

# EAST MAINS BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION (March 2010)

## 1 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1** The constitution of East Mains Baptist Church shall be read in conjunction with the Declaration of Trust of East Mains Baptist Church dated 22 June 2006.
- 1.2** The Church shall be called East Mains Baptist Church (referred to in this document as “the Church”). The Church is Baptist in its principles and practice and is in membership with the Baptist Union of Scotland. It is congregational in government and will manage its own affairs under Christ its Head, in accordance with the Bible, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All decisions at Church Meetings will be approached by the Church as together discerning the mind of Christ, the Head of the Church. Voting at Church Meetings will therefore be in order to express the conviction of the Church about the will of God on the matter being considered. The Church is committed to relating to the other Baptist Churches in East Kilbride in a ‘Covenant Relationship’, making every endeavour to foster a spirit of unity between us; to work and witness together whenever possible; and to share resources, knowledge, skills and expertise whenever it is deemed appropriate to do so.

### The Covenant Relationship

By the grace of God and to the glory of God we, the Members of East Mains, Calderwood and Westwood Baptist Churches in East Kilbride commit ourselves to:

- Preach the Gospel and make disciples as our common goal
- Collaborate whenever the work of the Gospel can best be achieved through a common strategy
- Support each other in our common mission by making every endeavour to foster a spirit of unity
- Encourage one another and build each other up in word and action, refusing to speak or act in ways that harm fellowship or hinder our common cause
- Respect one another and to pray for one another as we further develop unique expressions of mission
- Relate to other like-minded churches of other denominations in the town in the ways set out above and to extend this to any other Baptist churches which may come into existence in the future.

## 2 Membership

### 2.1 What Members of the Church Believe

Members of the Church believe that the Bible is the sole authority on all matters regarding faith and conduct. In the light of this principle, those in Membership with the Church must acknowledge the following beliefs to be their own:

- a** I believe in God the Father, His only Son, Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, and in The Holy Spirit, the Equipper, Comforter and Guide of all Christians. These three divine persons are the One God whom we serve.
- b** I believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for the sins I have committed, and that in His Name, I have forgiveness, and am restored to fellowship with God. Without this forgiveness reconciliation with God is not possible.
- c** I believe that the public declaration, indicating that a person accepts both the forgiveness of God, through Jesus Christ, and intends to lead a life worthy of Jesus Christ, is that of baptism by immersion whenever that is possible.
- d** I believe that God has gifted me with both spiritual gifts and abilities and acknowledge that it is my obligation to use those gifts and abilities in God's service.
- e** I believe, that, as a Christian, it is my responsibility to obey the words of Scripture in both my personal life and my corporate life within the church, and in that obedience, to represent Jesus Christ as His Ambassador in the world.
- f** I believe that prayer is a primary process of communicating with God, and that God answers prayer in His own way and in His own time. Consequently, it is one of my obligations, as a Christian, to use prayer frequently and regularly for personal and intercessional purposes.
- g** I believe that The Bible is the primary source of our knowledge of God, His wisdom and teaching; it is therefore one of my obligations to read it regularly and frequently as a powerful way of informing and maintaining my Christian life and witness.

- h** I believe that The Lord's Supper is a primary way of establishing and maintaining communion with God, through Jesus Christ. Consequently, it is my obligation to attend, and participate in this celebration.
- i** I believe that Public Worship is a vital expression of devotion to God, an occasion for fellowship with the community of God's people, and a significant part of my personal witness to others of my belief in Jesus Christ. Consequently, it is my obligation to attend and participate in Public Worship.
- j** I believe that an obligation of Church Membership ought to be to give to the work of the Church 'as God has prospered' me. Consequently my obligation shall be to give what support I can to the work of the Church in accordance with Biblical principles.
- k** I believe that good order and discipline is required by God's Word in both the individual Christian life, and in the life of the Church, so as not to dishonour God's Name. Consequently, it is my obligation to accept, and implement, where appropriate, the decisions of the Church in accordance with Biblical principles.

## **2.2 Who Members of the Church are**

Those in Membership with the Church will be:

- a** Persons who have professed repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and have been baptised by immersion.
- b** Persons who have professed repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and have made such a profession but who are unable to be baptised by immersion owing to special circumstances, provided they believe in baptism by immersion and would be baptised should circumstances allow.
- c** Persons, whose Membership is transferred from another Church, provided they fulfil either of the above conditions.

