

Providence Baptist Chapel Cheltenham

Statement of Faith and Rules of the Church 2014 (as amended)



This Statement of Faith was adopted by the Church
on 24th April 2014
in substitution for all others previously adhered to.

The Rules of the Church were adopted in this form
with effect from 24th October 2014.

Amendments to the Rules were adopted on 17th May 2022.

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Foreword

The Church now known as PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHAPEL came into existence in 1990 when a group of believers joined together with the conviction that there was a need to stand fast in upholding the historic, evangelical, Protestant faith and because they were unable to embrace the prevailing trends in evangelicalism manifest in their own local church.

The Church believes that the New Testament churches were independent evangelical churches and our desire to be faithful to the teaching of Scripture in all things leads us to adopt the same form. The New Testament knows nothing of denominations and we do not desire to associate ourselves formally with any such group.

The Church rejects the ecumenical and charismatic movements, the former because of its failure to stand on fundamental, biblical truth and the latter because of its admission of extra-biblical revelation, which undermines the sufficiency of Holy Scripture and because of its tendency to irreverent and superficial forms of worship.

The Church declares its total dependency on God and desires to submit to the authority of His word in all matters of faith and practice. It believes that only a genuine spiritual revival will bring a restoration of true religion in our day and looks to God alone for that sovereign demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power which is effectual in the salvation of sinners, the establishing of God's people in their most holy faith and by which means God is greatly glorified.



This document is divided into two parts. Part 1 consists of the Church's ***Statement of Faith***, summarising the key doctrines of Scripture to which the Church adheres. Part 2 contains the ***Rules of the Church*** and details the rules and procedures by which the Church is to be ordered on a day-to-day basis through the practical outworking of the Scriptural principles stated by the Statement of Faith. A separate document, entitled ***Providence Baptist Chapel - Charity Constitution***, provides the framework for the operation of the Church as a legal entity under the Charities Act. Together these documents comprise the Governing Documents of the Church worshipping at Providence Baptist Chapel.

Part 1 – Statement of Faith

1.1 The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

We believe the Scriptures contained in the Holy Bible to be the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. However we recognise the benefit of having a statement subordinate to the Scriptures to set out our beliefs in a systematic way. We believe that, of all the historic confessions of faith, the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith (the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith) reflects most fully and accurately the principal teachings of the Scriptures. We therefore adopt this 1689 Confession of Faith as our own.

1.2 Providence Baptist Chapel – Key Doctrines

The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 is an extensive document running to 32 Chapters. Its wording can be technical and sometimes in need of mature understanding. (Nevertheless it will reward careful study by the serious believer.) Hence it is helpful also to have a more concise statement of the key doctrines of Scripture. Those key doctrines are set out more simply in the remainder of this section.

WE BELIEVE IN:

1.2.1 The Scriptures

The full and verbal inspiration of the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures and of these alone,^a being in themselves the Word of God, without error and wholly reliable in both fact and doctrine;^b their final authority and perpetual sufficiency in all matters of faith and practice.^c

^a *Exo 24:4; 2 Sam 23:1-2; Jer 1:9; 30:1-4; 36:1-2; 1 Cor 2:12-13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:19-21.* — ^b *Psa 19:7-11; 119:140,160; Dan 10:21; Matt 5:17-18; John 10:35; 17:17; Rom 3:1-2; 1 Thes 2:13.* — ^c *Isa 8:20; Luke 16:29-31; 1 Cor 14:37; Rev 22:18-19.*

1.2.2 The Trinity

The unity of the Godhead and the divine co-equality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.^a

^a *Gen 1:26; Num 6:24-27; Deut 6:4; Matt 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 John 5:7; Rev 1:4-5.*

1.2.3 The Sovereignty of God

The sovereignty of God in creation, providence and redemption.^a

^a *Deu 4:39; Job 23:13; Psa 115:3, 135:6; Isa 43:13; 46:9-11; Dan 4:34-35; Eph 1:11.*

(a) *In Creation*

In the beginning God created all things, including the first man and woman who were made after His own image in perfect righteousness. The biblical record of creation in the first two chapters of Genesis is historical, not mythical, hence the theory of evolution is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.^a

^a *Gen 1:1-31; Psa 33:6,9; Isa 42:5; Acts 17:24-25; Rom 1:1-20; Rev 4:11.*

(b) *In Providence*

In His infinite power and wisdom, God sustains and governs all creatures and things by His most wise and holy providence. Nothing happens by chance or outside the sphere of His providence. He is not, however in any way the author or approver of sin, nor does His providence detract at all from the responsibility of intelligent moral creatures.^a

^a *Job 23:14; Psa 31:15; 103:19; Prov 16:9; 19:21; Isa 46:9-10; Dan 4:35; Matt 10:29-31; Eph 1:11.*

(c) *In Redemption*

God the Holy Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. In this work we are convinced of our sin and wretchedness, gloriously enlightened in our minds to acknowledge our need of Christ and gloriously renewed in our wills to enable us to embrace Christ Jesus as freely offered to us in the Gospel. They who are effectually called become partakers of justification, adoption and sanctification.^a

^a *Luke 1:68-75; Eph 1:7; 4:14; Col 1:14; Tit 2:11-14; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18-20; Rev 5:9.*

1.2.4 The Lord Jesus Christ

The true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ;^a His virgin birth;^b His real and perfect manhood;^c the authority of His teaching; and the infallibility of all His utterances;^d His work of atonement for sinners of mankind by His substitutionary sufferings and death;^e His

bodily resurrection^f and His ascension into Heaven;^g and His present priestly intercession for His people at the right hand of the Father.^h

^a *Psa 45:6; Isa 9:6; John 1:1; 5:18; 14:9-11; 16:15; 20:27; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3,8; 1 John 5:20.* — ^b *Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35.* — ^c *John 1:14; Phil 2:7; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 4:15; 7:26.* — ^d *Matt 7:29; John 7:15-17; 7:46; 12:47-50.* — ^e *Isa 53:4-6; Matt 20:28; Rom 5:6-11; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 3:17.* — ^f *Matt 28:1-6; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-29; 1 Cor 15:4.* — ^g *Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Eph 1:20-23; 1 Pet 3:22.* — ^h *Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1.*

1.2.5 The Holy Spirit

Scripture teaches the absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit.^a He convinces of sin, righteousness and judgement, regenerates, baptises believers at conversion into the body of Christ, indwells, seals, sanctifies, illuminates and comforts them.^b The work of the Holy Spirit is essential for a true and spiritual understanding of the Scriptures and for truly spiritual ministry and worship.^c

^a *2 Sam 23:2-3; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 5:3-4.* — ^b *John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 19:2-5; Rom 5:5; 15:19; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:11; Eph 2:22; Tit 3:4-7.* — ^c *Isa 61:1; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6.*

1.2.6 The Law of God

God has commanded us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbour as ourselves.^a These two principles have been set forth in the Ten Commandments.^b While no man can be justified by keeping the law, the Christian strives to obey it, out of love for God, as it reveals His will and comes with His authority.^c

^a *Deut 6:4-5; Matt 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:26-28.* — ^b *Exo 20:1-17; 34:27-28; Deut 4:13; 5:6-21; Matt 5:17-19.* — ^c *Psa 40:8; 119:174; 143:1-2; John 14:21-23; Rom 3:31, 20; 3:28; Gal 3:11; 1 Tim 1:8-10; Jas 1:25.*

1.2.7 The Doctrines of Grace

Those doctrines commonly known as the Doctrines of Grace - namely:

- (a) The total depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall, and the necessity for regeneration.^a

^a *Gen 6:5; 8:21; 2 Chr 6:36; Job 14:1-4; Psa 14:2-3; 51:5; 58:3; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Rom 3:23; 5:12; 8:7-8; 1 Jn 1:8, 10.*

- (b) The unconditional election to salvation by God of an innumerable number of sinners.^a

^a *Matt 22:14; Mark 13:27; Rom 9:10-13,16; Eph 1:4-6; 2:4,10; 2 Thes 2:13; Jas 2:5; 1 Pet 1:2; Rev 7:9.*

- (c) Their particular redemption by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.^a

^a *Isa 53:4-5; Matt 1:21; Rom 9:10-13; 11:7; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:4; 5:25; 2 Thes 2:13; Tit 2:14; 3:5-6.*

- (d) Their effectual call through the gospel, wrought by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.^a

^a *Deut 30:6; Ezek 36:26-27; John 6:37-40; Rom 1:6-7; 9:10-13; Eph 1:4; 2 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9.*

- (e) Their perseverance in faith as they are kept by the power of God, thus assuring them of eternal salvation.^a

^a *Job 17:9; Isa 43:1-7; 54:10; Jer 32:40; John 10:27-30; Rom 8:35-39; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24-25.*

1.2.8 Justification by Faith

The justification of the sinner solely by faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.^a

^a *Isa 45:25; Jer 23:6; Hab 2:3-4; Acts 13:38-39; Rom 3:22-26,28; 5:17; 8:33; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:8-9.*

1.2.9 Sanctification

Those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ are progressively renewed after the image of God.^a This is a work of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in all believers.^b They are thus increasingly enabled to pursue a life of holiness, though never attaining to perfection in this world.^c

^a *Matt 5:8; Eph 4:21-24; 2 Tim 2:19; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15-16; 1 John 2:15-16. — ^b 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 6:17; Eph 1:4; Phil 2:12-13; Heb 13:12. — ^c Psalms 32:5; 51:10; 89:31-33; Rom 7:14-25; Matt 26:75; 1 John 1:8,10.*

1.2.10 The Church of Christ

The universal church, the body of which Christ is the Head, embraces all the redeemed, called by God through the Gospel, born of the Spirit and justified by faith.^a It manifests itself in local autonomous congregations comprised of those who have received salvation through Christ.^b The marks of a true local church are the

faithful preaching of the word of God, the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the exercise of biblical discipline. Fellowship between like-minded churches is a further manifestation of the unity of the body of Christ.^c

^a Matt 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph 1:22; 3:10; 3:21; 5:23-32; Col 1:18-24; Heb 12:23. — ^b Matt 18:17; Acts 2:44-47; 11:22; 13:1; 15:41; 16:5; Rom 16:1,5,16; 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:2. — ^c Acts 15:1-4,22-31; 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8:19,23; Col 4:15-16.

