



MEMBERSHIP

About CoastEC...

CoastEC launched in April 2009.

Since then **our mission** has been the same - to build Christ's church by prayerfully proclaiming the Word of God. We basically want to reach the 25,000 people living in our region with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to see them become mature disciples. We want to reach as many people as possible, by all means possible, for the sake of the gospel.

Although we are an independent evangelical church, we are also part of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (www.fiec.org.au). Together we want to see Australia won for Christ. We believe the most strategic way to reach people is to keep planting more churches that are theologically grounded and committed to growing by prayerfully preaching and teaching the Word of God in culturally connected ways.

In Forster and the surrounding region, we see a massive need for more churches that are culturally accessible, especially to young families and youth.

We would love you to partner with us in this mission, and God willing, as we work together in the great goal of making Jesus known, God will grow us in number and maturity, and we will plant other congregations in an ever widening circle around Forster.

What follows is a very brief outline of what we believe and an invitation for you to consider partnering with us more formally as a member.

In Him and for His glory,

Chris Ekins
(pastor)

Christians are members of Christ's Body

*Just as each of us has one body with many members,
and these members do not all have the same function,
so in Christ we who are many form one body,
and each **member** belongs to all the others...*
(Romans 12:4-5)

Christians are members of God's Family

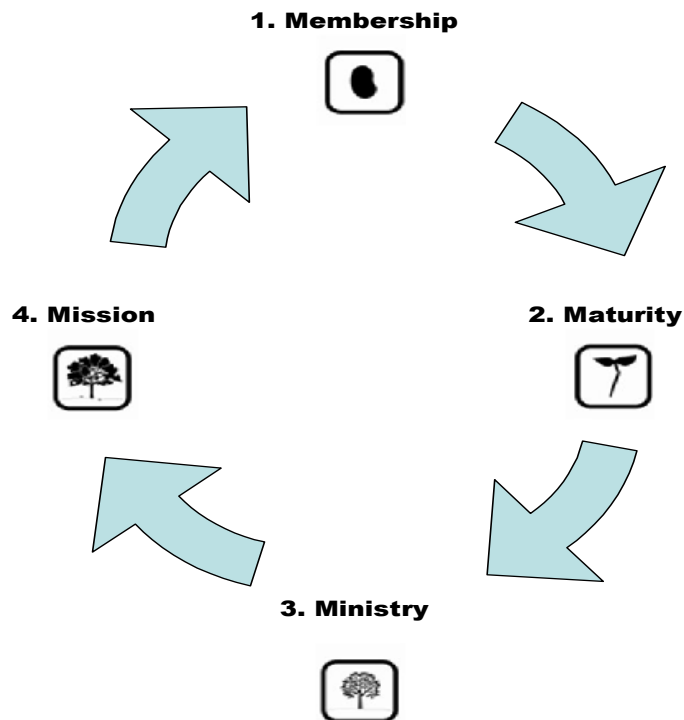
*"...now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away
have been brought near through the blood of Christ....
For through Jesus we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.
Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but
fellow citizens with God's people and **members** of God's household
(Ephesians 2:13,18-19)*

Jesus said:
"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it"
(Matthew 16:18)

Our Vision...

We want people to glorify God by

- Belonging as **Members** – by accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord and connecting with the body of Christ and the family of believers.
- Growing in **Maturity** - becoming more like Jesus by prayerfully studying the Word of God and being transformed by the Holy Spirit.
- Serving in **Ministry** - building up others in the body of Christ by serving faithfully with their God-given gifts and abilities
- Living as **Missionaries** - promoting the gospel with their lips and lives by living intentionally among the 25,000 people living in our region.



Our essential beliefs...

(a) **About God**

There is one unique and eternal God, who exists in an everlasting loving relationship of Father, Son and Spirit - one God in three persons. God is sovereign in all things: including creation, revelation, redemption, judgement and the establishing of his kingdom. As sovereign loving creator and redeemer, he is worthy of all glory, honour and praise.

