

# Constitution for Philpott Memorial Church

*Approved November 2, 2008 at Annual General Meeting of the Membership*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. Name & Association
2. Our Purpose
3. Our Mission
4. Our Statement of Faith
5. Governance
  - 5.1. *Head of the Church*
  - 5.2. *Members*
    - 5.2.1. Privileges of Membership
    - 5.2.2. Privileges of Associate Membership
    - 5.2.3. Becoming a Member
    - 5.2.4. Rules for Meetings of the Membership
    - 5.2.5. Annual Ministry Meeting
    - 5.2.6. Annual General Meeting
    - 5.2.7. Special Meetings
  - 5.3. *Elders*
    - 5.3.1. Number of Elders
    - 5.3.2. Qualifications of Elders
    - 5.3.3. Non-Executive Leadership Responsibilities of Elders
    - 5.3.4. Executive Duties of Elected Elders
    - 5.3.5. Selection of Elders
  - 5.4. *Officers*
    - 5.4.1. List of Officers
    - 5.4.2. Qualifications of Officers
    - 5.4.3. Reporting Responsibilities of Officers
    - 5.4.4. Selection of Officers
  - 5.5. *Committees*
    - 5.5.1. Standing Committees
    - 5.5.2. Reporting Responsibilities of Committees
    - 5.5.3. Additional Rules Concerning the Nominating Committee
    - 5.5.4. Selection of Committees
  - 5.6. *Staff*
    - 5.6.1. Senior Pastor
    - 5.6.2. Other Pastoral Staff
    - 5.6.3. Administrative and Custodial Staff
6. Method of Finance
  - 6.1. *Funding and Budgeting of Ministry*
  - 6.2. *Managing Assets*
  - 6.3. *Annual Audit and End of Financial Year*
  - 6.4. *Variance to the Budget and Indebtedness*
7. Dissolution of Philpott Memorial Church
8. Constitutional Revisions

APPENDIX A: Expanded Statement of Faith

APPENDIX B: The Membership Covenant

APPENDIX C: Statement of Our Values

## **Policy Manual:**

**This Constitution is supported by a Policy Manual that provides additional details relating to the operation of the Church. These policies will be formulated by the Board and will reflect the intent of the constitution of Philpott Memorial Church.**

### **1. NAME & ASSOCIATION**

- 1.1. This organized body of Christian believers shall be known as Philpott Memorial Church of the City of Hamilton.
- 1.2. Philpott Memorial Church is an autonomous member of the Associated Gospel Churches and is guided by the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Associated Gospel Churches.

### **2. OUR PURPOSE**

Our Purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who:

Exalt God by:

- Worshipping Him joyfully
- Praying to Him passionately
- Giving back to him generously
- Reflecting His character consistently
- Trusting Him fully

Edify one another by:

- Loving each other biblically
- Praying for each other diligently
- Communicating God's Word carefully
- Training each other thoroughly

Extend God's love to all people by:

- Sharing the Gospel boldly
- Serving all compassionately

### **3. OUR MISSION**

Every person who regularly attends Philpott Memorial Church commits to the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of our congregation, bearing witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed according to spiritual gifts.

With Philpott Memorial Church as our geographic centre, our presence and influence will grow in all directions according to God's leadership and timing. Our corporate priority is to the discipleship of our congregation in order that we evangelize and transform our city core, our homes, our workplaces, and our missionary communities.

In all of this, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will cultivate and share the immeasurable love and grace we receive from God through Christ Jesus.

### **4. OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH**

- 4.1. The Holy Scriptures as originally given by God are divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy, and constitute the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- 4.2. There is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- 4.3. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh; we affirm His virgin birth, sinless humanity, divine miracles, crucifixion, bodily resurrection, ascension, ongoing mediatorial work, and personal return in power and glory.
- 4.4. The salvation of lost and sinful humanity is possible only through the merits of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, received by faith apart from works, and is characterized by regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
- 4.5. The Holy Spirit enables believers to live a holy life, to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4.6. The Church, the Body of Christ, consists of all true believers.
- 4.7. Ultimately God will judge the living and the dead; those who are saved unto the resurrection of life and those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

## **5. GOVERNANCE**

Under the Headship of Jesus, the governance of Philpott Memorial Church shall be through her membership, exercised at regular and special meetings, and through the Board of Elders (the Board) and Officers, appointed at a duly called meeting of the membership.

### **5.1. Head of the Church**

Jesus is the Head of the Body of all believers, the Leader of the Church.

