

Original Rivers Constitution

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Section 1 – Name and Introduction

This Church is known as Rivers Baptist Church (subsequently referred to as “the Church” in this document) and is affiliated with the Baptist Union of Queensland.

The Church consists of Members who have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptised by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In addition, Members must:

- a) Accept doctrines as set out in Section 2 of this Constitution as part of their Christian belief.
- b) Accept the Values Statement, Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Objective Statements (together called the “Ministry Statements”) as set out in the Church Handbook.

More detail about membership requirements is set out in the Constitution and the Church Handbook.

It should be noted that this Constitution relates to other documents namely the Church Handbook and the Church Manual.

- ❖ As a general principle, the Constitution contains matters affecting the life of this Church which are unlikely to change very often. Any changes or amendments will be subject to the requirements of Section 11 of the Constitution.
- ❖ The Church Handbook will contain items, which have strategic medium term significance (e.g. 2 to 5 years) and can be more easily amended by a motion at a duly constituted Members Meeting. Details of the process for any changes are set out in the Church Handbook.
- ❖ The Church Manual will be a collation of policies and procedures covering the day to day running of this Church. It will in general contain documents developed by the Staff or Ministry Leaders which have been submitted to the Board for approval on behalf of the Members. A copy of the Church Manual will be held in the Church Office for reference by any Member who requests it. In addition, copies of the Church Manual will be provided to all Directors of objective areas. This document will be treated as a controlled document and any changes or amendments will be included in the document with a notation of when and by whom the changes were recorded. (For the purposes of this document, a Director will be defined as the person responsible for an objective area.)

Section 2 – Objectives and Statement of Faith

The Church's objectives are to advance Christianity through worship and service activities, as stated more fully in the Church Handbook.

Whilst it is recognised that the Scriptures are the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, this Church accepts the following statement of faith as a summary of Biblical beliefs for the guidance of its Members.

2.1 About God

There is one true living God, who is Spirit, light and love. The creator and ruler of the universe, including everyone and everything in it, who is absolutely holy, infinitely good and great, all-powerful, all-present, all-knowing and personal. He has eternally existed in three persons, the Holy Trinity i.e. the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These are co-equal and are one God. (*Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; John 4: 24; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16*).

2.2 About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is God, the Son, the second person in the Trinity and the one through whom the Father manages His affairs. He came to earth and took on humanity still fully God and now forever also fully human. This incarnation was achieved through a miraculous conception and virgin birth. Jesus lived a sinless human life in perfect obedience to the Father and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin and a substitution in our place at His death on the cross. By the Holy Spirit's power, God the Father raised Him bodily from the dead, conquering Satan, sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory where He intercedes on our behalf. He will return to Earth bodily to claim His own and visibly reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (*Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22,23; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13, 3:4-7; Hebrews 4:14-15*).

2.3 About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God with the Father and the Son. He is personally present in power to fulfil all of God's program purposed in love. He is present in the world to convince people of their sin and need for Jesus Christ. Upon a person's repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the individual. He is the gift of eternal life, the promise of the Father. The Holy Spirit provides believers with power for living a godly life, understanding spiritual truth and guidance in doing what pleases the Father. In Him reside all the spiritual gifts necessary to build up the Church. He exercises these gifts through believers as they submit to Him. Christians are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and live daily under His control. (*John 14:16-17; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16-17; 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 3:16-17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18*).

2.4 About the Bible

The Bible is God's self-communication in written form to us. It is an historical book written by human authors, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the revelation of the objective Word of God regardless of our subjective response to it. It is the supreme source of truth and the final authority for Christian belief and living. It is not an end in itself but the means by which we come to a knowledge of Christ. Because God inspired it, it is the truth without error. (*Psalm 12:6; 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-13; 1 Timothy 2:4; 4:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:25; 3:7, 16; Hebrews 10:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21*).

2.5 About People

People are the supreme object of God's creation. They are made in His image to be His representatives and like Him in character. Although all human beings still display evidence of their divine creation, they are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called sin. Sin is the irrational assertion of independence from the Creator, tainting the good in people and in their thoughts, words and deeds. From the moment the human race rebelled (fell), this attitude of independence from God has caused alienation from self, neighbour and the environment. This alienation or death means that every individual is hopelessly lost and destined for an eternity in hell, the second death. (*Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; 59: 1,2; Romans 3:23, 5:12; 8:19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Revelation 20:14-15*).

