



**NORTHCLIFF
UNION CHURCH
CONSTITUTION**



NORTHCLIFF UNION CHURCH

PREAMBLE

On 13 August 1950, a small group of believers began worship services at Northcliff. On 20 August 1952, the 24 members of that early congregation adopted a constitution, giving birth to Northcliff Union Church. That document has been our constitutional guideline for the past 60+ years, and has formally been referred to over the years as “The Constitution”.

The Constitution and attached Statement of Faith and Rules, specify how our Church is to be governed; what we as a Christian Church believe; and lay down guidelines for the day-to-day running of the Church. With the passing of time, certain amendments have become necessary to bring the Constitution adopted in 1952 in line with present-day requirements.

At a combined meeting of the Pastors, Elders and Councillors, held on 12 June 2003, the proposed amendments to “The Constitution, Rules and Statement of Faith” were approved unanimously. The amended documents were duly submitted to the members of the Church for final approval in writing as required by the original Constitution.

The Constitution is basic to Church Membership. By aligning yourself with the Constitution and Statement of Faith, you are joining a body of Evangelical Christians who believe what the Bible teaches.

New applicants for Church membership are required to state unequivocally that they subscribe to the Constitution and accept the Statement of Faith, as a condition of membership. We sincerely trust and pray that all our existing members will also accept these documents as a basis for their membership and confession of faith.

Considerable thought has gone into the Constitution and Statement of Faith with the object of helping us to make Northcliff Union Church a more effective, highly relevant Church with a vital, committed membership.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Northcliff Union Church, in agreement with Evangelical confessions of faith,

BELIEVES:

- 1.1 that the Bible in its original manuscripts is inspired by God. Holy men of God wrote as they were moved, guided and guarded by the Holy Spirit, so that the final product of their writings is the inerrant, infallible Word of God and is the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct¹.
- 1.2 in one God² eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are Co-equal, Co-eternal & Co-essential³.
- 1.3 that God created mankind, both male and female, in His own image⁴; that sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and, by his fall, through him all mankind fell from God's grace, incurring the wages of sin which is death⁵ and a totally depraved sinful nature⁶.
- 1.4 that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit⁷, and born of the Virgin Mary⁸. Jesus, in one Person, is at once true God⁹ and true man¹⁰; that He died on Calvary's cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, once for all, forever; that all who repent and put their faith and trust in Him, are justified on the grounds of His atoning sacrifice¹¹.
- 1.5 that the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead physically and visibly by the power of the Holy Spirit¹². He ascended into heaven where He presides in the place of honour, with the Father, acting as our High Priest and Advocate¹³.
- 1.6 in the personal, physical, visible and imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ¹⁴ to redeem His Church; to consummate history; and judge the ungodly¹⁵.
- 1.7 in the Person of the Holy Spirit who convicts the world and the unbeliever of sin, righteousness and judgement. He works within the life of the believer to bring about new life that imparts to the believer the Divine nature¹⁶.
- 1.8 that the Christian life is to be lived victoriously under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, who is the witness of God in the believer to the fact that he/she is a child of God, and that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the authoritative Word of God - the final guide and authority in all matters of faith and conduct¹⁷.
- 1.9 that Satan exists as a real spiritual being, created by and subject to God¹⁸. He is the arch-enemy of God; the originator of sin¹⁹; the arch-tempter of humanity; that he now opposes God's purposes; that God has decreed his and his cohorts' final defeat on earth and banishment to hell²⁰.
- 1.10 that the Church Universal is that whole company of believers who have repented of their sin and put their faith and trust in Jesus as their personal Saviour and LORD; that the local Church is an expression in microcosm of the Church Universal, doing His work as His body in the world²¹.
- 1.11 that the local Church is any community of believers who gather for worship, instruction from God's Word and service, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; that the local Church is subject to the Lord Jesus as Head of His Church; the local Church is committed to discovering and doing the will of God through the instruction of the Word of God.
- 1.12 the local Church is committed to faithfully observing the ordinances of the Lord Jesus - The Lord's Supper and Baptism, and is also committed to the carrying out of the Great Commission by means of mission and evangelism, as Christ commanded²².
- 1.13 that salvation is by grace alone, through faith, without works; but that such genuine saving faith will always manifest itself in a response of good works, witness and holy living²³.
- 1.14 that God has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ to whom He has given all authority and judgement.²⁴ On that day the fallen angels and all people who have lived on earth will appear before His throne to give an account of their deeds, either good or evil²⁵. Those who have been justified by faith and are born again believer will inherit an eternal life of peace, joy and eternal rewards. The unrighteous who do not know God's salvation will be punished by being excluded eternally from God's presence, and eternal punishment in hell.
- 1.15 That a personal confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the essential prerequisite for church membership²⁶.

