

# Constitution for the Edenvale Baptist Church

(As amended at Special General Meeting held on 18 Feb 2017 )

## **1. NAME:**

- 1.1 The name of the church shall be the Edenvale Baptist Church hereinafter referred to as “the Church”.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BAPTIST UNION:**

- 2.1 The Church shall be a member of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and the Baptist Northern Association but shall be independent of any control by them save as hereinafter provided.

## **3. CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND OBJECTS:**

- 3.1 The church recognizes the Lord Jesus Christ as its supreme head and undertakes to manage its affairs according to New Testament teaching.
- 3.2 The objectives of the Church shall be:
  - 3.2.1 To glorify the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church.
  - 3.2.2 To proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and to encourage and support the proclamation of that gospel (in accordance with Matthew 28:18-20) to the ends the earth.
  - 3.2.3 To provide instruction and fellowship for believers, seeking to build them up to the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

## **4. STATEMENT OF BELIEF:**

We believe:

- a) In the original Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in their original writings as fully inspired of God, and accept them as the supreme final authority for faith and life.
- b) In One God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- c) That Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, was born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
- d) That God created man in His own image, that man sinned, and thereby incurred the penalty of death, both physical and spiritual, that all human beings inherit a sinful nature which issues (in the case of those who reach moral responsibility) in actual transgression, involving personal guilt.
- e) That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, a substitutionary sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.

- f) In the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate.
- g) In the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- h) In the priesthood of all believers.
- i) That all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God.
- j) In the Resurrection of both the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and the eternal banishment of those who have rejected the offer of salvation through Jesus' blood.
- k) That the one true Church is the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit; that the local Church on earth should take this character from this conception of the Church spiritual, and therefore that the new birth and personal confession of Christ are essentials of Church membership.
- l) That the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two Ordinances – Baptism and the Lord's Supper – to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witness to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith; that Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a confession of identification with Christ in burial and resurrection; and that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of bread and wine as symbolical of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death, until he returns.
- m) That God has ordained marriage as a heterosexual relationship between a natural man and a natural women.

## **5. MEMBERSHIP:**

The membership shall consist of:

- 5.1 Those whose names are on the church "A" roll of members at the time of the adoption of this Constitution.
- 5.2 Subsequently, those who have given evidence of their personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been baptized by immersion, and accepted this Constitution and who have been admitted to membership in terms of Article 6.4.
- 5.3 A secondary roll to be known as the "B" roll shall be kept to record the names of non-active members removed from the "A" roll, at the discretion of the Executive Leadership. "B" roll members shall have no vote.
- 5.4 If a "B" roll member once again becomes active in the life of the Church, the Executive Leadership shall then be empowered to transfer his/her name back to the "A" roll.
- 5.5 Every effort shall be made to contact the person affected by clause 5.3 before transfer to the "B" roll.
- 5.6 Total removal from either A or B rolls shall be by resolution of the Executive Leadership, or at the written request of the member.

## **6. ADMISSION OF MEMBERS:**

- 6.1 Every application is to be considered by the Executive Leadership and brought to the attention of the congregation for two consecutive Sundays.
- 6.2 Any member would then have the right to lodge an objection to such application to the Executive Leadership giving their reason for such objection. The Executive Leadership must then examine the objection and advise that member of their findings.
- 6.3 After 6.1 and 6.2 have been adhered to, the Executive Leadership is empowered to accept or reject the application on behalf of the Church.
- 6.4 Application for Church membership under Article 5.2. shall be made in the first instance to a Pastor. Such application shall then follow the procedures as laid down in 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.

## **7. PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:**

- 7.1 Under the divine headship of the Lord Jesus Christ the final authority and responsibility in all matters touching the life and service of the Church rests with the membership.
- 7.2 Members shall be expected to support the ministry and maintain fellowship of the church –
  - by prayer
  - by attendance at services whenever possible
  - by engaging in some specific service
  - by conscientious giving as God's provision enables
  - by introducing others to the church
- 7.3 Every member shall be expected to attend General Meetings, unless prevented by some reasonable cause, and to exercise his/her vote for the welfare of the whole church, in a spirit of prayer and love.