1.2.11 Baptism and the Lord's Supper

The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as being instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ,^a but not in Baptism as conveying regenerating grace,^b nor in the Lord's Supper as being a sacrifice for sin nor involving any change in the substance of the bread and wine.^c

^a Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Cor 11:23-32. — ^b Acts 8:13,20-23; 8:36-37; 10:44,47; 16:14-15; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:17,21. — ^c Matt 26:29; 1 Cor 11:26-28; Heb 7:23,27-28; 9:25-28; 10:11-13.

(a) Baptism

Scripturally this is the baptism of believers by total immersion in water following credible profession of their faith in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ.^a in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

^a Matt 3:16; 28:19; Mark 1:4-5,5-9; 16:15-16; John 1:26-34; 3:23; Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,36-39; 10:46-48; 16:31-33; 18:8; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12; 1 Pet 3:20-21.

(b) The Lord's Supper

This is to be observed on the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ to be a memorial to His death until He comes again.^a In partaking of the Lord's Supper, as with the hearing of the Word of God, there must be the exercise of faith, that we might know profit to our souls. We further believe that only the true people of God should partake in the sacrament, and that all should examine themselves lest they eat and drink unworthily.^b

^a Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26. — ^b Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor 11:27-29.

1.2.12 The Personal Return of Christ

The personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.^a

^a Matt 16:27; 25:31; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 3:20-21; 1 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20;

*Col 3:4; 1 Thes 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16-17; 5:23; 2 Thes 1:7-10;
1 Tim 6:14; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; Jude 14; Rev 1:7; 22:7,12,20.*

1.2.13 The Resurrection of the Body

The resurrection of the body,^a the judgement of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,^b with the eternal blessedness of the righteous^c and the eternal conscious punishment of the wicked.^d

*^a Job 19:26; Isa 26:19; John 5:28-29; 6:39-40; Acts 4:2; 24:15; Rom 8:11;
1 Cor 15:20-23,42-45,48-54; Phil 3:21. — ^b Matt 25:31-34; John 5:22;
Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 2:16; 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1;
Rev 20: 1-12. — ^c Matt 25:34,46; John 10:28; 1 Cor 15:53; 1 Thes 4:17;
2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:4; 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 22:3-5. — ^d Matt 25:41,46;
Mark 9:44; 2 Thes 1:9; Jude 13; Rev 14:9-11.*

1.2.14 The Personality of Satan

Satan is a personal spiritual being,^a a fallen angel,^b the father of lies, a murderer from the beginning,^c and the great deceiver of all nations, and individuals.^d He has been defeated in consequence of the Saviour's death and resurrection,^e and is to be finally committed on the last day to the lake of fire with all his angels.^f

*^a Gen 3:14-15; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-4; Zech 3:2; Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13;
Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8. — ^b Isa 14:12; Rev 9:11. — ^c John 8:44; 2 Thes 2:9. —
^d Isa 14:12; 2 Cor 11:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Rev 12:9. — ^e Gen 3:15;
John 12:30-32; 2 Thes 2:8; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8. — ^f Matt 25:41;
Rev 20:10.*

1.2.15 Worship and The Lord's Day

The triune God is to be worshipped^a as revealed in His Word^b with reverence and godly fear.^c God has set apart one day in seven to be kept holy, the observance of which is binding upon all men.^d This day, originally appointed at Creation as the seventh day of the week^e was changed at Christ's resurrection to the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.^f It is designed for man's benefit, and is to be used for rest from labour, and from recreation and entertainment of a secular nature,^g so that the whole person might be refreshed, and the whole day occupied in the worship and service of the Lord. Although no detailed instructions are given in Scripture as to the way in which this day is to be kept, allowance is clearly made for works of mercy and necessity.^h

*^a Exod 20:3; Psalms 86:9; 145:3-5,21; 150:1-6; Isa 42:8; Matt 4:10;
Mark 12:32-33; 1 Cor 6:20; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9. — ^b Exod 20:4-6;*

Lev 10:1-2; Deut 4:2; 12:32; 1 Chr 15:13-15; Ezra 3:2,4; Jer 7:31; Matt 15:3-9; 28:20; Mark 7:6-9; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 11:2, 23. —
^c Exod 15:11; Psa 33:8-9; Prov 1:7; Jer 10:7; Heb 12:28; Rev 4:11. —
^d Gen 2:3; Exod 20:8-11; Mark 2:27-28; Luke 4:16,31; John 20:1,19,26; Acts 2:1; 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2; Rev 1:10. — ^e Gen 2:2-3; Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:14. — ^f Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1,33,36; John 20:19-20,26; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2. — ^g Exod 20:9-10; 34:21; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:14; Neh 13:15-20; Jer 17:21-22; Isa 58:13; Luke 23:56. — ^h Matt 12:1,10-13; Luke 13:16.

1.2.16 Marriage

(a) *Marriage*

Marriage is a union between one man and one woman for the duration of their joint lives,^a which symbolises the union between Christ and His Church.^b Christian believers should court and marry only believers.^c

^a Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-8; Eph 5:31; 1 Tim 3:2; Heb 13:4; 1 Pet 3:7. — ^b Eph 5:25,31. — ^c 2 Cor 6:14.

(b) *Divorce*

Marriage can only properly occur in the manner decreed by God (as defined in sub-paragraph (a) above) and, as originally ordained, is to be regarded as indissoluble except by the death of one of the spouses. Thus God alone can determine the circumstances in which divorce may lawfully occur.

The New Testament church does not recognise divorce on any grounds other than fornication (in the full scriptural sense of a consenting illicit sexual union of any kind),^a and, in very limited circumstances, wilful and obstinate desertion initiated by the unbelieving spouse.^b

While divorce is properly to be regarded as permissible in the situations just described it is not to be seen as obligatory. Reconciliation between a husband and wife is encouraged^c and a husband or wife converted subsequent to marriage should remain with, and pray for the unconverted spouse.^d

^a Matt 5:32; 19:9. — ^b 1 Cor 7:12-16. — ^c 1 Cor 7:10-11. — ^d 1 Cor 7:12-16; 1 Pet 3:1-4.

(c) *Unscriptural Sexual Practices*

The Bible teaches that all sexual practices outside marriage (as defined in sub-paragraph 1.2.16(a) above) are sinful. This is equally the case whether the practices involve men and women

or people of the same sex.^a The Bible also teaches that we must not be actively or passively complicit in sin, and that faith without works is dead. It is therefore part of our doctrine that in relation to any activities of this church we must in no way condone, promote, assist or encourage sinful sexual practices of any kind.^b

^a *Gen 19:4-7,24-25; 20:2-3; 39:9; 49:3-4; Exod 20:14; Lev 20:10-21; Psa 51:1-4; Rom 1:24-32; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Jude 7.* — ^b *Rom 1:32; 1 Cor 6:18-20; Eph 5:8-16; 1 Tim 5:22; Jas 2:17.*

1.2.17 Evangelism and Mission

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. It is therefore the duty of every church to seek to extend the gospel to all men everywhere. Only those methods which do not conflict with biblical principles are to be used.^a

^a *Psa 22:27; 96:3; Isa 2:2; 11:9-10; Jonah 3:2; Mal 1:11; Matt 24:14; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15,20; Luke 24:47; Acts 8:4-6,25,26-30,40; 13:2-5; 14:27; Rev 14:6.*

1.2.18 The State

Civil government is ordained of God and it is the duty of Christians to obey those who have the rule over them, provided that no demands made by the State conflict with the teaching of Scripture.^a

^a *2 Sam 23:3; Psa 82:3-4; Luke 3:12-14; Acts 4:18-19; Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-14,17; 1 Tim 2:1-2.*

Part 2 – Rules of the Church

2.1 Church Membership

2.1.1 Introduction

Membership of a local church is both a duty and a privilege for all who truly place their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation. At the same time each local church has a duty to use its discernment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and by faithful use of the Holy Scriptures, to defend its corporate body from corruption, schism or error.

2.1.2 Qualifications for Membership

Persons seeking to become Members of the Church of Providence Baptist Chapel will be required to:

- (a) Give credible testimony to the converting work of the Holy Spirit in their souls and to their trust for the forgiveness of their sins only in the Lord Jesus Christ; and,
- (b) Give evidence in their daily conduct of striving to walk consistently with their profession as followers of Jesus Christ; and,
- (c) Be in willing agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith as set out in Section 1.2 of this document; and,
- (d) Be willing to subscribe to the Church Covenant as set out in Appendix A of this document; and,
- (e) Have been baptised by immersion on profession of their faith (See paragraph 2.6.2.4); and,
- (f) Not currently be the subject of disciplinary measures by another Bible-believing church.

2.1.3 Becoming a Member

- (a) Application – All applications for Church membership shall be made in writing to the Pastor (or, in the absence of a Pastor, to the Church Secretary);
- (b) Consideration by the Elders – The applicant shall be interviewed by at least two of the Elders, one of whom shall

normally be the Pastor. The purpose of this interview is to establish to the satisfaction of the Elders whether or not the applicant fulfils the criteria for membership set out at paragraph 2.1.2 and can be commended to the Church;

- (c) Transfer of Membership from another Church – Where an applicant is currently in membership with another Bible-believing church the Elders, in addition to their consideration at paragraph 2.1.3.1(b), shall seek written commendation from the transferring church that the applicant is currently a member in good standing with them.
- (d) Consultation with Members – If the application is approved by the Elders, it shall be brought before a properly convened Church Business Meeting. Members shall be advised of the name of the applicant when notice of the Meeting is given (see Section 2.6.3). A Member who has a query or concern regarding an applicant for membership has a duty to bring the matter to the notice of the Elders privately in advance of the Meeting.
- (e) Elders' Recommendation – At the Church Business Meeting the Elders, having taken into account any information supplied by Members, shall either:
 - (i) Commend the applicant to the Church; or,
 - (ii) Notify the Church that the application has been withdrawn; or,
 - (iii) Notify the Church that consideration of the application is to be postponed for further examination.

It shall be the duty of the Elders to explain to Members as fully as possible the reasons for the postponement or withdrawal of an application. However, this shall not require the Elders to disclose information received in confidence and they shall retain discretion as to the level of detail they disclose.

- (f) Church Decision – The Church shall consider a recommendation by the Elders to commend the applicant and may vote either to:
 - (i) Accept the commendation of the Elders and admit the applicant into Church membership; or,

- (ii) Refer the application back to the Elders for further consideration.
- (g) Reception into Membership – Once approved by the Church the applicant shall be received into membership at the next convenient communion service. Thereafter the applicant may fully participate as a Member of the Church (subject to any relevant restrictions stated in paragraph 2.6.4.1).

2.1.4 Temporary Membership

- 2.1.4.1 The Church recognises that from time to time believers whose permanent spiritual home is elsewhere may wish to make Providence Baptist Chapel their temporary spiritual home because circumstances have led them to this locality. We welcome such people and invite them to apply to become Temporary Members of the Church for the duration of their stay. In this way we can extend to them the full advantages of the pastoral care of the Church.
- 2.1.4.2 When this Church considers an application for Temporary membership it will:
 - (a) Have proper regard for the authority of the home church of which the applicant is already a member; and,
 - (b) Apply the same standards for admission to its membership as it would for any other applicant.

Applications for Temporary membership will therefore also be dealt with as described in paragraph 2.1.3 (subject to the few necessary adjustments indicated below to take account of the differing circumstances).
- 2.1.4.3 As well as considering the applicant's suitability in terms of the qualifications for membership (see paragraph 2.1.2), the Elders will contact the applicant's home church to seek its agreement to the applicant becoming a Temporary Member of Providence Baptist Chapel. If this agreement is not given the application will automatically fall.
- 2.1.4.4 A Temporary Member will not be allowed to vote at Church Business Meetings. However, attendance as an observer at these Meetings is allowed and a Temporary Member may contribute to discussions if invited to do so.
- 2.1.4.5 Once a Temporary Member's circumstances so alter that he is no longer able to attend Providence Baptist Chapel on a regular basis

the Temporary membership shall automatically cease. The Temporary Member shall be notified in writing and the home church shall be advised accordingly.

- 2.1.4.6 A Temporary Member who subsequently wishes to transfer membership and become a full Member of this Church shall notify the Pastor of this wish in writing (or in the absence of a Pastor, the Church Secretary). The Elders shall then follow the procedures set out at paragraphs 2.1.3.1(c)-(g).

2.1.5 Cessation of Membership

- 2.1.5.1 Just as the Church has the duty of discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit when considering the admission of Members (as indicated in paragraph 2.1.1), so the circumstances in which Members may leave the Church demand equally prayerful and careful attention, for *"...we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."* Rom. 12:5.

- 2.1.5.2 Departure from a local Church may take place under only one of two conditions:

- When released with Commendation a Member leaves with the full consent and approbation of the Church;
- When released without Commendation a Member leaves either under censure or without the approbation of the Church.

- 2.1.5.3 Anyone seeking to terminate membership of the Church shall make written request to the Pastor (or, in the absence of a Pastor, to the Church Secretary) explaining clearly the reasons for this. The Elders shall consider the request in the light of the following paragraphs and shall advise the Church at a properly convened Church Business Meeting whether the Member may be released with or without the Commendation of the Church. A person who declines to provide any explanation cannot be released with Commendation.

2.1.5.4 Release with Commendation

The Church will grant release with Commendation to a Member who is of good standing in the Church and who is seeking to leave for any of the reasons indicated at sub-paragraphs (a)-(c) below. In such cases the Elders will, on request, send a Letter of

Commendation to any church which the Member may seek to join following departure from this Church.

(a) Moving away

- (i) A Member moving permanently to another neighbourhood at such a distance from the Church that he can no longer reasonably attend meetings regularly will be encouraged to seek fellowship with and apply for membership of a Bible-based church nearer to the new home.
- (ii) The Member will remain under the pastoral oversight of this Church and will continue in non-voting membership until accepted into church membership elsewhere. This interim situation should not normally be allowed to continue for more than one year. This may be extended at the discretion of the Elders.

(b) Reasons of Conscience

A Member who feels unable to remain in fellowship with this Church on grounds of conscience or significant differences of understanding of the Scriptures may, after due counsel from the Elders, request release from membership.

- (i) It shall be the duty of the Elders in giving counsel to seek to resolve the differences or, failing this, to encourage the Member to meet with and seek membership of another Bible-based fellowship.
- (ii) If the Elders are unable to resolve the differences they shall notify the Church accordingly. When the Church accepts the Elders' recommendation a person seeking release from membership for this reason shall be released with Commendation and the Church shall no longer exercise pastoral responsibility.

(c) Other Reasons

Apart from those reasons just cited there may be other legitimate grounds for a person to leave this Church with Commendation. It will be for the Elders to consider each case, to give counsel to the Member, and to advise the Church as to the appropriateness or otherwise of an intended departure from membership.

2.1.5.5 Release without Commendation

Where the reasons for a Member wishing to leave the Church cannot be regarded as legitimate, as set out in paragraph 2.1.5.4, the Elders will not issue a letter of Commendation. If a request for such a letter is received from another church the Elders shall faithfully but graciously communicate to the enquiring church the circumstances of the person's departure from this Church.

2.1.5.6 For the avoidance of doubt, a Member leaving or seeking to leave the Church in the following circumstances will not be supported by a letter of Commendation.

(a) Members under Church Discipline

- (i) Where a Member who is the subject of ongoing Church discipline, and whose membership has not been terminated by the Church, ceases to attend all meetings of the Church (leading to the need for further discipline). This will not apply if the Member has been expressly directed by the Church not to attend any meetings.
- (ii) Where a Member's name has been removed from the list of Church Members as the final step in the proper exercise of Church discipline.

(See Section 2.5 for more details of Church Discipline.)

(b) Members Refusing Counsel

Where consideration of a Member's request to leave the membership of the church requires the Elders to counsel the Member (see for example 2.1.5.4(b)(i) and 2.1.5.4(c)) and this opportunity for counselling is refused. (Such a refusal would normally be considered as a matter needing Church Discipline.)

2.1.6 **Responsibilities of Membership**

Each Church Member has a solemn and personal responsibility to:

- (a) Pray regularly for the ministry of the Word of God, for fellow Members and for the work of the Church generally. (*2 Thes 3:1; James 5:16*)
- (b) Seek the will of God in order to discover any particular way to be useful within the fellowship of the Church. (*Rom 2:6-8, 12:11; 1 Cor 6:19-20*)

- (c) Adopt a responsible attitude to Christian giving. As an independent Church we look solely to God to meet our financial needs through His people. Members are encouraged to fulfil their obligations by regular giving as the Lord prospers them. (*1 Cor 9:14,16:2; 2 Cor 9:5-7*)
- (d) Support financially, pray and care in every way possible for any missionaries or workers, whether at home or overseas, whom the Lord may call and send forth from the Church. (*2 Cor 8:1-4; Acts 13:2ff*)
- (e) Support other missionaries and/or missionary societies as agreed by the Church. (Members are, of course, free to support missionaries and societies of their own choice.)
- (f) Attend all the Services and Meetings of the Church regularly. Parents who are unable to do this due to the unavoidable responsibilities of care for young children are encouraged to take it in turns to attend as many of the Lord's Day services and midweek meetings as possible. This will not only strengthen the spiritual life of both parents but will be a godly example to the children and the Church. (*Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25*)
- (g) Be punctual in attendance at the services in order to wait upon the Lord. Arriving late is irreverent towards God and disturbs the worship of others. (*Acts 10:33*)
- (h) Dress for worship in a way which reflects an inward desire to act with reverence, sobriety and modesty in approaching the King of Kings. (*1 Pet 3:3-4*)

2.2 Church Officers

2.2.1 Introduction

- 2.2.1.1 The New Testament speaks only of two kinds of Officers for local Churches. These are Elders (in the Scriptures also called bishops and overseers), to whom falls the responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the local Church; and Deacons, whose duties relate primarily to the material needs of the Church.
- 2.2.1.2 The local Church alone, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is responsible for appointing men to these offices. Such appointments should be accompanied by much prayer, both by the Church and by the man involved. Each needs to be satisfied that the appointment is part of God's will for them. Haste is to be avoided.

- 2.2.1.3 It follows that an equal degree of care and concern to discern the Spirit's will should be applied if the Church feels the need to consider the removal of a man from office.

2.2.2 Elders

2.2.2.1 Functions and Duties

Elders are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the Church. Their duties include the pastoral care of the Church, teaching, Church government and the exercise of spiritual discipline. All meetings, activities and organisations held by or on behalf of the Church come under their supervision. (*1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5; Heb 13:7,17,24*)

- 2.2.2.2 While all Elders equally share the responsibility for the oversight of the Church they may bring to their office some diversities of gift. (*Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:7,17*) These are summarised below:

(a) Ruling Elders

In exercising the duties described in paragraph 2.2.2.1, all Elders are Ruling Elders.

(b) Teaching Elders

While all Elders rule, some are also gifted, called and trained by God to preach. An Elder who both rules and preaches is called a Teaching Elder. (*Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17*)

- 2.2.2.3 In carrying out the responsibilities conferred upon them the Elders should seek the support of the Church in every major matter. For matters on which the Scriptures give explicit or implicit direction to the Church it is the duty of the Elders to ensure that this is observed. In other cases the Elders should be ready to give guidance to the Church on the general principles of Scripture which are applicable.

- 2.2.2.4 The Pastor is the Church's principal Teaching Elder. As such there are some functions and duties applying to his post alone. These are set out in Section 2.2.5.

2.2.2.5 Qualifications

- (a) An Elder shall only be appointed from among male Members of the Church who have been baptised by immersion on confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to the

subscription to the Church's Statement of Faith and to the Church Covenant which he will have made as a Church Member he shall also subscribe to the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith.

- (b) A man shall only be appointed to be an Elder if the existing Elders and the Church are satisfied that he fulfils the scriptural requirements for eldership. (*1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4*)
- (c) No man shall be appointed to the office of Elder unless he is personally well-known to the church and is of proven ability for the office. He will normally have been a Member in good standing of this Church for at least one year continuously.¹

2.2.3 Deacons

2.2.3.1 Functions and Duties

Deacons are responsible for the varied ministries relating to the welfare and needs of the Church generally, but not for the spiritual oversight. Their duties will include care for the material needs of Church members, responsibility for Church finance, the care of Church property and practical needs within the fellowship. (*Acts 6:1-4*)

2.2.3.2 Qualifications

- (a) A Deacon shall only be appointed from among male Members of the Church who have been baptised by immersion on confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to the subscription to the Church's Statement of Faith and to the Church Covenant which he will have made as a Church Member he shall also subscribe to the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith.
- (b) A man shall only be appointed to be a Deacon if the Elders and the Church are satisfied that he fulfils the scriptural requirements for a deacon. (*1 Tim 3:8-13*)
- (c) No man shall be appointed to the office of Deacon unless he is personally well-known to the church and is of proven ability for the office. He will normally have been a Member in good standing of this Church for at least one year continuously.²

¹ Amended by Resolution of the Church, 17th May 2022

² Amended by Resolution of the Church, 17th May 2022

2.2.4 Appointment of Church Officers

2.2.4.1 Number

There shall be no stipulated minimum or maximum number of Elders or of Deacons.

2.2.4.2 Nomination

(a) Elders

A prospective elder shall be nominated by the existing Elders. They shall notify the Church Members in writing of the name of their nominee and the reasons for his nomination.

(b) Deacons

A prospective Deacon may be nominated either by the Elders, or by the existing Deacons, or by at least one-quarter of all Members eligible to vote. The nomination shall be made in writing to the Pastor (or in the absence of a Pastor, to the Church Secretary) together with the reasons for it.

A nomination must always be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee.

2.2.4.3 Election

(a) Preliminary Consideration

On receipt of a nomination for a deacon the Elders shall consider whether they are able to commend the man to the Church as meeting the scriptural criteria for a deacon. If they are unable to do so they shall meet with the nominators privately to explain their reasons. They shall similarly explain their actions to the nominee.

(b) Consideration by the Church

Where the existing Elders are commending the nomination of an elder or deacon it shall be considered at one or more properly convened Business Meetings prior to any decision. The nominee shall not be present for the discussion. Members shall be encouraged to seek earnestly the direction of the Holy Spirit as they prepare to reach a decision.

(c) Ballot

Following this consideration the nomination shall be put to a Secret Ballot (See paragraph 2.6.5.8). A nominee shall only be

appointed if he receives the favourable vote of at least three-quarters of all those Members eligible to vote.

2.2.4.4 Installation to Office

Following the election of a Church Officer by the Church he shall be publicly recognised in office by being solemnly set apart with prayer and the laying on of hands by the Elders at an open meeting of the Church and congregation as described in Appendix B or Appendix C.

2.2.4.5 Duration of Office

No time limit shall be fixed for the period of service of a Church Officer.

2.2.4.6 Removal from Office

Save for matters of serious doctrinal error or gross misconduct, the Church may only dismiss a Church Officer from office as set out below:

- (a) A written Proposal shall be submitted to the Pastor (or in the absence of a Pastor, to the Church Secretary). This Proposal must be accompanied by written reasons and must be signed by at least one-quarter of all those Members eligible to vote.
- (b) The Proposal shall be considered at one or more properly convened Church Business Meetings. The Church Officer in question shall be given an opportunity to speak at such a meeting but shall not be present for any discussion of his case. Members shall be encouraged to seek earnestly the direction of the Holy Spirit as they prepare to reach a decision.
- (c) If not withdrawn, the Proposal shall subsequently be put to a Secret Ballot (See paragraph 2.6.5.8) and shall only be carried if it receives the favourable vote of at least three-quarters of all those members eligible to vote. Following notification of the ballot result to the Church, the Church Officer shall be informed of the result in writing. If the Proposal is carried he shall not relinquish his duties until he receives formal notification of his removal from office.

2.2.4.7 Resignation from Office

If a Church Officer wishes to relinquish his office he shall first discuss this with his fellow Church Officers and then, if still of the

same mind, he shall give written notice to the Pastor (or in the absence of a Pastor, to the Church Secretary). He shall continue in his duties until the Church has been informed formally of his resignation provided that he is capable of doing so.

2.2.5 The Pastor

2.2.5.1 A settled pastoral ministry is to the benefit and edification of a church and it is the Pastor who particularly bears the responsibility for the preaching ministry. When the pastorate is vacant the Elders, in prayerful consideration with the Deacons and the wider Church membership, shall seek to discover the leading of the Lord concerning the man to call to the position of Pastor.

2.2.5.2 As one of the Church's Elders the Pastor is subject to the general requirements prescribed in Section 2.2.2. However, there are some respects in which a Pastor's responsibilities, appointment and terms of office differ from those of the other Elders. Paragraphs 2.2.5.3 to 2.2.5.13 set out those matters which are particular to the position of Pastor.

2.2.5.3 Functions and Duties

In addition to his general responsibilities as an Elder as set out at Section 2.2.2 the Pastor shall normally:

- (a) Bear the main responsibility for the preaching ministry of the Church, including the responsibility for deciding who shall preach in his absence.
- (b) Be the presiding Elder at all Meetings of the Church and its Officers. (Apart from those specific situations where the Church Rules prohibit this.)

2.2.5.4 Qualifications

Where a man is being considered for the Pastorate, the requirement for him to already be a Member of this Church and to have been in membership for at least one year, as specified in paragraphs 2.2.2.5(a) and (c), shall not apply.³

3 *Amended by Resolution of the Church, 17th May 2022*

2.2.5.5 Appointment

- (a) A man to be considered for the Pastorate shall be nominated by the Elders. Before making a nomination it shall be the duty of the Elders to ensure at least the following:
 - (i) That, as far as is reasonable, all Members of the Church have adequate opportunities to become acquainted with a prospective nominee both as a Minister and as a person. This shall include several opportunities to hear him preach and to meet him and his wife and family (where applicable) in both formal and informal settings.
 - (ii) That times are specially set aside for the Church unitedly to seek by earnest prayer to discern the Lord's will regarding the pastorate.

The Elders may take such additional steps as they think fit to ensure that they and the other Church Members are well informed on the spiritual and personal standing of a prospective nominee prior to making a nomination.

- (b) Following this period of assessment the Elders shall notify the Church members in writing of their nominee and of the reasons for his nomination.
- (c) The nomination shall be considered at one or more properly convened Church Business Meetings. No other business shall be brought to such a meeting or meetings. The meeting(s) shall provide an opportunity for Members' questions to be put to the nominee and also for a period of discussion with the nominee not present. Members shall again be encouraged to seek earnestly the direction of the Holy Spirit as they prepare to reach a decision.
- (d) Subsequent to this consideration the nomination shall be put to a Secret Ballot (see paragraph 2.6.5.8). The Elders shall only be authorised to issue to the nominee a call to the pastorate if he receives the favourable vote of at least three-quarters of all those Members eligible to vote.
- (e) Following the ballot the pastoral nominee shall be informed of the outcome in writing. If the vote has authorised the Elders to issue a call to the pastorate the nominee shall be asked to respond in writing and the contents of his reply shall be conveyed to the Church at the earliest opportunity. On his

acceptance of the call he shall become the Pastor-elect and the existing Elders shall agree with him the detailed arrangements for him to take up his pastorate.

2.2.5.6 Installation of a Pastor

Following the election of a Pastor by the Church he shall be publicly recognised as Pastor by being solemnly installed into his post in this Church at an open meeting of the Church and congregation as described in Appendix D.

2.2.5.7 Duration of the Pastorate

No time limit shall be fixed for the period of service of a Pastor.

2.2.5.8 Stipend

The Pastor will normally be supported financially by the Church so that he will not need to be engaged in secular employment (*1 Tim 5:17-18*). He can thus devote his time to the study and ministry of the Word of God and to pastoral work (*Acts 6:4; Eph 4:11-12*). This stipend shall be reviewed at least annually by the Deacons.

2.2.5.9 Removal from the Pastorate

Save for matters of serious doctrinal error or gross misconduct, the Church may only dismiss a Pastor as set out below:

- (a) A written Proposal shall be submitted to the Church Secretary. This Proposal must be accompanied by written reasons and must be signed by at least one-quarter of all those Members eligible to vote.
- (b) The Proposal shall be considered as the sole matter of business at one or more properly convened Church Business Meetings. The Pastor shall not chair such a Meeting but he shall be given an opportunity to speak. The Meeting(s) shall also provide for a period of discussion with the Pastor not present. Members shall be encouraged to seek earnestly the direction of the Holy Spirit as they prepare to reach a decision.
- (c) If not withdrawn, the Proposal shall subsequently be put to a Secret Ballot (See paragraph 2.6.5.8) and shall only be carried if it receives the favourable vote of at least three-quarters of all those Members eligible to vote. Following formal notification of the ballot result to the Church the Pastor shall be informed

of the result in writing. If the Proposal is carried he shall not relinquish his duties until he receives formal notification of his removal from office.

2.2.5.10 Resignation from the Pastorate

If the Pastor wishes to relinquish his post he shall give written notice to the Church Secretary after due discussion with his fellow Elders.

2.2.5.11 Notice Period

- (a) If the Church resolves to remove the Pastor from his post, or if the Pastor resolves to relinquish it, the initiating party shall give written notice to the other at least two months in advance of the date on which it is intended that the employment shall cease.
- (b) This notice period may be varied by mutual agreement between the Pastor and the other Elders.
- (c) In the case of the removal of the Pastor from his post on account of serious doctrinal error or gross misconduct the Church shall not be required to observe any period of notice.

2.2.5.12 Severance Payment

If the Pastor relinquishes or is dismissed from his post the Church shall be obliged to consider whether it is appropriate for it to make a severance payment to ensure that undue short-term hardship is not suffered by him or, where applicable, his family.

2.2.5.13 Continuance as an Elder

The other Elders and the Church shall consider whether it is appropriate for the one whose pastorate is ceasing to continue as an Elder. This shall be considered separately from the matter of the pastorate.

2.2.6 Meetings of Church Officers

- 2.2.6.1 In order to secure the proper ordering of the affairs of the Church the Church Officers shall meet regularly to consider both its spiritual and practical needs.
- 2.2.6.2 Elders shall normally meet at least once in every two months, or more frequently as required.

- 2.2.6.3 Deacons shall meet as often as is necessary to address matters which require their joint consideration.
- 2.2.6.4 For the purpose of co-ordination Elders and Deacons shall also meet together at least once every three months.

2.3 Administrative Officials

The Church shall appoint a Church Secretary and Church Treasurer to be responsible for the main administrative duties of the Church. The Secretary shall normally be an Elder and the Treasurer shall normally be a Deacon.

2.3.1 Church Secretary's Responsibilities

- (a) To ensure that the business matters of the Church are conducted with due observance of the approved Rules of the Church and the requirements of Church's Charitable Constitution.
- (b) To ensure that proper and accurate records are kept of all Church Business Meetings and that these records are maintained with due regard to confidentiality and security.
- (c) To ensure that Church Members have available to them all the documentary information to which they are entitled.
- (d) To carry out those other duties which are explicitly assigned to the Church Secretary by these Rules of the Church.
- (e) To ensure the carrying out of such other administrative duties as the Elders or the Church may properly require.
- (f) To ensure the complete confidentiality of all personal information about individual Church Members, insofar as this is consistent with the proper exercise of the duties of Church Secretary.

2.3.2 Church Treasurer's Responsibilities

- (a) The receipt of all payments and donations to the Church and the making of all payments on its behalf.
- (b) The keeping of an appropriate journal record of all income and expenditure of the Church.
- (c) The keeping of true accounts of the receipts, expenditure, current assets and liabilities of the Church.

- (d) The securing of an independent audit or examination of the Church's accounts annually according to the requirements of the Charity Commission's current Statement of Recommended Practice.
- (e) The submission of these independently reviewed accounts for the preceding financial year to the Church's Annual General Meeting.
- (f) To ensure the complete confidentiality of all personal information about individual Church Members, insofar as this is consistent with the proper exercise of the duties of Church Treasurer.

2.3.3 Financial Oversight

While the principal responsibility for the day-to-day management of the finances of the Church lies with the Church Treasurer, the Church has a responsibility to ensure proper oversight of these matters. To ensure this:

- (a) Where the Church has a bank account to which access is provided online, at least two of the authorised signatories for the account shall have online access to that account.
- (b) Regardless of the number of signatories for cheques required by a bank, it shall be the Church's own practice to require two signatures for all cheques of £100 or more.

2.3.4 Terms of Appointment

- (a) Only a person who is a Member of this Church and whose membership has been in good standing for at least two years continuously may be appointed as a Church Official. Temporary Members may not serve as Officials.
- (b) In considering a person for appointment as an Administrative Official the Church Officers shall satisfy themselves that he has abilities suitable to the particular post and that he is willing to serve in that capacity.
- (c) An Official shall be recommended by the Church Officers by a formal Proposal to a properly convened Church Business Meeting. He shall only be appointed by the favourable vote of a simple majority of those present at the Meeting and eligible to vote.
- (d) No time limit shall be fixed for an Official's period of service.

- (e) Save for matters of gross misconduct an Official may only be removed from his administrative post on a formal Proposal to a properly convened Church Business Meeting. He shall only be removed by the favourable vote of a simple majority of those present at the Meeting and eligible to vote.
- (f) If an Official wishes to resign from post he shall give notice in writing to the Pastor (or, in the absence of a Pastor, to the Church Secretary). This notice of resignation shall be reported to a properly convened Church Business meeting at the earliest opportunity.
- (g) The retiring Official will normally be expected to continue in post until a successor official is appointed.
- (h) If the Administrative Official is a Church Officer his removal or resignation from the administrative post shall have no effect upon his standing as a Church Officer. If it is deemed necessary to consider this it shall be treated as an entirely separate matter.

2.4 Other Positions of Responsibility

2.4.1 Men with the Gift of Preaching

A man who is a Member of this Church and whose gifts and preaching have been proved within the local Church may be formally recognised by the Church as one whom it is happy to commend to other churches for the ministry of the Word of God. This commendation shall be made by the resolution of a properly convened Church meeting following a favourable recommendation from the Elders.

2.4.2 Leadership of Auxiliary Church Activities

- 2.4.2.1 No auxiliary activity or organisation shall be established without the consent of the Church and every such organisation shall be subject to the authority of the Elders.
- 2.4.2.2 A Leader of an auxiliary activity or organisation shall be appointed by the Elders, with the consent of the Church, from among the Members of the Church.
- 2.4.2.3 Since those leading such activities will frequently be an important point of contact between the Church and those outside of it, a Leader will be expected to be:

- (a) Of good standing in the Church in matters of both faith and conduct.
 - (b) Prepared to serve sacrificially in the role to which he or she is appointed.
 - (c) Suitably equipped for the required leadership tasks.
- 2.4.2.4 Helpers for an auxiliary activity or organisation who are not leaders shall only be appointed with the approval of the Elders. Such helpers shall be Church Members (except on a temporary basis as determined by the Elders).

