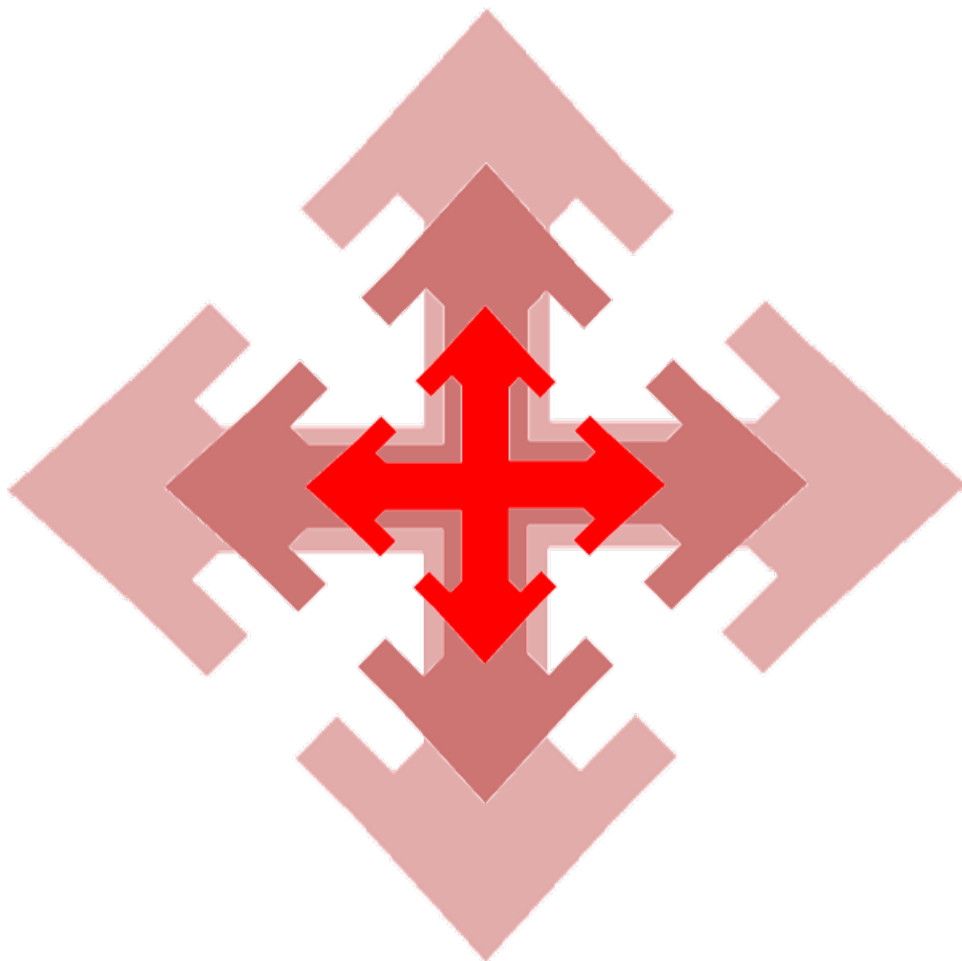




Growing together

The Mutley Baptist Church Membership Covenant



What is a Membership Covenant?

Church Membership is a commitment between Christians in a local church which we express as a covenant because it reflects the Covenant relationship that God has with us. A covenant is a mutually agreed exchange of promises. In the Bible, God's Covenant with people is expressed as, "I will be your God and you will be my people." The Mutley Baptist Church Membership Covenant is based on our mutual commitment, responsibilities and promises to love, support and encourage one another and be involved in the mission of the church.

This leaflet explains what it means to covenant with us to be a member of this church. We have called our membership covenant 'Growing Together' because that reminds us to two of the key elements: we grow together in the sense of simultaneously growing in the same direction as God's Spirit equips, inspires and empowers us; and we also grow together in the sense of growing closer to God and one another through the way we express our love for one another and as we worship with, share, pray for, support, encourage and bless one another.

As a church we have discerned the following **values**, which are reflected in who we seek to be together, what we do and how we do it.

Jesus calls us to love God and love people, and to be a community of his followers who are:

God-oriented

Like Jesus: a prayerful God-focused people who seek and celebrate God whether we are gathered together or dispersed, doing everything in a way that honours God and responding to his innovative prompting.

Lovingly inclusive

Like Jesus: pulling down the walls of prejudice, valuing everyone, ensuring everyone has a place in God's family and especially welcoming

those who have been marginalised.

