

# **OREWA BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **CONSTITUTION**

**REVISED 27 MAY 2018**

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## 1. THE CHURCH

- 1.1 The name of the church is the Orewa Baptist Church.
- 1.2 The church is a community of those 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 in: (Articles of faith as listed in the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923).
  - 1.3.1 The inspiration of the Bible and its authority in all matters of faith and practice.
  - 1.3.2 The true humanity and Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 1.3.3 The atonement made by our Lord on the Cross for the sin of the world.
  - 1.3.4 Salvation by faith in Christ alone.
  - 1.3.5 Membership in the Christian Church for the regenerate. Refer appendix 1.3.5
  - 1.3.6 The immersion of believers as the only scriptural form of baptism.

## 2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

- 2.1 To meet regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, encouragement and fellowship.
- 2.2 To engage in the task of mission, principally within New Zealand but also overseas.
- 2.3 To express God's love to the community through ministries of the Word and practical care.
- 2.4 In every possible way to seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ and bring them into His church.

## 3. STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The church is an autonomous body governed 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 Senior Pastor, together with the Elders'.

## 4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been baptised by immersion as a believer, shows evidence of following Christ in newness of life may apply to become a church member.
  - 4.1.1 Membership of the church from 7 December 2017 is for those who have received salvation and been baptised by immersion as a believer. However, any believer who desires to be baptised but due to physical disability (or other special reason) is prevented from immersion baptism may apply to the Elders for membership on the same basis as baptised believers. All current members, received into membership under previous constitutions of this church, will now have recognition as a member of the Orewa Baptist Church.
- 4.2 Application for membership shall be made to a Pastor or an Elder. Membership interviews shall be undertaken by the Pastors, Elders or other authorized persons who shall be appointed for that specific role. After the applicant has applied the Pastoral Staff and Elders will consider the application and make a decision. The church members shall be advised of the membership application by notice in the church newsletter for two weeks. If no reasons are received against the person being admitted as a member the applicant shall be received into membership thereafter.
- 4.3 A membership roll shall be kept. The roll shall be reviewed annually by staff and Elders. Any member who has ceased to attend the church shall be contacted, where possible, and given the opportunity to comment. Depending on the outcome membership may be revoked.
- 4.4 **Resolution of differences and church discipline**
  - 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.
    - The Elders shall have the power to admonish, suspend or expel a member for misconduct.
  - 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 members 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 Senior Pastor**

#### **5.1.1 Pastoral Responsibility**

The Senior Pastor shall be entrusted with the oversight of the church along with the Elders. The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Elders. The other pastoral staff shall be accountable to the Elders through the Senior Pastor.

#### **5.1.2 Pastoral Vacancy**

**5.1.2.1** When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the church members may, on the recommendation of the Elders, appoint an interim pastor who shall temporarily take up this function.

**5.1.2.2** A search committee shall be appointed by the Elders. Any search committee shall consist of some of the Elders along with other qualified people whom the Elders shall choose. The committee shall be guided by the Baptist Union pastoral placement protocols. The committee shall bring one nomination to a church 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 at least 75% of the votes cast at that meeting.

Voting shall be by secret ballot.

#### **5.1.3 Termination of the Pastorate**

Three months' notice shall be given by the church members 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 55% of votes cast by secret ballot at a properly constituted special members' meeting called for that purpose.

While it is acknowledged that the Senior Pastor, and any person appointed, 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 Senior Staff member of the Baptist Union shall appoint such an independent person.

#### **5.1.4 Nature of the Relationship**

Unless the parties agree in writing to the contrary, the relationship between the church and the Senior Pastor and any Pastoral Staff appointed will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.

### **5.2 Elders**

#### **5.2.1 Nominations**

These shall be brought by the leadership (see 3.2) to a church members meeting. Election of elders shall require a majority of not less than 75% of the votes cast by secret ballot. Elders shall serve for a term of two years and shall be eligible for re-election.

#### **5.2.2 Character**

Elders shall have exhibited the qualities of an Elder as found in I Timothy 3:1–7. There shall be no restriction on female or male church members being nominated for the position of Elder.

#### **5.2.3 Responsibilities**

The Elders, along with the Senior Pastor are responsible for the spiritual leadership, oversight and direction of the church.

#### **5.2.4 Meetings**

The Elders shall meet at least twelve times per year with the Senior Pastor and, if required by the elders, other Pastoral staff. There shall be a minimum of five (5) elders

of which no less than three (3) must be in attendance at elders meetings to make up a quorum.

#### **5.2.5 Eldership**

Only members of Orewa Baptist Church are eligible for election to eldership.

