

Constitution

Highfields Church of Christ

Version 4.42 as at 29/10/2023

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1. Definitions

- 1.1 Leadership Team** The elected leaders of the church who take ultimate responsibility for the spiritual leadership, relational health, and governance requirements of the church. The Leadership Team shall have the qualities of Elders and Deacons as defined by: 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9, and Acts 6:3-7. The Team will be made up of Elders and the Senior Pastor. Pastors are welcome to be a part of the Leadership Team when required or requested.
- 1.2 Senior Pastor** The person elected to lead the ministry work of the church and who oversees the church staff (paid and unpaid).
- 1.3 Pastor** The person hired to work with the Senior Pastor in leading a designated ministry area of the church.

2. Church Identity

- 2.1** The name of the church is Highfields Church of Christ
- 2.2** This church shall be an affiliated member of Churches of Christ in Queensland, an incorporated body under Letters Patent, or its successors and will fulfil affiliation requirements set down by Churches of Christ in Queensland.
- 2.3** The church is an Unincorporated Association.
- 2.4** The church is established to be and continue as a charity.

3. Purpose

- 3.1** The church exists for charitable purposes including, but not limited to, the advancement of religion. Specific activities of the church are to serve this purpose.
- 3.2** This church exists to fulfil the purposes for which Jesus established the Church:
[Our Church vision is to be A Welcoming Place to Know & Experience God's Love. This is done by keeping our values which you will find below.]
- **Gathering Together:** God shows us the strength in relationships and community throughout the Bible. Therefore, we come together in several ways throughout our church community. Knowing in Christ we are stronger together. (Matthew 18:20)
 - **Loving Others:** It is clear through Scripture that we have a shared humanity. God calls us to love others in the same way God loves us. That is why our church aims to grow in showing this love to our congregation and surrounding community. (John 15:12-17)
 - **Being Vulnerable:** Jesus shows us the strength in vulnerability which is a state of being that we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. As a Church we believe in having the courage to show up, fully engage, and be seen even when we can't control the outcome. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
 - **Fighting for the Heart:** We believe God values a personal relationship with everyone. Christ teaches us this through his journey to the cross by showing us the most important thing to fight for is the heart. This is more important than winning an argument or making a point. God wants our hearts and fights for it, so we aim to do the same. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

- **Going Deeper:** God is big enough for our doubts and invites us on a journey for every season of life. That is why we believe in embracing this journey with humility knowing God always has more to teach and show us. As a Church we aim to support others practically and spiritually in their journey. (John 20:24-29)

3.3 The church seeks to fulfil its purpose within the following framework of belief and practice.

3.3.1 The church generally supports the beliefs and practices as expressed by Churches of Christ in Australia.

3.3.2 The church affirms the following:

- (i) the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments
- (ii) the revelation of one God in three persons: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit
- (iii) the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ
- (iv) Jesus' life and teaching as the perfect example of divine character
- (v) the death of Jesus as the perfect offering for redemption and forgiveness
- (vi) the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- (vii) Jesus' supreme authority as Lord over all
- (viii) the person and work of the Holy Spirit
- (ix) the need of salvation and the forgiveness of sins
- (x) the invitation and requirement of faith and repentance for salvation
- (xi) the practices of baptism (at Highfields CofC we baptise followers in Christ by full immersion while allowing space for God's Spirit to move).
- (xii) the practice of communion where the food and drink become emblems.
- (xiii) the acceptance that the Church is a divine institution

4. Membership

4.1 Membership shall be comprised of those who align with and who are committed to the life and ministry of this church. They shall be persons who repent and confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their personal saviour, and who seek to follow Him in all aspects of their life. (Rom 10:9-10)

4.2 Church members agree to:

- Be an active participants in church life and use their gifts to serve others.
- Support the vision and direction of the church, and the church leadership.
- Build healthy and respectful relationships throughout the church family.
- Prayerfully bring before the Lord their financial contribution to the Church.
- Pray about church direction and participate in Church Members' meetings where possible.

