

## **Church Constitution.**

### **I. Name of Church.**

- a) The church shall be known as North Bushey Free Church (Baptist). It shall be affiliated to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the local Association and shall consist of those Christians who have become members according to the rules of section II.
- b) The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd. has accepted the trusteeship on the basis of the foundation trust of the church (i.e. Fuller).
- c) In all cases where a resolution is decided by a vote of the church meeting (General or Special) the votes to be counted are of those personally present, entitled to vote and voting.

### **II. Rules of Membership.**

- a) The membership shall be open to all who profess repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession. Members are usually received after Baptism by Immersion but the church welcomes to full membership all who conscientiously follow our Lord Jesus Christ.
- b) Those wishing to join the church shall apply to the Minister, to the church secretary or any of the deacons; the deacons may then appoint two visitors and their report shall be voted upon at the following church meeting. If elected they shall receive the Right Hand of Fellowship at the Lord's Table at the first convenient Communion Service.
- c) Members shall be received from other Christian Churches by letters of transfer, such applications to be voted upon, as indicated in the previous rule.
- d) Students may be welcomed as temporary members of the Church without transferring their membership from their home church; they should normally present the Church with a letter of recommendation from their own church. Such temporary membership is discretionary and may be terminated.
- e) Members are expected to attend the church services loyally, to contribute towards its support as God has prospered them, to take part in church activities and with God's help to lead lives regulated by the teaching and inspired by the Spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### **III. Ordinances.**

- a) The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be observed at least monthly, to which all who know Christ are invited. Members are expected to be present at the Communion Service and the names of those absent for six consecutive months without reasonable excuse may, after due notice, be removed from the Role of Membership.
- b) The Ordinance of Believer's Baptism by immersion shall be administered upon request. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ may be admitted to this ordinance. All prospective members will be encouraged to be baptised upon commencement of their membership.

### **IV. Church Officers.**

- a) The Minister.
  - 1) In making or considering a Call to a minister, the procedure for the time being recommended by the Baptist Union shall be observed.
  - 2) The Minister shall have been baptised as a believer and shall maintain and practise the doctrine and rite of immersion of believers. The Minister shall be on the

accredited or probation list of the Baptist Union unless a waiver of this requirement is granted by the Union.

3) A Call to the pastorate shall be decided upon at a Special Church Meeting and at least two-thirds (66%) of members shall have voted in favour. Voting shall be by ballot.

4) The termination of the appointment of a Minister shall require the support of at least two-thirds (66%) of members at a Special Church Meeting convened to consider the matter. The Chairman shall normally be the Secretary.

b) The Diaconate.

1) The Diaconate, together with the Minister, shall be responsible for the spiritual leadership, oversight, and day-to-day administration of the church, and shall act on behalf of the church between Church Meetings. The Diaconate shall consist of at least four members and may be augmented as necessary. If the diaconate falls below four members and the vacancy is not filled at the next A.G.M. then the Herts. Baptist Association will be consulted. They shall be above the age of twenty-one and elected from members of not less than six months standing. Husband and wife may not serve concurrently. One half (50%) of the Diaconate shall constitute a quorum.

2) Election shall be for an initial term of two years and deacons shall be eligible for subsequent re-election for two terms of three years before they are required to take one year's sabbatical. After such a sabbatical they may serve three terms of three years before being required to take another sabbatical.

3) The requirement for a sabbatical must normally be accepted, unless the church recognises, by the majority votes at a church meeting, some exceptional circumstances which would make such a requirement unworkable or unwise. The deacon(s) concerned may then postpone his/her sabbatical for a further 12 (twelve) months after which time it will be reviewed again.

4) In accordance with the Fuller Trust it is necessary that the majority of the Diaconate be Baptised Believers.

5) Deacons shall be elected by ballot from those who have previously consented to nomination. Nominations must be submitted in writing with the signature of two church members. No member may nominate for election more persons than there are places vacant.

