

**BETHEL BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INC.**  
**STATEMENT OF PURPOSES AND RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION**

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ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 1981  
BETHEL BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INC.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

1.NAME

The name of the Incorporated Church is **BETHEL BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INC.** (hereinafter called the Church).

2.PURPOSE

The purposes for which the Church is established are:

- 2.1 The salvation of souls;
- 2.2 The edification of Christians through the teaching of God's word;
- 2.3 The promotion of godly worship;
- 2.4 The defence of "the faith which was once delivered into the saints";
- 2.5 The establishment and extension of Christian missions and institutions for the furtherance of God's Kingdom on earth;
- 2.6 The promotion of Christian relief for the poor and needy;
- 2.7 The strengthening of mutual fellowship, encouragement, and unity among other Bible-believing churches who stand "for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9).

Solely for the purpose of carrying out the aforesaid purposes and not otherwise the Church has power:

- 2.8 to buy, acquire or otherwise deal with property of whatsoever nature and kind;
- 2.9 to sell and/or otherwise dispose of the whole or any part of the property of the Church either together or in portions and for such consideration and/or on which terms and conditions as the Church may think fit;
- 2.10 to engage in such other activities, of a like nature as may for the time being be permitted by law and determined by the Church;

- 2.11 to subscribe and cooperate with other churches, whether incorporated or not, who are likeminded (Romans 15:5) with the Church.
- 2.12 to enter into any arrangements with any Government or authority supreme, municipal, local or otherwise that may seem conducive to the Church's objects or any of them and to obtain from any such Government or authority any rights, privileges and concessions which the Church may think it desirable to obtain; and to carry out, exercise and comply with any such arrangements, rights, privileges and concessions.
- 2.13 to appoint, employ, remove or suspend such educators, managers, clerks, secretaries, servants, workmen and other persons as may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Church.
- 2.14 to establish and support or aid in the establishment and support of associations, institutions, funds, trusts and conveniences calculated to benefit employees or past employees of the Church or the dependants or connections of any such persons; and to grant pensions and allowances; and to make payments towards insurance; and to subscribe or guarantee money for charitable or benevolent objects, or for any public, general or useful object.
- 2.15 to construct, improve, maintain, develop, work, manage, carry out, alter or control any houses, buildings, grounds, works or conveniences which may seem calculated directly or indirectly to advance the Church's interests, and to contribute to, subsidise or otherwise assist and take part in the construction, improvement, maintenance, development, working, management, carrying out, alteration or control thereof.
- 2.16 to invest and deal with the money of the Church not immediately required in such manner as may be permitted by law for the investment of trust funds;
- 2.17 to take or hold mortgages, liens, and charges to secure payment of the purchase price, or any unpaid balance of the purchase price, or any part of the Church's property of whatsoever kind sold by the Church or any money due to the Church from purchasers and others.
- 2.18 to take any gift or property whether subject to any special trust or not, for any one or more of the objects of the Church by subject always to the proviso in 2.14.
- 2.19 to take such steps by personal or written appeals, public meetings or otherwise, as may from time to time be deemed expedient for the purpose of procuring contributions to the funds of the Church in the shape of donations or otherwise.
- 2.20 to print and publish any newspapers, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Church may think it desirable for the promotion of its purposes.

- 2.21 to produce purchase use any films video radio and/or television material that the Church may think desirable for the promotion of its purpose.
- 2.22 to purchase or otherwise acquire and undertake all or any part of the property, assets, liabilities and engagements or any one or more of the companies, institutions, societies or associations with which the Church is authorised.
- 2.23 to make donations for patriotic or charitable purposes.
- 2.24 to do any other thing conducive to the aims and purposes of the Church (as stated in 2.1 – 2.7).

### **3.DOCTRINE**

- 3.1 The doctrine of the Church shall be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed Faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.
- 3.2 In abbreviated form the chief tenets of the doctrine of the Church, apart from the Apostles’ Creed, shall be as follows:
  - 3.2.a We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35);
  - 3.2.b We believe in one God existing in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4, 1 John 5:7).
  - 3.2.c We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man in complete and direct fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14 (Matt 1:20-23, John 1:1, 14, Col 2:9).
  - 3.2.d We believe God created the whole universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) by the Word of His mouth, and all very good, in the space of six literal or natural days (Gen 1:1, Exod 20:11, Ps 148:5, John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 11:3).
  - 3.2.e We believe that man was created in the image of God, but sinned through the fall of Adam, thereby incurring not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and become sinners in thought, word and deed (Gen 1:26-27, Rom 3:19-20, 5:12, 6:23).

- 3.2.f We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died a propitiatory and expiatory death as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who repent of their sins and believe in Him are justified before God on the grounds of His shed blood (Rom 5:8-11, 1 John 2:2, 1 Pet 1:18-19).
- 3.2.g We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God, where He intercedes for us as our High Priest and Advocate (1 Cor 15:1-4, 15-19, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 3:1, 4:14-16).
- 3.2.h We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to judge this world, restore His chosen nation Israel to greatness, and bring peace to the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (Jer 3:17, Zech 14:9, Acts 1:6, Rom 11:26, Rev 20:1-7).
- 3.2.i We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, not by works, and that all who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God (Rom 5:1, 8:14-16, Eph 2:8-10, 1 Tim 2:5, Tit 3:5).
- 3.2.j We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and to convict and regenerate the sinner, and indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service (John 16:7-14, Rom 8:1-2).
- 3.2.k We believe that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism for believers and their children and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which sacraments shall be observed by His Church till He comes (Matt 28:19, 1 Cor 11:23-26).
- 3.2.l We believe in the eternal security, bodily resurrection and eternal blessedness of the saved, and in the bodily resurrection and eternal conscious punishment of the lost (John 10:27-29, 1 Cor 15:51-53, 1 Thess 4:13-18, Rev 20:11-15).
- 3.2.m We believe in the real, spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood and the necessity of faithfully maintaining the purity of the Church in doctrine and life according to the Word of God, and the principle and practice of biblical separation from the apostasy of the day being spearheaded by the ecumenical movement, charismatic movement and other false movements that contradict the Holy Scriptures and the Historic Christian Faith (2 Cor 6:14-7:1, Jude 3, Rev 18:4).

