



Cleveland Baptist Church

Constitution

2022

1. The Church shall be known as **Cleveland Baptist Church** (Here-in after referred to as the Church)
2. The Church is a constituent member of Queensland Baptists (The Baptist Union of Queensland)
3. **Statement of Belief:**
Cleveland Baptist Church has adopted the Statement of Belief agreed to by Queensland Baptists in 2004 and attached in Appendix A.
4. **Our Mission:**
TO BE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS – EQUIPPED, EMPOWERED, AND SENT TO THE COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

Our Values:

To our timeless values (Bible focused, prayer dependent, and compelled by Christ's love), we believe we are called to emphasize the following unique things that shape our church for this chapter of our story:

- **BOLDNESS** – courage, confidence, obedience, standing firm, adventurous (stepping into the wild).
- **AUTHENTICITY** – committed sincerity, simplicity, honesty, humble, vulnerable, being real with God and real with people.
- **ZEAL** – not complacent, standing out, not going through the motions – Christlikeness, wake up, go against the flow.
- **SERVICE** – Serving each other, serving our city –seeking to bless!

Vision Pathway:

Our plan to move people down the discipleship pathway:

- **CONNECT** – finding a place to belong and meeting others to share the journey.
- **EXPLORE** – finding out more about who Jesus is, what he has done, and why it matters.
- **GROW** – knowing Jesus more, growing in obedience, understanding, and fruitfulness
- **SERVE** – using your time, passion, skills, and gifts to serve Jesus, others, and our world

Vision:

In The church we see is a **church that connects with today's world**, a distinctive “God culture” - a culture of grace, generosity, service, excellence, and participation. A church that is warm and welcoming, that **feels like home**.

The church we see deeply **committed to mission - global and local**. We see a church that engages the world around us in up to date ways, a learning community, seeking not only to recruit, train and send people to do kingdom work, but also to support, encourage and bless.

The church we see has **worship** gatherings that are engaging, inspiring, moving, God honouring, Spirit-filled, and bursting with creativity and authenticity.

The church we see is **permeated by prayer**. Prayer is foundational to everything we do, individually, in smaller groups and together as a gathered church family.

In the church we see **God's Word** convicts, challenges, inspires, brings-life and healing as it is preached, read, discussed and taught.

The church we see **helps families** come together in a great way, it is inclusive, warm and welcoming, supports parents in their task of raising children, strengthens marriages, connects the generations, supports the young who are vulnerable, and creates community for the elderly who are isolated.

The church we see values **authentic servant leadership**, whose leaders are inspiring, faith-filled, authentic, committed, accountable, gifted and skilled. A church where leadership is honoured, supported, and developing at all levels.

The church we see is a **growing church**, growing in depth, quality, fruitfulness, and growing in numbers.

5. Membership

5.1 Eligibility

- a. Acceptance and public profession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by Baptism by immersion as a believer in accordance with New Testament practice. Elders may consider an application where the baptism as a believer has not been by full immersion.
- b. Personally hold to the doctrines set out in the Statement of Belief.
- c. Have applied to and been approved for membership by the Board of Elders.
- d. Those baptised at the Church will be expected to become members.

5.2 Admission into Membership

- a. Applications for membership, including transfers from other like churches, shall be made on the Application form.
- b. Applicants shall be interviewed by at least one member of the Board of Elders who will bring a recommendation to the Board.
- c. Applicants will be given a copy of the Church Constitution and other relevant documents at the time.
- d. The Church Members will be informed of the new admissions to membership.

5.3 Termination of Membership

- a. Members moving from the area are encouraged to join another congregation of like faith. A letter of recommendation will be provided on request. Membership will cease upon such transfer.
- b. Upon death
- c. Personal request for cessation of membership and removal of name from the Roll submitted in writing.
- d. Members absenting themselves from Church services for a period of six months when not prevented by sickness, duty or distance, provided they have been visited, where possible, by at least one Elder seeking restoration of the member.
- e. In cases of discipline of Members, by a decision of the Board of Elders and the Church Members. (See 5.4)

5.4 Discipline

- a. Any Member of this Church who exhibits a lifestyle inconsistent with being a Christian will be liable to Church discipline. Such inconsistencies may include:
 - Ceasing to believe in the basic teachings of the Christian faith (Galatians 1:6-9, Titus 3:9-11).
 - Continuous unrepentant sin (1 Corinthians 5:1-8, 1 Timothy 1:18-20).
 - Continuously causing disunity or dissension among the members of this Church (Proverbs 12:18,22, Colossians 3:8, Ephesians 4:25,29,31, James 1:19, 3:5-6,10, 1 Timothy 2:8).
 - Continued membership of any organisation which directly opposes the truth of the Scriptures and the work of God (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).
- b. All matters relating to discipline shall be handled by the Board of Elders and are to be approached in the spirit of love, seeking reconciliation, and following Biblical practice including Matthew 18:15-17.
- c. Church discipline may include the suspension of rights and privileges including voting at meetings and participation in the Lord's Supper for a specified period of time.
- d. A member placed under Church discipline shall be notified in writing.
- e. If at the conclusion of the specified time there has been no genuine repentance and reconciliation, that person shall be removed from the Church's Membership (2 Corinthians 2:6-11, 1 Timothy 1:19-20)

5.5 Responsibilities

Members are encouraged, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to honour God as follows:

- a. In their personal lives to maintain private devotions through prayer and Bible reading, to honour Christ in family relationships, to strive for the salvation of family, friends, and contacts, to exemplify the Christian faith and pursue a life of holiness.

- b. In fellowship with other believers to show brotherly love, maintain harmony and unity in Christ, cultivate Christian compassion by assisting others in sickness or distress, be courteous in speech and slow to take offence but always ready for reconciliation.
- c. In corporate life to acknowledge Jesus Christ as head of the Church, regularly attend the services of worship as able, promote the spiritual life of the church, attend church meetings as able seeking to discern God's will for the Church.
- d. In stewardship to serve God in any way as He gives talent and opportunity and to contribute cheerfully and regularly, according to the principles of the tithe for the ministry of the gospel and the expenses of the Church.
- e. In public life to walk wisely to the glory of God, be honest and just in dealing with others, avoid idle talk and unseemly speech, commend the gospel in life and action and be zealous in effort to advance the Kingdom of God and its values.

5.6 Church Roll

The names and addresses of all Church Members shall be entered in the Church Roll which is open to inspection by Members. Persons ceasing to be members shall have their names and addresses removed from the roll. The roll shall be revised by the Board of Elders at least once per year.

6. Church Government

The Church is governed by its members under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. It has full power to manage its own affairs. The Members may delegate authority and responsibility to the Elders for the daily functioning of the Church.

6.1 Church Meetings

- a. The Church shall hold an Annual General Meeting once per year where:
 - Annual Reports are presented
 - Elders and Deacons are elected in accordance with 6.2.2
 - Chairman of Members' Meetings is appointed
 - Church Treasurer is elected
 - Church Auditor is appointed
 - Ministry Leaders are recognised
- b. The Church will hold Members Meetings, generally quarterly to receive reports and discuss matters concerning the church.
- c. A Special Members Meeting may be called by either, the Board of Elders, or on a request from 10% of the Members in writing stating the reasons for the meeting.
- d. All Members Meetings shall be called with at least three Sundays notice.
- e. Items concerning the purchase or sale of real estate, major financial commitments, and the appointment, recall or dismissal of a Pastor must be considered at a Members Meeting.

- f. A quorum for Members Meeting shall consist of 20% of the Members on the membership roll, reduced in number for those away from the area and those disabled or shut-in, except that for the appointment, recall or dismissal of a Pastor the quorum shall be 50% of the members reduced in number for those away from the area and those disabled or shut in.
- g. Voting shall generally be by show of hands, but by secret ballot for the appointment and recall of a Pastor and the election of Elders and Deacons, when a two thirds majority shall be required. A secret ballot, for other decisions, may be called for at the discretion of the Chairman.
- h. A pre-poll vote on the ballot paper provided may be available for major decisions as listed under e. above for Members genuinely unable to attend the meeting.
- i. A voting member shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Younger members may attend Members Meetings. Non-members may be admitted at the discretion of the Chairman.
- j. Minutes of all Church Members Meetings shall be kept and available for Members.
- k. Voting slips shall be destroyed after a ballot.

1. Church Leadership

1. Pastors

Qualifications

- a. Pastors shall be or shall be able to be accredited with Queensland Baptists.
- b. Where more than one Pastor is appointed, one shall be designated as the Senior Pastor and Team Leader.

Appointment

- a. The Board of Elders shall take responsibility for the Pastoral search and take a nomination to the Membership.
- b. A Pastoral Search Team shall be appointed from the Elders, Deacons, and Members as appropriate for the particular appointment.
- c. The consideration of a Pastoral appointment or recall shall be advised to Members for at least three Sundays prior to the Members Meeting.
- d. Pastoral appointments are made on a vote of the Members as outlined in 6.1.
- e. The term of the call shall be for a period of four years, but a shorter or longer period may be negotiated by the Elders and the Pastor.
- f. Termination requires three months notice by the Pastor or the Church, however a shorter period of notice may be negotiated between the Pastor and the Board of Elders.
- g. If a Pastor is found guilty of any misconduct as defined by the Ministerial Committee of Queensland Baptists, the appointment will automatically terminate.

2. Elders

Term and number:

The Church shall appoint up to eight Elders, who together with the Pastors will serve the Church as the Board of Elders. Elders are appointed under the headship of Christ and are accountable to the membership. The term of office is for a period of two years, with approximately half the number of appointed Elders retiring each year but being eligible for re-election as herein provided.

Qualifications:

All members twenty-one years of age and over shall be eligible for office, provided they have been in membership for at least six months. An Elder shall fulfill the scriptural qualifications as contained in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Titus 1:5-9

Election:

No later than two months prior to the Annual General Members Meeting, nominations shall be called to fill the vacancies occurring. Any Member may nominate Members to be elected, provided the nominations are in writing and have the written consent of the person/s nominated. Such nominations are to be in the hands of the Senior Pastor or the Chairman of Members Meetings no later one month prior to the Annual Meeting.

The nominees shall then be tested according to the Scriptural requirements by the Senior Pastor and one other Member. A list of the successful nominees will then be published for two clear Sundays prior to the date of the Annual Meeting.

The election of Elders shall take place at the Annual Meeting and shall be by ballot. To be elected as an Elder, a nominee must receive two-thirds of the votes of members present and eligible to vote, and in the event of more nominees becoming qualified than there are vacancies, then an exhaustive ballot for positions must ensue.

Vacancies in the office of Elder may be filled by the Church at any regular Members Meeting by following the above procedure. Any member so elected shall hold office until the Annual Meeting prior to the completion of the two-year term. If it is found necessary to keep a balance of the number of Elders retiring from office at the one time, the appointment may be until the Annual Meeting following the appointment.

Duties of Elders:

The Elders will be recognized as the spiritual leaders of the Church and shall meet regularly under their elected chairman.

1. To seek the Lord in prayer and study of the Scriptures for His direction and vision.
2. To be accountable for implementing the vision and mission of the Church.

3. To be available to teach the Scriptures as required.
4. To monitor and enhance the spiritual climate of the Church.
5. To monitor and encourage the ministry teams and leaders of the Church.
6. To provide accountability and support for the pastors.
7. To conduct pastoral reviews and process pastoral calls as required.
8. To be available to members wishing to raise concerns.
9. To assist in pastoral or member conflicts.

3. Deacons

Term and number:

The term of service and number of deacons required will be subject to regular review by the eldership pending ministry requirements.

