

**NORTH CANBERRA  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION  
AND  
MOTIONS IN EFFECT**

**AS AMENDED MARCH 2017**

- 1. NAME**
- 1.1 This Church is named the NORTH CANBERRA BAPTIST CHURCH.
- 2. DOCTRINAL BASIS**
- 2.1 **Statement of Beliefs commonly held by Baptists – as adopted by the 1979 Assembly and amended by the 2003 Assembly.**
- 2.1 **The Nature and Unity of the Godhead**  
There is one God Who is eternal personal Spirit. He is infinite in power, wisdom, holiness and love. He is Triune in essential being and revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 2.2 **The Deity and Humanity of Christ**  
Jesus Christ as the second Person of the Godhead is eternally one with God the Father of whose Person and glory He is the accurate expression. To become man He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, were united in one Person; truly God and truly human.
- 2.3 **The Holy Spirit**  
The Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity is eternally one with the Father and the Son yet He is sent by Them to achieve the Divine purpose in the world and in the Church.
- 2.4 **The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures**  
The Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are the infallible Word of God. They were written by holy men of God inspired by the Holy Spirit and have supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- 2.5 **The Sinfulness of Man**  
People were made in the image of God and for fellowship with Him. By transgression of God's command humankind fell from fellowship with God and their nature was corrupted. As a consequence, all people are spiritually dead under Satan's dominion and control and

subject to God's wrath and condemnation. Therefore, apart from God's grace, man is helpless and hopeless.

2.6 **Christ's Atonement for the Sin of Man**  
In order to redeem people from the guilt, penalty and power of sin, Jesus Christ became human and died a sacrificial death as our representative substitute. By His resurrection, God's acceptance of His atoning death was demonstrated. This atonement is sufficient for the whole world but effective only in those who receive it. The sinner is justified and reconciled to God, not through any personal merit, but solely on the basis of God's gracious gift of salvation in Jesus Christ received through faith.

2.7 **The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation**  
The ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the acceptance of God's provision of salvation. The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sinfulness, leads them to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and so brings them to spiritual birth as God's children and to fellowship in Christ. Working within the life of believers the Holy Spirit makes real the presence of Christ, witnesses to their relationship with God, leads into all truth, bestows gifts for effective service and produces grace for holy living.

2.8 **The Church**  
The Church is the body of people whom God has separated from the world through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. All regenerate persons are members of the universal Church of God which takes local form wherever groups of believers unite for worship, fellowship and service in accordance with scriptural principles. All believers are called to priestly ministry in the offering of spiritual sacrifices and sent into the world to be witnesses. God calls individuals to positions of oversight and leadership or to special ministries. The Church recognises such by ordaining pastors, commissioning missionaries, appointing deacons and other leaders, following New Testament practice.

2.9 **The Baptism of Believers Only, by Immersion**  
Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a public

declaration of a person's faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In accordance with New Testament Scripture it should be administered only by total immersion which symbolises the believer's identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection, the remission of sins and the believer's dedication of himself to God to live and walk in newness of life.

## 2.10

### **The Communion**

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, instituted by Him to be celebrated with the elements of bread and wine by believers in Christ until the end of the age. It commemorates and declares our thanks for the Lord's substitutionary death. The celebration of the ordinance expresses our fellowship with and in the Lord Jesus Christ as members of the Body of which He is the Head.

## 2.11

### **The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ**

At the end of this age, according to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in His glory to the earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom of God awaits His return.

## 2.12

### **The Resurrection of the Dead**

At the end of the age, there is to be a resurrection both of the righteous and the unrighteous. After death the bodies of men return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God - the righteous to be with Him and the unrighteous to be reserved for the punishment.

## 2.13

### **Rewards and Punishments in a Future State**

God has appointed a day of final judgement for the world. At that time Jesus Christ will judge every man and each will receive reward or punishment according to his deeds. Those judged righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

## 3. PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of the Church is to fulfil all the functions of the local church, the body of Christ on earth, as set out in the New Testament (e.g. Ephesians 4: 11-12).

## 4. GOVERNMENT

4.1 This Church shall be governed on congregational principles (i.e. the Gospel Partners and Associate Partners of the Church (see clause 5) shall have full power to manage its affairs).

4.2 Except where otherwise provided by this Constitution, the Gospel Partners and Associate Partners may act by majority of those present and voting at a Church Meeting.