#### **4.PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT**

- 4.1 The Church shall be an independent, autonomous institution.
- 4.2 The government, administration, and discipline of the Church shall be in accordance with the supreme and final authority of the infallible and inerrant Scripture, and the provisions of this Constitution.
- 4.3 The Session shall have responsibility and control over all administrative and fiscal aspects of the functioning of the Church.
- 4.4 The Board of Elders shall have responsibility and control over all spiritual, theological, and the functioning of the Church in accordance with God's Word.

#### **5.PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL SEPARATION**

- 5.1 The doctrine of separation from sin unto God is a fundamental principle of the Bible, which should be upheld by the Church.
- 5.2 This doctrine arises out of the holiness of God. Both the purity and righteousness of God (Luke 1:75) are involved. "Be ye holy; for I am holy". (1 Peter 1:16, also 3:11, Exodus 15:11, Isaiah 6:2, 2 Corinthians 7:1).
- 5.3 The Bible does speak of cooperation ("be of one mind", "that they may all be one", "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord", also 1 Corinthians 12:25). However, Biblical co-operation is based upon TRUTH.
- 5.4 We maintain that Scripture teaches a separation that is based on the holiness of God, producing purity in all of life, personal and ecclesiastical.
- 5.5 The Church must be separate from all unbelief and corruption. (2 Corinthians 6:14, see also Matthew 6:24, Romans 16:17, Galatians 1, Ephesians 5:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 2 Timothy 3:1~7, Titus 3:10, 2 Peter 2:1~3, 1 John 4:1~3, 2 John 7~11, Jude 3:20~24, and Revelations 18:4).

## **6.MAIN PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH**

The main practices of the Church are as follows:

### **(1) WORD OF GOD – KING JAMES VERSION:**

We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God- the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.

We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.

### **(2) BAPTISM:**

The observance of the Baptism of believers is by sprinkling on personal confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptised (Matthew 28:19~20; Acts 2:38~42; 8:35~38; 10:44~48; 1 Corinthians 7:14).

### **(3) REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH:**

Baptised infants upon coming of age in that they can satisfy the Board of Elders as to their faith shall be received into Communicant membership by reaffirmation of faith.

### **(4) THE LORD'S SUPPER:**

The remembrance of the Lord's death through the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly, and normally all baptised believers (except baptised children of constituent Members who have not reaffirmed their faith) whose conduct is consistent with their confession of their faith shall be received at the Lord's table (Luke 22:14~29; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7; Romans 14:19; 15:7; 1 Corinthians 5:6~8; 11:23~26).

### **(5) FELLOWSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP:**

Every member shall participate in fellowship, prayer and instruction with other believers and the exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church (Romans 12:6~8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1~16; Hebrews 10:23~25; 1 Peter 4:7~11).

### **(6) EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS:**

The local Church in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, both as individual and collective witnesses, shall proclaim the Gospel to their families, neighbours, colleagues, friends, the nation as well as the regions beyond (Matthew 28:18~20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44~48; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9, 3:15).

### **(7) STEWARDSHIP:**

Every member shall have the responsibility and privilege to contribute his gifts, talents, time and resources to the work of God and the extension of His kingdom. It shall also be the responsibility and privilege of each member to tithe and contribute willingly, regularly and generously according to his ability as God enables (Romans 12:1~13; 1 Corinthians 6:19~20; 16:1~2; 2 Corinthians 8, 9).

**(8) CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:**

The Church shall conduct a Christian Education programme to build up the members on the most holy faith (Jude 20) through Sunday School, Bible study classes, Bible study groups, catechism classes, Christian publications, Gospel tracts and such other similar measures as the Church Session and/or Board of Elders may decide.

Teachers of such programmes will be selected from those who have demonstrated a good character and are sound in faith.

**(9) WORSHIP:**

All members shall meet regularly for the public worship of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and shall maintain family and personal devotions (Psalm 27:4; Hebrews 10:24, 25; Song of Solomon 1:6; Psalm 122:1; Psalm 1:1~3). Believing parents shall endeavour to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord and to lead them into a saving knowledge of the Lord by regular instruction of the Word of God (Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 6:4~9; Ephesians 6:4).

**(10) WEDDINGS:**

The solemnisation of marriages must be between a man and a woman, both born-again and baptised believers. (2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:21~33).

**(11) FUNERALS:**

The practice of the Church is to bury the dead. Christian funeral is to be conducted only for born-again believers.

**RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION**  
**BETHEL BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INC.**

**1.NAME**

The name of the incorporated association is **BETHEL BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INC.** (in these rules called "the Church").

