

LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(Adopted 25 September 2011, amended 11 September 2016)

1. PREAMBLE

2. This policy operates under the provisions of “Section 4 - Leadership and Decision Making” of the Constitution of the Open Icon Baptist Church.

2. THE HOST GROUP

- 2.1. This model seeks to empower the people who are ready to assume the host role to identify themselves, and take on the responsibilities of hosting this church with the affirmation and confidence of the congregation

- 2.2. As long as this policy remains in place, references to the “Leadership Group” in the church’s Constitution are to be understood as applying to the “Host Group”.

2.3. IDENTIFYING THE HOST GROUP

- 2.3.1. The Host Group consists of those within the congregation who, after prayerful discernment using a Personal Discernment Questionnaire, are willing to covenant with one another to be the Hosts, and work together in the leading of the congregation. They will either:

- 2.3.1.1. be members of the church who identify themselves as belonging to the Host Group,

or

- 2.3.1.2. be recognised as belonging to the Host Group despite being unable to meet the normal pre-requisites and expectation of Host Group membership. These positive exceptions must be approved by 80% of the Host Group after being recommended for inclusion by the pastor or any member of the congregation.

- 2.3.2. New members may be accepted into the Host Group at any time if they meet one of the above descriptions given in 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 and are prepared to commit themselves to the current Host Group covenant

- 2.3.3. The Personal Discernment Questionnaire will be made available during Lent each year, with a request that all congregational members prayerfully use it to consider their role in the congregation.

- 2.3.4. Although the Hosts are self-nominated, they hold a position of trust within the congregation. Those who have discerned a call to the host group will have their names published to the congregation at least 4 weeks prior to the Church Anniversary service (held on the Sunday closest to the date of the foundation of the church; viz. June 18th 1854). A brief special Meeting will be held at least two weeks before the Church Anniversary service at which the congregation will be asked to affirm, by secret ballot, their support of the hosts and their covenant. Should any person not receive such the affirmation of at least 80% of the members present and voting, their continued membership of Host Group shall be reviewed by the rest of the Host Group.

2.4. THE HOST GROUP COVENANT

- 2.4.1. The Host Group is to annually review and adopt a Covenant covering how they will work together, support one another, and hold one another accountable. The content of the covenant is to be affirmed by the

congregation in the same secret ballot mentioned above (2.6). The current Covenant is included as Appendix 5 to this constitution.

- 2.4.2. A commissioning rite will be held during the annual covenanting rite in the church anniversary service in which the Host Group stand and pledge themselves to one another under their covenant. The congregation will then be asked to stand and pledge themselves to supporting the Host Group and contributing, as they are able, to the life, prayer and ministry of the church.
- 2.4.3. It should be understood and made explicit in the covenant that acceptance of grace-filled accountability to one another is a basic expectation and a requirement for the Host Group to be able to function constructively. Members of the Host Group need to be able to rely on one another, and so they should expect to be graciously called to account if they repeatedly fail to meet their agreed commitments in the hosting of the church.
- 2.4.4. If it becomes clear that a person is not able to function as a reliable contributor to the Host Group, but that person is unable to acknowledge and address the problem, the person can be removed from the Host Group by a two thirds majority vote of the other members of the Host Group.

2.5. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.5.1. The Host Group have responsibility for:

- 2.5.1.1. leading by example in committed active participation in the life, prayer and ministry of the congregation;
- 2.5.1.2. developing and implementing the congregation's vision and mission;
- 2.5.1.3. overseeing and managing the church's life and work, including both spiritual direction and the organisational and administrative tasks required by and for the church's existence and activities on a day to day basis;
- 2.5.1.4. determining the nature, purpose and time of the church's regular gatherings;

2.5.2. The Host Group and the church's Pastors are expected to work cooperatively with one other in order that each may support and empower the other. The pastor is not a host, but is expected to be present and participate in the decision making of the group, but does not have a vote.

2.6. DECISION MAKING

- 2.6.1. The Host Group will normally meet at least once a month to discern the leading of God. Host Group meetings will normally be open to the attendance of anyone who regularly participates in the congregation's life.
- 2.6.2. The Host Group may choose to delegate the decision making in some areas of management to individuals or task groups. Those to whom such things are delegated remain accountable to the Host Group and to the Church Meeting.
- 2.6.3. The Host Group's decision making processes will be guided by the principles set out in section 4.3 of the church constitution.

- 2.6.4. Whenever the Host Group is working on a matter that is of wide interest to the congregation and would benefit from the wider involvement in the discernment, they are encouraged to distribute information about it and then nominate a gathering (eg. over drinks after the Sunday worship service) at which the matter will be opened up for comment and discussion. A “straw poll” indication of support may be taken at such a gathering as an aid to the subsequent discernment and decision of the Host Group.

