

An Introduction to Caloundra Church of Christ



Caloundra Church of Christ
A ministry of Churches of Christ in Queensland

"Our mission is to help move people at home and abroad from wherever they are spiritually to become deeply mature followers of Jesus"

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to

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Caloundra Church of Christ 2015
www.caloundrachurchofchrist.org.au

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Churches of Christ

Churches of Christ are a body of believers with a desire to see people saved from their sin and united in Jesus with other believers. The early proponents of the movement coined phrases that expressed some of their core beliefs:

*No creed but Christ
No book but the Bible
In essentials unity in non-essentials liberty
In all things love*

Churches of Christ in general have not formalized a creed or statement of faith believing the Word of God speaks for itself. We recognize though that it is helpful for those worshipping with us to have a basic outline of what we believe and what we value. Therefore we have listed some dot points as a framework of reference. But also we have included a basic explanation of what fellowship with and membership of our church at Caloundra means.

This booklet has two main purposes. Firstly, it aims to help both the new Christian, who is in the process of deciding what church to join, and the person who has been a Christian for some time, and who would like to know more about this church. Secondly, it aims to be useful to established members of the church, who may wish to refresh their own understanding of their church, or to use it to inform others about the church. It does not try to tell you everything we believe or do, but it does try to give you enough information to enable you to decide if you want to join the Church of Christ at Caloundra (or to remain a member) and what steps you should take if you do want to join. It also tells you where to get more help if you are uncertain about any particular matter, or if you want more information.

We encourage you to read it carefully and prayerfully.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to help move people at home and abroad from wherever they are spiritually to become fully mature followers of Jesus.

Our Vision:

*This is where we intend to go, a preferred future;
A picture of what could be*

to equip people to:

LOVE DEEPLY

LIVE PASSIONATELY

and SERVE WILLINGLY

an intentional focus on formation – the kind of people we are becoming

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Equipped to:

LOVE DEEPLY

“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”...“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this:...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

Mark 12:29-30

- Understanding spiritual disciplines – prayer, bible reading, fasting
- Growing in understanding of God and His ways
- Participation in mentoring
- All programs and ministry teams identifying ways to connect with God and hear his voice
- Creating opportunities for encounter with God
- Promote milestones and anchor points in the Christian journey

What does it mean for you to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Equipped to:

LIVE PASSIONATELY

“The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:31

Supporting and strengthening:

- Family life
- Church life
- Community life

Who is your neighbor that you are called to love?

Equipped to:

SERVE WILLINGLY

“And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”

Acts 1:8

- Understanding spiritual gifts – identifying your calling/passion; know what ministry opportunities are available; understanding where you fit
- Reaching out together – allowing God to touch your heart when confronted by brokenness; involvement in the community

How am I going to serve in a broken world?

Where do I see God at work, so that I can join him there?

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Beliefs and Values:

A brief outline of our beliefs and values is included here. We would expect that any person wishing to become a member of this church would subscribe to these basic doctrines. Any person seeking to become a member would be a true Christian who has been, or wants to be, baptized by immersion, and who has attended enough meetings to feel they wish to join. The Elders would prefer that people who have attended our meetings for a period of time would indicate whether (a) they wish to become a member, and so be fully involved with the church, or (b) they just wish to attend without full involvement. The latter is quite acceptable, but we would like to stress that it is our view that every member of the universal Church (that is, every Christian) should seek to give expression to that fact by joining fully in the worship, work, and witness of a local church.

What we believe:

- God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe
- God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- God created a perfect world, but it has been horribly affected by sin. Every person has sinned, and sin separates us from God and causes problems in our lives, relationships and community.
- Jesus died on a Roman cross for all mankind and rose on the third day.
- People can only have their sins forgiven by repenting (turning from their sins) and trusting in Jesus' death on the cross to save them.
- Believers are to be obedient to the commandment of Christ through baptism by immersion.
- Believers should remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross for them through regular participation in breaking of bread (communion).
- The Holy Spirit indwells believers equipping them to live godly lives of service in ministry and mission – the priesthood of all believers.
- The Bible is the inerrant Word of God; God's message to mankind.
- Jesus Christ is coming back to take His followers to be with Himself.
- God will judge this world and create new heavens and a new earth.

