

CONSTITUTION OF THE MAYLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH INCORPORATED

1. NAME

The name of the Church shall be “Maylands Baptist Church Incorporated”.

2. OBJECTS

The proclamation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the promotion of Christian practices and doctrines within the Church and community in Australia and overseas.

3. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

(See Appendix A for scriptural references)

We affirm:

- a. The eternal existence of one God in three co-equal Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Old and New Testament Scriptures as originally given and their supreme authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and conduct.
- c. The creation of human beings by God in two distinct genders/sexes as male and female and the institution of marriage by God as a union between one man and one woman.
- d. The creation of human beings by God for fellowship with God; their separation from God by the Fall, which was brought about by the personal work of the devil who is still active in the world; the resultant universal sinfulness of all human beings; and their consequent need of salvation from sin.
- e. The provision of salvation through the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; His Deity; His incarnation by the virgin birth; His perfect humanity; His substitutionary atoning death; His bodily resurrection and ascension; His unchanging priesthood; and His personal bodily return.
- f. The necessity, in order to receive salvation, of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g. The Deity of the Holy Spirit, His work in making salvation effective to individuals, and His indwelling, sanctifying presence in the life of each believer.
- h. The regenerate nature of the Church, its membership consisting only of those who have personally received salvation; and the Lordship of Christ over the Church.
- i. The eternal consciousness of the soul; the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved; the final judgement of all men by the Lord Jesus Christ; the eternal punishment of the unsaved and the eternal blessedness of the saved.
- j. The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; baptism being the immersion of believers as an expression of their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the Lord’s Supper being a symbolic remembrance by believers of His sacrificial death for them until He returns.

4. POWERS

- a. The acceptance of donations and offerings to further the objects.
- b. The acquisition and disposal of property, real and personal, including the borrowing of monies and the giving of security for the same when necessary to meet the objects of the Church.
- c. The affiliation with and support of other organisations with similar objects.

5. MEMBERSHIP

a. Eligibility

i. Only persons who have received salvation through repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been baptized by immersion as believers and who give evidence of their faith in daily life shall be eligible for membership in this Church. However a person who for reasons of physical incapacity cannot be baptized but is committed to the principle of believers baptism; is willing to be baptized; and otherwise qualifies, shall also be eligible for membership in the Church.

ii. Each applicant for Church membership shall be required to express agreement with the Doctrinal Statement (Clause 3), to express willingness to abide by this Constitution and to sign the Covenant of Membership (Appendix B).

b. Privileges and Obligations

Members shall be expected

- to live in accordance with the Covenant of Membership;
- to be willing to serve the Lord in the Church;
- to share in the government of the Church by attendance at Church Members Meetings;
- and to financially support the work of the Church through their freewill offerings as they feel led by God.

c. Admission

i. A person who desires to become a Church member shall normally make application to the Pastor or Church Secretary. A copy of the Constitution and of the Covenant of Membership shall be given to each applicant. Two members of the Church shall be appointed by the Diaconate to interview each applicant and to report on their interview to the Church Members Meeting.

ii. In the case of an applicant from another Baptist Church a letter of recommendation from that Church may also be presented to the Church Members Meeting. If such an applicant is accepted for membership in this Church the previous Church shall be so advised in order that it may be able to appropriately adjust its rolls.

iii. A simple majority vote shall be required for acceptance into membership of the Church.

iv. Reception into membership shall normally be at a Church Service in which the Lord's Supper is observed.

d. Roll

The Church Secretary shall be responsible for keeping the Church Members Roll. It shall have two or more sections.

i. Resident Members

This shall include the names of all members regularly attending the Church.

ii. Non-resident Members

This may include the names of members not regularly attending the church and those engaged in missionary service.

iii. "Potential New Church" Members

This may include the names of members associated with the commencement of a new work.

iv. The Roll shall be revised as and when necessary but at least annually at the Annual Church Members Meeting after consideration by the Diaconate.

