

## (ANNEXURE A)

### CONSTITUTION OF PROVIDENCE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INC

#### **Article 1      Name**

The name of the Church shall be “Providence Bible-Presbyterian Church Inc”, hereinafter referred to as “the Church”.

#### **Article 2      Address**

The address of the Church shall be at 169 Brougham Drive, Valley View SA, 5093, or such address as may be decided by the Session.

#### **Article 3      Objects**

The objects for which the Church is established are:

- 3.1 The salvation of souls;
- 3.2 The edification of Christians through the teaching of God’s Word;
- 3.3 The promotion of godly worship;
- 3.4 The defence of “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3);
- 3.5 The establishment and extension of Christian missions and institutions for the furtherance of God’s kingdom on earth;
- 3.6 The promotion of Christian relief for the poor and needy;
- 3.7 The strengthening of mutual fellowship, encouragement and unity among individual Bible-Presbyterian Churches in Australia and among other Bible-believing Churches of similar stand “*for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*”(Rev. 1:9).

#### **Article 4      Doctrine**

- 4.1 The doctrine of the Church shall be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed Faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.
- 4.2 In abbreviated form the chief tenets of the doctrine of the Church, apart from the Apostles’ Creed, shall be as follows:
  - 4.2.1 We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and, as the Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life;
  - 4.2.2 We believe in one God existing in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
  - 4.2.3 We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man;
  - 4.2.4 We believe that man was created in the image of God, but sinned through the fall of Adam, thereby incurring not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are therefore sinners in thought, word and deed;
  - 4.2.5 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died a propitiatory and expiatory death as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who repent of their sins and believe in Him are justified before God on the grounds of His shed blood;
  - 4.2.6 We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God, where He intercedes for us as our High Priest and Advocate;
  - 4.2.7 We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to judge this world and bring peace to the nations;

4.2.8 We believe that salvation is by grace through faith, not by works, and that all who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God;

4.2.9 We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and to convict and regenerate the sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service;

4.2.10 We believe that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism for believers and their children and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which sacraments shall be observed by His Church till He comes;

4.2.11 We believe in the eternal security, bodily resurrection, and eternal blessedness of the saved and in the bodily resurrection and eternal conscious punishment of the lost;

4.2.12 We believe in the real, spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood and the necessity of faithfully maintaining the purity of the church in doctrine and life according to the Word of God and the principle and practice of biblical separation from the apostasy of the day being spearheaded by the Ecumenical Movement (or other such movements) (2 Cor 6:14-18; Rev 18:4).

4.3 The Church upholds the system of doctrines set forth in this Statement of Faith as inviolable.

## **Article 5 Principles of Government**

The Church, in setting forth the form of government which it maintains as being founded upon and agreeable to the word of God, reiterates, by way of introduction, several cardinal principles which are basic to and regulative of its form of church government.

5.1 "God alone is Lord of the conscience" and "hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship". Therefore, we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and inalienable. We do not even wish to see any religious institution aided by, the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security and, at the same time, be equal and common to all others.

5.2 In perfect consistency with the above principle of common right every Christian Church, or union or association of Christian churches is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government in accordance with the Word of God. In the exercise of this right it may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, it does not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only makes an improper use of its own liberty and rights.

5.3 Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, appointed officers, not only to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty: it is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing in all cases the rules contained in the Word of God.

5.4 Truth leads to goodness; the great touchstone of truth is its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Saviour's rule, "*by their fruits ye shall know them*". No opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty; otherwise it would be of no consequence whether to discover truth or to embrace it.

5.5 Under the conviction of the above principle, we think it necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith. We also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.

5.6 Though the character, qualifications, and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution, yet the election of persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.

5.7 All church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and conduct; no church court ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now, though it will be easily admitted, that all synods and councils may err through the frailty inseparable from humanity, yet, there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws than from the right of judging upon laws already made and common to all who profess the gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.

5.8 If the preceding Scriptural and rational principles are steadfastly adhered to, the vigour and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any church. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object and not accompanied by any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal.

#### **Article 5a Statutory Powers of the Church**

For the purpose of carrying out its objects, the church shall possess all the powers conferred by section 25 of *the Incorporated Association Act 1985 (SA)*, insofar as the Church shall not:

5a.1 Invest its moneys pursuant to section 25 (d) of the Incorporated Association Act 1985 (SA), unless approved by the Session and the members of the church at a congregational meeting by special resolution; or

5a.2 Borrow money pursuant to section 25 (e) of the Incorporated Association Act 1985 (SA), unless approved by the Session and the members of the church at a congregational meeting by special resolution.

