

ChristChurch, Tilehurst
Church Handbook

We certify this to be the Church Handbook adopted by the members of ChristChurch,
Tilehurst at a meeting of the members held on the 13th of JULY 2016.....

Chairman: .....

As amended at a meeting of the members on:

Date of Revision

Signature of Chair

CHRISTCHURCH, TILEHURST CHURCH HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

Part 1- Principles for Charity Purposes

1.1 Doctrinal Basis of Faith

1.2 Doctrinal Distinctives

1.3 Amendments to Part 1

Part 2- Provisions for the Internal Governance of the Church

2.1 Members and Membership

2.2 Baptism

2.3 The Lord's Supper

2.4 Church Officers

2.5 Church Treasurer

2.6 Charity Trustees

2.7 Disciplinary Procedure

2.8 Safeguarding

2.9 Church Business Meetings

2.10 Church Safeguarding Policy

2.11 Amendment of the Church Handbook

Appendix I Doctrinal Basis of Faith

Appendix 2 Matters Requiring Approval At A Church Business Meeting

Principles for Charity Purposes

The Church Constitution

The Church is established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under a constitution dated 20., (and last amended on 20.....) (“the Constitution”) which contains the main legal provisions governing the Church, its purposes and the Doctrinal Basis of Faith, and its powers. Under the Constitution, the people with the responsibility for the general control and management of the administration of the Church are known as the charity trustees.

The Church Handbook

This Church Handbook sets out the practices of the Church and its method of internal governance, none of which are contrary to any of the provisions of the Constitution. It is the document that is referred to as the “Church Rules” within the Constitution.

This Church Handbook was initially adopted by the members on Any amendments since that date will have been approved as provided for under Clause 2.11. Any new member, including the Pastor and his wife (if married), must confirm in writing their wholehearted agreement to the Doctrinal Basis of Faith and acceptance of the provisions of this Church Handbook before their admission to membership.

Part 1 – The Doctrinal Basis of Faith, Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements

1.1 The Doctrinal Basis of Faith

The Doctrinal Basis of Faith (see Appendix 1) sets out matters that we, the members, believe all Christian believers should be able to accept wholeheartedly and a person can only become a member of the Church if they have indicated that they do accept those beliefs.

1.2 Doctrinal Distinctives

We recognise that there are a number of doctrines, not referred to in the Doctrinal Basis of Faith over which genuine Christian believers may take different views. Our Doctrinal Distinctives set out the position and teaching of the Church on these **matter**. Apart from elders and pastors, Church members are not required to agree with all the matters in the Doctrinal Distinctives and may hold and discuss views to the contrary, but members are required to respect the positions set out in the Doctrinal Distinctives as the teaching of the Church. In general, these Distinctives are matters on which believers should not insist upon as necessary to membership or salvation. However, members should be aware that where the Distinctives refer to the ethical application of Biblical truth then they are expected to live in accordance with those Distinctives, specifically at clauses 1.2.6; 1.2.7; 1.2.10.

- 1.2.1 The Bible – As the clear Word of God to His people, the Bible is to be the ultimate authority for all of the Church’s teaching and is sufficient for all of life and godliness (Psalm 19:7-9; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). This is to be demonstrated in its regular reading in church services, its use as the foundation for regular preached ministry and for homegroup teaching and practice as well as individual counselling.
- 1.2.2 Theology – Further to the assertions contained within the Doctrinal Basis of Faith the teaching of the Church shall uphold the doctrines commonly known as reformed. The Elders are required to be in agreement with these doctrines, including:
- The absolute power and sovereignty of God over His creation (Hebrews 1:3. Isaiah 46:10)
 - God’s unconditional election and effective calling of His people to salvation (Ephesians 1:11, Romans 8:30)
 - Christ’s sacrificial death for the sin of his people, only those who believe (John 10:15, 26; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 2:14)
 - The inherent hostility of humanity to God, but for God’s saving intervention (Romans 8:7)
 - The perseverance of genuine believers (John 10:28, 1 Peter 1:7)
- 1.2.3 Governance – Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He mediates His rule through the granting of individuals, roles and gifts to the Church (Ephesians 6:11-12). The Church is to be governed by Elders appointed from within the local congregation (Titus 1:5) who should assume spiritual oversight of the church with humility and a servant spirit (1 Timothy 3:1-7).
- 1.2.4 Baptism - the teaching of the church shall uphold that baptism is ordained by God, as revealed in scripture. It **as** a symbolic act representing the salvation of the individual by their unity with Jesus Christ through faith in His death and resurrection (Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3). Baptism is therefore an act for believers as a demonstration of their pre-existing faith; it is not a means of salvation. The symbolism of baptism is most fully expressed by total immersion (Acts 8:38-39).