**2.DEFINITIONS**

2.1 In these Rules, unless the contrary intention appears-

- "Act" means the Associations Incorporation Act 1981;
- "Session" or "Church Session" means the Committee of Management of the Church;
- "Board of Elders" means the governing committee comprised of the appointed Pastor(s) and Elder(s) of the Church;
- "financial year" means the year ending on 30 June;
- "Congregational Meeting" means either "Annual Congregational Meeting" or "Extraordinary Congregational Meeting".
- "Annual Congregational Meeting" means a general meeting of Members convened annually in accordance with Rule 9.
- "Extraordinary Congregational Meeting" means a general meeting of Members specially convened in accordance with Rule 10.
- "Member" means a Communicant Member of the Church as defined in Rule 4.8;
- "relevant documents" has the same meaning as in the Act.
- "likeminded" from the Greek *phroneo* which means to be of the same mind, to agree together, to cherish the same views and thoughts (as used in Romans 15:5).
- "majority" in the context of voting is defined as greater than half of the of the quorum.
- "Diaconate" is the collective of all elected Deacons and Deaconesses.
- "Finance Committee" an appointed group of Session Members comprising of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer and any other appointed Session Member(s) who have fiscal responsibility to carry out the fiscal decisions of Session.

- 2.2 In these Rules, a reference to the Clerk of Session of the Church is a reference-
  - 2.2.a where a person holds office under these Rules as Clerk of Session; and
  - 2.2.b in any other case, to the public officer of the Church

### **3.ALTERATION OF THE RULES**

- 3.1 Words or expressions contained in these rules shall be interpreted in accordance with the provisions of the Acts Interpretation Act 1958 and the Act as in force from time to time.
- 3.2 The alteration to these rules will be in accordance with the Act (Section 22). The quorum required is half of the Communicant Members.

### **4.MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 A natural person who is approved for membership as provided in Rule 4.8 is eligible to be a Member of the Church.
- 4.2 A person who is not a Member of the Church at the time of the incorporation of the Church (or who was such a Member at that time but has ceased to be a Member) shall not be admitted to membership unless –
  - 4.2.a he or she notifies a member of the Board of Elders in accordance with Rule 4.3; and
  - 4.2.b the admission as a Member is approved by the Board of Elders in accordance with Rule 4.8.a.
- 4.3 An application of a person for membership of the Church, including those seeking to reaffirm their faith, must –
  - 4.3.a be made in writing in the form as advised by a Session member; and
  - 4.3.b be lodged with the Clerk of Session who will refer the application to the Board of Elders as soon as possible.
- 4.4 The applicant(s) must be interviewed by one or more members of the Board of Elders who will discuss the result of the interview with the Board of Elders in affirming qualities as outlined in Rule 4.8.a.
- 4.5 If the Board of Elders accepts the application for membership, the Clerk of Session must, as soon as practicable-

- 4.5.a notify the applicant in writing of the approval for membership
- 4.5.b update the Register of Members to include the applicant's details.
- 4.6 If the Board of Elders rejects an application, the Clerk of Session must, as soon as practicable, notify the applicant in writing that the application has been rejected.
- 4.7 A right, privilege, or obligation of a person by reason of his membership of the Church:
  - 4.7.a is not capable of being transferred or transmitted to another person; and
  - 4.7.b terminates upon the cessation of his/her membership as provided for in Rule 4.9.
- 4.8 There shall be two categories of membership of the Church, namely:
  - 4.8.a Communicant Members being those persons who satisfy the Board of Elders as to their Christian faith, knowledge, manner of life and who have been baptised and have reaffirmed their Christian faith, being persons who are not members of any other Church;
  - 4.8.b Non-Communicant Members are baptised children of Communicant Members and have not affirmed their faith.
- 4.9 A Communicant Member shall remain a Member of the Church until he/she ceases his/her membership by way of:
  - 4.9.a death
  - 4.9.b transferring his/her membership to another Church
  - 4.9.c excommunication/expulsion
  - 4.9.d withdrawal of membership
  - 4.9.e non-attendance to the Church and by resolution of the Board of Elders in accordance with 4.12.
- 4.10 Members seeking to transfer membership to another Church must do so in writing, and lodging the notification with the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session must update the Register of Members by indicating that the Member has transferred their membership.
- 4.11 Members seeking to withdraw their membership must do so in writing, and lodging the notification with the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session must update the Register of Members by indicating that the Member has withdrawn their membership.

- 4.12 Members who are absent from the Church for a period of 12 months may be deemed by resolution by the Board of Elders to have ceased membership as the Member is regarded that they are unable to maintain their membership commitment.
- 4.13 Upon ceasing membership as outlined in Rule 4.9, the Clerk of Session must record the date on which the Member ceased to be a Member.
- 4.14 Non-Communicant Members can become Communicant Members through the processes outlined in Rule 4.2.
- 4.15 Members shall strive conscientiously to live according to the light given to them by the Holy Spirit through God's Word, and to support wholeheartedly the services and activities of the Church.

## **5. ENTRANCE FEE**

There shall be no entrance fee or annual subscription fee.

## **6. REGISTER OF MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1 The Clerk of Session shall enter the names of all Communicant and non-Communicant Members in the register of Members kept by him and upon the name being so entered the person becomes a Communicant or non-Communicant Member respectively of the Church.
- 6.2 The Clerk of Session must keep and maintain a Register of Members containing-
  - 6.2.a the full name and address of each Member
  - 6.2.b the date on which each Member's name was entered in the register
  - 6.2.c the category of membership (i.e. Communicant or Non-Communicant) of each Member
- 6.3 The Clerk of Session shall make the Register of Members available for inspection free of charge by any Member upon written request to the Church.

## **7. DISCIPLINE AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS**

- 7.1 Subject to these Rules, if the Board of Elders is of the opinion that a Member has acted in a manner unbecoming of a Member or by his or her act or omission to be likely to render the witness of the Church or the Church itself of ill repute, then they may agree by resolution to invoke disciplinary procedures

as outlined in Rule 7.2.

