

*The*  
MEMBERSHIP  
PAPERS



THE SCOTS' CHURCH  
MELBOURNE 2025

# Welcome

Welcome to the Scots' Church Membership Course. At this point, if you've been coming a while you're already part of the Scots' Community; so it's time to find out more about the meaning of formal membership, along with its privileges and responsibilities. There'll be plenty of time for questions and discussion along the way.

The Scots' Church community was established in 1838, and our historic building has been part of the Melbourne streetscape since 1874. A number of separate congregations (11am, ICC, Flemington and ScotsCity) make up the wider Scots' Community, which was historically Scottish (hence the name) but is now multicultural and multigenerational. We're a church that values our heritage but looks to the future with enthusiasm too.

From the start, it's important to say that becoming a church member does not require you to agree with a long list of doctrinal statements. We're part of The Presbyterian Church of Victoria, which affirms a historic statement called *The*

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*Westminster Confession of Faith.*

Our church leaders (ministers and elders) affirm the doctrines of this confession (with the provisos of a

'Declaratory Statement' added in 1901), but it's *not* a requirement for general membership. In simple terms, becoming a member requires an affirmation of *your faith in Jesus Christ* which has been at some point signified by *baptism*, and a statement of your intention to gather with, support and take part in the life of this particular church community.

## *Discussion*

Share briefly with the group your 'faith journey' to this point, and how you've come to Scots'.

# Session 1 - Why Jesus?

It's fair to ask at this point, why so much emphasis on 'faith in Jesus Christ?' Sorry for the analogy, guys, but Disney's Snow White famously sang that "*Someday My Prince Will Come*" – a romantic belief that one day her perfect princely rescuer would appear in her life. A less romantic version of the same idea threads right through the Old Testament Scriptures and the story of the world itself. In Old Testament Jewish expectations, the idea of a coming "Prince" was captured by the Hebrew word "Messiah," In Greek it's "Christ" – the long awaited "anointed one," who would rule over and restore God's Kingdom, the *good world* he created in the beginning.

The biblical story maps out a progression from that good creation, with mankind as the crowning glory of God's intentions; the tragedy of our wilful rebellion in turning from his rule; a promise that through the line of Abraham, blessing would ultimately be restored; the growth of the nation Israel, who receive God's laws, promises and wisdom but again ultimately reject his rule; the birth of Jesus, his life, kingly claims, death and resurrection; the promise of reconciliation with God and heart-change for those who in faith accept *his* rule; and a promise of a full and complete restoration of all creation up ahead.<sup>1</sup>

## Discussion

1. In unison with the early chapters of Genesis, the unfolding story of the Bible claims that *God created all things*. Check these references: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 33:6 and Revelation 4:11. Does this claim necessarily negate the theories and discoveries of contemporary science?<sup>2</sup>
2. What evidence do you see of a world and humanity that was 'created good,' but that requires restoration?

We – Christians – are those who have heard and believed the claims of *Jesus of Nazareth* to be God's anointed one. He's the long awaited "Prince"... and he's come! In fact, in New Testament terms (Ephesians 5 and Revelation 20), Jesus takes us (the church) as his *bride!*

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<sup>1</sup> For a clear, simple and personalised explanation of this, visit [www.twowaystolive.com](http://www.twowaystolive.com)

<sup>2</sup> If you're keen to think more about how to best read the creation accounts, try this link: <https://undeceptions.com/philosophy/is-the-story-of-creation-in-genesis-myth-or-fact/>

The New Testament tells the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the four gospel accounts, then describes the spread and growth of 'the church' in the book of Acts; then there's a series of letters to real-life first century churches. Because these documents come to us with the authority of the Apostles of Jesus, under the guidance and inspiration of his Spirit, we live under their authority.

In the New Testament gospel accounts, Jesus both claims and demonstrates his own "divinity" as the Son of God. For example, read Mark 2:1-12. (You can read it online via this QR code, or follow in a Bible.)



A paralysed man is lowered by his friends through the roof of a crowded house in the hope of being healed by Jesus. Instead, Jesus responds, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

3. How do the Scribes react to his words?
4. How does Jesus confirm their assessment is accurate?

In Mark 6:45-52, Jesus walks across the sea of Galilee, to the astonishment of his disciples. It's even more astonishing if you look back to Job 9:8, where Job acknowledges that '*God alone stretches out the heavens and tramples on the waves of the sea.*' A number of the signs Jesus performed make the same point.

The New Testament claims that uniquely, Jesus of Nazareth, as God 'incarnate' (en-fleshed) shows us what God himself is *actually* like, in a way we otherwise could not have known.

### *Discussion*

5. People have a wide range of ideas about 'how to know God.' How do these two passages contradict many common views?
  - John 1:18
  - Hebrews 1:1-2

Jesus himself, and others (like John the Baptist) claimed that his death would be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Here are two Scripture references.

