



open icon baptist church

Decisions and Questions from the Host Group Meeting 13th May 2026

Listed below are the main decisions and questions from our recent Host Group meeting. This is not the full minutes, but a summary of the main decisions. In line with our church policy, these decisions are circulated not only for your information, but to allow you to consider the decisions and, if you have any concerns about any of them, to seek more information or ask for them to be reconsidered. Where possible, we will not implement the decisions for at least seven days, in order to allow time for people to respond. Questions or concerns can be raised with any member of the Host Group, or by emailing all of them at once at hostgroup@openicon.church

Those in attendance at the recent meeting were Eliz Cook, Ian Cook, Rob Davis, Liesl Filippi, Nathan Nettleton, and Shelley Taylor. Jen Davis was present as minute secretary.

Summary of the Decisions

1. Before our Anniversary Service, the congregation will be asked to reaffirm the **Host Group Covenant and the Church Covenant** and the ongoing service of the Host Group members. We decided we would leave these as currently worded, looking towards a review of the Church Covenant during the coming year.
2. Following the constitutional amendment to finalise the **name change** to Open Icon Baptist Church, we plan to begin work on the remaining constitutional changes. Several congregation members have indicated potential willingness to help with this work. Nathan will convene a meeting of those involved in the coming weeks.
3. **Consent for Liturgy Recordings Online.** The Host Group had a wide-ranging discussion about the publication of liturgy recordings and the privacy of congregation members. The conversation surfaced a number of important themes, including:
 - The distinction between being visible in a live Zoom service and being visible in a recording that is permanently archived online — these represent qualitatively different levels of exposure.
 - Several members, on reflection, expressed discomfort with the existence of years of historical recordings, even if they had not consciously considered this before.
 - Concerns were raised about the permanent accessibility of children's images and names online, and risks such as identity theft.
 - Practical challenges exist in obtaining meaningful consent from visitors who may arrive mid-service.
 - One option worth considering is whether published liturgy videos should show only slides and Bible readers, without congregation members visible.**Decision:** Recordings more than one year old will be deleted from the church YouTube channel. This will be implemented in coming weeks, not immediately. Sermons will remain accessible. Nathan will also organise a congregational survey on preferences regarding recording retention and visibility, to inform future policy and a consent framework.

4. **Church Communications.** Nathan had circulated an email exploring how changes in the way people use email affect congregational connection — noting that email has shifted from a chatty, informal medium to one used more like formal correspondence, which contributes to the 'silo' feelings some members have identified. The Host Group had a rich conversation on this topic. Key themes included:
- Different members have very different relationships to email, WhatsApp, social media, and online communication generally — these differences are not age-related.
 - WhatsApp was seen as useful for specific purposes (as experienced at the church camp) but less satisfying for general group chat, and Meta's ownership is a concern for some.
 - The possibility of opt-in subgroups — for the host group, prayer hosts, or interest-based groups such as AFL or knitting — was explored, though the concept of choosing among social subgroups was uncomfortable for some.
 - Nathan drew attention to Circle (used by a comparable US online church) and similar WordPress-integrated platforms, which offer closed community spaces with social features, not dependent on Meta or other major social media providers.
 - The deeper question was identified as: how do we communicate as an online community when not physically meeting? This is a different question for those who joined before we went online versus those who joined us as an online church.
- No decisions were made. The conversation will continue, with congregational input being sought.
5. Anyone is welcome to attend a host meeting, please let Nathan know if you wish to do so. The hosts may also invite a congregation member to attend a meeting if we feel they have insights into a particular issue on the agenda.

Next meeting: 10th June 2026

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 24 May Pentecost Sunday service, 5:00pm