



**Busselton Baptist Community  
Church Incorporated**

# **CONSTITUTION**

**and other membership details**

*Growing followers of Jesus*



**Member Church,  
Baptist Union of  
W.A Inc.**





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Church Incorporated**

**CONSTITUTION**  
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## PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The true 'church' is neither a building nor an organisation, but rather a gathering of God's people centred around Jesus Christ and His word. The Apostle Paul says:

***We are no longer foreigners and aliens,  
but fellow citizens with God's people and  
members of God's household, built on the  
foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief  
cornerstone. In him the whole building is  
joined together and rises to become a  
holy temple in the Lord.***

(Ephesians 2:19-21)

AND

***All Scripture is God-breathed  
and is useful for teaching, rebuking,  
correcting and training in righteousness,  
so that everyone who belongs to God  
may be thoroughly equipped for  
every good work.***

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)



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While still this side of eternity, God's people meet together in associations of believers that for convenience sake, we have come to simply call 'church'. This document is to be seen as a tool to enable the affairs of God's people known as **'Busselton Baptist Community Church'** to run efficiently with a suitable focus and accountability.

To further clarify what it means to be a member of the **'Busselton Baptist Community Church'**, our membership covenant has also been enclosed.

This is a public document which may be read by anyone, and by which all members are to abide.

**To God be the Glory!**



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## CONTENTS

- **Constitution**
- **Appendices:**
  - **Statement of Core Values**
  - **Membership Covenant**
  - **Interpretive Notes**
  - **How to become a formal member**



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## 1. NAME

The name of the Church shall be Busselton Baptist Community Church Incorporated (hereinafter referred to as 'the Church').

## 2. AFFILIATION

The Church shall be affiliated with The Baptist Union of Western Australia Incorporated.

## 3. BASIS OF FAITH

We believe in:

- 3.1. The existence of One God in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- 3.2. The Divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
- 3.3. The Deity and Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- 3.4. The personality and malignancy of the devil, the fallen, sinful and lost estate of all mankind.
- 3.5. The Salvation of men from the penalty and power of sin through the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, His perfect obedience, His shed blood, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His unchanging Priesthood.
- 3.6. The Deity of the Holy Spirit and His work in the regeneration of men and in their sanctification.

- 3.7. The necessity of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 3.8. The resurrection of the dead and final judgment of all men by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3.9. The visible bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal punishment of the unrepentant and the eternal blessedness of the redeemed.
- 3.10. The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a symbol of their fellowship in His death, burial and resurrection; the Lord's Supper being a memorial until He come, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **4. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Church shall be to glorify God by:

- 4.1. Promoting the spread of the gospel in Busselton, the rest of Australia and overseas.
- 4.2. Promoting and providing opportunities for Christian fellowship and corporate worship.
- 4.3. Assisting people to become more like Christ in purpose, attitude and action.
- 4.4. Enabling and encouraging Christians to use and develop their gifts and abilities for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church and the Community.



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4.5. Ministering to the needs of the whole person.

## **5. NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION**

The Church is a non-profit organisation.

Accordingly, the assets and income of the Church shall be applied solely to the promotion of its objectives. No portion shall be paid or distributed directly or indirectly to the Formal Members of the Church or anyone else, except as *bona fide* remuneration for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.

## **6. CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

6.1. The Lord Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the Supreme Head of the Church. The government of the Church shall be vested in the local body of believers who constitute its Formal Membership, and shall have full power to manage its own affairs as herein provided.

6.2. Notwithstanding this principle of autonomy, the Church recognises the need for mutual counsel and interdependence with the Baptist Union of Western Australia Incorporated and shall support and participate in the Union's activities.

## **7. FORMAL MEMBERSHIP**

7.1. Eligibility

7.1.1. Persons born again of the Holy Spirit and baptised as believers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose principal



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allegiance is to Jesus Christ and His Church and who give evidence of their faith in daily life, shall be eligible for Formal Membership of the Church.

7.1.2. Each applicant for Formal Membership shall be required to accept the Basis of Faith (Section 3) and Core Values of the Church (Appendix 1), and to abide by the Membership Covenant (Appendix 2) and to abide by this Constitution.

7.1.3. Should an applicant for Formal Membership qualify in all respects other than baptism, but have:

7.1.3.1. been in good standing with a Christian tradition that differs on baptismal practice, and have been baptised according to that tradition, and

7.1.3.2. have publicly confirmed their faith subsequent to becoming a believer, and

7.1.3.3. have a conscientious objection to being baptised in the manner prescribed in this constitution,

the applicant shall be eligible for Formal Membership of the Church.

7.2. Privileges and Obligations of Formal Membership



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- 7.2.1. Formal Members are expected to accept the Basis of Faith (Section 2) and Core Values of the Church (Appendix 1) and to live in accordance with the Membership Covenant of the Church (Appendix 2).
- 7.3. Admission of Formal Members
- 7.3.1. A person desirous of Formal Membership of the Church shall make application to a member of the Church Board. Thereafter a member of the Church Board and one other Formal Member of the Church, shall be appointed by the Church Board to interview the applicant and to submit a written report to a Ministry Meeting or Annual General Meeting if Formal Membership is recommended, or to the Church Board if Formal Membership is not recommended. A simple majority vote shall be required for acceptance into Formal Membership of the Church.
- 7.3.2. No fee shall be charged to become or remain a Formal Member of the Church.
- 7.4. Formal Membership Roll
- 7.4.1. The Formal Membership Roll of the Church shall be kept in two or more sections:



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7.4.1.1. Resident Members Roll

The Resident Members Roll, to which shall be added the names of those who become Formal Members of the Church.

7.4.1.2. Non-Resident Members Roll

Formal Members absent from the district because of employment in another district or because of full-time Christian work and unable to transfer to another church shall have their names transferred to the Non-Resident Members Roll by the Church.

7.4.2. If there has been no active participation in the Church for twelve months, Formal Membership will cease at the next Annual General Meeting. Exception will be made for extenuating circumstances which have been explained to the satisfaction of the Church Board.

7.4.3. For the purpose of a quorum at an Annual General Meeting or a Ministry Meeting, the members on the Resident Roll only shall be used.



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## 7.5. Discipline

7.5.1. In the event of any allegation of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a Formal Member, the elders shall make enquiry into the matter. If after enquiry they deem such course necessary, they shall present a report to a Ministry Meeting or Annual General Meeting, at which further action shall be determined. The suspension or expulsion of Formal Members of the Church in such cases shall be resorted to if all efforts to bring about a restoration have proved unsuccessful. Voting on such action shall be by secret ballot and to become effective shall require a two-third majority vote of Formal Members present and eligible to vote.

7.5.2. Private offences shall be dealt with in accordance with the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ as given in Matthew 18:15-17.

## **8. ORDINANCES**

8.1. The ordinance of Baptism shall be administered by the Church through a pastor of the Church; or as otherwise determined by the eldership of the Church. Baptism shall be by immersion, unless for reasons of physical or



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other incapacity a person cannot be immersed. In such cases the person shall be baptised by effusion or sprinkling with water, and for the purposes of this constitution shall be deemed to be baptised by immersion. Only those who show evidence of personal faith may be baptised.

- 8.2. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be open to all and shall be observed on at least one Sunday in each calendar month.

## **9 CHURCH BOARD**

- 9.1. The Church Board will consist of the following church officers: elder and deacon. The Church Board shall appoint one of its members as chair other than the Pastoral Team Leader.
- 9.2. The Church Board shall normally meet at least 6 times a year, after reasonable notice of such meetings has been given.
- 9.3. One half of the members of the Church Board shall form a quorum except when there are only two members on the Church Board and in such instances both members must be present for a quorum.
- 9.4. All matters considered at Church Board meetings shall be decided by a majority vote of those present.
- 9.5. The Church Board shall nominate to the Annual General Meeting one of its members as the Church Treasurer. The Church Treasurer

shall be responsible for overseeing the financial management of the Church and the safe custody of the records, books, documents and securities of the Church.

- 9.6. The financial reports and financial records of the Church shall be audited annually by a suitably qualified person who is to be appointed by the Church Board. With 4 days notice, any Formal Member of the Church may inspect the financial records of the Church.
- 9.7. The Church Board may authorise the use of undesignated, available general funds of up to 5% of the annual budget per annum on expenditure not provided for at the time of setting the budget.
- 9.8. The Church Board is authorised to appoint non pastoral staff, within the constraints of the budget and specially designated giving.
- 9.9. The Church Board is authorised to appoint ministry leaders, informing the Formal Membership of the Church of all current ministry leadership appointees at each Annual General Meeting.
- 9.10. In the event of any allegation of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a Church Board member, remaining Church Board members shall make enquiry into the matter. If after enquiry they deem such a course of action necessary, they shall immediately suspend the Church Board