2.6 About Eternity

All people are created as eternal beings. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. After death, there will be a resurrection of the body and a final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ. There will then be the creation of new heavens and earth where sin will no longer exist. All will either exist eternally in Hell, alienated and separated from God because of personal sin (eternal loneliness and death); or eternally in fellowship with God through salvation from sin (eternal union or life). (*Matthew 18:8; 25:41, 46; John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:42-48; Hebrews 9:27; 1 John 2:25; 5:11-13; Revelation 20:15*).

2.7 About Salvation

Salvation begins for the individual when that person receives the free gift of eternal life. Eternal life is the very life of Jesus Christ Himself resident in the individual through the person of the Holy Spirit. This occurs upon repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone and is declared in Believer's Baptism. This gift of God's grace and mercy is what Jesus Christ has made possible by His perfect life, His atoning death, His powerful resurrection, His glorious ascension, His ongoing priesthood and His certain return. Salvation is assured by the grace

and commitment power of God. The Holy Spirit provides power over sin as a person lives in dependence upon and in obedience to Him. (*John 10: 29; 14:6; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5*)

2.8 About Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances, which were given by Jesus Christ, as recorded in Scripture, to be observed by the Church till His return. Baptism is in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is by full immersion of believers in water upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a declaration of union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and an initiation into the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of and thanksgiving for the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to be regularly practiced until He comes. It relates to forgiveness of sin, present sanctification and future glorification in Jesus Christ and is a sign of the believer's continuing fellowship in the body of Christ, the Church. (*Matthew 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 14:13-26; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:41; 8:12; 18:8; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Colossians 2:12*).

2.9 About the Church

Christ alone is the Head of the Church. No other person, group, or religious organisation can profess to be the Head of the Church. The Church is the instrument which displays the redemptive activity of God. Each local Church is a full manifestation of the Church. Wherever the Church operates it is the one universal church and is competent to function. It is composed of believers, that is all persons who have been born again by the Spirit of God and through Baptism have been initiated into its membership. The authority of Christ is in the Church not in an individual and is ministered through the Holy Spirit. (*Acts 9:31; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-16; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18-24*).

2.10 About Faith and Practice

The Bible (Scripture) is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Where the Scripture is silent each believer must exercise liberty of conscience in line with the principles of God's Word and in the light of the One to whom all are ultimately accountable. (*Matthew 4:4; 1 Corinthians 8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:13-14*).

Section 3 – Ordinances (Baptism and the Lord’s Supper)

The Divine ordinances to be observed by this Church will be Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Communion). They must be observed as set out in the Church Handbook.

Section 4 – Membership

4.1 Membership Admission

A person may be received into membership of this Church after:

- ❖ Profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour through being baptised by full immersion as a believer.
- ❖ Submission of a written application which states acceptance by the applicant (also called the proposed Member) of:
 - the Statement of Faith as set out in Section 2;
 - the Ministry Statements set out in the Church Handbook; and
 - the Partnership Commitment as set out in the Church Handbook.
- ❖ Having been interviewed, in the manner prescribed by the Church Handbook, by two (2) Active Members of the Church.
- ❖ Meeting any other requirements set out in the Church Handbook.

After those prerequisites have been satisfied, the Board must consider the application of the proposed Member at its next convenient meeting. Following the guidelines set out in the Church Handbook, the Board must decide to either accept or reject the applicant as a Member. The Board must also, if the applicant is admitted as a Member, decide which category of membership will apply to the Member.

The Board must notify the applicant of the outcome of its decision as soon as possible after its decision (and, if the Board admits the Member, advise of the category to which they have been admitted.)

If the Board rejects the proposed Member’s application, there is no right of appeal for the rejected applicant.

Note:

Any of the above steps except for those beginning “Profession of faith” and “Submission of a written application” may be waived at the discretion of the Board for staff being appointed from outside this Church and for staff coming from another Baptist Church.

