



New Heights

Christian Church

CONSTITUTION

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SCHEDULE OF AMENDMENTS

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6th edition: November 2003

7th edition: August 2009

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9th edition: July 2023

PART 1 DEFINITIONS

Administrator: Person/s appointed by the Elders either in a voluntary or employed capacity to oversee the conduct of matters of Church administration connected with day-to-day management of business and other affairs.

Affirmed/affirmation: The process by which members indicate acceptance of persons who are recommended to the membership for Eldership and various ministry positions. A person will be affirmed in the position with a majority vote.

Annual General Meeting (AGM): The AGM is to be held to deal with outstanding matters and to affirm appointments and to receive the annual financial statement.

Appointed/ appointments: The process by which suitable persons are designated to various leadership and ministry positions by the Elders.

Business Meeting: The Business Meeting provides a forum for discussion of Church matters which have been referred to the elders prior to the meeting, as well as to formulate motions which are to be put to the meeting for voting by the members. In the ordinary course of events discussion and voting will take place in the Business Meeting; however, there is nothing in this Constitution which prevents voting on a matter being deferred to a later Special Meeting deemed necessary by the meeting.

Business Meeting Coordinator: A Church member chosen by the Elders to coordinate the Business Meeting.

Church: Known as New Heights Christian Church Inc, hereinafter referred to as the 'Church'.

Management Team: Consists of Church members appointed by the Elders to manage the day-to-day operation of the Church.

Elders: Persons affirmed by the membership for the spiritual and pastoral oversight and care of the congregation.

Majority vote: In any procedure requiring affirmation or vote a majority will be at least 65% of the total number of votes cast.

Membership: All people who have applied for membership and been accepted as members.

Membership Roll: The list of current Church members.

Ministry Leaders: Persons who are either appointed or affirmed to ministry leadership positions.

Notice in writing: Notice in writing includes notice by electronic forms of communication. Notice in writing is deemed to have been given on the date the communication was sent.

Proxy: A nominated Church member who is authorised to vote on behalf of a Church member in their absence.

Public Officer: The person responsible for lodging the documents required to keep the public record of the Incorporated Association, and for signing documents of the Incorporated Association, as required. The functions of the Public Officer can be delegated to a member of the Church in circumstances of need for specific purposes or periods of time. Such delegation must be made in writing.

Special Church Meeting: Convened for the purpose of considering urgent Church matters.

Staff: All people who are employed by the Church.

Statement of Faith: The Statement of Faith is a summary of the essential elements of Church doctrine relating to Christian belief and behaviour.

Vision Team: Consists of Church members who are appointed by the Elders to suggest future directions for the Church.

Votes: Votes cast shall include votes cast by proxy during the Annual General Meeting, Business Meeting or Special Meeting, provided that the right to vote as a proxy has been tabled (in writing) to the Chairperson of the Meeting or the Church Administrator before the commencement of the meeting. Votes cast may also include absentee votes received prior to these meetings. Votes cast in absentia will be in writing and will be given to the Administrator or Chairperson of the Meeting prior to the meeting. Any votes cast in *abstention* shall not be included in the total number of votes cast.

PART 2 NAME

The Church is to be known as New Heights Christian Church Inc, hereinafter referred to as the 'Church'.

PART 3 PURPOSE

We exist to glorify God through praise, worship and acts of kindness, to strengthen and teach His people and to reach out with the love of God to those who don't know him.

We believe we should, by God's grace, fulfil the above statement by carrying out the following duties and ministries:

- a. Provide biblically sound and Godly leadership and care for the people of God.
- b. Establish regular meetings for worship, prayer, fellowship and teaching the Word of God.
- c. Maintain a witness to the truth of the Christian revelation, proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to our community and nurture those who respond to bring them to maturity as disciples of our Saviour.
- d. Engage in activities as opportunity is given to minister to our community.
- e. Support with prayer and fellowship all Christian organisations and individuals who hold and practise the essential doctrines of our faith.

PART 4 STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Church Statement of Faith is in Appendix A.

We believe the truth contained in this statement is fundamental to the Christian faith.

The Statement of Faith and the Constitution are to be regarded as subordinate to Scripture itself in matters of Christian doctrine and practice.

PART 5 MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Qualification

Membership shall be open to those who:

- a. are eighteen years and over.
- b. sincerely profess repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- c. show evidence of a life committed to the Word of God
- d. sincerely desire to participate in the privileges and fellowship offered by the Church.
- e. accept the Church Statement of Faith and the Constitution as guidelines for Church administration and unity in doctrinal matters
- f. have been attending the Church on a regular basis for a minimum of three months.

5.2 Application

When a person expresses interest in becoming a Church member:

- a. They will request membership.
- b. They will be interviewed by two Elders or their delegates.
- c. The Elders will consider the application and determine the outcome within one month of the request.
- d. People who are accepted for membership will be announced to the Church.

5.3 Responsibilities

Members are expected to:

- a. regularly attend public worship and other fellowship meetings
- b. pray regularly for the blessing of God on the Church and its work
- c. study God's Word to develop maturity in Christian living
- d. contribute financially to the support of the Church as the Lord directs, and according to the way He has prospered them
- e. respect and support the Elders, the Management Team and Ministry Leaders
- f. attend Church Business Meetings, the Annual General Meeting and Special Meetings.

5.4 Discipline

Members whose lifestyle is inconsistent with Christian principles shall be subject to discipline as directed by God's Word, including, but not restricted to:

1 Cor 5:1-5, 2 Cor 2:5-11, 2 Thess 3:6,14,15, Titus 3:9-11

Such discipline may comprise of admonition, suspension from privileges by the Church Elders, and/or involuntary termination of membership as detailed in section 5.6.

5.5 Voluntary Termination

Voluntary termination of membership may occur through:

- a. removal to another district or church or
- b. verbal or written communication by the member.

If a member is moving to another location and wishes to have their membership retained, an application should be lodged with the Elders for ratification. Retention of membership will be at the discretion of the Elders according to the circumstances.

Voting and consideration of Church matters may carry on without the need to contact absentee members.

5.6 Involuntary Termination

Involuntary termination of membership may occur through persistent failure to discharge the responsibilities of membership and:

- a. unrepentant or consistent deviation from the Statement of Faith or other severe doctrinal error
- b. absence from public worship and fellowship for three consecutive months without justifiable cause
- c. involuntary termination of membership shall be by the decision of the Elders
- d. involuntary termination will be in writing by the Elders after consultation with the member and automatically applied at the expiration of the three-month period.

5.7 Membership Restoration

Any member who has been excluded can, in due time, make fresh application for membership as set out in section 5.2. The Elders may seek further assurances as considered necessary and appropriate.

5.8 Membership Roll

The Church membership roll must be revised prior to the AGM and each Business Meeting and is subject to the provisions of this Constitution.

PART 6 CHURCH GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

6.1 Church Autonomy

This Church believes that the New Testament teaches the principle of the autonomy of the local fellowship. The Holy Spirit equips the members of the Church to manage its own affairs through holy, godly, gifted people.

6.2 Church Elders

Church Eldership relates to the spiritual oversight of the Church. Duration of these positions are normally for two years with half being elected every second year which provides continuity of service.

6.2.1 Responsibilities of the Elders

- a. Organising and overseeing the teaching and preaching of the word of God.
- b. Strengthening and developing the care, encouragement, and support ministries of the Church.
- c. Ensuring that the pastoral care and counselling ministries of the Church are actively maintained.
- d. Building up the Church in its faith and experience of the Lord Jesus Christ, by example, influence and service.
- e. Ensuring that any discipline necessary in the Church is carried out with love and in accordance with Scripture.
- f. Overseeing the spiritual guidance and direction of the various ministry and support teams that may be needed to assist growth in the Church.
- g. Because the spiritual leadership of the Church is the responsibility of the Elders, they are entitled to and should expect the love, loyalty, support, and fellowship of the congregation.

6.2.2 Qualifications of Elders

Only those qualified and suitable, as outlined in Scripture (eg 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9), shall be elected as Elders. Plurality is essential and at least three Elders will be appointed. Elders should:

- a. have wisdom, patience and understanding in their dealings with others
- b. subscribe fully to the Statement of Faith and the Constitution
- c. have been a member of the Church for at least one year
- d. give evidence by their life and gifts that they are truly called of God and satisfy the scriptural requirements for leadership.

6.2.3 Appointment of Elders

Church members are commissioned by God and the Church to seek discernment regarding the appointment of Elders.

- a. Nominations shall be made from amongst members of the Church who qualify under section 6.2.2 of the Constitution.
- b. Nominations can be received from Church members. If any Church member feels they have a gift for this ministry, they can submit their own name to the Elders for consideration.
- c. Nominations can be given to the current Elders for consideration at any time during the year and up to six weeks before the Annual General Meeting.
- d. The Elders will recommend to the Church those nominated members who are suitably qualified, allowing a minimum fourteen-day period for members to register any concerns.
- e. Votes shall be in writing. Each nominee must receive an affirmation of at least 65% of the total number of votes cast. The votes comprise of those cast at the Annual General Meeting and those cast in writing in absentia prior to the meeting, and those cast through a proxy nominated in writing prior to the meeting.
- f. Church Elder positions will be affirmed for a two-year period.
- g. Nothing in this Constitution, including Clause 6.2.2.(c), prevents the Elders making interim Eldership appointments to fill vacancies or respond to need until such time as the nomination can be properly brought to the membership.

6.3 All Other Church Positions

Other Church Positions include Management Team members, Ministry Leaders, and Vision Team members.

6.3.1 Responsibilities of Other Church Positions

- a. Management Team members are responsible for ensuring that the day-to-day activities of the Church and its associated ministries function effectively.
- b. Management Team members are Church members appointed by the Elders. The appointments will be regularly reviewed.
- c. Ministry Leaders are responsible to lead and direct official ministries and activities of the Church.
- d. The Vision Team is responsible to explore ways the Church can make improved contact with the community and create strategies for both now and into the future.
- e. The Management Team, Ministry Leaders, and the Vision Team will report verbally to Elders regarding any issues that are of concern.

- f. Where appropriate, the Management Team, Ministry Leaders and the Vision Team will suggest reasonable expenditure on behalf of the Church and in accordance with its purposes and mission, up to an amount approved at the Business Meeting.

6.3.2 Qualifications of Other Church Positions.

Qualifications of a Management Team member are outlined in 1 Tim 3: 8-13.

A person who is invited by the Elders to hold one of the positions must agree to the following:

- a. fully agree to the Church Constitution and the Statement of Faith
- b. be a Church member.
- c. be of Christian character
- d. show by their life, gifts, and spiritual maturity that they are suitable for the ministry position.

6.3.3 Nominations, Affirmations and Appointments of all Other Church Positions

All Other Church Positions will be affirmed or appointed at the discretion of the Elders. Tenure of each position to be reviewed each year by the Elders in consultation with person/s holding the position.

- a. Nominations shall be received from among members of the Church who qualify under section 6.3.2 of the Constitution.
- b. Nominations can be received from Church members. If any Church member feels that they have a gift for a ministry, they can submit their own name to the Elders for consideration.
- c. Nominations can be given to the Elders at any time during the year and up to six weeks before the Annual General Meeting.
- d. The Elders will recommend to the Church suitably qualified members to fill specific positions. A minimum period of fourteen days will be allowed for members to provide feedback.
- e. For positions requiring affirmation, votes will be in writing. Each nominee must receive an affirmation of at least 65% of the total number of votes cast. The votes comprise of those cast at the Annual General Meeting and those cast in writing in absentia prior to the meeting.

6.3.4 Meetings of Other Church Positions

- a. Members of each position will decide the frequency of their meetings.
- b. When other Church positions meet, 50% constitutes a quorum.
- c. Meetings are to be held on a regular basis to:
 - i. plan, discuss and formalise Church activities/strategies
 - ii. provide mutual support

- iii. discuss issues of concern.
- d. A record of meetings and decisions made will be kept as formal minutes.