#### **Article 6 Principle and practice of Biblical Separation**

6.1 The doctrine of separation from sin unto God is a fundamental principle of the Bible, one grievously ignored in the Church today.

6.2 This doctrine arises out of the holiness of God. Both the purity and righteousness of God (Lk 1:75) are involved. *“Be ye holy; for I am holy.”* (1 Pet 1:16, also 3:11; Ex 15:11; Isa 6:3; 2 Cor 7:1)

6.3 The Bible does speak of co-operation (*“be of one mind”, “that they may all be one”, “labourers together”, “keep the unity of the Spirit”, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”,* also 1 Cor 12:25). However, biblical co-operation is based upon TRUTH. It involves the united effort of God’s people. This is not a co-operation born of a spirit of undiscerning pluralism, or that of seeking “truth” in all religions.

6.4 We maintain that Scripture teaches a separation that is based on the holiness of God, producing purity in all of life, personal and ecclesiastical.

6.5 It is the duty of all true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ to make a clear testimony to their faith in Him, especially in these darkening days of apostasy in many professing churches, by which apostasy whole denominations in their official capacity, as well as individual churches, have been swept into a paganising stream of modernism under various names and in varying degrees.

6.6 There has been a notable growth of autocratic domination on the part especially of modernistic leaders by whom the rightful powers of true churches are often usurped and are now being usurped.

6.7 The commands of God to His people to be separate from all unbelief and corruption are clear and positive: *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* (2 Cor 6:14; see also Matt 6:24; Rom 16:17; Gal 1; Eph 5:11; 2 Thess 3:6, 14; 2 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 3:10; 2 Pet 2:1-3; 1 Jn 4:1-3; 2 Jn 7-11; Jude 3, 20-24; and Rev 18:4). We reach out to those who are part of any human system which involves compromising with error, and who thus ought to *“come out from among them”* (2 Cor 6:17), separate themselves unto the *“Father ... the Lord Almighty”* (2 Cor 6:18), thus *“cleansing themselves”* and perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1).

6.8 In loyalty to the revealed Word we, as an organised portion of the people of God, are obliged to oppose all forms of modernism, cultism, Romanism, and false religions. Dialogue for the purpose of

reaching a compromise between all true Bible believers and representatives of such beliefs is impious, unbiblical, treasonous and unfaithful to the holy God, as He has revealed Himself to us in His infallible, inerrant Word.

6.9 We are opposed to all efforts to obscure or wipe out the clear line of separation between these absolutes: truth and error, light and darkness. See Jer 5:20, 2 Cor 6:14-18. We refer to such efforts by New Evangelicals, Charismatic Christians, promoters of ecumenical cooperative evangelism and of the social gospel, and all churches and other movements and organisations that are aligned with or sympathetic to the Ecumenical Movement.

## **Article 7 Main Practices of the Church**

The main practices of the Church are as follows:

7.1 **BAPTISM:** The observance of the Baptism of believers is by sprinkling on personal confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Infants of one or both the believing parents are to be baptised (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-42; 8:35-38; 10:44-48; 1 Cor 7:14). Persons who are baptized in the Church shall be received into membership of the Church. Note: Baptism does not save the infant and believing parents should endeavour to bring their children up in "*the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" by regular instruction of the Word of God and to lead them into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Prov 22:6; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:4).

7.2 **REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** Baptised infants upon coming of age in that they can satisfy the Board of Elders as to their faith shall be received into communicant membership by reaffirmation of faith.

7.3 **THE LORD'S SUPPER:** The remembrance of the Lord's death through the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly, and normally all baptised believers (except baptised children of constituent members who have not reaffirmed their faith) whose conduct is consistent with their confession of their faith shall be received at the Lord's table (Lk 22:14-29; Acts 2:42, 46, 20:7; Rom 14:19, 15:7; 1 Cor 5:6-8, 11:23-26).

7.4 **FELLOWSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP:** Every member shall participate in fellowship, prayer and instruction with other believers and the exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of the church (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:1-16; Heb 10:23-25; 1 Pet 4:7-11).

7.5 **EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS:** The local Church in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, both as individual and collective witnesses, shall proclaim the Gospel to their families, neighbours, colleagues, friends, the nation, as well as the regions beyond (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:44-48; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 2:9, 3:15).

7.6 **STEWARDSHIP:** Every member shall have the responsibility and privilege to contribute his gifts, talents, time and resources to the work of God and the extension of His kingdom. It shall also be the responsibility and privilege of each member to tithe and contribute willingly, regularly and generously according to his ability as God enables (Mal 3:10; Rom 12:1-13; 1 Cor 6:19-20, 16:1-2; 2 Cor 8, 9).