(Rom 12:4-5, Eph 4:25, Col 3:15, 1Pet 4:10)

- 4.3 Membership is for any person who demonstrates commitment to Jesus Christ and who has been welcomed into Highfields Church of Christ. Individuals express interest to become Members and then meet with the Senior Pastor to ensure they agree with the church's affirmations in 3.3.2. These individuals are then confirmed after prayerful consideration by the Church Leadership Team.
- 4.4 Members must be 18 years old and have attended the church regularly for 3 months.
- 4.5 The Church Leadership Team will ensure a register will be kept with the names of the members of the church. A person becomes a member when their name is entered onto the register. A person must be removed from the register as soon as possible after they cease to be a member.
- 4.6 New members are publicly acknowledged, publicly prayed for, and announced in the High Times.
- 4.7 A member may be placed under discipline by the Leadership Team and lose membership privileges for a period of time. This will follow principles of natural justice and follow processes set out in the Church Conflict Resolution document. (Matthew 18:15-16)
- 4.8 All Leadership Roles, Staff, and Leadership Team members must be members of the church.
- 4.9 The Leadership Team may review the membership roll and remove members who have: joined another church, requested removal from the membership roll, become inactive or died.

5. Leadership Structures

The Leadership Team

- 5.1** The purpose of the Leadership Team is to:
- 1) Oversee the spiritual and administrative affairs of the church on behalf of the Church Members, taking responsibility for the governance requirements of the church.
 - 2) Discern the specific direction of the church and provide leadership to the church with the Senior Pastor who leads the Church Staff.
 - 3) Provide accountability and support to the Senior Pastor and through the Senior Pastor to the broader pastoral team.
- 5.2** There will be a minimum of 3 [but not more than 8] elected Elders of the Leadership Team. Those elected to the Leadership Team at the AGM must not hold a Church Staff position. Elected members will be appointed for two-year terms with 1 probational year.
- 5.3** Elected Elders may serve a maximum of [three two-year terms] before stepping down for a minimum of [two] years before being nominated for election again.

- 5.4** The Senior Pastor will be a member of the Leadership Team while they hold that position.
- 5.5** The Leadership Team will appoint its own chairperson and nominate a Treasurer of the church who will take responsibility for the treasury function of the church. The treasurer may or may not be an elected Elder of the Leadership Team.
- 5.6** As far as possible, consensus will be the basis of decision making by the Leadership Team. Where a vote is necessary, each Elder has one vote. Otherwise, in other matters, the Leadership Team may only act by a vote with no more than two dissents.
- 5.7** Minutes of the Leadership Team meetings will be kept.
- 5.8** The Elders of the Leadership Team are appointed by a [66% majority] vote at the AGM. The Leadership Team may appoint a person to fill a vacancy until the next AGM.
- 5.9** Nominations for the Leadership Team can be made by church members. The Leadership Team will then consider the applications and bring recommendations to the church for voting. The Leadership Team members seeking re-appointment will go through the voting process at the AGM and require a [66% majority] vote.
- 5.10** The Leadership Team will meet as agreed to by the Team. A meeting may be called for any purpose and at any time or place by resolution of [three] Elders. The Leadership Team will aim to meet monthly.
- 5.11** The quorum for meetings of the Leadership Team will be half the group plus one and meetings will usually be held face-to-face. However, the linking together of members using telephone or other electronic audio-visual communication shall constitute attendance at a meeting. In this instance the Leadership Team member/s must be able to receive the input of the other Leadership Team members taking part in the meeting and acknowledge their presence for the purpose of the meeting at its commencement.
- 5.12** If there is a conflict between the Leadership Team to come to an agreement resulting in a 50/50 split the following steps will be taken: The Leadership Team will take an agreed amount of time, at least a week, to pray over the matter before meeting again; After the decided period of time in seeking prayer and wisdom, the Leadership Team will meet again to seek a resolution; If a resolution cannot be reached CofC QLD Head Office in Kenmore will be contacted to help facilitate a resolution.

Ministry Staff

- 5.13** The staffing structure for the church (paid and unpaid) shall be determined by the Leadership Team and shall be communicated to the church. The Leadership Team shall ensure that the roles and responsibilities are documented for each position established.
- 5.14** The Leadership Team will identify and recommend to the Members for voting nominees for the Senior Pastor position.
- 5.15** The appointment and termination of all other staff (including pastoral) will be managed by the Senior Pastor and the Leadership Team.
- 5.16** Senior Pastor appointments or re-appointments are made at a Members' Meeting for a term that will not exceed 5 years and require a [66% majority] vote. These votes will be by secret ballot.
- 5.17** The termination of a staff member's contract may occur:
- 1) if the staff member fails to receive the percentage of votes required for a re-call by the Leadership Team or at a Members Meeting,
 - 2) as a result of a performance management process
 - 3) due to a matter of moral offence or misconduct in which case it will be dealt with by the Leadership Team.

