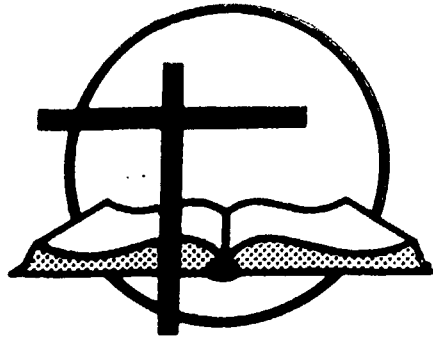


73418250635



# **Ocean Grove Baptist Fellowship**

**CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

**November 1993**

# OCEAN GROVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

## CHURCH CONSTITUTION

### 1. NAME

November 1993

The name of this fellowship is the Ocean Grove Baptist Fellowship.

### 2. BASIS OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

As a company of Christian people, believing that the "Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word", the church accepts as an expression of the Christian faith the Preamble and Doctrinal Basis incorporated in the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Statement of devotion or commitment to the life and direction of this fellowship. Romans 12:9-10.

- a) The membership of the church shall comprise those persons who have responded to the proclamation of the Word of God and the call of the Holy Spirit, being 'born again' of the Spirit of God, and who have been united to their Lord and to His people in their baptism upon their own confession of faith.
- b) An applicant for membership who has not been baptised shall be interviewed by the Eldership for that purpose. And, subject to confirmation of the Church Assembly, the applicant shall be baptised and received into the membership of the church.
- c) An applicant who already has been baptised upon his own confession of faith shall be interviewed similarly, and, subject to the confirmation of the Church Assembly, shall be received into the membership of the church.
- d) A member of another Baptist Church on whose behalf a letter of transfer has been obtained shall be received into the membership of the church, subject to the confirmation of the Eldership.
- e) Each member is expected to tithe towards the work and ministry of the church; to attend when possible the worship services of the church and the church meetings; to co-operate with other members in Christian fellowship; and to do all possible to advance the Kingdom of God.
- f) A Roll shall be kept containing the names of the members of the church. The Roll shall be revised annually. A separate section of the Roll shall be kept of the names of those members who, because of distance from the church, or from another Baptist Church, cannot participate in the worship of the Church. Such members shall be known as "Non-Resident Members", and the names and addresses of the Non-Resident Members shall be forwarded each year to the General Superintendant of the Baptist Union of Victoria.
- g) If a member continues to absent himself or herself from the services of worship and the Lord's Table without sanctioned cause, or persistently conducts themselves dishonourably, such a person shall be visited by at least two Elders as appointed by the Eldership, who shall endeavour to "set him right again very gently". If the member does not respond, then the matter shall be brought before the total Eldership. If there is no further response from the member the matter shall be brought before all the Eldership and Deacons for consideration and decision.
- h) Members moving to another area are expected to unite with another Christian Church. Transfers of members in good standing shall be granted on request. A certificate of membership relating to a person's membership may be granted if it is desired.

#### **4. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH**

- a) The ordinances of the church, which are of perpetual obligation upon all the Lord's people are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- b) Baptism is administered by the authority of the Lord of the Church. It is the act in which a person who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, and in obedience, is identified with the Lord and his death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6). The mode of Baptism observed in this Church is the immersion in water of the person making a confession of his/her faith.
- c. i) The Lord's Supper is memorial "until He come" of the sacrifice of the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and, in their participation, believers can experience the reality of the Lord's presence.
- ii) All who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who are in fellowship with his people shall be invited to share in the Lord's Supper at each observance.
- iii) The church shall observe the Lord's Supper on at least one Sunday in each month.

#### **5. MISSION, MINISTRY AND OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

##### **a) Introduction**

i) The whole church fellowship has received from the Lord a commission to extend the ministry of Word, sacrament and pastoral care to all mankind, and all members in particular, are called upon to fulfil this ministry by exercising the gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon them. In this ministry all accept the responsibility to encourage and edify the whole fellowship, and at the same time, receive from the fellowship the nurture and discipline essential to their own growth in grace.

