

DARFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH: CONSTITUTION

As at November 2018

1. THE CHURCH

1.1 The name of the church is the Darfield Baptist Church

1.2 The church is a community of those who believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit -one God; who are repentant of sin and have been saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ through His atoning death and resurrection; who publicly confess their faith and who are committed to the church's aims and functions.

1.3 The church believes in~

1.3.1 The true humanity and Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

1.3.2 The atonement made on the cross by our Lord for the sin of the world

1.3.3 The person of the Holy Spirit as the one who sets apart, empowers, and imparts spiritual gifts to the church

1.3.4 The inspiration of the bible and its authority in all matters of faith and practice

1.3.5 Salvation and membership in the church by faith in Christ alone

1.3.6 Membership of the church for the regenerate

1.3.7 The immersion of believers as the only scriptural form of baptism

1.4 The Ordinances of the church are:

1.4.1 Believers' baptism by immersion

1.4.2 Communion (the Lord's Supper) which is held at least monthly and open to all believers

2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The aims and functions are: Within New Zealand

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

2.2 To express the love of God to the community through the ministries of the Word and practical care

2.3 In every possible way to seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ and bring them into membership of the church

2.4 Engage in the task of mission principally within New Zealand but also overseas. (see Matthew 28 vv 19-20)

3. STRUCTURE

3.1 The church is an autonomous body governed through its members, working closely with regional and national Baptist staff, the Local Baptist Association, the Baptist Churches of New Zealand, and the wider body of Christ

3.2 The leadership shall consist of the Pastor(s), together with Elders and Ministry Leaders, all of whom are responsible to the membership for the oversight and direction of the church.

Responsibilities: The Elders, along with the Senior Pastor are responsible for the governance and direction of the church, and the Senior Pastor and the Ministry Leaders seek to bring into reality the vision and mission of the church.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Membership is open to all who subscribe to Darfield Baptist's shared statement of faith, vision and mission, who agree with the church's distinctive values, and who are willing to be committed to them in fellowship with the other members. Darfield Baptist Church views Believer's Baptism as the normal rite of Christian initiation. However anyone who conscientiously declines to be baptised may still be a member. Requests for membership shall be made to the pastoral staff or the Eldership, who are responsible to the membership for acceptance or otherwise.

4.2

Transfers

A member from another Baptist church may be received into membership when a letter of commendation and transfer is received from the previous church and endorsed by this church's leadership.

4.3 Membership Roll

A membership roll should be kept and reviewed annually.

5. LEADERSHIP

5.1 Senior Pastor

5.1.1 Pastoral Responsibility

The pastor shall be entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the church in co-operation with the other members of the leadership. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all organisations of the church.

5.1.2 Pastoral Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the church shall appoint a search committee. The committee shall begin its work by making contact with the local Baptist Union Pastoral Placement Advisor. All names suggested shall be considered by the committee and discussed with the Advisor. The committee shall bring one nomination to the church at a meeting called for that purpose. Two weeks' notice shall be given of the meeting. No call to the pastorate shall be made except on the votes of 70% or more of the members present at the meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

5.1.3 Conclusion of Pastorate

The church membership or the pastor shall give three months' notice before the pastorate is terminated, unless another period is negotiated between the parties. A termination of service/resignation agreement should be clearly worked out by an independent arbitrator and any need for arbitration will be carried out in terms of the Baptist Union Terms of Call.

5.1.4 Other Pastoral Staff shall operate under the direction of the senior pastor. Nominations for pastoral staff positions shall be submitted to the Elders, and thence to the church meeting. No call to a pastoral staff position shall be forwarded except on a vote of 70% or more of the members present at the meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot. The clear conditions offered shall accompany the call together with the term of the call and arrangements for the termination of the ministry.

5.2 Elders

5.2.1 Nominations

Shall be brought by the leadership to a church meeting. A ballot vote of not less than 65% of the members present at the meeting shall be required. Elders shall serve a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

5.2.2 Character

Elders shall have exhibited the qualities of an elder, as found in 1 Tim.3 vv 1-7.

5.2.3 Responsibilities

With the pastor and pastoral staff for the oversight of the church.

5.2.4 Meetings

Elders shall meet at least monthly with the pastor.

5.3 Ministry Leaders

5.3.1 Ministry Areas

The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall determine the ministry areas, one of which will be the Administration Team, which is responsible for the administrative and financial and property necessities of the church.

