



Mackay BAPTIST CHURCH

Passionate lovers of God and others

Church Information Booklet

(last updated 20/09/2023)

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Welcome

At Mackay Baptist, our desire is to be “passionate about loving God and loving others”. In my time here at MBC, it’s been my experience that this is true and I invite you to join with us in our mission. With God’s help, we desire that people of all ages can experience Christian community, discover what it means to know God in a personal way, make new and meaningful relationships and find help and encouragement for the challenges that face them in daily life.

Jesus’ greatest desire is to be in relationship with people, no matter what their background or where they’ve come from in life. C.S Lewis, writes, “God doesn’t want something from us, He simply wants us.” And, it was Jesus who said:

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires, drink freely from the water of life. – Revelation 22:17 NLT

MBC is made up of so many nations from all over the world. With so many people of different nationalities, languages and cultures all praising God together, it’s like a foretaste of what’s yet to come. Our goal as a church is to celebrate our diversity and embrace what we share in common, through honouring our Creator who became flesh to die on our behalf.

It is my prayer and my hope that God will use MBC to create in you a deep connection to Jesus, and a deep connection with other faith followers.

MBC has a lot to offer families, singles, young and old, so if you are seeking more information about the church or about Christianity in general, I invite you to explore our website or to make contact with us if you have a question or need.

Pastor Scott Jones

About Us

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)

As a Church we are passionate about loving God, and other people. We want to express the love of God by reaching out to others with God’s message of love and forgiveness. We want to discover, enrich and use the gifts God has given us in serving God, one another, and those who do not know God. We want to equip and build up one another for service. We want to support, encourage and strengthen one another in a warm open friendly Church family. We want to joyfully worship God with all that we do, have and are. We want to have prayer, and the word of God as the foundation of all that we do and are.

What we Believe

At Mackay Baptist Church, we believe that God has revealed Himself to us (and continues to reveal Himself) through His Word which is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). God’s Word defines for us our beliefs and principles, most importantly the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is God made flesh, who was born as a man and voluntarily accepted death on the cross as a means to pay the price and penalty for our sin. Yet, after three days in the grave, He arose and lived amongst us for 40 days before returning to Heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

The following statement of beliefs describes the principals upon which our faith is based:

1. The Bible is the Divinely inspired Word of God and the supreme authority and basis for all our beliefs and practices. (II Timothy 3:16&17, II Peter 1:20 & 21)
2. God exists as one God in three persons the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 9:14, Deuteronomy 6:4)
3. The Lord Jesus Christ is both divine, the only begotten Son of God, and human, the son of the Virgin Mary, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. (Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20, Isaiah 7:14, Galatians 4:4)
4. All people are born sinful and separated from God; and in need of God's saving grace. (Romans 3:10 – 18, 23, John 3:16)
5. The Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished the forgiveness of sin and the freedom from the penalty and power of sin by his perfect obedience, death, resurrection, and present intercession. (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, I Peter 3:18, I Peter 2:24, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)
6. The Holy Spirit brings about the new birth and eternal life in the believer. He sanctifies, seals, and empowers (I Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13 &14, II Timothy 1:7)
7. Salvation is only possible through repentance to God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38, Acts 4:12, Acts 16:30-31, Acts 20:21)
8. The dead will be resurrected and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ will happen. (II Thessalonians 1:6-10, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20;1-15)
9. The Lord Jesus will return visibly and gloriously to claim His own. (Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:13-18)
10. The two Ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ – namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are of perpetual obligation; Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; (Romans 6:4) the Lord's Supper being a memorial, until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:19 & 20)

We believe that the Word of God defines for us the indisputable and uncompromising principles upon which our faith is based. Were it not for the Word of God, our faith would be baseless. We recognise that the Word is not prescriptive towards the styles by which our faith is expressed in worship and we embrace the diversity of culture and style that God has fashioned in us to express our love and affection for Him.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is living and active in the lives of all Christians and that He dwells within us from the moment that we accept Christ as our saviour and repent of our sin (Acts 2:38). He alone chooses to whom specific spiritual gifts are given. Some gifts may even be considered miraculous. All gifts, however, are given for the purposes of building up the Church (1 Corinthians 14:26) and bringing glory to God (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Our Mission Statement

EVANGELISM

We are passionate about -

- Expressing love, and reaching out to the unchurched, unloved, unwanted, telling them of God's love, and their acceptance, worth and the forgiveness they can have in Him.
- Building relationships with the unchurched
- Sharing the gospel personally, corporately and globally
- Giving opportunities for people to respond to God's message of salvation

- Praying for the lost

DISCIPLESHIP

We are passionate about -

- Forming partnerships encouraging mutual deeper spiritual growth.
- Equipping people and fostering in them a passion for teaching and discipling others.
- Building unity, growing in the maturity and fullness of Christ.
- Encouraging one another to a deeper knowledge of Christ and applying this to the way we live.
- Being faithful to the study and application of the Word of God.
- Praying for perseverance and personal discipline.

WORSHIP

We are passionate about -

- Humbly and completely acknowledging God as the creator.
- Expressing our worship with a healthy balanced freedom according to Scripture.
- Living our lives as an act of worship.
- Giving our time, talents and finances willingly and generously as an act of worship.
- Having a healthy, rich, corporate and personal prayer life.

FELLOWSHIP

We are passionate about -

- Being a warm open and friendly church family
- Being bonded and united together in love.
- Forgiving and tolerating each other's personal differences.
- Supporting and strengthening each other through our words, thoughts and actions.
- Knowing we belong and feel valued.
- Encourage believers' baptism and church membership
- Encouraging one another to persevere, serve, and be personally accountable.
- Praying for one another regularly

MINISTRY

We are passionate about -

- Serving others in the Church with a servant's heart.
- Serving the lost with a servant's heart.
- Discovering, enabling, equipping and encouraging the use of our diverse spiritual gifts in service of God and others
- Building up the Body of Christ.
- Being prepared to change if that is what God is telling us to do.
- Praying for discernment in the use of our gifts and for opportunities to use them.
- Praying for each other as we use our gifts, time and resources.

