

# Church Constitution



North-East  
Baptist Church

Nundah

Revised June 2011



**This Church shall be known as the**

# **North-East Baptist Church**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

**North-East Baptist Church exists:**

- **to worship God**
- **to introduce people to Christ**
- **to incorporate people into God's family**
- **to build them to maturity in Christ through opportunities for the study of the Scriptures and serving church and community according to their spiritual gifts.**

## **2.0 STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

### **(1) God.**

We believe in one God revealed to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - equal, unified, eternal, creator and ruler of the universe.

### **(2) Jesus Christ.**

We believe that Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth as God and man – fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless human life. He offered himself through his willing death on the cross, as the perfect (sinless) sacrifice for the sins of all people. 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 that God the Holy Spirit is equal with God the Father and God the Son. He is present in the world to convince people of their 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 more Christ like. 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 a loving and dependent relationship with God. Because of our corrupt nature (sin), shown by our rebellion and self-dependence (sins), all people are separated from God and are under 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 are created to live forever. After the resurrection, everyone will be judged by Jesus for what they have done on earth. Those who have repented of their sin and accepted Jesus as their Saviour and King will live with him eternally (heaven). Those who have rejected Christ's free gift of salvation will be separated from him eternally (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 (e.g. Queensland Baptists), 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 bread and drink remind us of Christ's death on the cross and the subsequent blessings which we enjoy with all believers.

**(11) Christian Service.**

We believe that God bestows gifts as He chooses on every individual in His Church to be used for the building up of the body of Christ.

## **3.0 RULES FOR MEMBERSHIP**

### **3.1 Applications for Membership**

Any person wishing to apply for membership shall meet with two members referred to as Visitors, who will be appointed by the Senior Pastor. 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 to seek their eligibility for membership as stated in item 3.2.

Admission into Church membership shall be in accordance with this Constitution.

### **3.2 Admission of Members**

3.2.1 To be eligible for membership the applicant shall:

- have a professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- have been actively involved in the life of the Church for not less than six months
- be in agreement with this Church Constitution and Statement of Belief
- be committed to the life and ministry of this Church.

3.2.2 In seeking to assess eligibility, the Visitors and Members 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."*)

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

3.2.4 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.

3.2.5 All persons applying for membership shall sign a Church Membership Application Form and by so doing show their acceptance of the Constitution of the Church.

### **3.3 Reception of Members**

The report of the Visitors shall be presented to a properly constituted Church Meeting, which shall vote on the application. Upon acceptance, new members will then be welcomed into membership at a Church worship service.

### **3.4 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.

### **3.5 Church Roll**

The Church shall maintain a roll of members. 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 Members' Meetings, they will be contacted to enquire of their ongoing commitment to the Church and ministered to as necessary.

### **3.6 Inactive Members' Roll**

Members absent from Church for a prolonged period of time due to age, illness, temporary relocation or other adequate reason will be placed on the "Inactive Members' Roll" until their return to the fellowship. Inactive members maintain all rights and responsibilities of membership but are not counted in calculating the quorum for Church Members' Meetings. Should a person on the Inactive Members' Roll attend a members meeting that person shall be able to vote.

## **4.0 CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

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

- meet together regularly for worship
- live holy lives in Christian love, taking care to watch over each other for good, and to encourage one another to love and service
- endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the Church
- pray for one another regularly
- pray for the ministries of the Church
- pray for the deacons and pastors
- acknowledge our pastors' roles as spiritual leaders and encourage and support them through faithful attendance at services and meetings
- contribute to the financial stability and outreach of the Church through our offerings
- work to extend the Kingdom of God.

## **5.0 DISCIPLINE**

The purpose of Church Discipline is restoration. Any cases appearing to call for discipline shall be investigated by the Senior Pastor and the Diaconate in a manner consistent with Matthew 18:15-17. The Members' Meeting has the authority to suspend a person from membership where deemed necessary.

## **6.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Church shall elect persons to leadership positions at its Annual General Meeting. (AGM.)

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

### **6.1 Deacons**

6.1.1. All candidates for the diaconate shall first fulfil the Scriptural qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3.

6.1.2. At the AGM, the Church shall elect up to seven deacons by ballot. The Deacons shall appoint appropriate office bearers at their first meeting.

6.1.3. The Church may increase the number of deacons from time to time as necessary to the maximum of seven.

6.1.4. Members of at least six months' standing shall be eligible for election.

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

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

6.1.7. Nomination forms will be available at least four weeks prior to the AGM and completed nomination forms will be lodged with the deacons at least two weeks before the commencement of the AGM. (See 6.1.8)

6.1.8. In regard to the ballot, notice shall be given at the services on the two preceding Sundays to the AGM.

6.1.9. All deacons shall stand down at the AGM but may be re-elected. A deacon may not serve more than six consecutive years on the diaconate.

6.1.10. Deacons may also be elected at other times than the AGM at a properly convened Members' Meeting according to the appropriate conditions above.

6.1.11. The deacons should represent all of the ministries of the Church

## **6.2 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 AGM, but vacancies may be filled as necessary.

## **6.3 Senior Pastor**

Under Christ, the Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church. A job description for the Senior Pastor will include the acceptance of this constitution (including statement of belief) to ensure that the Senior Pastor be eligible for membership. The Senior Pastor shall also be an ex officio member of the diaconate.

