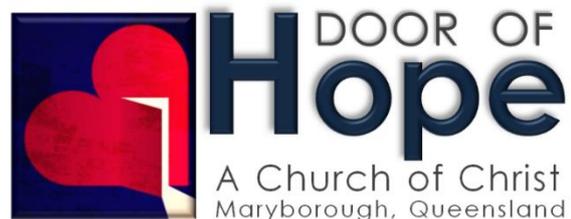


## Mission

Working together with God to love and serve all people, inviting them to walk with us toward full devotion to Christ.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

REVISED 16 SEPTEMBER 2018



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Door of Hope / Maryborough Church of Christ

Revised 16 September 2018

## 1. INTERPRETATION

These Guiding Principles are meant to be practical and descriptive rather than technical and restrictive. They are subject to the authority of the Scriptures and shall be applied accordingly.

## 2. NAME

This church is known as the “Door of Hope, a Church of Christ.”

## 3. OUR MISSION

### 3.1 Mission Statement

***Working together with God to love and serve all people, inviting them to walk with us toward full devotion to Christ.***

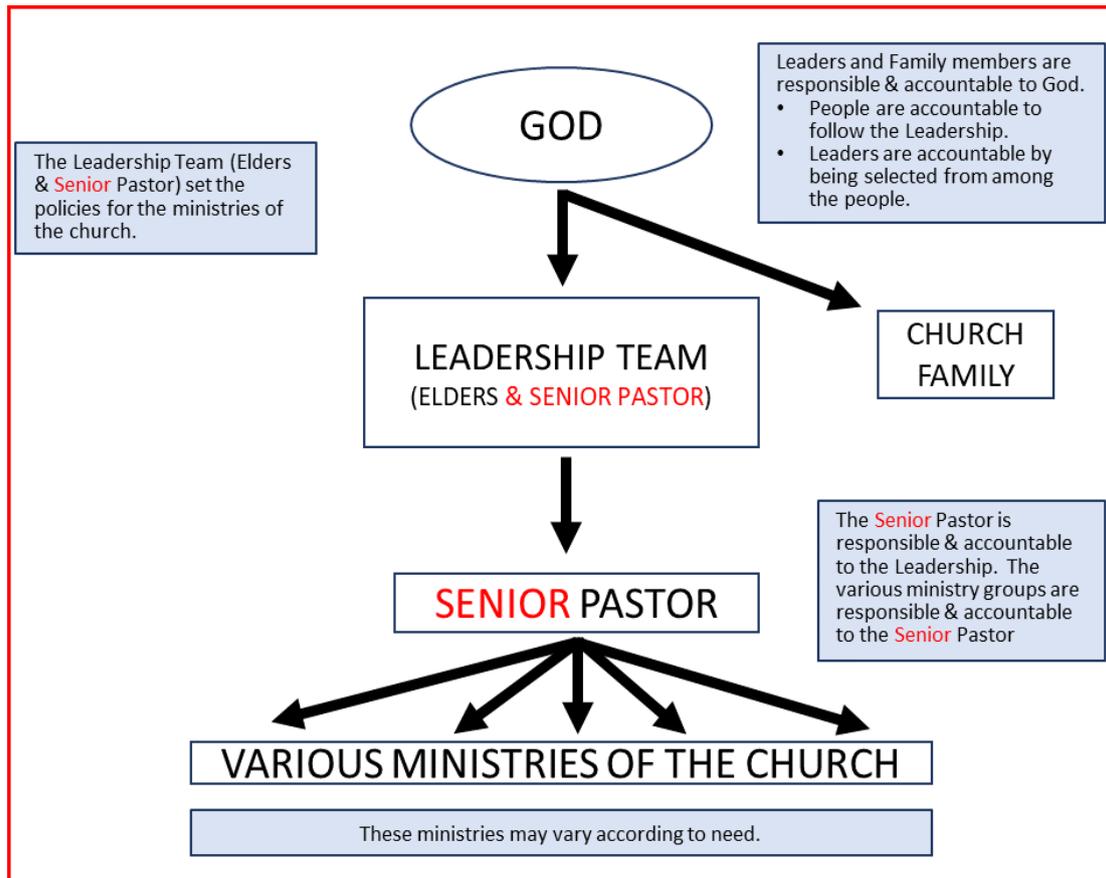
## 4. VISION STATEMENTS.

Each Vision Statement starts with the phrase “we see our church becoming a community.” This is a way of saying that we are not there yet, but this is where we are heading.