- 1 2 Timothy 3:16 & 2 Peter 1:20, 21
- 2 Deuteronomy 6:4
- 3 John 16:7 & John 17:1
- 4 Genesis 1:27
- 5 Romans 5:17-21
- 6 Romans 7:18, Psalm 51:5
- 7 Luke 1:35
- 8 Matthew 2:20-25
- 9 John 14:9
- 10 Luke 2:52
- 11 1 Peter 3:18, John 3:16, Heb 10:11-18, Heb 9:24-28
- 12 Acts 1:3, Romans 14:9
- 13 Eph 1:20-21, Heb 9:11, 1 Jn 2:1, Acts 2:33, Phil 2:5-11
- 14 1Thess 4:16
- 15 2Thess 1:1-12, Heb 2:3, Heb 9:28
- 16 John 3:3-8 & 16:8, 2 Peter 1:2-4
- 17 John 3:3-8
- 18 Job 1:6
- 19 Genesis 3:1
- 20 Revelation 20:10
- 21 Colossians 1:18-24
- 22 1 Cor 12:13, Eph 1:22-23 & 5:22, Matt 28:19-20
- 23 Matt 5:20, James 2, Titus 3:5-8
- 24 John 5:22,29, Acts 17:31
- 25 1 Cor 6:3, Jude 1:6, Matt 16:27, Matt 25:31
- 26 Acts 2:47

CONSTITUTION OF NORTHCLIFF UNION CHURCH (“THE CHURCH”)

1. CHURCH GOVERNANCE

- 1.1. The Church shall function as a Union Church and is hereby constituted as such.
- 1.2. The Church acknowledges the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the supreme head of the Church.
- 1.3. The governance of the Church rests with its members, and specifically in duly constituted meetings of members.
- 1.4. Leadership:
The church shall function through the medium of the Church Council, comprising Elders and Deacons. The members of the Church Council of 10 or more persons, and who shall be called “Councillors,” will be responsible for the carrying out of instructions and decisions taken by the Church at Members’ Meetings and for the day-to-day running of the Church. A body of at least 4 Elders, including the Pastors, who will, as their chief function, be responsible for the spiritual oversight of the Church.

2. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

2.1 MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1.1 Membership shall comprise:-

- 2.1.1.1 Those who are members of the Church at the date of adoption of this Constitution.

- 2.1.1.2 Those who are accepted into membership in terms of this Constitution.

- 2.1.2 Members of other Christian Churches may become members of the Church and need not cancel their membership of their previous Churches or denominations.

2.2 ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

- 2.2.1 Applicants for membership must indicate on their application forms that they:

- 2.2.1.1 accept every aspect of the Church Statement of Faith.

- 2.2.1.2 subscribe to the Church Constitution and Rules.

- 2.2.1.3 have personally accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

- 2.2.2 On completion of the application form, candidates will be interviewed by a Pastor or a person or persons appointed by the Pastor, who will submit a report on the suitability or not, in his/her or their opinion, of such applicants for acceptance as members.

- 2.2.3 All applications for membership that have been found suitable as above, shall be submitted to a Members’ Meeting for approval or otherwise.

