



MANUKAU CITY
BAPTIST CHURCH

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Adopted January 2024

1. THE CHURCH

- 1.1. We will be called Manukau City Baptist Church.
- 1.2. The church is a community of those who believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit one God. It is composed of those who are repentant of sin, have been saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ through His substitutionary death and resurrection, who publicly confess their faith, and who are committed to the church's aims and functions.
- 1.3. The church believes in:
 - 1.3.1. The true humanity and Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1.3.2. The substitutionary death on the cross by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sin of the world.
 - 1.3.3. His resurrection from the dead.
 - 1.3.4. Salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
 - 1.3.5. The person of the Holy Spirit as the One who sets apart, empowers, and imparts spiritual gifts to the Church.
 - 1.3.6. Basing its faith and practice on the Bible and accepting it as the inspired Word of God.
 - 1.3.7. Membership of this church for the saved.
 - 1.3.8. The immersion of believers as the scriptural form of water baptism.
 - 1.3.9. The physical return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal life of the saved, and the eternal punishment of the lost.
- 1.4. The Ordinances of the church are:
 - 1.4.1. Believer's baptism by immersion.
 - 1.4.2. Communion (the Lord's supper) which is held at least monthly and open to all believers.

2. COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

- 2.1 As believers, we are committed to our local church community. This is defined by the following:
 - 2.1.1. We affirm that salvation is a free gift received by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on a cross for our sin.
 - 2.1.2. We regard the Bible as God's final authority in all areas of the Christian life and do desire to be wholly obedient to it.
 - 2.1.3. We will share by life and word in the supreme task of the church, namely witnessing to the saving, keeping power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

- 2.1.4. We will be faithful in prayer for the church and its witness in the community.
- 2.1.5. We will live consistent to God's call to community within this local church body. We will regularly participate in the corporate gatherings of Manukau City Baptist Church.
- 2.1.6. We will do all in our power to deepen and enrich the spirit of fellowship in the church, always endeavouring to refrain from uncharitable thoughts or words and ever seeking to develop the Spirit of Love in this fellowship of Christ's people by:
 - a. Affirming the specific mission and objectives of the church
 - b. Being willing to cooperate with the Elders of the church and those in leadership positions.
 - c. Wholeheartedly affirming the church's statement of faith, which summarizes the basic truths of scripture.
 - d. Refraining from promoting doctrines contrary to our statement of faith in ways that cause dissension.
- 2.1.7. We will engage with a number of believers here at Manukau City Baptist Church for the purpose of growth, loving support, and accountability.
- 2.1.8. We will seek to live in such a way that our relationships at church, work and home are honouring to God.
- 2.1.9. We are committed to pursuing biblical patterns of conflict resolution (for example, Matthew 5:23-24 & 18:15ff).
- 2.1.10. We will use the gifts and abilities God has given us for His purposes in the church and community.
- 2.1.11. We will seek to be joyful givers, sharing conscientiously our time and resources to support the ministries of this church and the kingdom of God. In light of the tithe as a biblical precedent for giving, we will use 10% as a goal to reach or surpass as God prospers.

3. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

- 3.1. The aims and functions within New Zealand are:
 - 3.1.1. To meet regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, encouragement, and fellowship.
 - 3.1.2. To express the love of God to the community of Manukau through the ministries of the Word and practical care.
 - 3.1.3. In every possible way to seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ and bring them into membership.
 - 3.1.4. Engage in the task of mission principally within New Zealand but also overseas (see Matthew 28:19-20).

4. BAPTISM

- 4.1. Application for believers' baptism will be made to the Pastoral Staff and be subject to their approval.
- 4.2. A believer who desires to be baptised but is prevented by physical disability, or other special reason acceptable to the Pastors, may apply for membership on the same basis as baptised believers.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1. A member reflects commitment and belonging to the local church. It is any person who:
 - 5.1.1. is a believer (See Sections 1 and 2)
 - 5.1.2. has been baptised (as a believer by immersion)
 - 5.1.3. is mature (aged 16 or over indicating maturity to partake in decisions)
 - 5.1.4. is committed to MCBC faith community (regularly attending church services and/or attending services online at a MINIMUM of once a month).
 - 5.1.5. is committed over time (is regularly attending services for the past 6 months or more)
- 5.2. Membership will be explained to new people attending church. If someone fulfils the membership requirements, but chooses not to become a member, they can advise the church office and they will not be added to the membership roll.
- 5.3. If someone is unable to attend Sunday Services for specific reasons (e.g., serving overseas as church missionaries, away for a specific short-term period studying or overseas, health reasons, living in a Rest Home), their membership may be maintained at the discretion of the church staff.
- 5.4. A member from another Baptist church may be received into membership when a letter of commendation and/or transfer is received from the previous church provided they fulfil the criteria in 5.1.
- 5.5. The membership roll will be kept and reviewed at least annually. Membership will lapse if the requirements of a member are no longer being fulfilled.

6. LEADERSHIP

- 6.1. STRUCTURE
 - 6.1.1. The Leadership of this church consists of Elders, Pastors, Management Team, and other persons as may from time to time be determined by the church membership. All Leadership personnel must be members of this church.
 - 6.1.2. Leadership structure of the church is Elders Board, Lead Pastor (or this can be with Co-Lead Pastors), Other Pastors and Management Team.

