

**Church Rules
of
BARKING CHAPEL**

(affiliated to Battsford Free Church)



Proclaiming the good news of Jesus

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Part 1- Principles for Trust Purposes

- 1.1 The Church was established circa 1884 and comes under the Constitution dated July 2007, which contains the main legal provisions governing the Church, its purpose and Basis of Faith, its powers and the use of any property owned by the Church. For ease of reference the Basis of Faith is set out in Appendix 1. The Constitution appoints The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Limited as Holding Trustee and the Church Officers as the Managing Trustees.
- 1.2 The Constitution contains provision for the meetings of the Church Officers meeting as the Managing Trustees. These provisions are the minimum requirements for their meetings. They stipulate the following:
- 1.2.1 There shall be not less than three Church Officers.
- 1.2.2 The Chairman of their meetings shall be appointed by the Church Officers and shall have a casting vote.
- 1.2.3 They shall meet not less than four times a year.
- 1.2.4 A quorum shall consist of at least one half of the Church Officers.
- 1.2.5 Written minutes of their meetings shall be maintained.
- 1.2.6 The Minister (hereafter referred to as 'Pastor'), Assistant Pastor, Church Administrator, if any, may be remunerated from church funds provided those paid are not more than one half of the number of Church Officers, but they must not be present in the Church Officers' meetings whenever their salary or financial benefits are discussed.
- 1.2.7 Special provisions applying to persons related to a Church Officer (legally referred to as "Connected Persons") if they are to be remunerated from church funds.
- 1.2.8 Subject to 1.2.6 above no Church Officer shall receive any financial benefit from the church funds in connection with his service as an Officer, other than the re-imbusement of expenses incurred in carrying out his duties as an Officer or re-imbusement of costs of the purchase of goods or services supplied to or for the Church.
- 1.2.9 Legal rules calling for the disqualification of trustees and therefore Church Officers.
- 1.3 The Constitution also contains provisions for its amendment.
- 1.4 These Rules set 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 referred to in 1.1 above.
- 1.5 Practices**
- 1.5.1 Baptism - The Members of the Church agreed, in adopting these Rules, that the mode of baptism to be practised is that of believer's baptism by immersion, but on the recommendation of the Church Officers in accordance to the provisions of Rule 2.2.2. an alternative mode may be applied where this is felt appropriate. It is recognised that baptism is not an issue that should divide the church of Christ but that those parents wishing to have their children baptised should be free to seek out a church that will do so.
- 1.5.2 The Lord's Supper - the Members of the Church agreed in adopting these Rules that, whilst it is desirable that all who partake of the Lord's Supper should have been baptised as believers in obedience to the teaching of the Scriptures, all those who profess to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour will be welcome to partake of the Lord's Supper.
- 1.5.3 In the light of the Sexual Orientation Regulations, Regulation 14 (5), we clarify our doctrine as follows. We follow the teaching of the Bible that all extra-marital sexual practices are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1v24-32; 1 Corinthians 6v9-11). The Bible also teaches that we must not be actively or passively complicit in sin (1 Corinthians 6v18-20; 1 Timothy 5v22; 1 Samuel 2v12-36) and that faith without works is dead (James 2v17). 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 homosexual practices."

1.5.3 Amendment to this Rule 1.5 shall only be permitted where the provisions of Rule 2.10. have been satisfied.

1.6 These Rules were initially adopted by the Members in July 2007. Any amendments since that date will have been approved as provided for under Rule 2.10. Any new Member, including the Pastor and his wife, to be appointed under Rule 2.1 must confirm in writing their wholehearted agreement to the Basis of Faith and acceptance of the provisions of these Rules in their entirety before their admission to membership.

Part 2- Rules for the Internal Governance of the Church

2.1 Members and Membership

2.1.1 Members of the Church shall be those persons who have confirmed in writing their unreserved agreement to the Basis of Faith, their acceptance of these Rules in their entirety and whose Membership has been approved by the Church Officers and has not been suspended or terminated, all in accordance with the provisions of this Rule 2.1.

2.1.2 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. Each of these privileges brings with it the additional responsibilities to participate in the work of the Church and its activities, to regularly attend meetings, to bear each other up before the Lord in prayer, and to share in the financial needs of the Church; all to be done within the confidentiality of Church membership.

Admission to Membership

2.1.3 A person may apply to the Church Officers to become a Member of the Church and the officers may, or may not, approve the application. No minimum age is specified, but members should have attained their sixteenth birthday to be eligible to take part in voting at business meetings

2.1.4 The Pastor and his wife (if applicable) shall be received into Membership on the taking up of his appointment as Pastor subject to their compliance with Rule 2.1.1.

2.1.5 The Church Secretary shall maintain a written register of all Church Members.

Suspension from Membership

2.1.6 A Member may be suspended from Membership where the disciplinary procedure set out in Rule 2.6 has been followed and the Members approve such a course of action at a General Church Meeting.

2.1.7 While a Member is suspended he or she will have no right to receive notices of any Church Meeting or to attend and vote at any such meeting, nor will they be entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper without the approval of the Church Officers, unless and until their suspension is rescinded and they are restored to full Membership.

Termination of Membership

2.1.8 A Member may voluntarily resign by submitting in writing a letter to that effect to the Church Secretary.

2.1.9 A Member may be removed from Membership by the application of the disciplinary procedure set out in Rule 2.6.

2.1.10 A Member shall be removed from Membership where they are unable to confirm in writing their unreserved agreement to the Basis of Faith and acceptance of these Rules in their entirety when asked to do so.

2.1.11 The Pastor and his wife shall automatically cease to be Members upon his termination of office as Pastor unless they wish to remain in the Church and the Church agrees to that effect at a General Church Meeting.

2.1.12 A person whose Membership has been terminated pursuant to Rules 2.1.9 or 2.1.10 will not be entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper unless otherwise approved by the Church Officers.

2.2 Baptism

2.2.1 Rule 1.5 sets out the view of the Church with regard to Baptism.

2.2.2 Any person wishing to be baptised shall submit their request to the Church Officers who will arrange for their appointed representatives to interview the applicant. The representatives shall report back to a meeting of the Church Officers and within their report will be any recommendation as to the mode of Baptism if it is not to be by immersion.

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

2.4.1 The duly appointed Pastor and elected Church Council as set out below are the Officers of the Church and are therefore the Managing Trustees as laid down in the Constitution. Under English law certain persons are not allowed to be a trustee. The Constitution sets out the exclusions (set out in Appendix 2 to these Rules for ease of reference) and these must always apply unless the Charity Commission has agreed otherwise in writing.

Pastor

2.4.2 The Pastor is appointed by the Church Council in full consultation with the church members. He will be offered the post on receiving a minimum of 75% of a membership vote. He will adhere to the Basis of Faith of the church and is accepted into full membership of the church. He is responsible to, and serves on, the Church Council throughout his time as Pastor of the church.

2.4.3 Duties of the Pastor: Along with the church council; he will oversee the spiritual life of the church, taking particular responsibility for the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, Evangelising in the district and shepherding the existing congregation. The exact duties and term of office of the Pastor may change according to circumstances and will be agreed at time of appointment in 'Terms and Conditions or Service'

2.4.4 The Pastor's salary, allowances and subsequent increases are decided by the Church Council in a meeting at which the Pastor is not present

2.4.5 The Church Council may remove the Pastor from office in event that his mental capacity deteriorates and prevent him from carrying out his duties. He may also be immediately suspended for teaching contrary to the Church Basis of Faith or for immoral behaviour. He may then be removed from office by the Church Council if the offence is substantiated after investigation.

Church Council

2.4.6 All Church Officers are drawn from among the General Membership of Battisford Free Church. Council Members are appointed at the Annual Business Meeting. Members should be in Membership for at least six months before being eligible for nomination. They must receive 5 or more nominations from Members before the meeting and confirm their willingness to stand. They are welcomed onto the Council if they receive a 67% majority vote of Members present at the meeting. Their appointment is for a three year period. Retiring Council Members may automatically stand for re-election.

2.4.7 Duties of Council Members:

- a] To 'oversee' the spiritual church under the hand of the Great Shepherd.
- b] To help care for the Members and other attendees.

c] To look after the fabric of the church with its financial and material needs .

d] To nominate such church workers as it would deem necessary for the smooth running of the church so that "all may be done decently and in order."

2.4.8 Subsidiary Committees: All subsidiary committees limit their activities to within their own domain. They are not policy making bodies but are responsible to the Church Council.

Elders and Deacons

2.4.9 Whilst the Church Council as a whole constitutes the Church Officers and Managing Trustees, it may be desirable to arrange that the council be separated into two bodies termed Elders and Deacons whereby the Elders (Including Pastor if appointed) would meet regularly to discuss and plan the spiritual activities of the church and the Deacons would meet to manage church affairs and discuss practical matters.

2.4.10 The Church Council would decide those from their number who would be deemed as Elders 2.4.11 If an arrangement as in 2.4.9 is enacted the joint meeting of Elders and Deacons would still be held regularly to fulfil the duties of Managing Trustees and to allow sharing of outcome of their individual meetings. Any decisions by the Elders or Deacons that fall into the responsibilities of Managing Trustees shall be referred to a full meeting of the Church Council.

2.4.12 The Church Council may remove Church Officer(s) from their duties in event that their mental capacity deteriorates preventing them from carrying out their duties. They may also be removed for teaching contrary to the church Basis of Faith or for immoral behaviour.

2.5 Church Secretary and Church Financial Officer

2.5.1 The Church Officers shall appoint from among their number a Church Secretary and a Financial Officer who may perform the role of treasurer. Should the treasurer not be a church officer he/she should report to the Financial Officer and be responsible for administering the accounts. Policy decisions regarding finance remain the responsibility of the Church Officers in consultation with the membership.

2.5.2 The Church Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of notices of any General or Special Church 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 Meeting in sufficient time to enable them to be circulated to all Church Officers before the Meeting.

2.5.3 The Financial Officer on the Church Council shall be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Church. A nominated Treasurer may be appointed from among the Church Members to undertake the day-to-day financial needs. Subsidiary accounts may be administered by secondary treasurers who are also Church Members and who will submit their accounts to the Financial Officer for audit at the financial year end together with such explanations and documentary evidence as will enable him to incorporate the figures into the church accounts.

2.6 Disciplinary Procedure

2.6.1 The procedure set out in this Rule 2.6 shall be followed where any Member is accused of immorality, disunity, failure to accept the Basis of Faith or any other action or behaviour that brings dishonour to the name of the Lord.

2.6.2 The Church Officers should be informed where it is believed this procedure should be followed due to a Member's views or behaviour. Where such a report is received or where they themselves believe such a situation to exist the Church Officers shall appoint two of their number to meet with the Member to enquire into the matter and report the facts to a meeting of the Church Officers following which they may put a resolution to the Members at a General Church Meeting that the person be suspended or removed from Membership.

2.6.3 Where a Member has been absent from the services of public worship on Sundays for more than six

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months, for reasons other than for poor health or Christian service elsewhere, the Church Officers shall appoint two of their number to interview that person and if no valid reason, in their judgement, is given for the absence then they may recommend to the Church Officers that a resolution be put to the Members at a General Church Meeting that the person be suspended or removed from Membership.

2.6.4 Where a Member has been suspended the Church Officers shall ensure that they review the situation at least at six monthly intervals.

2.6.5 The Member concerned shall be entitled to make such representations as he or she wishes at any meeting of the Church Officers or Members where his or her possible suspension or removal from Membership is discussed.

2.6.6 The Member shall be informed of the decision of the Members by the Church Secretary and the register of Members amended accordingly where suspension or termination of Membership is to be applied.