Our core values:

- **discipleship**
we are intentional about growing towards spiritual maturity
- **fellowship**
we encourage opportunities to experience biblical community
- **service**
we equip people to develop their spiritual gifts, and release people to use them
- **the Word**
we apply the Scriptures to daily life
- **witness**
we are on mission, being a witness both across the street and across the world

Key points:

About God:

There is only one true God. He is the Creator of all life and the Supreme Ruler of the universe. He has always been (He is eternal) and co-exists equally in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. We learn about God through His creation, His Word, His Son and His Holy Spirit. God loves us more than we can imagine.

Genesis 1:26-27; Deuteronomy 6:4; Job 38:1-41:34; Matthew 3:13-17; John 3:16; Romans 1:19,20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:6

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About Jesus Christ:

Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God. Co-equal with God the Father and God the Spirit, He came to earth and became man. He was completely God while at the same time being fully man. He revealed to us who God is. His miraculous acts, sinless life, and life-changing teachings all confirm the fact that He is God's Son. His purpose for coming to Earth was to show God's love by dying on a cross, thus taking the sins of all mankind upon Himself, and paying the penalty that our sins deserve. His bodily resurrection from the grave and His promise to return someday are testimonies to the fact that He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus desires the deepest of relationship with every person.

Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1,14,18; Acts 10:37-43; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Ephesians 2:4-8; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-21; Hebrews 1:1-3

About the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. The primary role of the Spirit is to glorify and to testify of Jesus. He dwells in each member of God's family as a Helper and Guide. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that a person comes to salvation. At the point of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our physical bodies as His home. He provides help to every Christian to do what is right, strength to serve Jesus, and direction for living life God's way. Every Christian is to allow God's Spirit to help him on a daily basis.

John 14:16-17; John 16:7-14; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 3:16-20; Ephesians 5:18; John 15:26.

About the Bible:

The Bible is God's written Word. The process that God used to give us His Word is called inspiration, which means God-breathed. The Word of God is without error and is truth. It tells us who God is, why He loves us, and what His plans are for us. The Bible is the authority or standard for living our lives according to God's will for us.

Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119:105, 160; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

About Man:

We are created in the spiritual likeness or image of God. God gave us free will: we have the ability to choose to love as God loves, to choose to do right in the likeness of God's righteousness, and to choose to value what God values. God created us because He wants a family who will love Him because we want to love Him, and not because we have to love Him. The first man, Adam, chose to sin, and now every person lives in a marred creation with a marred spiritual nature. As a result, every person will eventually choose to sin and subsequently become separated from God.

Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:1-24; Psalm 8:3-6; John 4:24; Ephesians 1:4-6; Romans 3:2

About Salvation:

We need salvation because we have sinned. Sin separates us from God who desires a relationship with us. It is impossible for any man to restore that broken relationship with God by any amount of personal goodness, religious deeds, or by belonging to a church. We cannot earn, merit or achieve a right relationship with God by our own efforts. The death of Jesus was not an accident. It was God's plan from the beginning to save us from our sins through the death of Jesus Christ. The Bible calls God's act of love, grace. His grace is His gift to us. The way we receive His gift is by entering into a covenant relationship with Jesus by placing our trust and faith in Him. When we decide that we will follow Jesus for the rest of our lives, we demonstrate our trust in Jesus by obeying His command to be immersed (Baptised) in water demonstrating the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Isaiah 59:2; John 3:16; John 14:6; Acts 2:37-39; Romans

3:10,11,23; Romans 6:3-4; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-8

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About Eternity:

When God created you and me, He created us with a soul which will never cease to exist. Those who choose to follow Jesus as Lord, and have a growing relationship with Him, will spend eternity with God in Heaven. Those who reject Jesus by refusing to follow Him will spend eternity in Hell. Heaven, like salvation and grace, is a gift of God. Hell is the due consequence for those who have not accepted God's offer of forgiveness. Heaven and Hell are real places.

Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 7:21-23; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-6; Romans 6:23; Philippians 3:17-21; Revelation 20:15

About the Church:

The Church is God's spiritual family. It is made up of all those who have chosen to place their trust and faith in Jesus and who are His followers (disciples). The Church is not a building or one particular group of believers. To belong to the Church, is to belong to Jesus. The Bible uses the analogy that Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is His body. God's will is for the Church to gather regularly to worship its Head, Jesus, to remember His sacrifice on the cross by participating in communion, to use its various gifts and abilities to serve its Head, to love and encourage those who are in the body, and to work diligently to maintain the unity of the body. As the members of His Church love one another and maintain unity of purpose and relationship, the world around us will recognize that we belong to Jesus. The Church or body is to seek to do the will of God, which also includes loving and saving the world through Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16:15-18; John 17:20-23; John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10

Church Fellowship and Membership:

We praise God for the fellowship we enjoy as members of the church, and we are glad for every opportunity we have to share with others the life we have in Christ Jesus. We praise God, too for your interest in the fellowship here.

It is a **privilege** to worship and have fellowship together, and we also have a **responsibility** to serve Him together. With this in mind, the Elders wish to emphasize some aspects of these responsibilities.

To begin with, we accept that some folk may choose to meet with us here on a casual basis - to come to some of the services at their convenience - but are not able or willing to be fully involved, especially in personal service and or financially. We are happy to include such people in our Church Directory, for prayer and personal contact.

However, we do believe that the Bible teaches that it is God's intention that Christian's become **members of a local church**, which is a local expression of the body of Christ; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Romans 12:3-5. To help in understanding this, the following is an outline of what is expected of those who seek **membership of this church** and also those folk who desire to serve in a leadership position.

Responsibilities of Membership:

There are many privileges in being part of God's family, and you will be aware of those. There are also responsibilities to be accepted if we are members of the 'body of Christ', the church. Some of these are:

Members are expected to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and to give evidence of this in their daily lives. 1 John 5:1-5; Ephesians 2:8-10.

Members are expected to agree with our beliefs and values or to refrain from teaching or influencing to the contrary. 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

Members are expected to be faithful in attendance at the weekly services of the church. Acts 2:41-47; Hebrews 10:24-25.

Members are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the work of Christ by participation in, and support of, the activities of the church in reaching out to the unsaved world and caring for those in need. Matthew 28:18-20; Galatians 6:10.

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Members are expected to contribute regularly to the financial needs of the church, and so to further the work of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

Members are expected to recognize the authority of the Elders of the church as those responsible for the spiritual well-being and direction of all the members, and to agree to obey them in matters relating to the church fellowship. Hebrews 13:17.

Church Leadership:

Leaders are defined as those who have a clear and defined personal responsibility for a particular Team or Ministry Area. Leadership also has a corresponding personal accountability to the Ministry Team Leader, Elders and the Church for their Team or Ministry Area.

Prospective leaders should have demonstrated an active involvement in the life of the Caloundra Church of Christ for at least twelve (12) months.

Church members may suggest or nominate individuals to the Elders and or the Minister(s) for consideration for any leadership positions, however all leadership positions shall be filled as described in each ministry position covered in the church "Functional Principles".

At the individual level, **member** status simply permits "having a say **here**", and provides eligibility for appointment to leadership positions.

At the corporate level, adopting formal membership provides a mechanism to help ensure that the strategic direction, control, and leadership of the Church is not jeopardized; either by those who may not be fully committed to the purposes and mission of **this** Church, or by those who are not actively involved in Church life here.

Current Elders are: Mike Conolly (Chair)	Ph: 5499 6954
Geoff Davis	Ph: 5437 7449
Renee Moody	Ph: 5491 2488
Laureen Drake	Ph: 5437 0312
Derek Kickbush	Ph: 5438 2897
Jack Went	Ph: 5491 5092
Ian Wilson (Deputy Chair)	Ph: 5492 7057

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The following pages articulate the Caloundra Church of Christ leadership's teaching position on the two sacraments that the Lord Jesus commanded for His church namely Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Communion)

Caloundra Church of Christ Baptism - Our Teaching Position

Christian Baptism:

Christian baptism is a sacrament commanded by Jesus, by which Christians make a public confession that they have repented of their sins and committed themselves in faith to Jesus as their Saviour and Lord (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38,41; 9:18; 10:47-48; 18:8; Rom 10:9). The Bible speaks of people going into the water to be baptized (Acts 8:38; cf. Matt 3:16), but it gives no detailed description of the act of baptism. The original meaning of 'baptize' was 'dip' or 'immerse', suggesting that believers were immersed in water.

