

MINUTES OF THE 61st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Held on Sunday, 27 April 2025, 11.30am at the Sanctuary

Opening

1. With an attendance of 163 Electoral Roll (ER) members present at 11.30am, Honorary Secretary Mr Marcus Sia announced that quorum had been fulfilled for the conduct of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to proceed. Chairman/Vicar Revd Ian Chew commenced the AGM with an opening prayer and reading from Psalm 136 at 11.35am.

Vicar's Address

2. Vicar expressed his appreciation for everyone present, and outlined that in his address, he will focus on how the Lord had led COA in the past year as well as how the church can respond to Him in 2025.

3. Vicar recapped that COA's journey during his tenure as Vicar began in 2022 to Rebuild God's House, and continued in 2023 to Grow Deeper in Christ. Those were the years of focusing on strengthening our foundations so that the church will be prepared for God's purposes and growth. In 2024, the church moved on to Growing in Fruitfulness, inspired by John 15:16, which calls for believers to not just sit back and enjoy the blessing of our salvation, but also to be fruitful for God's kingdom. At the Watchnight Service in 2024, Vicar shared about God's blessings in many areas of the church life throughout the year, and he would like to highlight a handful of the many areas to give thanks for:

Growth in Attendance

4. The Lord has blessed COA with growing attendance across all its services. The average attendance of the various services were:

- English Service: 283 in 2023 to 297 in 2024 and 315 as of March 2025.
- Chinese Service: 64 in 2023 to 65 in 2024 and 77 as of March 2025.
- Sunday School (KFC & LG): 60 in 2023 to 91 in 2024 and 95 as of March 2025

5. Vicar expressed his thanks to all the service pastors and admin support staff, as well as all of the ministry leaders and members who serve faithfully in various areas to support COA's weekly services, in areas such as AV, worship, intercession, breakfast and counting of offertory. He added that another special group that should not be forgotten were the Sunday School teachers, who teach and care for our children so that we can focus on God and His Word at services. They also helped to organise camps for the children, and COA was especially blessed by activities such as the LG and KFC camps who not only provide an avenue for children to grow in the faith but also outreach to the community.

6. Vicar appealed for members to be regular and consistent in attending services. This was because our attendance is not only to glean self-benefit, but also to worship and honour God with our time, attention, and lives.

Growth in Cell Groups

7. Another aspect to thank God for is the growth of our cell groups. As of 2025, we have grown to a total of 29 cell groups, and each group has been growing in its number of members. Our cells have also been very involved in the life of the church, such as serving in Alpha outreach, participating in Carols by Candlelight, and contributing to the Lenten devotions. Vicar expressed his appreciation to the cell leaders, assistant leaders, and facilitators for serving faithfully. He highlighted that cell groups are the life of the church, and so it was important to pay special attention in nurturing them. He encouraged those who are not in a cell to join one.

Update on Chaplaincy Work

8. We have been blessed in fruitfulness across our chaplaincy efforts as well. Altogether, we serve over 390 staff and 2,693 students and residents, and this is the harvest field that God has granted us.

9. One chaplaincy that he was particularly thankful for was St Andrew's Nursing Home (Aljunied) [SANH (Aljunied)]. He thanked God for the love, dedication, and faith of Associate Chaplain Pastor Jocelyn Choo, newly-hired chaplaincy worker Matthias Hew, helpers, and befrienders. Since launching the ministry in April 2024, we have conducted 58 services, including two baptism services. The average weekly attendance stood at 146 residents. 50 residents have since accepted Christ and 14 have been baptised. Vicar also gave thanks for the close ties COA had with the management and nursing staff of SANH (Aljunied).

Theme for 2025: Heartwarming Hospitality

10. In 2025, COA will be embarking on the theme of Heartwarming Hospitality. We want to grow our church by welcoming new people in our midst, emulating God who is Himself a hospitable God by welcoming all of us into His family. Our theme is encapsulated in Hebrews 13:2 where the call is for believers to not neglect showing hospitality to strangers.

11. How can we show hospitality? One way would be to engage newcomers attending our services and cells. Vicar said that members should take the initiative to approach them, and not be afraid of rejection. We have a steady stream of visitors to our services each week, and so we should connect with them and introduce them to other members, which will also make them feel welcomed and more likely to continue coming to COA.

12. Another way to show hospitality would be to invite friends to join in church services and activities. He highlighted that COA will be embarking on the Alpha

programme in a big way in 2025, combining both the English and Chinese Alpha outreach efforts together. This would mean that the fellowship lunch will be combined, followed by breakout sessions. He thanked God for the availability of St Andrew's House to be used as a venue for Alpha, because it is a much bigger venue than the Youth Room at the Diocese Building and thus can accommodate more people. More information will be provided in due time, but the church can do their part by starting to pray for friends and loved ones to invite.

