

CONSTITUTION OF THE EMMAUS BAPTIST CHURCH

1. NAME

The name and designation of the church shall be the EMMAUS BAPTIST CHURCH, hereinafter called “the Church.”

2. AFFILIATION

The Church shall seek and maintain membership with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa but shall be independent of any control of it, save as hereinafter provided.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CHURCH

The aims and objects of the church shall be to fulfil the “Great Commission” of Christ by:-

- 3.1 the regular proclamation of the Gospel at all scheduled meetings and services, and through the faithful witness of individual members;
- 3.2 the mutual edification and motivation of the congregation to do their part in the Great Commission of Christ, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the salt of the earth and the light that dispels darkness;
- 3.3 the prayerful and practical support of evangelical missions;
- 3.4 conducting the affairs of the church in accordance with historic New Testament principles precious to our Baptist heritage.

4. DECLARATION OF BELIEF

We hold to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith as the official declaration of faith (a summary of what we believe the Scriptures to teach) for conduct and teaching.

While we do not expect and require that all candidates for membership hold to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith as a matter of personal conviction, at the least every candidate should be able to commit themselves to the teaching and the fellowship as a matter of church order.

The Short Declaration of Faith serves as a core summary of what we believe to be the clear teaching of Scripture. Every member and prospective member is expected to hold these core beliefs as a matter of personal conviction.

The church believes, among other equally precious Scriptural truths, the following.

4.1 The Bible

- 4.1.1 The Scriptures, comprising the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, in their original writings, are fully and verbally inspired by God. They are the final rule and authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- 4.1.2 The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, obedience and practice, and is necessary for the revelation of God’s will.
- 4.1.3 The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture.
- 4.1.4 The inward illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the saving understanding of the Scriptures.

4.2 God

4.2.1 There is one living, true God, Creator of all, unchanging, holy and sovereign, revealed in three Persons (the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit) equal in essence and eternally co-existent.

4.2.2 God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and from Himself, is unique in being all-sufficient, both in Himself and to Himself, not standing in need of any creature which He has made, nor deriving any glory or benefit from such. On the contrary, it is God Who manifests His own glory in them, through them, to them and upon them. He is the only source of all being; from Whom, through Whom, and to Whom are all things.

4.3 Jesus Christ

4.3.1 It pleased God in His eternal wisdom to choose and appoint the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and Man, Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things and the Judge of the World.

4.3.2 Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, is perfect God and perfect Man.

4.3.3 Though Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, He lived a sinless life and thus was able to offer Himself on the Cross of Calvary as the Lamb of God (the substitutionary sacrifice) for all our sins.

4.3.4 He died, rose again bodily from the dead and ascended into Heaven where He sits on the right hand of God as our Representative, High Priest and Advocate.

4.3.5 He is the only Way of Access to God and there is no other name by which sinners can be saved.

4.3.6 Jesus Christ is Lord, not only of the universe which He controls, but in particular Lord of the Church and Lord of every individual.

4.3.7 Being now exalted to the right hand of His Father in heaven, He always intercedes for us, and one day will come from heaven to finally consummate His saving work in His people and to judge the world.

4.4 The Holy Spirit

4.4.1 The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Triune Godhead, is Himself the initial illumination and initiating gift of God, by which, in the moment of their regeneration, believers are baptised into the one body of Christ (Ro 6:3-4, Acts 2:38ff, 1 Cor 12:13).

4.4.2 He indwells and forever abides in the true believer, thus making holy living possible for all Christians (1 Thess. 4:7-8; Ro. 8: 1-14), producing in them strong assurance of peace with God, of the fact that they are accepted in the Beloved, that they have access through prayer into God's presence and that they shall persevere to the end.

4.4.3 He gives a variety of spiritual gifts to the church, distributing them to each individual Christian as He wills for the mutual edification of the church.

