



Constitution of Kew Baptist Church

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Preamble

Kew Baptist Church is a covenant community. The church covenant (Appendix 1) provides the guiding principles by which church life operates, and should be reviewed and renewed at least every five years.

Within that Covenant framework, this Constitution provides a basis for governance.

Part I - Preliminary

1. Name

1.1. The name of the church is Kew Baptist Church.

2. Definitions and Interpretation

2.1. In this Constitution:

the Act means *The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930*, an Act of the Parliament of Victoria;

Annual Church Meeting means a meeting of Members for the purposes set out in clause 13;

Associate Pastor means any person, other than the Senior Pastor, who is appointed to a role which is deemed by the Leadership Team to be a role of significant pastoral ministry, but is not 'a Pastor' for the purposes of Schedule B;

Baptist Union of Victoria means The Baptist Union of Victoria, an organisation incorporated under the Act;

Chair means a member of the Leadership Team elected to that position pursuant to the operation of Part IV;

chairperson means the person chairing a Church Meeting or a meeting of the Leadership Team;

Church means Kew Baptist Church, an unincorporated association and a properly recognised constituent church of the Baptist Union of Victoria;

Church Covenant means the covenant of the Church set out in Appendix 1;

Church Meeting means a meeting of Members constituted pursuant to the operation of Part III and, unless the context dictates otherwise, includes a Special Church Meeting or an Annual Church Meeting;

Elected Representatives means all members of the Leadership Team elected pursuant to the operation of Part IV, other than the Senior Pastor;

Leadership Team means the team comprising the Senior Pastor and the Elected Representatives, which is referred to as 'the Deacons' for the purposes of Schedule B;

Member means a member of the Church, and ***Membership*** means all the Members, unless otherwise specified;

Membership Roll means the register of Members;

Principles and Ideals of the Baptist Faith means the principles and ideals contained in clause 4 of the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria, which form part of this Constitution as Appendix 3;

Purposes means the purposes of the Church as set out in clause 3.1;

Schedule B means Schedule B of the Act;

Secretary means a member of the Leadership Team elected to that position pursuant to the operation of Part IV;

Senior Pastor means the person appointed as Senior Pastor pursuant to the operation of clause 17, who is 'the Pastor' for the purposes of Schedule B;

Special Church Meeting means a meeting of Members for the purposes set out in clause 15;

Statement of Beliefs means the statement of beliefs of the Church set out in Appendix 2; and

Treasurer means a member of the Leadership Team elected to that position pursuant to the operation of Part IV.

2.2. Unless otherwise specified, a reference to a clause, Part or Appendix is a reference to that clause, Part or Appendix of this Constitution.

3. Purposes

3.1. The Purposes are to:

3.1.1. fulfil the Church Covenant set out in Appendix 1; and

3.1.2. advance the mission of the Christian faith as set out in clause 3.2.

3.2. The basis of the Church fellowship is that:

3.2.1. The Church is a body of Christian people who have responded to the Word of God and the call of the Holy Spirit and have been united to Jesus Christ and to his people in their own confession of faith symbolised in baptism.

3.2.2. The Church baptises professing believers, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as a sign of their salvation and their initiation into the membership of the body of Christ. Wherever practicable, baptism is practised by immersion into water as the form of baptism normative in the New Testament because it portrays “going down” into death with Christ and “coming up” into resurrection with Christ.

3.2.3. The Church accepts as expressions of the Christian faith the Statement of Beliefs, and the Principles and Ideals of the Baptist Faith.

3.2.4. In common with the universal church, the Church accepts its commission to participate in Christ’s ministry to all creation, to proclaim and live out the gospel message of reconciliation to God and to one another. All followers of Christ have been gifted by the Holy Spirit for their part in this ministry and are called to fulfil the meaning of their baptism or their public profession of faith by exercising their gifts together in nurturing the growth of Christian faith, peace and love.

4. Not-For-Profit Status

- 4.1. The assets and income of the Church must be applied solely in furtherance of the Purposes.
- 4.2. No portion of the assets or income of the Church may be distributed directly or indirectly by way of profit to the Members.
- 4.3. Clauses 4.1 and 4.2 do not prevent the Church from paying a person:
 - 4.3.1. reimbursing a person for expenses incurred in the proper furtherance of the Purposes;
or
 - 4.3.2. paying a person for goods or services provided on a standard commercial basis.

Part II - Membership

5. Eligibility for Membership

- 5.1. Membership of the Church is open to any person who:
 - 5.1.1. declares faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; and
 - 5.1.2. is willing to be committed to the Church as a covenanted Member; and
 - 5.1.3. is in agreement with the Statement of Beliefs (recognising that no set of words can adequately describe God or our relationship with God).
- 5.2. The usual practice of the Church is to accept into Membership those who have been baptised by immersion upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5.3. In particular circumstances, however, Membership may be open to those not baptised as per clause 5.2, but who are approved for Membership according to the following guidelines:
 - 5.3.1. The person has made a profession of faith, been nurtured within a recognised Christian tradition, has been a member in good standing or has participated in the life of the congregation in that tradition.
 - 5.3.2. The person is able conscientiously to affirm both the validity of his or her initiation into and ministry within that tradition, and his or her sense of call to belong to the Church.
 - 5.3.3. The person is able to affirm the Church Covenant and the doctrinal basis of the Church, including the normative nature of believers' baptism. However, having studied the Baptist position and the claims of Scripture, his or her experience within a Christian tradition makes it inappropriate to accept believer's baptism for themselves.

