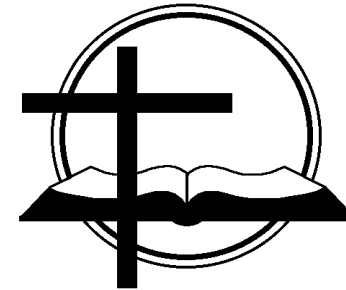


# SOUTH PERTH BAPTIST CHURCH



## CONSTITUTION

*ADOPTED 14 May 1997*  
(Amended November 2001)

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## **1. Name**

The name of the Church shall be "South Perth Baptist Church". (Hereinafter referred to as 'the Church').

## **2. Affiliation**

The Church shall be affiliated with the Baptist Union Of Western Australia Incorporated.

## **3. Basis of Faith:**

3.1 We Believe in:

- 3.1.1. The divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
- 3.1.2. The existence of one God in three distinct persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each person is wholly divine, yet there are not three gods.
- 3.1.3. The Father-the creator and sustainer of all life.
- 3.1.4. The deity and incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- 3.1.5. The reality and malignant nature of the devil.
- 3.1.6. The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all humanity.
- 3.1.7. The necessity of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 3.1.8. The virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, His perfect obedience, His shed blood, His atoning death. His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His unchanging priesthood, which have brought salvation for humanity from the penalty and power of sin.
- 3.1.9. The visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and final judgement of humanity by the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and the eternal punishment of the unrepentant.
- 3.1.10. The deity of the Holy Spirit and His work in the regeneration of humanity, and in the sanctification of the believer through His indwelling in daily life.
- 3.1.11. The equality and gifting for service of each believer.
- 3.1.12. Obedience to the Scriptural pattern in the practices of Baptism and in the Lord's Supper.
  - 3.1.12.1. Baptism being the immersion of believers upon their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a symbol of their fellowship in His death, burial and resurrection.
  - 3.1.12.2. The Lord's Supper being a memorial until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **4. Aims and Purposes:**

4.1 We Seek:

- 4.1.1. To worship God through the Lord Jesus Christ, our saviour and mediator and to honour Him with ourselves, our talents and our gifts, through our fellowship with one another.
- 4.1.2. To study the inspired Word of God that we might come to know and do more fully God's will for us, both individually and as a Church.
- 4.1.3. To nurture Christians in an endeavour to deepen their spiritual experience so that in their attitudes and by their actions they will reflect the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4.1.4. To maintain a local centre of evangelism and to bring others into a vital relationship with Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord.
- 4.1.5. To provide a 'spiritual home for the community and a place for Christian education.
- 4.1.6. To support home and overseas evangelism, prayerfully, financially, and practically.

## **5. Church Government**

5.1. The Lord Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the supreme head of the Church. The government of the Church shall be vested in the local body of believers who shall have full power to manage its own affairs as led by the Holy Spirit and instructed by the Scriptures.

5.2. Notwithstanding this principle of autonomy, the Church recognises the need for mutual counsel and interdependence with the Baptist Union of Western Australia Incorporated, and, where possible, shall support and participate in the activities of the Baptist Union.

5.3 The Church will also endeavour, where possible, to cooperate with and support the ministries and evangelistic activities of other Christian bodies in our area as we, together, seek to fulfil the Great Commission.

## 6. Membership

6.1 Recognising the Biblical teaching that all Christians are 'members of Christ', and therefore members of Christ's Church through their union with Him, the South Perth Baptist Church consists of those believers who have joined together as partners to further the kingdom of God through the life and ministries of the local fellowship.

### 6.2 Eligibility for Membership of the Church

- 6.2.1. Being born again of the Holy Spirit
- 6.2.2. Being Baptised, normally by immersion as believers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 6.2.3. Giving evidence of their faith in their daily life.
- 6.2.4. Expressing a desire to work for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ as 'a partner and fellow worker in the Gospel' (Philippians 1:5).
- 6.2.5. Willing to accept the Basis of Faith and to abide by this Constitution.