- 1.2.5 Baptism of the Holy Spirit – All believers receive the Holy Spirit (are ‘baptised’ by the Spirit) the moment they are brought to true faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; cf. Romans 8:9). The experiences of the apostles and first believers in Acts, separating receipt of the Holy Spirit from their conversion, were unique and do not establish a pattern for the modern believer. All believers may, and should seek to, enter into an increasing knowledge, influence and control of the Holy Spirit within them.
- 1.2.6 Marriage – The members of the Church agree that the teaching of the Bible is that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33) and that all sexual practices outside of marriage are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) regardless of whether or not homosexual marriage is permitted by the laws of England and Wales. The Bible also teaches that we must not be actively or passively complicit in sin (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:8-16; 1 Timothy 5:22) and that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). 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 adulterous or extra-marital sexual practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.
- 1.2.7 Gender distinctives in ministry – God has made men and women equal and co-heirs in Christ (Galatians 3:26-29). Both men and women are equipped by the Lord for essential service to the church, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7). As an effective body, the church requires the complementary roles that are ascribed to men and women in scripture. Notably, the charge to serve the church in the role of Elder is attributed to men (1 Timothy 3:2), as is the authority over teaching in the church (1 Timothy 2:11-15). Similarly, within a family the husband should provide servant leadership to his wife, seeking to love, nurture and protect his family, providing for their spiritual and physical needs. A wife should complement and complete her husband, serving Christ alongside him and training their children (where applicable) in the ways of the Lord (Ephesian 5:22-24).
- 1.2.8 Creation – Genesis provides a true account of God’s creation of the heavens, the earth, and everything in them. God created the first people, Adam and Eve. His creation was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Sin entered the world as a result of humanity’s first disobedience, by the wilful eating of a fruit which God had forbidden (Genesis 3:6). All of humanity has inherited this sinful condition from birth, with the exception of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:12). Death is the right consequence of this, and all subsequent, human sin (Genesis 2:17). The New Testament refers to Adam as a historical figure (Romans 5:12-21), and we continue to do likewise.
- 1.2.9 Spiritual gifts – each believer is to use their spiritual gifts in the service of the Lord (Romans 12:6-8). We recognise, however, that genuine believers may sincerely hold a range of beliefs regarding whether ‘supernatural’ spiritual gifts (e.g. speaking in tongues, gifts of healing) are ongoing today or have ceased. We therefore do not preclude the use of such gifts in church life, but also do not consider them commonplace and request that individuals intending to exercise such gifts speak to the Elders beforehand in order that everything might be done in a fitting and orderly way for the building of the church (1 Corinthians 14:12,40).
- 1.2.10 Sanctity of life – the Bible asserts that an individual’s human nature exists from conception (Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 1:5). It is evidently against scripture and common ethics to wilfully terminate a human life (Genesis 9:6). Therefore, whilst we recognise the complexity of the issue in certain circumstances, such as instances of acute health risk to the mother, embryonic abortion should be considered a termination of human life.

- 1.3 Amendments to this Part 1 of this Church Handbook shall only be permitted where the provisions of Clause 2.11. have been satisfied.

