



BLACKHALL
ST. COLUMBA'S
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

"To glorify God...to proclaim Christ...to serve others"

Membership Booklet

Thank you for considering becoming a member at Blackhall St. Columba's Church. This booklet is designed to give you more information about what membership in the church looks like, and what is expected of a member of the church.

If at any time, you feel that membership is not for you, or it is not right at this moment, then please make that known. It is better to make that decision now than to become a member and feel like it was the wrong decision later.

First Things

What is required to become a member of the church?

The primary requirement is that you must **believe**.

Profession of faith has always been an integral part of church membership.

In the Bible, Romans 10: 9 says that: ***'If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'***

You must be able to articulate what the Christian faith is about and know Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord.



That is not to say that you have it all entirely sorted out - faith is an ongoing process, and we all continue to learn more about God - but the basics must be there so that you can take the first vow (see the *Membership Vows* later in the booklet) in good conscience.

The expectation is that you will continue to **follow** Jesus in your everyday life.

The **secondary** requirements are that:

- You will come to church regularly.
- You read the Bible and Pray.
- You give a proportion of your time, talents and money to the Church's work.

These secondary requirements will be explained below:

Why should I come to church regularly?

There are several reasons why it is important to come to church regularly.

1. **Firstly**, as Christians, it is important that we set aside time to worship God and to spend time with other Christians.
(Hebrews 10:25)
2. **Secondly**, it is in the church that we can learn and grow in our faith.
3. **Thirdly**, in the church, you find a family and a place to belong. When you are struggling, they will help you to keep going. And when they are struggling, they ask that you do the same for them. In the church, we are accountable to one another.



Why should I read the Bible and Pray?

If we want to grow in our faith, and grow in the knowledge of who God is and what He has done, it makes sense that we spend time seeking God in **prayer** and by **reading the Bible**.

It is good for us to read a bit of the **Bible** every day. We shouldn't treat the Bible as a self-help book - but to find out about what God is like and what He expects from us.

You may want to use Bible Reading Notes or devotionals to help us go through the Bible in manageable chunks, and to help with the bits you don't understand.

Sometimes **prayer** can seem like a scary thing. Maybe you think that a prayer ought to be long and with flowery language - but that is far from the truth.

We can simply come before God and share what is on our heart. He also will place people and situations before us to pray through.

To help us to pray - it might be good for us to look at the **Lord's Prayer** as a model (Matthew 6: 9-13) or to use the **ACTS** model (see below).

ACTS stand for - **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.**

Adoration - give praise to God for who He is, and what He has done.

Confession - say sorry for the things throughout the day you have done or thought which were not pleasing to God.



Thanksgiving - give thanks for things which are good and which you are thankful for.

Supplication - an old word - just meaning ask. *What things would you like to ask God for? Is it healing for a family member or friend? Is it help at work? Is it wisdom in a particular situation?*

Why should I give a proportion of time, talents and money to the Church's work?

If God is important to you, and you appreciate what He has done for you in Jesus, it makes sense that we give back to Him.

Time - There are various ways you can get involved in the church - whether in children or youth work, fabric, catering or in other ways. Currently we have 8 committees in the church each member can be involved in - *Worship, Outreach, Nurture, Pastoral & Prayer, Fabric, Stewardship, Finance, Communication*. Why not speak to the Minister, the Session Clerk or one of the Committee convenors to find out more?

Talents – Each of us have gifts which can be used in the church. If you are gifted in a certain area - the church would be delighted to have you use that gift. There are many ways in which you may be able to help, like, catering, helping with the Sunday school, Crèche, IT, Sound and Visual, play an instrument, Welcome team, Bible reading, children's talks, etc.

Money - It is good for us to give money to the church for the work of the church locally, nationally and abroad, in recognition that all we have is God's anyway.



Traditionally in the church, people have tithed (i.e. - given 10% of their income) to the church. But this is something to aim for rather than a requirement - it of course depends on your own personal circumstances - at times you may feel you are able to give more - at other times, less.

There are several ways in which you can give to the church - through the open plate, by standing order or by WFO envelope. If you are a taxpayer - if you fill out a Gift Aid form, tax can be reclaimed on your donations.

Please speak to the Church Treasurer if you would like more information or forms.

Membership vows

These are the vows you will make to become a member of the church:

Question 1:

**Believing in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and confessing Jesus Christ as
your Saviour and Lord,
do you promise to join regularly with your fellow Christians
in worship on the Lord's day?**

Candidate: I do.

Question 2:

**Do you promise to be faithful in reading the Bible,
and in prayer? *Candidate: I do.***



Question 3:

**Do you promise
to give a fitting proportion
of your time, talents and money
for the Church's work in the world?**

Candidate: I do.

Question 4:

**Do you promise,
depending on the grace of God,
to profess your loyalty to Jesus Christ, to serve him in your
daily work,
and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?**

Candidate: I do.

Vision Statement for Blackhall St Columba's Church

Who are we?

We are a Trinitarian church within the Church of Scotland which is a church within the reformed tradition and which is Presbyterian in structure.

What do we do?

- We desire that people **come** to know Jesus, who is the only way to the Father.
- We want to see people **follow** Christ in their daily life.
- We want to enable people to **serve** one another out of gratitude for how God has served us.
- We believe that as individuals and as a church we need to **share** our faith with others around us.



In the light of the above, what should our church look like?

We long to see the church as a vibrant worshipping community with all ages represented where everyone feels welcome and included.

We want to see a church which is warmer in fellowship, deeper in faith and wider in reaching others.

How might this happen?

We are powerless in and of ourselves to transform the church / our community; we are entirely reliant upon God to transform and change lives: ***“Unless the Lord builds the house, the labourers labour in vain”*** (Psalm 127).

As this is the case, our primary task is to come before Him in worship and prayer. To that end, we have services of worship and we meet together for prayer to seek the Lord together and His will for the church.

We also recognise that as believers, God has given us a role in the world as his ambassadors - that others around us might come, follow, serve and share.

In short:

We seek that people:

“Come to Christ, Follow Christ, Serve Christ and Share Christ with others.”

Or as our Mission statement says, we live for Him to:

“To glorify God...to proclaim Christ...to serve others”