- member from duties, and call a Special Ministry Meeting to be held within four weeks, at which further action shall be determined
- 9.11. Church Board members may be removed from office by a two-third majority vote at a Special Ministry Meeting.
- 9.12. A casual vacancy on the Church Board occurs if a Church Board member:
- 9.12.1. Dies;
  - 9.12.2. Is removed from office by a Special Ministry Meeting;
  - 9.12.3. Resigns by notice in writing delivered to the Chairperson, or if that person is the Chairperson, to each member of the Church Board;
  - 9.12.4. Is convicted of an offence under the Act;
  - 9.12.5. Ceases to be a member of the Church.
- 9.13. In the event of the Church not having a Church Board, the Formal Membership of the Church is to appoint a Church Board of up to six members who fulfil the requirements for deacon, at a Special Ministry Meeting called for that purpose. If the Formal Membership fails to appoint a Church Board, the Baptist Union of Western Australia Incorporated is authorised to appoint a Church Board to provide oversight and governance of the Church until such time as the Church appoints its own Church Board.



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## 10. CHURCH OFFICERS

### 10.1. Elders

- 10.1.1. The eldership is responsible for the spiritual over-sight and pastoral ministry of the Church.
- 10.1.2. Elders must
  - 10.1.2.1. Meet the New Testament requirements for elders.
  - 10.1.2.2. Have been baptised as a believer, by immersion.
- 10.1.3. If not already an elder, the Pastoral Team Leader shall become an elder for the complete period of being the Pastoral Team Leader. Other members of pastoral staff may be elected as elders, simultaneously with or subsequent to their appointment as pastoral staff.
- 10.1.4. Elders shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting from Formal Members of the Church on the Resident Members Roll who are aged 21 years and over and have been in Formal Membership with the Church for not less than 12 months immediately prior to the date of the meeting at which elections take place. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the



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office of elder during the year such vacancy may be filled in the manner aforesaid at the next Ministry Meeting or at a Special Ministry Meeting called for that purpose. The person so elected shall hold office until the Annual General Meeting at which the vacating elder would have retired.

- 10.1.5. Elders other than the Pastoral Team Leader shall normally hold office for a period of three years, and shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- 10.1.6. Any regular participant in the Church shall be entitled to submit a written nomination for the position of elder to the Church Board. The Church Board shall not be bound to act upon such a nomination.
- 10.1.7. Nominations shall be advised to Formal Members not later than the Sunday prior to the date of the meeting at which elections shall take place. Voting shall be by secret ballot. To be elected, a nominee must receive at least three quarters of the votes of Formal Members present and eligible to vote.
- 10.1.8. The number of elders shall be set by the Church Board.



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## 10.2. Pastoral Staff

10.2.1. Pastoral staff are responsible for duties delegated to them by the Formal Membership and Church Board.

10.2.2. Pastoral staff must:

10.2.2.1. Meet the New Testament requirements for church elders.

10.2.2.2. Have been baptised as a believer, by immersion.

10.2.2.3. Accept the Basis of Faith (Section 3), Core Values (Appendix 1), and abide by the Membership Covenant (Appendix 2) and the remainder of this Constitution.

10.2.3. The choice and appointment of all pastoral staff is vested in the Formal Membership of the Church.

10.2.4. When considering the appointment of a pastor, the Church Board shall act as a Call Committee, or shall appoint a Call Committee. The Call Committee shall make the

necessary enquiries and bring forward a recommendation to the Church as soon as is reasonably possible.

- 10.2.5. Any regular participant in the Church shall be entitled to submit in writing a duly signed proposal for the consideration of the Call Committee. The Call Committee shall not be bound to act upon such a proposal.
- 10.2.6. The recommendation of the Call Committee shall be considered at a Special Ministry Meeting called for the purpose.
- 10.2.7. The Call Committee shall put forward only one name at a time and no invitation shall be sent unless at least three quarters of the Formal Members of the Church present and eligible to vote shall vote in favour. Voting to be by secret ballot.
- 10.2.8. The term of service between Church and pastor shall normally be 5 years, but may be terminated by three months notice on either side, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.
- 10.2.9. A pastor may be called for a further term of service, an

indefinite number of times. The process for calling a pastor for a further term of service shall be the same as the process for calling a pastor described above, except that a recall shall require at least two-thirds of the Formal Members of the Church present and eligible to vote, to vote in favour.

- 10.2.10. In the event of any allegation of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a pastor, the Church Board shall make enquiry into the matter. If after enquiry they deem such a course of action necessary, they shall immediately suspend the pastor from duties, and call a Special Ministry Meeting to be held within four weeks, at which further action shall be determined. If the allegation is against a pastor who is serving on the Church Board, the Church Board shall meet without that member present.
- 10.2.11. At the time of induction, a pastor, and if eligible, their spouse, shall become Formal Members of the Church.

10.3. Deacons

10.3.1. Deacons are responsible, along with pastoral staff, for the financial and general management of the Church.

10.3.2. Deacons must:

10.3.2.1. Meet the New Testament requirements for deacon.

10.3.2.2. Have been baptised as a believer, by immersion.

10.3.3. Deacons shall be elected from Formal Members of the Church on the Resident Members Roll who are aged 18 years and over and normally have been in Formal Membership with the Church for not less than 12 months immediately prior to the date of the meeting at which elections take place.

10.3.4. The number of deacons for the ensuing year shall be decided by the Church Board.

10.3.5. Deacons shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the office of deacon during the year such vacancy may be filled



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in the manner aforesaid at the next Ministry Meeting or at a Special Ministry Meeting called for that purpose. The person so elected shall hold office until the Annual General Meeting at which the vacating deacon would have retired.

- 10.3.6. Deacons shall normally be elected for a period of two years and on completion of their term of office, shall be eligible for re-election.
- 10.3.7. Any Formal Member shall be entitled to submit a written nomination for the position of deacon to the Church Board. The Church Board shall not be bound to act upon such a nomination.
- 10.3.8. Nominations shall be advised to Formal Members not later than the Sunday prior to the date of the meeting at which elections shall take place. Voting shall be by secret ballot. To be elected, a nominee must receive at least two thirds of the votes of Formal Members present and eligible to vote.



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## 11. MINISTRY MEETINGS

- 11.1. Ministry Meetings shall usually be held four times a year, to train in ministry and to transact the business of the Church. Special Ministry Meetings may be called to transact a single item of business. At least two Sunday's notification must be given of Ministry Meetings and in the case of Special Ministry Meetings, details of the business to be transacted must be included in the notice.
- 11.2. A Special Ministry Meeting must be called by the Church Board at the request in writing of the Pastoral Team Leader, a simple majority of the Church Board, or 10% or more of the Formal Members of the Church. Such a request shall be submitted to the Church Board setting out the purpose for which the meeting is to be called.
- 11.3. One Ministry Meeting each year shall be the Annual General Meeting, which must be held within 4 months of the end of the Church financial year.
- 11.4. The Church Board shall appoint a chairperson for each Ministry Meeting and Special Ministry Meeting.
- 11.5. A quorum for Ministry Meetings shall be 20% of the Formal Membership on the Resident Members Roll.



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- 11.6. At all Ministry Meetings only Formal Members who are aged 18 years and over shall be eligible to vote.
  - 11.7. All matters brought before Ministry Meetings shall be decided by a majority vote of Formal Members present and eligible to vote, except where otherwise provided in this Constitution.
  - 11.8. Resident members eligible to vote but unable to be present at a Ministry Meeting, may cast an absentee vote on a prescribed form, on unamended motions that have been circulated to members at least two weeks prior to the Ministry Meeting.
  - 11.9. If requested by any Formal Member present and agreed to by the Meeting, voting shall be by secret ballot.

## **12. ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENTS OF THE CHURCH**

- 12.1. Organisations and Departments must have the approval of the Church Board and are accountable to the Church.
- 12.2. Where separate books of account are kept by the organisations and departments these shall be submitted for audit annually to the auditor appointed by the Church Board.

## **13. FINANCES**

The church's ministry shall be financially supported:



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- 13.1. By the freewill offerings of the congregation, and by any other method decided upon by the Church Board provided this is not in conflict with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.
  - 13.2. By interest on funds invested.

#### **14. PROPERTY**

- 14.1. Church property shall only be used in accord with policies set by the Church Board.
- 14.2. No land or building shall be bought, sold, disposed of or mortgaged in any way, without a two-thirds majority vote of a Special Ministry Meeting.
- 14.3. The proceeds derived from the sale, lease, mortgage, or pledge or other encumbrance shall be applied and devoted in such manner as the Church may deem best fitted to secure the furtherance of the objects of the Church and the propagation of its principles.

#### **15. SEAL**

- 15.1. The Church Board shall provide for the safe custody of the Common Seal, which shall only be used with the specific authority of the Board and every document to which the Common Seal is affixed shall be signed by two members of the Church Board.



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15.2. A register of use of the Common Seal shall be kept with the Common Seal.

## **16. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH**

The church may be dissolved by a resolution approved by at least three quarters of Formal Members present and eligible to vote at a Special Ministry Meeting called for the purpose, provided at least three months notice of the proposal has been given. In the event of such a resolution being passed persons appointed by the Special Ministry Meeting shall take all the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the Church. After payment of all debts and liabilities any surplus assets are to be distributed in accordance with a decision of the Special Ministry Meeting in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Church, and in the event of no decision being agreed to by the Church, then the Baptist Union of Western Australia Incorporated may make such a decision on behalf of the Church.

## **17. CONSTITUTION**

No change shall be made to this Constitution except by the approval of at least three quarters of Formal Members present and eligible to vote at a Special Ministry Meeting called for the purpose. Notice of any proposed change must be given in writing at an earlier Ministry Meeting, and the full text of the proposed changes shall be made available to all resident members at least two



weeks prior to such meeting. Any such proposal may be adopted as presented or as amended by the Ministry Meeting.



# **Appendices to the constitution**

- 1. Statement of Core Values**
- 2. Membership Covenant**
- 3. Interpretive Notes**
- 4. How to become a formal member**

## ◆ Appendix 1 ◆

### Statement of Core Values

- We value clear, Christ-centred Bible teaching that leads to trusting in Jesus as Saviour, and obeying Him as Lord.
- We value each other, and seek to encourage one another to grow in Christian maturity in everything we do.
- We value all people, and aim to engage those outside the Church with the person and claims of Jesus.
- We value faithful ministry, and will seek to actively encourage and support those who give themselves for this task in our community and in other parts of the world.
- We value prayer, as we recognise God's rule over all things, and we seek to pray according to His will.
- We value church activity which is welcoming and understandable to everyone.
- We value authentic relationships and practical love modelled on the sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself for us.
- We value team work, and encourage all followers of Jesus to play their part in building Christ's church.
- We value the spiritual gifts, abilities and resources God has given us, and seek to use them adventurously, and to the very best of our ability, for His glory.



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## ◆ Appendix 2 ◆

### **Membership Covenant**

Having received Christ as my Lord and Saviour, I unite with the Busselton Baptist Community Church family, as an active member. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members of the Church, to do the following:

**I will seek to support the testimony of the Church:**

- By attending faithfully
- By living a godly life
- By giving generously and sacrificially

**I will seek to serve the ministry of the Church:**

- By seeking to discover and use my gifts and talents
- By constantly being equipped by God's word
- By developing a servant's heart

**I will seek to share the responsibility of the Church:**

- By praying for its growth
- By inviting the unchurched to attend
- By warmly welcoming those who visit

**I will seek to protect the unity of the Church:**

- By acting in love toward other members
- By building up other members with my words
- By supporting the leadership team

## ◆ Appendix 3 ◆

### Interpretive Notes

Most of the constitution is easy to accurately understand. The following notes provide further clarity in a small number of areas, to reveal in more detail what was meant and understood at the time of adopting the constitution and/or modifying the constitution.

#### ■ **Section 7.1.1**

The words 'whose principal allegiance is to Jesus Christ and His Church' is a general but positive way of indicating that Formal Membership of the church and membership of antichristian associations (such as Freemasonry) are mutually exclusive (one cannot logically be a member of both).

There is no mention of the mode of baptism in this clause. The Church believes that baptism is best symbolised by full immersion and exclusively practices such (section 8.1). However, as the mode of baptism is not prescribed in the Scriptures, we do not exclude someone from Formal Membership who has undergone believers baptism by a mode other than full immersion.

#### ■ **Section 7.1.3.**

The Church believes that baptism is a ceremony that all Christians are called to engage in,

publically depicting personal faith in Christ. Consequently, the Church believes that it is appropriate that all who become Formal Members of the Church, should be baptised, and that in an ideal world, this baptism would:

- [1] Have occurred soon after coming to personal faith. The New Testament always associates baptism with conversion, as opposed to being something reserved for those who have 'proved their faith' through several years of Christian living.
- [2] Be by full immersion. This is most likely the practice of Jesus and the early church. Also, baptism is a ceremonial washing and symbolises a death to the old and resurrection to the new. Full immersion most completely fulfils this symbolism.
- [3] Be public. Baptism is an external sign of inward regeneration. As such, it is appropriate that it be done in the presence of others (ideally both Christian and non Christian).