4.5 Man

4.5.1 Our first parents, Adam and Eve, although created in God's image, upright and perfect, transgressed God's express command and by this sin fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them. We and all mankind thereby incurred the penalty of death, physical and spiritual, thereby inheriting a sinful nature. "There is no one righteous, not even one For all have sinned." (Ro. 3:10,23; 5:12). Nevertheless, each person is personally responsible for his own sin.

4.6 The Gospel

4.6.1 Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-3; Ro. 1:1-6).

4.6.2 As it is proclaimed, preached and taught, it is an announcement of good news that God has shown mercy and grace to undeserving sinners, freely forgiven their sins, accepted them in His beloved Son, and has given them eternal life.

4.7 Saving Faith

4.7.1 Saving faith, whereby people are enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts. This act of faith includes hearing the Word, receiving it with gladness and believing it to be true, and trusting the Saviour alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life.

4.8 Regeneration

4.8.1 Those who are united to Christ, having had a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are being cleansed and sanctified by the Word and the Spirit indwelling them to the practice of true holiness without which no one shall see the Lord.

4.8.2 All who repent of their sins and receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are justified on the grounds of His shed blood (Ro. 5: 1-2).

4.8.3 They are born again of the Spirit and so become children of God.

4.8.4 They are called to a life of holiness and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and of service for Him.

4.9 The Future

4.9.1 The church awaits the personal and bodily return of Christ to this earth, which event will mark the end of our present historical order, and so we look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells, God Himself dwelling amongst His people forever. God has appointed a Day in which He will Judge the world, the children of God being assigned to eternal blessedness while the wicked who know not God shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, separated from God forever.

4.10 Freedom of Conscience

4.10.1 Every individual is responsible to God alone to conduct his life and his worship according to the light that is given him and according to the dictates of his own conscience, though with due regard for the needs of his neighbour and the demands of the law of the land.

4.11 The Body of Christ

4.11.1 The Church universal, consisting of all true believers throughout the ages, constitutes the body of Christ and the local church, made up of believers voluntarily covenanting to gather for fellowship and service, is a manifestation of that body and is vitally linked to Christ its Head.

4.12 Co-operation with Those of Like Precious Faith

4.12.1 The execution of the Great Commission often demands co-operative effort with other individuals or institutions of similar evangelical persuasion.

4.13 The Autonomy of the Local Church

4.13.1 The local church under the Headship of Christ is responsible solely to Him for the conduct of its own affairs according to New Testament teaching, and is not subject to the dictates of any person or institution outside the church, other than to “render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s.”

4.14 Separation of Church and State

4.14.1 Authorities have been ordained by God to rule in secular affairs as a power for good, and as such, can expect and demand allegiance and obedience from every citizen, but they have no divine power to dictate how God should be worshipped. Likewise has the Church no authority to dictate to the State but has the obligation to pray for those in authority, to witness, and to be the “salt of the earth.”

4.15 The Priesthood of All Believers

4.15.1 All believers in Jesus Christ have no other intermediary than Christ our High Priest, and they all enjoy the common dignity, calling and privilege afforded to Christians before God of being a holy priesthood, called “to offer spiritual sacrifices to God...,” including praise and the service of Christian love (Ro. 15:15-16; Heb. 13:15-16, 1 Pet. 2:5ff).

4.16 The Christian life

4.16.1 Born-again believers are a special people, called by God to live a life of holiness and separation from all associations (personal and corporate) which may bring His name into disrepute.

4.16.2 God has made provision for the preservation of believers who have fallen into sin to repent and to humble themselves for such sin with godly sorrow, praying for pardon and strength supplied by the Holy Spirit, so that they may thereafter live a life pleasing to God.

4.17 The Two Ordinances appointed by Christ

4.17.1 Christ ordained two ordinances to be observed in their New Testament simplicity as a perpetual testimony to His substitutionary death and resurrection, namely, the Lord’s Supper (i.e. the memorial wherein believers partake of the bread and the cup as the symbols of His broken body and shed blood until He returns), and Believers Baptism (wherein the believer is immersed in water as a symbol of his death and resurrection with Christ, and of his initiation into the body of Christ). (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Ro. 6:3-4)

4.18 The principle of Congregational Church Government

4.18.1 A constituted Church meeting is, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the highest court of authority for the local Church. Each individual member has the inalienable right and responsibility to participate fully in the life and government of the Church, including appointment of its leaders.