The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" *John 1:29*

Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to *give his life as a ransom for many.*" *Mark 10:45*

Jesus regularly foretold his own resurrection from death (e.g. Luke 9:22), an event which was then witnessed by many, and became the basis of his ongoing authority to rule. This became the central claim of the Apostles, as they spread the word around the ancient world.

Peter declared, “*This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing... Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.*” *Acts 2:32-33, 36*

So “Why Jesus?” Because he rescues all creation as the promised Anointed One by showing us God the Father in human form, giving himself as the ‘Passover Sacrifice’ for our sins, and rising from death to rule with all authority, calling on us to follow him in loyal obedience with the help of God’s Spirit.

### *The Nature of Faith*

The New Testament says that *repentance and faith* are the appropriate responses to Jesus. To ‘repent’ is to actively change directions, and literally ‘turn around in your mind.’ The idea of *faith* has become a bit hazy and mystical – but originally, it simply meant to *give your loyalty*. It’s not a feeling as much as a merging of *trust and obedience* that comes from a conviction that Jesus is exactly who he claims to be – the long-awaited Prince, the King of God’s Kingdom.

<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; *repent and believe in the gospel.*” *Mark 1:14*

Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (and not just ‘generic god’) are the gateway to inclusion in God’s family, and so are the first step in ‘membership’ of the church. But ‘how much faith is enough?’ Jesus famously said *even faith the size of a mustard seed* was enough to move mountains (Matt 17:20). In other words, you don’t have to be ‘doubt free,’ or ‘super-spiritual’ or a theological expert. The main thing is *who* you have put your faith in, rather than how much you have.

## *Discussion*

6. Do you think 'spiritual doubts' disqualify you from being Christian? Why or why not?

## *Meet the Spirit of Holiness*

Historic Christian Creeds (and the unfolding story of the Bible) have much to say about God's "Holy Spirit." While in the Old Testament Prophets and Priests and Kings are specially anointed with the Spirit, the promise of the age of the coming Messiah is that He will pour out the Spirit on *all* his followers. Most significantly, this would bring about a *change of heart*, and a natural inclination towards *righteousness*. Here are some famous passages about the way God promised the change of hearts:

"And the Lord your God will circumcise *your heart* and the heart of your offspring, so that you *will* love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." *Deuteronomy 30:6*

"I will put my law *within them*, and *I will write it on their hearts*. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." *Jeremiah 31:33*

"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will *put my Spirit within you* and *cause you* to walk in my statutes." *Ezekiel 36:26-27*

The New Testament shows the fulfilment of this expectation in Acts 2 as the Holy Spirit is poured out on the day of Pentecost; it's detailed in Romans, and the heart changing impact of the Spirit is detailed in Galatians 5. While many 'Charismatic' or 'Pentecostal style' churches emphasise what they call 'the gifts of the Spirit', the New Testament says we should look instead for the *fruit* of the Spirit as evidence of the promised 'new hearts'...

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." *Galatians 5:22-23*

## *Discussion*

7. What do you see is the logic behind church membership requiring a commitment of faith in Christ?
  
8. If you can identify a time when you first made a commitment to follow Jesus, have you noticed any change in your desires that would show the Spirit at work in your attitudes? Do you think this guarantees that doing the right thing will always be easy?
  
9. Do you have any other questions as a result of this session?

## Session 2 - Why Church?

As the New Testament story moves from the gospel accounts of Jesus into the Book of Acts, we soon see groups of Christians clustering together for regular gatherings. Our first glimpse of this in Acts 2, after Peter preaches a powerful sermon...

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Here’s the result:

<sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Baptism is a symbolic ‘washing’, which signifies the receiving of God’s cleansing forgiveness. (Peter goes on to say it’s a sign for Christian *households*, which is why Presbyterian doctrine includes baptism of children.)

### Discussion

1. What are the priorities of this ‘gathering of believers’? How are these things evident in our church meetings today?
2. The ‘apostles’ teaching’ has been preserved for us in the New Testament. How do we express our seriousness about it (‘devotion’) in our own church context at Scots’?
3. The ‘breaking of bread’ was originally simply *the sharing of meals together*. This was a living, breathing, eating, sharing community. But there was always the added understanding that whenever they broke bread together they would do so *in remembrance of the broken body of Jesus*. Over time, the ‘meal’ component has become more symbolic. But we still eat and drink to remember the death of Jesus.



