

The Bridge 2024 Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: Sunday, November 17, 2024

1:15pm – 3:15 pm

In-person at *the bridge*

Welcome/Call to Order

Pastor Brian Childs, the Lead Pastor, called the Annual General Meeting to order at 1:15 PM and welcomed everyone in attendance. He began by reflecting on *the bridge*'s framework established over 26 years ago, which has consistently guided our church.

He highlighted our five priorities: Purposes, Principles, People, Program, and Property, explaining that our property supports our program, our program serves the people, and our people fulfill the purposes of God in a principled manner.

We exist for five core purposes: 1) Worship God; 2) Fellowship with one another; 3) Discipleship; 4) Serve/Ministry; and 5) Evangelize/Mission. Pastor Brian stressed the importance of balancing these purposes, noting that we are a health-oriented church where growth is a natural by-product. To achieve these purposes, we focus on the 5Gs: Gather, Group, Give, Grow, and Go.

Our pastors are entrusted with the 4Ds of ministry: 1) Discover gifted individuals; 2) Develop their talents; 3) Deploy them in service; 4) Debrief with them post-deployment. Each pastor is responsible for "keeping the gate," defining who we are and who we are not. The 6Cs of leadership—Character, Competencies, Chemistry, Convictions, Capacity, and Calling—guide us in this endeavor.

Pastor Brian then invited Etta Peters to open the meeting with a prayer.

Recording Secretary

Pastor Brian communicated that Sonia Tan, as the Board Secretary, had been appointed as recording secretary for the meeting.

Establishing Membership & Quorum

Cynthia Yoon reported that there were 270 members on the official membership list and that we needed 108 members for quorum. She announced that they had established a quorum with 117 members in attendance, plus 23 proxies, for a total of 140 members.

Acceptance of Past Minutes

Pastor Brian asked for a motion of acceptance related to last year's AGM meeting minutes, which had been made available to the members. Peter Furnell made the motion, seconded by Vince Kwan, all in favour. Brian appreciated Sonia for preparing last year's meeting minutes.

Election of Board Members

Jey Anandarajan, Chair of the Board Nomination Committee, began his report by expressing gratitude to the members who submitted 20 nominations back in September. He introduced the members of the Nomination Committee: Pastor Brian, Bill Buck, Sonia Tan, Kenneth Lai, and Pamela Li-Chung.

Jey explained the nomination process, which involved:

- Determining which nominees met the four basic qualifications
- Reviewing the six Cs of leadership attributes
- Reflecting on biblical qualifications based on 1 Timothy and Titus
- Considering the current context and season of the church

Through prayerful consideration, the committee approached two nominees, who also spent time in prayer and discernment. Jey was pleased to announce that Greg Clark and Sherene Furnell had agreed to let their names stand for election.

He reminded the members that the board appointment process, introduced a few years ago, gives the Nomination Committee the responsibility to select and appoint new nominees to fill vacancies. However, the members must still vote to affirm the selected candidates.

Jey acknowledged the two board members who completed their terms and will be stepping down: Bill Buck and Sonia Tan. Both Jey and Pastor Brian expressed their appreciation for their service on the board.

Pastor Brian then thanked Jey and the Nomination Committee for their diligent work throughout the process.

Financial Update

Tim Jenkins, Chair of the Finance Committee, introduced himself and Cynthia Yoon, the Director of Administration and a committee member.

Cynthia began the report by sharing that this was the first full ministry year in our new building, which ended with a surplus of \$376K due to higher-than-forecasted income and lower-than-budgeted expenses. Income was approximately 10% higher than target, with an 18% growth in giving year-over-year. General fund giving increased from \$1.65 million to \$1.9 million. Increase in total income included government funding and rental income. Expenses saw a slight increase due to larger building, with increased costs from program use and utility costs.

Tim provided an overview of the 2024-25 budget, explaining that it was developed based on anticipated income with a focus on careful planning and resource allocation. The Compensation Committee oversees salary and benefit increases for staff. A small deficit budget of approximately \$64K is projected, similar to last year, with a conservative estimate of a 4% increase in giving. Total revenue is projected at approximately \$2.274M, with total expenses estimated at \$2.38M. Of this, \$1.43M is allocated for ministries and missions, and \$902K for general operations. Operational expenses are broken down into 44% for building operations, 39% for administrative costs, and 17% for communications and IT. Ministry allocations include 7% for

young adults, 11% for youth, 10% for children's, 9% for connection, 26% for pastoral ministries, 13% for worship and groups, and 11% for missions.

Tim also provided an update on the building project, noting that the 2023-2024 year marked the final expenses for the project, which was completed within budget. This past year the Board officially voted to close the project. The Vision Fund, which was established from land sale proceeds, are earmarked for future expansion beyond the church's current physical property. There is a balance of approximately \$1.729 million and includes a 4.3% gain. Tim explained that any gains on the account are reinvested back into the fund.

