

CONSTITUTION OF THE PINELANDS BAPTIST CHURCH

PART A: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE STAND FOR

- 1. Pinelands Baptist Church (PBC or the Church) is**
 - 1.1. a not for profit voluntary association of Christians who, sharing the beliefs in Articles 3 & 4, have banded together in order to pursue the objectives in Article 2 with altruistic intent. PBC shall be a legal entity distinct from its members.
 - 1.2. in membership with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, but shall be independent of any control by it save as is hereinafter provided.

- 2. The objectives of PBC are to**
 - 2.1. improve our personal and collective relationships with the Holy Trinity, being God the Father, God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit, thereby participating in a process of progressive sanctification.
 - 2.2. worship, praise and glorify the Holy Trinity as a demonstration of our faith in the accomplished salvation afforded to us by the Lord Jesus Christ achieved through his voluntary crucifixion.
 - 2.3. 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.
 - 2.4. provide instruction and fellowship for all believers, so that they may be built up to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:11 - 16).
 - 2.5. demonstrate the love of Christ to others in practical ways (Matthew 22:39; 25:31-46).

- 3. Statement of Faith**

PBC teaches and practises belief:

 - 3.1. in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in their original writings as fully inspired of God, and accept them as the final authority for faith and life.
 - 3.2. in one God eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they constituting the Holy Trinity.
 - 3.3. that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
 - 3.4. that God created human beings in His own image; that humans sinned and thereby incurred the penalty of death, physical and spiritual; and that all human beings inherit a sinful nature; resulting in (in the case of those who have reached moral responsibility) actual transgression involving personal guilt.
 - 3.5. that the Lord Jesus died for our sins, a substitutionary sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in Him are justified and redeemed on the ground of His shed blood.
 - 3.6. in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate.
 - 3.7. in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.



- 3.8. in the person of the Holy Spirit, His regenerating work and abiding presence in the true believer.
- 3.9. that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by their own act of faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
- 3.10. in the resurrection both of the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and the eternal banishment of those who have rejected the offer of salvation.
- 3.11. that the one true church is the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit; that the local church on earth should take its character from this conception of the church spiritual, and therefore that the new birth and personal confession of Christ are essentials of church membership.
- 3.12. that the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances - Baptism and the Lord's Supper - to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witnesses to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith; that Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a confession of identification with Christ in burial and resurrection, and that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of bread and cup as symbolical of the Saviour's mutilated body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death till He come.
- 3.13. that God has ordained the only form of marriage as a heterosexual relationship between a natural man and a natural woman who are lawfully married to each other.

4. **Statement of Baptist Principles**

We share many areas of our faith with other members of the professing Christian church. These include 3.1 and 3.2 of our Statement of Faith. There are however areas of principle and practice where we as Baptists make distinctive emphases arising out of our understanding of the Scriptures. It is to clarify these that the following statement is made.

We as Baptists believe:

- 4.1. in 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.
- 4.2. in terms of 3.11 of our Statement of Faith, 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 observed. It is fully autonomous and remains so notwithstanding responsibilities it may accept by voluntary association.
- 4.3. in Believer's 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 in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 4.4. in 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 Elders (who are called Pastors or Elders) whose primary function is to lead in a spirit of servanthood, to equip and provide spiritual oversight, as well as 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 Pastors (referred to herein

- also as Ministers), Elders and Deacons, and that a constituted church meeting, subject to the direct Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture, is the highest authority of the church.
- 4.5. in 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. This includes administering the ordinances of baptism and communion, as well as in intercession, worship, faithful service and bearing witness to Jesus Christ, even to the ends of the earth.
 - 4.6. in 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 in all people 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.
 - 4.7. in 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, which may include prophetic confrontation with the State when necessary.

PART B: MEMBERSHIP

5. Primary Responsibilities of Members:

- Through the Grace of God every Member shall strive to
- 5.1. be a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ demonstrating in their daily lives their love for God and their Christ-like love for all people,
 - 5.2. serve in the ministries and maintain fellowship at PBC, especially by prayer, attendance at the services and conscientiously giving as God's provision enables,
 - 5.3. actively pursue the unity of PBC in seeking to resolve any and all disharmonies between individuals or groups,
 - 5.4. partake in and apply the Congregational Principle (Article 4.4) by participating in meetings under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Divine Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ to collectively discern the mind of God in all the affairs of PBC,
 - 5.5. uphold PBC's objectives and beliefs as stated in Articles 2, 3 and 4, as qualified by 6.
 - 5.6. suggest appropriate nominees for the positions of Ministers, Elders and Deacons.



