Church Constitution

of the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle, last amended on 27 April 2023

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1. THE AUCKLAND BAPTIST TABERNACLE (ABT)

1.1. The name of the church is the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle.

1.2. The ABT is a community of God's people who

(a) Are repentant of sin and have been saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ through His atoning death and resurrection; who publicly confess their faith;

(b) Believe in:

1) The eternal unity of God: the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, one God;
2) God's creation of humanity in his own image, mankind's disobedience and judgment;
3) The supreme demonstration of the Father's love in that he gave Jesus Christ, his one and only Son for mankind's salvation;
4) The true humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ;
5) The atonement made on the cross by our Lord for the sin of the world, his death, resurrection, ascension, and future personal return;
6) The salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone;
7) The person of the Holy Spirit, who sets apart and empowers the Christian, and who imparts spiritual gifts to the church;
8) The inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scriptures and their supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct;
9) The profession of faith in Christ by public baptism by immersion;
10) Membership in the church for all followers of Jesus;

(c) Hold to the ordinances of believers' baptism by immersion and the Lord's supper; and

(d) Are called by Christ into relationship with Him and into relationship with one another, seeking to be holy, set apart, useful to and closely following the Lord as members of His body.

1.3. The ABT is an autonomous body governed through its Members.

1.4. The ABT is a member church of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand and associates with the other Baptist churches, the regional and national Baptist leadership and the wider body of Christ.

1.5. The ABT is incorporated under the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle Act 1948 (The Act).

2. MISSION AND FUNCTIONS

2.1. The ABT exists to glorify God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2.2. The mission of the ABT is:

(a) To proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom

(b) To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

(c) To respond to human need by loving service

(d) To seek to transform unjust structures of society

(e) To sustain and renew the life of the earth

2.3. The ABT will do this by:

(a) Worshipping God

(b) Praying
(c) Bringing people to personal faith (evangelism)
(d) Growing people to maturity (discipleship)
(e) Growing a family of God (fellowship)
(f) Equipping and releasing people for God's work (ministry)
(g) Sending and supporting people in mission to the Auckland CBD, the wider city, the nation and the world (mission)

3. STRUCTURE

3.1. The ABT is governed through its Members. Members may:

(a) Appoint from their number a Governance Elders Board to govern the ABT organisation and oversee the ABT community, including leaders and staff;
(b) Appoint from their number a Congregation Eldership to oversee people and ministries within a Congregation;
(c) Call a Senior Pastor and other Pastors to specified roles within the ABT; and
(d) Appoint from their number Deacons to specific areas of ministry.

4. MEMBERS

4.1. Membership of the ABT recognises those who are called of the Lord into relationship with Him and with other Members of the ABT as one body in Christ.

4.2. Members are responsible for:

(a) The collective governance and decisions of the ABT; and
(b) The mission and functions of the ABT, as described in paragraph 2.

4.3. Collective decisions of Members are expressed as Ordinary, Special and Extraordinary Resolutions, which require the support of more than 50%, 66% and 75% of votes respectively.

Admission and Removal

4.4. The ABT may admit as Members only those who:

(a) have confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour;
(b) have been baptised as believers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; baptism will normally be by immersion;
(c) have confessed their belief in the statement of faith written in paragraph 1.2(b); and
(d) agree to uphold and abide by the Constitution of the ABT.

4.5. Applications for membership shall be made to a Congregation Eldership and evaluated by them against the criteria described in paragraph 4.4. A report on the application for membership shall be brought to the Governance Elders Board for affirmation. The Governance Elders Board shall present the name of the proposed member to the next suitable Members' Meeting and within 12 months of the date of application. Members shall be given the opportunity to consider the application for membership and the report from the Governance Elders Board for not less than two weeks.

4.6. Members shall indicate their recognition of God's call to an applicant and willingness to accept them into membership by Ordinary Resolution.

4.7. The ABT will maintain a Membership List that records the current Members of the ABT and for each Member:

(a) Contact information provided by the Member, to which notices may be delivered.

(b) The Congregation with which the Member primarily associates. Notwithstanding this, Membership is of the whole ABT, not a particular Congregation. A Member may change their association by written notice no more than once in a calendar year.

(c) A classification of Active, Non-Resident or Inactive shall be determined by the Governance Elders Board in consultation with the Member's associated Congregation on the following basis:

1) "Active" means participating in the responsibilities of membership described in paragraph 4.2.
2) "Non-Resident" denotes those who are restricted in their ability to participate in the collective governance and decisions of the ABT but who are otherwise Active.
3) "Inactive" means not participating in the responsibilities of membership.

Classification shall not affect the Member's rights under this Constitution.

4.8. Congregation Elderships shall pastorally follow up Members prior to any change to their membership classification, where possible. A Congregation Eldership may bring a report of follow-up of Inactive Members to all Members who may choose to remove them from Membership by Special Resolution, subject to the principles of procedural fairness described in paragraph 9.1.

4.9. A Member may terminate their membership at any time and for any reason in writing to a Pastor, Congregation Elder or Governance Elder, who shall organise appropriate pastoral follow-up.

Duties of Members

4.10. Members must not:

(a) Cause, agree to or allow the business of the ABT being carried on in a manner likely to create a substantial risk of serious loss to the ABT's creditors; or

(b) Agree to the ABT incurring an obligation unless the Member is acting within delegated authority or as approved by a Resolution of Members; or

(c) Enter into any transaction as an agent of the ABT without having legitimate authority bestowed either by this Constitution or properly conferred via a delegation, or Resolution of Members.

Nothing in this paragraph gives any Member or Members a power to act on behalf of the ABT.

4.11. Every Member has the right at any reasonable time to inspect Minutes of Members' meetings and Membership Lists.

5. MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

5.1. Members' meetings shall seek to discover, confirm and follow the mind of the Lord, and grow and build His body in love.

5.2. A minimum of three Members' Meetings will be held each year, being:

(a) The Annual General Meeting at which the audited accounts and annual report for the previous calendar year shall be presented; and

(b) Other Members' Meetings called by the Governance Elders Board from time to time, one of which must consider recommendations for the use of funds by the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle Trust Board.

5.3. All Members are entitled to notice of all Members' Meetings not less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. The notice must state:

(a) The date, time and place set for the meeting; and

(b) The nature of matters to be considered at the meeting.

5.4. The Governance Elders Board, on receipt of a request signed by at least five percent (5%) of Members shall bring a requested Resolution to the Members at the next meeting.

5.5. The Governance Elders Board, on receipt of a request clearly stating the nature of business to be discussed and signed by at least thirty (30) members or three percent (3%) of the Members, whichever is greater, shall call a special meeting of the Members within fourteen (14) days of the request being received. Two weeks' notice of the meeting shall be given. In the event that this does not occur, the requisitionists may themselves call a meeting as described in Rule 13 of The Act.

5.6. The Governance Elders Board has responsibility to appoint a chairperson for all Members' Meetings. If no chairperson has been appointed or if the appointed chairperson is not present within fifteen (15) minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Members present may choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.

The Chairperson controls the meeting subject to this Constitution, firstly, and to any applicable policies and procedures of the ABT, secondly.

5.7. Minutes of Members' Meetings shall be kept.

5.8. Meetings of Members may be held from time to time by means of an online platform if deemed necessary by the Governance Elders Board for health or convenience purposes. A member's presence in such a meeting with constitute their attendance in such a meeting, and decisions made at a fully constituted online meeting of the members will be binding as if such a meeting was held in person.

Resolutions of Members

5.9. Resolutions shall be only made at Members' Meetings.

(a) Members are entitled to a reasonable opportunity at any Members' Meeting to question, discuss or comment on the matter being considered at the meeting, and the process being applied to the decision-making.

(b) An indication may be demanded by four (4) or more Members to establish, before putting a proposed decision to a vote, whether Members desire a vote to be taken at that time.

5.10. Resolutions shall be made by vote.

(a) Only members who attend a meeting shall be eligible to vote. There shall be no voting by proxy.

(b) A quorum of at least 15% of the number of Active Members is required for decision.

(c) A quorum call may be demanded by four (4) or more Members to establish the number of Members eligible to vote.

(d) A vote is valid only if the number of valid votes cast is at least 75% of the number of Members present at the meeting.

(e) Each Member may cast one vote. The chairperson does not have a casting vote.

5.11. When a vote is taken at a Members' Meeting, unless a secret ballot is mandatory by virtue of a provision within this Constitution, voting shall be by whichever of the following methods is determined by the chairperson of the meeting:

1) voting by voice;
2) voting by show of hands; or
3) a secret ballot.

(a) A declaration by the chairperson of the meeting that a Resolution is carried by the requisite majority is conclusive evidence of the fact, unless a secret ballot is demanded.

(b) A secret ballot may be demanded by 10% of Members present. A secret ballot may be demanded either before or immediately after a vote by voice or show of hands is taken on a Resolution.

(c) The result of the secret ballot will be determined by two scrutineers who are Members who shall have been appointed by the meeting. Scrutineers may vote. Numerical results of a secret ballot shall be communicated in full to the meeting, except that in the case of leadership elections only the outcome shall be communicated.

5.12. The ABT shall have a common seal, which may be affixed to any document to testify to a Resolution of Members.

(a) The common seal shall be affixed only with the approval of Members expressed by Ordinary Resolution, and only in the presence of two (2) Governance Elders.

(b) The common seal shall remain in custody overseen by the Governance Elders Board.

5.13. In addition to matters described elsewhere in this Constitution, decisions that must be made by Resolution are:

(a) By Special Resolution:

1) Purchase, sale or development of land and property;
2) Incurring of obligations or liabilities exceeding ten percent (10%) of total budgeted annual income; and
3) Approving the list of Congregations; and

(b) By Ordinary Resolution:

1) Approval of the consolidated budget;
2) Approval of non-budgeted expenditure exceeding five percent (5%) of total budgeted annual expenditure; and
3) Adopting the annual report and audited accounts for the preceding year.

Resolutions of a Congregation

5.14. Members associated with a Congregation may wish to make a decision by a resolution of Congregation Members. The intent and requirements of paragraphs 9, 10 and 5.11 shall be

applied to any such decision, except that Members shall be taken to mean only Members associated with the Congregation.

5.15. Apart from the election of their Elders, resolutions of Congregation Members are not binding on the ABT.

6. LEADERSHIP

6.1. Members are to discern and affirm, through a process of nominations and elections, those being called into leadership as Governance Elders, Congregation Elders, Deacons and Trustees.

(a) The Governance Elders Board is responsible to call for nominations for Congregational Governance Elders, Deacons or Trustees as needed. The corresponding Congregation Eldership is responsible to call for nominations for Congregation Elders.

(b) Nominations, supported by two Members, shall be notified in writing to the calling leadership group.

1) Nominations for Governance Elder must be Members of at least two (2) years.
2) Nominations for Congregation Elder must be Members of at least one (1) year.
3) Nominations for Governance Elder must meet the qualifications of an 'officer' as defined under section 4 of the Charities Act 2005 or its successor.
4) Nominations for Deacon must be Members of at least six (6) months.
5) Nominations for Trustee must be Members of at least six (6) months or as specified in the applicable governing document.

(c) All Members are entitled to notice of nominations for Governance Elders, Deacons, Trustees and Congregation Elders nominated by the Governance Elders Board as allowed by paragraph 6.15(c). All Congregation Members are entitled to notice of nominations for Congregation Elders of their Congregation. Notice is to be given no less than two weeks before the date of the meeting at which nominations are to be considered. The notice must state, at a minimum:

1) The name of the nominee; and
2) The position for which the nominee is to be considered.

(d) All nominations for a vacant leadership position must be considered at the same meeting.

(e) Voting on nominations shall be by secret ballot.