4.19 Marriage

4.19.1. We believe that God has instituted marriage between a man and a woman, therefore we believe in a heterosexual relationship between a natural man and a natural woman within the confines of lawful matrimony. (Genesis 2:18; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-8; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, 39-40; Ephesians 5:31)

Adherence to this stated principle of sexual behavior is an inherent requirement for membership with the Emmaus Baptist Church.

5. MEMBERSHIP

The membership shall consist of:

5.1 Those persons who are on the Church roll at the date of the adoption of this Constitution.

5.2 Those who have been accepted into new membership according to clause 6 of this Constitution, have given evidence of their personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who have confessed that faith by believer's baptism. (If, by reason of age or infirmity, baptism by immersion is medically not advisable, the candidate may be baptised by affusion (the pouring of water over the head).)

5.3 Voting rights at all church meetings.

5.3.1 Only those who have been in regular attendance at one or more Sunday services are entitled to vote in a general meeting of the church.

5.3.2 Regular attendance shall mean that a member has not been absent from Sunday services for a period of four (4) consecutive Sundays or has attended a minimum of six (6) Sundays during the immediate eight (8) weeks to the date of the meeting being constituted.

5.3.3 In the case of those who do not qualify in accordance with either 5.3.1 or 5.1.2 the discretion of the elders shall prevail.

6. ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

6.1 Any persons desiring membership shall complete an application form in which they confirm in writing that they accept the Church Constitution in its entirety and agree to abide by it. They shall also be instructed and interviewed in an appropriate manner, as determined by the Elders.

6.2 When the Elders are satisfied that the requirements of 6.1 have been met, they shall submit the applications to the Church at a General Meeting or a Membership Approval Meeting. A Membership Approval Meeting may be convened at the close of a scheduled worship service with no other notice than an announcement during the course of the service. A quorum for a Membership Approval Meeting shall be the same as that for a General Meeting (clause 17.1). A two-thirds majority shall affect church membership.

7. PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

7.1 Every member is expected to attend General Meetings, unless prevented by some reasonable cause, and to exercise his/her franchise for the welfare of the whole Church in the spirit of prayer and love. Members are expected to tender apologies for non-attendance.

7.2 Members shall be expected to support the ministry and maintain the unity and fellowship of the Church, especially by prayer, attendance at the services, engaging in some definite work in connection with the Church, and conscientious giving as God's provision enables. It is the special privilege and duty of members to seek to win others to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to introduce strangers to the Church.

8. TRANSFER OR RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

8.1 Any member in good standing who desires to join another (Baptist or other Christian) Church, may be given a letter of transfer by the Executive if and when so requested.

8.2 A member may resign in writing at any time.

9. REVISION OF CHURCH ROLL

9.1 For statistical purposes, and to fulfil the relevant requirements of the Baptist Union, the Membership Roll shall be revised annually and kept up to date by the Executive in accordance with this clause and clauses 8 and 10.

9.2 A General Meeting may remove from the roll the name of any member who has not attended Church activities for six months and has failed to confirm continuing interest in membership by replying to an official, written request to do so.

9.3 It shall further be permissible for a General Meeting to remove from the Roll the name of any member whose whereabouts is unknown, and who has not kept in touch with the church for twelve consecutive months.

9.4 Where possible, persons are to be advised in writing concerning removal of their names from the Membership Roll.

9.5 The Executive shall inform the Church at each Annual or Quarterly General Meeting of all changes to the Roll.

10. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

10.1 If any member is absent from the services of the Church and/or fails to comply with any of the privileges and obligations of membership for a period exceeding six months, the Elders shall visit and encourage the member concerning these matters. In the event of such communication not producing a satisfactory response, the name of the member shall be reported to a General Meeting together with a recommendation by the Executive.

