



Membership at Bethel Christian Church

Becoming a member of a church is a way of expressing your loving commitment to a local body of believers; to participating in its mission; and to willingly being under the authority and pastoral care of our leaders (Hebrews 13:17). Membership helps the Elders in their task of shepherding the flock, under the ultimate authority of Jesus, our Good Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-2).

Members of a local church are in a covenant relationship with each other; this involves such things as:

1. Working and praying for the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)
2. Being devoted to one another in brotherly love; with humility and gentleness patiently bearing with each other, forgiving, encouraging and building one another up, exercising watchfulness over each other and admonishing one another when necessary. (Luke 17:3; Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Peter 1:22)
3. Not neglecting to gather together, or to pray for ourselves and others. (Colossians 4:2; Hebrews 10:25)
4. Making use of your spiritual gifts in order to build one another up in love (Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12)
5. Supporting families in bringing up children and youth in the training and instruction of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends. (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Peter 3:1)
6. Rejoicing with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, helping to carry each other's burdens. (Romans 12:15)
7. Defending and maintaining an evangelical ministry in the church by supporting and upholding the preaching and teaching of the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:2)
8. Contributing cheerfully, generously and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations. (Matthew 28:19; Luke 12:33; 2 Corinthians 9:7)

Membership is required for anyone taking on a leadership role in the church.

To become a member of Bethel Christian Church, you simply need to acknowledge your agreement with our Objects and Doctrinal Basis, and your willingness to observe the conditions of membership (see over).



Bethel Christian Church uses the *Safe Ministry Training* framework to provide a safe environment for children and vulnerable people, and we expect all members to be aware of what this involves. All leaders at Bethel Christian

Church must be screened and trained in safe ministry practice. A full copy of the Church Constitution, and of the Safe Ministry Policy is freely available upon request.

From the Bethel Christian Church Constitution (2019)

2. OBJECTS

The objects of the Church are the advancement of Christ's Kingdom by:

- Spreading the Gospel,
- The nurture of the faith of Christian believers in the Scriptures, in prayers, in fellowship, in Christian service and worship;
- Cooperation with other churches and organisations of similar faith in evangelism and mission at home and overseas.

3. DOCTRINAL BASIS

- a. We affirm the historic ecumenical statements known as the Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed and Definition of Chalcedon, and acknowledge them as the central confession of the universal Christian Church.

In addition:

- b. We believe in the Old and New Testaments as inspired of God and wholly trustworthy, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
- c. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- d. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man inseparably joined in one person for ever.
- e. We believe that humanity was created in the image of God, that we sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
- f. We believe in the personality of the devil and the universality and heinousness of sin.
- g. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.
- h. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith, and that all who by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and are adopted as children of God.
- i. We believe in the physical resurrection of our Lord, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
- j. We believe in the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to gather His elect, to manifest His Kingdom in power and glory, to judge the world in righteousness, and to renew the whole creation
- k. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the impenitent.
- l. We believe that the Church is the community of all who have been born again through faith in Christ and have been formed by His Spirit into one body, of which He is the head, and that the Church is commissioned to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.
- m. We believe that the gift of marriage, as defined by the Scriptures, is a covenant between one man and one woman for life, and is the only form of marriage that is a true expression of the image of Christ and the church.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- a. The membership of the Church shall be open to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, who accept the objectives and doctrines of this Church, and who are committed to worship and service within the context of this Church. Authority to approve applicants for, and to accept transfer of or removal or resignation from membership, shall rest with the Church Council.
- b. All communicant members of the Church will be eligible to vote at the General Meeting of the Church.
- c. Associate membership shall be open to those who attend meetings of the Church regularly, and are in sympathy with its objectives and doctrines.
- d. Associate members will be eligible to speak in the General meeting of the Church, and vote on any matter concerning finance or property, but not in the election of a pastor, elders and deacons, nor in changes relating to the Constitution.

- e. Any member shall have their membership cancelled or changed to Associate if they cease participation in Church activities for an extended period of time.
- f. The chairman of the Church Council (see 9b.) or his nominee shall be responsible for maintaining a formal register of full and associate members.

13. DISCIPLINE

Those members who should act against the teaching of the Bible, or against the objects and doctrines of the Church, shall, as deemed fit by the Pastor and the elders and deacons, be exhorted, admonished, or disciplined; or if deemed necessary by a unanimous vote of the Church Council, be removed from membership. This action does not preclude attendance at public meetings of the Church, unless their presence poses a risk to the safety or wellbeing of Church members.

A couple of 'secondary matters'.

At Bethel Christian Church we acknowledge that sincere, Bible-believing Christians may differ over their interpretation of some matters that are not central to the Gospel, and that these differences should not hinder fellowship. We welcome into membership anyone who may differ on the following two matters, however we ask members not to teach or promote different views in a way that causes division or confusion within the body.

4. SACRAMENTS

The Church Sacraments include:

- a. Baptism. The Church believes that those who have the assurance of salvation should be baptised. Authority to accept candidates for baptism shall rest with the Pastor who performs the baptism. The Church recognises both forms of baptism, and candidates for baptism shall themselves choose to be baptised either by effusion or by immersion.
- b. Holy communion. The Church follows the teachings of the Holy Scriptures in observing the Holy Communion. The emblems of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are to be taken in faith by believers.

13. THE CHURCH'S STAND ON 'SPIRITUAL GIFTS'

- a. The Bethel Christian Church believes that God the Holy Spirit gives to whomsoever He chooses, whensoever He chooses, either temporarily or permanently whichever gifts from the list of gifts of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament that He chooses to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
- b. In the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, as in all other activity the admonition of 1 Corinthians 13 is emphasised. 'If I speak in the tongues of man and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I am nothing.'