

Membership at ABAC



What is the basis for church Membership?

Here's the short version: Official membership is a legal requirement for our church to operate as a non-profit organisation. To remain orderly and diligent with our operation, our church is required to have a list of official members who can hold elected positions and who vote on major decisions such as finances and our church bylaws. All that being said, our desire at ABAC is to offer a more compelling vision of membership that goes beyond the ability to vote on church business.

Why be a Member at ABAC?

Because of Jesus we are all about loving God and loving others. This statement means that our church aspires to be a safe space for anyone looking to explore questions of life and faith in light of God's Word. A next step to pursuing discipleship at ABAC is to enter into membership. Becoming a member is a statement of commitment to love and serve in this community for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God. Membership also means committing to being discipled and discipling others in this faith community. Finally, membership is an opportunity to partner with our church leadership and other members in the ongoing work of discerning what comes next. By extending membership, we are inviting you to be a part of our story as we serve our community and endeavour to demonstrate what it can look like for a group of people to live out intentional unity in Jesus.

Are there requirements for Membership?

As the visible expression of the Body of Christ in our community, it is important that we are all pulling in the same direction. ABAC exists to advance the kingdom of God, and because of that, members must be committed followers of Jesus who have made a public declaration of faith by being baptised. In conjunction with our vision, members must be committed to growing in knowledge and faith as well as serving others in love. Members must be committed to unity in the body for the sake of authentic witness to the people around us. Members should also be committed to supporting and promoting the vision and ministry of ABAC. A big question for many that is connected to supporting the church is, "Do I need to make a financial commitment?" The answer is no, there is not an obligation to give a certain amount as a member. That being said, you are encouraged to discern how you can best support the ministry of the church as a member.

How do I become a Member at ABAC?

It would be our pleasure to welcome you into membership! Here's how to make it happen.

- Contact a member of the church staff or the Elders Board. We'll give you some additional information on membership and our church.
- A pastor and two members of the Board will arrange to sit down with you for a brief meeting. We'll ask you about your experience with Jesus so far and why you'd like to be a member of our church. There will also be time for you to ask questions.
- If you have been a member in another congregation, you can let us know so that your membership can be transferred over. If you have not been an official member in another church, not to worry! You will be soon!
- Once we've dotted our i's and crossed our t's, we will officially welcome you into membership during a Sunday service. To do this, we simply show a picture of you on the screen and announce your membership to the congregation.

Basis for Membership - The longer version.

The idea of church membership may bring to mind things like clubs, fees, or requirements for maintaining affiliation. In some cases it may bring up feelings of anxiety or frustration from past experiences. There are also those who may wonder why attending a church does not automatically grant people member status. After all, as believers in Jesus, aren't we all members of the body of Christ? Where does the Bible talk about church membership anyway?

It is true that the universal church is composed of all believers through all ages. This is true of the local church as well, however there are functional elements involved with the local church that need to be taken into consideration. Membership is an important part of how we maintain accountability for our leadership and credibility for the sake of our witness as the local expression of Jesus' body in the community.

The local church is not simply a religious gathering; the Alberta Beach Alliance Church is classified as a branch society of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. This is a legal designation that is subject to the requirements of the Alberta Societies Act. All local churches of the C&MA operate according to a Local Church Constitution that is provided by our denomination. In it you can find our statement of faith and the rules by which we operate. This is necessary because churches are responsible for facilitating, handling and officiating important things like marriages, funerals, ordination of clergy and charitable donations. It is vitally important that local churches conduct their business in an orderly manner that is above reproach and in line with the requirements of the law. Membership is a critical component for local churches to operate and minister with integrity.

Membership is also how we maintain accountability for our leadership. Church members are empowered to offer feedback to the Board of Elders by asking questions, making motions and voting on decisions in official meetings. A well informed and active membership supports the vision of the church and offers accountability to church leadership.

Members also help to shape the ministry of the church by voting on our budget. If you look at the finances of a church, you should be able to tell where its heart is pointed and who it wants to reach. Members are invited to evaluate the church budget, make recommendations, and vote to either approve the budget or send it back for revision. The budget is also another level of accountability that demonstrates our commitment to remaining above reproach, making it another important part of our ministry.

Members also vote on changes to our local church bylaws. Outside of the local church constitution, our denomination has left a number of operational decisions up to the discretion of local congregations. Because of this, members have the privilege of helping to shape the culture of our church in our unique context for ministry.

Finally, members are committed to the church and one another. As stated above, it is our desire to offer a compelling vision of membership that goes beyond a vote at an annual meeting. We see it as a tangible next step in your discipleship journey that demonstrates your desire to contribute to the impact of our church in the community. We want to see you growing in your faith and helping others to grow. We want to see you supported as you are equipped and empowered to support others. We want to help you identify your gifts so that you can partner ever more intentionally with Jesus and his local body. Because of Jesus we are all about loving God and others. We invite you to partner with us to carry out this vision in our local community and around the world.