2.6.7 The Church Officers may feel that there are reasons for seeking to terminate the Pastor's appointment other than immorality, disunity or no longer adhering to the Basis of Faith or behaviour that brings dishonour to the name of the Lord. If this is so then this is not to be considered a disciplinary termination and the Church Officers should follow the provisions set out in Rule 2.4.3

2.7 Church Business Meetings

2.7.1. General Church Meetings shall be held at least twice a year on dates determined by the Church Officers. The Church Officers shall appoint one of their number to be Chairman of any General Church Meeting. If no Officer is prepared or is not available to act as Chairman then the Members attending the Meeting may appoint a Chairman from amongst their number by a simple majority of those voting.

2.7.2. One of the General Church Meetings shall be the Annual General Meeting and there shall not be more than 15 months between any two such meetings. The Church Officers shall present their annual reports of the activities of the Church and the Annual Accounts of the church funds at the Annual General Meeting. The Chairman of the Church Officers, or failing him another Church Officer agreed by the Church Officers, shall be the Chairman of the Annual General Meeting. 2.7.3. Meetings

may be called by at least 10% or 10, which ever is the greater of the Church Members and such meetings will be Special Church Meetings. The Chairman of a Special Church Meeting shall be such person as is elected by a simple majority of the Members present at the beginning of the meeting and voting. Only business set out in the notice calling the meeting can be discussed at a Special Church Meeting.

2.7.4. Subject to the provisions of Rule 2.10.3 at least two weeks' notice in writing shall be given to all Members of any General Meeting two weeks for a Special Church Meeting in writing or by announcement on a Sunday service. The Notice will set out the business to be discussed at that meeting. The Chairman of a General Church Meeting shall determine whether or not to permit any other item of competent business to be discussed but not if it requires a vote of the Members. Failure to be able to give notice to individual Members because they are out of the country or away from the Church on holiday or for any other reason shall not constitute failure to give proper notice under this Rule.

2.8 Voting

2.8.1. Unless otherwise set out in these Rules all votes at a General or Special Church Meeting shall be carried by a simple majority of those Members present and voting in favour of the proposal. 2.8.2 No proxy

votes shall be permitted.

2.8.3. A secret ballot may be held on any item where a vote is to be taken where the Chairman agrees or

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where 20% of the Members present at the Meeting so request. Only those Members present at the Meeting shall be entitled to vote unless a summary of the discussions surrounding the resolution is prepared and circulated to all Members.

2.9 Church Property

2.9.1 The Constitution governing the Church lays down the uses to which property owned or leased by the Church may be used. These uses are widely drawn. The Church Officers are required to ensure that no use of the property is outside the provisions of the Constitution. If the property is to be used by third parties who are not Members then approval of the Church Officers must be sought. The approval of the Holding Trustee is required to any proposed use of the property by third parties.

2.9.2 Where the Church wishes to buy new property or sell existing property the Holding Trustee, as the registered title holder of property for the Church, will require a resolution of the Members approving the Church Officers' recommendation for that transaction.

2.10 Amendment of the Rules

2.10.1 Other than Rules 1.1 and 1.2 of Part 1, any Rule 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 General Church Meeting, provided that the proposed amendment shall not be such as would cause the Church to lose its charitable status. Rules 1.1 and 1.2 can only be amended where the provisions of the Constitution referred to in those Rules have been amended.

2.10.2 A majority of 67% of those Members present at the Church Meeting and voting in favour is required to approve a proposed amendment to any Rule excepting Rule 1.5 where a majority of 75% is required and Rules 1.1 and 1.2 where the amendment will automatically follow the amendment of the Constitution without the need for a vote.

2.10.3 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 3 weeks before the meeting at which the proposal will be put to the vote. Failure to be able to give notice to individual Members because they are out of the country or away from the Church on holiday or for any other reason shall not constitute failure to give proper notice under this Rule.

2.10.4 No amendment may be made under this Rule to any provision of the Constitution, including the Basis of Faith, to any other trust deeds in relation to the Church property, or be such as would be contrary to any provision in the Constitution.

2.11 Closure of the Church

2.11.1 In the event of the Members of the Church resolving to close the Church the remaining Church Officers shall apply the funds to meet all outstanding liabilities. Sufficient funds must be retained to meet the insurance and maintenance costs for any property until such time as it is sold, or otherwise disposed of. The remaining funds shall be distributed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

2.12 Barking Chapel

2.12.1 Barking Tye Chapel is a daughter church of Battsiford Free Church which largely operates independently from Battsiford as provided for under these rules.

