

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.
He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.

JEREMIAH 17:7-8

CHURCH LIFE

Welcome to Church Life at Southport Church of Christ. Our desire is to assist you in your decision in making SCC your spiritual home.

As we have people coming from many different church backgrounds and some from no church background, this booklet has been designed to clearly explain to you who Southport Church of Christ is, what we believe, and what it means to be a member. We trust that after listening to our heart, you might be encouraged to identify with us in our work for the kingdom of Christ in this area.

The following topics will be explained in the booklet:

ONE

Our Mission, Vision, Values, and Beliefs.

TWO

- a. What it means to be a Christian
- b. The significance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

THREE

The concept and responsibilities of formal church membership.



ONE

MISSION, VISION, VALUES, BELIEFS

The ministry of Southport Church of Christ, along with our future development and planning, is governed by the following three statements:

PURPOSE

The Church Of Christ Southport exists to glorify God

MISSION

Following Jesus...Transforming Lives

VISION

To be a people who practice the following qualities in our lives:

- **Surrender** (UP dimension)
- **Celebration** (IN dimension)
- **Compassion** (OUT dimension)

VALUES

Because we are Christ-centered, we are:

- **LOVING** - God is love: ask the question, 'what does love require of me?'
- **GRACIOUS** - in relating to our world today, the world needs to see grace in action, we can't just share truth without relationship.
- **GENEROUS** - Christ demonstrated generosity in His ministry - and throughout history followers of Jesus have cared for society like no other group has.
- **REAL WITH EACH OTHER** - we seek to be honest and authentic with each other in our relationships.
- **COMMITTED TO EACH OTHER** - we strive for Church to be a safe place, where we are all about building community.



BEGINNINGS

Southport Church of Christ had its early beginnings on the Gold Coast in 1957 and since that time has, under God's grace, developed into an impactful local Church, known and respected not only in this locality but also throughout Australia.

Southport Church of Christ is an autonomous (self governing) local Church and is affiliated with 'the Churches of Christ in Australia', who, in turn, trace their history back to the 1830's where Christians in Britain and the USA were seeking with a common purpose the restoration of New Testament Christianity. They never saw themselves as commencing a denomination but rather thought of themselves as being part of the 'Restoration Movement', known as 'people of the Bible'. Here at Southport Church of Christ we still commit ourselves to practising the basics of New Testament Christianity.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Southport Church of Christ is firmly based on the Bible, which it accepts as the inspired Word of God, the sole authoritative basis for faith and practice. Here is a summary of the major tenets of our belief system. This is what we teach:

- The Bible is the inspired word of God and the supreme and final authority in faith and life;
- Belief in one God eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- That Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, is true God and true man;
- That man was created in the image of God; that he sinned; and thereby incurred not only physical death; but also spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, being sinners in thought, word and deed;
- That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood;
- In the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension to heaven, in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate;
- In the personal, imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to receive His Church and to judge the world;
- That all who come to repentance of sin, and faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, are born again of the Holy Spirit and baptised by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, thereby becoming children of God;
- In the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting condemnation of the lost.

TWO

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

A church family is made up of believers in Christ so it is critical that everyone clearly understands where he or she stands in relation to Jesus Christ.

1.1 A Christian believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God

- A Christian believes that Jesus is God (Romans 9:5, 10:9, 1 John 5:20, John 1:1, 10:30, Colossians 1:19, 2:9),
- equal in all respects to God the Father (John 12:44-46, 14:6-9).
- This belief in Jesus Christ as the Lord God is not negotiable (John 8:24, 3:18);
- it is only to those who so believe in him that the promises of salvation are given (John 1:12, 3:16, Acts 4:12, Romans 10:9, 1 John 4:2-3, 15; 5:1, 5, 10-12)

[The authority of Jesus Christ as the divine Lord over all, who demands and commands our total allegiance, is clearly portrayed in each of the Gospels. As an example, consider Mark's presentation: Jesus has authority over people (Mark 1:16-22, 2:14), over the truth (1:21,22), over evil spirits (1:23-39, 5:1-20, 7:24-30), over sickness and disability (1:29-31, 40-42, 3:1-5, 5:25-34, 8:22-26, 10:46-52), over sin (2:1-12), over God's law (2:18-22, 3:1-6), over nature (4:35-41, 6:30-52), and over death (5:35-42).]