### **5.2. Members**

Membership at Philpott Memorial Church is a local expression of membership of the wider Church. We believe that commitment to a local body is a significant and important expression of faith and commitment to the greater body of Christ.

The aim of membership at Philpott Memorial Church is that we might grow together in love and submission to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

#### *5.2.1. Privileges of Membership:*

Members are eligible to serve as elected Elders where eligible (see 5.3), as Officers where eligible (see 5.4), and may vote on all matters at meetings of the membership.

#### *5.2.2. Privileges of Associate Membership:*

Associate members are members who choose to retain their full membership with a congregation outside the greater Hamilton region. Associate members may vote on all matters at meetings of the membership except constitutional changes, but may not serve as elected Elders, Officers, or on a committee reporting directly to the Board.

#### *5.2.3. Becoming a Member:*

To become a member at Philpott Memorial Church, a person must fulfill the following requirements:

- Declare their allegiance to Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord.

- Affirm the Purpose, Mission, Statement of Faith, Membership Covenant, and Values of Philpott Memorial Church.
- Be interviewed by an Elder or senior staff member, whose recommendation to offer membership is subsequently approved by the Board.
- By being publicly welcomed as a new member, declare their personal faith in Jesus Christ and a desire for mutual love and submission within the Body of Christ.
- If new to the Faith, or to the Associated Gospel Churches, a person seeking membership should attend a class that outlines the principles of our Faith, explains the elements of our Constitution, and discusses the role of baptism and communion in the life of our community.

**The Membership Covenant and Statement of Values can be found as Appendices to this constitution.**

*5.2.4. Rules for Meetings of the Membership:*

Meetings will be held by the membership to conduct the normal business of the Church. Any unusual items of business relating to ministry or finance will also be presented for congregational discussion and decision-making votes. Any agenda item that falls under the reasons for holding the Annual Ministry Meeting (see 5.2.5), the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6), or a Special Meeting (see 5.2.7) will ultimately require approval by the Members before implementation. If required, multiple Special Meetings may occur before a matter is ultimately resolved by a vote of the Members.

A quorum for all duly called General, Ministry, and Special Meetings of the members is the lesser of forty members or fifty percent of all members. The Chair of all such meetings will be the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Board, or in the absence of both, the chair will be appointed by a majority vote of those attending.

A two-thirds majority vote of those members present shall be required for approval of any financial matters, for choosing a senior pastor, and for constitutional amendments.

Any member who receives regular remuneration or support from Philpott Memorial Church must declare a conflict of interest and refrain from voting on any associated motion.

A simple majority vote of all members present shall be required for approval of all other matters, including the election of Elders and Officers.

**Other details on the form of notice, etc, are provided in the Policy Manual.**

*5.2.5. Annual Ministry Meeting:*

The membership will meet annually in the Spring, following at least two weeks notice:

- To receive ministry reports.

- To affirm the general direction of future ministry.

**5.2.6. Annual General Meeting:**

The membership will meet annually in the Fall, following at least two weeks notice:

- To receive annual financial reports.
- To vote on the budget for the next fiscal year.
- To appoint independent auditors.
- To elect Elders, Officers, and two members to the Nominating Committee.

**5.2.7. Special Meetings:**

The membership may be called to a Special Meeting by the Board, the Chairman of the Board, the Senior Pastor, the majority of the trustees, or by a signed petition of forty members as long as there is at least two weeks notice:

- To discuss and/or vote on any matter deemed urgent and exceptional.
- To discuss and/or vote on a major change in ministry direction.
- To discuss and/or vote on the acquisition or sale of property.
- To discuss and/or vote on matters concerning the Articles of Faith and Doctrine.
- To discuss and/or vote on a major unbudgeted expenditure.

**5.3. Elders**

Elders serve as the spiritual leaders of Philpott Memorial Church.

**5.3.1. Number of Elders:**

There will be a minimum of five “arm’s length” voting Elders, who shall elect their own Chair. No maximum number of Elders is defined. The Senior Pastor is considered an Elder ex-officio.

**5.3.2. Qualifications of Elders:**

Titus 1:6-9 and 1Timothy 3:1-7 outline the scriptural standards applicable to persons appointed to the role of Elder in a church. An Elder must be in active pursuit of these qualities with the help and accountability of his spouse, if he is married, and of the other Elders of Philpott Memorial Church.

**5.3.3. Non-Executive Leadership Responsibilities of Elders:**

The following are the non-executive leadership responsibilities of Elders:

- Doctrine of the Faith:

The Elders ensure that the beliefs, doctrine, and teaching at Philpott Memorial Church are orthodox and biblical. All doctrinal issues are addressed by the Elders, in keeping with the Scripture, and guided by the interpretations contained in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of Philpott Memorial Church and of the Associated Gospel Churches.

- Purpose, Mission, and Vision:

The Elders ensure that the staff and ministry volunteers are working to fulfill our Purpose, Mission, and Vision.

Any substantive changes to these must ultimately be approved by the Board and the members.

- Values:

The Elders articulate to the best of their discernment the values that Philpott Memorial Church espouses and aspires to so that those who attend become aware of the culture and characteristics of our Church community.

- Primary Issues:

The Elders ensure that key matters of faith and Church life are being regularly addressed.

- Mentoring Disciples:

The Elders ensure by example and instruction that disciples are being mentored at Philpott Memorial Church.

- Church Discipline:

The Elders administer in love and humility the process of Church discipline as outlined in Scripture.

#### 5.3.4. *Executive Duties of Elected Elders:*

In addition to their primary spiritual duties, elected Elders also comprise the non-remunerated Executive Board of Philpott Memorial Church, which is responsible for:

- The recommendation of Chairs for Committees.
- The appointment of members to Committees.
- The appointment of three members to the Nominating Committee.
- The appointment of delegates to represent Philpott Memorial Church at any denominational meeting and the instruction of such delegates where necessary.
- The hiring or dismissal of pastoral staff other than the senior pastor.
- The hiring or dismissal of any administrative and custodial staff.

- The receipt of summary reports from the pastoral staff, treasurers (and other Officers if deemed necessary), and Committees; as well as the appropriate deliberation on the action items from these reports.
- The development, amendment, and implementation of a Policy Manual as it relates to all facets of ministry.
- The declaration of any conflict of interest and abstention from voting on such matters.

The Board shall meet regularly, at least ten times per annum and a quorum shall be a simple majority of its members.

The senior pastor (or his delegate), the Church Clerk, and at least one trustee shall attend Board meetings, but without voting privileges.

*5.3.5. Selection of Elders:*

All Elders shall be elected to the Board at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6) of the membership for a term of up to four years.

The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying, interviewing, confirming eligibility and suitability, and recommending candidates for the position of Elder (see 5.5.3).

The list of nominees shall be posted by the Chair of the Nominating Committee in the Church building at least four weeks before the Annual General Meeting.

The nomination of eligible persons for the position of Elder may also be made in writing to the Chair of the Nominating Committee when signed by at least three members of the Congregation. Upon confirmation of eligibility through interview, according to the process outlined above, these names will be brought forward to the members for consideration at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6).

**5.4. Officers**

The Officers serve as the legal Officers for Philpott Memorial Church.

*5.4.1. List of Officers:*

At a minimum, the Officers of Philpott Memorial Church shall be:

- Trustees – at least three
- Church Clerk
- Receiver
- Assistant receiver(s) (as necessary)
- Treasurer
- Assistant treasurer(s) (as necessary)

*5.4.2. Qualifications of Officers:*

1 Timothy 3:8-13 outline the scriptural standards applicable to persons appointed to the role of Deacon or Deaconess in a church. Officers must be in active pursuit of these qualities with the help and accountability of spouses, Elders, and other Officers.

*5.4.3. Reporting Responsibilities of Officers:*

The Officers, in addition to legal responsibilities, have a dual responsibility to the Church, reporting to both the membership (see 5.2.6 and 5.2.7) and the Board (see 5.3.4).

*5.4.4. Selection of Officers:*

All Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6) of the Membership for a one year term.

The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying and confirming eligibility of candidates for the Deacon and Deaconess positions (see 5.5.3).

The list of nominees shall be posted in the Church building by the Chair of the Nominating Committee at least four weeks before the Annual General Meeting.

The nomination of eligible persons for a Deacon or Deaconess position may also be made in writing to the Chair of the Nominating Committee when signed by at least three members of the Congregation. Upon confirmation of eligibility through interview, according to the process outlined above, these names will be brought forward to the members for consideration at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6).

**Additional information about procedures and duties pertaining to each Deacon or Deaconess is maintained in the Policy Manual.**

## **5.5. Committees**

*5.5.1. Standing Committees:*

At a minimum, the Committees of Philpott Memorial Church shall be:

- Nominating
- Finance
- Facilities & Properties
- Missions
- Personnel

The quorum for each Committee shall be a majority of its members.

*5.5.2. Reporting Responsibilities of the Committees:*

Each Committee reports to the Board (See 5.3.4).

*5.5.3. Additional Rules Concerning the Nominating Committee:*

The Nominating Committee also reports to the membership at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6).