Ethically motivated

Like Jesus: unashamedly and relevantly speaking God's truth, striving for justice, caring for the environment and actively challenging the abuse of power, wealth, status and privilege.

Generously big-hearted

Like Jesus: becoming vulnerable in serving others, and generously reflecting the generosity of God – giving our time, gifts, expertise and resources.

People-focused

Like Jesus: loving people through our words and actions, embodying and bringing the transforming love of God in Mutley, Plymouth, the UK and the wider world.

Playfully creative

Like Jesus: enjoying and appreciating life in all its fullness, using our God-given talents to express ourselves and to communicate his truth, and looking imaginatively with the eyes of faith to discern and follow God's will.

We seek God's Spirit's help for us to embody these values, and humbly we seek and offer forgiveness for the times when we fail to do so.

Who can be a Member?

Anyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ can be a member of this Church. Normally this faith in Jesus would have been expressed in Believers' Baptism, but we also invite believers who have not been baptised in this way but want to express their commitment to Christ and this church to become members.

If you would like to become a member, please have a word with our Minister or one of the Elders. We will arrange for two people from the church (at least one of whom will normally be from the Eldership) to meet with you, to

hear your story, discuss what membership involves and answer any questions you may have. Following that meeting a recommendation will be brought to the next Church Meeting for affirmation and then you will be welcomed into membership in a church worship service, normally as we share Communion.

What does Membership look like?

Members of the church regularly attend worship services and participate in other church activities unless they are physically unable to attend. It is the privilege of believers to share together in Communion (also known as the Lord's Supper) and as members we seek to do this together as an expression of our shared faith and received forgiveness.

Members should **pray for one another**. One of the ways in which this is encouraged is through the weekly news sheet, where special prayer needs are recorded. Being part of a home group means that there are particular people who are praying for you as you pray for them, and we encourage everyone to be part of such a group. We also hold prayer meetings at the church. If you would like to know about a home group near you, please ask our Minister or Joy Sutton, who coordinates the groups. Personal prayer and Bible study are important activities through which we nurture our faith and deepen our relationship with God and one another.

This church is committed to **Biblical teaching**. All that we do is shaped by what we know of God, as revealed to us in the Bible, and particularly in the person of Jesus. On Sundays and on other occasions the Bible is applied to our daily lives to help us follow Jesus more faithfully in our Monday to Saturday lives.

We share one another's lives. The New Testament describes churches as the 'Body of Christ'. All parts of the body are equally significant, and all are required for the body to function properly. When one part of the body suffers the whole body suffers, and when one part is honoured the whole body rejoices with it. Members should experience this mutual love, support and commitment through our pastoral care team, home groups, and the love

and care of fellow-members.

God has given us all gifts, talents and abilities to use in serving him, his church and the wider community. Members seek to use our gifts, talents and abilities to help one another follow Jesus and to make him known. God relies on us to share the Good News of Jesus with our friends, family, colleagues and neighbours.

Believers in Jesus **rely on God's Spirit** for strength to live in a manner that is worthy of him, and which demonstrates to others our faith in him. We recognise that one of the ways in which he gives us this strength is through each other. As a community of Christian Believers we seek to show love, respect, serve, encourage and help each other and work together to help fulfil the purpose and beliefs of the church. We can do this through offering hospitality, visiting others, praying for one another and giving practical help. As God's Spirit helps us to live as community like this, he enables us to be a 'free sample of Jesus' to those who are not currently following him.

We seek to offer opportunities for members to **use their God-given gifts and talents** in his service and in the service of others. We would love to help you to discover those talents and to enhance them through their use and to grow in faith as you do so.

Another part of our commitment to one another as Mutley Baptist Church and share in our ministry and mission is that we support the work of the church financially. While we rely completely on God to sustain his mission this is mainly experienced through the generosity and faithful giving of those who attend. Members are asked particularly to consider a regular financial commitment to the church in proportion to their personal resources and circumstances. Please speak with the Treasurer for details on how to make regular payments, (for taxpayers, if giving is Gift-Aided the value of the gift is increased significantly, currently by 25%.)

We believe that **God speaks through any and all of us**. Members are encouraged to attend our quarterly Church Meetings where we try to discern God's will and purpose for the life, ministry and mission of the

church. If you are unable to attend in person, we usually also have a Zoom link so that people can join us online.

Because we value and respect our membership covenant, we review the membership list from time to time. This enables us to seek to renew relationships with members who have drifted from us, to remove those who have moved to new churches, and, with pastoral sensitivity, to remove those who are no longer in a covenant relationship with us.