Role:

Deacons are the "support team" of the church (Acts 6:1-6). The role of a deacon is distinct from the role of an elder. Deacons serve the Church for the good of the whole church body, assisting the elders to accomplish the work of bringing God's people to their fullest and best. They are, in effect, "servants to the congregation". Deacons are to care for the physical or temporal concerns of the church. By handling such matters, deacons free up the elders to focus on shepherding and meeting the spiritual needs of the congregation. Deacons are appointed under the headship of Christ and are accountable to the eldership.

Qualifications of Deacons:

All members twenty-one years of age and over are eligible for nomination to the role of a deacon, provided they have been in membership for at least six months. Deacons shall be men or women of God with the spiritual qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. If married, Deacons must be the husband of one wife or a wife of one husband. Deacons must fully subscribe to the Cleveland Baptist Church doctrinal statement at all times during their tenure as a Deacon. If in the assessment of the eldership a Deacon has failed to uphold any of the aforementioned qualifications that deacon will be stood down.

Election:

The elders shall nominate deacons as necessary to serve the church in particular roles as determined by the elders to serve the ministry needs of the Church. Nominees shall be tested by the eldership in accordance with scriptural requirements noted above. The names of any proposed appointments as Deacons and a description of the role they will be filling shall be published at least two (2) clear Sundays/weeks before the date of meeting at which they will be considered by the Members for endorsement. This endorsement shall take place by ballot at a Members' meeting requiring two-

thirds of the votes in favour of Members present at the meeting. Deacons continuing to serve in their appointed roles shall be subject to re-endorsement by the Members at each subsequent AGM.

Administrator

The Church may employ an Administrator on recommendation from the Board of Elders. This position shall include the oversight of the day to day working of the church office and its staff in accordance with the terms and conditions of the appointment.

Treasurer

The Church Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and has responsibility for the receipt of funds, the payment of accounts and the presentation of Reports and Budgets.

7. Finances

7.1 Raising Finances

The church shall be maintained primarily by voluntary contributions and shall accept such contributions and gifts for its own use under the following conditions: -

- a. The Church shall, unless it expressly agrees otherwise, restrict itself to accepting contributions and gifts which are free from any legal obligation to use the contribution or gift in a particular manner or for a particular purpose, and
- b. The church shall notify Members and other persons or organisations contributing to the church, that, unless the church expressly agrees otherwise any contributions or gifts to the church shall be considered available for use in any activity of the Church consistent with the objects stated in this Constitution. In particular, although contributions of gifts designated for a particular purpose within the Church, shall be treated with proper respect as suggestions or requests, they will not be treated as a legal obligation.

7.2 Appeals

All appeals for funds from the church congregation shall be approved by the Senior Pastor and/or the Board of Elders

7.3 Budget

An Annual Budget shall be prepared by the Treasurer and Elders and presented to the Members Meeting for approval

7.4 Audit

The Financial Records of the Church shall be audited regularly and the Auditor shall prepare an Annual Audit Statement for presentation to the Members.

8. Property

8.1 Usage

The use of Church Property for other than Church ministries shall be approved by a Pastor or the Deacons or by a person designated for that role.

8.2 Acquisition

All property purchases or alterations of a major nature, the encumbrance of the Church property by mortgage or lease, or the sale or exchange of property, shall be dealt with at a Members Meeting called for the purpose.

8.3 Vested

Any real property or any interest therein now held or hereafter acquired by or owned by, or on behalf of the Church, shall be transferred and assigned to and vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland on behalf of the Church. This clause shall not be rescinded or amended without prior consultation with the Baptist Union of Queensland.

8.4 Dissolution

In the event of the church being dissolved, all property, assets and monies which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland. Notwithstanding any previous or following provisions, this clause shall not be rescinded or amended without the prior approval of the Baptist Union of Queensland.

9. Alterations

This Constitution may not be altered, cancelled or added to, except by a two-thirds majority vote of the Members present at a Members Meeting convened for that purpose. The wording of the proposed alteration shall have been given in writing at least three weeks prior to the meeting.