

HAMILTON SOUTH BAPTIST CONSTITUTION

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1. THE CHURCH

1.1 The name of this congregation is the Hamilton South Baptist Church, which constitutes and is referred to hereafter as the 'church'.

1.2 This church consists of a local community of people who believe in God the Father, in God the Son Jesus Christ and in God the Holy Spirit – one God; who are repentant of their sin and who have been saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ through his atoning death and resurrection; who publicly proclaim their faith and are committed to the church's vision, aims and functions.

1.3 The church believes:

1.3.1 In the trinity; God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit

1.3.2 In the true humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.3.3 Jesus Christ's death on the Cross was in payment for people's sin, past, present and future.

1.3.4 The Holy Spirit indwells, instructs, convicts, guides and empowers believers and gives Spiritual Gifts to each for use in serving God and others.

1.3.5 The Bible is God-breathed and is the authority in all matters of faith and practice.

1.3.6 Personal faith in Jesus Christ by grace, not works is the only way to salvation.

1.3.7 The immersion of believers is the only scriptural form of baptism.

1.3.8 In the bodily return of Jesus Christ to earth at the end of the age.

2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The aims and functions are:

2.1 To meet regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, encouragement and fellowship

2.2 To engage in the task of proclaiming the gospel of Christ, principally within New Zealand but also overseas (see Matthew 28:19–20).

2.3 To express God's love to the local community through ministries of the Word and practical care.

2.4 In every possible way to seek to make people disciples of Jesus Christ and bring them into His Church.

2.5 To observe the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and believers' baptism.

3. STRUCTURE

3.1 The church is an autonomous body governed by elected Elders through its members, working closely with Regional and National Baptist Staff, the Baptist Churches of New Zealand and the wider body of Christ.

3.2 Leadership shall consist of the Elders and the Pastoral Team.

3.3 Ministries shall start, continue and terminate under the guidance of the Leadership Team.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, has been baptised as a believer, shows evidence of following Christ in newness of life and is willing to uphold the commitments as outlined in the members' pledge, may apply to become a church member.

4.1.1 As an exception, membership may be granted to a believer from another Christian Communion who desires membership in this Baptist church, provided he/she is willing to accept and promote this church's belief and practice.

4.2 Application for membership shall be made to a Pastor or Elder. After the applicant has attended any church membership course the church may require, the Elders will designate two people to visit the applicant to appraise their readiness for membership. They will report back to the Elders who will then make a decision to take to the church members if they are recommending membership. The church members will be given two weeks' notice via electronic and verbal communications to consider the named applicants for membership. If there has been no discussion from the membership, the Elders' recommendation will be assumed as ratified and the applicant received into membership on the next communion Sunday. If at any point an applicant's request for membership is denied, they will be communicated with in an appropriate manner by either an Elder or those who visited, as decided by the Elders.

4.3 A membership roll shall be kept. The Leadership will appoint a Review Team to review the Membership Roll at least annually to decide which names, if any, shall be presented at a church meeting for the recommendation of removal from the roll.

4.4 RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The Elders shall have the power to admonish, suspend or expel any member for misconduct (Matthew 18:17).

4.4.1 In cases of difference between church members, the Lord's words, as set out in Matthew 18:15 – 17 shall be followed.

4.4.2 If an allegation of conduct inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture is received the Elders shall arrange to have the allegation investigated. If the allegation is found to have substance, appropriate action will be taken by the Elders to address the issue and to seek repentance and reconciliation.

Where repentance and/or reconciliation does not result, the Elders may take appropriate action and/or bring a recommendation to a church meeting. The person or persons concerned shall, where possible, be given an opportunity to speak at any meeting called to consider their membership.

5. LEADERSHIP

5.1 PASTORAL TEAM

5.1.1 PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Pastoral Team is responsible for the management and direction of all Core Ministry Leaders. Together with the Elders, the Pastoral Team is also responsible for the governance and direction of the church.

5.1.2 PASTORAL TEAM LEADER

Within the Pastoral Team, there will be a Pastoral Team Leader who shall be accountable to the Elders. In the absence of a Pastoral Team Leader, all ministry roles will be managed by the Leadership.

5.1.3 PASTORAL VACANCY

When a vacancy occurs in the Pastoral Team Leader position, the church may consider, on the recommendation from the elders, another pastoral team member to fill this role. If no pastoral team member is chosen, a search committee may be appointed by the church on the recommendation of the Elders. The committee shall be guided by the Baptist Union pastoral placement protocols. The committee shall, after consultation with the Elders, bring one nomination to a church meeting called for that purpose which will need a quorum of 30% of resident members living within 30km of the church. Two weeks' notice shall be given of the meeting. A call to the pastorate shall be made upon at least 75% majority of the members' votes cast at that meeting.

