

Contents

How do I become a member of One Hope Baptist Church?.....	1
Membership Application form.....	2
Guidelines for writing your testimony of salvation.....	4
About One Hope Baptist Church.....	5
Affiliations.....	5
Meeting Times.....	5
Officers.....	5
Location:.....	5
Contact information.....	5
One Hope Baptist Church's Doctrinal Position and Distinctives.....	6
Introduction.....	6
Who are we?.....	7
One Hope Baptist Statement of Faith.....	15
Creeds that we affirm.....	27
Understanding Church and Church Membership.....	31
The Meaning of the Church.....	31
The Organisation of the Church.....	32
Offices Within The Church.....	32
Ordinances within the Church.....	33
The Role of the Church.....	33
The Meaning of Church Membership.....	34
The Need for Church Membership.....	35
One Hope Baptist Church Covenant.....	43
Why do we do it that way?.....	45
Why do we have the service structure we do?.....	45
Why is the preaching done the way it is?.....	45
Why don't we do altar calls?.....	46
Why do we have prayer meetings?.....	46
Why do we treat the Lord's Supper so seriously?.....	46
Who can partake of the Lord's Supper?.....	47

Why do we play music before the service and during the offering?.....	47
Why do we sing hymns?.....	47
Why do we sing the hymns we do?.....	48
Why do we use hymnals where possible?.....	48
Why don't we sing more choruses?.....	48
Why do we use the music we do?.....	49
Why do we use the New King James Version of the Bible?.....	50
Why don't we include skits, drama or plays in our services?.....	50
Why do we take collections?.....	50
What if people want to give through other means?.....	50
Why don't we speak in tongues?.....	50
Why don't the women preach?.....	51
Why don't we run a crèche or nursery during the service?.....	51
Why don't we make our services more 'seeker-friendly'?.....	52
How should people dress to church?.....	52
Why don't we make church more fun for the children?.....	52
Why don't we have a special youth ministry?.....	53
One Hope Baptist Church Constitution.....	54

How do I become a member of One Hope Baptist Church?

The leaders and members of One Hope Baptist Church are excited about your interest in becoming a member of our church.

We take church membership very seriously as we are sure you do, and have therefore provided as much information as we can to help you make an informed decision.

The process is very simple and follows these steps:

1. If you have already been baptised, fill in the membership application form (page 2) and hand it to a church elder. If you have not been baptised, speak to an elder about this important step of obedience. Attach a copy of your testimony of salvation to this application. If you are not sure how to go about this, you can use the guidelines on page 4.
2. Read the general information about One Hope Baptist Church.
3. Find out why we require membership by reading “Understanding church and church membership.”
4. Read the One Hope Baptist Church doctrinal position and distinctives.
5. Familiarise yourself with how One Hope Baptist Church operates by reading “Why do we do it that way?”
6. Read the One Hope Baptist Church covenant.
7. Read the church constitution.
8. Undergo a membership interview with one or more of the One Hope Baptist Church elders.
9. Should it be deemed appropriate, your application will be brought to the church and you will have an opportunity to present your testimony publicly to the church.
10. Assuming there are no objections to your application, you will have the opportunity to covenant together with our church one Sunday morning, and have the existing church members welcome you in as a member.

If you have any questions regarding these documents or processes, speak to one of the elders.

Membership Application form

Taking the formal step of membership is biblical and pleasing to the Lord. We welcome any who meet the biblical requirements and who desire to serve and grow in One Hope Baptist Church.

Please note: the following is simply an application for membership. Membership is granted after a person covenants to be a member with current members of One hope Baptist Church.

Personal information:

First & Last Name: _____

ID Number: _____

Contact numbers: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

E-Mail: _____

Physical Address: _____

Postal Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Marital Status: _____

Have you been baptised? Y N

If yes, please describe when, by whom and how (by immersion or by sprinkling):

Church/es previously attended (name of church, city and contact numbers):

If you were recently a member of a church, please attach copies of your letter of resignation and the church's letter of commendation/acceptance.

If you were a regular attender of a church without becoming a member, please give the reason/s.

Reason/s for leaving your previous church/es:

Have you ever been disciplined by a previous church? Y N

If yes, please give details.

Have you ever been for counselling, biblical or other? Y N

If yes, please give details.

- I have attached my testimony of salvation and letter/s from previous churches (where applicable).
- I have read the One Hope Baptist Church constitution, statement of faith, creeds and church covenant and I agree with them in both word and spirit.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Guidelines for writing your testimony of salvation

Before baptism or membership, we require a person share his or her salvation testimony. This has been the ancient practice of the church (1 Tim 6:12), by which believers do two things:

1. guard the purity of the church, by making sure only believers are included, and
2. encourage one another through hearing of God's grace in another's life.

A testimony is your account of how you came to saving faith in Jesus Christ. It is your explanation of why you believe you are now truly converted—born again.

It need not be long, but it is essential that you include the following:

1. Your understanding of your position as a sinner, and your need of reconciliation with God.
2. Your understanding of the person of Jesus Christ as your means of reconciliation with God.
3. A description of the time when you came to a point of turning from sin and self-reliance to trust Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and impart new life to you.
4. The change that Christ has made in you since your new birth.

About One Hope Baptist Church

Affiliations

We are an independent Baptist church, with many friends and co-labourers in ministry outside our church. We choose to remain independent to safeguard the autonomy, doctrine, purity and practices of our local church, while recognising that we are not independent of the Body of Christ worldwide.

Meeting Times

Discipleship Hour - 9:00am

Sunday Morning Service – 10:30am

Wednesday Evening Prayer Meeting & Bible Study - 7:00pm

Officers

Elders

David Duncan, pastor 082 052 0948

Wife: Sharlene Children: Shannon, Jesse, Timothy, Lydia, Benaiah

Deacons

Craig Folly 083 783 9093

Wife: Kelly Children: Trent, Rick and Kate

Location:

18 Harrismith Street, South Hills Extension 1.

Contact information

Email: david@onehopebaptist.co.za

Website: www.onehopebaptist.co.za

One Hope Baptist Church's Doctrinal Position and Distinctives

Introduction

When entering a church, it is natural for us to want to know what the church believes and teaches. If you have come from another church, or have been a Christian for some time, you want to 'position' the church somewhere on the spectrum of professing Christianity. Is this church Protestant? Charismatic? Reformed? This helps us know what the church is about. Very often, we want to know which teachers or groups the church recommends or identifies with. We try to use these things as summaries of what the church is, or short-cuts to knowing where the church stands.

This is often helpful, and useful as far as it goes. Unfortunately, it does not always go that far, because a church is a lot more than the authors in its library, the churches it fellowships with, or the circles it runs in. When we try to pigeon-hole a church into a particular group, we will get some things right, and other things wrong. This often leads to misunderstandings, and even disappointment or conflict down the line. People often think that because one author is recommended, we identify with everything he teaches or practises. Some will think that because we use materials from a certain ministry, we align ourselves entirely with all they believe and practise.

The truth is, modern Christianity is a lot more complicated than that. So much fragmentation has taken place in the last century, that Christians are going to be picking bits and pieces from various sources to try to piece together what they believe is biblical Christianity. While we do not claim to be infallible, we try to discern what is good and useful and what is not as we strive towards biblical Christianity. One Hope Baptist Church, like many (or most) conservative evangelical or fundamental churches, is a mixture of several theological views and practices.

This booklet is an attempt to help you understand our theological stand, as well as our approach to ministry. In it you will find out that we have much in common with many other churches, while also differing on certain points. We have fellowship on several levels with other churches; we do

not have fellowship in some other areas. That's just the nature of modern Christianity. The booklet is rather long, because Christian doctrine and practice is quite involved.

Some of the terms and theological language might be unfamiliar to you. Don't be intimidated by that. There is a lot of time to grow and learn these things. The goal is not that you understand all of these things in advance. The goal is for you to have a general idea of what we believe and what we don't, so that there are no unpleasant surprises down the road. Over the years, you might find yourself coming back to this booklet, and things making more sense.

We'd encourage you to read through this, and mark or underline what doesn't make sense. This can become a good opportunity to learn and discuss beliefs with one of the elders.

Who are we?

We are Christians.

This means that we believe the gospel. We believe that the God of the universe, Yahweh, is eternally existent in the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe the eternal Son was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless and righteous life, and then offered Himself up as a substitute for our sins in the cross. We believe He rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent His Spirit to indwell all those who believe. We believe Christ will return bodily to judge the world. The righteous will experience eternal reward, and the unrighteous will experience eternal torment. We believe that we were born in sin, but at the point of repentance and faith, God awakes us from our spiritual death, and imparts eternal life into our souls, and regards Christ's righteousness as being ours, while charging our sin to Him. Because of His sovereign act, we now love Christ. We believe He is our Saviour from sin and the Lord of our lives.

This means that we affirm the gospel as taught in the Bible, believed through the centuries, and especially recovered during the time of the Reformation. We believe salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone, to the glory of God alone.

We are conservatives.

This is perhaps the hardest one to explain, because it is so rarely seen to day, and so poorly understood. Put simply, we believe that true Christianity must be conserved and protected against beliefs and practices that would harm it. In other words, we want to be as fully Christian as possible. To do this, we work to conserve several things.

First, we conserve the gospel. We believe in loyalty to the gospel, not only in believing its message, but in defending it from those who would demean it. The gospel is the boundary of Christianity; everyone who believes it is a fellow brother or sister, whether Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Charismatic, Reformed or Arminian. With the church, we confess the truths of the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed.

However, the scene becomes more complicated when there are people around who claim the title 'Christian', but deny the gospel. If they deny the Trinity, the virgin birth, humanity, deity, substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ, or any other essential (fundamental) doctrines, then they have denied the gospel. This means they are not Christians. If they merely denied these things without claiming to be Christians, they would simply be unbelievers.

However, when they claim to be Christians, they are apostates. The Bible tells us not to extend Christian fellowship to apostates (2 John 1:10), because they preach a different gospel (Gal 1:6-8, 2 Cor 11:4). The whole books of 2 Peter and Jude are written about such people. As Christians, we cannot extend fellowship to those who deny the gospel itself. To do so would be to indirectly deny it ourselves. Not everyone who says he is a Christian is so. This is why we are confessionalists. We subscribe to certain creeds and confessions, not because they are more authoritative than the Bible, but because they summarise biblical teaching, and emphasise the boundary of the Christian faith: the gospel.

We believe in preaching a clear, doctrinally-rich gospel message. We believe in community and worldwide evangelism.

Furthermore, we exercise caution with those who profess the gospel, but are indifferent as to whom they extend Christian fellowship. If a church that professes the gospel is happy to have an apostate preach in their pulpit, or happy to partner with apostates in ministry endeavours, we

think such Christians are being disobedient. They are treating the gospel too lightly. This would place a strain and a limit on our fellowship with them.

Second, we conserve biblical doctrine. The gospel is just the boundary of the faith; the whole faith as revealed in Scripture is what we live out. We believe that the Word must have a central place in our lives and give much time to the public exposition of the Word. We encourage theological literacy and education. We believe in one-on-one or small-group discipleship along with the preaching ministry of the church. Again, here we find many Christian committed to conserving this much.

Third, we conserve biblical worship. We believe the chief end of man is to love Christ so as to glorify Him. Therefore we believe our greatest goal as a church is worship. We believe that God has prescribed the pattern for Christian worship in the New Testament. We guard against innovations, additions or omissions from this pattern. Unfortunately, here we part ways with many brethren, who do not see God's Word as prescriptive for worship, but feel the freedom to introduce all kinds of additions or innovations to corporate worship for pragmatic reasons. We are also different from those Christians who place their ministry emphasis on evangelism, world-wide missions, or ministry programs. As important as these things may be, we see the goal of the church as worship, and all else flowing out from that mountain-top.