- 7.2 The Board of Elders must ensure that they have followed the following investigatory processes in accordance with Matthew 18:15-16, namely-
  - 7.2.a the Board of Elders must identify and articulate the charges requiring investigation;
  - 7.2.b a member of the Board of Elders has spoken to the offending Member to investigate their conduct with respect to the charges identified;
  - 7.2.c if the charges against the Member are grounded and the Member refuses to comply with Rule 7.3, then the Elder or Pastor must seek audience with the individual in the presence of another Member of the Church;
  - 7.2.d if the Member still refuses to comply with Rule 7.3 in the presence of the Elder or Pastor and another member of the Church, formal disciplinary processes may be undertaken upon that individual as outlined in Rule 7.3.c.
- 7.3 Disciplinary processes can cease on grounds that the offending Member has:
  - 7.3.a admitted their conduct was offensive;
  - 7.3.b made restitution in a manner that is deemed satisfactory by the Board of Elders;

AND

  - 7.3.c if the Board of Elders is satisfied that the Member's conduct is no longer considered offensive;
- 7.4 Members who are subject to formal disciplinary action by the Board of Elders will be advised in writing to attend before the Board of Elders to explain his or her conduct. The written notice will stipulate-
  - 7.4.a the charge(s) that are being laid upon the Member including, as far as possible, the time, place and circumstances of the alleged offence accompanied by relevant facts. Facts must be substantiated by at least two witnesses (excluding offended parties) or any other relevant documents;
  - 7.4.b the intended date and location where the Member is invited to explain his or her conduct;
- 7.5 At the Member's hearing before the Board of Elders, if the investigation finds that the charges are founded and the Member still refuses to comply with Rule 7.3.a and 7.3.b, the Member may be served by the Board of Elders a notice of an intention for excommunication of the Member.

- 7.6 Members served with a notice of an intention for excommunication will be informed that their charges will be announced to the congregation of the Church, and that they will be asked publicly to comply with Rule 7.3.a and 7.3.b. Should the Member still refuse to comply, then the Member will be excommunicated, upon which the individual ceases to be a Member of the Church in accordance with Matthew 18:17.
- 7.7 The Board of Elders may suspend the membership of Members for a period of time in satisfying Rule 7.3.b. Upon expiration of the period of suspension, an Elder or Pastor of the Board of Elders will conduct a formal interview to determine whether the Member's membership status can be re-instated.
- 7.8 Upon suspension of membership, the Board of Elders must announce to the congregation that the Member is suspended.
- 7.9 Whilst a Member's membership is suspended, the Member is not permitted to serve in any ministry of the Church for the duration of the suspension.

## **8.DISPUTES AND MEDIATION**

- 8.1 This section covers the resolution of disputes that are not criminal, between:
  - 8.1.a a Member and another Member; or
  - 8.1.b a Member and the Church;
- 8.2 Where the dispute is between a Member and the Church, the representatives of the Church shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. Representatives chosen must be Members of the Church.
- 8.3 In all cases of disputes, the parties involved must endeavour to resolve their differences in accordance with Matthew 18:15-16, namely -
  - 8.3.a the parties involved should attempt to meet to resolve the dispute between themselves through open discussion and in accordance with Biblical precepts.
  - 8.3.b if the dispute cannot be resolved, then the matter should be referred to the Board of Elders through a written submission. The Board of Elders can elect to either resolve the matter in accordance with scriptures OR refer the matter to a mediation process. Where a dispute is subject to a mediation process, the Board of Elders can appoint a Mediator who is a Member of the Church;
  - 8.3.c in mediating a dispute the Mediator must adopt relevant Scriptural precepts to guide the parties to an acceptable resolution. Any resolution is subject to approval by the Board of Elders.

- 8.3.d If the Mediator is unable to find an acceptable resolution, the Board of Elders will determine a resolution in accordance with the Scriptures.
- 8.4 All disputes involving Members must be resolved among those who believe in Christ in fulfilment of 1 Corinthians 6:1-2.
- 8.5 Where a dispute arises between a Member and the other person(s) who is not a Member of the Church, the dispute resolution process prescribed by this section can apply if this is agreed by the parties of the dispute.

## **9.ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS (ACM)**

- 9.1 The Session may determine the date, time and place of the Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church.
- 9.2 The notice convening the Annual Congregational Meeting must specify that the meeting is an Annual Congregational Meeting.
- 9.3 Annual Congregational Meetings shall be opened with a Scripture reading and prayer and concluded with a prayer.
- 9.4 There shall be an Annual Congregational Meeting of Members to be held in each calendar year for the transaction of business pertaining to the Church.
- 9.5 The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held in or as near as practicable to the month of August.
- 9.6 The ordinary business of the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be-
  - 9.6.a to confirm the minutes of the previous Annual Congregational Meeting and of any Extraordinary Congregational Meeting held since that meeting; and
  - 9.6.b to elect members of the Session (if necessary) in accordance with Rule 25; and
  - 9.6.c to receive reports from the Session on the spiritual and temporal conditions of the congregation over the last preceding financial year and plans for the ensuing financial year including statements in accordance with section 30(3) of the Act, which includes-
    - 9.6.c.i the income and expenditure of the Church during the last financial year;
    - 9.6.c.ii the assets and liabilities of the Church at the end of its last financial year;

9.6.c.iii and any other disclosures as required by the Act;

9.7 The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be in addition to any other Extraordinary Congregational Meetings and may be held in the same year.

