

DOVERCOURT BAPTIST CHURCH
Toronto, Canada

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

and

DECLARATION OF FAITH

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 3:11

“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12

Dovercourt Baptist Church ... serving God in Toronto since 1879.

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Declaration of Faith

We believe in the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and their absolute supremacy and sufficiency in matters of faith and practice; in the existence of one living and true God, sustaining the personal relation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the same in essence and equal in attributes; in the total and universal depravity of mankind; in the election and effectual calling of all God's people; in the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ, and the free justification of believers in Him by his imputed righteousness; in the preservation unto eternal life of the saints; in the necessity and efficacy of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification; in the coming of our Lord in glory; in the resurrection of the dead, both the just and unjust; in the everlasting punishment of the wicked, and the everlasting happiness of the righteous; in the immersion of the believer in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the only gospel baptism; that communion at the Lord's table is a privilege peculiar to believers; and that a gospel church is a body of baptized believers voluntarily associated together for the service of God.

Constitution of Dovercourt Baptist Church

(Latest revision: April, 2006)

Note: The Deacons and Deaconesses collectively shall hereafter be referred to as the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT).

ARTICLE ONE: Name and Purpose

Section 1 General: This church shall be known as Dovercourt Baptist Church, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Section 2 Statement of Commitment: Dovercourt Baptist Church exists to glorify God by reaching people for Jesus, and developing them into fully devoted followers of Christ, who will in turn reach others. We will do this by being committed to worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism, and service.

Worship: is praying to and giving praise to God, individually and corporately, for all that He is and does.

Discipleship: is helping people to understand God's Word so that their behaviour conforms to the truth.

Fellowship: is participating in the body of Christ by the use of spiritual gifts and the mutual expression of God's love.

Evangelism: is communicating God's message of salvation to the lost.

Service: is demonstrating the love and righteousness of God in both word and deed.

All of these being exercised in trust and obedience to our Lord.

ARTICLE TWO: Membership

Section 1 Qualifications: Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of the new birth, and having been baptized since their new birth, may be received into membership.

Section 2 Examination of Applicants: Each applicant shall be interviewed by two members of the Board of Elders.

Section 3 Qualification by Letter: Applicants from another church belonging to the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada may be received by letter of recommendation from their respective churches, all such letters having been submitted to the Board of Elders.

Section 4 Restoration: Excluded members may be restored to membership on confession of their errors, and giving evidence to the Board of Elders of their repentance.

Section 5 Vote Required: No person shall be received into this Church except by a vote of members assembled at any regular or special meeting, or to whose admission five (5) members object.

Section 6 Student Members: Any baptized believer attending an institute of higher learning may have student membership at Dovercourt Baptist Church and still retain membership in his/her home church; all such members to have full rights and privileges including voting rights, with the exception of moving and supporting motions.

ARTICLE THREE: The General Obligations of Members

The general obligations of members to God, to themselves, to their Elders and MLT, to their brethren, and to all others shall be in accordance with the Word of God, “that in all things Christ might have the preeminence.”

ARTICLE FOUR: Dismissal, Exclusion, and Removal of Members

Section 1 Dismissal by letter: Any member may be dismissed upon request to unite with another Baptist or evangelical church, all such requests to be first submitted to the Board of Elders and then to the membership.

Section 2 Exclusion of Members: No member shall be excluded for wrong-doing until after an investigation by the Board of Elders and/or a committee appointed by the Church for that purpose, who shall report to the Church advising action or until after the procedure in the Abuse Prevention Policy has been followed. The treatment of such shall be in harmony with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.

Section 3 Removal of Members for Non-attendance: A member absent from the Church services, or the Lord's supper, without sufficient reason, for a period of twelve (12) months, may, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, be removed from the Church roll after sufficient efforts have been made to notify the member of the Church's intentions.

ARTICLE FIVE: Meetings

Section 1 Regular Business Meeting: Business meetings shall be held every quarter or as needed.

