

Freedom Christian Church AGM for the year ended 31.03.2025

The meeting opened at 12.10pm with a welcome and prayer from Pastor Ray.

This year is a voting year for the Board of Trustees. There are 2 places on the Board to be filled and there were 3 nominations received. Our voting strength this year is 26 members over 18 and therefore eligible to vote. The outcome of the vote was Adrian Solomon 25 votes and Samiya Joy 23 votes.

It was moved and seconded that the voting papers be destroyed.

John Twizell /Grant Whitelaw

The Minutes of the previous meeting have been available on the website for the last 2 weeks and had been handed out along with the agenda.

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Ministry Reports

1 Finance – Trish

Trish thanked the church members for their giving and pointed out that all the church finances come from them and it our privilege to spend it wisely. Points to note were:

1. Our income for the year exceeded the 2024 income by almost \$50,000.
2. Significant expenses included Church Refreshments, Missions – Congo, mortgage interest, and regional expenses.
3. Church refreshments were slightly down on the 2024 figure.
4. Missions- Congo was significantly higher than promised due to expenses being incurred getting the container on its way to the Congo.
5. Regional Expenses was due to Pastor Carolien's appointment as Regional Overseer but Trish explained that most of the expenses were raised by all the AG Churches in the Waikato and the expenses did not fall only on Freedom.
6. Mortgage Interest was an expected expense and Trish noted that this was tracking down as expected and that we have about 4 years to go to pay this off.
7. The Salaries figure for the year was lower than in previous years because Pastor Ray had reduced his working hours. It was also acknowledged the amount of work down by our Pastors and that it was unlikely that Pastor Ray was doing any less time on church work than in previous years. A very big thank you was expressed on behalf of all the church members.
8. The year ended on a small profit and Trish advised that Freedom Christian Church is solvent and not in any financial difficulties.

It was moved and seconded that this report be accepted.

2 Worship Report

The worship team now has 30 members, all dedicated volunteers. Four new songs have been introduced, with three more expected before next year. New gear includes improved monitors and upgraded Shure 58 Beta microphones for better clarity and reduced noise. New monitors have significantly improved on-stage audio clarity. A lighthearted metric for

worship participation was presented, using hand-raising as a scoring system: one hand = 0.5 point, both hands = 1 point. Social events such as pub lunches and bowling have strengthened team fellowship, with plans for more food-centered gatherings and a backup singers workshop early next year.

Over the past year, the most played songs were: House of the Lord: 15 times; Goodness of God: 13 times; I Speak Jesus and Bless God: both 12 times (now tied for second after recent use)

A humorous but intentional chart tracked congregational engagement based on hand-raising:

One hand up = 0.5 point; Both hands up = 1 point. Spikes in the data often followed direct prompts from worship leaders. A notable dip occurred during a hymn, suggesting lower engagement. The worship team will continue to introduce new songs and explore ways to encourage authentic worship engagement.

3 Youth Report

This year the new youth group “Reigning Champs” led by Sam with backup from Eleanora, Johan and Bua. Every term a plan is made which includes fun things, God things and interactions and spiritual things. There was a conference “Fearless North” and we look forward to the Hotfish Camp every year. During the year Bua and Magele took over the Risen Group which is the older high school group. There are 5 young people that come regularly. We encourage them to get involved in ministry especially with the youngest and newest group which they have genuinely loved doing. With the older Youth we are looking at a missions trip at the end of November to the Solomon Islands, and specifically to Freedom Solomons. Help will be provided by John Zama and the plan is for them to help with building the teachers’ houses. There will be a bake sale in the coming weeks to help with fundraising for this trip.

The next group is the Reflect Youth Ministry and this has been led by Torika and conner and they have had steady growth and spiritual maturity of the young people. Numbers have gradually increased with many of them inviting friends from school. One highlight of this group was watching them grow from being shy about praying to confidently leading prayer times and serving. A worship seminar was hosted with Elenora. This was well attended and it encouraged the youth to grow in worship and begin learning musical instruments. Many youth are now involved in church ministry, serving in kids church, media, lyrics, communion, and prayer and music ministry.

The next group is the “Reigning Champs”. They had a great start to the year with strong momentum and numbers. We are working on improving communication specifically with the parents giving them advance notice about youth nights and events.

Overall, things are going well. Bua expressed thanks to those members who have committed to running the Youth Groups. She asked the congregation to pray for the youth and the leaders and thanked everyone again for their hard work and commitment.

4 Kids Church and Under 5 Alive

The ministry has experienced both loss and renewal, with former team members replaced by faithful new helpers, including Andrea, Lina, Joanna, and Rachel. The next generation is stepping into leadership with enthusiasm, responsibility, and a heart for God's kingdom. The leaders express deep joy in seeing children grow in their understanding of God's love.. Teaching is simplified and repeated for the under-five children to reinforce learning. There has been an increase in attendance, especially from Congolese families, prompting the use of more physical actions and shorter lessons due to language barriers. Methods include storytelling, crafts, quizzes, Bible reading, and mutual prayer. The goal is not just knowledge, but a personal encounter with God. The curriculum focused on the Old Testament and Jesus' bloodline, progressing to loving God and living in His kingdom. The content is age-appropriate yet spiritually deep. A new initiative will identify children's spiritual gifts (APST—Apostle, Prophet, Shepherd, Teacher) through lesson-based questions.

