



North Pine Baptist Church

CONSTITUTION

“A CHRIST CENTERED CHURCH, LOVING GOD, ONE ANOTHER AND TAKING CHRIST TO THE WORLD”

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PREAMBLE

This Constitution was adopted on 9th December 2001 and is a continuation of the previous constitution of the NORTH PINE BAPTIST CHURCH adopted on 16 October 1985 and amended on 18 May 1987, 12 June 1990, 1 November 1997, 9 December 2001, 25 February 2002, 26 August 2012 and 26 November 2017.

SECTION I – THE CHURCH

1. NAME

This Church shall be called the NORTH PINE BAPTIST CHURCH.

2. AFFILIATION

This Church is a constituted church of The Baptist Union of Queensland and as such conscientiously seeks to honour all its duties and obligations to the Union and to other churches within the Union.

3. STATEMENT OF FAITH

Members of this Church shall hold the following doctrines as an essential part of their Christian belief (being in accordance with those set out in the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Queensland – Section IV Declaration of Principle):

- 3.1 The Divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and their supreme authority in matters of faith and conduct.
- 3.2 The existence of One God in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - The Father, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and holy who is also life, light and love.
 - The Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of God Incarnate both very God and very man.
 - The Holy Spirit who indwells every believer, God's guarantee of the believer's inheritance in Christ.
- 3.3 The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all people.
- 3.4 The salvation of people from eternal death and the power of sin through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, His unchanging Priesthood and His coming again in glory.
- 3.5 The necessity of repentance towards God, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 3.6 The immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of people, in their sanctification and in their preservation to the heavenly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3.7 The expectation of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ.

and shall, in accordance with that belief, have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been baptised by immersion into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and have thereafter been admitted into the membership of the Church in accordance with its constitution.

4. THE DIVINE ORDINANCES

The Divine Ordinances to be observed by the Church shall be Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are of perpetual obligation; Baptism being the immersion of believers upon profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection and as a normal prerequisite for membership of the local Church; the Lord's Supper being a memorial until He return, of the sacrifice of the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

The North Pine Baptist Church accepts the following principles in its corporate life as a body of Christian believers:

5.1 Leadership

- a. Christ is the Head of the Church Eph 5:23
- b. The Church is composed of believers 1 Cor 12:12-13
- c. Believers have the mind of Christ 1 Cor 2:16
- d. Believers are led by the Spirit of Christ (individually and corporately) Rom 8:9,14
- e. Elder is never mentioned alone, rather there are always "Elders". Their role is spiritual oversight, guidance and equipping. Scripture also points to Elders as having the ability to teach 1 Tim 3:2, Tit 1:9
- f. Functioning is primarily determined by spiritual giftedness under Christ's equipping and direction Rom 12:1;1 Cor 12, Eph 4 (Old number g)
- g. Members are to honour and respect those over them in the LORD. 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17.

5.2 **Teaching** - The Congregation shall regularly, diligently and systematically be taught the truths of the Holy Bible, the written Word of God, so that each member individually and all members corporately may be built up and become mature in the Christian faith. Ps 27:11, Mt 28:19,20

5.3 **Prayer and Bible Reading** – The Congregation shall be encouraged to pray, to read the Bible regularly and systematically, and to join with other members as much as possible to fellowship through Prayer and Bible study. 1 Tim 2:8, Jam 5:16, 1 Tim 4:11-15, 2 Tim 3:14-17

5.4 **Evangelism** - The Congregation shall be trained and encouraged to share the gospel so that every member may be a faithful witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. Mt 28:19,20

5.5 **Worship and Fellowship** - Opportunity shall be provided, and members of the Congregation shall be encouraged to worship together and to experience that quality of Christian fellowship as described in the New Testament. Heb 10:22-25

5.6 **Involvement** - Every member of the Church shall be expected to play an active part, so far as is possible, in the life and ministry of the Church. Mt 22: 38, Rom 12:1