## **8. CHURCH DISCIPLINE:**

- 8.1 If any member is absent from services of the church and/or neglects to comply with any of the privileges and obligations of membership for a prolonged period without good reason, the Executive Leadership shall make enquiry and take appropriate action.
- 8.2 In the unhappy event of any allegations of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief against any member, the Executive Leadership shall make enquiry and take appropriate action.
- 8.3 The suspension or expulsion of any member shall be resorted to only if all efforts at restoration prove unsuccessful.
- 8.4 In purely personal matters, members shall be expected to act in accordance with the Lord's injunction in Matthew 18:15-17.

## **9. THE ORDINANCES:**

### **9.1 Baptism:**

The New Testament ordinance of the Baptism of believers by immersion shall be administered at their own request to those who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, whether of our congregation or not.

### **9.2 The Lord's Supper:**

The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of the month, or at such times as the Executive Leadership shall decide. Attendance shall be open to all those who recognise the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

## **10. GENERAL MEETINGS:**

### **10.1 Annual General Meeting:**

10.1.1. The Church business shall end on 31 December and the Annual General Meeting shall be held as soon thereafter as possible, but not later than the 28 February.

10.1.2. Reports, financial statements & budgets shall be submitted by the Treasurer for approval.

10.1.3. Reports shall be submitted by all ministry teams of the church.

10.1.4. The Annual ratification of Deacons and election of Elders shall take place.

10.1.5. The Agenda shall be available to all members prior to the meeting.

### **10.2 Special General Meeting:**

10.2.1 Special General Meetings shall be convened:

10.2.1.1 As required by this constitution.

10.2.1.2 On the initiative of the Executive Leadership.

10.2.1.3 Upon written request of at least 10 members, (stating the purpose), and within one month of request.

10.2.2 Notice of a Special General Meeting shall be given prior to the meeting, clearly specifying the matters to be submitted for consideration.

### **10.3 Quorum:**

10.3.1 Twenty percent of the total voting membership present when a meeting proceeds to business shall constitute a quorum.

### **10.4 Notice of Meetings:**

10.4.1 Notice of all General Meetings shall be given at all services on two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.

## 10.5 Voting:

10.5.1. Only members who have attained the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote.

10.5.2. Unless otherwise required elsewhere in this Constitution all matters shall be decided by the majority vote of those present.

10.5.3. Voting shall be by show of hands unless:

10.5.3.1. Otherwise required elsewhere in this Constitution.

10.5.3.2. One member requests a ballot.

10.5.4. Proxy voting may be made available at the discretion of the Executive Leadership.

10.5.5. In the light of attendance by members of one or other of the two services on a Sunday morning, a general meeting may be held at both services. However, for the purpose of determining a quorum and the outcome of any vote, the number of members present and voting at each meeting shall be combined and the final result announced at the second meeting.

## 11. CHAIRMAN:

11.1 The elected Chairman of the Executive Leadership shall be the Chairman of all general meetings (In the case where a Pastor is Chairman, he shall vacate the chair when matters pertaining to his own position are under consideration).

11.2. Where the elected Chairman of the Executive Leadership is not present the meeting shall elect a Chairman for that particular meeting.

11.3 If a third of members present and entitled to vote object to any matters brought up without notice, the Chairman shall rule that it be referred to a future General Meeting.

## **12. THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP:**

- 12.1 The Executive Leadership shall consist of the current Elders and Pastors.
- 12.2 The Executive Leadership shall be responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Church, for its spiritual oversight, as well as deciding what Ministry Teams shall operate within the Church. They shall also ratify the appointment of all ministry leadership positions, including Deacons, Homecell Leaders and the Treasurer.
- 12.3 The Executive Leadership shall act as generally or specifically directed by the Church in General Meetings, and shall be accountable to the church for all tasks delegated to it, and for the proper administration of all church funds.
- 12.4 The Executive Leadership shall meet at least once quarterly, if possible.
- 12.5 Fifty percent of representatives from both the Pastoral team and the Elders shall constitute a quorum at meetings.
- 12.6 The Executive Leadership may invite any relevant persons including Deacons, Homecell Leaders and the Treasurer, to attend its meetings from time to time.
- 12.7 Any appointment of non pastoral salaried staff must be approved by the Executive Leadership.

## **13. ELDERS:**

### 13.1 Eligibility of Elders:

13.1.1 To qualify for consideration as an Elder a candidate shall have been in membership of this church for at least one year during which time their consistent spirituality shall be assessed according the criteria laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

### 13.2 Appointment of Elders:

13.2.1 The appointment of Elders shall be at the recommendation of the Executive Leadership and the approval of the Church by secret ballot. Only nominees receiving more than half the votes of the members present and entitled to vote shall be declared elected.

