



Constitution

June 2009

Kingswood Baptist Church is a Fellowship of Christians committed to being and making Disciples of Jesus Christ.

1. THE CHURCH AND ITS NAME

The Church means members of the charitable unincorporated association governed by this Constitution and known as Kingswood Baptist Church (or such other name as shall subsequently be adopted by decision of the Church Members' Meeting and with the consent of the Charity Commission).

2. PURPOSE

The principal Purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.

3. BELIEFS

3.1. As a Member of the Baptist Union the Church subscribes to the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle:

“That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who ‘died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again on the third day’.

That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.”

3.2. “We also believe in...

- The one true God who lives eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.

- The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God – fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
- The dignity of all people, made male and female in God’s image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
- The incarnation of God’s eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – born of the virgin Mary, truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
- The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
- The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
- The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers – given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit’s gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
- The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.”

4. ACTIVITIES

4.1. In fulfilling the Purpose, the Church will engage in a range of Activities either on its own or with others that will vary from time to time with Activities being initiated, expanded or closed, as appropriate.

4.2. The Activities may include but are not restricted to:

- regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching;

- baptism, as defined in the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle;
- the Communion of the Lord's Supper which shall normally be observed at least once a month;
- evangelism and mission, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- the teaching, encouragement, welcome and inclusion of young people;
- nurture and growth of Christian disciples;
- education and training for Christian and community service;
- giving and encouraging pastoral care;
- supporting and encouraging charitable social action in the United Kingdom and abroad;
- encouraging relationships with and supporting Baptists and other Christians.

4.3. Notwithstanding the appointment of persons to accept responsibility for any of the Activities all individuals, organisations, groups and committees operating within the life of the Church, and their leaders, shall be accountable to the Charity Trustees and also through any specific direction of the Church Members' Meeting.

5. AFFILIATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

5.1. The Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (Baptist Union) and the Eastern Baptist Association (Association).

5.2. The Church will normally promote, encourage, support and advance the work of the Baptist Union, the Association, BMS World Mission and other Christian missions and organizations through prayer, through financial contributions and, where appropriate, by making personnel available from the membership of the Church. When it is able the Church will also support local Baptist and ecumenical gatherings.

6. BELONGING TO THE CHURCH

6.1. The responsibilities of membership are specified in the following **Membership Covenant** (Full bible readings appear in appendix):

“We, the members of Kingswood Baptist Church, covenant together to extend the influence of God’s Kingdom and to live lives individually and in relationship together that bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ. Recognising our human frailty and our frequent need for forgiveness, in pursuing these goals we accept our responsibility to help one another to:

- Worship and pray, being faithful in personal devotions, in our support of the life of the Church and in our attendance at worship services, the Communion of the Lord’s Supper and prayer meetings.

Acts 2:42 Hebrews 10:25

- Maintain and safeguard right doctrine and practice as taught in the Bible, our only authority for belief and practice.

2 Timothy 4:2-5 Ephesians 4:1-14

- Encourage one another and care for one another in a spirit of mutual love and compassion, always striving to maintain the unity of heart, mind and purpose, which is ours through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:9-10 Ephesians 4:2-3

- Give of our time wholeheartedly in the work and ministry of the Church through prayer and practical service.

1 Corinthians 12

- Give of our financial resources systematically and generously as God has prospered us.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

- Maintain, as far as possible, a relationship of love and co-operation with Christians in other Churches.

John 17:20-23

- Take part in the evangelisation of the world, particularly our local area.

Matthew 28:18-20 Acts 1:7-8

- Work together to show in practical ways the love of Jesus to the community around us.

Matthew 26:31-46 Mark 12:28-34 Luke 6:27-35

6.2. If there are differences that lead to difficulties between Members of the Church (and it is recognised that these will sometimes arise) each Member should try to resolve the situation with gentleness and humility following Christian and Biblical principles. It may be necessary for another wise and experienced member of this Church (or if invited a member of a neighbouring Church or representative of the Association) to act as mediator or friend to those seeking to achieve reconciliation.

7. JOINING AND BECOMING A CHURCH MEMBER

7.1. Baptism by immersion upon personal profession of faith is the normal mode of entry into the membership of a Baptist Church.

7.2. The Church shall apply the following Baptismal qualification for Church Membership:

Open membership so that persons seeking membership who have not been baptised in the manner described in the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle may at the discretion of the Church Members' Meeting be accepted for full membership based on their own public profession of faith.