5.7 **Social Ministry** - The Congregation shall seek to meet practical as well as spiritual needs of people in the local community and beyond, according to Christ's example and teaching. Lk 4: 18-19, Mt 25: 31-46

5.8 **Stewardship** - A spirit of generosity in the giving of one's time, money, talents and gifts for service of the Lord shall be held before the Congregation as an appropriate guide to Christian giving for the Lord's work. 1 Tim 5:18, 2 Cor 9:6-8

SECTION II – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Membership of the Church is based on an agreement with the principle of participation in the life of the Church community. As such, all members are "participating members". Members of the Church agree with, accept and commit, to the best of their ability, to live out the primary beliefs and values of the Church.
- 1.2 Persons are entitled to be considered for membership of the Church upon completion of the following:
 - 1.2.1 Acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour;
 - 1.2.2 Believer's baptism by immersion or through other means approved by the Eldership due to special circumstances e.g. serious physical handicap;
 - 1.2.3 Acceptance of the Church Constitution and other rules as may apply from time to time formal agreement with, acceptance of, and commitment to living out to the best of their ability, the primary beliefs and values of the Church set out in SECTION I – THE CHURCH; and
- 1.3 Any applicant for baptism will be encouraged to be an applicant for membership

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 **Application for Membership** - All persons applying for membership shall be interviewed by the eldership or their nominees to:
 - 2.1.1 Ensure Section 1 - Qualifications for Membership have been met.
 - 2.1.2 Discuss the applicant's current personal, family and spiritual position;
 - 2.1.3 Discuss the areas of the Church in which the applicant is interested and prepared to serve;
 - 2.1.4 Ensure that the Church Constitution, other rules as may apply from time to time and details of the Church programme have been explained to and accepted by the applicant.
- 2.2 **Acceptance for Membership** - If after consideration of the interviewers' report, the Elders approve the application, the applicant will be accepted as an active member once fourteen (14) days have elapsed after the applicant's name has been announced to the Church and where no concerns are raised about the applicant's suitability for membership in accordance with sub-clause 2.3.
- 2.3 **Objections** - If an objection is raised by an active Church Member(s), the Eldership will discuss such objection with the objector(s) and the applicant to determine if there are grounds for the objection. A recommendation will then be made to the membership at a duly constituted Members' Meeting for them to decide if the applicant is to be admitted to membership. Such decision will be made by Secret Ballot.
- 2.4 **Reception into Membership** - All persons admitted shall be welcomed into membership at a church service as soon as practicable after acceptance.

3. MEMBERSHIP ROLL

- 3.1 The names and addresses of all members shall be entered and maintained in the Membership Roll under one of the following categories:
 - a) Active - Active Members are members who are actively involved in normal church life and who are not recorded as Absent or Non-Active.
 - b) Absent – Absent Members are members who have temporarily moved away from the district with the intention of returning or who are unable to maintain normal active membership due to age or infirmity.
 - c) Non-Active – Non-active members are members who have permanently moved away from the district or who are absent from services for a period of three months or more without a reason acceptable to the elders, or who have had their privileges of membership suspended because of a disciplinary decision.

- 3.2 The Eldership will review the Membership Roll whenever they consider it necessary, but at least once a year.
- 3.3 The Eldership may, after due process, transfer from Active to Absent or Non-Active the name of a Member who has ceased active participation in the life of the Church. Due process will include a meeting between the Member and the Eldership or its nominee or, if good faith attempts at a meeting have not succeeded, writing to the Member notifying them of the proposed action and consequences of being transferred to the Absent or Non-Active Categories.
- 3.4 A Member whose name has been transferred to the Non-Active Category will be notified as soon as possible of such and that if their name remains in the Non-Active Category for 12 months, their name will be removed from the Membership Roll;
- 3.5 An Absent or Non-Active Member will not be:
 - i) Entitled to vote at Members' Meetings; or
 - ii) Counted for the purpose of calculating quorums; or
 - iii) Able to hold any position in the church under Section III Clauses 7 or 8.1 of the Constitution
- 3.6 The Eldership will transfer a Member from Non-Active to Active upon being satisfied they have resumed active participation in the activities of the Church and completed other requirements as requested by the Eldership.
- 3.7 A Member who wishes to dispute the transfer of their name to Non-Active may ask the Eldership to review the decision to transfer their name to, or keep it as Non-Active. The Eldership will review this decision within 30 days.

