

Church of Christ York Street Ballarat

Affiliated with the Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania
Inc.

Constitution

Edition 15/11/2015

Preamble

We, the members of the York Street Church of Christ, accept this constitution for the proper running of this church as per New Testament principles.

We acknowledge the Deity and Trinity of God that His will and purpose be sought after and followed so as to advance Christ's Kingdom on earth.

1. Name, ownership and status

- 1.1 York Street Church of Christ, Ballarat ('The Church') affiliated with the Conference of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania.
- 1.2 The assets and income of The Church shall be applied solely to achieve the Vision and Mission of The Church and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of The Church except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of The Church.
- 1.3 In the event of The Church being dissolved, the amount that remains, after such a dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, shall be transferred to The Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc, to be used in the Ballarat region.
- 1.4 The Church is registered as a Charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission. Its registered trading name is Church of Christ York Street Ballarat. The ABN is 79 528 207 109 and it is classified as an "Other Unincorporated Entity".

2. Mission

- 2.1 The Mission of The Church and its members is to believe and live out the following scriptures:

Matthew 22:36-40 (NIV)

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

John 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

3. Governance (Structure of Authority)

- 3.1 The Council of Elders shall have the responsibility for the governance as distinct from the day to day management of The Church. In particular, it will be responsible for:
 - 3.1.1 Determining the vision and values;
 - 3.1.2 Stewardship of spiritual values in accordance with Biblical principles;
 - 3.1.3 Engaging in strategic planning and goal setting;
 - 3.1.4 Selecting and recommending to the congregation the appointment of the Senior Minister.
 - 3.1.5 If necessary removing the Senior Minister in accordance with the guidelines of the Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc;
 - 3.1.6 Endorsing all membership recommendations made by the Senior Minister, in accordance with the Membership Policy;
 - 3.1.7 Revoking the membership of individuals who no longer meet the expectations of the membership policy, based on moral, biblical or ethical reasons and in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17;
 - 3.1.8 Ensuring a roll of membership is maintained;
 - 3.1.9 Supporting the Senior Minister and reviewing the Senior Minister's performance annually;
 - 3.1.10 The job description for the Senior Minister;
 - 3.1.11 Ratifying ministry staff appointments made by the Senior Minister;
 - 3.1.12 Legal compliance;
 - 3.1.13 Financial accountability;
 - 3.1.14 Ensuring that appropriate governing policies are written, implemented and kept current.
 - 3.1.15 Identifying, encouraging and developing potential Council of Elders members so that the future leadership of The Church is assured;
 - 3.1.16 Delegating the implementation of goals as set out within the strategic plan to the Senior Minister;
 - 3.1.17 Monitoring achievement of goals;
 - 3.1.18 Acting in unity and with discretion at all times.

- 3.2 Upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders, the appointment of a Senior Minister will be by a secret ballot of Members (see clause 4.2) taken at a church Special General Meeting. Seventy (70) percent of attending Members must endorse the appointment before the Council of Elders can offer the role to the proposed Senior Minister.

- 3.3 The Senior Minister shall be responsible for the day to day running of The Church.
 - 3.3.1 All ministry and operational staff shall report through to the Senior Minister, directly or indirectly.

- 3.3.2 The Senior Minister will establish and dissolve any committees and/or sub committees that are required to ensure the effective day to day running of the Church and/or the achievement of the Church's strategic goals.
- 3.4 The Council of Elders shall consist of the following members:
 - 3.4.1 Senior Minister (1)
 - 3.4.2 Appointed Elders (5 – 8)
- 3.5 The Council of Elders shall meet as regularly as required for business, prayer and fellowship, with a recommended minimum of once per month, but no less than six (6) times per year.
- 3.6 Any member of York Street Church of Christ may nominate a member of The Church for Eldership at any time to the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders will consider the nominated person with regard to their suitability for the role, in light of:
 - 3.6.1 Existing members of the Council of Elders and their skills and spiritual gifts
 - 3.6.2 Whether the nominated person exhibits the qualities recommended in the New Testament (Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9)
 - 3.6.3 The requirement that Elders must be baptised by full immersion, and have a strong commitment to the life and ministry of York Street Church of Christ
 - 3.6.4 Family connections with current members of the Council of Elders (close family members within the Council of Elders is not recommended)
 - 3.6.5 No employee of York Street Church of Christ shall be appointed as an Elder.
- 3.7 If the nominated person is endorsed by the Council of Elders, at an appropriate time in relation to the commencement of an additional elder such as when a vacancy arises in the Council of Elders, then the nominated person will be recommended to The Church. A period of 4 weeks will be given for members to raise any objection (in particular on biblical, moral or ethical grounds) to the Council of Elders. Unless there is a reasonable objection raised, the Council of Elders will then announce the appointment of the new Elder.
- 3.8 Elders will be appointed for a term of 3 years. When an Elder is appointed for the first time at York Street Church of Christ, the appointment will be for a period of one year. This appointment will be reviewed by the Council of Elders on the anniversary of their appointment. If approved and the Elder agrees, the Elder will then be appointed to serve the remaining 2 years of the regular term of 3 years.
- 3.9 At the end of an Elder's 3 year term, if approved by the Council of Elders and the Elder agrees, the Elder will then be appointed to serve a further 3 year term.
- 3.10 Elders will take at least a one year sabbatical from Eldership after completing two consecutive three year terms on the Council of Elders.