1.2 A Christian trusts in the death of Jesus Christ as the only and complete way of salvation

- The death of Jesus Christ is historical fact (Mk 15:25, 33-38, 42-45).
- Jesus Christ died as a substitute for sinners, paying the death penalty for our sin (Mark 10:45, Romans 5:6, 8, 10, Hebrews 10:10, 1 Peter 2:24).

1.3 A Christian believes that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God

- This resurrection was predicted (Mark 10:32-34).
- It was witnessed by many (Luke 24, John 20:10-29, 1 Cor 15:3-8).
- It confirms that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 1:4).
- It confirms the validity of his death for sin.
- It confirms the real and present transfer, of those who trust in Christ, from 'death' to 'life' (John 5:24, Romans 5:17, 6:11, Colossians 3:1-3).
- It confirms the eternal resurrection life of the believer (John 14:19, 1 Corinthians 15:12-58).
- It confirms that Jesus will return as Judge (Acts 10:39-42, John 5:22- 27).

2. A Christian believes what the Bible says about mankind

- That no-one is 'good enough' to be considered good or righteous by God (Romans 3:10).
- That everyone has sinned (past tense) and continues to fall short (present tense) of the glory for which God created us (Romans 3:23, Isaiah 43:7, 1 John 1:8, 10).
- That God's just wrath and judgment is on all sin and unrighteousness (Romans 1:18, Ephesians 5:6).
- That no-one can be right with God by keeping the law (Rom 3:20, Galatians 3:10).

3. A Christian believes that God

- Loves all people and desires that all people come into a right relationship with Him (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9).
- Has demonstrated his love by sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), and still his enemies (Romans 5:10).
- Gives us salvation in Christ, because of the death of Christ, as sheer gift (Romans 5:17, Ephesians 1:6-8, 2:7-9).
- Gives us in Christ a salvation that is eternal, complete, and guaranteed (John 3:36, Hebrews 9:12, 15, 26, 10:10-18, Colossians 2:10, Romans 4:16), and in which there is no more punishment for sin (Romans 8:1).

4. A Christian is a person who personally trusted Jesus Christ

- Repenting of his/her former concept of God and acknowledging Jesus Christ alone as Lord and God.
- Repenting of his/her former attitude to God's law and sin, and acknowledging that they are, as God says, sinners.
- Acknowledging that in God's pure justice, they are guilty and worthy of God's condemnation.
- Gratefully receiving God's free gift of forgiveness of sin through the substitutionary death of Christ, and
- Trusting in that death alone for acceptance in the presence of God today and for eternity.
- Committing his/herself, as a true expression of true faith, to live from that time on under the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ.



TWO cont.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. BAPTISM

a. What is Christian Baptism?

There are different opinions among Christians about Christian Baptism. The Southport Church of Christ aligns itself with those who believe that Christian Baptism is the immersing in water of those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

b. Why do Christians baptise?

- Because Jesus was baptised (Matthew 3:13-17).
- Because Jesus commanded his disciples to baptise those who became disciples through their ministry (Matthew 28:19-20).
- Because the apostles commanded people turning to Christ to be baptised (Acts 2:28, 10:47-48).
- It was the normal practice of the apostles (Acts 8:12, 13, 36-38, 9:18, 16:15, 33, 18:8, 19:5).

c. What is the significance of Christian Baptism?