As Jesus preached the message of the kingdom, those who accepted his message and entered the kingdom showed the genuineness of their faith and repentance by being baptized. The disciples of Jesus, rather than Jesus himself, did the baptizing (John 3:22; 4:1-2). Just before he returned to his heavenly Father, the risen Christ told his disciples to spread the good news of his kingdom worldwide and to baptize those who believed (Matt 28:19). The book of Acts shows how the early Christians carried out his command (Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,35-39; 10:47-48; 16:13-15,31-33; 18:8).

Baptism was so readily acknowledged as the natural and immediate consequences of faith that the New Testament links the two inseparably. The object of saving faith is Jesus Christ and what he has done through his death and resurrection. Paul, the great interpreter of Christian belief and practice, saw baptism as more than just a declaration of faith; he saw it as having meaning that is tied up with the unique union that believers have with Jesus Christ (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27).

According to Paul's teaching, baptism is an expression of union with Christ in dying to sin and being raised with Christ to new life. When Christ died and rose again, believers died and rose again, so to speak. They demonstrate this in their baptism, but they must also make it true in practice. They must live as those who are no longer under sin's power (Rom 6:1-11; Col 2:12).

Baptism is also a witness, or testimony. It declares that believers are cleansed from sin (Acts 22:16; cf. 1 Peter 3:21), given the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47; cf. 1 Cor 12:13) and introduced into the body of Christ, the church (Gal 3:26-28; cf. 1 Cor 12:13).

Peter, like Paul, interprets Christian baptism in relation to the death and resurrection of Christ. He sees judgment and salvation pictured in baptism, as they were pictured in the flood of Noah's time. Christ died to bear God's judgment on sin, but he rose from death to new life. Through him believers are cleansed from sin and made sharers in a new and victorious life (1 Peter 3:20-4:1).

The community that believers enter through their conversion is of divine, not human, origin. It is not a club, but the kingdom of God. Believers are therefore baptized not in the name of a human cult-figure, but in the name of God (Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 1:13). The early preachers constantly kept this in mind. Paul, for example, preferred someone else to baptize his converts, to avoid the appearance of building a personal following (1 Cor 1:14-16). Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ, and he alone is their Lord (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 10:48; 19:5; Rom 10:9)

Baptism of Infants:

The well known practice of baptizing infants, usually by sprinkling, is not specifically taught in the Bible. Nor does the Bible deal specifically with the related subject of the salvation of infants. Although the Bible shows that God has a special concern for children, its teaching about salvation is mainly concerned with those who are old enough to be responsible for their own decisions (Matt 18:1-6; 19:13-15). The Bible clearly states that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:22-23) and each person needs to exercise faith to be saved.

Clearly, people are mistaken if they think that any sort of baptism, whether for adults or infants, guarantees personal salvation regardless of what people believe or do as morally responsible beings (Matt 3:7-10). Even the blessing of being brought up in a Christian family does not remove the need for the individual to repent and accept Christ in order to become a child of God (John 1:12-13; 3:5-6).

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Making arrangements for Baptism:

If you desire to be obedient to Christ in baptism this can be arranged at a time that is convenient for you, either during a worship service assembly or at another time during the week. It is up to you where you would like to be baptized it doesn't have to be in our church baptistry, you may prefer another venue such as a private pool or the beach. Baptisms may be performed by one of our ministers or Elders or by someone else you may prefer to do the baptism.

Please call the church office on 5491 7778 to make arrangements for baptism.

Caloundra Church of Christ The Lord's Supper - Our Teaching Position

The Lord's Supper:

In both the New Testament and the present day church, the Lord's Supper is known by a number of names. Paul calls it, literally, the supper of the Lord, because Christians keep it on the Lord's authority and in his honour (1 Cor 11:20). Paul speaks of it also as a communion, meaning an act of fellowship, or sharing together, in Christ (1 Cor 10:16). Luke calls it the breaking of bread, referring to part of the meal as a shortened title for the whole (Acts 2:46; 20:7). Another name, the Eucharist (from the Greek word for 'thanksgiving'), refers to Jesus' act of giving thanks for the bread and wine (Mark 14:23; 1 Cor 11:24).