e. Transfer

Upon request from the Church concerned a letter of recommendation shall be sent to it for any member in good standing who wishes to join another Baptist Church.

f. Discipline

- i. If any member is absent from the Services of the Church for a prolonged period without good reason known to the Pastor, Elders or Deacons, enquiry shall be made into the matter. If necessary it shall be referred to the Diaconate for such action as may be determined. If deemed appropriate the Diaconate may recommend to the Church that the member's name be removed from the Church Roll.
- ii. In the event of any allegation of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a member, the Pastor, and/or Elders, and/or Deacons shall make enquiry into the matter including where possible discussion with the member concerned. If after enquiry they deem such course necessary they shall present a report to the Church Members Meeting which shall determine any further action. The objective of any discipline administered should be the restoration of the member but should restoration not be possible the Church may suspend or expel the member. Voting on such action shall be by secret ballot and to become effective shall require a two thirds majority vote of members present and eligible to vote.
- iii. Private offences shall be dealt with in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. Church discipline shall be exercised in the spirit of Galatians 6:1.

g. Resignation

- i. A member may resign from membership of the Church by giving notice of the resignation to the Diaconate.
- ii. The resignation takes effect when the diaconate receives notice; or, if a later time is stated in the notice, at the later time.

h. Membership Fees

There are no membership fees.

6. ORDINANCES

a. Baptism

The ordinance of baptism shall be administered as required, normally by the Pastor.

b. The Lord's Supper

This shall be open to all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and shall normally be held twice in each calendar month.

7. OFFICERS

Those men appointed as Church Officers shall comprise the Diaconate which, subject to any decision of the Church Members Meeting, shall have the oversight of the affairs of the Church. Voting for all Church Officers shall be by secret ballot and shall require a favourable vote of at least three quarters of the Members present and eligible to vote at a Church Members Meeting.

a. Pastor(s)

- i. The choice and appointment of a Pastor(s) is vested in the Membership of the Church.
- ii. To qualify for appointment a Pastor must
 - Satisfy the Membership criteria set out in Clause 5a.
 - Practise the baptism of believers only.
 - Meet the New Testament requirements for Elders.
- iii. The Pastor(s) shall be responsible for the oversight and Pastoral ministry of the Church.
- iv. When it becomes necessary to consider the appointment of a pastor the elders and deacons shall normally act as a Call Committee. The Call Committee shall make the necessary enquiries and shall bring forward a recommendation to the Church as soon as is reasonably possible.

- v. The recommendation of the Call Committee shall be considered at a Special Church Members Meeting called for that purpose.
- vi. The Call Committee shall put forward only one name at a time.
- vii. A copy of this Constitution shall be given to any man invited to the Pastorate.
- viii. Three months notice by either the Church or the Pastor shall normally be required to terminate an appointment.
- ix. The Pastor shall become a member of the Church at his induction service.

b. Elders

- i. The Church may elect from the members of the Church one or more elders. The term of appointment shall normally be for two years.
- ii. Only men who fulfil the Scriptural qualifications for elders shall be eligible for election.
- iii. They shall share with the Pastor(s) in areas of pastoral responsibility and care.

c. Deacons

- i. The Church shall appoint deacons on the basis of not more than one man for every twelve (12) members or part thereof, but should the resident membership be less than sixty (60) it may appoint up to six (6) men as deacons. The number of deacons to be elected each year shall be determined by the number of Resident Members enrolled at the 30th June each year. Deacons shall normally be elected for a period of two (2) years. From among those selected the Church shall elect annually a Secretary and a Treasurer.
- ii. Only Church members who fulfil the Scriptural qualifications shall be eligible for election. To be appointed men must be aged at least twenty one (21) years and must also have been members of this Church for at least one (1) year.
- iii. Deacons shall be elected at the Annual Church Members Meeting or, to fill vacancies, at such other Church Members Meetings as maybe appropriate.
- iv. Deacons shall share in the spiritual leadership of the Church and in supervising the temporal affairs and property of the Church.
- v. Nominations shall be in writing and shall be signed by the proposer. Nominations shall close fourteen (14) days before the meeting at which the election is to take place. All nominations must have the consent of the nominee and the names of those nominated shall be available to Church members not later than the Sunday before the date of the meeting at which the election shall take place.

