

Welton Baptist Church



***A Guide to becoming a Member of
Welton Baptist Church***

Why Church Membership?

Welcome!

We are so pleased that you are considering membership at Welton Baptist Church. This booklet is a guide to help you with this important decision. But you may be wondering why you should take such a step in the first place.

The Bible teaches us that when we become a Christian, we also become members of the Body of Christ, His Church throughout the world. However, we believe that throughout the New Testament there is also an implicit encouragement for Christians to commit to a local church. Becoming a member is one way of doing this.

Becoming a member of a church is a commitment to worship and serve with the other members and to carry out God's will and vision in that place and through that people. It also enables us to develop and exercise gifts and ministries with the mutual support of other Christians.

This is a two-way commitment between the church and the individual members who make up its number and we would encourage you to read through this booklet and prayerfully consider joining the membership here at Welton.



Who are we?

In the 1960's the membership of Welton Baptist Church was made up of a few elderly local people who were faithfully keeping open the chapel building in West Road, Welton and seeking God's guidance for the future. Later several young families moved into the area and joined the church. Since then the fellowship has grown steadily and in 1995 our Sunday morning congregation grew too large for the chapel and we moved to Norton Hill School. We've since moved again and now meet at Somervale School

After several years without a Pastor, the Church appointed Chas Coomes in 1980 and he served the church until his retirement in September 1999. Mike Howell then led our church through a time of continued growth until 2016. Our present Pastor, who generally uses the term 'team leader', is Matt Hebditch. As well as leading the team at Welton, Matt helps to train and coach church leaders and church planters overseas (Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia).



Today the fellowship has a large proportion of young people and young families. There is also a lively group of older people who are actively seeking to serve and equip others. We have good links with the local Baptist Association (WEBA) and are members of The Evangelical Alliance - a national body with a membership of several hundred churches. We are also committed to our local Churches Together group, and networking with other organisations and churches with shared vision.

We follow Christian teaching as found in the Bible (See 'What do we believe?'), and are passionate about seeing people – believers and not-yet-believers, encountering God and seeing their lives transformed by God's grace. Mission is at the heart of the values and vision of the church.

We are keen that people joining our Membership should share our values and vision of what God wants to do among us. This means getting involved as God leads and embracing the responsibilities and privileges of belonging to the local body of Christ.

What do we believe?

Our doctrinal basis of faith is a largely derived from the *Evangelical Alliance*.

We believe in

1. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
3. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God—fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
4. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
5. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ — born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
6. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
7. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
8. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
9. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
10. The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers — given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
11. The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and separation from God for the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

Also...

We also believe that Jesus Christ left certain commands for His church to obey, including the command to be baptised; and the command to remember Him in sharing Communion.

Baptism - Baptism by total immersion is encouraged for those who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and are now living it out in their everyday life.

Those thinking of being baptised can chat with one of the Elders and are invited to attend a short Baptismal Course.



Child Dedication - Infant baptism or christening is not practiced in this church, but Christian parents desiring the dedication of their children are encouraged that this is a great step for them as a family and for the wider church family. A dedication service gives the fellowship an opportunity to pray for the child and also bear public witness to the parent's wish to bring up their child in the Christian faith. If you are considering dedicating your child or Children, please speak to one of the leadership team.

Communion – Communion is regularly taken at church meetings and Christians who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are welcome and encouraged to participate.

What are our 'Values' & 'Vision'?

As a church we believe God has given us **vision** and **values** to guide us forward. So, what's the difference between 'vision' and 'values'? Our values are those things *fixed* by the Bible – they don't change. Our 'vision' is *shaped* by the Bible, and is able to adjust and adapt as we move forward.

Our core **values** are expressed in 3 simple terms:

Disciple Making

Therefore go and make disciples of all nationsAnd surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'
Mt 28:19-20

Church Planting

The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Tim 2:2

World Reaching

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; & you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, & in all Judea & Samaria, & to the ends of the earth.
Acts 1:8

The vision that flows from these values is what we do week-in, week-out through our discipleship groups, outreach, worship gatherings, prayer, and through the everyday flow of life.

Summed up on the right are phrases that capture the 'how to' of our **vision**. These may produce as many answers as questions! This is good, as we hope this booklet simply adds to an ongoing conversation we would love to have with you.

We would encourage you to have a read, pray, note down any questions, and let's talk some more about the vision and values together.

Disciple Making

Small Group
Priority

Always growing in
love

For HIS glory first

Disciple making IN +
OUTSIDE programs

Testimony culture

Regular Baptisms

Supernatural
Expectation

(confidence)

Increased love &
literacy of Word

Leaders who model
+ release

Church Planting

Generous

Kingdom
Partnerships

Training to equip
the norm

New expressions of
church from scratch

Support 2 – 4 local
churches to re-plant

Birthing, not
reproducing

Reflect 'Resource
Church' goal

World Reaching

50% church cross-
culture experience

Form 'pathways' to
mission

High levels
ownership

Core leadership
Led / shaped

Humility to ask for
'help to help'

Regular / varied
interaction

Season of pruning
for growth

Spirit-led & fearless

Who's who?

The main thing is that Jesus is Lord, and His love for people is what motivates us and gives us a passion to be fruitful in living for Him.

