

# Old Paths Bible Church

---

Strathalbyn

## Constitution & Articles of Faith

Article 1	Name .....	2
Article 2	Purpose .....	2
Article 3	Membership .....	2
Article 4	Ordinances .....	3
Article 5	Missions .....	4
Article 6	Associations.....	4
Article 7	Officers:	
	Pastor .....	4
	Diaconate .....	5
	Secretary .....	6
	Treasurer.....	6
	Bible School Superintendant.....	6
Article 8	Election of Officers.....	7
Article 9	Meetings .....	7
Article 10	Business Procedure .....	8
Article 11	Church Government.....	9
Article 12	Doctrine – ARTICLES OF FAITH	
	The Scriptures .....	9
	The Godhead.....	10
	Christ .....	10
	The Holy Spirit .....	10
	Satan.....	10
	Creation.....	10
	The Fall of Man.....	10
	Salvation.....	11
	Eternal Security .....	11
	Eternal Destiny .....	11
	Church .....	11
	Last Things.....	12
Article 13	Amendments.....	12

## **Article 1 – Name**

The name of this organization shall be:

Old Paths Bible Church

## **Article 2 – Purpose**

The purpose is to serve as a church home for those of like precious faith in this general area; to conduct services of the church for the worship of God, edification of its members and administration of its ordinances.

To accept and fully implement the great commission as expressed in Matthew 28:19-20.

To earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Jude 3:4.

To receive, hold and disburse gifts, bequests and funds arising from other sources, to acquire, own, maintain, lease, hold, encumber, sell and otherwise deal in suitable real and personal property necessary or convenient to carry out the purpose aforesaid and to do all things necessary or incidental thereto.

## **Article 3 – Membership**

### **Reception of members**

Candidates applying for membership in this church, whether by Christian experience, baptism, letter or restoration to the Lord, shall appear personally before the pastor and deacons, or board of deacons to relate their Christian experience and to see if they will subscribe to the principles, practices and doctrines of this church. Upon the deacons recommendation the name shall be submitted to church for acceptance or rejection, any member objecting must be required to present the grounds of his objection before the deacons at their next meeting. The decision of the deacons may over-rule the objection and the name shall be submitted once more to the church. The minimum voting age shall be eighteen (18) years old.

### **Duties of members to the church**

To cultivate Godliness by daily study of the scriptures, meditation and prayer. To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the expenses of the church, to support the ministry, the relief of the needy, and the missionary enterprises.

### **To one another**

To love one another, not in word only, but in deed and in truth; in case of personal offense to follow without the slightest deviation, the course directed by our Saviour in Matthew 18:15-17. To pray for one another.

### **To the pastor**

To esteem him highly in love for his work's sake and to pray for him daily. To receive his instructions, not critically, but with an attentive and tender spirit, seeking improvement rather than gratification.

## **To the family**

To promote the faithful observance of the Lord's Day and endeavour to secure the attendance of all the members of the family to hear the truth preached that they be led thereby to "keep the way of the Lord".

## **To the world**

To make personal effort for the conversion of the unsaved and especially those to whom we are related or with whom we are acquainted. To be a faithful witness always for our Lord and Saviour.

## **Transferral of members**

1. A letter of transferral may be granted to any member in good standing. This letter must be addressed to some particular church of the same faith and order of this church and sent by the secretary to the pastor or secretary of the church to which the member is transferred.
2. Members not in good standing, or those desiring to unite with a church not of our faith and order, may be given a certificate of standing to date.

## **Discipline of members**

1. The matter of discipline of the membership shall be in the hands of the pastor and deacons, but in cases of expulsion from membership, final action must be taken by the church. The pastor and deacons shall safeguard the purity and peace of the church and deal scripturally with anyone who is hindering the work of God. Galatians 6:1. Matthew 18:15-17. No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including, if possible, personal visits to reclaim him (or her) for Christ and this church.
2. Members failing to support the church by their attendance within a period of three months will forfeit all voting rights and after six months, without legitimate excuse may be removed from the active membership roll and placed on the inactive members roll.

## **Article 4 – Ordinances**

### **Baptism**

Those professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, shall after examination by the pastor and deacons be immersed in water by the pastor or some person authorised by the church in accordance with scriptural teaching. Believer's baptism by immersion shall be a pre-requisite to church membership and any of its privileges.

### **The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's supper shall be served to the assembled church by the pastor or some person designated by the church and the deacons at a time and a place previously announced. Since it is the Lord's supper, His church may exercise the right to invite all true believers present to participate. It shall be the responsibility of the one directing the service to explain its full significance and purpose as well as the rights and privileges of those participating.