2.5 Church Discipline

2.5.1 Introduction

- 2.5.1.1 Discipline is an essential part of the life of a true Gospel church. Preaching, teaching and spiritual fellowship are divinely appointed means to nurture and strengthen those of the Church who are leading God honouring lives. In the same way properly applied corrective discipline is appointed by God for the safeguarding of those who may be especially at risk and for the restoration to health of those who have fallen into spiritual sickness. Like all of God's provisions for His church, the purpose of scriptural discipline is wholly for good. Its exercise by the Church should always be motivated by a loving concern for the one to whom it is applied.
- 2.5.1.2 The spiritual well-being of the Church is not just the concern of the Church Elders or of the Church acting collectively. It is also the responsibility of individual Church Members. It is for this reason that, in subscribing to the Church Covenant, Members promise to “...[bind them]selves to love each other, to seek each other's spiritual welfare and to work for mutual peace and prosperity” (see Appendix A). Those matters which are for the Member to address on an individual basis are set out in Section 2.5.2. The actions which are to be taken within the context of the Church as a whole are set out in Section 2.5.3.

2.5.2 Private Admonition

- 2.5.2.1 Where one Member is in dispute with another Member, or is offended by another's words or actions, he is under obligation to treat this as a private matter, not to be disclosed to any third party. He is to personally seek out the one who has given offence and, by

loving admonition, to endeavour to convince him of his fault. If the offender acknowledges and repents of the fault (or if the complainant discovers his complaint to be ill-founded) both parties should aim to enjoy spiritual reunion and no other person should be allowed to become aware of the problem (*Matt 18:15*).

- 2.5.2.2 If the offending Member resists the approach of the complainant or refuses the admonition, then the complainant should seek to meet him again in the presence of one or two other Church Members (*Matt 18:16*). These other persons are not advocates or arbitrators, though they may properly act as conciliators. However, their chief function is to serve as independent witnesses in case the matter should eventually need to be brought before the Church. At this stage the matter continues to remain private and should not be disclosed to anyone other than those directly involved. The object remains the spiritual reunion of the two principal individuals. Only if resolution is still not achieved should the Church be involved in an official way.

2.5.3 Discipline by the Church

- 2.5.3.1 A Member may need to be the subject of Church discipline for reasons which include the following: serious doctrinal error; scandalous behaviour; irregular attendance at worship services without good reason; corruption of pure worship; breach of Christian fellowship; resistance to appointed Church government; and a failure to resolve a dispute between individuals by use of the private procedures described in Section 2.5.2.

2.5.3.2 Degrees of Discipline

There are three degrees of Church discipline: firstly, admonition or rebuke (*1 Thes 5:14; 1 Tim 5:20; Tit 3:10*); secondly suspension from Church privileges (*2 Thes 3:14-15*); and thirdly, termination of Church membership (*Matt 18:17; 1 5:1-5,11,13*). These are described in more detail below:

(a) Admonition by the Elders

The Elders shall contact any Member for whom they deem Church Discipline is appropriate. They shall point out the Member's fault and seek to understand the reasons for his actions. They shall seek to administer spiritual and scriptural guidance on practical matters relevant to the issue. They shall

urge him to acknowledge his doctrinal error, repent of his fault, resume fellowship or otherwise do what is necessary to re-establish full union with the Church. The Elders shall also explain to him the future steps the Church will be required to take if there is no evidence of repentance and a turning away from the matter attracting the need for discipline.

(b) *Suspension by the Church*

If, after giving the Member due time for consideration, the Elders are not satisfied that there is evidence of repentance, they shall bring a written recommendation before a Church Business Meeting proposing that the Member should have his membership suspended. Reasons shall be included for this recommendation. The Church may either consent to this recommendation or refer the matter back to the Elders for further consideration. On the Church giving its consent the suspended Member shall have all Church privileges withdrawn from him (these include partaking in the Lord's Supper, attendance at Church Business Meetings, and serving the Church in any capacity). The Member shall be notified of the Church's decision in writing, together with the reasons. He shall also be advised of, and encouraged to take, the steps which the Church will require if it is to move towards lifting the suspension. He shall also receive notice again of the further steps that the Church will be required to take if he should continue to refuse to respond to its warnings.

(c) *Termination of Membership*

If, after giving the suspended Member further due time for consideration, the Elders are satisfied that he continues to neglect the guidance and warnings of the Church and refuses to repent, they shall bring a written recommendation before a Church Business Meeting proposing that his membership be terminated. Reasons shall be included for this recommendation. The Church may either consent to this recommendation or refer the matter back to the Elders for further consideration. On the Church giving its consent the person shall be removed from the membership of the Church and he shall be given written notice of this which shall include the reasons.

2.5.3.3 It shall be the duty of the Elders to keep the Church informed as fully as possible as action is taken at each stage of the disciplinary process. However, the Elders shall retain full discretion as to the amount of detail they disclose about an individual case.

2.5.3.4 Summary Action

In matters of extreme seriousness for the Church or for any individual Member, the Elders may take summary action in accordance with paragraph 2.5.3.2. They shall subsequently take the earliest opportunity to notify the Church at a Business Meeting of the action they have taken.

2.5.3.5 Restoration

Paragraph 2.5.1.1 emphasises the benevolent purpose of corrective discipline. Thus even when it has proved necessary to terminate the membership of a person, the Church and its Elders should still pray for the spiritual well-being of that person and should remain open to an approach from him seeking to express repentance and to be restored to fellowship. It will be for the Elders to carefully evaluate the genuineness of such an approach before bringing it before the Church.

2.6 The Gathered Church

2.6.1 Introduction

2.6.1.1 Whenever the Church gathers together the Lord is present. In view of His infinite majesty all meetings should be characterised by holy reverence and all things should be done decently and in order.

2.6.1.2 The King James (Authorised) Version of the Bible is the version used in the preaching and worship of the Church.

2.6.1.3 The Lord in his wisdom and mercy has provided that believers should gather together in local churches. Church Members should therefore regard the attendance at all meetings of the Church, whether for worship or business, as equally important.

2.6.2 Meetings for Worship

2.6.2.1 The worship will be conducted in a reverent and orderly manner and will include nothing other than the singing of praise to God, the reading of the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures, the offering of prayer and the preaching of the word of God.

2.6.2.2 Lord's Day Meetings

The Lord's Day is appointed by God to the benefit of man through rest and worship (see para. 1.2.15). To meet with the Lord together at both morning and evening services should be seen as a great privilege and a delightful duty (*Isa 58:13-14*). It also bears important witness to the unconverted. These services are the times primarily appointed in this Church for the hearing of the preached word of God. Church Members in particular should not neglect attendance at either service, unless prevented by lawful and unavoidable reasons.

2.6.2.3 Mid-Week Meetings

The mid-week meeting is appointed in this Church primarily for Bible Study and Prayer. United prayer is just as vital to the spiritual well-being of the Church as private prayer is to that of the individual believer. In addition to faithful and regular attendance on the Lord's Day, Church Members should expect to be present as often as possible at the mid-week meeting.

2.6.2.4 Baptism

A person who seeks to make a public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who has satisfied the Elders by a credible testimony of that faith and by God-fearing daily conduct in accordance with paragraphs 2.1.2.1(a) and (b) may be baptised by total immersion.

2.6.2.5 The baptismal ordinance will normally take place following a Lord's Day worship service and will be conducted by the Pastor, by another Teaching Elder or by another Minister. In accordance with the command of Christ, the baptism shall be carried out in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (see para 1.2.11).

2.6.2.6 The Lord's Supper

This is normally observed by this Church on the first Lord's Day evening and the third Lord's Day morning of each month, following the public worship service. It is a solemn service of remembrance of the Lord's death until He comes again and is only to be conducted after the pattern ordained by the Lord himself (see para 1.2.11). It shall be administered by the Pastor or, in his absence, by another Teaching Elder or by another Minister.

- 2.6.2.7 It is the Lord's command that his followers should keep this ordinance. To do so in humble dependence upon Him is essential to obedient discipleship. Neglect of His command is a serious matter. All who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and who are walking in fellowship with Him are therefore invited to His table.
- 2.6.2.8 The Lord also issues a solemn warning to any inclined to partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. He instructs each person to examine himself in this matter and to act with self-discernment. In addition to this personal responsibility, the Elders too have a responsibility before God for the spiritual integrity of the Church and must not allow the Lord's Supper to be misused. They may therefore refuse to allow any person to partake in the Lord's Supper if they have good reason to believe that his spiritual state or lifestyle show clear signs of being in breach of the Lord's warning.