## **2.3 How to Become a Member of the Church**

Those applying for Membership of the Church must:

- a** Acknowledge belief and acceptance of all the items detailed in section 2.1, and agree to implement each item as well as they are able, with the help of God.
- b** Be interviewed by two Members, appointed by the Church. The purpose of this interview is to learn of the person's reason(s) for requesting Membership, hear how they became a follower of Jesus Christ and how they would seek to live out their Christian life.
- c** A report of the interview will be presented to the Church with a recommendation that the person may be permitted Membership, if appropriate. The Church will meet to hear the report and recommendation, and then express the will of God about the application for Membership in a vote.
- d** Applications for Transfer of Membership from another church will be placed before the Church Meeting upon the request for transfer being made to their previous Church, provided that the person being transferred agrees to accept all the items detailed in section 2.1.

- 2.4** All matters affecting the good honour and name of the Church or any member of the Church shall be regarded by the Members of the Church as private and confidential.
- 2.5** In cases of private offence between Members, action will be taken in accordance with Matthew 18: 15-17. In cases of inconsistency or doctrinal error, discipline will be exercised according to 2 Thessalonians 3: 6, 14-15 and Titus 3: 10-11.
- 2.6** Should it become apparent that a Member is, over a prolonged period of time, living in a way grossly contrary to their stated commitment, the Member shall be approached, with pastoral sensitivity, by the Pastor(s), or their appointees, with a view to restoring the member concerned to faith. If the situation remains unchanged, and the Member fails to resign from Membership of the Church, the Leadership may recommend the removal of the Member's name from the Church Roll.

## **3 Lord's Supper**

- 3.1** The Lord's Supper will normally be observed every Sunday at the discretion of the Pastor(s).
- 3.2** The Lord's Supper will be open to all believers and will be made available at home to those who are unable to attend the services.

## **4 Pastor(s) and Leaders**

- 4.1** The Church will be served by a Leadership made up of the Pastor(s), Ministry Department Leaders, and a number of other Leaders as required.
- 4.2** The Pastor(s) and any other members of staff called by the Church in a ministerial or pastoral role will be required to satisfy the Church's conditions of Membership, accept the Church's Declaration of Trust dated 22 June 2006 and the Constitution. Their method of appointment will be as stated in 4.4
- 4.3** In the event of the Pastor(s) being unable to fulfil their responsibilities, the Leadership, shall be responsible for arranging the preaching ministry and the supply of the ordinances.
- 4.4** In the event of a pastoral vacancy an Interim Moderator shall be appointed by the Church. The Members shall also appoint a Pastorate Committee. The Interim Moderator shall be responsible for chairing the Pastorate Committee and any other meetings as the Church sees fit. A Call to the Pastorate of the Church shall only be issued if recommended by the Leadership and if not less than 80% of the Members, voting by ballot, are in favour of appointing the sole nominee.
- 4.5** There will be as many Leaders as is required to head the various Ministry Departments of the Church and a number of other Leaders as required. Each Leader will have the necessary qualifications, both spiritual and practical, as outlined in the Bible in, e.g. Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1: 5-9.
- 4.6** Appointment of Leaders will take place once every 3 years, at which time the previous Leadership will step down.
- 4.7** Information concerning the role, responsibilities and qualities required in a Church Leader will be made available at the commencement of the process for appointing new leaders.
- 4.8** Before the Election of Leaders, the Members of the Church will be invited to suggest names to the Pastor(s) of Members they consider suitable for appointment. The Leadership will prayerfully consider these suggestions. After prayer and reflection the Leadership will compile a list of people to be approached. The Pastor(s) will invite those identified by the Leadership to a meeting at which they will explain the responsibilities of Leadership, outline the Biblical principles, answer any questions and pray with them. All who agree to go forward to Election will complete a brief pro-forma profile form.
- 4.9** A brief profile outlining each nominee's current and previous areas of service will be provided to Members before the election.
- 4.10** Although Members should make every effort to attend the Church meeting where Leaders are elected, those with genuine good reason for not attending should request voting forms from the Leader of the Administration Department at least two Sundays before the election meeting. The voting form should be returned to the Leader of the Administration Department in advance of the election meeting. Any voting form received after the voting commences will be declared void.
- 4.11** A ballot vote of Members will be taken at the church meeting. Those elected must receive the support of at least 60% of the votes cast for her/him. The vote by the Church is to appoint people to the Leadership Team. The decision about which Leader will head up each Ministry Department will be decided by the Leadership following the appointment.
- 4.12** If the Church does not appoint all the people needed, the Leadership will endeavour to co-opt people they consider suitable to fill the vacant positions. Anyone who stands for appointment but is not elected cannot be co-opted by the Leadership for at least 1 year following the election.  
  