6. Application for Membership

- 6.1. A person may apply for Membership by submitting an application to the Secretary.
- 6.2. All applicants for Membership are required to:
 - 6.2.1. Participate in a discussion about the Church Covenant, the doctrinal basis and responsibilities of Membership.
 - 6.2.2. Be interviewed by nominated church representatives to determine that he or she:
 - 6.2.2.1. respects and understands the traditions of the Baptist Church regarding believers' baptism;
 - 6.2.2.2. has demonstrated the value or significance to themselves of their own journey of faith;
 - 6.2.2.3. has formed a reasonable basis for their conscientious objection to believers' baptism (in cases where this is relevant); and
 - 6.2.2.4. believe that it is God's will for them to enter into the life and witness of the Church.

- 6.2.3. Make a public declaration of faith.
- 6.3. In the case of baptismal candidates applying for Membership at the time of their baptism, the requirements of clauses 6.1 and 6.2 are deemed to have taken place and been completed during the candidate's baptism and the preceding preparatory classes.
- 6.4. If a person seeks to become a Member, having been a member of another church, a letter of commendation must be sought from that other church.
- 6.5. If, as a result of the interview and discussion process, a recommendation in favour of Membership is to be made, it must be brought to a Church Meeting and be accepted by a two-thirds majority of Members present.
- 6.6. No fees, subscriptions or other payments are required in relation to Membership.

7. Rights of Members

- 7.1. Unless otherwise specified, a Member has the right:
 - 7.1.1. to receive notice of Church Meetings and of proposed special resolutions in the manner and time prescribed by this Constitution;
 - 7.1.2. to submit items of business for consideration at a Church Meeting;
 - 7.1.3. to attend and be heard at Church Meetings;
 - 7.1.4. to vote at a Church Meeting;
 - 7.1.5. to have access to the minutes of Church Meetings; and
 - 7.1.6. to inspect the Membership Roll.

8. The Membership Roll and cessation of Membership

- 8.1. A person ceases to be a Member and may be removed from the Membership Roll at any time if the Member:
 - 8.1.1. becomes a member of another church;
 - 8.1.2. resigns Membership by written notice to the Secretary;
 - 8.1.3. dies; or
 - 8.1.4. has their Membership revoked by a decision of a Church Meeting for disciplinary reasons, pursuant to the operation of clause 9.
 - 8.1.5. The Membership Roll must be revised at each Annual Church Meeting on the basis of a report prepared by the Leadership Team. Unless the Church Meeting notes that special circumstances apply, such as age, illness or missionary service elsewhere, the names of Members who have not attended the Church in the past year must be removed.
- 8.2. There may be provision for an absentee roll for those who by nature of their location or circumstances are not able to attend worship at the Church.

9. Disciplinary action

- 9.1. The Church may take disciplinary action against a Member if it is determined that the Member:
 - 9.1.1. has failed to comply with this Constitution;
 - 9.1.2. refuses to support the Purposes and beliefs of the Church;
 - 9.1.3. has engaged in conduct prejudicial to the Church; or
 - 9.1.4. persistently or egregiously behaves in a manner inconsistent with the Christian faith.
- 9.2. Disciplinary action may not be commenced unless pastoral care has been first offered to the Member, and the grounds for disciplinary action remain.

- 9.3. Before disciplinary action is taken against a Member, a minimum of 14 days written notice must be given to the Member:
 - 9.3.1. stating that the Church proposes to take disciplinary action against the Member;
 - 9.3.2. stating the grounds for the proposed disciplinary action;
 - 9.3.3. specifying the date, place and time of the Church Meeting at which the disciplinary action is to be considered;
 - 9.3.4. encouraging the Member to attend the Church Meeting; and
 - 9.3.5. advising the Member that if they elect to attend the Church Meeting, they will have the opportunity to be heard.
- 9.4. At a Church Meeting assembled to consider disciplinary action, the Member must have the opportunity to be heard.
- 9.5. In relation to proceedings to consider disciplinary action, the Church Meeting may:
 - 9.5.1. take no further action against the Member;
 - 9.5.2. reprimand the Member;
 - 9.5.3. suspend the membership rights of the Member for a specified period;
 - 9.5.4. remove the Member from the Leadership Team, if the Member is an Elected Representative; or
 - 9.5.5. expel the Member from the Church and remove the Member from the Membership Roll.

