

Constitution of Taupo Baptist Church

1. THE CHURCH

- 1.1 The name of the church is the Taupo 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:
 - 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 sanctifies and 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 is by faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 - 1.3.6 Membership of the church is for those who have received salvation.
 - 1.3.7 The immersion of believers as the only scriptural form of baptism.

2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The aims and functions are:

- 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 (see Matthew 28 : 19 – 20).
- 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 and Ministry Leaders.
- 3.3 The church may set up a Charitable Trust or Trusts to provide resources which will enable the Church through the Trust to minister to it's 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 procedures in the relevant trust deeds.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Any person who is 18 or over, who has been attending services for at least 6 months, confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, shows evidence of following Christ in newness of life and who is willing to uphold the commitments as outlined in the members' pledge may apply to become a church member.
- 4.2 Application for membership shall be made to the designated Ministry Leader. After the applicant has attended any church membership course that the church may from time to time require, the appropriate ministry leaders will consider the application and make a decision. The church shall be advised of the membership application.
- 4.3 A membership roll shall be kept.
The roll shall be reviewed annually by a group of ministry leaders. Any member who has ceased to fulfil the spirit of the member's pledge shall be contacted, where possible, and given the opportunity to comment. The leaders will decide which names, if any, shall be removed from the roll.

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 church Elders shall have the power to admonish, suspend or expel any 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 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 Leader

5.1.1 Pastoral Responsibility

The Senior Leader shall be entrusted with the oversight of the church (along with the Elders), and of all Staff and Ministry Leaders. The Senior Leader shall ensure an annual plan is produced for the church. This plan shall require the approval of the Elders. The Senior Leader shall be accountable to the Elders for the agreed outcomes in the plan.

5.1.2 Pastoral Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in the senior pastorate (leader), the church may, on the recommendation of the Elders, appoint an interim pastor who shall temporarily take up this function. A search committee shall be appointed by the Elders (by the church on the recommendation of the Elders.) The committee shall be guided by the Baptist Union pastoral placement protocols. The committee shall, after consultation with the Elders, 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 or the Senior Leader 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 50% of votes cast by secret ballot at a properly constituted special members' meeting called for that purpose.

While it is acknowledged that the Senior Leader, and any person appointed under section 5.3.3, 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 (or membership) and the Senior Leader and any Staff appointed under section 5.3.3 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 Appointment Process

Recommendation: Names of possible Elders are to be recommended in writing by anyone in the church to the whole leadership team (Elders and Ministry Leaders as set out in 3.2). An elder must be a member, who has been baptised as a believer.

Discernment: The leadership team shall go through a discernment process when considering each of the persons recommended. This process shall consider character

(1 Timothy 3:1-7), skills, and calling. The discernment process will also involve discussion with the candidate. At least 75% of the leadership team must be in agreement in order for any of the recommended persons names to be brought before a church meeting for consideration for appointment as an Elder.

Approval: The names brought to the church meeting by the leadership team must be approved by not less than 75% of the votes cast. Votes cast shall be by secret ballot.

5:2:2 Size of Eldership

The maximum number of Elders (including the Senior Leader shall be 7 and the minimum number (including the Senior Leader) shall be 4.

5:2:3 Term of Eldership

An Elder shall be appointed for a term of two years. At the end of this term an Elder may be re-appointed for another term. The same three step appointment process is to be followed.

(i.e. recommendation, discernment and approval.) The Elder in question is excluded where appropriate from the discernment process.

5.2.4 Responsibilities

The Elders, along with the Senior Leader are responsible for the governance and direction of the church seeking to bring into reality the vision and mission of the church. The Elders can set and change policies from time to time for church life that will be available to all members in a separate document.

5.2.5 Meetings

The Elders shall meet (where possible) at least monthly with the Senior Leader.

5.3 Staff and Ministry Leaders

5.3.1 Ministry Areas

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

The Senior Leader may appoint church members, who have been baptised as believers, to be Ministry Leaders heading up ministry areas. Such appointment will require the ratification of the Elders and church meeting.

5.3.2 Ministry Leaders

Each Ministry Leader member will develop an annual plan, including goals expected outcomes and the resources required. This plan requires the agreement of the Senior Leader and will be incorporated in the Annual Plan agreed to by the Elders (see clause 5.1.1)

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 Leader for achieving the agreed outcomes.

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 workers (full or part time), that person shall be appointed by the Elders on the recommendation of the Senior Leader (and ratified by a church meeting), subject to 5.3.3.

5.3.3 Other Staff and leadership appointments

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 6.1. Clear "terms of call" shall accompany the call to that person, together with the arrangements for the termination of the call. Other non pastoral staff and roles such as Treasurer can be appointed by Elders on the recommendation of the Senior Leader (and if considered appropriate the church meeting).

6. GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

There shall be an annual church members meeting and such other member's meetings as may be called from time to time.

The church financial year shall end on the date set in the financial policy of the church. The annual meeting shall be held at a time that is in accordance with church policy and shall include:

- The consideration of the annual report and of the provisional accounts for the preceding year.
- Financial accounts shall be made freely available to church members for perusal within 6 months of the end of the preceding financial year. The financial statements may be audited or reviewed at the discretion of the church elders.
- Approval of the budget for the current financial year.
- Ratification of Staff and Ministry Leader positions.

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.

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

6.1 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 paid 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.

6.2 Quorum

At least (20%) of the resident church membership, shall be the quorum for any church members' meeting where binding decisions are to be made.

6.3 Special Meetings

The Elders, on receipt of a request signed by at least 10% of the resident members shall call a special meeting of the church members within 30 days of the request being received. Normal notice of the meeting shall be given.

6.4 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.

6.5 Chairperson

The Elders will appoint a chairperson.

6.6 Attendance

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

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. ALTERATIONS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

- 8.1** Any recommended alteration to the constitution shall be publicised at least two Sundays before a members meeting, either by including the details of the proposed change in the church newsletter or by posting it on a noticeboard in the church foyer. No alterations or additions shall be made to the constitution unless adopted by a majority of at least two thirds of the members present at a members meeting.

- 8.2** 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 9 and 10 hereof.

9. NO PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL

- 9.1** 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:

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

9.1.2 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;

9.1.3 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.

9.1.4 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.

9.1.5 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.

- 9.2** 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

- 9.3** 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.

10. 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 nett 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.

Addendum to the Constitution (this is not part of the constitution as such)

Member's Pledge

- To live at all times such a life as reflects a true Christian and a member of the church.
- To support the beliefs of the church as set out in Section 1 of the constitution.
- 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 member's 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.