Tim acknowledged and appreciated the Finance Committee members, including Cynthia, Chrissie Shum – who also chairs the Compensation Committee, Kevin Aide, Michelle Lai, and Michael Hum for all their time, effort, and rigor. Tim also recognized and thanked Cynthia's team: Jennifer Ma, Janet Hum, Giselle Albi and other volunteers for their diligent bookkeeping.

Tim shared the process and responsibilities of the Finance Committee. Cynthia and Tim report on the financials to the board on a monthly basis.

Tim reminded members that they would need to vote on two motions:

- to approve the 2023-2024 audited financial statements and receive the 2024-2025 operating budget
- to appoint Norton McMullen LLP as the auditor for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Pastor Brian expressed deep gratitude to Tim for his leadership, recognizing him for going above and beyond (not only leading the finance committee, but also chairing the board in Brian's absence) and to Paul Yoon for organizing the 12 giving devotional series and speakers.

During the Q&A session, John Schurmann inquired about the projected deficit of \$64K, to which Tim explained the conservative approach that equips ministries and anticipated savings. Tim reminded the members of the cash surplus from the past year to help with the projected deficit. Dilshan Anandarajan asked about maximizing space for 2000 people, and Brian estimated a need for approximately \$3M to support that size of congregation. Funds needed for staffing, ministry infrastructure, and multiple services. Cullen Quek inquired about the Vision Fund investments. Tim explained that financially, the funds are restricted for the future of the church. Brian discussed the purpose and future plans for new church initiatives.

Bill Buck emphasized the remarkable achievement of completing the building project within both the budget and the set timeline. He noted the church being in a highly fortunate position. Unlike many churches burdened by significant mortgages that impact their ministry, our church has managed its finances prudently. Bill highlighted the financial wisdom of the Building Committee in procuring materials early to avoid cost increases and recognized the contributions of Kevin Aide, Ron Cariglia, and Peter Furnell.

Voting

Cynthia explained that voting members in attendance should have received their electronic ballots via email. She walked everyone through the voting process and reminded them that the membership would be required to vote on the following four motions on one ballot:

1. To accept the Members Meeting minutes from November 2023
2. To affirm the two new board members
3. To approve the 2023-2024 audited financial statements and receive the new budget for 2024-2025
4. To appoint Norton McMullen as the auditor for the upcoming fiscal year

For anyone experiencing issues with the electronic ballot, paper ballots were also available. Ken Mo volunteered to serve as a scrutineer with the administrative staff to collect the paper ballots. Allan Abrigo made the motion, which was seconded by Sarah Buck, and all were in favor.

Everyone was then given the opportunity to submit their votes either online or through paper ballots.

Ministry Update

Pastor Brian invited Jeff Boadway, the Creative Arts Pastor, and Veronica Paxton, the Children's Ministry Pastor, to present the Ministry Highlight Report, showcasing God's work at *the bridge* and beyond. Jeff began by acknowledging Joseph Chander and the photography team for capturing amazing photos throughout the year, and Kathy Mo for her design contributions to the Impact Report.

Jeff shared that this was the first full ministry year in our new building. From September through August, we witnessed God moving in incredible ways, not only on Sundays, but throughout the week. The building has become a home for many, hosting sports ministries, community events, seasonal groups, life groups, midweek bridge ministries, and providing a space for students and adults to work and study.

We Gather: Across all ministries, gathering is a central activity. On Sundays, we have over 800 people attending services, both in person and online. Our youth ministry sees an average of over 100 youth gathering on Fridays, and over 30 young adults participate in Sunday night YA Night Ministry. Additionally, more than 100 people gather weekly for sports ministries.

Veronica highlighted the Children's Ministry, noting that over 150 volunteers engage with the kids on Sundays. The Leaders-in -Training (LIT) program mentors individuals aged 11 to 18. Last year, over 700 people attended the Kids Zone Christmas presentation, and more than 500 community members participated in our luau. The Kids Zone camps saw over 135 children attending, supported by over 100 volunteers.

Jeff reported that our first Christmas Eve and Easter services in the new space were memorable, with 1,300 attendees for Christmas Eve and over 1,600 for Good Friday and Easter Sunday celebrations. These gatherings expanded our vision of God's purposes.

We Group: Beyond large gatherings, we also focus on smaller, more intimate groups to foster deeper connections and personal growth. Last year, we had 41 unique life groups, with 347 people involved. We welcomed 94 first-time attendees and created 13 new life groups. Our short-term support groups also saw significant participation, with over 41 people journeying through Alpha and 143 people participating in seasonal support groups.

We Grow: Through sermon series, life groups, and support groups, we grow spiritually as individuals, as small groups, and as a church. We have grown deeper in our community and in numbers, transforming into a different church than we were a few years ago.

