



GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES

**The Christian & Missionary Alliance
of New Zealand**

27 September 2025

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO:

1. Explain the classifications of churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of New Zealand (the Alliance).
2. Provide governance guidelines and a template for Church Constitutions.
3. Ensure churches are operating within the Alliance guidelines for church governance.
4. Explain the role of the National Leadership Team (NLT) Supervisors in working with churches to provide support and guidance when required.

DEFINITIONS

1. An **Organised Church** is defined as a church with all the following characteristics:
 - a. 20 or more adult members.
 - b. Financially self-supporting.
 - c. Suitably qualified Pastors and/or Senior Leaders.
 - d. Operating autonomously under its own Constitution (consistent with, and subject to, the Alliance Constitution and the Alliance Governance Guidelines for Churches).
 - e. Registered as a charity with Charities Services
2. A **Supervised Church** is a church that needs additional support from the National Leadership Team. This includes the following two types of churches:
 - A. Churches in their early stages of development, before they become Organised Churches. The status of these churches shall be known as **Supervised Developing Churches (SDCs)**.
 - i. SDCs will operate under the Administrative Guidelines for Supervised Developing Churches listed in this document.
 - ii. The NLT will appoint up to three people to the Governing Body of the church to provide support and guidance.
 - iii. The NLT representatives will elect a Chair of the Governing Body and determine its membership in consultation with the Pastor and existing leaders.
 - iv. The NLT representatives will have full voting rights.
 - B. Organised Churches that face significant challenges to their health and sustainability, as referenced below, shall be classified as **Supervised Organised Churches (SOCs)**.
 - i. SOCs will continue to operate under their existing Constitution if possible; however, up to three Supervisors will be appointed by the NLT to the Governing Body of the church to provide direction and support.
 - ii. The NLT Supervisors will appoint the Chair of the Governing Body and determine its membership in consultation with the Pastor and existing leaders.
 - iii. The NLT representatives will have full voting rights.
 - C. Supervised Churches (SDCs and SOCs) may be defined as churches with any one of the following characteristics:

1. Less than 20 adult members.
 2. Not operating under their own local church Constitution.
 3. Not registered with Charities Services.
 4. The absence of suitably qualified leaders.
 5. Experiencing serious financial hardship.
 - a. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Expenditure has exceeded income for the past 12 months, and there are less than 12 months' cash reserves.
 - ii. Unable to service loans.
 6. Receiving financial assistance from the Alliance.
 - a. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Pastoral subsidy
 - ii. Building or Equipment loans
 7. Experiencing serious internal problems.
 - a. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Serious conflict within the Governing Body.
 - ii. Serious moral failings of Pastoral staff.
 - iii. Actions of a church member which brings significant harm to other church members or the community and/or damages the reputation of the church and/or the Alliance.
 - iv. Preaching or teaching inconsistent with Alliance theology and practice.
 - v. Significant decline in attendance.
 - vi. Serious breach of the church Constitution.
 8. Refusal to adhere to the membership criteria of the Alliance. (ARTICLE IV: THE CONSTITUTION)
 9. The Pastor or Governing Body of the church has requested supervision.
- D. All "Supervised" churches should be actively working towards "Organised Church" status.
- E. Churches are classified at the discretion of the NLT following consultation with the Pastor and Governing Body of the church. The classifications of all churches shall be reviewed annually.
3. **Governing Body** – The Senior Leadership group in the church. Normally, the Elders Board, Executive Committee or Advisory Team.
 4. **National Leadership Team (NLT) Supervisors** – people elected by the National Leadership Team to work with churches under supervision
 5. **References to the "Alliance"** refer to our legal name: "The Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand" and our operational name: "The Alliance Churches of New Zealand"

6. **References to e.g. "ARTICLE III. THE CONSTITUTION"** refer to the Trust Deed, Constitution & By-Laws of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this document require a 67% majority at any meeting of the General Council and are applicable immediately upon approval. Changes can be proposed by the National Leadership Team (NLT) or the members of individual Alliance churches. Notification of changes must be presented in writing to the Alliance constituency at least two weeks before the meeting of the General Council.