Focus Areas for 2025

13. The second half of 2025 will also see the church starting on a new sermon series based on the book of Hebrews. It will be a profound series with many deep truths, with the main focus on the person of Christ in His divinity and humanity revealed in the one Person.

14. 2025 will also see the church focusing on equipping its members. COA will be partnering with St Peter's Hall to roll out bible study courses for members to enrol. There will also be courses implemented for members:

- Cell Leaders' Training for four sessions starting 5 July
- Christian Foundations every fortnight on Wednesday starting 16 July
- Young Adults' Bible Study on Hebrews every fortnight on Thursday starting 17 July

15. As there will not be a church camp this year, one key focus would be the Marriage Retreat in September. This year, the retreat will be extended to 3 days and 2 nights, with more activities for couples. Vicar encouraged all married couples to sign up for the retreat.

Financial Aid for members

16. Vicar highlighted that the church leaders were aware that the financial outlook for 2025 was not optimistic. As such, the PCC implemented the COA Interim Financial Assistance (CIFA) scheme to help members in need. Members who are in need of financial assistance can apply for interim help, and the committee will assess each application and make recommendations to the PCC Exco for further assessment. The committee will also help members approach government agencies for long-term support. Vicar expressed his appreciation to Ms Skye Low for leading the committee.

Newly-appointed PCC

17. Vicar mentioned that the church will be welcoming a new PCC team to serve. He emphasised that the PCC plays a very important role in the leadership and governance of the church in accordance with the COA Constitution, by assisting the Vicar in the initiation, conduct, and development of the affairs of the church.

18. Vicar outlined that the PCC meets monthly to ensure that the church continues to function smoothly and in accordance with God's will. He encouraged people to take up

the opportunity to serve if they were able to, and added that people will be able to learn more about the daily operations of the church and discern the Lord's will, while also growing in their faith.

19. Vicar expressed his appreciation to the existing PCC members who would be stepping down: Dr Loh Kok Chi, Mrs Teresa Soon, Ms Jenny Chow, Mr Winston Tay, and Mr Paul Chua.

20. Vicar proceeded to provide his address in Mandarin.

Submitted Questions to the Annual Report

21. Vicar updated the meeting that there was one question submitted prior to the AGM, by Mr Adrian Choo. He asked if there was a process to recruit musicians for the worship ministry, to which Vicar replied that there was and it was a key avenue for our young people to serve. He explained that the worship ministry had several processes in place to identify, recruit, and train people to the worship ministry.

Honorary Treasurer's Address

22. Honorary Treasurer Mrs Teresa Soon began her address by giving thanks to God for His continued provision, particularly in providing faithful workers to serve in the Church's finance office. She expressed her gratitude for Nget Lee, who served COA diligently for over 18 years until her retirement at the end of 2024. She also gave thanks for Angelina Lim, who joined the church staff as a Finance Officer in January 2025. She then presented the financial report for 2024 and the budget for 2025. Total ordinary income had risen to \$1,638,704, a marginal increase of 0.06% year-on-year. There was a net surplus of \$28,821 for 2024 before setting aside \$66,000 for the Sinking Fund. The proposed 2025 budget is \$2,285,237. This is established based on the needs of each ministry, taking into account the actual expenditures in 2024 and the expected growth in 2025. Mrs Soon also presented an update of the financials for the period ending 31 March 2025. Overall, the church operated within the approved budget, and the church's financial and liquidity positions remain favourable. She thanked God for His faithfulness and the congregation for their ongoing contributions.

23. She also highlighted that the financial results are now published in the bulletin on the last week of every month, which would give greater transparency and awareness on the church's financial health to members.

24. Mrs Soon also provided a quick update on the legacy giving arrangements, of which details were set out by the Diocese. She highlighted that if members wanted to leave some money to COA, it was important to state the name of the beneficiary as the 'Secretary of the Synod of the Diocese of Singapore' and to mention COA as the recipient, so as to avoid any misunderstanding.

25. Concluding her address, she quoted from 1 Chronicles 29:13-14, and gave thanks to God for His provisions and blessings over the church in the past year. She also

expressed her appreciation to Ms Nget Lee, who has been performing the accounting work for COA over many years.