Part 2 - Provisions for the Internal Governance of the Church

2.1 Members and Membership

- 2.1.1 Clause 2.1 comprises the membership requirements of the Church Handbook referred to in the Constitution.
- 2.1.2 Members of the Church shall be those persons who have confirmed in writing (or other means permitted by the Elders) their agreement to the Doctrinal Basis of Faith and their acceptance of the Constitution and this Church Handbook in its entirety (including the duty of members referred to in the Constitution) and whose membership has been approved and has not been suspended or terminated, all in accordance with the provisions of this Clause 2.1.
- 2.1.3 Membership brings with it certain privileges and responsibilities. The privileges are identified as membership of the local Body of Christ in all its work and worship, to be able to partake in discussing and agreeing the way in which the local church should move forward and fulfil its Biblical role in the local community. It also carries the benefit of Pastoral care. The obligations of membership are to submit to the authority and leadership of the Elders in accordance with the provisions of this Church Handbook and the Constitution, to participate in the work of the Church and its activities, to attend meetings regularly, to bear each other up before the Lord in prayer, and to share in the financial needs of the Church. In particular this should involve:
- a. Regular attendance at Sunday worship. (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
 - b. Regular personal prayer and Bible study. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Phil. 4:6)
 - c. Regular attendance, when possible, at the main weekday meeting of the church for prayer, Bible study and fellowship. (Acts 1:14, 2:42)
 - d. Sharing in the life, work and witness of the local church. (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:58)
 - e. Regular giving to the local church and the Lord's work in general. (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
 - f. The showing of Christian love and concern, both for the members of the church family and for the community at large. (John 13:35, 1 Thess. 3:12)
 - g. An endeavour to live a life consistent with the faith we profess. (Rom. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:1)
 - h. Regular attendance at the Lord's Supper. (Acts 2:42, 20:7)

Admission to Membership

- 2.1.4 The first members of the Church are the people who voted to approve the original version of the Constitution together with the original version of this Church Handbook. (The fact that the first members voted to approve the Constitution and Church Handbook, including the Doctrinal Basis of Faith means that no further written declaration from them is required). A person may apply to any one of the Elders to become a member of the Church. Following an interview, if the application is approved by the Elders then the application shall be put to the members at a Church Business Meeting for approval.
- 2.1.5 The Pastor and his wife (if applicable) shall be received into membership on the taking up of his appointment as Pastor subject to their compliance with Clause 2.1.2.
- 2.1.6 A written register shall be maintained of all Church members.

Termination of Membership

- 2.1.7 A member may voluntarily resign by submitting a written request to that effect to the Elders.
- 2.1.8 A member may be removed from membership by the application of the disciplinary procedure set out in Clause 2.7.

2.2 Baptism

- 2.2.1 The Doctrinal Distinctives set out the view of the Church with regard to Baptism.
- 2.2.2 Any person wishing to be baptised shall submit their request to the Elders who will arrange for an interview of the applicant. The representatives shall report back to a meeting of the Elders for approval and to determine the necessary arrangements.
- 2.2.3 An applicant who is to be baptised will be required to give appropriate testimony to their faith before the baptism.

2.3 The Lord's Supper

- 2.3.1 The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in thanksgiving for the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. It is a service of remembrance of, and communion with, the risen Lord by those who have been saved.
- 2.3.2 The Lord's Supper shall typically be celebrated on a monthly basis and open to all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and know Him as their own personal Saviour.

2.4 Church Officers

The Church Officers are the people who hold the roles set out in this Clause 2.4.

Pastors and Elders

- 2.4.1 A Pastor is one of the Elders whose gift in preaching, teaching and pastoral care has been recognised by the Church and who has been appointed by the Church to exercise such a ministry.
- 2.4.2 ChristChurch, Tilehurst was founded by Carey Baptist Church, being a "Particular or Calvinistic Baptist Church". Any Pastor or Elder must be a man whom the Church recognises as gifted in the manner described for eldership in I Timothy ch 3 and Titus ch 1, who holds the doctrines of the Church defined in the Doctrinal Basis of Faith and also those biblical doctrines commonly called "reformed", including particular redemption.
- 2.4.3 Pastors and Elders are elected by the Church, their names having been brought to a members' Meeting on the recommendation of the Elders. Voting takes place at a subsequent members' Meeting. The election must be by secret ballot and a positive vote by at least two thirds of the members present and voting is required for the election of a Pastor or Elder.
- 2.4.4 The role of Elder is a four-year appointment. On completion of four years in service an Elder may stand for re-appointment, subject to the process hereby set out. In recognition of the intrinsic link between their office and livelihood, Pastors are elected for life. If a Pastor or Elder moves away from the area, he will be expected to resign from the Church. If, for any reason, such as advanced age, illness, incapacity, etc. a majority of the Elders believes that one of their number is not able to fulfil his responsibilities they shall ask him to resign.
- 2.4.5 If for any reason such as those given in paragraph 2.4.4 or for any other valid reason a