Our Leadership Team

The leadership of Mackay Baptist Church is shared between our staff and the elected positions of elders and deacons. Our staff includes pastoral staff, administrative staff and counsellors. As per the church constitution, the ultimate governance of the church rests with the body of believers, being the

membership of the church. The Board of Elders oversees the responsibilities of strategy, pastoral care, shepherding and leadership. The Board of Deacons oversees operational and practical responsibilities such as finances, property and administration.

PASTORAL STAFF

- Rev. Scott Jones – Senior Pastor
- Rev. Richard Carpenter – Associate Pastor (Church Development)
- Ps. Daniel O'Connor – Associate Pastor (Youth and Young Adults)

STAFF

- Bethany Venz – Admin Officer
- Talia Fiyen – Children's Ministry Coordinator
- Jess Moodie – Intern
- Ione Watkins – Counsellor
- Dale Jones – Counsellor

ELDERS

- Vince Tye – Elders Secretary
- Kerrie Vaughan
- Rob Ruge
- John Mallet

DEACONS

- Peter Barnett – Secretary
- Gordon Heelan – Treasurer
- Alison Tye

Giving and Finances

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

You can give to the work of Mackay Baptist Church using the bank direct deposit details below, for either regular or once off giving. Deposits made with a reference description of "BUILDING FUND" will be used to directly pay for our building loan.

BSB: 014640

Account Number: 386467964

Account Name: Mackay Baptist Church

DONATIONS TO MACKAY BAPTIST CARE

Donations to the counselling service of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Make your donation to the account shown below and then contact the church office to arrange a tax invoice.

BSB: 704913

Account Number: 400044053

Account Name: Mackay Baptist Church

Mackay Baptist Church believes that it is a requirement that all Christians give towards the work of the church, but that our generosity should be grounded in our love and affection for our Lord Jesus and all that He has done for us, rather than out of compulsion - in accordance with 2 Corinthians 9:7. Our leadership team has implemented controls to ensure that church finances are managed ethically and effectively for the glory of God and the fulfilment of our church mission. This includes submission to regular financial audits, the compliance with statutory regulations and the transparency of all financial information to church members. Church finances are administered in alignment with the church budget which is approved by the church membership at the Annual General Meeting and is expensed towards mission support, ministry support, pastoral, counselling and administrative staff, property and operational expenses.

Church Constitution

Mackay Baptist Church is constituted within the Baptist Union of Queensland, though it is self-governing by the leading of the Holy Spirit as revealed through the membership of the church. Its constitution defines the roles and responsibilities of members, Deacons, Elders and Pastors and is the framework for church governance.

The leadership and mission of the church is determined by church membership as moderated through the inerrant word of Scripture. The purpose of our leadership is to equip the church for fulfilling its mission to make disciples and to demonstrate God's love to the world. Our methods for achieving this purpose will vary through time and are shaped by all members of the church.

For reference purposes, the church's current constitution has been provided here:

[Mackay Baptist Church Constitution](#)

Church Membership

Mackay Baptist Church follows a governance model that is led by the leadership team including the Pastors, Elders and Deacons, on behalf of the members of the church. As per the church Constitution all leadership positions including pastoral staff are held to account by the members of the church by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Becoming a member of the church is simply a process whereby a person makes a covenant to commit to a community of believers. In practical terms, this means contributing towards the direction and decision making of the church as well as committing to your brothers and sisters in Christ in love and service.

Any believer who has made a previous public declaration of faith by way of baptism is welcome to become a member. After expressing your interest in becoming a member, one of the Eldership team will make arrangements to visit you to review the church vision and constitution. Afterward acceptance, you will be welcomed as a member at the next convenient church service.

For more information about church membership, please contact the church office.

MEMBER'S PLEDGE

All prospective members of the church are provided with a copy of the church constitution which includes the following pledge for all members of the church:

I believe the Articles of Faith set out in the Constitution of The Mackay Baptist Church and Pledge that I will endeavour to faithfully fulfil the following duties and obligations, the Lord being my helper:

1. To read from the Bible and pray daily.
2. To attend worship with the congregation weekly on the Lord's Day unless genuinely prevented from doing so.
3. To give generously from my income on a regular basis for the financial support of the Church's ministries.
4. To participate in the Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings of the Church, if possible.
5. To accept at least one office, task or function within the structure of the Church, unless excused from doing so by reason of extraordinary circumstances.
6. To strive to walk in holiness and to express the love of Christ in my dealings with all people.
7. To exercise brotherly love towards my fellow members, endeavouring to share their burdens, to pray for them, to avoid all causes of division and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
8. To respect the Pastors and Leaders of the Church, to pray for them and encourage them in their duties.
9. To play my part in extending the Kingdom of Christ by witnessing for the Saviour in word and deed.
10. To accept and support all correctly decided Church Purpose, Vision and Mission Statements.

Baptism

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20 ESV

Our responsibility as the Church is to grow others in the knowledge and love of Christ through discipleship to an extent that they must make a public declaration of their faith through Baptism. Through baptism, we publicly declare to others that we have been washed clean through the death of Jesus Christ. Through baptism we publicly state that we have been reborn with Jesus through His resurrection.

Baptism does not wash away our sins - since Christ's blood has already done that when we first believed. And baptism does not seal us unto God since the Holy Spirit has already done that at the moment of our salvation. Instead, baptism is an act of obedience to our God since He has commanded that all believers to be baptised.

