

Strand Baptist Church Constitution (adopted 24th October 2012)

1. NAME

The name and designation of the Church shall be the STRAND BAPTIST CHURCH

2. MEMBERSHIP OF BAPTIST UNION

The STRAND BAPTIST CHURCH (Hereinafter styled "SBC") shall be in membership with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

3. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The SBC acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Supreme Head of the Church, undertakes to manage all its affairs according to New Testament teaching and recognizes the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters of faith and conduct.

4. CHURCH OBJECTIVE

4.1. All the activities of the Church shall be done to the glory of God and not for personal gain or profit.

4.2. The objective of the Church shall be:

- ① To glorify the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church.
- ① To proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and to encourage and support the proclamation of that Gospel (in accordance with Matthew 28:18-20) to the ends of the earth.
- ① To provide instruction and fellowship for believers, seeking to build them up to the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13)

4.3 Method of Functioning:

The Church shall exist as a legal entity in its own right, separate from its members.

The Church shall continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office-bearers.

5. STATEMENTS OF FAITH

5.1 The SBC Believes:

5.1.1 in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original writings as fully inspired of God, and accepts them as the final authority for faith and life (II Timothy 3:15 - 17; John 15:3 and 20:31).

5.1.2 in one eternal triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (I John 5:7; I Timothy 1:17 and 3:16; Matthew 28:19).

5.1.3 that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, true God and true man. (Luke 1:26 - 35 and 2:6 - 14; Matthew 1:18 - 25)

5.1.4 that God created mankind male and female, in His own image; that man sinned and thereby incurred the penalty of death, physical and spiritual; that all human beings inherit a sinful nature (Genesis 1:26 and 5:1; Romans 3:23 and 5:12 - 21).

5.1.5 that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, as a substitutionary sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood (Romans 5:8 - 11; I Peter 2:24; Romans 3:23 - 26).

5.1.6 in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate (Matthew 28:1 - 10; Luke 24:1 - 12; 24:39 - 43; Acts 1:3 and 9; Hebrews 4:14 - 16; 7:23 - 28; 9:24).

5.1.7 in the person of the Holy Spirit, His regenerating work and abiding presence in every Christian (John 15:26; 3:5-8; 16:7-14; Acts 2:2 - 4; 1 John 5:7-10).

5.1.8 that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God (John 3:1-21; Titus 3:5-7; Acts 2:38, 39).