## **6. Pastoral Staff, Staff and Ministry Leaders**

### **6.1 Pastoral Staff**

Those staff considered "Pastors" in the life of the church shall receive from the church a Letter of Call to their ministry position, subject to 7.1. Clear terms of call shall accompany the call to that person together with the arrangements for the termination of the call. Existing Pastoral Staff roles may be amended by the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Elders, to improve the pastoral servicing of the church members.

### **6.2 Ministry Areas**

The Senior Pastor and Elders shall determine the ministry areas of the church.

The Senior Pastor may appoint church members to be Ministry Leaders heading up ministry areas. Such appointment will require the ratification of the Elders.

### **6.3 Ministry Leaders**

Each Ministry Leader will develop a plan, including goals expected outcomes and the resources required. This plan requires the agreement of the Senior Pastor

The Ministry Leader 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 Senior Pastor for achieving the agreed outcomes.

In consultation with the Senior Pastor a Ministry Leader may appoint other church members to form a team to assist them in their ministry.

Where a ministry area cannot be achieved by a volunteer but requires the appointment of a staff worker (full time or part time), that person shall be appointed by the Elders on the recommendation of the Senior Pastor, subject to 6.1.

The Elders may appoint administration teams to manage the finance and property as required

## **7. GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**

There shall be an annual church members meeting and such other members meetings as may be called by the Elders from time to time or as set out in clauses 7.3 or 7.4.

The church financial year shall end at the end of the calendar year. The annual meeting shall be held in or near the end of February and shall include:

- The consideration of the annual report.
- Consideration of the unaudited accounts for the previous year (refer explanatory appendix). The election of the Elders shall normally be made at this meeting but can be made at any members meeting. The Elders may call any other church members meeting as necessary.
- There shall be a members meeting held in the last quarter of the year for approval of the future year's budget.

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

### **7.1 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 Senior Pastor and other 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.
- Purchase or development of land and property.
- Altering this church constitution.

### **7.2 Quorum**

All church members meetings must have a quorum of at least 20% of the church membership. The calculation of the quorum shall not take into account missionaries or members living abroad, members who are in hospital or are incapacitated and thus unable to attend the church meeting.

**7.3 Special Meetings**

The Elders, on receipt of a request signed by at least 10% of the active 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.

**7.4 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.

**7.5 Chairperson**

The Elders will appoint a chairperson.

**7.6 Attendance**

Both church members and others of the congregation are able to attend church members meetings, but only members may vote. For decisions relative to 4.4.2 only church members may be present. A secret ballot shall be held if requested by not less than 10% of the members present at those meetings or if requested by the chairperson.

**7.7 Voting**

**7.7.1** A majority of 75% of the valid votes cast is required for the appointment of Elders and Pastoral staff.

**7.7.2** A majority of 55% of the valid votes cast is required for the termination of Elders, Senior Pastor or other Pastoral Staff and Ministry Team Leaders.

**7.7.3** A majority of 67% of the valid votes cast is required for all other decisions at Church Members meetings.

**7.8 Charitable Trust**

The church may set up a Charitable Trust or Trusts to provide resources which will enable the Church through the Trust to minister to its local community by seeking to meet the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and educational needs of the people of its local community. The church shall elect Trustees when required under the relevant Trust Deed(s). Nominations and voting shall be in accordance with the election of Elders in section 5.2.1 of this Constitution.

## **8. DECLARATION OF TRUST**

**8.1** 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".

## **9. ALTERATIONS TO THIS CONSTITUTION**

**9.1** Any recommended alteration to the constitution shall be publicised at least four Sundays before a members meeting, either by including the details of the proposed change in the church newsletter or by email to all congregants on the church email list. No alterations or additions shall be made to the constitution unless adopted by a majority of at least 67% of the members present at a members meeting.

**9.2** 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 10 and 11 hereof.

## **10. NO PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL**

**10.1** 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:

**10.1.1** A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred in connection with the affairs of the church;

**10.1.2** 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;

**10.1.3** 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.

**10.1.4** 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.

**10.1.5** 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.

**10.2** 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

**10.3** 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.

## **11. 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 net 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.

### **Appendix to the Constitution**

#### **Member's Pledge:**

Being called of God into the fellowship of His people and into the membership of this church, I pledge by the grace of God to strive;

- To live at all times a life befitting a true Christian and an ambassador 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 supporting and encouraging the leadership of the church and by attending church members meetings.
- 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 by witnessing to the saving power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### **Explanatory appendix:**

**1.3.5** A modern rendition of this article of faith would read; Membership in the Christian Church is for those who have received salvation.

- 7.** Unaudited accounts. As the church financial year ends 31 December it is generally not possible to have financial accounts prepared and audited for the AGM in February. Thus, the unaudited financial accounts under consideration were actually for the year previous to the preceding year. The final acceptance of the accounts once audited is the responsibility of the Elders who are to report to the church if any irregularities or material differences are found from the accounts originally presented.