## *Communion– What, Why, & When?*

As the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church became more and more ritualistic through the centuries, the simple original ‘Lord’s Supper meal’ gradually became a symbolic ‘Mass’ where it was taught that ‘the real body of Jesus was re-sacrificed.’ Eating the Priest-blessed wafer was then said to be *the way that you shared in the sacrifice of Jesus*, and was essential for salvation. The Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther overturned this idea and returned to a more biblical view. In Scottish Presbyterian Churches, the surrounding prevalence of Roman Catholic ideas led to the conclusion that ‘The Lord’s Supper’ service should be kept simple and minimal, and would only be celebrated four times per year, as our salvation is *by faith alone*, and not by partaking in the mystic re-enacted ritual. Some denominations (and even some Presbyterian Churches) prefer to share in the Lords Supper more often; Scots’ Church continues to follow the Scottish model of Quarterly Communion.

## *A Glorious gathering*

The ordinary Greek word for “gathering” (*ekklesia*) translates to our English word “Church.” In other words, in the original setting church is not a building; it’s not an abstract organisation; it’s a *gathering* of Jesus-followers from all kinds of backgrounds. And in God’s unfolding plans, it’s astonishingly important. Paul puts it this way.

<sup>8</sup>To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, <sup>10</sup>so that *through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known* to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. *Ephesians 3:8-10*

Paul says, it’s as if God is displaying his multi-ethnic gathering of united, loving Christ followers to the spiritual powers of the universe saying “here’s a demonstration of how I planned things all along.” It’s glorious! But at risk of stating the obvious, a ‘gathering’ should gather! The writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it this way:

<sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,<sup>25</sup> *not neglecting to meet together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” *Hebrews 10:24-25*

## Discussion

4. According to this passage, what's the key reason we should keep on gathering?

5. Consider the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27f...

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many...  
<sup>27</sup> Now **together**, you are the body of Christ and individually, members of it.

You'll sometimes hear people say, "I'm a Christian, I'm just not that interested in being part of a church." How would you respond, from Hebrews 10 and 1 Corinthians 12?

How does the original meaning of the term *ekklesia* show the essence of 'church'?

You might have noticed that none of these passages mentions 'formal church membership,' or Presbyterianism, and certainly not Scots' Church Melbourne! Like electricity and the internet, they're ideas that have developed much later, and may or may not have practical value.

## Why Presbyterian?

Scots' Church is part of the *Presbyterian Church of Victoria* which is part of the 'protestant-reformed' theological movement. According to the website [pcv.org.au](http://pcv.org.au):

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria holds the Bible to be the inspired and inerrant revelation of God, a book fully trustworthy to guide the Church in all matters of faith and practice. Embracing this particular view of inspiration of Scripture means that our work and witness has distinctive guiding values, these being expressed in what is known as:

- reformed doctrines and church practice
- the confessional position of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647).

Significantly, the Presbyterian Church is led by Elders (in the original Greek, 'presbyters,' hence the name) drawn from among congregational members,

rather than by Bishops. Each local church has a group of elders called a “Session”; and there’s also a regular regional meeting of representative ministers and elders, called a “Presbytery.” An annual “Assembly” involves the minister and an elected representative elder from each congregation.

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria decided in 1995 that *elders must be male*, based on the biblical conviction that passages like 1 Timothy 3:1-13 assume and require this. Scots’ Church *retains a number of female elders* who were appointed pre-1995; and, continues to appoint and encourage suitably qualified women in key roles<sup>3</sup> and ministries while working within the regulations of the PCV. This remains an ongoing point of disagreement between Scots’ Church and the denomination.

## *Why Scots’?*

Originally gathering on the banks of the Yarra River, Scots’ was the first Presbyterian Congregation in Victoria. That means we have historically been blessed with abundant land and resources; but it’s also a history that’s sometimes been marked by unhelpful pride and some struggles with the denomination that grew around us. If you’re interested, [Appendix II ‘Scots’ and the Wider Denomination’](#) gives more details. You’ll find some members of Scots’ are very much geared towards reformed doctrines, while others lean towards a more relaxed view. In terms of size, resources, style, music, and the doctrinal emphasis through the years, Scots’ Church has been an ‘outlier’ in the wider Presbyterian Church of Victoria – though after 150 years of ups and downs, we’re working to build bridges and mutual understanding with the denomination.

## *Meet our Elders and Staff*

See [Appendix III for a full list of our elders and ministry team members](#), along with Board of Management office bearers and other admin staff. Importantly, taking the step into formal membership means that you will be eligible to nominate and elect people to these key roles.

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<sup>3</sup> Eg Deputy Session Clerk, Pastoral Care Ministries, Board of Management

## *Formalising Your Membership*

Every organisation has regulations around membership. Churches are no exception. One reason is that sometimes we need to vote on an issue regarding property or personnel – so it’s important to know whose votes we should count. (First time visitors, for example, shouldn’t get to vote on the appointment of a new minister or elder!)

Formal membership also helps us allocate pastoral care, and make sure our shepherd-leaders ‘know their flock.’ Even so, it doesn’t mean non-members, or associate members (who we call ‘adherents’) are any less Christian, or any less important, or any less ‘part of God’s family.’

Church membership is a voluntary statement of loyalty and obligation to both the Lord Jesus and to your particular local church. It’s a promise to be involved; to take note of the ‘one another’ passages<sup>4</sup> in the New Testament and to step up and take joint ownership of problems, challenges, and opportunities that may come up in the future.

## *Membership, Baptism and Communion*

We welcome anyone to take part in our Communion Services on the basis of their personal convictions. The *Code Book of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria* links formal membership with baptism and participation in the *Lord’s Supper*, or ‘*Communion*’, because in eating and drinking together to commemorate the death of Jesus, we also symbolise *our unity as the body of Christ*. Accordingly, the technical term used is “Communicant Membership.”

In the unfortunate event that “*discipline*” of a member becomes necessary, the chief and only instrument of this process is exclusion from sharing in Communion.

### **2.8 Communicant member**

2.8.1 A communicant member of a congregation (generally referred to in these rules as a ‘communicant’) enjoys the privileges of sharing in the Lord’s Supper and of wider fellowship with other believers throughout the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

2.8.2 A communicant, unless under a process of discipline, aged at least 16 years, has the right to:

- a) vote and take full part in the business of any meeting of the congregation;
- b) add his or her name to a call on a separate sheet provided for this purpose;
- c) nominate and vote in an eldership or board election;
- d) approach the appropriate court by petition;
- e) be appointed as an office-bearer of a congregational organisation.

2.8.3 A communicant aged at least 18 years is eligible to be elected to a board.

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<sup>4</sup> For example: **Be at peace** with one another (Mk 9:50); **Don’t grumble** among one another (Jn 6:43); **Be of the same mind** with one another (Ro 12:6, 15:5); **Accept** one another (Ro 15:7); **Don’t bite, devour, and consume** one another (Ga 5:15); **Don’t challenge or envy** one another (Ga 5:26); **Gently, patiently tolerate** one another (Ep 4:2); **there are many more.**

## *SafeChurch Policies*

It's unfortunate that any discussion of Membership and church governance must include the topic of Child Protection. Both our regulations and our responsibility under God require us to take the utmost care of children and young people in our midst, as well as any who are vulnerable. Our SafeChurch policy guidelines are detailed under the *Church Life* section of our website [scotschurch.com](http://scotschurch.com).

As a standard procedure, applying for Membership of Scots' means granting permission for our denominational SafeChurch unit to carry out a name-check against their own database. Taking on a formal leadership role involving children requires SafeChurch Training and a Working With Children card, which involves a more robust police check.

## *Baptism*

The regulations require that a person *be baptised* to be eligible for membership, either as a child, or as an adult who has come to faith. Baptism from any other Christian denomination is accepted.

Baptism is a public act of washing with water, symbolising acceptance of God's promise to cleanse us from sin by faith in Christ, and representing the start of a new life with a clean conscience. Baptism in itself does not make a person a Christian – but it's a vivid symbol of a deeper inner reality. In his short letter near the end of the New Testament, Peter says,

*“This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but *the pledge of a clear conscience toward God*. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 3:21*

Because Peter also says in Acts 2:38-39 that the promise of baptism is ‘for you *and your children*,’ in New Testament times it became the norm for whole families to be baptised when the parents came to faith. The Presbyterian Church follows in this tradition, while Baptist Churches (note the name!) insist on a personal statement of faith before baptism.

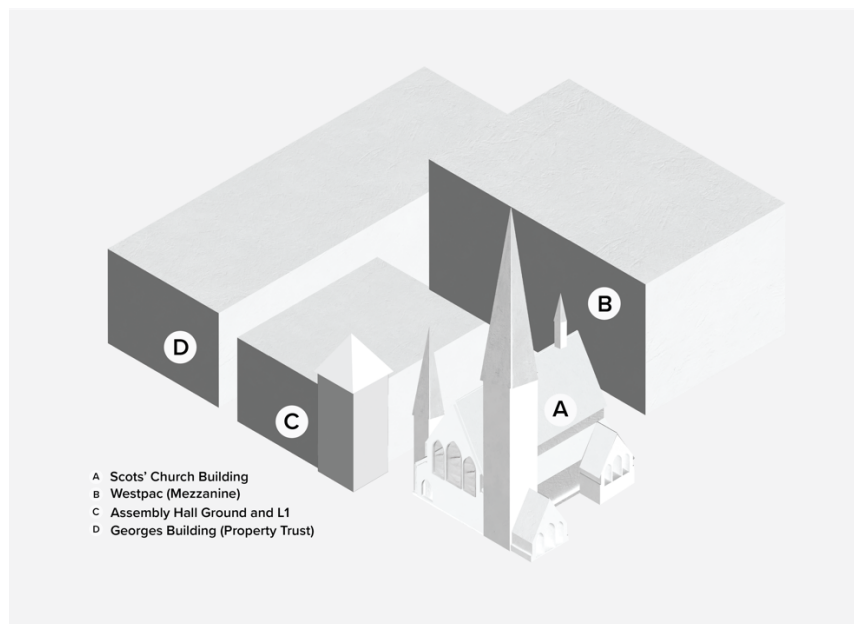
**If you haven't already been baptised as an infant or at some other time**, we would be delighted to include your baptism in the public membership process. Simple promises are made, along with sprinkling or splashing with water.

