



HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

The Lord Jesus Christ, appointed by God the Father, is the Head of the Church. In Christ, the Father has invested all power for the calling, institution and order of the Church, which He fulfils through the ministry of His Word by His Spirit. Jesus Christ calls out of the world to Himself, those that are given to Him by his Father; that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience, which He prescribes in his Word. Those so called, He commands to form local churches, for their mutual edification and so to engage in the public worship and witness which He requires of them while in the world, in order to glorify the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this HANDBOOK is to help facilitate the orderly and diligent governance of *Forres Baptist Church* in a way that is consistent with Christ's Word and will. In addition, where civil legislation benefits the church, and without any compromise or prejudice to its faithfulness to Christ, the handbook may also include items that satisfy any civil statutory requirements, in accordance with [Matthew 22:21](#) and [Rom. 13:1-7](#).

1. PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

The Church will be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this handbook.

2. NAME & CHARACTER

The church is to be called *Forres Baptist Church* ('the Church'). The Church is Congregational in its form of church government (see attached explanation) and is in membership of the Baptist Union of Scotland ('the Union'). The Church subscribes to the Declaration of Principle of the Union (see *Church Confession of Faith*). The Church is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("SCIO") and as such must comply with Scottish charity law and is regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator ("OSCR") as Registered Scottish Charity Number SC050133. The handbook operates in conjunction with and is subject to the Church's SCIO Constitution, which satisfies the necessary charity law and OSCR requirements.

3. MEMBERSHIP: THE ESSENTIALS

3.1 The primary objective of our fellowship is to bring glory to God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ([Rom. 16:25-27](#); [1 Cor. 10:31](#); [Phil. 1:9-11](#); [Phil. 4:19-20](#); [1 Tim. 1:17](#); [1 Pet. 4:11](#); [Rev. 1:6](#); [7:12](#); [19:1](#)).

3.2 How do we, as a fellowship, bring glory to God? By hearing and doing his Word and will ([Matt. 7:21](#); [Mark 3:35](#); [Luke 6:46-48](#); [1 Pet. 1:22-25](#); [1 John 2:4-6](#)).

3.3 The members of the Church shall be such as profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour ([2 Pet. 3:18](#)), and have been baptised as professing believers into the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ([Matt. 28:19](#)). However, a person holding to the theological convictions of their infant baptism (and so departing from the *Church's Confession of Faith* on this point) may, at the discretion of the Members, be accepted for full membership based on their own public profession of faith and respect for the Church's position. The mode of baptism practised by the Church shall be that of full immersion ([Matt. 3:16](#); [John 3:23](#); [Acts 8:38](#)) on the understanding that in special circumstances exceptions can be made (e.g. a disabled person).

3.4 The Members of Christ's Church are His disciples by calling ([John 15:8](#); [Rom. 8:30](#); [1 Cor. 1:9](#)). They visibly demonstrate and give evidence of their obedience to this call of Christ in and by their profession and conduct ([John. 8:31](#); [13:35](#)). They willingly consent to walk together according to Christ's instruction ([1 Thess. 4:1](#); [1 John 1:7](#)), giving themselves to the Lord and to one another ([Gal. 5:13](#); [Eph. 4:25](#)), in willing subjection to the rule of the Gospel ([Phil. 1:27](#)). They shall make every endeavour to attend the Church Members' Meetings, so that the mind of Christ may be sought by the body of Christ together.

3.5 To love one another means we collectively support one another in prayer ([James 5:16](#); [2 Thess. 3:1](#); [2 Cor. 1:11](#)), by regularly meeting together ([Acts 2:42](#); [Heb. 10:25](#)), by mutual encouragement ([Acts 15:32](#); [1 Thess. 5:11](#)), by striving for peace ([Rom. 12:18](#); [Heb. 12:14](#)), by using the gifts God has given to us ([Rom. 12:6](#); [1 Cor. 12:4](#)), by our cheerful giving ([2 Cor. 9:7](#)), by supporting the leadership ([Heb. 13:7](#); [1 Tim. 5:17](#)), by bearing fruit ([John 15:2-8](#); [Rom. 7:4](#); [Col. 1:10](#)), by humbly serving ([Gal. 5:13](#); [Col. 3:24](#); [1 Pet. 4:10](#)), by pursuing a personal devotional life to Christ including private prayer and Bible study ([Rom. 12:12](#); [Col. 4:2](#); [Eph. 4:13](#); [Heb. 5:12-14](#)), to share in the fulfilment of the Lord's Commission ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)), and by forgiving one another whenever offence is caused ([Matt. 6:14-15](#); [Eph. 4:32](#); [Col. 3:13](#)) seeking reconciliation after private offences as the Lord commanded ([Matt. 18:15-20](#)). All, of course, by the lavish and abundant grace of God which works within us ([Rom. 5:2](#); [1 Cor. 15:10](#); [Eph. 2:8](#); [Tit. 2:11](#)).