- 6. Members in General Meeting may accept into the Membership of PBC any person who**
- 6.1. gives confession to and evidence of a life transformed by faith in Jesus Christ,
 - 6.2. has, according to their conscience, and notwithstanding 3.12 and 4.3, been baptised and accepts that PBC teaches and practises believers' Baptism by immersion as the norm.
 - 6.3. agrees to abide by the PBC Constitution and indicates willingness to accept the responsibilities in Article 5 above, and
 - 6.4. has complied with the procedures detailed in the Regulations and has been recommended for acceptance.
- 7. Removal from Membership of PBC**
- 7.1. Members in General Meeting shall remove from Membership any person who dies or resigns.
 - 7.2. Members in General Meeting may resolve, on the recommendation of the Eldership after investigation, to remove from Membership any person who fails to abide by his/her undertaking given in terms of Article 5.

PART C: MEMBERS IN GENERAL MEETING

- 8. Powers and Authority of Members in General Meeting**
- 8.1. In compliance with the Constitutional Principle recorded in Article 4.4, the final authority and responsibility in all matters and decisions touching the life, service and ministry of PBC, including the interpretation of this Constitution shall vest with the Members in General Meeting.
 - 8.2. Without limiting the ambit of Article 8.1, the following decisions are specifically reserved for Members in General Meeting
 - 8.2.1. Changes to the Constitution and Regulations.
 - 8.2.2. The addition or removal of a name from the Membership Roll.
 - 8.2.3. The call or removal from office of a Minister.
 - 8.2.4. The appointment or removal of an Office Bearer, an Elder or a Deacon.
 - 8.2.5. The appointment of the Chair of their meetings.
 - 8.2.6. The acquisition sale or mortgaging of fixed property.
 - 8.2.7. The procurement of or entering into any unsecured loan.
 - 8.2.8. The approval of the annual budget and any decision having financial implications that exceed the amount decided by Members from time to time.
- 9. Members in General Meeting**
- 9.1. Members are entitled to vote at a General Meeting and hence contribute to the quorum. No proxies shall be allowed.



- 9.2. A General Meeting shall be duly constituted provided that notice has been given as required by the Regulations and further, as regards a quorum, that at least 20% of Members entitled to vote are present. As soon as may be reasonably possible after the meeting has commenced and before any voting takes place, the Secretary shall determine whether a quorum has been attained. The Secretary shall exclude from his calculation any persons whose application to become members is to be considered by the Church at that meeting. Persons who are accepted into membership at a General Meeting shall be entitled to speak at the said meeting, but shall not be entitled to vote on matters to be decided by the Church at that meeting.
- 9.3. If a General Meeting fails to procure a quorum it shall automatically reconvene at the same time and place seven days later (provided that should the Eldership, within their discretion, decide that the seventh day after the non-quorate meeting is not convenient nor practical, then the Eldership shall be entitled to determine any other day during the twenty-one days following the inquorate meeting to reconvene the non-quorate meeting), and the Members then present shall constitute a quorum.

10. Degrees of Consensus Required for Valid Members Decisions

- 10.1. Not less than
- 10.1.1. 75% of the aggregate number of "Yes" and "No" votes cast for any changes to Articles 2 to 4 of the Constitution;
- 10.1.2. 67% of the aggregate number of "Yes" and "No" votes cast for any changes to the Constitution in respect of matters other than those referred to in 10.1.1;
- 10.1.3. 67% of the aggregate number of "Yes" and "No" votes cast for any decisions to call a Minister or appoint an Elder;
- 10.1.4. 50% of the aggregate number of "Yes" and "No" votes cast for any other decision, including changes to the Regulations;
- 10.2. In instances where not less than 50% of the aggregate number of "Yes" and "No" votes cast support a resolution that sufficient urgency exists to make a property or financial decision reserved in Articles 8.2.6, 8.2.7 and 8.2.8 the notice requirements pertaining to such items may be waived and a decision taken.
- 10.3. When determining whether or not the degrees of consensus required by this 10 have been achieved, such determination shall be made as required by the Regulations – clause 2.3 thereof.

