

## **ARTICLE 1. NAME, LOCATION, AND AFFILIATION**

The name and designation of this church shall be Christ Baptist Church. For convenience sake it will be referred to hereafter as the "church". The church is located at 375 Marshall Street, Polokwane 0699.

The church, though independent, autonomous and free from any control of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa or any church professing the same principles, shall be in voluntarily membership with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. It shall therefore support the ministries of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa through its finances and attendance at meetings whenever possible.

The church shall manage its own affairs without reference to any outside authority except as is hereinafter provided. It shall exist as a corporate body distinct from its members and office bearers and shall remain in existence notwithstanding changes in the composition of its membership or office bearers.

The church shall not withdraw its membership from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa unless consensus is reached at a Special Church Meeting called for this purpose. All members must be given adequate opportunity to participate in this process. Discussions with the Baptist Union of South Africa must form part of this process. If consensus cannot be reached and there is a strong feeling towards withdrawal from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, the chairman will put such a proposal to the vote and 66% of the vote in favour will resolve the matter.

## **ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church is as stated in the New Testament scriptures. The Church exists as a Biblical community for God's glory and therefore exalts His supremacy in all things (1). This is done through the equipping of the saints for their work of service, to the building up of its members to attain unity of faith and true knowledge of Christ to spiritual maturity (2). And being light in a darkened world by evangelising all nations (3). The ultimate purpose will be to present all people complete in Christ.

### References

(1) Colossians 1:15-19, (2) Ephesians 4:11-16, (3) Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:7-8,

## **ARTICLE 3. STATEMENT OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE**

### **ARTICLE 3, SECTION 1. STATEMENT OF FAITH GUARDING THE CONSTITUTION**

Because we believe that the Holy Bible is the Inspired, Infallible, and Inerrant Word of God, it alone and not this constitution is and will be the basis and authority of answering any and all questions regarding the purpose, structure, and function of the Church. The purpose of this constitution is to primarily satisfy the requirements of the law which we respect, and to serve as a legal document to which the Church can refer to when agreement on issues cannot be reached otherwise, or legal requirements of the law need to be followed. The following five essential and non-negotiable statements of faith are the foundation and framework on which this constitution is based.

#### **3.1.1 We Believe In A High View of God**

God is absolutely sovereign in all things. The church is established and exists for His glory

alone. God is directing and working all things after the counsel of His own will (1).

### **3.1.2 We Believe In A High View of Scripture.**

Because the Bible is the Inspired, Infallible, and Inerrant Word of God in the original language passed down to us without change, it is the absolute and final authority on **all** matters of faith and conduct (2).

### **3.1.3 We Believe In the Preaching of Sound Doctrine.**

Maintaining a high view of God and a high view of scripture necessitates the preaching, teaching, and practicing of sound doctrine (3). Doctrine always precedes duty.

### **3.1.4 We Believe In Personal Holiness.**

Though we are in the world, we are not of the world. We are accountable to God and to each other for what we do and how we live, for we have been bought and are not our own (4). We belong to Christ.

### **3.1.5 We Believe In Spiritual Authority.**

God himself has established order in every area of our lives, and the church is no exception. God in scripture has clearly given us the structure of authority for the Church. Christ is the head of the church and He mediates His rule through the shepherding of godly elders (pastors) (5). These elders (pastors), having a high view of God and scripture, being devoted to the preaching, teaching and practicing of sound doctrine, and being examples of personal holiness before the congregation, are responsible to lead the church. The Bible teaches that the congregation is spiritually accountable to the elders (pastors) as overseers, and that the elders (pastors) are accountable to God. Decision-making however while normally vested in the elders (pastors), who shepherd the church (6), are subject to the final authority of the congregation as a whole of which they are a part.

#### References

(1) Psalm 22:28; Psalm 33:6-9; Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:34-35; Isaiah 40:17-18; Romans 9:13-29; Revelation 4:11, (2) 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21, (3) 2 Timothy 4:1-5, (4) Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:18; Ephesians 5:3-12, (5) Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 5:1-4, (6) Acts 15:6-21 Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17

## **ARTICLE 3, SECTION 2. DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS**

### **3.2.1 God**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

#### References

Genesis 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; Ephesians 4:5,6

### **3.2.2 God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

#### References

Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

### **3.2.3 God the Son**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, who is true God and true man. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people as our high priest and advocate, and His personal visible return to earth.

#### References

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

### **3.2.4 God the Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

#### References

John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

### **3.2.5 The Scriptures**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

#### References

II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

### **3.2.6 Regeneration**

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Saviour are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. From beginning to end, the total work of regeneration is by grace alone.

#### References

Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 20:10,14,15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

### **3.2.7 The Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

#### References

Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

### **3.2.8 Christian conduct**

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. True believers are called to a life of holiness, with a personal devotion to the Lord Jesus and service for Him.

#### References

I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Col. 1:9-10

### **3.2.9 The ordinances**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death and is available to all believers. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ

#### References

Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26

### **3.2.10 Religious liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

#### References

I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9,12

### **3.2.11 Church cooperation**

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by either formal or informal cooperation with other like-minded bodies according to article III, section 1. Cooperation in a denomination is voluntary and cannot be coerced.

#### References

Acts 15:36,41; 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelations 1:4,10,11.

### **3.2.12 The return of Christ**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body of both the just and the unjust, the final judgment, the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked.

#### References

Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15

### **3.2.13 Family and Marriage**

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one natural man and one natural woman in covenant commitment

for a lifetime.

### References

*Genesis 2:23-25; Ephesians 5:22-33, Rom 1:26-27*

## ARTICLE 3, SECTION 3. STATEMENT OF BAPTIST PRINCIPLES ACCEPTED IN RELATION TO MEMBERSHIP WITH THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

### **3.3.1 The direct Lordship of Christ**

**The DIRECT LORDSHIP OF CHRIST** over every believer and over the local church. By this we understand that Christ exercises His authority over the believer and the local Church directly, without delegating it to another.

### **3.3.2 The Church**

**The CHURCH** as the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The local church, being a manifestation of the universal church, is a community of believers in a particular place where the Word of God is preached and observed. It is fully autonomous and remains so notwithstanding responsibilities it may accept by voluntary association.

### **3.3.3 Believers Baptism**

**BELIEVER'S BAPTISM** as an act of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and a sign of personal repentance, faith and regeneration; it consists of the immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### **3.3.4 Congregational Principle**

**The CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLE**, namely that each member has the privilege and responsibility to use his/her gifts and abilities to participate fully in the life of the Church. We recognise that God gifts His Church with Overseers (who are called Pastors or Elders) whose primary function is to lead in a spirit of servanthood, to equip and provide spiritual oversight, and Deacons whose primary function is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Church. This principle further recognizes that each member should participate in the appointment of the church's leaders, and that the constituted church meeting, subject to the direct Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture, is the highest court of authority for the local Church.