Voting shall be by secret ballot by the members only.

5.1.4 TERMINATION OF THE PASTORATE

Three months' notice shall be given by the church or the Pastor before the pastorate is terminated unless another period is negotiated between the parties. Any resolution to terminate the pastorate shall require a vote of at least 66% of votes cast by secret ballot at a properly constituted special members' meeting called for that purpose which will need a quorum of 30% of resident members living within 30km of the church. While it is acknowledged that the Pastoral Team Leader, and any person appointed under section 5.2.1, is not an employee, the church membership shall 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 the pastorate must be referred to an independent party for resolution by way of mediation or such 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, a Staff member of the Baptist Union shall appoint such an independent person.

5.1.5 NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Unless the parties agree in writing to the contrary, the relationship between the church (or membership) and the Pastoral Team Leader and any Pastoral Team appointed under section 5.2.1 will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.

5.2 OTHER PASTORAL STAFF

5.2.1 Where a ministry area cannot be achieved by a volunteer but requires the appointment of a full or part time pastor, that person shall be appointed by the Elders on the recommendation of the Pastoral Team Leader and ratified by a church meeting. Clear terms of call shall accompany the call to that person together with the arrangements for the termination of the call.

5.3 ELDERS

5.3.1 CHARACTER

Elders shall have exhibited, and continue to exhibit, the qualities of an Elder as found in Scripture (i.e. 1 Timothy 3:1–7).

5.3.2 NOMINATIONS

Nominations shall be brought by the members to an Elder or Pastor. The nominees must be church members. After prayerful consideration, the Pastoral Team and Elders will make known the names of the nominees two weeks prior to a church meeting via electronic and verbal communications.

5.3.3 APPOINTMENT

The appointment of an elder requires a majority of not less than 66% of the votes cast by secret ballot at a meeting with a quorum of 25% of resident members living within 30km of the church. There will be a minimum of three Elders and a maximum of six. Elders may serve a two-year term and are eligible for re-election at the end of the term. At the end of the third term the Elder will be required to take a one-year sabbatical with the exception that no more than one third of the Elders will stand down at any one time, to preserve continuity.

5.3.3.1 CO-OPTING

Occasionally there may be a need to co-opt a church member with a specific skill set to sit on the Elders board, for a specific project or time period. The church will be informed via electronic or verbal communications, and from the front. The term will end at the end of the specified project or time OR at the following AGM, whichever is first. The member may then be voted as an elder at the AGM. Time accrued 'co-opted' will not count towards the two-year term of an elder.

5.3.4 RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Elders, along with the Pastoral Team, are responsible for the governance and direction of the church seeking to bring into reality the vision and mission of the church and are accountable to the church.

5.3.5 POLICY

The Elders will determine church policy as required, to be ratified by the members at a normal church meeting.

5.3.6 MEETINGS

The Elders shall meet at least bi-monthly, where possible with the Pastoral Team.

5.4 CORE MINISTRY LEADERS

5.4.1 CORE MINISTRY AREAS

The Leadership Team shall determine the Core Ministry Areas of the church. The Leadership Team may appoint church members to be Core Ministry Leaders, or make Core Ministry Teams heading up Core Ministry Areas. Such appointment will require the ratification by the members at a normal church family meeting or AGM. A Core Ministry Leader may have responsibility for more than one Core Ministry Area. Examples of Core Ministry Areas are: Worship, youth, kids, etc.

5.4.2 CORE MINISTRY LEADERS

The Core Ministry Leaders will be required to work according to the values and policies of the church and within the parameters of the budget allocated to that ministry. They will be given the authority to develop their ministry and will be

accountable to the designated Pastoral Team member for achieving the agreed outcomes. Core Ministry Leaders may appoint other people from within the church to form a team to assist them in their ministry.

5.4.3 MEETINGS

The Pastoral Team leader will meet with the other Pastoral Staff where possible weekly and with all Core Ministry Leaders at least every third month and preferably monthly for prayer, encouragement, to review their progress and assess their Ministry Areas.

5.4.4 PAID STAFF

Where a ministry area cannot be achieved by a volunteer but requires the appointment of a full or part time worker, that person shall be appointed by the Elders on the recommendation of the Pastoral Team Leader and ratified by a church meeting. Clear Job Description and New Zealand employment agreement will be provided and New Zealand employment laws followed.