Part III - Church Meetings

10. Notice and convening of Church Meetings

- 10.1. Members must be given not less than 14 days notice of the time, place and major business of any Church Meeting.
- 10.2. The agenda for a Church Meeting, together with any supporting documentation, must be circulated to Members not less than seven days prior to the date of the Church Meeting.
- 10.3. Records of the decisions of the previous Church Meeting must be made available to Members not less than 14 days before a Church Meeting.

11. Quorum and voting at Church Meetings

- 11.1. No business may be conducted at a Church Meeting unless a quorum of Members is present.
- 11.2. The quorum for any Church Meeting, other than a Special Church Meeting, is one-quarter of the Members entitled to vote.
- 11.3. A motion put to a Church Meeting must be decided by a simple majority (50% + 1) of Members who are present and voting, unless otherwise specified. If votes are divided equally, the motion is lost.
- 11.4. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted.

12. Financial statements

- 12.1. Audited financial statements (for the preceding church year) must be presented to a Church Meeting once in every year.
- 12.2. A budget for the next church year must be approved by a Church Meeting once in every year.

13. Annual Church Meetings

- 13.1. An Annual Church Meeting must be held each year.
- 13.2. The ordinary business of the Annual Church Meeting is:
 - 13.2.1. to receive and consider the annual report of the Leadership Team, the Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor(s);
 - 13.2.2. to receive and consider the financial statements of the Church during the preceding year;
 - 13.2.3. to confirm or vary the number of Elected Representatives;
 - 13.2.4. to elect representatives to the Leadership Team; and
 - 13.2.5. to review the Membership Roll.

14. Other Church Meetings

- 14.1. The agenda of any Church Meeting may include:
 - 14.1.1. a report and/or presentation by any Church group;
 - 14.1.2. a report and/or presentation by any external group working in co-operation with the Church; and
 - 14.1.3. other appointments that the Church Meeting decides to make.
- 14.2. Church Meetings to consider the life and ministry of the church must be held at least twice each year, in addition to the Annual Church Meeting.
- 14.3. Church Meetings are ordinarily called by a decision of the previous Church Meeting.
- 14.4. Church Meetings may otherwise be called, and/or items of business considered at a Church Meeting, if requested in writing to the Secretary by:
 - 14.4.1. the Senior Pastor;
 - 14.4.2. the Leadership Team; or
 - 14.4.3. one-sixth of the Membership.

15. Special Church Meetings

- 15.1. Special Church Meetings must be convened to make decisions regarding:
 - 15.1.1. the calling, extension of term or removal of the Senior Pastor, subject to clause 17.4; or
 - 15.1.2. any transaction involving any land or buildings of the Church, as required by Schedule B.
- 15.2. Special Church Meetings are governed by the provisions of Schedule B.

Part IV - Leadership

16. Final authority is vested in the Church

- 16.1. The Church, through the Church Meeting, has final authority in deciding every matter which affects the Church's life.

17. The Senior Pastor

- 17.1. The Senior Pastor is a person whom the Church believes has been called and gifted by God to fulfil a ministry of pastoral leadership within the Church.
- 17.2. A person must be eligible for Membership of the Church to become Senior Pastor.

17.3. The following decisions about the Senior Pastor require the approval of a Special Church Meeting:

17.3.1. calling of a Senior Pastor;

17.3.2. if a Senior Pastor has been called for a specific term, approval of any extension of that term; and

17.3.3. subject to clause 17.4, removal of a Senior Pastor.

17.4. The Church must consult with the Baptist Union of Victoria before the removal of a Senior Pastor may be considered at a Special Church Meeting.

18. Associate Pastors

18.1. The Church may appoint one or more Associate Pastors whom the Church believes to have been called and gifted by God to roles of significant pastoral ministry.

18.2. A person must be eligible for Membership of the Church to be appointed as an Associate Pastor.

18.3. The following decisions about an Associate Pastor require the approval of a Church Meeting:

18.3.1. calling of an Associate Pastor;

18.3.2. if an Associate Pastor has been called for a specific term, approval of any extension of that term; and

18.3.3. removal of an Associate Pastor.

19. The Leadership Team

19.1. The Leadership Team exercises delegated authority over all areas of the Church's life and ministry, excepting those powers which are reserved for the Church Meeting by a decision of the Church Meeting, by this Constitution or by legislative requirement.

19.2. The Leadership Team is always accountable to the Church.

20. Composition of the Leadership Team

20.1. The Leadership Team consists of the Senior Pastor and the Elected Representatives.

20.2. It is the intention of the Church that the Elected Representatives include at least one representative from each congregation.

20.3. Any Member aged 18 years or over is eligible to be an Elected Representative, unless otherwise specified by this Constitution.

20.4. An Associate Pastor is not eligible to be an Elected Representative.

20.5. Elected Representatives are each elected for a two year term at an Annual Church Meeting.

20.6. The Elected Representatives are:

20.6.1. the Chair;

20.6.2. the Secretary;

20.6.3. the Treasurer; and

20.6.4. at least one other person and preferably at least three other persons.

