



SOUTH COAST LIFE CHURCH

Membership at South Coast Life Church

Why membership?

Membership is formally committing to South Coast Life Church. It is saying this is the community of God's people that you will be investing into spiritually, relationally, missionally and financially. It does not bind you to any contract or legal obligation.

Eligibility

Anyone over 16 who has confirmed our statement of beliefs and has indicated through word and commitment to the church is eligible for membership. We have open-membership which means you do not need to be baptised by full immersion to join, just agree that this is SCLC's position and be supportive of it.

Process of becoming a member

Once someone decides they would like to become a member they will speak to a pastor or elder who will give them copies of the constitution and relevant policies. Elders will then affirm them as members if they meet the criteria spelled out in the constitution (attached). They will then be formally affirmed in a Sunday Service.

Governance

We are part of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT. This association of churches (including us) are congregationally governed. That is, the authority lies not in head office but in the local congregation. Each member is asked to take impending decisions to God and ask for His direction. Decisions are based on the will of God as discerned by the congregation of believers.

Membership is essentially how we legally talk about who has the authority to speak into the running of our church. 99% of the time when we vote on things as a church we include everyone (members or not) in the decision. However we have membership to make sure the process cannot be manipulated by stacking a congregation.

Only people who have been members for more than 12 months may become elders.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding membership please speak to an elder or pastor. Attached is the relevant section of our constitution.

Excerpt from South Coast Life Church Constitution regarding church membership.

5. Membership

A. Eligibility for Membership

Members shall be persons over 16 years of age who give evidence of a sincere profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who agree and hold to the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading "Doctrinal Position of this Church" except possibly for the doctrine of the baptism of believers only by immersion. Should a member not believe in the doctrine of the Baptism of believers only by immersion then they must agree to this Church holding to this doctrine. Further, a member who does not personally believe in the doctrine of the "baptism of believers only, and by immersion" shall be restricted in respect of being a delegate of this Church to an Assembly of the Baptist Union of NSW.

B. Admission to Membership

Applicants for membership shall be through the Pastor or Church Secretary. Applicants for membership shall be visited by two members appointed by the Council or the Church to discuss their testimony to faith in Jesus Christ, membership responsibilities, the Church Constitution and its various ministries. A report shall be presented to the Church Council following the visitation. Applicants may be admitted to membership upon a vote of council confirmed at next congregation meeting

Where the applicant for membership has been a member of another Baptist Church, letters of transfer and/or commendation shall be sought and shall be taken into account by the Church.

C. Responsibilities of Members

- a) To endeavour at all times, by God's grace, to remain true to their commitment to Christ as expressed in their baptism.*
- b) To join regularly in the worship of the Church.*
- c) To lead a life worthy of Christ in love, humility and peace, endeavouring to build each other up through encouragement, counsel and comfort.*
- d) To study the Scriptures in private and in groups as the Lord gives opportunity.*
- e) To express their gratitude to God, and their responsibilities as his stewards by contributing regularly and wholeheartedly to the financial support of the Church and the wider work of the Union of Churches.*

- f) *To seek opportunities to use their gifts in the ministry of the Church.*
- g) *To pray regularly in private and where possible in fellowship for the people and ministry of the Church and the family of Churches.*

D. Members Roll

A Members' Roll and an Absent Members' Roll shall be kept by the Church Council.

E. Removal from Membership

The Council, Eldership or other appropriate body will prayerfully review the Members Roll at least every two years.

Members who for a period of six months fail to participate in the worship of the Church without satisfactory explanation or fail to honour other responsibilities of membership shall receive special attention. Where the failure to participate in the Worship of the Church relates to removal from the District in which the Church is situated, then such members shall be transferred to an Absent Members Roll. Where the failure to participate in the Worship of the Church relates to some reason other than removal from the district or where the member in question fails to honour other responsibilities of membership, every effort shall be made to restore such members to worship and fellowship (Matt. 18:15-17). Where these efforts fail, a recommendation may be brought to the Church that such members names be removed from the roll.

No member's name shall be transferred or removed from either the Members' Roll or the Absent Members' Roll except by their request or the decision of a two thirds majority of the members present and voting at a properly constituted Church meeting.

F. Transfer of Membership

Any member in good standing may request that a letter of commendation be sent to another Baptist Church he or she wishes to join. The Elders may process the request reporting their actions to the next Church meeting for confirmation.