7.7 **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:** The Church shall conduct a Christian Education programme to build up the members in the most holy faith (Jude 20) through Sunday School, Bible study classes, Bible study groups, catechism classes, Christian publications, Gospel tracts and such other similar measures as the Church Session and/or Board of Elders may decide.

7.8 **WORSHIP:** All members shall meet regularly for the public worship of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and shall maintain family and personal devotions (Ps 27:4; Heb 10:24-25; Song of Solomon 1:6; Ps 122:1; Ps 1:1-3).

7.9 **WEDDINGS:** The Church will solemnise marriages between one man and one woman, both of whom must be born again believers. The groom must be a baptised believer and the bride either a baptised believer or a catechumen (2 Cor 6:14; Eph 5:21-33).

7.10 **FUNERALS:** The normal practice of the Church is to bury the dead. Christian funeral is to be conducted only for born-again believers.

7.11 **BIBLE VERSION:** We affirm the King James Version as the official version of the Church.

## **Article 8      Membership**

8.1      Membership of the Church shall be of four categories:

8.1.1    Communicant Members – Persons who can satisfy the Board of Elders as to their Christian faith, knowledge, and manner of life and who have been baptised or have reaffirmed their Christian faith or transferred from another Bible-Presbyterian Church or another Bible-believing Church and agree fully with the Church's doctrine and statement on separation shall be Communicant Members. They must be citizens or permanent residents of Australia. They shall be eligible to vote at congregational meetings provided that they are 18 years and above and are not inactive members. No member under the age of 21 shall be eligible to stand for election to the Session.

8.1.2    Non-Communicant Members – Baptised children of Communicant Members or of Christians who have not yet acquired Communicant Membership in the Church shall be Non-communicant members. They shall not be eligible to vote nor hold office. They shall have the right to attend all congregational meetings of the Church as observers, but they shall not be permitted to speak during the meetings.

8.1.3    Associate Members – Persons who can satisfy the Board of Elders as to their Christian faith, knowledge and manner of life and who have been baptised or have reaffirmed their Christian faith or transferred from another Bible-Presbyterian Church or another Bible-believing Church, and are not citizens or permanent residents of Australia, shall be Associate Members. They shall not be eligible to vote at Congregational Meetings. They can still retain membership of another church. They shall have the right to attend all congregational meetings of the Church as observers, but they shall not be permitted to speak during the meetings.

8.1.4    Affiliated Members – Persons who can satisfy the Board of Elders as to their Christian faith, knowledge and manner of life and who have been baptised or have reaffirmed their Christian faith or transferred from another Bible-Presbyterian Church or another Bible-believing Church, but who do not wish to become communicant members, shall be Affiliated Members. They shall not be eligible to vote at Congregational Meetings. They may serve in the Church at the discretion of the Board of Elders. They can still retain membership of another church. They shall have the right to attend all congregational meetings of the Church as observers, but they shall not be permitted to speak during the meetings.

8.2      Inactive Members –

8.2.1    Those who have not attended the worship services of the Church for a consecutive period of six months or more shall be classified as Inactive Members.

8.2.2    Inactive members shall not be eligible to vote at Congregational Meetings. Once they have resumed regular attendance at the worship services of the Church, they may be reinstated as Active Communicant Members, subject to an interview by the Board of Elders.

8.3      Communicant Membership in the Church shall be terminated when:

8.3.1.    the member resigns by giving one month's written notice to the Board of Elders at the registered place of business of the Church;

8.3.2    the member ceases to subscribe to the Doctrine of the Church, the Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation, and/or the Main Practices of the Church;

8.3.3    the member is excommunicated;

8.3.4    the member emigrates;

8.3.5    the member transfers his or her membership to another Bible-Presbyterian or Bible-believing church, or

8.3.6    the member dies.

8.4      Communicant Members shall maintain membership only in one Church, except where special approval has been given by the Board of Elders. If a person is found to be a member of another church, such

person's membership shall be liable to termination if no reason acceptable to the Board of Elders can be produced.

8.5 Members are expected to strive conscientiously to live according to the light given to them by the Holy Spirit through God's Word; to support wholeheartedly the services and activities of the Church; and to submit themselves to the discipline and authority of the Board of Elders.

#### **Article 9 Discipline of Members**

9.1 Any Member who shall be found by the Board of Elders to have acted in a manner unbecoming of a Member or by his or her act or omission be likely to hinder the witness of the Church or render it of ill repute, shall be requested to appear before the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall have the power to discipline by admonition, rebuke, suspension, deposition, or excommunication, the Member in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Bible Presbyterian Book of Discipline.