Fourth, we conserve ordinate affection. "Affections" refers to our desires, or values or loves. "Ordinate affection" means that there is a right way to desire and love God, and a wrong way. We believe God is to be loved supremely. We believe God must be loved appropriately. We believe there are fitting, appropriate and therefore, ordinate responses to God, and inappropriate and therefore inordinate responses. We believe in the importance of knowing what affections are true and ordinate when it comes to responding to God, the world and our experiences. Here we will seem strange to many people, who are used to thinking about love for God in a very simple "either I do or I don't" way. Here we will part ways with many Christians who believe that any kind of music, prayer, praise or approach to God is fine, so long as it is sincere. We believe we must think very carefully about how we are to love God and people, and what kind of responses we should have to Him. Because of that, we also try to promote and conserve a fifth thing:

We conserve the examined life. We believe we must examine life to understand it, and the meanings of the things in our lives. Apart from this, we can never understand how to properly love and obey God. All of life has meaning – from the things we wear, to our tone of voice, to the music we listen to, to the technology around us. For us to be fully Christian, we must consider carefully the meaning of the things around us, and particularly the things that shape meaning. We can never properly apply Scriptural principles to life, unless we understand the meaning and significance of things in the world. Unfortunately, many people view this search for meaning as 'legalism'. We part ways with many of our otherwise-conservative Christian brothers and sisters on the matter of using various things in popular culture for worship and ministry, like certain kinds of music, certain forms of entertainment and so forth. We do not think these things are just 'styles'. They have meaning, and the meaning must be understood before it is used in ministry or worship. You can see an example of thinking about the meaning of things in the booklet “Why do We Do It That Way?”

Finally, we conserve Christian tradition. For us, tradition is not authoritative, it is simply instructive. The Word of God is our final authority. However, contained in the best of Christian tradition is orthodox theology, ordinate affection, and examples of true piety to Christ. Therefore, we want to remain connected with the evangelical Christian tradition throughout history. We want to build on what we have been handed. Some of our fellow evangelicals or fundamentalists appear to be anti-traditional, and may even suspect that we have sympathies with Roman Catholicism. We abhor what Rome has done to the gospel. Nevertheless, we are happy to own our heritage wherever it is found: in the early Church Fathers, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment or the Modern Era. Our emphasis on conserving ordinate affection, meaning and tradition makes us seem strange to many, for we live in an unreflective age.

Put simply, a conservative says: a true Christian must believe the gospel, believe and obey the Bible, worship God properly, and obey Him responsibly in the culture he is living in. He believes he has been handed Christianity, and is responsible for preserving it and passing it on. That is why a conservative tries to conserve these things.

We are Baptists.

This is not about a denominational affiliation, it represents several convictions we hold about the nature and practice of the church. We believe that the final authority for the church's order and practice is the New Testament. Both Testaments are equally authoritative, but we believe the church as a New Testament entity must use the New Testament to order its life. We believe in a pure church: a regenerated membership, immersed upon personal confession, who are included in the local church through membership or excluded through discipline. We hold that believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances (ceremonies) for the church. We reject Campbellite views, which make baptism essential to salvation. We believe pastors/elders/overseers (three titles, one office) and deacons are the two offices of the church. We hold to a congregational model of church organisation: the church makes decisions under the guidance and shepherding of the elders. We believe in a plurality of biblically qualified men to lead the church under Christ's Lordship. We also believe that each church is autonomous and answers directly to the headship of Jesus Christ. We believe the State must not control or sponsor the church, though we recognise that the church may have an indirect influence on the State. We respect the individual responsibility of believers to read the Word for themselves (soul competence), and pray to God directly (priesthood of the believer).

We believe in God's sovereignty in salvation.

We affirm the sovereignty of God over all things, including salvation. We affirm human responsibility in salvation, while recognising God's sovereign election. We believe in the eternal security of the believer, as well as the perseverance of true believers.

We are cessationists.

We believe that the supernatural gifts of tongues, prophecy, miracles, as well as supernatural forms of divine revelation such as dreams, visions, angelic visitations, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, audible messages from God, ceased by the end of the apostolic era (around A.D. 100). The miraculous gifts were a very particular type of gift, unique to the apostolic era of transitioning Israel to the church. God can do anything at any time, but He has not indicated in Scripture that He intends to grant miraculous gifts to the church throughout the church age. Instead, the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20), that is, the completed Scriptures and matured church is sufficient for us (1 Cor 13:8-13). This means we are different

from churches that believe in continuing prophecy and revelation, the gift of tongues, whether publicly or in a 'private prayer language'. We believe in divine healing, but not in 'healing crusades'. We believe God casts our demons through the reception of the gospel, not through exorcism ministries. We believe in spiritual warfare by growing in Christlikeness, not through 'binding Satan', 'taking dominion', 'breaking generational curses' or by certain verbal incantations. We reject the out-of-control manifestations of charismatic worship as denials of 1 Corinthians 14, particularly verses 33 and 40. This means we are different from a large percentage of professing Christian churches, who have adopted a charismatic model of revelation and worship.

Having said that, we believe we have a living experiential relationship with the Triune God through Jesus Christ. Because Christ is real and personal, a relationship with Him is real and personal. Therefore, the goal of our lives as a church is 'to know Christ and to make Him known'. We reject the health, wealth and prosperity gospel as false and deceitful, as well as other forms of 'positive confession' teachings that grow out of the charismatic and Word-Faith movements.

We are complementarians.

We believe that men and women complement each other, while being different. Men and women are spiritual equals, and in Christ, the war of the sexes is torn down (Gal 3:28). This does not obliterate differences in roles. In the home, God has different roles for husbands and wives (Eph 5:22-33). In the church, God has different roles for men and women (1 Tim 2:8-15). These roles do not come out of some existing cultural issue at the time of the New Testament's writing, but rather from the created order itself (1 Tim 2:13-14). God has ordained that men function as spiritual heads of their homes, and of the church, by mimicking the servant-leadership of Christ (1 Cor 11:3, Eph 5:25-29). Therefore, we believe pastors and those who serve or officiate as spiritual leaders in the church must be male. We see God even calling for these distinctions in nature and role to be clear in corporate worship (1 Cor 11:4-16). We honour and cherish biblical femininity (Proverbs 31:10-31), and recognise the indispensable role of women ministering to each other (Titus 2:3-5), and to the whole body (1 Cor 12).

We are creationists.

We believe that the Genesis account of creation was meant to be understood literally, not symbolically, typologically, or as a 'literary framework'. We believe God created the universe in the six days He described. We reject models of origins that include Darwinistic evolution, that is, speciation occurring through natural selection over aeons. We believe that theories which seek to combine evolution with special creation may ultimately compromise the integrity of the gospel, by compromising the truths of man's original innocence and subsequent fall, and the need for a substitutionary Saviour.

We believe in biblical counselling and a progressive model of sanctification..

We hold that Scripture is entirely sufficient for man's spiritual needs and problems (2 Tim 3:16-17), and does not need to be supplemented or integrated with insights from secular psychology. Therefore we believe we need to admonish and confront one another with biblical truth to solve our problems. We believe sanctification is a process of increasingly gaining the mind of Christ through Spirit-enabled understanding of the Scriptures, and so putting off the old and putting on the new (Eph 4:22-24). We reject the idea of second-blessing Christianity. We do not hold the revivalist view that spiritual growth is brought about by precipitating a crisis decision every week through an altar-call.

We are premillennialists.

We believe a consistently literal approach to interpreting Scripture reveals that the church is distinct from Israel. We recognise continuity between Israel and the church, but also recognise the discontinuities. We do not think that Israel has been permanently set aside, according to Romans 11. We do not hold to multiple ways of salvation. We exercise some latitude on interpreting the timetable of end-time events. Nevertheless, we believe that there Old Testament promises that are yet to be fulfilled, and will not be fulfilled by the church. We believe Christ will return to earth before He sets up His kingdom, hence we are premillennialists.

Conclusion

This might sound like a bulky list. Whatever happened to plain, simple Christianity? Well, we're happy to profess the simple gospel with all other Christians. However, we can't put our heads in the sand, either. The convictions we hold have emerged because of real disputes and conflicts over what Christians ought to believe and practise. Some of these disputes are centuries old. Some of them are relatively recent. Our goal is not to be eccentric, but to navigate the complicated landscape of modern Christianity, trying to be as fully biblical as we can.

We trust this has helped you understand something of the position and practices of One Hope Baptist Church. We hope you see the basis for this, and will join with us in knowing Christ and making Him known!

One Hope Baptist Statement of Faith

Preamble:

The purpose of this statement of faith is twofold:

1. To clearly articulate our understanding of the major doctrines of the Christian Faith, and
2. To do so in such a way as to make these doctrines understandable and clear to all people, even those whose home language is not English.

The Bible:

We believe that the Bible (the Scriptures) is the Word of God that He personally breathed out. God the Holy Spirit carried men along, as a wind carries a sailing ship, causing them to write exactly what He intended for them to write. He did not dictate His Word but rather used the different personalities of these men to write exactly what he wanted in their individual styles (2 Pet 1:21, Gal 3:16).

The Bible does not contain the Word of God, it *is* the Word of God (Matt 4:4, 2 Tim 3:16, Prov 30:5-6).

There were no errors in the original handwritten biblical documents. God has miraculously preserved His Word through the ages and the Bible is still God's Word and as such, should determine what every Christian does and how he does it.

The Bible is our final authority and alone is able to thoroughly equip the Christian to live a life that pleases God (2 Tim 3:16-17). No other source addresses human problems as thoroughly and reliably as the Holy Scriptures.

The correct way to understand God's meaning in the Bible is to use the plain meaning of the words (except where it is obvious that figures of speech are being used), which is discovered by carefully studying the grammar, historical background and literary setting (the immediate context and the passage's context in the whole of the Bible) of the passage being studied. The Bible never contradicts itself and is the final word on its interpretation—it is self-interpreting.

There is only one valid interpretation of Scripture. There may, however, be multiple applications of one Scripture passage.

God:

God is the supreme Lord and maker of heaven and earth (Gen 1:1, Col 1:16-17). The Bible never tries to prove that God exists. It simply states that He does (Gen 1:1).

The God of the Bible is one being, consisting of three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit - 2 Cor 13:14). The three persons are co-equal and co-eternal (John 10:30). No one was created by the others.

Each person is God (John 6:27, Phil 2:6; Acts 5:3-4), but they are one God, not three gods. They are not different modes or forms of one person, but three persons making up one being (John 10:30, Matt 28:19).

Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God the Father (Heb 5:5; Ps 2:7; Acts 13:33), equal to the Father (Phil 2:6) and yet submissive to the Father (1Cor 3:23; 1Cor 11:3; 1Cor 15:27; 1Cor 15:28). Jesus is the only mediator between God and men (1 Tim 2:5).

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) as does the Son (John 8:42), but He is not begotten of the Father and is therefore not a son.

All three persons of the God-head act as one in all things (creation, resurrection, salvation).

God's first concern is His glory (Is 48:11, John 17:24) and for this reason God commands us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30).

Jesus Christ:

Jesus the Messiah is God. We know this because among other things:

- He has the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:10-12).
- He receives worship and honour (Matt 28:17; John 5:22-23) unlike any creature.
- The prophecies concerning Jesus call Him God (Mark 1:2-3; Isa 40:3-5).

Jesus has been God from eternity past. He existed before He took on human form (Micah 5:2, Is 9:6, John 1:14, John 8:58).

Jesus is the creator of all things (Col 1:16, John 1:3).

He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary who was a virgin (Matt 1:16, Luke 1:35). He continued to be fully God while taking on human form. He remains the God-man forever.

Jesus never sinned, even though He was tempted in every way as we are (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus Christ acquired all of the limitations (but not sins) of humanity by the addition of His human nature. He also voluntarily submitted Himself to the will of His Father, taking the form of a slave (Phil 2:7). In other words, He freely chose to limit the use of His divine powers except where and when He was directed by the Father. He hid His brilliant radiant beauty, which He had before He took on human form. At no time did Messiah Jesus give up any of His divine attributes.

The blood of Jesus the Messiah, representing His life (Lev 17:11), was given to ransom whoever should believe in Him, from the debt of guilt that came from breaking God's law and not conforming to the standard of His perfection (Rom 3:23, Mk 10:45).

Jesus kept God's Law perfectly and having done that, paid its penalty (Gal 3:13)—the price for our sin (1 Tim 2:6). God was satisfied with Jesus' offering of Himself (1 John 2:2). Jesus died in the place of the sinner (2 Cor 5:21), restoring the relationship between God and that sinner (2 Cor 5:18-19). His death was able to cover the sin of all men, but only brings about restoration for those who receive Him (Matt 10:40; Matt 18:5; Col 2:6).

After the third day, Jesus rose from the tomb in bodily form (John 20:20-29). He later went up to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) where He remains, Head over the church. Here too, Jesus continues to intercede for all believers (Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1) as High Priest.

Jesus will return personally and visibly to rule the earth as King for 1000 years (Rev 19-20:6).

Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, God the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is clearly a person, not a force as:

- He has intelligence (Rom 8:27), emotion (Eph 4:30) and a will (1 Cor 12:11).
- He is sometimes referred to with the masculine pronoun “He” (John 16:13-14).
- His titles confirm this (Acts 16:27, 1 Cor 6:11).
- His attributes confirm this (omniscience – Is 40:13, 1 Cor 2:12; omnipresence – Ps 139:7).
- He is associated on an equal basis with the Father and the Son (Matt 28:19).

The Spirit’s main ministry is revealing Jesus Christ, to glorify Him (John 16:14, 15:26). To that end, we see He does a number of works:

- Conviction of sin (through exposing sin, bringing evidence against the sinner) - John 16:8-11;
- Regeneration (the event of being born again) - Titus 3:5, John 3:3-7;
- Baptising (1 Cor 12:13),
- Indwelling (1 Cor 6:19, Rom 8:9),
- Anointing (1 John 2:27),
- Sealing (Eph 4:30),
- Illuminating (1 Cor 2:9-16),
- Leading (Rom 8:14),
- Filling (Eph 5:18), and
- Gifting - equipping God’s people for ministering to one another (1 Cor 12-14)

NOTE: Certain gifts were used to prove that the changes from biblical Judaism to Christianity were appointed by God, and used to add to the books of inspired holy Scripture. As the church became established and as the New Testament became available, the need for these sign gifts lessened, disappearing altogether by the end of the time of the Apostles. Therefore we believe that the legitimate gifts that can be seen in the true Church today are those that are useful for edification through service (teaching, service, exhortation, giving, leading, mercy etc).

Angels:

Angels are created beings (Col 1:16). They appear to have been created before the creation of the world (Job 38:6-7)—they were present at the creation of the world but are not mentioned as being created during this process. As created beings, angels are not able to mediate between God and man and should never be worshipped (Colossians 2: 18; Revelation 22: 8 & 9).

They were originally all created holy (Jude 6). Some of the angels sinned and so were removed from their original state. We presume that fallen angels are what the Bible calls demons.

Satan:

The Bible speaks about Satan as a person, not simply the idea or picture of evil. Satan was created by God. He was created perfect (Ezek 28:14-15). He was of the cherubim, apparently the chosen or highest ranking angel (Ezek 28:14). His original sin was pride (lifting up of self). This sin led to all other sins (1 Tim 3:7; Isaiah 14:12-20).

Satan does not know everything, he cannot do everything and he cannot be everywhere at the same time. He is forced to submit to the limits set by God (Job 1:12). A Christian can resist him (James 4:7), be on guard against him (1 Peter 5:8) and take a stand against his evil schemes (Ephesians 6:11-18). He will be thrown into the lake of fire in the end (Rev 20:10).

Man:

Man was created by God in a unique way on the sixth day¹ of creation. Man was created in the image or likeness of God (Genesis 1:26; James 3:9). Both male and female are made in God's image (Gen 1:27). This means man is like God in some ways and is a picture of God in some

1 One day is from sunset to sunset (So the evening and the morning were the sixth day - Gen 1:31)

ways. Even though man sinned, he continues to be like God in some ways—God’s image in man is distorted but not lost (Genesis 9:6).

Man was created for God’s own glory (Isaiah 43:7). This determines man’s entire purpose for life—doing ALL in such a way that God is seen to be as glorious as He is (1Cor 10:31; 1Pet 4:11).

Man was created without sin. However, he was given a test of obedience, which he failed. God revealed His will for them through a command, which man disobeyed. Having failed, he was separated from God who is life—he died spiritually.

Since that day, sin has ruled in every mortal body of every descendant of Adam and Eve. Each person is a slave to sin from birth (Rom 6:17-18), obeying only their own desires.

Sin:

Sin is transgression of the law or lawlessness (1John 3:4) and anything opposed to the glory of God (Rom 3:23). Sin is abandoning God as the source of life and joy and to love substitutes instead of Him (Jer 2:12-13; James 4:4)).

Every individual human being is thoroughly corrupt (Is 53:6; Rom 3:10-18).

Every part of man has been affected by sin, including his heart (Jer 17:9), mind (Eph 4:17; Rom 8:7; Titus 1:15; Col 1:21) and mouth (Rom 3:13-14). Man is a slave to sin (Rom 6:18-22) from birth—he has no ability to stop sinning until God makes him a new creature through the new birth (see Salvation).

The penalty of death for sin (Rom 6:23, Gen 2:17) has three aspects:

- Spiritual death – separation from God (Eph 2:14).
- Physical death – the separation of the spirit from the body (2 Cor 5:6-8).
- Eternal death – the separation from God for all eternity in the lake of fire (Rev 20:15, Mk 9:47-49).

Salvation:

Salvation is when God the Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the sake of the Name of the triune God (Is 43:25), gave Himself for all men, freeing those who receive Him from every sinful act and purifying for Himself a people who are devoted to Him and delight to do good (Titus 2:14; Rev 5:9). In doing so, He removes the curse of the Law from those who believe (Gal 3:13) so that they no longer need to fear the sentence of spiritual death we all deserved (Rom 8:1). To these (those who receive Him) He gave the right to become the children of God (John 1:12).

To magnify the wonder of His unmerited favour toward mankind, it pleased God to determine, by His own choosing, those who would be saved and become his sons (Eph 1:4-5). This election happened before creation and is connected with God's foreknowledge in a mysterious way (1 Pet 1:2, Rom 8:29-30). Men do not believe indiscriminately or randomly, but God the Father elects those whom he hands over, as it were, to his Son (John 6:37). At the same time, man's responsibility to actively repent (which is granted by God – Acts 11:18), believe (Acts 16:31) and come (enabled by the Father – John 6:37) is clearly taught in the Scriptures.

How human responsibility and God's election work together is a mystery, but in a wonderful way, the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to persuade men to voluntarily and actively repent and believe in the Lord Jesus the Messiah, trusting in the salvation that He provides through His sacrifice (2 Thes 2:13, John 6:37, 44-45, 64-65, Rom 10:13-17).

Jesus the Messiah achieved salvation through making atonement. This means that God's justice was upheld when Jesus bore the curse and punishment for men's sin—sin was punished and all those who trusted in the atonement provided, are released from the sentence. Jesus' perfect life, His death as a substitute and His resurrection (which gives assurance of all God has spoken) combine to provide the way that God accomplishes salvation. There is nothing a man can do to make himself righteous—no works such as keeping the Law can save Him (Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Rom 3:28). The biblical conditions for salvation are clearly given as repent and believe (Acts 20:21, Mk 1:15).

A Christian can have absolute certainty of possessing eternal life (1 John 5:13)—he cannot, at any point, lose his position in Christ (his salvation). This certainty is based on God's ability to save through the work of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:38-39, Heb 7:25, Rom 8:34, Phil 1:6, Jude 24, 1 Pet 1:5).

God's ability to save is absolutely sure and gives the Christian the ability to be assured in his mind of his eternal position in Christ.

Assurance of salvation is given by the Holy Spirit to the child of God, when he or she bears the fruits of a being a child of God, for example, keeping Christ's commandments (1John 2:3) and loving fellow Christians (1John 3:14).

Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth is the natural and expected result of receiving spiritual life. The Bible teaches each believer to live a life of increasing holiness, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ. Each Christian should live in such a way that he does not bring disgrace on his Saviour and Lord (Rom 8:29; 1Cor 15:49; 2Cor 3:18; Eph 4:21-24).

Before salvation, a man is ruled by his flesh (or old nature) (Rom 8:5-9). After salvation, that old nature is considered 'dead' (Rom 6:6-9, Col 3:1-3). This means that the power of the old nature has been broken, having no hold over him. After the new birth, a Christian receives the ability to be obedient to God (2 Cor 5:17). However, the Christian is still able to yield to sin—to give his body to do works of unrighteousness (Rom 6:11-16). This ability to sin (Gal 5:16-17, Rom 7:14-25) will exist within a Christian until he is made perfect at Christ's return (1 John 3:2). The gradual, advancing process of putting off the works of unrighteousness, renewing the mind and putting on the works of righteousness is called sanctification and will be evident in every true Christian. This happens through obedience to the Word of God (His Word dwelling in us) and dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in the Christian and enables him to know the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16) and gives him the power to resist the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16).

The Church

The word "Church" is the collective word for all Christians, past present and future.

The "local church" is a group of baptised Christians who submit to Christ's headship and follow the New Testament's pattern for a local church. The local church is self-governing and is accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ as their head.

- The local church is to be organised (1 Cor 14:40; 1 Tim 3:15).
- It is to have officers. The officers are to be pastors (also called elders and overseers in Scripture) and deacons (1 Tim 3:1-13).
 - Pastors have the task of leading, overseeing, and shepherding the local church. The moral and personal qualifications of a pastor are seen in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
 - Deacons have the task of supporting the pastors by service. (Acts 6:1-6). Their qualifications are seen in 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13.
- The church is to have ordinances – that is, ceremonies to be performed visibly by the local church. These are to be believers' baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.
- The purpose of the church is to glorify God by making disciples of Christ, baptising them, and training them in obedience to Christ (Matt 28:19-20).
- In addition, it is to care for its own (1 Tim 5) as well as outsiders (Gal 6:10). It is to praise God (Acts 2:47), be the keepers or guardians of truth (1 Tim 3:15), and be a righteous influence in the world (Matt 5:13-16).
- The church as a 'called-out assembly' is to keep herself separate from corrupting influences (1 John 2:15-17, 2 Cor 6:14-18, Rom 16:17).
- The church is authorised to discipline unrepentant believers (Matt 18:15-20, 1 Cor 5:3-7, 2 Thes 3:6-15).

Events Of The End Times

Although there is much difficulty and thus much misunderstanding and disagreement over the events of the last times, Scripture clearly describes the following events:

Resurrection and rapture:

There is no soul-sleep, or purgatory mentioned in the Bible (Heb 9:27):

- At death, the souls of unbelievers go immediately into hell (Luke 16:22-23), in torment they await their resurrection and final judgement after which they will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15).
- At death, the souls of Christians will be with their Lord (2 Cor 5:8).

According to Paul, Jesus the Messiah is the first-fruits of the resurrection. Those who are His will live again at His coming (1 Cor 15:23, 1 Thess 4:16). The Lord Jesus will bring these with Him at His return. Their bodies will be raised at this time (1Thess 4:14-16). This resurrection of believers will come before the rapture, when those who are alive at the Messiah's return will be caught up together with the risen dead in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1Thess 4:16-18). Those Christians who are still alive at this time will be caught up to be with their Messiah in the air.

Messiah's 1000 year reign:

Messiah Jesus will personally return to earth to rule and reign as King for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-7). This kingdom will be a literal, physical kingdom, characterised by peace, righteousness and restored harmony to the creation (Zechariah 13-14; Isaiah 11), a time when Satan is bound—not able to exert his influence on the world.

The tribulation:

Preceding Christ's return to the earth to rule as King, the earth will undergo a period of judgement and tribulation such as the world has never seen. (Isaiah 26:20, Joel 2:30, Matthew 24:21-22). This period of tribulation will precede Christ's return to rule as King (Prophecies of Daniel).

Satan's final defeat:

After the 1000 year reign of the Messiah, Satan will be set loose and he will gather his forces to fight against Messiah. This is when Satan's rebellion will be finally crushed Rev 20:7-10 (cf. Ezek. 38; 39).

Judgement:

All men will be resurrected and judged according to their works as recorded in God's books. Having been judged, anyone not found written in the Book of Life will be thrown into the lake of fire Rev 20:11-15.

Christian conduct

We believe that spiritual growth is the natural and expected result of receiving spiritual life. The Bible instructs each believer to live a life of increasing holiness, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ, through obedience to the Word of God. God is the one who enables this change by His Holy Spirit who lives in each Christian. Each believer should live in such a manner as not to bring disgrace upon his Saviour and Lord. Leviticus 20:7; Acts 17:11; Romans 8:29; Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 2:2.

Religious liberty

We believe that each local church is independent and must be free to carry out its God-given responsibilities without the control of any higher human authority, church or political. God has given both the Church and the State specific biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities so that neither institution has the right to control the other. Both of these authorities are answerable to God and governed by His Word. Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; Acts 5:29.

