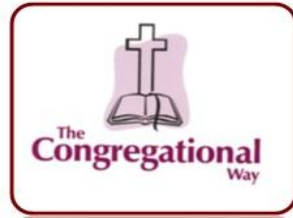


What does it mean to be a Congregationalist?



Many have written eloquent and lengthy articles on congregationalism in the past. This is just a very brief summary of what it means to be a member of a Congregational Church.

West End is a Congregational Church. It is an Independent church wholly governed by the 'Church Meeting' which meets under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We meet in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ who is head of the Church.

The Minister, Church Secretary and Treasurer are the Church Officers and together with the other elected Deacons are the leaders of the Church appointed by the Church Meeting and responsible for the day to day running of Church Affairs.

Although we belong to a Christian denomination called the "Congregational Federation," West End is still responsible for governing its own affairs.

All of the major decisions concerning the Church are taken at the 'Church Meeting' which currently meets bi-monthly. These decisions include; the calling and maintenance of the ministry, the carrying out of the Church's mission, the administration of the Church's property and financial affairs, the appointment of Church Officers, Deacons, Choir Leaders and Organists and all of the other posts within the church, these are made by decision of the Church Meeting alone.

All are welcome to attend our Sunday Services and to enter into the spiritual life of the church. Membership of the Church is open to all those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. There are a number of ways we accept people into membership of this church, and they are usually:-

- **By Transfer.** Those who are members in good standing of another Christian Church can transfer their membership to our church. This usually happens when people move from

one area to another. A letter of commendation is required from the previous church.

- **By Re-affirmation of faith.** Those who have previously been brought into membership of the church but have let their membership lapse and have been removed from the Membership list, or have ceased to attend worship and wandered away from the Christian life. On rediscovering their need of Christ in their lives they seek to make a re-commitment and have that membership re-instated.
- **By Profession of Faith.** Those who are already committed Christians or those who make a decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and promise to follow him from that moment, it's what we call conversion, and following a short course on membership with the Minister may be received into full membership of the church.

Applications for membership of this church in all of the above categories are wholly dependent on acceptance by the Church Meeting.

All those who become members of the Church are not only entitled, but should deem it a privilege and their personal duty to attend Church Meeting. It is here that the members seek the mind of Christ, through His promise *"That where two or three are gathered together in His name He is present!"*

Members of the church are required to attend worship regularly, to take Communion and to take their place in the body of Christ. This means responding to the call of God to work for the good of the congregation and as the Lord leads you perhaps to hold a position in the Church.

You may be thinking of becoming a Church Member or if already a member, of standing for office in the church. With all of this in mind I have asked our Deacons to write a short testimony of ***"what it means to be a Member and a Deacon at West End."*** Three of these personal testimonies are printed in the following pages. I hope they will be helpful to you as we approach the AGM and in taking your place in the Fellowship of West End Church.

Reverend Leslie Shorten
Minister