

Constitution

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a Constitution is to set out the beliefs and principles of practice and governance that enables Windsor Park Baptist Church to function as best as it's able. Every organisation needs to have certain operational guidelines and rules, and these are ours.

Our vision is to build stronger communities by putting our faith into action (Kia mahitahi tatou mo te koroiatanga o te Atua – better together for the glory of God). We achieve this by doing life and faith together, acknowledging that no perfect people are allowed. This vision enables Windsor Park to be a diverse and respected community of faith that seeks to proactively and innovatively grow the Kingdom of God both locally and in other places where God leads us to serve.

Our vision cannot easily be expressed in the format of a Constitution; nevertheless the statement of aims and purposes given in Section 2 gives some expression to this.

1. OUR NAME AND BELIEFS

1.1 We will be called the Windsor Park Baptist Church.

1.2 We are a community of people who believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit - one God; who are repentant of sin and have been saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ through His atoning death and resurrection; who publicly confess their faith and who are committed to the church's aims and purposes.

1.3 We believe in:

1.3.1 The true humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.3.2 The person of the Holy Spirit as the one who sets apart, empowers, and imparts spiritual gifts to the church.

1.3.3 The inspiration of the bible and its authority in all matters of faith and practice.

1.3.4 Salvation and membership in the Christian church by faith in Christ alone.

1.3.5 The immersion of believers as the scriptural form of baptism.

1.4 The Ordinances of our church are:

1.4.1 Believers' baptism by immersion.

1.4.5 Communion (the Lord's supper) which is held at least monthly and open to all believers.

2. AIMS AND PURPOSES.

Our aims and purposes are within New Zealand:

2.1 To meet with each other regularly for worship, prayer, teaching and fellowship.

2.2 To express the love of God to the community through the ministries of the Word and practical care.

2.3 To make disciples of Jesus Christ.

2.4 To engage in the task of mission principally within New Zealand but also overseas. (see Matthew 28 vv 19-20).



3. STRUCTURE.

- 3.1 Our church will be an autonomous body governed through its members, working closely with other Baptist Churches of New Zealand and the wider body of Christ.
- 3.2 The leadership of our church consists of the Pastor or Pastors, Elders, Deacons or other persons as may from time to time be determined by the Church membership. The leadership will be responsible to the Church membership for the oversight and direction of the Church.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Eligibility

- 4.1.1 Members will be those who have publicly confessed their faith in Jesus Christ in believers' baptism and are committed to the life and work of our church.
- 4.1.2 Subject to any requirements as determined by the Church membership, every person who is baptised through the ministry of Windsor Park Baptist Church, or through the ministry of another Christian church/organisation, will be eligible to be a member of the Church.
- 4.1.3 Applications for baptism and membership may be made to the pastoral staff or one of the Elders, who are responsible to the membership for acceptance or otherwise.
- 4.1.4 A believer, who desires to be baptised, but is prevented by physical disability or other special reason acceptable to the Elders may apply for membership on the same basis as baptised believers.
- 4.1.5 A believer who desires to be a member but has not been baptised by immersion but by some other means, may be accepted for membership at the Elders' discretion.

4.2 Membership Roll

- 4.2.1 A membership roll will be kept and reviewed annually. Any member who ceases or fails to attend worship services for a period of 12 months shall, if possible, be visited by a Pastor or Elder to determine the circumstances with a view to



encouraging full participation in the life of the Church. If full participation is not desired by the person or they cannot be located, then the Elders may remove the name of that person from the membership roll, and if possible inform the person of that action.

4.2.2 A member may be suspended or expelled in accordance with the procedure set out in clause 7.

5. LEADERSHIP

All leaders must be baptised believers and members of the Church.

5.1 Pastors

5.1.1 Pastoral responsibility

The senior pastor is entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the church in co-operation with the other pastors and other members of the leadership. The senior pastor will be an ex-officio member of all organisations of the church.

5.1.2 Senior Pastoral vacancy

(a) When a vacancy occurs in the senior pastorate, the Elders will appoint a search committee. The search committee will, as far as practicable, be representative of the Church community and will report to the Elders. The search committee may consult with the Baptist Union. The search committee will bring one nomination to the church at a meeting called for that purpose. Ten days written notice will be given of the meeting to the members. No call to the pastorate may be made except on the votes of 85% or more of the members present at the meeting. Voting will be by secret ballot.

(b) The call will include the terms and conditions offered and include arrangements for the termination of the ministry.