- 6.1.3. The combined Leadership Team will meet as required and 70% of the Leadership will constitute a quorum.
- 6.1.4. The person or persons designated by the Leadership Team must record the minutes of the Members Meetings, Elders Board and Management Team meetings, take charge of all records, and with the Pastors, prepare the Annual Report.

6.2. ELDERS

- 6.2.1. Elders with the Lead Pastor (in accordance with the Vision Statement and the Approved Annual Plan) will supervise the spiritual welfare of the church.
- 6.2.2. Names for new Elders may be submitted by members to the Pastors or Elders Board for consideration.
- 6.2.3. Elders' nominations will be finalised by the Elders and Pastors, advertised in the church newsletter at least two weeks prior to the meeting, and elected by ballot as part of the Annual Meeting with a 75% majority vote of the ballots returned valid. The term of office will be three years, but they shall be eligible for re-election at the third anniversary annual general meeting.
- 6.2.4. A nomination may be accepted during the church year provided there is a vacancy. The election to follow the procedure of Clause 6.2.3 and the election to take place at a special Members Meeting or by ballot. The part year in which the election takes place to be considered the first year of the three-year term.
- 6.2.5. The Elders and the Lead Pastor will meet as required but not less than 11 times per year.
- 6.2.6. The Lead Pastor and church staff will maintain the church members roll with responsibility to the Elders.

6.3. THE PASTORS

- 6.3.1. The Lead Pastor in co-operation with the Elders Board and Other Pastors is entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the church. The Lead Pastor may be ex-officio chairperson of all organisations of the church unless they are unwilling or unable to act.
- 6.3.2. All pulpit arrangements will be made by the Lead Pastor, but in the event of there being a vacancy in the Lead Pastor position, the Elders Board is empowered to act.
- 6.3.3. The Lead Pastor shall ensure an annual plan is produced for the church. This plan shall require the approval of the Elders Board. The Lead Pastor shall be accountable to the Board for the agreed outcomes in the plan.
- 6.3.4. The Lead Pastor in co-operation with the Elders Board shall be entrusted with the oversight of all staff.
- 6.3.5. The procedure for appointing a pastor or a new Lead Pastor is:

- a. A meeting of the church members will be called to consider a person approved and recommended by the Leadership. This meeting will be announced at least two Sundays beforehand.
- b. The Leadership will come to the Church Members Meeting with a profile of the person being called. To extend a call to a Pastor, a ballot will be taken of the resident members. The ballot will be made available for members and must be returned within 7 days of the meeting. At least 75% of returned valid ballots must be in favour of the call.
- c. Unless the parties expressly agree in writing to the contrary the relationship between the membership and Pastoral Staff will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.

6.3.6. Conclusion of Pastorate

It is acknowledged that a Pastor is not an employee, and that no legal relationship exists between the church and a Pastor. The church must ensure that a Pastor is treated with fairness and dignity upon the conclusion of a pastorate, as set out in the Terms of Call.

- a. Any Pastor or the church membership must give three months' notice before a Pastor's ministry is terminated unless another period is agreed between the parties.
- b. The Church membership may only terminate a Pastor's ministry on a vote of at least 75% of the members present at a specially convened meeting and subsequent ballot.
- c. Any dispute or difference that cannot be resolved among the parties shall be referred to an independent party for resolution by way of mediation or other 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, the Senior Executive for the time being of the Baptist Union will appoint an independent person.

6.4. MANAGEMENT TEAM

- 6.4.1. The Management Team with the Lead Pastor (in accordance with the Vision Statement and the Approved Budget and Annual Plan) will supervise all matters involving the “business” matters of the church.
- 6.4.2. Management Team’s delegated responsibility from the Elders is to honour God through the business administration in areas of Administration, Finance, Property, Facilities, Legal, Health & Safety, Information Technology, and other areas deemed necessary by the leadership.
- 6.4.3. Members of the Management Team will meet regularly and as required but not less than 11 times per year.
- 6.4.4. The Management Team members will hold office for three years but will be eligible to stand for re-election.
- 6.4.5. Names for the office of the management team may be submitted by church members to the Elders Board, Pastors, and the Management Team for consideration.
- 6.4.6. Nominations for the office of the Management Team will be made by the combined leadership.
- 6.4.7. All nominations to be advertised in the church newsletter at least two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 6.4.8. The Management Team members will be elected by a majority of returned valid ballots as part of the Annual Meeting of the church.
- 6.4.9. Any vacancy among the Management Team occurring during the year may be filled by a majority vote at a special Church Members Meeting or by ballot. Notice will be at all services on the two Sundays prior to such a meeting or ballot.
- 6.4.10. An elected member of the Management Team will be the Finance Manager. The Finance Manager will:
 - a. be responsible to ensure recording and disbursement of all church monies in accordance with legal requirements and resolutions of the church or the Leadership.
 - b. be responsible to ensure keeping of the necessary books, and present to the Management Team and the Church Annual General Meeting an audited statement of accounts and balance sheet.
 - c. present a statement of accounts at regular meetings of the Management Team.
- 6.4.11. No church ministries or departments are permitted to operate a separate bank account.

