



CONSTITUTION OF
TE ATATU BAPTIST CHURCH

**Approved by Church Meeting on 2 December
2007**

1. THE CHURCH

- 1.1 The name of the church is Te Atatu Baptist Church (“the Church”)
- 1.2 The Church is a community of those who believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit - one God; who 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 and who are committed to the church’s aims and functions.
- 1.3 The Church believes in:
 - 1.3.1 The true humanity and Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - 1.3.2 The atonement made on the cross by our Lord for the sin of the world
 - 1.3.3. The person of the Holy Spirit as the one who sets apart, empowers, and imparts spiritual gifts to the church
 - 1.3.4 The inspiration of the Bible and its authority in all matters of faith and practice
 - 1.3.5 Salvation and membership in the church by faith in Christ alone
 - 1.3.6 Membership of the church for those who are born again.
 - 1.3.7 The immersion of believers as the only scriptural form of baptism
- 1.4 The Ordinances of the Church are:
 - 1.4.1 Believers’ baptism by immersion
 - 1.4.2 Communion (the Lord’s supper) which is held at least monthly and is open to all believers

2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The aims and functions are:

- 2.1 To meet regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, encouragement and fellowship
- 2.2 To express the love of God to the wider community through the ministries of the Word and practical care
- 2.3 In every possible way to seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ and bring them into membership of the church
- 2.4 Engage in the task of mission principally within New Zealand but also overseas (Matthew 28 vv 19-20).

3. STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The Church is an autonomous body governed through its members, working closely with regional and national Baptist staff, the Local Baptist Association, the Baptist Churches of New Zealand, and the wider body of Christ
- 3.2 The Church leadership shall consist of the Church Board (“the Board”) which shall include the Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Leader, and Worship Leader, all of whom shall be members of, and are responsible to the membership for the oversight and direction of the Church.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Church Membership

Members shall be those who have publicly confessed their faith in Jesus Christ in believers' baptism. Applications for baptism shall be made to the Pastor and/or Elder.

4.2 Transfers from other Churches

4.2.1 A member from another Baptist church may be received into membership when a letter of commendation and transfer is received from the previous church.

4.2.2 A member from another denomination may be received into membership if they have been baptised previously and agree to give a declaration of their faith.

4.2.3 The Church will prepare detailed guidelines from time to time to enable each transfer to be assessed on its own merits.

4.3 Membership Roll

4.3.1 A membership roll shall be kept and reviewed annually.

4.3.2 That roll shall include provision for members who become non-resident being those who are members but are no longer actively involved as members or as part of the congregation.

5. LEADERSHIP

5.1 Pastor

5.1.1 Pastoral Responsibility

The Pastor(s) shall be entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the church. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all organisations of the church.

5.1.2 Pastoral Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Board will take such steps as are necessary to fill the vacancy. This may include the appointment of a moderator, and/or a committee comprising the Board and representatives of such organisations as the Board may determine. They will bring forward a nomination to be considered at a Church meeting specifically called for that purpose by written notice issued to the members at least fourteen days prior to the date of such meeting, provided that the non-receipt of such notice by any member shall not invalidate the decision of such meeting.

5.1.3 Conclusion of Pastorate

5.1.3.1 Three months notice shall be given by the Church membership or the Pastor before the pastorate is terminated, unless another period is negotiated between the parties. If there is any dispute arising from the above, then the parties agree that an independent arbitrator will be appointed within the terms of the Baptist Union Terms of Call.

5.1.3.2 No resolution terminating the pastorate shall be deemed to be carried unless passed by at least 70% of the members present at a special Church meeting.

5.1.4 Other Pastoral Staff

They shall operate under the direction of the Senior Pastor. Nominations for pastoral staff positions shall be submitted to the Board and thence to the Church meeting. No call to a pastoral staff position shall be forwarded except on a vote of 70% or more of the members present at the meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot. The clear conditions offered shall accompany the call together with the term of the call and arrangements for the termination of the ministry.

5.2 Elders

5.2.1 Nominations

These shall be brought by the pastor to the Annual General Church meeting. A ballot vote of not less than 70% of the members present at the meeting shall be required. Elders shall serve a term of two years and shall be eligible for re-election.

5.2.2 Character

Elders shall have exhibited the qualities of an elder, as found in 1 Tim.3 vv 1-7.

5.2.3 Responsibilities

Responsibilities are to be determined by the pastor and pastoral staff for the oversight of the Church.

5.2.4 Meetings

Elders shall meet at least monthly with the pastor, and are members of the Board.

5.3 Deacons

5.3.1 Nominations

Shall be signed by two Church members and the nominee and shall be in the hands of the Church secretary before the election.

5.3.2 Character

Deacons shall have exhibited the qualities of a deacon as found in 1.Tim.3 vv8-12.

5.3.3 Responsibilities and appointment

Shall be appointed by the Church and shall take responsibility for administration, finance, property, mission, music and other areas as the Board and/or the Church shall determine from time to time. Deacons shall be elected by a secret ballot of at least 50% of members present at the meeting. Deacons shall be appointed for a two year term and shall be eligible for re-election.

5.4 Church Secretary

Shall be appointed by the Church with the responsibility for recording the minutes of the Board, maintaining Church records including the membership roll, attending to correspondence, preparation of the annual report and co-ordination of Church administration.

5.5 Church Treasurer

Shall be appointed by the Church to be responsible for financial tasks as defined from time to time. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for providing audited accounts to the annual Church meeting and ensure adequate insurance policies are held and maintained.

5.6 Board positions: Sunday School Superintendent, Youth, Worship Leader

Shall be nominated by not less than two members and be in the hands of the Church secretary before a Church meeting. They shall be elected by secret ballot of not less than 50% of the members present and voting at such meeting.

