

ST MARKS

Congregational Church



CONSTITUTION

21 Articles of Faith

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The meaning of “Congregationalism”.

Congregationalism means that the church is autonomous in terms of governance.

The origin of congregationalism, is normally traced back to England during the 1558 - 1603 era. Congregationalists repudiated the concept of a state church and favoured the “gathered church” principle. There are others who believe that autonomous churches consisted of Christians who refused to be part of the Roman church that was established under Constantine in 314AD. The ordination of its ministers is not subject to bishops, magistrates or elders, but is determined by the congregation in accordance with the church constitution. The legacy of independency is embraced by Congregationalist. The congregational system of church government has often been wrongly interpreted as democratic. Ideally the church is seen as being under the rule of Christ and the church seeks to discern His will through the collective vote or consensus of its members. Membership of the church is on profession of personal faith in Christ and new members are normally welcomed by being given the right hand of fellowship at a communion service. The congregation chooses its minister and mandates him to lead the church as a shepherd leads his flock and as a captain leads his team.

For more information consult R.W. Dale – Manual of Congregational Principles, London 1884.

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CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be:
ST MARKS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.
- 1.2 The shortened name of the organisation shall be St Marks.
- 1.3 The church shall be Congregational in its form of government.
- 1.4 The organisation shall:
 - 1.4.1 Exist as an autonomous Faith Based Organisation (FBO).
 - 1.4.2 Continue to exist when the membership or office bearers change.
 - 1.4.3 Be entitled to own property and other assets.
 - 1.4.4 The church shall promote extended or satellite ministries under its auspices, referred to as St Marks RSA.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The organisations main objectives are:
 - 2.1.1 To proclaim the Gospel of Grace as revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ to the Apostle Paul in the New Testament and shall promote fellowship among all those who believe in the doctrinal statement of the church as contained in the Articles of Faith.
 - 2.2.2 The church shall endeavour to fulfil its mandate as a Christian body to promote Truth as taught in the Scriptures and shall acknowledge the Bible as authoritative for doctrine, lifestyle, conduct and service.
 - 2.2.3 The vision of the church shall be a truly community serving church.
 - 2.2.4 The Pastorate shall promote the vision and objectives of the church.
- 2.2 The church acknowledges unity of all believers who hold to a confession of Faith in Christ Jesus as Lord.

3. INCOME AND PROPERTY

- 3.1 The organisation shall keep an inventory of its assets including those of all satellite and auxiliary ministries and departments.
- 3.2 The organisation may not give finances and property to its members or office bearers. The only time that such payment may be made is for services and work rendered for the organisation and for the furtherance of the Gospel and the promotion of the Christian ministry.
- 3.3 A member or office bearer may receive re-imburement from the organisation for the expenses that he/she may have incurred on behalf of the organisation subject to approval by the Senior Minister or other authorised person prior to such expenditure.
- 3.4 Members do not have ownership of items that belong to the organisation.
- 3.5 The Pastorate and the Church Council shall be the Trustees of Church property. The Pastorate and the Church Council may acquire by way of purchase, donation, exchange, lease or any other manner, any property movable or immovable, and may sell, donate, exchange lease, or any other manner, any property movable and immovable, mortgage or otherwise and alienate any of its properties. They may also at any time permit the church premises to be repaired, altered or enlarged, taken down, wholly or partially rebuilt or sanction the construction of any other buildings so as to render the premises more suitable for the carrying out the work of the church. The Pastorate and Church Council shall hold the mandate to represent the church on matters pertaining to property, registration and the signing of all documents in terms of the above and shall be the trustees of the property.
- 3.6 All satellite ministries properly constituted under the auspices of St Marks RSA shall meet the requirements as set out by the Pastorate and shall Function in accordance to their respective local constitution which shall be ratified by the Pastorate and the Council.
- 3.7 All satellite ministries shall contribute one tenth or a tithe of all income received to St Marks RSA. The Pastorate and Council shall promote and initiate extended ministries to fulfil the calling of the church.
- 3.8 All satellite ministries shall submit an annual report to the Pastorate and the Church Council in terms of activity, income and expenditure. An annual narrative report, including an audit report on all finances, shall be submitted to the Pastorate and the Church Council on an annual basis.
- 3.9 A banking account shall be kept at a registered bank in which all monies received shall be deposited without delay. At the discretion and approval of the Pastorate and/or Church Council, savings, investments maybe opened with a registered bank, building society or any other reputable financial institution. All withdrawals from banking, building society or approved financial institution accounts shall be signed by at least two (2)

persons who have been granted the mandate as power of attorney. In terms of electronic transfer of funds the Pastorate and/or Church Council may appoint a financial monitor to determine the correct protocol and procedure in terms of transfers for the protection and integrity of the administrator.