3.6 How does this manifest itself in our fellowship? We believe we collectively bring glory to God when we seek to live by and live out the following four 'L's': *'Love, Listen, Learn, Live.'* Love the Lord with all your heart ([Mark 12:30](#)) and show it in your love for one another ([Mark 12:31](#); [John 13:34-35](#)). Listen to the Lord as he speaks through his Word ([Luke 11:28](#); [John 14:24](#)) and Spirit ([2 Tim. 1:13-14](#); [1 Cor. 2:12](#); [Rom. 8:14](#)) and listen to one another ([James 1:19](#)) in whom the Spirit also dwells ([1 Cor. 3:16](#) [John 14:17](#)). Learn from God's Word ([Acts 2:42](#); [1 Tim. 4:13](#); [2 Tim. 3:16](#)) and learn from one another ([Col. 3:16](#); [Heb. 13:7](#)). Live your life for the Lord ([Rom. 12:11](#); [14:8](#)) and show it in your service to the lives of others ([Gal. 5:13](#); [1 Pet. 4:10](#)).

MEMBERSHIP: THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

3.7 Applicants for membership who profess their faith in Christ and commitment to Christian discipleship ([Eph. 4:15](#)) shall be accepted by the Church. Applicants must therefore profess agreement with, and submission to, the Church's Confession of Faith as appended to this handbook. Members should be 16 years old or over.

3.8 Applicants shall be received into membership upon the recommendation of the Elders, after at least one Elder and one other member have discerned that the candidate is in agreement with the Church's doctrine and practice, followed by the discernment of the fellowship before the candidate is welcomed into membership.

3.9 Any member who unreasonably fails to fulfil their obligations over an extended period, or engages in any gross sinful behaviour, as discerned by the Elders, will be visited by at least two Elders, on behalf of the Church, in order to review their membership. Should the situation remain unchanged the Elders may recommend to the Church Members' Meeting the removal of such persons from the Church's membership.

3.10 The Church Member under discipline shall be allowed to hear what is said at the Church Members' Meeting, to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing from the meeting so that the Church Members Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether they should resolve to remove that person from membership.

3.11 In cases of open backsliding, glaring inconsistency or grave doctrinal error, the Church shall exercise discipline according to the Scriptures and shall be administered in a way consistent with Christian love and unity ([1 Cor. 16:14](#) & [1 Pet. 4:8](#)). Any person so removed from membership shall have the opportunity to apply to be restored to membership. Restoration to membership shall be determined at the discretion of the Church Members' Meeting, under the advice of the Elders, if and when, the person's life is judged to be adequately restored to that consistent with faithful Christian discipleship.

3.12 This handbook shall be printed and a copy given to each member. Applicants for membership shall be made fully aware of its content before acceptance into membership.

3.13 A list of the current Church Members shall be maintained.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES OF THE CHURCH

4. AIMS

The Church's AIMS are: to glorify God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through the advancement of the Christian faith primarily in Forres and district but also throughout Scotland, the rest of the UK and the World by all means consistent with the teachings of the Christian Bible ('the Scriptures'), including worship, observance of the Lord's Supper, ministry, mission, prayer, witness, education, community service and the support of agencies and individuals and other charitable organisations involved in Christian missionary work and the relief of poverty or other social needs.

5. OFFICE BEARERS AND TRUSTEES

The offices appointed by Christ to be recognised, chosen and set apart by the Church are Elders ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#); [Titus 1:5-9](#)) and Deacons ([1 Timothy 3:7-13](#)). They are appointed to oversee what the Lord has ordained, and to execute the powers and duties which the Lord has entrusted to them in the service and governance of *Forres Baptist Church*. All such Church governance is to be carried out in a manner consistent with the teachings of Christ regarding servant-hood ([John 13:12-17](#); [34-35](#); [Matthew 20:25-28](#)).

