



GLENVISTA
BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

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CONSTITUTION

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CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Glenvista Baptist Church, do ordain this Constitution and by-laws and voluntarily submit to it to enable us to achieve our goals as a local Church under the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. NAME OF THE CHURCH

The name of the Church is Glenvista Baptist Church; hereinafter referred to by the name, or “the Church”. Glenvista Baptist Church is a Bible-based, Evangelical, Independent and Reformed Baptist Church.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CHURCH

2.1 WORSHIP:

To promote the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

([John 4:23-24](#); [John 14:17](#); [John 16:13](#); [Eph. 5:9](#); [II Thes 2:13](#); [I Pet. 2:5](#); [Psalm 100:1-4](#))

2.2 EVANGELISM:

To make Christ known through the clear presentation of the Gospel.

([Mark 16:15](#); [II Cor. 5:20](#); [II Tim. 2:15](#); [4:5](#); [Rom 1:16](#); [I Cor 1:17](#))

2.3 EQUIPPING:

To equip the saints to do the work of the ministry through consistent expository teaching of God’s Word.

([II Tim. 3:16-17](#); [Eph. 2:10](#); [Eph. 4:11-16](#); [Heb. 13:20-21](#))

2.4 MISSIONS:

To promote the accomplishment of the Great Commission by the support and the sending of missionaries and partnering with organisations of like faith and purpose.

([Mark 16:15](#); [Ps. 96:3](#); [Rom 10:13-15](#); [Acts 13:47](#); [Matt 28:19-20](#); [Isa. 52:7](#))

2.5 FELLOWSHIP:

To promote a growing fellowship among all our members in the local body, and amongst other like-minded Churches

([I Thess. 5:11](#); [I John 1:3](#); [Prov. 27:17](#); [I John 1:7](#); [Acts 2:42](#); [Heb. 10:24](#))

2.6 DISCIPLINE:

To submit to the Headship of Jesus Christ as our Lord in our worship, faith, and practice.

([James 5:19-20](#); [Heb. 12:5-11](#); [Deut. 8:5-6](#); [Gal. 6:1](#); [Matt. 18:15-17](#))

2.7 ORDINANCES:

To administer the ordinances of believer's baptism and Communion.

([Acts 2:38](#); [Acts 22:16](#); [Mark 16:16](#); [Rom. 6:4](#); [Gal 3:27](#); [I Cor 1:26](#); [Matt. 26:26-28](#); [Acts 2:42](#); [I Cor 11:24](#))

3. STATEMENT OF FAITH

Refer to Annexure A for our Statement of Faith

4. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS:

For the efficient and effective operation of this Local Church, we encourage individuals to become members of Glenvista Baptist Church to bear the

responsibility and to uphold the order and unity that God intends for His Church.

As outlined in the Membership Covenant (Annexure B), Church members shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the Church, consistent with God's leading and with the member's gifts, time, and God-given material resources.

Only Church members shall have the privilege to serve in the different ministries of the Church; whilst persons undergoing the membership process shall be privileged to serve in non-teaching ministries of the Church subject to the approval of the Eldership of the Church.

4.2 QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

People who are eligible for membership shall consist of those who have given evidence of their personal faith in Jesus Christ, who have confessed their faith by Believers Baptism and who have completed the discipleship requirement (as determined by the elders), for membership of the Glenvista Baptist Church.

Membership can be entered into from the age of 18 upwards.

Such a person will be brought in with the commitment to complete the discipleship.

Should a member not complete the discipleship of his/her own choosing such a member shall be removed from membership.

No transfers of membership will take place from or to another church.

Individuals shall also have accepted this Constitution, (including the Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant) and agreed to live under its authority.

4.3 ADMISSION OF MEMBERS:

- i. Eligible candidates need to approach the Eldership or those who have disciplined them regarding membership.
- ii. The Elders shall interview the applicant(s).
- iii. Following the interview, the Elders will publish the names of suitable applicants for prayerful consideration by the members for two consecutive Sundays.
- iv. Should any objection or concerns be raised by the membership the process will be paused until these have been resolved.
- v. Provided there are no objections or concerns raised by the membership, the applicant(s) shall be brought into formal membership of the Glenvista Baptist Church at the first appropriate Lord's Day.

4.4 DISCIPLESHIP OF MINORS

The discipleship process may commence from the age of 13. Each case will be wisely and prayerfully assessed by the elders, in conjunction with the parents (where possible) before discipleship can commence.

5. CHURCH GOVERNANCE

The Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as the supreme Head of the Church and claims the scriptural right of complete autonomy and self-governance. The Church undertakes to manage all its affairs according to the New Testament teaching and recognises the final authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters of faith and conduct.

We believe the most consistent model of governance in the Scripture is that of an Elder-led congregationalism. This model requires a Church to be led by its appointed Elders while such Elders always remain accountable to the membership of the Church.

6. CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

The authority to affirm offices is vested in the congregation. The New Testament recognizes two offices of the local Church, Elders (also called pastors or overseers) and Deacons. The Church may recognise the other administrative positions, such as pastoral assistants. All offices of the Church must be Church members prior to assuming their responsibilities and must remain Church members for the duration of the time in which they serve in their individual capacities.

6.1 ELDERS (PASTORS):

In accordance with clear New Testament principles, the oversight of the Church rests with its Elders, all of whom are equal in authority, ministering in a plurality of leadership. The structure of New Testament Church government is a collective leadership in which each Elder, shares equally the position, authority and responsibility of the office.

6.2 TERMINOLOGY REGARDING ELDERS:

Elders are designated by three terms in the New Testament, each of which highlights a distinct responsibility of those in the office.

- “Overseer” (Bishop) “Episcopos”
([1 Tim. 3:1-2](#); [Titus 1:7](#)) “one who gives oversight to the welfare of the Church”.
- “Elder” or “Presbuteros”
([1 Tim. 5:19](#); [1 Pet. 5:1](#); [Titus 1:5](#)) “one who gives mature leadership to the Church”.
- “Pastor” (Shepherd) “Poimen”
([1 Pet. 5:2](#); [Eph. 4:2](#)) “one who shepherds and feeds the flock.”

While the most common term used by the Church to refer to its leaders is “Elders”, this is not intended in any way to create an unbiblical distinction between pastors and Elders. Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd – the supreme

Head and Leader of the Church – and the Elders serve as His undershepherds. The Elders are therefore responsible to Christ rather than to a “senior” pastor.

6.3 QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS:

The qualifications for the office of Elders are specifically set forth in [1 Tim. 3:1-7](#); [Titus 1:5-11](#) and [1 Pet. 5:1-4](#). They are qualifications of ethical behaviour, knowledge of Christian doctrine, and sound family life.

Elders must be “above reproach” ([1 Tim. 3:2](#)) because they are to wield godly influence for the Church and bring no reproach to the name of Christ. They are men who are able to teach, model a godly family life, are firmly committed to living out our Lord’s principles of discipleship, and who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ([Matt. 6:33](#)).

They are men who love Jesus Christ above all else and who willingly sacrifice themselves for the sake of others, even to suffer for Christ. The list of qualifications for those who shall oversee the local Church presupposes males. The New Testament teaches male headship in both the family and the Church. In [1 Tim 2:11-14](#) women are expressly forbidden to teach or to exercise authority over men in the corporate gathering of the Church.

Prospective Elders are to be publicly examined in the light of biblical qualifications. The number of Elders is not limited but shall depend on the number of men the Lord calls and the Church affirms.

6.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS:

Subject to the will of the congregation, the Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the Church. In keeping with the principles set forth in [Acts 6:1-6](#) and [1 Pet. 5:1-4](#), the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine) and shepherding God’s flock.

The Elders shall take particular responsibility to:

- i. Examine and instruct prospective members.
- ii. Examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions.
- iii. Oversee the work of the Deacons and appointed Church staff.
- iv. Conduct worship services.
- v. Administer the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- vi. Equip the membership for the work of the ministry.
- vii. Encourage sound doctrine and practice.
- viii. Admonish and correct error.
- ix. Oversee the process of Church discipline.
- x. Coordinate and promote the ministries of the Church and mobilise the Church for world missions.

Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

May establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities subject to approval by the Church.

May also propose funding for new paid staff positions subject to the approval of the Church. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of the Eldership subject to the approval of the Church.

Shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members.

Shall meet as often as the proper fulfilment of their responsibilities may require.

The authority of the Elders does not include the right to make all decisions unilaterally. The Bible and our Confessions makes it clear that decisions having to do with corrective discipline and the recognition of officers require the consent of the local Church. ([Acts 6:2-6](#); [9:26](#); [I Cor. 5:4-5](#), [13](#); [II Cor. 2:6](#))

It is according to the mind of Christ that other matters such as the reception and exclusion of Church members, the full support and involuntary removal of officers and major financial decisions be approved by the consent of the Church. Nevertheless, the Elders must provide definitive leadership to the Church in the making of such decisions.

The authority of the Elders is limited to the sphere of the local Church. They may not require consequences for sin beyond those of Church discipline, invade the spheres of other ordained human authorities (husbands, fathers, civil rulers, and employers), or command God's people regarding matters not specified in Scripture. ([Matt. 22:21](#); [Luke 12:13-14](#))

They must, however, order the house of God by the application of His Word. ([Acts 20:28](#); [I Pet. 5:3](#); [Rom. 13:1-7](#); [Eph. 5:22-6:9](#); [I Cor. 7:25-28](#), [35-40](#))

The authority of the Elders is conditioned by the fact that they are themselves members of the local Church. While Elders are shepherds over the flock, they are also members of the flock. Therefore, each individual Elder is entitled to the same privileges, is obligated by the same responsibilities and is subject to the same discipline as are all other members of the Church. Thus, each individual Elder is both under the oversight of his fellow Elders and accountable to the Church as a whole. ([Matt. 18:17](#); [23:9](#); [26:31](#); [II Cor. 11:19-20](#); [Gal. 2:11](#); [III John 1, 9-10](#))

(Section 9 [*Loss of Plurality of Elders*] of this Article provides for the temporary oversight of Elders from a sister Church who would not be members of this particular local Church.)

The authority of every Elder (overseer or pastor) is the same. Thus, every Elder has equal rule in the Church. Though gifts possessed and functions performed will vary from Elder to Elder, this diversity must never undermine real parity (equality) among the Elders.

([Acts 20:28](#) [[cf.17](#)]; [Gal. 2:11](#); [1 Pet. 5:1-2](#); [1 Tim. 5:17](#))

Finally, the authority of the Elders is a very real authority. When it is biblically exercised, God's people are required to submit to this authority ([Heb. 13:17](#)).

6.5 SELECTION OF ELDERS:

A member who desires the office of Elder and is confident that he fulfils the biblical requirements for the office may approach any of the Elders to express his desire to serve in that capacity.

Furthermore, if amongst the Eldership there is the belief that there is a suitable candidate, within the congregation, based on the man's life and ministry, any of the Elders may put the man's name before the Eldership for consideration. If, after due consideration, the Elders concur, the proposer may approach the man to suggest that he give prayerful consideration to joining the internship.

A member who agrees to pursue the office of Elders shall enter an Elder internship process. His name shall be made known to the Church as an Elder intern. As a candidate, he shall attend Elders meetings and receive exposure to shepherding and teaching ministry. Interns shall, at the discretion of the Elders, be excused from Elders meeting during particularly sensitive matters of discussion.

There is no set time for the Eldership internship. Once the Elders are satisfied that an individual does indeed meet the requirements of Scripture for the eldership, the Elders shall, at the first appropriate Lord's Day, formally propose the candidate's name to the Church for consideration as an Elder. The proposal, including the candidate's name, shall be published in the Church

bulletin for no less than four weeks. During this time, members shall be invited to raise any objections ([I Tim. 3:1-7](#); [Titus 1:5-9](#); [I Pet. 5:1-4](#).) to the appointment of the candidate as an Elder. If no grounds for disqualification are found, the candidate's call shall be affirmed at the first appropriate Lord's Day or members meeting of the Church. The candidate shall subsequently be ordained to the office during a Sunday morning Communion Service by the laying on of hands and prayer by the Elders.

6.6 VOCATIONAL ELDERS:

Elders shall serve without remuneration, except in cases where it is felt by the Elders and the congregation that it shall be advantageous to the life and ministry of the Church, in keeping with a congregation-approved budget, that such Elders should be enabled to give undivided attention to the work and ministry of the Church. Any proposal to vocationally employ an Elder shall be made at a Members Meeting and be ratified by the membership no sooner than the following scheduled Members Meeting.

A vocational elder's salary shall be determined by a salary committee comprising non-staff Elders, the Church Treasurer and any other men appointed by the Eldership to this responsibility. A vocational Elder shall be granted a 3 months' Sabbatical every 5 to 7 years, subject to the needs of the Church. A sabbatical is not primarily a time of holiday, but a period of focused study and learning. Its design is to make a significant contribution to the vocational Elder's ongoing formation by developing knowledge, skills, and insight.

A vocational Elder shall remain in office as long as he is a member and continues to meet the biblical requirements or resigns from the office. Any employment contract between the Church and a vocation Elders shall be terminated by three months' notice in writing by either party, unless otherwise mutually agreed in writing.

6.7 NON-VOCATIONAL ELDERS:

Biblically qualified and called men, who are members of, but not vocationally employed by the Church, may be appointed to serve as Elders in accordance with the selection process outlined above. Non-vocational Elders shall bear the same authority and responsibilities as vocation Elders. A non-vocational Elder may serve a maximum of five to seven years before taking a mandatory one-year sabbatical from the office of Elder, subject to the needs of the Church. Assuming he remains qualified he may be nominated and re-affirmed as an Elder after his one-year sabbatical.

6.8 APPOINTMENT OF A VOCATIONAL ELDER IN THE ABSENCE OF ELDERS:

Under normal circumstances the existing Elders shall lead the congregation in the selection of Elder candidates as outlined above. In the event that there are no Elders in the Church, then the following procedure shall be followed. A Special General Meeting for the purpose of electing an Elder shall be called by the Diaconate, at which the members shall appoint no less than six biblically faithful men who are members, who are not Deacons, to act with the Diaconate as a special calling committee. The members proposed for this calling committee shall be voted on at the above-mentioned Special General Meeting. These members shall be individually accepted with a two-third majority of Church members present and eligible to vote.

The duty of the calling committee shall be to make all necessary enquiries and to agree upon a prospective Elder with an eighty percent (80%) majority of the committee. The calling committee's decision shall be recommended to the Church as soon as possible. The calling committee shall put before the Church only one prospective Elder at a time. The calling committee's recommendation shall be considered at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose of appointing an Elder and no invitation shall be sent forward unless eighty percent (80%) of the members present vote in favour.

Forty percent (40%) of the membership of the Church shall be deemed to constitute a quorum at a Special General Meeting called for this purpose. An invitation shall be contingent upon the prospective Elder accepting in writing the provisions of the Constitution, Statement of Faith, Membership Covenant, Membership Process, Discipleship material and Discipleship process, copies of which shall be supplied for his perusal and acceptance.

6.9 LOSS OF PLURALITY OF ELDERS:

The Constitution assumed, and the governing principles of Biblical Church order require, that a plurality of Elders oversee the Local Church. Therefore, if at any period in the life of the Church, there no longer exists a plurality of Elders, and this lack cannot in a timely way be supplied, the remaining Elder (or the Church, if there is no Elder) shall seek the temporary oversight of the Elders of a trusted sister Church holding as its doctrinal standard the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. The purpose of such an arrangement is to provide both pastoral care and leadership in the loss of plurality of Elders.

When a suitable Eldership willing to undertake these responsibilities is located, the Church shall within a reasonable time period officially place itself under that Eldership.

