
Constitution of the Kraaifontein Baptist Church

Amended and adopted at Annual
General Meeting 24 August 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

This Constitution, in addition to being the Constitution of this local church, is a covenant which is an agreement binding all members to accept the responsibilities and fulfil the duties of members as set out in this Constitution.

This local church exists in order to fulfil a threefold purpose:

- a) The Worship of God in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23).
- b) The edification of the body of believers (Ephesians 4:16).
- c) The fulfilment of the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

2. THE NAME:

The name of the church shall be the Kraaifontein Baptist Church, hereinafter called "the Church", and shall be in membership with the Baptist Union of South Africa.

3. CHURCH GOVERNMENT:

The Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Supreme Head of the Church; undertakes to manage all its affairs according to New Testament teaching and recognises the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters of faith and conduct.



God
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4. METHOD OF FUNCTIONING:

- a) The Church shall exist as a legal entity in its own right, separate from its members and shall be capable of suing and being sued in its own name.
- b) The Church shall have perpetual succession and continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office-bearers unless dissolved as per Clause 17.

5. DECLARATION OF BELIEF:

Scripture is our absolute and final authority. However, we are wary of diverse and dangerous interpretations of God's Word. Therefore, the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith is to be the standard of interpretation that is held by this congregation as it best encapsulates to our conscience the clear message and meaning of the Holy Scriptures. All preaching and teaching in this Church is to be conformed to this standard.

The International Fellowship of Reformed Baptists has summarised the Doctrines of Grace expressed in the 1689 Confession as follows (reproduced here in its entirety with certain additions):

- a) We believe in the one true and living God, in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who is invisible, personal, omnipresent, eternal, dependent on none, unchanging, truthful, trustworthy, almighty, sovereign, omniscient,

righteous, holy, good, loving, merciful, long-suffering and gracious.

- b) We believe that Almighty God has revealed all that is necessary to life and salvation in the sixty-six books of Holy Scripture which are the Word of God in its original writings. All Scripture was given by inspiration of God, is infallible, inerrant, sufficient and is the final arbiter in all disputes. Its authority is derived from its Author and not from the opinions of men.
- c) We believe that God made our first father Adam perfect, holy and upright. He was appointed representative and head of the human race thereby exposing all his offspring to the effects of his obedience or disobedience to God's commands.
- d) We believe that Adam fell from his original righteousness into sin and brought upon himself and all his offspring death, condemnation and sinnership.
- e) We believe it to be utterly beyond the power of fallen man to love God, to keep His laws, to understand the Gospel, to repent of sin or trust in Christ.
- f) We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, for His own glory did elect an innumerable host of men and women to eternal life as an act of free and sovereign grace. This election was in no way dependent upon His foresight of human faith, decision, works or merit.

- g) We believe that God sent His Son into the world, conceived of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, unchangeably sinless, both God and man, born under the Law, to live a perfect life of righteousness, on behalf of His elect people.
- h) We believe that God's Son died at Calvary to effect propitiation, reconciliation, redemption and atonement for His elect people. God bore testimony to His acceptance of His Son's work by raising Him from the dead.
- i) We believe that God's Son ascended to the right hand of his Father and is enthroned in glory, where He intercedes on behalf of His people and rules over all things for their sake.
- j) We believe that God the Son has poured out the Holy Spirit to work through the preached Word. The Spirit of God regenerates the elect sinner and draws him irresistibly to repentance towards God and faith in Christ the Saviour.
- k) We believe the elect, who are called by grace, are justified in the sight of God on account of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ which is received by faith alone.
- l) We believe that such as are regenerated, called and justified shall persevere in holiness and never finally fall away.

- m) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper; to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witnesses to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith. Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are gospel ordinances belonging only to regenerated believers in good standing with the church. Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a public confession of identification with Christ in burial and resurrection. The Lord's Supper is the partaking of bread and wine, which symbolise the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death till He comes.
- n) We believe that the local church is under the authority of Christ alone. The communion of saints, however, requires recognition of and fellowship with other churches.
- o) We believe in the priesthood of all believers.
- p) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again to raise the dead, both righteous and unrighteous, and that the righteous shall enjoy everlasting life and the wicked endure everlasting punishment.

6. MEMBERSHIP:

The membership shall consist of baptised believers:-

- a) Whose names are on the Church Membership List, or
- b) Others who, desiring membership, have given evidence of their personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have confessed that faith in baptism (immersion) and have been accepted by the Church, subject to the provisions of Clause 7.
- c) Each member shall submit to this Constitution as indicated on the membership application or by signing a copy of the Constitution.

7. ELECTION OF MEMBERS:


- a) Every application for membership is to be dealt with finally by the vote of a properly called business meeting.
- b) An application in terms of Clause 6.b) must be made in the first instance to the elder(s) through either the pastor or secretary. After the elder(s)' careful enquiry and interview with such applicant, regarding the candidate's qualification, they shall then submit their report to a business meeting in due course. Any such application shall be accepted, rejected, or referred back by the vote of a Church

business meeting after the elder(s)' report has been considered.

8. PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP:

Under the Divine Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the understanding of church policy generally held by Baptists, the final authority and responsibility in all matters touching the life and service of the Church shall rest with the whole membership. Therefore, every member shall be entitled, and expected to attend business meetings, unless prevented by some reasonable cause, and to exercise his or her franchise for the welfare of the whole community in the spirit of prayer and love.

- a) Members shall be expected to support the ministry and maintain the fellowship of the Church, especially by prayer, attendance at the services, engaging in some definite work in connection with the Church, and conscientious giving as God's provision enables. It is the special privilege and duty of members to seek to win others to the Lord Jesus Christ and to introduce strangers to the Church.
- b) In order to prevent factions or competing ministries within the Church, no member may conduct or sit under a teaching ministry not approved by the elder(s).

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9. CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

The Church reserves the right to discipline members in cases of absenteeism, immorality, uncharitable conduct towards other members, schism, heresy and unwillingness to submit to the legitimate authority of the Church. The primary aim of such discipline is the restoration of the offender and every effort shall be made to implement it with the right attitude of heart (Gal 6:1). It shall relate only to areas of Christian life clearly governed by Scripture. In line with our Lord's teaching in Matt 18:15-20, private counsel and reproof will always take precedence over public reproof (1 Tim 5:20), the suspension of privileges, shunning (Rom 16:17, 2 Thess. 3:6, 14) and excommunication. As a spiritual society, the Church may only impose spiritual penalties on its errant members.

- a) In the unhappy event of any allegation of unworthy conduct being brought against a member, the elder(s) shall make enquiry into the matter, which shall include interviewing the member if possible. If, after enquiry the elder(s) deem any further action necessary they shall present a report to a Church business meeting. Such further action shall be determined after prayerful consideration.
- b) The Church is to beware of both the neglect of church discipline and the abuse of it, which includes excessive penalties and delayed restoration (2 Cor 2:5-11).

10. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

- a) Death - Any member who has died shall be removed from membership of this local visible Church.
- b) Departure - Any member wishing to leave the membership of this Church is to do so in an orderly way by privately indicating that desire to the elder(s), giving the reasons. Members are encouraged to seek out another suitable church to join as soon as is possible, which is for their own spiritual good. Where members leave in good standing a letter of commendation may be given to the other church concerned.
- c) Absence – Any member who ceases to attend the means of Grace and in effect withdraws himself from the fellowship of the Church by failing to attend services for six (6) consecutive Lord's Days may, after investigation by the elder(s), which shall include interviewing the member, be removed from membership. The individual will be informed (if possible) and the removal from membership will be announced to the Church for approval at the next business meeting.
- d) Excommunication – Excommunication will be applied in extreme cases where a person teaches or insists on holding false or heretical doctrine in relation to the doctrinal standing of the Church; or who blatantly, unrepentantly and persistently behaves in a manner that is inconsistent with a Christian profession, or who

persists in disturbing the unity, peace and purity of the Church (Matt 18:15-20, Rom 16:17-20, 1 Cor. 5:1-13). The individual will be informed of this most serious action in writing.

Like all the sanctions of church discipline, excommunication is intended to effect repentance through a sense of sorrow and shame (2 Thess. 3:14). It is to be regarded as a last resort when all else has failed, a final appeal to a conscience in grave spiritual peril. Excommunication is a grievous matter, which ought to break the hearts of God's people.

As Kraaifontein Baptist Church does not exist in isolation from other churches of Christ, the elder(s) may notify other churches of the reason(s) for the excommunication of a member from the Church where the excommunicated member(s) seek fellowship (2 Tim 2:17, 4:10). In the same way, the Church does not exist in isolation from society at large but has a duty to maintain the integrity of its testimony (2 Cor. 8:20-21). The elders therefore reserve the right to disclose to any relevant parties the reason(s) for the excommunication of any Church member where it is deemed appropriate.

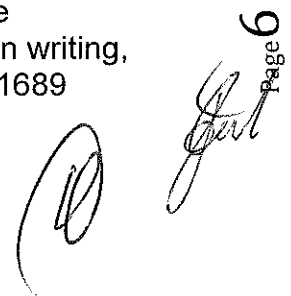
Excommunicated Church members have a duty to refrain from negative criticism of the Church, whether in other church circles or in the world at large, but rather to seek repentance and

reconciliation.

11. ELDERSHIP:

The pastoral and spiritual oversight of the Church rests with the elders. The ideal is a plurality (more than one) and equality of elders. We distinguish between full time elders (traditionally known as pastors) and part time elders. However a full time elder with other elders (part time) is considered to be one among equals.

- a) The choice and appointment of a full time elder (pastor) is vested in the membership of the Church. If and when it is necessary to appoint a full time elder (pastor) the procedure is as follows: A business meeting shall be called for the purpose and shall appoint three members (not elders or deacons) to act with the eldership and diaconate as a special committee (Call Committee), whose duty shall be to make the necessary enquiries and to make recommendation to the Church as soon as possible. In order for the committee and the Church to properly assess a candidate, he will be invited to preach and spend time with the congregation.
- b) The Call Committee after proper assessment will submit a recommendation to the Church for consideration at a properly convened business meeting called for this purpose and no call shall be issued unless eighty percent (80%) of Church members vote in favour. Any call shall be contingent upon the prospective full time elder (pastor) accepting, in writing, the provisions of the Church Constitution and 1689



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Baptist Confession of Faith. Copies of which shall be supplied for his perusal. Any full time elder (pastor) is expected to become a member of the Church. The prospective full time elder (pastor) must meet the requirements for eldership as outlined in Clause 11.e).

- c) The Church must provide a salary where agreed upon for the support of the full time elder (pastor) so as to release him wholly or to a certain extent from secular services. The salary or other benefits shall be determined at a Church business meeting.
- d) Recognising that persons are fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of elder, the appointment of elders from the Church membership shall be as follows:
Any member having the right to vote at meetings may at any time make a proposal for the eldership in writing to the elder(s). Following this, the elder(s), having made the necessary enquiries and having obtained the consent of the proposed elder to submit his name, shall make a substantiated recommendation to a properly convened Church business meeting. This meeting shall only consider a positive recommendation of the elder(s). No person shall be ordained as elder unless at least eighty percent (80%) of the members vote in favour. Voting shall be by secret ballot. The proposed elder's name shall be made known to the membership at least two (2) Sundays before the Church business meeting in accordance with

Clause 13. When the result of the ballot is known the proposed elder shall be informed of the full resolution of the Church and he shall be requested to confirm or decline the appointment within 14 days of the Church business meeting.

- e) Only such male persons shall be suitable for eldership that have reached the age of twenty-one years (21) and have been baptised (immersion) upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the duty of every elder to teach, exhort, administer the ordinances, exercise discipline, lead the flock, oversee every function of the Church and ensure that the pure doctrine according to the Scriptures and as set out in the 1689 Baptist Confession, be taught and upheld in the Church. The elder(s) must conform to the qualifications laid down for elders in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. They are to refute those that contradict the truth and expose false teachers (Titus 1:9-11). They are to pray for the sick, both spiritually and physically (James 5:14-15). Elders shall lead by example, serving with humility and faithfulness and not lording it over the flock. They are not to use their position for selfish gain or demonstrate dictatorial attitudes.
- f) An elder shall be ordained by the laying on of hands by the eldership or leadership as per Clause 11.m).
- g) Every elder shall remain an elder so long as he is a member, unless his office is terminated or he resigns as an elder.

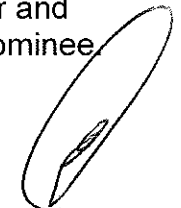


- h) The exercise of the gifts of teaching and preaching by brethren who do not hold the office of elder in the Church shall be permissible with the consent of the elder(s).
- i) The elders shall meet as often as the proper fulfillment of their responsibilities may require.
- j) Any engagement between the Church and an elder shall be terminable by three (3) months' notice on either side.
- k) Pastoral duties may be suspended immediately as deemed necessary by the eldership after thorough investigation.
- l) If deemed necessary by the eldership, the Church members, at a properly convened business meeting of the Church, may for dereliction of duty or heresy where there is sufficient proof of gross sin or a manner of life contrary to the teaching of Scripture terminate the appointment of an elder. Such termination shall be sustained by the vote of eighty percent (80%) of the members present at such a Church business meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- m) Should the Church be in the position that she has no elder(s); the diaconate (being scripturally spiritual men) will act as the interim leadership of the Church, providing guidance and conducting meetings, until such time as an elder is appointed.