10.2 In the unhappy event of any allegation of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a member, the Elders shall, bearing in mind the teaching of Matthew 18:15-17, make careful inquiry into the matter. If, after the inquiry, the Executive deems such a course necessary, it shall present a report and a recommendation to a General Meeting, at which meeting any further action shall be determined after prayerful consideration. The suspension or expulsion of any member shall be resorted to only if there is no evidence or repentance and all efforts to bring about restoration have proved unsuccessful.

11. CHURCH OFFICERS

The Church recognises the two offices ordained by Christ for the leadership of the Church, namely elders and deacons. It is understood that the Church does not appoint people to these offices, but recognizes and sets apart those whom Christ has appointed.

12. ELDERS

12.1 The oversight of the Church rests with the Elders. The ideal is a plurality of Elders, and all Elders are equal as to the authority of their office. It is the duty of all the Elders to teach, administer the ordinances, lead the flock, shepherd the members, oversee every function of the Church according to the Scriptures, and ensure that pure doctrine, according to the Scriptures and as set out in the Church's Declaration of Belief, be taught in the Church. Elders shall lead by example, serving with humility and faithfulness, and not lording it over the flock.

12.2 Elders differ in their particular gifts and abilities, and it is right that there should be a difference of functionality (including the possibility of primary leadership) in accordance with the gifts which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to the respective Elders.

12.3 In accordance with the biblical teaching that persons are fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of Elder, the procedure for recognising Elders shall be as follows:

At all times, special attention must be given to the biblical qualifications of eldership as set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. Any member qualified to vote may at any time make recommendation in writing to the Elders. The Elders, after making the necessary enquiries and obtaining the consent of the proposed Elder to submit his name, may make a recommendation to a General Meeting. No person shall be ordained as an Elder unless he obtains at least 75% of the votes cast. Voting shall be by ballot. When the result of the ballot is known, the proposed Elder shall be informed of the decision of the Church, and shall be requested to confirm or decline the appointment.

12.4 Any prospective Elder shall be a mature male person, shall have undergone believer's baptism, and shall undertake, to the satisfaction of the Elders, to uphold the Church's Declaration of Belief and Constitution together with 1689 Baptist confession of faith and shall have become members of the Church as provided for in this Constitution.

12.5 An Elder shall be ordained in a regular Lord's Day worship service by the laying on of hands by an Elder or Elders.

12.6 The Elders shall review one another's lives and ministries on an ongoing basis with a view to ensuring that Elders hold office only as long as they meet the biblical qualifications for their office.

12.7 There may arise reasons that would require an Elder to be reviewed by the Church. This may be done at a properly called Special General Meeting (see 15.4). Any such Special General Meeting shall be conducted in the following way:

During the discussion, the Elder under consideration and members of his immediate family shall leave the presence of the church until the written ballot is taken. The scriptural qualifications shall be read and expounded, and the Elder's qualifications openly discussed in the fear of God and with due respect for the reputation of the Elder. Any member who publicly suggests in such a meeting that the Elder being reviewed is unqualified for his office must have previously spoken with the Elder himself and informed the Elders of the Church of his concerns (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:19). He must also present biblical and factual warrant for his concerns at the review meeting. Just as it is wrong for a church to retain an Elder who is not biblically qualified, so also it is rebellion against the Head of the Church to reject an Elder for any but biblical grounds. Additionally, any Elder about whom such concerns are raised must be permitted, if he wishes, to return to the meeting and defend himself. The Church should seek unity of mind concerning the matter, but should such unity not be fully realized, a vote of no fewer than 75% of votes cast shall be required for the confirmation of an Elder in his office. Any Elder failing of confirmation no longer holds office in the Church. This vote shall take place by written ballot; and the vote shall stand as it is first given in the written ballot.

