

# **CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

**for**

**SIMPLYGOD CHURCH INCORPORATED**

**September 2023**

**v 1.0**

# Revision History

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1.0	07 Sep 2023	Updated following Special Constitution Meetings
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# SimplyGod Church Incorporated

## Constitution

### **1. Name**

- 1.1 The name of the Church shall be SimplyGod Church Incorporated, hereinafter referred to as the Church or Congregation. SimplyGod Church Incorporated maintains and will continue to trade under Grace Community Perth.

### **2. Objects**

- 2.1 To glorify the one God of heaven and earth, in the Trinity of His Sacred Persons, to whom be all honour and glory, world without end.
- 2.2 To preach and teach the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures (the Bible) as our only rule of faith and practice.

### **3. Our Beliefs**

- 3.1 We believe that there is only One God who is One in Being and who exists eternally in Three Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These Three Persons are distinct but never separate. Each Person is not a part of God, nor an aspect of God, but each Person is fully God. For this reason, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally worthy of praise and adoration because they are One God. We believe in these Three Persons as follows...
  - 3.1.1 We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
  - 3.1.2 We believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, God the Father's only Son, who to save us from God's judgement that we deserve, became a man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the place of the dead. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead and take to Himself those who have entrusted themselves to Him.
  - 3.1.3 We believe in the Holy Spirit, Who expired (breathed out) the Bible and Who creates new life in people through the Bible changing them into the image of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's primary role is to mediate the presence of Jesus Christ by living

within God's people empowering them to be Christians and do good works which God has planned for them to do.

- 3.2 We believe in the holy church, which is not a denomination or human institution, but an invisible unity of all Biblical Christians throughout all ages in all places.
- 3.3 We believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and true life which begins now and lasts forever beyond physical death.
- 3.4 We believe all this because God has spoken, and His Word has been written down and carefully preserved for all of humanity. This Word, the Bible, is inerrant and infallible in all that it teaches considering the normal ways in which language works.
- 3.5 We believe this Word of God to be fully sufficient and that no truth is necessary for salvation that isn't contained in this Word.
- 3.6 We believe that all men are sinners in Adam, by nature and by choice and are therefore dead in sin and under condemnation. We believe that God in His free and sovereign grace saves sinners as He wills. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. True believers will persevere in faith and good works unto the end. This good news of salvation is freely offered to all and requires faith in Christ, which is enabled by the Holy Spirit, making those who are ordained to eternal life willing and able to believe.
- 3.7 We believe that the act of believer's baptism is by immersion as an outward response to faith in Christ as taught in the Word of God.

#### **4. Our Teachings**

- 4.1 The Teachings at SimplyGod Church Incorporated should align with Our Beliefs in Section 3 and the Pastor/Elder Statement which expands on Our Beliefs.

#### **5. Functional Basis**

- 5.1 The Church is autonomous (independent) in its government. It is not affiliated with any denomination or ecclesiastical structure.
- 5.2 Though the Church is autonomous, it is at liberty to co-operate with other Christian congregations, organisations and/or denominations as it may deem desirable.
- 5.3 The Church is a non-profit organisation. The assets and income of the Church shall be applied solely in furtherance of the above-mentioned objects and no portion shall be

distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the Church except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.

- 5.4 Scriptural references within the Constitution are to direct the reader to the appropriate places within Scripture related to church governance but it should be noted that all 66 books of the Bible are fully authoritative in all matters noted within the Constitution.

## 6. Membership

- 6.1 The membership of the Church comprises persons who have become Christians in the manner taught in the New Testament, and who desire fellowship and association with the Congregation.

- 6.2 Persons may become members of the Church who have satisfied the Elders that they:

- (a) accept the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, and rule of their life and practice (**2 Timothy 3:16,17**);
- (b) have accepted the basis of salvation set out in the Scriptures, via repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (**Acts 20:21**);
- (c) have been baptised in response to Christ's own command. The practice of our Church is believer's baptism by immersion (**Matthew 28:20**). Regarding membership, respecting that salvation is by faith alone, other previous modes of baptism can be discussed with the Elders;
- (d) are endeavouring to show forth the genuineness of their faith and repentance in the living of an obedient Christian life (**Colossians 2:12,13**);
- (e) are prepared to meet regularly with the Congregation for the study of the Scriptures, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer (**Acts 2:42**);
- (f) agree with the Church's Constitution reflecting the governance and management of the Church;
- (g) and are 18 years of age or older.

- 6.3 In accordance with the above qualifications, a **Membership Roll** consisting of the following categories shall be formulated and kept up to date:

- (a) **The Active Roll** shall comprise the names of members who regularly attend Sunday services.
- (b) **The Isolated Roll** shall comprise the names of members who by reason of distance or health are unable to attend services regularly, but who retain an interest in the Church and who wish to continue in association with the Congregation.
- (c) A member who has not attended during the six (6) months prior to any review taking place, and who manifests no interest in restoring an ongoing relationship with the Church, shall be considered to have lapsed, and shall have his/her name removed from the Membership Roll. Lapsed members may be reinstated upon resumption of regular church attendance if in alignment with Section 6.2 above.

## 6.4 Discipline

- (a) Cases of misconduct shall be dealt with by the Elders of the Church in a manner consistent with the New Testament pattern (**Matthew 18:15-17**).

## 6.5 Membership Fees / Contributions

- (a) There shall be no membership fee or annual subscription fee;
- (b) Members and regular worshippers are encouraged to contribute financially to the ministry of the Church as an expression of worship.

## 7. Pastors

7.1 The Pastor(s) shall, for practical purposes, be considered Elder(s), and subject to the terms contained in Section 8.1. Suitability should initially be by self-examination in-line with 8.1 and followed by the examination of the Pastor/Elder Statement and interview by the existing Elders, but always in love.

7.2 Nomination of the Pastor will be by the Elders and to the members for final vote. Voting for Pastors and Elders will be by secret ballot at a Special Members Meeting with a minimum 75% yes vote by those members present at the Special Members Meetings. For the election of a Pastor 75% of members from the Active Roll should be present at the Special Meeting.

7.3 The term of the Pastor is determined by the agreed contract with the Church Council as approved by the church members at the Special Members Meeting to vote on the Pastor.

7.4 Pastors are subject to the Word of God as well as discipline noted in **Matthew 18:15-17**. Should there be any concerns regarding a Pastor not being subject to the Word of God, any member of SimplyGod Church Incorporated can raise their concerns to an Elder. The notified Elder must bring the concern before the Elders. A Pastor will automatically be disqualified from holding office should his testimony (witness) at any time become significantly impaired (refer to Section 8.1). If the Pastor does not voluntarily tender his resignation, the concern will need to be brought before the members in a Special Members Meeting. As an employee of the Church, the Pastor can be removed from office via an 80% vote among the Elders and Church Council but is still eligible for compensation as required under Australian law. The Pastor would not be eligible for a vote in this situation.

7.5 If there is a need to terminate the Pastor's employment for any other reason other than described in Section 7.4, the Elders and Church Council should reach an 80% consensus vote. The Elders will then bring that matter to the members in a Special Members Meeting which 75% of the active members quorum at the Special Members Meeting would need to agree to remove the Pastor from office but is still eligible for compensation as required under Australian law. The Pastor would not be eligible for a vote in this situation.

## 8. Elders

8.1 Following the New Testament pattern, the oversight of the Church is the responsibility of the Elders, who will be male Church members appointed from the Active Roll to a

continuing ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 15:6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4**).

- 8.2 The role of the Elder is as overseer of all attendees of and teachers in the Church in all spiritual matters.
- 8.3 The Elders will be responsible for spiritual direction of the Church, working with the Pastor(s) of the Church.
- 8.4 The recommendation of the Pastor(s) for paid appointment will be initially by the Elders and to the members for final vote.
- 8.5 The recommendation of a person for Elder can be by any member in discussion with the Elders if the member feels that the individual aligns with the qualifications of an Elder in Section 8.1.
- 8.6 Nomination of Elders will be by the Elders and to the members for final vote. Voting for Elders will be by secret ballot at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) with a minimum 70% yes vote by those members present at the AGM.
- 8.7 Suitability of Elders should initially be by self-examination in-line with Section 8.1 and followed by the examination of the Pastor/Elder Statement and interview by the existing Elders, but always in love.
- 8.8 Elders are subject to the Word of God as well as discipline noted in **Matthew 18:15-17**. Should there be any concerns regarding an Elder not being subject to the Word of God, any member of SimplyGod Church Incorporated can raise their concerns to another Elder. The notified Elder must bring the concern before the Elders. An Elder will automatically be disqualified from holding office should his testimony (witness) at any time become significantly impaired (refer to Section 8.1).
- 8.9 Once the Church Constitution has been agreed upon by the members and the Eldership has been established in full, the number of Elders within the church should never be less than two. If a minimum of two Elders is not possible from within the

Church, then in consideration of the Church's ability to carry out the objects, Dissolution (Section 13) may be considered.