5.3.2 Appointment

The Senior Pastor and Elders shall appoint church members to lead the ministry areas. Such appointment shall require the ratification of the members.

5.3.3 Responsibilities

The Ministry Leader shall lead their ministry according to the values and policies of the church and within the parameters of the budget allocated to that ministry. They shall be given the authority to develop their ministry and shall be accountable to the Senior Pastor for achieving the agreed outcomes. Each Ministry Leader shall develop an annual plan for their ministry, which includes goals and expected outcomes and resources required. This plan shall be made in consultation with the Senior Pastor and be ratified by the Elders.

5.4 Other Church appointments e.g. life group leaders, pastoral visitors and ancillary staff, shall be appointed by the leadership.

6. CHURCH MEETINGS

6.1 Frequency

The church members shall meet not less than three times each year, one meeting of which to be the annual general meeting. The church year shall end on the 31st December. The members shall consider and approve the annual plans for the next 12 months and approval of the budget. The annual meeting shall include: a report presented by the church administrator and reviewed or audited accounts by the treasurer. Election of Elders shall be normally made at the annual meeting, but vacancies may be filled at any church meeting, provided two weeks' notice of the intention is advised.

6.2 Purpose

The purpose of each meeting shall be to discover and confirm the mind of the Lord on matters affecting the life and work of the church and its mission.

6.3 Quorum

At least 25% of the resident church membership is required at any members' meeting where decisions are to be made.

6.4 Special Meetings

The Church Administrator, on receipt of a request signed by at least 10% of the resident membership, shall call a special meeting of the church within 21 days of the request being received. Two weeks' notice of the special meeting must be given. Only the business of the advertised agenda may be dealt with at such a special meeting.

6.5 Chairperson

The pastor or nominee shall chair all members' meetings, except when the pastor is personally interested or is unwilling or unable to act. In such cases the Elders shall nominate a chairperson who shall be a person of good standing in a Baptist church and accepted by the church meeting.

6.6 Attendance

Both church members and members of the congregation are able to attend church meetings, but only church members may vote. The chairperson shall have a deliberative vote and, in the case of an equality of votes, may make a casting vote. Voting shall be by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested by not less than 10% of the members present at the meeting.

6.7 Church Discipline

The church shall have the power to admonish, suspend or expel any member for misconduct. Should a dispute in the church arise causing a serious division and remain unsolved, the church, if requested by 25% of the resident membership, shall apply for advice and help to the Baptist Union National Resource Centre.

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. NO PRIVATE PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL

8.1 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:

8.1.1 A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred by that member in connection with the affairs of the church;

8.1.2 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;

8.1.3 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 that member is a partner, employee or associate, in connection with the affairs of the church;

8.1.4 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 that member has acted in any capacity whatever notwithstanding that member's connection with that company or undertaking is in any way attributable to that member's connection with the church.

8.1.5 Nothing shall prevent the church from making payments to any individual (whether a member of the church or not) in fulfilling any of the purposes expressed in clause 2 hereof.

8.2 Members or leaders of the church, in determining 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.

8.3 Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in this 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.

9. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

9.1 No alterations or additions to this Constitution shall be made unless adopted by a majority of at least 65% of the members present 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 8 and 10 hereof. Notice of proposed alterations or amendments to the Constitution shall be given to the church on two Sundays prior to the meeting.

10. WINDING UP PROVISIONS

10.1 Subject to clauses 17, 18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923, 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 should 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, 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. CHURCH PROCEDURES MANUAL

11.1 The Constitution provides a framework for the governance of how Darfield Baptist Church make decisions on behalf of the church body.

The church Elders shall define and maintain a manual of operating procedures, guidelines and protocols for the day to day operation of Darfield Baptist Church.

The procedures manual is distinct from the Constitution. Alterations to the procedures within the procedures manual can be made as required by the Church Eldership.

Member's Pledge:

- To live at all times such a life as reflects a true Christian and member of the church
- To take an active and diligent part in the life and work of the church, regularly attending its services of worship as far as I am able, and being willing to help in whatever way I can
- To be faithful in prayer for the church and its witness in the community
- To share conscientiously in contributing to the funds of the church according to my means
- To share in the government of the church by attending, as I am able, the meetings called for the transaction of the business of the church
- To do all in my power to deepen and enrich the spirit of fellowship in the church, always seeking to develop a spirit of love in this fellowship of Christ's people
- To share by life and word in the supreme task of the church, namely witnessing to the saving, keeping power of Jesus Christ our Lord.