

Bracken Ridge Baptist Church Constitution

27 October 2019

1. Church Identity

1. The name of the church is Bracken Ridge Baptist Church.
2. The church voluntarily affiliates with The Baptist Union of Queensland.
3. The Members subscribe to the document "What We Believe" (attached). The Church accepts the Declaration of Principles contained in The Baptist Union of Queensland's Constitution as a general statement of the principles of the Christian Faith.

2. Church Membership

2.1 The reasons for church membership

Church membership is important for two primary reasons:

1. It is a concrete expression of commitment to the church whereby one agrees:
 - To be an active participant in church life and use their gifts to serve others.
 - With the emphasis and direction of the church and is able to support the church leadership.
 - To try and build healthy and respectful relationships throughout the church family.
 - To financially contribute to the church.
 - To pray about church direction and participate in Church Members' meetings where possible.
 - Normally, when available, to reaffirm the above five points at our AGM or covenant renewal service.
2. It provides a formal membership who are able to vote at Church Members' meetings on major decisions.

2.2 Types of membership

Full & Associate Members are believers in Jesus who are prepared to make the commitments outlined in section 2.1.

Full Membership is available to those who have been baptised as believers by immersion.

2.3 Rules about membership

1. All applicants for membership will be interviewed by a church member who will bring a recommendation to the Church Council. The approval of the Church Council will represent the approval of the church.
2. Applicants will become members from the time of their acceptance by the Church Council or Church Meeting. They may be publicly welcomed into membership at a convenient church service. A roll will be kept with the names of the members of the church.
3. Non-active Members are members who no longer agree to the commitments in section 2.1. Decisions regarding the placement of members on the non-active roll will be made by the Church Council.
4. A member may be placed under discipline (for wrongdoing) by the Church Council and lose membership privileges for that period.
5. Pastoral Staff or Church Council members must be full members of the church.
6. The Church Council shall review the membership roll and may remove members who have: joined another church; requested removal from the membership roll; died; been moved to the non-active roll or who are under disciplinary action. The Membership Roll will be revised to coincide with each Annual Meeting.

2.4 Members Meetings

1. The Church Members have final authority in deciding matters which affect the life and functioning of the church. This authority is delegated to the Church Council for ongoing decision making but exercised directly by the members through Members' Meetings for major decisions.
2. The Church Council will call Church Members' Meetings. All agenda items for Members' Meetings are approved by the Church Council.
3. At least two meetings will be held each year; one of which will be the Annual General Meeting.
4. If at least 30 members on the Active Membership roll give written notice to the Church Council that they want a matter brought to the notice of the Members, then:
 - a) The Church Council will call a forum to discuss the matter raised and if possible resolve it without having to call a Members' Meeting; and
 - b) If the matter cannot be resolved the Church Council will call a Members' Meeting to discuss the matter.
5. The Church Council will give the Members at least two Sundays' prior notice, excluding the meeting day, for all Church Members' meetings, including the agenda and proposed motion(s) for the meeting.
6. All Members who are 15 years of age and above are entitled to vote at Church Meetings. Proxy or absentee votes are not permitted. Voting on matters relating to the Call of a Pastor, Property Purchases, and major Renovations shall be restricted to Members over the age of 18.
7. At Church Meetings when a vote is called for, it will be decided by a majority vote except where the constitution specifies otherwise or the meeting decides otherwise.
8. A quorum will be 30 percent of members. If the quorum is not achieved at a meeting, a subsequent meeting with the same agenda can be arranged within two weeks of the original meeting, with the notice requirements having been already fulfilled.
9. The Lead Pastor, or his nominee, will chair the meetings of the church. The Church Council will appoint a chairperson in the absence of a Lead Pastor.
10. Minutes of Members' Meetings will be kept.
11. The Members will agree on an annual budget and approve audited annual accounts.

2.4.1 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

1. The AGM will be held within six months of the end of the financial year.
2. The agenda of the AGM will include the presentation and receipt of the audited annual Church accounts and election of Church Council members.

2.4.2 Voting majorities

For the purpose of this constitution the following definitions apply for voting at Members Meetings:

- Majority vote: 50% of members present at the meeting, plus one.
- Two-thirds majority vote: 66% of the members present at the meeting.