2.6.3 Meetings for Business

- 2.6.3.1 The Church Business Meeting is the Church gathered to consider those matters relating to the Church which cannot properly be disclosed at more public meetings. Such Meetings may receive information and, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, may make decisions in all things concerning the work of God in the Church.
- 2.6.3.2 The Church Business Meeting is an opportunity for fellowship and full participation in all the life of the Church. All eligible Members should therefore consider it a privilege and obligation to attend.
- 2.6.3.3 A Church Business Meeting may be one of the following:
- (a) Ordinary General Meeting
This shall be the meeting at which most general Church business is ordinarily done. Such meetings shall be held at least once every three months.
 - (b) Annual General Meeting
This meeting shall be held in October of each year, or as soon as practicable thereafter. Its only business shall be as set out at 2.6.4.5(b) below.
 - (c) Special General Meeting
A Special General Meeting must be called by the Church Secretary if he receives a request to do so from the Elders or from at least one-quarter of the Church Members. The request

for the Meeting must always specify the matters to be discussed. When the request is made by Members it must be made in writing and must be signed by all those making the request. The Meeting must take place within fifteen days of the request being received, unless those making the request agree to a longer period.

2.6.4 Conduct of Business Meetings

2.6.4.1 Attendance

- (a) Church Business Meetings may only be attended by full and Temporary Members of the Church. However, a non-Member may attend a Meeting where there is a specific need for this and the Church has extended an express invitation. In no circumstances shall a Temporary Member or non-Member have a vote.
- (b) Church Members may not attend if they have been suspended from the privileges of the Church as part of the Church's disciplinary procedures (see Section 2.5), or if they are aged under 16. These limitations may be varied at the discretion of the Elders in individual circumstances.

2.6.4.2 Notice of Church Business Meetings

All Members shall be given notice of Church Business Meetings. The minimum notice period shall be as follows:

(a) Ordinary and Annual General Meetings

Notice of the Meeting shall be announced publicly on the two Lord's Days preceding the Meeting. The Agenda for the Meeting shall be available to Members not later than seven days before the Meeting.

(b) Special General Meetings

Notice of the Meeting shall be announced publicly on at least one Lord's Day preceding the Meeting. The Agenda for the Meeting shall be available to Members not later than four days before the Meeting or on the Lord's Day immediately preceding the Meeting, whichever is the earlier date.

(c) Urgent Business

In a case where urgent action is required, the procedure for calling a Meeting as detailed above may be waived by the decision of the Elders.

2.6.4.3 Chairman

The Chairman of all Church Business Meetings shall be the Pastor. In his absence, or if he is prohibited by a provision elsewhere in these Rules from serving as Chairman for a particular meeting or item, then the Elders shall appoint one of their number to be the Chairman. If no Elder is present (or if he is similarly debarred from acting as Chairman) then the Meeting shall appoint a Chairman from among the Deacons for the duration of that meeting or item only.

2.6.4.4 Quorum

The quorum for any Business Meeting shall be one-third of the Members who are eligible to vote. No business may be enacted at any Church Business Meeting unless the necessary quorum of Members is present. If, during the meeting, attendance falls below the required quorum level the meeting shall immediately be suspended until the quorum is restored.

2.6.4.5 Business at Meetings

(a) Ordinary General Meetings

Except at the discretion of the Elders, no business shall be dealt with at an Ordinary General Meeting other than that contained on the Agenda. Any Member who desires that a particular matter be raised at a Meeting shall give notice in writing to the Church Secretary (including an adequate description of the matter it is wished to raise) not later than three days after the first public announcement of the Meeting (see paragraph 2.6.4.2(a)).

(b) Annual General Meetings

No business may be discussed at an Annual General Meeting other than the following:

- (i) To confirm the Church Covenant which shall be read aloud to the Meeting. The Members present shall be required to solemnly declare their continued adherence to this Covenant with the Lord and with each other by appending their signatures to a copy of the Covenant. Members unable to be present shall also be required to indicate their adherence to the Covenant in writing as soon as possible after the Meeting.

- (ii) To receive from the Church Treasurer a report on the audited financial statement for the preceding Church financial year.
- (iii) To receive from the Elders a report on any matters relating to amendments to the Church's Statement of Faith, Rules or Charity Constitution which have been agreed in the preceding year or may need to be considered in the ensuing year.
- (iv) To receive from the Trustees of the Church a report on any matters to which they feel the attention of the Church should be drawn.

(c) Special General Meeting

No business may be discussed at a Special General Meeting other than that for which it was convened.

2.6.4.6 Confidentiality

No matter discussed at a Church Business Meeting shall be divulged to any non-member without the consent of the Church.

2.6.5 Voting Arrangements for Business Meetings

2.6.5.1 Members shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at Church Business Meetings.

2.6.5.2 General Eligibility to Vote

Where a vote is necessary to decide the Church's view on a matter, a person is eligible to vote who:

- (a) Is a full Member of this Church (Temporary Members are not allowed to vote); and,
- (b) Has been a Member for at least six months continuously; and,
- (c) Is aged 18 or over; and,
- (d) Is not suspended from Church privileges by the disciplinary action of the Church; and,
- (e) Is not prohibited from voting under paragraph 2.6.5.3 or by any other provision of these Rules.

Each Member who is eligible shall have one vote. The Chairman shall not have a casting vote.

2.6.5.3 Ineligibility to Vote on Specific Items

While a Member generally may be eligible to vote under paragraph 2.6.5.2 it will sometimes be inappropriate for him to do so on a specific item because of a close personal interest in the matter being decided. This applies in the following situations:

(a) Financial Interest

Any Member who has a direct financial interest in an item on the Agenda of a Church Business Meeting shall declare his interest to the Church Secretary before the item is considered; shall withdraw from the Meeting during its consideration; and shall take no part in the voting on it. His declaration of interest and withdrawal shall be duly recorded in the official Minutes of the Meeting.

(b) Personal Interest

Any Member whose future relationship with the Church is being considered shall withdraw from the meeting while the decision is being discussed and shall take no part in the voting. This will include, for example, occasions when the appointment or removal of a man as a Church Officer is being considered. It will also apply when the Church is considering disciplinary action towards a Member.

2.6.5.4 Since the Member must not vote in the situations described above he shall not be counted among those eligible to vote on the item in question when calculating whether a necessary percentage of votes has been reached.

2.6.5.5 Submission of Proposals

Matters which are to be decided by vote shall be the subject of a formal Proposal to the meeting. Each Proposal must be clearly stated, either orally or in writing, and must be supported by a named Proposer and Seconder. A Proposal made from the chair shall not require a Seconder.

2.6.5.6 Voting Procedures

The majority of matters on which the Church may need to vote will normally be dealt with by way of a Standard Ballot as described in paragraph 2.6.5.7. However, certain matters which are of particular significance to the life of the Church must always be dealt with by

way of Secret Ballot (see paragraph 2.6.5.8). In addition to those matters where a Secret Ballot is obligatory, the Church may always resolve by way of a Standard Ballot to decide a particular matter by Secret Ballot.

2.6.5.7 Standard Ballot

- (a) All Church Members who are present at the Meeting and are eligible (see paragraphs 2.6.5.2 to 2.6.5.4) may vote.
- (b) Voting may be by a show of hands or by a counted vote. If a show of hands is inconclusive or is disputed, or if any Member present and eligible to vote requests it, a counted vote must be held and the numbers for, against and abstaining must be recorded in the Minutes.
- (c) For a vote to be carried a simple majority will normally be required. If the matter being considered is one for which a higher majority is required elsewhere in these Rules then that higher majority shall apply.
- (d) If the number of votes for and against the Proposal is equal it shall be deemed not carried.

2.6.5.8 Secret Ballot

- (a) The following matters must be the subject of a Secret Ballot:
 - (i) The appointment or removal of a man as an Elder, Pastor or Deacon (see Sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5).
 - (ii) Any change to the Church's Statement of Faith (see Section 2.8).
 - (iii) Such other matters as the Church may decide by way of a Standard Ballot.
- (b) All Church Members who are eligible may vote (see paragraphs 2.6.5.2 to 2.6.5.4).
- (c) The following balloting procedure shall be adopted:
 - (i) Each eligible Member shall be issued with a printed ballot paper together with a statement of the Question to be decided. Members who are not eligible shall be informed of the Question but must not receive a ballot paper.
 - (ii) Votes shall cast by Secret Ballot. The ballot box shall be available in the Chapel for each Meeting for a period of not less than eight and not more than twenty-two

consecutive days immediately following the issue of the ballot papers. (It shall be the duty of the Church Officers to agree on the length of period appropriate to the issue.) During the ballot period it shall be the duty of the Church Secretary to ensure the availability and security of the ballot box.

- (iii) A Member who is unable to attend any Meetings during the ballot period may vote by proxy in writing to the Church Secretary. (If the matter under consideration relates to the Church Secretary, the Pastor shall act as Proxy Officer instead.) It shall be the duty of the Proxy Officer to ensure that each absentee Member votes only once; that each vote is properly cast; and that the nature of each proxy vote remains confidential.
- (iv) Following the end of the ballot period the votes shall be counted at a properly convened Church Business Meeting. Before the ballot box is opened the Church Secretary shall advise the Meeting of the number of Members eligible to vote and of the minimum number of favourable votes required for the Question to be carried.
- (v) The ballot box shall be opened and the votes counted by two Members appointed by the Meeting as tellers. If the tellers find evidence of any irregularities in the ballot (for example, more votes cast than there are eligible Members) they shall report the irregularities to the Meeting and the ballot shall be declared invalid.
- (d) A Question shall be carried if the ballot is valid and the number of votes cast is not less than the minimum number advised by the Church Secretary. The tellers shall only report to the Meeting whether or not this minimum threshold has been reached. They shall not disclose to anyone any details of the actual number or proportion of votes cast without the express consent of the Church.

2.6.6 Record Keeping

2.6.6.1 List of Church Members

It shall be the duty of the Church Secretary to maintain an up-to-date list of all Church Members. This shall include at least

sufficient detail to allow a Member's eligibility to vote to be established (see paragraph 2.6.5.2).

2.6.6.2 Minutes of Church Business Meetings

It shall be the duty of the Church Secretary to ensure that accurate Minutes are kept of the proceedings of every Church Business Meeting. These Minutes shall be made available to all Members and shall be confirmed at the next available General Meeting. Subject to any corrections of fact agreed by the Meeting they shall be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2.6.6.3 The Church Secretary shall securely maintain an archive of the Minutes of all Church Business Meetings which shall be available for inspection by Members on request. Minutes shall not be disclosed to non-members without the express consent of the Church.

2.7 Other Matters

2.7.1 Use of Church Premises

2.7.1.1 Marriages

The Church premises at Naunton Parade, Leckhampton, Cheltenham are licensed for the solemnization of marriages. A marriage shall only be conducted on the premises with the express written consent of the Elders.

2.7.1.2 Other Uses

The Church premises shall generally only be used for meetings to do with the Worship and Business Meetings of the Church and the regular activities of the approved auxiliary organisations as described in Section 2.6. Use of the premises for any other purpose shall require the consent of the Church Officers. No meeting or activity shall interfere with the regular public Worship Meetings of the Church.

2.7.2 Literature

No literature shall be displayed, distributed or sold on Church premises (or elsewhere on behalf of the Church) without the consent of the Elders.

2.8 Changes to the Statement of Faith and Church Rules

2.8.1 Omissions

Any matter not covered by this Statement of Faith and Church Rules document shall be considered by the Elders who, where necessary, will decide the matter summarily. If the Elders consider the matter to be of sufficient significance to require inclusion in the written document they shall, after consultation with the Deacons, bring their recommendation to the Church.

2.8.2 Annual Review

It shall be the duty of the Elders annually to review this Statement of Faith and Church Rules document and, after consultation with the Deacons, to make recommendations to the Church for any amendments deemed necessary.

2.8.3 Agreement of Changes

Proposals for change to this Statement of Faith and Church Rules document shall only take effect if they have received the favourable vote of at least three-quarters of all Church Members who are eligible to vote.

Appendix A – The Church Covenant

We acknowledge the Lord Jehovah, the only true and living God, to be our God in Jesus Christ, through the eternal covenant which has been revealed to us in the gospel, upon which we have taken hold for life and salvation, giving ourselves to the Lord to be His people.

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to His revealed will, we covenant together to give ourselves solemnly and prayerfully to the Lord and to one another, so that we may perform the duties required of a church of Christ; and this we do relying entirely upon the free grace, the precious blood and righteousness of our Saviour, the assistance of the Holy Spirit and the many promises of help given to us in Holy Scripture.

Our desire and resolve is to make God's glory our end and God's word our rule in all worship and practice. We will, therefore, endeavour to obey the laws of God's house, walking together in the observance of Christ's holy ordinances and binding ourselves to love each other, to seek each other's spiritual welfare and to work for mutual peace and prosperity.

We call both heaven and earth to witness this solemn covenant with God and with each other and we fervently pray that God will grant us His blessing as a Christian church under the Lord Jesus Christ our Head.

Appendix B – Installation of a Ruling Elder

Following his election by the Church a Ruling Elder shall be publicly recognised in office by being solemnly set apart with prayer and the laying on of hands by the existing Elders at an open meeting of the Church and congregation.

The presiding Officer (who shall be the Pastor or, in the absence of a Pastor, an existing Elder) shall state the biblical warrant for the office and work of a Ruling Elder. Having done this, he shall propose to the elected man the following questions:

The Presiding Officer

The Elder-elect

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Do you affirm your belief in the Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and as the only infallible authority for faith and practice? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 2) Do you believe the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 to be founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God, and do you resolve, through divine grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to that Confession? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 3) Do you declare full agreement with this Church's Statement of Faith and Church Rules, as teaching and applying the principles established in Holy Scripture? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 4) Do you promise uncompromising adherence to purity and reverence in this Church's form of worship, believing that the acceptable way of worshipping God is instituted by Himself and limited by His revealed will, so that nothing may be introduced into worship without positive scriptural warrant? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 5) Are you resolved earnestly to contend for the Faith and to do everything in your power to keep this Church free from error, sin and compromise? | <i>(I am so resolved, the Lord helping me)</i> |
| 6) Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder and promise, relying upon God for strength, to assist your fellow Elders in the orderly government of this Church, discharging your duties at all times with diligence and faithfulness? | <i>(I do, trusting in God's enabling grace)</i> |

The congregation shall then stand while the man kneels and, the existing Elders laying their hands on him, the presiding Officer shall proceed to set him apart with prayer to the office of Ruling Elder.

Appendix C – Installation of a Deacon

Following his election by the Church a Deacon shall be publicly recognised in office by being solemnly set apart with prayer and the laying on of hands by the Elders at an open meeting of the Church and congregation.

The presiding Officer (who shall be the Pastor or, in the absence of a Pastor, an Elder) shall state the biblical warrant for the office and work of a Deacon. Having done this, he shall propose to the elected man the following questions:

The Presiding Officer

The Deacon-elect

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Do you affirm your belief in the Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and as the only infallible authority for faith and practice? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 2) Do you believe the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 to be founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God, and do you resolve, through divine grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to that Confession? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 3) Do you declare full agreement with this Church's Statement of Faith and Church Rules, as teaching and applying the principles established in Holy Scripture? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 4) Do you promise uncompromising adherence to purity and reverence in this Church's form of worship, believing that the acceptable way of worshipping God is instituted by Himself and limited by His revealed will, so that nothing may be introduced into worship without positive scriptural warrant? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 5) Do you accept the office of Deacon and promise, relying upon God for strength, to serve in support of the Elders, managing the temporal concerns of this Church in a manner which is spiritual, efficient and above reproach? | <i>(I do, trusting in God's enabling grace)</i> |

The congregation shall then stand while the man kneels and, the Elders laying their hands on him, the presiding Officer shall proceed to set him apart with prayer to the office of Deacon.

Appendix D – Installation of a Pastor

Following his election by the Church to the pastorate the Pastor-elect shall be publicly recognised in office at an open meeting of the Church and congregation. The Presiding Minister shall state the biblical warrant for the office and election of a Pastor. Statements concerning the leadings of God regarding the call to the pastorate shall be made by an Elder of the Church and by the Pastor-elect.

The Presiding Minister shall propose to the Pastor-elect the following questions:

The Presiding Minister

The Pastor-elect

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Do you affirm your belief in the Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and as the only infallible authority for faith and practice? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 2) Do you believe the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 to be founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God, and do you resolve, through divine grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to that Confession? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 3) Do you declare full agreement with this Church's Statement of Faith and Church Rules, as teaching and applying the principles established in Holy Scripture? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 4) Do you promise uncompromising adherence to purity and reverence in this Church's form of worship, believing that the acceptable way of worshipping God is instituted by Himself and limited by His revealed will, so that nothing may be introduced into worship without positive scriptural warrant? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 5) Do you accept the office of Pastor and do you engage, relying upon God for strength, to discharge your duties at all times with diligence and faithfulness, leading the Lord's people in the ways of His holy ordinances, teaching and governing them according to the Scriptures, and setting before all a godly and holy example? | <i>(I do, trusting in God's enabling grace)</i> |
| 6) Do you accept the call of this Church to be its Pastor and promise, through grace, to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people? | <i>(I do)</i> |
| 7) Do you solemnly promise that, by divine and gracious assistance, you will always seek this Church's purity, peace, unity and extension? | <i>(I do so promise, in the strength of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour)</i> |

The Presiding Minister will then ask the Members of the Church to stand and he shall ask them the following two questions:

The Presiding Minister

The Church Members

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1) Do you, the Members of the Church, acknowledge and receive, whom you have called to be your Pastor? | (We do) |
| 2) Do you promise to receive the Word of Truth from his lips with meekness and submit to him in the exercise of scriptural discipline, giving to him all due honour, obedience and encouragement in the Lord. | (We do) |

The whole congregation shall then stand while the Presiding Minister offers a prayer of installation. The Elders of the Church, followed by the Deacons shall then come forward to their Pastor, extending the right hand of fellowship to him in token of their sincere reception of and affectionate regard for him.

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Providence Baptist Chapel
Naunton Parade, off Exmouth Street
Cheltenham
GL53 7NP

www.cheltenham.church

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