## **10.EXTRAORDINARY CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS (EGM)**

- 10.1 In addition to the Annual Congregational Meeting, Extraordinary Congregational Meetings may also be held.
- 10.2 All Congregational Meetings other than the Annual Congregational Meeting are Extraordinary Congregational Meetings.
- 10.3 The Session may, whenever it thinks fit, convene an Extraordinary Congregational Meeting.
- 10.4 Members may request in writing for an Extraordinary Congregational Meeting by writing to the Session and lodging the letter with the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session must inform the Session and Board of Elders of the request within 14 days. It is at the discretion of the Board of Elders and/or Session to call an extraordinary congregational meeting.
- 10.5 If, but for this Rule, more than 15 months would elapse between Annual Congregational Meetings, the Session must convene an Extraordinary Congregational Meeting before the expiration of that period.
- 10.6 Members requesting for an Extraordinary Congregational Meeting must-
  - 10.6.a state the objects of the meeting; and
  - 10.6.b be signed by the Members requesting the meeting; and
  - 10.6.c be lodged with the Clerk of Session.

## **11.NOTICE OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

- 11.1 The Clerk of Session, at least 14 days, or if a special resolution has been proposed at least 21 days, before the date fixed for holding a congregational meeting of the Church, must cause to be made available at the Church premises or cause to be sent to each Member of the Church at his address appearing in the Register of Members a notice by prepaid post stating the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business to be conducted at the meeting. The notice must also include the timeframe and means by which Members may raise business for the meeting.
- 11.2 No business other than that set out in the notice convening the meeting may be

conducted at the meeting save for any additional items tabled by Session in accordance with 11.3.b.

11.3 A Member intending to bring any business before a meeting may notify in writing, or by electronic transmission, the Clerk of Session at least 7 days prior to the date for holding a congregational meeting. Upon receipt of the intention, the Clerk of Session must inform the Session of the enquiry in a timely manner, at which the Session may choose to:

11.3.a Speak to the individual raising the question to address their concerns

11.3.b Include the request to be included in the transaction of business during the congregational meeting. During the meeting, such additions to the transaction of business must be announced by the meeting chair prior to the commencement of the meeting.

## **12. QUORUM AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

12.1 No item of business may be conducted at a Congregational Meeting unless a quorum of Members entitled under these Rules to vote is present at the time when the meeting is considering that item.

12.2 A quorum is achieved when a designated proportion of voting Communicant Members are present in-person at the meeting. The proportion of Members to achieve quorum is dependent on whether the Congregational Meeting includes the election of office-bearers of the Church, namely -

12.2.a When the Congregation Meeting includes the election of the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Elders, Deacons or Deaconesses then one half of all voting Communicant Members are required to achieve quorum for the Congregational Meeting.

12.2.b For all other Congregational Meetings, only one third of all voting Communicant Members are required to achieve quorum for the Congregational Meeting.

12.3 If, within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of a Congregational Meeting, a quorum is not present-

12.3.a the meeting if convened upon the requisition of Members according to Rule 10.4 - the meeting shall be dissolved; or

12.3.b the meeting is convened as a result of an adjournment, then the Members present shall be a quorum; or

12.3.c in any other case - the meeting shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and (unless another place is specified by

the Chairperson at the time of adjournment or by written notice to Members given before the day to which the meeting is adjourned) at the same place.

### **13.PRESIDING AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

- 13.1 The Pastor, or in his absence, one of the Board of Elders as determined by the Board of Elders shall preside as Chairman at each Congregational Meeting of the Church.

### **14.ADJOURNMENT OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

- 14.1 The Chairman of a congregational meeting at which a quorum is present may, with the consent of the meeting, adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place, but no business shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.
- 14.2 Where a meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, a like notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given as in the case of the congregational meeting.
- 14.3 Except as provided in Rule 11.1 and 11.2, it is not necessary to give notice of an adjournment or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting if the meeting is adjourned to a date within 14 days.

### **15.VOTING AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

- 15.1 Upon any question arising at a congregational meeting of the Church and deemed appropriate for voting by the Chairman, a Member has one vote only save the Chairman.
- 15.2 All votes must be given personally.
- 15.3 In the case of an equality of voting on a question, the Chairman of the meeting is entitled to exercise a casting vote.
- 15.4 Save for the amendments to these rules, all resolutions shall be passed by a majority vote of those Communicant Members present.
- 15.5 Only Communicant Members who are 16 years of age or older shall be eligible to vote at any congregational meeting.
- 15.6 Except on resolutions to the election of the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses, a question arising at a congregational meeting of the Church shall be determined on a show of hands or by poll (if demanded).

The Chairman will declare the determination that a resolution has been carried by a majority or lost, and an entry to that effect will be minuted as evidence of the fact.

#### **16.MANNER OF DETERMINING WHETHER RESOLUTION IS CARRIED**

- 16.1 If a question arising at a congregational meeting of the Church is determined on a show of hands-
  - 16.1.a a declaration by the Chairperson that a resolution has been-
    - 16.1.a.i carried by a majority (in accordance with Rule 15.4); or
    - 16.1.a.ii lost; and
  - 16.1.b an entry to that effect is minuted -- is evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of, or against, that resolution.

#### **17.PROXIES**

- 17.1 There shall be no entitlement of any Member to vote by proxy.

#### **18.THE CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

- 18.1 The affairs of the Church shall be managed by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders has the following responsibilities -
  - 18.1.a maintains spiritual oversight of the Church in matters of doctrine, principles of government, church elections, admission and discipline of Members, who rule and watch over the Church in accordance with Hebrews 13:17; and
  - 18.1.b is able to delegate spiritual and administrative oversight of the Church to the Diaconate.
  - 18.1.c may, subject to these Rules, the Act and the Regulations, exercise all such powers and functions as may be exercised by the Church other than those powers and functions that are required by these Rules to be exercised by congregational meetings of the Members of the Church; and
  - 18.1.d subject to these Rules, the Act and the Regulations, has power to perform all such acts and things as appear to the Board of Elders to be essential for the proper management of the business and affairs of the Church.

