



Introduction

Bethel Baptist Church was founded in 1895. It is a member of the Old Baptist Union, a group of wholly evangelical baptist churches founded in 1880. It is the policy of the church to co-operate wherever possible with other Christians in Macclesfield in the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

Constitution

Church Membership

Every person who has professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, testified the same in baptism, given evidence of having received the Holy Spirit, and is willing to accept the Articles of Faith and Constitution, is eligible to be received into membership.

All applications for membership will be discussed by Pastor, Elders and Deacons, before being put to the Church Meeting for acceptance.

A person's name may be removed from the roll

- if they are guilty of open and unrepented sin.
- if they wish their name to be removed.
- if their attendance at church has been neglected over a period of one year.

In the last case, the Pastor will consider with the person concerned as to whether they remain on the Church roll.

Church Organisation

1 Ordained Officers

It is our understanding of the New Testament model of the church that its affairs are administered by Pastors, Elders and Deacons.

The Pastor

The quorum for a Church Meeting to appoint a Pastor shall be 2/3rds of the membership.

The Pastor of the Church shall be appointed by an 80% majority of the Church Meeting, but only after satisfying the doctrinal standards of the Old Baptist Union and gaining the unanimous approval of the ordained officers of the Church.

A Moderator (a serving Pastor of the Old Baptist Union who knows the Church and has its confidence) will be invited to take the chair at all meetings relating to the appointment, including interviews.

The duration of pastoral appointments will be determined by such contractual agreements as are entered into by the Church and Pastor, unless the Pastor ceases to uphold the Articles of Faith which are the basis of this Constitution. In which case the Pastorate can be terminated at any time by the Executive Council of the Old Baptist Union.

If the Church desires the termination of the pastorate for any other reason, a well founded application by a majority of the members will be given due consideration by the Executive Council of the Old Baptist Union.

Elders and Deacons

Elders and Deacons will be appointed only after giving evidence of God's call to the office according to the Scriptural requirements, having been in membership of the Church for at least 12 months and agreeing to uphold the Articles of Faith and the Constitution of this church.

Nomination for these offices should be submitted to the Pastor and ordained officers for approval and subsequently placed before a Church Meeting. A 2/3rds majority of the voting members will ensure the election of the officer after which the Pastor will arrange for their ordination.

The number of officers may vary according to need, but should not normally exceed 10% of the total adult congregation.

Elders and Deacons shall be appointed to serve for a term of 3 years, after which they may be re-elected for a further term, but at the end of the second period of service they may not be re-elected until a period of 1 year has elapsed.

An Elder, having been elected during or at the end of a period of service as a Deacon, shall serve no more than 9 consecutive years in combined office before standing down for 1 year.

2 Business Meetings

A meeting of the ordained officers of the



Church will be held quarterly or more frequently if required.

Members desiring to present items for consideration at such meetings should inform the Pastor at least 7 days prior to such a meeting taking place.

A meeting of Church members will be held quarterly or more frequently if required. One of these meetings will be the Annual General Meeting, when the Church accounts will be presented for approval and reports of the work given. All appointments shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting, as and when necessary, by the voting members.

Members desiring to present matters to be considered for inclusion on the agenda should inform the Pastor at least 14 days prior to the Church Meeting.

Members will normally be given 14 days notice of a meeting of the ordained officers, and 28 days notice of a Church meeting.

Marriage

It is our understanding of the Scriptures that, while both partners are living, marriage is intended as a permanent relationship. Divorce for any reason is failing short of God's Ideal and

Version 1, 1988

Version 2, 2009: 5th paragraph added to Elders and Deacons section

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2: 19-22)

contrary to His absolute will for mankind.

Pastors are required to give couples seeking marriage in the Church full instruction in the Biblical teaching concerning marriage and its obligations, stressing that they should not enter marriage without a proper consideration of the step they are taking.

Because of the frailty of human nature, occasions may arise where Pastors are asked to officiate at or bless marriages where one or both parties to the marriage is a divorcee. Pastors are permitted to undertake such a ceremony if, in their absolute discretion and understanding of the Scriptures, they feel able to do so.

Note: If a Pastor is in doubt over an application for marriage from a divorced person, he should refer to the Executive Council of the Old Baptist Union either for guidance or decision. A Pastor on probation must seek such guidance as a matter of course.

The Constitution

No alterations or amendments may be made to this Constitution without the approval of a 2/3rds majority of the Church Members, and the permission of the Executive Council of the Old Baptist Union.