d. Secretary

- i. The election procedure shall be on the same basis as for deacons (See 7c iii, v).
- ii. The Church Secretary shall be responsible for the secretarial duties of the Church.

e. Treasurer

- i. The election procedure shall be the same basis as for deacons (See 7c iii, v)
- ii. The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for Church finances and shall keep the Church Members Meeting and the Diaconate informed on financial matters.

f. Diaconate

- i. The Diaconate shall normally meet monthly after reasonable notice of each meeting has been given.
- ii. It shall deal with and finally dispose of any matters deemed by it not to be of major importance needing the final approval of the Church Members Meeting. However any expenditure may not exceed that amount determined by the Church Members Meeting from time to time.

- iii. The Diaconate shall be responsible for carrying out all the duties delegated to it. It shall be accountable to the Church Members Meeting for the proper performance of its responsibilities.
- iv. One half of the members of the Diaconate shall form a quorum.
- v. All matters considered at the Diaconate meetings shall be decided by a majority vote of those present.
- vi. The Pastor may chair Diaconate meetings but they may be chaired by such other person as the Diaconate may appoint.
- vii. The Diaconate must ensure that minutes are taken and kept of each Diaconate meeting.
- viii. No payment or remuneration whatsoever will be made to members of the Diaconate. However, reimbursement will be made for expenses pre-approved by the Diaconate.

g. Removal from office

At any time a special Church Members Meeting may be called to review the appointment of a Pastor, an Elder, a Deacon or any other office bearer and it shall have the power to remove any person from office by passing a resolution to that effect by secret ballot by a two-thirds majority of members present and eligible to vote.

8. OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Only Church members shall be eligible for appointment. The election procedure shall be on the basis as set for Deacons in 7c iii, v. Voting shall be by secret ballot and appointment shall require a favourable vote of at least two thirds of the members present and eligible to vote at a Church Members Meeting.

a. Deaconesses

- i. The Church shall appoint deaconesses on the basis of not more than one woman for every twelve (12) members or part thereof, but should the resident membership be less than sixty (60) it may appoint up to six (6) women as deaconesses. The number of deaconesses to be elected each year shall be determined by the number of Resident Members enrolled at the 30th June each year. Deaconesses shall normally be elected for a period of two years.
- ii. Women who are spiritually mature may be appointed as deaconesses.
- iii. Deaconesses shall, subject to any decisions of the Church Members Meeting, give leadership in the women's work of the Church. They shall be responsible for carrying out those duties delegated to them. As deemed necessary they shall meet together for prayer and business.

b. Missionary Committee

- i. The Missionary Committee shall consist of the Pastor who may be its chairman, and up to four (4) members.
- ii. It shall promote and stimulate interest in home and overseas missions with respect to prayer, financial support, service and meetings.

c. Other Office Bearers

The Church shall appoint such other office bearers as it shall from time to time determine. These may include positions such as Sunday School Superintendent, Door Stewards Convenor, Music Convenor and Bulletin Editor.

9. MEMBERS MEETINGS

- a. Regular Members Meetings shall normally be held in February, April, June and November.
- b. The Annual Church Members Meeting shall normally be held in August. Business shall include elections, audited financial Statements; Reports by Pastor, Secretary, Treasurer and all Departments; the presentation of the Budget; Roll Revision; and the appointment of Baptist Union Annual Assembly delegates.