4. DISCIPLINE

- 4.1 Three Elders or their nominees, appointed by the Eldership shall review any case appearing to call for discipline of a member. If, in their opinion, clear evidence for the need of discipline appears to exist, they shall refer the case to The Baptist Union of Queensland for advice on the process for handling the case. All cases shall be investigated in a manner consistent with the Word of God e.g. Matthew 18:15-17.

The person under review shall have the right to be heard by the three Elders before the case is referred to the Baptist Union of Queensland.
- 4.2 On receiving advice from The Baptist Union of Queensland, the Eldership shall undertake an investigation into the case in accordance with that advice.
- 4.3 Should the Eldership determine that a case calls for discipline, the member concerned shall be notified in writing by the Eldership, and shall, from that time, have all privileges of membership suspended.
- 4.4 Before such discipline is effected, the person shall have the right to be heard by the Eldership.
- 4.5 In all cases where a member has been placed under discipline for a specified time, such member shall be contacted by the Eldership at the expiration of the term with a view to restoration or otherwise.
- 4.6 No member shall tender his or her resignation from the Church in order to escape discipline for any act committed by him or her unworthy of the name and character of a professed follower of Jesus Christ.

5. REMOVAL FROM THE MEMBERSHIP ROLL

- 5.1 A Member's name will be removed from the Membership Roll on:
 - i) Death;
 - ii) Written request signed by or with the authority of the Member;
 - iii) The expiration of 12 months from the date of their name being transferred to Non-Active unless otherwise determined by the Eldership; or
 - iv) Direction of the Eldership (see Section 5.2 below).
- 5.2 The Eldership will only direct the removal of a member's name from the Membership Roll:
 - i) if they are satisfied an appropriate Conflict Resolution Process has first been applied, where they consider it appropriate to do so; and

- ii) the removal is due to the conduct of a Member, and:
 - a) the Eldership or their nominees have first investigated the complaint about the conduct. In the investigation the rules of natural justice will be observed; and,
 - b) the Eldership or their nominees find the complaint proved and the conduct of the Member in question, in the opinion of the Eldership, constitutes a serious hindrance to the work of the Church.
- 5.3 A Member may ask the Eldership to review the decision to remove their name from the Membership Roll under Clause 5.1 (iv). The Eldership will review the decision and communicate their decision to the Member within 30 days. Such decision will be binding.
- 5.4 A person who has ceased to be a Member may at any time reapply for Membership as set out in **SECTION II – Clause 2.**