PART D: LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS OF PBC

- 11. The Eldership shall**
- 11.1. provide overall leadership and oversight, spiritual and organizational, to PBC, its members and adherents by overseeing preaching, pastoral work, teaching, the guarding of doctrine and leadership in disciplinary issues and overseeing the work of the Church Council. The Eldership shall assist to



equip ministry leaders and members as required by Ephesians 4. When so doing, the Eldership shall comply with the Congregational Principle.

- 11.2. be accountable to and report regularly to Members in General Meeting.
- 11.3. comprise
- 11.3.1. the Senior Minister and between six and eleven other Elders (including Associate Ministers elected as Elders in compliance with 14.5) (who shall have been baptized by immersion as a believer as a public declaration of faith) who are to be elected by Members in General Meeting as demonstrating the characteristics outlined in Timothy and Titus and the gifts appropriate to the role, provided that not more than one-third of the Eldership shall be Ministers. Should it transpire that fewer than six Elders are elected, then in such circumstance the Eldership shall comprise such Members who have been elected to that office together with the Senior Minister and if there is no Senior Minister at any time, then the Eldership shall be constituted by such Members who have been elected as Elders.
- 11.4. Shall comprise of Members. Each Elder shall be nominated by a Member, and thereafter elected by Members in General Meeting as required by the Regulations. .

12. The Church Council shall

- 12.1. be the forum and interface between the Eldership and Deacons;
- 12.2. be accountable to the Members in General Meeting for the fulfilment of PBC's objectives as detailed in Article 2. When taking decisions, the Church Council shall attempt to reach consensus. Should consensus not be attainable, then decisions shall be taken by simple majority.
- 12.3. meet at least four times per year when one half of their number shall comprise a quorum provided that a majority of those present at the meeting shall not be Ministers;
- 12.4. elect from the Eldership a Chair who shall chair their meetings;
- 12.5. elect from the Deacons a Deacon who shall be their spokesman and who may report to each quarterly General Meeting on the functioning and efficacy of the work of the Deacons;
- 12.6. comprise all Ministers, Elders, Deacons, the Secretary and Treasurer;
- 12.7. perform such further and/or other duties as may be provided for in the Regulations;
- 12.8. minute all decisions taken at meetings and store them safely.

13. Deacons shall

- 13.1. be Members who are willing and demonstrate the characteristics described in 1 Timothy 3 : 8-10, who wish to serve PBC as Deacons;
- 13.2. be nominated by a Member, and thereafter elected by Members in General Meeting as required by the Regulations;
- 13.3. shall not be concurrently Elders or Ministers of PBC;
- 13.4. fulfil their functions and duties (and specifically their portfolio functions) on the Church Council as detailed in the Regulations.

14. Ministers

- 14.1. Under the Lordship of Jesus, the appointment and support of the Ministers are the responsibility of the Members in General Meeting.
- 14.2. There shall be a Senior Minister who shall qualify for inclusion on the Baptist Union of South Africa Ministerial lists.
- 14.3. The Members in General Meeting shall be entitled to decide how many Ministers PBC shall appoint. Ministers shall become members of PBC as soon as is convenient after their appointment.
- 14.4. The Senior Minister and Ministers shall be appointed as required by the Regulations.
- 14.5. Associate Ministers may serve as Elders, provided that they have been elected as Elders in compliance with 4 of the Regulations, *mutatis mutandis*.

15. PBC Fiduciaries

- 15.1. shall be those holding office from time to time as the Secretary, Treasurer, and two currently serving Elders whose offices as Fiduciaries shall be approved at each Annual General Meeting. The said Fiduciaries shall be the Fiduciaries of all of the assets of PBC which shall be vested in them, as Fiduciaries, for and on behalf of PBC.
- 15.2. shall accept fiduciary responsibility for PBC.
- 15.3. are empowered to make, conclude and accept all purchases, sales, investments, leases, contracts and agreements, and to discharge any securities or investments, as directed by the Members in General Meeting. The powers granted under this 15.3 shall be read together with and in conjunction with the Regulations dealing with this 15.3. As regards the application of this 15.3 the Fiduciaries shall themselves nominate any two of their number to sign such documentation for and on behalf of PBC. .
- 15.4. the Fiduciaries shall not be related, nor connected (as defined by the South African Revenue Services). No PBC employee shall qualify;
- 15.5. a certificate given under the hand of the Secretary shall for all purposes be deemed sufficient evidence as to the appointment of the Fiduciaries;
- 15.6. it is noted that the PBC Fiduciaries, when acting in that capacity, are acting as Trustees for the purposes of holding assets for and on behalf of PBC. They are not acting as Trustees within the meaning of the Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988.