Church cooperation

We believe that loyalty to Christ and the biblical principle of holiness require separation from groups and organizations that do not uphold and contend for the truth of God's Word. True spiritual fellowship is the result of a common faith and practice. Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,7; 1 John 1:6,7; Jude 3.

Statement of faith

This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing statements accurately represent the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, are binding upon all members. Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 4:1,2; 1 Peter 2:9,10.

Creeds that we affirm

The Apostles' Creed (3rd-4th century A.D.)

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal² church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting

Amen.

The Nicene Creed (A.D. 325 & 381)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

2 The original word 'catholic' has been substituted with 'universal'. "Catholic church" simply refers to the invisible, worldwide church – all those who have believed the Gospel. However, due to the modern use of "Catholic Church" to refer to the Roman Catholic church, this word was substituted this to avoid misunderstandings.

We believe in one holy universal and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

The Athanasian Creed (4th-5th century A.D.)

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the universal faith;
2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the universal faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.
8. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.
9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.
10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.
11. And yet they are not three eternals but one eternal.
12. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensible, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.
13. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty.
14. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.
15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God;
16. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord;
18. And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord.

19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;
20. So are we forbidden by the universal religion to say; There are three Gods or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten.
23. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
25. And in this Trinity none is afore or after another; none is greater or less than another.
26. But the whole three persons are coeternal, and coequal.
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.
29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.
31. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of substance of His mother, born in the world.
32. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
33. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.
34. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.
35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God.
36. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.
37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;
38. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead;

39. He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God, Almighty;
40. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
42. and shall give account of their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.
44. This is the universal faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.

Understanding Church and Church Membership

The Meaning of the Church

The church is not:

Israel continued or replaced. Although there is continuity between the redeemed of all ages, the church is a 'new man' (Eph 2:15, 1 Cor 10:32)

The church is:

A spiritual organism made up of believers with Christ as the Head. The word 'church' translates the Greek *ekklesia*. This literally means 'a called-out assembly'.

The universal church is the body of Christ composed of all regenerated people from Pentecost until the rapture. Christ is its founder and head (Mat 16:18, Col 1:18). It includes all believers, living and dead (Heb 12:23). It is 'invisible', in the sense that it is not located in one place.

The local church is a group of professing believers in Christ who have been baptised and have organised themselves along New Testament lines. It is 'visible', in the sense that it is made up of a set number of believers in a particular place at a particular time. These three definitions make up a large part of being baptistic in conviction.

1. The church includes only those who do profess Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Baptists believe in a regenerated church membership. Many other groups throughout history have been willing to include in the church (through infant baptism) all who are part of it by virtue of family. The Lord's Supper has been extended to those who make no profession of faith.

2. The New Testament knows nothing of unbaptised believers joining a church.

Baptists believe in believers' baptism by immersion, and do not receive people into membership who have not been baptised as believers.

3. The church is to be organised at some level, and the New Testament provides the pattern.

We hold that the New Testament is the final authority for church practice and order.

Based on this model, the church is organised along New Testament lines.

The Organisation of the Church

Organisationally, we are a congregational church.

We believe that individual churches are autonomous and make their decisions under the sound teaching of the Word of God.

Congregational polity comes out of two New Testament teachings.

The first is the clear example in Scripture that each church was autonomous, and made decisions as a body of believers. (Acts 6:3-6, 1 Cor 5:4-5, 2 Cor 2:6).

The second is the teaching that every believer is a priest (1 Pet 1:14), and has direct access to God in Christ. We do not believe that any human being functions as an intermediary between God and man, apart from the God-man, Jesus Christ. Pastors are to lead and guide, but it is the church as a body that decides important matters like inclusion or exclusion of members, selection of its own officers, and the choice of its own missionaries.

Offices Within The Church

The New Testament describes two offices: Elder and deacon.

1. Elder

- a) Title & Roles: The office of elder is referred to with three terms. Elder emphasises the office as leader and counsellor in the church. Overseer/bishop emphasises the role as superintending and looking after the church as its steward-manager (1 Pet 5:1-4) Pastor emphasises his role as a shepherd (Acts 20:28). These three terms are often used in the same passage (1 Pet 5:1-4, Acts 20:17,28), indicating they are three titles for the same office.

- b) Qualifications: He is to meet certain qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-6, Titus 1:7-9).
 - c) Number: The New Testament does not explicitly say whether churches should have more than one pastor. It seems wise to have a plurality of leaders, without negating the possibility of leaders among leaders.
2. Deacon.
- a) Title & Roles: Diakonos simply means "servant, one who waits on others." Deacons assist the elders, particularly by freeing them up to focus on the study of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:1-6).
 - b) Qualifications: They are to meet certain character qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-6, Titus 1:7-9).
 - c) Number: Most people recognise that more than one deacon should be present in the church.

Ordinances within the Church

An ordinance is a ceremony prescribed for us by Christ. It does not impart saving grace, but is crucial in the life of the individual believer and the life of the church as a whole. Baptists see two ordinances emerging from the New Testament: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Baptism.

Baptism is identification with Christ, visibly proclaiming one's death to the old life and new life in Christ. The Greek word baptizo means 'to immerse'. Immersion best pictures full identification with the atonement of Christ. Baptism signifies faith in Christ, therefore, baptism is for professing believers only.

2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper remembers Christ and His work, proclaims His death, looks forward to His return and provides deep fellowship for Christ and His people (1 Cor 11:24-26, 10:21). It is for believers. Those under discipline are excluded. Ideally, only members should participate; however, those baptised and committed to the church, and on the road to membership can participate as well.

The Role of the Church

1. Worship God Together (1 Pet 2:5,9) This high calling is governed by what the New Testament prescribes. We are not to do anything except what the New Testament tells us to do for worship, which is:

- reading and preaching the Word (1 Tim 4:13);
- the offering up of corporate prayers (1 Tim 2:1-4);
- the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Col 3:16, Eph 5:19);
- the administration of the ordinances (1 Cor 11:23-34); and
- the collection of offerings (1 Cor 16:1-2).

Obviously, for this to occur, we must gather together at an agreed upon time and day (Heb 10:25, 1 Cor 11:18). Since the time of the apostles, this day has been the Lord's Day, the day of Christ's resurrection (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:1-2, Rev 1:10).

2. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

Obviously the process of making disciples means many things. It means evangelism and missions. It means baptising those who believe. It means teaching, caring for and serving those who become part of the local church. It means fostering fellowship amongst believers. It means disciplining those who unrepentantly reproach the name of Christ. It means administering mercy to the believers within and unbelievers without the church and upholding a godly testimony before them.

The Meaning of Church Membership

While it is true that every believer is a member of the universal church, that does not mean every believer is a member of every local church. Because the local church is an organised section of the universal church, entrance into the local church is not one and the same with entrance into the universal church.

One clear illustration of this truth is baptism. Baptism does not save people. Since people are part of the universal church the moment they are saved, why be baptised? The answer is that baptism

is a public witness to others, and a public identification with Christ and His people. Clearly, God wants us to take some public, visible steps to identify with His people once we have repented and believed in Christ.

We acknowledge that only regenerated, baptised believers are qualified to be considered part of any local assembly of believers. The Bible gives evidence that early local churches included some form of enlistment or recognition of who was part of their assemblies and who was not. For example, the Bible describes people being 'added to the church', and even records the number being added (Acts 2:41, 47). This fact also implies that some administration was taking place. Timothy was told to 'enrol' only certain widows for financial support (1 Tim 5:9), implying that certain lists were being kept, and the church was not an open free-for-all. We also see the practice of giving and receiving letters of recommendation, which suggests that local churches did not simply accept anyone and everyone (Romans 16:1, Col 4:10, Acts 18:27, 2Cor3:1).

While baptistic believers have used differing methods to delineate who is part of a local church and who is not, most agree that some form of public commitment from the believer and some form of public acknowledgement by the local church is necessary. For our congregation, and for many like ours, that form of commitment and acknowledgement is called membership.

Definition: Membership is a formalised commitment to the local church which, when accepted by the church, constitutes being considered a member of that local church.

By formalised commitment, we mean that an internal attitude is made public and explicit in the form of a stated commitment in front of the believers. That stated commitment takes the form of accepting the church covenant.

A group of believers who have gathered to organise themselves along New Testament lines often gather their core beliefs into a statement of faith, and gather their core commitments into a church covenant. Together, these describe what unites those believers in terms of belief and practice. A believer applying for membership is stating his or her agreement with the beliefs and practices of the local church, and his or her desire to become part of that church's ministry.

The Need for Church Membership

Covenanting is a very serious and important concept, mostly lost on the world today. The Bible encourages us to take our vows seriously (Eccl 5:4-6, Ps 15:4). At the same time, it is a joy to come under a binding commitment, when empowered by grace (Ps 22:25-26).

Sometimes, believers object to forms of organisation, viewing them as unspiritual, or as add-ons to Scripture. However, God does not have to spell out in detail how to implement every principle of church life. For example, God tells us to be committed to sound doctrine. He does not tell us to have statements of faith.

Nevertheless, these help us to achieve that. He tells us to be committed to the local church and to one another. He does not tell us to have church covenants. However, these help us to achieve commitment.

Furthermore, formalised and public commitments are really the kind that matter. A couple might live together, and protest that they are committed to one another with or without a marriage licence. However, until they make a public covenant to be true to one another, they are not considered married. In the same way, church membership is not a mere administrative detail. It is a means to achieving proper New Testament church life.

We see this in at least five ways:

1. Membership makes sense of leadership in a church and submission to that leadership (1 Pet 5:2, Heb 13:17). If no one is formally committed to a church, who are the elders actually shepherding? Who is actually required to submit to God's Word as taught by the pastors, if one's commitment can be to several churches at once (or even an Internet or TV church)? Can a pastor require submission from casual attenders? At what point does a person's regular attendance require that they become accountable to that church?
2. Membership makes church discipline sensible and possible. Church discipline is a form of correction that works by ultimately excluding someone from church fellowship and its privileges (Matthew 18:15-17). How can one exclude a person who has never been included in the first place? Furthermore, who is responsible for exercising church discipline? Can first-time visitors discipline someone, or ought it to be members who are

already committed to the life and health of the body? Paul expected the members of the church at Corinth to undertake church discipline of a sinning member (1 Cor 5:4-5).

3. Membership guards the Lord's Table (1 Cor 5:7-8). Membership is a form of filtering. Since membership requires a clear testimony of salvation, and an experience of Scriptural baptism, those who go through this process vouch for their (outward) qualification to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is not a soup kitchen; it is a family meal. To protect people from harming themselves, membership provides this important kind of filter.
4. Membership increases accountability and commitment. We live in a time of religious independence and individualism. Everyone wants a 'private' religion without accountability. People shop for spiritual experiences like they shop for other goods, bouncing from church to church, neglecting the ordinances, using para-church organisations for personal growth and edification, but disconnected from a church community with its body life, its accountability to leadership and its mutual submission. Membership makes public and explicit what is personal and unseen. In membership you are making a promise that you can be held to. This is important for our sanctification, given our inclinations towards self-deceit, spiritual apathy, and privatised religion. Scriptures like Galatians 6:1-4, James 5:16, 19-20, only make sense in an environment of mutual accountability.
5. Membership has administrative and legal ramifications for the church. In an era of litigation and governments that often interfere with church administration, it is important for a church to be properly constituted and protected under the law. Membership also functions in this way, protecting the church from possible problems by detailing in its constitution what it stands for, how people join or are removed, and the various inner-workings of the church. A congregationally-governed church such as ours places the decision to accept, reject or revoke membership in the hands of the church itself. Therefore, after a person's public commitment to the church, the church, in turn, signifies its acceptance or rejection of the person's application to be a member by voting in favour of such membership or not. Likewise, the church decides if people are to be removed from the membership roll in the same way. The elders lead, but the church decides.

The Responsibilities of Church Membership—as they relate to worship, leaders, other members.

To put it simply, a church member is to help the church achieve its role. We saw earlier that the role of the church is twofold: 1) To worship God together and 2) To make disciples of Jesus Christ.

To achieve these goals, a church member has various responsibilities related to them such as to be present for corporate worship and teaching times.

A church cannot fulfil its role as a living temple of worship if the stones seldom show up. Since corporate worship is an event organised to occur on a particular day, with much preparation that goes into it, a church member does his or her utmost to be at every occasion of corporate worship to actively participate (Heb 10:25).