12.8 An Elder may resign his office without prejudice if he does so in an orderly fashion and for good and valid reasons. This resignation, together with its reasons and the date upon which he wishes his resignation to be effective, shall be submitted in writing to the Elders of the Church.

12.9 The Church must provide a salary where necessary for the support of an Elder so as to release him wholly or partly from employment outside the Church, and so enable him to devote himself more fully to his pastoral and preaching responsibilities.

12.10 Any financial engagement between the Church and an Elder shall be terminable by three months' notice on either side, unless otherwise agreed upon, provided that pastoral duties may be suspended immediately as provided for in 12.6 and 12.7.

12.11 This Constitution assumes, and the norms of biblical church order require, that a plurality of elders oversee this local church. Therefore, if at any period in the life of the church, there no longer exists a plurality of elders in office; and this lack cannot in a timely way be supplied, the remaining elder (or the church, if there are no elders) shall seek the temporary oversight of the pastors of a trusted sister church holding a doctrinal standard compatible with the Church's Declaration of Belief. The purposes of such an arrangement are to provide pastoral care and leadership in the recognition of a plurality of elders.

12.12 When an eldership meeting this requirement and willing to undertake these responsibilities is located, the church shall within a reasonable period of time officially place itself under this eldership. If the church has a remaining elder, this eldership shall function as his fellow elders. This action shall be taken by a written ballot at a properly called meeting of the church. A 75% majority of those present and voting is necessary for such an action. The recognition of the oversight of such an eldership shall be confirmed (or, failing a 75% majority, withdrawn) in the same way at the Annual General Meeting of the church in succeeding years. When a plurality of resident elders is raised up, the oversight arrangement here described shall immediately cease.

13. DEACONS

Deacons are to be appointed for a term of two (2) years as the need shall arise in order to assist the Elders in all matters pertaining to the efficient administration of the Church, so that the latter may devote themselves more effectively to their pastoral duties. Each Deacon shall be responsible only for the portfolio under his control.

The appointment of Deacons shall be as follows, special attention being given to the biblical character of a Deacon as set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

13.1 Election of Deacons shall take place at the Annual General Meeting of the Church, but may also take place at any other General Meeting. Election shall be by ballot, and by a 2/3 majority of votes cast. Deacons shall retire on rotation at every Annual General Meeting, approximately half the deacons retiring each time. Retiring deacons may make themselves available for re-election for up to three consecutive terms. After holding office for three consecutive terms, a deacon shall be obliged not to make himself available for re-election for a period of one year.

13.2 When it becomes necessary to elect Deacons, the Elders shall determine the portfolios for which Deacons are required, and shall notify the Church accordingly.

13.3 When called for by the Elders, nominations for Deacons may be submitted in writing to the Elders by any member having the right to vote. The nominations shall be signed by a proposer, seconder and the nominee, and shall indicate the portfolio for which the candidate is considered suitable. The nominations must be received by the Elders at least 14 days prior to the meeting at which the election shall take place, and must be made public not later than the Sunday preceding the election.

13.4 Any proposed Deacon shall be a person who has reached the age of 21 years, has undergone believer's baptism, and has been a member of the Church for at least twelve months.

14. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Deacons are to be appointed as the need shall arise in order to assist the Elders in all matters pertaining to the efficient administration of the Church, so that the latter may devote themselves more effectively to their pastoral duties. Each Deacon shall be responsible only for the portfolio under his control.

14.1 The Executive shall consist of the Elders, who shall act as generally or specifically directed by the Church in a General Meeting. They shall be accountable to the Church for the proper execution of, and for the proper administration of all Church funds and property.

14.2 A meeting of the Executive shall be held monthly and at such other times as shall be deemed advisable, notice of which meeting shall be given, whenever possible, at the Services on the previous Sunday.

15. GENERAL CHURCH MEETINGS

15.1 The Church year shall end on 31 December, and a church meeting shall be held within a period of 3 months after this date. This meeting shall be known as the Annual General Meeting.