Volunteers have observed joy and growth in the children's understanding of God's love. Multicultural unity is celebrated, with children from diverse backgrounds, including many from the Congo who do not speak English, learning effectively through body language and participation. Activities like the church birthday song are especially well-received.

Two volunteer teams operate on a month-on, month-off schedule, which has functioned well. The team has grown, and there is gratitude for new helpers stepping in. The first half of the year covered the Old Testament with a focus on Jesus' lineage; recent lessons explored loving God fully, and current teachings emphasize being part of His kingdom.

Inspired by Sarah Coop's women's group session, the team plans to implement an APST framework to identify spiritual gifts in children through the questions they ask during lessons. Examples include:

Shepherds: Show care and compassion.

Prophets: Drawn to joyful, hope-filled stories.

Apostles: Natural leaders who solve problems.

Evangelists: Enthusiastically share experiences (e.g., Zoe).

Teachers: Deepen understanding of complex concepts.

This approach aims to nurture each child's unique gifting for future service.

Our future steps will be implementation of the APST spiritual gift identification through lesson-time questions. Continue adapting lessons for non-English speakers using action and visual learning. Support and train new volunteers. Develop deeper discipleship paths based on identified spiritual gifts.

5 Child Protection Office (CPO) Report

The church participates in the Safer Churches program to ensure child and youth safety. Katie serves as the independent Child Protection Officer to prevent spiritual manipulation and ensure compliance. All children's leaders are police-checked and trained annually on safety policies. Two external safeguarding concerns were reported and managed appropriately. Regular prayer meetings continue with strong member participation and reported testimonies of breakthroughs.

The church is required to participate in the Safer Churches program, which enforces annual safety practices for protecting children and youth. Pastor Ray emphasized that Katie is the designated Child Protection Officer, serving as an independent point of contact to report inappropriate behaviour—especially spiritually harmful conduct—without fear of manipulation or discomfort in approaching leadership.

Katie's responsibilities include ensuring all children's and youth leaders are police-checked and complete Safer Churches training during regular leadership meetings. Safety practices include:

- Maintaining two adults present during children's activities
- Preventing children from being alone with a single adult or another child
- Locking children's rooms when not in use to eliminate hidden spaces

State of the Nation

After advising the church that he had left his notes at home, Pastor Ray began his "State of the Nation" (Church) address. He expressed it as a privilege to pastor this church. He then went on to explain that the year had been a strange one for him and Pastor Carolien. They had been away for over 20 Sundays during the year. He was hopeful that the coming year will be quieter.

Our congregation is around 250 people and roughly 100 of these have an identifiable ministry within the Church. We are a church of volunteers which includes pastors, youth leaders, kids church and under 5 leaders, worship team, elders, board, door team (which is one of the more significant jobs within the church and one that needs extra people). Why did Pastor Ray say that? Because many people decide whether or not they're going to stay within the first four minutes of entering the church! It's about first impressions and the environment and the first people a newcomer sees is the person or people on the door. So it's a really important job.

And then there is the cleaning team. We have some that clean every week and some that clean month on month off. We have an AV team who also need volunteers to help with streaming and putting up the lyrics of songs. There is a flowers team who make those gorgeous arrangements every week. We have a prayer team who pray (mostly in the background) week in and week out. I'm sure there are people that have been missed and to those he expressed his apologies. A huge "thank you" was conveyed to everyone involved.

For the year ahead, the first thing is that Pastors Ray and Carolien have nothing planned that is going to take them away. But he knows that God has plans and at this point in Pastor Ray's life they are here until they retire and after that, so for the foreseeable future.

Pastor Ray spoke of the Tongan AG Pastor's conference and that they had done 2 Tongan conferences this year. The second was a dozen churches based out of the large AG church in Apia and four keynote speakers. The main speaker was a well-known woman from Australia from Hillsong. Pastors Ray and Carolien were "picked on" by her for the first 10 minutes of her sermon.

He expressed desire to see the church grow not just numerically but spiritually, we need to grow and increase our leadership, we need to train new leaders. These things we will be working on in the weeks to come. The health of the church is also important and we will do that together. He expressed his thanks to the congregation for their support. He expressed thanks again to everyone involved in a team. He expressed thanks to Maureen and Andrea for their service on the Board. He expressed thanks to Maureen for the 21 years she has supported the church in many ways in singing,

leading kids church, and most of all looking after Carolien and himself. He expressed appreciation and thanks on behalf of the board and the church as a whole for her service.

The meeting closed at 1.20pm with prayer from Pastor Ray who also gave thanks for the food before we had pizza lunch together as a fellowship.