- 5.1.9. that all Christians are called to a life of holiness and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and for service for Him, for which we are exhorted to be "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:25 - 27; I Thessalonians 4:3, 7, 8; 5:23, 24; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:18).
- 5.1.10. in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and the eternal punishment of those who have rejected or neglected the offer of salvation (Acts 24:15, 16; John 5:28, 29; I Corinthians 15: 35 - 44; Matthew 25:46; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
- 5.1.11 that as the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme and only Head of the Church Universal that He appointed two ordinances - BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER - to be observed by all Christians as acts of confession and communion, obedience and consecration and as a witness to the central facts of the Christian faith. Only those who partake of them worthily shall receive wholesome effects or benefit and they that receive them unworthily will receive unto themselves the discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 3:13-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29).
- 5.1.12 that baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as an outward sign of an inward work wrought by the Holy Spirit in the believer; and is symbolic of the believer's identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection to a new life (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 16:33; Luke 7:29, 30; Romans 6:1-11).
- 5.1.13 that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of bread and wine as symbols of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood in remembrance of His sacrificial death until He comes (I Corinthians 10:16-22; 11:23-24).
- 5.1.14 that the one true Church is the whole company of those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, thus redeemed by Him and regenerated by the Holy Spirit; and that the local church on earth should take its character from this concept of the church spiritual and therefore, that the new birth and personal confession of Christ are essentials of Church membership. (II Corinthians 5:17-18; Romans 12:1, 2; James 4:4; I John 5:18-20; Romans 10:9-10)
- 5.1.15. in the priesthood of all believers giving each believer direct and unmediated access to Christ as the Head of the Church (John 10:14-15, 27; I Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:5, 6; 5:10; 20:6).
- 5.1.16 in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:30, 31; 24:42; Acts 1:9 - 11; I Thessalonians 4:14 - 18; Revelation 22:12).
- 5.1.17 that God has sanctioned marriage between a man and a woman, therefore we believe in heterosexual relationships between a natural man and a natural woman within the confines of lawful matrimony. Adherence to this stated principle of sexual behaviour is an inherent requirement for membership with the SBC (Genesis 2:20; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:2).
- 5.2 The SBC further believes in the following distinctive Baptist Principles:
- 5.2.1 The Direct Lordship of Christ over every believer and over the local church. By this we understand that Christ exercises His authority over the believer and the local church directly, without delegating it to another.
- 5.2.2. The Church as the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The local church, being a manifestation of the universal church, is a community of believers in a particular place where the Word of God is preached and the ordinances of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are observed. It is fully autonomous and remains so notwithstanding responsibilities it may accept by voluntary association.
- 5.2.3. Believers Baptism as an act of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and a sign of personal repentance, faith and regeneration; it consists of the immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 5.2.4. The Congregational Principle, namely that each member has the privilege and responsibility to use his/her gifts and abilities to participate fully in the life of the church. We recognise that God gifts His church with Overseers (who are called Pastors or Elders) whose primary function is to lead in a spirit of servanthood, to equip and provide spiritual oversight, and Deacons whose primary function is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Church. This principle further recognises that each member should participate in the appointment of the Church's leaders, and that a constituted church meeting, subject to the direct Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture, is the highest court of authority for the local church.
- 5.2.5 The Priesthood Of All Believers, by which we understand that each Christian has direct access to God through Christ our High Priest, and shares with Him in His work of reconciliation. This involves intercession, worship, faithful service and bearing witness to Jesus Christ, even to the ends of the earth.

- 5.2.6 The principle of Religious Liberty, namely, that no individual should be coerced either by the State or by any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith. The right of private conscience is to be respected. For each believer this means the right to interpret the Scriptures responsibly and to act in the light of his conscience.
- 5.2.7 The principle of Separation of Church and State in that, in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective natures and functions. The Church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or practice, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community, and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel and for demonstrating and making known God's will and care for all mankind.
- 5.2.8 The above Statement of Faith and Baptist Principles shall be agreed to and signed by all members of the SBC. Each member shall be given a copy of these Statements of Faith, which shall be concluded with the following certificate to be signed and dated by each member namely:-

"I, the undersigned, freely and voluntarily subscribe to the basic principles set out in these Statements of Faith and understand and consent to the fact that should I violate such principles, I may be required by the Executive to either accept their counsel and discipline, or forfeit my membership of Strand Baptist Church."

6. ORDINANCES

The SBC shall observe in their New Testament simplicity, Baptism and the Lord's Supper as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ.

6.1. Baptism

The Minister shall be free to admit to baptism by immersion any who so desire to confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, provided that the Minister, in consultation with the Elders, have satisfied themselves regarding the candidates' personal salvation. Further references to baptism in this Constitution will be understood as baptism by immersion.

6.2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a month or at such times as the Church shall decide. Participation at the Lord's Table shall be open to all who profess personal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SBC

The membership shall consist of:

- 7.1 Those whose names appear on the SBC register at the date of the adoption of this Constitution.
- 7.2 Those who, desiring membership, have given evidence of their personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have confessed that faith by baptism and have been accepted by the SBC according to Section 8.

8. ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

- 8.1. Persons who have declared their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have confessed the same in baptism who desire to join the SBC shall make application by completing the required Application Form and handing it to the Minister or any one on the Executive of the SBC.
- 8.2. Thereafter two members of the Executive shall interview the Applicant and enquire whether the applicant is sound in faith and agrees with our Statements of Faith found in Section 5 of this Constitution, and that they are in good standing in both the community and any other church they may have previously attended. The two Executive members shall then report back to the Executive who will consider the application.
- 8.3. Once the Executive is satisfied with the applicant, the applicant's name shall publicly appear on the church notice board for a period of at least two (2) Sundays prior to a properly constituted Special Church meeting. Members of the SBC must be sufficiently informed of the posting of all the names of the applicants on the church notice board, and if after the two (2) Sundays there are no valid objections to the applications, the persons concerned will be read out as accepted into membership at the Special Church meeting.
- 8.4. Applications for membership by baptised members of other Baptist Churches shall be dealt with as under Section 8 and a letter of reference shall be obtained (if possible) from the Church in which their membership stands.

9. PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

- 9.1. Under the Divine Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the final authority and responsibility in all matters touching the life and service of the SBC rest with the whole membership. Therefore, every member shall

be entitled, and expected, to attend all business meetings, unless prevented by some reasonable cause, and to exercise his or her vote for the welfare of the whole SBC in the spirit of prayer and love.

- 9.2. Every member shall be entitled to the services of the Minister/s and other officers of the SBC in ministering to the sick, the aged, the dying and the bereaved. They shall be entitled to the services the SBC can render in the event of a bereavement, or the dedication of an infant.
- 9.3. Marriages shall be solemnized in the SBC at the discretion of the Minister in keeping with Clause 5.1.17.
- 9.4. Members shall be expected to support the ministry and maintain the fellowship of the SBC, especially by prayer, attendance at the services, and conscientiously and cheerfully giving of themselves and their financial support (Proverbs 3:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Romans 12:1).
- 9.5. It is the special privilege and duty of members to witness for Christ and seek to win others for the Lord and to introduce strangers to the SBC.

10. LETTER OF REFERENCE

- 10.1. Any member in good standing who desires to join another Baptist Church shall be given a letter of reference upon application from the member or the Church concerned.
- 10.2. Any member in good standing who desires to join another Protestant Church other than Baptist shall be given a letter of introduction upon request of the member or the church concerned.
- 10.3. Where necessary, in order to avoid undesirable delay, a letter of reference may be forwarded by the Executive.

11. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- 11.1. If any member is absent from the services of the SBC for a period of three (3) months without a good reason known to the Minister and/or Executive, the Executive shall make inquiry into the matter. In the event of such an inquiry producing no satisfactory results, the name of the member concerned may be reported to a Special Church Meeting for such action as the members present may decide after due consideration and prayer.
- 11.2. Any allegation of unworthy conduct being brought against a member, the Executive shall make inquiry into the matter. After they have given the matter prayerful consideration, their recommendation shall be conveyed to a Special Church meeting for a decision. If so desired by a two third (2/3) majority of SBC members present and eligible to vote, a member may be suspended or removed from the roll of membership, whereupon he/she shall cease to be a member of the SBC. The suspension or termination of membership of a member of the SBC shall be resorted to only if there is no evidence of repentance and all efforts to bring about restoration have proved unsuccessful.
- 11.3. Members thus suspended or removed from the roll may be restored to full membership upon showing evidence of repentance and of compliance with the terms and conditions laid down in Section 8 hereof.
- 11.4. If any allegation of unworthy conduct is brought against a member of the Executive, the Executive shall make prayerful enquiry into the matter. Their recommendation shall be conveyed to a Special Church meeting for appropriate action.
- 11.5. In purely personal matters, members shall be expected to act in accordance with the Lord's injunction recorded in Matthew 18:15 - 17.

12. THE MINISTER/S

The choice and appointment of a Minister or Assistant Minister is vested in the membership of the SBC. If and when it is necessary to appoint a Minister the procedure shall be as follows:

- 12.1. A Special Church Meeting, called for the purpose, shall appoint not fewer than four (4) members (other than members of the Executive) and preferably including representatives from the various ministries of the SBC, especially the men's, woman's, youth and Sunday School departments, to act with the Executive as a Call Committee.
- 12.2. Their duty shall be to consult with the Ministerial Settlements Committee of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and to make the necessary inquiries.
- 12.3. Thereafter the Call Committee shall make a recommendation to the SBC as soon as possible. The Call Committee shall put before the SBC only one name at a time.
- 12.4. A prospective Minister or Assistant Minister must appear either on the Fully Accredited List or on the Probationers List of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, and upon his accepting the provisions of this Constitution, a copy of which shall be supplied for his perusal, an invitation shall be extended to him. Should such a prospect not appear on the said lists, application for ministerial status with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa must be made.
- 12.5. The Call Committee's recommendation shall be considered at a Special Church Meeting called for that purpose, and no invitation shall be forwarded unless at least eighty five percent (85%) of the members present and eligible to vote, vote in favour.
- 12.6. Other Terms