SECTION III – ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH

1. CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

- 1.1 The church members shall normally meet four times each calendar year for the purposes of review, setting policy, leadership selection, budget, reporting on ministries/strategies and transacting other business as required from time to time. Such meetings shall be known as General Meetings.
- 1.2 A Special Meeting may be called at any time by the Eldership on its initiative, or if a written and signed request for a Special Meeting is submitted to the Eldership by at least 20% of the Active Voting Membership. The meeting shall be called within a month of receipt of the request by the Eldership. These meetings shall be called either in writing or by notice from the pulpit for two Sundays prior to the meeting provided seven (7) clear days notice is given. The nature of the business shall be stated, and no other business shall be transacted at the Special Meeting.
- 1.3 An Extraordinary Meeting may be called at any time by a majority of the Elders on their initiative. The nature of the business shall be stated, and no other business shall be transacted at the Extraordinary Meeting.
- 1.4 All active members may participate in the above meetings. Only those who have attained 18 years of age at the time of the meeting may vote at such meetings.
- 1.5 Quorums:
 - General and Special Meetings: one-third of the Active Voting Membership, except for the calling of a Pastor which shall require a quorum of 60%.
 - Extraordinary Meetings: 60% of the Active Voting Membership.
- 1.6 Voting:
 - 1.6.1 All decisions made at such meetings shall require a 75% majority of the votes cast to pass.
 - 1.6.2 Voting at meetings may only be carried out in person unless a member entitled to vote shall be absent at the time of the meeting because of age or infirmity.
 - 1.6.3 Should a member entitled to vote be unable to attend because of infirmity or age at the time of any meeting, such member may submit his or her decision on any matter to be discussed at the meeting in writing to the Meeting Chairman prior to the commencement of the Meeting.
- 1.7 The method of voting shall normally be by show of hands. If, however, the Chairman so desires or not fewer than ten members so request, a vote may be taken by secret ballot.
- 1.8 The Eldership shall appoint the chairman of meetings.
- 1.9 Minutes of all duly constituted members meetings shall be maintained and confirmed at the next General Meeting.

2. MINISTRY GROUPS.

- 2.1 The ministries and activities of the church shall be arranged into appropriate groups by the Eldership and be known as Ministry Groups.
- 2.2 Each Ministry Group shall be structured such that the following elements are seen to be present in each group to ensure ongoing effective evangelism, discipleship, pastoral care and training.
 - a. A “workable span of care” where leaders at all levels provide “pastoral care” and “discipling”.
 - b. An “apprenticeship” process to assist the ongoing development and training of new leaders.
 - c. An “outreach” into the community for evangelistic purposes.

3. THE PASTORS

- 3.1 In accordance with the Scriptures, the Pastors shall be mature Christian men who are spiritual leaders in the life and ministry of the church. They accept their office from the Lord of the Church and church members will esteem and acknowledge the pastors as over them in the Lord.
- 3.2 The pastors are ex-officio members of the Eldership.
- 3.3 All business connected with the pastorate shall be presented to a duly constituted members’ meeting as a recommendation from the Eldership except in the case of moral or ethical misconduct which shall be handled in accordance with Sub-Section 6 of this Section.
- 3.4 A Pastor shall be a person eligible for membership in the church and shall possess such spiritual and other qualifications as shall be deemed suitable by the Eldership, by a duly constituted members’ meeting and by The Baptist Union of Queensland.
- 3.5 The appointment of a pastor is contingent upon formal registration as a Minister of The Baptist Union of Queensland.
- 3.6 The Pastors and their spouses shall be recognised as ex-officio active members of the church during their term of appointment.

4. THE PASTORAL CALL

- 4.1 A call may be negotiated for either an indefinite or a stated period.
 - 4.1.1 If the call is for a stated period and is not extended, the pastor will be advised and shall cease to serve the church at the completion of three months from the date of advice unless otherwise mutually agreed.
 - 4.1.2 Whether for an indefinite or a stated period, the call may be terminated with three months notice in writing from either side or other mutually agreed period of notice except in the case of a pastor found guilty of moral or ethical misconduct.
 - 4.2.1 The name(s) of Pastoral candidate(s) to be voted on should be presented to the membership at least 2 weeks prior to the Member’s Meeting called for the purpose, to enable adequate time for prayer. Such meeting shall require a quorum of not less than 60% of active voting members.
 - 4.2.2 A brief written profile should be provided for consideration
 - 4.2.3 Voting shall be by ballot paper. The results of the ballot are to be declared prior to the conclusion of the meeting.
- 4.3 Affirmation of the call will require a 75% majority of the votes cast.