At Mackay Baptist Church, we uphold the biblical principal that the ordinance of baptism is by way of immersion for every believer who professes their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The "Baptist FAQ" at the end of this document provides a lot more information about the purpose and history of baptism and how this applies to the Baptist Church.

HOW CAN I BE BAPTISED?

Any believer in Christ who has repented from sin and chosen to follow Jesus is welcome to be baptised. For more information about baptism please contact the church office.

At Mackay Baptist Church, we believe that the act of baptism is not made any more holy by the location or water used. We have baptised believers at a number of local beaches, the Pioneer River, swimming pool, purpose-built baptismal tanks and even spas.

Connect with us

Sunday services (Mackay)

On Sundays we meet at 9am at our Mackay campus and this service is also streamed online via YouTube. Sunday school (for children in kindergarten through to Grade 3) and YoYos (for children in grades 4-7) operate during the service throughout the school term. There is a creche room available for younger children to play and a parent's room for those with babies. Both the creche and parent's rooms provide the capacity for caregivers to watch the main service while they take care of their children. Morning tea is served on the patio after the service.

Sunday services (Sarina)

Our Sarina campus meets at 10am each Sunday. Sunday school is available during the service throughout the school term. Morning tea is served after the service.

Youth group

Mackay Baptist Youth (MBY) is a youth ministry for high schoolers (grades 7 to 12). Meeting each Friday night of the school term, MBY provides a place for youth to learn about faith in a fun and safe environment. For more information, visit our Facebook page.

Young adults

A group of young adults meets regularly for study and social activities. For information about what's on and when, join our Facebook group.

Play group

This is a relaxed playgroup for all pre-school aged children and their carers. We hope to provide a supportive environment for parents to connect while children play. For more information, join our Facebook group.

Men, women and small groups

A number of activities for men and women, as well as combined small groups operate within the life of our church. For more information about what's on, please make contact with the church office.

Church History

This history has been developed to give a snapshot of the development of this Church to the present day, and as a way of thanking those faithful folk who have gone before us. A special thanks for early information to Rev. Stan Solomon - Mackay Church Secretary in 1958.

1957

The Baptist Home Mission commenced and funded a Church planting process in Mackay.

1958



Photo of cottage at MBC site.

1959

February 14 - Official opening of the church building Cnr. Brisbane & Shakespeare St. Mackay.

1959



1958

Norm Mergard - Pastor (Home Mission). Norm was a driving force behind the early life of MBC and was fondly remembered by our last original member still in Mackay (Mrs Grace Gibbins) Who went to be with the Lord in 2006.

Early 1958: A Manse was purchased at 28 Wentford St Mackay. The Baptist Home Mission evidently paid the initial expenses.

March/April: Group meetings and services began in the Manse on the verandah. Two young men - Laurie Kingston and Ian Florence - came to live in town to assist with the work.

August 31: The Mackay Baptist Church was formally Constituted with 30 Foundation Members.

October: The properties at the corner of Brisbane & Shakespeare Streets were bought and one of the two old cottages was converted into a meeting room. The other served as classrooms and kitchen.

December: The original church building was built over the Christmas holidays with assistance from a Rockhampton builder, Bill Simpson, and another Brisbane volunteer. Folks from within the Church donated their time and labour under Bill's supervision. This was a massive feat achieved in a very short time. A labour of love. For years afterwards people would still talk of the joy and excitement in this project.

1959



Church Opening Ceremony and Congregation



Inside the original Church

1964 - 1967

Rob. Paulsen - Pastor - A strong youth Ministry, although for many years, up to around 1996 youth tended to leave town around 18 and go to Brisbane for education and career options. Remembered as having strong Sunday services with a lively musical ministry. John & Heather Mills, currently Pastor John Mills at Margate Baptist Church were the Youth leaders.

1969



The church complex. The building behind the cottage is the next-door guest house at 144 Shakespeare Street.

1961 - 1963

N.H. Suffolk Pastor. Neville remembers the fellowship fondly as being made up of hard-working faithful people. This was a time of consolidation, with strong links with other churches in Mackay. Neville is particularly remembered as a good mixer, and a solid preacher. A property was obtained at Sarina, and outreach activities commenced there.

1968 - 1969

Len Maycock - Pastor - A Solid time of teaching and a strong personal counselling ministry. A strong preacher.

1970

C.H. Nicholls Pastor - Brief interim ministry - 6 months.

1971 - 1973

Rod Bulpitt - Pastor with the arrival of a student pastor and wife in their early 20s, the church experienced an influx of young people who sometimes tested the patience of older members. This was a time of expansion, evangelism, and

1974

June to Oct: Interim Pastor G. Tudball Smith. The work at Sarina was concluded and the property and contents were sold.

1974

Dec, Jan - Pastor J Steer.

1976 - 1979

Jim Watson - Pastor. This was a period of quiet consolidation and stable development. By this time MBC had attained financial independence from its' Home Mission beginning.

1978

Lorna Phillips called as Deaconess for women. (Also 1994)

1981

Church Hall Built. This was a great project that was achieved debt free through donations and volunteer effort. Special mention should go to the then Church Secretary Paul Andersen who coordinated the effort.

1981



The church hall (Photo from 2005).

experimenting with new ideas, that was unexpectedly curtailed by the return of the Bullpitts to meet Theological College study requirements.

1973 - 1974

Dec to Feb: Interim Pastor I Cathie.

1974 - 1976

Overall leadership by Deacons punctuated by interim ministries.

