

Becoming a Member...



Thank you for considering becoming a Member of Castle Hill Baptist Church

Whilst membership may seem like a business concept there is biblical basis implied throughout the New Testament.¹ Baptists have always been keen to stress that membership is about a covenantal relationship where we devote ourselves to each other (within the local community of believers) and before God. This relationship views both practical and spiritual care as one. Therefore, we aim to ensure that practical issues are not perceived as being separate from the spiritual aspects of church life and discipleship.

Becoming a Christian is not just an independent event; rather, it involves becoming part of a project through which God is working in the world. That project is the Christian Church and it occupies a central part in God's purpose. So, as we **believe** and trust in Jesus (becoming members of the universal Church), we also covenant to **belong** to a local expression of church—working out our part in the mission of God, watching over one another, and walking together as we grow as disciples.

Castle Hill counts itself amongst the earliest gatherings of English Baptists. It can trace its history back to 1649 and we know Baptists have worshipped on the site we currently occupy since 1685. Whilst our history is important, it is the future that Members have the privilege of shaping—discerning how God is calling us to worship him and serve Warwick today.

Contact Information

warwickbaptists.org.uk ... 01926 459640

Rev Kevin Johnson	Pastor	07802 884168	kevin@warwickbaptists.org.uk
David Ho	Secretary	07939 966218	secretary@warwickbaptists.org.uk
Rebecca Riordan	Treasurer	07708 620648	treasurer@warwickbaptists.org.uk

Safeguarding — Children (under 18s) and Adults

warwickbaptists.org.uk/resources/policies-and-procedures

Joy Johnson — Designated Lead	Call: 01926 459640, select option 3 (<i>leave a message & number if no answer and someone will call back</i>)
Vacant — Designated Deputy Lead	
Chris Williams — Safeguarding Trustee	Non-urgent email: safe@warwickbaptists.org.uk

¹ A detailed review of whether church membership is biblical or not can be found here:

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/where-did-the-idea-of-church-membership-originate.html>

What Does Membership Involve? *(Extracts from our Constitution 2009)*

3. Church Membership

Church membership is open to those who:

- Accept the Beliefs of the Church;
- Meet the Church's qualification on Baptism (public profession of faith/believers' baptism);
- Commit themselves to serving Christ within the Church and beyond;
- Abide by the decisions of the Church Members' Meeting;
- Acknowledge their responsibilities as Church Members;
- Have their membership application accepted by the Church Members' Meeting.

6. Belonging to the Church

6.1. The responsibilities of membership normally include:

- Attending worship and participating in church Activities;
- Personal prayer and Bible study;
- Participation at the Communion of the Lord's Supper as a privilege and priority;
- Helping the church whenever possible by using gifts and abilities to advance the Purpose of the church through its Activities;
- Attending and participating in Church Members' Meetings;
- Giving regular financial support to the church in proportion to personal resources and circumstances;
- Upholding Christian values.

2. The Purpose of the church

The principle purpose of the church is the advancement of the Christian Faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.

3. Beliefs

As a member of the Baptist Union the Church subscribes to the Union's Declaration of Principle:

1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer his laws.
2. That Christian baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again on the third day'.
3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

9. Church Members Meetings

9.1. Church members shall meet together in a Church Members' Meeting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ to discern the mind of God in the affairs of the Church.

9.2. The Church Members' Meeting shall have reserved authority in the appointment and removal of a Minister, ... , decisions relating to church property including (without limitation) any purchase, sale, lease, tenancy, mortgage, or re-development of the property, the administration of the membership list, and the closure of the Church.

- 10.2 ...shall be an opportunity to consider and review matters associated with the life of the Church including issues relating to church membership, the appointment and dismissal of the Charity Trustees, the approval [of] the budget, with opportunities for considering proposals from the Charity Trustees or other Church Members for the development of the church and the advancement of its Purpose through its Activities.

The Process

- One or two Members will meet with you to hear your faith story and share about CHBC;
- A recommendation is made to the Pastor and/or deacons;
- A commendation (including a short report) is made to the Members at a Church Members' Meeting, other comments invited and a vote is taken;
- You will be informed of the decision and publicly welcomed into membership at the next convenient Sunday morning communion service (third Sunday of each month).

