



mountpleasant
baptist church

MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

together



Introduction

We are pleased you are considering becoming a member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (MPBC). The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with the necessary information to apply for church membership and is structured under five key headings:

- Why Church Membership?
- Requirements for Church Membership
- Responsibilities of Church Members
- The Biblical Foundations of Church Membership
- Church Membership Application Process

A “Church Application Form” and our “Statement of Faith” are attached.

1. Why Church Membership?

Universal Church Membership

To be a Christian is to be a member of the universal church, the body of Christ. All who believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord automatically become part of Christ’s body by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. The body of Christ transcends race, nationality and all other barriers.

Local Church Membership

The local church is a microcosm of the universal church that has been placed in a local community. The universal church is made visible in local churches. The importance of the local church is seen by the fact that most of the New Testament letters are addressed to local churches.

Despite the fact that many of the instructions given in the New Testament would be superfluous if Christians were not part of a

local church, some have questioned the importance of being a member of a local church. We believe it's important to join and commit to a local church, and to regularly meet together for the following reasons:

- To be part of a spiritual church family to be supported and encouraged, and to support and encourage others
- To be built up and equipped in Christ
- To have a place to call “home” and belong in community
- To discover and develop personal and spiritual gifts for works of service
- For accountability in order to grow and mature in Christ

Additionally, to function, a local church must be duly constituted in accordance with the law of the State of Western Australia and maintain a membership roll to ensure proper governance.

2. Requirements for Church Membership

The requirements are outlined in our Church Constitution and can be summarised as follows:

- To have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- To agree with the MPBC Statement of Faith
- To practise believers' baptism
- To be committed to fulfilling the responsibilities of membership

3. Responsibilities of Church Members

Identification with Christ and His Church

Jesus often spoke of the importance of being identified with Him as His disciple. Church membership can be part of that identification of who we are in Christ. Membership is a public statement of allegiance to Christ and his church, signifying agreement with what the church believes and values.

Engagement in the Life of the Church

A member not only enjoys the blessings and benefits of being part of the church community, but also accepts there are responsibilities associated with the ongoing functioning of the church.

When a person is recognised and accepted into membership, that new member appropriately engages in the life and ministry of the church, recognising the body is made up of many who work together under Christ who is the head of the church.

This engagement includes regular attendance at Sunday services, prayer, care for one another, financial support, involvement where possible in Connect groups and serving in the church community in accordance with the giftings and the capacities God has given.

Involvement in the Appointment of Key Leaders

Attendance, as far as is possible, at duly constituted Church Family Meetings, where quorums are required and key decisions are made, is crucial to the proper functioning of the church. It is at these meetings that:

- Church Board Members are elected to office
- The Senior Pastor and the Executive Pastor are appointed
- The Church's Annual Financial Budget is approved
- Other significant matters as required are discussed.

Accountability to Christ and His Church

Being a member means being willing to follow Jesus and by His grace live by the beliefs and standards of the church. Membership helps makes accountability possible, and accountability is essential for maintaining unity and Christ-likeness within the church.

Our desire is to be known by our love for one another as members of the household of God, and to be those who live out the life of Christ in our daily lives wherever the Lord has placed us. This includes in our families, in the community and in our places of employment.

Moving to another Local Church

There are various reasons why members may relinquish membership and move to another local church, including moving home or being called to another church community. Members are encouraged to move well by talking to a Pastor, being prayed for and allowing our membership roll to be updated (for voting purposes) and membership transferred as is permissible.

4. The Biblical Foundations of Church Membership

Members concur with the following Biblical foundations:

- Realising my sin and guilt before God, I have confessed and repented and received the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore my sins on the cross, as my personal Saviour (Romans 3:19, 23; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24 & John 1:12).
- I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as Lord of my life and seek to confess Him before others (Romans 10:9).
- I accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as my final authority in all matters of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:16).
- I trust in the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in me, to keep me and lead me in the way of holiness and love in all the relationships of life (John 14:26; 16:13; Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:22-23).
- I recognise my responsibility to make diligent use of the gifts God has given me, and to be regular in my attendance at the services of the church (1 Thess.5:17; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 10:25 & 1 Cor. 11:26).

- I acknowledge my brothers and sisters in Christ in this place as my God-given family and commit myself to live in meaningful fellowship with them (Romans 12:4-5, 9-13; Acts 2:42).
- I recognise my responsibility to pray regularly for the work of this church, for its ministers, officers and members (Ephesians 6:18-19).
- I recognise my financial responsibility to participate in the worship and witness of the church by systematic giving as the Lord may prosper me (1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 9:7).
- I recognise my responsibility by all means to serve the Lord through His Church and to extend His kingdom here and throughout the world (Matt 28:18-20; Rom 12:6-13; Luke 12:4).

Conscious that in my own strength I cannot please God, I now, in complete dependence on Divine Grace, accept and affirm the above foundations of church membership.

5. Church Membership Application Process

Set out below is the Membership process to be followed.