4. **MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1. Membership of *St Marks* shall consist of all who have been officially received into church membership and whose names appear on the official church register. Any person who holds to a confession of Faith in Christ and who is committed to the task of empowering the church to fulfil its ministry and who embraces the Articles of Faith shall be received into membership at a public service after a formal meeting with the Pastorate. Thereafter, the person shall be considered a registered member of the church. *See article 13 – All believers who hold to a confession of Faith in Christ are members of the Body of Christ.*
- 4.2. A church member shall carry out responsibilities in terms of Christian character, conduct and service in the church itself and also in the community and society at large. Sincerity of membership shall be expressed in this manner and every effort shall be made to maintain the unity and harmony of the church. Members have a forum to express concerns, opinions, suggestions, proposals and other issues in writing to the Pastorate for their response and action, provided the letter carries the name and contact details of the writer.
- 4.3. It is the first obligation upon membership to seek to be present at the times of public worship.
- 4.4. Each member shall endeavour to attend the Annual General Meeting and exercise his/her vote in terms of the affairs of the church.
- 4.5. Membership implies zeal for the cause of Christ and is expressed in the privilege of partaking in Holy Communion, Christian Service, the organised work of the church and in faithful and regular financial contribution to the church for its service and maintenance in honour of the Lord and His Divine work.
- 4.6. Any member may be disciplined, suspended or membership terminated if deemed to have brought the organisation into disrepute. The Pastorate may appoint a disciplinary committee (DC) to investigate and to hold a hearing on the complaints of no less than two (2) witnesses. The DC may recommend a course of action to the Pastorate and/or Council for their consideration.
- 4.7. Termination or transfer of membership shall be considered by request in writing.
- 4.8. Any application for membership may be declined by the Pastorate.
- 4.9. Any member disciplined, corrected or whose membership is terminated

- may appeal in writing to the Pastorate.
- 4.10 On the recommendation of the Pastorate the Church Council shall consider the appeal and based on a two thirds majority vote of the Church Council, the recommendation shall be adopted. No further interaction or correspondence regarding the matter shall be entertained. The decision shall be final.
- 4.11 Satellite ministries and their members shall comply with the constitution and shall submit their local constitution to the Pastorate and Council for endorsement.
- 4.11.1 The aim is to hold an annual conference for satellite ministries under St Marks RSA.
- 4.11.2 All satellite ministries shall function according to their approved constitutions and the constitution of the organisation.
- 4.12 Persons over the age of sixteen (16) who hold to a positive confession of faith in Christ and who embrace the Articles of Faith and the general ethos of the organisation shall be eligible for membership.
- 4.13 At all times mutual Christian respect and support between ministers and members shall be maintained. In the event of such a relationship being violated the issue or attitude shall be addressed in order to reconcile differences and restore a healthy relationship within the organisation.
- 4.14 The Pastorate shall take appropriate scriptural action to resolve any dispute that may arise. *according to Titus 3:1-2, Titus 3:9-11 and Titus 2:15.* Faith, trust, loyalty, faithfulness, support, morality, care and witness are virtues displayed by members of good standing.

5. **MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The Church Management (MC) shall consist of the Pastorate, Church Administrator, and a Member of the Church Council.
- 5.2 Office bearers may be appointed by the Pastorate and/or Church Management to carry out the work of the organisation and to form sub-committees.
- 5.3 The Management Committee will meet monthly.

6. **MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES OF THE COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 The Church Management Committee shall keep minutes of all meetings.
- 6.2 The Church Management Committee shall abide by the rules of the constitution at all times.
- 6.3 The Church Management is responsible for the administration of the Church and shall ensure that all positions and portfolios are adequately filled.

- 6.4 The Church Management shall be responsible for training and equipping of staff members for their task, including registration, etc.
- 6.5 Full time staff and part time personnel shall be directly responsible to the Church Management.
- 6.6 The Church Management shall be responsible for submitting a financial audit and narrative reports to the Annual General Meeting.

7. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

- 7.1 The AGM shall be held at least once a year at the end of the financial year, normally during the first term of the year. Any matter to be considered for the agenda must be forwarded, in writing, to the Pastorate at least twenty one (21) days prior to the AGM.
- 7.2 The organisation shall deal with the following business at its AGM:
 - Agree to the items on the agenda.
 - Attendance register shall be completed with apologies noted.
 - Read and confirm the previous AGM minutes.
 - Receive the MC's report.
 - Consider changes to the constitution (all amendments and addendums shall be submitted at least twenty one (21) days before the AGM in writing to the MC).
 - Only matters on the agenda will be considered and no other business or issue shall be discussed.
 - The meeting shall be closed in prayer with the singing of the Doxology.
- 7.3 Voting at all church meetings shall be by the show of hands, except if stated otherwise in the constitution and if deemed necessary a ballot vote may be implemented.