## *Practicalities & Property*

Scots' Church Properties Trust (with members elected by the congregation) owns the Scots' Church building, the Georges Building in Collins Street, and the land occupied by Westpac (via General Properties Trust.)

The Assembly Hall building is jointly owned by the Scots' Board of Management (63%, through Scots Board of Management Ltd) and The Presbyterian Church of Victoria (37%).

The Westpac tenancy allows us free use of the Mezzanine floor area (where we hold after church refreshments) and a free Sunday parking arrangement through Wilson Parking.



Annual profit from SCPT is distributed equally between the PCV and Scots Building Maintenance Fund (BMI), where it is allocated by the Board of Management for upkeep of the building. This arrangement has allowed us to keep the church building in excellent condition for the last 150 years.

As a member, you will have the opportunity to be nominated for, and to vote for appointments, in any of these committees.



*If you're financially minded, scan for a simple video overview of Scots' financial structures, and the responsibilities of our Trustees and Board of Management.*

**Our final Session next week will include lunch, hosted by Phil and Louise Campbell. Please make sure you have their address details (provided separately) before you leave.**

## Session 3 – Growing Together

Church membership is all about growing *together* as followers of Jesus. Jesus calls us to a life of discipleship – joining his original twelve in leaving behind our former ambitions, and following him. His sacrificial death on our behalf was to be a model of our own self-sacrifice in serving one another. His Kingdom is one of service rather than privilege and power.

"And Jesus said, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and *take up his cross daily and follow me*. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.'" *Luke 9:23-24*

1. Have you experienced any costly life choices or changes since you started to follow Jesus?

As we saw last time, Hebrews 10 urges us to keep meeting together.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. *Hebrews 10:24-25*

2. How does this passage show that following Jesus is a *team sport*? (Someone once said, "Being Christian is more like netball than golf!")
3. How might you 'spur someone on' in the way described?

In Romans 12, Paul paints a picture of an organic, mutually supportive church community.

<sup>4</sup>For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>**so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.** <sup>6</sup>We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup>if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup>if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. <sup>9</sup>Love must

be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

The idea of 'one body-many parts' invites us all to think about how we might be involved in the life of our church community, using whatever abilities we have for the service of others. Some roles (like teaching from the pulpit) require significant training. Others, like teaching children and key public-facing roles, require a regulated process of Safety Checks (which are not onerous!)

One of the membership promises detailed in Appendix 4 asks you to commit yourself to honouring God with your time and talents.

4. What 'gifts' might you consider using? Here are some starting thoughts:

*Welcoming a newcomer*  
*Noticing that someone is lonely*  
*Inviting a friend to church*  
*Helping someone understand how to become a Christian*  
*Lending a listening ear*  
*Visiting someone sick or shut-in*  
*Creating a friendly vibe at church*  
*Helping with kids ministry*  
*Joining the Coffee Roster*  
*Becoming a member of the Board of Management*  
*Helping at the Flemington Mission*  
*Cooking for Small Groups*  
*Signing up for the Reading roster in the 11am service*  
*Helping with the sound and tech at ScotsCity*  
*Writing, editing, proofreading, forming a social media team*  
*Helping launch our monthly LunchBreak service*  
*Starting a social justice ministry*

## *Processes and promises*

The full list of membership promises shown in Appendix 4 is drawn from the things implied in the PCV membership regulations, and various biblical texts. We hope to introduce new members to the congregation in an 11am service around the middle of the year. If you're keen to go forward with this, we'd love to include you. For the sake of brevity, we don't plan to ask each new member to state each promise in the list. Instead, we will ask:

1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
2. Do you repent of your sin, and with a humble and grateful heart put your trust in the mercy and grace of God and in Jesus Christ whose death takes away your sin?
3. Have you understood and accepted the duties and privileges of membership of this church.



In other words, the third question expects that you have read, and affirm, each of questions 3 to 8 in Appendix 4. Our hope is that their meaning has been made sufficiently clear through this course.

Take a moment to read through the questions in the Appendix. Do you have any remaining questions or concerns?

If you haven't yet been baptised, exactly the same questions will apply. They'll be followed by sprinkling with water, and the words, "I now baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

THANK YOU for being part of our Membership Course. If you wish to proceed with Membership, please speak to Phil, Justin or Arthur to help us finalise arrangements. Your application will be processed at the next meeting of the Session.



