

Brief History of Tuggeranong Baptist Church

Tuggeranong Baptist Church began as a small fellowship group in 1976 in the newly developing Tuggeranong Valley. It comprised families and individuals from other Baptist Churches in Canberra.

After a couple of years of meeting together the fellowship was formally constituted a church in 1978. The church building was opened in 1988.

In 1991 a group of 10 families moved out from Tuggeranong to start a new church now called Brindabella Baptist Church.

Several ministers and families served TBC in past years

David Pollock

John & Faye Robinson

Peter & Diana MacKay

Laurie & Lesley Purdy 1983 to 1998

Robert & Margaret Brown, 1992 to 1994

Bryan & Heather McClelland 1985 to 2001

Derek Brown 2001

Ian & Chanelle Reid 2003

We're glad that you have chosen to discover more about our church. As you may have come here from different backgrounds, we have published this booklet which explains why Tuggeranong Baptist Church exists, how it works and what becoming a member involves.

Our beliefs	1
1 Our Statement of beliefs	
2 Baptism	3
3 Communion	6
4 Our beliefs compared to other churches	9
5 Who are the Baptists?	10
Our Vision	12
1 Our mission statement	
2 Our standard objectives	
Our structure	13
1 Church structure	
2 Leadership and ministry structure	
3 Giving	
Church membership	15
1 What it means to be a member	
2 Why become a 'formal member' of a Baptist church?	
3 Membership covenant	
Brief history	17



Our Beliefs

1 Statement of beliefs

We believe in:

- a) One true God existing in three persons—
Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- b) God who is personal, all-powerful and sovereign in creation; in revealing His purpose in redemption from sin; and in final judgement;
- c) The divine inspiration of the Bible and its supreme and sufficient authority in matters of Christian belief and conduct;
- d) The original creation of man in God's image; the sinfulness and guilt of all mankind since Adam disobeyed God, rendering every person subject to God's judgement, condemnation and punishment;
- e) The coming to earth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as a man; His sinless life, death, bodily resurrection and ascension;
- f) Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin is only possible through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ;
- g) The work of the Holy Spirit as the one who convicts of sin, continually indwells the believer, gives spiritual gifts as He wills and produces fruit in the believer;
- h) The expectation of the personal return and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead; rewards and punishment in a future state;
- i) One holy, universal Church, the body of Christ, to which all true Christians belong;

Members Covenant

We ask all members to sign the following Members Covenant. The member keeps this covenant, as a reminder of their commitment to the church.

Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Saviour and accepting and subscribing to the Statement of Beliefs as set out in the constitution of Tuggeranong Baptist Church, I feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Tuggeranong Baptist Church family. In so doing, I commit myself to God and the other members to do the following:

I will protect the unity of the church

- * by acting in love towards other members
- * by refusing to gossip
- * by supporting the leaders

So let us concentrate on all things which make for harmony and on the growth of our fellowship together. Romans 15:19

I will share the responsibility of my church

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

So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified. Romans 15:7

I will serve the ministry of my church

- * by discovering and using my gifts and talents
- * by developing a servant's heart
- * by encouraging others

Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you... 1 Peter 4:10

I will support the testimony of my church

- * by attending faithfully
- * by living a godly life
- * by giving regularly

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together... but let us encourage one another. Hebrews 10: 25

Church Membership

What it means to be a church member

The difference between 'attenders' and 'members' can be summed up in one word—'commitment'. Our church recognises the need for formal membership.

The basis for membership is set out in our constitution.

Why become a 'formal member' of a Baptist Church.

Commitment Christ is committed to the church, so Christians should be also. To join a Baptist church a person first joins the congregation and then asks to become a member. This 'asking' is important—it means that Baptists don't select who is going to be in their church. It means that the person who asks wants to belong in a more committed way. It means that they realise the church has much to offer them and that they have talents and gifts to help the body function.

Accountability The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you're not committed to any specific church family.

Rights Becoming a member gives you the right to vote at meetings (by law, you must be over 18 to vote on any motions that deal with property.)

- J) The divine institution of baptism (the immersion of the believer in water) in obedience to the command of Christ, as a symbol of death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and as a witness by the Christian to his/her Identification by faith with Christ and His Church—Baptism is the outward demonstration of an inward profession of faith;
- k) Communion as a remembrance of Christ's work;
- l) The priestly ministry of all believers and their mission in the world as witnesses to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.



2 Believers Baptism (Public declaration of faith)

Our statement of beliefs says that baptism is ‘an outward sign of an inward change’. Some form of public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ is practised by all Christian denominations. Baptists, and some other denominations, practice believer’s baptism, by immersion—as in the New Testament. It is undertaken by those who have decided to personally accept that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Baptism by immersion identifies the believer with Christ’s death and resurrection.

We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Jesus Christ was raised from the death through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:4)

Baptism doesn’t make you a believer—it shows that you already believe. Baptism doesn’t save you; only your faith in Christ does.