Appendix 1

Constitutional Template for an ORGANISED CHURCH

NOTES:

1. *This template provides the essential elements of an Alliance Church Constitution.*
2. *Churches are encouraged to consult with the Alliance during the process of writing or amending their constitutions.*
3. *Churches are required to submit a final draft to the Alliance for review before presenting to the church members' meeting.*
4. *All changes must be approved by the Alliance before they can be formally adopted or submitted to external bodies such as Charities Services.*
5. *It is recommended that By-Laws be only introduced for matters not already mentioned in the Constitution. This avoids the confusion of similar matters (such as how Elders are elected) being included in two separate parts of the document.*
6. *Throughout the document, words in italics provide an explanation only and should not be included in the Constitution.*

The Constitution and By-Laws of [Church Name]

DEFINITIONS

1. **Governing Body** – The Senior Leadership group in the church. Normally, the Elders Board, Executive Committee or Advisory Team.
2. **National Leadership Team (NLT) Supervisors** – people elected by the National Leadership Team to work with churches under supervision
3. **References to the “Alliance”** refer to our legal name: “The Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand” and our operational name: “The Alliance Churches of New Zealand”
4. The Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand **Group** mentioned in the Preamble is the name of the Charities Services group under which all Alliance Churches are included.
5. **References to e.g. “ARTICLE III. THE CONSTITUTION”** refer to the Trust Deed, Constitution & By-Laws of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand.

PREAMBLE

[Church Name] is an integral part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand Group (the Alliance). It shall consist of members duly organised in accordance with the Alliance Constitution and the Alliance Governance Guidelines for Churches. It is united in governance, fellowship and service to promote unity of faith in the fullness of Jesus Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King; and to facilitate the spread of the gospel at home and abroad under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Any income, benefit, or advantage must be to advance the charitable purposes of the church.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

This church shall be known as [Church Name] of The Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand Group.

ARTICLE 2 – OBJECTS

State the main reasons (Objects) the church exists, which is a fuller and more specific explanation of what is included in the latter part of the Preamble. This could also be a place to list the church’s Mission statement.

The following example is from West Harbour Alliance Church:

The West Harbour Alliance Church, through its membership, exists to:

1. *Maintain and promote the public worship of God.*
2. *Promote brotherly love and encourage each other in faith as outlined in the Old and New Testaments.*
3. *Live a life of personal witness, that others may come to know Christ as their own personal Saviour and Lord.*

4. *Provide a Christian Education ministry that will assist the members and adherents in the training of families in godly conduct.*
5. *Work as part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of NZ for the speedy evangelisation of the world.*
6. *Provide opportunities that will seek to enrich the lives of those in our community.*
7. *Any income, benefit, or advantage must be to advance the charitable purposes of the church.*

ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP & DOCTRINE

Qualifications for people to become Church members shall include:

- A. Satisfactory evidence of Christian faith and lifestyle as defined by the Scriptures.
- B. Being Baptised into the Christian Faith.
- C. Affirmation of the Mission and Leadership of the church.
- D. Commitment to serve and financially support the ministries of the church.
- E. Acceptance of The Doctrinal Statement of The Alliance (ARTICLE III. THE CONSTITUTION) and the teaching of Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King.
- F. Support of the church's membership of the Alliance, and the overseas mission programme of Alliance Global Partners.
- G. Such other qualifications that may be stated in the local church By-Laws.

No member of the church, or anyone associated with a member, is allowed to take part in, or influence any decision made by the church in respect of payments to, or on behalf of, the member or associated person of any income, benefit, or advantage.

Any payments made to a member of the church, or a person associated with a member, must be for goods or services that advance the charitable purpose and must be reasonable and relative to payments that would be made between unrelated parties.

ARTICLE 4 – ORDINANCES

- A. Baptism is preferably by immersion and is recognised as a Scriptural ordinance.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated regularly.

ARTICLE 5 - ELDERS BOARD

A. Formation

The Elders Board shall consist of at least four members, including the Pastor, who shall be seen to satisfy the scriptural requirements for church leadership as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It shall meet at least bi-monthly for prayer and business. The Elder's Board is the Governing Body of the church, and all Officers, Committees, and Ministries except the Nominating Committee are amenable to the Elders' Board.

1. The Sole/Senior Pastor is the Chairman of the Elders Board and the leading Elder of the church. He may, however, choose to delegate the Chairmanship responsibility to a fellow Elder.
2. In the absence of a Sole/Senior Pastor, the Elders Board shall elect one of its members to fill the position of chairman.
3. If an Elder is considered by his fellow Elders to be living contrary to the scriptural standards of Eldership, the Elders' Board may, by a 67% majority vote, call for the resignation of that Elder.
4. The Elders' Board is amenable to the local church membership and the National Leadership Team (NLT) of the Alliance.

B. Function

The spiritual work and leadership of the church shall be in the care of the Elders' Board, who shall be responsible for the spiritual well-being of the church. They shall constitute the committee on membership and discipline. The Elders shall be ex officio members of the Executive Committee (ExCom):

1. To oversee preaching and teaching.
2. To make decisions on matters of doctrine and practice affecting the church.
3. For the provision of pastoral care, including visitation, counselling, anointing and prayer for the sick.
4. For examining candidates for membership, disciplining members and keeping the membership rolls up to date.
5. To oversee the church's programmes to ensure their harmony and contribution to the purposes of the church.
6. For appointing people to non-elected positions and for filling positions that become vacant between annual meetings.
7. To issue calls to pastoral candidates with the approval of the Church Membership and the National Director.
8. To ensure minutes are taken of all Elders Board meetings.

In the absence of an Elders Board:

1. The ExCom, with the attendance of the Elders, shall be empowered to carry out the functions of the Elders Board and be considered the "Governing Body" of the church.
2. All Elders shall be ex officio members of the ExCom and be represented at all ExCom meetings.
3. All officers, committees and ministries, except the Nominating Committee, are amenable to the ExCom.
4. The ExCom shall be responsible for filling the unexpired term of positions becoming vacant between Annual General Meetings and appointing people to non-elected positions.
5. The ExCom is amenable to the local church membership and the NLT.

ARTICLE 6 - THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Formation

The Executive Committee (ExCom) shall consist of Church Members elected by the congregation or appointed by the Elders Board, who shall be seen to satisfy the scriptural requirements for church leadership as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It shall meet at least bi-monthly to manage the business aspects of the church. In the absence of an Elders Board, refer to Article 5, Elders Board B. Function.

The chairman of the ExCom shall be elected from amongst its members at its first meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

B. Function

1. The ExCom will manage the business aspects of church life, including, but not limited to, Finances and Property. Additional areas of responsibility will be determined by the Elders Board or the Church Constitution.
2. The ExCom shall be under the authority of the Board of Elders.
3. No offerings shall be solicited from the congregation except by order of the ExCom.
4. The ExCom shall record the minutes of all ExCom meetings and distribute them to the Elders Board.
5. The ExCom shall ensure that the finances of the church are administered according to Biblical guidelines and legal requirements. This may be through the appointment of a Treasurer, Finance Team, Church staff or outside contractors.
6. A budget shall be prepared by the ExCom for approval by the Church Members, which will then determine expenditure.
7. The ExCom is authorised to commit unbudgeted finances of up to 10% of the budgeted general giving for the current year without needing the approval of the church membership.

ARTICLE 7 – OFFICERS

The Officers shall be seen to satisfy the scriptural requirements of church leadership and be members of the local church. They shall consist of the Senior Pastor, together with those appointed by the Governing Body.

A. Sole/Senior Pastor

1. As chairman of the Elders' Board, the Sole/Senior Pastor will be the leading Elder of the church. They are Ex Officio members of all committees.
2. They shall automatically become Official Members at their induction as Pastors. This membership privilege shall also be extended to their spouse.
3. They shall be called by the Elders' Board upon approval by the church membership and the National Director of the Alliance.
4. The Elders' Board shall not negotiate with any candidate without the approval of the National Director of the Alliance.
5. The Elders' Board may, in conjunction with the National Director of the Alliance, ask for the resignation of the Pastor in keeping with the conditions of the Employment Contract.

6. If there is no Sole/Senior Pastor, the National Leadership Team shall determine, in consultation with the Governing Body, who shall fulfil their constitutional requirements, for example, the chairing of meetings.

B. Deacons & Deaconesses

Deacons and Deaconesses may be appointed by the Elders Board and be responsible for carrying out the charities and practical affairs of the life of the church. They may be included as members on the Executive Committee.

C. Trustees

Where required, Trustees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. Their duties and ministries shall be stated in the By-Laws of the local church.

ARTICLE 8 – MINISTRIES

Churches may choose to list their essential ministries with any specific guidelines and rules which apply to their operation. Be aware that changes to the ministries listed in this section, including their methods of operation, will require a change to their Constitution or By-Laws.

ARTICLE 9 – RELATIONSHIP

The parent body of this church is the Alliance. The church is subordinate to the Constitution of the Alliance. The church shall contribute financially towards the operation of the Alliance as prescribed by the General Council.

Proposals for the establishment and operation of ministries which require the purchase, building or renovation of property, or capital investment of more than \$100,000 shall first be referred to the National Leadership Team for their approval, together with relevant building plans and loan documents.

Annual Reports must be submitted to the NLT before the church's Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE 10 – GOVERNMENT

A. Annual General Meeting

There shall be an Annual General Meeting of all members held within three months of the end of the Financial Year. Reports from the Elders and Executive Committee, including a Financial Report, shall be received. It shall elect Elders and members of the Executive Committee.

B. Voting

On General Church matters in which no legal questions are involved, it is understood that all members in good and regular standing, who have reached the age of sixteen, are entitled to vote. In matters involving title to property or legal procedures, the law of New Zealand shall determine the age at which members are eligible to vote.

For the election of Elders and Executive Board members, the following majority votes are recommended: Elders: 67% majority vote; Executive Members and all other Officers: 51% majority vote.

C. Elections

Elections shall be by secret ballot.

ARTICLE 11 - NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Pastor, one church member elected by the Elders Board, and three church members elected by the membership at least two months before the Annual General Meeting.

The Nominating Committee shall, if possible, nominate candidates for each of the available Offices to be elected at the Annual General Meeting. They shall submit a written report to the church that shall be distributed to the Membership at least 10 days before the Annual General Meeting.

Other nominations may be made from the floor, except for the position of Elder. Nominations for Elders may be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee for their consideration at least three weeks before the Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE 12 - MISSIONARY CONVENTION

Churches shall participate in the annual missions conference arranged by the Alliance.

ARTICLE 13 – PROPERTY

A. Real Property

The title to all property shall be held by the Alliance. The NLT shall provide a declaration of trust indicating that the property is held in trust for the church. The church may acquire, sell, convey, exchange or encumber real property by order of the church membership through the Executive Committee. Where trustees are required, the order of membership shall proceed through them.

B. Personal Property

The church may acquire, sell, improve, encumber and convey personal property for church purposes.

C. Dissolution

Should the Church cease to exist or cease to be subject to the Constitution of the Alliance, then all of its property appurtenances and effects owned or held by it shall enure to the benefit of and become the property of the Alliance.

ARTICLE 14 - RECORDS

- A. The official records of all officers of the church and all its departments are the property of the church.
- B. All financial records shall be independently audited or reviewed at least biannually or at any time on order of the Executive Committee or a motion moved by members at a duly constituted members meeting.
- C. In the event of the death or resignation of the incumbent, or upon the election of his successor, the current records necessary for fulfilling the obligations of the office shall be passed on to the newly elected officer.
- D. All records, other than current records, shall be kept in a safe repository selected by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE 15 - AMENDMENTS

- A. The church is encouraged to consult with the Alliance during the process of writing or amending its constitutions.
- B. The church is required to submit a final draft of proposed changes to the Alliance for review before presenting to the church members' meeting.
- C. This document may be amended by a 67% majority vote at any church member's meeting. Notification of changes shall be advised to church members at least two weeks before the members' meeting.
- D. All changes must be approved by the Alliance before they can be formally adopted or submitted to external bodies such as Charities Services.

ARTICLE 16 - BY-LAWS

Note: By-laws should only be introduced for matters not already mentioned in the Constitution. This avoids the confusion of similar matters being included in two separate parts of the document.

- A. The church is encouraged to consult with the Alliance during the process of writing or amending its by-laws.
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Appendix 2

Constitutional Template for a SUPERVISED DEVELOPING CHURCH

This document provides an outline for the administration and supervision of Supervised Developing Churches (SDCs). The following template should be used to govern a church in its formative stages. This can then be adapted when churches become Organised Churches.

NOTES:

1. *This template provides the essential elements of an Alliance Church Constitution for Supervised Developing Churches.*
2. *Churches are encouraged to consult with the Alliance during the process of writing or amending their constitutions.*
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DEFINITIONS

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ARTICLE 1 – NAME

This church shall be known as [Church Name] of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of New Zealand Group.

ARTICLE 2 – OBJECTS

The Church shall state the main reasons (Objects) for its existence, essentially a fuller and more specific explanation of what is included in the latter part of the Preamble. This could also be a place to list the church’s Mission statement.

The following example is from West Harbour Alliance Church.

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3. *Live a life of personal witness, that others may come to know Christ as their own personal Saviour and Lord.*

4. *Provide a Christian Education ministry that will assist the members and adherents in the training of families in godly conduct.*
5. *Work as part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of NZ for the speedy evangelisation of the world.*
6. *Provide opportunities that will seek to enrich the lives of those in our community.*
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ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP AND DOCTRINE

Qualifications for people to become members shall consist of:

- A. Satisfactory evidence of Christian faith and lifestyle as defined by the Scriptures.
- B. Being Baptised into the Christian Faith.
- C. Affirmation of the Mission and Leadership of the church.
- D. Commitment to serve and financially support the ministries of the church
- E. Acceptance of The Doctrinal Statement of The Alliance (ARTICLE III. THE CONSTITUTION) and the teaching of Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King.
- F. Support of the church's membership of the Alliance, and the overseas mission programme of Alliance Global Partners
- G. Such other qualifications that may be stated in the local church By-Laws.

Procedures for membership shall be:

- A. People may apply for church membership through the Governing Body, who will review their application in consultation with the National Leadership Team (NLT) Supervisors. Successful applicants will receive a membership certificate and be welcomed into membership at a public service of the church.
- B. Upon formal organisation of the church, the members of the church under the administrative guidelines shall become the charter members of the organised church.
- C. No member of the church, or anyone associated with a member, is allowed to take part in, or influence any decision made by the church in respect of payments to, or on behalf of, the member or associated person of any income, benefit, or advantage.
- D. Any payments made to a member of the church, or a person associated with a member, must be for goods or services that advance the charitable purpose and must be reasonable and relative to payments that would be made between unrelated parties.

ARTICLE 4 – ORDINANCES

- A. Baptism is preferably by immersion and is recognised as a Scriptural ordinance.
- B. The Lord's supper shall be celebrated regularly.

ARTICLE 5 - ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An Advisory Committee shall be formed by the National Leadership Team (NLT), consisting of up to three Supervisors appointed by the NLT. The Advisory Committee may include the Pastor and members of the church in addition to the supervisors appointed by the NLT.

The NLT Supervisors will appoint a Chair for the Advisory Committee.

They shall meet at least bi-monthly to discuss the growth and development of the church. The NLT Supervisors shall report to the NLT bi-monthly. All other ministries of the church shall be amenable to the Advisory Committee.

ARTICLE 6 - OFFICERS

The Advisory Committee shall appoint officers as needed for the ministries of the church.

ARTICLE 7 - PASTOR

The Pastor shall be appointed by the National Director with agreement from the Licensing and Ordination Committee and the Advisory Committee.

The Pastor may resign from the church according to the conditions of their Employment Contract. The Advisory Committee, excluding the Pastor, in conjunction with the NLT and the membership, may call for the resignation of the Pastor in keeping with the conditions of the Employment Contract.

ARTICLE 8 - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The Pastor shall have general oversight of the work of the church. He may serve as Chairman of the Advisory Committee and is a member ex officio of all committees. Other officers may serve as set forth for officers in the GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES FOR AN ORGANISED CHURCH, ARTICLES 5-7.

ARTICLE 9 - MINISTRIES

Churches may choose to list their essential ministries with any specific guidelines and rules which apply to their operation. Be aware that changes to the ministries listed in this section, including their methods of operation, will require a change to their Constitution or By-Laws.

ARTICLE 10 - RELATIONSHIP

The Alliance is the parent body of developing churches working toward formal organisation. The church is subordinate to the Constitution of the Alliance. The church shall contribute financially towards the operation of the Alliance as prescribed by the General Council.

Annual Reports, including financial statements, must be submitted to the NLT before the Alliance Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE 11 - MISSIONARY CONVENTION

Churches shall participate in the annual missions conference arranged by the Alliance.

ARTICLE 12 - PROPERTY

All real and personal property shall be managed according to the Alliance Constitution (ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP, B. Church Property. THE CONSTITUTION).

ARTICLE 13 - RECORDS

- A. The official records of all officers of the church and all its departments are the property of the church.
- B. All financial records shall be independently audited or reviewed at least biannually or at any time on order of the Advisory Committee or a motion moved by members at a duly constituted members meeting.
- C. In the event of the death or resignation of the incumbent, or upon the election of his successor, the current records necessary for fulfilling the obligations of the office shall be passed on to the newly elected officer.
- D. All records, other than current records, shall be kept in a safe repository selected by the Advisory Committee.

ARTICLE 14 - AMENDMENTS

- A. The church is encouraged to consult with the Alliance during the process of writing or amending its constitutions.
- B. The church is required to submit a final draft of proposed changes to the Alliance for review before presenting to the church members' meeting.
- C. This document may be amended by a 67% majority vote at any church member's meeting. Notification of changes shall be provided to church members at least two weeks before the members' meeting.
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ARTICLE 15 - BY-LAWS

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