

Grace Community Baptist Church
Wamberal

Constitution

April 2011

We are a contemporary renewal style church, evangelical in faith and welcoming the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1. NAME

The name of the church shall be Grace Community Baptist Church. We will be known as Grace Community Baptist Church Wamberal. We may use Grace Community Church Wamberal or Grace Community Wamberal whichever best represents us in various circumstances.

2. OUR BELIEFS

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE

As a church we are united by a shared faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and saviour. The Church agrees with and accepts the statement of beliefs of the Baptist Union of NSW & ACT, summarised generally as follows:

2.1. About God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22, Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

2.2. About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; 1 Cor 15:3-4; 1Tim 6:14-16; Heb 4:14-15

2.3. About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make all people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and both practical and spiritual guidance for all aspects of life. He gives every believer spiritual gifts when they are saved.

As Christians we seek to live under His leading daily.

John 14:16-17; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18-19.

2.4. About the Bible

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme authority and source of truth for Christian belief and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error. The Bible, or Holy Scripture, consists of both Old Testament and New Testament.

Psalms 12:6; 119:105,160; Proverbs 30:5; 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

2.5. About Human Beings

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God, which is called sin. This attitude and the actions that arise, separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; 59:1-2; Romans 3:23

2.6. About Salvation

Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into their life by faith.

John 1:12; 14:6; Romans 5:1; 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

3. OBJECTIVES

Grace Community Baptist Church Wamberal is committed to glorifying and serving God through the pursuit of our Church Profile and Vision Statement, which we believe has been given to us by God and is honouring of Him, summarised generally as follows:

3.1 To engage in relationship with God, including loving the Lord Jesus Christ as Head of His Church and gathering together to serve praise, listen to, pray to and experience God.

3.2 To engage in relationship with one another, including sharing our faith with each other and caring for each other at whatever is each person's point of need

3.3 To engage in relationship with our community, sharing our faith and caring for them at whatever is their point of need, so that they might place their faith in Jesus.

3.4 To honour God in all that we do.

- By acknowledging who He is;
- By celebrating His presence (worship);
- By communicating His word (evangelism);
- By educating His people (discipleship);
- By demonstrating His love (ministry).

It is our expectation that while Partners in Ministry participate in the fulfilment of our objective they will not all do so in the same way but in accordance with their gifting and their current circumstances, needs and resources.

4. ORDINANCES

4.1. Baptism

Upon request professing Christians may be baptised by immersion at the discretion of the Pastor/s.

4.2. Communion

Communion, also known as the Lord's Supper, shall be regularly observed and shall be open to all believers.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Church members shall be referred to as *Partners in Ministry*. To be eligible a person must be able to affirm the statement of beliefs of this constitution and the *Church Profile and Vision Statement*, have an expressed faith commitment to Jesus Christ, and identify Grace Community Baptist Church as a group they belong to.

5.1. The Church Leadership will consider and approve or decline *Partners in Ministry* applications, and will keep an official *Partners in Ministry* roll.

5.2. A person may have their name removed from the *Partners in Ministry* roll at their request or by a decision by the pastor/s.

5.3. A person may be deemed to be an inactive *Partner in Ministry* at their request or by a decision by the Pastor's.

5.4. Only active *Partners in Ministry* are eligible to vote.

6. DISPUTES AND DISCIPLINE (Matthew 18:15-17)

Matters of offence or dispute involving partners in ministry will not be brought to the Church unless the parties have first complied with the direction of Matthew 18:15-17. The individuals concerned shall first attempt to resolve the dispute prayerfully together. If this is not successful the individuals

concerned should go to the pastor/s – together if agreeable, or separately if they cannot or will not go together. If this also fails to resolve the dispute then the individuals concerned may seek direction from the church, in a manner and at a time to be arranged by the pastor/s.

7. HOW WE ORGANISE OURSELVES

The Church is the body of Christ and seeks to exist and act under the headship of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to bring glory to God the Father.

7.1. The Church will develop leadership and decision-making structures that it deems appropriate to its needs at the time. The following principles will be observed:

7.1.1. final responsibility for decision making resides with the Partners in Ministry, however we affirm the importance of good, Godly leadership and will appoint such leaders to lead, make decisions and manage the church in the pursuit of its mission and vision.

7.1.2. Special meetings may be convened by the Leadership, or written requisition by 40% of *Partners in Ministry*.

7.2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the only head of the Church and we will seek to always order the life and function of the church so that this truth is a practical reality. We further believe that the Holy Spirit has gifted various people with leadership abilities and has given them as leaders with various functions in the local church. A leadership body will be affirmed by the Partners in Ministry and is known as the Leadership (or such other title as the Leadership may determine from time to time). The Leadership will comprise:

7.2.1. the senior Pastor, who leads the team/s

7.2.2. other appointed Pastor/s and other Partners in Ministry affirmed by the church.

7.3. Recommendations for Partners in Ministry to serve on the Leadership shall be made by the existing Leadership. The existing Leadership should consider any suggestions made by the church. Once recommended the Partner in Ministry shall be affirmed by a suitable method to be determined by the existing Leadership.

7.4. Length of term of appointment on the Leadership will be a minimum of twelve months and will be determined by the existing Leadership and specified at the time of affirmation.

7.5. Dismissal from the Leadership can be made by the Senior Pastor, see 8.5

7.6. The Leadership shall be responsible for the spiritual and practical leadership of the church. These duties are to be prayerfully tailored to most suitably meet the current needs and resources of the church. Decisions on the nature of these duties are to be made by the Pastor/s.

7.7. The *Church Profile and Vision Statement* exists to serve the Church and help facilitate the harmonious functioning of the life and ministry of the Church. It is a document which is to be regarded as a set of guidelines that are provided to enable the Church to function in a way that will see the work of God being accomplished. The guidelines are not finely detailed, exhaustive or absolute. Their implementation is to be determined by the Church Leadership according to the

needs, resources and circumstances of the church in an attitude of humble service to the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

8. CHURCH STAFF

8.1. The Church may appoint full-time and/or part-time paid and/or volunteer pastors and staff members.

8.2. Any paid pastoral position will be appointed upon an 60% majority at a Partners in Ministry meeting, at which at least 40% of the Partners in Ministry eligible to vote must be in attendance. At least four weeks notice will be given of such a meeting with the specified recommendations proposed.

8.3. Any paid pastoral position will be dismissed upon an 80% majority at a Partners in Ministry meeting, at which at least 60% of the Partners in Ministry eligible to vote must be in attendance. At least four weeks notice will be given of such a meeting with the specified recommendations proposed.

8.4. Any paid staff member will be appointed or dismissed by the senior pastor, subject to the needs of the church, and other relevant circumstances.

8.5. Unpaid ministry appointments and dismissals may be made by the senior pastor, in consultation with the Leadership.

8.6. A person appointed to any paid or unpaid role, if not already, must also agree to become a Partner in Ministry, and shall remain a partner in Ministry for at least the duration of their appointment.

9. QUORUMS AND VOTING

9.1. When a quorum is not achieved at two consecutive meetings called for the same purpose, the Leadership shall have authority to make any decision it deems to be appropriate.

9.2. The Leadership will choose how voting will take place before a decision is taken to the church, and this is to be included in the notice given before a meeting. (This may include a mail out, a private ballot or any other suitable method.)

10. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

10.1. Any proposed change to the constitution will be made available to all Partners in Ministry not less than two weeks before the date of a Partners in Ministry meeting.

10.2. No alteration shall be made to the constitution except by an 80% majority of Partners in Ministry eligible to vote at a meeting convened for the purpose. The quorum for such a meeting will be 60% of the eligible Partners in Ministry.

11. BAPTIST UNION

At those times that the Church is a member church of the Baptist Union of NSW & ACT:

11.1. Only those Partners in Ministry who are baptised as believers will be eligible for appointment as delegates of the church to Baptist Union Assemblies or to vote on a resolution proposed for the purpose of giving the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust a direction under section 42 of the Property Trust Act. When voting, eligible Partners in Ministry will give consideration to resolutions of the entire Partners in Ministry meeting.

11.2. Church properties shall be held in trust by a church appointed board of trustees.

11.3. Church buildings shall not be used or occupied by persons or organisations except where previous consent has been obtained from the Leadership.

11.4. Being a Partners in Ministry does not of itself confer an interest in property on a Partner in Ministry.

12. Application of Church Assets and Income

The assets and income of the church shall be applied solely in the furtherance of its charitable purpose and the advancement of religion and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Members except as bona fide reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the church.

13. DISSOLUTION

Dissolution of 'Grace Community Baptist Church Wamberal' shall comply with any relevant laws. If, on winding up, there remains any property or finances or assets, after the satisfaction of all debts or obligations agreed by the partners in ministry, none shall be distributed among the Partners in Ministry or attendees. Any remaining property or finances or assets shall be transferred to the Trustees of Grace Community Baptist Church Wamberal, pending a decision on whom the recipients may be. If consensus cannot be reached on this matter by the Partners in Ministry, then the decision shall be transferred to the Leadership of another church whom 'Grace Community Baptist Church Wamberal' Leadership shall nominate.