Questions from Members

26. Pertaining to the church's finances, Mr Phua Kia Wang asked if the Diocese provides financial support for Chaplaincies, especially in view of the growing number of ministries, and if COA had tapped on these funds. Vicar replied that the Diocese does offer support through specific funds that parishes can tap on. For example, there is a chaplaincy fund for schools chaplaincy which COA has tapped on, and another fund for nursing home chaplaincy which COA has not tapped on. He said that God had richly blessed COA in that we did not require to utilise those funds, and that there were other parishes who were in greater need for support. People's Warden Mr Goh Chee Kong added that for SANH (Aljunied), the chaplaincy ministry was offered to COA and it was up to the church then to decide if it wanted to take it up. Thus, the onus was on the PCC then to decide if we had adequate resources to take up the ministry. Mr Phua Kia Wang thanked them for their clarification, and said that it was important for the Diocese to be aware of the real costs of running the ministry. Vicar assured the church that the Diocese is aware of the costs.

27. Mrs Sandra Sng asked about the increase in manpower budget for 2025 and if there was a corresponding increase in headcount. Mrs Teresa Soon replied that there was an increase of three more headcount for 2025. Vicar added that another crucial part of the increase in manpower budget was the salary adjustment that was implemented in 2025. He explained that the church had not adjusted salaries since 2017, and so the increase for 2025 constituted the salary adjustment as well as the inflationary impact for the new year. The HR Committee (HRC), chaired by Mr Edwin Phang, was tasked to look into this and presented their recommendations to the PCC Exco. Mr Goh Chee Kong added that it was important for the church to support the staff, as well as how it was important for experienced HR professionals who make up the HRC to provide their expertise advice for the church to act on. Vicar's Warden Mr Loh Kok Chi echoed the point, and added that also added that with the adjusted salaries, it would go some way to attract talent to join the church staff team, yet not up to the level that people will be attracted to join because of monetary gains.

28. Mr Jonah Su enquired how many pastoral staff the church has under employment, to which Vicar replied that COA has eight pastoral staff not including clergy. *[Afternote: Nine pastoral workers as of end April 2025]*

Confirmation of 60th AGM Minutes

29. There being no further edits to the minutes, Ms Elaine Koh proposed and Mr Phua Kia Wang seconded the motion to confirm the Minutes of Meeting of the 60th AGM held on 28 April 2024. Electoral Roll members voted in favour of the motion.

Approval of Annual Report 2024/25

30. Mr Phua Kia Wang proposed and Mr Victor Ong seconded the motion to approve the AGM Annual Report for 2024/25. Electoral Roll members voted in favour of the motion.

Approval of Audited Accounts for 2024

31. Mr Kevin McWhinney proposed and Mr Clement Chew seconded the motion to approve the audited accounts for 2024. Electoral Roll members voted in favour of the motion.

Approval of Budget for 2025

32. Mr Randy Eng proposed and Mr Lawrence Lee seconded the motion to approve the Budget for 2025. Electoral Roll members voted in favour of the motion.

Appointment of Vicar's Warden

33. Vicar announced that Mr Teo Swee Pieu was appointed the Vicar's Warden.

Appointment of Parochial Church Council (PCC)

34. At the close of nominations on 20 April 2025, one nomination was received for People's Warden, and six nominations for the PCC. As such, there was no election and the following nominees were duly elected into the PCC:

S/N	Name	Position	Proposer	Seconder
1	Goh Chee Kong	People's Warden	Loh Kok Chi	Tey Choo Chin Yee Patricia
2	Eng Choon Kong Randy	PCC Member	Koh Chin Wai Yee Elaine	Yau Hoe Kiat Patrick
3	Priscilla Chin Wai Sum	PCC Member	Goh Chee Kong	Tan Wong Tiow Kiak Elsie
4	Sia Wei Sheng Marcus	PCC Member	Ng Jun Kai	Sng Wei Xiong Jonathan
5	Tang How Seok Li	PCC Member	Fong Chin Chee Wai Eunice	Priscilla Chin Wai Sum
6	Phang Seng Ann Edwin	PCC Member	Loh Kok Chi	Cheang Yew Kong Andrew
7	Leung Lik Min Raymond	PCC Member	Loh Kok Chi	Goh Chee Kong

Appointment of Auditor for 2025

35. Mrs Sandra Sng proposed and Mr Andrew Cheang seconded the motion to retain the appointment of Messrs Baker Tilly TFW LLP as COA's auditors for 2025. Electoral Roll members voted in favour of the motion.

Closing

36. There being no further agenda items, Honorary Secretary Mr Marcus Sia thanked COA members for their faithful support and participation in the AGM. Vicar closed the meeting at 1.00pm with a prayer and Benediction.

Recorded by:

Marcus Sia
Honorary Secretary
PCC 2024/25

Vetted by:

Revd Ian Chew
Chairman/ Vicar

Dated: 20 May 2025

Approved: 20 May 2025