Members of Philpott Memorial Church shall appoint two members to the Nominating Committee at the Annual General Meeting based on the recommendations provided by the current Nominating Committee (see 5.2.6).

The Nominating Committee shall select its own Chair.

The senior pastor or, in his absence, a ranking member of the pastoral staff, shall attend meetings of the Nominating Committee ex-officio.

The Nominating Committee is responsible for recommending appropriate persons for the positions of Elder (see 5.3.5) and Officers (see 5.4.3).

No person serving on the Nominating Committee can him/herself be nominated for a position recommended by the Nominating Committee

#### *5.5.4. Selection of Committees:*

Upon vacancy, a Chair is recommended by the Board for each Committee; except the Nominating Committee, which appoints its own Chair (see 5.5.3).

Membership of each committee is approved by the Board (see 5.3.4).

## **5.6. Staff**

The staff implements the Purpose, Mission, and Vision of the Board and the Congregation.

#### *5.6.1. Senior Pastor:*

The senior pastor is responsible for leading, shepherding, and teaching the congregation, and for the spiritual well-being of the community at Philpott Memorial Church. He is also responsible for the coordination of the overall ministry of the Church.

The appointment of the Senior Pastor will be approved by a two-thirds majority vote by ballot of the members present at a Special Meeting duly called for this purpose (see 5.2.4 and 5.2.7).

#### *5.6.2. Other Pastoral Staff:*

The Board is responsible for creating additional pastoral positions required to fulfill the Purpose, Mission, and Vision of Philpott Memorial Church and for the appointment of the appropriate person(s) to fill that role (see 5.3.4).

A job description shall outline the duties, responsibilities and reporting procedures for each person so appointed.

#### *5.6.3. Administrative and Custodial Staff:*

The Board is responsible for creating additional administrative and custodial positions as required (see 5.3.4).

A job description shall outline the duties, responsibilities and reporting procedures for each person so appointed.

## **6. METHOD OF FINANCE**

### **6.1. Funding and Budgeting of Ministry:**

The work of the Lord through Philpott Memorial Church shall be primarily financed by regular free-will offerings of God's people.

The budget for the allocation of these offerings and other anticipated income will be approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6).

### **6.2. Managing Assets:**

Philpott Memorial Church has a duty to manage its assets well and may invest its funds, make arrangements to borrow money or raise capital.

### **6.3. Annual Audit and End of Financial Year:**

Auditors appointed at the Annual General Meeting shall conduct an annual audit of the accounts of Philpott Memorial Church (see 5.2.6).

The year-end for Philpott Memorial Church is 30 September each year.

### **6.4. Variance to the Budget and Indebtedness:**

Any major variance from the approved budget or any indebtedness shall be recommended by the Finance Committee and the Board, to be approved by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting (see 5.2.6) or at a Special Meeting (see 5.2.7).

The Trustees must also approve and sign any documents related to indebtedness.

## **7. DISSOLUTION OF PHILPOTT MEMORIAL CHURCH**

In the event that the operations of Philpott Memorial Church were to cease, the remaining membership shall vote to dissolve the organization, pay outstanding debts, and allocate residual assets to the Associate Gospel Churches.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS**

Amendments to the constitution may be made only by a two-thirds majority vote of members present for the purpose at a duly called meeting, provided notice of such amendments, and of the duly called meeting, have been conspicuously posted for the four Sundays preceding such a meeting.

## APPENDIX A:

### **Philpott Memorial Church Expanded Statement of Faith**

1. The Holy Scriptures as originally given by God are divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy, and constitute the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. We understand that God superintended human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the original manuscripts His revelation to the world. We consider history, grammar, context, and harmony with other Scriptures as guidelines for interpretation of Scripture.
2. There is one God who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity.
3. Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, the living Word. He was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He is perfect deity and true humanity eternally united in one person. He lived a sinless life, died an innocent, voluntary and substitutionary death, as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of all people. All who trust in Christ alone are saved, enjoying the benefits of His death and perfect life: for them divine justice has been satisfied and they stand clothed with the righteousness of Christ. He was raised from the dead, ascended to the Father's right hand and continues to pray for us in heaven.
4. We are all made in God's image and have been given the capacity to enjoy His holiness. We all experience alienation from God because of inherent sin. Because of His love for all people God intervened by sending His Son Jesus. We are able to receive forgiveness from God the Father through the death of Jesus. We accept God's forgiveness by faith and do not rely on good works for salvation.
5. The Holy Spirit convicts the world and the believer of sin. He gives spiritual birth to all believers. The Holy Spirit is given by God to indwell believers, and His presence within the person is proof of belonging to God. He is the operating agent in our growth, and is active in preparing us for final salvation by sanctifying us, involving transformation into Christlikeness, energized by faith.
6. The church, the Body of Christ, consists of all true believers. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. Individuals are joined to the universal church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation. The church is built by the making of disciples. The life of a local church is expressed in teaching the Word, fellowship, communion and prayer. The practice and experience of individuals within the local church should be unity.
7. The world and time will end when Jesus Christ returns as judge. He will bring an end to evil and those without faith in Christ will be eternally separated from God. God will complete his judgment through a final separation of good from evil. Those who have trusted Christ will inherit eternal life. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