At any time the Leadership has the authority to co-opt people onto the Leadership Team to assist, whether in a general way, or for specific tasks. The co-opted leaders may serve for a limited time or till the next election of leaders.  
  
Co-opted members will be considered full members of the Leadership Team.
- 4.13** A Pastor, or in the absence of a Pastor, one of the Leadership, will act as Chairperson of the Leadership meetings and fulfil all other constitutional responsibilities.

## **5 Trustees**

The Church will have Trustees appointed in accordance with the Declaration of Trust dated 22-6-2006.

## **6 Finance**

- 6.1** The Church's financial year will end on 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- 6.2** Prior to the Annual General Meeting of the Church the Church accounts will be audited/examined and certified by a competent auditor/independent examiner and all auxiliary accounts will be examined by

persons appointed by the Church. Subsequent to the examination and no later than the Annual General Meeting a financial statement for the year will be made available to Members.

- 6.3 The Church will approve the establishment of funds for reasons considered appropriate. These funds will include a General Fund and a Fellowship Fund. The General Fund will be for the day to day running of the Church. The Fellowship Fund will be for the benefit of those in need and will be available for this purpose at the sole discretion of the Pastors(s) or in a period of vacancy those appointed by the Leadership for this task.
- 6.4 The Church bank account(s) will be in the name of East Mains Baptist Church and will be administered by the Treasurer, and such other Members approved by the Leadership for this purpose. All bank withdrawals will be signed by at least two authorised signatories that under normal circumstances should include the Treasurer.
- 6.5 The audited or examined accounts of the Church will, following presentation and approval of the Church, be filed with the relevant charity authorities.
- 6.6 A budget for the year will normally be presented at the first Church Meeting after the financial year end for approval by the Church. The Treasurer and Leadership will endeavour to work within the approved budget.
- 6.7 All heritable property will be held in the name of the Trustees.
- 6.8 The payment of remuneration in the provision of ministerial or pastoral services to the Church, with the exception of ex gratia payments in respect of pulpit supply, will be approved by the Church Meeting.
- 6.9 In the event of the dissolution of the Church the Trustees will be responsible for the disbursement of all funds and assets in accordance with the Declaration of Trust dated 22 June 2006.

## **7 Church Ministries, Organisations and Committees**

- 7.1 No formal or permanent church organisation will be established without the prior approval of the Leadership and, if considered necessary by the Leadership, the Church. In the case of a church organisation ceasing to exist, any equipment or funds held by the organisation will vest in the Leadership on behalf of the Church with the authority to deal with these as appropriate.
- 7.2 All leaders of formal decision making church committees and formal or permanent organisations are to be appointed at a Church Meeting on every occasion and, except in exceptional circumstances, be Members of the Church.

## **8 Meetings**

- 8.1 The Church will have regular, normally four, Church Meetings each year including an Annual General Meeting. All Church meetings will require intimation two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- 8.2 All Members should consider attendance at Church meetings as a priority as part of their Christian service.
- 8.3 Special Church Meetings may also be called by the Leadership provided intimation is given two Sundays prior to the proposed date of the meeting.
- 8.4 A notice of motion on any matter to be raised at a Church Meeting must be given in writing to the Leader of the Administration Department at least one month before the date of the meeting.
- 8.5 Except as otherwise provided all matters will be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast by those Members present.

## **9 Changes to Constitution**

- 9.1 No alterations will be made to this Constitution except by a vote of two-thirds of the Members present at a Church Meeting called for the purpose, by special intimation on three previous Sundays.
- 9.2 No changes to this Constitution can be made if the effect would be that the Church ceased in law to be a charity.

## **10 Other Matters**

The Constitution will be printed and a copy given to each Member and to all applicants for Membership.