

CONSTITUTION

A. NAME

The name shall be Toronto Baptist Church hereafter called 'the Church'.

B. DOCTRINAL BASIS

The Church shall consist of baptised believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been duly admitted to membership as hereafter provided.

Members shall hold as an essential part of their system of belief what are commonly known as evangelical doctrines, as set forth in the Act of Incorporation of the Baptist Union, namely:

- i. The sinfulness of man
- ii. The deity of Jesus Christ
- iii. His atonement for the sin of man
- iv. The second coming of Jesus Christ
- v. The need of the Holy Spirit for conversion
- vi. The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer
- vii. The Divine inspiration of the Scriptures
- viii. The resurrection of the dead
- ix. Rewards and punishments in a future state
- x. The baptism of believers by immersion.

C. MEMBERSHIP

1. Applications for membership shall be made in writing through the Pastor, Elders or Deacons.
2. The Church or Diaconate shall appoint two members who are mature Christians to visit each applicant for membership in accordance with the Church's Guidelines and such visitors shall present a written report to the Church regarding their visit. Letters of transfer and/or commendation from other Baptist Churches will be taken into account by the Church.
3. Applicants approved by the Church will normally be received into membership at the first communion service following the Member's meeting at which the membership was approved.
4. Members are expected to regularly worship together, to partake of the Lord's Supper, and to take part in a ministry to others exercising their gifts for service which come from God.
5. The Diaconate shall prepare each year, prior to the Annual Member's Meeting, a list of those members who have, for a period of six months without a valid reason, failed to participate in the worship services. The Pastor or Elders shall ensure that within the months thereafter contact (preferably by visitation) is made in an endeavour to restore such members to the fellowship of the Church. Where these efforts fail a recommendation may

be brought to the Church by the Diaconate that such members be removed from the Roll or be transferred to an absent members' Roll.

6. Matters of dispute or offence between members shall not be brought before the Church unless the parties have first complied with the direction of Matthew 18:15-17. Cases appearing to require the exercise of discipline by the Church shall be reported to the Church by the Pastor(s), Elders or Deacons, when the Church shall take such action as it may deem necessary.
7. The Church shall deal with cases of dismissal of members as they arise.

D. OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Church shall consist of the Pastor(s), Elders and Deacons as provided for in this Constitution.
2.
 - a. The Pastor shall have responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the Church including the pulpit ministry. He shall seek to fulfill the role of Pastor outlined in Ephesians 4:11-13.
 - b. No person shall be eligible for the pastorate who is not eligible to be a member of this Church.
 - c. Nominations for the appointment of the Pastor shall be brought to the Church by a Pastoral Committee elected by the Church. Any member may submit a name to such a Pastoral Committee. The Pastoral Committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one name at a time. All discussions concerning such nominations shall be confidential to the members.
 - d. A Pastor shall be appointed only by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at the special meeting called for that purpose, of which notice has been given by announcement at each service on the two preceding Sundays.
 - e. The conditions of appointment shall be as determined by the Church at the time of acceptance of the Church's call.
3. An Associate Pastor or Pastors may be called to share with the Pastor in specified or in general duties. The procedure for appointing or removing an Associate Pastor shall be the same as for the Pastor, and the conditions of appointment shall be determined by the Church at the time of acceptance of the Church's call.
4.
 - a. The Church may recognise certain of its members as Elders who possess the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:7-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. They shall share with the Pastor(s) in the pastoral ministry of the Church, being responsible to the Church through the Pastor(s) for shepherding and encouraging of members and adherents and being an example to the Church in Christ-like living.
 - b. The nomination of members for recognition as Elders shall be made by a Nominating Committee of three, comprising one each of Pastor, Elder and Deacon. If any one of these Offices is vacant, members shall be appointed by the Church as required to form the

Committee. Any member may submit names to this Nominating Committee, but any approach to the Nominee is to be made only by the Nominating Committee. Such Nominees shall be over the age of 21 years, and shall have attended at least four ordinary business meetings as members.

c. An Elder shall be appointed only by a two-thirds majority of the members present, and voting at a special meeting called for that purpose, of which notice has been given by announcement at each service on two preceding Sundays.

d. The term of office of an Elder shall be three years from the date of appointment to the nearest Annual Business Meeting. An Elder shall be eligible for further appointment following nomination in writing, signed by the Nominee, and a Nominator, to be in the hands of the Secretary not later than two Sundays immediately preceding the Annual Business Meeting.