21. Chair

21.1. The Chair has responsibility for oversight of the Leadership Team.

21.2. The Chair is the chairperson for all Church Meetings and for all meetings of the Leadership Team.

21.2.1. In the absence of the Chair at any such meeting, the Leadership Team must elect a member of the Leadership Team to be chairperson for that meeting.

22. Secretary

22.1. The Secretary has responsibility for Membership, record-keeping and the management of Church Meetings including the giving of notice.

22.2. The Secretary must:

22.2.1. Keep and maintain the Membership Roll;

22.2.2. Keep records of the decisions made at all Church Meetings;

22.2.3. Keep records of the decisions made at all Leadership Team meetings; and

22.2.4. Fulfil other functions as directed by this Constitution.

23. Treasurer

23.1. The Treasurer has responsibility for oversight of the finances of the Church.

23.2. The Treasurer must:

23.2.1. Regularly update the Church and the Leadership Team regarding financial matters;

23.2.2. Keep financial records that correctly record and explain transactions and the financial position of the Church;

23.2.3. Enable the preparation of audited financial statements; and

23.2.4. Ensure that legislative requirements are met in regards to the financial statements of the Church.

24. Meeting and decisions of the Leadership Team

24.1. The Leadership Team must meet at least ten times a year.

24.2. A quorum is half of the Leadership Team or a minimum of three people, whichever is the greater.

24.3. Decisions of the Leadership Team must be made by a simple majority (50% + 1) of Leadership Team members who are present and voting, unless otherwise specified. If votes are divided equally, the chairperson has a second or casting vote.

24.4. In the event of a casual vacancy, the Leadership Team may appoint an Elected Representative to act as Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, with effect until the next Church Meeting.

25. Election of Elected Representatives

25.1. The number of Elected Representatives to form part of the Leadership Team must be determined at each Annual Church Meeting.

25.2. Any Church Meeting may alter the number of Elected Representatives. Such a decision must not shorten the term of any person serving on the Leadership Team.

25.3. Nominations for Elected Representatives must be in writing to the Secretary, signed by the person nominated and by two other Members.

25.4. Elections for Elected Representatives must be held by secret ballot. The chairperson must appoint a Member who is not a candidate in the election to conduct the ballot.

25.5. A nominee must receive the approval of a two-thirds majority of Members who are present and who are eligible to vote to become an Elected Representative.

25.6. In the event that the number of nominations for Elected Representatives exceeds the number of vacant positions, or in the event that more than one person nominates for the office of Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, a two-stage election must be held.

25.6.1. In the first instance, a vote must be held to approve each nominee as suitable to become an Elected Representative. This vote must fulfil the requirements of clause 25.5.

25.6.2. If the number of nominees approved as suitable pursuant to the operation of clause 25.6.1 still exceeds the number of vacant positions, then another vote must be held and the nominee or nominees who receive the most votes will become Elected Representatives according to the number of vacant positions.

25.7. A vacancy on the Leadership Team may be filled at any Church Meeting, with the new Elected Representative serving the remainder of the vacated term.

26. Term limits

26.1. Any Member who has served five years or more of the previous six years as an Elected Representative on the Leadership Team, in any capacity, may not be a candidate for election or re-election as an Elected Representative for at least nine months following the expiry of their term, or until the next Annual Church Meeting, whichever is the greater.

26.2. Notwithstanding clause 26.1, the Church Meeting may set aside a term limit and allow a Member to be a candidate for election or re-election as an Elected Representative in extenuating circumstances.

27. Cessation of Membership of the Leadership Team

27.1. A person ceases to be an Elected Representative on the Leadership Team if the person:

27.1.1. is no longer a Member;

27.1.2. resigns;

27.1.3. dies;

27.1.4. fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Leadership Team without leave of absence; or

27.1.5. is removed from the Leadership Team by disciplinary action at a Church Meeting.

Part V - General Matters

28. Church property

28.1. The Church may not let church land and buildings which enjoy a rate-free status except in special circumstances, subject to the approval of a Special Church Meeting.

28.2. The activities of any group or groups using the Church's name, property, buildings or equipment are subject to the oversight of the Leadership Team.

28.3. If a Church group ceases to function, the Church becomes the owner of any property purchased or owned by that group and any money in its possession.

29. Policies

29.1. The Church may adopt new policies or alter existing policies on various matters for the purpose of governing aspects of the Church's life and mission or for the purpose of expressing a collective opinion.

30. Dissolution

30.1. In the event of the Church being dissolved, all property, assets and moneys which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities must be vested in the Baptist Union of Victoria.

31. Alteration to this Constitution

31.1. This Constitution must be reviewed at least once every five years and a Church Meeting asked to either reaffirm or alter it.

