

Forward Baptist Church

Charity # 887369791 RR0001

Constitution

**Approved by congregational vote:
*October 21, 2018***

Forward Baptist Church Constitution

1. Name

The name of this church shall be Forward Baptist Church. Within this document, the term “church” shall also be used to refer to Forward Baptist Church.

2. Charitable Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by making and growing disciples of Jesus Christ among all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all Jesus’ commands. This purpose will be met by the following objects: preaching the gospel of Christ, teaching the tenets of the Christian faith found in the Bible, maintaining a house of worship, serving the community through programs that demonstrate Christ’s love, and establishing and supporting other Christian organizations and churches (that are also eligible donees) in Toronto and throughout the world.

3. Statement of Mission

This church exists that its members together may: Glorify God, Grow in Christ, and Go with the Gospel.

4. Statement of Faith

This church shall be committed to the statement of faith as stated below:

Bible: We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments were God-breathed and were entirely free from error; we believe that God, in His providence, ensured the preservation of His Word so that that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union.

God: We believe in One God, Creator of all, holy, sovereign, eternal, existing in three equal Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who have enjoyed perfect love and community for all of eternity.

God the Father: We believe in one God, the Father almighty who is over all and who sovereignly works through all and in all according to His purpose. He shares the same divine essence as His Son and the Holy Spirit so that they are each fully God. We believe that He sent the Son to redeem the church, whom He chose and adopted to make them co-heirs with the Son and true children of the Father, blessing them with every blessing, and disciplining them, as a loving Father.

God the Son: We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He shares the same divine essence as His Father and the Holy Spirit and is fully God. We believe in His eternal existence with the Father and Holy Spirit in preincarnate glory. We believe that He took on full humanity when He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death, was resurrected bodily, and ascended triumphantly. He is the head of the church and now sits at the right hand of the Father, mediating for His people until the day He returns to reign.

God the Holy Spirit: We believe in one Holy Spirit of God, who shares the same divine essence as the Father and the Son and is fully God. We believe He is a person and not merely a force. The Spirit spoke through the prophets and apostles so the Scriptures are the very words of God. He actively convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. He regenerates, indwells, and sanctifies those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. He also illuminates, comforts, unifies, and gives gifts to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Satan: We believe that Satan is a spirit being who is an evil personality, the originator of sin, the archenemy of God and humankind, whose eternal destiny in hell is certain.

Humanity: We believe that God created humanity in His own image to glorify and enjoy Him forever.

We believe that because we were created in the image of God, we were created to work, to be creative, to care for and cultivate the earth.

We also believe that because we were made in the image of God, the value, dignity and personhood of human life comes from God; He knits us together in our mothers' wombs and numbers our days according to His will.

Furthermore, we believe that because we were created in the image of our Triune God, we were created for community. Friendship and family reflect this reality, as does the unity and diversity of the local church. This is also reflected in gender differences between male and female and in the covenant relationship of marriage, where one man and one woman are joined together as husband and wife. God created sexual activity to be practiced and enjoyed by a husband and wife in marriage to celebrate and deepen that union and for procreation. Therefore, sexual activity practiced outside of marriage is forbidden by God.

Sin: Sin was introduced into the world when Adam disobeyed God. The result of this first sin is that all humanity is alienated from God; every aspect of their total being is depraved. Humanity thereby incurred the condemnation of God, resulting in physical, spiritual and eternal death.

Salvation: We believe that salvation is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that Christ voluntarily suffered a substitutionary death for sinners that completely satisfied God's righteous demands; that justification is by faith alone in the all-sufficient sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and that those whom God has saved shall be divinely preserved and finally perfected in the image of the Lord.

Future Things: We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the resurrection of the just and unjust; in the eternal blessedness in heaven of the redeemed and in the judgement and conscious, eternal punishment in hell of the wicked.

The Local Church: We believe that the church is a company of immersed believers, voluntarily associated for worship, instruction, fellowship, edification, evangelism and the observance of the ordinances. We believe it is an autonomous, independent body, under the Lordship of Christ, the Great Head of the church. Its Pastors and Board members are elected by the membership.

Ordinances: We believe there are only two ordinances for the church regularly observed in the New Testament and commanded by Christ:

1. Baptism which is the immersion in water, whereby a person publicly identifies with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.
2. The Lord's Supper which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements, the bread and the cup, which symbolize the Lord's body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until He comes.

The Church And State: We believe in the entire separation of church and state.