5. a. Deacons shall ordinarily be appointed by the Church at the Annual General Meeting of the Church. While Deacons shall possess qualities outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-12, and Acts 6:2-4, female Deacons shall be allowed provided they possess comparable qualities. The number of Deacons appointed shall be given in the Guidelines to this Constitution.

b. Each Deacon shall be appointed for a period of one year and be eligible for re-election. When a person is elected at a time subsequent to the Annual Meeting, that appointment shall be until the following Annual Meeting.

c. Nominations for the office of Deacon shall be invited from members as from the fourth Sunday prior to the Annual Business Meeting. All such nominations are to be in writing, signed by the Nominee and the Nominator, and be in the hands of the Church Secretary not later than two Sundays immediately preceding the Annual Business Meeting. Nominations received during the year shall be filled in a similar manner at a Business Meeting.

d. All members of the Church above the age of 21 years, who have attended at least two ordinary business meetings as members prior to the date of election, shall be eligible for election to the office of Deacon.

e. The names of all persons nominated for election as Deacons shall be placed upon the Ballot Paper. The number of positions available shall be filled with those persons gaining the greatest number of votes, providing that they gain a minimum of two-thirds of the votes of members present and voting. A member may vote for as many Nominees as they believe qualify for the office of Deacon.

f. After the election of Deacons has been made the Church shall, at that meeting, elect an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer from among the Deacons. A vacancy occurring during the year in the positions of Secretary and Treasurer shall be filled by election from the available Deacons at a duly convened Church Meeting.

6. A Pastor, Elder or Deacon may only be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at a Special Meeting of the Church called for that purpose of which notice has been given by announcement at each service on the preceding two Sundays.

7. The Superintendent, President or otherwise styled leader of any Organisation within the Church shall only hold that position subject to the approval of the Church members.

E. MEETINGS

1.
 - a. The Diaconate shall consist of the Pastor(s) and Deacons.
 - b. The Diaconate shall ordinarily meet monthly on a time and date to be arranged by themselves. The Quorum for such meetings should be determined by themselves, but should not be less than half the number of members of the Diaconate.
 - c. Where Elders attend meetings of the Diaconate, they have the same rights as a Pastor.
2. The Pastor(s) and Elders, while meeting separately, may from time to time meet with the Deacons for their mutual benefit.
3. The Church shall meet for business quarterly.
4. An Annual Meeting of the Church shall take place each year at which the election of Officers shall take place, reports from the various Organisations will be received and matters pertaining to the Officers may be dealt with.
5. Special Meetings shall be convened upon a request in writing, signed by at least five active members or may be convened by the Diaconate at its discretion. Such Meetings shall only deal with the business for which they are called.
6. All Business Meetings of the Church shall be convened upon a notice announced at each service on the two Sundays preceding such meeting.

F. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

1.
 - a. The Pastor may at his discretion preside at all meetings of the Church, Diaconate and Church Organisations. When the Pastor is not available to preside at meetings of the Church or Diaconate, one of the Officers or members shall be elected by the meeting to preside.
 - b. At a meeting concerning the position of a Pastor, that Pastor would be ineligible to preside.
2. The Quorum at any quarterly, special or annual meeting shall be one quarter of active members. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting it shall stand adjourned to the same day in the following week and at the same time and place as specified in the notice of such adjourned meeting. Such meeting shall be competent to conduct the business of the adjourned meeting notwithstanding the absence of a quorum.
3. The vote shall ordinarily be taken by show of hands, but voting relative to the election of Pastor, Elder or Deacon shall be by secret ballot. Secret ballot may also be used to vote as the chairman considers advisable.

4. No member under the age of 16 years shall be entitled to vote at Church meetings.
5. The Secretary shall keep a record of all Deacons' Meetings and Church Meetings, conduct correspondence and deal with the administrative matters of the Church as directed by the Church or Diaconate.
6. The Treasurer or Acting Treasurer shall receive all monies for the Church and shall make all payments as directed by the Church or Diaconate and present a statement to each meeting of the Diaconate and to the Quarterly and Annual meetings of the Church. The operation of the Church's accounts shall be as directed by the Diaconate.
7. All questions affecting the management and general interests of the Church shall be first submitted to the Deacons who shall, if necessary, report to the Church.

G. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. Believers may be baptised upon application to the Pastor(s) or Elders. The Deacons would normally be advised of any proposed baptism.
2. The remembrance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed normally on the morning of the first and the evening of the third Sunday in the month. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be invited to partake of the Supper.

H. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

1. No alteration shall be made to this Constitution except by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting convened for that purpose and of which notice has been given at each service on the two preceding Sundays.
2. Notice of any proposed alteration or addition shall be given to the Secretary, in writing, not less than one month before the date of such meeting.

I. GENERAL

1. The trustees of all Church property shall be The Baptist Union of N.S.W.
2. The Church shall arrange to have its financial books audited at least once per year for presentation at the Annual Meeting.
3. The Church may determine guidelines for the implementation of this Constitution. Such Guidelines shall not be inconsistent with this Constitution and may be altered by ordinary majority at any duly convened meeting of the Church.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

The members selected by the Church to interview an applicant shall ensure that the following matters are covered during the interview:

- a. Determine the time and nature of the conversion of the applicant to Christianity and their Baptism;
- b. Determine that the applicant is familiar with, and agrees with, the doctrinal basis of the Toronto Baptist Church;
- c. Ensure that the applicant has a copy of, and agrees with, the Church's Constitution;
- d. Explain the responsibilities of membership and encourage the applicant to identify an area of service that they believe God would have them undertake.

In carrying out this interview aids such as the "Baptist Basics" series distributed by the Baptist Union of NSW, may be of some value.

A written report is to be provided to the Church covering the above topics including a recommendation regarding the application for membership.

MEMBERS ROLL

The membership roll of the Church shall consist of two parts:

- a. **Resident Members Roll** - this roll shall contain the names of those who are actively engaged in the local work and regularly attend the services of the Church or who are living in the locality and are prevented by health or legitimate circumstances from such activity or attendance.
- b. **Absent Members Roll** - this roll shall contain the names of those who are actively engaged in Christian work but are remote from this Church and thus unable to regularly attend the services of the Church. It shall also contain the names of those who because of their particular circumstances have had their names placed on this roll by the Church.

Only those whose names are on the Resident Members Roll shall be counted for the purposes of determining the Quorum at Church meetings.

When a resident member leaves the locality and/or becomes involved in another Church or active Christian work remote from the Church their name shall forthwith be placed on the Absent Members Roll and a letter of encouragement written to them advising them of that action.

The Deacons will annually review the Resident Members Roll to identify any resident members who have been absent from the Church for an extended period of time. The names of such people will be given to the Pastors and Elders for visitation or other contact. The report of the Pastors and Elders will form the basis of a recommendation that may be presented at a Church Meeting regarding transfer to the Absent Members Roll.

NUMBER OF DEACONS

There shall be no limit on the number of Deacons provided that their election and appointment is in accordance with the Church's Constitution.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

No organisation shall claim affiliation with the Church without the approval of the Diaconate. Any organisation which utilises its connection with the Church for operational purposes shall lodge with the Secretary a statement of objectives. It shall also provide a written report to the Annual Meeting of the Church and to the Deacons at their request in which it advises of its progress in meeting its objectives.

AUDIT OF FINANCIAL BOOKS

A qualified external auditor shall be appointed by the Church at its Quarterly Meeting prior to the Annual Meeting to audit the Church's financial books, and provide a report to the Annual Meeting pertaining to that audit.

SCREENING OF CHILDRENS/YOUTH WORKERS

All children and youth workers must be screened in accordance with legal requirements and the Church's Child Protection Guidelines.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOMINATIONS

No nominations are to be taken from the floor at the Annual General Meeting, except for the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and scrutineers.

INSURANCE AND USE OF NON-CHURCH EQUIPMENT

At times people bring various pieces of their own equipment into the church to use in services and other church activities. Because the church does not own these pieces of equipment they are not covered by church insurance if they are damaged or stolen.

While the church appreciates people generously using their own equipment, the following points should be noted:

- a. If you bring equipment to the church please look after it while it is there and do not leave it there when you leave. Any equipment left at the church remains the responsibility and risk of its owner.
- b. If you borrow a piece of equipment from someone else and bring it to the church the owner should be informed that church insurance does not cover damage or loss. You will need to have an understanding with the owner as to who pays for damage or theft of the equipment should such an event occur.

DELEGATES TO BAPTIST UNION ASSEMBLY and HUNTER DISTRICT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Due to the nature of the business on which delegates to the Baptist Union of NSW Assembly and Hunter District Baptist Association may be called upon to vote, it is a requirement of the enabling legislation that delegates to these bodies are members of the Church.