

**West Preston Baptist Church**  
**Policy & Process document**  
**Membership at West Preston Baptist Church**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Explain WPBC's understanding of church membership
- Outline the process by which people can become members of West Preston Baptist Church.

**Policy:**

At West Preston Baptist Church, we believe that commitment to a local congregation is important for every Christian disciple and underpins the unity and health of the church.

Church membership is a way of demonstrating a specific commitment to serve the well-being of the church's ministries, leaders, congregational attendees and other members.

That commitment is further demonstrated in having permission to:

- vote at church meetings.
- approve the church's budget and where funds get allocated,
- vote for deacons, or for pastors when a pastor is to be called, and,
- become a deacon.

**To become a member is to provide a statement of support for this church and to be identified as a person who believes in, and is part of, the outworking of God's kingdom at West Preston Baptist Church.**

**Requirement for Membership**

- a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour;
- *baptism* as an expression of commitment to God, or *profession of faith* for those from other Christian traditions;
- basic agreement with the church's vision, and
- a willingness to share in the worship, life, witness & service of this congregation.

Note: When a person is baptised at West Preston Baptist church, they do not automatically become a Member.

## **Procedure for becoming a member at WPBC:**

- a) When an attendee expresses interest in becoming a member of West Preston Baptist Church, they are given the membership enquiry summary from this policy (*see attached*).
- b) A member of the Leadership team shall arrange a meeting with them to discuss the following:
  - Does the person profess to have faith in God and a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?
  - Have they been baptised as a testimony of their own faith, or have they made a profession of their faith, for those from other Christian traditions?

NOTE: In having an open membership policy, we recognise those baptised according to the rites of another Christian church. If the prospective member has never been baptised but professes a faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, an invitation to baptism will be given.

- How do they perceive the church's values and vision, and are they in basic agreement with them?
  - Are they willing to share in the worship, life, witness and service of this congregation?
- c) Feedback of the discussion will be given to the deacons, who will then endorse the application for membership. The name shall be brought to the next Congregational meeting for the church members to vote on whether to approve membership request. Acceptance into membership requires a majority vote.
  - d) Once approved by the church meeting, the new member will be welcomed during the next convenient church service, preferably a communion service. There will be an opportunity to make a commitment to the church. *See attachment for some suggested prayer liturgies.*

NOTE: The WPBC constitution includes a **members' covenant**, which was intended to be a commitment by resident members of the church to one another and to the life of the West Preston Baptist Church. This covenant is not currently in use and has been retired.

### **Termination of Membership**

Members shall be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons:

- transfer of membership to another church,
- by personal request of the member,
- death, or
- for disciplinary reasons by a decision of the church meeting.

Members are placed on an "inactive" membership roll if they have not been present at a church service for more than 12 months.

## Attachments & resources

- Introduction to membership – handout for those making enquiries – see *below*
- Prayers for new members – for use in a service to welcome new members
- Ppt presentation – membership promotion

Document revision	
Review Period:	2 years
Next review due:	August 2022

Document control					
Version number	Description	Author	Position	Approval Date:	Approved by:
1	Development of policy	Paul Hicks	Deacon Secretary	17 Dec 2009	Diaconate
2	Expansion of policy to include background for membership	Elizabeth Williams	Deacon		
3.	Policy review	Elizabeth Williams	Deacon	6 Nov. 2012	diaconate
4	Annual review	Elizabeth Williams	Deacon	September 2014	Diaconate
5.	Policy review	All deacons		April 2015	diaconate
6	Policy review	deacons		12/10/16	diaconate
7	Policy review	Rev. Sylvia Griffiths	Interim Minister	17/9/18	diaconate
8	Additional review with substantial revision, addition of summary page	Elizabeth Williams & Paul Huglin	Secretary, Minister.	12/11/19	diaconate
9	Policy review and update of wording	Paul Hicks	Deacon	October 2020	Diaconate

# Introduction to Membership at WPBC

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*Hi there! Thanks for making an enquiry about becoming a member of West Preston Baptist Church. This document outlines the key aspects of our membership policy, and what might be covered in our discussions about membership. If you have any questions, just ask!*

At West Preston Baptist Church, we believe that commitment to a local congregation is important for every Christian disciple and underpins the unity and health of the church. Throughout the New Testament, the pattern of the Christians is to meet in local congregations (*e.g. Acts 2:46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Timothy 3:15*). In addition, the church is described as a family, a body, and a unit. The apostle Paul introduces the idea of being a member of the church, when he describes the local church as a “body” and each person within it as a “member” of that body, inter-dependent on all the others. (*1 Corinthians 12:12-19*).

Church membership is a way of demonstrating a specific commitment to serve the well-being of the church’s ministries, leaders, congregational attendees and other members.

In particular, members have the right to:

- vote at church meetings.
- approve the church's budget and where funds get allocated,
- vote for deacons, or for pastors when a pastor is to be called, and,
- Become a deacon.

*To become a member is to provide a statement of support for this church and to be identified as a person who believes in, and is part of, the outworking of God’s kingdom at West Preston Baptist Church.*

## **Requirement for Membership**

- ✓ a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour;
- ✓ *baptism* as an expression of commitment to God, or *profession of faith* for those from other Christian traditions;
- ✓ basic agreement with the church's vision, and
- ✓ a willingness to share in the worship, life, witness & service of this congregation.

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

- When you express interest in becoming a member, a member of the Leadership Team will arrange a meeting with you to discuss the requirements for Membership.
- Feedback of the membership discussions will be given to the deacons.
- A proposal will be made at the next Congregational meeting, and church members will vote on whether to approve your membership request.
- Once approved by the church meeting, you will be officially welcomed during the next convenient church service, preferably a communion service. There will be an opportunity to make a commitment to the church through a prayer liturgy.

**A possible prayer liturgy as we welcome you into membership is:**

Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: your Creator and Redeemer and the Sustainer of all things?

***I do.***

Do you believe that God has led you to share in the worship, life and witness of West Preston Baptist Church?

***I do.***

Will you share with us the gifts God has given you, so that together we may serve God in our local community and in the wider world?

***I will.***