- 3.11 No member of the Council of Elders shall participate in any matter involving conflict of interest.
- 3.12 This constitution may be amended at any business meeting of The Church providing the voting procedure as laid out in 3.15 is followed. Any amendment must receive at least 70% of the vote cast in order to be ratified. Written notice of the proposed amendment must have been given to the members of the congregation or must have been read at all regular Sunday services for at least two weeks prior to voting.
- 3.13 The Council of Elders may approve for money to be borrowed by The Church for amounts up to a total of the equivalent of 10% of the previous years' General Offering without approval of the Members.
- 3.14 Any proposed borrowings to be undertaken by the Church greater than the amount indicated in item 3.13 will need to be approved by the attending Members at either an Annual Meeting or Special General Meeting.
- 3.15 Voting procedures:
- 3.15.1 All voting shall be conducted by a show of hands, or if requested by more than 10 members or determined by the Elders, by secret ballot.
 - 3.15.2 All votes will be deemed to be carried when approval is 70% or more.
 - 3.15.3 Votes are to be counted by the Elders in conjunction with any appointed scrutineers (see item 5.2) immediately after a vote.
 - 3.15.4 Absentee votes shall be made available on request to the church office to those members eligible to vote who by reason of illness or other reasonable excuse are unable to be present at the meeting.

4. Membership

- 4.1 To be a member of the York Street Church of Christ, a person must:
 - 4.1.1 be baptised by full immersion
 - 4.1.2 agree to the statement within the Preamble within this document
 - 4.1.3 follow the expectations of members as described in the membership policy.

- 4.2 Members who are sixteen (16) years of age or older have the right to vote:
 - 4.2.1 on the appointment of the Senior Minister, and
 - 4.2.2 at any Annual Meeting, and
 - 4.2.3 at any Special General Meeting of members, and
 - 4.2.4 on changes to the Constitution.

- 4.3 As per clause 3.6, any member of York Street Church of Christ may nominate a member of The Church for Eldership at any time.

5. Meetings

- 5.1 The Church Members shall meet at least annually (at intervals of no greater than 18 months) to celebrate the progress of the vision achieved and anticipate the ministry in the year ahead. A finance report will be made available.
- 5.2 The Council of Elders will appoint the Chair, scrutineers if required, and minute taker for each meeting of The Church.
- 5.3 Special General Meetings can be called by the Council of Elders or by a quorum of the membership by giving a notice period of not less than 2 weeks.
- 5.4 A Notice of Motion must be given 2 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting or Special General Meeting and will be read out all normal services of The Church and made available to the congregation 1 week before the Annual or Special General Meeting.
- 5.5 Voting on a Notice of Motion will be carried by a majority as voted by either a secret ballot or show of hands (refer to item 3.15.1).
- 5.6 All Annual or Special General Meetings of The Church shall be governed by normal meeting procedures.
- 5.7 15% of the current active membership roll of The Church, but not less than 20 people, will constitute a quorum.

6. Grievance Procedures

- 6.1 Grievances should be handled in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. That is:
 - 6.1.1 Talk directly to the individual(s) involved privately. If the matter is not resolved;
 - 6.1.2 Take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If the matter is not resolved;
 - 6.1.3 Take the matter to the Senior Pastor or Elders. If the matter is not resolved;
 - 6.1.4 Take it to a Special Meeting of The Church.

Appendix 1 - Scripture referred to within this document

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Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (NIV)

¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Titus 1:5-9 (NIV)

⁵ The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. ⁶ An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷ Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.