### **3.3.5 Priesthood of Believers**

**The PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS**, by which we understand that each Christian has direct access to God through Christ our High Priest and shares with Him in His work of reconciliation. This involves intercession, worship, faithful service and bearing witness to Jesus Christ, even to the end of the earth.

### **3.3.6 Religious Liberty**

The principle of **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**, namely that no individual should be coerced either by State or by any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith. The right of private conscience is to be respected. For each believer this means the right to interpret the Scriptures responsibly and to act in the light of his conscience.

### **3.3.7 Separation of Church and State**

The principle of **SEPERATION OF CHURCH AND STATE** in that, in the providence of God, the two differ

in their respective natures and functions. The church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or practice, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community, and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel and for demonstrating and making known God's will and care for all mankind."

## **ARTICLE 4. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 1. THE CHURCH DEFINED**

The word church (ekklesia) means, "called out ones" and can refer to the entire spiritual body of Christ or a local congregation of that body. In the New Testament it most often refers to an established local congregation of believers.

Scripture teaches that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body called the Church, the family of God, of which Jesus Christ is the head (1). The Church is made up of individual local congregations of believers that assemble together for the cause of fellowship and growing in Christ. God has given each local congregation all that it needs to individually and corporately mature and carry out the commands and commissions of our Lord (2). The church exists for the spiritual purpose set forth in Article II of this constitution and by-laws.

#### References

(1) Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22, (2) Acts 2:47; Acts 11:22; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 4:15

### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 2. DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Members of this church shall be comprised of those who have:

- a) Been accepted as members prior to the adoption of this constitution.
- b) Made a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
- c) Been baptised as believers. Acceptance into membership prior to Believers Baptism will be at the discretion of the elders and every case will be dealt with according to its merits. No person may be accepted into membership who does not agree that Believers Baptism is the only biblical mode of Baptism.
- d) Requested to be a member of this church by making application to an elder (pastor) of the Church in terms of Article 4, section 4.2
- e) Attended the membership classes, and have been subsequently approved by the elders for presentation to the congregation.
- f) Whose names have been presented to the Church for at least two weeks either in writing or by a public announcement, during which the members of the Church could state reasons to the elders why the applicant should not be received into membership.
- g) Been received as members of the Church publicly before the congregation by the Elder Board or a representative of the Elder Board.

### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 3. PURPOSE, PRIVILEGE AND OBLIGATION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

4.3.1 Church membership is important in that it facilitates:

- a) The defining of who belongs to our local congregation.

- b) The knowing of who should participate in the privileges and responsibilities of the Church.
- c) The providing of adequate care, nurture, and protection for every individual that belongs to this church.
- d) The exercising of authority and oversight in discipline and restoration of those members not maintaining a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct.

#### 4.3.2 The privilege and obligation of church membership:

- a) The final authority and responsibility in all matters touching the life and service of the Church rests with its membership. Each individual member under the direct Lordship of Christ and the authority of God's word has the right to participate in the life and decision making process of the Church including the appointment of its leaders.
- b) Each member is entitled and expected to attend the official meetings in place in terms of Article 4 section 8.
- c) Members are expected to support the ministry of the Church through their giftedness, giving of their finances, attendance of the worship services and any other way that evidences their fellowship with the Church.
- d) Members or office bearers have no rights to the income, property or assets of the Church solely by virtue of their being members or office bearers.

## **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 4. PROCEDURES FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **4.1 APPLICATION FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Any person may request membership with this church presenting himself or herself to an elder for membership at any time.

### **4.2 PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Upon a person's request for membership, the following procedures will be followed:

- a) The applicant shall fill out the official membership information booklet answering all the questions provided.
- b) The applicant shall attend the membership classes as decided from time to time by the elders.
- c) If needed an elder or an elder-appointed member of the Church shall meet with the person to discuss and answer any questions regarding the Church and his or her membership commitment.
- d) If after meeting with an elder or an elder-appointed member of the Church, the applicant is found to have trusted Christ as Saviour, is found to be of kindred spirit with the Church, is willing to accept the constitution of the Church, and can and will commit to the responsibilities of membership an elder shall present his or her request for membership to the Elder Board for approval.
- e) If a request for membership is denied, an elder of the Church shall meet with the person to discuss and answer any questions regarding the decision of the Elder Board.
- f) Upon Elder Board approval, the potential member's name shall be presented to the Church either by public announcement or through any official church publication.
- g) Members shall have the opportunity to state reasons they believe the applicant should not be received as a member.
- h) If such reasons are brought to bear it will be discussed with the applicant.

- i) If no adequate reasons are given why the applicant cannot be a member, the person will be publicly presented to the Church as a fellow member of the Church at a church service by the body of elders or a representative of the Elder Board.
- j) Any member who has been a member of another church including Baptist both locally, nationally or internationally will follow the same procedures above. There will be no automatic transfer of membership.
- k) If any of the above needs to be waived for whatever reason not known or experienced by the time of acceptance of this constitution, the Elder Board may so decide and agree upon such procedure unanimously.

#### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 5. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS**

The purpose of church discipline is to affect a return to a biblical standard of conduct and doctrine in a member who errs, to maintain purity in the local church, and to deter sin (1).

Members of this church who shall err in doctrine or conduct shall be subject to admonition and possible dismissal.

Before such dismissal, however:

- a) It shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn and to correct such erring member in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
- b) If the erring member does not heed this warning, then the warning member shall again go to the erring member accompanied by one or two witnesses to warn and correct such erring member, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
- c) If the erring member still refuses to heed this additional warning, then, it shall be brought to the attention of the elders.
- d) The elders, upon careful and prayerful investigation, shall deal with the matter pastorally according to Biblical wisdom and if necessary tell it to the Church.
- e) If the erring member refuses to heed the warning of the elders or the Church, he or she shall be dismissed from membership with the Church. The Elders will according to the merits of each individual case decide if it is of benefit and therefore necessary to announce such dismissal and the reasons to the congregation.
- f) There shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.
- g) It is understood that this process will continue to its conclusion even if the erring member leaves the Church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership to avoid the discipline process.
- h) If the member, after dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests restoration of membership, he or she shall be publicly restored to membership if they were removed publicly.

#### References

(1) Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Gal. 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; James 5:19-20; 1 Tim 1:18-20

#### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 6. REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP**

Members may be removed from church membership by the body of elders for any of the following reasons:



- a) Death.
- b) Transfer of membership, providing that disciplinary action is not in process for an offence under Article 4, Section 5 of the constitution.
- c) Inactivity or conduct that evidences a lack of desire to belong.
- d) Disciplinary action.
- e) Member request.

#### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 7. RESTORATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

If a member, after removal fits any of the criteria to follow, they can immediately be placed back on the membership role by the elders without reference to the congregation.