Religious Liberty: We believe in religious liberty; that every person has the right to practice and propagate his beliefs.

The Lord's Day: We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day and that it is the biblically normal day for corporate worship and spiritual exercise.

Civil Government: We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the kings of the earth.

5. Affiliation

Forward Baptist Church shall be an affiliated member of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada and its regional organization, FEB Central.

6. Finances

The church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members and any proceeds from donations, gifts, assets, or other financial gains to the church shall be used solely to promote its charitable purpose.

7. Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, and after payment of all debts and liabilities, all assets shall be distributed or disposed of to The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, or its regional organization, The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada - Central Region or another eligible donee.

8. Membership

All of the following conditions must be met to obtain membership:

- Profess a personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord;
- Have demonstrated their faith through believer's baptism by immersion according to the New Testament;
- Agree to the church Statement of Faith; and
- Be accepted into membership by a membership vote.

Any of the following are the conditions for removal from membership:

- A member indicates they no longer wish to be a member and wish their name removed;
- A member is no longer in regular attendance for an extended period without valid reason, known to the Board of Elders;
- The death of a member;
- Removal by church discipline; or
- Transfer of membership

9. Church Discipline

Members found to be in violation of the Statement of Faith or living a life inconsistent with the moral teachings of the Bible will be removed from membership by a vote of the members after a period of pursuing reconciliation.

10. Church Officers and Personnel

10.1. Board of Elders and Deacons

Under Christ, the highest functioning authority of the church shall be the Elders Board. Elders (also called pastors or overseers in Scripture), are those given the responsibility and authority of oversight, shepherding and leading in the church.

The deacons shall be the officers of the church, and shall include, but not be limited to, the chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer. The deacons are collectively referred to as the Deacons Board.

All elders and deacons shall be members of Forward Baptist Church, shall meet and maintain the qualifications for those offices prescribed in Scripture, and shall fulfil their duties according to the doctrinal and ethical standards of the Scriptures.

For charitable status purposes, the deacons are also the directors of the church, and are elected to fulfil the administrative, financial, and contract needs of the church so that the elders may focus on the duties outlined above.

10.2. Trustees

All property of Forward Baptist Church is held in trust by trustees appointed by the Deacons Board.

10.3. Procedures for Appointing and Replacing Elders and Deacons

10.3.1 Elders

Forward Baptist Church will appoint and replace its elders as follows: potential candidates are nominated by the Elders Board and the membership votes on the candidates.

10.3.2 Deacons

Forward Baptist Church will appoint and replace its deacons as follows: potential candidates are nominated by the membership. These nominees are then screened by a nomination committee and the membership votes on the candidates.

11. Meetings and Voting

11.1. Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

11.2. Other Meetings

There shall be an annual business meeting of the church when full reports from all departments of the church shall be given and accepted by the church. Other meetings may be called from time to time by the elders of the church as necessary. Business

meetings shall be announced two weeks in advance, including information as to the nature of the business to be dealt with in the meeting. At any duly called meeting of the members those present shall constitute quorum.

11.3. **Quorum**

The following decisions of the church shall require the approval of the membership and will require not less than 33% of eligible members to be present at the meeting at which these items are being considered to constitute a quorum for the meeting and a vote of at least 75% in favour:

- Purchasing, selling, or placing a lien on real property;
- Signing a note to incur debt;
- Dissolving the church; or
- Amending the Constitution.

12. **Policies**

The elders of the church, may from time to time, establish specific policies related to the spiritual and ministry needs of the church. These policies will be prepared in writing, be approved by a majority at a meeting of the Elders Board and will take effect immediately or at such time as specified by the elders. Copies of the written policies will be kept on file in the church office and will be made available to any church member upon request.

The deacons may, from time to time, establish specific policies related to the operation of the church, employees, and/or property. These policies will be prepared in writing, be approved by majority at a meeting of the Deacons Board and will take effect immediately or at such time as specified by the officers. Copies of the written policy will be kept on file in the church office and will be made available to any church member upon request.

13. **Limitation of Liability**

The church shall indemnify and save harmless the staff, members, trustees, deacons and elders of the church in regard to all actions, costs, or judgements against the church, no matter what the cause, except where such actions or judgements are a direct result of the gross negligence or illegal action of a deacon or elder.

In this regard, the deacons will establish and maintain insurance covering all reasonable risks associated with the operation of the church including personal liability and shall ensure that this insurance fully covers the staff, elders, trustees, deacons, all members of the church and any person rightfully on the property of the church.