- c. General or Special Church Members meetings may be called by a resolution passed at any Church Members Meeting or by the Diaconate or at the written request of 20% of the Members subject to the purpose of such meetings being identified.
- d. At least 14 days notification shall be given to members by public announcement in Sunday Church services of Church Members Meetings and in the case of Special Meetings the nature of the business to be considered shall be available to the Church Members.
- e. The Pastor may chair Church Members Meetings or they may be chaired by such other person as the Church Members Meeting may appoint.
- f. All Meetings shall normally begin with devotions and shall be closed with prayer.
- g. Twenty percent of the Resident Membership shall be required to form a quorum.
- h. At all Church Members Meetings only members who are aged eighteen (18) years and over shall be eligible to vote.
- i. Except as otherwise provided for in this Constitution all matters shall be decided by a majority vote of members present and eligible to vote, with voting ordinarily being by show of hands. A meeting may decide that on an important matter voting shall be by secret ballot.
- j. At meetings specified in clause 9a and 9b members may bring forward any matter relative to the welfare of the Church but preferably after giving at least fourteen (14) days notice in writing to the Diaconate.
- k. Matters discussed in Church Members Meetings shall be treated as confidential to Church Members.
- l. The final authority in all Church matters shall be vested in the Church Members Meeting.

10. ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENTS

- a. No organisation or department shall be established without the approval of the Church Members Meeting.
- b. The principal office bearer of each organisation or department shall be a Church Member.
- c. All organisations and departments of the Church shall be subject to the control of the Church.

11. FINANCE

- a. Subject to the authority of the Church Members Meeting the Diaconate shall be in control of Church finances.
- b. Finances for the Church and any of its organisations and departments shall be raised upon the principle of prayer using direct giving and any other means sanctioned by the Diaconate which are consistent with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.
- c. No financial appeals on behalf of any organisation shall be made unless approved by the Church Members Meeting or by the Diaconate.
- d. Each year a Church Members Meeting shall appoint a person to review financial accounts.
- e. The Church accounts and the accounts of all organisations and departments of the Church shall be maintained and reviewed as required under Part 5 of the Associations Incorporations Act 2015 relating to the financial statements.
- f. All cheques and banking accounts shall be signed by two members duly appointed as signatories at a Church Members Meeting.
- g. The Church financial year shall begin 1st July and conclude on 30th June the following year.

12. SEALHOLDERS

- a. Four (4) members appointed by the Church Members Meeting shall act as Sealholders.

- b. Upon the direction of a Church Members Meeting any two (2) Sealholders may affix the Seal.
- c. The Secretary must make a written record of each use of the Common Seal.
- d. The Common Seal must be kept in the custody of the Secretary or another Diaconate member authorised by the Diaconate.

13. PROPERTY

- a. Church buildings and property shall not be occupied or used by persons or organisations without the approval of the Diaconate or Church Members Meeting.
- b. No land or building shall be bought, sold, disposed of or mortgaged in any way without a favourable two-thirds majority vote of those present and eligible to vote at a Special Church Members Meeting.
- c. The income and the property of the Church shall be vested in the Church and shall be applied solely for the promotion of its objects as herein set forth and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to any member of the Church provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any officers or servants of the Church or other persons not being members of the Church in return for any services actually rendered to the Church nor prevent the payment of interest at a rate not exceeding ten per cent per annum (10%) on money borrowed from or lawfully due to any member of the Church nor the payment to any member for occasional services.

14. DISSOLUTION

The Church may be dissolved by a Special Resolution approved by at least a three-quarters majority of the members present and eligible to vote at a Special Church Members Meeting called for the purpose, provided that at least three (3) months notice of the proposal has been given. In the event of such a resolution being passed persons appointed by the Church shall take all the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church. After payment of all debts and liabilities any surplus assets shall not be distributed amongst the members of the Church but shall be distributed to a society that meets the objects of the Church in accordance with the decision of a Special Church Members Meeting such a society being:

- an incorporated association;
- a company limited by guarantee registered under the Corporations Act 2001; or
- an organisation that holds a current licence under the Charitable Collections Act 1946.