4.2 Members Rolls

There are five (5) different categories into which Members can be classified. They are as follows:

Active Members: Those Members who have reached the age of eighteen (18) years and who are active in the life of this Church by being involved in its ministry. (Detailed requirements for Active Members are set out in the Church Handbook.)

Junior Members: A person who meets all the requirements of an Active Member but who is under the age of eighteen (18) years.

(Note that in accordance with Section 5.5 of this Constitution, Junior Members may attend Members Meetings, express their opinions under the Rules of Debate and take part in discussions, but are ineligible to vote.)

Members Living Away: Members who live out of the local area* and for a reason notified to and approved by the Board have not joined a local church where they live and work. e.g. Members' names may be placed in this category if:

- (a) They choose to leave their name on our roll while attending a church that is not a Baptist Church or
- (b) There is no local Christian Church to attend.

* Local area is defined as the area within thirty (30) minutes drive of the facility where the church congregation meets regularly.

Members under Discipline: A Member who is being dealt with under the disciplinary procedures set out in Section 4.4.

Inactive Members: Any Member who is no longer an Active or Junior Member in the life of this Church (refer to Church Handbook for requirements of an Active Member) – for example a Member who is unable to attend regularly and participate fully in the ministry of this Church but who has not yet been approached to discuss and review the status of their membership.

Before classifying a Member into a different category of membership, or before removing a person as a Member, the Board must authorise such a reclassification or removal. The Board may delegate this power and responsibility to a Membership Task Force which follows the guidelines set out in the Church Handbook.

The Board must maintain rolls of each category of membership and the appearance of a person's name on a particular roll is prima facie evidence of their membership in that category.

4.3 Records

The names and addresses of all Members of this Church, with the method and date they were admitted or removed, are to be kept on file in the Church office and as part of the Church database. This list must be revised at least annually in accordance with the Church Manual.

The rolls of the different Member categories must be published annually and be available for any Member to view in the church office. These lists must be treated in a manner which ensures their security as set out in the Church Manual.

4.4 Discipline

The Board may cancel the membership of a Member, or place a Member into the category of Members under Discipline, if:

- ❖ it is of the opinion that a Member no longer fulfils the requirements for admission to membership outlined in Clause 4.1, or;
- ❖ for some other reason, it considers that particular conduct or attitudes of the Member disqualify them from continued membership.

The Board may, on the grounds set out above, by resolution, remove the name of a Member from the Register of Members, or move a Member from their current roll to the roll of Members under Discipline.

Before the Board acts under the preceding paragraph, the Board must give the Member a full and fair opportunity to show why the proposed decision should not be made and in particular, must provide the Member with:

- ❖ Fourteen (14) days notice of the Board meeting at which the matter is to be considered; and
- ❖ notice of the proposed resolution; and
- ❖ notice of any evidence to be considered by the Board; and
- ❖ an opportunity to make written submissions to the Board in relation to the resolution and any other matter.

If, after considering all representations made by the Member, the Board decides to make a resolution under the preceding two sub-clauses, the Board Secretary must give the Member a written notice setting out the resolution of the Board.

The Board will have regard to the principles set out in Matthew 18 in dealing with the disciplinary process and will endeavour to give a Member an opportunity for restoration of issues which have lead to the disciplinary process. To achieve this, when the Board resolves to place a Member on the roll of Members under Discipline, it must endeavour to identify to that Member the processes and actions which the Board considers will evidence the restoration of the Member.

The Senior Pastor is responsible for implementing specific actions agreed with the Board and will be at liberty to delegate such actions if considered appropriate.

A Member under Discipline may have membership privileges (such as participation in ministry and receiving communion) withdrawn immediately and withheld for a period decided upon by the Board. In instances where a Member placed under discipline has genuinely repented and has complied with the requirements of discipline, that person may have their previous rights as a Member restored at a time determined by the Board.

If the matter of discipline involves the Senior Pastor either directly or indirectly, the Board will be at liberty to appoint a suitable person to undertake specific actions on its behalf in consultation with the Baptist Union of Queensland.

A report on matters of discipline may, at the discretion of the Board, be presented at a Members Meeting stating the nature of the offence (but not necessarily full details), and the steps taken in the disciplinary process.

Should any Member being dealt with under these provisions feel that the treatment they have received is unjust, they are entitled to select up to three (3) other Active or Junior Members to petition the Board on their behalf. On receipt of this petition, the Board must convene a meeting with the concerned parties to discuss and resolve the issue. After this meeting, and after any agreed actions or enquiries are completed, no further action may be taken on the matter by the Member subject to the discipline, or the petitioners on his or her behalf – that is, there is no right of appeal for the Member.

A report on the petition may, at the discretion of the Board, be presented at a Members' Meeting. This report will state the steps taken in dealing with the petition.

Section 5 – Members Meetings

5.1 Authority

Recognising the headship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this Church will be governed by its Members. Except where matters are specifically delegated to the Board, either in this Constitution or by resolution of the Members, all authority for the transaction of matters affecting the Church is vested in the Church Members Meeting duly constituted.

In accordance with processes set out in this Constitution and other related documents, namely the Church Handbook and the Church Manual, the Members appoint the Board to exercise all powers and do all things as are within the scope of this Constitution in the management and control of the activities, business and affairs of the Church. The Board must bring the following matters to a Members Meeting for approval:

- ❖ Appointment of Active Members to a position on the Board.
- ❖ Appointment of the Senior Pastor.
- ❖ Major expenditure of Church funds on non budgeted items.
- ❖ Decisions on changes to ministry statements.
- ❖ Setting of yearly budgets for ministry activities.
- ❖ Changes to this Constitution
- ❖ Other matters as outlined in the Church Handbook.

5.2 Types of Members Meetings

There will be four (4) types of General Meetings

- ❖ Annual General Meeting
- ❖ Regular Members Meetings
- ❖ Special Members Meetings
- ❖ Members Forums

An Annual General Meeting must be held every calendar year.

A minimum of two (2) Regular Members Meetings must be held at approximately even intervals throughout the year.

Special Members Meetings and Forums will be held as required to address specific issues and needs which arise from time to time. Forums will have no decision making power but are for communication of information and discussion of specific issues.

Notice of all such General Meetings must be given in the following manner:

- ❖ By notice in writing (which includes electronic communication such as facsimile and email) to all Members; or
- ❖ By publishing a notice in the Church's newsletter, which is distributed regularly at Sunday worship meetings.

If notice is given only in the latter manner, then the effective date for notice is the first Sunday upon which the newsletter including the notice is distributed at Sunday worship.

The Members specifically agree that, notwithstanding that they may not actually receive notice of a meeting, they will be deemed to have received notice so long as notice is given in the above manner.

The time periods for notice for various types of meeting are set out in the Church Handbook.

5.3 Conduct of Members Meetings

The Board, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, must nominate the Chairman for any General Meeting.

Where it is considered necessary, the Board, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, may nominate a Chairman for any Church organisation meeting. Meetings are to be held in accordance with the Standing Orders set out in the Church Handbook.

Printed minutes including an attendance record will be kept for all General Meetings except forums. These minutes are to be confirmed as a true and accurate record at the subsequent meeting and prior to any business being dealt with.

5.4 Quorum for General Meetings

The quorum for the Annual General Meeting, Regular Members Meetings and Special Members Meetings will not be less than twenty percent (20%) of the Active Members. No quorum will be required for Forums.

5.5 Voting Members

Only Active Members are entitled to vote at any duly constituted Members meeting – in person, or by an absentee vote as set out below. Junior Members may attend, express their opinions under the rules of debate and take part in discussions but are ineligible to vote. Other Members may attend but not take part in discussions or otherwise participate.

5.6 Absentee Votes

Absentee votes will be accepted in writing for any written motion notified to the Members prior to the meeting. Votes will be administered in accordance with the Church Handbook.

5.7 Adoption of Motions

Any motion will be decided by Active Members; both those at the meeting and those casting absentee votes.

Except as otherwise specified in the Constitution or Church Handbook (e.g. for the call of a Senior Pastor), motions will be deemed passed on the affirmative vote of a majority of Active Members voting.

