

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Background

The New Testament assumes that all Christians will be a part of a local gathering of believers and benefit from mutual accountability. The local church is described as Jesus' body, with each member playing a different role that contributes to the whole. It is also described as a family, where the members support and encourage each other. As a result, church membership is a step we encourage all Christians to take.

Baptist Churches believe that the local church should be under the authority of all the members gathered together because all believers have free access to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, in a Baptist Church, the final decision making body, under Christ, is a meeting of all the church members.

Associated Documents

Constitution Section 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23

Core Values of the Church

Membership Covenant

Membership Flowchart

Purpose

To encourage believers to be committed to God and to the body of Christ. On a formal level, to encourage believers to participate in the legal requirements and responsibilities of an incorporated body.

Policy Statement

Those who qualify for membership must have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and have been baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To qualify, believers are expected to attend a Membership Course, agree to the church's Statement of Faith, Core Values and aim to live in accordance with the Membership Covenant.

Statement of Faith

Section 4 of the Constitution

We believe in:

- (a) The existence of one God in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.
- (b) The divine inspiration, infallibility and authority of the 66 books of scripture of the Old and New Testaments.
- (c) God's creation of humankind in His image, male and female, intending that we live in fellowship with Him.
- (d) The personality and malignancy of the devil and his opposition to God's purposes.
- (e) The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all humankind.
- (f) The deity, incarnation and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- (g) The salvation of believers from the penalty and power of sin through the Lord Jesus Christ's perfect obedience, shed blood and substitutionary atoning death.
- (h) The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of His Father and His high priestly intercession.
- (i) The deity of the Holy Spirit and His work in the regeneration and sanctification of the redeemed.
- (j) The necessity of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- (k) The visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (l) The eternal blessedness in God's presence of the redeemed and the eternal punishment by exclusion from God's presence of the unrepentant.
- (m) The establishment of baptism and the Lord's Supper by the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church.
 - a. Baptism is, preferably, the immersion of believers upon their profession of faith as an act of identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; and
 - b. The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ's sacrificial death in which believers share in fellowship with their risen Lord and with one another and look forward to His return.
- (n) The church as the community of believers called together by God. In both its universal and local expressions it consists of people who have personally and knowingly accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Core Values

1. We value clear, Christ-centred Bible teaching that leads to trusting in Jesus as Saviour, and obeying Him as Lord.
2. We value each other and seek to encourage one another to grow in Christian maturity in everything we do.
3. We value all people and aim to engage those outside the church with the person and claims of Jesus.
4. We value faithful ministry and will seek to actively encourage and support those who give themselves for this task in our community and in other parts of the world.
5. We value prayer, as we recognise God's rule over all things, and we seek to pray according to His will as expressed in Scripture.
6. We value church activity which is as welcoming and as understandable as possible to everyone.
7. We value authentic relationships and practical love modelled on the sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself for us.
8. We value working together and encourage all followers of Jesus to play their part building Christ's church.
9. We value the gifts, abilities and resources God has given us, and seek to use them adventurously, and to the very best of our ability, for His glory.
10. We value whole-hearted devotion to Jesus.

Membership Covenant

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and having been baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and accepting Margaret River Baptist Church's mission, values and statement of faith, I now unite with this church family as an active member. In doing so, I joyfully and truthfully commit to God and to the other members to do the following:

I will seek to support the testimony of my church

- By attending faithfully
- By living a godly life
- By encouraging my children in the faith by word and deed

I will seek to serve the ministry of my church

- By seeking to discover and use my gifts and talents
- By continually being equipped by God's word
- By developing a servant's heart

I will seek to share the responsibility of my church

- By praying for its members and its growth
- By inviting the unchurched to attend
- By warmly welcoming those who visit
- By giving regularly

I will seek to protect the unity of my church:

- By acting in love towards other members
- By building up other members with my words
- By supporting the leadership team

I recognise that we are all part of the church body. As such, I recognise that problems are to be dealt with in the manner described in the Bible (e.g. Matthew 18:15-17) and accept the discipline of the church. I also undertake that when I move from this church, I will, if possible, unite with another part of Jesus' wider body by joining another church.

Church Membership Process

Invitation to Attend Membership Course

Prospective believers are invited to attend a membership course.



Complete Membership Application Form



Application to Board Secretary



Oversight Team

(The OT will consider the applicant within 30 days of receipt of application.
The OT will make a recommendation to the Board and the members.)



Members Notified

(The Board secretary will notify the members of the application.)



Board Members to Consider Application

(The Board will either accept or reject the application.)

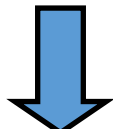


Application Accepted



Applicant and Members Notified

(Board Secretary to notify applicant and members)



Formal Acceptance

(Senior Pastor or Board Chairperson to formally welcome the new member into membership at a Sunday Service.)



Application Not Accepted

(Applicant informed by Board Chairperson.
Secretary to inform members.)



Applicant May Appeal

(Applicant may appeal the Board's decision within 14 days of being informed.)



Members' Vote

(The members accept or reject the Board's decision at a General Meeting.)



Application Accepted

(Follow blue arrows)



Application Rejected

(Applicant may reapply in twelve months time from the date of member's vote)