5.5 MINISTRIES

5.5.1 ESTABLISHING A MINISTRY

When seeking to initiate a new ministry, the initiator should approach a Core Ministry Leader of the Core Ministry Area. The proposed ministry will be discussed by the Elders and Ministry Leader concerned and if approved, that ministry may call itself a ministry of Hamilton South Baptist Church.

5.5.2 RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Leader(s) of the ministry are responsible to the Core Ministry Leader for upholding the good name of the church in the community and following the vision and teaching of the church at all times.

5.5.3 RESIGNATION OR TERMINATION

Should the ministry be unable to continue due to the departure or removal of personnel, the church is not required to continue the ministry in any form.

6. GOVERNANCE OF THE CHURCH

There shall be an annual church members' meeting and such other members' meetings as may be called from time to time.

The annual meeting shall be held within the first two months of the financial year, and contain:

- The consideration of the annual report.
- Approval of the budget for the current financial year.
- Reviewed/audited accounts will be presented for approval at the first available business meeting after the reviewed/audited accounts are available.
- Ratification of Core Ministry Leader positions.
- The election of the Elders.

The Elders may call any other church members' meeting as necessary.

At least two Sundays notice is required for any church members' meeting.

6.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of any church members' meeting shall be to seek to discover and confirm the mind of God on matters affecting the life and work of the church and its mission.

The following are matters that must be decided by a members' meeting:

Calling of a Pastoral Team Leader and other paid Pastoral Staff.

Appointment of Elders.

Approval of the church budget.

Approval of non-budgeted expenditure, outside the agreed parameters that have been delegated to leadership by the members.

Sale, purchase or development of land and property.

Altering this church constitution.

6.2 QUORUM

At least 20% of the resident church membership currently living within 30km of the church property shall be the quorum for any church members' meeting where binding decisions are to be made.

6.2.1 A quorum of at least 30% of the resident church membership living within 30km of the church property is required for a meeting to make any change to the church constitution.

6.3 SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Elders on receipt of a request signed by at least 10% of the resident members shall call a special meeting of the church members within 21 days of the request being received.

Normal notice of the meeting shall be given.

6.4 NATIONAL LEADER

The National Leader of the Baptist Union of New Zealand may call a special church members' meeting by making announcements, or arranging for announcements to be made, on at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. The National Leader or nominee will chair such a meeting.

6.5 CHAIRPERSON

The Elders will appoint a chairperson of the Elders.

6.6 ATTENDANCE

Both church members and others of the congregation are able to attend church meetings, but only members over the age of 16 years may vote. A secret ballot shall be held if requested by not less than 10% of the members present at the meeting or if requested by the chairperson.

7. DECLARATION OF TRUST

7.1 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; 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".

8. ALTERATIONS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

8.1 Any recommended alteration to the constitution shall be publicised at least two Sundays before a members' meeting, by including the details of the proposed change in an electronic communication. No alterations or additions shall be made to the constitution unless adopted by a majority of at least two thirds of the members present at a members meeting.

8.2 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.

9. NO PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL

9.1 No decision of the church or its leadership shall 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 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 the 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 the member has acted in any capacity whatever notwithstanding that member's connection with that company or undertaking is any way attributable to that member's connection with the church.

9.1.5 Nothing shall prevent the church from making payments to any individual (whether a member 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 this clause, shall 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 a 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 PROVISIONS

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 a church meeting that the church should be wound up then the nett proceeds arising from such winding up shall be applied, with the prior approval of the Baptist Union of New Zealand, to such charitable purposes within New Zealand as the members may determine or in default of such determination as may be determined by a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand on application by the members, and such proceeds shall not be paid or distributed amongst the members of the church.

11. ADDENDUM TO THE CONSTITUTION

MEMBERS' PLEDGE

To do my best...

- + To live as a Christian, following the Biblical example and teaching of Jesus Christ;
- + To commit to regular and active participation in the worship, life and work of the Church;
- + To be faithful in prayer for the Church and its outreach, in the community and further afield;
- + To give financially, contributing tithes and offerings to support the Church and its ministries;
- + To share in Church governance, by encouraging the leadership, attending Church members' meetings and participating as I am able;
- + To enrich the spirit of aroha (love) in this fellowship of believers, in a positive, supportive way;
- + To share, by what I do and say, in witnessing to the saving grace of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour;
- + To accept and promote the Biblical beliefs and practices of this Church, including believers' baptism by immersion as the only scriptural baptism;
- + To promote baptism by the Holy Spirit, and minister according to my Spirit giftings.