## **Article 5 – Missions**

It shall be the policy of this church to support only missions, missionaries and organizations who are known to be in agreement with our confession of faith, both in doctrine and in practice. The church does not consider itself under any obligation to support its members, or the relatives of members, who align themselves with organizations out of harmony with the above stated requirements.

## **Article 6 – Associations**

It is the policy of this church to choose churches and organizations with whom it will fellowship. As a guideline, this church will not fellowship with any group, church or organization, union or fellowship that is:-

1. Not in agreement with our doctrinal statement.
2. In fellowship with the World Council of Churches or any of its affiliate organizations.
3. Ecumenical or charismatic in its concept of operation or would seek to sponsor the Lord's work with the aid of Bible-denying liberals, apostates or other unbelievers.
4. Infringing on the autonomy of the local church in any manner.

If advice is required for any matter, places such as the following may be contacted:

1. FECA (Fundamental Evangelistic Churches of Australia)
2. Other churches associated with FECA

## **Article 7 – Officers**

The initial ministering servants of this church shall consist of the scriptural offices of pastor and deacons, afterwards any other officers deemed necessary by the church to implement its stated purpose. Also, following the initial election of officers with the exception of the pastor, one must be a member of this church for a period of at least one year before being placed in nomination for any office. Any exception to this rule will be by congregational action of the church body. Their term of office shall begin at the first of the month following the annual meeting. Retiring officers shall hold office until the term of the newly elected officers begin. No member on the inactive roll is eligible to hold church office. In the event of a vacancy in any office other than that of pastor, the deacons shall have the authority to appoint a replacement if necessary, to fulfil those duties until the time of the next regular church business meeting.

### **The Pastor**

The pastor shall be called for an indeterminate term. He shall be in full accord with the doctrines and practices of the church. He shall be elected at a special meeting of the church called for that purpose by public notice given on two Sundays preceding the date set for the meeting. Balloting shall be written and the affirmative vote of a quorum shall be necessary for his election into this office. Before his name is presented to the church for consideration, the deacons shall have thoroughly investigated the history of the candidate relative to his schooling, business affairs, evidence of the Lord's blessing in previous pastorates, or position to Christian experience. They shall have, prior to this, determined his doctrinal, spiritual, emotional and moral stability, before placing his name before the church. The candidate shall have affirmed in writing and also orally in the

presence of the deacons, his belief and acceptance of the articles of faith, covenant and church constitution. Only one pastoral candidate shall be considered at a time.

The pastor shall continue in office until he resigns or his resignation is requested by the affirmative vote of a congregational quorum at a specially called business meeting of the church. In the dissolution of pastor and church relationship, a thirty (30) day period of time shall be given by the party initiating the move. In the case of doctrinal or moral digression from the standards of the church, the pastor shall not be permitted to exercise any further duties, although the proposed period of dissolution referred to above, shall be exercised

The pastor shall be moderator of such meetings of the church and a member ex-officio of such boards and committees as the church may designate.

Although the pastor's services shall be considered on the basis of an indefinite call, the pastor's salary shall be reviewed annually by the board of deacons prior to the annual business meeting. As far as possible this salary shall be kept in line with the current cost of living; therefore recommendations to implement this should be made to the church at the annual business meeting

It is expected that the pastor will have the qualifications laid down in the scriptures; otherwise the church should not call him.

Assuming this to be true, the pastor's duties and responsibilities are:-

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Preaching the Word                      | II Tim. 4:2            |
| 2. Teaching the Word                       | Acts 20:28             |
| 3. Visitation of the flock and the unsaved | Acts 20:20             |
| 4. Evangelization                          | II Tim. 4:5            |
| 5. Warning of modernism and apostasy       | Jude 3 & 4             |
| 6. Spiritual leader of the congregation    | Phil. 3:17; Acts 20:28 |

The ultimate responsibility of the pastor is to the Lord, whose direction he should seek continually.

He is responsible to the congregation to faithfully carry out the afore-mentioned duties in a manner conducive to their spiritual growth and the furtherance of the work.

The pastor shall be entitled to four weeks annual leave on full pay.

## **The Deaconate**

The church shall elect by ballot from its membership at each annual business meeting, not less than two to serve as deacons. Their terms shall be three years and arranged to end alternatively. All nominations shall be in writing and signed by both the nominator and the nominee; such nominations shall be handed to the secretary seven (7) clear days prior to the commencement of the meeting. A simple majority of the ballot cast is necessary for each election. No deacon shall succeed himself to office more than three times. There shall be as many deacons elected as practical and encouraged to form such committees as is necessary within the deacons board, to carry out the various activities of the church, such as, trustees, finance committees, nominating committees etc. All minutes of all deacons meetings shall be made available to the church upon request. The qualifications of deacons shall be those prescribed and set forth in the New Testament.