Section 2 Annual Business Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held some time within two months of the beginning of the new year.

Section 3 Changing Meeting Dates: Dates of regular or annual business meetings may be changed when necessary upon recommendation of the Board of Elders. However, the financial year of the Church shall end on the 31st of December in each year.

Section 4 Special Business Meetings: Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Board of Elders or upon a requisition signed by seven (7) voting members of the Church and delivered to the Board of Elders. Notice shall be given on the preceding Lord's Day during or immediately following the morning service, and a meeting may then be held as long as at least seven (7) days notice is given.

Section 5 Quorum: Twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 6 Public Worship: The Church will regularly meet every Lord's Day for the public worship of God.

Section 7 The Lord's Supper: The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed by the Church once each month on the Lord's Day or otherwise as the Board of Elders may determine.

Section 8 Prayer Meetings: Members are encouraged to meet at least once a week for the purpose of corporate prayer.

Section 9 Reports of Committees: Reports of committees on applications for membership by baptism or Christian experience and letters of dismissal, may be received or granted at regular Church meetings (i.e., Sunday and mid-week services) or at any business meeting.

Section 10 Meeting of Elders, MLT, and Trustees: The Board of Elders shall meet twice per month or as required. The Board of Elders and the MLT shall meet together at least three (3) times per year. The Trustees shall meet at least twice per year.

ARTICLE SIX: Officers of the Church

Section 1 The Senior Pastor:

As often as it may be deemed necessary by the departure, death or removal of a previous pastor, the Church shall, without unnecessary delay, invite to its pastorate some minister of good report, provided seventy-five percent (75%) of the members present and voting at any meeting consent to the invitation. It shall be the duty of the Senior Pastor to preach statedly at the Church, to administer the ordinances of the Gospel and to perform the various other duties incumbent upon his office. The Senior Pastor will be a member of the board of Elders.

(a) Duties: The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Board of Elders. All other staff members are responsible to the Board of Elders through the Senior Pastor. A staff member may only be dismissed by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders. The responsibility of the Senior Pastor will be to faithfully preach God's Word and model the priority of discipleship within the church. Along with the Board of Elders, he will give oversight and direction to all ministry staff. The Senior Pastor shall oversee the daily administration of the church.

(b) Qualifications: The qualifications are equivalent to the biblical qualifications for an Elder. (See Article six, Section 3 (g)).

Section 2 Other Pastoral Staff:

(a) Selection of the Pastoral Staff: As often as is deemed necessary, the Board of Elders shall, without unnecessary delay, invite to its pastorate some minister of good report, provided seventy-five percent (75%) of the members present and voting at any meeting consent to the invitation.

(b) Duties: Ministry descriptions for the remaining pastoral staff will be established by the Board of Elders in keeping with the giftedness of the individual and the needs of the church, as agreed upon at the time of hiring.

The Church will consult the Fellowship's register, the Government list of pedophiles to the extent possible, and available police records, before engaging any staff member, Elder, or MLT member. The Church will not enter into an agreement with any person, whether paid or volunteer, whose record indicates prior engagement in sexual abuse.

Voting Privileges of Pastor(s): The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio voting member of the Board of Elders, so long as the number of full-time pastors does not equal or exceed the number of elders. In the event the number of full-time pastors equals or exceeds the number of elders, the pastors shall abstain from voting on all matters at an Elders' meeting.

Section 3 The Elders:

(a) Number of Elders: The Board of Elders shall be no less than three (3) and no more than seven (7) in number.

(b) Method of Nomination: When the need arises for additional Elders, the church will be asked to recommend nominees. In keeping with the clear biblical injunctions regarding authority structures within the church, only men will be considered for the office of Elder. The Board of Elders will then review the nominees and present to the church any nominee who receives consensus approval from the Board of Elders. The congregation will then be reminded of the biblical requirements for Elders and given 30 days notice of the nominees before a vote of affirmation is taken by the congregation. During the 30 days notice, anyone having questions or doubts about a nominee should make their concerns known to the Board of Elders.