Other teaching times are critical for your own discipleship, and you should do your best to be present whenever the Word will be taught. Discipling people also means being involved in the body-life of the church, seeking to encourage growth in others towards Christlikeness. This means true fellowship with others, fostering and protecting unity, serving in various capacities, submitting to one another, giving of oneself, and one's resources. These two main areas of responsibility can be examined under several sections.

Responsibilities in corporate worship

1. Prepare—Get your heart ready and thoughtful before you arrive for worship (Eccl 5:1, Jas 1:19)
2. Participate—Unite your voice with others in song. Join your heart with corporate prayers that are offered. Read the Word thoughtfully when it is read. Concentrate on the teaching. Seek to help others to do the same.
3. Ponder—Consider the revelation of God to you in the Word declared. Consider how God seeks you to respond.

Responsibilities towards leadership in the Church

The Bible encourages an attitude of meek and servant-like leadership from the pastors (1 Pet 5:1-3). In response, members are exhorted to:

- submit to their leaders (Hebrews 13:17);
- follow their example where it is biblical (Hebrews 13:7);
- show love to them (1 Thes 5:12-13); and
- support them (1 Tim 5:17-18).

Responsibilities towards fellow-members

Fellowship and Unity

Once we are joined to a local church, we are sharing in its life. That sharing, or common-union, is what the Bible calls fellowship. Fellowship is what we have in common. Our deepest commonality is Christ Himself. Therefore, our fellowship ought to centre around knowing Christ and making Him known to one another. Fellowship is not simply coffee or tea after a service; it is sharing our lives with one another, because we have so much in common in Christ. Acts 2:42-47 describes fellowship in the early church, which included meeting often, sharing resources, praying together and sharing the Word with each other. Once we have Christ in common, our lives ought to become intertwined with those who love Him as we do.

Having Christ in common ought to submerge our differences (Col 3:11). However, we must work hard to bring our characters into conformity with Christ. The closer we fellowship with one another, the greater potential for conflict, irritation, disagreement, disappointment and resentment. Some kind of conflict is inevitable; however, it does not need to be sinful or destructive. Consider the kinds of attitudes we should have as we dwell with one another as seen in Colossians 3:12-15 and Ephesians 4:1-6. A great source of possible divisiveness in the church is the tongue (James 3:1-12).

Before giving our ears to something, or repeating it, we should ask:

- is this true? (not a lie, an exaggeration a half-truth) (Eph 4:25)
- is it edifying? (will it build up, or is it destructive directly or indirectly through innuendo?) (Eph 4:29)
- is it in any way corrupting or polluting? (Eph 5:3-4)

- is it complaining (Phil 2:14-15)
- am I feasting on details I don't need to know? (Prov 26:22)

We all are guilty of sins of the tongue. However, a person becomes a source of real division when he or she is persistently guilty of such sins, particularly using the tongue to criticise and discredit leadership, indulge in murmuring and otherwise sowing discontent in the church. God makes it clear that He hates those who sow discord (Proverbs 6:16-19). Since divisiveness opposes the very work that God is building, God expects the church to take very serious action against those who, after having been warned, persist in divisiveness. Such people are to be publicly noted as divisive, and the church is to withdraw from them (Titus 3:10-11, Romans 16:17-18). Another part of fellowship is the sacrificial way we share with one another in giving.

Giving

Giving is to be centred around the local church (1 Cor 16:1-2). While the New Testament never calls for the tithe that was required of the Israelite, it encourages giving that is:

- purposeful and deliberate;
- willing and cheerful;
- sacrificial;
- done in faith (2 Cor 9:6-8); and
- proportional 1 Cor 16:1-2, like the tithe).

Giving frees the pastors up to devote themselves entirely to the ministry, which in turn benefits the church (1 Cor 9:13-14, 1 Tim 5:17-18). It enables the distribution of mercy within the church to those who are destitute or deeply in need (1 Jo 3:16-18; 1 Tim 5:3-16) as well as the support of missionaries and various ministries within and without the church.

The Responsibilities of Church Membership—as they relate to service and purity.

Service

Because of the term 'minister' and 'the ministry', we tend to associate ministry with something that a paid pastor does on behalf of the church. In fact, the pastor's role is not to perform the ministry, but to train others to do so (Eph 4:11-13). Every member is a minister. When the body

ministers to itself, it causes growth in all, resulting in discipleship and worship.

We also tend to associate the word 'ministry' with a particular organised section of the church, such as Sunday School. While organisation is necessary and good in its place, ministry is what members do for one another, formally or informally. What is important is that you adopt a 'one-another' mindset towards the other believers in the local church. The New Testament has over 27 one-another commands. These are essentially different ways we 'service' each other, so as to cause more discipleship and worship.

One of the ways God enables our service of each other is through the provision of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are enablements the Spirit gives you to perform some function. He decides who gets what gifts. They are always to be used for the edification of the body (1 Cor 12:7, 11). While there is sometimes an overlap between natural ability and spiritual giftedness, a spiritual gift is never merely a natural ability.

The Bible gives us several lists of gifts (1 Cor 12:1-11, 27-31, Rom 12:6-8, 1 Pet 4:7-11). There is no reason to suggest that these lists are exhaustive lists. God equips individuals and local churches according to their unique needs. The miraculous gifts were a very particular type of gift, unique to the apostolic era of transitioning Israel to the church. God can do anything at any time, but He has not indicated in Scripture that He intends to grant miraculous gifts to the church throughout the church age. The Bible does not encourage an introspective approach to spiritual gifts. There is no need to do a 'spiritual-gifts inventory' to 'discover your gift'.

Begin looking outward towards others, and start serving them. Once you are doing that, ask yourself these questions:

1. What do you enjoy doing? What comes readily?
2. Where have you been effective? Where have you actively built the body?
3. What has been the response of others with proven judgement?

Even when you have a general idea of your giftedness, you must not restrict yourself to your supposed 'giftedness'. The New Testament emphasises serving the Lord and one another. Many areas of service we must do, regardless of our giftedness. Your service must be regulated by the needs of the body, not your need for self-expression.

Purity

The body of Christ is one of the greatest tools that God will use to purify and sanctify you. The primary way this will happen is through exposure to the Word of God in the preaching and shepherding of the pastors. However, within body-life, we are to be gracious encouragements to one another to live for Christ. As believers, we are to hold each other accountable to the standards of Scripture, and lovingly provoke each other to good works.

Believers are not called to be 'sin-policeman' in each other's lives. However, when sins are divisive, repetitive or apparently done unrepentantly, we are to lovingly try to restore each other to obedience (Gal 6:1-2). When done carefully and gently, this approach is commended by Scripture (Prov 27:5-6).

Church discipline is the action the church takes to correct and hopefully restore a sinning member of the body. Except in cases of known, public and scandalous sin (such as in 1 Cor 5:1-13), a procedure is followed which protects all parties. If this procedure is followed properly, Christ promises to be in and behind the church's decision (Matthew 18:15-20). A person under discipline is not to be counted as an enemy (2 Thes 3:15), but they are removed from the membership and denied the privileges of intimate fellowship. The same procedure is followed with leadership, with the exception that the witnesses called for ought to be other leaders within the church (1 Tim 5:19-20).

The church must guard its purity, because there is a sense in which God regards our purity in a corporate sense (1 Cor 5:6-7). Sin in the camp can be devastating to the whole.

One Hope Baptist Church Covenant

People throughout the history of the Bible have voluntarily bound themselves by covenant to God and each other. In a similar way, members of One Hope Baptist Church voluntarily bind themselves by covenant to do that which God expects of us in the local church.

Our membership covenant reads as follows:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

1. Believing our chief purpose is to glorify God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, we covenant to worship the Lord together in the power of His Spirit and the light of His truth.
2. Believing the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, we covenant to diligently study God's Word and submit our lives to its authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
3. Believing that righteousness and eternal life are the free gift of God through personal faith in Jesus Christ, we covenant to bear witness to this gospel message and then, as commissioned by Christ, to baptise and disciple those who believe.
4. Believing that salvation, the new birth, begins spiritual life, we covenant to seek spiritual growth and maturity by "putting on" the likeness of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit, our inner man being progressively transformed by the aid and power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Believing a Christian's life should be a testimony to Christ's love and righteousness, we covenant to be merciful to those in need, to be honest in our dealings and faithful in our responsibilities, to avoid those practices that would hinder the effectiveness of our witness and bring reproach upon our Lord and this fellowship.
6. Believing that all we have belongs to God, we covenant to cheerfully contribute to this church, as faithful stewards, such time, talent, and money, in the measure that God

prospers each of us, so that the responsibility of the work of this fellowship can be faithfully and effectively carried out.

7. Believing Christ has called us to love one another, even as Christ has shown His love to us, we covenant to give and receive admonition with humility and grace, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and hardship, to edify in speech, to slowly take offence, and to swiftly seek reconciliation and extend forgiveness.
8. Believing that biblical marriage and the Christian home were divinely ordained by God, we covenant to place our families under the authority and guidance of Scripture, seeking to instruct and exemplify biblical truth and principles. As a fellowship of believers, we further commit ourselves to a ministry of strengthening the family.
9. Believing Christ has commissioned His Church to make disciples of all nations, we covenant to make the cause of missions at home and abroad a priority concern.
10. Believing in the divine conception and preservation of His Church, we covenant to regularly participate in worship, and support the church's discipline, doctrine, and its God-ordained leadership; furthermore, to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin.

Why do we do it that way?

Why do we have the service structure we do?

Each of our services is carefully chosen to reflect a particular need in the life of the church.

Sunday discipleship hour:

Here we get to teach and learn various core issues and teachings that relate to the Christian life, such as spiritual growth, parenting, biblical counselling, systematic theology, biblical Manhood and womanhood, personal evangelism and other topics. It is educational and practical, allowing for a more thorough study of topics which the regular preaching does not allow for. This is also the time when our children are discipled in the core doctrines of the Word.

Time of corporate worship:

This time is made up of calls to worship, the singing of hymns, psalms and spiritual songs, prayers of praise and confession, and consecration, the giving of offerings, and an exposition of Scripture in a sermon. A time of silent meditation follows.

Wednesday evening meeting:

This is a time to connect as a local body.

We consider the Word of God in an interactive study. We hear from one another in terms of salvation testimonies, testimonies of the Word's effect in our lives, or even testimonies in song. We learn of events in each other's lives, hear of answers to prayer and God's work in and through us in the past week. We come to God to thank Him and pray prayers of intercession and supplication.

Why is the preaching done the way it is?

We believe the most important thing in life is worship. To worship God is to respond appropriately to truth about Him. Therefore, the 'fuel' of our worship is truth about God. We want to spend as much time as possible to studying the truth about God found in His Word. For that reason, we believe in something called expository preaching. Expository preaching is where we seek to expose or expound what is in the Word of God. We do not want to impose our

thoughts, ideas or opinions on the Word, but rather we want to have our thoughts, ideas and opinions shaped by the Word of God. Therefore, our preaching consists of understanding the texts of Scripture as they were originally written, taken in context, with applications made to modern life. Understanding the texts of Scripture is not meant to be entertaining, though it is interesting. Preacher and listener must work hard together to understand the meaning of Scripture and allow the Holy Spirit to apply it to life.

Why don't we do altar calls?

We do give invitations to respond to the Word of God. These invitations are mostly given during the sermon. Christians must respond to the truth, and are invited to so do. We will sometimes give people the opportunity to meet or pray with one of the pastors after a message. On certain occasions, we might invite people to come forward and respond to a message. We do not do this frequently, because we believe that Christian discipleship does not require a weekly 'crisis decision', but a continual process of putting off the old and putting on the new. We do not want people to think that if they came forward or prayed after a service that they have fulfilled their responsibility, when in fact, their responsibilities are just beginning when that sermon is over. The concept of 'coming forward' (the altar call) after a sermon is a fairly modern innovation, and while we think there can be a place for it, we do not use it frequently.

Why do we have prayer meetings?

We hold prayer meetings because apart from prayer our church will be powerless and end up working in the flesh. Prayer meetings are part of our privileges as believers: to gather together and corporately call on the Lord.

Why do we treat the Lord's Supper so seriously?

We treat the Lord's Supper seriously because that's what it deserves. The Lord's Supper is the most important time of fellowship, consecration, memorial and worship that we can experience together as a church. To reflect on the Lord's sacrifice and our participation in its benefits is perhaps the highpoint of corporate worship. The Bible warns against a flippant use of the ceremony (1 Cor 11:27-30).