1) For each candidate, regardless of the number of vacancies, voters shall indicate whether or not they support the nomination.
2) Candidates qualify for the leadership position if, in accordance with paragraph 5.10(d), at least 75% of Members present cast a vote concerning their nomination, and more than 66% of those votes support their nomination. Qualifying candidates shall fill vacant leadership positions in order of decreasing number of supporting votes.
3) A tie between qualifying candidates shall be broken by lot.
4) Positions shall be left vacant if there are insufficient qualifying candidates.

(f) The electors for Governance Elders, Deacons, and Trustees shall be the ABT Members. The electors for Congregation Elders shall be as specified in paragraphs 6.15(b) and 6.15(c).

6.2. Vacation of a leadership position, other than by normal expiry of term, shall be subject to the following:

(a) The leader who is considering vacating office shall notify a Governance Elder, Congregation Elder or Pastor who shall be responsible to convene an appropriate group to meet with the leader to prayerfully consider the matter.

(b) Subject to paragraph 6.23(b), a leader may vacate their office at any time and for any reason by written notice to a Governance Elder, Congregation Elder or Pastor. Notice of vacated office shall be given to all Members, in the case of a Governance Elder, Pastor, Deacon or Trustee or all corresponding Congregation Members in the case of a Congregation Elder.

(c) A leader who ceases to remain as a Member shall also cease to hold office.

(d) The leadership group responsible for calling for nominations as described in paragraph 6.1(a) may call for nominations for a replacement. They may decide the term of the replacement to be either the remainder of the term vacated or a new, full term.

6.3. A term in office shall count towards any limit on consecutive terms if the intervening period out of office is shorter than nine months.

Governance Elders Board

6.4. Governance Elders have overall responsibility to:

(a) Be attentive to, care, protect and oversee the ABT community;

(b) Work with the ABT community to develop and uphold a Biblical vision of God's Kingdom being outworked through the ABT;

(c) Develop and uphold strategy, policy, structure and resources to advance the mission of the ABT;

(d) Put in place and oversee the management of the affairs of the ABT, including:

1) The ABT consolidated budget;
2) Employment and pastoral call relationships;
3) Third-party relationships; and

(e) Uphold the Constitution, Resolutions of Members, and other lawful requirements.

6.5. The Governance Elders Board has all the powers necessary to execute its responsibilities, except those powers reserved to Members.

6.6. The Governance Elders Board may delegate to any other person (the "Delegate") any one or more of its powers. A Governance Elders Board that delegates a power is responsible for the exercise of the power by the Delegate as if the power had been exercised by the Governance Elders Board, unless the Governance Elders Board —

(a) believed on reasonable grounds at all times before the exercise of the power that the Delegate would exercise the power in conformity with the duties imposed on Governance Elders by the Constitution; and

(b) has established, by means of reasonable methods properly used, that the Delegate is aware of and understands their powers and associated responsibilities; and

(c) has monitored, by means of reasonable methods properly used, the exercise of the power by the Delegate.

6.7. Governance Elders each have a duty to:

(a) Act in cooperation with other Governance Elders and in good faith in what he or she believes to be the best interests of the whole ABT, rather than for any one Congregation or interest group;

(b) Exercise a power for a proper purpose;

(c) Exercise reasonable care, diligence and skill, including making proper inquiry where indicated by the circumstances.

6.8. The Governance Elders shall be appointed as follows:

(a) The Senior Pastor shall be a Governance Elder.

(b) The Senior Pastor may appoint one other Pastor as a Governance Elder.

(c) Each Congregation Eldership is responsible to nominate one of their elected number as a Governance Elder. The nomination shall be brought to all Members of the ABT for election.

(d) The Governance Elders Board shall issue a church-wide call for additional ("at-large") nominations for Governance Elders with the objective of having no fewer than two (2) Governance Elders nominated under this paragraph, and no more than twelve (12) Governance Elders in total.

6.9. Except for the Senior Pastor, all other Governance Elders shall serve for a term finishing at the second Annual General Meeting after their appointment. A Governance Elder may hold office for a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms, except that each additional consecutive term for a specified Governance Elder may be allowed by Special Resolution.

6.10. A valid Governance Elders Board is formed if there are at least two elected Governance Elders and four Governance Elders in total. If a valid Governance Board cannot be formed, its responsibilities and authority revert to the Members.

