



**Mackay BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Passionate lovers of God and others

# Constitution

(Last Review made with amendments implemented on 11/07/2021)

## Table of Contents

Section 1 – The Church.....	3
2. Articles of Faith.....	3
PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE .....	4
Section 2 – Rules of Membership .....	4
MEMBER'S PLEDGE:.....	4
Section 3 – Officers of the Church.....	5
PASTORS .....	5
PASTORAL TEAM .....	6
DEACONS .....	6
ELDERS .....	7
Section 4 – The Board of Deacons .....	7
Section 5 – The Board of Elders .....	8
Section 6 – Discipline.....	10
Section 7 – Baptism and Communion .....	10
Section 8 – Meetings and Reports.....	10
FORUMS.....	13
Section 9 – Church Records.....	13
Section 10 – Marriage Ceremonies and Infant Dedications .....	14
Section 11 – Finances of the Church .....	14
Section 12 – Property of the Church .....	14
Section 13 – Amendment of the Constitution.....	14
Section 14 – Exceptional Circumstances.....	15
Section 15 – Terms Used (Further defined in other parts of this constitution) .....	15

## Section 1 – The Church

1. The Church shall be known as the Mackay Baptist Church and shall consist of persons holding the Articles of Faith listed below as an essential part of their religious beliefs and who, in accordance with that belief, have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, through baptism by immersion in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and have thereafter been admitted into the membership of the Church.

As baptised believers, we join ourselves together in a holy union and fellowship in the fear and love of the Lord

This Church is a loyal member of the Baptist Union of Queensland (Queensland Baptists) and conscientiously seeks to fulfil all duties and obligations to other churches within the Union.

This church also seeks to encourage, mentor, assist and partner with other Baptist Churches within our sphere of contact.

2. **Articles of Faith** - These doctrines, which are the Articles of Faith of The Mackay Baptist Church, are based on those set out in the Declaration of Principles of the Baptist Union of Queensland.
  1. The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God and the supreme authority and basis for all our beliefs and practices. ( II Timothy 3:16&17, II Peter 1:20 & 21)
  2. God exists as one God in three persons the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. ( Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 9:14, Deuteronomy 6:4)
  3. The Lord Jesus Christ is both divine, the only begotten Son of God, and human, the son of the Virgin Mary, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. (Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20, Isaiah 7:14, Galatians 4:4)
  4. All people are born sinful and separated from God; and in need of God's saving grace. ( Romans 3:10 – 18, 23, John 3:16)
  5. The Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished the forgiveness of sin and the freedom from the penalty and power of sin by his perfect obedience, death, resurrection, and present intercession. (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, I Peter 3:18, I Peter 2:24, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)
  6. The Holy Spirit brings about the new birth and eternal life in the believer. He sanctifies, seals, and empowers ( I Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13 & 14, II Timothy 1:7)
  7. Salvation is only possible through repentance to God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38, Acts 4:12, Acts 16:30-31, Acts 20:21)
  8. The dead will be resurrected and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ will happen. ( II Thessalonians 1:6-10, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:1-15 )
  9. The Lord Jesus will return visibly and gloriously to claim His own. (Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:13-18)
  10. The two Ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ - namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are of perpetual obligation; Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; (Romans 6:4) the Lord's Supper being a memorial, until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:19 & 20)

### PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

3. Principles of Church Life - The Mackay Baptist Church accepts the following principles in its corporate life as a body of Christian believers:
- (a) Leadership - The Pastors, Elders and Deacons of the Church, appointed by God and elected by the members, shall exercise authority and enjoy the respect of the congregation in accord with the teaching of Scripture. (Hebrews 13:7,17)
  - (b) Teaching - The congregation shall be regularly, diligently and systematically taught the truths of the Holy Bible, the written Word of God. (II Timothy 3:16 – 4:4)
  - (c) Involvement - Every member of the Church shall be mobilised to play an active part, so far as is possible, in the life and ministry of the Church (Matthew 5:13-16, Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 2:10, and I Peter 4:10)
  - (d) Worship and Fellowship - Opportunity shall be provided for members of the Church to worship together and to experience that quality of Christian fellowship as described in the New Testament. (Hebrews 10:24, 25, and I Corinthians 14:26, 40.)
  - (e) Evangelism - The Church shall be trained and encouraged to share the gospel so that every member may be a faithful witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Corinthians 5: 17-20, and I Peter 3:15).
  - (f) Outreach Ministry - The Church shall seek to serve earthly as well as spiritual needs of people in the local community, the region and beyond according to Christ's example and teaching. (Matthew 7:12, and 25:31-40)
  - (g) Stewardship - Sacrificial commitment to God of possessions and income shall be held before the congregation as an appropriate guide to Christian giving for the work of the Lord. (I Corinthians 16:1,2, and II Corinthians 9:6-15)
  - (h) Prayer - Church members shall commit themselves to regular private and corporate prayer. (Ephesians 6:16-20)
  - (i) Missions - The Church shall have a clear commitment to missions and missionary support. (Matthew 9:35-38, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8)

## Section 2 – Rules of Membership

1. Admission of Members: Baptised believers may be admitted to membership on profession of their faith, by transfer from other Baptist Churches or by restoration, provided in all cases that they subscribe to the "Members Pledge", "Articles of Faith" and the "Principles of Church Life". Where baptism by immersion is medically inadvisable the matter should be considered by the Board of Elders for their decision.