The criteria shall be:

- a) A member in good standing with the Church moving back into town, and seeking fellowship with the Church once again.
- b) An inactive member who is restored in their activity and whose reasons for inactivity have been proven justified according to Biblical standards.
- c) A member who requested to be removed and subsequently has come under different convictions, and whose reasons for removal in the first place does not disqualify them from membership.
- d) Members who have been removed due to disciplinary action cannot be restored without following the process of application for membership. If a public announcement was made with regards to their removal, a public announcement needs to be made regarding their reintroduction to membership.

#### References

(1) Galatians 6:1

#### **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 8. MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

##### **4.8.1 TYPES OF MEETINGS**

##### **4.8.1.1 Annual General Meeting:-**

- a) The church's financial year shall end on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December and in the light thereof an Annual General Meeting shall be held within the first month of the year, but not later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February, to affirm the Church's annual budget, and financial reports and hear reports to the congregation from the Elder Board and other ministries of the Church regarding the previous year's ministry. This meeting will also provide the platform for the Church to be informed of the direction of their ministries for the coming year.
- b) Three Sundays notice needs to be given for such a meeting and 33% of the membership present will be deemed as a quorum.
- c) Minutes need to be kept of this meeting even if there are no decisions taken. At least the reports and financial statements have to be included in the minutes.
- d) When decisions need to be taken and there seems to be lack of unity on the matter at hand, or a member in good standing with the Church requests for voting to take place, or the will of the Church cannot be sought in another way according to a

procedure accepted by the Church at the time of the meeting the matter will be put to vote. In such cases a majority vote will be accepted unless there is clear evidence that the unity of the Church will be disturbed. If the unity of the Church is at stake, it is the responsibility of the Elder Board to find ways to unite the people on the issue before such a vote takes place. A higher percentage in favour of a matter will then be required, such a percentage determined at such a meeting.

- e) The senior pastor or if this is impractical for whatever reason, anybody else appointed by the body of elders shall act as chairman. The presiding chairman shall when a vote is needed have a deliberative and casting vote.
- f) A church member is eligible to vote when formal voting takes place when he or she is present and has reached the age of eighteen.

#### **4.8.1.2 Special General Meetings:**

- a) Special General Meetings may be called by the Elder Board from time to time to report to the Church of pending decisions or decisions made by the Elder Board, or to seek the wisdom or formal affirmation of the Church in any matter where the elders are not comfortable with their own wisdom regarding issues at hand, or because of the potential implications on the body with regards to finances or major policies. Notice of such a meeting plus the reasons or broad agenda must be given 2 Sundays before the meeting unless the elders can justify to the congregation why under exceptional circumstances such a meeting need to be held with only one Sunday notice.
- b) 33 % of the membership will constitute a quorum. During such meetings the Elder Board needs to ensure that the full participation of all members present are enlisted, and wherever possible the process of participation should be ongoing as absent members wherever possible are given the opportunity to interact in the process of decision-making as well. General consensus should be reached on all matters, and any sense of unhappiness amongst the members becomes reason to go back to the drawing board and to prayer. Voting will only take place on critical issues as stipulated under Article 5 section 2. The voting method and percentage required will be determined at the meeting based on the seriousness of the issue at hand.
- c) A Special General Meeting may also be called by 25% of the congregation. The Quorum for such a meeting called by the members shall be 40% to ensure the broader participation of the body. The agenda or reason for this meeting needs to be clearly stated to the congregation at least 7 days before the date of the meeting.
- d) Active adherents do have the right to attend any of the official church meetings and even to participate in discussions within a small group environment, but they do not have the right to vote if voting is required.
- e) The senior pastor or if this is impractical for whatever reason, anybody else appointed by the body of elders shall act as chairman. The presiding chairman shall when a vote is needed have a deliberative and casting vote.
- f) A church member is eligible to vote when formal voting takes place when he or she is present and has reached the age of eighteen.

#### **4.8.2 NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Any special-called meetings shall be publicly announced and when possible be in printed form according to the required announcement period of either meetings. The Elder Board should seek ways to contact absentees if critical issues in the life of the Church will be discussed. Special meetings can be called with one Sunday's notice only if extreme urgency renders the two week announcement period impractical.

## **ARTICLE 4, SECTION 9. ORDINANCES**

Scripture teaches that there are two ordinances that the Church is to observe until Jesus Christ returns again.

- a) Baptism. (See Article 3. Section 2. I. for detailed information about Baptism)
- b) The Lord's Supper. (See Article 3. Section 2. I. for detailed information on the Lord's Supper)

## **ARTICLE 5. CHURCH GOVERNMENT & FINANCES**

### **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

Church government is an extremely practical and theologically significant issue. Biblical structure and function allows the peaceful and orderly working out of the ministry of the Church. The Church is the family of God and its head is Jesus Christ. Just as God has given us the structure and the function of each person in a family, He has done so in regards to his church (1). God's Word reveals the proper structure of the Church and the function of each of its parts.

The purpose of such structure and instruction is to ensure spiritual maturity both individually and corporately as a New Testament Church (2).

#### References

(1) *Ephesians 5:23*, (2) *Ephesians 4:11-13*

### **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 2. STRUCTURE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

#### **5.2.1 JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH**

Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Jesus Christ has revealed His will for us, as the Church, through His Word, the Bible (1). Under the authority of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church and the Word of God, the members of the Church which includes its leaders are the final authority within this local Church. This authority is exercised through the election of elders to govern the Church as stipulated in Article 6.

However, the approval of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in this constitution, shall be required to effect the following actions:

- a) Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any capital expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget or acquired by other means, or is not within the confines of the Church income. When the Church is not liable for the expense it need not be referred to the members meeting but will be subject to the wisdom of the elders.
- b) Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Body of Elders at a Special General Meeting;
- c) Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution of this church.
- d) Approve the call of a senior pastor.
- e) Approve the call of any new full-time ministry staff position whose salary will be paid by the Church.
- f) Withdrawal from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

### **5.2.2 THE ELDERS**

Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. He rules over the Church by calling and appointing elders (pastors) to shepherd, oversee, and lead the Church while lovingly equipping the members for their work of service through the teaching and training ministries of the Church. These elders are directly responsible to Jesus Christ for the governing of the Church according to His Word (2). The final human authority within the Church however lies with the constituted church meeting of which the elders form part.

(See ARTICLE 6 for detailed information about elders.)

### **5.2.3 DEACONS**

Deacons are recommended by the Church and approved by the elders to assist the elders, and to facilitate through their practical ministry of service the smooth functioning of the Church. (3).

(See ARTICLE 9 for detailed information about deacons.)

### References

(1) *Ephesians 5:23*, (2) *Acts 20:28-30*; *1Thess. 5:12-14*; *1Peter 5:1-2*, (3) *Acts 6:1-6*

## **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 3. COUNCILS, COMMITTEES OR BOARDS**

To promote efficient handling of church life, the Elder Board may appoint or allow others to appoint subject to the approval of the Elder Board various councils, committees or boards from within its members, the staff, the deacons, and from the Church at large. These bodies shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties related to their special gifts and ministries and with the powers specifically delegated by the Elder Board accordingly. These bodies may be required to formulate terms of reference by which they will function. Such terms of reference have to be approved by the elder board that will have the final say with regards to its content.