We Give: Our ministry extends beyond our walls as we give our time, talents, and treasures for God's purposes. Last year, we received over \$1.9 million, an 18% increase from our target. The Vision Fund, earmarked for future expansion, continues to grow, with a balance of \$1.7 million. Special offerings during Christmas Eve and Good Friday raised over \$90,000 for community projects and partners.

Prayer is a cornerstone of our ministry, with over 60 prayer partners faithfully praying for the church, staff, and community. Last year, they prayed for over 1,230 prayer requests. Many volunteers dedicate their time and talents to various ministries, contributing to the vibrant and loving community we have.

We Go: We actively put our love into action through missions in our neighborhoods, city, and across the world. Over 135 kids attended our community camp, and we raised over \$3,500 for the Coldest Night of the Year. Our December food drive collected over \$7,500 worth of food. We support eight missionaries globally and partner with Compassion Canada, sponsoring over 160 children since 2018.

Jeff concluded by expressing excitement for what God will do in the coming year. Pastor Brian thanked Jeff and Veronica for their comprehensive ministry report.

Staffing Update

Pastor Brian provided several staffing updates. He shared that Laura Zhang has been hired as the new intern for the OnMission ministry, recruited by Pastor Anna, who has been instrumental in finding and developing interns like Pastor Anki. The church is currently interviewing candidates for the Youth Pastor and Assistant Children's Pastor positions. Pastor Brian mentioned meeting some top-notch candidates recently and emphasized the importance of finding the right people to handle the complexities of these ministries. He expressed confidence that God will provide the right individuals for these roles.

Veronica, the Children's Ministry Pastor, is expecting and will be taking an extended leave. The church is seeking to hire an assistant to cover her position during her absence and hopes this person will continue to assist Veronica upon her return. Given the rapid growth of the Children's Ministry, Pastor Brian believes having at least two individuals in this area is essential.

Pastor Brian thanked Teresa Maskery, Pauline Leung, and Brittany Nesty for stepping up during the transition in the youth ministry. Brittany has agreed to lead the youth on Sunday mornings and will be building a team for Sunday morning youth ministries. He also expressed gratitude to Joanna and Caleb Young for their leadership in the young adult ministry, which continues to grow and thrive.

A new role has been established at *the bridge*: Family Ministries Pastor. This pastor will oversee the children, youth, and young adult ministries, involving themselves in hiring, development, and strategy creation for families. Brian proudly announced that Teresa Maskery will be the first

Family Ministries Pastor. He highlighted the importance of this role in addressing the family as the next great mission field for the church. Brian prayed over Teresa and her new role.

Pastor Brian also took a moment to recognize and express his deep appreciation for Paul Lam's outstanding contributions and service as the Interim Lead Pastor. During Brian's absence, he has preached exceptionally well, connected deeply with the congregation, and supported the staff.

Voting Results

Cynthia announced the voting results came in and shared that everything passed:

- Members Meeting Minutes from November 2023 was approved at 99%
- 2 new board members affirmed and received a majority vote of over 90%: Greg Clarke, Sherene Furnell
- Financial statements approved and new budget received at 100%
- Norton McMullen approved as our auditor for the next fiscal year with a vote of 99%

Motion of acceptance by Bill Buck, seconded by Mark Lamirande, all in favour

Update on Pastor Brian & Deb

Pastor Brian took a moment to provide an update on his personal life with respect to his marriage with Deb. He read a section from Deb's script and his script from the July 7th announcement since not everyone had a chance to hear it. Brian shared that the complexities related to their home life have not changed and that both he and Deb have concluded that they cannot continue and have made the difficult decision to move towards a divorce.

He thanked the members for praying for him and Deb and assured them that there has been good accountability between him and the board. The board has functioned incredibly well and has been working with a consultant over the last few months.

During the Q&A session, Carol Case inquired if there was a plan for another Lead Pastor role that could co-lead with Pastor Brian and asked who Brian is accountable to. Brian explained that he is accountable to the board and to God. If the members have any concerns, they are welcome to communicate them to the board. He also clarified that there is only one lead pastor role at *the bridge*. His plan is to hire an Executive Pastor who will partner with him.

Dilshan Anandarajan expressed his appreciation and respect for Pastor Brian in shepherding the church faithfully through the years, even through this season of hardship. He thanked him for availing himself to the church and for serving with honour.

Lesa Isaacs asked about members having access to support and counselling as they go through their own journey of hurt and hardships. Brian responded that when it comes to crisis counselling, this is an area where *the bridge* can do better and it is something they will work on.

Tony Constable inquired about the findings/recommendations that came out of the consultant's assessment. Brian confirmed that a 360 assessment was done, but that it is a confidential document only available to the board and staff who participated in the assessment. They are currently reviewing and working through the recommendations to determine what changes are to be implemented.

Close & Adjournment

Paul Daye shared a few closing remarks on behalf of the board, sharing that Pastor Brian will continue to lead *the bridge* with the full support of the board, and that they will continue to navigate through the impact that Brian's news may have on the leadership, staff, and church family. He then closed the meeting in prayer.