- 12.6.1 The "Code of Pastoral Ethics" of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa shall be accepted and signed by the Minister.
- 12.6.2 A letter of appointment including the duties of the Minister and the conditions of service shall be prepared and upon acceptance, signed by the Minister(s).
- 12.6.3 A "Personnel Committee" shall be appointed by the SBC to communicate terms and conditions of service with the Minister(s).
- (a). They shall conduct an annual appraisal with the Minister(s) concerning their ministry.
 - (b). They shall take care of the well-being of the Minister(s) and shall address tensions, convey any affirmation and if necessary issue warnings to the Minister(s) with regard to their ministerial duties.
 - (c). The Minister(s) has/have the right of appeal to a properly constituted church meeting. This committee shall attempt to deal with any ministerial grievances of the SBC or Minister, failing which Section 22 of this constitution shall be invoked.
 - (d). The Personnel Committee shall familiarise themselves with the requirements of the South African Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 as amended, when dealing with the Minister(s) especially with regard to the termination of employment by the SBC.
 - (e). The Personnel Committee shall also be responsible for letters of appointment and all other responsibilities as outlined above for the Minister and also for all employees or any outsourced subcontractors of the SBC.
- 12.6.4 The retirement age of a Minister shall be upon turning sixty five (65) years of age. Thereafter the SBC may wish to extend the Minister's ministry on an annual basis

12.7 The Minister or Assistant Minister shall become a member of the SBC as soon as convenient after his appointment.

13. THE EXECUTIVE

- 13.1 The Minister, Elders and Deacons shall comprise the Executive.
- 13.2 Anyone who has been a member of the SBC for six months or more shall be eligible for nomination to the Executive.
- 13.3. The Executive shall act as generally or specifically directed by the SBC at any General Meeting, and shall be accountable to the SBC for all tasks delegated to it and for the proper administration of all SBC funds.
- 13.4. The Elders shall meet regularly and frequently, weekly if possible. The Diaconate shall meet once a month except December. The Combined Executive shall have a minimum of two meetings in the weeks preceding the Annual General Meeting and the Half Yearly Meeting.
- 13.5 Fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of the Executive shall constitute a quorum.
- 13.6 At its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, the Executive shall appoint a Chairperson and Treasurer, preferably from its own number, or a member of the SBC. By virtue of his office, the Minister may be the Chairperson of the Executive if he so desires.
- 13.7 The Chairperson at any Executive Meeting shall have a casting vote, but not a deliberative vote.
- 13.8 An Executive member who fails to attend three Executive meetings in succession without an adequate reason shall automatically cease to be an Executive member and shall be informed to that effect in writing by the Chairperson.
- 13.9 Should a vacancy occur among the Deacons during a term of office, a substitute may be co-opted for the remaining portion of the term of office.
- 13.10 Any proposal shall be carried by majority vote, by show of hands, except that at the request of any member, the Chairperson shall order a ballot.
- 13.11 The Executive may appoint such sub-committees as may be necessary.
- 13.12 In the event of the SBC not being able to meet its criteria with regard to Clause 13:1, Clauses 13.1-11 shall be suspended for not more than a year at a time and an interim Leadership Team of not less than five members shall be elected, comprising of respected persons in the church who have the confidence of at least sixty percent (60%) of those present and entitled to vote. A Chairperson shall be appointed from the Leadership Team.

14. DEACONS

- 14.1 From its membership of the age of eighteen (18) years and over, and in keeping with Section 13.2, the SBC shall elect at its Annual General Meeting as many Deacons as may be necessary to conduct the SBC's affairs and who shall be considered in the light of 1Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons shall serve for a period of two (2) years and may be eligible for re-election.
- 14.2 Not less than three (3) consecutive Sundays prior to the Annual General Meeting, or Special Church Meeting called for the purpose, the Executive shall advise the members of the number of vacancies on the Executive and call for nominations to fill such vacancies. Nominations shall be in writing and shall be signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee, and shall be in the hands of the

Executive one week before the Annual General Meeting. Nominations so received shall be published on the Church notice board on the Sunday preceding the meeting.