5.1 Elders: Those who have been called and equipped by God to lead and teach in the Church are identified as Elders, Pastors, or Overseers, and are equal in the authority of their office ([Acts 20:17, 28](#); [Eph. 4:11-12](#); [Titus 1:5, 7](#)). Their primary responsibilities as outlined by Scripture are the pastoral oversight and governance of the Church ([1 Timothy 5:17](#); [1 Timothy 3:4-5](#); [Acts 20:28](#); [1 Peter 5:2](#). See also [1 Thessalonians 5:12](#) & [Hebrews 13:17](#)) as well as teaching and preaching ([Ephesians 4:11](#); [1 Timothy 3:2](#); [1 Timothy 5:17](#); [Titus 1:9](#)). The Elders (including 'The Pastor/Minister') shall be appointed to govern and lead the Church in a way that is commensurate with the qualifications, roles and responsibilities of Elders taught by the Scriptures. Those appointed shall be Church Members.

5.2 The Scriptures evidence that some who have particular ability in leading the Church and, more especially, in public teaching and preaching, are worthy of full financial support ([Galatians 6:6](#); [1 Timothy 5:17](#); [1 Corinthians 9:1-14](#)). Such abilities have historically found

expression in the establishment of the Pastoral Ministry (Pastor/Minister/Leading Elder). Here Christ's calling and equipping of an individual for this Office is acknowledged and affirmed beyond the local Church by means of the testing and training for ministry within the wider Baptist family, Unions and Alliance.

5.3 Deacons: Those that have been called and equipped by God to assist the Elders in the Church are identified as Deacons. They are primarily responsible for assisting the Elders in those practical aspects of ministry which would otherwise distract the Elders from their priorities of the ministry of the Word, prayer and pastoral-oversight/shepherding ([Acts 6:2-4](#)).

Such practical matters include the administration of benevolence, the maintenance and improvement of the church's resources and facilities, the management of various business affairs and the facilitation of ministries within the church. Therefore, to assist the Elders in their governance and leading of the church, Deacons shall be appointed in a way that is commensurate with the qualifications of Deacons taught by the Scriptures ([1 Tim 3:8-13](#)). Those appointed need to be existing Church Members.

5.4 Trustees: In order to satisfy charity law requirements those who between them have 'general control and management of the administration' of the church are regarded as Trustees. This includes the Elders and Deacons as they fulfil their respective responsibilities and functions.

5.5 In the event of the Pastor/Minister/Leading Elder being unable to fulfil his responsibilities, the Elders and Deacons shall be responsible for arranging pulpit ministry and the supply of the ordinances.

5.6 The Church Members may appoint any member of the Church who is willing to act as Trustee provided that the person concerned is not disqualified from acting as the Trustee of a charity in terms of the 2005 Act.

5.7 The minimum number of Trustees is three.

5.8 The Elders and Deacons may organize themselves however they see fit in order to best achieve the (objects) mission of the church subject to the provisions of this handbook. All matters of business at Officers-bearer meetings requiring a decision will normally be carried by majority vote unless it is unanimously agreed otherwise by those present for any particular decision.

6 PROCEDURE FOR THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF OFFICE BEARERS, INCLUDING ELDERS AND DEACONS

6.1 Elders: The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, qualified and gifted by the Holy Spirit, to the office of Elder in a church, is that they be appointed by the Eldership ([Acts 14:23](#); [Titus 1:5](#)) and solemnly set apart by prayer, with the laying on of hands by the Eldership of the Church.

6.2 In order to fulfil their calling and responsibilities the Eldership will discern the required number of Elders. If the need for additional Elders is required, the current Elders will recommend someone who fulfils the New Testament qualifications for that office, is willing to stand, and is a member of the Church.

6.3 Elders shall be subject to re-election at three yearly intervals.

6.4 Deacons: The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, qualified and gifted by the Holy Spirit, to the office of Deacon in a church, is found in [Acts 6:1-7](#). Recommendations for new Deacons shall be given to the church secretary who will inform the Eldership. The recommendation for a Deacon must be by consent of the candidate and the backing of two church members. If the Elders discern the proposed candidate fulfils the New Testament qualifications for the office of Deacon and there is the need for an additional Deacon, the nomination will go before the church membership.

6.5 Deacons shall be subject to re-election at three yearly intervals.

6.6 Elections: Adequate notice of elections for both Elders and Deacons should be given in order for an election process to take place. Each member will be allocated an Elders/Deacons voting form three weeks before the election takes place, and the election will be announced on the three Sundays immediately prior to the election. Voting shall be by anonymous ballot and each member is responsible for returning their voting form on or before the date of the election to the church secretary. Postal and proxy votes will be permitted. The election date should not coincide with an update meeting.

