

CHRIST CHURCH COTTINGHAM
CHURCH HANDBOOK

Chairman:

Secretary/Managing Trustee:

Date:25th July 2018.....

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Principles for Charity Purposes

The Church Constitution

The Church is established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under a constitution first adopted on (*date of Charity Registration*), (“the Constitution”) which contains the main legal provisions governing the Church, its purposes and 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 and they are identified in the Constitution by reference to the office they hold in accordance with this handbook.

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.

Church Officers

The date of the legal establishment of the Church is the date that the Constitution is registered by the Charity Commission (rather than the date on which the Constitution was adopted by the members).

Clause 2.4 contains the provisions for the appointment of Church Officers.

The Church Officers are listed below.

- Scott William Tones (Pastor/Managing Trustee)
- Colette Longbottom (Secretary/Church Leader/Managing Trustee)
- Joshua Griffith (Church Leader/Managing Trustee)
- Tim Jackson (Church Leader/Managing Trustee)

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

1.1 Basis of Faith

The Basis of Faith (see Appendix 1) sets out matters that we 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 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 matters. Church members are not required to agree with 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 and should not be insistent on their own views or divisive over these matters.

Adult Baptism – believer's (as outlined in the Basis of Faith) baptism by immersion, on the recommendation of the Managing Trustees, or an alternative mode may be applied where this is felt appropriate.

Baby/Child Dedication – is an act of worship, thanksgiving, dependence, trust, and commitment. Child dedication is different from infant baptism or christening. While these rites are significant for a variety of faiths, it is the practice of Christ Church Cottingham to dedicate babies/children.

It is recognised that baptism is not an issue that should divide the church of Christ but that those parents wishing their children to be baptised should be free to seek out a church that will do so.

The Lord's Supper – The communion table shall be open to all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and know Him as their own personal Saviour.

1.3 Ethical Statements

The matters covered in this section set out how the beliefs set out in the Basis of Faith apply in relation to ethical matters. Church members are required to lead their lives in a manner that is consistent with these Ethical Statements recognising the reminder and encouragement given to all Christians in 1 John 1:8-9.

- 1.31. Marriage – our Basis of Faith sets out that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of belief and practice and 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 between a man and a woman 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.

- 1.4 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 Managing Trustees) their unreserved agreement to the 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 and the benefit of Pastoral care. The obligations of membership are to submit to the authority and leadership of the Managing Trustees 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 will 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 – the pattern of frequency being a matter for the individual member to decide. (Acts 2:42, 20:7)

Admission to Membership

2.1.4 The Managing Trustees recommend those joining the church should attend services regularly and get to know the rest of the congregation and the way the church operates before making a decision to become a Member, to ensure that Christ Church is the place where you believe God is calling you to worship and serve.

2.1.5 To help make up your mind the church runs regular New Friends Dessert Evenings where potential new Members are invited to come along, meet members of the Managing Trustees and other Church Officers to ask questions about the way the church operates, its Ministries and what is meant by Church Membership. We also have a Church Membership pack that gives information in more detail about the church and its various

ministry areas.

- 2.1.6 If you decide to join us and want to become an official Member, there is a Membership Application Form in the pack which you should read and complete and then hand to the Pastor or one of the other Church Officers you will have been introduced to.
- 2.1.7 The Pastor/Church officer will then arrange a meeting to discuss any final queries you may have and at this meeting it would be appropriate to share your personal faith testimony and any past church experience.
- 2.1.8 The Pastor/Church officer will then take your application to the next meeting of the Managing Trustees where your application will be put forward for Membership.
- 2.1.9 On acceptance, the Pastor/Church officer will check with you the next time you will be at a Sunday morning service when it will be formally announced to the rest of the Membership/congregation that you have been accepted into Membership.
- 2.1.10 Once formally accepted into Membership you will be able to participate in any Member-only votes conducted at any church members meeting.
- 2.1.11 The first Members of the Church are the people who agreed 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 Basis of Faith means that no further written declaration from them is required. A person may apply to the Managing Trustees to become a Member of the Church. If their application is approved, the Managing Trustees will welcome the applicant into membership at the next Sunday morning meeting of the Church.
- 2.1.12 The Pastor and his wife shall be received into Membership on the taking up of his appointment as Pastor subject to their compliance with Clause 2.1.2.
- 2.1.13 The Church Secretary shall maintain a written register of all Church Members.

Termination of Membership

- 2.1.14 A Member may voluntarily resign by submitting in writing a letter to that effect to the charity trustees through the Church Secretary.
- 2.1.15 If a Member has not attended a Sunday worship service for a period of 6 months and has not indicated to the Managing Trustees the reason for absence, or if no reason is known by the Trustees, for example personal/family illness; working or studying away for a period of time, then the Managing Trustees will attempt to contact the member. In the absence of any response or valid reason for non-attendance, the Managing Trustees will discuss and formally record the details at their next meeting and an appropriate decision made on termination of membership.
- 2.1.16 A Member may be removed from Membership by the application of the disciplinary procedure set out in Clause 2.7.