2.7. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 2.7.1. The Host Group accept their ministry from Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, and from the congregation. In their provision of leadership, oversight, management, and care, the Host Group remains accountable to the Congregational Meeting.
- 2.7.2. All meetings of the Host Group will normally be open to the attendance of anyone who regularly participates in the congregation’s life, and held at times publicised to the congregation. If it is believed that there is a reason for the group to hold a closed meeting (e.g. a matter requiring strict confidentiality has arisen), an approval of the reason must first be obtained from either the Pastor or the BUV Regional Minister.
- 2.7.3. The Host Group must keep records of its meetings and the decisions made.
- 2.7.4. Decisions made at Host Group meetings can be challenged by any member of the church and taken to congregational meeting for reconsideration before being implemented.

To enable this to happen:

- 2.7.4.1. The record of decisions made at a Host Group meeting is to be made available to the congregation (by email and in hard copy available for collection or mail-out on request) as soon as possible after the meeting. The record should include the name of a nominated contact person for questions or challenges. Where possible, action on the decisions will not be commenced until at least seven days after the notification.

Within that seven days:

- 2.7.4.2. Within the above seven days, any church member may request that a decision be referred back to the next meeting for reconsideration. If the member still wishes to challenge the decision after the next meeting, the decision must be referred to a special congregational meeting.
- 2.7.4.2.1. A member requesting such a reopening of a decision will be expected, prior to the subsequent meeting, to provide in writing to the Host Group:
- 2.7.4.2.1.1. an account of the new information or overlooked factors that would warrant an overturning of the decision;
 - 2.7.4.2.1.2. an explanation as to why such information or factors were not made known until after the decision had been made.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

- 3.1. The Host Group may approach other members of the congregation or, with approval from the congregation, outside sources, to undertake tasks to which the member's or outsider's skills may be best suited, either on a regular or ad-hoc basis. It is understood that:
 - 3.1.1. some will involve a person who volunteers to do the work themselves, while others will involve a person who volunteers to co-ordinate others in getting the work done;
 - 3.1.2. some will be semi-permanent, while others will exist only for the life of a particular project;
 - 3.1.3. some may require a regular report to the congregational meetings, while others may not;
 - 3.1.4. all are ultimately accountable to the congregational meeting, but in the day-to-day performance of their duties will usually report Host Group.
- 3.2. Although the appointment of a person to such an administrative role may not require an election, if others have concerns about the person's suitability, competence or performance, a challenge may be brought at any time. This should firstly be done through the Host Group, without public criticism or complaint, with a view to either enabling the person to improve or finding a replacement. However, if a satisfactory resolution cannot be negotiated, the concerns may be brought to a church meeting as a motion of no confidence or as a request to put the position to a vote.
- 3.3. The position of Treasurer must always be filled. This can only be done at a duly convened meeting of the congregation; by the expressed confidence of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting; and is filled for a two year term. The incumbent may seek re-election.
- 3.4. The responsibilities of the Treasurer are:
 - 3.4.1. ensuring that the congregation's income and expenditure are responsibly handled and accounted for;
 - 3.4.2. ensuring that the congregation's financial obligations, including taxes, salaries, allowances and superannuation, are met;
 - 3.4.3. preparing financial reports and drafting annual budgets and presenting them to church meetings.
 - 3.4.4. Ensuring that the accounts of the church are audited on a regular basis.
- 3.5. At each Annual General Meeting of the Congregation, a list of all the current administrative tasks and the people appointed to perform them will be tabled, and a motion brought to thank them for their service.

4. PASTORS

- 4.1. The Pastors of the Open Icon Baptist Church will be a person or persons whom the church believes to have been called and gifted by the Lord of the Church to fulfil a ministry of spiritual leadership in word, sacrament and pastoral care within the church. This ministry is exercised in consultation and cooperation with the Host Group and with other designated pastors.
- 4.2. Pastors are called and expected to make a substantial contribution to:

- 4.2.1. the preaching, teaching, and outreach ministries of the congregation;
 - 4.2.2. the ordering of the congregation's worship and prayer; and
 - 4.2.3. the provision of pastoral care and counsel to people who are regular participants in the life of the congregation or who contact the church in search of care and counsel.
- 4.3. The Pastors accept their ministry from Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, and while they are "servants of the Church", the congregation is not their master. They lead rather than rule, for they have only that authority which is affirmed in practice by the congregation, in recognition of the call of God and the integrity of their life, prayer and ministry. In their provision of leadership, oversight and care, the Pastors remain accountable:
- 4.3.1.1. to the Lord of the Church;
 - 4.3.1.2. to the Congregation (whose formal authority resides in decisions of the members, gathered in duly convened open meetings to discern the mind of Christ);
 - 4.3.1.3. and to the congregation's Visiting Pastoral Overseers.
- 4.4. Except in special circumstances approved by a church meeting, pastors are expected to refrain from taking a hands-on role in any organisational and administrative tasks of the congregation which are not directly related to their core roles of preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. They are, however, expected to participate in the spiritual and theological oversight of the organisational and administrative functioning of the congregation, its members, and its Host Group.
- 4.5. The Pastors are those whose call to pastoral ministry in the congregation has been recognised and endorsed by a duly convened "Schedule B" Meeting of the church (see 5.11 & 5.12). The appointment of a pastor may come about by either:
- 4.5.1. the congregation, having recognised that one of its members is exercising a pastoral ministry which shows evidence of the call and gifting of God, calling a Special Church Meeting to demonstrate the congregation's confidence in that ministry and formalise the appointment; or
 - 4.5.2. the congregation, identifying a need for a new pastor, forming a selection committee to seek a suitable candidate and bring a recommendation to a duly convened Special Church Meeting.
- 4.6. It is understood that the Pastors, and especially those who have been ordained by the wider Church, represent the local congregation to the wider Church, and vice versa, and therefore will periodically have responsibilities that require them to give a portion of their working hours to denominational or ecumenical endeavours.
- 4.7. A "Statement of Understanding" between each pastor and the congregation shall be negotiated and ratified, with the approval of both parties. Each "Statement of Understanding" will:
- 4.7.1. be framed in accordance with the Baptist Union of Victoria's "Guidelines for Churches and Pastors";

- 4.7.2. outline the basic framework by which the relationship between the pastor and the congregation is understood;
- 4.7.3. identify the essential duties and responsibilities of the pastor;
- 4.7.4. identify the time fraction for which the pastor is engaged and remunerated, on the understanding that:
 - 4.7.4.1. a 1.0 EFT appointment means an average of thirty eight hours per week given to pastoral duties;
 - 4.7.4.2. a 0.0 EFT appointment means that the appointment is on a voluntary basis and that there is no requirement for any time to be committed to pastoral duties beyond what occurs within the course of those activities which are expected of all Members;
- 4.7.5. detail the terms and conditions of employment if the pastor is engaged and remunerated for a time fraction greater than 0.0 EFT.

5. VISITING PASTORAL OVERSEERS

- 5.1. The Open Icon Baptist Church recognises that while the Pastors and the Host Group are entrusted with the primary responsibility for the spiritual leadership and pastoral oversight of the congregation and its shared activities, there are many situations in which the wisdom and experience of people from outside the congregation may prove invaluable.
- 5.2. The church will seek the voluntary service of other people, recognised for their pastoral wisdom and experience, to serve among us as Visiting Pastoral Overseers. This role has two parts. Firstly: to provide a point of contact for the congregation with regard to matters they feel uncomfortable raising with either the Pastor or a member of the Host Group. Secondly: to provide a point of reference, advice and guidance for the Pastor should the need arise.
- 5.3. The church will ask of its Visiting Pastoral Overseers that:
 - 5.3.1. they visit us at least twice a year to worship with us and share refreshments with us;
 - 5.3.2. they have their photographs on our display board and website and their contact details available to all regular congregational participants;
 - 5.3.3. they be willing to talk with any congregational participant about issues or concerns to do with the life and direction of the church;
 - 5.3.4. they agree to be notified of the issues and informed of important questions to be discussed at church meetings and invited to offer critique, advice, comments or suggestions as they see fit.
 - 5.3.5. they be willing to offer assistance in finding appropriate paths to reconciliation if there are conflicts within the congregation in which the Pastors or Leadership Group are not able to function as a neutral mediator.
 - 5.3.6. they be invited to be members of our congregational email discussion list so as to be informed of discussion taking place in that forum.
- 5.4. The congregation will invite two or more people (preferably one female and one male) to become Visiting Pastoral Overseers.

- 5.4.1. The congregation's BUV appointed Regional Minister shall be regarded ex-officio as a Visiting Pastoral Overseer whether or not they are able to meet the normal expectations outlined in 5.3 above.
- 5.5. New Visiting Pastoral Overseers may be appointed at any time, by the expressed confidence of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting in a duly convened meeting of the congregation.
- 5.6. Visiting Pastoral Overseers are appointed for open ended terms, but the congregation's confidence in them must be tested by a vote in a Special meeting at least once every three years. Such a vote requires four weeks notice to the congregation, and may be brought on by:
 - 5.6.1. the passing of three years from the date of the last time the congregation voted to affirm their confidence in the Visiting Pastoral Overseer;
 - 5.6.2. the request of any two members of the congregation;
 - 5.6.3. the request of the Visiting Pastoral Overseer themselves.