



CHURCH SEATING STEERING GROUP REPORT

This report follows on from the report taken to the Church Council Meeting on 17 July 2018 and the Meeting of the Congregation on 29 July 2018 which was presented by Jenny Swanbury. It contains a summary of the work done by the steering group since that date and brings the recommendations of the group.

The group has met twice more.

- We consulted with several congregations that have made the change from pews to chairs. We noted that all were positive in favour of chairs and we noted the steps that were taken, how chairs were received, and the things they would do differently in hindsight.
- We investigated thoroughly the types of chairs currently available and decided on our preferred option – Alloyfold Church Chairs which come with and without arms, are stackable and linkable and have the option of seat pockets and book racks.
These are the ones we borrowed from Walkerville Uniting Church. There is a choice of fabrics and colours. Alloyfold is wholly owned by Pathway Trust, a registered charitable trust that exists to assist low skilled and disadvantaged individuals into long term positive life changes.
- We acquired rough floor plans with three different configurations of chairs for the main body of the church (where the pews are currently) and estimated the number of chairs needed.
 - 1) Present configuration with 2 aisles – 84 chairs
 - 2) Central aisle with access aisles along each wall – 78 chairs
 - 3) Central aisle with chairs to the walls – 105 chairs.

In addition, we calculated another 32 chairs to be available for a variety of configurations at the front of the church including the transepts.

- We discussed the advantages of chairs. Chairs would allow for a variety of uses. Currently worship is restricted by pews to passive, theatre, entertainment style; i.e. generally people remain where they are seated, and everything happens at the front. Chairs allow for flexibility; i.e. in the round, experiential, movement, creative, participatory, café, table, small group discussions, active, spatial, Sp@ce, drama, dance etc.
- We noted that at present some flexibility with the pews is possible for particular seasons of the church calendar, (Lent/Easter, Advent/Christmas) and other special occasions. This can be achieved by removing one or two of the central pews, and using a variety of configurations at the front of the church with the blocks and chairs, etc. We noted that the pink chairs are not particularly suitable as they do not stack well and are heavy. There are 60 pink chairs plus 2 pink chairs with arms. Some are currently stored in the Crying Room. We could use some of the green chairs from the hall. There are brown moulded stacking chairs in the KUCA rooms, (at least 50).
- We discussed extensively the present condition of the church.
Removing the pews would expose the skirting boards and salt damp.
The side pews are secured by being inserted into the dados. New dados would be needed or the wall be repaired. There is salt damp in other areas also. The walls would need to be repaired and repainted.
Dust is falling from the ceiling and walls which would not be good for new upholstered chairs. We understand that some windows need attention.
Air conditioning would improve comfort.
The blocks are heavy. Lighter blocks are preferable.
We do not know the condition of the roof.
We do not know how much longer the carpet will last.
- Other considerations include our current financial situation and the forward mission plan of the congregation.

Recommendations to Church Council

1. Any decision regarding purchasing chairs be put on hold until there is clarification of the Congregation's financial situation and property issues are addressed.
2. If in the future, a decision is made to purchase chairs, we recommend Alloyfold Church Chairs as our preferred chair.

Christine Garner
18 October 2018