

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CHURCH OF SAINT-PAUL DE VENCE
Galerie Commerciale Sainte-Claire, Route de Vence
06570 Saint-Paul de Vence

**Annual General Meeting of the Saint-Paul's Church
Sunday February 23rd, 2025, at 12:30
at the church**

Minutes

1. Attendance

Attending: 21

Proxy: 2

Total: 23 members represented out of 26 church members

2. Welcome, Opening Prayer and President's Opening Remarks

The pastor, James Arnold, opens the AGM with prayer.

John Paul Mokski remarks that this year we are doing things differently. Members have had the possibility to put written questions on the church website. The following presentations will give them answers.

Pastor James explains that after 17 years serving the 3 churches here, his wife and him need to have a break and will be taking a sabbatical leave from end of March 2025 till August. They will be here in St. Paul most of the time, but only as mere church members. We will have very qualified speakers coming to preach on Sundays, some of them we already know. James and Jen will be going to the US for some time around May / June. Things will go fine here, we will have the Leadership Team, deacons and deaconesses, all functioning for the wellbeing of the church. Pastor and his wife will take advantage of their leave here to work at improving communication with the church people, for instance by inviting people to dinner at their home; they also will have the floor of the sanctuary renovated, so that the things they couldn't cover before will be done. If members need to call pastor James, they will be redirected toward one or another of the leaders. At the present time, pastor is interviewing three men in order to find pastoral help for the future. Robb and Rachel will also be coming back for that purpose. It is obvious that pastor James cannot continue to work for three churches. When they come back in August he will be pastoring only one or two of them. They also will work on their marriage and other things normal people are doing.

3. Approbation of the 2024 AGM minutes.

The minutes for the AGM of April 7th of 2024 are unanimously approved.

4. Appointment of deacons and deaconesses.

After several years of looking to have deacons and deaconesses, we have finally reached our goal.

The deacons are: Dave Stevenson, John Paul Mokski, Doug Neihart and Marius Van Wyck.

The deaconesses are: Amanda Renar, Paula Ordonez , Maureen Neihart, Maria Sales.

Vote: the deacons and deaconesses mentioned above are unanimously approved.

Our desire also was to have Elders in the church, but the members who could have filed the position didn't pursue the BTCP training.

- Question 1: what is the role of deacons?

- Answer 1: they are the heads of the different ministries in the church, people who oversee. They make decisions but have to refer to the Leadership Team.

- Question 2: what do elders do?

- Answer 2: deacons are for services; the difference is that elders are able to teach. They are the teaching, praying side of the church, similar to pastors. We also wish that they could deal with finances.

5. Leadership Team election

Our Leadership Team is renewed by half of its members every two years. This year the outgoing members are Doug Neihart and Catherine Melchio. Catherine is stepping down and Doug is willing to continue, so the proposed members for the Leadership Team are:

James Arnold, Doug Neihart, John Paul Mokski, Dave Stevenson.

Vote: The four members mentioned above are unanimously approved.

- Question: Is it normal that deacons and leaders are the same people?

- Answer: we are working on better communication and have decided that deacons will be part of the church counsel. They make the link between services and leadership. Our first meeting with deacons and deaconesses will be to find out where the gaps are about communication. The deacons who are not in the Leadership Team are holding hands with leaders; they are in contact with a person who can bring their requests and observations to the leaders. For example, James talks several times a year with Patrick R. who is the head of the music team.

6. Financial Report, budget, Auditor declaration.

- Financial report

The treasurer, Douglas Neihart, presents the 2024 financial report. He thanks the church members for their generous giving all through the year.

The total of our income at the end of the year was €137,615.01.

The regular giving (cash, checks, online) was €82,375 and we also received exceptional donations.

From the total of our income, we could put aside €40,000 for Future Dreams.

We gave 12,432 euros toward Missions, representing 15.9% of our total expenses and 9% of our Income in 2024.

The total of our expenses was €77,847.85, less than budgeted.

Pastoral expenses are higher because the cost of rent and electricity went up.

- Auditor declaration:

The auditor, David Stevenson, declares that after verification the accounts have been very well kept all through 2024.

Vote: The AGM unanimously approves the 2024 financial report.

- Provisional 2025 Budget:

The 2025 budget for income is €102.000, higher than that of 2024 which has been surpassed. About expenses, we raised the amount of pastoral expenses because of pastor's medical covering (Cavimac) and of our participation to "The Refuge" expenses. The other expenses which are up in the budget are for materials and technology. Missions expenses are also up because of the increase of our income in 2024.

Regarding Missions, we would like in the future to give locally instead of sending money to other countries. The summer kid's camp being a means of outreach is also included in our giving to Missions.

Vote : The AGM unanimously approves the 2025 provisional budget.

The treasurer thanks God that we are growing towards financial independence.

- Question 1: How will the Future Dreams money be spent?

- Answer: a part of the money will be used to cover expenses for the replacement speakers coming during pastor's leave: transportation tickets, housing, meals, etc.

- Question 2: Why are we giving €300/month to the Refuge in Nice?

- Answer: their meetings include a meal and other expenses.

7. Activity report:

In 2024 we had a very successful kid's camp in July and also a great Worldview conference. We also had our usual festivities for Thanksgiving and Christmas and quarterly prayer meetings, as well as our regular home groups meetings. Vlad and Ines started the "Refuge" group in Nice, a bible study for young adults, mostly students. Sunday school and tweens have been functioning regularly. We also had women bible meetings, art and coffee gatherings, hikes outings.

8. Any Other Business

- Kids protection policy: In 2024 we worked on our children protection policy to make it more accurate, and we posted it on our website. We are having some problems with kids running through the building during church services. We want our children to be safe; outside church premises they can be in danger. We also found burned paper in the back office, and even copies of pornography in the printer. The problem is children being unsupervised when their parents are attending service, or when there is no Sunday school. The main point in our children's protection policy is that there always should be two adults with kids, and that parents should tell them not to run outside, not to stay unsupervised and that when they are not at Sunday school they should stay with their parents. Sometimes there is no Sunday school because we lack instructors, thus we encourage parents to step in and volunteer.

- Curriculum for Sunday school: We are working at putting a curriculum for children and are thinking to have bilingual help because some kids don't speak English.

- Dogs: On Sunday we come here to worship. We need to be focused on prayer, on singing praises, on the word, and dogs in the sanctuary during service are too distracting. If people want to bring their dogs, the dogs should stay on the terrace.

9. Closing remarks.

Pastor's sabbatical is a time of rest. He will be here, but he is not here for teaching or answering questions. If some people have a question, a concern, they can talk to one of the other leaders that were just elected. Or they can do it through the website. Let's give James a real break. Announcements will be made to inform people who are not here today.

During pastor's leave, we will have replacements. We have a list of speakers coming during this time and every Sunday will be covered for the three churches.

The agenda having been exhausted, the meeting closed at 1:10 p.m.

The president
J. Arnold

The secretary
C. Melchio