7.3. Church Membership is open to those who:

- accept the Beliefs of the Church;
- meet the Church's qualification on Baptism;
- commit themselves to serving Christ within the Church and beyond;
- abide by the decisions of the Church Members' Meeting;
- aspire to fulfilling the Membership Covenant;
- have their membership application accepted by the Church Members' Meeting.

7.4. A person wishing to become a Church Member shall apply in a manner determined by the Church Members' Meeting.

7.5. The Church Members' Meeting will consider and decide on the application for membership and if accepted the new member will normally be welcomed publicly.

8. THE MEMBERSHIP LIST

- 8.1.** A list of the current Church Members shall be maintained by the Charity Trustees incorporating routine changes because of additions or deletions arising through death, transfer to another church, resignation or a resolution by a Church Members' Meeting.
- 8.2.** Routine changes to the membership list shall be reported at the next convenient Church Members' Meeting.
- 8.3.** In order to keep the membership list up to date the membership list shall be reviewed at least once every three years when the Church Members' Meeting may resolve to make any appropriate deletions.
- 8.4.** At any time, in exceptional circumstances where the conduct of a Member is considered to be contrary to the Purpose and Beliefs of the Church and/or disruptive to the relationships between Members then the Charity Trustees may recommend to a Church Members' Meeting that the membership of that person be reviewed. The Church Members may, after considering the facts, terminate the membership of that person. The Church Member shall be allowed to hear what is said at the Church Members' Meeting, to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing from the meeting so that the Church Members' Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether they should resolve to remove that person's name from the list of Members.

9. CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

- 9.1.** Church Members shall meet together in a Church Members' Meeting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ to discern the mind of God in the affairs of the Church.
- 9.2.** The Church Members' Meeting shall have reserved authority in the appointment and removal of a Minister, the appointment and removal of Charity Trustees, decisions related to Church property including (without limitation) any purchase, sale, lease,

mortgage or redevelopment of property, the administration of the Membership List and the closure of the Church.

9.3. Any decisions taken under 9.2 in relation to property must comply with the requirements of statute law and any specific property trusts under which the land and buildings are used and occupied by the Church.

10. ORDINARY AND SPECIAL CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

10.1. There are two types of formal Church Members' Meetings, Ordinary Church Members' Meetings and Special Church Members' Meetings.

10.2. Ordinary Church Members' Meetings shall be held at regular intervals on not less than four occasions in any calendar year and shall be an opportunity to consider and review routine matters associated with the life of the Church including issues related to Church Membership, the approval of the budget, with opportunities for considering proposals from the Charity Trustees or other Church Members for the development of the Church and the advancement of its Purpose through its Activities.

10.3. One Ordinary Church Members' Meeting each year shall include the Annual Church Members' Meeting for the Church Members to receive annual accounts and reports, to appoint Auditors or Independent Examiners, and to consider proposals for the strategy and vision of the Church in the coming year, with other appropriate matters.

10.4. A Special Church Members' Meeting shall be convened when necessary to consider the appointment or dismissal of a Minister, the appointment or dismissal of a Charity Trustee, matters relating to the purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or redevelopment of Church property, the closure of the Church or matters considered by the Charity Trustees to be of sufficient importance to require the calling of a Special Church Members' Meeting.

11. CALLING CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

- 11.1.** Church Members' Meetings shall be convened by the Charity Trustees so as to be convenient for as many Church Members as is reasonable.
- 11.2.** An Ordinary Church Members' Meeting shall be properly convened if as a minimum requirement the date, time and place for the meeting are publicised at the worship service or services on the previous Sunday (or other regular weekly meeting time when the Church gathers together) with an indication (if possible) of the matters to be considered.
- 11.3.** A Special Church Members' Meeting shall be properly convened if as a minimum requirement the date, time and place for the meeting are publicised, with as full an indication of the matters to be considered as possible, at the public worship service or services on the two previous Sundays (or other regular weekly meeting time when the Church gathers together).
- 11.4.** Additional meetings whether Special or Ordinary shall be convened by the Charity Trustees as necessary but they shall have specific responsibility to convene a Special Church Members' Meeting as soon as possible upon the receipt of a written request for a meeting signed by at least one tenth of the Church Membership or twelve Church Members, whichever is the less.
- 11.5.** Members, invited guests and, if publicly invited, those who normally attend Church events may attend a Church Members' Meeting but only Members may vote.

12. THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

- 12.1.** Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be a key feature of the Church Members' Meeting. The discussion of any matters affecting the life and activities of the Church shall be set in this context with the intention that, so far as possible, practical issues are not perceived as being separate from the spiritual aspects of the Church.

- 12.2. A quorum of 25% of the total number of Church Members shall apply to Church Members' Meetings.
- 12.3. The Senior Minister of the Church shall normally chair Church Members' Meetings but in his/her absence or at his/her request the Members, after receiving advice from the Charity Trustees may choose another to fulfil this role.
- 12.4. A resolution passed at either an Ordinary Church Members' Meeting or a Special Church Members' Meeting shall not be rescinded within one year, unless notice of the resolution for rescission is given at the Church Members' Meeting prior to that at which there is to be a vote on the resolution to rescind.

13. VOTING

- 13.1. Members shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at a Church Members' Meeting.
- 13.2. Where legally necessary or where requested by three or more Members a vote shall be taken and the outcome of the vote recorded as the resolution of the Members.
- 13.3. Each Member shall have one vote which they may use at the Church Members' Meeting after hearing about the issues and any comments or questions raised by other Members in advance of the vote.
- 13.4. No proxy votes shall be allowed, and no postal votes shall be valid.
- 13.5. A resolution at an Ordinary Church Members' Meeting shall be carried if supported by a majority of the Members present, entitled to vote and voting.
- 13.6. If there is an equality of votes on any matter at an Ordinary Church Members' Meeting the resolution will be considered rejected and the matter shall be referred back to the submitter for review and if appropriate resubmission to a subsequent Church Members' Meeting for consideration.
- 13.7. A resolution at a Special Church Members' Meeting shall be carried if supported by at least two thirds of the Members present, entitled to vote and voting.

13.8. Although Members of any age may attend and participate in a Church Members' Meeting the minimum age for voting will be determined by the Church Members' Meeting.

14. MINUTES

14.1. The business conducted at Church Members' Meetings and, in particular, any decisions of the Members shall be recorded in the Minutes for future reference.

14.2. The Minutes shall be written or printed and filed in a book or binder set aside for this purpose using materials of sufficient quality to ensure that they survive for many years and shall be kept in a safe place.

14.3. Each set of Minutes shall be approved by the Church Members attending the next Church Members' Meeting. They shall have the opportunity to review the Minutes and to correct any errors of fact before a formal vote on the approval of the Minutes is taken. If the Minutes are approved the person chairing the Church Members' Meeting shall confirm the Members' acceptance of the Minutes by signing and dating them as a correct record of the preceding meeting.

14.4. The signed Minutes shall be conclusive evidence of the decisions taken at the Church Members' Meeting to which they relate.

15. THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

15.1. The statutory definition of Charity Trustees in Section 97(1) of the Charities Act 1993 is "persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity."

15.2. The Church Members' Meeting shall appoint Charity Trustees to be responsible for the governance of the Church and where there is a Minister that person is a Charity Trustee because of their role and responsibilities. Subject to any specific or general directions of the Church Members' Meeting and the provisions of 9.2 the control management and administration of the Church shall be by the Charity Trustees, save that the Charity Trustees

are not required to do anything that would cause them to be in breach of this Constitution or any trustee duty placed upon them as a result of this role.

- 15.3.** No person may serve as a Charity Trustee if they are disqualified.
- 15.4.** Charity Trustees shall with the possible exception of any newly appointed Minister be chosen from among the Church Members with the maximum number of Charity Trustees being agreed from time to time by the Church Members' Meeting.
- 15.5.** In this Church it shall be the Minister(s) if any, Elders and Deacons (known together as the Leadership) who together are the Charity Trustees of the Church at the time of adoption of this Constitution or the registration of the Charity with the Charity Commission.
- 15.6.** The Church Members' Meeting shall arrange for the appointment of a Church Secretary and Church Treasurer (or equivalents) who shall by the nature of their responsibilities be Charity Trustees.
- 15.7.** A person (who is not disqualified by statute) may not be a Charity Trustee unless that person has been Baptised in the manner described in the Declaration of Principle referred to in clause 3.
- 15.8.** A close family member (spouse, parent, child, sibling) of a serving Charity Trustee shall be eligible for appointment as a Charity Trustee.
- 15.9.** Charity Trustees shall serve so long as they have the support of the Church Members' Meeting and Deacons shall be actively appointed and reappointed at least once every three years.
- 15.10.** Charity Trustees who are to serve as Deacons shall be appointed for an initial three-year term with the opportunity to be nominated for reappointment at the end of each three-year term. Charity Trustees who are to serve as Elders shall be appointed for an initial three-year term after which they may be reappointed without specific time limit.