***We see our church becoming a community...***

- Which is responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Which has a clear system of governance.
- Where prayer is a very high priority.
- Where the Bible is taught clearly with the goal of total life-transformation.
- Which actively seeks to connect people to Christ.
- Which provides people with a safe, non-threatening and friendly atmosphere in which to explore the issues of faith.
- Who use their spiritual gifts to humbly serve God and others.
- Which provides multiple opportunities for authentic worship and spiritual growth.
- Of caring small groups which provide a sense of belonging, care, encouragement and opportunity for service.
- Which provides hurting people with opportunities for care and healing.
- With a true family atmosphere.
- Which embraces and serves the community of Maryborough.

**5. OUR STRUCTURE.** Below is a chart describing our structure and governance.



**6. VALUES**

- *We value the Scriptures:* We affirm that the whole Bible is the inspired Word of God.
- *We value the work of the Holy Spirit:* We value the influence, fruit, gifts and empowering of the Holy Spirit, both in bringing an individual to faith in Christ and in guiding and equipping every believer as a follower of Christ.
- *We value the ministry of every believer:* The Scriptures tell us that every Christian is part of the “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). Every believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit to fulfil a unique place of ministry within the people of God.
- *We value worship:* We place a high value on the gathering of God’s people for worship. Worship establishes the authority of God in our lives and refocuses our attention on God, rather than the ambitions and problems of life.
- *We value small groups:* We believe that people grow best spiritually when they are involved in small caring groups, as well as in inspiring corporate worship.
- *We value specialised ministries:* We have developed a variety of ministries that seek to reach and train people in special groups, including children, youth,

women, men, etc. These ministries may come and go as God raises up the people with the gifts and motivation to lead them.

- *We value mission:* We are convinced that Jesus Christ is who He said He is - the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Because of that we believe that everyone should become a Christian. We work, both on the local level and through involvement with missionaries (both overseas and within Australia), to see that commitment fulfilled.
- *We value our heritage:* This church is affiliated with the Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland. We affirm that the Restoration Movement was born of the Holy Spirit to unite all Christians on the basis of returning to the Scriptures.
- *We value the whole body of Christ:* While we seek to be Christians only, we do not believe that we are the only Christians. We recognise the faith and ministry of all churches and individuals who are truly Christian - that is, truly devoted to Christ and His Word.
- *We value the local community:* We do not believe that Christians should withdraw from the community. Rather, we believe that Christians should be involved in a wide range of community activities and issues, seeking to bring Christ into every area of community life.

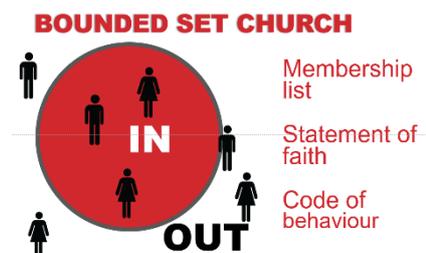
## 7. BELONGING

We choose the word “belonging” rather than “membership” for a very important reason. It is illustrated in these two models of church inclusion.

### Bounded Set Church.

The bounded set church is like a field with a fence around it. Those inside the fence are “in” while those outside the fence are “out”. The fence can be many things, but often it is a membership role, a statement of faith or a code of behaviour. The fence determines membership.

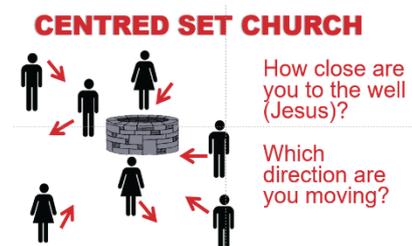
The big question in a bounded set church is, “Are you in or out?”



### Centred Set Church

The centred set church is like a field with no fence, but it has a well in the centre. All who come near the well are included and welcomed. In the case of a church, the well is Jesus. All are welcome to come among us and find life in Jesus.

The centred set church has two questions. “How close are you to the well?” And, “Which direction are you moving?”



## **We have chosen to be a centred set church!**

As such, we do not have formal church membership. All are welcome.

Our mission is that we are “working together with God to love and serve all people, inviting them to walk with us toward full devotion to Christ.”

We do, however offer some invitations.

### **7.1 Invitations**

1. The invitation to salvation. We invite people to look to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Among other activities, this will be demonstrated by-

(a) Faith. —putting trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their Saviour.

“I assure you, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. (John 5:24. NLT)

(b) Repentance— turning from a selfish and sinful life to a life which seeks to honour God.

Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins. Then wonderful times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will send Jesus your Messiah to you again. (Acts 3:19-20. NLT)

(c) Visible Signs. The Bible mentions two visible signs which indicate identification with Jesus Christ. These are baptism and communion. We understand that someone who seeks to be a fully devoted follower will have been baptised and be a regular participant in communion.

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. (Colossians 2:12. NLT)

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again. (1 Corinthians 11:26. NLT)

**Our understanding of the Bible is that baptism is full immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We expect all who are new to the faith to be baptised in this way. We also accept that other churches have an understanding of baptism which is different. We assume that someone coming from another church, and wanting to link up with this church, would at the very least prayerfully look at what the Bible has to say and consider being immersed as a sign of obedience to Christ.**

2. The invitation to walk in holiness. This is an invitation to truly follow Jesus in our attitudes and behaviour. Among other activities, this will be demonstrated by-

(a) A Devotional Life— having a healthy relationship with God through prayer and reading of the Bible.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do. (2 Timothy 3:16-17. NLT)

Always be joyful. Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. NLT)

- (b) **God-honouring Life**— seeking to honour God by doing good and resisting evil.

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. (James 4:7-8a. NLT)

- (c) **Stewardship**— using God-given time, talents and resources in a way that pleases God.

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8. NLT)

### 3. The invitation to serve. Jesus invites us to follow him in serving.

Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:43-45. NLT)

- (a) **Humble use of Spiritual Gifts**—understanding how God has gifted us and then using those gifts to serve others.

God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you. (1 Peter 4:10. NLT)

- (b) **Point others to Faith**— involved in getting the message of Jesus out to as many as possible.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20. NLT)

- (c) **Seek Justice.** Advocating and working towards caring for the vulnerable, the poor, the weak, the marginalised, and the oppressed.

For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. ... I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!' (Matthew 25:35,36,40. NLT)

## 8. LEADERSHIP TEAM—ELDER

While we see the church family as being a centred set (see section 7), we see the Eldership as a bounded set, since the role comes with specific expectations. The Elders and the Senior Pastor together form the Leadership Team

### 8.1 Expectations of an Elder

#### Character

The Bible gives a good indication of the character requirements of an Elder. Church leaders, including Elders, are not chosen because of popularity, or because they represent any particular group. They are chosen because of their respect for the truth and for godliness, both in what they believe and in how they live. That's character!

Summary of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

An Elder must be respected both inside and outside the church as a person of good character.

An Elder needs to be someone who is in control—gentle and peace-loving, not violent, quick-tempered or argumentative, free from addiction to alcohol and not greedy.

An Elder must have a healthy family life.

An Elder must have a good grasp of the Scriptures in order to both encourage those who need encouragement and to correct those who need correction.

An Elder needs to have been a Christian long enough for Christ-like character to have been seen by others.

An Elder must be free from egotism so as to lead God's people and not push them around.

#### Time & Energy

Being an Elder carries with it a considerable time and energy commitment.

An Elder needs to be present at a majority of the Sunday worship events, in order to be available to people and to know what's going on in the church.

An Elder also needs to commit to regular Elders' meetings.

An Elder needs to be available to pray with people according to James 5:14-15.

#### Teamwork & Vision

The Bible always mentions Elders in the plural, meaning that the Elders in the New Testament operated as a team. They may not always agree on every detail, but they are in complete harmony in their vision for the church.

The Elders often deal with issues which are both personal and very private. This means that it is absolutely necessary that things be kept in strict confidence.

The Elders need to work as a team, supporting each other in everything. There must be a deep sense of trust, respect and honour for each other, both in the Eldership meetings and outside the meetings.

The Elders seek God's guidance and then set the direction the ministry of the church will take. It's necessary that all members of the Eldership team are working together towards the same goals.

## 8.2 Selection Process

1. The Leadership Team will set the timeframe for the annual Eldership selection process.
2. Anyone in the church family may nominate a potential Elder.
3. Those nominated will be notified in writing and given a minimum of two weeks to prayerfully consider whether or not to accept nomination.
4. Those who accept nomination will be interviewed by a panel consisting of members of the Leadership Team and any others whom the Elders, at their discretion, may invite to participate.
5. If there is agreement that there is a calling from God, the nominee's name will be put to the church family for confirmation. The Elders will set the timeframe for the confirmation period, allowing for the church family to pray and consider the appointment.
6. Anyone having concerns about a nominee is encouraged to raise this with a member of the Leadership Team during the confirmation period. If concerns are raised, the Leadership Team will seek to mediate a mutually acceptable outcome.
7. At the end of the confirmation period, the successful nominee(s) will be appointed as an Elder.
8. Elders are selected for a 2-year term and may not serve more than 3 consecutive terms.
9. Existing Elders who are at the end of a two-year term, and eligible to continue, are automatically nominated for another term.
10. In the event that more than half of the Elders are at the end of six consecutive years, and their retirement is deemed to be detrimental to the Leadership Team, the Elders may, at their discretion, nominate an existing Elder to a special one-year term. However, no one may serve as an Elder longer than seven consecutive years.