- 18.2 The Board of Elders is supported by the Session which comprises of all members of the Board of Elders and the Diaconate. The Session has the following responsibilities -
- 18.2.a manages the business and affairs of the Church including administrative and ministry matters, in accordance with Acts 6:1-4; and
  - 18.2.b may, subject to these Rules, the Act and the Regulations, exercise all such powers and functions as may be exercised by the Church other than those powers and functions that are required by these Rules to be exercised by congregational meetings of the Members of the Church; and
  - 18.2.c subject to these Rules, the Act and the Regulations, has power to perform all such acts and things as appear to the Session to be essential for the proper management of the business and affairs of the Church.

### **19. THE SESSION**

- 19.1 The Session consists of the Pastor, Assistant Pastor (if any), Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses (if any);
- 19.2 If the Church which has no elected Pastor or Elder(s) of its own, the Diaconate must co-opt a Pastor and an Elder(s) from another likeminded Bible-Presbyterian church who shall have all the rights and powers in the affairs of the Church as if he were the elected Pastor or Elder for a period no greater than 12 months ('qualifying period').
  - 19.2.a Upon the expiry of the qualifying period, co-opted Pastor and/or Elder(s) can only continue in their office if elected by the congregation in accordance with Rule 25. In such circumstances all offices of the Session will be subject to re-election.
- 19.3 The Board of Elders may co-opt other Elder(s) from another likeminded Bible-Presbyterian church.
- 19.4 The Church Session shall appoint a Clerk of Session and a Treasurer among its Members and define their duties and may appoint such other office bearers as it may think fit.
- 19.5 The Church Session may delegate specific powers to any one of its Members and appoint such committees as it deems fit and to make such rules and standing orders to regulate the duties and powers of such persons or committees.
- 19.6 The Church Session may co-opt Members of the Church to serve on any committee.
- 19.7 A majority of those Session members resident in Victoria who must include

the Pastor or a majority of the elected Elders shall constitute a quorum at Session meetings. Where there are only two Elders, one Elder shall constitute a majority of Elders.

- 19.8 The Church Session shall act by consensus of those present at the Session meeting or by a majority vote when necessary. The Chairman shall have only the casting vote.
- 19.9 The Chairman shall be the Pastor or in his absence one of the Elders as chosen by the Board of Elders.
- 19.10 The Church Session shall at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church present an annual or periodic accounts duly audited either internally or externally.
- 19.11 The Church Session, through the Clerk of Session, shall be responsible for keeping the following records:
  - 19.11.a A register of Communicant and Non-Communicant Members with full particulars of name, address, date of birth, baptism, reaffirmation of faith, transfer, marriage, death or dismissal.
  - 19.11.b A catalogue of minutes in accordance with Rule 34.

## **20. THE BOARD OF ELDERS**

- 20.1 The Board of Elders shall consist of the Pastor and Elder(s) and, if any, the Assistant Pastor(s).
- 20.2 If the Church which has one elected Pastor or Elder, the Pastor or Elder must co-opt other Pastor(s) and/or Elder(s) from another likeminded Bible-Presbyterian church who shall have all the rights and powers in the affairs of the Church as if he were the elected Pastor or Elder for a period no greater than 12 months ('qualifying period').
  - 20.2.a Upon the expiry of the qualifying period, co-opted Pastor(s) and/or Elder(s) can only continue in their office if elected by the congregation in accordance with Rule 25.
- 20.3 The Pastor shall be the Chairman of the Board of Elders. In his absence or when deemed prudent, one of the Board of Elders shall act as Chairman.
- 20.4 The Board of Elders may invite Deacon(s)/Deaconess(es) to take part in any meeting of the Board Elders without voting rights.
- 20.5 The Board of Elders shall meet when necessary. The quorum shall be a majority of those qualified to attend.

- 20.6 The Board of Elders shall act by consensus of those present at the meeting or by a majority vote when necessary. The Chairman shall have only the casting vote.
- 20.7 Be responsible for the spiritual welfare and ministry of the Church.
- 20.8 Receive Members into the Church by confession and reaffirmation of faith and by transfer from other Churches.
- 20.9 Appoint staff workers as necessary.
- 20.10 Exercise discipline in the Church according to Rule 7 and 8 in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-16.
- 20.11 Enquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the Members of the Church.
- 20.12 Call before them offenders with witness or witnesses from within or without their congregation.
- 20.13 Admonish and rebuke those who are found to deserve censure and suspend or exclude offenders from the Holy Sacrament.
- 20.14 Determine by itself or when it deems necessary, in consultation with the Deacons and Deaconesses all matters concerning the religious services and spiritual life of the Church and the suitability of candidates for election to the Church Session.