16. The Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- 16.1. be the key representative of the Members in all PBC internal administration and shall report to Members in General Meeting independently at least twice each year.
- 16.2. uphold the PBC Constitution and the Regulations.
- 16.3. be a Member who may be an Elder or Deacon who is not an employee of PBC and who shall be nominated by the Church Council and whose appointment shall be confirmed by the Members at a General Meeting.



- 16.4. not be the Chair of the Eldership, nor the Treasurer and, should a vacancy arise in the Secretary's office, then within 30 days thereof the Eldership shall fill the vacancy temporarily by appointing a suitable person who shall hold office as Secretary until his successor is confirmed by the Members at the following General Meeting.

17. The Treasurer

- 17.1. The treasurer shall:
- 17.1.1. liaise with and keep the Elders informed of the Church's financial circumstances, and shall report to the Church Council.
- 17.1.2. not be the Chair of the Eldership, nor the Secretary.
- 17.1.3. be a Member who may be an Elder or a Deacon who is not an employee of PBC and who shall be nominated by the Church Council and whose appointment shall be confirmed by the Members at a General Meeting.
- 17.1.4. report to Members in General Meeting four times per year. Should the Treasurer be unable to attend a General Meeting, then a Member of the Finance Committee shall report to the Members on the Treasurer's behalf.
- 17.2. Should a vacancy arise in the Treasurer's office, then within 30 days thereof the Eldership shall fill the vacancy temporarily by appointing a suitable person who shall hold office as Treasurer until his successor is confirmed by the Members at the following General Meeting.

PART E: GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL POWERS

18. PBC shall

- 18.1. Shall be a body corporate and have an existence distinct from its Members and fiduciaries.
- 18.2. continue to exist notwithstanding changes in the composition of its Members and fiduciaries.
- 18.3. have authority to receive, purchase, sell, hold, hypothecate, sell, donate, lease, exchange and partition movable and immovable property.
- 18.4. be able to sue and be sued in its name as The Pinelands Baptist Church.
- 18.5. have such other general and/or ancillary powers as may be required to implement and/or complete the objectives of PBC as detailed in Article 2 and as may be necessary or required to operate and/or enforce the Constitution and Regulations.

19. PBC Financial Constraints

- 19.1. The business and financial years shall coincide with the calendar year.
- 19.2. PBC shall be supported by voluntary giving.
- 19.3. No donation will be accepted which is revocable at the instance of the donor for reasons other than a material failure to conform to the designated purposes and conditions of such donation.
- 19.4. Proper books of account shall be maintained by the Treasurer and/or Finance Committee, documenting all financial transactions which said books of account shall be financially reviewed at the end of each financial year.



- 19.5. With the exception of Petty Cash transactions all other transactions must be conducted by means of a banking account or accounts in the name of the Pinelands Baptist Church with a bank or financial institution as defined in Section 1 of the Financial Institutions (Investment of Funds) Act 1984.
- 19.6. No activity shall directly or indirectly promote the self-interest of any employee, Member, office-bearer or fiduciary, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered having regard to what is generally considered reasonable in the sector and in relation to the services rendered.
- 19.7. Members have no rights in the property or other assets of the PBC solely by virtue of their being members, office-bearers or fiduciaries.
- 19.8. To comply with the requirements of the South African Revenue Service for Tax Exemption, at least 85% of PBC's activities, measured either in cost or time spent, will be carried out for the benefit of persons in the Republic.
- 19.9. At least 75% of PBC's resources shall be applied in the furtherance of its objectives detailed in Article 2.
- 19.10. Any trading activity into which PBC enters shall be integrally and directly related to the objectives of PBC or shall be directed towards the recovery of costs. However, on occasions PBC may undertake trading that is not directly linked to its objectives provided that this trading activity is of an occasional nature and never amounts to more than 15% of the gross annual income of PBC.