2.3 CANCELLATION OF MEMBERSHIP

In order to keep an up to date roll of members involved in the activities of the Church, Council shall periodically review the list of members with a view to recommending to a Members' Meeting the cancellation of membership of those who are no longer in contact with the church.

2.3.1 *Members who leave*

In respect of members of the Church who leave the area without notifying the Church or are no longer in fellowship with the church:

2.3.1.1 Every effort will be made to contact such members in the first instance.

2.3.1.2 If unsuccessful, the names of missing members will then be displayed for perusal by the congregation. After having been displayed for a period of one month, if no response has been elicited from the congregation, a communication will be forwarded to the last known address of the missing member informing him/her that if no response is received within 30 days from the date of the notice, their membership will be cancelled.

2.3.1.3 If the above process is unsuccessful, the names of persons who have not been contacted will be submitted to the next Members' Meeting for the purpose of cancelling their membership.

2.3.2 The names of members who have passed away or resigned their membership will be removed from the Membership Roll.

2.3.3 *Church Discipline:*

In the unhappy event of an allegation of unworthy conduct, or the adoption of belief which is contrary to sound doctrine as expressed in the Statement of Faith, being brought against a member of the congregation, the Pastors and Elders shall make diligent enquiry. If after prayerful consideration the allegation is substantiated, the Pastors and Elders shall, in the first instance, make every effort to effect repentance, reconciliation and restoration. Should such efforts fail, the Pastors and Elders shall, at their discretion, determine the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken against the person concerned. All disciplinary action shall be based on the premise that church discipline must be redemptive and not merely punitive.

2.3.4 *Re-instatement of Membership*

Where membership had been cancelled in terms of Chapter 2.3, full membership may be restored on application by the former member, on the recommendation of the Pastor or Senior Pastor.

3. APPOINTMENT OF PASTORS

When the Church desires to call and support a minister or ministers for the Church, it shall in the first instance consider extending the call to a Baptist Minister. If an acceptable candidate, in the opinion of the call committee, cannot be found, the call committee may request the secretary to convene a Members' Meeting and, if agreed by a special resolution by the members of the Church, a call may be extended to any suitably qualified evangelical minister of a denomination specified at the meeting. Notwithstanding, the induction of a minister of any denomination to the Church, it shall remain a Union Church and the tenets of the Church as set forth in this Constitution and Statement of Faith shall be adhered to by the said minister.

4. ORDINANCES

The Church shall observe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 4.1 BAPTISM: As the Church is a Union Church, with members of various Christian denominations, the Church will practice both Infant Dedication and Believer's Baptism in accordance with the scriptural understanding and beliefs of members.
- 4.2 THE LORD'S SUPPER: Participation at the Lord's Supper shall be open to all who love the Lord and have accepted Him as the Son of God and their personal Saviour. Communion shall be observed at such times as the Pastors and Elders may decide.

5. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The financial year of the Church shall end on the 31 December. The Annual General Meeting of members will be held not later than 31 March each year. Items on the agenda will include:

- 5.1 verification of minutes of previous Members' Meetings
- 5.2 election of Deacons and Elders
- 5.3 a report on the work of the various ministries of the Church for the past year.
- 5.4 audited financial statement for the past year.
- 5.5 election of auditors for the ensuing year.

6. PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS:

- 6.1 All immovable property owned by the Church shall be vested in the Trustees and registered in the name of the Church. The Trustees may, for and on behalf of the Church, acquire by purchase, donation or otherwise, movable and immovable property of whatever kind, and may, on behalf of the Church, sell, mortgage, pledge, donate or lease such property, subject to the approval of Council in the case of

movable property. Immovable property may only be dealt with in the above manner, subject to a special resolution passed at a meeting of members.

- 6.2 Council may, on behalf of the Church, invest funds in such financial instruments with any bank or financial institution as it may decide from time to time.