##### **b) The Eldership**

- i) The church shall set apart members in whom it perceives the requisite gifts, and who meet the qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:3-7, to be Elders.
- ii) The Eldership shall exercise a ministry of spiritual oversight and direction of the church, of temporal care of the members of the church, and of oversight- management of the church's finance and property.
- iii) In any group of Elders, God generally places the mantle of leadership on one Elder. This person is to be known as the Senior Elder or Senior Pastor. This does not exalt this Elder above the other Elders, but sets him in responsibility as "first among equals".
- iv) The number of Elders is to be determined by the Eldership and confirmed by the Church Assembly.

##### **c) The Senior Elder or Senior Pastor**

- i) The person whom the Church believes to have been called and gifted by the Lord of the Church to fulfil a ministry of leadership shall be called and set apart to the special ministry of Senior Elder or Senior Pastor.
- ii) The Senior Elder accepts this office from the Lord of the Church, and whilst being a "servant of the church", the church is not his master. The Senior Elder is the spiritual leader in the life and ministry of the church.
- iii) The Senior Elder shall be ex-officio president of all organisations of the church.
- iv) The recognition of the Senior Elder. When the position of Senior Elder is vacated, a committee shall be established to recommend a name to the Church Assembly for confirmation.
- v) Such a committee is to comprise - The Total Eldership and eight (8) additional members, (4)

of whom are to be deacons or deaconesses, and all eight (8) to be appointed by the Church Assembly.

**d) Deacons/Deaconesses**

i) The church shall set apart members in whom it perceives the requisite gifts, and who meet the qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, to be Deacons/Deaconesses.

ii) A Deacon/Deaconess is to have the responsibility, under the Eldership, for one or more "congregational ministries". A specific Elder may be attached to each Deacon for the purposes of communication, encouragement and support.

iii) Possible areas of "congregational ministries" could include-

Womens Ministries	Property
Pastoral Care	Worship
Youth	Fellowship groups
Missions	Baptisms and memberships
Evangelism	Prayer

**e) Appointment of Elders**

i) The number of Elders is to be determined by the Eldership and confirmed by the Church Assembly.

ii) The Eldership will present the names of all prospective Elders to the Church Assembly for confirmation before appointments are finalised. The confirmation process allows for both: - any written objections to the appointment to be considered by the Eldership, and - an indication of membership support in favour of the appointment.

iii) Appointments to the position of Elder will be determined by the Eldership by unanimity.

iv) The members shall, at a Church Meeting, vote by 70% confirmation the office of Elder presented to the Assembly.

v) The term in office of an Elder is not specified, but is subject to annual review by the Senior Elder.

vi) The appointment of an Elder may be terminated if one or more of the following applies:

- the Elder fails to maintain the biblical standard
- the Elder resigns

- after an annual review of each appointment by the Pastor and/or Elders, this action is mutually agreed upon.

**f) Bringing an accusation against an Elder**

i) The scriptural pattern set in 1 Timothy 5:19-20 is to be the guide when presenting an accusation against an Elder.

ii) The 'accuser', in the company of two or three witnesses, shall present their evidence before the Eldership (the 'accused Elder' shall not be in attendance).

iii) The Eldership shall fully discuss the evidence and interview the 'accused Elder'. The 'accuser' and witnesses may be invited to this meeting.

iv) The Eldership will make a resolution. This will be communicated to the 'accuser'.

v) If the accusation is founded, the Eldership should discipline the Elder.

**g) Appointment of Deacons/Deaconesses**

i) The number of Deacons/Deaconesses will vary according to the number of congregational ministries within the church.

ii) The Eldership will announce to the Church Assembly the position(s) to be administered by a Deacon/Deaconess. Following Acts 6:3, the members may nominate to the Eldership people of good repute and full of the Spirit to be appointed to the position of Deacon/Deaconess.

iii) Nominations shall be in writing, signed by the member nominating and the nominee, and may be received by the Church secretary up to 3 (three) consecutive Sundays before the time of the meeting.

iv) The names of those to be appointed to the position of Deacon/Deaconess will be determined by the Eldership by unanimity.

v) The members shall at a Church Meeting vote by 70% confirmation, the office of Deacon/Deaconess of the members above the age of eighteen (18) years and worthy of office, as shall be decided upon from time to time.

vi) The term in office of a Deacon/Deaconess is not specified, but is subject to annual review.

vii) The appointment of a Deacon/Deaconess may be terminated if one or more of the following applies:

- the Deacon/Deaconess fails to maintain the biblical standard
- the Deacon/Deaconess resigns
- after an annual review by the Eldership this action is mutually agreed upon
- the 'congregational ministry' area ceases

viii) Meetings of the Diaconate shall be held quarterly to consider the work of the Church. Special meetings may be held as deemed necessary by the Pastor or Eldership of the Church.

ix) The Diaconate shall nominate the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Church from its own number, and shall submit their names for confirmation to the Eldership and Church Assembly.