3. Church Leadership

3.1 The Church Council

1. The purpose of the Church Council is to:
 - a. Oversee the spiritual and administrative affairs of the church on behalf of the Church Members.
 - b. Discern the specific direction of the church and provide leadership to the church with the Lead Pastor who leads the Church Staff.
 - c. Provide accountability and support to the Lead Pastor and through the Lead Pastor to the broader pastoral team.
 - d. Ensure that Policies and Practices are adequate for the following areas: Child protection; Risk Management; WH&S; Financial; Employment Practices; Conflict Resolution; Meeting Procedures.
2. There will be a minimum of 7 and maximum of 9 members of the Church Council. At least Six of the members will be elected to the Church Council at an AGM and will not hold a Church Staff position. Elected members will be appointed for two year terms.
3. The Lead Pastor will be a member of the Church Council while holding that position. The Lead Pastor may invite one other member from the Pastoral Team to join the Church Council as a full voting member with the Church Council's agreement.
4. The Administrator of the Church is an ex-officio non-voting member of the Church Council but will attend meetings at the discretion of the Council.
5. The Church Council will appoint its own Chair.
6. Minutes of Church Council meetings will be kept.
7. The elected members of the Church Council are appointed by a majority vote at an AGM. Each year at least two of the elected Council Members shall complete their term. The Church Council may appoint a person to fill a vacancy until the next AGM. This person will need to meet the requirements of the standard Nomination process.
8. Nominations or renominations for Church Council can be made to the Nominations Committee which consists of the Chair of the Church Council, the Lead Pastor and one other person appointed by the Church Council. The Nominations Committee will then bring recommendations through the Church Council to the Church Members for appointment.

3.1.1 Meetings of the Church Council

1. The Church Council will meet when and how it decides and may be called for any purpose and at any time or place by resolution of three members.
2. Consensus will, as far as possible, be the basis of decision making by the Church Council. Where a vote is necessary, each member has one vote. When voting on a matter under section 3.3, the Church Council may only act by a vote with no more than one dissent.
3. The quorum for meetings of the Church Council will be five members and meetings will usually be held face to face. However, the linking together of members using telephone or other electronic audio-visual communication shall constitute attendance at a meeting. In this instance the member/s must be able to receive the input of the other members taking part in the meeting, and be present for the full meeting for the purpose of a quorum.

3.2 Church Staff

There are two types of staff members.

- **Pastoral Staff** are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral leadership of the church or an area within the church; and
 - **Support Staff** who operate in support of the Pastoral Staff in specific areas of ministry.
1. The Church Council will identify and recommend to the Members nominees for Pastoral Staff positions including the Lead Pastor.
 2. Pastoral Staff appointments or re-appointments are made at a Members' Meeting for a term that will not exceed 5 years and require a two-thirds majority vote. These votes will be by secret ballot.
 3. A Pastoral Staff member's position ceases at the end of their term of call. The Church Council will determine whether to recommend to the Church that the Pastoral Staff member receive another term of call. The Pastoral Staff member will be informed of the Council's decision at least three months before the completion of their term. If the Pastoral Staff member disputes the Council decision, either party may invite QB to mediate on this matter, with both parties agreeing to comply with the mediation process. If either the Church Council or the Pastoral Staff member does not accept the outcome of the mediation process, the matter will be decided at a Church Members' Meeting, where a two-thirds majority would be needed for a new call for the Pastoral Staff member.
 4. The termination of a Pastoral Staff appointment will be made at a Members' Meeting and requires a majority vote, unless it is matter of moral offence or misconduct in which case it will be dealt with according to section 3.3. These votes will be by secret ballot.
 5. Support staff appointments are made and concluded by the Church Council.
 6. The Church member responsible for administration will be the Administrator of the church.

3.3 Dismissal of Members of Church Council and Church Staff

1. Complaints about the conduct of members of the Church Council or Church Staff members will be made in writing to the Church Council.
2. Any member of the Church Council who is the subject of a complaint shall not sit on the Church Council for the purpose of investigating or determining the complaint.
3. In any investigation the principles of natural justice will apply.
4. If the Church Council decides to dismiss the complaint or decides not to take action on the complaint, the person or persons who brought the complaint may refer the matter to the appropriate person of The Baptist Union of Queensland for mediation.
5. If the Church Council decides that the complaint has substance, the Church Council may take the action it considers appropriate including termination of employment, suspension or admonition. The person against whom this action is taken may refer the matter to the appropriate person of The Baptist Union of Queensland for mediation.