Below are a handful of those who make Welton a 'body' which believes passionately in a 'priesthood of all believers', where all, rather than a few are using and growing their God given gifts.

* ***The Eldership team*** are those with leadership gifting who have been appointed by the Members Meeting. They are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church, sharing the pastoral care and seeking God's leading from His Word, in prayer, and by listening to others within the church.

* ***The Team Leader*** has broad responsibility for overseeing the leadership team of elders, and helping to form and steer the overall vision of the church.

* ***The Deacons*** are also gifted leaders, who have been elected by the Members Meeting to be both practical and spiritual leaders in the church. This combination enables them to help in the day to day running of the church, whilst giving a spiritual lead.

* ***The House Group Leaders*** are those who lead our mid-week groups. Housegroups are our primary way of growing as disciples and disciple-makers – in short, they are the 'life-blood' of the church.

* ***Trustees*** are those with the legal and financial oversight of the church.

* ***Church Administrators*** are employed by the church to undertake the various tasks required to facilitate clear and accurate communication and correspondence.



Who can become a Member?

All those who are 16 years or older and have a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptised are welcome to become members of the Church. In exceptional circumstances, an individual may outwardly express their faith in, and relationship with Christ in accordance with another church tradition. If they express a desire to become a Church member they will be considered for Membership subject to the specific recommendation of the Church leadership team. Such members will be asked to give prayerful consideration to baptism in the light of New Testament teaching.

If someone desires to become a part of the Church family we would expect them to accept the values and vision of the church. (See 'What are our values and vision?') and recognise the need to be continually transformed by the love of God.

Where people are transferring from another local fellowship/church we normally ask that they wait for a period of six months from first attending before being received into the Church membership.

What does it mean to be a Member?

* **Be there...** (*Hebrews 10:19-26*)

Worship is a natural desire for Christians and worshipping together with brothers and sisters in the Lord is high on our list of priorities. With this in mind, we encourage members to be regular attenders at services of public worship and Housegroups. These meetings are the primary places for ongoing discipleship, and where many other fruitful connections are made.

* **Be in prayer...** (*Ephesians 6:18*)

Meetings for corporate prayer take place regularly in the church and in Housegroups. We do not see these as optional extras to the life of the church but as a key to renewal and our mission vision. It is our responsibility and joy, corporately and individually, to pray for God's work, God's people and the advance of God's Kingdom on earth.

cont...

*** Be holy...** (an ongoing transformation) (1Peter 2:9-12)

We have been called out of darkness into His light. As such our lives should publicly demonstrate this unfolding truth. With humility, members lives should communicate the grace of God, as the Holy Spirit leads, redeems and shapes us.

*** Supporting leadership...** (1 Timothy 5:17)

We recognise from the Bible that God appoints and anoints leaders to serve and equip the church. The membership is encouraged to pray for the leaders and support them as they give direction, and seek to serve the church family.

***Be a servant... (Romans 12)**

As part of the Body of Christ, we each have a responsibility to serve one another. Each person has an essential role to play in the church and has an effect on the rest of the Body. Every ministry, whether public or practical, is considered to be equally important and our desire is for everyone to be involved in some way.

*** Be generous... (Malachi 3:10,11 / 2 Corinthians 9:6-13)**

The Bible encourages us to give of our time, our talents, goods, and wealth in the light of God's gracious gift of Jesus our Saviour. We teach the principle of tithing as a helpful biblical guideline but mainly encourage joyful, prayerfully considered giving to the church. We encourage tax payers to give using 'Gift Aid' as this increases their gift at no extra cost to themselves. – details are available from the Church Treasurer.

Privileges of Membership.

At Welton we seek to extend a warm welcome and express genuine care and support to everyone who attends. So, what is so important about Membership?

Membership is not merely about what the Church expects from you. As a Member you will also have expectations from the Church and we will seek to meet those expectations as the Lord directs us.



Because the church is people and not a building, we encourage everyone to live in love and fellowship with other members, praying for one another, ready to forgive and be forgiven, and in all ways seeking to foster the Spirit of Jesus.

We are also keen for people to get involved in the various activities of the Church, according to their calling, gifts and opportunities



Member's Meetings.

These are held four times a year and are an opportunity to share vision, worship and pray together. The leadership team present reports and there is opportunity for the membership to share their insight.

The **Annual Church Meeting** is normally held in April where the annual statement of accounts is presented. This meeting will also include the election of Deacons, election of Church Secretary and Church Treasurer.

All Members are encouraged to make every effort to attend and participate in these meetings or to send their apologies to the Church Secretary if they are unable to attend.

Privileges of Membership.

** Joining Membership involves four simple steps....*

STEP 1 - *Inform the Team Leader or one of the Elders that you would like to consider becoming a Member. One of the team will then arrange to spend some time to discuss membership with you.*

STEP 2 – *With the agreement of both you and the leadership team, you will be invited to attend the next Members Meeting where you will be received into Membership.*

STEP 3 - *The present membership will be informed of your desire to become a member via a newsletter which is sent in advance of each Members Meeting. They then have the opportunity to offer you and the Leadership their support and counsel.*

STEP 4 - *Finally, on a Sunday following the Members Meeting, you will be received into Membership publicly during the morning service*