### 6.3 Privileges and Obligations of Membership

- 6.3.1. Members are expected to live in accordance with the principles of the Scriptures.
- 6.3.2. Members are expected to support the ministry, and maintain the fellowship of the Church, especially by:
  - 6.3.2.1. regular prayer for the Church, its people, and its ministries.
  - 6.3.2.2. attendance at times of corporate worship and the Lord's Supper.
  - 6.3.2.3. exercising their gifts in the life of the Church through engaging in some definite form of service for Christ.
  - 6.3.2.4. sharing in the government of the Church through participation in the Members' meetings.
  - 6.3.2.5. conscientious financial support of the life and ministries of the Church as God's provision enables.
- 6.3.3. Members are expected to encourage one another as we seek to live for Christ and as we seek to serve Christ in each of these areas.

### 6.4 Admission to Membership

- 6.4.1. A person desiring to join actively in the life and ministry of the Church through Church membership, shall normally make application to the Pastor or Secretary. Thereafter, the Pastor or a Deacon and one other member shall interview the applicant, making clear to the applicant the purpose, ministry, and vision of the Church, to ascertain their understanding, acceptance, and desire to work towards fulfilling that purpose, ministry and vision. This will include an understanding and acceptance of the Church's Basis of Faith and Constitution.
- 6.4.2. A report confirming the applicants eligibility, and their understanding of the purpose, ministry, and vision of the Church will be given to the following Members' Meeting.
- 6.4.3. in the case of an applicant from another Baptist Church, a letter of recommendation from that Church may also be presented to a Members' Meeting.

### 6.5 Admission of those who are unbaptised, or baptised by a method other than immersion.

- 6.5.1. Any person desiring baptism, but who is prevented by some cause beyond his/her control may be accepted provided all other requirements and steps are fulfilled.
- 6.5.2. Any person baptised by a method other than immersion may be accepted upon:
  - 6.5.2.1. Their acceptance of the Basis of Faith.
  - 6.5.2.2. Their acknowledgment that their baptism or confirmation was a mature response of faith and that a public declaration of that faith has been given.
  - 6.5.2.3. Their instruction by the Pastor in the theological reasons for believer's baptism by immersion, and their acceptance that this method is the practice and belief of this Church.
  - 6.5.2.4. Their willingness to encourage new believers to follow Christ in believer's baptism by immersion, and their willingness to refrain from encouraging any other form of baptism within the Church fellowship.

6.6 **Members who have theological persuasions additional to the Basis of Faith** will refrain from forcing these theological persuasions among the congregation.

### 6.7 Membership List

- 6.7.1 The Church Membership List shall be kept in two or more sections:

- 14.1.1. The free will offerings of the Members and congregation, and by any other method decided upon by the Members of the Church, provided that the method is not in conflict with the spirit and teaching of the Scriptures.

- 14.1.2. Interest on funds invested.

14.2 The property and assets of the Church and all monies or income of the Church shall be used solely for the furtherance of the aims and purposes of the Church and no part shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly to the members of the Church except as a payment in good faith for services rendered or for expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.

## 15. Property

- 15.1. Church buildings and property shall not be occupied or used by persons or organisations for any purpose except where prior consent has been obtained from the Deacons or Church Members' Meeting.
- 15.2. No land or building shall be bought, sold, disposed of, or mortgaged in any way, without the approval of a Special Church Members' Meeting.
- 15.3. The proceeds derived from the sale, lease, mortgage, or pledge or other encumbrance shall be applied and devoted in such manner as the Church may deem best fitted to secure the furtherance of the objects of the Church and the propagation of its principles.
- 15.4. The Diaconate shall ensure that such insurance as is deemed necessary shall be taken out in the name of the Church.

## 16. Dissolution of the Church

16.1. The Church may be dissolved by a resolution approved by the Members at a Special Church Members' Meeting called for the purpose, provided at least three months notice of the proposal has been given. In the event of such a resolution being passed, persons appointed by the Church shall take all necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church. After payment of all debts and liabilities, any surplus assets are to be distributed in accordance with a decision of the 'Special Church Members' Meeting in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Church, and in the event of no decision being made by the Church, then the Baptist Union of Western Australia Incorporated, may make such a decision of behalf of the Church.