Section 6 – Church Leadership

6.1 Overview

Recognising that the final authority for decision making is vested in the Members Meeting and that this Church is committed to the priesthood of all believers, the Church may appoint Members to key ministry and leadership positions in accordance with the Church Handbook.

In this process, it is recognised that the Church is the Body of Christ and is accountable to Him. As a practical way to exercise ministry the Members (i.e. the Body) elect and empower the Board, who in turn empower the Senior Pastor, who in turn empowers the Pastoral Staff, Ministry Leaders and other Ministers to undertake ministry activities.

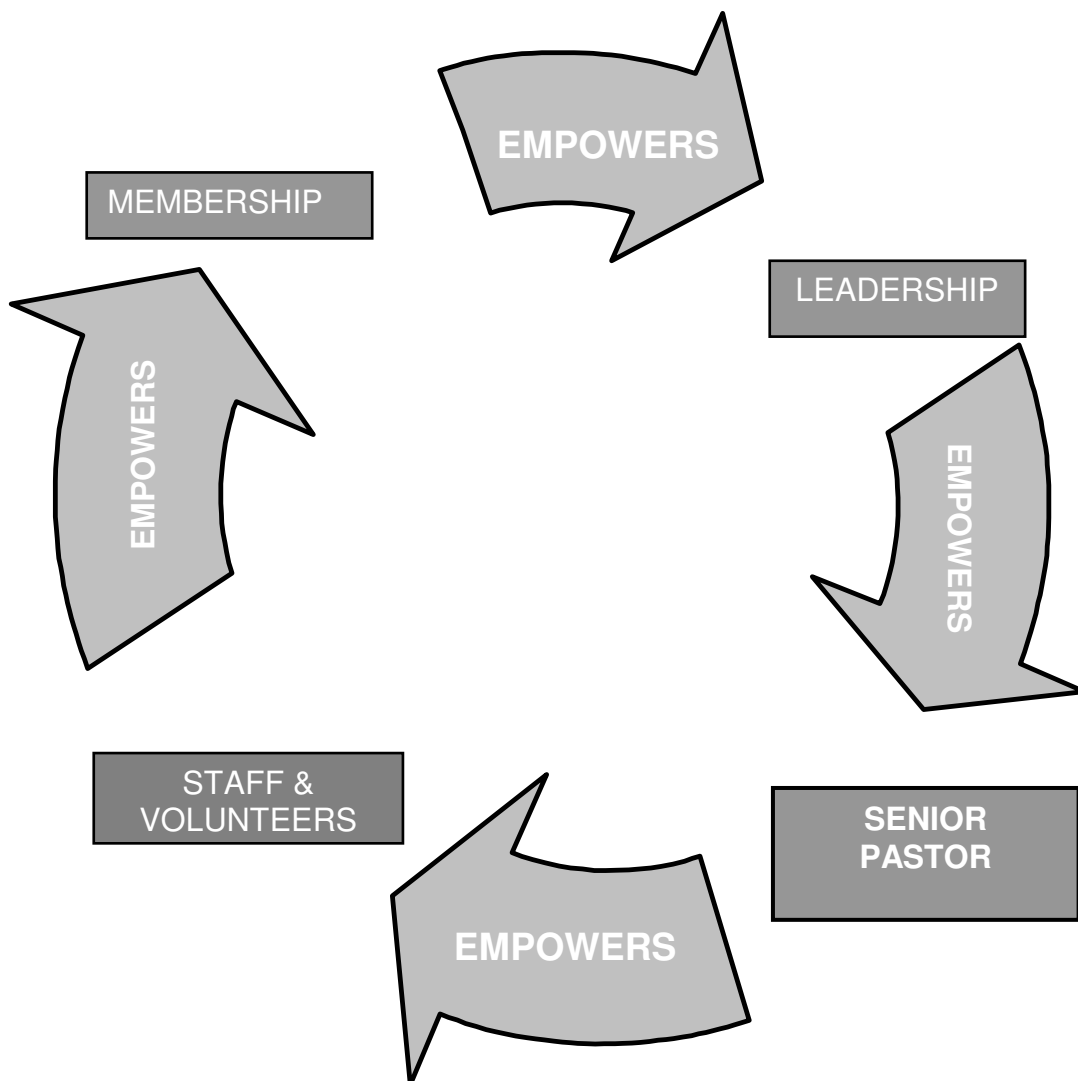


FIGURE 1: CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT

6.2 Church Board

The Church Board will consist of a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of nine (9) elected Members who will be Active Members prior to being nominated for such a position. The method of election for Board Members will be as set out in this Constitution and the Church Handbook.

