

Goodwood Evangelical Church

Church membership

The Church Universal and the Church Local

The New Testament teaches that all Christians are members of Christ's body - the church (e.g. Ephesians 5:30) and Ephesians 5:25 says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy." The verses in Ephesians are primarily talking about the Church Universal, but Acts 20:28 describes the local church at Ephesus and 1 Corinthians 1:2 the local church at Corinth (see also 1Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Each local church in the New Testament was just that - a gathering of local people belonging to God, bought with his blood, sanctified in Christ and called (together) to be holy. That is what Goodwood Church is and seeks to be. Obviously we are not all the Christians in this local area (however that is defined) and certainly we are not all the Christians in Leicester. Nevertheless we are a gathering of believers (a church) with common beliefs which unite us.

One body, many gifts

The New Testament nowhere envisages that Christians will be isolated individuals who do not come together. Christians are to be part of a local body of believers. In Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 Paul likens the church to a body with many parts which are all important. Christians all have gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit many of which can only be exercised together as a church. Becoming a Church Member therefore means identifying and exercising our gifts for the good of the body as a whole.

The Church is a family

In 1 Timothy 3:15 the church is described as a household or a family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ and we have responsibilities towards one another. In Galatians 6:10 we are called to do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:2 exhorts us to carry one another's burdens. We should be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other (Ephesians 4:32). We are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love, honouring one another above ourselves (Romans 12:10). We are to always pray for our brothers and sisters, the saints (Ephesians 6:18). We have a responsibility as Christians to meet together, to encourage each other and "to spur one another on to love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Becoming a Church Member therefore means that we have a responsibility towards our fellow believers.

Criteria for membership

We warmly welcome any who wish to join us in membership and fellowship. Of course we would expect every member to be a professing Christian. Members should show by what they say and do that they have experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in being "born again" (John 3:3) (regeneration) so that they are a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our lives should therefore show evidence of the change which repentance and faith in God bring. In addition every member is expected to profess the doctrines set out overleaf. Normally we expect that a member will have witnessed to their faith by being baptised as a believer. In becoming a member a commitment is therefore made to the life and witness of the church.

The Procedure

There is no formal membership procedure, but normally a person who is interested is directed to an elder who will discuss it with them, and possibly leave this paper with them to read. If the elders agree to welcome the person into fellowship a public announcement is made. There is a directory of members, and their addresses, which each member receives.

Goodwood Evangelical Church
A Statement of Doctrine - What we believe

- The Divine Inspiration Authority and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.
2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 19:7-11
- The unity of Godhead with the distinction of Persons in that Unity, namely the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to whom equal honour is due.
Deuteronomy 6:4; Genesis 1:2, 26; Luke 3:22; John 1:1, 2; 5:17, 22-23; 14:25-26; 16:7, 27-28; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:1-3, 8
- That the Son of God truly became man being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
John 1:14; Romans 8:3 Galatians 4:4; Matthew 1:20-25; Luke 1:35
- That His death was a sacrifice to God and a propitiation for the forgiveness of sins.
Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:24-28; Hebrews 10:12-14
- That He was raised from the dead; His body saw no decay and was raised on the third day from among the dead.
Matthew 28:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:4, 20
- That He ascended in bodily form to the right hand of God and is now the all-sufficient High Priest of His people.
Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25
- That He will come again to receive His people to Himself and that He will afterwards come with them to set up His kingdom.
John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 1:32-33; Psalm 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44-45; 7:13-14
- That in consequence of the fall of Adam man became "lost", and at "enmity with God", that he is also "powerless" to do the will of God.
Psalm 53:2-3; Luke 19:10; Romans 3:19; 5:6, 12-19; 8:5-7
- The need of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration and sanctification.
John 3:5-8; 16:8-11; Titus 3:4-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2
- That the justification of the sinner before God is by faith alone.
Romans 3:21-26; 4:4-5; 5:1; Galatians 2:16
- That every justified one is also born of God.
John 1:12-13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23
- That such new birth results in and is made evident by holiness of life and good works.
Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; Titus 3:4-8
- That at death the spirit of man does not cease to exist or become unconscious.
Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
- That the dead will be raised either to life or to condemnation; and that the blessedness of the righteous and the punishment of the unrighteous will be alike eternal.
1 Corinthians 15:51-57; Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 14:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Daniel 12:2; Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:11-15