Christian traditions vary in the practice of how (or whether) all these areas are upheld. We think that it is appropriate to, as fully as possible, uphold them all. However, the Church accepts that it is appropriate that we have the ability to accept

into Formal Membership those who have essentially fulfilled the symbolism of baptism, even if the order of events and time delays involved cause it to not fulfil all of points [1] to [3] above, if the Membership candidate is convicted of the spiritual significance of the ceremonies they have already engaged in.

The following examples illustrate what clause 7.1.3. does and doesn't mean.

- Baptism is appropriate for all believers, so someone who has not fulfilled the symbolism of baptism at all (for example someone from a Christian tradition that doesn't practice baptism, or someone who simply doesn't want to be baptised), may not become a Formal Member until they are baptised.
- Someone who was 'baptised' prior to personal faith, and then 'confirmed' prior to personal faith, may not become a Formal Member until they are baptised, as the purpose of baptism clearly has not been realised.
- Someone who was 'baptised' prior to personal faith, but who subsequently came to faith and then chose to publically 'appropriate their baptism to themselves' by a public ceremony of confirmation, if they are convinced of the spiritual significance of

what they have engaged in to the point of conscientiously objecting to repeating what they believe to be the same act but in a 'Baptist manner', they may become a Formal Member.

In the context of someone who was 'baptised' at birth, became a Christian, publically confirmed their faith, and has then spent many years (possibly decades) faithfully serving Christ; insisting on a ceremony of baptism by immersion (point [2] above) would transgress the clear New Testament practice of point [1] above. We wish to transgress neither – but in the case just outlined, insisting on [2] (baptism by immersion) would come at the expense of ignoring [1] above (the clear association between baptism and conversion). We accept that in some cases, it is appropriate that point [2] gives way to point [1].

#### ■ **Section 7.4.2**

The matter of removing someone who no longer attends the Church from the Formal Membership Roll, is not something that needs great discussion or controversy. If someone no longer attends the Church, they are no longer being a member of the Church and in due time, will automatically cease to be a Formal Member of the Church.

## ■ **Section 8.2**

We do not believe in 'closed communion' (the practice that only Formal Members of the church can partake of the Lord's Supper). We understand that 1 Corinthians 11:27 ('therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.') specifically prohibits believers from partaking of the Lord's Supper when they have a grudge against a fellow believer (as opposed to warning non-believers to not participate). As the Lord's Supper only has meaning for believers, we do not encourage unbelievers to partake, but we do not need to ensure that they do not partake.



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## ◆ Appendix 4 ◆

### **Becoming a Formal Member**

Busselton Baptist Community Church Incorporated has a Formal Membership. All regular attendees are welcome to fellowship and serve in and through the Church, however, only those formally in membership have the opportunity to vote at our quarterly Ministry Meetings. Hence, Formal Membership is an important means of having an active interest in the present and future ministry of the Church here in Busselton.

Far more than being a formality, church membership is a step of commitment to this particular church, as a way of serving Jesus. As one contemplates this important move, the following aspects of membership are worth considering.

Formal church membership:

- Is a public declaration that the individual is a believer (Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:5).
- Provides us with a spiritual family to support and encourage us (Galatians 6:1-2).
- Gives us a place to discover and use our gifts in ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-27).
- Places us under the spiritual protection of godly leaders (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28-29).
- Gives us the accountability we need to grow in the faith (Ephesians 5:21).



Although all these aspects can be true of any person who attends Busselton Baptist Community Church, becoming a formal member is a step that we believe mature Christians ought to seriously consider.

### **How to become a member**

The first step to becoming a member is to approach a Pastor or Board Member of the Church. In due time two members will make an appointment with you, for an informal discussion centred on spiritual matters, such as:

- How you became a Christian.
- What you believe your spiritual gifts to be.
- Specific areas of your Christian walk that you are seeking to grow in.
- Areas of your life for which you would most value prayer.
- How we can be a support to you, encouraging you to effectively serve the Lord.
- Some details about the purpose of the Church, and matters to do with how we function as a church.
- The responsibilities of church membership (see our Membership Covenant, Appendix 2).

**We are interested in you as a person and your spiritual welfare.** After this informal discussion, a brief report will be made to the next Ministry Meeting, which will vote on your acceptance as a member. Subsequently, you



will be welcomed into Formal Membership during a church service, and be included on the Formal Members Role.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.  
(1 Peter 2:9-12)