Their duties generally shall be those expected of those elected to this office in the church, namely:

1. To assist in serving the Lord's Supper and administering the ordinance of baptism.
2. To serve with the pastor in meeting the spiritual needs of the church by participating in the examination of candidates for baptism and church membership.
3. To assist in initiating matters of discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17.
4. To serve as a pulpit committee for the church and to be responsible for the hospitality of pastoral supplies and candidates to the pulpit.
5. To be able to use the word of God for the purpose of teaching and counselling.

In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the board of deacons shall become the moderator of the church. If the deacons serve as trustees, then the care of the church property, arranging for its care and preservation becomes a responsibility. They shall exercise only those rights given to them by the church in respect to receiving or disposing of property and receiving and disposing of funds.

Unless the church chooses to make members outside the board responsible for other offices, one of its members should serve as secretary, one as treasurer, another as Bible school superintendent also director of other departments which the church may desire to create. This is in keeping with the true meaning of the word "deacon", a ministering servant in the church. The deacons wives should assist with visiting the sick and be proficient in dealing with women and girls who respond to the invitations given in the church services.

### **Secretary**

The church shall elect a secretary at each annual meeting for the ensuing year.

The secretary shall keep a fair and complete record of the proceedings covered in each business meeting, be responsible for records, keep a complete up-to-date register of members, indicating full name, age, sex and date of birth, write all letters of dismissal, send out notices of church business meetings, announce the result of votes, prepare any papers authorized by the church, also post in the membership register the termination of membership, either by death, dismissal, or by letter and be prepared at all times to close the books and turn over all books, records and church property to a successor.

### **Treasurer**

The treasurer shall be elected at each annual meeting of the church. The treasurer shall receive all monies given to the church and apply the same as directed by the church, keep a true and accurate record of the receipts and disbursement of these funds. All accounts to be paid by cheque.

He will give a financial report at each regular business meeting, or when otherwise directed by the church. Monies received shall be deposited as quickly as possible in a bank selected in advance by church authorization. He will submit an audited statement of accounts to the annual business meeting. When vacating office, deliver to his successor, or the nominee appointed by the church, all books, accounts and funds, the property of the church within fourteen (14) days, fully audited.

### **Bible school superintendent**

The church shall elect a Bible school superintendent at the annual meeting. He shall work in close association with the pastor in providing the teaching ministry of the Bible school. All teachers and officers shall be approved by the deacons.

## **Article 8 – Election of officers**

All active members of the church (as defined in `Discipline of members Part 2.) 18 years and over, shall have the right to vote and submit names for the consideration of the church.

Nominations must be signed by the nominator and the nominee.

Only active, male members twenty one (21) years and over may be nominated for any elected church office, in accordance with *Article 7 – Officers*.

Nominations shall be open for two weeks and will close one week before the voting takes place.

All nominations must be in the hands of the secretary seven clear days before the meeting.

Voting will be by secret ballot.

Any absent member in good standing may have an absentee or postal vote by making application to the secretary. The signed, witnessed and sealed vote to be in the hands of the secretary prior to the business meeting.

## **Article 9 – Meetings**

The church shall hold regular meetings each week, which shall normally comprise:-

1. Sunday morning – Bible school and preaching the word;
2. Sunday evening – Prayer, Praise and preaching the word;
3. A mid-week prayer and Bible study.

The translation to be used in the Public Ministry shall be the King James Version.

Hymns and sacred songs will be used. CCM (Christian Contemporary Music) will not be used in the Public Ministry.

The Lord`s Supper will be observed at the morning or evening service each Sunday.

The church board of deacons shall determine the actual time and place at which all meetings shall be held.

Should our existing meeting place be no longer available, it will be the responsibility of the diaconate to find an alternative meeting place.

The domicile of the church shall not be outside Strathalbyn unless such a move has the full support of ninety (90) percent of all active members.

A regular deacons meeting shall be held each month. A special deacons meeting may be called at any time.

A special general meeting shall be called by the secretary when requested to do so by the deacons, or at the written request of at least five (5) active voting members. Such notice of meeting must be circulated to all active voting members at least twenty one (21) days in advance of the date of the special meeting, stating the business thereof.

## **Article 10 – Business procedure**

The fiscal year shall begin July 1st and end on the following June 30th.

No money shall be raised by the church, or any assisting department except by freewill giving.

The treasurer's books will be independently audited, annually.