1975 - 1976

Nov to Jan - Interim Pastor J Scalon

1977

New Manse purchased at 20 Warland St Mackay

1980 - 1985

Alan Gordon - Pastor This period saw exciting growth, and the eventual introduction of a second Sunday morning Service. Crusades every year were held with an emphasis on Church growth and evangelism. A strong Youth work was a feature of this period. During this time there was serious consideration of relocating the church, but despite preparedness to move, and much searching the Lord led the church to remain at the current site. Alan had a strong emphasis on church growth.

1982

All Church Services moved into the church Hall during the Ron Baker Crusade. Services remained there after that.

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1983

25th Anniversary of MBC

1981



Founding Church Members gathering at the 25th Church Anniversary

(Back row: Gordon & Jean Taylor, Gloria Taylor, Bill & Grace Gibbins, Nadine Ireland, John Howland, Stan & Nell Solomon. Front row: Ivy Cameron, Olive Hodgkinson, Ilma Daniels, Joyce Doyle)

1989

Purchase of Property at 142 Shakespeare St. Quite a large block with an old house on it. This added a neighbouring property for possible future expansion. The manse in Warland Street was sold.

1991 - 1998

Jeff Grant - Pastor. A highlight of this period was the development of the Street Level Youth Care ministry, feeding street kids from a van on the church property.

1995

Three families from MBC were commissioned to commence a church planting process in the Northern Beaches area.

1998 - 2002

Leadership by Deacons. This was a time of growth and healing within the church. The house on 142 Shakespeare St had been rented, and now was gradually renovated to the point that it could be used as the manse in 2002. Much consolidation occurred in this time.

2003

1983 - 1985

Trevor Walmsley appointed Associate Pastor. Trevor led an outreach to Carmilla, which finally concluded in 1989 due to lack of response.

1985 - 1991

Don Moore - Pastor. There was continued growth in this period, with a strong personal inter-generational ministry. A caring personal counsellor. Many unchurched people came into contact with the fellowship in this period.

1989



The manse at 142 Shakespeare St. The block at 144 Shakespeare St can also be partly seen on the left.

1996

Purchase of a property at 144 Shakespeare St. This was an old guesthouse between the church blocks. The Guest House was demolished and the land used for parking and possible future expansion. This gave the church 4 blocks from 142 - 148 Shakespeare St.

2002

February - Jock Whittaker - Pastor. The church began a time of exciting growth, with numbers increasing so that the property could not comfortably house our worship services.

The Northern Beaches Baptist Church was constituted. A very close working relationship exists between the two Churches. John Whitborn was called by the Beaches as their pastor.

The church appointed George Williams as paid Youth Worker. Youth and Young adult work flourished and the church rapidly grew.

2004



*Worship services held off-site
(Mackay Entertainment Centre Pictured)*

2008

50th Church Anniversary. Through an agreement with BapCare, a building was purchased at 58a Wellington Street Mackay to become the base of Mackay Baptist Care. This ministry continues to grow with regular courses offered for depression and anger management amongst others as well as counselling services. Church property redevelopment activities continue.

2010

Relocation to temporary site - 245 Bridge Road during the demolition of the old site and commencement of construction of the new church. The last church service in the old church building was held on 11 April 2010 with family members sharing their stories of the way in which God uses what he has given us to bring glory to himself. The original church building (now church hall) was relocated to another site to be converted into a house and re-uses some of the materials from the main church building which was demolished. The old manse was sold to a property developer and relocated to 38 Stayts Road, Marian.

2004

April - Morning Services moved to Mackay North State High School Hall, due to the increase in numbers of people attending. On occasion, worship services have also been held at Mackay Entertainment Centre.

2004 - 2006

A period of solid growth in the church. Our facilities are stretched on a Sunday especially. Services returned to the church buildings for the cool conditions in the Summer, and dual services continued. Many healthy Ministries are flourishing. Nina Wiesenecker appointed as Church Counsellor. Pastor Jock Whittaker agrees to a further 5-year call.

2007

In partnership with Bapcare the Mackay Baptist Care Counselling service was established. Church building Plans underway for Development on the current site. Paul Polgeiter pastor of Northern Beaches Baptist Church.

2009

Property plans finalised, approved by council and approved by the church. Planning and preparations underway to ready for commencement of construction in 2011

2010



Removal of the church manse captured on Google Street View

2010



Worship services at "Parkside" (245 Bridge Road)

2011



July: The building under construction

2012

January 1: The first service was held in the completed building on New Year's Day. The building project overall was completed on time and on budget.

April 21: Community open day and official opening of the building. The new building was full with church family, past members, friends and official guests as well as former pastors, Ps. Jeff Grant and Rev. Alan Gordon.

Two more short-term mission trips were commissioned to Vanuatu.

The church has continued to grow numerically and in depth of our relationship with God through Christ Jesus. A large number of baptisms were held this year.

2011

May: Commencement of the new property construction phase. Dave Harney Constructions was commissioned with the building which was designed by Steve Turner of Sanders Turner and Ellick Architects. Steven Tye was the church property project manager. Significant practical and financial contributions were made by many church members and God was especially gracious in binding the church together during this busy time and performing many miracles in the provision of funds, safety, practical helpers and solutions to unsolvable problems.

The church commissioned two short-term missions to Vanuatu, to minister to the people of Black Sands Community and Pele Island. This exercise was in support of our partner church, "History Maker's Church" in Port Villa.

2013

2 more mission trips to Vanuatu.

2014-2016

Appointment of Ps. Peter Muller as full-time associate pastor.

2017

Ps. Jock Whittaker retired after 15 years of faithful service.

Ps. Scott Jones appointed as new Senior Pastor.

Ps. Rohan Beatson appointed as Associate Pastor.

2021

Developed an association with Sarina Baptist Church. We provide assistance with preaching and management matters and encourage the work in Sarina as we can.

Pastor Rohan Beatson returned to Rockhampton after a successful time with us.

Pastor Scott Jones accepted a call for a further term as Senior Pastor.

