



CONSTITUTION

19 November 1995

REVISION HISTORY

Revision 1 – February 2006 (Refer to 1689, 3e, 4g)

Revision 2 – June 2011 (Refer to 3g, 3h, 4g)

Revision 3 – June 2013 (updated wording 3g, 3h, statement of faith, new purpose statement)

Revision 4 – September 2015 (Clause 2a updated)

Revision 5 – November 2015 (Church Name changed from Marchwiel Reformed Baptist Church)

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the church is to obey the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in the evangelising of unbelievers in order to make disciples and see them edified in the context of a local church.

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND BASIS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Therefore, we sinners saved by grace and immersed in the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection, do hereby unite in church fellowship so that as a holy brotherhood we may advocate the truth of God, proclaiming the riches of His sovereign mercy to the lost and perishing, and by counsel and sympathy help one another in the Christ-like life. We solemnly undertake by the Spirit's help, to bear one another's burdens and in the exercise of a tender-hearted, tolerant, forgiving spirit to avoid everything of harsh and ungenerous criticism, recognising each other as fellow members of that mystical body of which our Saviour is the head. We seek to maintain in basic simplicity, the purity of worship and communion, regarding it as an essential feature in the teaching of our Lord; who said the redeemed souls should walk in newness of life and holy separation from the world. While loving all Christians and permitting to the Lord's table only those whose sins are forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ and whose lives are in harmony with that great truth, yet we cannot admit into church membership any unbaptised believer. We desire to live in love and harmony with all followers of our Lord, and hope that the establishment of this church may be alone to the furtherance of His glory, the edification of His dear people, the salvation of the lost and the overthrow of unholiness and error. Looking to God alone for strength and blessing, we pledge ourselves to work together, each according to his or her ability for the attainment of these objectives in love and brotherhood. While desiring to extend to all believers the fullest and freest liberty of conscience, we yet expect from all who join our fellowship an adherence to the following doctrines:

TRUTH UNAPPLIED IS TRUTH DENIED

- i. The verbal inspiration and sole sufficiency of the Old and New Testaments as originally given by God
2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21
- ii. The Trinity and unity of the God-head
Matt 3:16-17, 28:19; John 16:15; 14:8-44; Rom 8:1-17
- iii. The essential deity and perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ
Phil 2:5-6; Heb1:8-10; John 1:14, 5:18
- iv. The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit
Rom 8:16, 26; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 4:30; John 14:15-17
- v. The totally depraved and fallen state of man
John 3:3; Rom 3:9-18, 23; Eph 2:1-5; Psalm 51:5
- vi. The unconditional, electing grace of God
Eph 1:4-14; John 15:16-19; 2 Thes 2:13; 1 Pet 2:4; Rom 9:10-24
- vii. The redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church
Eph 5:25; Matt 20:28, 1:21; 1 Pet 1:18
- viii. The clear, unmistakable and irresistible call of God to His people
John 10:3-5; 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Thes 2:14; Rom 1:6
- ix. The justification of the sinner through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
Rom 5:1; 3:21-28; Gal 2:16, 3:24-25; Acts 13:39
- x. The enduring perseverance and eternal security of the saints
Phil 1:6; John 10:27-29; Heb 10:39; Rom 8:38-39; 2 Tim 1:12
- xi. The personality of the devil
John 1:6; Matt 4:1-11; Eph 6:10-18; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 20:10
- xii. The immortality of the soul
Gen 2:7, John 3:16; Matt 18:8, 25:46; Luke 17:22-23
- xiii. The second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
Matt 24:30; John 14:3; 1 Thes 4:16; Acts 1:11; 2 Pet 3:1-10
- xiv. The resurrection of the body
1 Cor 15:35-38; 1 Thes 4:16; Rev 20:13; John 11:24; Phil 3:21
- xv. The conscious eternal punishment of those who die impenitent
Matt 25:46; 2 Thes 1:9; Rev 20:15; Luke 16:23-26
- xvi. The binding character of the ordinances of the Lord's table until He comes, and believer's baptism as the only scriptural baptism. The responsibility of all saved souls to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age.
Matt 26:26-30; 1 Cor 11:17-34; Acts 2:38-41, 8:12, 36-38, 10:47-48

A fuller expression of our doctrinal position can be found in the articles of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

1. MEMBERSHIP

- a. All people requesting membership shall approach the elders.
- b. It shall be required of all members that they:-
 - i. Be professing Christians
 - ii. Have been baptised by immersion on profession of their faith in Christ
 - iii. Be those who strive to walk in holiness according to the measure of faith and grace granted to them
 - iv. Agree with the statement of faith
 - v. Agree to abide by the rules of this constitution
- c. The elders shall consider applications for membership according to clause 1b and shall recommend to the church the appropriate action.
- d. An application for membership shall be accepted when members agree to such a recommendation by the elders.
- e. Applicants shall be welcomed into membership at the following communion service
- f. If any member wilfully neglects to meet the requirements of clause 1b the elders shall firstly admonish, then may suspend that person from membership. When exclusion is necessary, the elders will recommend this to the church.

Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-13; Gal 6:1
- g. It is the duty of the church to forgive and restore to membership those persons who give satisfactory evidence of repentance.
- h. The church officers should encourage unity with other like-minded evangelical churches and the mutual recognition among the churches of biblical procedures regarding discipline so that those are not made ineffective to the dishonour of Christ.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- a. Regular attendance at the means of grace, as the gathered church, is a duty and privilege given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through the meetings on the Lord's Day in particular and in our mid-week meetings where God communicates His grace to us through His Word by the Holy Spirit. All members are therefore expected to actively participate in the life of the church including regular attendance of services and meetings. Church business meetings are also important in running the church in a God honouring way, members are therefore also expected to be faithful in attending these.

Acts 2:42, 4:24, 12:5,12, 13:3; Matt 18:19-20
- b. Elders being ordained by the Holy Spirit to rule and pastor the flock of Jesus Christ are to be honoured and the flock are to submit to their spiritual authority.

Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 9:14; 1 Thes 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17-20; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:1-4
- c. Members are to work and pray zealously for the welfare and the coming of the kingdom of God and seek by all possible means to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ
Rom 12:11; Phil 1:27; 1 Cor 9:19-23
- d. Members are to undertake all Christian service connected with the church in consultation with the elders and other members rather than acting independently.

Acts 13:1-3, 14:27; Rom 12:3-10, 16; 1 Cor 12:12-27
- e. Members should seek to avoid all causes of division in the body and strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. All members are to discern their place in the body of Christ and honour one another above themselves.

Rom 14:3; 1 Cor 1:10; Eph 4:2-3; Phil 2:1-4; Col 3:12-14; Heb 12:15
- f. Members are to promote holiness, edification and love among themselves by praying for one another, spurring one another on towards love and good deeds, admonishing one another, sharing hospitality, bearing one another's burdens and forgiving one another. Members are to pray particularly for elders and deacons in the discharge of their duties.

Rom 12:10-13; Gal 6:1-2; Eph 4:32, 6:18-20; Col 3:16; Heb 10:24-25; 1 Pet 1:22, 4:8
- g. Regular proportional giving to the Lord's work according to our means and out of a spirit of generosity is a mark of a true worshipper and is pleasing to God. Tithing one's substance is commended as a guideline for giving.

2 Cor 9:6; 1 Cor 16:2-3; Mal 3:6-14

3. CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- a. The government of the church shall be the responsibility of the elders as under-shepherds of Christ. The work of an elder is to serve the church by teaching, shepherding and overseeing in all its spiritual affairs. Those who display the attributes and are doing the work of an elder as set out in I Tim 3 and Titus 1 shall be qualified for the office of an elder.
- b. Deacons are called to a ministry of mercy towards those in physical need, especially any such within the church, and to administer the business and practical affairs on behalf of the church. Those who display the attributes as set out in I Tim 3 shall be qualified for this office.
- c. Elders and deacons are to be recognised as those members appointed by Christ for their work and so set aside by the church. The elders shall recommend to a church meeting the recognition of those they believe to be called to the work of elder or deacon. Such recognition shall take place upon the agreement of the members at a further meeting. Those so recognise shall be set aside by prayer.
- d. If any elder or deacon ceases to maintain the requirements of clause 3a or 3b the same course of action as in 1f may be adopted.
- e. A statement of accounts shall be presented to the church quarterly meeting by the treasurer. At the AGM the accounts shall be presented to the church having been independently checked by a suitably qualified person appointed by the church.
- f. A church treasurer and secretary shall be appointed from within the diaconate and ratified by the church.
- g. All income, benefit, or advantage must be used to advance the stated purpose of the Church and no member or officer shall vote on any decision made by the church, to pay them or any closely associated person any income or benefit. Any payment for goods and services must advance the stated purpose of the church and shall not be greater than would be paid in any arm's length transaction on the open market.
- h. If, upon winding up or dissolving the church, there remains after settling debts, any excess, it shall be paid to approved charitable organisations with priority being given to those churches in New Zealand subscribing to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith or the NZ Baptist Missionary Society or be given or transferred to another organisation established for a charitable purpose similar to our stated purpose.

4. CHURCH MEETINGS

- a. Where the church is gathered in His name the Lord is present. Therefore, all meetings should be conducted in a spirit of worship and unity.
- b. The elders should call all meetings of the church and there shall be at least one general members meeting every year. Other meetings of members shall be held quarterly and when need arises. The elders shall notify members of the time and place of the meeting and shall appoint one of their number to chair the meeting.
- c. The elders should summon the church for all matters of importance, such as considering the appointment of officers, applications for baptism and church membership, matters of discipline, the settling of matters of doctrine, the organisation of evangelism or the sending out of missionaries and major practical matters.
- d. All members should attend these meetings of the church. However a quorum shall consist of ten members or 50% whichever is the lesser.
- e. Unanimous agreement of the members in all matters is to be sought for, but when this cannot be reached a 60% majority shall be considered as agreement.
- f. When voting is required it shall be by a show of hands.
- g. This constitution may only be amended provided at least 80% of the members present at a properly constituted meeting of the church vote in favour. Notice of any intended amendment must be given at a previously properly constituted business meeting of the Church. No addition to or alteration of this constitution shall be approved if it affects the non-profit aims and objects of the church, personal pecuniary benefit or the winding up rule.
- h. An appointed secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings held.