

# Granville Community Baptist Church



## CONSTITUTION

*A Church of many cultures,  
One in Christ.*

Approved: November 2005  
Amended: August 2006  
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Prepared by:

Granville & South Granville Baptist Churches combined deacons and elders

Based on a template from the Baptist Union of NSW

Amended and reprinted by GCBC Secretary

Version 2 approved by GCBC members 21 August 2022

## Member's Declaration of Commitment

I, \_\_\_\_\_x do hereby attest and declare that  
Print name here

I have read this Constitution and support all of the provisions and

positions outlined within it.

I will, by the Grace of God, commit myself to:

- endeavour at all times to remain true to my commitment to Christ as expressed in my baptism;
- attend regularly and participate in the worship service(s) and various activities of the Church;
- lead a life worthy of Christ in love, humility and peace, endeavouring to build up my fellow members through encouragement, counsel and comfort;
- study the Scriptures in private and in groups as the Lord gives opportunity;
- express my gratitude to God, and my responsibilities as His steward by contributing regularly and wholeheartedly to the financial support of the Church and its worldwide ministry;
- seek opportunity to be active in using my gifts in the service of Christ in the Church; and
- pray regularly in private and where possible in fellowship for the people and ministry of the Church and the family of Churches.

Signature: , \_\_\_\_\_x

Date: , \_\_\_\_\_x

## **1 Name**

The name of the Church shall be the Granville Community Baptist Church.

## **2 Doctrinal Position of this Church**

This Church shall hold to the following evangelical doctrines set out in the Baptist Union of NSW Incorporation Act, 1919 (NSW) and amplified by the 1979 Baptist Union of NSW Assembly:

- The nature and unity of the Godhead (Matt 28:19, Eph 4:6)
- The deity and humanity of Christ (John 1:1, Phil 2:6—7)
- The Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 2 Cor 13:14)
- The divine inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16)
- The sinfulness of man (Rom 3:10,23)
- Christ's atonement for the sin of man (Rom 3:25—26, 1 Peter 2:24)
- The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation (John 3:5—6, Rom 8:9—11)
- The Church (Matt 16:18, Eph 1:22—23)
- The baptism of believers only, and by immersion (Matt 28:19, Rom 6:3—4)
- The communion (Luke 22:14—20, 1 Cor 11:23—26)
- The return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 24:30, Acts 1:11)
- The resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:20, 2 Cor:4:14)
- Rewards and punishments in a future state (Matt 25:31—46, Rom 14:12)

## **3 Government (i.e. decision-making)**

- The Church shall be affiliated with the Baptist Union of NSW accepting its responsibility to support and share ministries undertaken by the denomination.
- Recognising the headship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Church shall be governed in line with the fundamental Baptist principle of the autonomy of the local church and congregational government. That is, the decision-making of this Church shall be vested in the body of believers who compose its membership.

- Notwithstanding this principle of autonomy, the Church recognises and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation which are common among Baptist Churches. Therefore the Church will be interdependent as well as independent.

## 4 Objective

The Church adopts as its objective (which it believes to be in harmony with the purpose of Christ's Church as declared in the New Testament) the desire to glorify God through:

- The inspiration and maintenance of active spiritual growth among its congregation by the regular assembling for public worship and the administration of the ordinances.
- The proclamation of the truths of the Bible so that persons experience salvation.
- Teaching, training and discipling all who come to faith in the Lord Jesus so that they grow together in love, are loyal to each other and grow to maturity in Christ under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Proclaiming the sole Lordship of Christ Jesus in the lives of the members of the congregation and seeking to fulfil His desires in the life of the community, nation and wider world through evangelistic and other missionary enterprises. To assist those who are in need in the belief that social action and evangelism are mutually our response to the gospel.

## 5 Membership

### 5A Eligibility for Membership

Members shall be persons who give evidence of a sincere profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been baptised as believers and agree to hold to the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading "Doctrinal Position of this Church".

### 5B Admission to Membership

Applicants for membership shall apply to the Church Secretary. Applicants shall be visited by two members appointed by the deacon's meeting or the Church to discuss their testimony to faith in Jesus Christ, membership responsibilities, the Church Constitution and its various ministries. A report shall be presented to the Church following this visitation. Applicants may be admitted to membership upon majority vote at a properly constituted Church meeting.