The general functions of any bodies are:

- a) To manage and oversee their ministry and to report back to the elders and the Church regarding their functioning according to the powers granted to them from time to time as the Church through their Elder Board may decide.
- b) To provide a wider base of leadership specialising in their area of giftedness.

All elders serve as ex-officio members of all councils and may sit as such at their discretion.

All committees shall exist for the period specified by the Elder Board.

## **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 4. THE LOGOS COMMITTEE**

- a) From time to time difficult theological issues will appear before the Church that could be divisive in nature. The Senior-pastor and elder body should protect the unity of the Church by not allowing divisive issues to be discussed by the members without sufficient information before them. To ensure Biblical clarity on the issue at hand the Logos committee will be formed to study the scriptures and any other material to assist the Church in resolving dispute regarding any theological matter. The purpose is to

ensure that all decisions are done with Scripture as our final authority rather than the likes, dislikes and personal feelings of its members.

- b) The committee membership shall be determined according to the topic at hand and may include non members of the Church who due to their expertise can assist in this process. After sufficient study has been done and the information has been provided to resolve lack of clarity on an issue at hand the committee shall cease to exist.
- c) Together with the Elder Board it shall be determined how their findings are presented. The committee shall have no decision making power, and their activity must display adequate attention given to the topic at hand. Their findings will be studied by the Elder Board and then presented to the part of the Church where the theological dispute or discussion that could affect the unity of the body arose. The Elder Board findings with regards to the theological issue will be final as long as sufficient opportunity for dialogue has been granted to the Church at large.

#### **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 5. AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES**

The Elder Board for the purpose of the signing of legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal document where authorised signatures are required shall appoint such persons. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without the specific authorization of the Elder Board and duly recorded in the minutes. Authorised Signatories shall serve for a period or purpose specified by the body of elders.

#### **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 6. ORDINATIONS**

##### **5.6.1. ORDINATION**

Ordination refers to the recognition by the Elder Board and the Church of a member's call to the ministry as an elder or a deacon (1). Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the member manifests the qualifications of and effectively serves in the office to which they were ordained, otherwise they will be asked to step down and allow the opportunity for others to serve in this capacity. All who accept such ordination will also accept the wisdom of the Elder Board if asked to step down. They will however after proper discussions with the Elder Board have recall to a Special General Meeting if they feel that they are asked to step down with invalid reasons given.

#### References

(1) Acts 6:6; Acts 13:2-4; Acts 20:28

#### **ARTICLE 5, SECTION 7. CHURCH RECORDS AND FINANCES**

- a) The church shall maintain current, adequate, and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of operation, unless another place is approved by the Body of Elders.
- b) The church shall be supported by the voluntary giving of its members and adherents according to the teaching of the Bible.
- c) The Elder Board is responsible to put in place a proper method for counting the Sunday offerings that will ensure that no single person determines the final count and that such counting of the moneys happens immediately after the service.

- d) An accurate account of all receipts and disbursements shall be maintained by financial staff or lay person/s appointed by and accountable to the Elder Board. The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>, and end on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- e) The Elder Board will be responsible to ensure that the books and accounts are properly managed and that sufficient checks and balances are put in place and reviewed on an annual basis to prevent fraud or other harmful financial practices. The church's financial transactions must be conducted by means of a banking account.
- f) The church shall have the power to buy, sell, donate, let or hire, exchange, transfer, receive by way of donation or otherwise, movable and immovable property and to invest its funds as it deems wise in non risky acceptable opportunities and places of investment, according to acceptable business practices. The church shall have the right to borrow money with or without security in such manner as the Church shall think fit through a responsible decision of its Elder Board.
- g) The church's income and property are not distributable to its members or office bearers, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.
- h) The church's financial books will be audited on an annual basis by a qualified auditor and the audit be made available to its members. All the Church's books must always be available for the perusal of its members.
- i) The Elder Board shall be responsible to appoint a qualified auditor who shall examine the Church securities, audit the accounts and financial records and furnish a report to the members in writing.

## **ARTICLE 6. ELDERS**

The New Testament Scripture is clear about those who have the responsibility of rule, oversight, and care of the Church. These men are called elders, overseers, and bishops. All three different titles are used to refer to the same spiritual office of leadership in the Church and are interchangeable (1). We know that Christ is the only Head of the Church and that the task of the elders is to lead the congregation in discovering the will of Christ for His Church from the Word of God.

### References

(1) 1 Timothy 3:1-7, (2) Acts 20:17-18, 28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 1. THE AUTHORITY OF ELDERS**

### **6.1.1 DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY**

Day to day decision-making authority of the Church under the final authority of the constituted church meeting is vested in the elders (pastors) who shepherd the Church. The objective of any and all decisions made shall be to do the will of God regarding the matter at hand for the benefit of the church(1).

### **6.1.2 DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Decisions shall be reached after careful and prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility, with each elder regarding one another before himself. Consensus will always be the preferred form of agreement within the context of their meetings. If consensus cannot be reached and any of the elders feel the matter is serious enough to demand a decision the matter will be put to the vote after time has been given for further wisdom, Godly counsel and direction to be brought to the matter at hand. Prayer, the final authority of Scripture, patience and careful consideration of the well being and unity of the Church will always be the guiding factor.

When it is unwise to take a decision without reference to the Church, a Special General Meeting will be called for that purpose or in lesser matters the members of the Church could be invited to participate in the process by their interaction with the Elder Board by either expressing their agreement or disagreement either in written form or a personal meeting with the Elder Board.

When a matter has to be put to the vote in the Elder Board, 75% of the vote will be required to carry the vote. If the Elder Board consists of 4 or less members a simple majority will be a 'yes' decision.

### **6.1.3 STATEMENT OF UNITY**

Any decision made after following the agreed upon decision-making process will be a unified "yes" or "no" decision. All elders agree to be unified in the final decision, "yes" or "no," in public and in private, even though it may not agree with their personal preference (2).

### **6.1.4 SPECIAL DECISIONS**

The Elder Board shall seek the affirmation of the Church members when the following decisions are being made (3):

- a) The calling of or removal of the senior pastor or other paid pastors.
- b) The church's annual budget.
- c) The approval of the audited statements.
- d) Expenditures involving new property or new buildings and related indebtedness.
- e) Any changes or amendments to the constitution.
- f) Any other matter where they feel that the decision of the Elder Board will be frowned upon by the congregation or could place the respect the Church has for the Elder Board in disrepute.

### **6.1.5 AFFIRMATION OPTIONS**

- a) The Elder Board may choose at any time and on any matter to seek the affirmation of the congregation or any leadership group within the Church such as deacons, teachers, etc. These affirmations may be formal or informal according to Article 6 Section 2.