(b) **About humanity**

Men and women together are created in the image of God, and therefore enjoy a unique dignity in creation and a unique relationship with God. Men and women together have dominion over the created order. Tragically, human nature is universally sinful since the Fall and all are guilty before God. This leaves us under the wrath and condemnation of God. We are unable, without the prior regenerative work of God's Spirit, to turn ourselves to God.

(c) **About the Bible**

There is no other way to know God except that he reveals himself to us. The Bible is God's revelation to us. The words of the Bible are divinely inspired and infallible, as originally given, and have supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct and experience. The Bible is sufficient for knowing God. It is not only central to the wellbeing of the church but is able to thoroughly equip the Christian community for life and godliness.

(d) **About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is both fully God and truly human. He entered fully into human experience. He endured temptation and he suffered and died. He was perfectly obedient to God his father. Jesus took on himself the consequences of human sin. He died and was buried. On the third day he rose from the dead bodily and is now exalted as ruler over all. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

(e) **About salvation**

There is only one name under heaven by which we can be brought into relationship with God: the name 'Jesus Christ'. It is only through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, that the guilt, penalty and power of sin can be removed. In that death, God demonstrates his love to us most perfectly and establishes his victory over

Satan and all his foes. The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to make the death of Jesus effective in an individual's life. The Spirit enables the sinner to repent and put their faith in Jesus Christ, so that salvation is entirely of God's grace and not of human merit or works. Although we enjoy now the blessing of union with Christ and secure relationship with God, we await the final consummation of our hope with the return of Christ, the resurrection of our bodies and life with him eternally.

(f) **About the Spirit in the believer's life**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the father and the Son, and indwells all true believers. His role is to bring glory to Jesus Christ, thus making Jesus Christ central in all things. The Spirit works to illuminate believers' minds to grasp the truth of the Bible, producing in them his fruit, granting them his gifts and empowering them for service. He grants his gifts for the purpose of service, not self indulgence. Their use is determined - not by personal desire for fulfilment, or satisfaction - but by the principle of building the church. Not every gift of the Spirit is given to the church at every moment of its life, only those necessary for building Christ's body.

(g) **About the church**

The visible church is the gathering of believers around Christ in his word. It is a community of people intended by God to bear witness to him and actively seek the extension of his rule. Within its community both men and women are to seek proper expression of their gifts as they work to build the church in love. The Bible makes clear that in church leadership, as in marriage, the roles of men and women are not interchangeable. We are committed to expressing the differences within relationships of mutual dependence.

• **In essentials, we have unity**

"There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Eph 4:4-6)

• **In non essentials, we have liberty**

"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls....So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Rom 14:1,4,12)

• **In all our beliefs, we show charity**

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor 13:2)

Our Core Values...

Here's some stuff we're into. They're not just nice theological or philosophical principles – they're things we're striving to commit ourselves to, embody, live out, do, and invite others to join us in.

(a) **Love**

Jesus said it's the greatest commandment. So it's at the top of the list. Love God. Love people. And don't be cheesy about it.

(b) **Bible**

When we gather, we meet around God's Word. We believe the Bible is Jesus-focussed and gospel-centred. It's central to all we do. Jesus is the head of His church, so we let Him speak and lead.

(c) **Prayer**

God is powerful and can do anything. And He graciously invites us to depend on Him and to trust Him to provide for our needs. We acknowledge that we are powerless to change anyone's heart – only God can do that.

(d) **Fellowship**

This goes beyond being 'nice' to each other. The Bible says we're brothers and sisters, so we're committed to hanging out together, encouraging each other in the faith, and looking after each other as a spiritual family. Home Groups are our backbone. Our unity is not based on our race, age, gender, income, or any other common interest – but only on Jesus who levels the playing field.

(e) **Godliness**

We want to live radically transformed lives, and become more and more like Jesus as God's Spirit changes us from the inside out. The old dodgy self must go, and the new fresh self must come.