4.3 The Leadership model of the Church shall be determined from time to time as the Church sees fit, provided that any proposed change shall be circulated to the Church not less than six months before it is voted upon. Leaders will be Gospel Partners or Associate Partners.

4.4 The Leadership of the Church shall consist of a Mission Ministry Team, a Care Team and an Administrative Team. A Gospel Partner or Associate Partner may be a member of up to two Teams. The Pastor may be a member of all three Teams.

4.5 The Mission Ministry and Care Teams, under the leadership of the Pastor, shall have elected Coordinators, and the Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected members of the Administrative Team. Teams shall consist of a maximum of six persons. Non-elected members shall be invited to join by the elected member(s) in consultation with the Pastor, subject to their appointments being approved by a Church Meeting. The Pastor shall be entitled to be a member of any Team, without such appointment requiring Church Meeting approval.

## **5. GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP**

- 5.1 Partners will have confessed Christ as Lord in baptism as a believer born of the Spirit, be committed to Christ's mission and the Church, and accept the doctrinal basis of the Church.
- 5.2 Associate Partners confess Christ as Lord, are born of the Spirit, have been baptised in ways other than believers' baptism, are committed to Christ's mission and the Church, and uphold the doctrinal basis of the Church.
- 5.3 People become Gospel Partners or Associate Partners by decision of a Church Meeting.
- 5.4 Associate Partners may not vote on matters concerning pastoral appointments, constitutional change or property ownership.

## **6. OFFICE BEARERS**

- 6.1 The officers of the Church shall be the persons holding the offices of Pastor, Mission Ministry Team Coordinator, Care Team Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer and any other position designated an office of the Church by a Church Meeting.
- 6.2 The Pastor shall be called to the Pastorate of the Church by a vote of at least 75% of the Gospel Partners of the Church present at a meeting convened for the purpose. Gospel Partners shall be advised by letter or email at least 14 days before the meeting.
- 6.3 Officers of the Church must be Gospel Partners or Associate Partners.
- 6.4 Subject to sub-paragraph 6.8 below, officers other than the Pastor shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting from persons who have been Gospel Partners or Associate Partners for at least six (6) months.

- 6.5 At the first Annual Meeting following the adoption of the leadership model provided for by paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 the Mission Ministry Team Coordinator and the Treasurer shall be elected for two-year terms, and the Care Team Coordinator and the Secretary for one-year terms. Thereafter, except as provided for in paragraph 6.8, all elections will be for two-year terms.
- 6.6 Any officer of the Church other than those explicitly listed in sub-paragraph 6.1 above shall be elected to a two-year term at an Annual Meeting.
- 6.7 Nominations for election to an office of the Church require a second order and the consent in writing of the nominee, and shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the Annual Meeting. Nominees must receive the vote of 75% of Gospel Partners and Associate Partners present at the meeting in order to be elected.
- 6.8 The Church may at any Church Meeting elect a person to a casual vacancy in an office of the Church. Sub-paragraph 6.7 shall apply in relation to the election, 'Church Meeting' being if appropriate substituted for 'Annual Meeting'. A person elected to a casual vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired portion of the term of the officer they are replacing.
- 6.9 In addition to officers of the Church, the Church may at any time appoint or recognise, in such manner as it thinks fit, such persons, committees or organisations as it considers desirable for carrying out the purposes of the Church.
- 6.10 No organisation or fund shall be commenced or monies collected unless approved by the Church.
- 6.11 The Administrative Team is authorised to spend from Church funds on any individual item or project it considers necessary for the operation of the Church an amount of up to \$3,000. Such

spending would be brought to the next Church Meeting for ratification.

- 6.12 The holder of an office of the Church designated under sub-paragraph 6.6 above shall have the right to attend any Team meeting in order to discuss and vote on any matter relating to his or her office.

## **7. CHURCH MEETINGS**

- 7.1 Meetings of the Gospel Partners and Associate Partners ('Church Meetings'), one of which shall be the Annual Meeting, shall be held at least twice a year. They must be called and announced publicly on the Sunday preceding. The Officers shall have the power to call additional Church Meetings whenever necessary. The regular Church Meetings shall be held on the second Sunday of February and August, or as close to those dates as possible in prevailing circumstances. The August Meeting shall be the Annual Meeting. Church attendees who are not Gospel Partners or Associate Partners may attend and participate in, but not vote at, Church Meetings.