13.2.2 At least 30 days before the Annual General Meeting, any member may in writing nominate, with motivation, any eligible person for appointment as Elder. Such nominations must be considered by the Executive Leadership who will make the final decision as to which persons will be nominated as Elders to the members in the AGM.

13.2.3 A list of nominated elders will be brought to the attention of the congregation at least two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.

13.2.4 An elder shall hold office for one year but shall be eligible for recommendation by the Executive Leadership for re-election for a further year indefinitely.

### 13.3 Responsibilities of Elders:

13.3.1 Besides the Executive Leadership responsibilities Elders are responsible for the following:

- Wise counsel in steering the Church and ensuring it meets the objectives of the Executive Leadership.
- Oversight and Monitoring of all the Church's activities.
- Guarding of the Church from theological error.

### 13.4 Elders Meetings:

13.4.1 The council of Elders shall meet at least once monthly, if possible.

13.4.2 At its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, the Elders shall appoint from its own members any office bearers deemed necessary.

## 14. PASTORS:

14.1 The choice and appointment of a Pastor/Pastors is vested in the membership of the church.

14.2 When an appointment of the senior pastor becomes necessary the procedure shall be as follows:

14.2.1 A Call Committee shall be established consisting of four members appointed by a Special General Meeting and eight representatives from the combined Executive Leadership and Deacons appointed by the Executive Leadership.

14.2.2 The Call Committee shall recommend only one name to any Special General Meeting.

14.2.3 The invitation shall be contingent upon the following:

14.2.3.1 At least two thirds of members present shall vote in favour by ballot.

14.2.3.2 The prospective pastor shall have been baptised by immersion and shall accept in writing this constitution.

14.2.3.3 The Pastor shall become a member of the church upon assuming the pastorate.

14.2.3.4 Any engagement between the church and the Pastor shall be terminable by three month's notice on either side, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

14.2.3.5 The Pastor called to the general oversight of the church shall be known as the Senior Pastor, whose name shall be on one of the ministerial lists of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

14.3 When an appointment of a pastor other than the Senior Pastor becomes necessary the procedure shall be as follows:

14.3.1 At the discretion of the Executive Leadership, either

a) The Executive Leadership shall recommend only one name to any Special General Meeting, or

b) the procedure defined in paragraphs 14.2.1 and 14.2.2 shall be followed

14.3.2 The invitation shall be contingent upon the following:

14.3.2.1 At least two thirds of members present shall vote in favour by ballot.

14.3.2.2 The prospective pastor shall have been baptised by immersion and shall accept in writing this constitution.

14.3.2.3 The Pastor shall become a member of the church upon assuming the pastorate.

14.3.2.4 Any engagement between the church and the Pastor shall be terminable by one month's notice on either side, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

## 15. DEACONS:

15.1 Eligibility of Deacons:

15.1.1 Eligible Deacons must be members of the Church

15.1.2 Eligible Deacons must demonstrate the spiritual qualities of a Deacon as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13

15.2 Appointment of Deacons:

15.2.1 Nominations for the Deacon of a particular ministry can be made by the members of that Ministry Team (where applicable) and the Executive Leadership.

15.2.2 All Nominations must be ratified by the Executive Leadership.

15.2.3 In the event that no person, or more than one person is nominated as Deacon, then the nomination decision rests with the Executive.

15.2.4 Names of nominees are to be brought to the attention of the congregation at least two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting, during which time members may object to any such nomination in writing to the Executive, which will consider any objections and make final decisions on whether the contested nomination is carried forward or withdrawn.

15.2.5 Final ratification of Deacons will take place by ballot at the Annual General Meeting. Only nominees receiving more than half the votes of the members present and entitled to vote shall be declared elected.

15.2.6 In the event of a vacancy occurring in the office of Deacon, such vacancy may be filled by an appointment made by the Executive Leadership, but only for the unexpired period of the previous incumbent's term of office.

15.2.7 A Deacon shall hold office for one year or less but shall be eligible for nomination for re-election for a further year indefinitely.



### 15.3 Responsibilities of Deacons:

15.3.1 The Deacons of the Church are those members entrusted with leading the various Ministry Teams, under the guidance and oversight of the Executive Leadership.

15.3.2 Deacons therefore implement the strategic plans of the Church through the leadership of Ministry Teams.

## **16. MINISTRY TEAMS:**

16.1 Ministry teams shall be constituted for all ministries officially associated with the Church, as defined by the Executive Leadership in clause 12.2.