## 9. SENIOR PASTOR

### 9.1 The Senior Pastor's role.

The Senior Pastor is the visionary leader of the church. The Senior Pastor, **together with the Elders**, seeks God's direction and vision for the church and leads the people in that direction. The Senior Pastor is the team leader and is accountable to the Elders

for fulfilling the policies set by the Elders. The other Ministry Leaders are accountable to the Senior Pastor. See Governance chart.

## 9.2 Appointment

The Elders will seek God's direction and oversee the process of setting criteria, sourcing of candidates, processing applications and conducting interviews of a prospective Senior Pastors.

The Elders will seek input from the Church Family with regards to a proposed appointment.

The final decision regarding an appointment will be made by the Elders.

The Elders will determine the Senior Pastor's job description and contract terms and conditions, in accordance with the current Churches of Christ in Queensland Ministers Appointment & Employment Guide and will arrange for an annual review and appraisal to be completed.

In the event of serious misconduct, or if the Senior Pastor is not fulfilling the job description, the Elders shall take appropriate steps to resolve the issue. These steps, depending on the seriousness of the breach, may include mediation, counsel, reprimand or dismissal.

## 10. MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

Other appointments will be made from time to time as deemed necessary. These will be either paid or unpaid positions as determined by the Leadership Team.

Paid employees will be subject to the relevant award with terms and conditions of employment set by the Leadership Team.

Unpaid volunteers will be subject to the terms and conditions of the position as set by the Leadership Team.

Those who lead Ministry Areas are accountable to the Senior Pastor. Those helping in a Ministry Area are accountable to their relevant Ministry Leader.

Everyone who serves in a Ministry Area must have completed an Application to Serve in Ministry and have it approved by the Senior Pastor and the Elders and must comply with all relevant mandatory government and organisational requirements (eg. Blue Card, Child Safe, etc.).

## 11. GENERAL MEETINGS

Rather than an Annual General Meeting, the Elders shall plan for a yearly gathering of the church family to review the previous twelve months and cast a vision for the year to come. This shall be in the form and format that the Elders may decide. Each Ministry will be asked to present a written report, including a financial statement if applicable. These reports should be made available to the church at least two Sundays before that gathering. and shall be taken "as read" in that event.

A Special General Meeting may be called by the Leadership Team to discuss matters where the Elders desire to communicate information and/or seek input from the Church Family.

Individuals may request a Special General Meeting in writing to the Elders but only after meeting personally with the Elders to discuss their concerns.

Notice for any General Meeting should be given in writing in the church paper at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.

Decisions by the Elders are final, but wisdom demands that the Leadership Team must listen to the thoughts and feelings of the Church Family.

## **12. POLICY STATEMENTS**

The Elders may, from time to time, wish to publish policy statements, covering issues not dealt with in these Guiding Principles. It is understood that the Elders will (a) seek what the Bible says on the issue, (b) pray extensively about the matter, (c) allow for people in the Church Family to make a contribution, and (d) reach a unanimous agreement before presenting the policy to the church.

The Elders shall arrange for a Policy Register to be drawn up and kept up to date in the church office. This Policy Register shall be a record of all such policy decisions.

## **13. CHANGES TO THESE GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Over time this document may not completely reflect who we are or who we believe God wants us to be. The Leadership Team shall arrange for this document to be reviewed at least every two years.

Suggestions for changes to the Guiding Principles may be suggested by individuals from within the Church Family.

Changes to this document must have the unanimous agreement of the current Leadership Team and then be put before the Church Family for feedback for a period of 30 days.

## **14. DISSOLUTION**

Should this church cease to be an affiliated member of Churches of Christ in Qld and its purpose remains 'the advancement of religion' then the approval of the Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland, shall be obtained for the transfer of property assets to another income tax exempt entity.

Should the church permanently close for whatever reason, all funds, assets, property and equipment that remain after the satisfaction of all liabilities, shall become the property of Churches of Christ in Queensland being an entity with the purpose of the advancement of religion.