- 15.11.** The appointment of Charity Trustees shall be undertaken by processes that are public, clear and open so that all Church Members are enabled to consider prayerfully who should be appointed as Charity Trustees. The process shall ensure that notice is given of any forthcoming appointment so that Church Members may freely recommend prospective Charity Trustees.
- 15.12.** In this Church Charity Trustees (except for those in ministerial office) shall be appointed at a Special Church Members' Meeting according to the following procedure.
- 15.12.1.** Charity Trustees who are to serve as Deacons will each be appointed to oversee a key area of the Church's activity; those key areas having been decided by a Church Members' Meeting. Recommendations will be invited from Church Members for the role concerned and will be considered by the Charity Trustees (Leadership). The Charity Trustees (Leadership) will bring a nomination to a Special Church Members' Meeting for decision by vote.
- 15.12.2.** Recommendations will be invited from Church Members for Charity Trustees who are to serve as Elders. Elders will assist the Minister(s) in the oversight of the Church. These recommendations will initially be considered by existing Ministers and Elders and then by all the Charity Trustees (Leadership). A nomination or nominations will then be brought by the Charity Trustees (Leadership) to a Special Church Members' Meeting for decision by vote.
- 15.13.** A technical defect in the appointment of a Charity Trustee of which the Charity Trustees were unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken by the Charity Trustees.
- 15.14.** A Special Church Members' Meeting may rescind the appointment of any Charity Trustee (except for those in ministerial office) at any time.
- 15.15.** Where a Special Church Members' Meeting is considering the dismissal of a Charity Trustee (except for those in ministerial office) the Charity Trustee shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Members' Meeting and to correct any errors of fact

and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Members' Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated.

16. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

16.1. The Charity Trustees shall be responsible for the governance of the Church and the fulfilment of the Purpose through its Activities acting according to the will of God as discerned by the Church Members' Meeting and subject to any specific or general directions of the Church Members' Meeting in relation to the matters set out in clause 9.2.

16.2. The Charity Trustees should keep in an appropriate state of repair and insure to their full value against fire and other usual risks all the buildings of the Charity (except those where the responsibility is of a third party where they shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that the third party does so). They must ensure that suitable public liability and employer's liability insurance is in place.

17. PROCEEDINGS OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

17.1. Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be key features of any meeting of the Charity Trustees whose leadership and administration of the Church shall be characterised as much by mutual accountability, service and pastoral care, as strategic thinking and effective management.

17.2. The Charity Trustees shall determine when and how frequently they shall meet provided that they shall convene meetings of the Leadership not less than once every three months.

17.3. The Charity Trustees shall determine a quorum for their full meetings that shall not be less than two persons or half of their number whichever is the greater number.

17.4. Notwithstanding the joint and several responsibilities of all the Charity Trustees and in addition to regular meetings of the Leadership they may meet in such sub-groups as are necessary

and convenient. Reports of such subgroup meetings must be made to the next full Charity Trustees Meeting.

- 17.5. For matters requiring a decision the Charity Trustees shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at their meetings but where this is not possible a vote shall be taken, and the outcome recorded as the resolution of the Charity Trustees.
- 17.6. Each Charity Trustee shall have one vote to be exercised at the meeting.
- 17.7. Every issue may be determined by a simple majority of votes cast at a meeting of the Charity Trustees but if there is an equality of votes on any matter the resolution will be considered rejected and the matter shall be referred back to the submitter for review and if appropriate resubmission to a subsequent meeting for consideration.
- 17.8. The Charity Trustees shall always act in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the general law.
- 17.9. Subject to clause 9.3 the Charity Trustees shall act in accordance with the specific directions of the Church Members' Meeting in relation to matters relating to Church property including any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or redevelopment of Church property.
- 17.10. Minutes shall be prepared of the proceedings at the meetings of the Charity Trustees including any appointments, the names of those present, the decisions taken and where appropriate the reasons for the decisions and the Charity Trustees shall decide from time to time whether all or part of these Minutes shall be treated as confidential.
- 17.11. Charity Trustees shall respect the confidentiality of their meeting.

18. POWERS OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

- 18.1. The Charity Trustees shall have specific power subject to any general or specific directions of the Church Members' Meeting to apply for and accept grants and to provide security in respect of obligations under grant agreements.