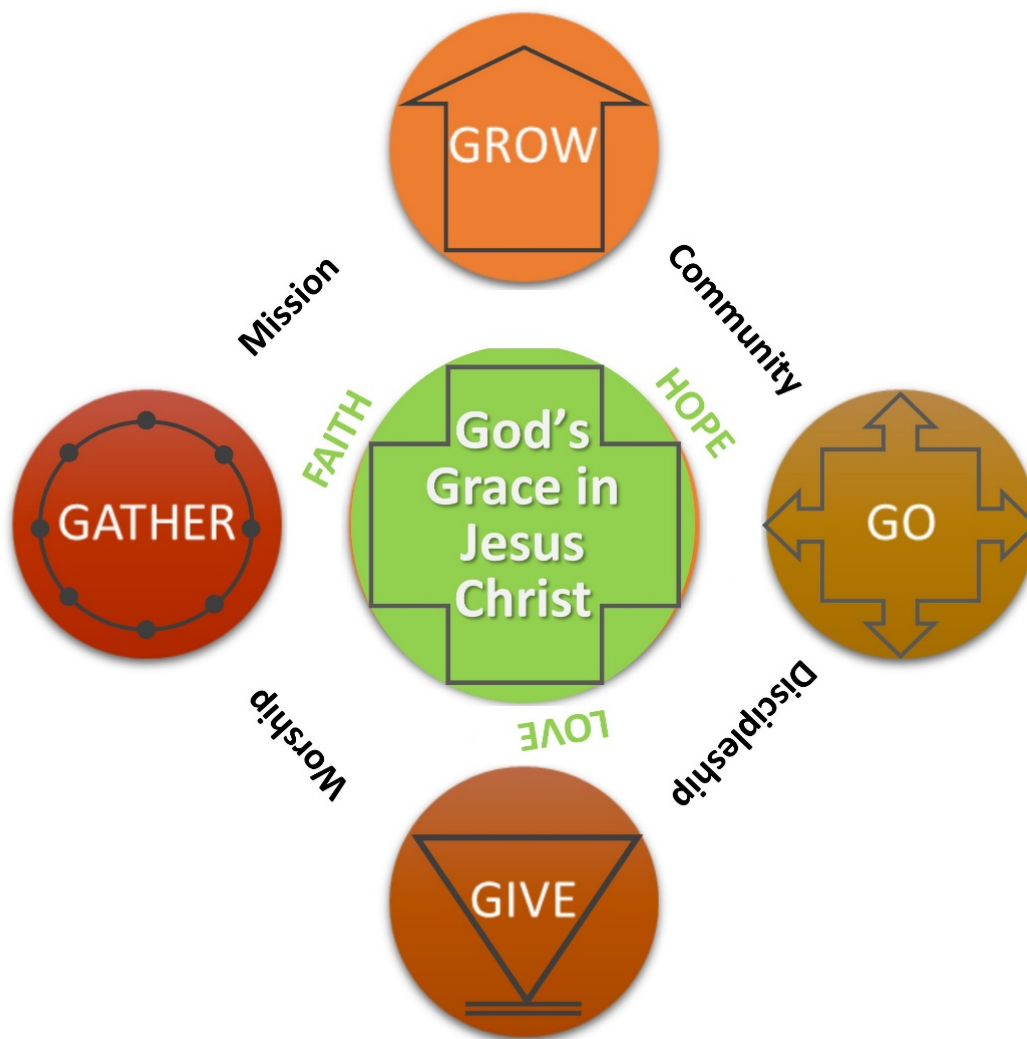
31.2. This Constitution may only be altered at a Church Meeting if not less than four weeks prior notice of the wording of the proposed alteration has been given to Members.

31.3. If the Church is in debt to the Baptist Union of Victoria, any proposed alteration does not take effect until approved by the Executive Council of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

31.4. This Constitution remains in operation until it is revised or replaced by a Church Meeting.

Covenant Membership and Discipleship at Kew Baptist Church

2019 Version 1



A vision and pathway for loving God, one another and our neighbour

"In the New Testament there is no such person as a Christian who is not a church member. Conversion was described as 'the Lord adding to the church' (Acts 2:47). There was no spiritual drifting." (Douglas Millar).

"Church is not an organisation you join; it is a family where you belong, a home where you are loved and a hospital where you find healing." (Nicky Gumbel)

We are a church that seeks to welcome everyone: non-believers, spiritual seekers, agnostics, Christians from other churches and people from all walks of life. We respect that people are at different stages of their spiritual journey and all are welcome. But whoever you are and wherever you are on your spiritual journey, we are a community of faith intentionally centred on and committed to following Jesus. Moreover, if you are a committed follower of Jesus and believe God has called you to KBC as your spiritual home and family we invite you to take Jesus' call to discipleship seriously and become a church member. Of course, you can be a sincere and devoted follower of Jesus at KBC and not be a member—we get that. But ask yourself, “why not?”. What would stop you from taking a step to join this community of faith in following Jesus together by becoming a member?

- *I may only be around for a couple of years:* no problem—and discipleship is for life anyway.
- *I don't think I have time:* This isn't about doing extra stuff but orienting your whole life towards Jesus.
- *I have a theological issue with membership and/or baptism:* That's ok, can we talk about it with you?
- *I'm a member of another denomination and was Christened as an infant:* You are welcome!