If the Church has a remaining Elder, the aforementioned Eldership shall function as his fellow Elders. This action shall be taken by a written ballot at a Special General Meeting of the Church. An eighty percent (80%) majority of those present and voting is necessary for such an action. The recognition of the oversight of such and Eldership shall be confirmed or failing an eighty percent (80%) majority be withdrawn in the same way at the Special General Meeting of the Church. When a plurality of resident Elders is realised, the oversight arrangement described here shall immediately cease.

6.10 DEACONS:

Deacons are primarily responsible for assisting the Elders in those practical aspects of ministry which would otherwise distract the Elders from their priorities of prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding the flock. Such practical matters include the administration of benevolence, the maintenance and improvement of the Church's facilities, the management of various business affairs and the facilitation of ministries within the Church.

Deacons must fulfil the duties of their office in cooperation with, and in subjection to, the Elders. The Elders may at their discretion appoint one of the Deacons to act as the chairman of the Deacons in order to facilitate the communication with the Elders and the general organisation of the Diaconate.

The number of Deacons shall not be fixed. The Church shall set apart according to its need men who evidence the scriptural qualifications for that office. ([Acts 6:1-7](#); [I Tim. 3:8-13](#))

6.10.1 Appointment of Deacons:

General Statement

The appointment of Deacons is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. However, He has ordained that they be formally recognised by the consent of the particular Church they serve. Deacons are ordained to the office, by the laying on of hands of the Eldership ([I Tim. 4:14](#)). This is an expression of approval for which the Elders are responsible. ([I Tim. 5:22](#))

Therefore, each Deacon must have the approval, not only of the Church as a whole, but of the Eldership in particular. The Lord's appointment of an individual to this office is recognised by means of that individual's possession of those graces and gifts required by

Scripture for the particular office and his own conviction that the Lord is calling him to minister in that office.

The recognition of this office is a matter of such importance that it should never proceed without much prayerful waiting upon God, careful consideration of the relevant passages of Scripture and thorough evaluation of those persons being considered. Each member of the Church has a responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding these matters.

6.10.2 Procedure of Appointment:

The recognition of those whom the Lord has appointed to bear office in this Church is carried out in three steps:

i. Nomination:

The members of the Church are encouraged to express to the Elders their views concerning those whom Christ may be gifting for the office of Deacon in the Church. The Elders will seriously consider the wisdom God gives to His Church, however, nominations to this office are to be made to the Eldership.

The nominee(s) name(s) shall be published in the Church bulletin for no less than four (4) weeks prior to a Special General Meeting. During this time, members shall be invited to raise any objections and/or concerns to the nomination of the candidate(s) to the office, based on the following Scriptural qualifications ([1 Tim. 3:8-13](#); [Acts 6:1-3](#)). Such objection(s) and / or concern(s) must be raised with the candidate and the elders. If no grounds for disqualification are found, the candidate's name shall be presented at the Special General Meeting called, to vote on the appointment of deacons.

ii. Voting:

At such a Special General Meeting for the appointment of Deacons the names of all nominee(s) shall be presented and voted upon by the membership. The scriptural qualifications shall be read and expounded. The Church should seek unanimity concerning each nominee, but where unanimity is not realised, 80% of those ballots cast shall be required for the appointment(s). Ballots shall be cast according to Protocols at all Meetings as laid out, under Item 9.4 of this Constitution.

iii. Ordination:

Following the election of an office(r) there shall be a portion of a Communion Service set aside at which time the officer(s)-elect shall be ordained and installed into office by the laying on of the hands of the Eldership. The laying on of the Elders' hands shall signify the ratification of Deacon(s) appointed. This solemn act should always be accompanied by the special prayers of the Church. ([Acts 13:1-3](#))

Should reasons arise which prohibit the Elders from conscientiously ordaining the officer elect ([I Tim. 5:22](#)), the Church shall be informed of their reasons in an appropriate and discreet manner.

7. CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

The threefold purpose of Church discipline is:

- i. To glorify God by reflecting His holy character in maintaining purity in the Church. ([I Cor 5:6-13](#))

- ii. To edify believers by deterring sin. ([I Tim. 5:20](#))
- iii. To promote the spiritual welfare of the offending member by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct, for the purpose of restoration. ([Gal. 6:1](#))

7.1 PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

Every member of the Church is accountable to the Church and liable to its discipline ([I Cor. 12:12-27](#); [I Thes. 5:12-15](#); [Heb. 3:12-13](#); [10:24-25](#)). Mutual submission to one another ([Eph. 5:21](#)) and to the Elders whom the Lord has set over His Church, is required.

Church discipline is intended by the Lord to result in the sanctification of each individual member and of the whole body of the Church collectively.

The following concerns/matters shall subject a member to the processes of Church discipline outlined in the New Testament.

- i. Any member who is guilty of heretical doctrine or sinful conduct by which the name of Jesus Christ is dishonoured.
- ii. Any member who is consistently neglectful of his/her membership duties, and who thereby opposes the welfare of the Church.
- iii. Any member who renders his/her profession of faith doubtful. ([Matt. 18:15-20](#); [I Cor. 5:6-13](#); [Gal. 6:1-2](#); [I Cor 12:12-27](#); [I Thes. 5:12-15](#); [Heb. 3:12-13](#); [10:24-25](#)).
- iv. Any member in the process of Church discipline is called to be in submission to all other members ([Eph. 5:21](#)) and to the Elders whom the Lord has set over His Church ([II Thes. 3:14-15](#); [Titus 3:10-11](#)).

While the Elders shall offer leadership in this process, Church discipline is the responsibility of the entire congregation. Whenever feasible, an effort must be made to correct error, resolve difficulty, and remove offense through private counsel and admonition before more public steps are taken ([Gal. 6:1](#); [James 5:10](#), [20](#)). These principles are given to us in ([Matt. 18:15-16](#); [Rom. 16:17-20](#); [I Cor 5:1-13](#); [II Thess. 3:6-15](#)).

The Scriptures, [I Tim 5:19-20](#) and [Titus 3:10](#) must be carefully followed and appropriately applied to each case of corrective discipline.

In some cases, public admonition or public repentance may be warranted ([Matt. 18:17](#); [I Tim. 5:20](#)). In extreme cases excommunication from the membership of the Church may be necessary ([Matt. 18:17](#); [Rom. 16:17-20](#); [I Cor. 5:1-13](#); [I Tim. 1:20](#); [Titus 3:10](#)). All the members of the Church are obliged to submit to and enforce the decision of the Church in its acts of discipline.

Since the Church is a spiritual and religious institution, the punishments ([II Cor. 2:6](#)) inflicted by the Church are spiritual. They may include public verbal reproof ([Matt. 18:17](#); [I Tim. 5:20](#)) social avoidance ([Rom. 16:17](#); [I Cor. 5:9-11](#); [II Thes. 3:6, 14](#)), suspension from the Lord's Supper and/or other privileges of Church membership ([I Cor 5:11](#)) as well as excommunication ([Matt. 18:17](#); [I Cor 5:13](#)). They are intended to produce repentance through a sense of sorrow and shame ([II Cor 2:7](#); [II Thess. 3:14](#)).

The Church has no right, however, to confiscate goods, revoke conjugal rights, or inflict corporal punishment of any kind. Nevertheless, a member guilty of criminal actions may be delivered to the civil authorities according to the rule of Scripture ([I Pet. 4:15](#)).

The goals of corrective discipline must always be the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the Church ([I Cor. 5:6](#); [Eph:5:27](#)) and the spiritual restoration of the offender ([I Cor. 5:5](#); [II Cor. 2:5-8](#); [I Tim 5:20](#)). For these reasons all Church

members should pray earnestly for God's gracious, restorative blessing upon all who are disciplined.

7.2 PUBLIC REPROOF AND REPENTANCE:

Public reproof consists of a pastoral effort before the gathered Church to call an impenitent member to repentance for sin too blatant to be dealt with in an exclusively private manner.

The Elders may, therefore, require such a member to publicly confess his/her repentance before the Church. The Elders may administer public censure whenever in their judgment, public misconduct ([Gal. 2:11-14](#); [I Tim 5:20](#)), patterns of sin ([Titus 1:12-13](#)), or serious doctrinal error ([Titus 1:10-13](#)) pose a significant threat to the godliness, unity or testimony of the congregation.

Those who humbly receive public censure, own, and confess their sin and manifest a transformed life ([Prov. 28:13](#)) shall be publicly commended for their godly repentance ([II Cor. 7:7-11](#)).

If within a reasonable time period public censure is not heeded, further discipline will be imposed. This severe measure is to be employed only when both aggravated lawlessness is discovered and there are no hopeful signs of repentance. This measure is designed as a means of grace to purge the lawbreaker of his/her lethal attachment to sin through a sincere and enduring repentance ([I Cor. 5:5](#); [6:9-11](#)). The Elders, therefore, having made earnest but unsuccessful efforts to bring the offender to true repentance shall report his/her impenitence to the Church and recommend that he/she be excommunicated. This shall be done during a Communion service at which point the gathered Church shall affirm this corporate biblical decision. During this time the members will be encouraged to uphold all aspects of such excommunication and shall be called to earnest prayer for the repentance and restoration of the individual.

The members of this Church agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at any point in the disciplinary process ([I Cor 6:1-8](#)).

Members who are under discipline by the Church, as defined above, forfeit, and waive the right to resign from the Church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action. Members who are under discipline by the Church, as defined above, forfeit, and waive the right to participate in any voting conducted by the Church.

7.3 RESTORATION:

Since the crucial purpose of Church discipline is to restore a fallen member, it is the duty and privilege of the Church to forgive and to restore to full membership a suspended or excommunicated member who gives satisfactory evidence of their repentance ([II Cor. 2:6-8](#)). If the erring individual, following dismissal from fellowship and/or membership, heeds the warning of the Church, expresses, and demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement, the Elders shall propose to the Church that he/she be publicly welcomed back into fellowship and restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of membership. If the Church agrees, the repentant member shall be welcomed back into membership at a regularly scheduled service or members meeting of the Church.

8. AFFILIATION:

While the Church remains independent and is not affiliated or aligned with the Baptist World Alliance or the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, the Church does maintain active fellowship with other Churches of like-minded faith, and reserves the right, with the approval of its members, to affiliate itself with Churches and Church associations of like-minded faith and practice.

9. MEMBERS MEETINGS:

9.1 THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM):

An annual business meeting of the Church shall be held. At such a meeting a financial report and the proposed budget shall be presented and approved by a vote of the Church. A membership report shall also be given by the Elders. This meeting shall be held no later than April after the financial year end.

The proposed budget, having been formulated by the Elders in conjunction with the Treasurer and having taken into account budget requests from Departmental Heads and members, shall be circulated to the membership by reasonable means no less than two weeks prior to the AGM. Opportunity shall be given in the intervening period to ask questions, make suggestions and seek clarification. A vote shall be taken at the meeting to ratify the proposed budget.

9.2 SCHEDULED GENERAL MEETINGS (SGM):

Over and above the scheduled Annual General Meeting, two additional Scheduled General Meetings will be held in July and November. Notification for such meetings shall be communicated two (2) Lord's Days prior to the meetings.

9.3 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

- a. They may be called at any time by the Elders.
- b. They may also be called by a member provided that:
 - i. Such a matter has been brought to the attention of the Elders and not resolved satisfactory subject to the conditions in the next point.
 - ii. Twenty five percent (25%) of the voting members, make a written request for such a meeting. In this case, this request must state the

reason for the meeting, and be signed by twenty five percent (25%) of the members in good standing and be presented to the Elders, who shall in turn make the proper announcement of the meeting.