- 14.3. The election of Deacons shall be by ballot, and no nominee, including any unopposed nominee, shall be elected unless he/she receives seventy five percent (75%) or more of the votes of the members present and eligible to vote.
- 14.4. Each member eligible to vote shall be entitled to as many votes as there are vacancies, provided however, that only one vote may be cast in favour of each nominee.

15. ELDERS

- 15.1. The SBC may appoint to the office of Elder men recognized as gifted by the Holy Spirit for this office and who satisfy the requirements as detailed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- 15.2. Church members may submit in confidence suggestions for the office of Elder to the Minister or Elders of the SBC, without obtaining prior consent from the member concerned to maintain confidentiality. Once the Minister and Elders have considered the recommendation/s, the proposer should be notified of the decision. If there is no Minister or Elder in office, suggestions should be submitted to the Executive.
- 15.3. After the Minister and Elders have discussed recommendations for eldership with the Executive, they shall recommend to the Annual General Meeting such members as they consider suitable for the appointment to this office.
- 15.4. Appointment of any nominee shall be by eighty five percent (85%) of the vote of the members present at the Annual General Meeting and an Elder shall hold office for a period of three (3) years and may be eligible for re-election. The nominations shall be published on the Church notice board on the Sunday preceding the meeting.

16. DUTIES OF THE MINISTER(S), ELDERS AND DEACONS

- 16.1. It shall be the duty of the Minister to watch over the spiritual interests of the SBC, preach the Word, administer the ordinances, shepherd the flock and take charge of the religious services and spiritual well-being of the SBC. By virtue of his office he shall be a member of the Executive and an *ex officio* member of all committees, and shall have full voice with the other members of the official committees of the SBC. He shall support and equip members of all SBC ministries.
- 16.2. It shall be the duty of the Deacons to direct the administrative affairs of the SBC, and assist the Minister in the administration of the ordinances. They shall consult with and assist the Minister in the Caring Ministry of the SBC
- 16.3. The Elders shall consult with and assist the Minister in the spiritual oversight of the SBC. They shall exercise discipline where needed. It shall also be their duty to co-operate with the Minister in shepherding the flock, "tenderly watching for their souls as those who must give account", "striving to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus", healing in so far as possible all differences, giving counsel and comfort to the poor, the sick and the afflicted, keeping order in the public assemblies of the SBC, making provision for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of the Minister. They shall also co-operate with the Minister in conducting the examination of those who seek membership with the SBC on confession of their faith.
- 16.4. It shall be the function of an Elder to give every support and assistance to the Minister in the execution of his pastoral duties in accordance with I Peter 5:1-4.

17. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

- 17.1. The SBC shall function through the medium of its Executive (as defined in Sections 13), who shall act as generally and specifically directed by the SBC in General Meetings, or in accordance with regulations formed by the SBC in General Meetings.
- 17.2. The Executive shall be accountable to the SBC for the proper carrying out of all duties delegated to them, and for the proper administration of funds as approved by the SBC.
- 17.3. The Executive may, after consultation with the Treasurer, spend an amount equal to one percent (1%) of the budget in order to meet urgent incidental expenditure. Detail of this over expenditure shall be reported to the SBC membership at their next General or Annual General Meeting. Any expenditure greater than one percent (1%) of the budget will require approval at a Special Meeting of the SBC members called for that purpose.

18. MINISTRIES

- 18.1. Leaders of the various ministries, such as the men's, woman's, worship and Sunday School departments, must be members of the SBC and approved by the Executive.
- 18.2. All ministries conducted by the SBC shall operate within a Ministry Policy Document drawn up for each Ministry, which shall have been approved by the Executive, and adopted at a General Meeting of the SBC.
- 18.3. All ministries of the SBC shall be free to manage their own affairs, subject to the conditions laid down in this Constitution, but the Executive shall have the right to veto any measure introduced which it considers to be contrary to the provisions set down in Section 3 of this constitution.

19. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 19.1. The SBC financial year shall be from the 1st day of March to the last day of February of the following year.
- 19.2. The Annual General Meeting of the SBC shall be held not later than the end of April each year in order to:
 - 19.2.1. receive, and if approved, to adopt an audited financial statement for the past year.
 - 19.2.2. receive, and if approved, to adopt the Minutes of the previous Half-yearly Meeting, and of Special Church Meetings not yet adopted.
 - 19.2.3. receive, and if approved, adopt the reports of the Minister(s), Executive, all SBC ministries.
 - 19.2.4. elect Deacons and Elders in terms of Sections 14 & 15 hereof.
 - 19.2.5. consider any other relevant business on the agenda. See Clauses 21.1.2 (b) and (c)

20. SPECIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

- 20.1. The SBC Half-Yearly Meeting shall be held between five (5) and seven (7) months after the AGM, in order to:
 - 20.1.1 appoint an honorary auditor for the ensuing year. An interim financial report may also be presented by the Treasurer.
 - 20.1.2. appoint, if necessary, such office bearers as are required by the Baptist Union and Western Province Baptist Association.
 - 20.1.3. consider any other relevant business.
 - 20.1.4. appoint a Sunday School Superintendent.
- 20.2 All business meetings of the SBC, other than the Annual General Meeting, shall be called Special Church Meetings.
- 20.3 Special Church Meetings shall be called by the Executive as the proper conduct of the SBC affairs may require from time to time.
- 20.4. A Special Church Meeting shall also be called by any member of the Executive if, and when, such a meeting is requested in writing by not fewer than twenty percent (20%) of SBC membership, provided that the subject matter shall be submitted in writing, so that it may be considered by the Executive prior to the Special Church Meeting. The request for the meeting shall be signed by all those concerned in the application. Such Special Church Meetings shall be called within one (1) month of a valid request.
- 20.5. For the purpose of approval of new members only, a Special Church Meeting may be called after a Sunday morning service.

21. PROCEDURE AT CHURCH MEETINGS

21.1. Notice Periods

- 21.1.1. Notice of the Annual General Meeting and of all Special Church Meetings shall be given at Sunday Services on two (2) successive Sundays immediately prior to the day appointed for the meeting in question. This does not apply to Clause 20.5 above
- 21.1.2. Notice shall be given at Sunday Services both in the morning and the evening on three (3) successive Sundays immediately prior to the day appointed for any meeting dealing with:
 - (a) Ministerial vacancies or appointments (See Section 12).
 - (b) Purchase, sale or mortgaging of immovable property (See Section 25), or any other contracts to be entered into by the SBC.
 - (c) Alterations to the Constitution and Bye-laws (See Section 29).
 - (d) Dissolution of the SBC
- 21.1.3. Only matters on the agenda of Special Church Meetings may be discussed
- 21.1.4. All requests for matters to be placed on the agenda for the Annual General Meeting and the Half-yearly Meeting must be submitted in writing to the Executive at least two weeks before these meetings.
- 20.1.5 The agenda for the Annual General Meeting and the Half-yearly Meeting will be made available on the church notice board for the members' perusal on the Sunday before these meetings.

21.2. Quorums

- 21.2.1 Thirty percent (30%) of the membership of the SBC who reside within 50km of the church and who are not genuinely incapacitated due to age or ill-health shall be deemed to constitute a quorum at any SBC meeting, provided they have attained the age of 18 years and provided the meeting does not deal with matters under Section 21.1.2.
- 21.2.2 When matters relating to Clause 21.1.2 are to be dealt with, sixty percent (60%) of the membership of the SBC who reside within 50km of the church and who are not genuinely incapacitated due to age or ill-health shall be deemed to constitute a quorum, provided they have attained the age of eighteen (18) years.
- 21.2.3 If an Annual General Meeting or any Special Church Meeting should not obtain a quorum, the Chairperson should postpone that meeting to a date agreed upon by the members present, preferably after two (2) weeks. Sufficient notice should be given to the members of SBC regarding this postponed meeting. Stipulated quorums would still be required at all postponed meetings.