In any of the above cases, the Leadership Team will act in accordance with the CofCQld Ministers Appointment and Employment Guide and Fair Work Queensland.

6. Members' Meetings

- 6.1 Church members are to be given 2 weeks' notice of all meetings, including date, time, place, and agendas.
- 6.2 The Leadership Team shall arrange for an Annual General Meeting to be held within six months after the end of the financial year. The business of the Annual General Meeting will include.
- 6.2.1 Declaration of ballot for election of Elders
 - 6.2.2 Reception of Financial report
 - 6.2.3 Reception of ministry reports
 - 6.2.4 Ratification of Budget for next financial year
 - 6.2.5 Appoint auditor if required
 - 6.2.6 No other business shall be dealt with
- 6.3 The Leadership Team shall arrange for at least one General Members Meeting to be held each year.

- 6.4 The Leadership Team may be petitioned to call a Special Members Meeting upon receipt of a written request, signed by 3 members stating the nature of the business to be discussed.
- 6.4.1 The Leadership Team will call a forum to discuss the matter raised and if possible, resolve it without need to call Special Members' Meeting.
- 6.4.2 If the matter cannot be resolved; the Eldership will call a Members' Meeting.

Conduct of Members Meetings

- 6.5 The Leadership Team shall appoint a chair for the members' meetings.
- 6.6 A quorum will be [66%] of the members [either in person or votes having been received]. If the quorum is not achieved at a meeting, a subsequent meeting with the same agenda can be arranged within four weeks of the original meeting, with the notice requirements having been already fulfilled.
- 6.7 Proxy voting shall be allowed.
- 6.8 Motions shall be declared passed by a simple majority unless otherwise stated in the constitution.
- 6.9 Scrutineers shall be appointed to manage all ballots.
- 6.10 A record of the meeting will be kept and the major decisions with any key matters being reported to the church within a month after the meeting was held.

7. Indemnity

- 7.1 To the extent possible under law, members (including the Leadership Team Members and Staff) are entitled to be indemnified out of the assets held for the church for any debts or liabilities incurred personally by a member when acting on behalf of the church, so long as the member was:
- 1) authorised by the church to take that action, and
 - 2) acting in good faith (fairly and honestly and in the best interests of the church).
- 7.2 This indemnity is a continuing obligation and is enforceable by a person even if that person is no longer a member of the church. This indemnity only applies to the extent that the person is not otherwise entitled to be indemnified and is not actually indemnified by another person (including an insurer under an insurance policy).

8. Contract Arrangements & Financial Management

- 8.1 The Leadership Team is entrusted with the stewardship of the resources of the church and shall ensure that they are directed to the achievement of its purposes. The Leadership Team will abide by the church's Financial Practices Guidelines.
- 8.2 The Leadership Team shall be responsible for the preparation of an annual budget, which is approved by the church at the annual general meeting.

- 8.3** The financial records shall be audited annually by a qualified, independent party, with summary financial reports provided at an annual meeting and kept for the required period of time to meet external affiliation requirements.
- 8.4** The financial year of the church runs from [1 July to 30 June].
- 8.5** As an unincorporated association, where the association cannot enter into contracts in its own name, the Leadership Team may appoint three or more individuals to be signatories to these contracts. CofCQld may, at times, fill this role where appropriate.

9. Dissolution

- 9.1** Should the church either permanently close, or cease to be an affiliated member of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, all funds, assets, property and equipment that remain after the satisfaction of all liabilities, shall become the property of Churches of Christ in Queensland or another entity being an entity with the purpose of the advancement of religion and endorsement by the commissioner of taxation as a tax concession charity, in consultation with Churches of Christ in Queensland.
- 9.2** Any surplus assets must not be distributed to a member or a former member of the church.

10. Altering the Constitution

- 10.1** Amendments to this constitution can only be made by a simple majority vote of members at a church meeting. This constitution shall be changed to meet any requirements of the Churches of Christ in Queensland constitution adopted by affiliated member churches.
- 10.2** Where this document is interpreted to be at odds with the constitution of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, then the constitution of Churches of Christ in Queensland shall take precedence.
- 10.3** The members must not pass a resolution that amends these rules if passing it causes the church to no longer be a charity.

Scriptures to Remember when reading, reviewing, or exploring this document.

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5 NIV

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47 NIV