7. CHURCH MEETINGS

- 7.1. The church needs to ensure good, honest and ongoing communication between leadership and members. The church also needs to fulfil all statutory regulations.
- 7.2. There will be an Annual Meeting for the presentation and adoption of the Annual Report including accounts for the previous financial year. This Annual meeting will be held no later than the end of November, the church financial year having closed on the preceding June 30th.
- 7.3. Notice of the Annual Meeting and of the impending elections will be given at the regular church services on the two preceding Sundays.
- 7.4. At times other than the Annual Meeting, matters may be decided by ballot of members with a majority decision of returned valid ballots (unless otherwise specified in the constitution).
- 7.5. Members Meetings may be called by the Leadership as occasion requires. 25% of resident members present OR a minimum of 50 members presents (whichever is lower) will form a quorum.
- 7.6. Forums may be called by the Leadership as required for the discussion of relevant topics.
- 7.7. Notice of every Members Meeting/Forum will be given at all services on the two preceding Sundays.
- 7.8. The Leadership will, on receipt of a requisition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of the resident members of the church, call a Special Meeting of the church (See 7.7.) If the Leadership fail to call such meeting within ten (10) days of the receipt of such requisition, the requisitioners may themselves convene a Members Meeting by placing, at least two (2) Sundays before the date of such a meeting, a notice in the church foyer signed by them stating the time and the place of the meeting and the nature of business to be transacted. A copy of such notice must be handed to the Lead Pastor before the morning services on the Sunday which the notice is posted in the foyer. Only the business specified in the notice calling the meeting will be transacted.
- 7.9. The Lead Pastor when present may preside at all Members Meetings/Forums, except when the business relates to the Lead Pastorate, or when they are personally interested, or are unwilling or unable to act. In such cases the Leadership will appoint a chairperson.
- 7.10. At all Members Meetings the Chairperson will have a casting vote.
- 7.11. Voting will be by ballot when requested by 25% of the members present at a meeting.
- 7.12. Each member, when personally present at Members Meetings will have an equal voice in the discussion of business. When any matter of discipline is to be discussed attenders at the meeting under 16 must retire on the request of the chairperson.
- 7.13. Matters which require detailed investigation cannot be approved at a Members Meeting unless they come with a recommendation from either the Elders Board or the Management Team, or if necessary, the combined leadership.

8. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- 8.1. The church will have the power to admonish, suspend or expel any member for misconduct.
- 8.2. Should a dispute in the church arise causing serious division and remain unsolved, the church if requested by 25% of the resident membership, will apply for advice and help from the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

9. CHURCH FUNDS

- 9.1. Every member is expected to contribute regularly to the funds of the church according to his or her ability.
- 9.2. An Auditor will be appointed annually by the Management Team.
- 9.3. No decision of the church or its Leadership will be made which would allow a member or members to receive any private pecuniary profit provided that:
 - 9.3.1. A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred by that member in connection with the affairs of the church.
 - 9.3.2. 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.
 - 9.3.3. Any member of the church may be paid for all usual professional business or trade charges for services rendered, time expended and all acts done by that member or by any firm or entity of which that member is a partner, employee, or associate, in connection with the affairs of the church.
 - 9.3.4. Nothing will prevent the church from making payments to any individual (whether a member of the church or not) in fulfilling any of the purposes expressed in Section 3 Aims and Functions.
 - 9.3.5. Leadership or members of the church, in determining all reimbursements, remuneration and charges payable in the terms of this clause, will ensure that the restrictions imposed by the following clause are strictly observed.
 - 9.3.6. Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in this constitution, any person who is a member of the church will not by virtue of that capacity in any way (whether directly or indirectly) determine, or materially influence in any way the determination of the nature or the amount of any benefit or advantage or income or the circumstances in which it is or is to be received, gained, achieved, afforded or derived by that person.

10. AMMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 10.1. This Constitution may be amended only in the following manner:
- 10.1.1. A meeting of members must be called on not less than one month's prior written notice.
 - 10.1.2. The written notice convening the meeting must contain details of the proposed amendment but may also set out details of other issues that are to be considered at the meeting.
 - 10.1.3. A majority of 66% of the members present as part of the meeting will be required to pass the resolution or it may be decided by ballot of members with a majority of 66% of returned valid ballots.
 - 10.1.4. Unless the church agrees to forgo its charitable status and income tax exemption, no alteration will be made to this constitution which would in any way detract from the exclusively charitable nature of the church and in particular will not alter the provisions of Clauses 9.3 and 11 hereof.

11. REAL ESTATE AND OTHER PROPERTY

- 11.1. Any land or any property including church buildings and houses will be vested in the Baptist Union as Trustee, which will hold them for and on behalf of the church; and will 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.

12. WINDING UP PROVISIONS

- 12.1. 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 church members meeting that the church should be wound up, then the net proceeds arising from such winding up will be applied, with the prior approval of the church members and 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. Such proceeds will not be paid or distributed amongst the members of the church.