PRESBYTERY OF

**REPORT OF ORDINARY VISITATION**

# INTRODUCTION

At its meeting on Click here to enter a date., the Presbytery of directed that an Ordinary Visitation be conducted to the Choose an item. of . The members of the Visitation Committee were: , with serving as Visitation Convener.

On Click here to enter a date. congregational attenders were given an opportunity to complete a Presbytery Visitation Survey. The results of this survey were delivered to Session for their consideration on Click here to enter a date.. A formal Self-Assessment Report was completed by Session and sent to the Visitation Convener on Click here to enter a date..

On Click here to enter a date. the members of the Visitation Committee were introduced to the congregation/s. At members of the Committee met with the Moderator/Minister and his wife. They also met with the Session (and other pastoral staff (if relevant)- without the Moderator), the Committee of Management (without the Moderator), and representative leaders and ordinary members of the congregation at . Inspections of the church’s buildings at were held at .

# REPORT

# Moderator/Minister

The Visitation Committee, having considered the Self-Assessment Report, Presbytery Visitation Survey results, and other information provided by the Session to the Visitation Convener, met with the Moderator/Minister (and his wife)[[1]](#footnote-1). The Visitation Committee records the following matters as reflective of the Moderator’s/Minister’s relationship with, and contribution to, the Session, Committee of Management, and the wider congregation/s.

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# Session (and other Pastoral Staff)

The Visitation Committee, having considered the Self-Assessment Report, Presbytery Visitation Survey results and other information provided by the Session to the Visitation Convener, met with the Session in the absence of the Moderator. The Visitation Committee records the following matters as indicative of the Session’s (and other pastoral staff) relationship with, and contribution to, the Moderator/Minister, the Committee of Management, and the wider congregation/s.

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# Committee of Management

The Visitation Committee, having considered the Self-Assessment Report, Presbytery Visitation Survey results, and other information provided by the Session to the Visitation Convener, met with the Committee of Management in the absence of the Moderator. The Visitation Committee records the following matters as indicative of the Committee of Management’s relationship with, and contribution to, the Moderator/Minister, the Session (and other pastoral staff), and the wider congregation/s.

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# Congregation/s

The Visitation Committee, having considered the Self-Assessment Report, Presbytery Visitation Survey results, and other information provided by the Session to the Visitation Convener, met with representative leaders and ordinary members of the congregation. The Visitation Committee records the following matters as indicative of the health and outlook of the congregation/s.

# FINDINGS

**[Note: the “Findings” should contain no new material but be an extract of key points recorded in the prior section entitled “Report”. The Findings are not the place for recommendations. They will flow out of the Findings and are recorded in a later section entitled “Recommendations”.]**

The Visitation Committee, having considered the Self-Assessment Report, Presbytery Visitation Survey results, and other information provided by the Session to the Visitation Convener, and having had opportunities to meet with the Moderator/Minister, the Session (and other pastoral staff), the Committee of Management and representative leaders and ordinary members of the congregation/s, and having inspected the church’s buildings, summarises its findings as follows:

**Moderator/Minister**

* bullet points

**Session (and other pastoral staff)**

* bullet points

**Committee of Management**

* bullet points

**Congregation/s**

* bullet points

# DELIVERANCE

**1. FINDINGS:**

That the Presbytery find as follows:

(Here quote the Findings that flowed out of and summarised the report.)

**2. COMMEND THE MODERATOR/MINISTER FOR**

a.

b.

**3. COMMEND THE SESSION (AND OTHER PASTORAL STAFF) FOR**

a.

b.

**4. COMMEND THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR**

a.

b.

**5. RECOMMEND THAT THE MODERATOR/MINISTER**

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| **Required Action** *(tick no more than* ***five (5)*** *actions that arise from the Findings)* | **Standard Recommendations Provided by M&M** | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
|  | Set aside more dedicated time every week to spend with God |  |  |  |  |
|  | Set aside more dedicated time every week to shepherd his immediate family |  |  |  |  |
|  | Take a full day off for rest every week, if possible, with his wife |  |  |  |  |
|  | Withdraw from other church or school committees to redeem time for pastoral leadership in this church |  |  |  |  |
|  | Take all outstanding Long Service Leave |  |  |  |  |
|  | Take all outstanding Annual Leave |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop an intentional friendship with two or three men within the church |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop an intentional friendship with two or three non-Christian men from the wider community |  |  |  |  |
|  | In consultation with the Session, identify, train and empower more existing elders to share the burden of pastoral leadership |  |  |  |  |
|  | In consultation with the Session, identify, train and empower more elders and gifted teachers who can train and equip all of God’s people for all of life |  |  |  |  |
|  | In consultation with the Session, identify, train and empower more men and women to share the burden of church leadership, based on their gifts |  |  |  |  |
|  | Find a mentor outside this Presbytery to support his personal and professional development |  |  |  |  |
|  | Enrol into a relevant professional development program for pastoral leaders and that the pastoral charge pay all financial costs |  |  |  |  |
|  | Transition towards a shared leadership model of pastoral ministry with the Session (and other pastoral staff), starting with the development of a new role description for the Moderator/Minister based on his strengths and passions, and the identification of other complementary team roles that could be filled by existing and new elders |  |  |  |  |
|  | Retire or find alternate employment within the PCNSW or elsewhere |  |  |  |  |