2023

Pastor Richard Carpenter commenced as Associate Pastor focusing on Discipleship and Growth.

2020

COVID means a temporary halt to face to face services. Online services are run from March to September.

2022

Pastor Daniel O'Connor commenced as Associate Pastor with special interest in Youth and Young Adults.

The Mackay Baptist Church is people. Wherever we have been through the years, or wherever we are now we remain God's people in a world that needs to know Jesus Christ. We pay compliment to those faithful workers who over the years have sought to witness to the Love of Jesus Christ in Mackay, Queensland.

Property Redevelopment Project (2011)

In 2001 Mackay Baptist Church completed a significant property redevelopment project. This project saw the clearing of all existing buildings at our current site on the corner of Shakespeare and Brisbane Streets with a new, purpose-built facility constructed. The new facility has a modern, worship-focused assembly with seating for 312, dedicated spaces for Sunday School and teaching programs, fellowship space, crèche, cry room, meeting and office spaces.

After member's approval in 2009, the church finalized plans and commenced construction of the building in May, 2011. During the period of construction, the church was able to lease premises in the former Parkside Timber and Hardware building on Bridge Road for a period of 20 months.

The new building was completed by Christmas that year with the first service held in the building on 1 January, 2012. An official opening ceremony was held on the building on 21 April, 2012 in a service

attended by former pastors Ps. Jeff Grant and Rev. Alan Gordon, as well as Queensland Baptists Regional Consultants, Rev. Steve Twible and Rev. Col Peaker. Government representatives were also in attendance, including Cr Deirdre Comerford (Mackay Regional Council), Tim Mulherin MP (State Member for Mackay) and George Christensen MP (Federal Member for Dawson).



Resources

Becoming a believer

A Christian is someone who has received Jesus Christ as their personal saviour and dedicates their lives to turning away from sin and following Him. It is neither a set of rules and regulations, nor a loose set of optional principles from which you can pick and choose your own self-defined spirituality. Instead, it is simply a relationship with God through the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

THE PROBLEM

Before you can begin this relationship, there is one critical matter that must be addressed. A long time ago, a man and a woman made a choice to disobey God because they hoped to be "like God" (Genesis 3). Their rebellion, which is called, "sin" entered the world, bringing ultimate death to everything, including ourselves. To this day, we are all dominated by the curse of sin which ultimately leads to eternal separation from God.

Since God is perfectly holy and just, He cannot accept you if you are tainted by the effect of sin. The sin that God detests is not limited to things that we might rightly consider abhorrent like murder or rape, but also a lustful heart, bitterness towards others and pride. According to Matthew 5, privately lusting after another is just as wicked as committing adultery, and wishing evil towards another is just as abhorrent as committing murder. Finally, according to James 2:10, anyone who fails in one commandment is guilty of the whole law.

It is tragic predicament that demands a solution. Our attempts to earn or bargain for our sin to be removed are fruitless. If we are truly depraved, how can we make ourselves clean of our volition? If God's Word is true where we are told that He loves us (John 3:16), surely He cannot stand to allow us to perish from this terrible curse?

THE SOLUTION

Before we fall into despair, our God, full of love and grace, has made a way for us. Whilst His way cost us nothing, it cost God everything. Jesus – God in Human form took the punishment that was destined for us. Unlike us, He lived a perfect life and was spotless before God. Yet because He loved us so much, He allowed himself to be sacrificed for our sin. This is called, "Grace". We cannot earn this love, in fact, we deserve the opposite, but God demonstrates His love for us in that, whilst we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Our sinful condition – present at the moment of our conception, passed on from thousands of generations since Adam – has been taken away by Jesus Christ. He replaces our heart of stone with a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26) and we are born again (John 3:3). We still have the capacity to continue sinning, but our heart – the core of our being has been changed to exalt Christ and bring glory to Him. It is from this new position that we begin our lives anew – free from the power of sin – and free from the punishment of sin.

GOD'S CALL

How does God ask us to respond to this incredible gift of love and grace?

Then he [Jesus] said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23 NIV

Our response should be more than just intellectual acceptance or enthusiastic admiration, but full devotion. A follower of Jesus has made a wilful decision to place Jesus in the centre of their lives, accepting the price that He alone paid, and responding with love and affection. We are called to "repent" which simply means to turn away from our sin towards God - He will give us the strength to endure temptation and overcome the power of sin in our lives.

Jesus has said that the road that leads to salvation is narrow and winding, whilst the road to destruction is broad (Matthew 7:13-14). The life of a true Christian may be unpopular and even divisive, but it is a life filled with a supernatural joy grounded in the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. He becomes our strength in times of trouble and remains our hope in seasons of blessing.

God's call to us to return to Him is constant, but time is limited and unpredictable. Don't wait to sort out your problems, failures and sin by yourself before you come to Jesus - but come to Him in humility and ask for His perfection to cover your flaws and He will answer with an enthusiastic "Yes!"

YOUR RESPONSE:

If you would like to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ, you only need to pray to Him, accept your sinfulness, ask Him to forgive you by the grace of Jesus Christ, and wilfully turn from your life of sin by the power of God's Holy Spirit. You can do this right now, in this moment, by praying to Him. If you are not sure what to pray, the following may help you:

Dear God, I admit that I am a failure. I am sorry for my sins and my rebellion against your perfect law. I accept that Jesus Christ, your son, was given to this earth, lived a life perfect and free of sin, and was sacrificed on a cross to take the punishment for my sin that I deserved.

I accept this wonderful gift of salvation through Jesus Christ and turn from my sin to follow you. I resolve to make You the focus of my life, to guide my steps and to make me more like Jesus. With the freedom that You have bought for me, and in the power of Your Holy Spirit, I declare my heart's desire is to serve, honour and worship You alone so that You will receive all glory and honour.