The Senior Pastor must automatically be appointed as a Board Member, without the need for any election process, but must not be Chairman.

The Board is the primary oversight and accountability body of the Church on behalf of the members.

The quorum for Board meetings will not be less than fifty percent (50%) of the Board Members. Furthermore, no motions will be considered passed unless a majority of Board Members (i.e. a majority of total Board Members, not just a majority of those present) have voted in favour of a motion.

6.2.1 Role of Church Board

The Board is responsible for

- ❖ Direction and vision of the Church as developed in consultation with the Senior Pastor.
- ❖ Strategic planning approval.
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluating overall ministry of this Church.
- ❖ Reviewing and refining policies developed by the Senior Pastor.
- ❖ Holding the Senior Pastor accountable for accomplishment of various aspects of an agreed strategic plan.
- ❖ Being an example for the congregation.
- ❖ Oversight of Church finances.
- ❖ Oversight of the discipline process.

6.2.2 Election of Board Members

The Members, in a General Meeting, have the power to add or remove Board Members in accordance with the principles set out in this Constitution. Normally, names of persons nominated to the Board (following the nomination process set out in the Church Handbook) will be submitted to a ballot for confirmation by a majority of at least three-quarters (3/4) of Active Members voting at the Annual General Meeting.

A General Meeting of Members may however consider the addition or removal of Board Members at any time, as long as a proper notice of the relevant General Meeting, specifying the intention to consider that issue, is given in accordance with the Constitution. The Members may only appoint a person as a Board Member if:

- ❖ they are already a Board Member (whether on a term or casual basis); or
- ❖ the person has been nominated pursuant to the process set out in the Church Handbook.

Nominations for approximately one third (1/3) of the total number of Board Members must be called for each year prior to the Annual General Meeting as set out in the Church Handbook.

The term of a Board Member will normally (unless otherwise resolved by the Members in General Meeting) be three (3) years with the position being declared vacant at the end of this term. A Board Member may renominate for a second term. After this the Board Member must stand down for a minimum of twelve (12) months prior to being eligible for re-nomination.

Should the number of Board Members fall below the minimum of six (6), the Board may continue to operate provided that the selection process for sufficient replacement Board Members [to bring the number of Board Members back above six (6)] is in process. The process for replacement is to be as specified in the Church Handbook with the exception of timing for the election and the term of service. The ballot will be taken at a Regular Members' Meeting or a Special Members Meeting as appropriate. The nominee will be elected to serve out the remainder of the unexpired term of service of the non-continuing Board Member.

The Board may, when there are less than the minimum six (6) Board Members, act to temporarily fill casual vacancies by nominating a person to be a casual Board Member. A person may only be so nominated on one occasion in any financial year. A person so nominated will be deemed to be a Board Member, exercising all powers and responsibilities of other Board Members, but for a period of three (3) months only. A General Meeting of Members may elect to affirm the Board Membership of such a casual Board Member within that three (3) month period, converting the casual Board Member's term of service into a full term of three (3) years (or a shorter length as resolved by the General Meeting of Members).

6.2.3 Positions on Church Board

The Board must elect from its Members a Chairman*, Board Secretary and Treasurer who will be responsible for specific duties as set out in the Church Handbook. This election will be for a period of twelve (12) months and will be an item of business at the first Board Meeting following the Annual General Meeting. People elected to those positions, as long as they are still Board Members, are eligible for re-election to their positions.

* Refer to clause 6.2 re Senior Pastor not being Chairman.

6.2.4 Financial Authority of Church Board

The Board is responsible for the general oversight of ministry activities including the expenditure of Church funds. Generally such expenditure will be in accordance

with the annual Church budget as approved by the Members at a General Meeting which deals with the issue.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances arising, the Board will have discretion to authorise expenditure outside of the budget to a limit as set out in the Church Handbook.