Perhaps think of membership as another name for discipleship—it is a way to express your commitment to following Jesus at a particular church and with a particular community of people. And just as baptism is an act that symbolises a person's decision to follow Christ, membership is an act that symbolises commitment to a local body of Christ and to discipleship in community. It says, “I'm serious about growing, giving, gathering and going with a fellow group of believers on Christ's mission.”

Jesus never intended you to try to do this life on your own; join with him and join with a local church. And as a member of Kew Baptist- or any church, for that matter, there are some core dimensions of Christian living and practice that we need to understand. Firstly, everything begins and continues because of God's amazing grace to us in Jesus

Grace



We are invited into the fullness of life and love by God through the faithful life, the sacrificial death and the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Though our sinfulness warranted judgement and condemnation, God graciously and lovingly saves us in Christ. Our salvation is pure gift and we enter into it by faith and trust.

“For he chose us in him [Jesus] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.** In him [Jesus] we have

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's **grace that he lavished on us.**”

“For it is by **grace you have been saved**, through faith—and **this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God**—not by works, so that no one can boast.” Eph 2:8–9.

Then there are 4 central pathways to living out God's gift of grace to us in Jesus that we commit together as a church to follow and pursue:



Grow—the pathway to Transformation

We believe each Christian is called to a life of worship and devotion, learning from Jesus each day. We will rely on the Holy Spirit to sustain us and we will intentionally work out a daily/weekly rhythm that gives priority to prayerfully reading God's Word, listening to

that Word preached and applying it to our lives, and to prayer (adoration, thankfulness, confession, petition and intercession). Other disciplines we will embrace are a weekly Sabbath rest from work, solitude, repentance and confession, reading and reflecting upon good Christian literature, journaling, and enjoying the beauty and gift of creation.

We prioritise and schedule time to regular prayerful reading of God's Word, submitting to its authority for all things in the life of faith. We commit to a lifestyle of daily prayer and a commitment to live in step with the Holy Spirit, seeking to put to death sinful attitudes and actions. We will also embrace other spiritual disciplines to nourish our spiritual lives and commune with Jesus. We prayerfully consider each day: "What is God saying to me and doing in my life, and how will I respond to Him?"



Gather—the pathway to Community

We believe each Christian is called to love others in a community of faith and be loved in that same community. No matter what season of life we are in we will prioritise and willingly participate in gathered worship, sharing and praying more intimately with others throughout the week, being hospitable by eating with, caring for and sharing life with others in the church. We believe that God has chosen to help us and bless us in and through community.

We willingly and generously commit to participate in sharing life together as Kew Baptist Church through authentic, accountable and honest friendships, working together to create a loving and caring spiritual community. We will share the responsibilities of managing the practical and necessary aspects of church life. We will pray for our leaders and diligently strive for peace and unity in the church. Weekly we will prayerfully consider how we might express God's love to others at KBC.



Give—the pathway to Generosity

In response to God's gracious and lavish generosity to us in Christ, we believe each Christian offers to God their whole lives in loving others in the church and wider community. Both spontaneously and by scheduling, we will give generously of our spiritual gifts, time, energy, possessions and money, offering them to support others in our church, support the ministry and mission of Christ, and to help those in need. We commit ourselves to answer Christ's call to daily follow and serve him in all spheres of life, being generous in response to God's generosity to us in Christ.

We generously offer our whole lives, our gifts and talents to serve Christ, and in a regular scheduled pattern, we will cheerfully give financially to our church and to other aid and charity needs as God guides us, be prepared for humble service, and be grateful stewards of all God has entrusted us.



Go—the pathway to Purpose

We believe each Christian is called to show in their lives and tell with their words, with love, respect and humility, the good news that Jesus is Lord and calls all to come to him and follow (the gospel). We will live for Jesus in the sphere of influence we find ourselves- our work, family, study, homes and friendships. We will actively engage in our culture to see it transformed by Christ. We will be committed in praying for our community and for non-Christians, diligently listening to the questions and barriers people have to faith, looking for opportunities to share our personal faith with others, inviting people to connect with our church, and supporting others with a global mission call in prayer and with finance.

Daily we pray for at least one person in our lives to come to faith in Jesus, be active in inviting others to church and offering hospitality in our homes, pray for and seek opportunities to share our faith in Jesus, and support global mission prayerfully and financially.

Appendix 2 - Kew Baptist Church Statement of Beliefs

We accept and proclaim the historic truths of the Christian faith including the following:

God and the human race

We hold that the Lord our God is one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that he fulfils his sovereign purpose - in creation, revelation, redemption, judgement and the coming of his kingdom - by calling out from the world a people united to himself and to each other in love.

We acknowledge that though God made us in his own likeness and image, conferring on us dignity and worth and enabling us to respond to himself, we are now members of a fallen race; we have sinned and come short of his glory.

We believe that the Father has shown us his holy love in giving Jesus Christ, his only Son, for us, while through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to his wrath and condemnation; and has shown his grace by putting sinners right with himself when they place their trust in his Son.