6.11. The Governance Elders Board may regulate its own procedures subject to the following:

(a) Governance Elders will elect a chairperson from one of their number, who shall not have a casting vote.

(b) All Governance Elders shall receive equivalent notice of meetings.

(c) Governance Elders Board quorum shall consist of half of the number of Governance Elders or four Governance Elders, whichever is greater.

(d) The Governance Elders Board shall record and approve minutes of its meetings and resolutions. These minutes are to remain confidential to the Governance Elders Board.

Congregation Elderships

6.12. Each congregation is to organise its leadership structure in consultation with the Governance Elders Board

6.13. Where Congregation Elders are appointed, Congregation Elders have responsibility for:

(a) The spiritual oversight and pastoral care of those in their Congregation, and fostering their equipping for the Lord's service, and engagement in the ministries of the ABT; and

(b) Encouraging and clarifying the vision, mission and ministries of their Congregation.

6.14. Congregation Elders are to function in a manner consistent with the church-wide vision, budget, policies, boundaries, roles and organisational structure set by the Governance Elders Board.

6.15. The Congregation Elders shall be appointed as follows:

(a) A Pastor may be given specific responsibility as a Congregation Elder in their Terms of Call.

(b) The Eldership of a Congregation shall call for nominations for Elders for their Congregation with the objective of having no fewer than three (3) elected Congregation Elders, to be elected by the Congregation Members.

(c) The Governance Elders Board may, after consulting with the corresponding Congregation Eldership, nominate Congregation Members as Elders for their Congregation, to be elected by ABT Members.

6.16. Elected Congregation Elders shall serve for a term finishing at the second Annual General Meeting after their appointment and may hold office for a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms, except that each additional consecutive term for a specified Congregation Elder may be allowed by Special Resolution.

Pastors

6.17. Pastors have responsibility for:

(a) The spiritual oversight and pastoral care of Members and fostering their equipping for the Lord's service, and engagement in the ministries of the ABT;

(b) Encouraging and clarifying the vision, mission and ministries of the ABT;

(c) Managing the ministries of the ABT in pursuit of its mission; and

(d) Matters that are specified in their Terms of Call, or by the Governance Elders Board or Senior Pastor from time to time.

6.18. Pastors are to function in a manner consistent with the church-wide vision, budget, policies, boundaries, roles and organisational structure set by the Governance Board.

6.19. A Pastor is called by Christ to serve the ABT when that call is heard and obeyed by the ABT and the pastor. The relationship between the ABT and a Pastor will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.

6.20. When the ABT seeks to call a Pastor, a search committee will be appointed by the Governance Elders Board as follows:

a) In the case of the appointment of a Senior Pastor the Governance Elders Board will consult with the Members on the appointment of a search committee and ensure congregation-wide participation in the search committee

b) In the case of the appointment of other pastoral staff the Governance Elders Board will consult with the relevant congregation in the appointment of the search committee and may involve other congregations if deemed helpful

c) The search committee shall be guided by the Baptist Union pastoral search protocols.

d) The search committee shall, after consultation with the Governance Elders Board, bring one nomination to Members. A call may only be made after approval by Extraordinary Resolution, with voting by secret ballot

e) In rare circumstances regarding the appointment of pastoral staff other than the Senior Pastor, a nomination may be brought directly by the Governance Elders Board to the Members if a known candidate is deemed to be the best person for the pastoral role. The Governance Elders Board will consult with the relevant congregation and in such circumstances a search committee may not be appointed. The Governance Elders Board shall bring the nomination to Members. A call may only be made after approval by Extraordinary Resolution, with voting by secret ballot

6.21. A pastoral call may be for indefinite or fixed term.

6.22. Membership shall be granted to a Pastor on acceptance of their pastoral call.

6.23. Termination of a pastoral call, other than by normal expiry of term, shall be subject to the principles of procedural fairness described in paragraph 9.1 and the following:

(a) A pastoral call may be terminated by Ordinary Resolution, held by secret ballot,

(b) Three months' notice shall be given by the ABT, or the Pastor, before the pastorate is terminated, unless another period is agreed by both parties.