15.2 Prior to the Annual General Meeting, reports and audited financial statements for the previous year shall be submitted in writing to the Executive for submission to the Annual General Meeting. Officers shall be elected as required by the Constitution.

15.3 General Meetings shall be called, as often as business in the church may require, by the Elders, or upon written application of not less than 5 members, or ten percent (10%) of the membership which ever is the greater, addressed to the Elders. Such application shall state the proposed business.

15.4 Any General Meeting shall be deemed to be properly convened if announced at both morning and evening services held in the Church on each of the two Sundays immediately preceding such meeting.

16. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS AT GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE MEETINGS.

16.1 An Elder shall preside at all meetings. If no Elder is present the meeting shall appoint its own Chairman. No member may preside while his own position is under discussion.

16.2 The Chairman shall be entitled to a casting vote. He may also, with a majority vote of the members present, postpone deliberations on any matter which he considers the meeting is not representative enough to attain an objective decision.

16.3 At all meetings of the Church any member who has attained the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote. This qualification shall apply to all explicit or implied references to an exercise of the right of franchise in this Constitution.

16.4 No member may introduce at any General Meeting any matters unless the Executive has had the opportunity of discussing it beforehand.

16.5 Except where otherwise herein provided, all matters shall be declared carried when approved by the vote of two-thirds of the members present at any General Meeting at which such matters are discussed.

16.6 If requested by one or more of the members present, the voting, on a specific matter shall be by ballot.

16.7 Resolution(s) adopted by the Church at General Meetings shall be binding on the whole Church until such resolution(s) be rescinded at a subsequent General Meeting.

16.8 Proper minutes shall be maintained of all decisions of the Church and the Executive.

17. QUORUMS

17.1 15% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater, shall constitute a quorum for all General Meetings. If there is no quorum by the commencement of the meeting, a further 30 minutes shall be allowed and if by then the required number of members is still not present, the meeting shall be reconvened at least 7 days later, on a date decided upon by those members present. When the meeting reconvenes the members then present shall constitute a quorum.

18. CHURCH ACTIVITIES

18.1 No activity of the Church may function independently of the Church, but shall be an integral part thereof.

18.2 The Church may at a General Meeting frame and enact such Bye-laws as it may deem necessary for administering the funds or managing the affairs of the Church. Such Bye-laws shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

18.3 Office-bearers of all organisations, departments, committees and sub-committees shall be Church members who have shown by their zeal and faithful testimony that they are worthy of the position in question. Their appointments must be confirmed by the Elders. (Note: "office-bearer" shall be understood to mean a chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary, departmental leader, person in a teaching position, or any other position defined as such in any Bye-laws referred to in 18.2.)

18.4 The Elders shall be ex-officio a member of all organisations, departments, committees and sub-committees, and as such may attend any of the meetings.

19. CONFIDENTIALITY

Members, when so requested, are to consider certain matters of church life and/or business transacted at Executive Committee Meetings and General Meetings, as strictly private and confidential.

20. NON-CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Meetings and services and other functions or activities not necessarily connected with the Church, held on Church premises, may be held with the permission of the Executive Committee, and upon such conditions as it may decide.

21. METHOD OF FINANCING

The Church shall be supported by:

21.1 Voluntary contributions of members of the Church and congregation by means of tithes and offerings or other contributions to church funds and/or by any other method decided upon by the members of the Church at a General Meeting, provided this is not in conflict with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.

21.2 Interest on surplus Church funds invested in recognised commercial banks or building societies or other investments.

21.3 As outlined by clause 23 of the Constitution.

22. ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETING

22.1 Proper banking accounts and books of account, financial statements and budgets, sufficient to control and record income, expenditure and capital items, shall be maintained.

22.2 The Church financial year shall be from 1 January to 31 December.

22.3 All Church accounts shall be subject to audit by a member of a recognised accounting body, or by a person chosen by the Executive and capable of certifying the correctness of the Church accounts.

22.4 An annual budget for each new financial year shall be approved at a General Meeting before it comes into effect at the start of the new financial year.