- 7.2 An Annual Meeting shall be held, at which the Secretary's Report and the Treasurer's Statement of Receipts and Payments shall be presented and the Roll of Gospel Partners and Associate Partners revised.

- 7.3 A quorum of at least 50% of active Gospel Partners and Associate Partners is to be present before any Church Meeting can proceed. For this purpose Gospel Partners and Associate Partners will be considered not 'active' if they (i) no longer reside close enough to the Church to attend services regularly, (ii) are prevented from attending services by serious ill-health, or (iii) have been absent from services for six months or longer prior to the meeting in question. If this quorum is not present, the meeting will be automatically deferred to an agreed time and place.

- 7.4 All items of business for Church Meetings shall be given to the Secretary at least one week prior to the Meeting. No other items shall be raised at the Meeting. If possible, the Secretary shall distribute copies of the Agenda to members by the Sunday preceding the Meeting.

## **8. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND DISSOLUTION**

- 8.1 The Church Properties shall not be used by outside bodies without the approval of the Church Officers.
- 8.2 Property Ownership: The Trustees of all Church property shall be the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust.
- 8.3 Application of Church Assets and Income: The assets and income of the Church shall be applied solely in the furtherance of its charitable purpose and the advancement of religion, and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Gospel Partners and/or Associate Partners except as bona fide reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.
- 8.4 Church Dissolution: In the event of the Church being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall:
- (a) In the case of property held in trust pursuant to the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984, be dealt with in accordance with that Act and in particular Section 29 which provides that no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members (i.e. Gospel Partners and Associate Partners) of the Church.
- (b) In all other cases be transferred to the Baptist Union of NSW and ACT or to any other organisation with similar purposes and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its members and which is exempt from income tax.

## 9. ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION

- 9.1 No alteration shall be made to this Constitution except by the vote of a 75% majority of the Gospel Partners present at a Church Meeting convened for the purpose. Notice of any proposed alteration or addition shall be given in writing not less than two months before the date of such meeting.

## MOTIONS IN EFFECT

### Gospel Partnership

A person who satisfies the criteria in either paragraph 5.1 or paragraph 5.2 may be recommended for acceptance as a Gospel Partner or Associate Partner under paragraph 5.3 by the Pastor and any one other member of the Church Leadership.

Gospel Partners and Associate Partners in good standing may be given a transfer to other Baptist Churches. The Administrative Team and the Pastor are authorised to deal with such requests as they see fit, and shall inform the Church at its next Meeting of any action taken. Gospel Partners and Associate Partners who have left Canberra to serve and are serving with an accredited Christian organisation and who wish to remain identified with the Church may, if they so request, be granted permission to join their local church while still remaining Gospel Partners or Associate Partners in the North Canberra Baptist Church.

Only Gospel Partners and Associate Partners 18 years of age and over are permitted to vote at Church Business Meetings.

Gospel Partners and Associate Partners shall be expected to support the work of the Church in all possible ways and in particular are expected to :

- a) support the work of the Church and Pastor in prayer;
- b) attend the services of the Church whenever possible;
- c) serve the Church in accordance with their talents;
- d) support the Church financially by means of regular and sacrificial giving.

### Pastorate Procedures

The following will be observed when calling a Pastor.

- 1) A Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) shall be appointed by a Church Meeting and given the task of "Managing the Call Process". Members of the Committee should be Gospel Partners, some of whom should also be members of the Church Leadership. A Chairman or Moderator for the Committee shall also be chosen.
- 2) Any member of the congregation may make recommendations for discussion within the Committee by submitting a name, together with reasons supporting the recommendation, in writing to the Committee. The Committee may advise the Baptist Union of the vacancy and seek advice and assistance from the appropriate denominational officer.
- 4) Should more than one name come before the Committee, discussion will continue until agreement is reached regarding an approach to one person.
- 5) The Pastoral Search Committee shall communicate privately with this nominee, and/or with the appropriate Union officer, to ascertain their willingness to allow their name to be placed before the Church.

- 6) Pastors will be appointed upon at least a 75% majority vote in favour among Gospel Partners present at the relevant meeting. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of active Gospel Partners, **not**, as provided for in paragraph 7.3, active Gospel Partners and Associate Partners.
- 7) In the event of an adverse vote, or a call or approach not being accepted, the above procedure shall be repeated until successful.