## **21.OFFICE HOLDERS**

- 21.1 The officers of the Church shall be-
  - 21.1.a the Pastor (Ephesians 4, 1 Timothy 3:1-7)
  - 21.1.b the Elders (Ephesians 4, 1 Timothy 3:1-7)
  - 21.1.c the Deacons and Deaconesses (1 Timothy 3:8-13, Romans 16:1)
- 21.2 The formal administrative roles of the Church shall be-
  - 21.2.a a Presiding Officer- normally the Pastor
  - 21.2.b a Treasurer
  - 21.2.c an Assistant Treasurer
  - 21.2.d a Clerk of Session

- 21.2.e a Public Officer
- 21.3 Administrative roles must be Members of the Session and/or Board of Elders
- 21.4 The Public Officer is the nominated representative of the Church for matters concerning government and civil issues.
- 21.5 With the exception of the Presiding Officer, administrative roles are appointed by the discretion of the Session and/or Board of Elders and can be changed at any point in time by the discretion of the Session and/or Board of Elders.
- 21.6 Each officer of the Church shall hold office for the term they are elected for until the annual congregational meeting presiding of the issue of electing officers of the Church, but he or she will be eligible for re-election

## **22.PASTORS**

- 22.1 The qualification of a Pastor will be assessed by the Board of Elders and shall be in accordance with the spiritual qualities outlined in Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7. In addition, he shall possess relevant theological qualifications from an acceptable seminary or bible college.
- 22.2 All Pastors shall be elected by the Members of the Church at a Congregational Meeting by a majority of the votes cast and shall hold office for a term of three years but shall be eligible for re-election.
- 22.3 The Pastor shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular service, and ministration of the Sacraments of the Church and the ordination of Elders.
- 22.4 The Pastor shall be the ex-officio member and advisor of all committees connected with the Church.
- 22.5 The Pastor shall be the Chairman of the Church Session, except for prudential reasons, when the Board of Elders shall appoint one of its Elders as Chairman of a particular meeting.

## **23.ELDERS**

- 23.1 A candidate for election to the office of an Elder must possess the spiritual qualities outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9. He should have served as a Deacon, is not a novice and is nominated by the Board of Elders..
- 23.2 Upon election, an Elder shall hold office for a term of 3 years and may be eligible for re-election.
- 23.3 An Elder may be elected in absentia, with written consent. In such situations, a

written notice by the candidate will be read prior to the election.

- 23.4 An Elder, once elected and ordained shall not be divested of his status as Elder when he is not re-elected or when he declines re-election. In either case, he shall not be a member of the Session or Board of Elders.
- 23.5 An Elder, with the approval of his Board of Elders, may simultaneously serve in another Bible-Presbyterian Church for such duration of time as may be determined.

#### **24.DEACONS AND DEACONESSES**

- 24.1 A candidate for election to the office of a Deacon or Deaconess (Romans 16:1) must possess the spiritual qualities outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. He/She must have attained 21 years of age at the time of nomination.
- 24.2 Upon election, a Deacon or Deaconess shall hold office for a term of three years and may be eligible for re-election.
- 24.3 They may be elected in absentia, with their written consent. In such situations, a written notice by the candidate will be read prior to the election.
- 24.4 Deacons but not Deaconesses may be requested by the Pastor or Elder to assist in the ministration of the Holy Communion.
- 24.5 Deacons and Deaconesses shall be subject to the discipline of the Board of Elders.
- 24.6 The ministry of a Deaconess is limited to:
  - 24.6.a In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 – not to usurp the authority over the man.
  - 24.6.b In accordance with Titus 2:3 – to teach other women good things.

#### **25.ELECTION TO THE SESSION**

- 25.1 The Election of the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses shall be by secret ballot and the Chairman shall appoint at least 2 scrutineers to count the ballot papers. Upon the receiving the result of the ballot from the scrutineers, the chairman shall declare that the resolution concerning election has been carried by a majority or lost, and an entry to that effect will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting including the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour for each nominee which is evidence of the election result.
- 25.2 Candidates shall satisfy the requirements listed in 1 Timothy 3, Titus and 1

Peter 5. Additionally, and to ensure better objectivity in selection, they shall fulfil the following conditions:

- 25.2.a Demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt, and over a sufficient length of time, that they are faithful and mature members of the Body of Christ and faithfully devote themselves to personal prayer and study of the Word.
- 25.2.b Attend public worship and prayer meetings of the Church regularly unless prevented from doing so for valid reasons.
- 25.2.c Make a careful study of the Statement of Purposes, in particular the principle and practice of Biblical separation and fully accept it.
- 25.2.d Be willing to participate wholeheartedly in the ministry of the Church, with the Pastor, and to devote time, talents and resources in such ministry which shall include serving in the various departments of the Church.
- 25.2.e At least 21 years of age.
- 25.3 The Board of Elders shall nominate candidates for election to the Session. Potential nominations may also be submitted by any member of the congregation to the Board of Elders for consideration.
- 25.4 Proposals for election to the Session shall be carefully screened by the Board of Elders to ensure that candidates fulfil Rule 23, 24 or 25.2 as dependent on the intended office of the nominee.
- 25.5 Elected Members of the Session shall be formally installed into office at a Service of Consecration to be held on an appropriate Lord's Day soon after election.
- 25.6 The voting process to elect nominees to the Session shall be in compliance with Rule 15 at an appropriately convened congregational meeting.

## **26.VACATION OF OFFICE FROM THE SESSION AND/OR BOARD OF ELDERS**

- 26.1 For the purposes of these Rules, the office of a member of the Session becomes vacant if that member:
  - 26.1.a ceases to be a Member of the Church;
  - 26.1.b becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Law;
  - 26.1.c resigns his office by notice in writing given to the Clerk of Session; or

- 26.1.d removal from office as determined by the Board of Elders in accordance with the Word of God.
- 26.2 The Board of Elders shall determine the need for nominating replacement candidate(s) in the event of a vacancy. The nominee(s) shall be elected via an Extra-ordinary Congregational Meeting to install them to serve the remaining period of the current Session term.
- 26.3 In the event that all positions on the Board of Elders become vacant, refer Rule 19.2.