Senior Pastor

6.24. The Senior Pastor has overall responsibility for managing the affairs and functions (paragraph 2.3) of the ABT in accordance with the vision, mission, strategy, budget, policies, boundaries, roles and organisation structure set by the Governance Elders Board from time to time, to include:

(a) Direct spiritual and management oversight of ABT Pastors;

(b) Management oversight of the Eldership of each Congregation;

(c) Management oversight of all ABT Staff; and

(d) Management oversight of church-wide ministry areas and functions.

6.25. The Governance Elders Board has direct management oversight of the Senior Pastor.

Deacons

6.26. Deacons are responsible for the effective functioning of church-wide areas of ministry assigned to them and directly reporting on that ministry area to Members.

6.27. Deacons are to function in a manner consistent with the church-wide vision, budget, policies, boundaries, roles and organisational structure set by the Governance Elders Board.

6.28. The Governance Elders Board shall call for nominations for church-wide Deacons for ministry areas to support the proper functioning of the ABT as needed.

6.29. Deacons shall serve for a term finishing at the Annual General Meeting after their appointment and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

Staff

6.30. Staff may only be appointed with the authorisation of the Governance Elders Board.

6.31. Staff are to function in a manner consistent with the church-wide vision, budget, policies, boundaries, roles and organisational structure set by the Governance Elders Board.

7. Trusts and Other Entities

7.1. Trusts and other entities associated with the ABT are to be established only:

(a) After Members have reviewed and approved the terms of the proposed trust deed or other governing document by Special Resolution;
(b) On the authority of Members expressed by Special Resolution;
(c) For the purpose of aiding the mission of the ABT; and
(d) Such that Trustees appointed by the ABT may be removed by a Resolution of Members.

7.2. Unless otherwise required or allowed by the governing document of the trust or other associated entity:

(a) Trustees shall be Members;
(b) The nomination process shall follow paragraph 6.1; and
(c) Vacation of office, other than by normal expiry of term shall be subject to paragraph 6.2.

7.3. The Senior Pastor shall not be eligible for appointment to the governing body of any trust or other entity associated with the ABT whose primary function is the administration of commercial investments or property.

7.4. The Schedule lists associated entities of the ABT and their governing documents.

8. Conflicts of Interest

Private Pecuniary Benefit Prohibited

8.1. No Member or group of Members has, by virtue of their Membership, any rights in the property of the ABT.

8.2. A Member or Members shall not receive any private pecuniary benefit except that:

(a) A Member may receive reimbursement for all authorised expenses properly incurred by that Member in connection with the affairs of the ABT.
(b) The ABT may pay reasonable and proper remuneration to any officer or employee of the ABT in return for services actually rendered to the ABT.
(c) Any Member may be paid for all usual professional business and/or trade charges for services rendered, time expended and all acts done by that Member or by any firm or entity of which that member is a partner, employee or associate, in connection with the affairs of the ABT.
(d) Any Member may retain any remuneration properly payable to the Member by any company or undertaking with which the Member may in any way be concerned or involved for which that Member has acted in any capacity whatever notwithstanding that Member's connection with that company or undertaking is any way attributable to that Member's connection with the ABT.
(e) Notwithstanding the above, nothing shall prevent the ABT from making payments to any individual (whether a Member or not) in fulfilling any of the purposes expressed in paragraph 8.2(b).

(f) Members or leaders of the ABT, in determining all reimbursements, remuneration and charges payable pursuant to this paragraph 8.2, shall ensure that the restrictions imposed by paragraph 8.2(g) are strictly observed.

(g) Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in this constitution, no Member or any person associated with a Member shall participate in, be present for or materially influence any decision made by the ABT in respect to the payment to or on behalf of that Member or associated person, of any income, benefit or advantage whatsoever.