9.2 A Communicant Member under discipline who resigns is deemed to have resigned in bad standing.

9.3 Any member not being satisfied with the excommunication order of the Board of Elders shall have the right to appeal to the Communicant Members of the Church at an Extraordinary Congregational Meeting convened for the specific purpose, provided notice of appeal in writing is filed with the Clerk of Session within two weeks of the service of the excommunication order on the Member.

9.4 The decision of the Communicant Members of the Church by a majority vote through secret ballot shall be final.

9.5 The quorum of the meeting shall be a majority of all active Communicant Members.

#### **Article 10 The Church Government**

10.1 The government, administration, and discipline of the Church, shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and with the Form of Government, and the Book of Discipline of the Bible Presbyterian Church, except in those instances where specific statements in this Constitution supersede them.

10.2 The spiritual oversight of the Church in matters of doctrine, principles of government, church elections, admission and discipline of members and the administrative oversight of the Church shall be the specific responsibilities of the Board of Elders.

10.3 The general spiritual and administrative oversight of the Church may be delegated by the Board of Elders to the Deacons.

#### **Article 11 The Church Session**

11.1 The Church Session shall consist of the Pastor, Associate Pastor if any, and/or an Advisory Pastor or Supervisory Pastor when necessary, Elders and Deacons.

11.2 The Church, which has no Pastor and/or Elder(s) of its own, should, at the earliest convenience, co-opt, through a vote at a Congregational Meeting, a Pastor and/or Elder(s) from another Bible-Presbyterian church, who shall have all the rights and powers in the affairs of the Church.

11.3 The Church Session shall appoint a Clerk of Session, who shall be the Secretary, from among its members and define his duties and may appoint such other office bearers as it may think fit.

11.4 The Church Session may delegate specific powers to any one of its members and appoint such committees as it deems fit and to make such rules and standing orders to regulate the duties and powers of such persons or committees.

11.5 The Church Session may co-opt Members of the Church or such other persons as it deems fit to serve on any committee.

11.6 The church Session shall meet once a month or once in two months at such place and time as the Pastor or Board of Elders may determine. Emergency meetings may be convened by the Pastor or Associate Pastor, or in their absence, by the Elder appointed to act for the Pastor. Such a meeting shall also be convened at the joint request of any two Elders.

11.7 A simple majority of the Session members present in South Australia who must include the Pastor or a majority of the elected Elders shall constitute a quorum. Where there are only two Elders, one Elder shall constitute a majority of Elders.

11.8 The Church Session shall act by consensus or by a simple majority vote when necessary. The Moderator or Chairman shall have only the casting vote.

11.9 The Church Session shall at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church present a budget for the next fiscal year or period, and the annual or periodic accounts duly audited either internally or externally.

11.10 The Church Session, through the Clerk of Session, shall be responsible for keeping the following registers;

11.10.1 An up-to-date Register of Members with full particulars of name, address, date and place of birth, baptism, reaffirmation of faith, transfer, marriage, death or dismissal.

11.10.2 A Minutes Book to record the minutes of the Session, Board of Elders and of the Congregational Meetings.

## **Article 12 Election to the Church Session**

12.1 Candidates shall satisfy the requirements listed in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5. Additionally, and to ensure better objectivity in selection, they shall fulfil the following conditions:

12.1.1 Demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt, and over a sufficient length of time, that they are faithful and mature members of the Body of Christ and faithfully devote themselves to personal prayer and study of the Word.

12.1.2 Attend public worship and prayer meetings of the Church regularly unless prevented from doing so for valid reasons.

12.1.3 Make a careful study of the Constitution, in particular the Doctrine, the Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation, and the Main Practices of the Church and fully accept them.

12.1.4 Be willing to participate wholeheartedly in the ministry of the Church, with the Pastor, and to devote time, talents and resources in such ministry, which shall include serving in the various departments of the Church.

12.2 The Board of Elders shall nominate candidates for election to the Church Session. Nominations may also be submitted by any member of the congregation to the Board of Elders.

12.3 Proposals for election to the Church Session from Members of the Congregation shall be carefully screened by the Board of Elders to ensure that only those with the essential qualifications and who are in full agreement with the doctrinal stand of the Bible-Presbyterian Church, in particular with its Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation and the Main Practices of the Church, are considered for nomination and election to the Church Session.

12.4 Elected Elders/Deacons shall be formally installed into office at a Service of Consecration to be held on an appropriate Lord's Day soon after election.

## **Article 13 Pastors**

13.1 The Pastor and/or Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor shall be elected by the members of the church at the Annual Congregational Meeting by a majority of the votes cast and shall hold office for a term of four years. He shall be eligible for re-election.