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| **Custom Recommendations** *(These recommendations must be framed as SMART goals and arise out of the Findings. There should be no more than 5 total recommendations for the Moderator)* | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
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**6. RECOMMEND THAT THE SESSION (AND OTHER PASTORAL STAFF)**

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| **Required Action** *(tick no more than* ***seven (7)*** *actions that arise from the Findings)* | **Standard Recommendations Provided by M&M** | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
|  | Submit Forms F and S (or their electronic equivalent), and if relevant, Form F for all outstanding years |  |  |  |  |
|  | Update the minute book |  |  |  |  |
|  | Set aside more dedicated time every month to spend together in prayer and the study of God’s word |  |  |  |  |
|  | Set aside more dedicated time every quarter to cultivate healthy friendships among the elders and their families |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop a shared, biblically-based and culturally appropriate vision for the future (at least the next 5-10 years) for this particular church |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop a comprehensive strategic plan (including detailed action plans for the next 3 years) to promote fruitful gospel-centred ministry in and through this particular church to the world |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop clear and culturally appropriate strategies to love the local community and bear witness to Christ in word and deed |  |  |  |  |
|  | Support the planting of new churches approved by the Presbytery by sending experienced leaders and members, making regular financial contributions, and praying regularly for gospel fruitfulness |  |  |  |  |
|  | Support the renewal of particular designated churches approved by the Presbytery by sending experienced leaders and members, making regular financial contributions, and praying regularly for gospel fruitfulness |  |  |  |  |
|  | Actively support the Moderator/Minister and other approved leaders as they introduce ongoing changes to worship services and other aspects of the church to engage the wider community with the gospel |  |  |  |  |
|  | Meet with and learn from the leaders of other churches that are engaged in fruitful gospel-centred ministry in similar contexts |  |  |  |  |
|  | Request external assistance from appropriately qualified individuals or groups to facilitate the development of a vision, strategic plan and/or strategies for the future |  |  |  |  |
|  | Encourage each elder to develop intentional friendships with two or three younger church members of the same sex |  |  |  |  |
|  | Encourage each elder to develop intentional friendships with two or three non-Christians of the same sex from the wider community with a view to discipling them |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop clear expectations for church membership and communicate these through multiple forums to the wider church |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop a plan to provide more consistent, transparent and two-way communication with the church community |  |  |  |  |
|  | Make appropriate changes so that the majority of the congregation can participate actively in a regular small group Bible study overseen by the elders |  |  |  |  |
|  | Identify, train and empower more elders and gifted teachers who can train and equip all of God’s people for all of life |  |  |  |  |
|  | Identify, train and empower more leaders who can train and equip all of God’s people for all of life |  |  |  |  |
|  | Identify, train and empower more men and women to share the burden of church leadership, based on their gifts |  |  |  |  |
|  | Review the ways in which church is organised to help people love God, love each other, and love God’s world |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop a plan, in consultation with the Committee of Management, to care for the needs of the vulnerable, weak and poor in the local community |  |  |  |  |
|  | Proactively resolve known conflicts between members in the church, seeking external assistance as required |  |  |  |  |
|  | Discipline elders and/or members identified in the Findings for the sake of restored relationships in the church, their sanctification in Christ, the health and witness of the church, and God’s glory |  |  |  |  |
|  | Remind every biblically-qualified elder of their God-given responsibilities for: a) leading/governing the church in its life and mission, b) praying with and for God’s people, c) proclaiming the gospel and teaching the whole counsel of God from the Scriptures, refuting those who oppose it, and d) setting an example of Christ-like living |  |  |  |  |
|  | Update the Membership Roll and assign every member to an elder who can shepherd them directly or indirectly through accountable others (e.g. small groups) |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop a clear plan for all elders to contribute to the shepherding of all of God’s people in this church |  |  |  |  |
|  | Organise further relevant training for all existing elders so they might better shepherd all of God’s people |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop a succession plan for the training, ordination and empowering of future elders, especially in relation to public leading and teaching/preaching on Sundays |  |  |  |  |
|  | Identify, examine, train, ordain and empower 1-3 biblically-qualified elders to share the burden of pastoral leadership |  |  |  |  |
|  | Audit and then stand down all active elders who are not qualified to fulfil the expectations of a biblical elder, pastor and overseer, based on the character and competence requirements outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Consider how a body of deacons could complement the pastoral work of elders and explore the formation of a team of deacons with functions distinctly different from those of the elders (see further the PCNSW Theological Vision) |  |  |  |  |

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| **Custom Recommendations** *(These recommendations must be framed as SMART goals and arise out of the Findings. There should be no more than 7 total recommendations for the Session)* | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
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**7. RECOMMEND THAT THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