### References

(1) Acts 15:2-6; Hebrews 13:7, (2) Acts 15:6-22, (3) Proverbs 11:14

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 2. CONGREGATIONAL AFFIRMATION**

### **6.2.1 PURPOSE OF CONGREGATIONAL AFFIRMATIONS**

The purpose of an affirmation from the congregation or any other group of the Church is the seeking of godly counsel of many as taught in scripture (1). This type of counsel can be helpful to the elders in the determining of God's will in a matter. We must remember that the purpose

of an affirmation is not so that the body from which affirmation is sought can make the decision (2). The elders will make the final decision after a fair hearing by the relevant bodies. This final decision should under serious circumstances be put before the relevant body either formally or informally again to allow them further time for interaction, agreement or disagreement or as stated below for informal affirmation.

## **6.2.2 TYPES OF AFFIRMATIONS**

### **6.2.2.1 Formal Affirmation:**

A Special General Meeting called for the specific purpose of affirming a decision being made by the elders on a particular matter. The meeting shall be called by the Body of Elders and publicly announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting or alternatively called according to the further provisions in Article 4, section 9. This meeting should preferably be conducted through small group discussions to facilitate greater participation, to counter dominance by one or two members on the floor and to give adequate time for the issue at hand. The preference is that only the issue at hand be brought to the members so that the membership may adequately deal with the issue. The results of all formal affirmations will be made public. The Special General Meeting shall function according to Article 4, section 9. Voting by the meeting called by the Elder Board will only take place when the Special General Meeting so decides otherwise the issue at hand will be referred back to the elders for a decision.

### **6.2.2.2 Informal Affirmation:**

Participation of members will be invited after clear reference to the issue at hand either through a document in the hands of or available to members, or a clear announcement from the pulpit on the Lord's day. Members could either be invited to indicate their desire in a written form, or to come and share their opinion or to even show their support by abstaining from advising the Body of Elders on the matter. A vote might even be taken using any method desired by the elders for the purpose of polling the counsel of the congregation or a leadership group (i.e. deacons, mission, Seminary, teachers, etc.) on any matter. The direction the Board of Elders follows will be guided by this process and the view of the church members may not be ignored.

## **6.2.3 ELIGIBLE MEMBERS**

A church member is eligible to vote in formal affirmations when he or she is present and has reached the age of eighteen.

## **6.2.4 VOTING**

From time to time the Church shall be called to make a decision on critical issues at hand. For that purpose the Church will be called to prayer and then to vote either by the raising of hands or by ballot. Percentages required to carry a vote are stipulated under relevant headings in this constitution. The ballots used for voting shall preferably, but not necessarily provide the following choices.

After prayer on the matter at hand:

- a) I believe that this is God's will for our church.
- b) I do not believe that this is God's will for our church.
- c) I am undecided due to various reasons in the matter, and therefore place my support alongside that of the Elders that God has appointed through the congregation to lead



us.

### References

(1) *Proverbs 11:14, (2) Hebrews 13:17*

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS**

### **6.3.1 TO SPIRITUALLY SHEPHERD THE CHURCH**

- a) To preach and teach God's Word (1).
- b) To pray (2).
- c) To maintain doctrinal purity in the church (3).
- d) To reprove, rebuke, and exhort the church with great patience (4).
- e) To be examples in the church (5).
- f) To shepherd the church through their caring and council. (5)

### **6.3.2 TO GOVERN AND OVERSEE ALL THE AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH**

- a) To establish policies and practices for the Church that is consistent with scripture and the purpose of the Church (6).
- b) To direct and oversee all of the financial resources and expenditures of the Church.
- c) To direct and oversee the maintaining of adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of the business of the Church.
- d) To appoint officers, councils and committees as needed to carry out the business of the Church in an orderly and acceptable manner. Any officer or council appointed by the elders is directly responsible to the elders and shall serve as long as the elders see the need (7).
- e) To select a Senior Pastor in accordance with the selection process as decided on by a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- f) To appoint elders for the Church in accordance with the selection process established in this constitution (8).
- g) To appoint deacons for the Church in accordance with the selection process established in this constitution under Article 9 (9).
- h) To maintain open communication with the Church body.

### References

(1) *Acts 6:2, 4; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:2, (2) Acts 6:4, (3) Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; Jude 3-4, (4) 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9-11, (5) 1 Peter 5:3, (6) 1 Timothy 3:4-5, (7) Acts 6:3, (8) Titus 1:5, (9) Acts 6:2-6*

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 4. QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS**

### **6.4.1 CALLED BY GOD**

An elder (pastor) must be a man who has been called by God into the gospel ministry either vocationally or non-vocationally. The evidences for such a call are as follows:

- a) Confirmation of the call to the Body of Elders by other believers (1).
- b) Possession of the abilities necessary to serve (giftedness).
- c) A deep desire to serve in this position (2).
- d) A lifestyle characterized by moral integrity (3).

### **6.4.2 ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP**

An elder must affirm and adhere to the constitution of this church (4).

### 6.4.3 BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

An elder must possess the qualifications described in 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- a) Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach.
- b) When married, a husband of one wife.
- c) Temperate, sober, vigilant.
- d) Sober-minded, prudent.
- e) Given to hospitality.
- f) Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching.
- g) Not given to wine.
- h) Not violent; not pugnacious.
- i) Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle.
- j) Not a brawler; not contentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered.
- k) Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain.
- l) Rules his own household well. His children are faithful; not accused of rebellion to God.
- m) Not a novice; not a new convert.
- n) Has a good report or reputation with outsiders.
- o) Not self-willed.
- p) Loves what is good.
- q) Just, fair.
- r) Holy, devout.
- s) Self-controlled.

### 6.4.4 ORDINATION

An elder (pastor) must be ordained to the ministry by this church. (5).

#### References

(1) 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 3John 1:12, (2) 1 Timothy 3:1, (3) Titus 1: 6-9; 1Peter 5:1-3, (4) Hebrews 10:25, (5) Acts 14:23

## ARTICLE 6, SECTION 5. SELECTION OF ELDERS

### 6.5.1 ELDER SELECTION PROCESS FROM WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

The process by which elders are nominated and appointed to the body of elders is as follows:

- a) As the need arises, the elders shall set aside men that they determine have met the qualifications and calling of the office of elder. They shall be declared as being under consideration.
- b) The members at large have the right to nominate as well, or a man may present himself to the elders as one desiring the office of an elder.
- c) These men will then if necessary enter into a period of training during which they are equipped, evaluated and encouraged.
- d) During the time of training men who for some reason have been proven unsuitable will either be asked to leave the training programme or will be encouraged into other areas of ministry more suitable to their giftedness.
- e) The elders shall then make it known to the Church that a particular individual is being considered as a candidate for the office of elder.
- f) For a period of time, not less than sixty days, the congregation will have the opportunity to prayerfully consider the individual's qualifications for the office of elder. If members for any reason feel that the person may be unqualified, they should go to him in love with discretion and privately discuss their concerns (1). If after a discussion with the nominee, the members feel that their concern is unresolved, then they should approach

the elders with their concern. During the time that a man is under consideration, there are several process options.

- Option 1: The man under consideration can withdraw himself from consideration and the process will cease.
  - Option 2: The elders may deem the man unqualified for whatever reason and the process will cease.
  - Option 3: The man, the members of the Church through either their silence or their verbal agreement and apparent affirmation and the Body of Elders agree that the process should continue.
- g) After the time of consideration, the elders shall make a final announcement regarding the date during which the candidate will be recognised and set apart publicly. During this announcement a final opportunity will be given for members to express their concern with such and appointment.
- h) After prayerful consideration of the Elders and the congregation, the elders shall reach unanimity in this regard.
- i) Upon Elder Board approval, the man shall be set aside before the congregation and immediately assume his position as an elder.

### References

(1) *Matthew 18:15-18; Titus 1:7*

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 6. LEADERSHIP AMONG THE ELDERS**

### **6.6.1 FIRST AMONG EQUALS**

As demonstrated in the scriptures, even among the leadership of the Church there is a leader. In as much as the senior pastor has the responsibility of the spiritual equipping and oversight of the entire congregation, of which each of the elders are a part, he shall be the first among equals in the Elder Board. As such, he shall serve as the chairman, moderator, and spokesman for the Elder Board to the Church. He shall have but one vote in the Elder Board and in that way is an equal among equals (1).

### References

(1) *Acts 15:13-21*

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 7. NUMBER OF ELDERS**

The number of elders shall be as many as are qualified and needed to carry out the ministry of elders in the Church. The Elder Board shall determine that number.

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 8. TERM OF ELDERS**

The term of office for an elder shall be as long as he is qualified, capable, available and desirous of fulfilling the duties of an elder.

## **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 9. REMOVAL OF ELDERS**

Any elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically or mentally incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established by the remainder of the Elder Board. Any accusation or action against an elder must be presented to the Elder Board in accordance with scripture (1).

### References

*(1) 1 Timothy 5:19-20*

#### **ARTICLE 6, SECTION 10. ELDER BOARD MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Elder Board shall be held on a regular basis as determined by the elders. Anyone desiring to approach the elders on any matter or need may feel free to arrange to meet with them. The senior pastor may call special meetings of the Elder Board as needed.

#### **ARTICLE 7. THE SENIOR PASTOR**

##### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 1. THE POSITION OF THE SENIOR-PASTOR**

The term senior-pastor will only be used when there is more than one full-time pastor on staff. The senior-pastor is the primary teaching pastor of the Church. He is responsible for the spiritual equipping and oversight of the entire congregation and is the first among equals in the Elder Board. He is the spokesman for the Elder Board to the congregation and is directly accountable to the Elder Board for the carrying out of his duties in the Church (1).

##### References

*(1) Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1Peter 5:2-4*

##### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 2. DUTIES OF THE SENIOR PASTOR**

The duties and responsibilities of the Senior Pastor are as decided from time to time by the elder board.

##### References

*(1) Acts 6:4<, (2) Acts 6:4; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:5, (3) 1 Timothy 4:16; Titus 1:9, (4) Acts 20:34*

##### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 3. AUTHORITY TO DELEGATE**

The senior pastor may, at his discretion, delegate any task pertaining to the administration and oversight of the Church staff. Delegation may be done through individuals or councils. In the event of the delegation of a task, those individuals or councils shall be directly responsible to the senior pastor and the Elder Board, and the senior pastor shall remain responsible for the task. This provision is added with the following tasks in mind, but is not limited to this list.

- a) Priority in the selection of pastoral, non-pastoral ministry and support staff.
- b) The annual review of all church staff and their ministries.
- c) The review of ongoing and new church program possibilities and ministries.

##### References

*(1) Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:3-14; Galatians 6:6; 1Thess. 5:12-18; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 3John 5-8*

##### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 4. THE SELECTION OF THE SENIOR PASTOR**

The Elder Board shall select the Senior Pastor as follows:

- a) The elders shall serve as the pastor search council, or select the pastor search council.
- b) If a council is the preferred option, the elders shall set guidelines and procedures for the council to follow throughout the pastor search process.
- c) The council shall consist of at least five persons and shall have a member of the Elder Board as its chairman.
- d) The council shall be directly responsible to the elders and shall keep them informed on

- its progress.
- e) Upon the recommendation of the council and the approval of a specific Senior Pastor Candidate, the Elder Board shall make known to the congregation all pertinent information about the senior pastor candidate.
  - f) A special meeting shall be set and announced publicly at least two weeks in advance when a senior pastor candidate is coming in view of a call.
  - g) At the special-called meeting, a formal affirmation of all eligible members shall be taken concerning the candidate for senior pastor. The results of this affirmation will be made public.
  - h) After consideration of the formal affirmation of the congregation, the Elder Board shall make the final decision regarding the candidate for pastor-teacher. Upon approval of the Elder Board, a call will be extended to the man who upon acceptance shall become the senior pastor.
  - i) The Elder Board shall announce to the Church the date that the new senior pastor's tenure shall begin.

#### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE SENIOR PASTOR**

The elders or elder delegated council shall initially establish and continually review the senior pastor's financial support and benefit package (1).

- a) The senior pastor shall receive his support package information in writing prior to a call being extended, but not before serious discussions in view of a call have taken place.
- b) The elders or the elder delegated council or persons shall also review the senior pastor's support and benefit package annually.
- c) Any change in his support and benefit package shall be given to the senior pastor in writing.

#### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 6. TENURE AND DISMISSAL OF THE SENIOR PASTOR**

- a) The tenure of the pastor-teacher shall be indefinite in length.
- b) The retirement age of the Senior Pastor will be deemed 65 and ongoing ministry will be negotiated annually with no obligation on the pastor or church in this regard.
- c) The Elder Board has the authority to dismiss the senior pastor if he becomes physically or mentally incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is unanimously established by the remainder of the Elder Board.
- d) Any accusation against the senior pastor must be made in accordance with scripture (1).
- e) Dismissal of duties may be immediate if so determined by the remainder of the Elder Board.
- f) The senior pastor must give at least one-month's written notice if he intends to resign.
- g) The time limit of resignation is subject to a lesser time if mutually agreed upon in writing by the senior pastor and the Elder Board.
- h) Financial support shall continue to the end of the senior pastor's tenure. Any leave due to the senior pastor is paid out ex-gratia.

#### References

(1) 1 Timothy 5:19-20

#### **ARTICLE 7, SECTION 7. VACANCY OF THE SENIOR PASTOR**

In the event that the Church is without a senior pastor, the Elder Board will:

- a) Choose from among themselves an interim first among equals as chairman, moderator, and spokesman for the elders to the Church.
- b) They shall choose an interim administrator to be over all church staff.
- c) They shall be responsible for finding from amongst themselves or otherwise by invitation a preacher to fill the pulpit in the interim time.
- d) They shall start the pastor search process as established in this constitution.