13.2 No Minister shall receive the call to be the Pastor of the Church save through the hands of the Presbytery of the Bible-Presbyterian Church at the instance of the Board of Elders (1 Tim 4:14).

13.3 The Pastor and/or Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor shall possess the spiritual, educational and other qualifications as set forth in the Bible Presbyterian Form of Government or such other qualifications as the Board of Elders or Church Session may determine.

13.4 The Pastor shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and ministration of the Sacraments of the Church and the ordination of Elders.

13.5 The Pastor shall be the ex-officio member and advisor of all committees connected with the Church.

13.6 The Pastor shall be the Chairman of the Church Session, except for prudential reasons, when the Board of Elders / Church Session shall appoint one of its Elders / Members as Chairman of a particular meeting.

13.7 If the Church is without a Pastor, members should, at the earliest convenience, elect by a majority vote, at a Congregational Meeting, a Pastor or retired Pastor of the Bible-Presbyterian Church, to serve as Supervisory Pastor.

13.8 The Church, having a Pastor, may elect by a majority vote, at a Congregational Meeting, a Pastor or retired Pastor of the Bible-Presbyterian Church, to serve as Advisory Pastor.

13.9 The Pastor and/or Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor shall be subject, through the Board of Elders, to the discipline of the Presbytery of which they are members. They may appeal to the Synod against the Presbytery's decision.

13.10 For as long as the Church is not a member in any Presbytery and/or Synod, any reference in this article to the "Presbytery" and/or "Synod" shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Session".

#### **Article 14 Elders**

14.1 The number of elders in the Church (excluding the pastor) shall not be more than three or one to every thirty Communicant Members, whichever is the greater number.

14.2 A candidate for election to the office of an Elder shall be a Deacon of not less than six years' standing, save that the Board of Elders may in its absolute discretion, shorten the qualifying period.

14.3 Elders shall be elected by the members of the church at the Annual Congregational Meeting by a majority of the votes cast. They shall hold office for a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election. They shall be elected in three classes, one of which shall be elected every year. The initial term of an elder may be one, two, or three years, in order to satisfy the requirement that one of the three classes be elected every year.

14.4 An Elder may be elected in absentia, with his written consent.

14.5 An elder, once elected and ordained, shall not be divested of his status as Elder when he is not re-elected or when he declines re-election. In either case, he shall continue as a non-ruling Elder, and may serve in whatever capacity as may be assigned by the Session, except that he shall not rule in matters of government or discipline.

14.6 An Elder, with the approval of his Board of Elders, may simultaneously serve in another Bible-Presbyterian Church for such duration of time as may be determined.

14.7 An Elder shall endeavour by God's grace to serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in the Word of God (1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9), joining with the Pastor in the government, administration and discipline of the Church, visiting the sick and sorrowing members, investigating delinquents and endeavouring to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of members.

14.8 Elders shall be subject to the discipline of the Board of Elders.

#### **Article 15 Board of Elders**

15.1 The Board of Elders shall consist of the Pastor(s) and Elders and, if any, the Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Supervisory Pastor, Advisory Pastor. All members of the Board of Elders must be ordained.

15.2 The Pastor shall be the Chairman of the Board of Elders. In his absence or when deemed prudent, one of the Elders shall act as Chairman.



15.3 The Board of Elders may appoint or invite Deacons to take part in any meeting of the Board of Elders without voting right.

15.4 The Board of Elders shall meet when necessary. The quorum shall be a simple majority.

15.5 The Board of Elders shall act by consensus or majority vote, if necessary.

#### **Article 16 Powers and Responsibilities of the Board of Elders**

Subject to Article 10 of this Constitution, the Board of Elders shall:

16.1 be responsible for the spiritual welfare and the ministry of the church;

16.2 supervise all public worship and preaching services, the ministration of the Sacraments, Bible Classes, Prayer Meetings, Special Meetings, and all similar efforts aimed at reaching the lost for Christ and at building up Christians in the faith;

16.3 receive members into the Church by confession and reaffirmation of faith and by transfer from other churches;

16.4 appoint Staff Workers and other office staff as it deems necessary;

16.5 exercise discipline in the Church according to the Word of God and the Bible Presbyterian Book of Discipline;

16.6 enquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the Church;

16.7 call before them offenders with witness or witnesses from within or without their congregation;

16.8 exercise discipline of Members according to Article 9 of this Constitution;

16.9 determine by itself or when it deems necessary, in consultation with the Deacons all matters concerning the religious services and spiritual life of the Church and the suitability of candidates for election to the Church Session.

#### **Article 17 Deacons**

17.1 The number of Deacons in the Church shall not be more than seven or one to every twenty-five Communicant Members, whichever is the greater number.