**h) Appointment of Leaders of Congregational Ministries**

i) Leaders of 'congregational ministries' shall be appointed by the Eldership in consultation with the appropriate Deacon/Deaconess.

ii) Appointments are to be reviewed annually.

**I) The Church Assembly**

i) The Church Assembly comprises all the members of the Ocean Grove Baptist Fellowship.

ii) The purpose of the meeting of the Church is for the Eldership to:

- seek confirmation in matters relating to provision of property, staff positions, finance, membership, constitutional changes.

- seek confirmation of all prospective Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses before these appointments are finalised.

- share the vision and direction of the Church.

iii) On major issues of finance and property, as well as any constitutional change, whilst unanimity is a desirable expectation, an approval of 70% of members present and voting is required.

iv) The Eldership is responsible for the calling of a meeting of the Church Assembly. A communication made at all Church Services on two consecutive Sundays shall be deemed a sufficient calling of such a meeting.

v) One such Church Assembly meeting is to be the Annual Meeting where all reports audited financial statements shall be presented. The Eldership shall submit a budget of estimated receipts and expenditure for the ensuing year. The Annual Assembly Meeting should be held in January/February.

vi) The minimum voting age is to be eighteen (18) years old.

vii) A quorum for any meeting of the Church shall be 20% of the resident and voting membership.

## **6. CHURCH FINANCE**

### **a) Offerings**

The ordinary expenses of the church shall be defrayed by the tithes and offerings from members and adherents at public worship, and by other such means as are approved by the church. Each member shall be expected to exercise the privilege of Christian stewardship.

### **b) Treasurer**

i) The Treasurer shall provide financial statements for the Eldership each month.

ii) An audited Income and Expenditure Statement shall be submitted at the Annual Church Assembly.

## **7. CHURCH ORGANISATIONS**

a) The Senior Elder shall be, ex-officio president of all auxillary organisations connected with the Church, and shall, when present, be entitled to act as Chairman of all meetings.

b) Each organisation shall have the right of recommending its officers, though, in the case of all such leaders, approval must be given by the Eldership.

c) Property purchased or used by any organisation, if it disbands or ceases to function, shall become the property of the Church.

d) Programmes, rules and each syllabus of any society, club or organisation connected with the church shall be subject to the approval of the Eldership before being published, circulated or performed.

e) No organisation shall use the name of the church without the consent of the Eldership.

## **8. CHURCH PROPERTY**

a) The church property is available for use by any organisations of the church.

b) Since church property is rate free it ought not to be let except under special circumstances.

c) Any organisation outside the local church desiring to use any part of the church property shall apply in writing to the Property Deacon/Deaconess. The property 'congregational ministry' group

shall determine the matter, subject to the approval of the Eldership.

d) All organisations, whether belonging to the church or not, using the premises are required to leave the same in order, swept, clean and tidy for next use by others.

e) Should breakages or damage to property occur, a report on the same should be made to the Property Deacon/Deaconess, and either expenses met or replacement made by the responsible party at the earliest opportunity.

f) As the premises are primarily required for public worship, devotional meetings and Sunday School, smoking is not permitted in any part of the church building.

g) No consumption of alcoholic liquor or drugs, nor gambling is permitted on the premises.

h) Costs of lighting, heating, cleaning, etc. should be met by any outside organisations using the premises. Details should be arranged by agreement. Additional freewill gifts to the church are acceptable.

## **9. GENERAL**

### **a) Pulpit Supply**

Appointments for the supply of the pulpit during the temporary absence of the Senior Elder shall be exclusively under the control of the Senior Elder and Eldership; or, if there be no Senior Elder, of the Eldership.

### **b) Alterations**

No change of these Rules shall be made except by the approval of 70% of the members present and voting at a properly constituted Church Assembly, written notice of which proposed change shall have been given to the Church Secretary not less than three (3) months prior thereto. Such proposed change shall be considered by the Eldership prior to the Church Assembly, and notice of its nature shall be given at each service on two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the said Church Assembly.