majority of the Elders believes that one of their number is not able to fulfil his responsibilities and he is not willing to resign then the Elders may bring a resolution to a Members' Meeting for him to be removed from office. A vote shall be taken by secret ballot and a positive vote by at least two thirds of the members present and voting is required for the Pastor or Elder to be removed from office. The decision of the Members' Meeting shall be binding on the Pastor or Elder concerned.

2.4.6 All Elders and Church Officers will also be subject to an annual review to be conducted by at least one other Elder.

Church Treasurer

2.4.7 The Church Elders shall propose appointment to the role of Church Treasurer from within the Church membership.

2.4.8 A candidates' name shall be brought to a Members' Meeting for voting to take place at a subsequent Members' Meeting. A positive vote by a majority of the members present and voting is required to finalise the appointment.

2.4.9 The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Church. Any member holding any church funds shall account for those funds to the Church Treasurer together with such explanations and documentary evidence as will enable him/her to incorporate the figures into the church accounts.

2.4.10 The Church Treasurer is to be appointed indefinitely, but may voluntarily resign by submitting a written request to that effect to the Elders. If for any reason the Elders believe that an individual is not able to fulfil their responsibilities, then the Elders may request the resignation of the individual. Should the individual be unwilling to resign their office then the Elders may bring a resolution to a Members' Meeting for them to be removed from office. A vote shall be taken by secret ballot and a positive majority vote is required for the Church Treasurer to be removed from office.

Other Offices

2.4.11 Other Church members may be appointed as Church Officers on the recommendation of the Elders and if elected at a Members' Meeting. The election must be by secret ballot and a positive vote by at least two thirds of the members present and voting is required for the election of a Church Officer. Such an appointment may be temporary, for a defined period or permanent as decided by the Church.

2.5 Charity Trustees

2.5.1 The Constitution sets out which of the Church Officers are the charity trustees of the Church.

2.6 Church Discipline

Removal from membership

2.6.1 Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5 teach that local churches should remove members who refuse to repent of sin. We believe that local churches should always take this action with the aim that it will prompt the person who has been removed from membership to repent so that he or she can be welcomed back into the church and with the aim that it will help to prevent other members from being tempted to follow their example.

2.6.2 An unrepentant member of the church may be removed from membership for any of the following reasons:

- a. He or she errs in doctrine so that he or she no longer affirms the Doctrinal Basis of Faith of the Church
- b. He or she is no longer willing to respect the practices and doctrinal positions adopted by the Church set out in Part 1 of this Church Handbook
- c. He or she errs in conduct by committing sin which brings the church into disrepute
- d. He or she has consistently failed to fulfil the obligations of a member of the church
- e. He or she refuses to repent of sin committed against another member which has been drawn to his or her attention
- f. He or she has made false and malicious allegations against a member of the church
- g. He or she is no longer living in submission to the leadership and authority of the Elders of the church

2.6.3 A member may only be removed from membership by a resolution of the members at a Church Business Meeting which has been proposed by the Elders of the Church.

2.6.4 The Elders shall not propose a resolution to remove a Church member unless the following steps have been taken:

2.6.4.1 The Elders have held a charity trustee disciplinary meeting (“the CTD Meeting”) at which they considered whether or not to propose a resolution to remove the member (“M”) from membership;

2.6.4.2 The Elders have given to M a minimum of 21 clear days’ notice of the CTD Meeting, informing M why his or her removal from membership is being considered, and inviting M to make representations to the Elders as to why he or she should not be removed from membership;

2.6.4.3 The Elders allowed M to make those representations at the CTD Meeting himself or herself or through his or her representative; and

2.6.4.4 The Elders took those representations into account when deciding whether to propose a resolution that M be removed from membership.