7. BORROWING POWERS:

The Trustees of the Church shall have the right to borrow money with or without security whenever it is deemed necessary from any bank, institution or person, subject to the approval of a Members' Meeting in the case of money borrowed to finance the development or purchase of immovable property. In all other cases, borrowings will be subject to the approval of Council.

8. SIGNING AUTHORITY:

Signing authority may be delegated by Council resolution to such persons as the Council may deem fit at their discretion. The Trustees have full signing authority on behalf of the Church and specifically to sign any legal documentation to give effect to any matter pertaining to Chapter 6.

9. PAYMENT OF MONEY

The Council has the right to secure the payment and receipt of money in such a manner as they may deem fit.

10. TRUSTEES

The Trustees of the Church shall be the Secretary and the Treasurer for the time being and provided that the Council may at any time elect Trustees in lieu of the Secretary and Treasurer from amongst the Elders or Councillors.

11. CONSTITUTION AND RULES

- 11.1 Members may adopt such Rules as they may deem fit for carrying on the work of the Church in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.
- 11.2 This constitution and appendant rules may only be amended by special resolution passed at a duly constituted meeting of members.

12. DISSOLUTION

- 12.1. In the event that the Church should cease to exist, e.g.
- 12.1.1 when the members of the Church have become largely dispersed, or
- 12.1.2 when services and meetings have ceased for a period of at least 12 consecutive months, or
- 12.1.3 by special resolution of 90% of the members of the Church. The Trustees are authorised to wind up the affairs of the Church. The assets of the Church, or the proceeds from the sale of the assets may only be used for the purpose of spreading

the Gospel in the district of Northcliff by a Christian Evangelical Bible-based Church or Churches or Bible College.

- 12.2. If, after a reasonable period, but not less than 1 year after the date the Trustees had decided to wind up the affairs of the Church, the disposal of the Church assets had not been finalised, the Trustees will proceed with the sale of all movable and immovable property. The proceeds from the sale of the assets will then be distributed equally amongst the mission organisations supported by the Church over the previous 5 years and the Bible Society of South Africa.

RULES

13. MEETINGS

13.1. NOTICE OF MEETINGS:

13.1.1. Not less than twenty one days' notice shall be given for meetings of members except for meetings called in terms of 13.4.

13.1.2. The notice of meeting must state the date, time and venue, and must be displayed on the Church notice board on at least two Sundays immediately prior to the meeting.

13.1.3. The notice of meeting must be accompanied by the agenda for the meeting.

13.1.3.1. Agenda:

The agenda must specify all matters to be dealt with at the meeting, clearly differentiating between ordinary business and special business.

13.1.3.2. Ordinary Business will include, inter alia:

- Verification of minutes
- Auditor's report and Financial Statements
- Appointment of auditors
- Ministry reports submitted to the Annual General Meeting
- Any other business which the Chairman & Secretary agree should be treated as ordinary

13.1.3.3. Special Business will include, inter alia:

- All matters relating to the pastorate
- Election of Members, Deacons and Elders.
- Amendments to the Constitution and Rules.
- Cancellation of membership.
- All matters relating to the purchase, sale or mortgage of immovable property.
- Any other business which the Chairman and Secretary agree should be treated as special business.

13.1.3.4. Any matter not on the agenda may be brought up for discussion at the sole discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.

13.2. VOTING:

- 13.2.1. Only members who have attained the age of 16 years shall be eligible to vote at Members' Meetings.
- 13.2.2. Voting shall be by show of hands unless a ballot is requested by at least 8 members and provided that elections of Pastors, Deacons and Elders will always be by ballot.
- 13.2.3. All matters proposed as ordinary business at a Members' Meeting will be decided by a 60% majority of members present and entitled to vote.
- 13.2.4. All matters proposed as special business at a Members' Meeting will be decided by a 75% majority of members present and entitled to vote.