- 8.10 The Elder role is a two-year term with elections/re-elections occurring at the AGM. Should there be the need to replace or add Elders, that can be decided via vote at a Special Members Meeting any time throughout the year.
- 8.11 60% of Elders in attendance is considered a quorum for decision making purposes.

## 9. Deacons

- 9.1 The office and qualifications of Deacons shall be as those defined in **1 Timothy 3:8-12** (see also **Acts 6:1- 6**) and comprised of those who desire a ministry of care.
- 9.2 The role of the Deacon/Deaconess is to ensure care, primarily for the members of the Congregation and their immediate family, the Pastor(s) and ministries supported by the Church and additionally to those in the community with physical or spiritual needs.
- 9.3 Deacons may co-opt other members and regular attenders as may be necessary to assist them in their tasks.
- 9.4 Deacons can be nominated by any member of the Church. The nominated Deacon should be reviewed by the Elders then recommended to the Church for approval via a secret ballot requiring a 60% yes vote.
- 9.5 The Deacon role is a two-year term with elections/re-elections occurring at the AGM.

## 10. Church Council

- 10.1 The role of the Church Council is primarily business related and should consist of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and a minimum of two other elected Church members, at least one of whom should be an Elder.
- 10.2 The Church Council will be comprised of Church members from the Active Roll, elected by a 60% yes vote by secret ballot at the AGM for the term of two years. Church Council members can be added or replaced via an election at a Special Members Meeting at any stage, as approved by the Elders.
- 10.3 The Church Council must meet at least four times per year with a quorum of at least 75% for any decision-making purposes.
- 10.4 The Secretary will be directly responsible for the membership rolls.
- 10.5 The Church Council are responsible for all auxiliary equipment and records that are the property of the Church for its use and must not be removed or destroyed without the consent of the Church Council. The Church Council is responsible for the financial and legal aspects regarding meeting the obligation of an incorporated association.

## 11. Business Procedures

- 11.1 Meetings
  - (a) The Church Secretary is responsible to ensure that minutes are taken at every meeting of the Church. Where the Secretary is not in attendance at a meeting, it



is still the Secretary's responsibility to ensure that minutes are taken, then accepted as a true and accurate record at the subsequent function related meeting.

- (b) The Chairman from the Church Council will preside as Chairman over all Member Meetings.
- (c) Every member, including the Chairman has only one vote. Where a vote does not meet the majority percentage outlined in the Constitution related to a special appointment, the vote is then considered a non-passing vote.
- (d) The Church Secretary is responsible for the agreed agenda in discussion with the Chairman at each meeting.
- (e) Members are encouraged to participate in Church business in the following manner:
  - (i) Any active member may bring any item of business to any Elder.
    - A. The Elders are then responsible for dealing with the matter and advising the member of the outcome.
    - B. If the member considers that the matter requires further attention, he/she shall confirm the matter in writing to the Elders, for further consideration.
- (f) A special Business Meeting may be called by the Elders, Church Council, or at the request of 20% of the active Church members. A minimum two weeks' notice of meeting shall be given to the Church.
- (g) Business Meetings shall be held as required, shall be presided over by the Chairman. All extraordinary decisions affecting the life and direction of the Church, or decisions requiring large financial commitments, shall be presented to the Church by the Elders, in the form of recommendations, for discussion and ratification.
- (h) A quorum of 50% of Church members from the Active Roll are required at any meetings where a vote is taken. General business shall require a majority vote for ratification of over 60% in matters not noted as otherwise within the Constitution.
- (i) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) for Church members shall be held annually at a time determined by the Church Council near the end of the financial year (Section 11.3(d)), provided that notice of such meeting shall be announced at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the date of such meeting. The following procedures and ordinary business of the meeting will be as follows:
  - (i) to confirm the minutes of the previous annual general meeting and of any special general meeting held since then if the minutes of that meeting have not yet been confirmed;
  - (ii) to receive and consider: (a) the annual report on the Church's activities during the preceding financial year; and (b) a copy of the report of the review or auditor's report on the financial statements or financial report if this has been required;