23. PROPERTY

23.1 The Church shall have the power and the authority to receive by way of gift, inheritance or legacy, purchase or otherwise acquire, hold, hypothecate, sell, donate, lease, exchange and partition moveable and immovable property of any kind whatsoever, whether leasehold or freehold, borrow money with or without security, and to guarantee the performance of contracts by any person or any Baptist Church having object wholly or partly similar to the objects of this Church, and to pass mortgage and other bonds for registration with the proper authority.

23.2 The Church property, whether movable or immovable, shall vest in and be held by the Trustees hereinafter mentioned, in trust for the Church.

23.3 The Church shall have the authority to invest any funds belonging to it in any manner it may deem fit, and may open and operate banking accounts.

23.4 No proposal to sell, donate, borrow money upon security of a mortgage of immovable property shall be passed by the Church, except upon a two-thirds majority of members present and entitled to vote at a Special General Meeting duly called for the purpose.

23.5 Should the Church cease to exist as a Baptist Church or be dissolved as hereinafter provided, then all movable and immovable property shall vest in and become the property of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

23.6 The Church may, at a Special General Meeting, be dissolved by resolution of at least three quarters of the members present and entitled to vote. In the event of such a resolution being passed, the Executive Committee, or in the event of there being no such Committee, other persons appointed by the Church, or the Trustees of the Church as hereinafter defined, shall take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church, and in particular to transfer the property of the Church in due and proper form to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

24. INDEMNITY

The Trustees and all Officers of the Church shall be fully indemnified against all actions, costs, charges, losses, damages and expenses which they or any of them shall or may incur in the execution of their duty, except such as they shall incur by their own wilful neglect or wrongful act.

25. TRUSTEES

25.1 Trustees shall be appointed annually at a General Meeting from the membership of the Church and shall hold office until their successors are appointed at a General Meeting. The number of Trustees shall be determined by a General Meeting from time to time.

25.2 They shall act as directed by the Church in pursuance of a resolution passed in accordance with the provisions of the relevant clauses of the Constitution.

26. REVISION OF CONSTITUTION

26.1 This constitution may be amended at a General Meeting of the Church duly convened for the purpose, and circularised, provided 3 months notice of motion has been given at a previous General Meeting. No change shall be made unless at least 75% of the members present at such meeting vote in favour of the suggested alteration(s), either in the original form(s), or with such amendment(s) the meeting itself may make.

APPENDIX A

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

God created mankind male and female and ordained marriage as a lifelong union between a natural man and a natural woman¹⁸.

¹⁸ Genesis 2:18-25.

Marriage and divorce:

- Therefore we affirm that husband and wife are no longer two but one and that God intends marriage to last as long as both partners are alive¹⁹. We affirm that there are certain circumstances in which Scripture permits divorce;²⁰ nevertheless, divorce always grieves the Lord and hurts those involved²¹.

- We deny that marriage is merely a negotiated contract which may be terminated at will. Divorce is permissible only for a cause permitted in Scripture.

¹⁹ Matthew 19:4-6.

²⁰ Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16.

²¹ Malachi 2:16.

Marriage and sexual purity:

- We further affirm that marriage is by nature heterosexual²² and that any expression of sexual intimacy is holy only in the covenant of such a marriage²³.

- We deny the legitimacy and permissibility of homosexuality, lesbianism, fornication, adultery, pornography, paedophilia, bestiality, prostitution, incest and other forms of sexual perversion²⁴.

²² Genesis 2:24.

²³ Exodus 20:14; Hebrews 13:4.

²⁴ Romans 1:24-27.

26.2 This Constitution was approved at the General Meeting of the EMMAUS BAPTIST CHURCH held on 28 February 1999.

26.3 This Constitution was amended at the General Meeting of the EMMAUS BAPTIST CHURCH held on 28 February 2007.

26.4 This Constitution was amended at the General Meeting of the EMMAUS BAPTIST CHURCH held on 1 September 2013.