12. CHURCH DIACONATE:

Only such male persons shall be suitable for election who have been members for at least one (1) year, have reached the age of twenty-one (21) years, have been baptised (immersion) upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who undertake to the satisfaction of the elder(s) to uphold the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. They must conform to the qualifications laid down for deacons in Acts 6: 3 and 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

- a) The Church shall elect a maximum of five (5) deacons for a membership of less than twenty-five (25) and thereafter may elect one (1) extra deacon for every fifteen (15) members. Deacons shall be elected at each annual business meeting (AGM) to hold office for two (2) years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election.
- b) Mid-term vacancies which occur in the diaconate may be filled by an eighty percent (80%) vote of the members present at a business meeting called for that purpose. This appointment shall terminate at the following annual business meeting (AGM).
- c) Election to the diaconate shall be after nomination. Every member being entitled to send in as many nominations as there are vacancies; provided that every such nomination is lodged with the Church secretary at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the election and is signed by the nominator and another member with the consent of the nominee.



Nominees must meet the qualifications as set out above.

- d) Election to the office of deacon must obtain an eighty percent (80%) vote of the members present at the business meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- e) The duties of a deacon shall be to assist the eldership in meeting the practical and spiritual needs of the Church and/or individuals (Acts 6:1-6), including administrative duties. The secretary and treasurer shall both be elected from and by the diaconate annually after the AGM.
- f) The diaconate shall meet as often as required.
- g) A quorum for a diaconate meeting shall consist of sixty percent (60%) of the deacons and fifty percent (50%) of the eldership; taking into account the special circumstances of Clause 11.m) .

13. NOTICE OF MEETINGS:

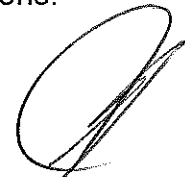
Notice of the annual business meeting (AGM), the quarterly business meeting (QGM), a diaconate vacancy meeting, a meeting to choose, terminate or suspend an elder(s), and a meeting to consider the alteration of the Constitution, shall be given at the services at least two (2) Sundays immediately prior to the proposed date of the meeting. Any other business meetings may be called by notice given at both services one (1) Sunday immediately

prior to the proposed date of the meeting in question. An attempt shall be made to inform all members not present at such services.

14. CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS:

The Church business year shall end on the 30th day of June. An annual business meeting shall be held as soon as possible and practical and not later than three months (3) after that date; at this meeting certified accounts of the Church shall be presented, a report of the Church's work for the past year shall be given. External Auditors to check accounts for the ensuing year shall be appointed by the Church and the general election of deacons shall take place.

- a) A business meeting shall be held every quarter, at which meeting interim financial statements shall be presented. Other business meetings shall be called by the elder(s) or deacons as the proper conduct of the Church affairs may require.
- b) A special business meeting shall be called by the Church secretary if and when such a meeting is requested in writing by no less than six (6) members, provided that the request states clearly the purpose for which the meeting is desired and is signed by all those concerned in the application.
- c) Every matter of Church business shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast at a properly called business meeting, subject to the following conditions:



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- d) At least fifty (50%) percent of the membership must be present, which constitutes a quorum. If within thirty (30) minutes of the notified time of commencement of a meeting no quorum is present, notice shall be given that the meeting is adjourned for no longer than two weeks. At the following meeting, should the 50% quorum not be attained, then the members present will constitute a quorum.
- e) Voting is by the show of hands unless otherwise provided for, or if at least six (6) members present request a secret ballot.
- f) If at least one-third (1/3) of the members present so request, any matter brought forward without notice beforehand shall be postponed for consideration at a future meeting.
- g) An elder/deacon shall preside at all diaconate and Church business meetings.
- h) Only those members having attained the age of 18 years or over are eligible to vote.
- i) A member may vote by proxy if he/she is prevented from attending due to ill health, or for any other good cause approved by the elders. This proxy must be in writing, giving explicit instruction as to the vote, handed in to the secretary in a sealed envelope with the envelope stating the subject and signed by the member concerned. In order to

maintain the secrecy of the ballot the proxy vote must be unsigned.

15. DEPARTMENTAL ORGANISATIONS:

All organisations connected with the Church shall be approved by the eldership as well as the Church membership, before their introduction. All appointments made in these organisations or departments shall be submitted to the eldership for approval.