- The applicant should attend a membership class or one-on-one session and complete the “Application for Membership Form” with an approved MPBC member – usually one of the Pastors.
- The Application for Membership Form must be signed by one of the Pastors recommending the applicant for membership and be approved by the Senior Pastor or the Executive Pastor.
- Once the certificate has been completed and signed, it will be presented in accordance with your preference:
 - at the next available church service
 - at your Connect group (Small Group)
 - by one of the Pastors outside of a church service
- The applicant becomes a member upon receiving the duly completed and signed certificate.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name (please print): _____

Street Address: _____

Suburb: _____ **Postcode:** _____ **Date of birth:** ___/___/___

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

I wish to become a member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (MPBC).

I have publicly confessed my faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

I was baptised by immersion at _____ in the year of _____

I was a practicing member of the _____ denomination and was baptised in the year of _____ by a mode of baptism I genuinely believe is sufficient.

I am desirous of being baptised but am prevented from so doing by a disability.

(Tick whichever applies)

I am committed to the unity, beliefs, life and ministry of MPBC.

I accept the responsibilities of being a Church Member at MPBC.

I have completed a Membership class, having read, understood and agreed with the matters contained in the Membership Handbook in discussion with:

_____ **(Name of Pastor).**

Signature of Applicant: _____ **Date:** ___/___/___

I would like to be presented with my membership certificate
(tick your preference)

- During a Church Service
- At my Connect Group (Small Group)
- By a Pastor outside of a Church Service

Confirmation and Recommendation by a Pastor

I confirm that the above applicant has completed a Membership class and has confirmed to me that they have read, understood and agree with the requirements and responsibilities of membership as outlined in the Church Membership Handbook.

I have no hesitation in recommending the applicant for Church Membership.

Name of Pastor: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

Office Use Only

Approved by Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor _____

Certificate/s ordered: Date: ____/____/____

HUB updated: _____

Certificate and letter presented: Date: ____/____/____

STATEMENT OF FAITH

As followers of Jesus, we hold that:

1. Jesus Christ alone is head of the Church.
2. The Church is the community called into being by God. In both its universal and local expressions, it consists of persons who have personally and knowingly accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and have pledged themselves to worship, follow and serve him as a priestly community.
3. By his high-priestly ministry, Jesus Christ has opened the way for every believer to approach God the Father directly through him.
4. Jesus Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct in the life of both churches and individuals.
5. He has given to all churches and to every individual the right and responsibility to understand and to do God's will. Therefore, being accountable to God, Christians are not to despise their fellow believers but to accept one another as Christ's servants, allowing each other freedom of conscience. God has given to human governments the right and responsibility to promote what is just and good but not to coerce belief or practice contrary to conscience.
6. There is only one God. He is infinitely good and great, and has revealed himself to be personal and triune in essential being, eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
7. God speaks to us through the Bible, the sixty-six Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Being God-breathed they are fully trustworthy and supremely authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct.
8. God created the heavens and the earth and all that exists in them. He continues to care for and govern his creation, working out his purposes for all he has made.

9. God created humans in his image, male and female, intending that we live in fellowship with him. However, tempted by Satan, God's adversary, the first man and woman disobeyed God. As a result we all sin, falling short in our responsibilities to love God and neighbour and to care for the world.
10. Despite our sin, which alienates us from God and rightly deserves his judgment, God, because of his grace and great love for all people, sent his Son into the world to save us. The incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, was conceived by the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit. Fully human and fully divine, he lived on earth a sinless life of perfect obedience. He died on the cross as a sacrifice on our behalf and in our place, redeeming us from the penalty and power of sin and triumphing over Satan. He was raised bodily from the dead and ascended to his Father's presence where he lives forever as our great High Priest and reigns as Lord of all.
11. The Gospel, the good news concerning Jesus Christ and his reconciling work, is God's powerful way of bringing salvation. All who respond in repentance and faith God sets right with himself, forgiving and cleansing them from sin, giving them his Holy Spirit and eternal life, and incorporating them into his church.
12. The Holy Spirit gives new life to all believers and resides in them permanently. He makes them holy, and enables them to grow into the likeness of Christ. Through his Spirit God empowers all his people for life and witness, granting them various gifts for the well-being, functioning and mission of the church.
13. While all believers belong to the universal church, God gathers them into local churches which exist to worship and serve him. Jesus Christ, the head of the church, has established both baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of believers on their profession of faith, an act of identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It involves commitment to a life of discipleship in fellowship with his people. In the Lord's Supper, believers remember Christ's sacrificial death, share in fellowship with their risen Lord and with one another, and look forward to his return.

14. All Christians are commanded to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and their neighbours as themselves. We discover what love means in practice through searching the Scriptures, which reveal God's character and will. Such love includes the responsibility of every Christian to participate in the proclamation of the Good News throughout the world.
15. Jesus Christ will return visibly and victoriously from his Father's presence to gather his people to himself and to complete his conquest of sin and evil. All people, both believers and unbelievers, will be raised bodily and be judged by God. Believers will enjoy eternal blessedness in God's presence, while unbelievers will suffer the eternal punishment of exclusion from his presence. The whole creation will be so transformed that righteousness will characterise the new heavens and the new earth for ever.



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