## 10 Alterations to Constitution

No alteration shall be made to the Constitution except by a three-quarters majority of members present and eligible to vote at a meeting convened for the purpose.

The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership.

Any proposed change to the Constitution shall be given in writing as a Notice of Motion to a deacon's meeting and shall be distributed by the Secretary to all members not less than one month before the date of such meeting.

The Secretary of the Baptist Union of NSW shall be notified of any changes to this Constitution by the Church Secretary within 14 days of any decision being made by the Church.

**\*\*\* END of TEXT \*\*\***

## **9C Property**

Church buildings and properties shall not be used or occupied by people or organisations for any purpose except where previous consent has been obtained from a deacon's meeting, who may give such consent in accordance with the decisions and guidelines laid down by the Church.

## **9D Insurance**

Insurance shall be effected on all Church buildings and property in accordance with the requirements of the Baptist Union of NSW.

## **9E The Ministry**

The ministry of the Church shall primarily be supported and expenses met by voluntary contributions. Cheques shall be signed on behalf of the Church by two of the church officers, one of whom shall normally be the Church Treasurer. Other methods of financial transactions may be approved by a deacon's meeting after full consideration of due process.

## **9F Auditors**

Auditors shall be appointed at the Annual Church meeting and shall audit the financial records of the Church, including all departments, for presentation to the next Annual Church meeting.

## **9G Application of Church Assets and Income**

The assets and income of the church shall be applied solely in the furtherance of its charitable purpose and the advancement of religion and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Members except as bona fide reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the church.

## **9H Church Dissolution**

In the event of the church being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall:

- (a) in the case of property held in trust pursuant to the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984, be dealt with in accordance with that Act and in particular Section 29 which said trusts provide that no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the Church; and
- (b) in all other cases be transferred to the Baptist Union or to any other organisation with similar purposes and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its members and which is exempt from income tax.

Where the applicant for membership has been a member of another Baptist Church, letters of transfer shall be sought and shall be taken into account by the Church meeting when determining the application for membership at a properly constituted Church meeting.

## **5C Responsibilities of Members**

- (a) To endeavour at all times, by God's grace, to remain true to their commitment to Christ as expressed in their baptism.
- (b) To attend regularly and participate in the worship service(s) and various activities of the Church.
- (c) To lead a life worthy of Christ in love, humility and peace, endeavouring to build each other up through encouragement, counsel and comfort.
- (d) To study the Scriptures in private and in groups as the Lord gives opportunity.
- (e) To express their gratitude to God, and their responsibilities as His stewards by contributing regularly and wholeheartedly to the financial support of the Church and its worldwide ministry.
- (f) To seek opportunity to be active in using their gifts in the service of Christ in the Church.
- (g) To pray regularly in private and where possible in fellowship for the people and ministry of the Church and the family of Churches.

## **5D Membership Roll**

A Members' Roll shall be kept by the Church Secretary.

## **5E Removal from Membership**

The deacons and/or elders will prayerfully review the Members Roll at least every year, then, where appropriate recommend the removal of inactive or absent members' names to a Church meeting.

No member's name shall be transferred or removed from the Members' Roll except by their request or the decision of the majority of the members present and voting at a properly constituted Church meeting.

## **5F Transfer of Membership**

Any member may request that a letter of transfer be sent to another Baptist Church he or she wishes to join. The Deacons may process the request reporting their action to the next Church meeting for confirmation.

## **5G Offences and Disputes**

- (a) Matters of offence or dispute between members shall not be brought before the Church unless the parties have first complied with the direction of Matt. 18:15—17.
- (b) Where a member becomes an offence to the Church by reason of immoral or un-Christian conduct, the Church will make every effort, in the spirit of love and meekness, to restore such a member to fellowship (Matt. 18:15—17). Where such efforts fail the Church may terminate or suspend for a specified time, his or her membership. Termination or suspension of membership shall be only on the decision of three-quarters majority of members present and voting at a properly constituted Church meeting.
- (c) In the event of a dispute arising either between the members, the Pastor(s) and the members, or the Church and the Baptist Union, such dispute may, after every effort has been made to resolve it within the Church or through the services of the Baptist Union be referred for decision to the Panel of Arbitrators elected by the Assembly, if agreed to by all parties of the dispute.