5. OTHER EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 The Church may appoint other employees from time to time e.g. Office Manager, Youth Worker or Pastoral Assistant.
- 5.2 Any employee shall be a person eligible for membership in the church and shall possess such spiritual and other qualifications as shall be deemed suitable by the Church.
- 5.3 All business connected with other employees shall be presented to a duly constituted members’ meeting as a recommendation from the Eldership except in the case of moral or ethical misconduct which shall be handled in accordance with Sub-Section 6.

- 5.4 The process for appointment and termination shall be carried out in the same manner as set out in Sub-Section 4 except that any industrial award conditions shall take precedence.

6. MORAL OR ETHICAL MISCONDUCT OF PASTORS OR OTHER EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 Three Elders or their appointees, appointed by the Eldership shall review any case involving possible serious moral or ethical misconduct of a pastor or other employee. If, in their opinion, clear evidence of misconduct appears to exist, they shall refer the case to The Baptist Union of Queensland with a request to investigate the case on behalf of the Church and forward a report to the Eldership.

The person under review shall have the right to be heard by the Elders or their appointees before the case is referred to the Baptist Union.

Any person under investigation shall be suspended from duty immediately by the Eldership pending the investigation. Any remuneration provided by the church to the person shall continue during the period of suspension.

- 6.2 The Baptist Union shall undertake the investigation in accordance with its own rules and guidelines for handling such matters. It is noted that the Baptist Union of Queensland may, at its discretion, also take whatever action it deems necessary in the best interests of the Union, the Church and the parties concerned.

- 6.3 If, following the investigation, it has been found that, either on the admission of the person concerned or on evidence satisfactory to the Eldership, misconduct of a serious moral or ethical nature has occurred, then the person shall have his or her appointment terminated effective immediately by the Eldership with pay in lieu of notice given at the discretion of the Eldership.

Before such termination is effected, the person shall have the right to be heard by the Eldership.

- 6.4 Any action taken under this section shall be carried out recognising the pastoral care that may be required for all parties concerned.

7. THE ELDERSHIP

7.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Eldership (i.e. the Elders as a group), being accountable to the Church Membership, shall be responsible for the oversight of the Church and its various ministries and activities.

7.2. APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

In accordance with the Scriptures, Elders shall be mature Christian men, appointed according to spiritual qualifications as set out in 1 Tim: 3 and Titus 3, by a duly constituted Church Members' Meeting.

To be considered for appointment as an Elder any nominee must be at least 21 years of age and an active church member for a period of 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the closing of nominations.

7.3. PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS.

The process for appointment of Elders shall be as follows:

1. NOMINATIONS

1. The Eldership will call for nominations for the role of Elder using a Nomination Form as determined by the Eldership from time to time.
2. All nominations will require the support of two church members evidenced by their signature on the Nomination Form. Nominees will indicate the Area(s) of Ministry they believe are most suited to their gifting and personality.
3. The names of all nominees to be voted on will be presented to the church membership at least 2 weeks prior to the Member's Meeting to enable adequate time for prayer and consideration of the nominees.

2. ELECTION

1. The election process will normally be held at the November General Meeting.
2. Voting shall be by secret ballot. The results of the ballot are to be declared prior to the conclusion of the meeting. Appointment will require a 75% majority of the votes cast.

3. CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

Upon election the appointment of an elder:

1. shall normally commence on 1 December for a two-year period.
2. is confirmed by the nominee's acceptance of responsibility for at least one Area of Ministry.
3. Should a serving elder cease to have responsibility for an Area of Ministry, his appointment shall conclude immediately.
4. Absence from two consecutive Eldership meetings without explanation satisfactory to the Eldership creates a vacancy, which shall be filled in accordance with this Sub-Section.
5. If, in the opinion of the Eldership, an Elder is not performing their duties and responsibilities in a manner satisfactory to the Church, it will be handled as a matter of discipline.
6. An elected Elder may serve for a maximum of three consecutive full terms at the conclusion of which he must stand down for a one-year period before being eligible for further appointment.

4. VACANCIES

1. The Eldership may fill any vacancies occurring on an interim basis until such time as the normal election process under Sub-Section 7.3.2.1 occurs.