6) All nominations for the Diaconate (with the nominee's consent) shall be in the Secretary's hands by the Church Meeting previous to the election and thereafter displayed for the Church Members to see. Voting shall occur at an ordinary Church Meeting held before the Annual General Meeting. Those receiving the highest number of votes and the votes of at least two-thirds (66%) of those voting shall be deemed elected. Where there have been more candidates nominated than there are vacancies the following shall apply: at the first ballot the members shall be asked to vote for those whom they would prefer to serve as deacons. They shall vote for no more candidates than there are vacancies. The chief scrutineer (a church member not seeking nomination and appointed by the church meeting) shall report in writing and in confidence to the Chairman the number of votes cast for each candidate. The Chairman shall ascertain which names need to be deleted so as to retain on the list as many of those with the highest number of votes as there are vacancies (he may use his casting vote when there is a tie). Members shall then be asked to vote as in the normal method (i.e. so that the remaining candidates are elected with two-thirds [66%] majority).

c) Executive Officers.

The church shall elect a Treasurer and a Secretary from the diaconate by ballot at the A.G.M.

d) Eldership.

The officiating Minister, Church leader or Moderator may nominate and request the Church to recognise up to four elders (for one year) drawn from the membership of the

church at least half of which must normally be members of the diaconate. The procedure used for election shall be the same as that used for the election of deacons, except that only the Minister, Church leader or Moderator may nominate such people. The majority must be baptised in accordance with the Fuller Trust.

#### V. Church Meetings.

The Church shall meet for Christian Fellowship and for the transaction of the business of the church at least once a quarter. The Annual General Meeting will be held as soon as practicable after December 31st at which time the accounts shall be presented, annual appointments made, and the Secretary's Report given.

- b) The Church Meeting shall be preceded by a Deacons' Meeting. The church will be presented with the agenda at least two Sundays before the business meeting.
- c) A Special Church Meeting shall be called at the discretion of the Minister and/or a majority of the Deacons, or at the written request of one tenth (10%) of the membership or 12 members, whichever is the greater. Notice of such meeting shall be given at both services on the two preceding Sundays and the agenda displayed.
- d) The decision of any matter arising at a Special Church Meeting shall be by a majority of not less than two-thirds of those present entitled to vote and voting.
- e) A Quorum at any Church Meeting shall be one quarter of the membership.
- f) Members of six months standing and who have attained the age of eighteen shall be entitled to vote at Church Meetings, and the business shall be transacted under such rules as ordinarily govern the conduct of public meetings.

#### Vi. Church Accounts.

- a) A statement of the Church Accounts, duly prepared by the Treasurer and audited by a member of another fellowship, shall be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- b) Financial accounts shall be kept by every organisation, and copies shall be submitted to the diaconate at the end of each financial year, though these do not necessarily form part of the church annual accounts.

#### VII. General.

- a) The Minister shall be ex-officio President of all Societies and ordinarily shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and its constituent societies.
- b) Meetings and Services on church premises shall be held with the permission of the Minister or Secretary or Deacons and upon such conditions as they may decide.
- c) The initial appointment of all leaders of all church activities shall be ratified by a Church Meeting and subsequently ratified annually at the Annual General Meeting. In the event of a vacancy occurring in any such office during the year, the deacons are empowered to fill that office subject to ratification at the next Church Meeting.
- d) The service of infant Dedication is open to parents who desire to give thanks for their child and dedicate themselves under God to its upbringing in Christian ways.
- e) Each church organisation shall accept the guidance and control of the church in all

matters and shall submit, on request, rules defining its purpose and governing its procedure to be sanctioned by the Diaconate and/or Church Meeting.

#### VIII. Alteration Of Rules.

The foregoing rules, a copy of which shall be given to each Church Member, may be altered only after Notice of Motion and at the Annual General Meeting.

#### IX. Doctrinal Basis.

The Doctrinal Basis of the Church shall be the fundamental of Christianity including:

- a) The Trinity. There is only One God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three equal persons, rather, Son and Holy Spirit, eternal and co-equal in power and glory, the same In essence but distinct in subsistence.
- b) The Divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture as originally given and its supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct, and religious practice.
- c) The essential deity and perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ - lie is truly and properly both God and man.
- d) The universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature since Adam's Fall, rendering man subject to God's Wrath and condemnation.
- e) Redemption from guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death (as our Representative and Substitute) of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God
- f) The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- g) The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the death of Christ effective to the sinner, granting him repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.
- h) The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.
- l) The expectation of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- j) The one, holy, universal Church. The Church is the body of Christ, consisting of all those in time and eternity who are united in Christ by faith, and that groups of professing believers in Christ who have organised themselves for the purpose of doing God's will are the local expression of that Church.

Date of Annual General Meeting at which accepted: 6th March, 1992.