We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God; as truly human, born of the virgin Mary; as Servant, sinless, full of grace and truth; as only Mediator and Saviour, dying on the cross in our place, representing us to God, redeeming us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin; as Victor over Satan and all his forces, rising from death with a glorious body, being taken up to be with his Father, one day returning personally in glory and judgement to establish his kingdom.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement; who makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that they must now turn to Christ in repentance, and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ; who through the new birth makes us partake in the life of the risen Christ, and who is present within all believers, illuminating their minds to grasp the truth of Scripture, producing in them his fruit granting to them his gifts, and empowering them for service in the world.

The Scriptures

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are God-breathed, since their writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; hence are fully trustworthy in all that they affirm; and are our highest authority for faith and life.

The Church and its Mission

We recognise the Church as the body of Christ, held together and growing up in him, both as a total fellowship throughout the world, and as a local congregation in which believers gather.

We acknowledge the commission of Christ to proclaim the Good News to all people, making them disciples, teaching them to obey him, and to observe the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; and

We acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbours, resulting in service to the church and society, in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows, in proclaiming liberty from every kind of oppression, and in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world

...until he comes again.

This statement was adapted by the Scripture Union International Council at Harare, Zimbabwe, in May 1985. The sentence about observing the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper was added by Kew Baptist Church

Appendix 3 - The Principles and Ideals of the Baptist Faith *from the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria*

Whilst holding many phases of Christian Truth in common with other denominations, Baptists place a distinctive emphasis upon the following fundamental principles of the Christian Faith, as revealed in the New Testament.

1. The Child in the Kingdom

- a) Baptists believe that infants are God's little ones, whether children of Christian or non-Christian parents, and accept without modification the word of the Lord, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven". This Christian view of the child makes the external act of "Infant Baptism" unnecessary.
- b) Baptists approve of the presentation of children to God by parents, if thereby they solemnly undertake to train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the home and in the Church.

2. The Significance of Conversion

- a) To all who at the stage of personal responsibility, ignore God's law, and wander as prodigals from the Father's Home, Baptists preach the gospel of the Father's love, and the message of the cross, as the Way of Life. Conversion is acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
- b) This acceptance of Christ is a personal and deliberate act, involving the assent of the mind, the decision of the will, and the love of the heart.
- c) This avowal of allegiance to Christ implies a constant endeavour to live a life worthy of, and well-pleasing to Him in all things.

3. The Church - a Spiritual Society

Baptists hold that the Church, as established by the Lord Jesus Christ should consist of persons who have personally and intelligently accepted Him as Saviour and Lord, and pledged themselves to discipleship and service in the Kingdom of God.

4. The Lordship of Christ in the Church

- a) Baptists hold and teach that Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the Church, and that without any human intervention or ritualistic ceremony.
- b) Therefore, He is the sole authority in all matters of faith and conduct, in the life both of the Church and of the individual.
- c) This involves liberty of thought and conscience, and the rights of the Believer and the Church, freed from any ecclesiastical or other external authority, to interpret His mind.

5. The Standard of Belief

- a) Believing that the voice of the Church is subordinate to the voice of Christ, and that the mind of the Master is the Standard of Christian belief, Baptists do not subscribe to any formal Church Creed lest it hamper the development of Christian thought.

- b) Further, in their interpretation of the Lord's farewell declaration, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth", Baptists accept the principle that God has yet "more light and truth to break forth from His Word".
- c) Therefore, Baptists claim the personal privilege, and accept the Christian responsibility of courageously thinking God's thoughts after Him, under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of Truth.

6. The Ministry of Leadership

- a) In adopting the Congregational Principles of Church government, with no formal creed, with no external authority, and no defined ecclesiastical policy, and each member having equal rights and responsibilities, the Baptist Church is largely dependent on the reality and vigour of the spiritual life of its individual members.
- b) This spiritual life is generated by the understanding and inspiration of Christ's ideals, and by the creation and maintenance of a spiritual atmosphere, in which all that is unworthy dies, and in which Christian life becomes healthy and aggressive.
- c) Baptist ministers accept their office from the Lord of the Church, and while they are servants of the Church" the Church is not master over them. They are the spiritual leaders in the life and ministry of the church.
- d) Associated with the ministers in the spiritual oversight of the Church are men and women chosen for their Christian gifts and graces, who are called to be examples to the members of the Church, in conduct, zeal, self-denial and generosity.
- e) Church officers are appointed as spiritual leaders to work in sympathetic cooperation with the minister and Church members.
- f) The periodic Church Business Meeting is the centre of the Church's Christian activities, and is the seat of authority in the management of Church business.

7. The Christian significance of Baptism

- a) Christian Baptism, by which is meant the immersion of believers as instituted by our Lord, is a personal, public confession of the believer's identification with Christ, and also a means of grace to the Christian.
- b) Baptism is an outward act which symbolises, but does not effect regeneration, and salvation is not dependent on it.
- c) Baptism is a glorious privilege and a personal responsibility, and is a help to all believers in reminding them of their spiritual union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

8. The Fellowship of the Lord's Supper

- a) (To Baptists the Church is not so much an organisation as a fellowship, effective only as there is spiritual association with the Head of the Church.
- b) The Lord's Supper is a service of spiritual fellowship whereby, through remembrance of His Life and Death believers may experience in supreme degree the reality and influence of His Presence.
- c) It is an opportunity of entering into close fellowship with the Lord in the Holy of Holies, where there is a rekindling of love and a reconsecration of life to His service.