### **27. MEETINGS OF THE SESSION**

- 27.1 The Church Session shall meet at least once in two months at such place and time as the Pastor or Board of Elders may determine.
- 27.2 Emergency meetings may be convened by the Pastor/Assistant Pastor, or in his absence, by the Elder appointed to act for the Pastor. Such a meeting shall be also convened at the joint request of any two Elders.

### **28. NOTICE OF SESSION MEETINGS**

- 28.1 Meetings are convened by the Pastor/ Assistant Pastor, or in his absence, by the Elder appointed by the Board of Elders.
- 28.2 Written notice of each Session meeting must be given to each member of the Session at least 2 days before the date of the meeting, identifying the agenda of the meeting.

### **29. QUORUM FOR SESSION MEETINGS**

- 29.1 At least half of the appointed Session members must be present at the meeting to constitute a quorum.
- 29.2 No business may be conducted unless a quorum is present.

### **30. PRESIDING AT SESSION MEETINGS**

- 30.1 The Pastor, or in his absence, an Elder as determined by the Board of Elders shall preside as Chairman at each Session meeting.

### **31.VOTING AT SESSION MEETINGS**

- 31.1 Should disagreement arise on a question arising from a Session meeting, the Chairman may decide to resolve the impasse by vote.
- 31.2 Each member present at the Session meeting, is entitled to one vote save the Chairman and, in the event of an equality of votes on any question, the Chairman may exercise a casting vote.
- 31.3 Resolution is carried on a majority of those present.

### **32.REMOVAL OF A SESSION AND/OR BOARD OF ELDER MEMBER**

- 32.1 Prior to the removal of a Deacon or Deaconess from his/her office, the disciplinary processes outlined in Rule 7 must be carried out. In application of Rule 7, the Board of Elders will determine that the Deacon or Deaconess may be removed from the Session.
- 32.2 Prior to the removal of an Elder from his office, in addition to the disciplinary processes outlined in Rule 7, the Board of Elders (excluding the Elder in question) must consider 1 Timothy 5:19 -20 and determine the appropriate course of action.

### **33.MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

- 33.1 The Clerk of Session of the Church shall keep minutes of the resolutions and proceedings of each -
  - 33.1.a congregational meeting; and
  - 33.1.b Session meeting; and
  - 33.1.c Board of Elders meetings if the Elders so direct the Clerk of Session
- 33.2 The minutes will record the names of persons present at meetings.

### **34.ACCOUNTS, FINANCE AND PROPERTY**

- 34.1 The Treasurer of the Session must-
  - 34.1.a collect and receive all moneys due to the Church and make all payments authorised by the Session; and
  - 34.1.b keep correct accounts and books showing the financial affairs of the Church with full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the Church.
- 34.2 The accounts and books referred to in Rule 34.1 shall be available for inspection by Members of the Church. All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange,

promissory notes and other negotiable instruments shall be signed by two members of the Session.

- 34.3 The work and programme of the Church shall be supported by the freewill offerings and tithes of its Members. Gifts and donations from friends and by any other income as may be derived by the Church according to the Holy Scriptures.
- 34.4 The funds and property of the Church shall be used in accordance with these Rules.
- 34.5 The Session shall elect one of its members as Treasurer and another member as Assistant Treasurer. The Session may appoint a Finance Committee from among its members to take charge of the financial affairs of the Church.
- 34.6 The Church Session may appoint an auditing firm as external auditor to audit the accounts of the Church.
- 34.7 The Members of the Church shall appoint one or more internal auditors who is/are not a member of the Session, at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church.
- 34.8 The internal auditor(s) shall be appointed for one year and can be re-appointment in the subsequent year.
- 34.9 The internal auditor(s) and/or the auditing firm shall satisfy their statutory duties as specified by the Act.

### **35.SEAL**

- 35.1 The Common Seal of the Church shall be kept in the custody of the Clerk of Session.
- 35.2 The Common Seal shall not be used or affixed to any instrument except pursuant to a resolution of the Session
- 35.3 The affixing of the Common Seal shall be attested by signatory of any two of the three following persons, namely
  - 35.3.a the Chairman,
  - 35.3.b Clerk of Session and
  - 35.3.c the Treasurer or in the event of any long term absence of any of them then an Elder or a Deacon (in that order).

### **36. NOTICE TO MEMBERS**

- 36.1 Except for the requirement in Rule 11, any notice that is required to be given to a Member, by on behalf of the Church, under these Rules may be given by-
- 36.1.a delivering the notice to the Member personally; or
  - 36.1.b sending it by prepaid post addressed to the Member at that Member's address shown in the Register of Members; or
  - 36.1.c facsimile transmission, if the Member has requested that the notice be given to him or her in this manner; or
  - 36.1.d electronic transmission, if the Member has requested that the notice be given to him or her in this manner.

### **37. WINDING UP**

- 37.1 The Church shall be wound up or dissolved only by the consent of not less than three-fourths of those Communicant Members of the Church present in person at a Congregational Meeting convened for that purpose;
- 37.2 If upon the winding-up or dissolution of the Church there remains, after satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same may be distributed to one or more institutions having-
- 37.2.a objectives similar to the Statement and Purposes of the Church; and
  - 37.2.b a constitution clause which only permits the distribution of wound-up funds to other institutions with similar Statement of Purposes
  - 37.2.c Wound up funds shall not be distributed among the Members of the Church nor transferred to some other institution not having a similar Statement and Purpose as the Church.

### **38. CUSTODY AND INSPECTION OF BOOKS AND RECORDS**

- 38.1 Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the Clerk of Session shall keep in his custody or under his control all books, documents and securities of the Church.
- 38.2 All accounts, books, securities and any other relevant documents of the Church will be available for inspection free of charge by any Member upon written request.