### **References for Philpott Memorial Church Expanded Statement of Faith**

1. 2Tim. 3:16,17; 2Pet. 1:20, 21
2. Deut. 6:4 ; Matt. 28:19; 2Cor. 13:14
3. John 1:14; 1John 4:2; Heb. 2:14; Is. 7:14
4. Gen. 1:26; Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12 -14; Jer. 31:3; John 3:16; 1John 2:2; Col. 1:13,14; Eph. 2:4-9; Rom. 5:8,9
5. Rom. 8:1-17; John 16:8; Psa. 51:1-10; John 3:5-7; John 14:16,17; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13; 2Th. 2:13; Rom. 6:1-11; Rom. 8:11-13; Eph. 2:10; Eph. 5:18; Phil. 1:6
6. Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42; Acts 11:15,16; Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:18
7. 2Pet. 3:9-14; John 14:2,3; Heb. 9:27; Matt. 25:41-46; Matt. 24:35; 1Th. 4:15-18; 1Th. 4:16-18; 2Th. 1:7-10; Is. 11:2-5; Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:11; Rev. 20:4-6

The expanded Statement of Faith is intended to provide additional guidance for pastors, church leaders, missionaries, church staff, full time workers etc.

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT OF PHILPOTT MEMORIAL CHURCH**

We confess Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord; and give ourselves to His service. We take His Word as the rule of our life. Having been united to Christ by faith, we, as members of His church, unite with one another in this Covenant.

We purpose to enjoy God through prayer and the study of the Scriptures, recognizing that the Holy Spirit is our guide in this fellowship.

We will practice the worship of God in our homes, and endeavor to lead our children, or others committed to our care, towards faith in Christ, and growth in Him.

We will worship with the other believers of our congregation regularly and participate in Communion. We will walk together in love and faithfully encourage and admonish one another as needed. We will practice love and care for one another following the pattern described by Jesus (Matthew 18:15-17); in this way, we intend to settle all private offenses without publicity.

We will practice Christian ministry here and around the world through our prayer, our work and our giving. As we have opportunity, we will seek by example and word to lead others to Christ.

We intend to live simply and to represent Christ in this present world, and as baptism signifies our death to sin and resurrection to righteousness, so we will walk in this new kind of life (Romans 6:1-14).

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **STATEMENT OF OUR VALUES**

#### **Our Relationship with God:**

We believe God intended for us to have a relationship with Him and are therefore committed to fostering this relationship through prayer, service, and the celebration of worship.

#### **The Teaching of God's Word:**

We believe the Bible is God's Word and is therefore the foundation of our faith and practice. As such, we are committed to teaching it in ways that are faithful to the text and relevant to the culture in which we live.

#### **The Church as the Body of Christ:**

We believe that God created the church to be a grace filled community where people are committed to loving, caring for, and encouraging one another by working out of their individual gifting.

#### **The Diversity of the Body:**

We believe it is God's desire that His Kingdom be made up of people from all nations and tribes, cultures and languages, social classes and academic backgrounds and as such are committed to being a place of refuge and strength for everyone who comes through our doors.

#### **The Spiritual Growth of the Believer:**

We believe it is our responsibility as followers of Christ to help each other to grow in our faith with integrity, spiritual depth, and wisdom so that we might be able to exercise our gifts in service, ministry, and leadership.

#### **The Sharing of God's Love**

We believe that God commanded us to share our faith in word and deed in ways that bring His transforming love to our community, our own spheres of influence, and throughout the world.

#### **The Strengthening of the Family:**

We believe God intended the family to be a place of comfort, reconciliation, and security, and are therefore committed to providing ministry that strengthens and encourages families as they struggle to be healthy, unified, and stable.

#### **Building Community through Small Groups:**

We believe God intends all people to find comfort, reconciliation, and security by being part of a family, even if this family is not of flesh and blood. We believe small groups can serve as spiritual families and are therefore committed to being a church of small groups where all who attend can experience love, acceptance, and forgiveness.