17.2 Deacons shall be elected by the members of the church at the Annual Congregational Meeting by a majority of the votes cast. They shall hold office for a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election. They shall be elected in three classes, one of which shall be elected every year. The initial term of a Deacon may be one, two, or three years, in order to satisfy the requirement that one of the three classes be elected every year.

17.3 They may be elected in absentia, with their written consent.

17.4 They shall endeavour by God's grace to serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in the Word of God (1 Tim 3:8-13).

17.5 Deacons may be requested by the Pastor or Elder to assist in the ministration of the Lord's Supper.

17.6 Deacons shall be subject to the discipline of the Board of Elders.

#### **Article 18 Clerk of Session (Secretary)**

The Clerk of Session must:

18.1 Co-ordinate the correspondence of the Church.

18.2 Keep full and correct minutes of the proceedings of the Session and the Church.

18.3 Comply on behalf of the Church with—

18.3.1 Keeping the register of Members of the Church;

18.3.2 Keeping and maintaining in an up to date condition the rules of the Church and, upon the request of a member of the Church, must make available those rules for the inspection of the Member and the Member may make a copy of or take an extract from the rules but will have no right to remove the rules for that purpose; and

18.3.3 Maintaining a record of—

18.3.3.1 The names and residential or postal addresses of the persons who hold the offices of the Church provided for by these rules, including all offices held by the persons who constitute the Session and persons who are authorized to use the common seal of the Church; and

18.3.3.2 The names and residential or postal addresses of any persons who are appointed or act as trustees on behalf of the Church, and the Clerk of Session must, upon the request of a member of the Church, make available the record for the inspection of the Member and the Member may make a copy of or take an extract from the record but will have no right to remove the record for that purpose.

18.4 Unless the Members resolve otherwise at a Congregational Meeting, have custody of all books, documents, records, and registers of the Church, including those referred to in Article 18.3, but other than those required by Article 19 to be kept and maintained by, or in the custody of, the Treasurer; and

18.5 Perform such other duties as are imposed by these rules on the Clerk of Session.

## **Article 19 Treasurer**

The Treasurer must:

19.1 Be responsible for the receipt of all moneys paid to or received by, or by him or her on behalf of, the Church and must issue receipts for those moneys in the name of the Church.

19.2 Pay all moneys referred to in Article 19.1 into such account or accounts of the Church as the Session may from time to time direct.

19.3 Make payments from the funds of the Church with the authority of a Congregational Meeting, or of the Session, and in so doing ensure that all cheques are signed by himself or herself, and at least one other authorised Session member, or by any two others as authorised by the Session.

19.4 Comply on behalf of the Church with Section 35 and 36 of the Act with respect to the accounting records of the Church by—

19.4.1 Keeping such accounting records as correctly recorded and explain the financial transactions and financial position of the Church;

19.4.2 Keeping its accounting records in such a manner as will enable true and fair accounts of the Church to be prepared from time to time;

19.4.3 Keeping its accounting records in such a manner as will enable true and fair accounts of the Church to be conveniently and properly audited and;

19.4.4 Submitting to Members at each Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church accounts of the Church showing the financial position of the Church at the end of the immediately preceding financial year.

19.5 Whenever directed to do so by the Chairman, submit to the Session a report, balance sheet, or financial statement in accordance with that direction.

19.6 Unless the Members resolve otherwise at a Congregational Meeting, have custody of all securities, books and documents of a financial nature and accounting records of the Church, including those referred to in Articles 19.4 and 19.5; and

19.7 Perform such other duties as are imposed by these rules on the Treasurer.

## **Article 20 Casual Vacancies in the Session**

20.1 A casual vacancy occurs in the Session and that office becomes vacant if a Session member:

- 20.1.1. resigns by giving one month's written notice to the Board of Elders at the registered place of business of the Church and that resignation is accepted by resolution of the Board of Elders;
  - 20.1.2 ceases to subscribe to the Doctrine of the Church, the Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation, and/or the Main Practices of the Church;
  - 20.1.3 is excommunicated;
  - 20.1.4 emigrates;
  - 20.1.5 transfers his or her membership to another Bible-Presbyterian or Bible-believing church;
  - 20.1.6 dies;
  - 20.1.7 is convicted of an offence under the Act;
  - 20.1.8 is permanently incapacitated by mental or physical ill-health; or
  - 20.1.9 is absent for more than three (3) consecutive Session meetings, without tendering an apology to the Chairman of those meetings.
- 20.2 When a casual vacancy occurs in the Session, Members should, at the earliest convenience, elect by a majority vote, at a Congregational Meeting, a Session member to complete the term of office of the former Session member, subject to the qualifications of Session members as set forth in Article 12.