16.2 Each Ministry Team shall appoint its own committee where necessary.

16.3 Each Ministry Team will draw up its own mission statement and operational framework in writing which must be reviewed annually by the Executive Leadership.

16.4 The Ministry Teams will execute their tasks within the framework approved by the Executive Leadership.

16.5 Each Ministry Team must submit an annual report to the Executive Leadership for inclusion in the church annual report to be presented to the church at the Annual General Meeting.

## **17. FINANCE:**

17.1 The raising of funds for the Church by any means other than free-will offerings or pledges shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Leadership of the Church.

17.2 The Finance Ministry will keep proper books of account, prepare annual financial statements and maintain suitable financial controls to protect church assets.

17.3 The Finance Ministry will report monthly to the Elders on the financial affairs of the church and will submit the annual financial statements together with a written financial report to the Annual General Meeting.

17.4 A Treasurer shall be appointed to lead the Finance Ministry, subject to the qualification and nomination requirements of a Deacon highlighted in 15.1 and 15.2 above.

## **18. FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS:**

18.1 The Church subject to the approval of the Executive Leadership shall have power

- to buy, sell, donate, let or hire, exchange, transfer, receive by way of donation or otherwise, movable and immovable property.
- to invest its funds in Government stock, participating mortgage bonds, or investments with registered financial institutions
- to borrow money with or without security in such manner as the Church shall think fit, negotiate loans from bankers or others by overdraft or otherwise and by passing mortgage and notarial bonds for registration with the proper authorities
- to open and operate upon banking accounts, and to make, draw, accept discount, execute and issue promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable and transferable instruments
- to guarantee the performance of contracts by any person or duly constituted church having objectives wholly or partly similar to the objectives of this church and to enter similar guarantee or suretyships of any description.

## **19. IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:**

19.1 All immovable property acquired by the Church in any manner shall be registered in the name of the Trustees of the Church.

19.2 The Trustees for the time being of the Baptist Union shall be the Trustees of the church and shall act as required by resolution of a General Meeting of this Church.

19.3 All acquisitions of immovable property in any manner shall require the approval of a General Meeting, due notice having been given of the proposed transaction.

19.4 Any proposal to sell, donate, exchange, mortgage, hypothecate, or otherwise alienate or encumber any immovable property must have the prior approval of a Special General Meeting by a two thirds majority vote of the members present.

## **20. SALE OF PROPERTY:**

20.1 The proceeds derived from the sale or other disposal of any property of the Church shall be used in such manner as the Church in General Meeting may deem best fitted to secure the furtherance of its objectives.

## **21. INDEMNITY:**

21.1 The Trustees and all officers of the Church shall be fully indemnified against all actions, costs, charges, losses, damages and expenses which they or any of them shall or may incur in the exercise of their duties to the best of their abilities, but excluding gross negligence or dishonest actions.

## **22. DISSOLUTION:**

22.1 The dissolution of the Church may be effected by the two thirds majority vote of members present at a Special General Meeting.

22.2 In the event of dissolution such meeting shall thereupon authorise the Executive Leadership to take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church, and in particular to transfer the immovable property in due and proper form to the Baptist Union (see 22.4).

22.3 In the event of there being no effective Executive Leadership in place, the Church shall appoint and authorise any other persons to comply with the requirements of 22.2.

22.4 In the event of the church at any time ceasing to exist all acquired property or rights to property at such time shall ipso facto vest in and become the property of the Baptist Union which shall hold, administer or deal with it in such manner as the said Union through its Executive Committee may deem best fitted to secure the objectives in Clause 3.2.

22.5 The Church shall be deemed to have ceased to exist:

22.5.1 when dissolution shall have been resolved in accordance with 22.1

22.5.2 when members shall have been totally dispersed so that public worship shall have been discontinued for a consecutive period of six calendar months without an Executive Leadership.

## **23. MODIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION:**

23.1 Any proposal to change this Constitution must be submitted by way of a motion to a General Meeting.

23.2 Notice of Motion to change this constitution shall be circulated to all members for a formal vote at a Special General Meeting convened not less than three months after the General Meeting referred to in 23.1.

23.3 Proposed changes shall require the approval of two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

23.4 This constitution was accepted by the members present at the Annual General Meeting of the Edenvale Baptist Church held on the xx February 2017 and supercedes all previous constitutions.