Conflicts of Interest

8.3. A conflict of interest occurs if a Member (the Interested Person) has professional or personal interests that compete or might compete with his or her duty to the ABT. Subject to paragraph 8.4, an Interested Person, after becoming aware of the fact that he or she has a conflict of interest regarding a decision or proposed decision of the ABT:

(a) Must declare the nature of the conflict of interest;

(b) May be consulted but must not participate in, be present for or materially influence any decision in relation to the conflict of interest; and

(c) Shall not be counted in the quorum required for decision in relation to the conflict of interest.

8.4. The provisions of paragraph 8.3 shall not apply to a conflict of interest arising solely on the basis of nomination in a leadership election as described in paragraph 6.1.

9. Resolution Of Differences And Church Discipline

Procedural Fairness

9.1. In applying the procedures of this Constitution relating to church discipline, dispute resolution, termination of a pastoral call and removal from membership, the ABT shall follow a fair process, including the opportunity to hear, consider and be heard, a lack of bias, providing evidence to support decisions, and investigating disputed matters.

Church Discipline

9.2. On becoming aware of a Member's sin on the basis of reliable evidence, the ABT shall apply the principles of Scripture, in a spirit of gentleness, to encourage repentance at the earliest possible of the following steps:

(a) The Member should be confronted privately by someone who is aware of the sin and is spiritually mature.

(b) The Member should be confronted again in the presence of one or two witnesses.

(c) The matter should be brought to the Governance Elders Board, Pastors or Elders who may bring a report to the Membership. Members have authority to admonish, warn, suspend or expel any Member. Such a decision shall be made by Special Resolution.

9.3. A Member who repents of their sin shall be reaffirmed in membership and Godly love for one another.

Disputes

9.4. The procedures for church discipline described in paragraph 9.2 do not apply to disputes between Members. However, behaviour, such as divisiveness, arising from a dispute may be subject to church discipline.

9.5. Members may request the ABT assist in resolving disputes with the primary aim being to restore and maintain the unity of the body, grace and justice at the earliest possible of the following steps:

(a) A request may be lodged with any Pastor or Elder who shall attempt to put in place mediation acceptable to the disputing parties.

(b) Members may appoint a Christian mediator or external Christian dispute resolution service by Special Resolution.

(c) If requested by 25% of the Members, the ABT shall apply for advice and help to the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

10. Alterations To Constitution

10.1. No alterations or additions to this Constitution shall be made unless adopted by a Special Resolution.

10.2. Unless the ABT agrees to forgo its charitable status and income tax exemption, no alteration shall be made to this Constitution which would in any way detract from the exclusively charitable nature of the ABT.

10.3. Any alteration to or stipulation of this Constitution shall have no effect in so far as it conflicts with Schedule 1 Part 2 Rule 40 parts (b) and (c) of The Act concerning Members' right to inspect the Membership List and minutes of Members' meetings and Members' right to demand a special meeting.

10.4. Notice of proposed constitutional changes and copies of proposed changes shall be forwarded to all Members two (2) weeks before the meeting at which the changes are to be decided.

11. Winding Up Provisions

11.1. Subject to paragraphs 17, 18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act, if the Members resolve by Special Resolution that the ABT should be wound up then the net proceeds arising from such winding up shall be applied with the prior approval of the Members and the prior approval of the Baptist Union of New Zealand to such charitable purposes within New Zealand as the Members may determine or in default of such determination as may be determined by a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand on application by the Members, and such proceeds shall not be paid or distributed amongst the Members.

Appendix: Definitions

In this Constitution the following words and phrases have the following meaning:

"ABT" means the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle church.

"Active" is a Membership List classification described in paragraph 4.7(c)1).

"Congregation" means a community of the ABT identified by a Resolution of Members, normally as a distinct grouping of Members such as one that gathers regularly for worship.

"Congregation Elder" means a person appointed pursuant to paragraph 6.15.

"Congregation Eldership" means the Congregation Elders of a Congregation, collectively.

"Congregation Member" means those associating with a specific Congregation as recorded on the Membership List as described in paragraph 4.7(b).

"Constitution" means this document and any subsequent amendments and additions to this document.

"Deacon" means a person appointed after nomination pursuant to paragraph 6.28

"Elder" when used without qualification means a Governance Elder or Congregation Elder.