Some important detail about Baptist Churches

- We believe in the Priesthood of all Believers — that all can speak directly to God and hear from him because of Jesus. Whilst our Pastor carries out specific roles within church life, we believe each person is 'on mission' and has a ministry wherever they go and in whatever they do.
- We all have gifts and skills to share. Some are called to be on the Leadership Team², others serve on the cleaning team, some in children's work whilst others bake cakes. Each of these roles should be viewed equally; they are just different responsibilities within the family. Therefore, if you see areas where you can help, opportunities to improve what we do, ways to forward our part in God's mission, develop our community, or anything else please speak to the Pastor, a Leader or the relevant Lead person – we want to enable and release you to use your gifts and skills and grow you in your walk with Jesus.
- As a congregational church we have a formal Membership. From this group, people are elected to the Leadership Team who enact the direction and policies agreed at Members' meetings. Other responsibilities are delegated to specific groups (with informal terms of reference) and they are held accountable by the Leadership Team and Church Meeting.
- CHBC is self-funding; there is no central body that supports us financially. Please consider what level of regular giving you can offer to ensure the continued work of the church (see <https://warwickbaptists.org.uk/giving> for more info).
- CHBC has various policies and procedures agreed by its Members (*see web address under "Safeguarding" p1/request in paper from the Secretary*). These help us to consider and apply good practice as recognised in both the secular and Christian worldview. Members have a responsibility to make sure we and others abide by these. We welcome constructive comments to improve them—please talk with the Designated Person or a member of the Leadership. We are always keen to make sure they are both robust and practical.
- CHBC News and our website are the main source for information and activities.

Our Structure & Members' Meetings

- The Leadership Team (Deacons) meet on 2nd Thursday each month, 10 times a year.
- Members meet on the 4th Thursday (7.45pm) most months, in person & online, and sometimes over lunch on Sundays, to enable different people to attend as fits their life pattern. We worship together and listen for God speaking through our conversations and prayer; e.g., we discuss Leadership recommendations, offer updates on various ministries, invite ideas, pray for one another, and discern next steps in God's mission for us.
- Dates for all meetings are published in the church calendar and in CHBC News.

² This is a small group of Members (men and women), chosen by the Church Meeting, to represent, discern (in partnership with the CM), lead and support the fellowship in presenting the gospel and God's Word to the wider community, and are the legal trustees. NB This is also known as the diaconate / deacons.

- Elections for Deacons (3 year term), Secretary and Treasurer (1 year terms) are held every November, to commence in January; our AGM is held in March.
- If you cannot make a meeting please send your apologies to the Secretary. If you have a comment to share regarding an agenda item on that date, please also include that.

A GOSPEL PEOPLE *Words all Christians are invited to join in at our annual Covenant service*

We are called to be a worshipping community

Offering all to God in prayer

We are called to be a missionary community

Making known the redeeming love of God

We are called to be a sacrificial community

Generously giving from all that God has given us

We are called to be an inclusive community

Sharing the hospitality of God's Kingdom with all

And we are called to a prophetic community

Challenging powers that oppress and corrupt

THE CHBC COVENANT *Words for Members, or those willing to commit to support and serve within this fellowship, as they're able, in the year ahead.*

By God's undeserving grace,
 this church is a group of Christians who
 worship God
 and long to share the love of Jesus
 in the ways we love and serve one another.

We will try to demonstrate love by being forgiving,
 ready to listen to one another rather than insisting on having our say,
 and more concerned to help one another before ourselves.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit
 we will strive to live as disciples of Jesus Christ
 and will help and encourage others to know and follow him.

We recognise that our purpose as 'church'
 is for the benefit of all those who are not currently part of the church.
 And we want to show God's love to the world in practical ways.

We seek to value and welcome people irrespective of age,
 life experience, belief and background.

We seek to be an open and inclusive community.

And all of this is summed up in our determination to:

 Love God, love one another and love the world.

We say together: **By God's grace, we covenant together.**