



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting: 31 January 2016

The Annual General Meeting for the year 2015-2016 was held at the Church Centre after the Divine Service on Sunday, the 31st January 2016 at 11h10.

- 1) Pastor Anja Spiske opened the proceedings with a **prayer** and Geoff Andrews **welcomed** all present, especially Bishop Gilbert Filter and the Treasurer of the Cape Church, Horst Schöttler.
- 2) Jutta Rohwer and Reinhard Walle were appointed joint **Minutes Secretary** for the meeting.
- 3) The meeting was **attended by 24 voting members** and 2 guests (Viz. Attendance List) **Apologies** were received from Brian Arends, Brenda Lentz, Darren Lentz, Sonja Savini and Sharon Walle.
- 4) The **Minutes of the previous AGM (2015) (Appendix 1)** held on the 25th January 2015 were read by the Chairman of the Church Committee and adopted by the meeting (proposed by Dorle Kussing, seconded by Hans Schaberg).
- 5) **Additional Agenda Items proposed:** None
- 6) **Annual Reports:**

The **Pastor's Report, (Appendix 2a)**, based on the 3 months since she was ordained as pastor of our congregation, was read by Pastor Anja Spiske.

The **Chairman's Report (Appendix 2b)** was presented by Geoff Andrews.

A spelling error on the first page of his report was pointed out: Günter Frölich should be corrected to read Fröhlich.

During discussion of the report, Hans Schaberg proposed sending an official letter of thanks to Pastor em. Arthur Becker, who so ably and dedicatedly shepherded our congregation through the pastoral vacancy period. It was decided to present Pastor Becker with a framed copy of the water colour depiction of the church which was given to the Meylahns on their departure from Port Elizabeth.

A request was made to have the AGM minutes available in both German and English, since there are the occasional members who struggle to understand the English version. Marita Fröhlich volunteered to do the translation.

Bishop Gilbert Filter commended the congregation on its handling of the work required during the pastoral vacancy. He also went to great lengths to discuss aspects of the perceived 'secrecy' in making public the appointment of Pastor Spiske and to clear up misunderstandings.

The pastor's and chairman's reports were accepted unanimously by the meeting, proposed by Hans Schaberg and seconded by Henry Newman.

The Financial Statements (Appendix 3) were presented by Gerhard Fröhlich and accepted unanimously by the meeting (proposed by Dorle Kussing, seconded by Colin Lentz).

It was pointed out that a surplus is reflected for this year, which is mainly the result of the cut in levies during the period that we were without a pastor. This will no longer be the case in the following year.

Pastor Spiske expressed thanks to Gerhard and Günter Fröhlich for their dedicated hard work in overseeing the financial matters of the congregation.

- 7) **The Budget proposal for 2016** was presented during the presentation of the financial statements by Gerhard Fröhlich and accepted by the meeting, proposed by Dorle Kussing, seconded by Colin Lentz. It was noted that an expected substantial shortfall this year would presuppose additional fundraising.

The **Exoneration** of the Treasurer and the Church Committee with respect to the financial statements was unanimously accepted (proposed by Hans Schaberg and seconded by Hans Rohwer).

8) **Elections:**

8.1) **Church Committee:** Geoff Andrews, who has been chairman of the church committee for a number of years, has resigned from this post. However, he has volunteered to take over the post of convener for the Christmas and Easter markets. Hans Schaberg thanked him and his wife Charlotte for their dedicated service to the congregation over many years.

The meeting unanimously re-elected Henry Newman and Reinhard Walle as committee members for the next term of office, and elected Desmond Fillis and Branson Bosman as new committee members. (No further nominations were received from the floor.) The acceptance of these committee members was proposed by Geoff Andrews and seconded by Hans Rohwer.

8.2) **Delegates to Synod & CCE:** Geoff Andrews remains our delegate for the full 4-year cycle.

The next CCE will take place on the 3rd of September in East London. Geoff Andrews and Anthea Burger remain as delegates, with Hans Rohwer and Reinhard Walle as alternate delegates if required. It was emphasized that any member of the congregation is entitled to attend the Synod and CCE as a visitor.

9) **Bishop Filter** informed the meeting of three **Synod Resolutions** that were passed during the last Synod and need to be communicated to every congregation:

9.1) We were reminded that we, and all congregations, need to look beyond ourselves and realize that collections are not only taken to balance the congregation's books. This involves a certain mind shift and thus compulsory collections are planned for all congregations in the Cape Church 4 times per year. They are to focus on 4 particular areas of the church's work:

- i. Solidarity
- ii. Mission (outreach ministry)
- iii. Education (not only for pastors' training but also for congregation members, lay preachers etc.)
- iv. Music

9.2) Our congregations are encouraged to participate in the general 'Listening Process' of the church, to find out what is happening in the wider church body. Who are we as body of Christ? Where is He leading us? We must be wary of remaining static, we need to build relationships, allowing others to be part of us and move out of our comfort zone. How can we give something to the community? What do we have to give, without giving up our own theological principles? Let us pass on what we have to give. An example in our diocese would be to engage with the congregation of Pastor Danie Mouton's NG Kerk in Charlo. Another example would be to ask ourselves how we can help young adults to see that not only we need them, but that God needs them too.

9.3) Bishop Filter referred to the current engagement between the ELCSA (Cape Church) and the NTC (Natal Transvaal Church). Tentative negotiations are underway to look into the feasibility of and necessity for a merger between the two synods. The questions being asked are: Should we merge? What can we bring from the Cape Church's side? What can the Natal Transvaal Church bring?

Mr Schöttler discussed the financial issues that such a merger would have to consider and Bishop Filter explained management and structural issues, and in reply to a number of concerns raised by the meeting, he emphasized that such management and structural issues should not be regarded as being 'superior' to theological questions and congregational interests.

A central question that needs to be asked is: 'What unites us?' and not: 'What is the purpose of unity?'

10) Since there were no points for discussion under **General**, Geoff Andrews thanked Bishop Filter and Mr Horst Schöttler for taking the time to visit our congregation and discuss the important issues around a possible merger of the two synods.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer at 13h30.