



# ***Church and Christian Faith***

*Becoming part of the local church – what it means*

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# Becoming a Christian

Before becoming an active part of any local church, including Main Street Community Church, you might well first ask yourself if and why you call or consider yourself a Christian. There are a number of reasons why you might apply that description to yourself:

- Because you were born and grew up in a Christian country
- Because your parents took you to church when you were younger
- Because you believe in God and Jesus Christ

However, we want to suggest that, of themselves, those are not a full description of what a Christian is. The last of the three reasons above comes the closest.

At Main Street Community Church we are described as ‘Evangelical’ in our belief. Very simply that means that we believe in sharing the Gospel, or “Good News” about Jesus. Evangel comes from the Greek word meaning to herald or to announce so being ‘Evangelical’ is simply to want to announce, by whatever means possible, the message of Jesus. So, what is that message?

Its key factors are:

- We have all failed to reach God’s standards (Romans 3 v23)
- God loves us, even though we’ve failed (John 3 v16)
- Failure to reach God’s standards means death is the end
- However God’s Son Jesus Christ has died in our place!
- So, we can receive Eternal life as a gift from God
- All that is required is to believe and accept Jesus (Romans 10 v9)

Essentially that means that being a Christian is very simply a matter of believing and accepting – the Bible calls it being ‘born-again’.

So:

- Do you accept that you have failed to reach God’s standards?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ – that he is God’s Son and that he died for you?
- Have you ever asked Jesus to be Lord of your life?

# Baptism

So, as you have considered the questions in the section *Becoming a Christian*, you may have decided that you have never asked Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life. You might do so now with a prayer like this:

*“Lord Jesus Christ, I recognise that I have failed to meet your standards for life. I cannot do this on my own. I believe that you are the Son of God and that you died on the cross to make it possible for me to be forgiven. I ask you now to come into my life for ever and to make me your child.”*

You don't have to use those exact words but they may be a guide for you.

If you have prayed a prayer like that, the next step is to **tell someone**, perhaps one of our church leaders or a member you know well.

Following this there is another important step you can make. The Bible talks about Baptism. For us at Main Street Community Church this primarily means an act which is illustrative of the faith in Jesus a person has and is a public way of declaring that I now wish to follow Jesus Christ and live for him.

The New Testament Greek word for 'baptise' means to dip and was used to refer to the dying of a garment. So it referred to a total immersion in water. We believe that this is a conscious and deliberate step by the person being baptised.

So, if you have made the choice to be a follower of Jesus, baptism is a step to seriously think about. We have a tank in the floor of the main church especially designed for this! The meaning of baptism can be summed up as follows:

- Being lowered under the water reminds us that Jesus died
- Also, I am now considering my old life to be dead
- Being raised up out of the water reminds us that Jesus came to life
- Also, I am now raised up to live a new life in Jesus Christ!

Being baptised in front of friends and relatives is an amazing experience and seals in a very public way your personal commitment to Jesus.

## Communion

So, you have made a personal commitment to Jesus. From that moment you become, the Bible says:

- Part of the church – that is the worldwide church – that is all those across the world who are ‘born-again’.
- Part of the family of God – a true child of God!
- Part of the Kingdom of God here on earth

These things are true whether or not you decide to be baptised though we recommend that important step to mark your commitment publicly!

In our church we regularly celebrate Communion or The Lord’s Supper which is something Jesus asked us to do to remind ourselves of his death for us and of our promised future with him. It is something that all born-again Christians are invited to do. It is a wonderful privilege and one you should be part of.

So, if you have asked Jesus to be Lord of your life, whether or not you are yet baptised, we encourage and invite you in Jesus name, to join in this simple meal when we share it. It is your right to join in!

## Church Membership

Because you are a member of the church by choosing to follow Jesus – you are a member of our local church too! As such you are a part of our family and our sister or brother. We will care for you in Jesus’ name and you can be involved with us in caring for others and helping to “evangelise”, that is share the message!

Other things you will choose to do, supported by the local church and its leaders, include:

- Praying regularly with us and on your own
- Reading the Bible and studying it with us and on your own
- Living your life by the standards of the Bible with God’s help