The church building and its facilities shall be primarily used for its own services and shall be available for other use only to the active members of the church upon recommendation by the board of deacons.

The Bible School shall be considered the church studying the Bible. It shall be under the supervision of the church at all times.

Other departments of training, teaching and exercises may be established by the church at its discretion. Therefore it is clearly understood that none shall be started without the consent of the members. The departments shall be subject to the policies of the church and the department head must always be one of the active members of the church.

The minutes and records of any and all departments of the church shall be available to the church body at any time and an annual report must be read and approved at each annual business meeting of the church. Failure to provide such reports and records and failure to receive church approval shall be considered the reason for automatic termination of the work of a church department and the conclusion of its services.

All committees appointed by the church or by church boards shall be expected to report at the next business meeting.

All permanent committees shall be expected to make an annual report at the annual business meeting of the church.

In accordance with the fiscal year, the church shall determine the time and place of the annual business meeting.

Each and every officer and department shall be informed twenty one (21) days in advance to prepare proper reports in writing. All reports to be in the hands of the secretary seven (7) clear days before the annual business meeting.

The church may conduct business at any regular meeting, or called meeting, with as few as one third (1/3) of the active members present. However, on any item where a ballot vote is required for passage, a quorum for such a business meeting is automatically required.

All monies to be expended beyond the weekly budget by any one department, must have the prior approval of the deaconate and be recorded by the secretary accordingly.

### **Banking**

All accounts to be paid by cheque.

### **Bank signatures**

Three specimen signatures shall be deposited at the bank selected by the church. They shall be the signatures of the:

1. Pastor
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer

Or an officer designated by the church.

Any two of these three signatures shall be required, to issue cheques.

### **Quorum**

The quorum shall be fifty (50) percent, plus one, of the active voting members to the nearest higher whole number.

The quorum at an ordinary or special deacons meeting shall be fifty (50) percent, plus one, to the nearest higher whole number.

In the conduct of business, the rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all Parliamentary procedure and the final authority for church policy, until it is otherwise changed shall be The New Directory for Baptist Churches by Edward T. Hiscock, carrying the date in the preface May 20th 1893.

## **Article 11 – Church Government**

We believe in congregational church government. For practical purposes the day to day government will be vested in the church officers, namely the pastor and deacons.

It will be their responsibility to ensure that any matters of a nature fundamental to the life and operation of the church and/or involving expenditure outside of running expenses, will be brought before the congregation for approval.

The diaconate may recommend a particular course of action to the church, but the final decision must be by congregational vote. A show of hands or a secret ballot as deemed necessary.

The church shall have full power to decide all matters relating to church funds.

The chairman or acting chairman shall have a casting vote only.

## **Article 12 – Doctrine (Articles of faith)**

### **The scriptures**

We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired of God, plenary in content and inerrant in the original writings and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. 2. Tim.3:16-17. 2. Peter 1:19-21.

## The Godhead

- A. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Deut. 6:4-5; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 John 5:7; Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 3:16
- B. We believe that God is a sovereign, living, intelligent, rational being and that He has a plan for man and for the universe. We believe that He has the will, the power and the authority and is actively engaged in carrying that plan to completion. Gen. 18:25; Isa. 57:15; Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 8:28-29.

## Christ

- A. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin and is true God and true man. Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18; John 14:7-11; John 20:28; Gal. 4:4-5.
- B. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed Blood. 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Heb. 10:9-12; Rom. 3:24.
- C. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven and in His present life there as High Priest and Advocate. 1 Cor. 15:1-20; John 20:24-29; Acts 1:10-11; Heb. 1:3, 4:14-16, 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5.

## Holy Spirit

We believe, in this the Church Age, that the Holy Spirit indwells each and every believer from the moment he receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

We believe this indwelling alone, makes it possible to live a victorious Christian life. We believe that the modern day speaking in tongues and divine healing movements are not related as outward evidence of the Spirit-filled life. We believe the Spirit-filled life is to be the normal experience of every born-again Christian and regardless of ones occupation or profession, he is filled with the Spirit when he is occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ and His word for the purpose of reaching others for Christ. 1. Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 8:1-14; John 14:15-18; John 16:7-14; Eph. 6:17; Eph. 5:18; Heb. 4:12.

## Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the un-holy god of this age and the author of the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. Matt. 4:1-4; Mark 1:13; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 20:10.

## Creation

We believe and accept the Genesis account of a creation in six (6) literal days; that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution. Gen. 1:2; Col. 1:16-17; John 1:3.

## The fall of man

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and in the case of those who reach the age of moral responsibility, are sinners in thought, word and deed. Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 3:23; Deut. 1:39.