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| **Required Action** *(tick no more than* ***five (5)*** *actions that arise from the Findings)* | **Standard Recommendations Provided by M&M** | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
|  | Update the minute book |  |  |  |  |
|  | Set aside more dedicated time every month to spend together in prayer and the study of God’s word |  |  |  |  |
|  | Set aside more dedicated time every quarter to cultivate healthy friendships among the members and their families |  |  |  |  |
|  | Support the vision, plans and strategies of the Session by developing a 3-5 year resource management plan that will fund Session’s gospel-centred initiatives sustainably over time |  |  |  |  |
|  | Develop and implement, in consultation with the Session, a plan to care for the needs of the vulnerable, weak and poor in the local community |  |  |  |  |
|  | Steward all church resources in ways that promote a growing and sustainable supply of income to fund gospel-centred ministry in and through this particular church |  |  |  |  |
|  | Organise further relevant training for all existing members so they might better serve all of God’s people |  |  |  |  |
|  | Identify, examine, train, appoint and empower 1-3 biblically-qualified deacons to contribute to the work of the Committee of Management |  |  |  |  |
|  | Force renewal within the Committee of Management by reducing the number of existing members by at least 50 percent |  |  |  |  |
|  | Audit and then stand down all members who are not qualified to fulfil the expectations of a biblical deacon, based on the character and competence requirements outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 |  |  |  |  |
|  | Engage an external auditor to examine all church accounts and relevant financial processes and to make recommendations to improve the transparency and veracity of financial record keeping and reporting |  |  |  |  |

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| **Custom Recommendations** *(These recommendations must be framed as SMART goals and arise out of the Findings. There should be no more than 5 total recommendations for the Committee of Management)* | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
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**8. RECOMMEND THAT THE PRESBYTERY**

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| **Required Action** *(tick only those arising from the Findings)* | **Standard Recommendations Provided by M&M** | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
|  | Instruct the Visitation Convener to review, every three months, for a period of two years, the degree to which the Presbytery’s recommendations have been implemented and to report to the Presbytery |  |  |  |  |
|  | Conduct another Ordinary Visitation within **two** years of the date of this Report *(Note: this is an exceptional recommendation for churches with significant opportunities for improvement and/or multiple required actions)* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Conduct another Ordinary Visitation within **three** years of the date of this Report *(Note: this is the normal and default recommendation for all churches)* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Conduct another Ordinary Visitation within **five** years of the date of this Report *(Note: this is an exceptional recommendation for healthy churches with minimal opportunities for improvement and/or required actions)* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Appoint a Special Visitation to inquire into or provide a remedy for the following particular problems or difficulties found to exist during this Ordinary Visitation:  a.  b.  c.  d. |  |  |  |  |
|  | Appoint a Special Visitation to examine the actions of the Moderator/Minister and report to the Presbytery concerning the viability of the pastoral tie, having regard to the provisions of The Code II 1.42, and relevant procedural advice from the Clerk of Assembly (as required). |  |  |  |  |
|  | Appoint a Special Visitation to examine the operation of the Session (and other pastoral staff) and report to the Presbytery concerning the utility of the Session as it is presently constituted, having regard to the provisions of The Code II 1.42, and relevant procedural advice from the Clerk of Assembly (as required). |  |  |  |  |
|  | Appoint a Special Visitation to examine the operation of the Committee of Management and report to the Presbytery concerning the utility of the Committee as it is presently constituted, having regard to the provisions of The Code II 1.42, and relevant procedural advice from the Clerk of Assembly (as required). |  |  |  |  |
|  | Appoint a Special Visitation to examine the viability of the congregation in accordance with The Code II 1.13 and 1.15, and relevant procedural advice from the Clerk of Assembly (as required). |  |  |  |  |
|  | Set aside three experienced members of Presbytery to investigate the viability of a new church plant in this region |  |  |  |  |

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| **Custom Recommendations** *(These recommendations must be framed as SMART goals and arise out of the Findings)* | **To be completed within:** *(tick as appropriate)***:** | | | |
| **3 mths** | **6 mths** | **12 mths** | **2 yrs** |
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**9. PASTORAL STATEMENT TO THE CONGREGATION**

# APPENDICES

The following appendices were provided by the Session to the Visitation Convener and were considered by the Visitation Committee:

[Please include the documents identified below as appendices to this Report. Scanning could be used to assemble these documents into one unified whole for the purposes of distribution and record keeping. Otherwise, please ensure that all relevant appendices are distributed in the same single communication with this report.]

* Self-Assessment Report
* Presbytery Visitation Survey results
* Completed and current Form F (or its electronic equivalent)
* Completed and current Form S (or its electronic equivalent)
* Communicant Roll
* Adherent Roll
* Marriage Roll
* Baptismal Roll
* Minute book of the Session
* Minute book of the Committee of Management
* Other records requested by the Visitation Convener

1. The Visitation Committee is encouraged to interview the Moderator together with his wife (if married), except where the ordinary visitation is to a vacant charge or home mission station where the Moderator is not the appointed Home Missionary. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)