The last Supper:

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper while eating a Passover meal with his disciples the night before his crucifixion (Luke 22:8,12,15). During the meal Jesus took some of the bread and wine from the table and passed each in turn among his disciples, inviting them to eat and drink. The bread and wine were symbols of his body and blood, which he was to offer on the cross as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:26-28; cf. Isa 53:4-6,10).

God had once made a covenant with Israel and sealed it with blood (Exod 24:6-8). Through Jeremiah he promised a new covenant, one that would bring forgiveness of sins and give new life through the indwelling Spirit (Jer 31:31-34; cf. Ezek 36:26-27). Jesus established this covenant, his blood sealed it, and the supper he instituted is a reminder of its meaning to those who believe in him. The Old Testament system, having reached its fulfilment, is replaced by the new covenant with its unlimited blessings (Matt 26:28; 1 Cor 11:25).

When Israelites observed the Passover, they reminded themselves that their lives had been saved only through the death of the Passover lamb. When Christians observe the Lord's Supper, they remind themselves that they have eternal life only through the death of Christ (1 Cor 11:23-24; cf. 5:7).

Christians keep the Lord's Supper not only in remembrance of Christ's death, but also in anticipation of his return. When that day comes, bread and wine will no longer be necessary. Christ and his people will be together for ever in the triumphant kingdom of the Messiah. In that day there will be far more blessed fellowship between Christ and his people, likened to a heavenly feast with new wine (Matt 26:29; Luke 22:16,18; 1 Cor 11:26).

The practice of the Church:

From the earliest days of the church, Christians joined regularly to eat the Lord's Supper. It seems that at first they ate it as part of their ordinary meals, and may even have done so daily (Acts 2:42,46). Later they ate it less frequently, perhaps weekly (Acts 20:7), but the practice of combining it with a common meal continued for some time.

These common meals were called love feasts, and were occasions when the rich could show love and fellowship by sharing food generously with the poor. At Corinth, however, many of the rich greedily ate their own food, without waiting for others to arrive and without sharing it with others. Instead of being a love feast, it was a selfish feast. Instead of being a supper in honour of the Lord, it was very much a supper for themselves (1 Cor 11:20-22; cf. Jude 12)

The practice of the Church (cont'd.):

Paul reminded the Corinthian church that if Christians make a mockery of the Lord's Supper through wrong behaviour, they may bring judgment upon themselves. They must therefore examine themselves and correct any wrong attitudes they may have towards the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:27-34).

Far from being a cause of division among Christians, the Lord's Supper should be something that binds them together. Christians demonstrate their unity in Christ as they share in the same bread and the same wine. They show that they are united with each other and with Christ in one body (1 Cor 10:17; cf. 11:18-21).

Eating bread and drinking wine together in the Lord's Supper is more than just a remembrance of Christ's suffering and death. It is a spiritual sharing together in the body and blood of Christ, a fresh enjoyment of and proclamation of the benefits of his death. It is not a time of mourning, but a time of joyful fellowship with the risen Lord (1 Cor 10:16; 11:26; cf. John 6:48-51; Acts 2:46-47).

The Lord's Supper is therefore an important part of worship in the church. It is enriched when fittingly combined with prayers, singing, preaching, the reading of the Scriptures and instruction in Christian teaching (cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 14:26; Col 3:16).

In Conclusion:

At Caloundra Church of Christ all who have responded to Jesus as expressed in the Scriptures are welcome to participate in The Lord's Supper. As mentioned earlier although it is symbolic only, this does not mean it is something to be taken lightly at all. Each of us needs to examine ourselves before taking part, not to see if we are free from sin or shortcomings, but to ask ourselves if the truths set forth in the Lord's Supper are at least something of a reality in our own lives. We need to be sure we are not partaking in a careless or unthinking manner.

There is a richness of symbolism in the Lord's Supper that embraces every aspect of the Christian life. If we take part in the Lord's Supper with some understanding of this, it is certain that as well as remembering the Lord as He asked us to, we will receive grace that strengthens our walk with Him.

Church Organizational Chart as at September 2015

