

## DAGENHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Becontree Avenue : Chaplin Road : Oxlow Lane : Wood Lane

Guide lines for the working arrangements of the combined congregations incorporating a standard constitution for each local congregation.

### TITLE

DAGENHAM BAPTIST CHURCH is accepted as a convenient description of the combined congregations centred at Becontree Avenue, Chaplin Road, Oxlow Lane and Wood Lane and may be used for letter headings, notice boards and other united publicity.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An Advisory Committee shall comprise the members of the Ministerial Team, two representatives (one of whom shall be a deacon) of the member congregations, two representatives each from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland and the Essex Baptist Association, a chairman, secretary and treasurer, each to be appointed annually by the Advisory Committee. The said officers need not be members of the Dagenham Baptist Church. The secretary shall convene the Advisory Committee for prayer, consultation, reports, discussion and recommendations concerning the Church's work as a whole.

The treasurer shall be responsible for securing and administering grants and contributions to a Central Fund and for the payments of stipends and Ministerial and other expenses as detailed under the heading for Finance 1 (a), (b) and (c).

Meetings should be held quarterly.

### MINISTRY

(a) The Church shall be led by a Team of Ministers, each of whom shall have special responsibility as outlined below, all of whom shall be available to serve the congregations and the neighbourhood according to their gifts, interests and training. Each Minister must be a baptised believer, subject to the conditions of Church Membership and acceptable to the Baptist denomination.

(b) Senior Minister: The Ministerial Team shall be led by a Minister who shall have special responsibility for co-ordinating the work of the Church, in addition to other responsibilities as deemed necessary at the time.

(c) Other members of the Team will have special responsibility for the leadership of one of the congregations within the Group and/or such other special responsibilities as may be deemed necessary.

(d) Team Meeting: The Senior Minister shall convene regular Team Meetings for fellowship, devotions, study, discussion and planning.

(e) Appointment: Each Minister shall be appointed as follows:-

i) The Senior Minister (and any member of the Team with special responsibilities other than specific pastoral charge of one congregation) shall be nominated by the Advisory Committee to the United Deacons who will recommend him to the four Church Meetings. A two-third majority vote of members present shall be required to ratify the appointment in each Church Meeting.

ii) Ministers with special responsibility for pastoral charge of one congregation (having met with and been approved by the Team, the local diaconate and the United Deacons) shall be nominated by the local church meeting to the other three church meetings, (voting as above), and finally approved by the Advisory Committee for the Call to be sent.

Invitations to join the Ministerial Team shall be issued by the Chairman or Secretary of the Advisory Committee in the following terms:

"You are invited to become a member of the  
Ministerial Team of the Dagenham Baptist Church  
with special responsibility for....."

iii) Each full-time Minister is to be entitled to one free day per week and one free Sunday per quarter, and four weeks paid holiday per annum.

- (f) <sup>x</sup> i) Resignation: In the event of a Minister wishing to resign from the Ministerial Team, the resignation shall be sent in writing to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and copies to each Church Secretary, giving at least three months notice.  
A Supplementary Minister or other similar Team Member shall give notice of resignation as would be appropriate at the time.
- ii) Termination: In the event of a termination of a ministry by the Church, reference shall be made to the Deacons Meeting of the congregation concerned in consultation with the Ministerial Team and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee; for appropriate action. A minimum of nine months notice shall be given.
- <sup>x</sup> (g) When a vacancy arises in the Team the Ministers shall arrange for the continuance of pastoral care and leadership in consultation with the congregation concerned. A local congregation may appoint a moderator (in consultation with the Ministerial Team), and it is expected that he will work in close association with the Ministerial Team, attending the Team Meetings if possible.
- <sup>x</sup> (h) United Church Meetings: Such meetings should be held at times when felt desirable by the Ministerial Team and the United Deacons. United Church Meetings should be convened by a secretary who must be a member of the Dagenham Baptist Church nominated by any of the four congregations, elected by a two-thirds majority of each church meeting, for a period of three years and eligible for re-election if nominated.

#### MEMBERSHIP

The Church consists of those individuals who have become members in the manner hereafter stated:

- (a) The membership shall be open to all who profess repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession. Usually members are received after baptism by immersion. The Church welcomes to full membership all who conscientiously follow our Lord Jesus Christ but for some acceptable reason are not baptised.
- (b) New Members: Those desirous of joining the Church shall apply to one of the Ministers or Church secretaries or to any of the Deacons. After visitation and a satisfactory report by the Minister and two Church members nominated by the Diaconate, they shall be eligible for election. When elected they shall receive the right hand of fellowship at the Lord's Table.
- (c) Church Roll: Individual congregations shall maintain a membership roll and those enrolled shall be deemed members of the Dagenham Baptist Church. Any members will be welcome to attend any of the local business meetings but with voting rights only at the meeting where he is enrolled.  
Ministers will have responsibility for the pastoral care of those on the local membership list for whom they are said to have 'special responsibility'.
- (d) Transfer: Members from other Churches shall be received by letter of transfer and, after visitation by the Minister or secretary, such applications to be voted upon, elected and received as set forth in the previous clause.
- (e) Commitment: Members are expected loyally to attend the Church Services, to contribute towards its support as God has prospered them, to take part in activities and, with God's help, to lead lives regulated by the teaching and inspired by the Spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- (f) Discipline: In cases which call for discipline, members of the Church shall be dealt with according to the principles laid down in Matthew 18: 15-17, and Galations 6: 1.
- (g) Deletion: After due notice and visitation, those absent from the Communion Service without good cause for six consecutive months may be regarded as no longer active members after consideration by a Church Meeting.