## Salvation

- A. We believe that all who receive by grace, through faith the Lord Jesus Christ, are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become Children of God. John 1:12; John 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 3:26.
- B. We believe in the 'soul liberty' of every individual. Soul liberty is the implementation of the truth that "we must obey God rather than man". Every man must give answer to God individually and therefore, no other man and no church can act as his conscience now. He has the right to interpret the scriptures for himself and the responsibility to answer to God for the way in which he does so. He has, as a believer, the Holy Spirit to guide and enable him apart from any other ministry of man or the church. I John. 2:27; Rom. 14:5; II Tim. 2:15; I Cor. 2:9-14.
- C. We believe in the priesthood of all believers; that all believers have access into the holiest of holies, by the blood of the Lord Jesus; that we need no human agency to intercede for us before the throne of grace and that the Lord Jesus Christ is our only mediator before God. Heb. 10:19; I Peter. 2:1-10; Heb. 13:15-16; I Tim. 2:5.

## Eternal security

We believe in the eternal security of the believer; that it is impossible for one born into the family of God ever to be lost. John 1:12; John 10:27-28; Phil. 1:6; 1 John 5:10-13; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 6:1-23.

## Eternal destiny

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost. John 5:21-30; Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8; II Thess. 1:7-10; John 14:1-6.

## Church

- A. We believe that the true church is the mystical body of Christ, of which He is the living head and the regenerate believers, Jew and Gentile, are the members. Eph. 5:23-32; Matt. 16:18; Col. 3:11.
- B. The local church is a body of baptized believers, organized to meet together for the purpose of observing the ordinances and to carry out the principles, precepts and commission of Christ. I Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:41-47; Acts 14:23; Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 28:18-20.
- C. We believe that the scriptural ordinances of the church are baptism (immersion.) and the Lord's Supper, that baptism should be administered to believers only, as a symbol of that belief and of their death, burial and resurrection with Him and that the Lord's Supper should be partaken of by believers only, to show forth His death till He come. Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:26-40; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; I Cor. 11:23-28.
- D. We believe in the sovereignty and independence of the local church from any centralized power, whether from other churches, denominations, or the State. We believe in the separation of church and State. We believe in obeying the "powers that be" of government, except where they violate the commands of God's word. Rom. 13:1-7; Acts 5:29; Acts 13:1-5; Acts 15:19-31

## Last things

- A. We believe in “That Blessed Hope” the personal, pre-millennial, pre-tribulational and imminent return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, when the church will be “gathered together unto Him”. Titus. 2:3; Acts. 1:10-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
- B. We believe that this age will end with the rapture of the mystical body of the church. At that time the Holy Spirit as the restrainer and indweller, will be removed from the world, thus paving the way for the following events:
  1. The Day of God’s wrath, commonly known as the great seven year tribulation period and the last week of the prophetic 70 weeks given to Daniel. Dan. 9:24-27; Dan. 12:1; Rev. 6:16-17; I Thess. 1:10; 5:9.
  2. The revealing and judgment of the wicked one, commonly known as the antichrist or the son of perdition. II Thess. 2:3-17; Rev. 19:20; 20:10.
  3. The revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes back to the earth with His saints to stand on the Mount of Olives in the full radiance of His eternal glory. Matt. 24:27-31; Jude 14 & 15; Zech 14:1-9.
  4. The judgment of the nations. Matt. 25:31-32.
  5. The resurrection of the righteous dead. Rev. 20:6.
  6. The millennium reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as King. A literal reign of 1000 years on the earth over all people, nations and tongues. This will especially be the fulfilment of the promises to Israel for their Messiah, the King, to reign on the throne of David. Rev. 20:4-6; Phil. 2:9-11.
  7. The resurrection of the wicked dead. Rev. 20:5.
  8. The Great White Throne judgment and eternity. Rev. 20:7-15; I Cor. 15:22-25; Rev. 21:22

*“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

Rev. 22:17

## Article 13 – Amendments

Any proposed amendment to this constitution must be put in writing and be in the hands of the secretary at least twenty-eight (28) clear days before the annual meeting.

The proposed amendment will then be read out at each church service on the two Sundays prior to the above meeting.

Each active, voting member is to receive a copy of the proposed amendment at least fourteen (14) days before the meeting.

## Voting

Voting necessary to alter this constitution (apart from *Article 12 – Doctrine (Articles of Faith)*) will be the affirmative vote of a quorum.

Any proposed amendment to *12 – Doctrine (Articles of Faith)* shall require at least a seventy five (75) percent vote of all active, voting members.

Voting will be by secret ballot.