8. **FINANCE**

- 8.1 An administrator shall be appointed either as a fulltime employee or a part time staff member. This appointment shall be determined by the Pastorate and/or the Church Council.
- 8.2 The administrator's task, along with the Management Committee (MC) is to attend to the day-to-day running of the organisation. The administrator shall keep proper records of all finances and along with the MC shall appoint powers of attorney.
- 8.3 If the organisation secures funds that may be invested the funds may only be invested with a registered financial institution. These institutions are listed in Section 1 of the Financial Institutions (Invest of funds) Act of 1984 or the organisation may obtain securities that are listed on a licensed

stock exchange as set out in the Stock Exchange Control Act of 1985. The organisation is free to consult with different banks to seek the best advice as to its investments.

- 8.4 The administrator and MC shall hold all titles on church property, land, equipment, furniture, etc.
- 8.5 The administrator and the MC shall keep accurate confidential records of all individual gifts and offerings received and disburse funds at the discretion of the MC.
- 8.6 The MC shall present an independent financial audited report and a spread sheet or pie chart reflecting the income and expenditure at the AGM.

9. A QUORUM

- 9.1 A quorum of at least twenty one (21) registered members is required to constitute a church business meeting, i.e. AGM, whereby resolutions are passed after fourteen (14) days notice is given prior to the meeting.
- 9.2 A two thirds majority vote of registered members present is necessary for the adoption of a resolution.
- 9.3 A resolution shall be forwarded in writing to the Pastorate at least twenty one (21) days before the AGM or Member's Meeting.

10. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 10.1 The constitution may be changed by resolution. The resolution shall be agreed upon and passed by no less than a two thirds majority vote of those present who are registered members at the AGM or Special Meeting.
- 10.2 Resolutions, including amendments and addendums, shall be forwarded in writing to the Pastorate and/or Church Council. The Pastorate and/or the Church Council shall determine the merit of such a resolution.
- 10.3 The proposed change to the constitution requires a two thirds majority vote of the Council prior to the fourteen (14) day notification period as per clause 9.1.

11. PASTORATE and SENIOR MINISTER

- 11.1 The Minister shall be elected by the majority vote of no less than two thirds of the registered members present at a Special Church Meeting or AGM. voting shall be by ballot.
- 11.2 The Senior Minister or his appointee shall be the Chairman of the Management Committee and the Church Council.
- 11.3 The Senior Minister is responsible for the spiritual development and guidance of staff and members and shall submit an annual report to the

members at the AGM.

- 11.4 The Pastorate is ex officio of all committees and subsidiary or satellite ministries.
- 11.5 The Senior Minister shall be the executive leader in terms of spiritual and secular responsibilities of the organisation.
- 11.6 The position of the Senior Minister is vital and pivotal in terms of the success and progress of the organisation. His conduct, life, belief and qualifications must be of the highest degree. The primary decision making office in the church is that of the Senior Minister who leads the church as its visionary with the freedom to consult with the Pastorate, the Council and Members as he deems necessary. The congregation mandates the Senior Minister to lead the church.
- 11.7 In the unlikely event of a Minister failing in the exactions of his calling and duty he may be removed from office subject to the recommendation of the Church Council (two thirds majority of the church council by ballot) who will seek a two thirds majority endorsement of the church registered members at a properly constituted meeting as per clause 9. However, the Church Council shall endeavour to resolve any issue of this nature in an amicable manner with due consideration to the reputation and unity of the organisation.
- 11.8 The Pastorate shall consist of the Senior and Associate Ministers.
- 11.9 A Minister may be granted sabbatical leave after fifteen (15) years service. The sabbatical leave period shall be determined by the Council and voted on by members at an AGM.
- 11.10 The church staff shall function under the leadership of the Pastorate and shall serve the organisation through their specialised skills and/or expertise and shall subscribe to an exemplary Christian lifestyle.
- 11.11 The Pastorate may appoint temporary committees and service opportunities shall be created by the Pastorate whenever the need arises with clearly defined responsibilities and job descriptions.
- 11.12 Committee members of subsidiary auxiliaries shall be members of good standing in the organisation.
- 11.13 In the event of the resignation, retirement, termination or death of the Senior Minister the Church Council shall present nominees for the position from the Pastorate. The membership shall be required to vote by ballot at a special meeting for the purpose of electing a Senior Minister. A two thirds majority is required for the election to carry. In the event of there being more than one candidate, voting shall be as follows: A clear majority of two thirds of the registered members present is recognised as an election for the office of the Senior Minister. If a two thirds majority is not attained in the first round of voting, a second round of voting shall follow until a clear two thirds majority vote is achieved. Prayer for Divine guidance and respect for the outcome is to be consistent

with Christian maturity and faith acknowledging that the membership's vote is an expression of God's divine leading. The nominee with the lowest percentage of votes in each round shall not proceed as a nominee for the following rounds (this is in the event of there being more than two candidates). Lobbying for votes and campaigning for candidates shall not be permitted. The Church Council shall determine suitable nominees from the Pastorate.

11.14 The Pastorate and the Council shall have the authority and the privilege to veto any action of the organisation that it deems detrimental to the purpose and objectives of the organisation, however the Pastorate and the Church Council shall seek a two thirds majority consensus at a joint sitting of the Pastorate and Council in order for the veto to be effective..

12. ASSOCIATE MINISTER

12.1 The Associate Minister shall be elected by the majority vote of no less than two thirds of the registered members present at a Special Church Meeting or AGM. Voting shall be by ballot.

12.2 The Associate Minister shall render support and assistance to the Senior Minister in the exactions of his duties.

12.3 The Associate Ministers shall be responsible to the Senior Minister in matters pertaining to doctrine, lifestyle, conduct, service, etc.

12.4 An ordained minister shall serve as an assistant minister for a period of five (5) years after which he shall be eligible to be appointed as an associate minister to serve on the Pastorate.

12.5 An ordained minister who has served as an associate minister for fifteen (15) years shall be eligible to be appointed as a senior associate minister.

12.6 In the unlikely event of the minister failing in the exactions of his calling and duty he may be removed from office subject to the recommendation of the Church Council (two thirds majority of the church council by ballot) who will seek a two thirds majority endorsement of the church registered members at a properly constituted meeting as per clause 9. However, the Church Council shall endeavour to resolve any issue of this nature in an amicable manner with due consideration in the interest of the organisation.

13. ORDINATION

13.1 The office of a minister is a Holy calling and shall be respected by all church members. The recognition of such a calling is of God and expressed by the members endorsement at an AGM subject to the candidate meeting the requirements for the full time ministry.

13.2 It is imperative that a candidate for ordination be well trained and academically equipped for the task to which he is called. The criterion

should be as follows:

- 13.2.1 The minimum qualification is a Diploma in Theology or equivalent degree.
- 13.2.2 The candidate shall meet the Pastorate of the organisation in order for the Pastorate to determine the sincerity, suitability and calling to the full time Christian ministry of the candidate.
- 13.2.3 On the recommendation of the Pastorate to the Ordination Committee (OC may consist of an Associate Minister, a lay person and a member of the Church Council) the candidate shall meet the OC who may consider the credentials of the candidate and endorse the recommendations after which the candidate will be requested to motivate his calling at the AGM subject to a seventy five percent (75%) pass rate on a test of the Church Articles of Faith and a public declaration of endorsement by the candidate of the doctrine and ethos of the church.
- 13.2.4 In the event of a two thirds majority endorsement of the candidate's calling a suitable date will be set for the ordination to the Sacred ministry.
- 13.3 A prospective ordained minister shall agree to sign a contract with the church organisation.
- 13.4 A satellite ministry that meets the requirements of the Pastorate to call a full-time minister to service may not negotiate such a calling with a prospective candidate but shall notify the Pastorate of its intention and desired nominee for a vacant position to lead the satellite ministry. The Pastorate shall be responsible to ensure that such a candidate is suitable and equipped for the task, before his or her nomination is forwarded to the satellite ministry for voting purposes. A two thirds majority of members present, at a special meeting, for this purpose, is required for the nomination to carry. The elected full-time minister shall be required to sign a contract agreement with the organisation and the Pastorate.
- 13.5 The elected minister shall recognise the sanctity of the pulpit as a sacred desk from which God's Truth is ministered.
- 13.6 The elected minister shall maintain dignity in all relationships with the church and the community.
- 13.7 The elected minister shall guard all confidential information.
- 13.8 The elected minister shall minister to the entire church and shall not interfere or undermine the affairs of another satellite ministry or the Mother Church in any way whatsoever.
- 13.9 The elected minister shall not consider a call from any other church or satellite ministry whose current minister has not yet resigned.
- 13.10 The elected minister will not entertain invitations or enquiries to assume a

position with a satellite ministry of the organisation unless this meets with the approval of the Pastorate.

13.11 In the event of a minister leaving a satellite ministry he shall encourage the total support of the newly elected minister.

13.12 A minister shall not return to a former satellite ministry or church to visit members or perform services or any other function normally carried out by the local minister of the church without first consulting with the current minister of the church or satellite ministry.

13.13 While we acknowledge the final and supreme authority of the Scriptures and headship of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Body, members, ministers and church officials shall recognise the spiritual leadership and authority vested in the church leadership.

14. **STUDENT MINISTER**

14.1 Not all theological students are eligible for ordination but are required to meet the criteria as stated in clause 13. Ideally students of Theology shall participate in the practical programme of the ministry to be determined by the Pastorate.

15 **CHURCH COUNCIL**

15.1 The Church Council shall consist of the Pastorate, a representative from the Women's Auxiliary, a representative from the Senior Youth Department, a representative from the School, a representative from the Sunday School and a representative from the Diaconate, the Senior Administrator and three additional church members who are in good standing.

15.2 Members of the Church Council shall be entitled to exercise their vote at Council level.

15.3 The Church Council shall serve to advise and assist the Pastorate in their duties and responsibilities.

15.4 The Church Council shall promote and support the programmes and goals of the church.

15.5 The Church Council shall recognise the Pastorate and Staff's entitlement to a reasonable and adequate stipend.

15.6 The Church Council shall understand the need for staff vacation, rest and recreation.

15.7 A clearly stated contractual agreement for fulltime staff members shall be finalised by the Church Council.

15.8 The Church Council shall serve for one term (2 years) and may be eligible for re-election if nominated and approved by the Pastorate.

15.9 Nominees for the office of Church Council from the membership (3 members) shall be forwarded to the Pastorate for their approval before a

ballot vote is taken at an AGM with a two thirds majority vote required for the nomination to carry. In principle if more than three (3) nominations are received the procedure will be the same as the voting process of a senior minister as in clause 11.13.

16. **DIACONATE**

- 16.1 Deacons will be appointed by the Pastorate from among members of good standing in the church to assist in the public ministry of the church. They shall be men or women who hold to a positive confession of faith in Christ Jesus and shall be fully committed to the vision and leadership of the church.
- 16.2 Deacons shall be responsible for the welcoming of members and visitors to the public service.
- 16.3 Deacons shall be required to attend regular Diaconate meetings.
- 16.4 Deacons shall assist with the offertory and collection of funds at the public services.
- 16.5 Deacons may be appointed to assist with the preparation of communion.
- 16.6 Deacons may be appointed to carry out the function of a church warden responsible for unlocking and locking the church premises before and after services.
- 16.7 Deacons lifestyles, conduct and faith shall be consistent with the organisations values and ethos.
- 16.8 The Diaconate functions to serve the interest of the Lord and the church.
- 16.9 The Diaconate may elect a representative to serve on the Church Council for a one (two year) term. Voting shall be by ballot and a two thirds majority is required for the nomination to carry.

17. **CHURCH AUXILIARIES**

- 17.1 Auxiliaries and committees may be formed by the Pastorate for the furtherance of the work of God and shall be responsible to the Pastorate and submit a narrative report on activities on an annual basis. Auxiliaries such as Youth, Sunday School, Women's Auxiliary, Welfare, Social, Support Groups or Cultural Groups will serve the interest of the church and the community.
- 17.2 St Marks RSA Trust shall function under the management of the Pastorate and Church Council and shall seek opportunities to spread the Grace message far and wide. The Pastorate and Council shall determine the modus operandi.

18. **BY-LAWS**

- 18.1 Satellite ministries functioning under St Marks RSA. (Port Elizabeth), are required to submit their constitutions and By-Laws for approval by the Pastorate before implementation.
- 18.2 Any appointee, leader, committee, pastoral assistant or full time minister shall be required to adhere to the by-laws and constitution of the organisation and shall execute his/her duties in a manner consistent with the values and ethos of the organisation.
- 18.3 Twenty one (21) or more members may constitute a satellite ministry, under the auspices of the organisation, if approved by the Pastorate. In order not to duplicate ministries, satellite ministries shall offer either a unique service to the community or shall endeavour to establish a satellite ministry in a centre or city where no representation of the organisation is currently functioning.
- 18.4 The satellite ministry shall be entitled to open a banking account according to the laws and rules as set out in their by-laws and constitution.
- 18.5 The satellite ministry shall appoint a secretary and treasurer at a members meeting. The appointment and tenure shall be for two (2) years only after which a new secretary or treasurer shall be appointed. The appointments shall be approved by the Pastorate on the recommendation of the satellite ministry.
- 18.6 The by-laws of the satellite ministry must clearly state that all finances are accounted for and annual audit appointed by the Pastorate may be called for.
- 18.7 The Pastorate shall present a standard satellite constitution and by-laws for the respective ministries. No amendments or addendums shall be considered without the approval of the Pastorate.

19. **DISSOLUTION**

- 19.1 In the unlikely event of the dissolution of the organisation none of its assets or holdings shall be divided amongst its members but may be distributed to a religious corporation that is in agreement with the letter and spirit of the doctrine and faith of the organisation. An alternative is to establish a Trust that will function for the purpose of the furtherance of the Pauline message. The Pastorate and/or Church Council shall clearly state and justify the reasons for such a recommendation. The organisation shall by resolution give notice to the members (14 days notice) of such a recommendation and in order for the resolution to carry a two thirds majority ballot vote of members present is required. The trust shall be managed by a Senior Associate Minister and three appointed trustees. The trust shall function according to the policy and law in terms of trusts laid out by the state.
- 19.2 The Pastorate and/or Church Council requires a two thirds majority vote

and mandate to determine the organisation that should be the beneficiary of such funds or assets.. No profit from the assets, holding or other transactions or activities may accrue to the benefit of any person or persons. When the organisation is dissolved it has to first settle all outstanding debts. A dignified closing ceremony of the organisations affairs shall be conducted by a church official.

20. **ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

20.1 This constitution was approved and accepted by members of the St Marks Congregational Church at the Annual General Meeting held on

Day:..... Month:..... Year:.....

.....
SENIOR MINISTER

.....
PRESIDING CHAIRMAN

***St Marks was founded in June 1985 by Rev Dr Bruce Woolard
with twelve founding members.
Sandy Woolard, Lauren Wynne Vice, Jane Oelofse, Late Corrie and Alida
Rademeyer, Lovell and Ruth Mey, Late George and Margaret Flack, Late Les and Ivy
Saayman and Late Marion George.***

History of St Marks

St Marks was founded in June 1985 by Rev Bruce Woolard in Port Elizabeth, RSA, as an autonomous congregational church. The founding statement included the following:

The church shall exist to reach souls for Christ and to teach the uncompromising Truth of God's Word, the Bible.

The founding members were: Sandy Woolard, Lauren Wynne Vice, Jane Oelofse, Corrie and Alida Rademeyer, Lovell and Ruth Mey, George and Margaret Flack, Les and Ivy Saayman and Marion George.

The name St Marks is derived from the Gospel of Mark which emphasises the role of Christ as a servant. We, the church, have been called to serve God and His people.

MISSION STATEMENT

*Reaching the whole person
with the whole Gospel
Through the whole Church.*

*By Grace you are Saved..
Eph.2:8*

Articles of Faith

A Doctrinal Statement is of necessity an abbreviated and condensed Statement of Faith of what we believe.

INTRODUCTION:

We affirm that the seven-fold unity expressed in Ephesians 4:1-7 is the Holy Spirit's doctrinal Statement for the Church that is the Body of Christ. We recognise other doctrinal unity as given for various programmes found in Scripture but we affirm that Eph. 4 stands alone as the doctrinal unity for the Church today of all those regenerated by the Holy Spirit and saved by God's Grace Eph.2:8-9..

ARTICLE 1 SCRIPTURES

In keeping with orthodox belief, we affirm that the entire Bible written in the original languages is inerrant, verbally inspired by God and is of plenary authority. (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:21) We believe in the 66 books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is to be literally interpreted and understood in their progressive form of revelation (Psalm 119:89).

ARTICLE 2 THE GODHEAD

We believe that there is but one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4); an infinite intelligent Spirit (John 4:24); perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, existing and subsistent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

- A. God the Father is the first person of the Trinity (1 John 5:7). He is the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1-31). He is sovereign (Rom. 11:33). His fatherhood denotes a Spiritual relationship within the Trinity and secondly within mankind creatively, and thirdly in spiritual relationship to all believers.
- B. The Son, Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity and possesses all divine excellencies. He is co-equal, co-creator and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:27-30). We teach that in His incarnation He surrendered the prerogatives of deity but nothing of divine essence, either in degree or kind. His divine nature and human nature is an indissoluble union, He became God the man (Phil. 2:5-8). We teach that He was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26). We believe that through His merits and work of salvation, redemption is made possible to all who believe and receive His grace through faith. His death was voluntary, vicarious, propitiatory redemptive and substitutionary (Rom. 3:25; 5:8). We believe His resurrection from the dead was literal and physical. He ascended to the right hand of the Father where He ministers as our Advocate. We teach that His resurrection from the dead confirmed His deity and guarantees our future resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor.15:22-23). He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). He is the Head of the Body, the Church (Eph. 1:22); He is the coming universal King who will reign on the Throne of David (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:31,32). We teach the return of Christ to receive the Church as His Body unto Himself (1 Thess.4:13-18) and that He will come again to judge all mankind.

- C. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, possessing all the divine excellencies and is co-equal with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4). We believe the work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the divine will with relation to the world. The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of Sin and the need of salvation Jesus Christ, of righteousness and judgement and glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into Christ-likeness (2 Cor. 3:8; Eph. 2:22).

The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptising all believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). He indwells, empowers and has sealed all who believe until the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 1:6; Eph. 1:13). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation and it is the duty of all believers to be filled (controlled by the Holy Spirit moment by moment, Eph. 5:18.) We believe the Holy Spirit has bestowed gifts to the Church for the perfecting of the saints. Sign gifts and spiritual gifts must be distinguished. It is evident in Scripture that the sign gifts were given to manifest and reveal Christ as the Messiah both in His earthly ministry and through the delegated authority of the Apostles (Matt. 10:5-11; Mark 16; 1 Cor.12 & 14; 1 Cor.1:22; Acts 28:26-28; 1 Tim. 5:23). It is evident that the sign gifts continued to authenticate Apostleship until the complete revelation was given which is contained in the writings of the New Testament (2 Cor.12:12; 1 Cor.13:8-13). These texts indicate a functional change in the demonstration and purpose of the gifts. Therefore today only spiritual gifts are in operation and not sign gifts.

ARTICLE 3 MANKIND

We teach that mankind was directly created by God in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26; 2:15-25). We teach that the purpose of man's creation was with the divine intention that he should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship and live his life in the will of God. By this he shall accomplish God's purpose in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). Adam's sin of disobedience to the will and word of God resulted in man losing his innocence. Mankind incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became inherently corrupt and incapable of doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Man had no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself. Man is hopelessly lost, apart from the salvation which is in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16,17; John 3:36; Romans 6:23; 1 Cor.2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8). We teach that all mankind, in the loins of Adam are partakers of his sin that has been transmitted to all humanity, Jesus Christ being the exception. All mankind is sinful by nature and by choice (Jer.17:9; Rom. 3:9-18; Rom. 5:12).

ARTICLE 4 SALVATION:

We believe that salvation is by God's grace through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood and not on the basis of human works (Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10, Titus 3:5). We believe in the all-inclusive complete work of salvation performed on the cross by Jesus Christ our Lord in His atoning sacrifice for the sins of all mankind (1 Cor.1:17-18).

ARTICLE 5 REGENERATION:

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the word of God so as to secure voluntary obedience to the gospel. This work of regeneration is manifest by God's grace through faith (Tit. 2:11,12; Eph. 2:10; 1 Cor.6:19-20). This results in the quickening of the human spirit brought into union with the Holy Spirit as a seal of salvation (Eph.1:13)

ARTICLE 6 ELECTION:

We believe that election is the act of God and the response to the gospel. It is consistent with the responsibility of man because it comprehends all the means in connection with the end achieved. We teach that election should not be mistaken as merely based on abstract sovereignty independent of man's responsibility but through faith man and woman may exercise their responsibility to accepting God's grace which is a free gift, unmerited. God's sovereignty is in harmony with His other attributes. This sovereignty must never exalt the will of God as separate and apart from His character. Our salvation and election are in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:4-11).

ARTICLE 7 JUSTIFICATION:

We teach that justification before God is an instant and complete act of God by which He declares righteous those who believe in Christ for personal salvation (Rom. 5:1, 8:33).

ARTICLE 8 SANCTIFICATION:

We teach that every believer is sanctified, that is set apart unto God by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer is declared holy and is identified with the Body of Christ. This act of sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his state (1 Cor.1:2.30; 6:11; 2 Thess.2:13). We believe that experiential sanctification is the means by which the state of the believer is progressively brought closer to the standing that the believer enjoys in Christ. As the believer obeys the Word of God and is empowered by the Holy Spirit, he will live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God (Rom. 6:1-22; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess.5:23; Titus 2:12). We do not embrace the doctrine of subsequence. The practical outworking of our standing in Christ ought to be the result of the finished work performed on Calvary. Now that we are in Christ we are blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

ARTICLE 9 SECURITY:

The eternal security of a believer does not imply that one has a licence to live recklessly, irresponsibly and immorally. We teach that all redeemed - once saved, are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever (Rom. 5:9-10; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Cor.1:4-8; Eph 4:30). It is therefore impossible for a believer to lose his/her salvation. We have reason to doubt a person's salvation who uses Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Rom. 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13, 25,26; Titus 2:11-15).

ARTICLE 10 SEPARATION:

In the light of our present permissive and corrupt generation, believers must abstain from all practises of compromise with the world. All saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour and should separate themselves from religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices. A believer ought to walk circumspectly (Eph. 5:5-16; Rom 12:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 2:12-14). A believer is an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor.5:17-20).

ARTICLE 11 GOSPEL:

The gospel of grace as revealed in the N.T. is distinct from the works of the individual and is based solely on the merits and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In all other programmes faith was expressed in works. Under the present programme faith is the element by which we receive the gift of salvation, a

work that God has already performed by the cross. The uniqueness of this gospel is particularly taught in the Pauline writings. It is important to note that in all programmes in the Old and New Testament, salvation was by grace through faith, but was expressed through the works that were a shadow of the work accomplished by Christ alone. When Paul states that there is only one gospel (Gal. 1:6-8) it is in reference to the gospel of grace distinct from the other messages for the past programmes in Scripture (Gal. 1:6-8). The gospel of the good news of the kingdom was primarily intended for Israel (Matt. 10:5-8). Through the change of programmes and the call of Paul the Apostle to reveal Christ to the Gentiles, the emphasis of salvation is not the works of the law but the gift of grace. This is the gospel we preach (Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 16:25).

ARTICLE 12 MYSTERY:

We believe that the mystery of the Body of Christ is revealed through the writings of Paul the Apostle. It was hid from all generations and ages (Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9) but was revealed to the Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 16:25). This revelation came from the Lord Jesus Christ directly from heaven (Gal. 1:11-12). Paul is the dispenser of this revelation to the Church (Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:2; Gal. 1:11). Much of what Paul taught, was difficult for the apostles to receive because their programme was primarily Jewish in content (2 Peter 3:15-16). The preaching of the Kingdom embraced the Gentile world. (Matt. 28:19). The apostles understood that their primary thrust of ministry was to reach the nation of Israel, thereafter, to carry the message of the Messiah to the uttermost parts of the world. We discover through careful study of the N.T. and the book of Acts that Peter was surprised when God called him to minister to one Gentile - this is evidence that Peter needed to see that a change in programme was taking place (Acts 10). Peter was able to say in Acts 15 that God had revealed a new programme for the Gentiles. Paul the Apostle was raised up to carry out this new programme (Acts 9:15). Controversy and disputes became the order of the day as the apostles grappled with the revelation revealed distinctively to the Apostle Paul. This is borne out in Galatians 2:2-16.

ARTICLE 13 CHURCH:

We believe that all who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are baptised by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body (1 Cor.12:12-13). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Body (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18). The word "church" is taken from the Greek word ekklesia. which means, "those called out". Stephen refers to Israel as those called out of Egypt (Acts 7:38). The disciples and the followers of Christ were called out as the remnant from Israel and therefore they were the Messianic Church. The body of Christ does not consist of one national group but Jew and Gentile have now become one church, those called out of the pagan world and unbelieving Israel (Eph. 1:22,23; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27,28; Eph. 2:11-14). The church is an organism of "called out" people placed into the living body of Christ. The autonomy of the local church is also a principle taught in Scripture (Titus 1:5). The Church is the recipient of the spiritual promises made to Abraham through his Seed, Jesus Christ. The physical promises meant for believing Israel will be fulfilled in the future following the Rapture of the Body of Christ and Israel as a distinct nation will be honoured by God above all other nations. Revelation 21 testifies to this fact.

ARTICLE 14 COMMUNION:

Communion is not an ordinance but an act of commemoration proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes. It is not a continuation of the Passover Supper, it is a commemoration of the N.T. made possible to the believer through the death and life of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor.11:23-26).

ARTICLE 15 ANGELS:

We believe that angels are created beings and are not to be worshipped. They are ministering spirits created to serve God and His people (Luke 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7 & 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14 & 19:10 A 22:9). Lucifer was a created angel who through pride fell and became the author of sin (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezek 28:11-19; Gen. 3:1-5). Revelation 20:10 tells of his final fate.

ARTICLE 16 FUTURE:

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11; Luke 16:19-31). The soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of God (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8). We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the saved to eternal life (Rom. 8:10,11; 2Cor. 4:14) and the unsaved to judgement and eternal punishment (Rev. 20:6 & 13-15; John 5:29).

ARTICLE 17 CONSUMMATION:

We believe in the personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess.4:16; Titus 2:11-13) to translate His Church (the Body of Christ) from this earth (1 Cor.15:51-53). All believers will receive rewards according to their works (1 Cor.3:11-15; 2 Cor.5:10).

ARTICLE 18 TRIBULATION:

We teach that the righteous judgement of God will be poured out upon all unbelievers in the world (Jer.30:7; Dan 9:27; 2 Thess.2:7-12; Rev. 16:1-21; Matt 24:15-31.) This will last for a period of seven years.

ARTICLE 19 SECOND COMING:

We teach that after this time of great tribulation the Lord Jesus Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10,11 & 2:29-30) and He will establish His messianic Kingdom on the earth for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7). His reign will be preceded by the overthrow of a false system of the antichrist and false prophet. He will remove Satan from the world (Dan 7:17-27; Rev 20:1-7). The Kingdom period is a fulfilment of God's promise to national Israel (Deut. 30:1-10; Ezek 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-8). Israel has been temporarily set aside (Rom. 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the Kingdom and the land of blessing. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Her. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32). We teach that the time of our Lord's reign will be categorised by harmony, equity, peace, justice, righteousness and long life (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezek 36:33-38).

ARTICLE 20 JUDGEMENT:

We teach that following the thousand-year reign of Christ Satan will be released for a short period and will deceive the nations of the earth. He will convince them to attack the beloved city and Satan and his army will be devoured by fire (Rev. 20:7-9). Satan will then be finally bound in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). It is at this time that the Lord will judge all unbelievers (Rom. 14:10,11; Rev. 20:11-15).

ARTICLE 21 ETERNITY:

We teach that after the closing of the Millennium, the temporary release of Satan and the judgement of all unbelievers (2 Thess.1:9,10; Rev. 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God.

The elements of the earth will be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and will be replaced with a new earth and a new atmospheric heaven (Rev. 21). The heavenly city, the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21.22) and will be the dwelling place of the saints. Believing Israel will play a dominant role on earth and believers making up the body of Christ will fulfil their purpose in the heavenlies (Rev. 5:10; Phil. 3:20). The Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission will then deliver the Kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor.15:24-28) that in all spheres, physical and spiritual, the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Cor.15:28).

MISSION STATEMENT

*Reaching the whole person
with the whole Gospel
Through the whole Church.*

*By Grace you are Saved..
Eph.2:8*



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