6.2.5 Discipline and Dismissal of Board Members

If the Board is of the opinion that a Board Member no longer fulfils the requirements for the position as a Board Member, then the Board may consider the removal of that Board Member from their position, by following a process as close as possible to that set out in Clause 4.4. The Board Member whose removal is being considered may not participate in the Board's discussion of their possible removal, nor vote on the issue.

Any Board Member who is removed from that position by the action of a General Meeting of Members, has no right of appeal.

6.3 Senior Pastor

6.3.1 Role of Senior Pastor

The Church may appoint a Senior Pastor to lead the ministry of the Church including the coordination and direction of staff both paid and unpaid, who organise and manage the ministry or ministry teams. The Senior Pastor must be an accredited pastor as defined by the Ministerial Committee of the Baptist Union of Queensland or become accredited within six (6) months of the call being accepted.

Specific details of this position are set out in the Church Handbook.

6.3.2 Appointment of Senior Pastor

The appointment of a Senior Pastor must be introduced as an item of business at a Members Meeting only after the recommendation of a Senior Pastoral Search Team appointed by the Board.

Voting on such a recommendation must occur at a properly constituted Members Meeting of which two (2) full weeks notice will be given in writing to all Active and Junior Members. This notice requirement displaces the normal notice requirements.

The motion regarding appointment of a Senior Pastor will be submitted to a ballot for confirmation by a minimum of a three-quarters (3/4) majority of Active Members voting. If this majority is obtained, an offer of appointment will then be made to the proposed Senior Pastor.

The appointment will be for a period of five (5) years and subject to review and renewal at the end of this time. The call can be terminated by either this Church or the Senior Pastor giving a minimum of three (3) months notice except in the case of a moral offence or misconduct (as judged by the Ministerial Committee of the Baptist Union of Queensland), where the call will terminate immediately.

6.3.3 Conflict Resolution

Should there be an impasse between the Board and the Senior Pastor which is hampering ministry, either party will be at liberty, without the authority of the Members, to request the Baptist Union of Queensland to nominate a moderator to discuss the issue and under God's guidance, give advice.

6.4 Additional Staff

The church may also appoint other staff as may be considered necessary. This procedure is set out in the Church Handbook.

Section 7 - Church Organisations

An organisation will be defined as but not limited to a club, society or ministry area.

The church may bring into existence such organisations as will make its work for the Kingdom more effective. Each organisation will be considered a vital part of this Church.

All organisations and all activities, financial or otherwise, will function under the approval of the Board.

Each organisation may recommend its Leaders, subject to approval of the appropriate Leader of an Objective area. For the purposes of the appointment of Organisational Leaders, should there be an impasse between a Leader of an Objective area and the organisation, the Board is the final authority.

Where it is considered necessary, the Board, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, may nominate a Chairman for any Church organisation meeting.

Property purchased or used by any organisation, will be deemed the property of this Church. In particular, if the organisation disbands or ceases to function, all property will be utilised or disposed of as directed by the Church Board.

Ministry statements, programs, rules and the syllabus of any organisation connected with the Church will be subject to approval by the appropriate Objective Director before being published, circulated or performed.

The main leader of an organisation must be an Active Member. Every effort should be made to see that all other leaders of these organisations are Active Church Members.

No organisation will use the name of this Church without the consent of the Board.

This Church reserves the right to refuse, cancel, suspend and or terminate any organisation at any time if in the opinion of the Board that organisation may be operating or conducting itself in a manner that could be detrimental to this Church. That organisation or its nominated representative may request an opportunity to address the Board in relation to the particular issue.

The Board will have the right to request an organisation of this Church to provide any requested documentation or explanation in order that the Board may evaluate that organisation, its operation and adherence to this Constitution and this Church's Ministry Statements as set out in the Church Handbook. Such requests are to be in writing and will require a written response within one calendar month.

Section 8 – Finances

8.1 Administration

A Treasurer will be elected from the Church Board in accordance with clause 6.2.3. This person will be responsible for the oversight of the Church finances.