16. CHURCH PROPERTY AND TRUSTEES:

All property, which the Church may hold or acquire whether movable or immovable, shall be held and administered solely for the furtherance of its objectives and the propagation of its principles. All such property must be registered in the names of the Trustees. It is hereby declared that the Trustees of the Church shall be the same as the Trustees for the time being of the Baptist Union of South Africa. The Trustees shall therefore be designated in the title Deeds of the Church as follows:

"The Trustees for the time being of the Baptist Union of South Africa and as such the Trustees of the Kraaifontein Baptist Church."

In the event of the Church at any time having no members, or deemed to have ceased to exist, all property or rights to property owned by it shall *ipso facto* vest in the Baptist Union of South Africa, which shall hold, administer, realise or otherwise deal with the same as the said Union may deem

best fitted to secure the furtherance of the objectives and the propagation of the principles of the Church as here-in-before-mentioned.

The Church shall be deemed to have ceased to exist when the dissolution of the Church shall have been resolved upon in accordance with Clause 17, or when the members of the Church shall have become totally dispersed or when the public worship of God shall have been discontinued (in connection with the Church) for a period of three (3) calendar months.

17. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH:

The Church may at any time be dissolved by the resolution of eighty percent (80%) of the Church members. This is to be done at a meeting called for such a purpose. In the event of such a resolution being passed, persons appointed by the Church shall take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church. All assets of the Church shall automatically vest in and become sole and absolute property of the Baptist Union of South Africa.

18. TRANSFER OF MORTGAGE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:

The Church shall have power to buy, sell, let or hire, exchange, mortgage, transfer, receive by way of donation or otherwise, movable and immovable property and to invest its funds in mortgage bonds, or on fixed deposits or

otherwise, in Banks, Post Offices, Buildings Societies, or like organisations.

It shall further have power to borrow money with or without security in such manner as the Church shall think fit, negotiate loans from bankers or others by overdraft or otherwise and by passing mortgage and notaries' bonds for registration with the proper authorities; to open and operate banking accounts and issue promissory notes, bills of exchange, and other negotiable and transferable instruments; to guarantee the performance of contracts by any person or duly constituted church having objectives wholly or partly similar to the objectives of this Church.

19. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION:

Any member desiring to propose an amendment shall notify the Church secretary in writing, giving the exact terms of the suggested amendment.

The eldership shall consider the amendment in the light of the Scriptures and make recommendations to the Church. The proposal shall then come up for consideration at a subsequent quarterly or annual business meeting.

No change shall be made unless at least eighty percent (80%) of the Church members actually record their votes in favour of the suggested alteration, either in its original form or with such amendment(s) as the meeting itself may make.

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20. MARRIAGE:

We believe that God has sanctioned marriage between a man and a woman, therefore we believe in the heterosexual relationship between a natural man and a natural woman within the confines of lawful matrimony. Adherence to this stated principle of sexual behaviour is an inherent requirement for membership with the Kraaifontein Baptist Church. The Church will only allow marriages as defined in this section to take place in the Church building, or to be performed by its elders.

21. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In the unhappy event of a serious dispute that cannot be resolved, within the eldership, or between the eldership and the members, godly oversight in resolving the issue(s) may be sought from outside the Church in an effort to resolve such a dispute. Those approached for help must hold to the same doctrinal standard as the Church.

22. FUND RAISING

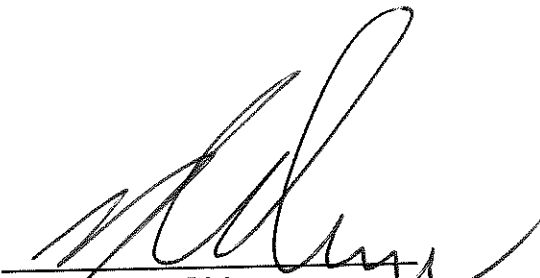
The funds of the Church shall consist of tithes, free-will offerings and donations. Any other form of fund raising will need to be agreed and approved by the eldership and thereafter the Church.


23. REPEAL

All other Constitutions or documents of a similar nature adopted by the Church before the adoption of this Constitution are repealed. Any member who immediately before the adoption of this Constitution holds office continues to hold that office in terms of this Constitution and despite the repeal.

24. CONFIRMATION/ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution as printed above was adopted at a business meeting of the Kraaifontein Baptist Church, called in terms of the Constitution, and held on 24 August 2011... and comes into operation on 25 August 2011.....


SECRETARY ON BEHALF OF
DEACONATE

 (J.C. Meyer)
CHAIRMAN