Informal or associate (non-voting) membership

2.1.17 Those who attend the church regularly, who agree and can sign the Basis of Faith and agree with Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements, but do not wish to become official Members, following a meeting with members of the charity trustees to discuss this, the charity trustees can accept them as informal (non-voting) members. The rights and obligations of informal (non-voting) members are the same as Members, and termination of informal membership the same as Members, the only difference being that they will not be allowed to participate in official Members votes.

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 (or wishing for his or her child to be Dedicated) shall submit their request to the Managing Trustees who will arrange for two of their number to interview the applicant. The representatives shall report back to a meeting of the Managing Trustees and within their report will be any recommendations.

2.2.3 An applicant who is to be baptised will be required to give 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 be celebrated at least once a month. The table shall be 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.

Pastor

2.4.1 The calling of the Pastor is to be the recommendation of the Managing Trustees, by a resolution of a Church Meeting convened for that purpose, by a majority vote in favour, of a minimum of 75% of Members present at the meeting and absent Members who are unable to attend the meeting but have completed the required postal vote and handed it in a sealed envelope to the Church Secretary/nominated official before the voting meeting, to be opened and included with the votes at the meeting.

2.4.2 The Pastors tenure of office is to be reviewed every three years from assumption of the duties of this ministry. Any extension of tenure of office is by recommendation of the Managing Trustees, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Employment.

2.4.3 In the event of an extension not being desired, a Pastor shall be given a minimum of three months' notice of the termination of the appointment.

2.4.4 After 5 years in office a sabbatical can be discussed with the Managing Trustees allowing 1 week of sabbatical for every 1 year of service.

Managing Trustees

2.4.5 A Managing Trustee is proposed for election by current Managing Trustees and is selected in accordance with the criteria detailed in Appendix 2.

2.4.6 All Managing Trustees to be elected for 3 years, when re-election may be sought from the church membership on the recommendation of the Managing Trustees by a majority vote.

2.4.7 A further 3 year term of office may be held through re-election but no Managing Trustee shall hold office for more than 6 years consecutively. A person may be re-elected after a 3 year term out of office in that instance.

2.4.8 Normally any officer would only hold one office e.g. secretary or treasurer.

2.4.9 In accordance with the Constitution clause 17 the Managing Trustees can appoint staff to roles to meet the objectives of the charity.

2.4.10 Certain roles, paid or unpaid, such as Assistant Pastors and Senior Administrators, may, by virtue of the nature of these roles, necessitate the co-option of the person holding that role. These persons are therefore considered to be Church Officers.

2.4.11 The term of office of such persons is as detailed in the relevant contract of employment or volunteer contract. Should the person voluntarily step down or be removed from the role before end of the contract, then the position of Church Officer is also surrendered

General Rules Applicable to all Church Officers

2.4.12 After 3 years in office a sabbatical can be discussed with the Church Officers allowing 1 week of sabbatical for every 1 year of service.

2.4.13 If a Church Officer is no longer able to fulfil his/her duties due to infirmity, failing health or the like and will not resign then by agreement of all the remaining Church Officers s/he can be removed from office.

2.4.14 On the roles of Chair, Church Secretary and Treasurer as defined in the constitution: The Pastor would normally hold the role of Chair however the roles of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by any member of the Church Officers. No person may however hold more than one of the positions of Chair, Secretary or Treasurer.

2.4.15 If a Church Officer is deemed to have contravened the qualifications for Church Officers as detailed in Appendix 3 then by agreement of all the remaining Church Officers s/he can be removed from office.

2.5 Church Secretary and Church Treasurer

2.5.1 The Church Officers shall appoint from among their number a Church Secretary and a Church Treasurer.

2.5.2 The Church Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of notices of any Church Business Meetings and the issuing of all papers and reports to be presented to such meetings. Members shall deliver to the Church Secretary any notice of items of business

to be discussed at a Church Business Meeting in sufficient time to enable them to be circulated to all Members before the meeting.

2.5.3 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 to incorporate the figures into the church accounts.

2.6 Managing Trustees

2.6.1 The Constitution sets out which of the Church Officers are the Managing Trustees of the Church.

2.7 Church Discipline

Removal from membership

2.7.1 Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5 teach that local churches should remove from among them 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.