## *Appendix I - Jews and Gentiles, Law and Spirit*

A surprising amount of New Testament ink (and sometimes even blood) was spilled on the issue of the ongoing role of Old Testament Law. Many Jewish Christians were of the view that non-Jews ('Gentiles') who came to faith in Christ should be obligated to keep all the traditions, rules, laws and sabbaths detailed in the Old Testament. Paul, the first missionary to the Gentile world, saw things differently. And ultimately, after some debate, so did church leaders Peter and James. The issue was resolved at a council in Jerusalem in Acts 15, where James concludes:

“Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.” *Acts 15:19-20*

Instead of being *governed* by a list Old Testament regulations, our loyal obedience to Jesus comes from the heart, by the working of God's Spirit; a life *informed and instructed* by the righteousness described in the Scriptures; **starting with** the teaching of the Apostles in the New Testament, undergirded by an understanding of the Old Testament laws and expectations that were fulfilled in Christ. The same Spirit that inspired the Scriptures moves in our attitudes as we hear and respond.

“For *through the Spirit*, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness; ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. *Galatians 5:5, 22-23*

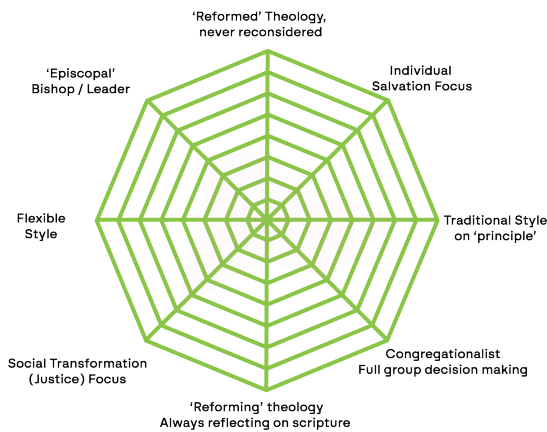
Though this matter was debated and agreed back in Acts 15, many Christians (and many Presbyterians) are still caught up in debating the ongoing relevance of Old Testament law in the life of the gentile Christian today. We are committed, with Paul, to the view that:

... all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”  
*2 Timothy 3:15-16*

However, we're also committed to the view that pursuing righteousness through *obedience to the Old Testament law* is missing the point of the gospel, and can bind the conscience of gentile Christians in a way that contradicts passages like Galatians 2:11-3:14 and Colossians 2; we rely on faith in Christ, who gives us a change of heart!

## Appendix II: Scots' and the wider denomination

A radar graph is a simple way to plot multiple axes of emphasis or strength. It's useful in thinking about the different polarities that exist in understanding the history of Scots' in the wider church landscape, and the inclinations of our key leaders past and present. Here are the axes in our diagram:



### Reformed Theology never Reconsidered <-> Reforming theology, Always reflecting on Scripture

The Protestant Reformation saw the redefinition of many theological areas, like grace, faith, justification, and the place of scripture. These doctrines were codified into statements like the Westminster Confession of Faith, which Presbyterians affirm. However, does affirming the WCF mean we no longer reflect on the scriptures in our own generation and continue to reform and refine our theological understanding?

### Individual Salvation Focus <-> Social Transformation (Justice) focus

It's often been observed that churches (and Christians) tend towards either evangelism (urging people to 'be saved') without taking much interest in immediate physical needs on the one extreme, or, social justice and welfare without much emphasis on 'Jesus and the offer of salvation' on the other. One view simply proclaims the Gospel to secure an individual's personal salvation (where Salvation is life in a sort of disembodied heavenly future); the other engages with politics, corporate responsibility, and empowerment. Either way, our vision of salvation flows into our understanding of morality, ethics, and politics.

### Traditional Style on 'principle' <-> Flexible Style

These terms relate to what usually happens within a 'church service.' You could think in terms of traditional liturgical style vs 'simple' or 'informal', one for traditional vs contemporary music; the bigger underlying issue is whether you think flexibility is appropriate, or that there's a theological necessity for one style or the other. Many who insist on traditional styled 'worship' have strong convictions about it; the Flexible style would claim to be 'missional' or 'adaptive' as they try to keep the essentials while changing with culture.

### Congregationalist Full group decision making <-> 'Episcopal' Bishop/Leader

In terms of church governance and decision making, these are two extremes. Importantly, Presbyterianism falls on neither extreme, as we have a system of representative leadership by a group of elders. Still, there's a tension, as most people fall somewhere between the top down 'episcopal' nature of Anglicanism with strong leadership, and the bottom up 'congregational' nature of the Baptist movement. There's an emerging leadership style of the 'pastor as CEO' model, where accountability structures — or even the congregation — are seen as impediments to pursuing a vision.