For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8,9)

Baptism is like a wedding ring—it’s the outward symbol of the inward commitment you have made. For this reason we do not baptise infants (see note ”Dedication of infants).



Giving

Individual Baptist churches don’t just govern themselves, they fund themselves as well.

Offerings are part of our weekly services and the ministries of the church are dependent on the giving of the congregation. You will be asked to give, however no one will dictate to you how much you should give, or force you to give at all. This is entirely between you and God. The church will simply make needs known, and leave the response to you.

How do I give?

It’s up to you—you may choose to give through the offering weekly, fortnightly, monthly—whatever you choose.

Offering envelopes are available for this purpose.

You are also able to contribute by direct debit or internet banking if you find that more convenient.

Please see the details in the pamphlet.



Our Structure

Leadership and Ministry Structure

Pastor and Elders

The eldership, which comprises the senior pastor and the elders, provide visionary leadership to enable the strategic direction of the church. Men and women can serve as elders, while only a man can fill the role of senior pastor. The role of the elders includes:

- Exercising leadership and discipline
- Overseeing the ministry and teaching programs
- Taking responsibility for the vision and its strategic implementation
- Delegating responsibilities for ministries within the fellowship

Deacons

The diaconate comprises men and women, who serve the church and the elders by facilitating the practical and administrative affairs of the fellowship.

Checks and balances

The eldership is required to submit to the membership for confirmation the following:

- Audited annual financial accounts of the church
- Appointment of any pastor/s
- Undertaking of major building construction and/or extensions, purchase or sale of property and lands
- Distribution of funds in the event of the dissolution of the church.

Why be baptised as a public declaration of faith?

- a) It follows the example of Jesus himself who was baptised by John.
At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan (Mark 1:9)
- b) Jesus commanded it as part of the Great Commission.
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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)
- c) You identify yourself publicly with Christ and His church:
Those who accepted his message were baptised. (Acts 2:31)
But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised both men and women (Acts 8:12)

Baptism and membership

Once you have accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour, you have joined the 'Church Universal', comprising all believers of any time or denomination. Most people choose to become identified with a local church of a particular denomination.

Our church is part of the Baptist denomination, but differs from many other Baptist churches in that some of our members have not been baptised as believers. If you are long-standing committed Christian from another denominational background, and have publicly declared your faith in some way other than

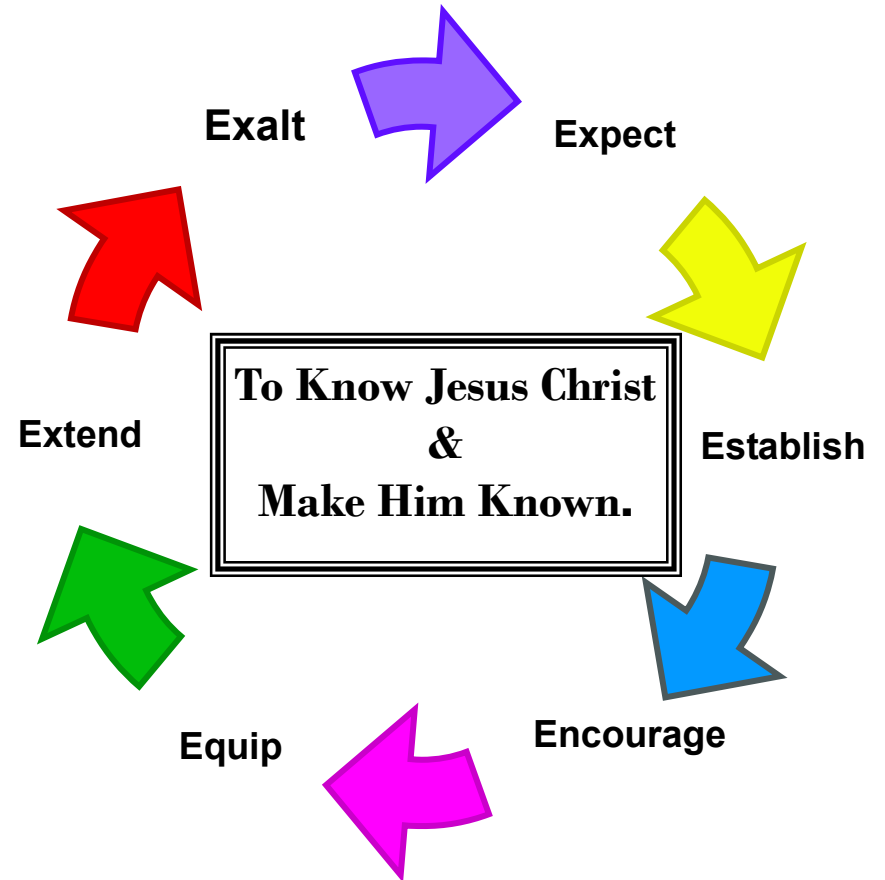
believer's baptism (e.g. a meaningful confirmation of infant baptism when you were old enough to accept Christianity personally), then this does not prevent you from seeking membership at Tuggeranong Baptist Church.

Such a background does not prevent you from seeking believer's baptism, either, should you feel that this is what God would have you do. It is our belief that the Lord did not command baptism merely to create members of Baptist churches! However, if you are a new, or recent, Christian we encourage you to seek baptism before considering formal church membership.

Dedication or thanksgiving service for infants

As noted above, it is not our practice to baptise infants. However, a dedication service (incorporated into a normal church service) can be held any time after the birth of the child. Some families choose to have a dedication service for several children at the same time. In this service it is not with child/ren who are being 'dedicated' - it is their parents. The child/ren are 'presented' to the Lord (see Luke 18:15-17) and the parents give thanks and dedicate themselves to bring the child/ren up according to God's word in the hope that they will accept Jesus Christ for themselves when they are at an age to do so. The congregation is also asked if they will assist the parents in this.

Our Vision at TBC



“Active and Growing”



(2 Peter 1:5-8)



Baptist Affiliation

- We work together with other Baptist churches at various levels.
- Locally, the Association of Baptist Churches of the ACT (ABC ACT) comprises Belconnen, Brindabella, Canberra, Cooma, Dickson, Hughes, North Belconnen, North Canberra, Queanbeyan, Tuggeranong and Yass churches. (NB We also work with other denominations in the Tuggeranong Valley)
- State-wide with Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT (BUNSW)
- Nationally with the Baptist Union of Australia
- Globally with Baptist World Alliance

Why not just be an independent church?

We are an independent church—every Baptist church is completely independent. There is no denominational control or hierarchy. Each church is self-governed and determines its own affairs. For example—every Baptist church chooses its own pastor, owns its own building and assets and determines its own programs.

The advantages of affiliating with other Baptist organisations.

It allows us to identify with other Christians around the world for their commitment to the Bible. Baptists have no ‘creed’ other than the Bible. It also allows our church to more effectively participate in cross-cultural mission service, community programs and theological training.



3 The Lord's Supper or Communion

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But he did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two symbols (sometimes called ‘ordinances’) as reminders of His death—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for the believer.

What is the Lord's Supper? (1Cor 11: 23-26)

It is a simple act

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed too bread...

It is a reminder

...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; eat it in remembrance of me."

It is a symbol

In the same way, He took the cup, saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me."

It is a statement of faith

For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes back.

Who should take the Lord's Supper?

It is only for those who are already believers

For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself.

There is no bar on people from other denominational backgrounds (either part of our congregation or visiting) from participating in the Lord's Supper. It is for the individual to decide if they are in the right relationship with God before participating in the service.

How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

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. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. (1 Cor 11: 27-28)

- * Self examination—1 Cor 11: 27
- * Confession of sins—1 John 1: 9
- * Recommitment—Rom 12: 1
- * Restoring relationships—Matt 5: 23-24

When should we observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe the Lord's supper. The Apostle Paul said *As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup...1 Cor 11: 25* It is our practice to observe the Lord's Supper once a month. Of course, individual small groups, church retreats or camps may choose to celebrate communion when they meet.

5 Who are the Baptists?

- Baptist Christians began life as part of the great church/state arguments of the 1500's
- They believed that being Christian had nothing to do with where a person is born, or what was the faith of his or her parents. Faith was a matter of choice. So was whether or not he or she belonged to a church.
- They were called 'Baptist' because of their willingness to baptise people for their belief. This immediately barred infants and from the early years the form of baptism was by immersion. This meant that well into the 1700's the Baptists were regarded with suspicion and scepticism. Some early Baptists were drowned for their beliefs.
- Baptists regard the Bible as their foundation in deciding how to describe their faith and how to put it into practice. This is reflected in Baptist church services by the music, prayers and sermons that reflect on Bible experiences and relate them to our life today. The 'style' of service, however, can vary widely from church to church, as each Baptist church governs itself.
- Baptists have always been heavily committed to the work of evangelism, and have been involved in local and foreign mission work for many years. Baptists are also active in community services. Baptist Community Services—NSW & ACT operates aged care facilities (locally Carey Gardens & Morling Lodge), counselling services (Lifecare), training services (Caloola), emergency housing etc.





4 What we believe compared with other churches

- * In **essential** beliefs we have unity
*There is one body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...
Ephesians 4:4-6*
- * In **non-essential** beliefs we have liberty
*Accept him who is weak, without passing judgement on disputable matters... Who are we to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of you will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.
Romans 14: 1, 4, 12, 22*
- * In **all** our beliefs we show love
If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains—but have not love, I amount to nothing at all. 1 Cor 13: 2

What happens at the Lord's Supper?

The service is simple—whoever is leading will give a brief explanation of the significance of the service (often via a Bible reading) and ask all who intend to take part to examine themselves before God. A roll of bread for you to take a piece of will then be passed around, followed by small glasses of juice (to symbolise wine). You may be directed to eat and drink when you are ready, or be asked to hold either bread or wine so that the congregation eats/drinks simultaneously. The glasses will then be collected, often while music is played or during some congregational singing.