All Church accounts will have at least four (4) signatories with withdrawals generally requiring two (2) signatories to sign. If a special purpose account is established, the Board may reduce the number of signatories to one (1) if it is satisfied sufficient accountability processes are in place for that account. The names of all signatories will be approved by the Board.

8.2 Tithes and Offerings

The Church will encourage tithing and the giving of offerings over and above to support the work and ministry of this Church both locally and through its Missions involvement.

All offerings and monies will be accounted for in the presence of at least two (2) people. These persons will be selected in accordance with the Church Handbook and Manual.

8.3 Account Records

The Treasurer will ensure all income and expenditure is recorded and handled in accordance with policies and procedures as set out in the Church Handbook and Manual. Records will be available to the Board and Finance Advisory Team as required.

8.4 Financial Statements

A financial report will be provided for the information of Members at each Regular Members Meeting and at other times as required by the Board.

8.5 Budget

An annual budget will be prepared in accordance with the Church Handbook and presented for approval at a Members Meeting.

8.6 Donations

Until the Church approves otherwise, all donations whether designated for a particular purpose or not will be treated as available for use in any activities of this Church in any way and free of any obligation to use or apply the donation in a particular matter or for a particular purpose.

Any donation offered may be refused at the discretion of the Board.

8.7 Appeals and Fundraising

No financial appeals for any organisations will be undertaken without the prior approval of the Board.

Fundraising activities, where goods or services are provided to raise funds for an organisation, must be approved by the appropriate Leader of an Objective area.

8.8 Auditor

The Board will appoint an auditor(s) annually. After auditing of the Church accounts a report will be prepared for presentation at the next Regular Members Meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

8.9 Organisations

Each organisation will appoint a Treasurer to keep financial records in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Board.

Each organisation will produce a financial report for the Church Treasurer at regular intervals as requested by the Board. In addition, if the organisation maintains its own bank account, it will meet the following requirements:

- a) An auditor's report of its accounts will be provided annually at a time agreed with the Treasurer.
- b) Signatories to bank accounts will be Active Church Members.

All records and reports will be maintained and prepared in accordance with the Church Handbook and Manual.

8.10 Finance Advisory Team

A Finance Advisory Team will be formed to assist the Treasurer in recording and administering the Church finances. This Team will be formed and hold meetings as set out in the Church Handbook.

Section 9 – Church Property

Use and maintenance of Church premises or property will be in accordance with the Church Handbook and Manual.

The Rivers Baptist Church may ask the Baptist Union of Queensland or another suitable entity to act as trustee for it in relation to property which is owned by the Church.

The income and assets of the Church, from whatever source derived, must be applied exclusively to the promotion of the objects of the Church as set out in Section 2. No portion of the income or assets may be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly, by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise, to the Members of the Church.

However, this does not prevent the payment, in good faith, of remuneration to any officers, employees or servants of the Church or to any Member of the Church in return for any services actually rendered to the Church or for goods supplied in the ordinary and usual way of business, nor prevent the payment of interest at a rate not exceeding the rate for the time being charged by bankers in Brisbane for overdrawn accounts on money borrowed from any Member of the Church, or reasonable and proper rent for premises let by any Member of the Church.

Section 10 – Winding Up

If, on the winding up or dissolution of the Church, there remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities any property whatsoever, then the same must not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Church. Rather, such property must be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions which prohibits the distributions of its or their income and property among its or their Members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the Church. Such institution or institutions will be, unless determined otherwise by the Members of the Church at or before the time of dissolution, be The Baptist Union of Queensland. If The Baptist Union of Queensland is not a qualifying recipient for any reason, and in default of any other determination by the Members of the Church, then a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland may make a determination, and insofar as effect can not be given to the aforesaid provision then to some charitable object meeting the requirements of Division 30 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Section 11 - Changing the Constitution

This Constitution may not be altered, added to, or cancelled except by a three quarters (3/4) majority vote of the Active Members voting (i.e. 3/4 of the Active Members voting in person or by absentee vote at a properly constituted General Meeting of Members with a quorum present). This vote is to be taken at a Special Members Meeting convened for the purpose. A minimum of one (1) month's notice of such a meeting will be given in writing to all Active and Junior Members and it will set out in full detail any motions to be moved at the proposed meeting.