## **7.0 THE CHURCH MEETING**

7.1. The following matters will be dealt with at Church Members' Meetings:

- election of Church leaders;
- calling of pastors;
- adoption of the Church budget;
- approval of unbudgeted expenditure in excess of 1% of the total expenditure budget;
- acceptance of new members into membership;
- issues of Church doctrine;
- alteration to the constitution;
- major property issues.

All other decisions will be delegated to the elected deacons.

7.2. Members' Meetings will be open to all who call the Church their home although voting rights will be reserved for members.

7.3. The members shall meet at least quarterly for the transaction of business. Between such meetings, the deacons shall attend to the business as delegated to them. The deacons shall present a report to each Members' Meeting.

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

- 7.5. Notification of any Church Meetings together with an agenda for the meeting shall be given at Church services for two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- 7.6. Minutes of preceding meetings shall be presented and confirmed before any new business is commenced. Minutes of previous Special meetings shall be included with the minutes of the members' meeting. At the Special Members' Meetings, minutes from any previous meeting (regular or Special) will not be read unless the minutes refer to the subject of the Special Members' Meeting being held.
- 7.7. All business for the Church Meeting shall first be submitted to the Deacons, preferably in writing.
- 7.8. All business should be introduced by a motion duly moved and seconded. Where a notice of a motion is to be considered it shall be moved and seconded before being opened for discussion.
- 7.9. 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 Chair for an explanation.
- 7.10. All Church ministries shall report regularly to the Church Members' Meeting.
- 7.11. A quorum at any Church Meeting shall be not less than 25% of the active membership.
- 7.12. The business done at a duly called meeting shall be binding on all members.

## **8.0 CHAIRPERSON OF MEETINGS**

The diaconate shall appoint a suitable person(s) to chair the diaconate and members' meetings. The Chair of the diaconate shall communicate with the Senior Pastor and Secretary to set agendas for diaconate and members' meetings.

## **9.0 CHURCH FINANCES**

- 9.1. The Church accepts the Scriptural principle of giving freely to support the Lord's work. The Old Testament system was tithing, i.e. giving a tenth of God's provision, under Law. Now under grace every member may cheerfully contribute, as God enables, a portion of their income through the Church to the ongoing support of the Lord's work.
- 9.2. The diaconate shall prepare a budget covering the anticipated needs for the local Church and the wider ministry for the forthcoming year.

- 9.3. The diaconate shall have the right to refuse any donation or gift, which comes from what they may deem an unworthy source.
- 9.4. Financial appeals for projects not related to North-East Baptist Church's activities shall not be circulated by any person without first obtaining the approval of the diaconate.
- 9.5. 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 donation only.
- 9.6. For accountability, all cheques will bear the signatures of at least two deacons.
- 9.7 Offering monies must be counted by at least two church members and recorded appropriately. If two members are not present then the offering is to be kept safe until two members are present to count the offering.

## **10.0 CHURCH PROPERTY**

- 10.1. No Church premises or property can be used for any other purpose than that of our own ministries without first obtaining the approval of the Senior Pastor or Church Secretary.
- 10.2. 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 days' clear notice in writing to all members before being dealt with at a Special Church Meeting.
- 10.3 Property purchased or used by a ministry of the Church shall be deemed the property of the Church for insurance purposes
- 10.4 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.

## **11 THE PASTORS**

- 11.1. The Senior Pastor shall be a registered minister or approved by the Queensland Baptists, or in the process of becoming registered.
- 11.2. The deacons shall determine on a case-by-case basis whether pastors other than the Senior Pastor will be required to be registered.
- 11.3. Pastors accepting a call to ministry at North-East Baptist Church shall become members of the Church.

- 11.4 All business connected with a pastoral call shall, in the first instance, be introduced to the Church Meeting as a recommendation from the diaconate. The services of the Queensland Baptist Ministerial Committee should be sought in relation to a pastoral call.
- 11.5. The formal call shall be for a pre-determined period. The call shall be made at a properly constituted meeting of which two weeks' notice has been given. A majority of two-thirds of the members present at the meeting is necessary to issue a call.
- 11.6. The call of the Senior Pastor may be terminated (or not renewed) by a duly convened Members' Meeting after following the relevant grievance procedure. A quorum of not less than 25% of the active membership at the meeting is necessary to terminate or not renew a call.
- 11.7 The diaconate is authorised to terminate or not renew the call of a Pastor, other than the Senior Pastor, as necessary, after following the relevant grievance procedure, and report to the Members on this decision at the next Members Meeting.
- 11.8 If the Pastor shall be found guilty of any moral offence or guilty of any misconduct (deemed such by the Queensland Baptist Ministerial Committee) his/her pastorate shall automatically terminate.
- 11.9 When a vacancy occurs, the Church Members' Meeting shall be competent to fill the position by appointing a suitable person in an acting capacity for a limited interim period.

## **12 REPORTS**

A record of the Church Members' Meetings will be kept in the Church Office and be available for any member upon request. A financial report incorporating a statement of receipts and expenditure will be presented to each deacons' and Members' Meeting. The Church shall annually appoint an appropriately qualified person to audit Church records and the Auditor's Report will be presented at the AGM.

Each ministry group shall present an Annual Report and Financial Statement, duly audited, at the AGM.

A copy of these reports shall be forwarded to the deacons at least four weeks before the AGM.

### **13 THE CORPORATION**

The Church shall at the AGM 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 AGM but are eligible for re-election.

Trustees will only act at the direction of the Members' Meeting and are subject to Clauses 7.1-7.12 and 10.2.

### **14 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.