## Scots' Church and the Presbyterian Church of Victoria

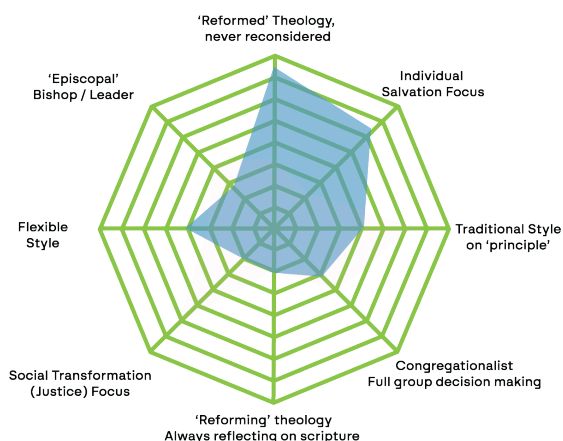
As the first Presbyterian Church in Victoria, founded in 1838, Scots' came into existence before the development of the wider denomination known as The Presbyterian Church of Victoria. Historically, the relationship between Scots' and the PCV has been challenging, especially around issues of finance (as Scots' was granted a large landholding in the city centre), but also matters of theology.

For example, back in an era where Presbyterian worship style was very plain (singing only psalms, unaccompanied by any ‘newfangled instruments’ like pipe organs!) Scots’ moved in the opposite direction. And while the PCV was (and remains) strongly oriented towards the statements of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Scots’ has been a church that has been inclined towards ‘moving with the times’ – not always prioritising ‘reflecting on Scripture’ in that process.

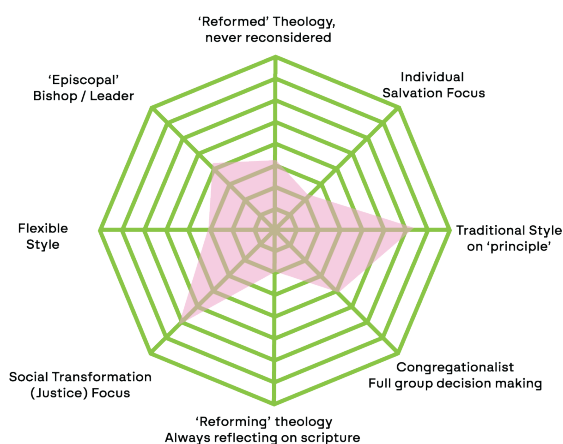
**Background**

Some of these tensions came to a head in the last decade, with the PCV taking legal action against the trustees of Scots’ for using the wrong source of funding to renovate the Assembly Hall Building. (The funds were drawn from the distributable income of a property trust that were meant to be shared evenly between PCV and Scots’. Put very simply, as the renewal of the building facilitated the redevelopment of the Westpac site which benefited both parties, the trustees felt it was appropriate to use pre-distribution funds for the renovation.) Sadly, the resulting court case made national headlines; ultimately, the judge found that a) an error had been made by the Scots’ Trustees and b) the legal action of the PCV was ‘in many ways extravagant’; and that both parties should have worked harder to resolve the matter. Costs were awarded against the PCV, though a share of ownership (37%) of the Assembly Hall building was given to the PCV. (There’s ongoing negotiation, as PCV don’t wish to retain their share.)

Some of the underlying issues can be mapped as below. (Be aware that there’s an amount of personal judgment involved in the scores.)



*Presbyterian Church of Victoria*



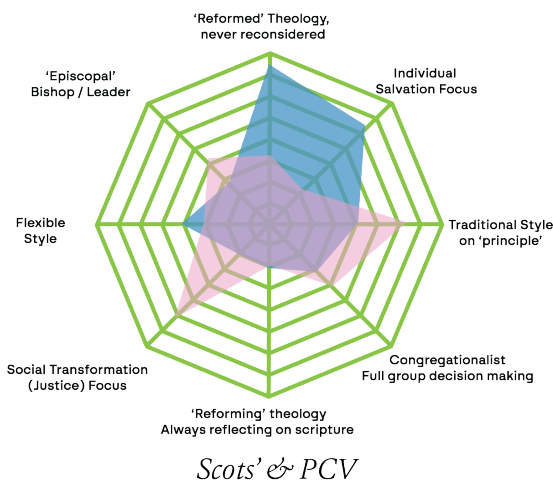
*Scots' Church*

**The PCV** has a strong emphasis on conservative Reformed Theology. While the wider Presbyterian Church of Australia adopted a clause allowing ‘*liberty of opinion in matters not essential*’ to the doctrine of the Confession in 1901, some elements of the PCV tend to think rules should be made in as many areas as possible to limit ‘liberty of opinion.’ There’s a strong emphasis on Individual Salvation, though the reformed ‘doctrine of Election’ can curtail effective ‘faith sharing’ activities. While there’s a substantial history of social transformation and social justice (especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) this is less evident today. Traditional Worship Styles have been adopted ‘on principle’ in many Presbyterian Churches, though in recent years contemporary expressions of worship have become more common. The emphasis on Eldership can diminish full involvement of members in decision making, and women have especially felt excluded due to a growing emphasis on ‘all male eldership’ since 1995. “Bishop-style” executive leadership is criticised – though some denominational office bearers have disproportionate influence.