21.3. Voting

- 21.3.1. Members aged eighteen (18) years or older shall be entitled to vote at any Church Meeting.
- 21.3.2. Voting shall be by show of hands, unless a ballot is requested by members entitled to vote.

- 21.3.3. Unless otherwise required by this Constitution, all matters shall be decided by majority vote of those entitled to vote.
- 21.3.4. In the event of an equal vote, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- 21.3.5. There shall be no proxy, or postal votes.
- 21.4. Chairperson Of Church Meeting**
- 21.4.1. The Minister shall normally preside at all meetings of the SBC, unless circumstance, or he personally, determines otherwise. A Chairperson shall then be elected by the Executive.
- 21.4.2. The Chairperson at any Church Meeting shall have a casting vote.

22. RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES / AREAS OF CONCERN

In the unhappy event of serious disputation or anxious concern;

- 1* As between a group or groups of members and the remaining membership, or
- 2* As between the Pastor and the whole membership or a group or groups within that membership, or
- 3* As between the Pastor and his Executive, or
- 4* As between the Executive and the membership, or
- 5* As between Pastor and Pastor

which in the opinion of any one of the disputants above mentioned is impinging on the effective ministry of the church or is seriously threatening its unity, it shall be the right and privilege of any such Pastor or any four (4) members of the Executive Committee or any ten (10) church members to

either:

- 22.1.1. Call for a special meeting of the Executive Committee with a view to resolving the differences. Three (3) persons who are not members of the church shall be nominated by the Executive of the Association with which the Church is in membership, to be present at such a meeting. One of these people shall be nominated to serve as Chairperson of the meeting or meetings.
- 22.1.2. It shall be the obligation of the disputants and of the church membership as a whole to afford the Church Executive and the three (3) Association representatives when so invoked, every reasonable opportunity to assist in bringing about a God-honouring solution. The association representatives may, if they so elect, submit a written report with appropriate recommendations.
- 22.1.3. In the unlikely event of these deliberations still not resulting in any satisfactory resolution of the differences or the areas of concern, then the Association representatives shall recommend to the Area Co-ordinator that an independent person be appointed to lead the church through a conflict resolution process (as in Clause 22.1.5 etc.) ;

Or

- 22.1.4. Request the Area Co-ordinator of the Association with which the church is in membership, to recommend from an independent mediator body, a person to lead the church through a conflict resolution process.
- 22.1.5. During this process, which will involve a number of meetings and interviews, it shall be the obligation of all members of the church to participate in whatever way may be required of them in order that a satisfactory God-honouring resolution of differences or areas of concern may be achieved.
- 22.1.6. The person appointed by the Area Co-ordinator shall be recompensed by the church for his/her services and travel, as mutually agreed by all involved parties.

23. FINANCE

- 23.1. The SBC shall be supported by its members and adherents by means of tithes, offerings, donations and bequests.
- 23.2. The SBC shall appoint an independent competent person to verify the existence of the SBC Assets, to audit the accounts of the Church and report in writing thereon to the AGM.
- 23.3. The report shall express an opinion of the accuracy of the books of account, shall refer to the existence of the assets and the adequacy of the records maintained thereof.
- 23.4. The Church's accounting records and reports must be ready and handed to the Director of Non-profit Organisations, in as far as is possible, within six months of the financial year end. The Church will submit the required returns by the South African Revenue Service together with the relevant supporting documents.
- 23.5. To comply with the requirements of the South African Revenue Service for Tax Exemption, at least eighty five percent (85%) of the Church's activities, measured either in cost or time spent, will be carried out for the benefit of persons in the Republic.

24. CHURCH PROPERTY

All property which the SBC may hold or acquire, whether movable or immovable, shall be held and administered solely for the furtherance of its objectives, and the propagation of its principles.

25. REGISTRATION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY AND CHURCH TRUSTEES

- 25.1. It is hereby declared that the Trustees shall be the Executive of the SBC, consisting of the Minister, Elders and Deacons.
- 25.2. The Trustees shall hold the property on behalf of the SBC and deal therewith as directed by the SBC in pursuance of a resolution passed at an Annual General Meeting or Special Church Meeting, subject to the provisions of Section 23 as the said Executive may direct in terms of Section 26 hereunder.
- 25.3. The Trustees shall, therefore, be designated in the title deeds of the SBC property as "The Executive of the Strand Baptist Church."
- 25.4. All immovable property held and acquired by the SBC shall be the separate property of the SBC, and such property must be registered in the name of Trustees.
- 25.5. Signing powers shall be vested in two (2) of three (3) appointed members of the Executive, one of whom must be the Chairperson or Treasurer.

26. INDEMNITY CLAUSE

- 26:1 The Trustees and all Officers of the SBC shall be fully indemnified against all actions, costs, charges, losses, damages and expenses which they or any of them shall or may incur in the execution of their duty, except such as shall be proved to have been incurred by their own neglect or wrongful act.

27. TRANSFER OR MORTGAGE OF MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

- 27.1. The SBC shall have the power to buy, sell, let or hire, exchange, mortgage, transfer, receive by way of donation or otherwise, movable and immovable property.
- 27.2. It shall have the power to invest its funds in Government or Municipal Stock, mortgage bonds, or on fixed deposit or otherwise, in Banks, Post Office, or like organizations and shall further have power to borrow money with or without security in such manner as the SBC shall think fit.
- 27.3. It shall have the power to negotiate loans from bankers or others by overdraft or otherwise and by passing mortgage and notarial bonds for registration with the proper authorities.
- 27.4. It shall have the authority to open and operate upon banking accounts, and to make, draw, accept, discount, execute and issue promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable transferable instruments to guarantee the performance of contracts by any person or duly constituted SBC having objects wholly or partially similar to the objects of the SBC.
- 27.5. It shall have the power to enter into guarantees, or suretyships of every description.

28. DISSOLUTION OF THE SBC

- 28.1. The dissolution of the SBC may be effected by at least seventy five percent (75%) vote of members present at a Special Church Meeting held for that purpose.
- 28.2. The SBC shall be deemed to have ceased to exist when the dissolution of the SBC shall have been resolved in accordance with Clause 28.1, when the members of the SBC shall have become totally dispersed or when the public worship of God shall have been discontinued for a period of three calendar months.
- 28.3. In the event of the SBC ceasing to exist as a Baptist Church, or ceasing to exist through lack of members:-
 - 28.3.1. the Baptist Union of South Africa shall be empowered to wind up the affairs of the SBC and the assets realized shall be held in trust by them.
 - 28.3.2. all property or rights to property owned by it shall *ipso facto* vest in the Baptist Union of South Africa
- 28.4. In the event of the SBC contemplating dissolution, it shall not be competent for the SBC to give away or sell for less than the market value any of its property whether movable or immovable. The interpretation and implementation of this Section shall be determined by the Executive of the Baptist Union of South Africa.
- 28.5. In the event of the membership decreasing to less than twenty five (25), no movable property shall be disposed of by the SBC unless the decision of the SBC to effect such disposal is confirmed by the Executive of the Baptist Union of South Africa.

29. REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 29.1. This Constitution may be amended, revised, added to or deleted from, at a Special Church Meeting duly convened for the purpose, or at the Annual General Meeting of the SBC, provided three (3) months' notice of motion has been given at a previous Special Church Meeting called for the purpose or at an Annual General Meeting.
- 29.2. No change shall be made unless at least two-thirds (2/3) of members present and eligible to vote at such meeting record their votes in favour of the suggested alteration either in its original form or as the meeting may amend.
- 29.3. No modification of this Constitution may be made which directly or indirectly modifies the principles outlined in Section 2 and Clause 9.1.

- 29.4 Section 3 and Clauses 9.1 and 29.2 are entrenched and may not be revoked, amended or amplified.
- 29.5 In that approval of this Constitution by the Executive of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa is a prerequisite to membership of such Union, any amendment of this Constitution or any replacement thereof shall likewise be subject to the approval of the Baptist Union Executive as a condition of continuing in membership.
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The Mission Statement of our Church:

*“To build a **Healthy Church** by caring for each person and bringing them to **Maturity in Christ** with a view to equip them for **Outward Mission in the world**”*