Who can partake of the Lord's Supper?

We believe that the Lord's Supper is for baptised believers who submit to and are affirmed by the local church.

In addition to Matthew 18, perhaps the most well-known passage on church discipline is 1 Corinthians 5. Here, Paul tells the church to deal with the man in sin in a way that he "might be taken away from among you." (1 Cor. 5:2). He can no longer be regarded as a citizen of God's kingdom, not when he is living like he is. In doing so, the church is saying that it can no longer affirm the person's profession of faith, it's excommunicating, or ex-communication-ing, the person. The strongest picture of the communion of believers is the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16-17).

Whenever a church offers the elements of the Lord's Supper to a person it is affirming or agreeing that the person is truly a Christian – one who by faith and repentance has entered into the Kingdom of Christ. To be true, the local church can therefore only offer the Lord's Supper to those who have been affirmed by that or another biblical local church.

Why do we play music before the service and during the offering?

We play music before and after the service and during collections to enable worshippers to focus on the truth about to be considered, or truth that has already been considered. It is not supposed to be 'background' music, but rather music which directs our thoughts and affections towards God.

Why do we sing hymns?

We sing hymns for several reasons:

First, we are commanded to do so in the Bible (Col 3:16, Eph 5:19).

Second, hymns are one of the best ways to worship God in a fitting way. This is because hymns are not art music: they are simple, straightforward tunes and fairly easy to learn. Nevertheless, the music of good hymns matches the content of the lyrics, whether it be sentiments of majesty, reverence, expectancy, reflection, expectation, jubilation and so on.

Third, hymns teach us an enormous amount of truth about God, often packing a lot of doctrinal

meat into one hymn. However, hymns are not merely doctrinal statements put to music. They are truth set out imaginatively. The truth is written with metaphors and imagery, so that it grips us in our affections and moves us to respond in a particular way. When the music matches the images of the hymn, it is one of the most powerful ways of responding to God.

Fourth, hymns represent the shared beliefs and affections of the church for two thousand years. When we sing hymns, we include ourselves in that heritage, and learn what it is to worship by example and exposure. It would be quite arrogant to sing only hymns or songs from our modern era, because we are a very small blip on the radar screen of two thousand years of church history. Having said that, we do not object to well-written modern hymns or hymn tunes, and we sing certain modern hymns and songs as well.

Why do we sing the hymns we do?

We try to choose hymns which have several characteristics: First, their content must be true. What they say about God or Christian experience must be Scriptural. Second, they must use images and poetry which will help us to understand God better. A hymn is not a doctrinal statement, it is a lyrical poem, which ought to fire the imagination. We avoid hymns (some of which are in our hymnal) that use wording that is childish, clichéd or juvenile. We also avoid hymns which treat the things of God 'too sweetly'. In other words we avoid hymns that are sentimental. We want hymns to produce emotions, but we want the right emotions stirred. To that end, we seek hymns which have tunes (or can be sung to tunes) that match the content of the lyrics. Hymn tunes that sound like nursery rhymes, fun-fair tunes, bar-tunes, children's story-book music, waltzes or honky-tonk music fail to carry the gravity and majesty of our God.

Why do we use hymnals where possible?

We have no problem with electronic projections per se, but we choose to use printed hymnals for several reasons. First, a hymnal is a physical collection of Christian piety through the ages, whereas a projection is not. When you page through a hymnal, you are all at once paging through church history, and the Christian tradition. Second, a hymnal is something you can take home and use for private and family worship. Third, hymnals contain musical notation, whereas projections usually don't. As much as musical illiteracy is rife, printed hymnals still hold out the hope that some music education can take place within a church, which is our goal. Finally, a

hymnal prevents someone from just chopping and adding songs or hymns at whim, since it is a fixed collection.

Why don't we sing more choruses?

That depends on what you mean by 'choruses'. A chorus is actually a refrain of a song, that is sung at the end of each stanza. Usually, when people say 'choruses' they mean something like 'simple, shorter songs'. We have no objection to simple songs, because the truth of the Bible is not too complex to grasp. Nor do we have any objection to short songs. We sing some of them. However, there are many choruses which are not merely simple, they are unhelpful for Christian worship, for at least three reasons:

First, they tend to simply repeat a phrase or thought over and over, creating a mantra-like attitude to worship: that if we keep chanting the same thing, somehow we will feel it more.

Second, very often the sentiments contained in those songs represent a kind of response to God which is not appropriate: Jesus as boyfriend, God as daddy. We want to love God and feel love towards Him, but it must be the right kind of love. If love is too harsh, it is brutal. If love is too sweet, it is sentimental. Neither brutality or sentimentality should be in our songs.

Third, too many of these songs tend to shift the focus back to ourselves: "I am worshipping" "I am bowing down" "We're here to do such-and-such". Unwittingly, the song becomes about us and our emotions. Emotion is absolutely crucial in worship. However, worship is not about our emotions; it is about God.

Why do we use the music we do?

We believe music communicates emotion. Music symbolically represents human feelings such as excitement, sadness, gladness, zeal, triumph and so on. It does not do so in an exact fashion, like a mathematical formula. But everyone admits that music carries emotional power (movie-makers make sure they provide background music to tell you what kind of emotion is associated with the scene). When we worship God, we must always ask what kind of love, or joy, or sorrow, or expectancy is the kind which is fitting in response to Him. For example, not all joy is the same – we can be chipper, glib, cheery, optimistic, giggly, satisfied, bitter-sweet, content, etc. We do not have the same kind of joy for our spouses that we do for our pets, nor do we have the same kind

of joy for food that we do for sunsets. The affection depends on the object to which it is directed. Our goal is to pick music which we think represents the kind of love or joy or sorrow or hope (or whatever other kind of affection is in view) that accords with the God revealed in the Bible. While our music might not always be an exact fit, we as a church strive to approve what is excellent and grow in discernment (Phil 1:9-10, Heb 5:14) so we can sense when a musical form seems to cross the line into inordinate affection. We might not get it right all the time, but that does not mean we can become musical relativists – where truth becomes impossible.

Why do we use the New King James Version of the Bible?

We use the New King James Version (NKJV), because it is a literal, accurate and faithful translation of the Hebrew and Greek texts. Many of our members are used to the old King James Version, while many of our members are second-language English speakers. The NKJV retains something of the dignity and beauty of the KJV, but uses language which is more accessible to a modern audience.

Why don't we include skits, drama or plays in our services?

We do not use skits or drama simply because God did not command us to do anything of the sort in His Word. Since God prescribes how we are to worship Him, we must not innovate and come up with our own additions into corporate worship. In the Bible God always frowned upon worship innovations. Also, skits and dramas are of course, people acting. Since worship is all about utter truth and sincerity, the presence of drama or skits can lend a 'pretend' feel to worship which is not helpful for corporate worship.

Why do we take collections?

We take collections because this has been the practice of the church since the time of the apostles (I Corinthians 16:1-2). The Bible does not tell us how we should take the collection, it simply tells us to make giving part of our Christian lives (2 Cor 8-9). The collection is an opportunity to worship God corporately in the act of sacrificial giving, without it being ostentatious or showy.

What if people want to give through other means?

There is no problem in principle with giving to the Lord through other means, e.g. electronically.

However, make sure that even when you give electronically, you are doing so as to the Lord, with a heart of gratitude, love and worship. Don't let it become a mechanical act, like merely paying a bill.

Why don't we speak in tongues?

We don't speak in tongues because we believe the biblical gift of tongues no longer operates like it did in Acts 2, or as described by Paul in I Corinthians 14. That is: a gift of a known human language given to a non-native speaker, whereby he gives some form of revelation from God, in the presence of another believer who has the gift of interpretation, who interprets it back into the native language of the listeners. Since this gift was a sign primarily to unbelievers, we believe the time for this gift was in the transitional time of the church recorded in the book of Acts. We believe the Bible predicted the cessation of the gift of tongues once the apostolic and prophetic foundation of the church had been laid (I Eph 2:20, Cor 13:8-12).

Why don't the women preach?

The women do not preach because the public preaching of the Word to a mixed audience of women and men by a female is expressly forbidden by I Timothy 2:11-15. Since we believe that the Bible is God's Word, we believe God was able to write a book which would not go out of date or be irrelevant. The words written then were not conditioned by a particular cultural situation, nor was Paul a chauvinist or a bigot. Paul grounds these commands in the pre-cultural created order, and in the fall of mankind into sin. We believe that the public preaching of the Word is the declaration of authority, and the one who does so carries derived authority. Since God calls for male headship in the home and in the family, a woman preaching to a mixed audience would violate this principle. Headship does not mean superiority. God regards males and females as spiritual equals, while assigning them different roles in the home and in the church.

Why don't we run a crèche or nursery during the service?

We actually do try provide a place for mothers with infants. We want to help people as much as possible focus on worship, and we understand that little children can be distracting. At the same time, we love the children! We want them to be exposed to worship as early as possible, and to begin to experience what it is to respond to truth about God. The earlier children experience this, the better. We do not want to simply whisk children off to a separate room to entertain them. We

do have special ministry to children, aimed at their level of understanding. However, a child does not have to understand everything to benefit from corporate worship. In fact, it is the very fact that corporate worship is slightly out of reach for them that can give the motivation to grow in understanding and spiritual maturity. Therefore, we encourage families worshipping together as early as possible.

Why don't we make our services more 'seeker-friendly'?

By seeker-friendly, many people mean 'accommodating a church's atmosphere to the comfort of the unchurched visitor'. We are certainly desirous to welcome first-time visitors. There is always awkwardness when visiting a church, and we do not want to add to that at all. We try not to draw attention to people publicly, and set up opportunities for guests to be welcomed afterwards. Having said that, our focus in corporate worship is not evangelism, but worship. Evangelism may sometimes enter in, and a salvation message will often be preached. However, the purpose of church is not to attract the unbeliever, but to edify the saint as he or she exalts Christ in worship. Therefore, we do things which believers growing in grace will appreciate and participate in. It is not wrong for an unbeliever to be a curious witness or 'eavesdropper' on our services, even though they do not appreciate or understand it all. It may be one of the things the Lord uses to draw such a person to Himself (I Cor 14:24-25).

How should people dress to church?

We do not make any demands of people on their dress to corporate worship, except the commands for modesty given in I Tim 2:9 and I Pet 3:3-4. Certainly, we are happy to have unbelievers come in almost any form of dress! However, our dress communicates meaning. We all know this. We dress differently at a picnic from a job interview. We dress differently to a court than we do to a family braai. Our dress at a funeral differs from our dress at the mall. The occasion has a particular meaning, so we typically dress to reflect our understanding of that occasion. All we ask of believers is to consider the occasion of corporate worship. Is it serious? Is it reverent? Is it important? If so, then in some form, our dress should reflect that. Certainly, the external clothing is not enough to make up for an internal attitude that is irreverent or flippant. However, when the heart is right, such externals like dress certainly help us (and those who see us) make the most of corporate worship.

Why don't we make church more fun for the children?

There is a difference between satisfaction and 'fun'. We want our children to find deep satisfaction in God. We do not think they need to find church 'fun' in order to do so. Indeed, if we try to make church 'fun', we may find that our children associate God with amusement and entertainment, and become more and more self-centred in their approach to church. We should

not be surprised if we eventually lose them to some other form of entertainment, if we have been feeding that appetite in the name of religion. God is a deep fountain of joy, and we do not want to rob our children of that by giving them cheap, trivialised substitutes in the name of 'fun'. We do not have to be impatient to keep the children endlessly entertained. We can trust in the sovereignty of God to shape their hearts to love what is true, good and beautiful, if we love it ourselves by example.

Why don't we have a special youth ministry?

We do minister to our youth. The Bible commands us to do so (Titus 2:1-8). What we do not do is separate our youth into a 'herd', and try to bring into the church a form of youth culture baptised in Christian terminology. For the most part, we think that youth culture is detrimental to spiritual growth: it fosters values like egotism, impatience, materialism, immorality, rebellion and an idolisation of youth itself. Too much youth ministry today tries to hook young people by taking some form of youth culture (e.g. obsession with amusement, obsession with the opposite sex) and brings it into the church (e.g. games, youth dating). We have no objection to discipling our young people, or even having times set aside for them to meet together. However, we will not allow the paganised youth culture any room to move within our church. Also, we think the church is robbed when young people gather in herds away from the children or the adults or elderly. The segmenting of the church into age-groups is not biblical (it is anti-biblical – Titus 2:1-8), it is simply the church copying the 'target-market' mentality of the world. We want the youth to be reverent towards the elderly, patient with them, and teachable with adults. We want them to become responsible with younger children. Likewise we want the elderly to experience their zeal, vibrancy and enthusiasm. Therefore we discourage an over-emphasis on age-group ministry.