13.3. QUORUM:

Thirty members of the church shall form a quorum for a meeting of members. In the absence of a quorum after 30 minutes from the time for which a meeting was called, the meeting will be adjourned for not less than one week. Notice of the adjournment shall be given and announced at the intervening Sunday services. At the adjourned meeting, the business may be proceeded with, even in the absence of a quorum.

13.4. MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

- 13.4.1. Shall be held at least once every six months or as often as the business of the church requires.
- 13.4.2. The Pastor or the Senior Pastor, if there is more than one Pastor, shall have the right independently to call a meeting of members if he thinks this is necessary.
- 13.4.3. The Secretary shall call a meeting if requested in writing by not less than eight members provided that the subject matter to be discussed is included in the requisition.
- 13.4.4. The Secretary shall be obliged to call any meeting requested in terms of 13.4.2. or 13.4.3 within 30 days of receiving the request and not less than eight days nor more than 21 days notice of the meeting shall be given.

14. MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

- 14.1. The Elders and Deacons shall meet jointly once a month in a Council meeting. Extraordinary Council meetings may be called at any time if the Chairman and/or Secretary deem it necessary or expedient to do so. In addition, the Secretary shall be obliged promptly to call an extraordinary meeting if requested by at least three Councillors.

- 14.2. Elders will enjoy the same voting rights as Deacons at Council meetings. All matters to be decided at any Council meeting will be decided by a simple majority of votes.
- 14.3. 50% of Elders and Deacons, provided this number is not less than 5, shall constitute a quorum.
- 14.4. The agenda, relevant minutes and any other discussion papers are to be circulated at least 2 days before the meeting.
- 14.5. In addition to the monthly Council meeting, the Elders shall meet with the Pastors whenever necessary to consider the affairs of the Church.
- 14.6. For any agenda item where a Council member may have a conflict of interest, it should be declared at the outset of the meeting. The Chairman shall decide whether the Council member should be recused from the discussion and/or voting, to ensure sound principles of governance.

15. THE CHAIRMAN

- 15.1. The Pastor or Senior Pastor, if there is more than one Pastor, shall preside at all Members' Meetings, as well as at all meetings of Council.
- 15.2. Should the above said Chairman elect to vacate the chair, or during his absence, the Vice-Chairman or other nominee of the Chairman shall act as Chairman. In the event of their absence, a substitute shall be appointed by the meeting.
- 15.3. The Chairman at any meeting shall in addition to his normal right to vote, have a casting vote.

16. CHURCH OFFICE BEARERS

At the first joint meeting of Council after the annual general meeting, the vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer shall be elected.

17. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Council may form management committees to assist in the administration of church activities and ministries. Members of the Church may be co-opted to these committees. The Chairman of each management committee shall be a Councillor.

18. MINISTRY STRUCTURES

The various ministries of the church will in every case report to a ministry cluster/focus area committee or directly to one of the Church leaders. Ministry leadership structures may comprise of church members and adherents provided that an adherent may not preside at a meeting of the committee.

19. ELECTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

19.1. GENERAL

- 19.1.1. Deacons and Elders shall be qualified for the office by their spiritual maturity, character and way of life, and according to the teaching of Scripture (including inter alia the guidelines laid down in Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-13). Any Deacon or Elder who has or may have a conflict of interest should declare it prior to the acceptance of nomination for appointment to Council.
- 19.1.2. All names submitted by the Pastors, Elders and Members for the position of Elder or Deacon in terms of 19.2. and 19.3.1. below will be discussed at a meeting of the Pastors and Elders, who will discuss the suitability of the candidates in terms of 19.1.1. above. Their recommendations will be submitted to Council for discussion and endorsement prior to being submitted to the Annual General Meeting for approval.
- 19.1.3. Deacons and Elders shall be elected by the Church at the Annual General Meeting, to hold office for 3 years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election of one further term.
- 19.1.4. In the event of a vacancy occurring either through resignation or the need to increase the number of serving Elders or Deacons during any year, either body may co-opt a member or members of the Church to serve as Elders or Deacons. Any such appointment will, however, need to be ratified at the next Annual General Meeting.
- 19.1.5. The names of nominations for Deacon or Elder including those retiring by rotation who are standing for re-election must be included in the agenda for the Annual General Meeting provided that the final list of nominations will only be determined at the meeting referred to in 19.1.2.
- 19.1.6. No nominations will be necessary for retiring Elders or Deacons who offer themselves for re-election.