(c) Method of Election: The Church will vote to elect these men to the office of an Elder at the Annual Business Meeting or when a position becomes vacant. It

shall be required that no Elder be declared elected unless he receives no less than seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the members present and voting.

(d) Duties of the Elders:

i.) The Elders are to devote themselves to prayer and be zealous to guard the doctrine and unity of spirit within the Church in the bonds of peace. They shall serve as a council of service and conference in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the Church. They are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the Church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the growth of Christians, and the extension and growth of the Kingdom of God.

ii.) The Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Church. They shall assist in administering the ordinances of the Church. They shall be expected to visit the membership and care for the sick and sorrowing, investigate delinquents, and endeavor to help those with any spiritual weakness.

iii.) In accordance with the Word of God and guidance from the Holy Spirit, the Elders are to have oversight of the discipline of the Church.

iv.) The Elders shall serve as a pulpit committee. In any period when the Church is without a Senior Pastor, unless the Church shall otherwise provide, the Elders will arrange the temporary ministry and take council with reference to securing a Senior Pastor.

v.) The Elders together with the MLT shall oversee the administration of the business and activities of the Church and shall bring all necessary considerations before the Church at the stated regular business meetings for approval of the members. The meeting is to be chaired by one of the Elders.

vi.) An Elder will normally not serve on the Board of Trustees at the same time unless there is a shortage of candidates. The Church shall be free to decide on this matter as circumstances develop. It is thus intended to elect a slate of trustees separate from the Elders.

(e) Term of Office: Each elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a three year commitment, and will be eligible for additional terms after confirmation by means of the nomination and election process.

(f) Structure: All Elders will have equal authority and shared responsibility. The Senior Pastor will work in cooperation with the Board of Elders to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability. An Elders meeting may

not be held without a majority of the elders present and the entirety of the Elders informed. The Elder Board Chairman will be selected by consensus decision of the Board of Elders with no fixed term and may not be one of the pastors.

(g) Qualifications (I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9):

Above reproach

Faithful and devoted to one wife

Have children who believe and are well-behaved and respectful

Not overbearing

Not quick-tempered

Not indulging in much wine

Not violent but gentle

Not quarrelsome

Not a recent convert

A good reputation with outsiders

Not a lover of money or dishonest gain

Hospitable

A lover of what is good

Self-controlled and disciplined

Upright and holy

Able to teach and encourage others by sound doctrine and refute false teaching

(h) Removal of Elders: An individual's service as an Elder may be discontinued by his own decision or by a consensus decision of the other Elders and the approval of the congregation.

Upon recommendation from the Board of Elders, an Elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the church, if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated, or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9).

Section 4 The Deacons (MLT):

The office of a Deacon may be held by a man or woman who is considered as holding to the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. They shall be recommended for their appointment by the Elders and affirmed by the members for the direction or management of various areas of special need in the church as deemed necessary by the Board of Elders. It shall be required that no Deacon be declared elected unless he or she receives no less than fifty percent (50%) vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting, Annual Business Meeting, or special business meeting.

The office of Deacon is one that exists Biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualification for deacons are the same as elders in the areas of character, but different in aptitude. The elders are to be “apt to teach” while the deacons are to be “able and proved as servants.”

(a) Number of Deacons: The number of Deacons shall be based on the various ministry needs as determined by the Board of Elders.

(b) Selection: When the need arises for new or additional Deacons, the church will be asked to recommend nominees. The Board of Elders will then review the nominees and present to the church any nominee(s) who are willing to hold the office and who receive consensus approval from the Board of Elders. The congregation will be reminded of the Biblical requirements for Deacons and given 30 days notice of the nominees before a vote of affirmation is taken by the congregation. During the 30 days notice, anyone having questions or doubts about a nominee should make their concerns known to the Board of Elders.