## 17. Changes to the Constitution

- 17.1 No change shall be made to this constitution except by the approval of Members at a Special Church Members' Meeting.
- 17.2 Any proposed alteration or addition shall be given in writing as a Notice of Motion to the diaconate and copies of the proposed changes shall be distributed to all Members not less than one month before the date of such meeting.

This Constitution was based upon the model recommended by the Baptist Union of Western Australia. It was adopted by the South Perth Baptist Church on 14 May 1997.  
(Amendments have been made in May 1998 and November 2001)

11.5 The meetings shall normally be chaired by the Pastor, but may be chaired by such other person as the Diaconate may appoint.

11.6. Issues of a sensitive nature should not be discussed outside the Diaconate.

## 12. Quorum and Voting

### 12.1 Quorum

12.1.1. For Church Members' Meetings (including the Annual General Meeting) this shall be one third (1/3) of the Resident Members' List.

12.1.2. For a Special Church Members' Meeting, a quorum shall be one half (1/2) of the Resident Members' List.

### 12.2 Voting

12.2.1. At an **ordinary Church Members' Meeting** (including the Annual General Meeting) a majority of **one half plus one** (1/2 + 1) of the Resident Members present and eligible will be required to approve a decision, except in the matter of the **election of Church Officers**, where a **three fourths** (3/4) **majority** will apply.

12.2.2. A **Special Church Members' Meeting** will be required to decide the following matters, and in each case a **three fourth** {3/4} **majority** of Resident Members present and eligible to vote will apply:

12.2.2.1. Election of removal of a Pastor

12.2.2.2. Removal of a Church Officer

12.2.2.3. Discipline of a Member

12.2.2.4. Buying, selling, mortgaging, or leasing of a property, or some other major financial liability.

12.2.2.5. Alteration to the Constitution

12.2.2.6. Dissolution of the Church

12.2.2.7. Other matters as requested by the membership.

12.3. An abstention in voting, by those present and eligible to vote, will be counted as a vote "against" the motion.

12.4 If requested by any Member present, and agreed to by the meeting, voting shall be by secret ballot.

### 12.5 Absentee Voting

12.5.1. In the matter of the election of a Church Officer, Election of a pastor, or buying, selling, mortgaging, or leasing of a property, a resident Member may apply to the Diaconate for a written absentee vote to be presented to the meeting. This will apply where extreme and exceptional circumstances prevent attendance and the Diaconate is satisfied that the situation warrants this action, and the applicant has an adequate understanding of the implications of the issue under review.

12.5.2-The Church Meeting will have the final right to accept or decline the vote.

12.5.3. Absentee votes will be used for voting only, and will not affect the quorum requirements of the meeting.

## 13. Organisations and Departments of the Church

13.1 Organisations and departments must have the approval of the Church, and shall report to the Annual General Meeting.

13.2 A principal office bearer of each department and organisation shall be a Member of the Church.

13.3 All organisations and departments of the Church shall be subject to the control of the Church in all their operations. The appointment of the officers of such organisations and departments shall normally be approved by the Church.

13.4 All such office bearers, together with others appointed for specific duties by a Church Members' Meeting or by the Diaconate, shall be accountable to the Church for the duties of their several offices.

13.5. Where separate books of account are kept by the organisations and departments, these shall be submitted to the Treasurer prior to the Annual General Meeting.

13.6. Church representatives to outside organisations must be approved by the Church at a Church Members' Meeting.

## 14. Finances

14.1 The Church's ministry shall be supported by

6.7.1.1. **The Resident Members' List:** The Resident Members list shall be maintained by the Secretary.

6.7.1.2 Members absent from the fellowship and who are unable to transfer to another Baptist Church may have their names transferred to the **Non-Resident Members' List**.

Upon their return and rejoining in the life and ministry of the Church, they may apply to have their names returned immediately to the Resident Members' List.

6.7.2. All Lists shall be revised as and when necessary but at least annually at the Annual Members' Meeting after consideration by the Deacons. For the purpose of a quorum at a Members' Meeting the members on the Resident List only shall be used.

## 6.8 Transfer to other Baptist Churches

Any member in good standing who desires to join another Baptist Church shall, upon request, have a letter forwarded to the Church concerned.