- (h) Non-residents: If a member removes to some other district where there is no Free Church to which he or she can be conveniently transferred, the name of such members shall be placed on a non-resident members' list and they shall be contacted from time to time both with the object of discovering whether the possibility of transfer has arisen and also to give such members an opportunity to recognise the responsibilities of membership. A list of non-resident members shall be kept.

#### FINANCE

1. Central Fund

- (a) Income: The Central Fund of the Dagenham Baptist Church is to receive monthly contributions from the four congregations.

The Central Fund shall receive monthly payments from each of the congregations in proportion to the membership of each church, as recorded on the church statistical return to the Baptist Union of the previous year.

The total remittance to the Central Fund for the ensuing year given by each congregation, is to be advised by the Group Treasurer and agreed by the local church meeting in November/December each year, so that the increased remittance (or otherwise) will take effect from January each year, in line with Baptist Union procedure.

Denominational grants will also be paid to the Central Fund, until such time when the Group shall become self-supporting.

- x (b) Expenditure: The Central Fund is to be used for the payment of Ministerial stipends and expenses and general expenses of the Group such as postages, stationery, travelling allowances and car expenses. Ministerial stipends are to be at least the minimum laid down by the Baptist Union with appropriate allowances. Also from the Central Fund payments shall be made to cover the running costs of each Manse occupied by a Minister (i.e. minor repairs and re-decoration, manse rates and insurances and telephone charges).
- x (c) Administration: The Central Fund is to be administered by a Treasurer elected annually by the Advisory Committee. The Treasurer will make requests to the treasurers of the four congregations for monthly payments, as under 1 (a) above.

x 2. Individual Congregations:

Manse occupied by full-time Ministers of the Team are to be provided by the congregation for which the Minister is responsible. Major repairs to the Manse will be the responsibility of the congregation owning the Manse. Whilst the Manse belongs to the local congregation concerned, minor repairs and re-decoration, manse rates, insurances and telephone, will be undertaken and paid for by the Central Fund. The four congregations are to cover this expenditure by including in their monthly remittance to the Central Fund a proportionate amount, advised to each congregation by the Group Treasurer, as under 1 (a) above.

#### ORDINANCES

- (1) The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper is to be observed by each congregation at least twice a month. All believers in our Lord Jesus Christ are invited to attend and members should do their utmost to be present at a monthly Communion Service.
- (2) The Ordinance of Believer's Baptism shall be by immersion of those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### CHURCH OFFICERS

- (1) Diaconate: Each congregation shall endeavour to elect from its baptised members, for a period of three years, six deacons (men or women over the age of 21 and who have been Church members for at least twelve months) two of whom shall retire in rotation each year and shall be eligible for re-election if nominated. Deacons shall be elected or re-elected by ballot on a two-thirds majority of those present at a meeting of local members. The written consent of nominees shall first be obtained by two members. At least two-thirds of the number should be baptised believers.

- (2) Executive Officers: A secretary and treasurer shall be elected annually from the baptised members and they shall be ex-officio deacons. The election shall be by ballot or otherwise as the meeting may determine and as occasion may arise.
- (3) Leaders of Organisations: Leaders of all organisations connected with the Church shall normally be members as defined under 'Membership'; but it is recognised that the help of other Christians may from time to time be required.
- (4) Elections: Each congregation shall have discretion regarding the timing of elections, announcements of nominations, method of ballot, proxy voting.

LOCAL  
BUSINESS  
MEETING

- (1) The enrolled members of each congregation shall meet for Christian fellowship and for the transaction of business at least once a quarter.
- (2) A special business meeting may be called at the discretion of the Minister and a majority of the deacons, or at the written request of a third of the local members. Notice of such meeting shall be given at both services on the two preceding Sundays.
- (3) All members on the roll shall be entitled to vote at their own business meetings and the business shall be transacted under such rules as ordinarily govern the conduct of public meetings.
- (4) The Minister with special responsibility or another member of the Ministerial Team shall normally take the chair at such meetings. Otherwise, the members present shall elect a chairman and proceed with the business.

GENERAL

- (1) Committees and Control: The Ministers shall be presidents of their respective local committees and societies. Deacons shall appoint one or two of their number as representatives of the said local committees and societies. Meetings are expected to conclude not later than 10.30 p.m. unless special permission is given by the Minister and deacons.
- (2) Premises: Buildings and premises shall be used for the public worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, the instruction of children and adults and the promotion of such other religious social philanthropic purposes as shall from time to time be decided.
- (3) Accounts: All organisations connected with the Church must submit annual accounts showing receipts and payments duly certified by the local treasurer.
- (4) Alterations of Rules: The Church shall have the right to rescind, vary, amend or add to the rules by resolutions provided this is in keeping with the Constitution. Such resolutions to be presented to a united Church Meeting.



## C O V E N A N T

I, being elected a member of DAGENHAM BAPTIST CHURCH, acknowledge my responsibilities as under:

1. To live a life consistent with the gospel and worthy of our high calling in Christ.
2. To spend some time every day in prayer and reading the Scriptures.
3. To share each Lord's Day, unless unavoidably prevented, in the corporate worship of the Church and to be regular and faithful in observance of the Lord's Supper.
4. To fulfil the ministry of intercession both privately and by being present whenever possible at meetings for corporate prayer.
5. To live in loyal love and fellowship with all the other members of the Church.
6. To take some part in the work of the Church, according to calling, gifts and opportunities.
7. To accept personal responsibility for the government of the local Church by being present whenever possible at the Church Meeting.
8. To set aside and give a sum of money every Lord's Day for the work of God's Kingdom at home and overseas.
9. To attempt, by personal invitation, hospitality and visitation to introduce and bring others to the Church.
10. To witness to the Lord Jesus Christ by word and deed and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

Name of Member .....

Received into Membership.....

Date of Baptism .....