"Extraordinary Resolution" means a Resolution that requires approval by a majority of more than seventy five percent (75%) of votes.

"Governance Elder" means a person appointed pursuant to paragraph 6.8.

"Governance Elders Board" means the Governance Elders, collectively.

"Inactive" is a Membership List classification described in paragraph 4.7(c) 3).

"Member" means a person who is named and identified on the Membership List. That person's **"Membership"** shall have a corresponding meaning.

"Members' Meeting" means a meeting of Members at which a Resolution is to be considered.

"Membership List" means the register of all Members of the ABT described in paragraph 4.7.

"Non-Resident" is a Membership List classification described in paragraph 4.7(c)2).

"Ordinary Resolution" means a Resolution that requires approval by a majority of more than fifty percent (50%) of votes.

"Resolution" means a formal decision of the Members acting collectively.

"Pastor" means a person who holds a specific position of call in the ABT pursuant to paragraph 6.19.

"Special Resolution" means a Resolution that requires approval by a majority of more than sixty six percent (66%) of votes.

"Staff" means a person who is employed by the ABT.

"Terms of Call" are agreed conditions of the pastoral appointment.

"Trustee" means a person who is appointed by the ABT as a trustee or officer of an entity associated with the ABT.

SCHEDULE: TRUSTS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED ENTITIES

Entity Name	Governing Document	Responsibilities of the ABT towards the entity
Auckland Baptist Tabernacle Trust Board	Auckland Baptist Tabernacle Act, 1948	Elect Trustees (Third Schedule, Section II, Paragraphs 3 to 11.) Receive an annual report from the Trust Board and respond within two months of receipt. (Third Schedule, Section I).
Auckland Baptist Tabernacle Missions Trust	Charitable Trust Deed executed 30th March 2004	Elect Trustees (Clause 5) Provide a list of approved auditors (Clause 6 (c))
City Pathway Trust	Charitable Trust Deed executed 4th December 2012	Elect Trustees (Clause 5) Approve auditor (Clause 6 (c))
Tabernacle Plaza Trust	Trust Deed executed 9th August 2016	Elect and appoint Trustees (Clause 8)

ANNEX: APPLICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The provisions in this Annex do not form part of the Constitution but are adopted alongside the Constitution as a guide to the intended outworking of the Constitution.

Members' Commitment

Paragraph 4.4(d) requires a commitment to "uphold and abide by the Constitution" from those seeking Membership. Expressions of this commitment include:

(a) Seeking to be holy, set apart, useful to and closely following the Lord (paragraph 1.2(d))
(b) Regularly joining with other Members in the life of the ABT (paragraph 1.2(d))
(c) Joining with other Members to seek to discern and obey the mind of the Lord for the ABT (paragraph 4.2(a))
(d) Actively participating in ministries to support the mission of the ABT (paragraph 4.2(b))
(e) Giving cheerfully and regularly to support the ministries of the ABT (paragraph 4.2(b))

Meetings of Members

Paragraph 5.1 describes the Christ-centred purpose of Members' Meetings. The outworking of this provision should be evident in conduct that:

(a) Seeks to strengthen the relationships to which Christ has called Members (as described in paragraph 1.2(d)).
(b) Seeks to hear what the Lord may choose to give through individual Members;
(c) Seeks unity of understanding among Members;
(d) Strives to be transparent and above reproach;
(e) Strives to be timely and effective

Scriptural Basis for Leadership Structure

Paragraphs 6.1 and 6.19 call on Members to carefully discern whom Christ has called into leadership.

(a) Governance Elders, Congregation Elders and Pastors hold offices corresponding to overseers/elders (*presbuteros* or *episkopos*) as revealed in Scripture and are to exhibit corresponding character and qualities.
(b) Pastors shall normally be recognised as being gifted as shepherds (*poimen*).
(c) Deacons and Trustees hold offices corresponding to deacons (*diakonos*) as revealed in Scripture and are to exhibit corresponding character and qualities.

All leaders are to willingly serve other Members and to set an example for them. They are to be humble, exercising leadership under the authority of the Lord.