PART F: CONSTITUTIONAL REGULATIONS (THE REGULATIONS) AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

20. PBC Regulations

- 20.1. So as to provide for the efficient administration and functioning of PBC, and the implementation of this Constitution, PBC shall have Regulations that detail its procedures and administration. These shall be known as the Regulations the first of which are attached to this Constitution.
- 20.2. The Regulations shall be reviewed, amended and/or supplemented by the Members in General Meeting from time to time; any amendment to the Regulations shall be taken provided that the degree of consensus required by 10.1.4 of the Constitution is achieved.
- 20.3. When amending the Regulations, it shall not be necessary to comply with the requirements of 21; 21 shall be applied in respect of amendments to the Constitution itself.
- 20.4. The Regulations may be revised, reviewed and/or amended by decision by Members in General Meeting by the following procedure:
 - 20.4.1. Any Member or group of Members desiring to propose an alteration to the Regulations shall notify the Secretary in writing giving the exact terms of the suggested amendment.
 - 20.4.2. Full details of any proposed amendment to the Regulations must be given to Members by way of notice given in compliance with 2.7 of the Regulations.



21. Constitutional Amendments

This Constitution may be revised, reviewed and/or amended by a decision of Members in General Meeting, but no change of any kind shall be made except by the following procedure:

- 21.1. Any Member or group of Members desiring to propose an alteration to the Constitution shall notify the Secretary in writing giving the exact terms of the suggested amendment.
- 21.2. Full details of any proposed amendment to the Constitution must be given to Members by way of notice given in compliance with the requirements of 2.7 of the Regulations.
- 21.3. Should the consensus required by 10.1 or 10.2 of the Constitution be achieved then the amendment, or an amendment thereto, shall be referred for decision at the next quarterly General Meeting (or a General Meeting called for that purpose) at which meeting the consensus required by 10.1 or 10.2 of the Constitution shall be achieved again in which event the amendment shall have been passed and accepted.

PART G: DISSOLUTION AND DISASSOCIATION

22. Dissolution

- 22.1. Members in General Meeting may dissolve PBC provided that 75% of Members present plus one vote in favour of the resolution. Again, proxies shall not be allowed. Should such a resolution be passed by the Members then the Church Council, and failing the Church Council, other persons appointed by the Members at their meeting, shall take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church. On PBC's dissolution all of the assets of the Church, less any liabilities, shall be transferred either
 - 22.1.1. to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, or
 - 22.1.2. to another Public Benefit Organization sharing the same objectives and beliefs, as close as may be, as those set out in Articles 2, 3 and 4.
- 22.2. It shall vest within the discretion of the Members in General Meeting as to whether the said assets shall be transferred to the Baptist Union of South Africa or to the Public Benefit Organization.
- 22.3. PBC shall be deemed to have ceased to exist when any one of the following has occurred:
 - 22.3.1. The PBC has been dissolved in accordance with 22; or
 - 22.3.2. Public worship services have been discontinued for a period of six consecutive calendar months; or
 - 22.3.3. The number of Members, whose names and full local addresses are known, has dropped below 10.
- 22.4. In the event of PBC being dissolved and in the further event that the Members in general meeting decide to transfer the Church's assets less liabilities to the Baptist Union of South Africa, then the said Union shall hold, administer or deal with such assets in such manner as the said Union through its Executive Committee may deem best fitted to secure the furtherance of 2, 3 and 4

23. Disassociation

23.1. For many years PBC, as a Baptist Church, has been associated with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and also with the Western Province Baptist Association.

23.2. Should Members in General Meeting wish to disassociate PBC from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, or from the Western Province Baptist Association, then Members in General Meeting may so resolve to disassociate PBC, provided that 75% of Member's present plus one vote in favour of the resolution. Again proxies shall not be allowed. Should the resolution be passed, then PBC shall be disassociated from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and/or the Western Province Baptist Association and PBC shall then continue to exist and its Constitution and Constitutional Regulations shall remain in place save that 23 shall no longer have application. PBC shall change its name to a new name and references to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and/or to the Western Province Baptist Association, in the Constitution and/or Constitution Regulations shall no longer be applicable.

24. Notice for 22 and 23

Should it be proposed that a resolution be considered by the Church in General Meeting for the purposes of either 22 and/or 23, then notice of such resolution shall be given as required by 2.7 of the Regulations.

PART H – CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

So as to avoid any confusion or ambiguity, it is hereby recorded that on the adoption of this Constitution by the Members of the Church, all Members on the membership roll immediately prior to the adoption of this Constitution shall automatically continue to be Members of the Church and the terms of office of all Ministers, Elders, Deacons and other Office Bearers shall be carried forward.



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