2.6.5 The member whose removal from Membership is proposed shall be entitled to a reasonable amount of time during the meeting at which the Church members vote on the resolution to remove him or her from membership to address the members and make such representations as he or she wishes prior to the vote on the resolution.

2.6.6 The member shall be informed of the decision of the members and the register of members amended accordingly where termination of membership is to be applied.

2.6.7 A person who has been removed from membership shall be welcomed back into membership if they apply for membership in the normal way and their application is approved.

2.6.8 The steps set out at Clauses 2.6.9 to 2.6.11 should also be followed prior to the CTD Meeting taking place, but failure to follow those steps will not invalidate a resolution of the members to remove a person from Membership.

2.6.9 The Elders must be informed where it is believed that any of the reasons set out in Clause 2.6.2 apply to a member of the Church. When a member makes a report against another who has sinned against them, that member should normally raise the issue first with the person committing the offence. If the two persons concerned are unable to resolve the matter between themselves then other witnesses (which may include an elder) should be

called upon, according to Matthew 18:16, to seek a resolution. Only after these steps are unsuccessful should the matter be reported to the eldership.

2.6.10 Where the Elders are informed or they themselves believe that any of the reasons at Clause 2.6.2 apply to a member, they shall appoint two persons of spiritual maturity to meet with the member to enquire into the matter and to investigate the matter thoroughly, and where appropriate to encourage the member against whom the allegations have been made to repent.

2.6.11 After the persons appointed under Clause 2.6.10 have investigated the matter and have met with the member against whom the allegations have been made (or the member has been given reasonable opportunity to meet and has refused), they shall report back to the Elders who shall decide whether it is necessary for a CTD Meeting to be held and what additional steps they should take (if any).

2.6.12 Even in cases where there has been genuine repentance, the Elders may still be required to report the facts arising from the investigation to the relevant secular authorities. In such cases the Elders shall give to the member concerned all the support that is appropriate for a member who is genuinely repentant.

Additional Disciplinary Measures

2.6.13 Whenever the members vote to remove a person from membership, they may also resolve to impose any of the following measures:

- a. a restriction from attending or taking part in any or all of the meetings of the Church, including meetings or activities that are normally open to the public;
- b. the remaining members may be required not to have any association with the person who has been dismissed from membership in accordance with clear and specific guidance from the Elders as to what is required in this regard.

2.6.14 Any of the measures at Clause 2.6.13 may be removed by a resolution of the Elders.

2.7 Church Business Meetings

The provisions for Church business meetings are set out in the Constitution under the Clauses headed “Members’ decisions” and “General meetings of members”. A “general meeting of members” under the Constitution is referred to as a “Church Business Meeting” in this Church Handbook.

Decisions covering any matters listed in Appendix 2 to this Church Handbook require the approval of the Church members at a Church Business Meeting.

2.9 Church Safeguarding Policy

2.9.1 The Elders shall operate a church safeguarding policy and shall ensure that activities involving children and vulnerable adults are carried out in accordance with that policy.

2.9.2 Each person overseeing church activities involving children or vulnerable adults and every charity trustee shall provide a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

2.10 Exclusion of Non-Members From Public Meetings of the Church

2.10.1 The Elders may decide that the open invitation to attend public meetings of the Church customarily extended to non-members may be withdrawn from any individual who seeks to obstruct the carrying out of the work and ministry of the Church, or to undermine the leadership of the Church.

2.10.2 An invitation that has been withdrawn may be reinstated by a resolution of the Elders.

2.11 Amendment of the Church Handbook

2.11.1 Other than the section headed "Principles for Charity Purposes", any provisions of this Church Handbook can be amended by the Elders under the authority of a resolution of the members of the Church approving such a change at a Church Business Meeting, provided that the proposed amendment shall not be such as would cause the Church to lose its charitable status or such as would cause this Church Handbook to be inconsistent with the Constitution. The section headed "Principles for Charity Purposes" can only be amended where this is required because the provisions of the Constitution have changed.

2.11.2 A two thirds majority of those members present and voting at the Church Business Meeting is required to approve a proposed amendment to any clause.