6.7 Two members will be appointed as scrutineers to the ballot to count the votes. Each nomination or re-election needs to receive votes from at least 67% of those members voting.

6.8 In the event of a pastoral vacancy, an Interim Moderator shall be appointed by the Church. The members of the Church shall also appoint a Vacancy Committee. A Call to the Pastorate of the Church shall only be issued if at least 67% of the membership votes in favour of the candidate at a properly constituted Church Members' Meeting. Proxy and postal votes shall be accepted.

6.9 Any candidate for the role of Pastor/Minister shall hold to the established Church *Confession of Faith*; that the candidate normally be recognised as an ordained Accredited Minister by the Baptist Union of Scotland.

6.10 Other Office Bearers: The appointment of any other Church Office Bearers shall be decided by processes that are public, clear and open so that all Church Members are enabled to adequately consider those who are recommended by the Elders to any particular Office.

6.11 The Treasurer and Secretary shall be subject to re-appointment at three yearly intervals.

6.12 An officer may resign his/her office without prejudice if he/she does so in an orderly fashion. This resignation shall be submitted in writing to the Elders of the Church and in a timely fashion announced to the Church.

6.13 If it is deemed appropriate, an Officer may be removed from office and even membership, in accordance with clauses **3.9** and **3.10** above. Where there are serious difficulties involving an Elder of the Church (including the Pastor/Minister), the principle of [1 Tim 5:19-21](#) must be applied and the Mission and Ministry Advisor (or equivalent officer) of the Baptist Union of Scotland shall normally be consulted.

7 CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Church Members shall meet together in a Church Members' Meeting under the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discern the mind of Christ in the affairs of the Church.

7.1 Church Members' Meetings shall be held at least three times a year, one of these meetings

being the Annual General Meeting (AGM), with an Elder normally presiding, although it will be permissible for the members present at the meeting to elect an alternative Chair. Should the need arise, a Special Church Meeting (SCM) may be called at any time by the Elders, or by 10% of the members.

7.2 The minimum period of notice required to hold a Church Members' Meeting is fourteen clear days from the date on which the notice is deemed to have been given.

7.3 The notice must be given or delivered or posted to all the members of the Church.

7.4 Business at Church Meetings shall include:

7.4.1 A statement of the finances of the Church, including presentation to the AGM of full accounts duly audited or independently reviewed in accordance with the requirements of current legislation.

7.4.2 Consultation about the work and policy of the Church

7.4.3 Consultation with reference to how the pastoral care of the members of the Church is being fulfilled.

7.4.4 Business remitted from the Trustees.

7.5 Members wishing to raise business at the next Members' Meeting are required to give notice in writing to the Elders at least two weeks prior to the next Members' Meeting, and with sufficient time for the item to be considered and approved by the Elders, before its inclusion on the next Church Members' Meeting agenda.

7.6 No business shall be transacted at any Church Members' Meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum is at least 50% of the members, entitled to vote upon the business to be conducted at the meeting.

7.7 If a quorum is not present within half an hour after the time appointed for the meeting, or during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present, the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as the Elders and Deacons shall determine.

7.8 The Elders and Deacons must reconvene the meeting and must give at least seven clear days' notice of the reconvened meeting stating the date, time and place of the meeting.

7.9 If no quorum is present at the reconvened meeting within fifteen minutes after the time specified for the start of the meeting the members present at that time shall constitute the quorum for that meeting.

7.10 Any resolution for voting upon must be clearly articulated and proposed by a member and seconded by another member.

7.11 Voting may be either through a show of hands or by secret ballot; the method employed for any resolution being at the discretion of the Church Meeting.

7.12 Every member at a Church Meeting shall have one vote and if there are an equal number of votes for and against any resolution, the Chairman shall be entitled to a casting vote.

7.13 It may be desirable to the Church Members' Meeting and/or Trustees for there to be a higher measure of support for a particular resolution. In such cases the Church Members' Meeting must pass a further or enabling resolution referring to that particular resolution and specifying the proportion of votes necessary to pass it.

7.14 The business conducted at Church Members' Meetings and, in particular, any decisions of the Members shall be recorded in the Minutes for future reference.