9. The Church and the Kingdom

Baptists recognise their responsibility to strive for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world and teach that membership in the Church implies service and sacrifice. This involves a stewardship of time, talents and money which aims at being worthy of the Son of God who loved and served humankind, even unto death.

Appendix 4 - A Plain English Summary of Schedule B

This summary has been prepared by the Union office as a guide to the operation of Schedule B to the Baptist Union of Victoria Incorporation Act 1930. It is a guide only. We recommend that Schedule B in its original form be read when specific questions arise. If you are in doubt about the meaning of a particular provision, please contact the Union office.

The Baptist Union of Victoria ("Union") holds property on trust for its member churches for the following purposes and subject to the following conditions:

1.0 To allow the member church concerned ("Church" to build/alter a sanctuary, manse or other buildings/structures as desired by the Church. These buildings are to be used as directed by the Church.

2.0 Based firmly on the principles of congregational government, the Church has complete discretion to manage its affairs, subject to clause 10 below.

3.0 The Church is entitled to direct the use of money received by it.

4.0 A pastor called (including for a new term) to the Church:

4.1 must be Baptist;

4.2 must be called (including for a new term) by a Special Church Meeting complying with clause 10 below;

4.3 must subscribe to the Doctrinal Basis [reproduced as Appendix I].
and

a pastor removed from the Church must be dismissed by a Special Church Meeting complying with clause 10 below.

5.0 The Church is entitled to use its property as security to borrow money. The decision to mortgage or otherwise charge the Church property must be made at a special Church meeting complying with clause 10 below.

6.0 The Church is entitled to:

6.1 create easements over;

6.2 construct roads over;

6.3 sell;

its property.

Without the consent of the Executive Council of the Union ("Executive Council"), the Church may *not* sell its property at substantially less than current market value.

7.0 Money received by the Church:

- 7.1 raised by way of mortgage of Church property;
- 7.2 derived by sale of Church property;
- 7.3 received as an insurance payout in relation to Church property;

must be used for further property purchase or building improvements. Moneys so derived are deposited with the Union in the normal course until the Church directs the use of the money.

8.0 The Church is entitled to rent Church property on terms decided by a special Church meeting complying with clause 10 below.

9.0 Where the Union receives money on behalf of the Church, the payee has no further responsibility to follow up the payment.

10. The special Church meetings referred to above:

- 10.1 may generally be called at any time;
- 10.2 may be called by the Church leadership;
- 10.3 must be called upon the written request of at least one-sixth of the members of the Church;
- 10.4 must be convened by 14 days' clear notice specifying the time, place and purpose of the meeting
At a special Church meeting:
- 10.5 persons voting must be over 18 years, must have been members of the Church for at least 6 months, and must have been present at Church for communion at least once in the preceding 6 months; and
- 10.6 a two-thirds majority vote is required.

(the two-thirds rule relates to two-thirds of all those members present and voting. ...if the vote is by ballot and invalid votes are cast, the number of invalid votes must still be included in the total number of votes against which the two-thirds requirement is measured.)

11. A minute signed by the chairperson of a Church meeting is sufficient evidence that the minute is an accurate record of a Church decision.

12. (transitional provision)

13. In special circumstances of the Church owing money that the Union is liable to pay, the Union may, having given 6 months written notice to the Church, mortgage or sell Church property so as to cover the debt.

14. The beneficial ownership and control of Church property by the Church is not affected per se if the Church moves to another locality.

14A. In relation to the powers vested in the Church by clauses 4,5,7,8 and 13 above, the Church may, at any time, ask Executive Council to stand in the shoes of the Church and be able to exercise those powers in the Church's stead. Executive Council and the Church may later both determine that those powers will revert back to the Church.

15. If:

15.1 the Church is dissolved;

15.2 the Church is dispersed;

15.3 the membership of the Church is reduced below 6; or

15.4 public worship in the Church sanctuary property stops for six months (not being for building alterations)

the Union automatically assumes full control of the Church property.

(At this stage any proceeds of sale of Church property by the Union would be deposited in the Union's Advancement Fund.)

15A. If the resident membership of the Church is reduced to less than 29 but more than 5, Executive Council may exercise the powers vested in the Church by clauses 4,5,7,8 and 13 above. Executive Council may only exercise this discretion to stand in the shoes of the Church if it has given three months written notice of its intention to the Church and to Assembly. The Executive Council action must also have the endorsement of Assembly. Executive Council and the Church may later agree and both determine that the powers vested in Executive Council will revert back to the Church.

16. If the Church moves to another locality and leases the original Church property, then, until the end of the lease, the clause 15 "trigger" above, relating to the absence of public worship for at least six months, does not apply.