(c) Unless the parties expressly agree in writing to the contrary the relationship between the membership and the pastor will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.



5.1.3 Other Pastoral Staff

- (a) Other pastoral staff will operate under the direction of the senior pastor. Nominations for pastoral staff positions may be submitted to the Elders and/or a search committee appointed by the Elders. The issuing of a call to pastoral staff will be made by the Elders, on the proviso that funding for such staff positions has been approved within the Church's budget or by resolution of a special Church meeting.
- (b) The call will include the terms and conditions offered and arrangements for the termination of the ministry.
- (c) Unless the parties expressly agree in writing to the contrary, the relationship between the membership and pastoral staff will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.

5.1.4 Conclusion of a Pastor's Ministry

- (a) The church membership or the pastor must give three months' notice before a pastor's ministry is terminated, unless another period is agreed between the parties.
- (b) The church membership may only terminate a pastor's ministry on a vote of at least 75% of the members present at a specially convened meeting.
- (c) While it is acknowledged that the Pastor is not an employee, and that no legal relationship exists between the Church and the pastor, the church membership must ensure that the pastor is treated with fairness and dignity upon the conclusion of the pastorate. Any dispute or difference arising out of the conclusion of a pastorate must be referred to an independent party for resolution by way of mediation or such other alternative dispute resolution process that is agreed as being appropriate. In the event it is not possible to reach agreement as to the identity of the independent party, the Senior Executive for the time being of the Baptist Union shall appoint such independent person.

5.2 Elders

5.2.1 Character

Elders must exhibit the qualities of an elder, as found in 1 Tim.3 vv 1-7.



5.2.2 Responsibilities

The number of Elders will be determined from time to time by the Church membership, and pending such determination shall be eight. The Elders are responsible for the oversight of the church, together with the pastor or pastors.

5.2.3 Appointment and Term

Nominations will be brought by the leadership to a church meeting, after considering any proposals for nomination brought by the members. A ballot vote of not less than 65% of the members present at the meeting will be required. Elders will be appointed for a term of two years and will be eligible for re-election. After serving a maximum of three consecutive terms, an Elder must stand down for at least one year before re-election.

5.2.4 Meetings

Elders will meet at least monthly with the senior pastor.

5.3 Deacons

5.3.1 Character

Deacons must exhibit the qualities of a deacon as found in 1.Tim.3 vv8-12.

5.3.2 Responsibilities

The number of Deacons will be determined from time to time by the Church membership, and pending such determination will be seven. They Deacons will have responsibility for administration, finance, property and other areas as the leadership and/or the church determine from time to time

5.3.3 Appointment and Term

Nominations of Deacons must be signed by two church members and the nominee and must be presented to the church secretary two weeks before the election. . A ballot vote of not less than 65% of the members present at the meeting will be required. Deacons will be appointed for a term of one year and will be eligible for re-election.

5.3.4 Church Secretary

A Church Secretary will be appointed by the church membership as a Deacon in the manner described in clause 5.3.3 and will be responsible for overseeing the recording of minutes of all business meetings, and liaising with the Pastoral Staff regarding maintaining church records, the membership roll, attending to correspondence, preparation of the annual report and co-ordination of church administration. The Church Secretary will be an ex-officio member of the Elders.



5.3.5 Church Treasurer

A Church Treasurer will be appointed by the church membership as a Deacon in the manner described in clause 5.3.3 and will be responsible for financial tasks as defined by the Deacons from time to time. The Treasurer will also be responsible for providing audited accounts to the annual church meeting, and to ensure adequate insurance policies are held and maintained.

5.4 Other Church appointments

All other Church appointments (eg, home cell group leaders, pastoral visitors, musical director, and ancillary staff) will be made by the leadership.

6. CHURCH MEETINGS

6.1 Frequency.

The church members will hold an annual meeting at which the Church Secretary and Treasurer, in cooperation with the senior pastor, will present a report (including accounts prepared as at the end of the Church's most recently completed accounting period and the proposed budget for the current accounting period). Election of Elders and/or Deacons will be made at the annual meeting, but vacancies may be filled at any church meeting, provided that two weeks notice of the intention to appoint such position is advised to church members.

6.2 Purpose.

The purpose of each meeting is to discover and confirm the mind of the Lord on matters affecting the life and work of the church and its mission.

6.3 Quorum.

At least 20% of the church membership is required at any members' meeting where decisions are to be made.

6.4 Special Meetings.

The Secretary, on receipt of a request signed by at least 10% of the resident membership, must call a special meeting of the church within 21 days of the request being received. Two weeks' notice of the special meeting must be given.