Excepting the following circumstances:

(i) any provision of this Handbook requiring approval by a percentage of the membership greater than a simple majority of the members present and voting. In this case the majority required to amend the relevant provision shall be at least 75% of members present and voting;

(ii) the provisions contained in Part 1 of this Church Handbook where a majority of 75% is required, and

(iii) the provisions in the section headed "Principles for Charity Purposes" where the charity trustees shall make the amendment without the need for a vote following any change to the Constitution.

2.11.3 Notice of any proposed amendment together with the specific wording of the proposed change must be given in writing to all Church members at least 2 weeks before the meeting at which the proposal will be put to the vote.

2.11.4 No amendment may be made under this Clause to any provision of the Constitution, including the Doctrinal Basis of Faith.

DOCTRINAL BASIS OF FAITH

God

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is the unchangeable, holy, faithful, loving and almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge. He sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

The Bible

The Bible, comprising the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the complete and final written record of God's revelation to the human race and is in its entirety the word of God. It was written by human authors who were supernaturally moved by the Holy Spirit so that every word they wrote was divinely inspired. The Bible is therefore without error and is fully reliable in fact and doctrine. It is the final authority and is always sufficient in all matters of belief and conduct. A true and spiritual understanding of the Bible comes through the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

The Human Race

All men and women are made in the image of God and have equal worth. Their greatest purpose is to worship, love and obey God. As a result of the disobedience and fall into sin of our first parents, every aspect of the fallen human nature, with which we are born, is corrupt and without spiritual life. All men and women sin and live in rebellion against God. All are therefore under God's condemnation and need to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him. God therefore commands all people everywhere to repent, turn from their sin and believe in Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, uniting in the one person of the eternal Son of God his divine nature and his human nature. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary while she was a virgin, and lived a sinless life.

On the cross he died as a substitute for his people, shedding his precious blood, bearing God's wrath and being punished for their sins. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven. Now he is exalted as Lord of all and intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father. The only way that anyone can come to God the Father is through Jesus Christ his Son.

Salvation

The Gospel is God's plan of salvation. Salvation, being saved from the punishment our sins deserve, is entirely a work of God's grace. It cannot be earned or deserved. It was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ for his people who, because of God's unconditional love, were chosen in Him before the world was made. God in his love forgives sinners and, through the Holy Spirit, grants them the gifts of repentance and faith.

God's salvation in Christ is freely offered to everyone who wants to be saved. Sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith alone, are considered by God to be righteous, are adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life. The salvation of every believer is therefore eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ through his saving and keeping power.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ. He indwells all believers giving spiritual life, applying and bringing assurance of salvation, producing the fruit of the Spirit and making them more like Jesus, the Son of God. He empowers and gives gifts to the members of the Church for worship, service and mission.

The Church

Christ is the head of the Church, to which all who are saved from every generation and all nations belong. This universal Church is seen in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are united in their love for the Lord Jesus Christ and are committed to each other for the worship of God, for pastoral care, discipline and evangelism. The Bible is central to our church life, preaching and worship. Unity is expressed within and between local churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the Gospel.

Believers' Baptism & The Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper were introduced and commanded for believers by our Lord Jesus Christ. They are administered in the context of the local church.

Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is a beautiful symbol of the washing away of sins, union with Christ, entry into his Church and living for God. Being baptised in water does not make anyone a Christian.

The Lord's Supper is a simple, symbolic meal to remind believers of Christ's sacrifice for them, offered once for all. As we partake we are reminded to feed on Christ in our hearts by faith. It involves no change in the bread and wine.

The future

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory and judge the world in righteousness. The bodies of the dead will be raised. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new in new heavens and a new earth and will be glorified forever. The time of Christ's return is unknown to all except the Father but we say, "Come soon, Lord Jesus."

MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL AT A CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

- Appointment and removal of Church Officers, including Pastors, Elders and Church Treasurer.
- Admission and removal of members
- Amendments to the Church Handbook
- Acceptance of Church Business Meeting minutes
- Acceptance of an annual Church budget¹

¹ The Church budget is simply a plan which the trustees will seek to adhere to. The trustees may go over or under budget if they think it is necessary.