18.2. For the avoidance of doubt the Charity Trustees shall have power to borrow money, receive grants, give guarantees and or security for loans and to make grants or loans of money towards the advancement of the Purpose. In the event of a charge over land and/or buildings being required this must be consistent with provisions in the trusts for the land and with statute law.

18.3. For the avoidance of doubt the Charity Trustees shall have power to make grants to other charities working elsewhere in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.

19. APPLICATION OF INCOME AND CAPITAL

The Charity Trustees must use the income and may use the capital where trusts permit it to be spent to promote the Purpose provided that the Charity Trustees may apply an appropriate reserves policy in accordance with the general law.

20. REMUNERATION OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

20.1. With the exception only of a Minister or Ministers as authorised by clause 23, or a remuneration permitted under clause 20.2 no Charity Trustee (or any person, firm or company connected with the Charity Trustee) may be paid or receive any other direct or indirect benefit for being a Charity Trustee except the reimbursement of reasonable and proper expenses and other payments permitted by statute or specifically authorised by the Charity Commission.

20.2. Where it is proposed that a Charity Trustee (or person, firm or company connected with the Charity Trustee) is to be employed or receive remuneration or sell goods or services or any interest in land to the Church and where this gains the approval of the Church Members' Meeting then this shall be permitted only if:

- the Charity Trustee or any person connected with the trustee who may benefit directly or indirectly from the proposed remuneration declares an interest in the proposal before discussion on the matter begins;
- absents himself or herself (or in the case of any connected persons themselves) from any part of any meeting at which the proposal is discussed and takes no part in any

discussion of it and is not counted in determining whether any such meeting is quorate;

- does not vote on the proposal;
- the remaining Charity Trustees who do not stand to receive the proposed benefit are satisfied that it is in the interests of the Church to contract with or employ that Charity Trustee (or connected person) rather than another independent person and must record the reason for their decision in the Minutes;
- in reaching that decision the Charity Trustees must balance the advantage of contracting with or employing a Trustee against the disadvantage of doing so (especially the loss of the Trustee's services as a result of dealing with the Trustee's conflict of interest);
- The Charity Trustees authorising the proposed transaction comprise a majority of the Charity Trustees body and have not received any such benefit.

21. MINISTERS

- 21.1.** The Church may have a Minister or more than one Minister or no Minister. Where a Minister is appointed it is expected that they will become a Member of the Church.
- 21.2.** Minister of this Church shall accept the Beliefs being the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle and the beliefs listed in clause 3.2.
- 21.3.** Where the Church has a Minister she or he shall be in relationship with the Baptist Union and the Association normally expressed by being on the Baptist Union's Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry.
- 21.4.** The Minister, whether or not they are on the Register of Persons Accredited for Ministry shall be supportive of the Church's relationships with the Baptist Union, the Association and other Baptist Churches.
- 21.5.** The tasks fulfilled by Ministers will vary depending on individual ability and gifting, but a Minister is normally expected to be involved in the Activities of the Church with an emphasis on the

leading of worship and prayer, the teaching of the Christian faith and the pastoral care of individuals. The Minister shall work with the Church towards achieving its Purpose through its Activities.

21.6. Notwithstanding any legal status afforded to a Minister by statute the Church recognises that the Minister and the Church are in a Covenant relationship based on Christian love and trust and mutual accountability. A Minister shall be in a relationship of mutual accountability with the other Charity Trustees and also with the Church Members.

22. THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF MINISTERS

22.1. When the Church is seeking to appoint a Minister, it will normally consult the appropriate staff within the Association before commencing any appointment process and follow, so far as practicable, the Baptist Union's procedures and recommended terms for the settlement of Ministers.

22.2. A Minister will be appointed or removed by a resolution of the Church Members at a Special Church Members' Meeting at any time.

22.3. Where a Special Church Members' Meeting is considering the dismissal of a Minister the Minister shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Members' Meeting and to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Members' Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated.

22.4. The Church and the Minister shall normally agree 'terms and conditions of appointment' including termination procedures based on the standard terms of appointment published by the Baptist Union.

23. THE REMUNERATION OF MINISTERS

Notwithstanding the fact that any Minister or Ministers appointed by the Church are Charity Trustees they will be entitled to be paid an agreed and reasonable remuneration or stipend out of the funds of the Church.

24. PASTORAL VACANCIES AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A MODERATOR

When there is no appointed Minister the Church Members' Meeting may appoint a person, who is a Church Member or a member of another Baptist Church to be the Moderator who will hold this office until a new Minister is appointed or until they resign or are released or dismissed by the Church Members' Meeting.