6.5 Chairperson.

A person nominated by the Elders will chair all members' meetings.



6.6 Attendance.

All persons associated with the Church may attend Church meetings, but only Church members may vote on any resolution. Except as otherwise required by this Constitution voting will be by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested by not less than 10% of the members present at the meeting.

6.7 Audited Accounts.

Audited accounts for the Church's most recently completed accounting period will be prepared and presented at either a Church Members Meeting, or published for uplifting by Church Members, no later than six months following the closure of the previous financial year

7. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

7.1 In the case of a difference between members,

our Lord's rule as set out in Matthew 18:15-17 must be followed. The church will have the power to admonish, suspend or expel any member for conduct, which, in the view of the Elders (following proper investigation) is considered to be prejudicial to the name and function of the Church. At the discretion of the Elders, any report to the members following such an investigation need only contain their conclusions and recommendations.

7.2 Should a dispute in the church arise causing a serious division,

and remain unresolved, the church, if requested by 25% of the membership, must apply for advice and help to the Senior Executive of the Baptist Union or his/her nominee.

7.3 All members of the Church must regard all matters affecting the honour and good name of the Church as strictly private and confidential.

8. DECLARATION OF TRUST

All land will be vested in the Baptist Union to be held for the Church in accordance with the trusts declared in the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923.

9. NO PRIVATE PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL

- 9.1 No decision of the church or its leadership will be made which would allow a member or members to receive any private pecuniary profit provided that:
- 9.1.1 A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred by that member in connection with the affairs of the church;
 - 9.1.2 The church may pay reasonable and proper remuneration to any officer or employee of the church in return for services actually rendered to the church;
 - 9.1.3 Any member of the church may be paid for all usual professional business or trade charges for services rendered, time expended and all acts done by that member or by any firm or entity of which that member is a partner, employee or associate, in connection with the affairs of the church;
 - 9.1.4 Any member may retain any remuneration properly payable to the member by any company or undertaking with which the member may in any way be concerned or involved for which that member has acted in any capacity whatever notwithstanding that member's connection with that company or undertaking is in any way attributable to that member's connection with the church.
 - 9.1.5 Nothing will prevent the church from making payments to any individual (whether a member of the church or not) in fulfilling any of the purposes expressed in clause 2 hereof.
- 9.2 Members or leaders of the church, in determining all reimbursements, remuneration and charges payable in the terms of this clause, must ensure that the restrictions imposed by the following clause are strictly observed.
- 9.3 Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in this constitution, no member of the church or any person associated with that member may participate in or materially influence any decision made by the church in respect to the payment to or on behalf of that member or associated person, of any income benefit or advantage whatsoever.

10. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

This Constitution may be amended only in the following manner:

- 10.1** A special meeting of members must be called on not less than 10 days prior written notice.
- 10.2** The written notice convening the meeting must contain details of the proposed amendment but may also set out details of other issues that are to be considered at the meeting.
- 10.3** Notice of the proposed amendment to the Constitution must be given to persons attending regular services on two consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.
- 10.4** A majority of 75% of the members present at the meeting will be required to pass the resolution.
- 10.5** If a meeting is called to consider an amendment affecting the provisions in:
- Clauses 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 (Church beliefs and ordinances)
 - Clause 2 (aims and purposes)
 - Clause 3 (structure)
 - Clause 8 (declaration of trust)
 - Clause 9 (no private pecuniary profit)
 - Clause 10 (amendments to Constitution)
 - Clause 11 (winding up provisions)
- then the minimum quorum required at the meeting will be 40% of the membership.
- 10.6** If a meeting is called to consider an amendment to any provision other than those provisions set out in clause 10.5 then the minimum quorum required at the meeting will be 25% of the membership
- 10.7** As the purposes of the church are exclusively charitable in nature, no change to this constitution shall be made, in particular to clauses 9 and 11, which negate the charitable nature of the church.

11. WINDING UP PROVISIONS

- 11.1 Subject to clauses 17, 18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act, if the members resolve at a properly constituted meeting of the church adopted by a majority of at least 65% of the members present at such church meeting that the church should be wound up then the net proceeds arising from such winding up must be applied with the prior approval of the church members and the prior approval of the Baptist Union of New Zealand to such charitable purposes within New Zealand as the members may determine or in default of such determination as may be determined by a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand on application by the members, and such proceeds must not be paid or distributed amongst the members of the church.



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