15. CONSTITUTION

No change shall be made to this Constitution except by Special Resolution approved by a three-quarters majority of members present and eligible to vote at a Church Members Meeting. Notice of any proposed change must be given in writing to the Church Secretary or other person appointed by the Diaconate for the receipt of such notices at least four (4) months prior to the meeting at which the motion will be presented. The full text of the proposed changes shall be made available to all resident members at least two (2) months prior to that meeting. The motion proposed may be adopted as presented or as amended by the Church Members Meeting.

16. CUSTODY OF BOOKS AND SECURITIES

- a. Subject to subrule 2, the books and any securities of the Church must be kept in the Secretary's custody or under the Secretary's control.
- b. The financial records and, as applicable, the financial statements or financial reports of the Church must be kept in the Treasurer's custody or under the Treasurer's control.
- c. Subrules 1 and 2 have effect except as otherwise decided by the committee.
- d. The books of the Church must be retained for at least 7 years.

17. INSPECTION OF RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

a. A member may inspect and/or copy the Church's records and documents free of charge by contacting the Secretary to make the necessary arrangements. However,

b. If a member wants to inspect a document that records the minutes of a Diaconate meeting, the right to inspect that document is subject to any decision the Diaconate has made about minutes of Diaconate meetings generally, or the minutes of a specific Diaconate meeting, being available for inspection by members.

APPENDIX A

SCRIPTURES RELATING TO THE DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The following passages are some of the Scriptures on which the Doctrinal Statement is based:

- a. Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14.
- b. Psalm 119:89; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:21.
- c. Genesis 1:26-28, 2:20-25; Matthew 19:4-5.
- d. Genesis 1:26-27, 3:6; Romans 5:12, 6:3; Ephesians 2:1-3; Matthew 4:3-11; Ephesians 6:11-12; Revelation 12:9.
- e. Acts 4:12; Romans 5:6-11; John 1:1-4; Colossians 2:9; Matthew 1:18-25; 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14-20; Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15; Acts 1:9, 2:22-36; Hebrews 7:24-28; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:42-44; 1 Timothy 3:16.
- f. John 3:16, 5:24; Acts 20:21.
- g. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; John 16:7-11, 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:13-14.
- h. John 3:3-8; Acts 2:41, 42, 47; Colossians 1:18
- i. Luke 16:22-24; John 5:28-29; Acts 10:42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15; John 3:36.
- j. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

APPENDIX B

MAYLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH INC. COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP.

1. Realising my guilt before God, I have confessed my sin to Him and received the Lord Jesus Christ, Who bore my sin on the Cross, as my personal Saviour. (Romans 3:19-23; John 1:12)
2. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord of my life and seek to confess Him as such before others by testimony both of life and lip. (Romans 10:9)
3. I trust in the power of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in my heart, to keep me, guide me and lead me in the way of purity and holiness.(John 14:26; Romans 8:2)
4. I accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and my final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (2 Timothy3:16)
5. I recognise the experience for which the witness of believer's baptism stands – separation from the world, death to sin and self and union with Christ in His victory and risen life and will seek to live this out each day. (2 Corinthians 6:17; Romans 6:16)
6. I recognise my responsibility by prayer and gifts to extend the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, both at home and abroad. (Romans 12:6-13)
7. I recognise my responsibility to pray regularly for the work of this Church, for its Pastor, Officers and Members, that the witness of all concerned may be to the Glory of God and to the salvation of souls. (Ephesians 6:18-19)
8. I recognise my responsibility to be regular in my attendance at the services of the Church and at the Lord's Table. (Hebrews 10:23; 1 Corinthians 11:26)
- 9 I recognise my responsibility in the maintaining of true Christian unity. (Ephesians 4:3)
10. I have read the Doctrinal Statement as contained in the Constitution of the Church and am in complete agreement therewith.
11. Recognising my inability in my own strength to adhere to the terms of any covenant yet believing that my Saviour and Lord can enable me to do so, after prayerful thought, and in simple trust in His Grace, I append my signature below, implying the ready consent of my heart to each of the clauses in this covenant. (Philippians 4:13)

Signature:

Date:

Witness – Pastor: