



South Valley Baptist Church

Doctrine and Constitution

Updated February 2021

South Valley Baptist Church
238-244 South Valley Road
Highton, Vic 3216
Australia

SOUTH VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV

South Valley Baptist church recognizes the Bible as the very Word of God to man. The elders of South Valley are committed to studying and teaching the Scriptures with diligence and authority. This is done so that the people of this church family can see the priority of coming to know God personally and obediently through the truths of His Word. This document reveals the conviction of our elders regarding the theological truths of the Bible to which our church family is committed. These are primary doctrines of the Christian faith and they reflect the heart of our teaching here at South Valley.

The Scriptures

We believe that the Bible is God’s Word, it is fully inspired in the original writings as the Holy Spirit superintended the human writers using their individual personalities and different styles. It is without error or omission and is the ultimate authority for faith, life and practice that endures forever. We believe that the meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical and historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 119:105; Jn 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21, 1 Peter 1:23-27, 1 John 2:27

The True God

We believe that there is only one true, living, and everlasting God. He is absolute in every aspect of His nature, perfect in attributes, holy in character, and the supreme Creator and Sustainer of Heaven and Earth. He is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. He exists in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, who are equal in every divine perfection but execute distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption and worthy of all praise.

Ex 20:2-3; Deut 6:4-5; Isaiah 44:6, Daniel 4:34-35, 1 Cor 8:6; 1 Tim 2:5, Rev 4:11

GOD...The Father

We believe that God the Father, is the first person of the Trinity, He is sovereign, working all things according to His own purpose and glory. He is the absolute and all-powerful ruler of the universe.

Isa 46:9; Ps 103:19; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:4

GOD...The Son

a. The person and work of Jesus Christ

We believe in the Deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He was fully God and fully man, living a sinless life. He suffered and died as the only acceptable substitute for the sins of man, rose again from the dead in bodily form, and ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father continuing His priestly work interceding for the saints.

Isaiah 7:14, Matt 1:20; Lk 1:26- 38; Jn 1: 1, 2, 14; 10:30; 14:9; Col 2:9, 1 Timothy 2:5; Heb 1:1-3.

b. The second coming of Jesus Christ.

We believe in the personal, imminent, visible, and bodily return of Jesus Christ for His Church. He will then come to earth in glory to establish His millennial Kingdom and reign.

1 Thess 4:16-17, 1 Cor 15

We believe that He will create a new heaven and a new earth following the resurrection of those who are lost to eternal death (hell) and those who are saved to eternal life. (Heaven)

Matt 24:29-31, Rev 11:15, Rev 19,20

GOD...The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with the Father and the Son. He indwells within believers and restrains evil. The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement; He seals, gifts, teaches and comforts, transforming believers into the image of Christ bringing glory to Jesus Christ.

Lk 24:49; Jn 14:16, 17; Jn 16:7-9; Acts 1:5, 2:4; Rom 8:14-27; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph 2:22; Heb 2:1-4.

The Devil or Satan

We believe in the existence of Satan. He was created by God as an angel who was perfect and holy but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of God.

He is the god of this age and the prince of the power of the air, who seeks to continually frustrate the purposes of God and to ensnare mankind.

He was defeated at the cross and resurrection and He is destined to judgement in the lake of fire with the fallen angels.

Isa 14:12-17; Ezk 28:11-19; 1 Cor 7:5, 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 20:10.

Creation

We believe and teach the biblical record of creation is literal, not allegorical, or figurative. Every creative act of God was supernatural, complete, and perfect. The Triune God brought the universe and all that it contains, into existence in six successive 24 hour days.

Gen 1 & 2; Ex 20:9-11; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:1-3

Mankind

We believe that mankind (male and female) was created for God, by God and in the image of God, but that mankind sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal death, which is separation from God, ultimately the lake of fire.

Consequently, all of mankind are born with a sinful nature, are sinners by choice, enemies of God, and therefore under condemnation.

Gen 1:26; Gen 2:16-17; Jn 3:36; Rom 3:23; 5:10-19; 6:23; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim 2:13-14; 1 Jn 1:8

Salvation and The New Birth

We believe that Salvation is by grace through faith; that is wholly a gift from God, not secured in any merit or work of mankind, it is offered to all people based solely upon the atoning work of Christ on cross, that all believing in Christ alone for salvation shall receive complete and final forgiveness of sins, the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God and a deliverance from eternal condemnation.

Jn 1:12-13; Jn 3:5, 16-18; Romans 8:1; Tit 3:5-6; 1 Pet 1:18-19

We believe our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ who was made to be sin for us, dying in our place. Nothing and no one can add to that finished work of Christ. His salvation is wholly of grace.

Lev 17:11; Matt 26:28; Rom 5:6-9; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; 2:8-9; Tit 3:5-7; 1 Pet 1:18-19

We believe it is the privilege of all who are born again, to be assured of their eternal salvation. Those who are saved, by the sovereign initiative of God, are kept by His power and are therefore secure in Christ forever.

Jn 3:16, 18, 36; Jn 5:24; Jn 6:37; Jn 10:28-30; Rom 8:28-39

The Church

We believe in the unity of all believers that constitutes the universal Church, which is the body and bride of Christ. It began with the New Testament saints at Pentecost and will end at the coming of Jesus Christ in the rapture.

We believe that a local Church is a congregation of immersed believers associated by like faith, for worship, evangelism, prayer, fellowship, discipline, and teaching.

We believe that God has established two officers for the local Church, that of an Elder, who is mature, who oversees, and shepherds; and that of a deacon, one who serves.

Mt 16:18; 18:15-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 1:2; 12:12-28; Gal 1:2; Eph 1:22-23; Eph 3:21; Eph 5:23; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Tim 3:1-14; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5.

We believe that the local church is to be self-governing and free from any external authority or control. Its only Head is Christ. It is scriptural for churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and in the furtherance of the Gospel. The oversight of the spiritual life and direction of the church is also vested in its elders, by the will of the congregation. **Mt 28:19-20; Eph 4:11-16; Eph 5:21-33; Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 9:8-9; Rom 16:1-2; Acts 15:19-31; Acts 11:22, 29-30; 1 Cor 5:4-7; 1 Pet 5:1-4.**

Christian Living

We believe and teach that a Christian should live an exemplary life, worthy of the Lord, having been called to walk in the Spirit, in holiness and in love.

We are exercise mutual care and be watchfulness over each other, seeking to promote growth in Christ and in encouraging one another.

We are to separate ourselves from religious apostasy and all worldly and sinful practices, as commanded by God in the Scriptures.

Col: 1:10, Gal 5:16, Gal 6:1, Eph 5:2, Heb 10:24-25

Ordinances

We believe there are two New Testament Church ordinances, water baptism and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances are not sacraments, but are symbolic, pointing to the world's only Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism

Water baptism is the single immersion of the believer in water and is properly called 'believers' baptism.' It is a testimony that shows forth a believer's faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour. It reveals his union with Christ in death to sin and in resurrection to a new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of local church membership, but it is not essential to salvation.

Acts 8:36-39; Rom 6:1-11; Mt 28:19; Jn 3:23; Acts 2:38-42; Col 2:12

Lord's Supper

We believe the Lord's Supper is symbolic and a proclamation of Christ's death until He comes. It should always be preceded by a solemn self-examination, the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, and therefore serve as a remembrance of His finished redemptive work.

Matt 26:26-29; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-32.

Israel

We believe that God has a separate program for the nation of Israel, declared in a series of covenants. This program includes her judgement, repentance, acknowledgment of the Messiah and the restoration of a redeemed remnant to the Promised Land. Israel will occupy a place of honour and blessing when Christ reigns as King, during the millennium.

Gen 12:1-3; Deut 30:1-10; 2 Sam 7:16; Jer 31:31-37; 33:19-26; 25-27

Angels

We believe and teach that angels are created beings and therefore are not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they were created to serve God and worship Him.

Lk 2:9-14; Heb 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Rev 5:11-14.

Marriage

We believe that marriage is the God-ordained union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered for life. This Church will only solemnize marriages that conform to this Biblical definition.

Genesis 2:24-25, Matt 19: 1-6

The Eternal State

We believe and teach that those who are saved by God's grace will spend eternity in full enjoyment of God's presence. Those who by unbelief have never been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ will spend eternity in everlasting punishment in hell.

Matt 25:46, John 14:2, Rev 20: 11-15

<p style="text-align:center">THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTH VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH INCORPORATED</p>
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ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be: South Valley Baptist Church Incorporated.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

To live a life to the glory of God, to lead others to Christ and membership in His Body, to disciple them to a mature Christ-likeness, and to train them for their ministry in the Church and their mission in the global community.

ARTICLE III – CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND ASSOCIATIONS

The entire assembly is responsible alone to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. The oversight of the spiritual life and direction of South Valley Baptist Church is vested in its elders by the affirming of the congregation.

Acts 6:3,5; 14:23

This church shall cooperate in the ministry of the Word of God with such bodies of believers as are true to the Scriptures. However, such cooperation shall never be construed as a surrender of freedom or autonomy.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section A – Present Membership

Any person accepting the doctrines and practices of this church as set forth and whose names appear on the roll is considered a member of this church.

Section B – Reception of Members

Any person who has confessed Christ as Lord and Saviour, who gives assurance of a sincere desire to live consistently as a Christian, who accepts without reservation the doctrinal statement of this church, who has received baptism by immersion and who has attended the membership Class may become a member of this church. Candidates for church membership shall appear personally before the elders, following their attendance in the Membership Class. Having been recommended by the elders, the name(s) shall be submitted to the church for acceptance.

Section C – Responsibilities of Members

The responsibilities of each member are to be clearly outlined in the Membership Class. Only those members who are in good standing and are at least sixteen (16) years of age may vote in matters of church business. Every person is heartily encouraged to live a life worthy of their calling in Christ. **Eph 4:1-3**

Section D – Discipline of Members

To maintain its purity and peace, a local church has the scriptural right and responsibility to discipline its members in need of such action. **Matt 18:15-22; Gal 6:1-5; Titus 3:10; 2Thess 3:6**

Any member who is wilfully negligent toward his church commitments or errs in doctrine or conduct shall be lovingly approached according to the process outlined in Matthew 18. It should be kept in mind that discipline is a loving exercise with the goal of repentance and restoration. Each individual situation needs to be prayerfully considered. When necessary, such persons may be admonished by the elders, and if the attitude and actions persist, the elders may make a recommendation to the church body. The elders shall act with love and grace but with due process.

If a matter is a reportable offense, we will hand over all the necessary information to the appropriate authorities.

Persons who have been removed from membership of the church by whatever means shall have no right to make claim to any church property and shall return any such property in their possession immediately. Members who have been expelled may be restored to the membership upon evidence of repentance and affirmed by the Elders, will be brought forward to the Church for affirmation.

Section E – Termination of membership

Membership in the church may be terminated by request of a member, the transfer of membership, or by disciplinary action.

ARTICLE V – CHURCH OFFICES AND STAFF

The New Testament teaches that there are two church offices: elder and deacon. The church may have as many of each as its size and work demands. They shall serve for an indefinite period with the right to terminate their ministry function at any time. If at any time their doctrine or conduct shall be deemed unscriptural, the members and/or elders shall discuss the matter with them and seek to resolve the problem. If a satisfactory resolution is not realized, it shall be the responsibility of those members and/or elders to bring a recommendation to the church at a special business meeting.

1 Tim 5:19-20

Section A – Elders

The primary role of the elders is to oversee the spiritual ministry, doctrine, direction and shepherding of the church. This not by force of dictatorial power, but by precept and a humble servant example. The senior elder will be responsible in directing the management and oversight of the elders.

1 Pet 5:1-3; 1 Tim 3:1- 7; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:7, 17; 1 Pet 5:3

Within a Spirit led eldership there should be unanimity in the decisions that are made, reflecting the unity and harmony of the church.

1 Cor 1:10; Eph 4:1-7; Phil 1:27; 2:1-8

The elders shall be responsible to see that the various areas of church ministry have capable leadership and oversight. The eldership is responsible for leading the church in a prayerful consideration of those who should be appointed to fill the offices of the church. All officers shall have a God given desire to serve in this office and shall reflect the character qualities outlined in Scripture. As ministry expands and needs arise, the elders may also create staff positions to meet those needs.

Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 1 Tim 4:14; Titus 1:5-9.

The primary role of the elders is to teach, train and equip the members of the church to carry out the work of the ministry.

Eph 4:11-12

Within one week after the pulpit has been vacated, the elders shall appoint from among themselves a Pulpit Committee, whose names shall be presented to the church for approval. It shall have the responsibility of assembling a list of prospective candidates for evaluating, screening, interviewing, and recommending the person to be considered as a candidate. All candidates for a senior elder position must accept the Doctrinal Statement of the church and be in harmony with its purposes and ministry directions. Upon a unanimous vote of the eldership the senior elder candidate shall visit the church and minister for a specified time. During this time, the elders and members of the church shall be given the opportunity to meet and question the candidate. If the eldership unanimously approves the candidate, a special business meeting shall be called at which time the membership shall vote on the matter.

The salary and benefits of the senior elder should always reflect an attitude of generosity. The senior Elder shall serve for an indefinite period with the right to terminate their ministry function upon thirty days' notice. If a senior elder is dismissed, he shall vacate his ministry responsibilities immediately but shall receive four weeks wages.

1 Tim 5:19-20; Matt 18: 15-20

Section B – Deacons

The primary role of the deacons is to ensure the smooth and effective running of the ministry in its many practical areas. They will carry out their vital ministry under the oversight of the eldership.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Section C – Church Staff

Clerk – The church clerk shall record and keep the minutes of the church business meetings.

Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for the recording and keeping of all financial transactions in permanent records and shall make monthly and annual reports to the church.

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH TEAMS AND MINISTRIES

It is recognized that as a church grows it will expand within its various areas of ministry. A variety of ministries may be formed to meet the changing needs of a growing church. Leadership teams that will oversee these various ministries will also be created to provide proper vision and direction. All ministries will be integral parts of this church and will reflect a commitment to the spiritual purposes and direction of the church. Each leadership team will fall under the oversight of the eldership.

ARTICLE VII – MISSIONS

This church will support missionaries and missionary endeavours that are in harmony with our doctrinal position. A team of mission minded people shall be responsible for promoting a greater awareness and personal involvement with world missions. They will submit to the eldership missionary candidates they believe should be financially supported by the church, who will in turn make recommendations to the church. Support of missionaries may be discontinued by church vote for unresolved problems dealing with doctrine or conduct deemed unscriptural.

Acts 1:8; 13:1-4.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH SERVICES

The regular weekly services of this church normally shall include Sunday school, prayer meeting and Sunday services. The eldership may recommend at any time that service structures be altered to fulfil the purposes of the church more effectively.

ARTICLE IX – BUSINESS MEETINGS

All business meetings shall be conducted decently and with a sense of order that is honouring to Christ. Any of the elders may moderate at both the special and routine business meetings. All business requiring a vote of the congregation shall be transacted in a business meeting. All votes in any business meeting shall be cast only by a voting member who is present, when the vote is taken. Such a vote shall only be on behalf of the person casting the said vote.

Section A – Special Business Meeting

The calling of a pastor, the amending of this constitution, the election of church officers or staff, the adoption of the annual budget, and the transfer of any titled property or to lease, rent or mortgage such property shall take place only at a called special business meeting. A special business meeting must be called twenty-one days prior to the meeting and must be announced from the pulpit for at least two Sundays prior to the date of meeting. The voting members present will constitute a quorum and is required and a three-fourths vote shall constitute adoption or acceptance.

Section B – Routine Business Meeting

A routine business meeting is one which does not concern the specific items mentioned in the above special business meetings. A routine business meeting may be called by the elders at any regular service of the Church. The voting members present will constitute a quorum and three-fourths vote shall constitute adoption or acceptance.

ARTICLE X – FINANCES

The fiscal year of the church shall begin 1st January and end on the following 31st December of each year.

Section A – Methods

In keeping with God's Word, the work of the church shall be carried on by regular free-will offerings of God's people. No money shall be raised by the church or any ministry group within the church, except by this method. No financial obligation shall be placed upon the church either as a mortgage, note, outstanding bill or any other form unless money is on hand to meeting same, or by express vote of the church. **Mal 3:8-10; 2 Cor 9:7**

Section B – Audit

An audit by an independent accountant hired by the church shall be done of the church's financial records annually. A report of the findings shall be made available to the church at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE XI – CHURCH PROPERTY

Section A – Church Building

The church building is dedicated to the glory of God and the carrying out of His purposes. The use of the building for special functions shall be by the approval of the deacons.

Section B – Real Estate

All titled property belonging to this church shall be titled in the name of the south Valley Baptist Church Incorporated of Highton, Victoria 3216. When the church, by corporate vote wishes to transfer the title to any titled property, or to lease, rent, or mortgage such property, the trustees acting for the church shall be authorised to act as directed in the matter in the corporate name of the church.

The Elders shall serve as trustees of the corporation and shall exercise all functions of that office in the State of Victoria and as governed by this constitution.

Section C – Disposition of Property

If at any time, the active membership of this church shall be reduced to less than seven, all its property; real, personal, and mixed shall become the property of Bible-believing witness such as a mission, church, or a Christian ministry to be determined by the remaining members. Any such disposition shall be consistent with Australian Taxation laws and provisions of the Associations Incorporated Reform Act 2012.

ARTICLE XII – ALTERATIONS OF CONSTITUTION

These articles and the Statement of Purposes of the Church shall not be altered except in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

ARTICLE XIII – SEAL

The common seal of the Church shall be kept in the custody of the senior elder. The common seal shall not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of the elders and the affixing of the Common Seal shall be attested by the signature of two elders.

ARTICLE XIV – INTERPRETATION

Whenever reference is made in this constitution to “this Church”, “the Church”, “South Valley Baptist Church” and like expressions, it shall be deemed to be South Valley Baptist Church Incorporated.