- In the culture of the New Testament world, to go through a rite of baptism indicated that one was changing one's god/religion. Christian Baptism was a real public declaration that one was rejecting one's previous belief system and taking Jesus Christ on board as one's God. In the records of Christian Baptism in Acts it is this public declaration of one's new allegiance to Jesus Christ that was significant.
- In the New Testament letters a symbolic significance of Christian Baptism was taught, in order to remind believers of their identification with Christ. This symbolic significance was two-fold: [1] that going down under the water symbolised the union of the believer with Christ in his death for sin, and [2] that coming up out of the water symbolises the entering into new life that the believer has in Christ (Romans 6:1-11, Colossians 2:11-13, 3:1-4).

2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

a. What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is an ordinance, that is, a holy (religious) ceremony or rite, in which believers in Christ eat a small piece of bread and drink a small cup of juice.

b. Why do we do it?

- Because Jesus Christ commanded it (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-22, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

c. What is the significance of the Lord's Supper?

- The bread symbolises the body of Christ, which was given (by God as a sin offering) for us.
- The wine symbolises the blood of Christ; this blood is described as being 'poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins', and as 'the blood of the new covenant'. The blood thus speaks of the substitutionary, sacrificial death of Christ by which atonement for sins is procured, and which brings in the new covenant of grace.
- Because of its rich symbolism the Lord's Supper is thus a constant reminder of the effectiveness of Christ's death for us.
- Because of its rich symbolism, the Lord's Supper is thus also a constant proclamation of his death and of God's purpose in his death.
- The Lord's Supper is only necessary 'until he comes' (1 Corinthians 11:26).



THREE

FORMAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The greatest commitment that anybody can make is to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and know the blessings of forgiveness, the gift of eternal life and becoming part of the Body of Christ. This Body of Christ is called the 'church universal', which is invisible and immeasurable. Membership into this invisible Church is gained when personal faith is exercised in receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

At Southport Church of Christ we recognise the truth of the 'church universal', and welcome all Christians as being members of Christ's Body, knowing that we are 'all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28).

We also recognize the truth of the 'local church', where Christians meet together in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, under His Headship, following the guidelines of the New Testament, establishing an 'ekklesia', a 'called out' assembly of Christian people. The local church is to be, in principle, a replica, a reflection, of the 'church universal'.

While not all members of the 'church universal' are associated with a local church and not all members of local churches are members of the 'church universal', each individual has a responsibility to meet together with a group of believers (Hebrews 10:25).

While requirements for formal membership vary from church to church, membership is significant. It gives the individual believer the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making processes of the church as well as leadership responsibilities. It provides a structured means by which deviations in doctrine and practice can be addressed by Church leadership in a Biblical authorized manner. Most importantly it signifies that together we commit to each other. That we will, in God's grace and strength, support, care, encourage and love each other through life's joys and trials, because this is our spiritual family, our spiritual home.

WHAT AM I DOING WHEN I BECOME A FORMAL MEMBER OF SCC?

Acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and that through his death I am forgiven and justified before God, I commit myself:

1. To faithfulness and obedience to Jesus Christ in on-going discipleship.
2. To uphold and support SCC in its beliefs, vision, mission and values.
3. To faithfully support SCC by prayer for its various ministries, leaders and people.
4. To faithfully support the ministry of the SCC according to the gifts and calling God has given me.
5. To actively participate in the fellowship of the SCC by involvement in its large church meetings and smaller Christian communities, and by personal support of its members and attenders.
6. To faithfully uphold the various ministries of the SCC through financial support.

Southport Church of Christ has a privacy policy to regulate how it deals with personal information it collects. If you would like a copy of that, please ask our Privacy Officer on **55646222** or by email to privacy@scc.org.au.

Application for Membership

Please return this form to the church office

Having read and understood the requirements of being a committed member of the Southport Church of Christ, and being prepared to affirm my support of the beliefs of this local church as outlined in this document, I accept the challenge of commitment to membership, and submit my application to the church leadership to become a member of this local church.

Name

Address

Phone

H | _____

M | _____

Email

I was baptised by immersion as a believer at

on

Signed

Date

OFFICE USE

Date received _____

Date approved _____

Date publicly welcomed into membership _____

TESTIMONY

Lined area for writing a testimony, consisting of 24 horizontal lines.