- (iii) to elect the office holders of the Church, Church Council, Elders and Deacons;
  - (iv) Any other business of which notice has been given in accordance with the Constitution may be conducted.
- (j) A correct record of all Church Business Meetings shall be kept in books provided for that purpose. Active members as defined in Section 6.3(a), shall have the right to vote on matters requiring ratification.
  - (k) Those attending the worship services regularly, but not yet members, can be polled for their opinions on matters of the church at the discretion of the Elders. The poll results are non-binding and have no actual impact on the vote but can be a worthy tool for understanding perspectives.
  - (l) Non-members can attend Church meetings at the discretion of the Elders. Non-members should only participate where a poll is conducted and not a vote. If a non-member would like to raise a new order of business, they should communicate that intent and the order of business via a Church Elder.

## 11.2 Functional Groups

- (a) Functional Groups, such as ministry or property search committees can be formed by the Church Council and Elder representation for specific time bound tasks. Functional Groups should consist of individuals within the Church who have specific related skill sets to the task of the functional group. At the completion of the nominated task the functional groups will report their recommendations to the Church Council or Elders and cease. Members can be removed at any time from the functional group at the discretion of the majority of the Functional Group members or the Elders.

## 11.3 Finances

- (a) The income and property of the Church, from whatever source derived, shall be applied toward the promotion of the objects of the Church (Section 2).
- (b) Payments to Pastor(s):
  - (i) The Pastor(s) is/are entitled to be paid out of the funds of the Church in the execution of their duties, as per the agreed salary package that has been approved by the Church Council, where said salary package has been reviewed and approved independently of the Pastor(s) by the Eldership and Church Council.
- (c) Correct books of account shall be kept by a Church Treasurer. The books together with the statement of receipts and expenditure and the balance sheet, shall be reviewed by the Church Council before presentation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
  - (i) An auditor, elected at a members Business Meeting each year. An auditor, may be required if:
    - A. the Church's income for the financial year is less than \$250,000, an auditor is optional;

- B. the Church's income for the financial year is more than \$250,000 but less than \$1,000,000, an auditor is optional but recommended;
  - C. the Church's income for the financial year is more than \$1,000,000 an auditor's report is required.
- (ii) If an auditor is to be appointed, the Church Council should appoint a suitably qualified, independent person to review the finances (financial reviewer) and provide a report to the Church for review by the Church Council, Elders and then the members.
- (d) The Church's financial year will be the period of 12 months commencing on the 1st of July and ending on the 30th of June of each year.
  - (e) The Church must open an account in the name of the Church with a financial institution from which all expenditure of the Church is made and into which all funds received by the Church are deposited.
  - (f) Subject to any restrictions imposed at a general meeting, the Church Council may approve expenditure on behalf of the Church.
  - (g) The Church Council may authorise the Treasurer, Pastor(s), and member(s) to expend funds on behalf of the Church up to a specified limit as decided by the Church Council without requiring approval from the committee for each item on which the funds are expended.
  - (h) All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments of the Church must be signed by —
    - (i) two Church Council members; or
    - (ii) one Church Council member and a person authorised by the Church Council.
    - (iii) The Church will not make use of a common seal.
  - (i) All funds of the Church must be deposited into the Church's account within five working days after their receipt.

## **12. Amendments to the Constitution**

- 12.1 The Church shall have the power to amend or add to the Constitution after written notice of a resolution providing for such amendment or addition has been sent to each active member of the Church twenty-one days prior to the meeting of the Church at which it is to be proposed, and no such resolution shall be effective unless it is passed by a majority of 75% of the active members quorum of the Church. Any change to the Constitution adopted by special resolution must be lodged according to the

Associations Incorporation Act 2015 within one month after the special resolution is passed.

### **13. Dissolution**

- 13.1 Dissolution can be triggered via Section 8.9 of the constitution or via a vote of 80% of the active members at a Special Members Meeting with a minimum one-month notice.
- 13.2 The Church may be dissolved by a resolution presented by the Elders to a meeting specifically convened for that purpose. In the event of the Church being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall not be distributed among the members of the Church but be transferred to another organization or church with similar purposes which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.