

WELTON BAPTIST CHURCH



A Guide to Becoming a Member of this Church

Membership

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 make such a commitment 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 make a commitment to a local church.

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 and counsel 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

Yours in Christ



Pastor

Welton Baptist Church

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 for our morning service.

After several years without a Pastor, the Church appointed Chas Coomes in 1980 and he served the church until his retirement in September 1999. Our present Pastor, Mike Howell, and his wife Rachel joined us in November 1999.

Today the fellowship has a large proportion of young people and young families, and is vigorous and robust. There is also a lively group of older people who give good care and encouragement. We are not a part of the Baptist Union but have links with the local Baptist Association and we are members of The Evangelical Alliance - a national body with a membership of several hundred churches.

We follow basic Christian teaching as found in the Bible (See 'What do we believe?'), believing firmly in Jesus Christ as the only way to know God for salvation. We also believe in the work of the Holy Spirit and encourage the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit as experienced in the New Testament.

God has established this church to serve Him in the surrounding community, and He has given us a vision for that service that has at its centre a particular call to worship God, to earnest prayer, to build Christian fellowship amongst us and to evangelise and care for God's world.

We are anxious that people joining our Membership should share our vision of what God wants to do among us, assenting to what we believe and accepting the responsibilities and privileges of belonging.

What Do We Believe?

Our doctrinal basis is that of the *Evangelical Alliance*. We accept the revelation of the triune God given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and confess the historic faith set forth in the Gospel. We here assert doctrines which we regard as crucial to the understanding of the faith, and which should issue in mutual love, practical Christian service and evangelical concern.

We believe in

- The sovereignty and grace of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in creation, providence, revelation, redemption and final judgement.
- The divine inspiration of the Holy Scripture and its consequent entire trustworthiness and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- The universal sinfulness and guilt of fallen man, making him subject to God's wrath and condemnation.
- The substitutionary sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God as the sole and all-sufficient ground of redemption from the guilt and power of sin, and from its eternal consequences.
- The justification of the sinner solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ crucified and risen from the dead.
- The illuminating, regenerating, indwelling and sanctifying work of God the Holy Spirit.
- The priesthood of all believers, who form the universal Church, the Body of which Christ is the Head and which is committed by His command to the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world.
- The expectation of the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory.

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 whose lives bear evidence to their Christian profession.

Any Christian believer desiring baptism should approach the Pastor or one of the Elders to discuss this matter. Those seeking baptism are expected 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 to the Lord Jesus Christ should approach the Pastor or one of the Elders. 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.

Communion –The celebration of communion is regularly observed and all Christians who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are welcome and encouraged to participate.

What Is Our Vision?

We are convinced that faithful attention to the following aspects of our vision will enable us to fulfil all that the Lord desires to do among us and through us. Each Church Member will be expected to share and participate in this vision.

HOUSEGROUPS: (Acts 2:46) *"..They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,.."*

To encourage one another to build strong relationships, show practical care, and to share in study, outreach and prayer.

FELLOWSHIP: (John 13:35) *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

To encourage one another to spend time together, enjoying the presence of God and each other in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

PERSONAL HOLINESS: (1Thess. 1:5b) *"You know how we lived among you for your sake."*

To encourage one another to conduct our daily lives in such a way that the Lord is glorified and His people are seen to be like Him.

EVANGELISM & SOCIAL ACTION: (Matthew 28:19) *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,.."* (Jeremiah 22:16) *"He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD."*

To encourage one another to communicate God's salvation and compassion to the local community and the wider world in a way that is both relevant and creative.

PRAYER: *(Colossians 4:2) “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”*

To encourage one another to actively engage in concerted and faithful prayer both in our individual lives and corporately as a church.

WORSHIP: *(1Corinthians 14:6) “What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.”*

To encourage one another to celebrate God’s presence through expressive and creative praise and worship.

TEACHING: *(Colossians 1:28) “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”*

To encourage one another to attain spiritual maturity through biblical instruction and practical discipleship.

BUILDING: *(Psalm 127:1) “Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labour in vain.”*

To encourage one another to consider any and all church buildings as both places of worship and resources for the local community.

MEMBERSHIP: *(Romans 12:5) “..so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

To encourage one another to commit to and participate in the ongoing vision of Welton Baptist Church.

Christ Centred—Gospel Hearted

Who's Who?

The main thing is that Jesus is Lord. We are responsible to Him, we worship Him, we seek that everything in the church is done to His glory.