Heavenly Father, thank you for purchasing my salvation with the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen

When we chose Jesus as our Saviour, we are joined into a new family which is Jesus' Church. The purpose of the Church is to proclaim this message of salvation to the world and to encourage one another to a deeper relationship with Christ, demonstrated by our love for each other. Being "plugged-

in" to a local Christ-centred church is an excellent next step in growing as a Christian and being used by God to fulfil His mission for your life.

Christian FAQ

Billy Graham tells of a young man who came to him very upset. He'd failed to make anything worthwhile of his life, he said. As he finished, he threw up his arms in despair, and said through his tears, 'I guess I was just born wrong!'

Many of us feel lost like that. We're not the persons we ought to be. We don't live up to our ideals, and sometimes deliberately do what's wrong.

The Bible calls this 'sin' - and sin is anything we do (or even think) which is disobedient to what God wants for us and is harmful to ourselves and others. More than that, sin is what we do not do that we should be doing! it's man's inhumanity to man, creating a mess in our world and its structures. It's falling short of the beautiful way God meant for us to live.

But the astonishing thing about God is that He loves us, in spite of our rebellion, selfishness and apathy. God is not only great and all powerful, He's very gracious and forgiving. He comes looking for us, wanting to save us from our sin and 'lostness' This is why He sent His Son Jesus into this hostile world - to give us liFE - life in all its fullness (John 10:10b).

He wants us to become 'truly human' - He wants to remake us, from the inside out!

Q: What do I have to do to become a Christian?

A:

- First, you realize that you - like everyone else - are a sinner (Romans 3:23)
- Confess this to God, accepting gratefully His complete forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Commit yourself totally to Jesus, God's Son, and tell Him you want to obey Him always (John 1:12, 3:16, 5:24,14:6,15:11-13)

It's as simple and as demanding as that!

Q: What happens when you become a Christian?

A: Jesus comes into your life - to stay (Revelation 3:20).

'But what if I don't feel any different?' That's O.K. Feelings go up and down; they're very unreliable. It's trusting God and His sure promises that is important, not your feelings!

You can begin the great adventure of following Christ any- where at any time. If you haven't yet accepted Him as your Lord and Savior, why not do it now? Here's a prayer you can pray, perhaps on your knees:

'Loving God, I admit I've been running my own life, and I've sinned - against you, against others, and against myself. I'm really sorry for my sins. Thank you for sending Jesus, who lived and died for me, to rescue me and forgive me. I want to belong to you completely. I'm totally willing to let Jesus control my life, all of it, from now on. Thank you, my God, my Father, for accepting me

into your family. Help me now to become a new person, with the help and power of your Holy Spirit who now lives in me. Amen'

If you've said that prayer - and really meant it - do you realise what's happened?

- You have become a child of God - 'born again' into His family!
- You've been 'made new all over again'! (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- You will live a beautiful 'eternal life 'forever' (1 John 5:11-13).
- You've begun a new relationship with a wonderful caring friend! He'll stick by you - right through your life, and beyond.

But perhaps you're thinking, 'I'll never make it. I'm sure to muck it up, just as I've often done in the past'. Well, that happens to all of us. But God will be there to help and forgive you (1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 John 1:8-9). After all, it is He who does the changing. We simply live in a way that is open to God's purposes (Romans 12:12).

The Christian life is a great adventure. It won't all be easy (worthwhile adventures rarely are!). For many Christians life gets 'harder and harder' as it gets 'better and better'

Q: How do you become a strong Christian?

A:

- Spend some time each day reading the Bible. Perhaps start with Mark, then John, then Acts. God's Word will keep you strong (Psalm 119:9,11).
- Then spend some time thinking and praying about what you've read.
- Talk to your heavenly Father just like you'd talk to a friend. Prayer is your 'life-line' to Him, and His answers to your requests will always be the best for you (John 15:7, 1 John 5:14,15).
- Obey your Lord and Master: if you really love Him you'll want to be His disciple (John 14:21).
- Help others in any way you can. You are now one of Christ's 'witnesses' - an ambassador for Him wherever you go.
- You'll want to talk to others about Christ (not everyone you meet, perhaps: pray for God to guide you each day to those who need to hear the 'Good News' from you).
- Make sure that your behavior is consistent with what you're saying! (1 Peter 1:13-15)⁴
- You have a deadly enemy - Satan - whom you'll be fighting all the time. Learn how to use the 'spiritual weapons' God gives you for this battle (Acts 1:8. Galatians 5:16-17, 22- 23).⁵
- Meet regularly with other Christians - at your church, in a small group, and, if possible, one-to-one for Bible study, sharing common problems (and successes!), and prayer (Galatians 6:2, Hebrews 10:24,25).

Finally, remember:

- You've begun a new relationship. Grow in your love for Him and your understanding of His ways. Trust Him - with everything. He'll never let you down (1 Peter 5:7, 2 Peter 3:18).

Baptist FAQ

The following are responses to frequently asked questions about the Baptist Christian denomination.

BAPTISTS**Q: Why are Baptists Baptists?**

A: The term 'Baptist' was a nickname given by others to these people because of their view of baptism. However, this is not really our chief distinctive. Let's go back to the question about 'Who belongs to the church?' The Baptist answer ('only the regenerate') raises another question: 'If baptism is the rite of initiation into the church who should be baptised?' To which a Baptist answers without hesitation: 'Again, only the regenerate'. So, Baptists would affirm that it's their view of the Lord-ship of Christ, the authority of the Bible, and the composition of the church that pre-determines their view of baptism.

Let's ask, and try to answer, the 'Where? Who? How? What? and Why?' questions about baptism:

Q: Where did baptism start?