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2.12.2 Barking may construct its own rules and have a governing body to suit the local situation. These rules should not contradict any rules heretofore mentioned in the Battsiford rules, but may differ in detail as suits the needs and practises of the local church.

2.12.3 The governing body of Barking Chapel is responsible to Battsiford Free Church Council. The day-to-day management and administration of all aspects of the work of Barking Chapel is delegated to a group appointed to govern church by the members of Battsiford Free Church who meet at Barking Chapel.

2.12.4 Battsiford should have representation on the governing body of Barking which may occur if either: a] A leader at Barking, being a full member of Battsiford is elected to the Battsiford church Council, b] A member of Battsiford church council attends as a guest on the Barking committee.

2.12.5 The persons who are part of the congregation at Barking Chapel can choose whether to be either:-

a] Full members of both Barking and Battsiford.

b] Members of Barking and associate members (without voting rights) of Battsiford. Persons who conform to b] above may be appointed to hold office in the oversight of the work at Barking by the Barking governing body with the approval of the Barking members

2.12.6 The Barking committee shall be responsible for the receipt and disbursement of the offerings and shall appoint a treasurer to hold the funds and produce an annual account of the finances. This shall be submitted to the treasurer of Battsiford with other information and explanations as are required so as to enable the consolidated Battsiford Free Church accounts to be produced for annual audit.

2.12.7 In all other respects the provisions of Battsiford Free Church rules shall apply (e.g. discipline) 2.12.8 That in the event of any dispute or uncertainty regarding the work at Barking Tye the matter shall be referred to the Church Council at Battsiford Free Church and that their decision shall be final and binding.

APPENDIX 1

BASIS OF FAITH to which Battisford Free Church adheres

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 whom 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.

Reprinted from the F.I.E.C. Statement of Faith

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PASTORAL STATEMENT of BATTISFORD FREE CHURCH

Notes for those considering application for membership

The Bible teaches that the Church is the whole company of believers in Christ, those who have repented of their sin and have received the Lord Jesus by faith, and who have personally committed their lives to Him as their Lord and Saviour. (1 John 1:9, John 1:12, Eph. 2:19-22). Membership of a local church is only appropriate for those who have taken this step of faith and commitment.

Scripture also teaches that a believer should be baptised. (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38)

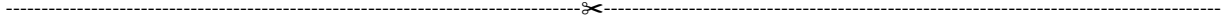
Membership also involves other responsibilities:-

1. Regular attendance at Sunday worship. (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
2. Regular personal prayer and Bible study. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Phil. 4:6)
3. Regular attendance, when possible, at the main weekday meeting of the church for prayer, Bible study and fellowship. (Acts 1:14, 2:42)
4. Sharing in the life, work and witness of the local church. (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:58)
5. Regular giving to the local church and the Lord's work in general. (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
6. 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)
7. An endeavour to live a life consistent with the faith we profess. (Rom. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:1)
8. 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)

The statement of faith in the Rules has been adopted as the doctrinal basis to which applicants for membership of Battisford Free Church are asked to give their wholehearted assent. Should you wish to discuss any particular clause

with a council member please notify the church secretary.

The Rules of the church are enclosed and you are asked to study them before applying for membership.



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF BATTISFORD FREE CHURCH

Name:

Address:

.....

I would express my relationship to God in the following way. (Please answer in one or two brief sentences):-

.....

.....

.....

I have read the notes on the responsibilities of church membership set out above, together with the Rules. I have studied the Scripture references. I am willing to accept the responsibilities and I agree wholeheartedly with the Basis of Faith and acceptance of the Rules in their entirety.

If I am accepted into membership I undertake to abide by the decisions of the Church Officers and to acknowledge their authority, in so far as the decisions and the exercise of their authority are in accordance with the teaching of Scripture and the Rules of the church.

In applying for membership I affirm that I have personally repented of sin and put my trust in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

Signature: Date:
