

SOUTH WEST BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH WEST BAPTIST CHURCH

1. THE CHURCH

- 1.1 The name of the church shall be the South West Baptist Church
- 1.2 The church shall be composed of those who believe in God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, one God; who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord; and who have publicly confessed their faith through baptism.
- 1.3 The church acknowledges:
 - (a) The Bible is the inspired Word of God and accepts its authority in all matters of faith and practice
 - (b) The true humanity and deity of Jesus Christ
 - (c) The atonement made by Jesus Christ on the Cross for the sin of the world
 - (d) Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone
 - (e) Membership in the Christian Church for the spiritually reborn
 - (f) The immersion of believers as the scriptural form of baptism
- 1.4 The communion service shall be held at least monthly and shall be open to all followers of Jesus Christ
- 1.5 The mission of this Church is 'to help people become followers of Jesus'.

2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The aims and functions are:

Within New Zealand

- (a) To meet regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, encouragement and fellowship
- (b) To express the love of God to the community through the ministries of the Word and practical care
- (c) In every possible way to seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ and bring them into membership of the church
- (d) Engage in the task of mission principally within New Zealand but also overseas (see Matthew chapter 28 verses 19-20)

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Membership of the church is open to those who confess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who are baptised as believers, and who participate in the worshipping life of the church.
- 3.2 Applications for exceptions to the requirement for believers' baptism will be considered from those who, in the light of the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience, genuinely believe that their prior baptism and the subsequent confirmation of their faith is sufficient.

4. LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE CHURCH

- 4.1 The Senior Pastor shall be entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the church in co-operation with the elders.
- 4.2 The Senior Pastor shall be ex-officio chairperson of all organisations of the church.
- 4.3 When a vacancy occurs in the Senior Pastorate, the elders shall consider all names suggested to them and submit a nomination for consideration to the church at a meeting called for the purpose. No call to the Senior Pastorate shall be made except on the votes of three quarters of the members present and casting votes at a church meeting.
- 4.4 Pastoral staff shall operate under the direction of the Senior Pastor. Appointments to pastoral leadership positions shall be made by the elders on the recommendation of the Senior Pastor.



- Appointments will be confirmed by a vote of two thirds of the members present and casting votes at a church meeting.
- 4.5 The senior management team will be appointed by the senior pastor with the agreement of the elders.
 - 4.6 Elders shall hold office for a period of one year and be eligible for re-election. Names for consideration for the eldership can be submitted up to two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Appointments to the eldership are made by a vote of two thirds of the members present and casting votes at a church meeting.
 - 4.7 Administrative committees shall take responsibility for world missions, community ministries and other areas as the church may from time to time determine. The pastoral staff responsible for the appropriate area shall be a member of each committee. All members of these committees shall hold office for a period of one year and be eligible for re-appointment. All committees operate under the delegated authority of the elders.
 - 4.8 The Executive Pastor shall take responsibility for ensuring the recording of the minutes of the business meetings of the church, and the keeping of all financial and other church records. The Executive Pastor shall be appointed in the manner laid down for pastoral staff.
 - 4.9 Other church staff shall be appointed by the appropriate ministry leader with the agreement of the Senior Management Team.
 - 4.10 The Executive Pastor shall ensure that all church monies are recorded and dispersed in accordance with resolutions of the church or the elders. The Executive Pastor or nominee shall present to the annual church meeting an audited statement of accounts and balance sheet, and shall also present a statement of accounts to all regular meetings of the elders.

5. CHURCH MEETINGS

- 5.1 The church year will close on 31 January. Notice of the annual meeting and of the impending elections shall be given to the church on the two Sundays immediately preceding. The quorum for all church meetings will be ten per cent of the resident membership or 100 members (whichever is less) except for the calling of a Senior Pastor, when the quorum will be twenty per cent of the resident membership.
- 5.2 Special church meetings may be called by the elders as occasion requires. Notice of such meetings shall be given to the church on the previous Sunday. The elders shall, on receipt of a requisition signed by at least ten per cent of the resident members, call a special meeting of the church within 21 days of the request being received.
- 5.3 The Senior Pastor or the pastor's nominee shall preside at all meetings of the church, except when the business relates to the pastorate, or when the senior pastor is personally interested or is unwilling or unable to act. In such cases the meeting shall elect its own chairperson.
- 5.4 Meetings will be held in person at the church or other suitable venue except in extraordinary circumstances when the Elders deem it unsafe to hold a meeting of sufficient size for the meeting and postponement is not viable, in which case meetings may be attended by all members virtually. In extraordinary circumstances specific applications may also be received from individual members one week in advance to virtually attend an otherwise in person meeting. In both cases the church will make available opportunities for members to be present at meetings through an online platform, to see the proceedings, to hear, to speak, and to vote, as desired.

6. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- 6.1 In the event of any dispute or difference causing serious division in the church and not reaching satisfactory settlement, the church shall if requested to do so by at least twenty per cent of the resident members, apply to the executive of the Baptist Union of New Zealand for advice and help in investigating and settling the matter in dispute.



7. ALTERATIONS OF CONSTITUTION

- 7.1 No alterations or additions to the Constitution shall be made unless adopted by a majority of two thirds of the members at a church meeting.
- 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.
- Notice of proposed alterations or amendments to the constitution shall be given to the church on the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

8. DECLARATION OF TRUST

- 8.1 The property of South West Baptist Church shall be vested in the Baptist Union of New Zealand as trustee, which shall hold same on behalf of the church and shall deal with the property by consent and direction of the church in accordance with the trusts declared in the sixth schedule to the 'Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923'.

9. NO PRIVATE PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL

- 9.1 No decision of the church civil or its leadership shall be made which would allow a member or members to receive any private pecuniary profit provided that:
- (a) A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred by that member in connection with the affairs of the church
 - (b) 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
 - (c) 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 an entity of which that member is a partner, employee or associate, in connection with affairs of the church
 - (d) 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 a member's connection with that company or undertaking is any way attributable to that member's connection with the church
 - (e) Nothing shall prevent the church from making payment 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 deciding all reimbursements, remuneration and charges payable in the terms of this clause, shall ensure that the restrictions imposed by the following clause are strictly observed.
- 9.3 Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in the constitution, no member of the church or any person associated with that member shall 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. WINDING UP PROVISION

- 10.1 Subject to clauses 17,18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act if the members resolve at a properly constituted meeting of the church adopted by a majority of at least two thirds of the members present at such church meeting that the church shall be



wound up then the net proceeds arising from such winding up shall be applied with the prior approval of the church members and the prior approval of the Baptist Union of New Zealand to such charitable purposes within New Zealand as the members may determine or in default of such determination 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.

Amended at Annual General Meeting of South West Baptist Church 12.5.2022

Confirmed by:  Stephen George Withington (Chair, Board of Elders) 12/8/22 Date: 12/8/2022