One Hope Baptist Church Constitution

ARTICLES

1. ORGANISATION

1.1 NAME

The name of this organisation shall be: **One Hope Baptist Church**.

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this corporation shall be to hold title to such property and conduct such business as may be necessary in the programme of a Baptist congregation dedicated to the preaching and teaching of the Bible; the training of Christian workers; and the promotion of evangelistic, missionary, educational, counselling and eleemosynary endeavours.

The activities of the organisation are to be carried on in a non-profit manner and with an altruistic or philanthropic intent.

1.3 NATURE OF THE ORGANISATION

1.3.1. The organisation has an identity and existence distinct from its members or office-bearers.

1.3.2. The organisation will continue to exist notwithstanding changes in the composition of its membership or office-bearers.

1.4 INCOME AND PROPERTY

1.4.1. The funds of the public benefit organisation will be used solely for the objects for which it was established.

The payment of reasonable remuneration to employees or office bearers conducting the affairs of the organisation to enable it to achieve its object is permitted.

1.4.2. No funds will be distributed to any person (other than in the course of undertaking any public benefit activity).

1.4.3. No remuneration will be paid to any employee, office bearer, member or other person which is excessive, having regard to what is generally considered reasonable in the sector and in relation to the service rendered and has not and will not economically benefit any person in a manner which is not consistent with its objects.

1.4.4. Members or office-bearers have no rights in the property or other assets of the organisation solely by virtue of their being members or office-bearers.

1.4.5. The public benefit organisation will not be a party to, or does not knowingly permit, or has not knowingly permitted, itself to be used as part of any transaction, operation or scheme of which the sole or main purpose is the reduction, postponement or avoidance of liability for any tax, duty or levy which, but for such transaction, operation or scheme, would have been or would have become payable by any person under this Act or any other Act administered by the Commissioner;

1.4.6. No resources will be used, directly or indirectly, to support advance or oppose any political party.

1.5 POWERS OF THE ORGANISATION

1.5.1. The pastor(s) and deacons (See point number 2) may take on the power and authority as delegated by Christ that they believe necessary to be able to achieve the objectives that are stated in point number 1.2 of this constitution. Its activities must abide by the laws of the country, insofar as they do not conflict with God's Law.

1.5.2. The pastor(s) and deacons have the power and authority to invite and receive contributions for the church through biblically sanctioned means.

1.5.3. The organisation may not accept any donation that may be revoked by the donor for reasons other than the organisation failing to abide by the designated purposes and conditions of the donation.

A donation may also be revoked if the organisation misrepresents the tax deductibility of the donation under section 18A and such tax deduction was a condition of the donation.

In addition, a donor may also not impose conditions that will entitle the donor or a connected person in relation to the donor to obtain some direct or indirect benefit from the application of the donation. This prohibition on the derivation of a benefit does not, however, apply when the donor is another PBO or an entity established by or under law which is exempt under section 10(1)(cA)(i) that has as its sole or principal object the carrying on of a PBA.

1.5.4. The pastor(s) and deacons have the right to make by-laws for proper management, including procedure for application, approval and termination of membership, which must be approved by the church.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 QUALIFICATIONS AND PROCESS FOR ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

2.1.1. Any person may be received into the membership of One Hope Baptist Church after:

2.1.1.1. Professing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour;

2.1.1.2. Having been Scripturally baptised by immersion;

2.1.1.3. Having been interviewed by the pastor(s);

2.1.1.4. Giving testimony to the church body of a personal faith in Jesus Christ;

2.1.1.5. Publicly accepting the statement of faith (Appendix 1), creeds (Appendix 2) and covenant (Appendix 3) held by this church; and

2.1.1.6. Being received by a simple majority of qualified voting members.

2.1.2. Pastors, their spouses and qualifying children shall be accepted into membership at the commencement of the pastor's ministry.

2.1.3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

With the blessings of membership comes certain duties and responsibilities. Members shall seek diligently to follow the biblical principles as expressed in the church covenant.

2.2 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

All membership terminations shall be subject to recommendation by the pastor(s) and deacons to the church. Termination of membership for any reason shall be done by written ballot requiring a simple majority at a regularly scheduled business meeting. Membership shall be terminated for the following reasons:

2.2.1. Death. The names of deceased members shall be removed from the membership.

2.2.2. Resignation. A member may request to terminate membership by letter.

2.2.3. Absence. Any member showing no interest in the activities of the church for six months, after appropriate follow-up and notification, may have their membership terminated.

2.2.4. Disciplinary reasons. Members may be removed for disciplinary reasons.

2.2.5. Exceptional Cases. These are to be agreed upon by the member and the pastor(s) and deacons.

2.3 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

2.3.1. Authority.

Believers are admonished to not "...continue in sin..." (Romans 6:1). Sin in the believer's life is to be confessed and forsaken in accordance with 1 John 1:9 and Proverbs 28:13.

2.3.2. Method.

The New Testament instructs the church in the method of discipline. Discipline in any form shall have as its purpose the restoration of the erring member (Gal. 6:1). The matter shall be carefully investigated and proceed in the manner laid out in Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Galatians 6:1-5).

2.3.2.1. When a member becomes aware of an offence of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go to the offending party and seek to restore his brother.

Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.

- 2.3.2.2. If the matter cannot be biblically settled, one or more of the pastors should be consulted for a Scriptural resolution of the offence. This will usually involve meeting(s) with the offending party that involve the biblically prescribed witnesses (Matthew 18:16).
- 2.3.2.3. If this fails to secure repentance and restoration, the matter shall be brought to the pastor(s) so as to bring it to the church for a more public call for repentance (Matthew 18:17).
- 2.3.2.4. Rejection of this final stage shall lead to exclusion from membership (Matthew 18:17).
- 2.3.3. A member's request for resignation will not be considered once disciplinary action has been initiated.
- 2.3.4. Disciplinary action shall be initiated in the event of unrepentant persistent sin or criminal behaviour by a member(s). Offences requiring discipline that may eventually result in exclusion from membership, church office, or staff position include, but are not limited to:
- 2.3.4.1. Sins of immorality that obscure the holiness of God such as moral impurity or perversion (I Corinthians 5:11);
- 2.3.4.2. Sins of divisiveness that bring contention and schism to the work of the church (Romans 16:17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6);
- 2.3.4.3. Sins of rebellion against the spiritual leadership of the church and of endeavouring to influence others against leadership (Hebrews 13:17); or
- 2.3.4.4. Sins that violate the truth of God by promoting false doctrine (2Peter 2:1-3).
- 2.3.5. If a member repents before dismissal has occurred, he or she shall be immediately restored to full fellowship. However, if the member held an office in the church, the restoration to fellowship does not imply a restoration to the office previously held.
- 2.3.6. If a dismissed member repents, application will again be considered for membership.

3. OFFICE BEARERS

3.1 GENERAL

The organisation is to have **officers**. The officers are to be pastors (also known as elders or overseers) and deacons.

3.1.1. Pastors have the task of leading, overseeing, and shepherding the local church.

3.1.2. Deacons have the task of supporting the pastors by service.

3.2 THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

3.2.1. Qualifications

A man will qualify for the office of pastor if he:

3.2.1.1. Meets the biblical requirements set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9; and

3.2.1.2. Is in agreement with and living in conformity to the church's statement of faith, creeds and covenant.

3.2.2. Forms Of The Pastoral Office

In terms of the office of pastor/elder/overseer, provision is made for:

- Staff pastors—those who are employed full-time by the church and remunerated as such; and
- Non-staff pastors—those who are not employed full-time by the church.

3.2.2.1. Staff Pastors

a. Calling

1. A staff pastor shall be chosen by written ballot at a special meeting of the church, requiring a 75% majority of qualified voting members.
2. In accordance with the legislation governing employment, a staff pastor will receive a contract of employment as agreed on by him and the deacons of the church.

b. Duties

The specific duties of a staff pastor will be defined by his contract of appointment, but will include:

1. Ministering the Word of God through preaching, teaching and individual discipleship;
2. Modelling Christian character and virtue;
3. Caring for the spiritual needs of the membership;
4. Conducting the services of the church and administering the church ordinances;
5. Moderating church business meetings or delegating the moderation to an assistant or deacon;
6. Exercising executive oversight of all church affairs, which includes choosing other members of staff;
7. If incorporated, holding the position of president of the corporation; and
8. Performing the duties common to this office as enjoined by the Word of God.

c. Term of Office

1. A pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time.

2. Resignation by pastor shall be made first to his fellow-pastors (if any) and then to the deacons. At least one month's notice shall be given, less if by mutual consent.
3. Dismissal
 1. Accusations against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the deacons and handled in a Scriptural manner. An accusation against a pastor shall not be entertained without the presence of two or more witnesses (I Tim 5:19)
 2. In the event of suspected doctrinal error or immoral conduct, a mutual council comprised of two pastors selected by the pastor and two pastors selected by the deacons may be convened at the request of either party. These four pastors will select a fifth pastor. This council shall be asked to thoroughly investigate the charges and make its recommendation to the deacons for church action.
 3. Before the church may vote to dismiss the pastor, notice of the special meeting and its stated purpose must be posted in a conspicuous place two (2) consecutive Sundays in advance of the meeting and announced during the Sunday morning services for two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting. Voting shall be by written ballot. A 60% majority of qualified voting members shall be required for dismissal.
 4. If the church votes to dismiss a pastor, his duties will be terminated. He or his family, at the discretion of the deacons, shall receive at least thirty (30) days' salary and benefits.
 5. Disciplinary removal of a pastor from office automatically terminates his membership.

3.2.2.2. Non-staff Pastors

a. Calling

1. According to the needs of the church, the pastor(s) in office may identify and recommend the appointment of non-staff pastors.
2. Non-staff pastors shall be approved by written ballot at any regular or special meeting of the church, requiring a 75% majority of qualified voting members

b. Duties

1. Model Christian character and virtue;
2. Conscientiously and wholeheartedly serve the church according to the terms of the Church Covenant and may include:
 1. Ministering the Word of God through some preaching, teaching and individual

discipleship;

2. Modelling Christian character and virtue;
3. Caring for the spiritual needs of the membership;
4. Conducting the services of the church and administering the church ordinances;
5. Moderating church business meetings if necessary;
6. Providing counsel with regard to the executive oversight of all church affairs, which includes choosing other members of staff;
7. Performing the duties common to this office as enjoined by the Word of God.

c. Term of Office

1. Each non-staff pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time.

d. Dismissal

1. Accusations against a non-staff pastor shall be submitted in writing to the other pastor(s) and deacons and handled in a Scriptural manner. An accusation against a pastor shall not be entertained without the presence of two or more witnesses (I Tim 5:19)
2. In the event of suspected doctrinal error or immoral conduct, a mutual council comprised of two pastors selected by the pastor and two pastors selected by the deacons may be convened at the request of either party. These four pastors will select a fifth pastor. This council shall be asked to thoroughly investigate the charges and make its recommendation to the deacons for church action.
3. Before the church may vote to dismiss the pastor, notice of the special meeting and its stated purpose must be posted in a conspicuous place two (2) consecutive Sundays in advance of the meeting and announced during the Sunday morning services for two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting. Voting shall be by written ballot. A 60% majority of qualified voting members shall be required for dismissal.
4. Disciplinary removal of a pastor from office automatically terminates his membership.

3.3 THE OFFICE OF DEACON

3.3.1. General

3.3.1.1. The word “deacon” means servant. Deacons are servants of the Lord and of the church. They are the invaluable helpers of the pastor(s).

3.3.1.2. The number of deacons shall be determined by the availability of qualified men for the

office and the needs of the ministry as decided by the pastor(s) and deacons.

3.3.2. Qualifications

A man will qualify for the office of deacon if he:

3.3.2.1. Meets the biblical requirements set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7;

3.3.2.2. Agreement with and living in conformity to the church's statement of faith and covenant;

3.3.2.3. Has been a member for at least one year; active and in full communion with the church and its leadership.

3.3.3. Recommendation

A candidate for deacon is to be recommended by the pastor(s), approved by the deacons, and then presented as a candidate to the church. He is to be observed by the church for six months prior to election.