## **6 Church Leadership**

### **6A Church Officers**

Pastors, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, deacons and elders are considered to be officers of the Church. Such officers shall attend to the affairs of the Church, within the framework of the Church's policies and procedures, as determined from time to time.

### **6B Pastor(s)**

The Pastor(s) shall be a person whose credentials are acceptable to the Baptist Union of NSW and holds the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading: "Doctrinal Position of this Church" and who complies with the legislative and regulatory requirements summarised in the relevant Church Policy/Procedure.

The Pastor will automatically become a member of the Church upon their induction.

Where more than one Pastor is appointed the Pastors shall comprise the Pastoral Team in which one shall be the Senior Pastor. (The Pastor or Senior Pastor shall normally be ex-officio member of all departments and may at their discretion chair any meetings.

## **7B Procedure**

All questions affecting the management and general interests of the Church shall be submitted to a deacon's meeting before presentation to the Church.

The vote of the Church shall be taken ordinarily on the voices or by a show of hands, but all voting for the election of officers mentioned herein will be by secret ballot, in accordance with procedures determined by the membership. The Chairman may only exercise one vote.

## **8 Church Departments**

All departments associated with the Church shall formulate guidelines governing their operations and present them to the deacons for approval.

The leaders of Church departments shall be elected by the Church at the Annual Church Meeting, upon nomination from the respective departments or any Church member. The process will be as determined for Deacons.

All departments shall submit to the deacons the names of all appointees to their various offices other than those elected at the Annual Church meeting. The deacons shall then submit a report to a Church meeting that shall have the right to discuss and confirm appointments.

The Church meeting may appoint groups for specific functions to assist in the general operation of the Church's ministry. Such groups shall report to the Church in co-operation with the deacon's meeting.

## **9 Sundry**

### **9A Ordinances**

#### **(a) Baptism**

The Pastor may baptise any believer upon application at his discretion, or alternatively any other person may baptise any believer upon approval of the Pastor and/or elders and deacons.

#### **(b) The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be invited to take part in the Supper.

### **9B The Trustees**

The Trustees of all Church properties shall be the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust.

Each year, half the number of Deacons decided upon by the Church shall be elected for a term of two years. Those retiring from office after two years shall be eligible for re-election.

## **7 Church Meetings and Procedures**

### **7A Meetings**

The (senior) Pastor may, at their discretion, chair all meetings of the Church, elders, deacons and Church departments.

The Church shall meet quarterly to transact business and provide information to the members.

Notice of all Church Meetings including Extraordinary Meetings shall be given at services for at least the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

An Annual Church Meeting shall be called each year to receive reports and conduct elections as herein prescribed, such meeting to be held during the month of October. The Church Financial year will close on 30 June each year.

Extraordinary meetings may be convened by the Pastor(s), or upon requisition signed by 10% of the Church membership or a majority of the deacons and elders. An Extraordinary Meeting may be called for a special purpose and only consider matters of which written notice has been given.

When there is no (senior) Pastor, or in his absence, an elder or deacon or Church member shall be elected to chair the meeting. Alternatively, for special reasons in consultation with the Baptist Union of NSW, an outside chairman may be appointed. Such a chairman shall be a member in good standing in a Church affiliated with the Baptist Union of NSW.

The Church Meeting shall be a meeting of those persons on the Members' Roll.

Non-Church members may be invited to be present at and to take part in the whole or any part of a Church Meeting, without the right to vote.

The quorum for all Church Meetings shall be 25% of the Church membership. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the appointed starting time of the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned usually to the same day, time and place in the next week. Notice of the adjourned meeting will be given at the intervening services. Such meeting will be competent to deal with the matters adjourned notwithstanding the absence of a quorum. (It should be noted that members under 18 years of age may not vote on matters relating to property transactions.)

Pastors will be appointed upon a three-quarters majority or removed upon a simple majority vote of the members present and voting at a meeting of which notice has been given on the two Sundays preceding such meeting, the purpose of such meeting having been specified. The quorum for meeting to call or remove a Pastor shall be 50% of members.