### MEMBER'S PLEDGE:

I believe the Articles of Faith set out in the Constitution of The Mackay Baptist Church and Pledge that I will endeavour to faithfully fulfil the following duties and obligations, the Lord being my helper:

- (a) To read from the Bible and pray daily.
- (b) To attend worship with the congregation weekly on the Lord's Day unless genuinely prevented from doing so.
- (c) To give generously from my income on a regular basis for the financial support of the Church's ministries.
- (d) To participate in the Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings of the Church, if possible.
- (e) To accept at least one office, task or function within the structure of the Church, unless excused from doing so by reason of extraordinary circumstances.
- (f) To strive to walk in holiness and to express the love of Christ in my dealings with all people.

- (g) To exercise brotherly love towards my fellow members, endeavouring to share their burdens, to pray for them, to avoid all causes of division and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
  - (h) To respect the Pastors and Leaders of the Church, to pray for them and encourage them in their duties.
  - (i) To play my part in extending the Kingdom of Christ by witnessing for the Saviour in word and deed.
  - (j) To accept and support all correctly decided Church Purpose, Vision and Mission Statements.
2. All persons applying for Church Membership or for restoration shall be interviewed by visitors appointed by the Board of Elders and shall be given access to copies of this Constitution and the Church Purpose, Vision and Mission Statements.
  3. Prior to deciding on an application, the Eldership Secretary shall post the name of the applicant for membership on the Church Notice Board, or advertise the names by a suitable electronic or printed means for a period of at least two full weeks, during which time, any member may comment on the application. If any member of the Church objects to the admission of any person to membership, the person so objecting shall make a definite charge to the Board of Elders, which charge the Board shall consider before deciding on the application. After due consideration, the Board of Elders shall accept or reject an application for membership.
  4. All persons accepted for membership shall be received by the right hand of fellowship at a Worship Service, or Church Members' Meeting, thereby indicating their willingness to be a full member of the Church. The welcoming process could include wording such as "Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour? Are you comfortable with our Articles of faith and Principles of Church Life? Are you seeking to serve your Lord in unity with us as your Church family fully aware of our statements of purposes and processes?"
  5. Members leaving the district are encouraged to unite with other congregations of like faith. If a member in good standing wishes to join another Baptist Church, such Church, upon request, may be granted a letter commending the member to its fellowship.

## Section 3 – Officers of the Church

The Officers of the Church shall be: Pastors, Deacons and Elders from time to time elected or appointed by the Church. We believe that these officers are called by God to their positions of responsibility and their calling is recognised by the Church through the processes of election and appointment described in this Constitution. All other positions in the Church, excluding Auditor, shall be filled through appointment by the Board of Deacons or the Board of Elders according to their relative roles. Officers of church affiliated organisations who are elected by members of those organisations shall be approved by the Board of Deacons or the Board of Elders before assuming office. Appointments made or approved by either Board shall be for a stated period, but shall, in all cases, be subject to termination by the relevant Board at any time.

### PASTORS

Pastors and Elders are the spiritual leaders in the life and ministry of the Church. Pastors accept their office from the Lord Jesus Christ and Church members will esteem and acknowledge our Pastors as over us in the Lord. We will pray for them, attend their ministry and by all means endeavour to strengthen their hands.

1. A Pastor shall be a person eligible for membership In the Church and shall possess such spiritual and other qualifications as shall be deemed suitable by the Board of Elders, by a General Meeting of the Church and by the Baptist Union of Queensland.
2. All business connected with the Pastorate shall be introduced to a General Meeting of the Church as a recommendation from the Board of Elders.
3. A call, or the extension of a call, to become a Pastor of the Church shall be made at a properly constituted General Meeting of the Church, of which two full weeks' notice has been given in writing or by announcements at Worship Services. A majority of two-thirds of the members present at the meeting is necessary to issue or renew a call. A call shall detail the duties, conditions of service and responsibilities.