7.15 Each set of Minutes shall be approved by the Church Members attending the next Church Members' Meeting. Members shall have the opportunity to review the Minutes and to correct any errors of fact before a formal vote on the approval of the Minutes is taken. If the Minutes are approved the person chairing the Church Members' Meeting shall confirm the Members' acceptance of the Minutes by signing and dating them as a correct record of the preceding meeting. The signed Minutes shall be conclusive evidence of the decisions taken at the Church Members Meeting to which they relate.

8 PERSONAL FINANCIAL INTERESTS

8.1 A member who has a personal interest in any transaction or arrangement which the Church is proposing to enter into and vote upon, must declare that interest at a Church Members' Meeting, and will be debarred from voting on whether or not the Church should enter into that transaction or arrangement.

8.2 Provided the member has declared their interest (and has not voted on the question of whether the Church should enter into the relevant arrangement), a Trustee/member will not be debarred from entering into an arrangement with the Church in which they have a personal interest and may retain any benefit which they gain from their participation in that arrangement.

9 AMENDMENTS

Any provision contained in this handbook may be amended provided that:-

9.1 A resolution is passed by 67% of the membership voting in favour at a Church Members' Meeting. Proxy and postal votes shall be accepted. This meeting must have been specially called for the purpose and members given at least 14 days' notice.

9.2 The notice of the Church Members' Meeting should include the full wording of the proposed amendment.

Appendix 1: Congregational Church Governance (CCG) is the type of polity which most Baptist Churches seek to adopt and implement as their form of government. CCG includes matters of decision making, structure and leadership. This means:

- i. No person or group outside of a Baptist congregation is to have authority over the local Church fellowship in regard to beliefs and religious practice. Central to CCG is the Lordship of Christ as the sole head of the Church.
- ii. All of the members within the Church fellowship have God's Spirit dwelling in them and are therefore to have an equal voice in the governance of the Church, their voices being expressed in order to seek and discern the mind of Christ together.
- iii. The Church's Authority as the Word of Christ is the Bible. Baptists believe that congregational governance best reflects the practices of those churches described in the NT. For example, the members of a Church acting in concert, not any one person or group, made major decisions ([Acts 6:1-6](#); [13:1-3](#); [15:22](#); [2 Corinthians 8:1-13](#)).
- iv. The Church is described in the Bible as a '*Priesthood of believers*,' in which Jesus Christ is the High Priest ([Hebrews 7-10](#)). This priesthood is a fellowship in which each *believer-priest* is to seek God's direction as a cooperative part of that fellowship.

In CCG, Baptists believe first and foremost, that Christ is the head of the Church. Therefore, CCG is not a '*democratic system*' where people rule, neither is it a '*theocratic system*' where a religious hierarchy rule. CCG is a system that acknowledges the Lordship of Christ and his rule over the Church, whilst acknowledging that the Spirit of Christ dwells within his people in order to lead and guide them *together* ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)). Perhaps an appropriate descriptive term for Baptist church governance would be "*theo-democratic*" meaning God's rule through all of his born again people.

Since all Christians should be baptised on profession of their faith ([Acts 8:12](#)) the Church, therefore, is a fellowship of baptised believers or, put another way, a community of believer-priests. Church governance is not in the hands of one or of a few but of all the members.

If Christ is Lord of the Church and the fellowship are equal in governing the Church under Christ, what place do the Elders have within CCG?

The Bible indicates that Elders have a very important role to play in a church ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#)). However, their role is not one of dictatorial authority but rather one of servant, spiritual leadership, "*not lording it over those entrusted to you*" ([1 Peter 5:2-3](#)). The Bible indicates that Elders have heavy responsibilities, and Church members should respect their servant leaders and relate to them in such a way that "*their work will be a joy, not a burden*" ([Hebrews 13:17](#)). The Bible also sets high standards for Deacons ([1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)), who are to be servants and not governors of the church. Therefore, the Elders lead the Church to discern the mind of Christ under the Lordship of Christ in agreement with the '*Body of Christ*.' How Baptist CCG is practised within the fellowship of *Forres Baptist Church*, is laid out in the remaining body of this document.

FORRES BAPTIST CHURCH CONFESSION OF FAITH

We are persuaded that the following statements about Jesus of Nazareth are trustworthy and true: ***Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*** (John 14:6, ESV)

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12, ESV)

We Believe...

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, 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 dwells in 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 who 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. Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the triune God on personal confession of faith in Christ. 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.

BAPTIST DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day'.

That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and thereby, to take part in evangelising to the world.