When calling a Pastor -

- (a) A Pastorate Committee, appointed by the Church, shall call for nominations. Members of the congregation may make recommendations for discussion within the Committee by submitting a name, together with reasons supporting the recommendation, in writing to the Committee.
- (b) The Committee may advertise the vacancy and seek advice and assistance from the Baptist Union.
- (c) Should more than one name come before the Committee, discussion will continue until agreement is reached regarding the approach to one person.
- (d) The Committee shall communicate privately with this nominee and/or with the appropriate Baptist Union officer, to ascertain their willingness to allow their name to be placed before the Church.
- (e) Should this nominee be willing, the name shall be submitted to the Church. Only one name shall be before the Church at any one time.
- (f) In the event of an adverse vote, or a call or approach not being accepted, the above procedure shall be repeated from the beginning until successful.

All terms and conditions of a call shall be conveyed to a Pastor in writing, having previously been clarified between both parties, together with full particulars of the Church and its development.

Acceptance shall be made in writing to the Church indicating acceptance of terms of call.

The tenure of office of a Pastor may be terminated by two months' notice in writing by either the Church or the Pastor.

### **6C Church Secretary**

A Church Secretary should be elected by the Church at the Annual Church Meeting. The Church Secretary will be a member of the deacon's meeting by virtue of office. Eligibility requirements and mode of election as for deacons will apply in relation to the Church Secretary.

The Church Secretary shall ensure that adequate records of all Church, deacons and department meetings are kept, conduct correspondence for the Church and generally deal with the business of the Church.

By means of an Annual Report and otherwise, he/she will ensure an adequate flow of information from the various departments to the Church members.

The Church Secretary shall keep an up-to-date Members Roll of the Church which shall be available for members to scrutinise.

## **6D Church Treasurer**

A Church Treasurer should be elected by the Church at the Annual Church Meeting. The Church Treasurer will be a member of the deacon's meeting by virtue of office. Eligibility requirements and mode of election as for deacons will apply in relation to the Treasurer.

The Church Treasurer shall receive all moneys for the Church and make such payments as may be directed. He/she shall keep a record of all financial transactions, keeping the Church informed through regular reporting.

A Treasurer's Financial Statement shall be presented to the Annual Church meeting covering the income and expenditure for the past year. This statement shall be audited.

## **6E Assistant Secretary and Treasurer**

The Church may determine to appoint an Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer from within the group of elected Deacons as desirable but not essential to be an elected Deacon. The function of the Assistant is to assist and support the officer as directed; however full responsibility must remain with the elected officer.

## **6F Elders**

The Church may appoint elders from the membership of the Church, who shall share with the Pastor(s) in the pastoral ministry of the Church.

Elders shall be responsible to the Church in co-operation with the Pastor(s) and shall:

- (a) Assist in shepherding those who are part of or associated with the Church, willingly and ably encouraging and building up such people and being an example to the Church in Christlike living;
- (b) Visit such people mentioned in "(a)";

- (c) Participate in the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church when they are recognised as having these gifts and are invited to do so by the Pastor(s).

The biblical material, especially I Timothy 3: 2—7, Titus 1:7—9 and I Peter 5: 1—4, shall assist the Church in appointing elders.

Only persons of known maturity, spirituality and gifts appropriate to the office shall be appointed upon three-quarters majority vote at the Annual Church Meeting and upon the unanimous nomination in writing of the Pastor(s) and existing elder(s) and deacon(s). Such nominees shall be over the age of 21 years and have been in membership in the Church for at least two years.

The term of office shall be two years, with eligibility for re-appointment.

Elders, while meeting separately, may also meet with the deacons for mutual benefit.

## **6G Deacons**

Members of the Church, who are over the age of 18 years and have been in membership for at least 12 months may be appointed to the office of deacon by the church at the Annual Church Meeting. Nominees shall give evidence of spiritual maturity and fulfil the qualifications of I Timothy 3: 8—13.

The number of deacons to be appointed, in addition to the Church Secretary and Church Treasurer, shall be determined at the members' meeting prior to the Annual Meeting.

The deacons, as far as shall be in their power, shall attend and sustain all meetings connected with the Church, shall assist in visitation, shall maintain discipline in the Church and shall be empowered to transact the routine business of the Church.

The deacons shall meet monthly and at other times as required. The Senior Pastor may be the chairman or a chairman may be appointed from among the deacons. The quorum for deacon's meetings shall be not less than 50% of the deacons.

Nominations for the office of deacon shall be invited from the members in accordance with the process determined by the Church and described in the relevant Policy/Procedure. Vacancies during the year may be filled in similar manner. The names obtaining the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected, providing that the nominee has obtained at least three-quarters of the number of members present and voting.