10 PROTOCOLS AT ALL MEETINGS

- i. A twenty five percent (25%) of the current membership shall constitute a quorum. Notification of the meeting shall be made known two (2) Sundays prior to such a meeting.
- ii. All voting members should regard their presence at a duly called Church meeting with the same seriousness and responsibility with which they would regard their attendance at any other meeting of the Church. It shall be our goal to discern prayerfully the mind of God so that it may be said of us, as it was said of the Church in [Acts 6](#) that this, “pleased the whole multitude.”
- iii. Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution of the Church or agreed upon by the members of the Church, voting at members meeting shall be taken by ballot. In the event of an unplanned vote during a members meeting, such a vote may be done by a show of hands.
- iv. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.
- v. Unless otherwise stated in this constitution or agreed upon by the Church, a resolution shall be passed by a majority of members present at the meeting. Resolutions passed shall be considered binding until rescinded at a later meeting of the members.
- vi. The Elders shall appoint a Scribe from among the members of the Church. The responsibility of the Scribe will be to record all the business transacted by the

Church, collect all documents submitted to the Church at its meetings and provide for the Church and its Elders a careful record of the Church's business. This record shall be available to the Church and its Elders in the Church office. The Elders shall have the authority to replace the Scribe whenever it seems wise.

11. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS:

Subject to the will of the Church, the Elders and Deacons, together with any other administrative officers appointed by the Church, have authority to transact the business of the Church, administer its funds and carry out its directions in accordance with the congregation-approved budget and the conditions of the constitution of the Church.

The necessary funds for the work of the Church shall be raised by free will offerings and tithes. No funds shall be raised in any other manner except with the consent of the Elders.

No disposal of Church movable or immovable property in excess of Ten Thousand Rand (R 10 000) per item(s), exclusive of interest and taxation thereon, shall be valid except upon the authority of a resolution passed at a Members Meeting of the Church.

No borrowing or capital purchase from Church funds in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Rand (R25 000) per item, exclusive of interest and taxation thereon, shall be valid except upon the authority of a resolution passed at a Members Meeting of the Church.

This amount shall be adjusted at the AGM on a yearly basis.

12. THE TREASURER:

The Treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the Church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the Church at each Members Meeting. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Elders.

The Treasurer shall ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in the books belonging to the Church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the Church are appropriately handled by any officer(s) or employees of the Church.

The Treasurer shall render to the Elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions pertaining to the financial condition of the Church. All specially designated funds given, may only be used for that designated purpose.

13. GIVING TO MISSIONS:

All funds, designated for Missions may only be used for the purpose of Missions.

14. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH:

The Church may at any time be dissolved by resolution of ninety percent (90%) majority of the members on the Church roll at a Special General Meeting of the Church.

On dissolution of the Glenvista Baptist Church the Elders must transfer the remaining assets to a charitable, religious, or education institution, within the Republic of South Africa, which is itself exempt from Income Tax in terms of Section 30 (3) (f) of the Income Tax Act no 58 of 1962, the Act and registered as a public benefit organisation.

The above institution shall be in agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and Scriptural beliefs and practices of the Glenvista Baptist Church.

In the event of contemplation of dissolution, no assets, movable or immovable may be disposed of until such dissolution has been affected.

If there is no Church – if the Church ceases to be – the Elders have the authority to allow the assets to be used, on a rental basis, by an organisation or institution with a similar doctrinal statement, until the dissolution and disposal has been finalised.

15. AMENDMENT / MODIFICATION OF:
CONSTITUTION AND (OR) STATEMENT OF FAITH AND (OR) MEMBERS COVENANT

The Constitution, Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant may be amended by an eighty percent (80%) majority vote of members present and voting. The quorum for such a meeting being sixty percent (60%) of the Church membership at a Special General Meeting, provided the Amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous Members Meeting and shall have been announced from the pulpit at Church services four (4) successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all Church members upon request.

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Adoption of the Church Constitution

This *Church Constitution* was formally adopted by a unanimous vote of the Members of the Glenvista Baptist Church present, at a properly constituted Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 19 July 2023.

This document replaces any previous *Church Constitution*.