4. A call shall be for a stated period of five years, or lesser period if desired and extensions of the call may be made for five years or lesser periods if desired. If the term is not extended, the Pastor will be advised and shall cease to serve the Church at the end of three months from the date of the advice. In any case, the call may be terminated after three months' notice from either side and the Church may pay the stipend and allowances for a three month period in lieu of notice.
5. If, as the result of a General Meeting of the Church, the term of a Pastor is concluded, or if a call is not renewed or if a Pastor resigns from his position, the Church may proceed forthwith to call another Pastor in accordance with this Constitution.
6. When two or more Pastors have been appointed to serve the Church together, they shall function as a team under the direction of the Board of Elders.
7. Pastors of the Church are, ex officio, members of both the Board of Deacons and the Board of Elders of the Church, but a Pastor shall be excused from meetings of either Board when the Pastorate or the selection of a successor to the Pastor is being discussed. A Pastor shall not be in attendance at a Members' meeting voting on a pastoral Call, unless requested for a statement at the commencement of the Meeting.

#### PASTORAL TEAM

8. A Pastoral Team may also exist under the leadership of the Senior Pastor and include other officers with a specific function, such as Discipleship Coordinator, Youth Worker, Deaconess, Associate Pastor, and Pastoral Visitor, Counsellor etc. The Pastoral Team is not a decision making group, but a ministry or service group within the life of the Church working with the Senior Pastor and Associate pastor/s. Paid members of the Pastoral Team shall not be elected but shall be called or employed by the Eldership on behalf of the Church for a specified period not exceeding five years at a time to be reviewed as necessary. Other members of the Pastoral Team shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. Members of the Pastoral Team who are not Deacons or Elders may by invitation attend these meetings, but may not have voting rights on these Boards. An Associate Pastor shall have full voting rights on the Board of Elders, or the Board of Deacons depending on the nature of their pastoral role.

#### DEACONS

Deacons are mature Christian leaders (I Timothy 3:8-14, Acts 6:1-6) who, together with the Pastors and Elders, form the Board of Deacons of the Church. They accept their office from the Lord Jesus Christ and members esteem and acknowledge their service as leaders of the Church. Their emphasis is on business, property and management areas of the Church. The Deacons "serve" the Church in practical ways

There shall be not more than twelve Deacons elected to the Board of Deacons of the Church and any member in good standing, (other than an Elder, or a Pastor of the Church) shall be eligible for election as a Deacon. The Deacons shall hold office for three years; and be eligible for re-election.

9. The election of Deacons shall be conducted as follows:
  - (a) Six weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting nominations shall be called to fill any vacancies occurring.
  - (b) Any member may nominate any number of other members to be elected, provided that the nomination is in writing, accompanied in every case by the written consent of the person nominated. Nominations are to be received by the Church Secretary by two Sundays (at least 7 days) before the Annual General Meeting. The Church Secretary shall post on the notice board or in the Bulletin, or through a members email out, the names of those nominated as they are received.
  - (c) At the Annual General Meeting every nomination received shall be submitted to ballot. A vote will be undertaken to determine successful Deacons. To be elected each must obtain a majority of the vote of the members present. If more than 12 Deacons would result from the vote those with the lesser vote would not be elected. Should the number still exceed 12 deacons the last people to have been nominated shall be excluded
  - (d) Vacancies in the office of Deacon, which occur during the period between Annual General Meetings, may be filled by a temporary appointment made by the Board of Deacons. Such appointment shall have full voting

rights in that Board. Any member so appointed shall hold office only until the next Annual General Meeting where they would be eligible if nominated to stand for election to the Board of Deacons

## **ELDERS**

Elders are mature Christian leaders who act as Spiritual leaders and advisers to all Officers and members of the Church. (1 Timothy 5:17) The Elders "direct" and "lead". They are esteemed by the Church and may undertake such spiritual duties as visiting, counselling, etc., under the direction of the Pastor(s) as described in Section 5. Their emphasis is on people and ministry related matters. They also have a decision making role in these areas.

There shall be not more than ten Elders elected to the Board of Elders of the Church and any member in good standing, (other than a Deacon, or a Pastor of the Church) shall be eligible for election as an Elder. The Elders shall hold office for five years, but will be eligible for re-election.

10. Elders are to be nominated only by the Pastor(s) of the Church and the Board of Elders. The nomination shall be advertised at least 2 weeks before being presented for a vote by a General Church Members Meeting. An Elder must be a member of the Church who has faithfully served the Church over a substantial period. A nomination must then be approved by a majority of the Board of Elders. The approved nomination then goes before a General Meeting of the Church for election by a majority of members present.
11. Elders shall hold office for a term of 5 years, after which time, with a recommendation from the Pastor and Board of Elders they may be re-elected for further terms to that role by the Church membership. (As per Section 3 –10. above.)