## **Article 21 Congregational Meetings**

- 21.1 Any Congregational Meeting of the church may be constituted a general meeting for the transaction of business, provided announcement of the said Meeting has been given from the pulpit at two regular worship services on the two preceding Lord's Days or by two weeks' written notice to members.
- 21.2 Congregational Meetings shall be opened with Scripture reading and prayer and closed with prayer.
- 21.3 Congregational Meetings shall be of two kinds; namely, Annual Congregational Meetings and Extraordinary Congregational Meetings.
- 21.3.1 The Annual Congregational Meeting for the transaction of business pertaining to the Church shall be held in the month of September.
- 21.3.2 At such Meeting the Church Session shall report on the spiritual and temporal conditions of the congregation and announce plans for the coming year.
- 21.3.3 Items of business shall include the Pastor's Report, the Clerk of Session's Report, the Treasurer's Reports, the Budget, election of Internal Auditor(s) and/or an External Auditor from an auditing firm, and any other matters on the Agenda.
- 21.3.4 Only such business as is specifically mentioned in the Agenda, which shall be distributed by the Clerk of Session to all Members at least seven (7) days before the Congregational Meeting, may be considered at such a Meeting.
- 21.3.5 Any Member who wishes to include an item on the Agenda of a Congregational Meeting may submit that item to the Clerk of Session at least ten (10) days before the meeting is due to be held. The Board of Elders shall decide if the item should be included on the Agenda.
- 21.3.6 An Extraordinary Congregational Meeting shall be called by the Chairman on the request in writing of not less than one-tenth of the active Communicant Members, or may be called by order of the Church Session. The request in writing shall be given to the Clerk of Session, setting forth the business that is to be transacted. The Extraordinary Congregational Meeting shall be convened within two (2) months from receiving the request to convene the Extraordinary Congregational Meeting. Proper notice of such meeting must be given according to Article 17.1. Only such business as is specifically mentioned in the call may be considered at such a Meeting.
- 21.3.7 If the Church Session does not within two months after the date of receipt of the written request proceed to convene an Extraordinary Congregational Meeting, the Members who requested the

Extraordinary Congregational Meeting shall convene the Extraordinary Congregational Meeting by giving two weeks' notice to voting Members setting forth the business to be transacted and simultaneously posting the Agenda on the Church's notice board.

21.4 The quorum of the Congregational Meetings for all business shall be a simple majority of all active Communicant Members.

21.5 In the event of a lack of quorum, the Chairman shall adjourn the meeting for two weeks at which time the members present, whatever their number, shall constitute the quorum.

21.6 The election of the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Supervisory Pastor, Advisory Pastor, Elders and Deacons shall be by secret ballot.

21.7 The election of Session members, and decisions on all other businesses of the Church shall only be adopted by a majority vote, except for amendments to the Constitution, which shall not be adopted without a three-fourth majority vote.

21.8 Poll at Congregational Meetings—

21.8.1 If a poll is requested by no less than 5 members at the Congregational Meeting, the Chairman of the Meeting will determine the manner in which the poll is to be conducted.

21.8.2 The result of the poll shall be the resolution of the meeting on that question.

21.8.3 A poll requested on a question of adjournment shall be taken immediately.

21.8.4 All other polls requested may be conducted at any time before the close of the Congregational Meeting.

21.9 Resolutions at Congregational Meetings—

21.9.1 A special resolution is a resolution passed at a Congregational Meeting where:

21.9.2 An announcement of the Congregational Meeting, specifying the intention to propose a special resolution, has been made from the pulpit at four regular worship services on the four preceding Lord's Days of the Congregational Meeting, or by three weeks' written notice to members; and

21.9.3 The resolution is passed at the Congregational Meeting by a majority of no less than three quarters of communicant members eligible to vote at that meeting.

21.9.4 An ordinary resolution is a resolution passed by a simple majority at a Congregational Meeting.

21.10 The Pastor shall be the Chairman of the Meeting except for prudential reasons, when the Board of Elders shall appoint one from among them as Chairman of the Meeting.

## **Article 22 Trustees**

22.1 The Church shall have the power to acquire immovable property and such other property as the relevant authorities shall permit in its name and vest it in trustees not less than two or not exceeding four in number.

22.2 Trustees of the Church shall be elected from active Communicant Members at a Congregational Meeting.

22.3 Trustees of the Church shall at all times act and perform their duties in accordance with the directives of the Church as effected through the resolution passed at a Congregational Meeting.

