

1. The Church shall be composed of those who have been converted to God through trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have confessed their faith in believer's baptism and who are seeking to live in harmony with that confession.

Acknowledging the headship of Christ over His church the members unite for worship, instruction, fellowship and such service as the gospel requires.

2. STATEMENT OF FAITH.

The statement of faith of the church is the Basis of Doctrine of the Baptist Union of Ireland. It is regarded as a summary of basic doctrines and as subordinate to Scripture. It reads:—

'The verbal inspiration, and the all and sole sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given, the Trinity In Unity of the God-head, the essential deity and perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the depraved and fallen state of man, the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the justification of the sinner through faith in the Lord Jesus, the personality of the devil, the natural immortality of the soul, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ the resurrection of the body, the eternal security of the believer, the conscious eternal punishment of those who die impenitent, the binding character of the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and the immersion of believers as the only Christian Baptism, and the responsibility of all saved souls to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.'

3. MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS.

Members are expected.

- (i) to accept the Statement of Faith;
- (ii) to covenant by the help of the Holy Spirit
 - (a) to be present as frequently as possible at the Sunday services, at the Lord's Supper, at prayer or other meetings and at business meetings;
 - (b) to pray for the pastor and the work of the church and to take part in that work as they may be able;
 - (c) to support the church by regular financial contributions;
 - (d) to avoid unkindly criticism of fellow members; to promote a spirit of Christian love and unity in the church, and treat as strictly confidential all matters relating to the business of the church.

4. MEMBERSHIP ROLL.

The roll shall be revised periodically. Any member who wilfully keeps away from the Lord's table for 12 months shall be interviewed by representatives of the officebearers and if a satisfactory reason cannot be given the name may be taken from the roll by vote of the church.

5. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP.

- 5.1 Applicants for membership shall
- (i) be baptised believers;
 - (ii) be given a copy of the constitution for consideration;
 - (iii) be interviewed by two members (the pastor or an officebearer being one) appointed by the officebearers.
- 5.2 Applications considered satisfactory by the officebearers shall be recommended by them for acceptance on the vote of the church.
- 5.3 Applicants previously attached to a church of another denomination shall be asked to send a letter of resignation to that church.
- 5.4 A baptised believer from another Baptist Church may be accepted into membership on the vote of the church on the basis of a satisfactory letter of transfer.

6. OFFICERS.

- 6.1 The officebearers of the church normally shall consist of elders (whose number shall include anyone called to the pastorate) and deacons in such numbers as the church shall from time to time decide.
- 6.2 The diaconate shall be dissolved at intervals of ³five years and reconstituted on the basis of an election.
- 6.3 Candidates for the office of a deacon shall have been adult members of the church for a minimum of two years. All qualifying members shall be eligible as candidates unless they indicate to the secretary that they wish to withdraw. The list of candidates shall be posted at least two weeks before the issue of voting papers.
- 6.4 The required number of deacons shall be elected on the basis of having received the most votes.
- 6.5 Counting of postal votes shall normally be carried out by the elders and they shall undertake to keep strictly confidential all details of the vote.
- 6.6 Elders shall continue in office while they are members of the church.
- 6.7 The officebearers may from time to time review the composition of the eldership, taking into account the availability of suitably qualified members to hold this office.
- 6.8 The elders shall, when they feel it appropriate, and with the consent of those concerned, recommend one or more members to the church for appointment to the eldership.
- 6.9 The election of an elder shall require a two thirds majority of the votes cast.
- 6.10 The officebearers shall recommend two of the deacons for appointment by the church as its secretary and treasurer. In the event of no duly elected deacon being suitable for, or able to accept, one or both of these responsibilities the officebearers shall nominate a person or persons for appointment by the church.
- 6.11 A call to the pastorate shall only be made at a special business meeting convened for the purpose.
- 6.12 Election to the office or elder or deacon shall be by postal vote.
- 6.13 Officebearers meetings shall be convened as business requires and with reasonable notice. They shall be conducted in confidence and in accordance with the accepted rules of debate. They shall be serviced by the secretary in the same way as the business meetings of the church.
- ## 7. BUSINESS MEETINGS.
- 7.1 The church shall meet at least once each year to receive reports and to transact any business other than that requiring a 'special business meeting.'
- 7.2 Notice convening business meetings shall be given at services on the two preceding Sundays. In the case of special meetings the precise business must be included in the notice and only that business can be discussed.
- 7.3 Business shall be conducted according to the accepted rules of debate and under the control of a chairman who will normally be the pastor.
- 7.4 The secretary shall keep a record of all proceedings and the first business at each ordinary meeting shall be the receiving and confirming of the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting, and of any special meeting held in the interim period.
- 7.5 When a matter relating to a member arises for discussion the person concerned, together with those closely related to him, shall be required to leave the meeting while the church discusses the matter.
- 7.6 Voting rights shall be restricted to members who have reached the age of majority.
- 7.7 Special business meetings shall be required for
- (i) the issue of a call to the pastorate;
 - (ii) amendments to the constitution and matters of extraordinary importance.
 - (iii) The transaction of urgent business requiring a decision of the church between regular business meetings.

Decisions taken in special meetings shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting except in the case of meetings in category (iii) when a simple majority shall suffice.