

Constitution
(As Revised 8th December 2002)

This Church shall be known as the North-East Baptist Church.

1.0 BASIS

The Church Membership shall consist of people who are:

- a Christian with a professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- in agreement with this Church Constitution and Statement of Belief
- committed to the life and ministry of this Church
- admitted into Church Membership in accordance with this Constitution.

2.0 WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe the following:

(1) God.

We believe in one God revealed to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, co-equal and existing forever in unity, creating and ruling the universe.

(2) Jesus Christ.

We believe that Jesus, the Son Of God, came to this earth as God and man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and will come again to judge the world and reign as king and Lord of all.

(3) The Holy Spirit.

We believe the Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to convince people of sin and their accountability to God. He gives new life to all who turn from their sin and receive Jesus as Lord. He lives in believers from the time they turn to Jesus and works to make them holy. He empowers them for Christian life and service, and gives them understanding of spiritual truth and guidance to do what is right.

(4) The Scriptures.

We believe the Bible is inspired by God and is our totally reliable authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

(5) The State of Humanity.

We believe people are created to live in relationship with and have dependence on God. Through our rebellion and self-dependence (sin) all people are separated from God and face God's judgment.

(6) Salvation.

We believe we cannot make up for our sin by self improvement or good works. We are saved when we turn from our self-ruled life (repent) and receive Jesus as Lord by faith. When we are saved, our rebellion and failings are forgiven and we are adopted into God's family forever.

(7) The Future.

We believe people were created to live forever. Everyone will be judged by Jesus for what they have done on earth. Those who have received Jesus will live with him forever (heaven). Those who have ruled their own life will be separated from him forever (hell).

(8) The Autonomy of the Local Church.

We believe Christ is the head of the Church. While recognising the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians (eg the Baptist Union of Queensland), we believe that every local church can independently seek the will of God and make its own decisions based on that knowledge.

(9) Baptism.

We believe that when a person accepts Jesus as Lord he/she should be baptised by immersion under water - the way Jesus was baptised and the way the word "baptism" implies (the Greek word "baptistheito" in Acts 2:38 means "be immersed.") Baptism is a symbol of our identification with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. Baptism also marks the entrance of the believer into Christ's Church.

(10) The Lord's Supper.

We believe Jesus commanded us to remember his sacrifice by regular participation in the Lord's supper. The thankful sharing of bread and the cup represents to us the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, which we enjoy with all other believers.

(11) Christian Service.

We believe that God has gifted every individual in His Church with abilities to be used in their proper context for the building up of His Church.

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

The North-East Baptist Church exists to introduce people to Christ, to worship God, to incorporate people into God's family, and to build them to maturity in Christ through opportunities for the study of the Scriptures and serving according to spiritual giftedness.

4.0 RULES FOR MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Applications For Membership

Persons eligible for Church membership shall be actively involved in the life of the Church for not less than six months.

Upon applying for membership the applicant shall meet with two members ('Visitors') appointed by the Deacons and/or the Church Secretary.

Each applicant for Church Membership shall be given a copy of this Constitution. The Visitors shall explain the privileges and responsibilities of membership to all applicants.

4.2 Admission of Members

4.2.1 To be eligible for Membership the applicant shall be:

- a Christian with a professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- in agreement with this Church Constitution and Statement of Belief
- committed to the life and ministry of this Church.

4.2.2 In seeking to assess eligibility the Visitors and Membership shall use the following criteria:

- love for God and others (*John 13:35: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*)
- fruit of the Spirit (*Matthew 7:16: "By their fruit you will recognise them."*)
- a public profession of faith at some stage in their Christian life (*Romans 10:10: "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*)
- active involvement in the life of the Church (*Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*)

4.2.3 An applicant for membership shall normally have been baptised as a believer. (*Acts 2:41: "Those who accepted his message were baptized..."*)

4.2.4 However, in the specific instance where the applicant has not been baptised but became a Christian in a denomination which did not baptise believers the applicant may still be considered for membership after having been presented with the Church's beliefs regarding Believer's Baptism.

4.2.5 The report of the Visitors shall be presented to a properly constituted Church Meeting which shall vote on the application.

4.3 Reception Of Members

All persons accepted for membership shall sign the roll book and by so doing show their acceptance of this the Constitution of the Church and then be welcomed into membership at a Church worship service. At that time they will be encouraged to make a public profession of faith to the congregation.