A: Mainly in Jewish baptism. When a 'pagan' wanted to become a Jew he had to be 'cleansed' with water. John the Baptist came along and told religious Jews that they too needed to be baptised, as a sign of their repentance. (This was really hard for some of them to take, so they persecuted John.) Jesus was baptised by John, then Jesus' disciples baptised converts during His ministry. At the end of His life, He gave His disciples the 'great commission': He commanded them to make disciples everywhere, baptising them 'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. The early Christians obeyed this command. The pattern in Acts and Paul's letters: preaching the Good News, a response of faith, then baptism. (Receiving the Holy Spirit is often mentioned in the same context.)

Q: Who should be baptised?

A: In the New Testament, it was those who chose to be. Professor William Barclay (a Presbyterian) says often in his commentaries: 'Baptism in the time of the early church was adult baptism'.

Q: But what about little children?

A: Jesus welcomed and blessed small children (as the church should continue to do) but He didn't baptise them nor did He tell His disciples to do so. From Jesus' point of view, children are already within God's love and care, so they don't need a religious ceremony to put them there. Certainly, Christian parents can exercise faith for their children, but this does not guarantee their salvation. (It's possible that even potential church leaders may have unbelieving children.) The parents' task, by their example and their teaching, is to encourage the child's own commitment to Christ. Another great Presbyterian, James Denney, once wrote that any idea of infant baptism getting rid of inherited 'original sin' (as the Roman Catholic Church has taught) and thereby guaranteeing regeneration in the child, is 'barefaced magic'. Baptists would agree. But what about the 'whole households' baptised in the New Testament stories? There is no evidence that Lydia was married. The Philippian jailer had a household that 'believed'. Those baptised in Stephanas' household also 'served God's people'. There is no direct mention in these passages of babies being baptised.

Q: How were they baptised?

A: Jews baptised by immersion — they even forbade things like hair ribbons and clenched fists so that water could cover the whole body. John the Baptist baptized the same way (e.g. John 3:22-23 tells us he chose the springs near Salim because there he had enough water), in Acts, we read of a baptised person 'going down into' and 'coming up out of the water Paul, in Romans 6:1-11, talks about being 'buried' and 'raised' in baptism. A widely-accepted book of instruction for church members written about AD 100 (The Didache) says baptism ought, if possible, to be by total immersion, or by pouring only if water was scarce. (Many Baptists today would also baptise by pouring ('effusion') in exceptional cases where a person has a severe medical problem, is disabled or very old etc.) Professor Kari Barth, the great Reformed scholar, says 'primitive baptism had the character of a direct threat to life, succeeded immediately by a deliverance and preservation.

Sprinkling infants, he says, robs baptism of this important symbolism. The Greek word 'baptise', according to Arndt & Gingrich's lexicon of the Greek New Testament, means 'to dip, to immerse'. They tell us that in non-Christian writings the word also meant 'to plunge, sink, drench, over-whelm'. So the Bible is quite clear: we baptise believers only, by immersion.

Q: What does baptism mean?

A: The New Testament uses several vivid pictures to convey its rich meaning; washing, a cleansing of 'dirt' from one's life; putting off the old life like soiled clothes, and putting on Christ, like a new, clean garment; being buried and raised with Christ. Baptism, like the waters in Noah's time, is linked with our salvation, so we, like him, should be godly in a corrupt and sinful world. Baptism is an act of faith (often of real courage, too) before witnesses. It's a proclamation, a dramatization of Christ's work for sinful people. Baptism means that we are now owned by Christ (the words 'in the name' signified ownership). Baptism is associated, too, with the 'baptism in the Holy Spirit': two aspects of what Paul calls 'one baptism'. Finally, baptism is the door into the church. Baptism is not really an individual event. You don't baptise yourself. You are asking to belong. You are coming into a new community. Paul says we are 'baptised into Christ' and baptised into the Body of Christ, the church. (To demonstrate this association, many churches baptise and receive the candidate into membership at the same service.)

Q: Why, then, should I be baptised?

A: Not to save you — we are saved by God's grace and our response in faith, not by anything we do. The best reason for being baptised is that Jesus, your Master, commands it. He Himself was baptised to 'do all that God requires' — shouldn't we follow Him and do the same? Every step of obedience you take (and this is certainly a major one) strengthens and encourages you to follow Christ still further. And so, 'what is to keep me from being baptised?' (Acts 8:36). 'Why wait any longer? Arise and be baptised!' (Acts 22:16).

Write down your own reasons for or against your being baptised. Why not discuss these honestly with your pastor or counsellor? What does 'dying, being buried, being raised' mean for you personally?

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

It is not uncommon for Baptist church constitutions to begin: 'The church shall be composed of those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord'. When Baptists throughout their history have been asked 'Who belongs to the church?' their response is always: 'Only those who've deliberately chosen to follow the way of Jesus — the "regenerate", those born again!'

Perhaps this can best be explained by taking a short journey into the past.

Baptists trace their spiritual history back to people like the 'Anabaptists' ('re-baptisers') in 16th century Europe, it was the time when Luther, Calvin and other 'Protestants' urged people to go back to the Bible for their instructions about faith and living, and reject doctrines and practices in the Church of Rome which they believed were unbiblical. For example they talked about 'the priesthood of all believers'. The Church of Rome made ordinary believers dependent upon the mediation of the priests, but these 'Reformers' proclaimed the right of every Christian to have access to God through the mediation of Christ alone. They encouraged ordinary people to read the Word of God (something rare — and even forbidden — by the church authorities in those days). They said that every Christian has the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of Scripture, so God can speak to them by this same Spirit as they read the Bible. You and I don't need the authorities in the church to tell us what to believe — it's all there in God's holy Word.

