

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 is able. Every organisation needs to have certain operational guidelines and rules, and these are ours.

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 inspiration of the Bible and its authority in all matters of faith and practice.
 - 1.3.2 The true humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1.3.3 The atonement made on the cross by our Lord for the sin of the world.
 - 1.3.4 The person of the Holy Spirit as the one who sets apart, empowers, and imparts spiritual gifts to the church.
 - 1.3.5 Salvation and membership in the Christian church by faith in Christ alone.
 - 1.3.6 The immersion of believers as the Scriptural form of baptism.
 - 1.3.7 Communion (the Lord's supper) which is held at least monthly and is open to all believers.

2. AIMS AND PURPOSES

Our aims and purposes are:

- 2.1 To meet with each other regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, encouragement and support for the sake of God's glory.
- 2.2 To express the love of God to one another and the community through intentional evangelism, the ministries of the Word and practical care.
- 2.3 To make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- 2.4 To engage in the mission of God principally within Aotearoa New Zealand and also throughout the world (Matthew 28:19-20).

3. STRUCTURE

- 3.1 With Jesus Christ as the head of this Church, the Church is governed by its members in accordance with this Constitution, working closely with regional and national Baptist Union of NZ staff (“the Baptist Union” or “BUNZ”), and the wider body of Christ.
- 3.2 The leadership of our church consists of the Senior/Sole Pastor, Elders, and any 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, show evidence of following Christ in newness of life, and are committed to the life and work of our church as reflected in the Members’ Pledge.
- 4.1.2 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.
- 4.1.3 A believer, who desires to be baptised, but is prevented by physical disability or other special reason acceptable to the pastoral staff or Elders may apply for membership on the same basis as baptised believers.
- 4.1.4 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 List

- 4.2.1 A membership list will be kept and reviewed annually. If full participation is not desired by the person or they cannot be located, then the pastoral staff or Elders may remove the name of that person from the membership list, 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 Pastors and Elders 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 cooperation with the other pastors and Elders. 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 of NZ. The search committee will bring one nomination to the church at a meeting called for that purpose. A minimum of 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.

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.

5.1.4 Conclusion of a Senior/Sole 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) 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 can 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 National Leader of the Baptist Union of NZ or their nominee shall appoint an independent person.

5.2 Elders

5.2.1 Character

Elders must exhibit the qualities of an Elder as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

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 a maximum of twelve. The Elders will be responsible to the Church membership for the oversight and direction of the Church.

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 Other Church appointments

A Church Treasurer will be appointed by the Elders and will be responsible for financial tasks as defined by the leadership. All other church appointments (e.g. Life Group leaders, pastoral visitors, and ancillary staff) will be made by the leadership.

6. CHURCH MEETINGS

6.1 Frequency

The church members will hold at least an Annual General Meeting (annual meeting) at which a report will be presented for approval.

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. Election of Elders 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 a position is advised to church members.

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 Elders, 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 members no later than six months following the closure of the previous financial year.



7. CHURCH DISPUTES AND 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 Elders must apply for advice and help to the Senior Executive of the Baptist Union of NZ or their nominee. The National Leader of the Baptist Union of NZ or their nominee may call a special church meeting by making announcements at least two weeks before the meeting. The National Leader or their nominee will chair the meeting.
- 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.
- 7.4 **Serious Misconduct Process**
The Church recognises its responsibilities and obligations to the Baptist Union of New Zealand with respect to the Union's role in managing a Serious Misconduct Process, or any subsequent procedure as the Union may adopt in respect of such matters from time to time, for such person(s) who occupy a role as a Pastor of the Church and who are named on the Official List maintained by the Baptist Union. In order to fulfil its obligations to the Baptist Union in this regard the Church will report to and comply with all such processes and procedures as are put in place by the Baptist Union under such Serious Misconduct Process from time to time.

8. DECLARATION OF TRUST

Any land or any property including church buildings and manses shall be vested in the Baptist Union as Trustee, which shall hold them for and on behalf of the Church. The Church and the Baptist Union shall deal with the property 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

- 10.1 Any recommended alteration to the Constitution shall be communicated electronically and announced at least two Sundays before a Church Members' Meeting. No alterations or additions shall be made to the Constitution unless adopted by a majority of at least 67% of the members present at a Members' Meeting.
- 10.2 Unless the Church agrees to forgo its charitable status and income tax exemption, no alteration shall be made to this Constitution which would in any way detract from the exclusively charitable nature of the Church and in particular shall not alter the provisions of clauses 9 and 10 hereof.

11. WINDING UP PROVISIONS

- 11.1 Subject to clauses 17, 18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923, if the members resolve at a properly constituted meeting of the Church adopted by a majority of at least 67% of the members present at such a Church meeting that the Church should be wound up then the net proceeds arising from such winding up shall be applied in accordance with the provisions of the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923, with the prior approval of the Baptist Union of New Zealand, to such religious charitable purposes within Aotearoa 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 shall not be paid or distributed amongst the members of the Church.



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