2.7.2 A 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 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 open 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 Managing Trustee or Church Officer, or other member of the church
- g. He or she is no longer living in submission to the leadership and authority of the Managing Trustees of the church

2.7.3 A Member may only be removed from membership by a resolution of the Managing Trustees.

2.7.4 The Managing Trustees shall not pass a resolution to remove a Church Member unless the following steps have been taken:

2.7.4.1 The Managing Trustees have held a Managing Trustee Disciplinary Meeting (“the MTD Meeting”) at which they considered whether or not to propose a resolution to remove the Member (“M”) from membership;

2.7.4.2 The Managing Trustees have given to M 21 clear days’ notice of the MTD Meeting, informing M why his or her removal from membership is being considered, and inviting the M to make representations to the charity trustees as to why he or she should not be removed from membership;

- 2.7.4.3 The Managing Trustees allowed the Member to make those representations at the MTD Meeting himself or herself or through his or her representative; and
- 2.7.4.4 The Managing Trustees took those representations into account when deciding whether to pass a resolution that M be removed from membership.
- 2.7.5 The Member shall be informed of the decision of the Managing Trustees by the Church Secretary and the register of Members amended accordingly where termination of membership is to be applied.
- 2.7.6 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.
- 2.7.7 The steps set out at Clauses 2.7.8 to 2.7.10 should also be followed prior to the MTD Meeting taking place, but failure to follow those steps will not invalidate a resolution of the Members to remove a person from Membership.
- 2.7.8 The Managing Trustees must be informed where it is believed that any of the reasons set out in Clause 2.7.2 apply to a Member of the Church. Where a person's behaviour is being reported by a Member who has been sinned against by the person he or she is reporting, that Member should normally raise the issue first with the person concerned and only report it to the Managing trustees if the two persons concerned are unable to resolve the matter between themselves.
- 2.7.9 Where Managing trustees are informed or they themselves believe that any of the reasons at Clause 2.7.2 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. If the allegations are found to be true, and it is appropriate to do so, to encourage the Member against whom the allegations have been made to repent, with the ultimate purpose of restoration.
- 2.7.10 After the persons appointed under Clause 2.7.9 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 Managing trustees who shall decide whether it is necessary for a CTD Meeting to be held and what additional steps they should take (if any).
- 2.7.11 Even in cases where there has been genuine repentance, the Managing trustees may still be required to report the facts arising from the investigation to the relevant secular authorities. In such cases the [the Managing Trustees] shall give to the Member concerned all the support that is appropriate for a Member who is genuinely repentant.

Additional Disciplinary Measures

- 2.7.12 Whenever the Managing Trustees resolve to remove a person from membership, they may also resolve to impose any of the following the 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 Managing Trustees as to what is required in this regard.

2.7.13 Any of the measures at Clause 2.7.12 may be removed by a resolution of the Managing Trustees.

There is general obligation on members to submit to the leadership and authority of the Managing Trustees. Therefore, the Managing Trustees may require a member who was struggling with a particular sin to take particular steps which they believe are necessary to enable that member overcome that issue, but these steps will not include taking away the right to vote at a members meeting, or exclusion from the Lord's Supper.

2.8 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.

2.9 Church Safeguarding Policy

2.9.1 The Managing Trustees 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, including helpers over the age of 18, involved in running church activities involving children or vulnerable adults, and every Managing Trustee, shall provide to the Church Secretary a current Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

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

2.10.1 The Managing Trustees may resolve 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 Managing Trustees.

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 Managing Trustees 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 majority of 75% of those Members present and voting at the Church Business Meeting is required to approve a proposed amendment to any clause excepting (i) any provision of this Handbook requiring the approval of a matter by percentage of the Members which is greater than a simple majority of the Members present and voting a Church Business Meeting, in which case the majority required to amend that provisions shall be the greater of (a) 75% of Members present and voting a Church Business Meeting and (b) the majority required by the provision itself as currently drafted, (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 two 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 Basis of Faith.

APPENDIX 1 BASIS OF FAITH

1. God

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

2. The Bible

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. The Human Race

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. The Church

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the

gospel.

8. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. 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 and will be glorified forever.

APPENDIX 2

Qualifications for Church Officers

I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9

Church Officers must:

1. Lead by example, demonstrating honourable behaviour and a lifestyle free of patterns of sin, being well respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy
2. If married, must be devoted spouses, have a well ordered household and a healthy family life.
3. Be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses including active addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
4. Be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. Be generous with their time, gifting's and personal resources.
6. Be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
7. Be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations.
8. Desire the will of God in every decision.
9. Desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on scriptural principle.
10. Be devoted Christ followers seeking to be conformed to His image, committed to prayer, worship, fellowship and the study of scripture, guarding their own spiritual walk.
11. Have a servant heart towards the fellowship, with a humble, teachable, spirit
12. Be stable in their faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Church Officers must not be:

- 1.. Given to quarrelling or selfish argument.
2. Stingy, greedy, preoccupied with amassing material things.
3. Motivated by personal gain or ambition.
4. New believers, but have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the genuineness of their conversion and a depth of spiritual insight.
5. Stubborn, prone to force opinions on others, or abuse authority.