(f) **Ministry**

This is not just something for the 'paid professionals'. It's for every believer. We want to see everyone who calls COAST EC their home church serving the other members of the body as God has equipped them to. Everyone has a vital part to play. We build our ministries around

people, not programs. We also want to serve our local community in practical ways.

(g) **Training**

Every Christian needs to be trained in their understanding, godliness, and ability to promote Jesus and build His church. We want to raise up the next generation of full time gospel workers (pastors, teachers, missionaries, church planters) through our 2-year Ministry Apprenticeship (MTS – Ministry Training Scheme). Our goal is to take on 3 MTS apprentices per year.

(h) **Mission**

Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations. We believe every Christian is to live a missional life where God has put them or where God calls them to go. There are about 19 million Aussies – most don't know Jesus, and 60% of them don't have a friend who is a Christian. This means we need to expand our circle of friends and to have gospel intentionality in all our relationships. As a church, we will focus on reaching the 25,000 people living in our region, and we will equip our members to promote the gospel amongst their friends, co-workers, families, neighbours and enemies.

(i) **Church planting**

We believe that establishing new churches, congregations, fellowships, and Christian communities is an effective way to see the gospel spread. God willing, we hope to start at least one new congregation or fellowship each year. We're linked up with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (www.fiec.org.au), whose vision is to see 50 churches planted in the next 10 years. We're also partnering with The Geneva Push (www.thegenevapush.com) to see many church planters raised up, assessed, resourced, and unleashed.

(j) **Culture**

Although we're theologically conservative, we're culturally liberal. This basically means we're 'normal'! The language we use and the style of our church services we have don't require you to own a theological dictionary, a dated wardrobe or a time machine. Our gatherings are accessible to everyday people, because we're everyday people too.

Qualifying for formal membership...

Although all Christians are members of Christ's church, some will want to formally commit to CoastEC as the local expression of that membership. CoastEC is administered by Forster Evangelical Church Incorporated (an Association registered with the Dept of Fair Trading). This means we need to have a constitution, registered membership, Annual General Meeting, and audited financial statements etc. In our constitution, the governing rules for membership of the association state:

Potential members must...

- Be Christian (have Jesus as their Lord and Saviour)
- Have been attending CoastEC for at least 3 months
- Be at least 18 years old
- Not be a member of another church (except where the Administration Committee determines that extenuating circumstances apply)
- Be approved for membership by the administration committee

Applying for formal membership...

- An application must be made in writing to the administration committee, professing:
 - faith in, and submission to Jesus Christ as Lord, Saviour and God,
 - agreement with the associations statement of beliefs,
 - agreement to promote the mission of the association.
- Once applications have been received and approved by the administration committee, the secretary will notify the applicant. Their name and the date will be added to the register of members, at which time they will officially become members.

Other...

- There are no membership fees or liabilities
- Members entitlements are not transferable
- Members may resign their membership at any time, in writing
- Members will have their membership reviewed by the administration committee (if they cease to follow Jesus as Lord, Saviour and God; no longer agree to promote the mission of the association; or stop attending for 6 months).

Application for membership

Personal Details....

Name:

Address:

Phone (home):

Phone (mobile):

Email:

Date of Birth*:

Other (eg skype, facebook, twitter):

Application....

My signature below indicates my desire to commit to membership of CoastEC, and the following is true of me:

- I am a Christian (Jesus Christ is my Lord, Saviour and God).
- I agree with the associations essential beliefs and core values
- I am on board with their mission to build Christ's church
- I want to grow in my spiritual maturity
- I want to serve other believers to build them up
- I want to work co-operatively under the recognised leadership
- I want to contribute to the needs of the church
- I am at least 18 years old.
- I have been attending CoastEC for at least 3 months
- I am not a member of another church

I give permission for my contact details to appear in the members roll which is available to other members (**year of birth won't be published*)

Signature _____ Date _____

Please give this form to the pastor, one of the administration committee or place it in the collection bag at the service.