(c) Term of Office: Deacons shall serve a term of one year and will be eligible for additional terms after confirmation by means of the nomination and affirmation process.

(d) Qualifications for Deacons (I Timothy 3:8-12):

Specific to Male Deacons (and to female also as it applies)

Dignified and worthy of respect

Sincere and not double-tongued

Not indulging in much wine

Not pursuing dishonest gain

Holding to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience

First tested as servants and found faithful

Faithful and devoted to one wife

Managing his children and household well

Specific to Female Deacons: (and to male also as it applies)

Worthy of respect

Not malicious talkers

Temperate and trustworthy in everything

(e) Removal of Deacons: An individual’s service as a Deacon may be discontinued by his or her own decision or by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders and the approval of the congregation.

Upon recommendation from the Board of Elders, a Deacon may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the church, if he or she is found to be

physically or mentally incapacitated, or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Section 5 The Trustees:

(a) Selection of Trustees: The Church may, from time to time as occasion may require, appoint Trustees who will be five (5) in number. When and as often as any Trustee shall die, be excluded from the fellowship of the Church, move from Ontario, unite with any other religious denomination, resign or be removed from office by the Church, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by the Church by a sixty-six percent (66%) vote of members present at any regular business meeting, Annual Business Meeting or special business meeting. A minute of such appointment or removal, when entered in the church book by the church clerk, shall be sufficient evidence of the appointment of a trustee.

(b) Removal of a Trustee: An individual's service as a Trustee may be discontinued by his or her own decision or by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders and the approval of the congregation.

Section 6 Other Officers: Other elective officers of the Church shall be: a treasurer, a church clerk, an envelope secretary and an auditor and such other officers as may be considered necessary from time to time.

Section 7 Treasurer: The treasurer shall verify all receipts of the Church. The treasurer shall pay all salaries, regular expenses and disbursements approved by the church either through its annual budget or by resolution passed at any meeting of the Church. The treasurer shall keep true and fair books of accounts of the receipts, expenditures and liabilities of the Church. The books and supporting receipts and voucher shall be examined by the auditor appointed by the Church. The treasurer shall report to the Church at the Annual Meeting and as required.

Section 8 Church Clerk: The church clerk shall keep a fair record of the proceedings of the Church in their meetings for business, take charge of necessary records, and keep a register of all the members of the Church.

Section 9 Envelope Secretary: It shall be the duty of the envelope secretary to receive the envelopes in which weekly offerings have been made from the weekly offering tellers, and to enter the amounts contained in each envelope in a book kept for that purpose, crediting each contributor with their donations and issuing such reports by February 28 of the following year.

Section 10 Term of Office: Officers of the Church shall be elected annually, with the exception of Elders, MLT, and Trustees.

Section 11 Vacancies: Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled at any meeting of the Church.

ARTICLE SEVEN: Standing Committees

Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders to the church, any standing committee may be approved at a church business meeting by majority vote of members present and voting.

ARTICLE EIGHT: Nomination and Election of Officers and Committees

Unless otherwise provided, the Board of Elders or a committee appointed by them, shall consider and present a list of nominees for each office or committee at the Annual Meeting for consideration by the Church.

ARTICLE NINE: Manner of Conducting Business

Section 1 The business of the Church shall be conducted in a manner consistent with New Testament simplicity and practice, remembering that God has given Christ “to be head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Section 2 The chairman of any meeting of the Church shall follow, as much as possible, the “Rules of Order” found in Schedule 1 of this Constitution.

Section 3 The right of voting on all matters of Church business shall be restricted to members of sixteen (16) years of age and over.

ARTICLE TEN: Licensing and Ordaining

Section 1 Any member who, in the judgment of the Church, gives evidence of his piety, zeal, and “aptness to teach,” that he is called of God to the work of the ministry, after having preached in the hearing of the Church, may be licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provided seventy-five percent (75%) of the members present at any regular business meeting shall agree thereto.