The Anabaptists, however, said Luther and Calvin and the others didn't take their 'Reformation' far enough. They agreed that 'If it's in the Bible we believe it; if it isn't, we reject it, even though centuries of Christian history are behind a particular belief. But they objected to the close alliance between church and state which had gone on for more than a thousand years. They also rejected infant baptism, which, they believed, served to perpetuate state churches filled with nominal Christians.

Meanwhile, over in England, a 'Puritan' movement emerged within the Church of England, calling that church back to the Scriptures. One learned man, Rev. John Smyth M.A. (a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge University), became a city lecturer at Lincoln at the turn of the 17th century a post which allowed him to expound the Scriptures to his townspeople who weren't satisfied with the teaching they were receiving in their churches. When things got 'too hot' for these Puritans, some went as refugees to Holland. There John Smyth continued to study the Scriptures, and with the help of some Dutch Mennonites (an Anabaptist group) came to hold certain convictions which Baptists have maintained ever since. In 1609 he became the leader of the first English-speaking 'Baptist' church. He saw with the Anabaptists that 'established churches' weren't an apostolic idea at all. You become a member of these churches through infant baptism, and everyone in a particular community or 'parish' therefore almost automatically belonged to the 'parish church'. Now that's all wrong, these 'Baptists' said. Only people who've had a personal encounter with Christ can belong to the church. You can't be born a Christian: at some point in your life you choose to belong to Christ's church, when you repent of your sins and commit your life willingly to Him.

So Baptists have always been wary of alliances between churches and the state authorities. They've said governments shouldn't influence or interfere with the free choice a person makes about his allegiance to Christ and the church. They have taken the idea a step further, too, and until recently, have generally refused government funding for their Christian ministries. (Today government grants may be accepted for educational and social welfare purposes, but not for worship and pastoral ministries.)

Because people willingly choose to belong to the church, a high standard of Christian behavior and discipleship is expected of members of Baptist churches. Because they possess God's Holy Spirit, they should live on a higher plane than non-Christians. Sometimes 'church discipline' has to be lovingly but firmly extended towards those who bring the faith of Christ into disrepute by their disobedient behavior. Occasionally, you'll hear leaders of other churches saying something like this: 'You Baptists expect a more rigorous commitment from your people than we do'. That's right, and we're not going to change that! indeed, many Anabaptists and early Baptists were martyred (often by drowning,

'seeing they like so much water,' these enemies said) for these beliefs. If our forefathers were prepared to go that far. their convictions are perhaps worth closer study!

WHO ARE THE BAPTISTS?

To answer this, we must go back to the 'Good News', the 'gospel'. In essence, Paul says (Philippians 2:10-11), the 'Good News' is that 'JESUS CHRIST IS LORD' That's where Baptists start their thinking. This isn't just an abstract doctrine it's very practical indeed. It means that He's our Master, our King. We are His obedient servants, His subjects, who do what He commands. He is the ultimate authority for all thinking and acting. He is God the Son, through whom everything came into being, and before whom everyone will ultimately 'fall on their knees'. Jesus Christ is Lord or 'Head' of the Church, His Body, So Christians are people who both individually and collectively, are constantly asking; 'What does our Lord want us to believe, and what does He want us to do?' This leads us to the Bible, in which the mind of Christ is revealed. The Bible is God's Word, His authoritative guide for our faith and practice. It is the inspired and trustworthy record of the mighty acts of God in the history of His people Israel and fulfilled in the life, teachings, and saving work of Christ. So Baptists are encouraged to be keen 'Bible people', seeking with an open and reverent mind to understand what God is saying to us today. Sometimes we won't find specific answers to all our modern problems there, but we'll always find God's guiding principles. The greatest principle, or commandment, said Jesus, is to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength'. And the second greatest: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself'. For Baptists, then, God alone is the sovereign Lord. They have always tried to follow the apostolic principle: 'We must obey God rather than men'. Baptists reject doctrines or practices which either contradict or are not in harmony with Christ's will be revealed in the Bible. They have simply believed that most of the differences between churches would be resolved if apostolic principles and practices were held in their true scriptural relationship with one another. And so, for just about every question we reply with another: 'What does the Bible say?'

But I hasten to add two things. First, this doesn't mean Baptists arrogantly believe they are the only ones who are right. No one (except God alone) has 'a monopoly on the truth'. We are humble fellow-learners with others who also submit to the truth of Scripture. And 'God has yet more light and truth to break forth from His holy Word'. A Baptist says, with love, to another Christian: 'You are my brother/sister, not because we happen to agree on everything, but because we are both God's children'. Secondly Baptists have produced written 'confessions' but never written 'creeds'. Creeds become 'locked into' the particular questions of one historical era, and later Christians may be asking some different questions. Further, creeds tend to make people 'exclusive' if you don't dot all the i's and cross all the t's you're not acceptable. Baptists aim rather to be inclusive: our bond is simply our common relationship to Jesus Christ.

Volunteering for Ministry

Involvement in ministry is encouraged for all members of the church. The true life of a Christian must not be passive and introspective. Scripture tells us in Matthew 5:16 that our good deeds should shine out before others, so that others will praise our Heavenly Father. At MBC, there are number of opportunities for you to exercise the spiritual gifts, skills, talents and passion that God has given you. This may be within some of the existing ministries that are already established, or in a new area that God may be calling you.

If you would like to volunteer for a ministry of the church, the best place to start is by contacting the church office for information.

Mackay Baptist Church takes the protection and safety of our young people very seriously. A number of volunteer positions in ministry, including those relating to children, young people and the overseeing of related ministries will require the volunteer to obtain a Queensland Government "Blue Card". As a not-for-profit organisation, there is no cost to the applicant for this, but the form must be completed and verified by our leadership team.