4.4 Objections To Membership

No objection to the admission of any person to membership shall be entertained unless the person so objecting shall make a definite charge in which case the application shall be held over for consideration by the pastors and Deacons on whose report a decision shall be reached at a subsequent meeting of the Church.

4.5 Roll Book

The names and addresses of all members of the Church, with the manner of their admission shall be entered in the Church Roll. The Church Roll shall be revised by the Church at least once a year. Should any member fail in regular attendance of Sunday worship, or be absent from the Lord's Table for six months, the Deacons shall, at their next meeting appoint visitors to ascertain the cause of non-attendance. If, on the report of the visitors it appears that the absences are not justified, and the non-attendance persists, the matter will be dealt with according to the Scriptures, Matthew 18:15-17. If deemed appropriate the names of these members shall be deleted from the roll.

5.0 CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP

As Members of the North-East Baptist Church we will strive to:

- [1] Meet together regularly for worship.
- [2] Live holy lives in Christian love, taking care to watch over each other for good, and to encourage one another to love and service.
- [3] Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the Church.
- [4] Pray for one another regularly.
- [5] Pray for the ministries of the Church.
- [6] Pray for the Deacons.
- [7] Acknowledge our pastors' leadership over us in the Lord and support them through prayer and attendance of their ministry.
- [8] Support the Church financially through our offerings.
- [9] Work to extend the Kingdom of God in our own locality and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

6.0 DISCIPLINE

The purpose of Church Discipline is restoration. All cases appearing to call for discipline shall be investigated by the pastors and Deacons in a manner consistent with Matthew 18:15-17. The Church Membership has the authority to suspend a person from membership where deemed necessary.

7.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Church shall elect persons to leadership positions at its Annual Meeting.

Nominees will be appointed upon a clear two-thirds majority vote of the members present at the Annual Meeting.

7.1 Deacons

7.1.1. All candidates for the Diaconate shall first fulfil the Scriptural qualifications of 1 Timothy 3.

7.1.2. The Church shall elect annually by ballot up to seven Deacons. The Deacons shall then appoint appropriate office bearers at their first meeting.

7.1.3. The Church may increase the number of Deacons as may from time to time be considered necessary.

7.1.4. Members of not less than six month's standing shall be eligible for election.

7.1.5. The mode of election shall be by nomination and secret ballot.

7.1.6. Nominations shall be in writing and shall bear a certification that the consent of each nominee has been obtained.

7.1.7. Nominations shall be lodged with the Deacons at least a week before the commencement of the Annual Church Meeting.

7.1.8. In regard to the ballot, notice shall be given at the service on the two next preceding Sundays to the Annual Church Meeting.

7.1.9. All Deacons shall stand down at the Annual Meeting but may be re-elected.

7.1.10. Deacons may also be elected at other times than the Annual Meeting at a properly convened Member's Meeting according to the appropriate conditions above.

7.2 Leaders Other Than Deacons

People nominated for leadership positions shall be members of the Church. Under special circumstances the Diaconate may appoint non-members as leaders. Nominations will usually be confirmed at the Annual Meeting, but vacancies may be filled as necessary.

8.0 THE CHURCH MEETING

8.1. The following matters are dealt with at Church Members' Meetings:

- (a) Election of Church leaders;
- (b) Calling of pastors;
- (c) Adoption of the Church budget;
- (d) Approval of expenditure in excess of \$500;
- (e) Acceptance of new members into membership;
- (f) Issues of Church doctrine;
- (g) Alteration to the constitution;
- (h) Major property issues.

All other decisions are delegated to the elected Deacons.

8.2. Members' Meetings are open to all who call the Church their home although voting rights are reserved to members.

8.3. The members shall meet at least quarterly for the transaction of business, and between such meetings the Deacons shall attend to the business as is delegated to them. The Deacons shall present a report to each Members' Meeting.

8.4. A Special Members' Meeting may be called at any time by the pastors and Deacons on their own initiative, or on the written and signed request of not less than ten members who have been in regular fellowship for 6 months. Such meetings shall be called either in writing or by notice from the pulpit for two Sundays prior to the meeting, provided that always seven clear days notice is given. The nature of the special business shall be stated, and no other business shall be transacted at the meeting.