## **Section 4 – The Board of Deacons**

1. The Board of Deacons shall consist of the Pastor(s) of the Church ex officio and the Deacons. Elders may attend Deacons Meetings to assist Deacons on matters of mutual concern. Elders shall have no voting rights on the Board of Deacons
2. Authority for transacting the business of the Church relevant to their roles is vested in the Board of Deacons of the Church, except as vested by this Constitution in the membership of the Church acting through Annual General Meetings and other General Meetings and as vested in the Board of Elders. Any uncertainty about the relative roles of the Deacons and Elders shall be decided by the Board of Elders.
3. The Board of Deacons shall meet at least six times per year and a meeting of the Board must be held within three months of the previous meeting. Where it is impossible to meet due to government or health restrictions or another valid reason attendance at a Deacons Meeting can be via some other means such as video, audio or online conferencing. This will be considered as actual attendance at that meeting, with all voting rights. Attendance shall be noted in the minutes as online and count as full attendance.
4. A quorum for a meeting of the Board of Deacons shall be a majority of the members of the Board.
5. Decisions of the Board of Deacons are taken by a majority voting, with the Chairman exercising a casting vote in the case of an equal vote.
6. All expenditure of the Church's funds in excess of three hundred dollars (\$300), except where budgeted for, shall require authorisation by the Board of Deacons.
7. Prior to an Annual General Meeting, the Board of Deacons shall approve a full Statement of Receipts and Payments for presentation by the Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting. Such Statement shall be made up to 30th June in each year. An Auditor/or Accounting firm shall be appointed at such Annual General Meeting for the purpose of auditing such Statement for the following year.
8. Prior to an Annual General Meeting, the Board of Deacons shall prepare and approve a Budget covering the anticipated needs of the Church and its wider ministry for the forthcoming year to be presented by the Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting.

9. Prior to an Annual General Meeting, the Board of Deacons may act as a Nominating Committee and make nominations for the positions coming vacant.
10. At the first meeting of the Board of Deacons following upon the Annual General Meeting of the Church, the Board of Deacons shall consider the duties of the Deacons elected to the Board. They shall decide by mutual agreement or by majority vote the specific office of each Deacon. One Deacon shall serve as Secretary of the Church and another Deacon shall be Treasurer. The remaining Deacons shall be assigned such duties as are deemed necessary. The Board of Deacons must inform the Church of the duties undertaken by each Deacon as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting.
11. Relative roles and responsibilities of the Deacons and Elders as agreed on between these bodies in accordance with the constitution, are to be notified to the church as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting each year, and at any other time as roles develop or change.
12. Committees of the Board of Deacons
  - (a) Advisory Committees may be formed under the guidance of the Board of Deacons, of church members interested in the specific area of responsibility allocated by the Board of Deacons to that Committee.
  - (b) Each Committee shall have a Pastor, Deacon or Elder appointed by the Board of Deacons as the Convenor, who shall be responsible for the effective operation of that Committee.
13. The Board of Deacons and Board of Elders, according to their roles, shall have authority over all organisations of the Church.
14. The Board of Deacons may invite other Church Members to assist them or to attend their meetings. Such official visitors or apprentice Deacons would have no voting rights on the Board of Deacons.
15. The Board of Deacons shall liaise where necessary with the Board of Elders to ensure the smooth running of the Church.
16. The Church Secretary or Secretary of the Board of Deacons, as well as the Church Treasurer shall come from the Board of Deacons
17. In matters considered urgent, the Deacons may pass a resolution by consultation with each other outside a formal meeting if they are in clear agreement. The next formal meeting will then minute that decision as being adopted by the Board concerned.

## **Section 5 – The Board of Elders**

(Until such time as a body of Elders has been appointed, the Pastor(s) and Deacons of the Church shall together temporarily undertake the duties of Elders.)

1. The Board of Elders shall consist of not more than ten Elders and the Pastor(s) of the Church ex officio. All Elders shall be members of the Board of Deacons until such time as more than three Elders have been appointed, after which Elders shall meet as the Board of Elders only The duties and functions of the Board of Elders shall be as follows:
  - (a) To liaise with the Board of Deacons where necessary to ensure the smooth running of the Church.
  - (b) To organise the work of all active Elders by calling meetings of Elders, appointing Elders to particular duties, etc.. (Active Elders are all those Elders not excused from Eldership duties by reason of advanced age, sickness, absence from the district or because of other duties.)
  - (c) To act as a Membership Committee for the Church by appointing visitors to interview applicants for membership, considering applications for membership (including any objections which may be brought forward) and by admitting persons to membership in accordance with section 2 of this Constitution. As part of the interview process applicants should indicate their willingness to accept and work within the terms of the



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constitution. The Elders should also maintain the Membership Roll where there are sufficient Elders to act as a Board of Elders.