25. FINANCE

25.1. The Charity Trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the financial administration of the Church.

25.2. Once in each year the Charity Trustees shall present a budget of subsequent years' projected income and expenditure at a convenient Church Members' Meeting.

26. RECORD KEEPING AND ACCOUNTING

26.1. The Church's financial year will run from 1st October to 30th September.

26.2. Financial statements of all Church organisations that form part of the Activities shall be presented to the Charity Trustees and incorporated into the Church's financial statements.

26.3. A statement of the Church Accounts (audited or independently examined as required by law) shall be received by a Church Members' Meeting.

26.4. Financial Records, annual reports and statements of account relating to the Church for the previous six years must be available for inspection by any Charity Trustee.

26.5. The law requires Charity Trustees to make the annual report and accounts available to any person who requests these. The Charity Trustees may make a reasonable charge to cover the administration costs of meeting this request.

27. CONSTITUTION

27.1. A copy of this Constitution will be made available to Church Members and to every applicant for membership with the

intention that every Member shall be informed about the organisation of the Church and be enabled to participate in the life of the Church and in Church Members' Meetings.

- 27.2.** No amendment may be made to this Constitution that would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at law.
- 27.3.** Subject to clauses 27.4 and 27.5 this Constitution may be altered only by a resolution of a Special Church Members' Meeting.
- 27.4.** No amendment may be made to clause 20.2 or 28.2 without the prior written permission of the Charity Commission.
- 27.5.** Notwithstanding the provisions 27.3 and 27.4 a resolution of a Special Church Members' Meeting altering clauses 2, 3, 5, 7.5, 8.1, 9.1, 9.2, 15.2, 15.11, 27.3 or 28.1 shall have no legal effect unless:
 - a) at least 6 months before the Special Church Members' Meeting at which the resolution is considered, or such shorter period as may be agreed in writing by each of the bodies referred to in clause 5.1, the Church shall have given to those bodies written notice of the wording of the resolution, and
 - b) the Church has afforded to those bodies reasonable opportunities, if those bodies so require, for enabling representatives of those bodies to meet representatives of the Church, to make representations to the Church Members' Meeting and to consider with the Church whether the proposed resolution might be withdrawn, amended or replaced by a different resolution.

28. CLOSURE

- 28.1.** If the Church resolves to close it shall notify the Baptist Union and the Association.
- 28.2.** If the Church shall resolve to close or shall cease to meet for worship for at least six months the assets of the Church, after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities (not being property assets

subject to separate trusts) shall be applied for Christian charitable purposes as decided by a Special Church Members' Meeting or, failing decision in that way, as decided by the Association and notified to the Baptist Union.

- 28.3.** The Charity Trustees of Churches that are registered charities shall notify the Charity Commission of any closure or dissolution.
- 28.4.** The property assets shall be dealt with by the holding trustees in accordance with the property trusts.

Appendix.

Below are listed the full bible texts quoted in the Membership Covenant in Clause 6.1:

- Worship and pray, being faithful in personal devotions, in our support of the life of the Church and in our attendance at worship services, the Communion of the Lord's Supper and prayer meetings.
Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
- Maintain and safeguard right doctrine and practice as taught in the Bible, our only authority for belief and practice.
2 Timothy 4:2-5 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.
Ephesians 4:1-14 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says:
"When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men."

⁹(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

- Encourage one another and care for one another in a spirit of mutual love and compassion, always striving to maintain the unity of heart, mind and purpose, which is ours through the Holy Spirit.
Romans 12:9-10 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.
Ephesians 4:2-3 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
- Give of our time wholeheartedly in the work and ministry of the Church through prayer and practical service.
1 Corinthians 12 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to

another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by[c] one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of

tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Romans 12:1-8 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

- Give of our financial resources systematically and generously as God has prospered us.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written:

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever."

¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

- Maintain, as far as possible, a relationship of love and co-operation with Christians in other Churches.

John 17:20-23 *²⁰"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

- Take part in the evangelisation of the world, particularly our local area.

Matthew 28:18-20 *¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:7-8 *He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

- Work together to show in practical ways the love of Jesus to the community around us.

Matthew 26:31-46 *³¹Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:*

*" 'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'*

³²But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

³³Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." ³⁴"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

³⁵But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Mark 12:28-34 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

²⁹"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

³²"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Luke 6:27-35 ²⁷"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³²"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.