## 6.9 Discipline

6.9.1. If any member is absent from the services of the Church for a three month period without good reason known to the Pastor or Deacons, inquiry shall be made into the matter. In the event of any such inquiry providing no satisfactory result the matter shall be referred to the Diaconate for such action as may be decided upon. If deemed necessary the Diaconate may recommend to the Church that the Member's name be removed from the Resident List.

6.9.2. In the event of any allegation of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a member, the Pastor and/or Deacons shall make private inquiry into the matter, with a view to restoration.

6.9.2.1. If such allegation shall be shown to be false, the accuser shall be approached by the Pastor and/or Deacons in order to seek reconciliation between the accuser and the one falsely accused.

6.9.2.2. If, after inquiry, they deem such course necessary, they shall present a report to the Church meeting.

6.9.2.2.1. The Church will take such action as is deemed necessary only after prayerful consideration.

6.9.2.2.2- The suspension or expulsion of a member of the Church shall be resorted to only if all other efforts to bring about a restoration have proven unsuccessful. Voting on such action shall be by secret ballot at a Special Members' Meeting.

6.9.2.3. Anonymous accusations will not be acted upon or tolerated.

6.9.3. Private offences shall be dealt with in accordance with the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ as given in Matthew 18:15-17.

## 7. Ordinances

7.1. The ordinance of Baptism shall be administered by the Church normally through the Pastor, or as otherwise determined by the Diaconate, or Church Members' Meeting.

7.2 The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be open to all those professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be observed in at least one worship service in each calendar month.

7.3 Although Dedication Services are not a Church ordinance, a service may be conducted whereby children of Christian homes are acknowledged as part of the Church family. Such a service should include

7.3.1. an act of thanksgiving to God for the gift of the child,

7.3.2. a call to acknowledge the respective responsibilities of parents and Church towards the spiritual, physical and emotional training of the child

7.3.3. the presentation of the child to the Lord.

## 8. Church Officers and Their Appointment

8.1 The Church officers shall be the Diaconate and, subject to any decision of the Church Members' Meeting, shall have the oversight of the affairs of the Church.

### 8.2 Pastor

8.2.1. The choice and appointment of a Pastor (or Pastors) is vested in the membership of the Church.

8.2.2. Such a Pastor shall be one who:

8.2.2.1. has been baptised by immersion as a believer.

8.2.2.2. meets the New Testament requirements for Elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9).

8.2.2.2. subscribes to the Constitution of the Church.

8.2.3. The Pastor (or Pastors) shall be responsible for the Pastoral ministry of the church, and, with the diaconate, for the oversight of the church.

**8.2.4. The Pastor is expected to:**

8.2.4.1. Preach and teach God's word.

8.2.4.2. Encourage and train members in evangelism.

8.2.4.3. Encourage the caring ministry.

8.2.4.4. Prepare God's people for works of service by encouraging the use and development of their gifts (Ephesians 4:12)

**8.2.5. Appointment of a Pastor**

8.2.5.1. When it becomes necessary to consider the appointment or reappointment of a Pastor for the Church, the Church shall select from the membership a Call Committee, which shall make the necessary inquiries and bring forward a recommendation to the Church as soon as is reasonably possible.

8.2.5.2. Any member shall be entitled to submit in writing a duly signed proposal for the consideration of the Call Committee, but the Call Committee shall not be bound in any way to act upon such proposal.

8.2.5.3. The recommendation of the Call Committee shall be considered at a Special Members' Meeting.

8.2.5.4. The Call Committee shall put forward only one name at a time and no invitation shall be sent unless the members of the church approve the recommendation by secret ballot.

8.2.6. The term of service between Church and Pastor shall be terminated by three months notice on either side, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

8.2.7. The Pastor shall become a member of the Church at the time of his induction into the pastorate.

8.2.8. The Pastor shall normally chair all Church Members' Meetings, and will be ex-officio on all committees.

**8.3 Deacons**

8.3.1. The Deacons, with the Pastor, shall be considered the spiritual leaders of the Church and as such are expected to set a good example to the fellowship in all things.

8.3.2. Deacons shall:

8.3.2.1. Be elected from members of the Church on the Resident Members List who are aged 21 years and over.

8.3.2.2. Normally have been in membership with the church six months prior to the date of the meeting at which elections take place.