## **ARTICLE 8. CHURCH STAFF**

### **ARTICLE 8, SECTION 1. PAID MINISTRY STAFF.**

#### **8.1.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

The elder board shall establish the duties and responsibilities of each person in writing. The elders may change these duties as the need arises. Any duties or changes in duties shall be given to each staff member in writing so that each person will know their duties and responsibilities to the Church.

#### **8.1.2 PAID MINISTRY STAFF ARE UNDER AUTHORITY**

Ministry staff shall be directly responsible to the Church represented by the senior pastor and/or elders for the carrying out of their duties and responsibilities.

#### **8.1.3 SELECTION OF PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

- a) The senior pastor shall lead in the selection of all paid ministry staff.
- b) Paid ministry staff selection shall be made in accordance with Article 7, Section 4.

#### **8.1.4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

The elders or elder delegated council shall initially establish and review each persons financial support package.

- a) The staff member shall receive his/her financial support package information in writing before he/she comes to the Church in view of a call.
- b) The elders or council appointed by the elders for this purpose shall initially establish the ministry staff member's support and benefit package. If such task is carried out by a council their findings will be subject to the approval of the elders.
- c) The elders or appointed persons shall review the ministry staff's support and benefit package at least annually.
- d) Any change in his/her support package is subject to the approval of budgeted figures.

#### **8.1.5 TENURE AND DISMISSAL OF PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

- a) The tenure of paid ministry staff shall be indefinite in length.
- b) Upon the recommendation of the senior pastor or the elder board, paid ministry staff shall be dismissed if they become physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or their inability to perform their duties is established by the senior pastor and confirmed by the Elder Board.
- c) The retirement age of the ministry staff will be deemed 65 and ongoing ministry will be

- negotiated annually with no obligation on the pastor or church in this regard.
- d) Dismissal is subject to Elder Board approval.
  - e) Dismissal may be immediate if so determined by the remainder of the Elder Board.
  - f) Paid ministry staff must give at least one-month's written notice if they intend to resign.
  - g) The time limit of resignation is subject to a lesser time if mutually agreed upon in writing by the paid ministry staff and the Elder Board.
  - h) Financial support shall continue to the end of a paid ministry staff's tenure.
  - i) Any other payments are ex-gratia.

## **ARTICLE 8, SECTION 2. NON-PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

### **8.2.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NON-PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

Non-paid ministry staff members will be deemed as those whose financial support is either raised through outside support or paid from another source than the Church. Non-paid ministry staff members can also be those who feel led to offer their service on a full-time basis free of charge and in so doing hold themselves as fully accountable just as if they were paid staff. The elder board and or senior pastor shall establish the duties and responsibilities of each non-paid ministry staff member in writing. If their ministry falls under the directives of a council functioning according to terms of reference as allowed for in Article 5 Section 3 their duties and responsibilities will be established by that council and approved by the elder board or delegated authority for that purpose. The elder board and or council may change these duties as the need arises. Any duties or changes in duties shall be given to each non paid ministry staff member in writing so that each non paid ministry staff member will know their duties and responsibilities to the Church and the ministries thereof.

### **8.2.2 NON-PAID MINISTRY STAFF ARE UNDER AUTHORITY**

In spite of the fact that their salaries are not paid by the Church, non-paid ministry staff shall be directly responsible to the elder board for the carrying out of their duties and responsibilities. The elder board may choose to delegate that accountability to the council overseeing the ministry the non paid ministry staff is involved in.

### **8.2.3 SELECTION OF NON-PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

- a) The senior pastor and or elders shall lead in the selection of all non-paid ministry staff unless such authority has been delegated to another person or council.
- b) Non paid ministry staff selection shall be made in accordance with Article 7, Section 4 where applicable.

### **8.2.4 TENURE AND DISMISSAL OF NON-PAID MINISTRY STAFF**

- a) The tenure of non-paid ministry staff shall be indefinite in length.
- b) Upon the recommendation of the elders or senior pastor, or the delegated authority over the ministry occupied by the non-paid ministry staff worker such staff member shall be dismissed if they become physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or their inability to perform their duties is established by the senior pastor and confirmed by the Elder Board.
- c) The retirement age of non-paid ministry staff will be deemed 65.
- d) Dismissal may be immediate if so determined by the remainder of the Elder Board.
- e) Non-paid ministry staff members must give at least one-month's written notice if they intend to resign.

- f) The time limit of resignation is subject to a lesser time if mutually agreed upon by the non-paid ministry staff member and the Elder Board in writing.

## **ARTICLE 8, SECTION 3. SUPPORT STAFF**

### **8.3.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPPORT STAFF**

Support Staff are those who are employed in positions not directly related to ministry but as those who undergird ministries e.g. secretaries, office helps, book keepers, property maintenance, domestic services etc. The elder board or delegated authority shall establish the duties and responsibilities of support staff in writing. They may change these duties as the need arises. Any duties or changes in duties shall be given to them in writing so that they will know their duties and responsibilities to the Church and its ministries when they function according to their own terms of reference.

### **8.3.2 SUPPORT STAFF ARE UNDER AUTHORITY**

Support staff shall be directly responsible to the elders or to the council designated with the responsibility of carrying out certain ministries as far as their own duties and responsibilities are concerned.

### **8.3.3 SELECTION OF SUPPORT STAFF**

- a) The elders and/or person delegated to this responsibility shall lead in the selection of all support staff.
- b) The selection shall be subject to Elder Board approval.
- c) The position of support staff appointments shall go before the Church for formal or informal affirmation only when it is a new position to be funded from the Church budget, and such a position is greater than that of cleaning and gardening staff.
- d) When such a position is covered from outside sources no church approval is needed.

### **8.3.4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF SUPPORT STAFF**

The elders shall establish and review the financial support package of all ministry support staff.

1. Support staff shall receive their financial support package information in writing before they are employed.
2. The elders or council delegated for this task shall review their financial support package on an annual basis and make the necessary changes if needed.
3. Any change in the support package is subject to Elder Board approval and shall be given to staff in writing.

### **8.3.5 TENURE AND DISMISSAL OF SUPPORT STAFF**

1. The tenure of support staff shall be indefinite in length unless otherwise agreed in writing.
2. Upon the recommendation of the pastor-teacher, they shall be dismissed if they become physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or their inability to perform their duties is established by the pastor-teacher and confirmed by the Elder Board.
3. Dismissal may be immediate if so determined by the Elder Board.
4. Non-pastoral ministry staff must give at least two weeks' notice if they intend to resign.
5. The time limit of resignation is subject to a lesser time if mutually agreed upon by the staff person and the pastor-teacher.