3.3.4. Election

A deacon shall be elected by written ballot requiring a simple majority vote of the congregation at a business meeting.

3.3.5. Duties

3.3.5.1. Assist the Pastor(s):

- a. In the administrative and financial oversight of the church;
- b. In receiving, restoring, dismissing and caring for members;
- c. In fulfilling faithfully the responsibilities as dictated by the needs of the church according to the Word of God;
- d. In promoting the spiritual welfare, maintaining the doctrinal purity, and advancing the overall mission of the church.

3.3.5.2. Elect from their number a chairman and secretary, who shall be respectively the vice president and secretary if the church is incorporated.

3.3.5.3. Represent the church as the legal trustees of the corporation.

3.3.5.4. Oversee the administration of the church, in cooperation with the pastor(s), Should the church be without a pastor for any period of time, the chairman of the deacons shall serve as the moderator of the church.

3.3.5.5. When the office of the pastor becomes vacant, the deacons shall appoint at least three of its members to act as a pastoral search committee to operate as follows:

- a. Only one pastoral candidate shall be considered at a time.
- b. The membership of the committee shall remain intact until the installation of a pastor at which time it shall be disbanded.
- c. They will execute the following duties:
 1. Arrange for pulpit supply.
 2. Assemble a list of prospective candidates – evaluate, screen, and interview prospects.
 3. Recommend to the deacons a candidate and the terms of the call.
 4. Arrange for the candidate to:
 1. Be interviewed by the deacons;
 2. Visit and minister in a church service or services; and
 3. Meet with the membership for a time of questions.
 5. After the candidate has ministered, make a recommendation to the deacons, who shall prepare a recommendation for church action after careful and prayerful consideration of the candidacy.
 6. Notify the candidate of the vote, extend a call if the vote so warrants and make arrangements for his moving and installation.

3.3.6. Term of Office

3.3.6.1. Each deacon shall serve indefinitely.

3.3.6.2. Should there arise any unresolved breach in a deacon's relationship to the Lord, the church, the pastor(s), or the requirements of this office, on the recommendation of the pastor(s) and deacons, and a majority vote of the congregation, a deacon may be removed from his office.

3.4 OTHER CHURCH POSITIONS

All who hold positions in the church (including those which are not specifically named in this section) shall be loyal to the Word of God; these are to be in agreement with and living in conformity to the church's statement of faith and covenant.

3.4.1. Clerk

The Clerk shall be appointed annually by the pastor(s) and deacons, and shall:

3.4.1.1. Keep an accurate record of all church proceedings at church meetings; and

3.4.1.2. Maintain membership records.

3.4.2. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the pastor(s) and deacons, and shall:

3.4.2.1. Oversee the financial assets of the ministry including, maintaining all bookkeeping records, dispersing funds as authorized and approved, and preparing proper monthly financial reports for the leadership and congregation.

3.4.2.2. Arrange for the:

- a. Receiving, recording, and receipting all contributions and offerings. Offerings are to be counted separately by two appointed men, both of whom record the amount and to sign their agreement as to the amount counted.
- b. Prompt depositing of all income in designated bank accounts

4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4.1.1. Purpose and composition

4.1.1.1. At least three persons who accept fiduciary responsibility for the public benefit organisation, will not be connected persons in relation to each other, and no single person directly or indirectly controls the decision making powers relating to such organisation.

4.1.2. Meetings and procedures of the committee

4.1.2.1. The management committee must hold at least two ordinary meetings each year.

4.1.2.2. The moderator is a pastor, or, in his/their absence, the chairman elected from the deacons.

4.1.2.3. There shall be a quorum whenever such a meeting is held.

4.1.2.4. Minutes of all meetings must be kept safely and always be on hand for members to consult.

4.1.2.5. If the management committee thinks it is necessary, then it can decide to set up one or more sub-committees.

4.1.2.6. The sub-committee must regularly report back to the management committee on its activities.

4.2 QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETINGS

4.2.1. Unless a special meeting is necessitated, normal meetings of all the members are to be held once every quarter.

4.2.2. The organisation should deal with the following business, amongst others, at its quarterly general meeting:

- 4.2.2.1. Keep a record of all present and apologies made.
 - 4.2.2.2. Read and confirm the previous meeting's minutes with matters arising.
 - 4.2.2.3. Ministry progress report.
 - 4.2.2.4. Quarterly financial report.
 - 4.2.2.5. Transact any other business as may be properly brought before the members.
- 4.2.3. A simple majority of qualified voting members shall constitute the act of all members.
- 4.2.4. Voting members must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- 4.2.5. The pastor and deacons shall establish the guidelines for absentee balloting.
- 4.2.6. The moderator is a pastor, or, in his/their absence, the chairman elected from the deacons.
- 4.2.7. Ten (10) percent of qualified members shall constitute a quorum for any duly called meeting. For the calling of the Pastor, twenty-five percent (25%) of qualified members shall constitute a quorum.
- 4.2.8. Any business meeting to be held at a time or date other than the normally scheduled quarterly meeting requires a notice of the date, time and general purpose of that meeting and shall be announced (2) weeks in advance of the meeting unless otherwise prescribed by law.
- 4.2.9. Matters of business to be presented to the membership shall come by way of recommendation from the pastor(s) and deacons.
- 4.2.10. Minutes of all meetings must be kept safely and always be on hand for members to consult.
- 4.2.11. Keeping in mind that the Bible is the church's final authority in all matters of faith and practice, and keeping in mind God's admonition of doing all things decently and in order with a spirit of Christian love, all business meetings of the church membership shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order:
- The rules for meeting can be summarised as follows:
- 4.2.11.1. All business should be brought before the assembly by a motion of a member, or by the presentation of a communication to the assembly.
 - 4.2.11.2. Before any subject is adopted, it is necessary, first, that a motion be made; second, that it be seconded, and third, that it be stated by the presiding officer.
 - 4.2.11.3. Before a vote is taken, the Chair puts the question by saying "Those in favour of the motion that... (repeat the motion)... say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." The chair will then say "The motion is carried," or "The motion is lost."
 - 4.2.11.4. A tie vote is a lost vote, since it is not a majority.

4.3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4.3.1. The meeting shall be held as soon as practicable after the close of the financial year.

4.3.2. The organisation should deal with the following business, amongst others, at its annual general meeting:

4.3.2.1. Keep a record of all present and apologies made.

4.3.2.2. Read and confirm the previous meeting's minutes with matters arising.

4.3.2.3. Pastor's report.

4.3.2.4. Treasurer's report.

4.3.2.5. Adopt the annual budget; and

4.3.2.6. Transact any other business as may be properly brought before the members.

4.3.3. The same rules of order apply as for quarterly general meetings.

4.4 Special Meetings.

A special meeting of the members may be called by the pastor(s) and deacons, or by fifteen percent (15%) of the membership submitting a written petition to the deacons. The petition must clearly state the purpose for calling the special meeting.

Church Services:

4.4.1. The number, character, and hour of the regular and special services of the church shall be determined by the pastor(s) and deacons.

4.4.2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed ordinarily on a monthly basis unless otherwise indicated by the pastor(s) and deacons.

4.5 FINANCES

4.5.1. Financial Year

The financial year of the church shall run from 01 March to 28 February the following year.

4.5.2. Fund-raising

The necessary funds for the work of the Church shall be raised by free will offerings and sacrificial giving as outlined in the New Testament.

4.5.3. Financial transactions

4.5.3.1. All financial transactions will be made by means of a banking account.

4.5.3.2. Acquisition of physical property or expense in excess of R10 000 (ten thousand Rand) will

be presented to the church body by recommendation of the pastor(s) and deacons and subject to a simple majority vote. The selling of church property in excess of R10 000 (ten thousand Rand) is subject to the same procedure.

4.5.4. Record-keeping

Any books of account, records or other documents, including financial statements, of the organisation must be retained and preserved for a period of at least four years after the last date of an entry in any book or, if kept in electronic or any other form, for a period of four years after completion of the transaction, act or operation to which they relate. It is the responsibility of the person in control of the organisation to ensure that the necessary records are kept.

4.6 PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

4.6.1. Any proposed amendment to this constitution must be submitted to the pastor(s) and deacons and, if approved, will then be presented to the church congregation.

4.6.2. Each amendment shall be in writing and posted in a conspicuous place two (2) consecutive Sundays in advance of the meeting and announced during Sunday morning services for two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting.

4.6.3. Voting shall be by written ballot.

4.6.4. Amendments shall be by a simple majority of qualified voting members.

4.6.5. An adopted amendment shall become effective immediately unless another provision is passed with the amendment.

4.7 DISSOLUTION OF THE ORGANISATION

4.7.1. The Church may at any time be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a special general meeting.

4.7.2. In the event of such resolution being passed such meeting shall thereupon authorise the pastor(s) or chairman of the deacons or such members thereof as may still hold office, or in default of any such members, any other person or persons to take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church, and in particular to transfer the property of the Church in due and proper form to a church or organisation deemed to be of like faith and practice.

4.7.3. The organisation which has enjoyed certain tax concessions may not, on dissolution, distribute any of its funds to individuals or other tax-paying entities thereby enabling the recipients to share in the concession which the organisation has enjoyed.

4.7.4. On dissolution of the public benefit organisation, the remaining assets must be transferred to:

4.7.4.1. A public benefit organisation, which has been approved in terms of section 30 of the Act.

- 4.7.4.2. Any institution, board or body which is exempt from the payment of income tax in terms of section 10(1)(cA)(i) of the Act, which has as its sole or principal object the carrying on of any public benefit activity; or
- 4.7.4.3. Any department of state or administration in the national or provincial or local sphere of government of the Republic, contemplated in section 10(1)(a) or (b) of the Act. V vii)
- 4.7.5. A copy of all amendments to the constitution will be submitted to the Commissioner for the South African Revenue Service.
- 4.7.6. The Church shall be deemed to have ceased to exist:
 - 4.7.6.1. When dissolution shall have been resolved in accordance with Section 3.9a.
 - 4.7.6.2. When members shall have been totally dispersed so that the public services shall have been discontinued for a period of six calendar months without a pastoral staff or deacons.

5. MINISTRIES

In order for any ministry to be considered a part of the church's sponsored activities, it must have the approval of the pastor(s) and deacons and a report of its activities and plans must be presented once a year prior to the annual meeting of the church.

6. COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION

6.1 COMMISSIONING

- 6.1.1. Any member may be recommended to the church for commissioning after the following:
 - 6.1.1.1. Experiencing an irresistible desire to serve the Lord in full-time missionary work;
 - 6.1.1.2. An examination by the pastor(s) and deacons;
 - 6.1.1.3. Affirming whole-hearted agreement with and living in conformity to the church's statement of faith and covenant.
- 6.1.2. Commissioning shall be granted upon an approving vote of the church.

6.2 ORDINATION

This church recognizes the fact that only God can call a man to the ministry of the Gospel but believes it is both Scriptural and wise to have such a man commended to the ministry by a local church. The ordination process may be initiated by the pastor(s) and deacons.

6.2.1. Requirements for Ordination

Any member, male in gender by birth, may be recommended to the church for ordination after the following:

- 6.2.1.1. Experiencing an irresistible desire to serve the Lord in full-time pastoral work;
 - 6.2.1.2. Manifesting the biblical requirements set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9;
 - 6.2.1.3. An examination by the pastor(s) and deacons;
 - 6.2.1.4. Affirming whole-hearted agreement with and living in conformity to the church's Statement of Faith and Covenant.
 - 6.2.1.5. Being actively engaged in Christian service.
 - 6.2.1.6. Knowledgeable in the Scripture and theology as evidenced by a public examination by a counsel composed of messengers from other Baptist churches of like faith and practice.
- 6.2.2. If recommended by the pastor(s), the deacons, and the examining council, the ordination shall be granted upon an approving vote of the church.
- 6.2.3. Revoking of ordination

Ordination may be revoked by action of the church for doctrinal defection and/or immorality.

This constitution was approved and accepted by members of One Hope Baptist Church at a meeting held on the 11 May 2014.

Amendments were approved and accepted by members of One Hope Baptist Church at a meeting held on the 15 June 2014.

Further amendments were approved and accepted by members of One Hope Baptist Church at a meeting held on the 16 November 2016.



Chairperson (Pastor)



Secretary (Deacon)