6.4 Termination of Responsibility

Automatic termination of responsibility of Elders, Management Team members or other positions occurs when the office bearer is not re-affirmed, resigns, or ceases to be a Church member. Other reasons for termination of membership are outlined in sections 5.5 and 5.6.

PART 7 CHURCH MEETINGS

7.1 Business Meeting

- a. The purpose of the Business Meeting is to ensure that there is an official forum for total Church discussion and preparation of motions which will be voted on at the Business Meeting.
- b. Affirmation of a motion or appointment will be by a vote of at least 65% of the total number of votes cast.
- c. The Business Meeting shall be held at least twice a year.
- d. Business Meeting dates will be set by the Management Team with the approval of the Elders.
- e. A quorum is constituted by 50% of each of Elders, Other Church Positions and Church members who hold their position by way of voted affirmation, or delegates of the Elders and those affirmed Ministry Leaders.
- f. Attendance at all Business Meetings is expected of members. The Elders may, at their discretion, extend attendance for observation, to other interested persons.
- g. An Agenda will be distributed to all members two weeks before the meeting.
- h. The membership role will be updated prior to every business meeting.
- i. A record of the meeting and decisions made will be kept as formal minutes.
- j. Voting at the Business Meeting is restricted to Church members.
- k. The Business Meeting coordinator may require reports from Other Church Positions including the Treasurer.
- l. Church members must present any agenda items to the Elders two weeks prior the Business Meeting.

7.1.1 Function of the Business Meeting

- a. Planning and formalising Church activities not associated with any Other Position portfolio. Notwithstanding this provision, the Elders may put a matter to a Business Meeting on behalf of a Church member if discussion of the issue reveals that this is the optimum course of action.
- b. To forward motions which have been approved by the Business Meeting to the relevant Ministry Leader or member for action.

7.2 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting shall be held no later than the fourth week in November each year. Notification to be given to Church members four weeks in advance followed by the agenda two weeks before the meeting.

- a. The Management Team, Ministry Leaders and Vision Team shall submit yearly reports if requested by the meeting coordinator. These will be attached to the minutes of the AGM.
- b. Voting on nominations for Elders and those whose roles require affirmation.
- c. The Elders will confirm all affirmed positions to the Church at the earliest suitable time.
- d. A quorum is constituted by 50% of each of the Elders, Other Church Positions and Church members.
- e. Affirmation of a motion will be by a vote of at least 65% of the total number of votes cast.
- f. A record of the meeting and decisions made will be kept as formal minutes.

7.3 Special Church Meetings

These meetings are convened for the sole purpose of considering urgent Church issues.

- a. Notice shall be given in writing to every member together with a full statement of each resolution two weeks before the meeting.
- b. A special Church meeting may be called at the request of the Elders, the Management Team or with the written request of no less than 20% of Church members. The request must state the purpose of the meeting.
- c. A quorum is constituted by 50% of Church members.
- d. Any motion must receive affirmation of at least 65% of the total number of votes cast to be a valid and actionable motion.
- e. A record of the meeting and decisions made will be kept as formal minutes.

PART 8 CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

Changes to the Constitution can only be affected at a Special Meeting.

Proposed amendments to any individual section of the Constitution or additional clauses will be adopted, if the amendment obtains at least 65% of the total number of the number of votes cast.

Where substantial amendments to the Constitution are proposed, it is not necessary for the members to vote on each proposed amendment, but the amended Constitution may be put to the vote as a revised version. If the revised version of the Constitution receives a vote of at least 65% of the total number of votes cast, the amended version will be substituted as the new version of the Constitution.

PART 9 CHURCH STAFF

9.1 Appointments of Church Staff

- a. Staff appointments are only made by the Elders.
- b. Elders may appoint Staff to meet specific Church needs.
- c. All Staff appointments must be made under the guidelines of this Constitution.
- d. Staff appointments will be paid positions.
- e. Staff may be employed for either full-time, part-time or casual positions.
- f. To avoid any conflict of interest, any appointments to Staff positions of members of the same family, parents and siblings, must be put to the Church as a motion at a Special Business Meeting and affirmed by at least 65% of the total number of votes cast.
- g. All Staff appointments will be under contract.
- h. Offers and contracts of employment will be in writing and will clearly outline:
 - i. the scope of the position
 - ii. the position limitations
 - iii. the duration of the offer
 - iv. an appraisal process.
- i. Staff positions will be reviewed at the end of each year by the Elders.
- j. Staff will undergo an appraisal at the end of each year by the Elders.
- k. Discipline of appointed Staff will be as outlined in clause 5.5 and 5.6 of the Constitution.