Section 2 If the Church decides that one of its licensed preachers possesses the spiritual qualifications for full ordination, it shall call a council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate to which council the propriety of ordaining shall be wholly referred.

ARTICLE ELEVEN: Amendment of Constitution

These regulations may be altered or amended by the Church at any meeting convened for that purpose, or at a regular meeting of the Church for business, provided at least one (1) month’s notice of the proposed amendment has been given.

ARTICLE TWELVE: Legal Dispositions

Section 1 Dovercourt Baptist Church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members. Any profits or other accretions to the Church shall be used in promoting its objective.

Section 2 Upon dissolution, any assets of Dovercourt Baptist Church shall be gifted to qualified donees (another registered charity) under the Income Tax Act as referred to in S110 (I) (a) or S110 (I) (b).

Section 3 The object of Dovercourt Baptist Church is to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This shall be done by means consistent with Fellowship Baptist teachings and shall include worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism, and service.

SCHEDULE 1: RULES OF ORDER

1. In this schedule, “member” means a member of Dovercourt Baptist Church with the right to vote.
2. When any member wishes to speak, he shall so indicate by raising his hand, and shall address the presiding officer and confine himself to the question under discussion.
3. When two or more members raise their hand to speak, the presiding officer shall call upon one member to speak first.
4. No member while speaking shall be interrupted by another except to raise a point of order. The interrupting member shall confine himself strictly to the point of order.
5. Any member in speaking or otherwise who transgress these rules, if called to order either by the presiding officer or on a point raised by another member, shall immediately cease speaking while the point is being stated, after which he may and shall then obey the decision of the presiding officer.
6. A member may speak only once upon any question, except:
 - a) in explanation of a material point of his speech which may have been misquoted or misunderstood, but then he is not to introduce any new matter or argument;
 - b) the proposer of a substantive motion, who shall be allowed a reply which shall close the debate, or...
 - c) with the permission of the presiding officer.
7. No member may speak longer than five (5) minutes upon any question except with the permission of the presiding officer.
8. When the question under discussion has not been printed and distributed, any member may require it to be read at any time during the debate, but not so as to interrupt a member while speaking.
9. When the question under discussion contains distinct propositions, any member may require the vote upon each proposition to be taken separately.
10. When the presiding officer is putting a question, no member shall enter or leave the chamber, and no further debate is permitted.

11. Any question when once decided by the Church shall not be reintroduced during the same meeting except by two-thirds vote of the Church then present.

12. All motions shall be moved and seconded before being debated.

13. After a motion has been moved and seconded and stated to the Church, it cannot be withdrawn by the member who has made a motion without the permission of the seconder and the consent of the Church.

14. In all cases not provided for by these rules or by other rules of the Church, the usage and customs of the House of Commons of Canada shall be followed so far as they may be applicable to the Church.

15. The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Church, without debate. In explaining a point of order or practice, he shall state the rule or authority applicable to the case.

16. No member is entitled to vote upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any member so interested will be disallowed.

17. When a question is under debate, no motion is received except to amend, to postpone (which may be indefinitely or to a day or time certain), to introduce the previous question, that is, "to put the question," to adjourn the debate, to adjourn the Church meeting, or to refer the question to a committee.

18. A motion to refer a question to a committee shall preclude all amendment of the main question.

19. The previous question, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendment of the main question and, if it is resolved in the affirmative, the original question is to be put forth without any amendment or debate.

20. A motion to amend the main question shall be disposed of before the main question is decided and, where there is more than one motion to amend, they shall be decided in the reverse order to which they were made.

21. Whenever the presiding officer is of the opinion that a motion offered to the Church is contrary to these rules or the Constitution, he shall apprise the Church thereof immediately, rule the motion out of order, and quote the rule or authority applicable to the case.