- (d) To act as a Discipline Committee on behalf of the Church by investigating all cases which appear to call for discipline and by taking action (including making recommendations to General Meetings of the Church) for disciplinary suspension or withdrawal of membership in accord with Section 6 of this Constitution.
  - (e) To assist the Pastor/s in any spiritual area they require.
  - (f) Elders may invite others to meet with them at Board of Elders meetings to assist in the coordination with the Pastor of the spiritual care and direction of the Church.
  - (g) To carry out roles as delegated to them by the Constitution. These roles have an emphasis on people and ministry related matters. The Elders have the decision making role in these areas.
  - (h) To appoint a Secretary/Chairperson within the Eldership for organizational and minute taking purposes.
  - (i) To meet regularly at least 6 times per year. Where it is impossible to meet due to government or health restrictions or another valid reason attendance at an Elders Meeting can be via some other means such as video, audio or online conferencing". This will be considered as actual attendance at that meeting, with all voting rights. Attendance shall be noted in the minutes as online and count as full attendance.
  - (j) Any matters of confusion between the roles of Deacons and Elders which is not clarified in this constitution shall be determined by the Board of Elders.
  - (k) Official minutes of Eldership Board meetings shall be provided to the Church Secretary to be retained as part of the official Church records.
  - (l) Where the Board of Elders drops below 3 persons, their major decision making roles will revert to the Board of Deacons.
  - (m) The Eldership will actively pursue attendees in regards to becoming church members.
  - (n) To appoint delegates to the Queensland Baptist Annual Assembly
2. Authority for transacting the business of the Church relevant to their roles is vested in the Board of Elders of the Church, except as vested by this Constitution in the membership of the Church acting through the Annual General Meetings and other General Meetings and as vested in the Board of Deacons. Any uncertainty about the relative roles of the Deacons and Elders shall be decided by the Board of Elders.
3. Committees of the Board of Elders
- (a) Advisory Committees may be formed under the guidance of the Board of Elders, of church members interested in the specific area of responsibility allocated by the Board of Elders to that Committee.
  - (b) Each Committee shall have a Pastor, Deacon or Elder appointed by the Board of Elders as the Convenor, who shall be responsible for the effective operation of that Committee.
4. No organisation shall use the name of the Church without the consent of the Board of Elders
5. The Board of Elders may invite other Church Members to assist them or to attend their meetings. Such official visitors or apprentice Elders would have no voting rights on the Board of Elders.
6. In matters considered urgent, Elders may pass a resolution by consultation with each other outside a formal meeting if they are in clear agreement. The next formal meeting will then minute that decision as being adopted by the Board of Elders.

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## Section 6 – Discipline

1. All cases appearing to call for discipline shall be investigated by the Board of Elders in a spirit of meekness and in a manner consistent with the Word of God (eg. Matthew 18:15-17) and the Board shall decide upon what action if any is appropriate. Members of the Church are obliged to discuss matters concerning discipline with members of the Board of Elders, if requested to do so. If the Board decides that it is necessary, for the spiritual benefit of a member or for the spiritual health of the congregation as a whole, the Board may, as a last resort, recommend to a General Meeting of the Church that further action be taken as per Paragraph 2 below.
2. Disciplinary decisions by a General Meeting of the Church shall be taken only on the basis of a recommendation from the Board of Elders. The Board may recommend either that a member's privileges of membership be suspended for a stated period or the membership be withdrawn immediately. The Board may subsequently recommend that privileges of membership be suspended for a further stated period or that the membership be withdrawn because no satisfactory response has been made during the period of suspension. If a member under discipline responds in reconciliation during a period of suspension, the Board of Elders shall inform the congregation that "the member placed under discipline on such and such a date has been restored to full fellowship with the Church"
3. At a General Meeting called to consider a disciplinary decision, a member of the Board of Elders shall report on the matter and present the recommendation of the Board. The report shall be discreet, yet shall contain sufficient detail for a proper decision to be made by the members. Such decision shall then be taken by the meeting without further discussion.
4. No member shall be allowed to resign his or her connection with the church in order to escape discipline for any act committed by him or her unworthy of the name and character of a professed follower of Jesus Christ.
5. Members who are the subject of a disciplinary decision shall be notified of the decision in writing, together with the reasons thereof, by the Secretary of the Board of Elders.
6. In all cases where a member has had the privileges of membership suspended for a stated period, the Board of Elders shall make faithful efforts to bring such member to restoration during that period.
7. Members absenting themselves from the Worship Service for a period of six consecutive months, when not prevented by sickness, duty or, distance, shall be liable to have their names removed from the Membership Roll for non-attendance, provided that they shall be visited, contacted or written to by the Board of Elders before such action is taken.

## Section 7 – Baptism and Communion

1. The Ordinance of Baptism shall only be performed upon persons who have experienced regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as described in the New Testament. Candidates for baptism should consider membership of this Church or another Christian congregation. The Pastor shall have the discretion to baptise born again Christians who are members or who undertake to become members of another Christian Church. The Pastor may delegate to others the right to baptise on behalf of the church so long as the specific baptism is approved by the Pastor.
2. The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly by the Church at such times as may be arranged by the Board of Elders, and shall be open to all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are in fellowship with the Lord and His people. Whenever possible, a Pastor, Elder or Deacon shall preside.

## Section 8 – Meetings and Reports

1. There are two kinds of business meetings which involve all members of the Church in corporate decision making: General Meetings and Annual General Meetings. Such meetings are to be called by the Board of Deacons or Board of Elders, as and when required by this Constitution.
2. (a) All Church members in good standing who are not less than 18 years of age may participate and vote in General Meetings and Annual General Meetings. Younger members may attend.  
  
(b) Other persons may be invited or permitted to attend subject to the approval of the Church Meeting. They shall have no voting rights and shall speak only as invited by the Chairman.

3. A quorum at a General Meeting or Annual General Meeting of the Church shall be not less than 25% of the active membership at the time of the meeting, with a minimum of fifteen. (See Section 9 "Record Books" paragraph 2 "Active and Inactive Members".)
4. The decisions made at properly constituted meetings of the Board of Deacons, Board of Elders, or at properly constituted General Meetings or Annual General Meetings of the Church shall be binding on all members.
5. A General Meeting of the Church may be called at any time by the Board of Deacons on its own initiative, or by the Board of Elders, provided due notice of the meeting is given to the congregation (see paragraph 6 below). Any member may request the Board of Elders to call a General meeting for a specified purpose, but the Board of Elders is required to call the meeting only if the request is made in writing and signed by not less than 30% of the active membership (see Section 9 Paragraph 2.) in such a case, the General Meeting must be convened within four weeks of the date of the request.
6. A General Meeting shall be called by notice at Worship Services for two Sundays prior to the meeting, provided always that seven clear days' notice is given. The nature of the business to be considered shall be stated in the notice and no other business may be transacted at the meeting.
7. A General Meeting of the Church must be called to transact any of the following business:
  - (a) To issue or renew a call to a position as Pastor of the Church or to terminate the position of a Pastor of the Church. A call to the position of Pastor may only be issued, renewed or terminated on the basis of a recommendation from the Board of Elders.
  - (b) To establish or to break a formal link between the Church and any other group or organisation. Such a meeting may act either on the basis of a recommendation from the Board of Elders or on the basis of a motion which has been notified in writing to the Board of Elders at the time of the request for the General Meeting.
  - (c) To make a decision whereby a member may be disciplined by suspension of the privileges of membership or by withdrawal of membership. Such a meeting may act only on the basis of a recommendation from the Board of Elders (see Section 6 "Discipline").
  - (d) To appoint a member of the Church as an Elder (see Section "The Officers of the Church" Paragraph 9).
  - (e) To authorise any major sale or purchase of real property or any major alteration to or encumbrance of the real property of the Church by mortgage or lease. Such a meeting may act only on the basis of a recommendation of the Board of Deacons.
  - (f) To amend the Constitution of the Church (see section 13 "Amendment of the Constitution").
  - (g) To approve any expenditure unforeseen in the Budget in excess of \$10,000.
8. All meetings of the Board of Deacons, Board of Elders and General Meetings of the Church shall abide by the following rules of meeting procedure:
  - (a) Minutes of the previous meeting shall be read and confirmed before any new business is considered. Annual General Meeting minutes will be taken as read and confirmed at the following Annual General Meeting.
  - (b) All business should be introduced by motion duly moved and seconded, except that minor Items of business at meetings of the Boards of Deacons and Elders may be transacted by agreement of all present at the meeting.
  - (c) No member (other than the mover of a motion) shall be allowed to speak more than once to any motion, except by consent of a majority of the members present or when called upon by the Chairman for an explanation.
  - (d) Except for procedural motions, or by the agreement of the meeting, the vote of a General Meeting (including Annual General Meetings) shall be by secret ballot, but the vote of the Board of Deacons and Board of Elders shall be by a show of hands.

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- (e) Proxy or absentee voting shall not be allowed for any decisions of the church. It is important for members to cast their votes in the light of discussions and up to date information actually received at meetings, and in sensitivity to the movement of the Holy Spirit at such meeting.
9. All organisations and ministries of the Church shall furnish a report to the Board of Deacons whenever requested to do so by that Board, but, in any case, at least once per year, no later than one month prior to the Annual General Meeting.
10. Any business that may be transacted at a General Meeting of the Church may also be transacted at an Annual General Meeting, always provided that the nature of the business to be considered is stated in the notice given of the Annual General Meeting. An Annual General Meeting is not restricted in the number of such items of business with which it may deal.
11. The conduct of Annual General Meetings and Annual Reports to the Church shall be as follows:
- (a) Annual General Meetings of the Church shall be held in July or August of each year. Notice of an Annual General Meeting shall be given at Worship Services for four Sundays prior to the Meeting. The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting shall be read and confirmed before proceeding with the other business of the meeting. The Church Secretary or Deacons Secretary will coordinate the Annual General Meeting and Annual Reports.
- (b) Annual Reports to the Church for consideration at the Annual General Meeting shall be prepared by the Church Secretary, the Treasurer, other Deacons and Elders with specific responsibilities, ministry leaders and the Pastor(s). Copies of all these reports are to be distributed to active members (and also to inactive or past members on request) two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Treasurers report shall be followed by the Budget for the following year which shall be endorsed by a majority vote of members present.
- (c) The Church Secretary's Report shall include a brief record of General Meetings held and important decisions made during the year.
- The Treasurer's Report shall include the Financial Statement for the year past and the Budget approved by the Board of Deacons for the coming year.
- The Board of Elders Secretary's report shall include any statistical changes in membership since over the previous 12 months as well as a general report of the activity of the Board of Elders.
- The reports of other Deacons and Elders and Ministry Leaders shall concern their area(s) of specific responsibility (see section 4 "The Board of Deacons" Paragraph 10) and should include an outline of the program which they believe should be followed in their areas during the coming years Significant details from reports of the various organisations of the Church may be included in the Deacon's reports. The Pastoral report(s) should range over the whole area of the Church's life and work.
- (d) The first major item of business at an Annual General Meeting (following the Minutes) shall be the consideration of the Annual Reports. Each report shall be dealt with in turn and the Pastoral Report(s) shall be the last to be discussed. The Deacon, Elder, Pastor or ministry leader who prepared the report may briefly summarise the main points of the report, after which, any questions from members concerning the report, or any aspect of that area of specific responsibility, shall be answered. No time limit shall be placed on the discussion of reports except that discussion on any report may be terminated by a majority decision of the meeting. No vote is to be taken with regard to any of the Annual Reports.
- (e) The next item of business following the Annual Reports and discussion thereon shall be the election of Deacons to vacancies on the Board of Deacons (see Section 3 "The Officers of the Church" Paragraph 8) and the appointment of an auditor or an Accounting Firm to carry out the Auditing function for the following year(see Section 4 Paragraph 7).
- (f) Following the election of Deacons, the Annual General Meeting shall consider any other business placed on the agenda by the Board of Deacons or Board of Elders and duly notified.

- (g) The Chairman of the Annual General Meeting, who shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons, shall have the right to accept or reject any other business submitted in writing, but not on the published agenda at the Annual General Meeting, in accord with this Constitution.
12. The Chairman of each General Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the Church shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons shall determine their own Chairman and the Board of Elders shall determine their own Chairman.
13. Joint meetings of Deacons and Elders – Where the Boards of Deacons and Elders consider it to be of value for a specific purpose they may call a joint meeting of the 2 Boards. This might be useful for some planning and visioning aspects of Church life, or for a sharing of ideas. Each Board shall still make their own decisions in their own areas of responsibility, however they may mutually agree for a specific purpose to have a single vote on a matter of mutual concern.

## FORUMS

Where it is considered important to the life of the Church a forum shall be held to provide additional information for the church and obtain feedback. Forums shall be called at the discretion of the Board of Deacons or Board of Elders.

## Section 9 – Church Records

The following Records shall be carefully maintained by the officers of the Church:

1. The Roll of Members - names and addresses of all members of the Church, with the date of their admission, shall be entered in the Roll by the Secretary of the Church or by the Secretary of the Elders if they are carrying out that role. The Roll of Members shall be revised at least once in each year.
2. Active and Inactive Members - The Elders Secretary or Church Secretary shall maintain a record of active and inactive members. Members shall be considered inactive if they have moved away from the district (but a membership transfer has not yet been requested), or, for any other reason, have not attended worship for a period of three months or longer or have had their privileges of membership suspended by a disciplinary decision of the Church. In the exceptional situation where church attendance is restricted due to government restrictions, this shall be taken into account when determining Inactivity. All other members shall be considered active members. If a previously active member has returned to full attendance the Board of Elders shall decide upon the reactivation of their membership.
3. The Church Secretary shall have the custody of the records of the Church and shall keep in proper order Minute Books, records of all General Meetings and Annual General Meetings of the Church and records of all meetings of the Board of Deacons and Board of Elders.
4. All members of the Board of Deacons and Board of Elders shall have executive authority to receive and conduct correspondence on behalf of their area of responsibility. Copies of all external correspondence are to be passed to the Church Secretary for centralised and archival record purposes.
5. The Treasurer shall receive and account for all the funds of the Church, discharge all liabilities under the direction of the Board of Deacons, render a regular account to the Board of Deacons and prepare a full Statement of Receipts and Payments for presentation to the Board of Deacons prior to the Annual General Meeting and for presentation in his Annual Report to the Church. Such Statements shall be made up to 30th June each year.
6. "All cash offerings shall be counted by at least two people of the Church, appointed by the Treasurer, at least one of whom must be a member. The amount must be duly entered and initialled in a form kept for the purpose by the Treasurer and bookkeeper appointed by MBC. All monies received shall be banked. Payments can be made by cheque, cash, credit card or any means of electronic banking. A record of receipts and payments shall be kept to be made available for scrutiny as required. The Church Treasurer shall oversee the effective and accountable functioning of all financial processes."
7. Deacons and Elders minutes shall be made available between the two bodies for information purposes. Judgement shall of course be exercised when personal matters of confidentiality are concerned.

8. The Church shall strive to abide by all government regulations such as risk management, COVID safe, Child Safe and Workplace Health and Safety requirements

## **Section 10 – Marriage Ceremonies and Infant Dedications**

Certain Christian ceremonies, celebrated in the Church, are only appropriate for persons with a Christian commitment and a proper understanding of the promises required in these ceremonies. Accordingly, the Church conducts marriage ceremonies and infant dedications only for persons who are members of the Church or for others who satisfy the Pastor(s) of the Church that they are equipped to undertake the responsibilities which ought to be accepted in such ceremonies.

## **Section 11 – Finances of the Church**

1. Referring to material possessions Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). See also 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, and Hebrews 13:5. Members are encouraged to obey the command to worship God through giving of our material possessions, and enjoy the blessings that result.
2. A Budget, covering the anticipated needs for the congregation and the wider ministry, shall be prepared and approved annually by the Board of Deacons. It shall further be endorsed by a majority of the members present at the Annual General Meeting.
3. The Board of Deacons shall have the right to refuse any donation or gift which comes from, what they may deem an unworthy source.
4. No financial appeals for outside objects shall be circulated by any person without first obtaining the approval of the Board of Deacons.
5. On occasions when services or meetings for any object whatever are held in the name of the Church on the premises of the Church, no charge will be set for admission. In all cases, a voluntary offering may be received and disbursed as approved by the Board of Deacons.

## **Section 12 – Property of the Church**

1. All property of the Church is vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland. Should the active membership of the Church fall below 12 members, then these remaining members of the church shall come under the direct control of the Baptist Union of Queensland, whose Officers will advise the membership on the future management and/or viability of the Mackay Baptist Church. In the event of the church being dissolved, all property, assets and monies which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland.
2. Major sale or purchase of real property or any major alteration to or encumbrance of the real property of the Church by mortgage or lease shall require approval by a General Meeting of the Church. Approval for such motions shall require a majority vote. Such a meeting may act only on the basis of a recommendation from the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons shall have full authority over all other property and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all property and premises of the Church.
3. Property donated to the Church or any of its organisations and all property belonging to any organisation of the Church shall be deemed the property of the Church.
4. The Board of Deacons shall determine the allocation of the premises and property of the Church for the use of the various organisations of the Church. No premises or property of the Church can be used for any other purpose than that of our own organisations without the prior approval of the Board of Deacons.

## **Section 13 – Amendment of the Constitution**

This Constitution may not be amended, altered, cancelled or added to, except by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a General Meeting of the Church convened for the purpose and acting on the basis of a recommendation from the Board of Elders. Notice of a General Meeting for this purpose, setting out proposed alterations, shall be made available to all active members of the Church at least four full weeks prior to the meeting.

## Section 14 – Exceptional Circumstances

1. Where it is impossible to meet for a church membership meeting such as an Annual General Meeting or a General Church Members Meeting due to government or health restrictions, (exceptional circumstances) the Elders and Deacons shall decide on the best way to fulfil the spirit of the Church Constitution for an alternate form of meeting such as video, audio or online conferencing. It always must be considered that a person needs to be physically or electronically part of the meeting to be able to vote on matters discussed. Voting could be therefore by a non-secret indication online, or could involve an electronic voting system, or a physical drop box for votes. Attendance for the sake of a quorum would include those attending online
2. Should unforeseen circumstances arise involving matters not specifically covered in the foregoing Constitution, the Board of Elders shall use discretionary powers, and, if deemed necessary, refer such matters to the Church members at a properly constituted Church Meeting for a final decision.

## Section 15 – Terms Used (Further defined in other parts of this constitution)

<b>Church Secretary</b>	The Secretary of the Board of Deacons
<b>Eldership Secretary</b>	The Secretary of the Board of Elders
<b>Church Treasurer</b>	The Deacon appointed by the Board of Deacons to oversee financial management of the church.
<b>Board of Deacons</b>	The body of Deacons including the Pastor who manage the business, financial and property aspects of the Church.
<b>Board of Elders</b>	The body of Elders including the Pastor who act as Church leaders in matters concerning visioning, people and ministry aspects of Church life.
<b>Church Forum</b>	A non decision making, information and discussion meeting of the Church.
<b>Members Meeting</b>	An official decision making meeting of the Church.
<b>Church Member</b>	Someone officially accepted into Church Membership meeting requirements in this Constitution.
<b>Pastor</b>	A Qualified person called by the Church into paid spiritual leadership of the Church, working with the Elders
<b>Procedural Motions</b>	Motions concerning the actual running of a meeting e.g. speaking a second time to a motion etc.

This Constitution was Last Revised and Ratified at a Special General Meeting on: 25/10/2009