

Membership Covenant

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and having been baptised 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 (eg 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.



A loving community desiring to know God, share Christ and care for people

Church Membership

In a Baptist Church, the final decision making body, under Christ, is a meeting of all the church members. Baptists 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 and we can all pray and read God's word. At a formal level, membership is a recognition that an individual is ready to participate in this.

Far more than being a ritual or formality, church membership is a step of spiritual growth. 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.

As well as participating in decision making, membership of the church family is normally expressed through regular participation in the large family gatherings (Sunday Services), ongoing commitment to a smaller gathering from the family (sharing Bible, life and prayer) and helping out in what the family is doing.

We run "Knowing our Church" classes to welcome new members, which look at the mission and values of the church, as well as some of the issues basic to our local church body (including how to know if you are a Christian, communion, baptism and our church leadership and structure.) The pastor or an elder can let you know when the next class will be.

BAPTISM

Baptism, which means washing or plunging in water, is the ceremony by which new believers indicate their intent to live a new life in Jesus. In the Bible we see:

a) Baptism declares the gospel as it:

1) Acts out what Jesus has done

We remind ourselves that Jesus died and was buried, but then rose again. We also remind ourselves that he washes us clean.

2) Acts out what happens to us

Our sinful life is buried with Jesus and we now have new life with him (Romans 6:1-14, Colossians 2:12)

b) When we are baptised we publicly identify with Jesus

Jesus submitted to baptism to identify with you (Matt 3:13-17)

In baptism we identify with him in obedience (Matt 28:19-20)

c) Baptism is the rite of entry into the visible church

(Assumed in Romans 6 and 1 Corinthians 12)

Please see the pastor or one of the elders if you would like to be baptised.

But what if I have been "christened"?

Baptism is both a symbol of entry into the church and a public declaration. Some churches separate these into infant christening and a later confirmation. Romans 6 convinces me that the symbolism of baptism by immersion is the most biblical. If you were baptised (and/or confirmed) in another church, I would encourage you to ask yourself:

1) Did those ceremonies serve as a real commitment to Jesus for me?

2) Did those ceremonies serve as an entry into active involvement in the local church?

If you answer yes to both these questions and do not wish to be baptised by immersion, then here at Margaret River Baptist you are still welcome to become a church member after making a public declaration of your faith.

Where and when?

Throughout the Bible, baptism took place very soon after becoming a Christian. Water baptism is an outer symbol of the work God is doing inside you, so variations in practical details are not critical. You can be baptised at the beach, in the river, in a pool or in a church service (which the congregation love). Usually you share what God has done in saving you and then undergo the simple ceremony as your Christian friends celebrate with you.



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Statement of 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.