19.2. ELECTION OF DEACONS

Every Church member shall be entitled to nominate any member of the Church for the position of Deacon. Nominations shall be in writing, must be signed by the nominee and the proposer, and must be handed to the Senior Pastor at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting. Any Deacon who has served for two full consecutive periods (i.e. for six years) shall stand down from office for a period of twelve months before being eligible for election as Deacon again.

19.3. ELECTION OF ELDERS

19.3.1. In the event of a vacancy, the Pastors and Elders will consider names of members who they wish to propose for election. Members will also be invited to submit nominations for consideration by the Pastors and Elders.

19.3.2. Nominations for the position of Elder must be in writing, must be signed by the

nominee and proposer, and must be handed to the Senior Pastor at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting.

19.3.3. Any Elder who has served for two full consecutive periods (i.e. for six years) shall stand down from office for a period of twelve months before being eligible for election as Elder again.

19.3.4. The Pastors and Elders shall determine the number of Elders required to serve the Church from time to time. The objective should be for the elected Elders and ordained Elders (Pastors) to be of a similar number.

20. ARBITRATION

Any dispute or difference which may arise and which cannot be settled by the Pastors or Elders, or at a Members' Meeting, shall be referred to an independent Christian arbitrator to be agreed by the parties concerned in the dispute.

21. ADDITIONS TO CONSTITUTION REQUIRED FOR THE CHURCH TO REGISTER AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION AGREED BY SPECIAL RESOLUTION PASSED AT A MEMBERS' MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2003.

a) The name of the Church is Northcliff Union Church.

b) OBJECTIVES:

1. The main objectives of the Church are to provide the local community with an interdenominational evangelical church, not aligned to any other Christian denomination.

2. To provide adequate accommodation and regular opportunities for worship; to provide for the diverse needs of the Congregation, the Church will arrange ministries such as Sunday School, Youth Groups, Ladies' Ministries, Men's Fellowship, etc.

3. The Church's secondary objectives are to provide religious and emotional support and counselling for the community; After School Care for children, Adult Literacy classes, Soup Kitchen, etc.

c) The Council shall have the authority to appoint staff workers, agents, attorneys, or other persons to perform any work which may be necessary on behalf of the Church. Council may not give any money or other assets to members, office bearers, or agents. They may, however, be remunerated at a reasonable rate for work done or expenses incurred. The Church may also employ full-time or part-time staff and remunerate them in accordance with fair and equitable practice.

- d) The Church shall:
- Exist in its own right, separate from the members of the Church.
 - Be able to sue and be sued in its own name.

The Church is a non-profit organisation. The income, funds and assets shall be used for the furtherance of its objectives. The Council is authorised to accept donations, bequests or any other assets in money or kind.

- e) Continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office bearers.
- f) Council members or office bearers of the Church do not have any rights over any assets that belong to the Church. No member of the Council shall be held responsible in his or her personal capacity for the financial obligations of the Church.
- g) Minutes will be taken at every Council, Committee or Members' Meeting to record decisions. Such minutes will be distributed at the following meeting for confirmation as a true record of proceedings and will thereafter be signed by the chairman.
- h) The income of the Church derives from income from its investments and from voluntary offerings, the needs of the work being laid before the Lord in prayer.
- i) The Treasurer is required to direct all revenue and expenditure transactions (other than Petty Cash items) through the Church bank account and to maintain proper books of account at all times.

Updated 18th May 2005

Draft revision date: 27 July 2016