**Scots’ Church** was always an outlier within the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. As the PCV became more and more oriented towards what some would call ‘hard-line reformed views,’ Scots’ Church gravitated towards the attitudes of The Church of Scotland, which was much more theologically

liberal. So, *Reformed Theology* was diminished; the attempt to keep ‘reforming’ was evident, and sometimes it was suggested that Bible doctrines were ‘outdated.’ *Individual Salvation* was not strongly emphasised (as the doctrine of ‘sin’ was considered unpopular) but there was significant emphasis on social action, advocacy for minority groups etc. A *Traditional Style of worship* was strongly affirmed, though with a much more ornate approach than most in the PCV. Some flexibility of style was allowed (both for that reason) and in the inclusion of new services. While Bishop/Executive style leadership has not been overt, the complexity of Scots’ property portfolio and other structures has led to *full congregational decision making* usually devolving to the empowerment of small but active committees elected by members.

## In Summary



In short, there are still some remaining tensions between Scots and the wider denomination. Overlaying the two diagrams shows the central area of commonality, and the significant areas of divergence. One goal of the current Scots’ Church leadership team is to build bridges of understanding, and move towards reconciliation with the denomination, with many relationships of older members still damaged by the legal action of the 2010s.

Ask the Ministry Team sometime, and you’ll see how there are different areas of emphasis in their own Radar graphs that should help us move forward in biblically faithful ways together. We have the conviction that in the sweep of Melbourne’s history, both Scots’ and the wider PCV sometimes could have done better in honouring the name of Jesus, and living as his loyal followers – and that there’s every reason for optimism as we look to the future.

## *Appendix III - Meet Our Elders and Staff*

Elders are elected by the Congregation and *ordained* (formally recognised) to serve on 'the Session.' There is no fixed term. Other office bearers and roles can be appointed to take part in meetings of The Session, though without formal voting rights. Current members are:

Philip Court\*\* - (Retired Minister) Session Clerk (Secretary)  
Rosalie Strother\*\* - Deputy Session Clerk  
Bruce Evans  
Nader Hanna  
Graeme Harris  
Sonal Herlekar  
Helen Holman\*  
Paul Keress  
Jack Laisanna (Flemington Congregation)  
Robert Lowe  
Andrew McDonald  
Craig McIntosh  
Graham Nixon  
Joel Purushottam  
Sol Sahhar  
Sen Sendjaya (Indonesian Congregation)  
Gordon Taylor  
Lois Taylor\*  
Rosemary Fethers\*\* (Session Advisor, Safe Church Co-ordinator)

\*Appointed pre 1995

\*\*Assisting the Session in special roles

### *Board of Management*

Members elect a Board of Managers each year, on a rotating two year term.

Chair: Rev Justin Ang  
Secretary: Sonal Herlekar  
Treasurer: Sebert Ruddock

### *Ministry Staff*

Senior Minister: Rev Phil Campbell  
Assistant to Senior Minister: Rev Justin Ang  
Next Generations Pastor: Rev Dr Arthur Keefer

Pastoral Care (P/T): Rev Litha Heshusius (Ordained Baptist Pastor)  
Director of Music: Douglas Lawrence

### *Admin Staff*

Scots' is served by an admin team that includes:

Operations Manager: Jonathan North

Receptionist: Wendy Gregory

Accountant: Murray Hirst

Tech/Venue Hire: Monty Chandra

**For more information, see the Team page on our website [scotschurch.com](http://scotschurch.com)**

## *Appendix IV – Membership Questions*

Admission to communicant membership normally happens during a church service, with a public profession of faith and baptism (if the new member hasn't been baptised before). Normally questions like these are asked (with the answer, "I do"):

1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
2. Do you repent of your sin, and with a humble and grateful heart put your trust in the mercy and grace of God and in Jesus Christ whose death takes away your sin?
3. Do you promise to confess Christ before others, to serve him in your daily work, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?
4. Do you promise to meet regularly with your fellow believers, encouraging one another to be faithful in hearing God's word from the Scriptures, and responding in prayer, praise and godly obedience?
5. Do you promise to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and to honour him with your time, talents, and money for the Church's work in the world?
6. Do you acknowledge your dependence upon the Holy Spirit to equip you and to enable you to be faithful to this your confession?
7. Do you promise to submit to the authority of Session as they exercise pastoral oversight of the congregation?