6. Financial support shall continue to the end of the staff person's tenure.

### **ARTICLE 9. DEACONS**

The New Testament scripture teaches that deacons and deaconesses were set apart by the Church as servants to minister to the needs of the Body of Christ. In the context of Christ Baptist Church the deacons and deaconesses will facilitate the smooth functioning of the practical affairs of the Church. This ministry allowed the apostles initially and then later in the book of Acts the elders (pastors) to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (1). The office of deacon or deaconess is one of a servant to the Body of Christ. Any other concept does injustice to the New Testament record found in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. According to the Bible it is not a position or office to give a person in order to honour him.

#### References

(1) Acts 6:1-7

### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF DEACONS AND DEACONESSES**

The purpose of deacons and deaconesses in the Church is as follows:

- a) To work and serve alongside the elders and staff to support, encourage, promote, and uphold their ministry (1).
- b) To exemplify spiritual maturity in the fellowship of the Church, in their family, personal, and business relationships (2).
- c) To be people of prayer and students of the Word of God (3).
- d) To take care of the practical side of the Church ministry either in person or through oversight; e.g. door duty, care of facilities, assistance to widows & orphans, ushering at meetings etc.

#### References

(1) Acts 6:3, (2) 1 Timothy 3:8-16, (3) 1 Timothy 2:8; 2 Timothy 2:14-15,

### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 1. ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

A deacon or deaconess must be an active voting member of this Church for one year prior to the time of election to the diaconate unless the Elder Board approves a shorter time (1).

### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 2. BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS**

A deacon or deaconess must possess the qualifications as described in scripture.

#### References

(1) 1 Timothy 3:10, (2) Acts 6:3, (3) Acts 6:3, (4) 1 Timothy 3:8, (5) 1 Timothy 3:9, (6) 1 Timothy 3:10, (7) 1 Timothy 3:12, (8) 1 Timothy 3:12,

### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 3. DEACON AN DEACONESS SELECTION PROCESS**

The process by which deacons and deaconesses are selected is as follows:

- a) The Elder Board shall determine if there is a need for additional deacons or deaconess for the Church (1).

- b) When the Elder Board determines that there is a need for additional deacons or deaconesses, it shall recognise suitably qualified people whose suitability will be tested before such name is brought to the Church for informal affirmation. Members as well may recommend such candidates on an ongoing basis. (1).
- c) Nominations by the Church shall be prayerfully considered by the elders for the position of deacon or deaconess. Upon affirmation by the elder board such names shall go before the Church for period of no less than one month and no longer than two months for informal affirmation.
- d) A special service shall be held so that the elders may present those men and women that they have appointed as deacons and deaconesses so that they may be formally set aside as deacons by the laying on of hands (1).

### References

(1) Acts 6:1-7

#### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 4. DEACON OFFICERS**

The diaconate shall preferably be led by an elder appointed by the Elder Board to head up this ministry. If no elder is willing or available to head up this ministry the Elder Board will appoint from amongst the deacons a person to head up this ministry.

#### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 5. DEACON MEETINGS**

The diaconate shall meet as needed for the carrying out of its ministry in the Church. The chairman of deacons or the Elder Board may call a meeting of the deacons.

#### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 6. TERM**

The term of office for a deacon shall be as long as he is qualified, capable, and desirous of fulfilling the office and duties of a deacon.

#### **ARTICLE 9, SECTION 7. REMOVAL OF DEACONS**

Any deacon may be removed from office if he becomes physically or mentally incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established by the elders of the Church.

### **ARTICLE 10. CHURCH PROPERTY**

#### **ARTICLE 10, SECTION 1. ACQUISITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

All property which the Church may acquire whether movable or immovable shall be held and administered solely for the furtherance of its objectives and the propagation of its principles.

In the event of the Church at any time ceasing to exist all property owned by it and all rights to the property which may have vested in or been acquired by it at such time shall ipso facto vest in and become the property of the Baptist Union of South Africa, which shall hold and administer it or deal with it in such manner as the said Union may deem best fitted to secure the furtherance of the objectives and the propagation of the principles of the Baptist Union of South Africa. Such furtherance of objectives should give preference to the region where the Church exists.

If for reason of principle the Church decides to resign from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa the previous clause will be modified according to the rules and regulations affecting the change

of the constitution.

The Church shall be deemed to have ceased to exist when the dissolution of the Church shall have been resolved upon in accordance with Article 11, or when the members of the Church have become totally dispersed or when public worship of God has been discontinued with no evidence of it starting up again within a reasonable time limit as agreed by remaining members in consultation with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

#### **ARTICLE 10, SECTION 2. REGISTRATION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

All immovable property acquired or hereinafter acquired by the Church shall be the separate fully owned property of the Church, and such property must be registered in the name of the Church. The church will handle the registration of the immovable property through its Elder Board who will authorise those with signing powers.

#### **ARTICLE 10, SECTION 3. TRANSFER OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

No disposal or transfer of immovable property bought by the Church or donated to the Church for its express purposes shall be valid unless authorised by a resolution passed at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.

#### **ARTICLE 10, SECTION 4. APPLICATION OF PROCEEDS OF SALE OF PROPERTY**

The proceeds derived from the sale or other disposal of any property of the Church shall be applied and devoted in such manner as the Church, or where the Church has ceased to exist the Baptist Union of Southern Africa may deem best fitted to secure the furtherance of the objects of the Church and the propagation of its principles.

### **ARTICLE 11. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH**

The Church may at any time be dissolved by a resolution of a majority of two-thirds of the members present at a Special General Meeting of the Church duly convened according to Article 4 section 8. In the event of such resolution being passed such Meeting shall thereupon authorise the Elder Board or such members thereof who may still hold office, to take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church, and in particular to transfer the property of the Church in due and proper form to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

If the Elder Board no longer exists or any members thereof, the meeting shall appoint and authorise any other suitable person or the Baptist Union of Southern Africa through its officers to comply with the above requirements.

The Church shall be deemed to have ceased to exist when public worship shall have been discontinued and the stated purposes of the Church ceases to continue in any acceptable form. It shall also cease to exist when the number of active members has dropped to below 20.

### **ARTICLE 12. MODIFICATION OF CONSTITUTION**

The constitution adopted by the Church in a business meeting held on 28 January 2007 shall supersede all prior resolutions, precedents, and actions of the Church not in harmony with its provisions.

The constitution may be amended or changed by the Elder Board after approval from the Church. Changes to Article 3, Statement of Faith and Doctrine, will require a unanimous vote of the Elder Board before being presented to the Church. The Elder Board shall seek either formal or informal affirmation of the congregation when changes or amendments to the constitution are required. Notification of such changes will be given for four consecutive Sunday mornings either in writing or through a public announcement to ensure that the majority of members have been informed. If during this period no concerns are raised it is accepted that consensus has been reached. The whole Church then agrees to stand by the decision.

Sola Gratia  
Sola Fide  
Sola Scriptura  
Solus Christus  
Soli Deo Gloria