PART 10 GENERAL

10.1 New Ministries and Activities

Any new ministry or activity should be presented to the Elders to determine the impact on the life and resources of the Church.

10.2 Insurance

The Church must affect and maintain insurance under s.44 of the Association Incorporation Act 1994.

10.3 Funds Source

- a. The source of funds of the Church will be derived from donations and, subject to any determination by the Eldership and the Management Team, from such other sources that accord with the purposes of the Church.
- b. All money received by the Church must be deposited as soon as practicable to the credit of the Church bank account.

10.4 Funds Management

- a. All funds will be used in the fulfilment of the Church purposes as stated in the Constitution.
- b. All payments must be authorised by any two Church members nominated by the Elders.

10.5 Custody of Books

The Public Officer must keep under their control all financial records, books, and related documents of the Church.

10.6 Inspection of Books

The financial records, books and related documents of the Church must be open to inspection by any member of the Church and by appointment.

10.7 Dissolution Clause

Stewards Foundation is the Trustee for the land, property, and any assets. In the event of the Church ceasing to function, any remaining assets, land, and property will be given only to an organisation which has similar objectives, and a non-profit body and with the approval of Stewards Foundation.

10.8 Non-profitability

All assets and funds of the Church will be used solely to further the objectives of the Church and will not be distributed to members, except for wages for employees, and reimbursement of properly incurred expenses outlaid on behalf of the Church.

APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in:

1. The Scriptures

The sixty-six books comprising the Old and New Testaments are the infallible, complete Word of God. As originally given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they are without error. They are our final authority, and sufficient in all matters of faith and conduct.

2. The Trinity

There is one true God, eternally existing in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is Sovereign, holy and loving. He is the Creator, Ruler and Judge of the world.

3. The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is True God and True Man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a perfect, sinless life.

4. The Work of the Lord Jesus Christ

Christ died on behalf of all mankind, throughout all ages, was physically raised from death by God the Father, and ascended to His Father's presence where He is now interceding for His people. Through his death and resurrection, He took the punishment for sin and he secured righteousness, forgiveness and eternal life for all who trust him.

5. The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, personally and visibly, in glory and power, to judge the world in righteousness and to bring the Kingdom of God to its full realisation.

6. The Holy Spirit

We affirm the Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit. His present work is to represent the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ to each of us, helping us to understand God's truth. He shows us our need of Christ and brings us salvation when we call upon Christ as Lord. He empowers us to live worthy lives and equips us to serve God.

7. The Sinfulness of Man

Because men and women are made in the image of God, they have personal worth as individuals. However, the human race, without exception, has rebelled against the authority of God. The effect of this has been to bias man's thinking, feeling and behaviour

against God. Therefore, everyone needs the salvation that only comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. Satan

Satan is a person who opposes God and His purposes. He has been defeated by Jesus Christ and will ultimately be destroyed by God.

9. Salvation

Salvation is God's work. It is solely by the grace of God the Father, accomplished by God the Son and applied by God the Holy Spirit. It is obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and includes regeneration, justification by faith, and adoption as sons, sanctification and final glorification.

10. The Church

There is One, Holy, Universal Church that is the body of Christ and to which all true believers belong.

11. The Sacraments

The Scriptures ordain only two sacraments:

1. Believer's Baptism by immersion.
2. The Lord's Supper, in which the bread and wine are but symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

These ordinances are the right, privilege and duty of all believers.

12. Resurrection and Judgment

There shall one day be a bodily resurrection of all the dead when God will judge each individual. This will result in eternal gain for those who in this life submitted to Him by obeying the gospel and eternal loss for those who in this life rebelled against Him.