4. Sale, Purchase and Holding of Property

The sale, purchase and holding of freehold or leasehold land:

1. will be in the name of The Baptist Union of Queensland held in trust for the Church; and
2. will be approved by the Members at a Members' Meeting in compliance with the rules stipulated in the Constitution of The Baptist Union of Queensland.

5. Indemnity

5.1. Loss and Damage

No person will be liable to the Members for any loss or damage suffered by them for action taken or omitted to be taken by them as:

- Church Council member
- Church Staff (Pastoral or Support) member
- Other people as the Church Council decides

if:

- a) the action or omission was taken or made:
 - i) within that person's scope of authority;
 - ii) in good faith; and
 - iii) if that person exercised the same degree of care and skill as a wise person would have exercised or used under the circumstances in the conduct of his own affairs;

or

- b) that person took or omitted to take the action in reliance upon the written or oral advice of a legal adviser of the Church.

5.2. Insurance

The Church will ensure that it is insured sufficiently to pay:

- any judgment (including costs) entered against a person; or
- the amount (including costs) necessary to settle the proceedings; and
- that person's reasonable legal fees;

if that person, and the act or omission, who are the subject of the proceedings meet the description in Section 5.1. In this Section, "proceedings" includes a claim before proceedings are instituted.

6. Winding Up

If the Church is wound up, then:

1. its assets will be first applied in satisfying its proper debts and liabilities and shall be subject to any requirements imposed by the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission;
- and
2. any surplus will not be paid or distributed between the Members, but will be given or transferred to the Baptist Union of Queensland or to another organisation having a similar philosophy, vision and values as the Church as decided by a Member's Meeting. Any such decision is to be made in consultation with the Baptist Union of Queensland and will require a two-thirds majority vote.

7. Review and Changing the Constitution

This Constitution will be reviewed every five years (or sooner if deemed appropriate). This constitution may be changed by a two-thirds majority vote at a Members' Meeting provided any change is accepted by the Baptist Union of Queensland.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that the following statements are foundational and unchallengeable. They form the basis of our belief as a Christian Church.

1. God

We believe in one God in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, co-equal and existing forever in unity, creating and sustaining the universe. Genesis 1:26,27; 3:22; Psalms 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

2. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth as both God and man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and will come again to judge the world and reign as King and Lord of all. Matthew 1:22,23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrew 4:14,15; 1 Cor.15:3,4; Rom.1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Tim.6:14,15; Titus 2:13

3. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to convince people of sin and of their accountability to God. He gives new life and is present in all who turn from their sin and place their faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. He lives in believers from the time they turn to Jesus and works to make them holy. He empowers them for Christian life and service, and gives them understanding of spiritual truth and guidance to do what is right. He gives spiritual gifts to all believers for the building of the church (the body of Christ). 2 Cor.3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor.2:12; 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18; Galatians 5:25

4. The Scriptures

We believe the Bible is inspired by God and without error in its original form. It is our primary authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 12:6; 119:105,160; Proverbs 30:5

5. The State of People

We believe people are made to live in relationship with and dependence on God. Through our rebellion and self-dependence (sin) all people are separated from God and face God's judgement. Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; 59:1-2; Romans 3:23

6. Salvation

We believe we cannot make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. We are saved when we turn from our self-ruled life (repent), place our faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and receive the Holy Spirit. When we are saved, our rebellion and failings are forgiven and we are adopted into God's family forever. Rom.6:23; Eph.2:8-9; John 14:6; 1:12; Titus 3:5; Gal.3:26; John 10:28-29; Tim.1:12

7. Service

We are saved to worship God and live lives of sacrificial service. Our call to be holy (set apart for God) is expressed as we love God, love people, and seek first God's kingdom in his church and in his world. 1 Pet. 1:15; Luke 4:8; Matt. 6:33; Eph. 5:1-2; Luke 10:27; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:1-3

8. The Future

We believe people were created to live forever. Everyone will be judged by Jesus for what they have done on earth. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord will live with him forever. Those who have ruled their own life will be separated from him forever.

John 3:16; 5:11-13; Revelation 20:12-15