8. MINISTRY GROUPS - COORDINATORS & TEAM MEMBERS

8.1 MINISTRY CO-ORDINATORS

1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ministry Co-ordinators shall be responsible for the operation of the particular Area of Ministry under the oversight of an elder.

2. APPOINTMENT

In accordance with the Scriptures, Ministry Co-ordinators shall be mature Christians, appointed according to their giftedness by the Eldership from among the Church Membership.

8.2 TEAM MEMBERS

1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ministry Team Members shall minister under the direction of and alongside the Ministry Co-ordinators responsible for the ministry or activity of which they are a part.

2. APPOINTMENT

Ministry Team Members shall be appointed by the Eldership according to their suitability for the role.

8.3 CONDITONS OF APPOINTMENT

1. Each year appointments made under this Sub-Section shall conclude on 31st December.
2. If, in the opinion of the Eldership any person appointed under Sub-Section 8, is not performing his or her role in a satisfactory manner, his/her appointment may be concluded by the Eldership.

SECTION IV – FINANCE AND PROPERTY

1. FINANCE

- 1.1 The Church favours a generous spirit of giving as God's method of meeting the financial needs of His work. It is expected that every member shall prayerfully consider his or her financial obligations.
- 1.2 The Eldership reserves the right to refuse any donation or gift which comes from what it may deem an unworthy source.
- 1.3 No financial appeals for any projects not already included in the budget shall be circulated by any person without first obtaining the approval of the Eldership.
- 1.4 The Eldership shall:
 1. present a budget for the church setting out the proposed income and expenditure for each financial year to a duly constituted members' meeting annually for approval.
 2. present an Audited Statement of Income and Expenditure, Assets and Liabilities to the first General Meeting following the close of the church's financial year.
 3. present a Statement of Income and Expenditure on a year to date basis to each General Meeting.
 4. approve cheque signatories as required from time to time.
 5. ensure appropriate accountability is maintained with respect to handling of the church's finances.
 6. determine the church's financial year as required from time to time.
 7. appoint an external auditor each year for the purpose of auditing the church annual financial statement prior to presentation to a General Meeting.

2. PROPERTY

- 2.1 All property and assets of the Church held both now and in the future shall be vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland on behalf of the Church.
- 2.2 In the event of the active membership of the Church falling below six (6) members, all property and assets of the Church shall come under the direct control and management of the Officers of the Baptist Union of Queensland.
- 2.3 The sale, purchase or encumbrance of or alteration of a major nature to, the land or buildings owned by the Church shall require the approval of a duly constituted members' meeting on the recommendation of the Eldership.
- 2.4 All property purchased by the Church or any of its organisations shall be deemed to be the property of the church, and property donated to the church or any of its organisations for use by any organization or ministry of the church shall be deemed to be the property of the church.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of Section V of this constitution, Sub-Sections 2.1 and 2.2 shall not be rescinded or amended without the express approval of The Baptist Union of Queensland.

SECTION V - ALTERATIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1. This constitution may be altered, cancelled or added to, at any time by the calling of a Special Meeting as provided for in Section III except that 28 days' notice shall have been given setting out the proposed alterations.
2. The provision to alter this constitution does not apply to Section IV, Sub-Sections 2.1 and 2.2 without the express approval of The Baptist Union of Queensland.
3. Any dispute regarding the interpretation of this constitution shall be referred to a duly constituted member's meeting.

SECTION VI – WINDING UP

1. By a Special Meeting as provided for in Section III of this Constitution, the active voting members may resolve that the Church be wound up. All property and assets of the Church upon winding up shall be vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland.

It is noted that the Baptist Union of Queensland shall have the right to deal with such property and assets in such manner as its sees fit. It may receive a recommendation from the closing meeting of the church.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section V of this constitution, Sub-Section 1 of this Section shall not be rescinded or amended without the express approval of The Baptist Union of Queensland.