5.7 Other Church appointments : home group leaders, staff appointments.

These shall be considered by the Board and approved by the Church meeting.

6. CHURCH MEETINGS

6.1 Frequency

The Church members shall meet not less than four times each year, one meeting of which to be the annual general meeting. The Church year shall end on the 30 April. The Church's financial year ends on 31 March. At the annual meeting a report shall be presented by the church secretary on behalf of the Board, and audited accounts by the treasurer together with others who lead groups within the Church. Election of elders and/or deacons, and any Board position shall be normally made at the annual meeting, but vacancies may be filled at any Church meeting, provided two weeks notice of the intention is advised. The appointments of Sunday School Superintendent, and Youth Leader will be filled at the November Church meeting in readiness for the next school year.

6.2 Purpose

The purpose of each meeting shall be to discover and confirm the mind of the Lord on matters affecting the life and work of the Church and its mission.

6.3 Quorum

At least 25% of the resident Church membership is required at any members' meeting where decisions are to be made.

6.4 Special Meetings

The Board, on receipt of a request signed by at least 10% of the resident membership, shall call a special meeting of the Church within 21 days of the request being received. Two weeks' notice of the special meeting must be given.

6.5 Chairperson

The pastor or nominee shall chair all members' meetings, except when the pastor is personally interested or is unwilling or unable to act. In such cases the Board shall nominate a chairperson who shall be a person of good standing in a Baptist Church and accepted by the Church meeting.

6.6 Attendance

Church members and the congregation are able to attend Church meetings, but only Church members may vote. The chairperson shall have a deliberative vote and, in the case of an equality of votes, may make a casting vote. Voting shall be by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested by not less than 10% of the members present at the meeting.

6.7 Proxy Votes

A Church member who is not able to attend at a Church meeting may vote by proxy. Any such vote may be made by appointing the Chairperson of the meeting to vote as may be directed by that member in writing. Such proxy must be delivered to the meeting before the meeting has begun and must be signed by the person who is not able to be in attendance.

6.8 Church Discipline

- 6.8.1 The Church shall have the power to admonish, suspend or expel any member for misconduct.
- 6.8.2 In cases of differences between members, the principles as laid down in Matthew 18: 15-17 shall be followed.
- 6.8.3 Cases of serious trouble shall be first investigated by a committee appointed by the Board, and if on receipt of such committee's report the Church Board considers that action is necessary, they shall then present their report and recommendations to a Church meeting of which at least fourteen days notice shall be given to the person or persons affected. A majority of the members present at that meeting will decide on the matter provided that the persons so involved have had the opportunity to be heard.
- 6.8.4 In the event that the procedure above does not satisfactorily resolve the dispute, the Board may refer the matter to the Baptist Union of New Zealand to mediate to try and resolve the dispute between the parties. In the event that the parties do not resolve the matter by mediation, the parties agree to appoint the Baptist Union of New Zealand and/ or their nominee to arbitrate matters whose decision shall be final and binding.

7. DECLARATION OF TRUST

7.1 Any land or any property including Church buildings and manses shall be vested in the Baptist Union as Trustee, which shall hold them for and on behalf of the Church and shall deal with the property by consent and direction of the Church in accordance with the Trusts declared in the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923.

8. NO PRIVATE PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL

8.1 No decision of the Church or its leadership shall be made which would allow a member or members to receive any private pecuniary profit provided that:

8.1.1 A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred by that member in connection with the affairs of the Church;

8.1.2 The church may pay reasonable and proper remuneration to any officer or employee of the church in return for services actually rendered to the Church;

8.1.3 Any member of the Church may be paid for all usual professional business 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 Church;

8.1.4 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 in any way attributable to that member's connection with the Church.

8.1.5 Nothing shall prevent the Church from making payments to any individual (whether a member of the Church or not) in fulfilling any of the purposes expressed in clause 2 hereof.

8.2 Members or leaders of the Church, in determining all reimbursements, remuneration and charges payable in the terms of this clause, shall ensure that the restrictions imposed by the following clause are strictly observed.

8.3 Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in this constitution, no member of the Church or any person associated with that member shall participate in, or materially influence, any decision made by the Church in respect to the payment to or on behalf of that member or associated person of any income benefit or advantage whatsoever.

9. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

9.1 No alterations or additions to this Constitution shall be made unless adopted by a majority of at least 70% of the members present at a Church meeting. Unless the Church 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 Church and in particular shall not alter the provisions of clauses 8 and 10 hereof. Notice of proposed alterations or amendments to the Constitution shall be given to the church on two Sundays prior to the meeting.

10. WINDING UP PROVISIONS

10.1 Subject to clauses 17, 18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923, if the members resolve at a properly constituted meeting of the Church adopted by a majority of at least 70% of the members present at such Church meeting that the Church should be wound up, then the net proceeds arising from such winding up shall be applied with the prior approval of the Church 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. Such proceeds shall not be paid or distributed amongst the members of the Church.

MEMBER'S PLEDGE/ DECLARATION OF FAITH

Being called of God into the fellowship of His people and into the membership of this Church, I pledge myself by the Grace of God to strive:

1. To live at all times such a life as becomes a true Christian and a member of the Church.
2. To take an active and earnest part in the life and work of the Church, regularly attending its services of worship as far as I am able, and being willing to help in whatever way I can.
3. To be faithful in prayer for the Church and its witness in the community.
4. To share conscientiously in contributing to the funds of the Church according to my means.
5. To do all in my power to deepen and enrich the spirit of fellowship in the Church, always refraining from all uncharitableness of thought or word, and ever seeking to develop the spirit of love in this brotherhood of Christ's people.
6. To share by life and word in the supreme task of the Church, namely, witnessing to the saving, keeping power of Jesus Christ our Lord.