8.5. Notification of ordinary Church Meetings shall be given at Church services for two Sundays prior to the meeting.

8.6. Minutes of preceding meetings, regular and/or special shall be presented and confirmed before new business is enacted.

8.7. All business should be introduced by motion duly moved and seconded. Where a notice of motion is to be considered it shall be moved and seconded before being dealt with.

- 8.8. All business for the Church Meeting shall first be submitted to the Deacons, preferably in writing.
- 8.9. No member (other than the mover of a motion) shall be allowed to speak more than once to any motion, except by the consent of a majority of the members present, or when called upon by the chairman for an explanation.
- 8.10. All Church organizations shall report regularly to the Church Members' Meeting.
- 8.11. A quorum at any Church Meeting shall be not less than 25% of the membership with a minimum of six.
- 8.12. The business done at a duly called meeting shall be binding on all members.

9.0 CHAIRPERSON OF MEETINGS

The Coordinating Pastor shall be recognized as the ex-officio chairman of the Church and when present, shall preside at all meetings. In his absence a chairman shall be appointed from other members of the pastoral team or from the Diaconate.

10.0 CHURCH FINANCES

- 10.1. The Church accepts the Scriptural principle of tithing to support the Lord's work through the Church, and it is expected that every member shall contribute a portion of their income to the Church.
- 10.2. The Diaconate shall prepare a budget covering the anticipated needs for the local Church and the wider ministry for the forthcoming year.
- 10.3. The Diaconate shall have the right to refuse any donation or gift which comes from what they may deem an unworthy source.
- 10.4. No financial appeals for outside objects shall be circulated by any person without first obtaining the approval of the Diaconate.
- 10.5. On occasions when services or meetings for any object whatsoever are held in the Church facilities, no charge will be set for admission. In all such cases, contributions will be by voluntary offering only.
- 10.6. Cheques will bear the signature of at least two Deacons.

11.0 CHURCH PROPERTY

- 11.1. No Church premises or property can be used for any other purpose than that of our own organizations without first obtaining the approval of the Diaconate.
- 11.2. All property purchases or alterations of a major nature, the encumbrance of Church property by mortgage or lease, or the sale or exchange of the property shall be the subject of seven clear days notice in writing to all members before being dealt with at a Church Meeting.
- 11.3. Property purchased or used by an organization of the Church shall be deemed the property of the Church.
- 11.4. In the event of the Church being dissolved, all property, assets and monies which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland.

12.0 THE PASTORS

- 12.1. The pastors shall be accredited ministers of the Baptist Union of Queensland, but when a vacancy occurs, the Church shall be competent to fill the position by appointing a suitable person in an acting capacity for a limited interim period.
- 12.2. All business connected with the pastorate shall, in the first instance be introduced to the Church Meeting as a recommendation from the Diaconate, the services of the Ministerial Committee of the Baptist Union of Queensland being sought if considered necessary. In the case of a call, this does not exclude the Church Meeting from nominating another name for consideration.
- 12.3. The call shall be made at a properly constituted meeting of which two full weeks notice has been given in writing to all members. A majority of two-thirds of the members present at the meeting is necessary to issue a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated after three months notice from either side.
- 12.4. If the minister shall be found guilty of any moral offence or guilty of any misconduct (deemed such by the Ministerial Committee of the Baptist Union of Queensland) his pastorate shall automatically terminate.

13.0 REPORTS

A record of the Church Meetings will be kept in a Minute Book. A suitable financial report will be presented to each Deacons' and Members' Meeting. The Church shall annually appoint a suitable person to audit Church records and the Auditor's Report presented to the Annual Church Meeting.

Each organization shall present an Annual Report and Financial Statement, duly audited, at the Annual Church Meeting.

A copy of these reports shall be forwarded to the Deacons at least a week before the Annual Church Meeting.

14.0 THE CORPORATION

The Church shall at the Annual Meeting elect, by a two-thirds majority, a maximum of five members to the position of Trustees of the Corporation of the Nundah Baptist Church. All Trustees shall stand down at the Annual Meeting but are eligible for re-election.

Trustees will only act at the direction of the Member's Meeting and subject to Clauses 8.1-8.12 and 11.2.

15.0 ALTERATIONS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

These rules may not be altered, cancelled, or added to, except by a two thirds majority vote of the members present at a special meeting convened for the purpose, and of which meeting one month's previous notice shall have been given in writing to all members, setting out proposed alterations.