22.4 Any trustee may resign his trusteeship.

22.5 When a trustee dies or is found to be of unsound mind, or becomes bankrupt or ceases membership of the Church, or is incapacitated from performing his function as trustee for any reason, his trusteeship is deemed to have ceased.

22.6 When a trustee is guilty of misconduct of such a kind as to render it undesirable that he continue to be a trustee, the Congregational Meeting may remove him from his trusteeship.

22.7 Notice of any proposal to remove a trustee from his trusteeship or appoint a new trustee shall be given in the Church Bulletin or announced at the regular Worship Service two weeks preceding the Congregational Meeting convened for the purpose.

### **Article 23 Common Seal**

23.1 The Common Seal of the Church engraved with the name of the Church shall be kept in the care of the Chairman or the Clerk of Session.

23.2 The Seal shall not be used or affixed to any deed or other document except pursuant to the resolution of the Church Session and in the presence of the Chairman, the Clerk of Session and the Treasurer and in their absence, two Elders or Deacons, in that order, shall subscribe their names as witnesses.

### **Article 24 Finance and Audit**

24.1 The work and programme of the Church shall be supported by the freewill offerings and the tithes of its members and gifts or donations from friends and by such other income as may be derived by the Church according to the Holy Scriptures.

24.2 The funds of the Church shall be used in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

24.3 The Session shall elect one of its members as Treasurer and another member as Assistant Treasurer, if necessary. The Session may appoint a Finance Committee from among its members to take charge of the financial affairs of the Church. The Treasurer shall keep a cash balance of not more than \$1,000.00 at any one time. All monies exceeding this amount shall be deposited with a bank designated by the Church Session at the earliest convenience. All cheques or withdrawals shall be signed by the Treasurer, or in his absence the Assistant Treasurer, and one other Church Session member appointed by the Church Session.

24.4 The financial year of the Church shall be a period commencing on the date of incorporation and ending on 30 June; and thereafter each period commencing 1 July and ending on 30 June in the following year.

24.5 The Church Session may appoint an auditing firm as external auditor or an internal auditor to audit the accounts of the Church as and when a casual vacancy occurs.

24.6 In addition to the external auditors, if any, the Church may elect one or two internal auditors who is/are not a member of the Church Session, at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church. However, the church must have either an external auditor or an internal auditor.

24.7 The internal auditor shall hold office for one year, but shall be eligible for re-election.

24.8 The internal auditor and/or the auditing firm shall certify the correctness of the accounts and membership list for presentation to the Annual Congregational Meeting at the end of each financial year.

### **Article 25 Non-Profit**

The income and property of the Church shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Church. No portion of the income and property shall be paid, transferred or distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the Church, provided that nothing shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any officer, employee, staff worker, full-time missionary of the Church or to any person other than a member (save one employed by the Church) in return for services rendered to the Church and the payment of other expenses, such as rental and transportation expended for the benefit of the Church.

### **Article 26 Rules**

The Board of Elders or the Church Session may make rules not inconsistent with this Constitution, for giving effect to the provisions of this Constitution for, but not limited to, the following matters:

26.1 The way and manner the activities of the Church business shall be administered.

26.2 The appointment of staff workers, secretaries, clerks and other personnel for the proper functioning of the Church.

**Article 27 Amendments**

27.1 No amendments to this Constitution shall be made except at a Congregational Meeting of the Church.

27.2 No amendments to this Constitution shall be adopted without at least a three-fourths majority of the votes cast.

27.3 No amendments to the Constitution shall come into force without the approval of the Attorney-General's Department, Business and Consumers' Services.

**Article 28 Inspection of Records**

A Communicant Member of the Church may at any reasonable time inspect without charge any books, documents, records, and securities of the Church.

**Article 29 Interpretation**

In the event of any question or matter arising out of any point in this Constitution over which there is a dispute in meaning or arising out of any point which is not expressly provided for in the constitution, the Board of Elders, in consultation with the Deacons shall decide on the interpretation to be adopted or the necessary steps to be taken.

**Article 30 Dissolution**

30.1 The church shall not be dissolved, except with the consent of not less than three-fourths of the members of the Church present in person or by proxy at a Congregational Meeting convened for the purpose.

30.2 In the event of the Church being dissolved as provided above, all debts and liabilities legally incurred on behalf of the Church shall be fully discharged. The remaining funds shall be distributed by the Session to non profit organisations carrying out objects similar to those hereinbefore set out, or be given to such non profit charitable organisations as the members of the Church may determine at a Congregational Meeting.

**(End of Constitution)**

This is the annexed marked 'A' referred to in the statutory declaration of \_\_\_\_\_

made on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ before me \_\_\_\_\_