

### • **Expectations of members**

As part of our spiritual oversight and care for you we encourage our members to:

- **Gather regularly on Sunday** – As we come together each week, we encourage each other to grow in faith as we hear from God's Word and as we sing his praise together.
- **Join a Growth Group Bible Study** – It is through our small groups that we can really get to know each other, pray for each other and help one another to grow to maturity in Christ.
- **Serve others as you are able** – As we are a body, the contribution of every member is vital. We need people to serve in ministries such as offering hospitality, welcoming visitors, serving morning tea, public Bible reading, helping with Kids' Connection or Youth Group and many many other ways.

### • **Our Aim and our Purposes as a Church**

- Our church's mission statement expresses our aim as a church. Our Church motto is CONNECT GROW SERVE. Understanding these helps each one of us to remain focussed on what we're about and why we exist.

### • **Guidelines for Giving**

The ministry of our church is fully dependent upon the giving of its members. It is important that those who commit to membership are aware that they are committing to financially support the work of God's Kingdom through this church.

### • **The Presbyterian Church of Australia**

It is helpful to understand the denominational structure that our local church is part of. The document *A Brief Guide to the Presbyterian Church of Australia* helps explain some of this.

### • **Meet the Elders**

The Elders who form the leadership of our church will want to meet with you so they can get to know you, before you formally become a member of our church.

# Belonging to the Body

*You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*  
1 Corinthians 12:27

The Christian life is about more than just commitment to Christ, it includes commitment to other Christians. In coming to Christ we become part of God's people – his church.

While your relationship with God through Christ is personal, God never intended it to be private. Being part of God's family means you are connected, by his Spirit, to every other believer.

In the Bible we find that God in his very nature is relational. He is Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit and he has designed us for relationship with himself, and with one another. We are created for community, fashioned for fellowship and formed for family.

As Christians, God has called us to be part of his people. He has called us not just to BELIEVE, but to BELONG

The aim of this study is to help you think through becoming a member of **Coffs Harbour Presbyterian Church**.

### • **Why do YOU come to church?**

## Bible Study

Look up the following Bible passages:

John 13:34-35      Acts 2:42-47      1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Ephesians 4:1-16      Hebrews 10:19-25      1 Peter 4:7-11

- What do these passages tell us about coming together and encouraging one another rather than just “going it alone” in the Christian life?

- Why is this important?

## Biblical Images of the Church

The Bible uses many images to describe the church:

- a body (Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 4:16),
- a building (Ephesians 2:22, 1 Peter 2:5),
- a bride (Revelation 21:2),
- a family (Ephesians 2:19, 1 Timothy 3:15),
- a flock (John 10, 1 Peter 5:2-4), and
- a vineyard (John 15).

The Bible says that a Christian without a church home, is like a organ without a body, a sheep without a flock or a child without a family – it is an unnatural state. There is a spiritual unity that exists between all Christians as they are part of the body of Christ. The local church is a visible expression of the one true universal body of Christ.

## Membership

All those who know Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour are already members of the body of Christ. Formally becoming a church member therefore is not a salvation issue. There are many true Christians who are not formal members of a church. (Just as there are no doubt members of churches who are not Christians!)

### - So why become a church member?

We ask you to commit to membership for 3 basic reasons:

#### • A sign of your commitment

Formally becoming a member is a visible and tangible way for you to express your commitment to our church family. It is a sign of “belonging”. It identifies you as being committed to this body of Christ, as your church family, rather than just being a “hanger-on”.

#### • As an encouragement to others

By committing to formal membership it encourages our church family to know that you are committed to them and that you want to use your gifts to serve the body of Christ as God enables you.

#### • For your spiritual growth and accountability

By becoming a member you are saying this church is where you want to grow as a Christian and that you are willing to be accountable to others as you seek to grow and mature in Christ.

## Membership has responsibilities

Within the Presbyterian Church, the election of elders and the calling of a new pastor, is entrusted only to those who have formally committed to membership. It would obviously be inappropriate for people who have not formally committed themselves to the church to vote on these matters.