- *The Pastor* has broad responsibility for the preaching and teaching ministry in the church, the pastoral care and day-to-day work of the church, shared with the Elders, Deacons, Housegroup Leaders and others.
- *The Elders* are members 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 Deacons* are members who have been elected by the Members Meeting to specially look after the day-to-day practical running of the church – to see that the building is clean, warm and welcoming, and that administration arrangements are properly attended to.
- *The Housegroup Leaders* are those who lead our mid-week Housegroups and are the initial contact point for pastoral care matters.
- *The Church Secretary and Treasurer* are Deacons or Elders with special responsibilities for supervising the day-to-day running of the church, and for the accounts, respectively.
- *The Outreach Worker* is employed by the church to co-ordinate and oversee our current outreach activities, to develop the established links the church has with the local community, as well as sharpening the evangelistic focus of the whole fellowship.
- *The Church Administrator* is employed by the church to undertake the various administrative tasks required to facilitate clear and accurate communication and correspondence.

Who Can Become a Member?

All those who are 16 years or older and who profess repentance towards God, have a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who have been baptised are welcome to become members of the Church. However, in exceptional circumstances, where an individual has outwardly expressed their faith in, and their relationship with, Christ in accordance with another church tradition, and expresses a desire to become a Church member they will be considered for Membership subject to the specific recommendation of the Pastor and Elders. Such members will be asked to give earnest and 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 *Vision,* (See 'What is our vision?') assent to the responsibilities outlined below and be living a life that bears evidence of their Christian profession.

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.

To assist you in making this commitment you will be expected to attend a short ***Membership Course***, based on this booklet. These courses will normally be held four times a year.

What Does It Mean To Be a Member?

Be there... (Hebrews 1:19-26)

Worship is the highest calling of a Christian and worshipping together with brothers and sisters in the Lord should be high on our list of priorities. Every opportunity should therefore be taken and, unless precluded by circumstances, regular attendance at services of public worship, and at Housegroups will be expected.

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

Meetings for corporate prayer take place regularly in the church and in Housegroups and they should not be seen as an optional extra to the life of the church but as a key to renewal and revival.

It is our responsibility, corporately and individually, to pray each day for God's work, God's people and the downfall and destruction of the kingdom of darkness.

Be holy... (1Peter 2:9-12)

Our testimony to the world should be above reproach. We have been called out of darkness into His light and our lives should publicly declare and demonstrate the fact. Every members life should advertise to the world what their church believes.

Be under authority... (Hebrews 13:17 / 1 Timothy 5:17)

The Pastor and Elders are appointed by God to lead and care for God's people. It is therefore the duty of each member to submit to the Pastor and Elders and respect their responsibility to the church in areas of teaching, church discipline, guidance etc.

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 for good or ill. There are many teams functioning in various departments of the church. Every ministry, whether public or practical, is considered to be equally important.

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 the supreme sacrifice of our Saviour. We teach the principle of tithing as a biblical guideline for our giving and encourage giving by 'Gift Aid' (which enables people who pay income tax to increase their giving to the church at no extra cost to themselves. – details of this are available from the Church Treasurer)

As a Church we donate a minimum of 20% of our income to Missions each year.

The 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.

Membership allows and encourages you to share in the responsibility of planning and decision making by attending Member's meetings.

At these meetings we share news of developments in the life of the church, seek God's will together and the election of Deacons and appointment of Elders takes place.

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 take an active part in the various activities of the Church, according to their calling, gifts and opportunities. As a Member you may also be asked to lead a ministry under the oversight of the Pastor and Church Elders.

Members' Meetings

These are held four times a year and include reports from the Pastor & Elders, Church Treasurer, Church Secretary and Youth Worker.

The Annual Church Meeting is normally held in April or May 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 expected 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.

How Do I become a Member?

Becoming a Member involves four simple steps....

STEP 1 - Inform the Pastor or one of the Elders that you would like to consider becoming a Member. You will then be given a copy of the booklet 'A Guide to becoming a Member of this Church' along with a copy of the church's charitable Constitution.

STEP 2 - Once you have had sufficient time to read through the above documents a meeting will be arranged so that any questions or need for clarification can be addressed. The present membership will be informed of your 'enquiry' either by letter or at the next Members Meeting, so that they may offer you and the Leadership their support and counsel.

STEP 3 - On the satisfactory completion of the above meeting, and with the agreement of both you and the Elders, you will be invited to attend the next Members Meeting where you will be received into Membership.

STEP 4 - Finally, on a Sunday following the Members Meeting, you will be received into Membership publicly during the morning service when you will also be presented with a Membership Certificate to record the event.



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