8.2.2.3. Meet the New Testament requirements for Deacons (Acts 6:3:1 Timothy 3: 8-13)

8.3.3. Deacons shall be elected at the Annual Church Members' Meeting and at such other times as may be required.

8.3.4. The number of Deacons for the ensuing year shall be not more than nine (9), and shall be decided by a resolution of the Members at the Members' Meeting prior to the Annual Church Members' Meeting.

8.3.5. Deacons shall normally be elected for a period of two years, and on completion of their term of office shall be eligible for re-election.

8.3.6. Nominations shall be made in writing and shall be signed by the proposer and countersigned by the nominee. The closing date for nominations shall be the Saturday prior to the date of the meeting at which elections shall take place.

Nominations shall be advised to the Members not later than the Sunday prior to the date of the meeting at which elections shall take place. Voting shall be by ballot.

8.3.7. A Deacon elected at a meeting other than at the Annual General Meeting shall hold office until the second following Annual General Meeting.

8.3.8. A nominated Deacon shall be ex-officio on each Committee to liaise with that Committee and keep the Diaconate informed of the progress of the Committee.

**8.4. Secretary and Treasurer**

8.4.1. The Secretary is responsible for:

8.4.1.1. keeping a correct record of all business transacted by the Church.

8.4.1.2. conducting general correspondence.

8.4.1.3. submitting an annual report to the Annual General Meeting.

8.4.2. The Treasurer is responsible for:

8.4.2.1. receiving and keeping account of all monies entrusted to him/her by the Church,

8.4.2.2. banking all monies.

8.4.2.3. paying all accounts by cheque as directed by the Church.

8.4.2.4. presenting a financial statement on the following occasions:

8.4.2.4.1. To the monthly Deacons' meeting.

8.4.2.4.2. To the quarterly Church Members' Meeting.

8.4.2.4.3. To the Annual General Meeting.

8.4.2.5. presenting an audited annual statement of income and expenditure to a Church Members' Meeting.

**8.5. Removal from office of office bearers**

8.5.1. At any time a Special Church Members' Meeting may be called to review the appointment of a Pastor, Deacon, or any other office bearer. Such Special Church Members' Meetings shall have the power to remove any office bearer from office by passing a resolution to that effect.

**9. Conduct of Church Business**

9.1. The Diaconate shall be responsible for carrying out all the duties which have been delegated to it: for the administration of Church funds, and shall be responsible to the Church for the proper performance of its responsibilities.

9.2. The financial reports and financial records of the Church shall be audited annually by a suitably qualified person who is to be appointed by the Church,

**10. Church Members' Meetings**

10.1. The members shall meet at least quarterly to transact the business of the Church.

10.2. Special Church Members' Meetings may be convened by:

10.2.1. the Pastor and Secretary

10.2.2. the decision of a Church Members' meeting

10.2.3. the request in writing of at least three members. Such request shall be submitted to the Secretary or Pastor setting out the purpose for which the meeting is to be convened.

10.3. At least two Sunday's notification must be given of Church Members' Meetings and in the case of Special Church Meetings, the nature of the business to be transacted must be included in the notice.

10.4. The Pastor shall normally chair Church Members' Meetings, but the meeting may appoint such other person as it sees fit.

10.5. At all Church Members' Meetings, only members who are aged 18 years and over shall be eligible to vote.

10.6. If requested by any member present, and agreed to by the meeting, voting shall be by secret ballot.

10.7. Issues of a sensitive nature should not be discussed outside the fellowship.

10.8. Non-Members may be associated with the Church Members' Meetings, and may participate in the discussion, but without voting rights.

**11. Diaconate Meetings.**

11.1. The Diaconate shall comprise:

11.1.1. The Pastor

11.1.2. The Deacons

11.1.3. The Secretary

11.1.4. The Treasurer

11.2. The Diaconate shall normally meet monthly after reasonable notice of such meeting has been given.

11.3. Two thirds of the members of the Diaconate shall form a quorum.

11.4. All matters considered at Diaconate meetings shall be decided by a majority vote of those present.