

Be part of it



CENTRAL

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A guide to help you love Edinburgh,
be family and follow Jesus as a member of Central



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Jesus is central

We want membership of Central to feel like being part of a family. Something we love belonging to, and a place that helps us to show Jesus in all aspects of our lives. We choose to follow Jesus, and being a member of his body – his family – is what flows out of what we believe about him.

Coming to Jesus

People come to Jesus in different ways and at different times in their lives, but the process for most people who come to faith moves from belonging to a faith community to believing in Jesus and then to behaving in the way he shows us. The speed at which this happens varies from person to person and it's not for us to judge where people are on this journey or to make them feel pressured into something they are not ready for. The Holy Spirit leads and convicts people in these things.

It's not about the rules

Membership isn't about following a rulebook – it's about living and believing in God's mission together as a family. Being part of this church family means you'll be challenged to submit your life – all of it – and allow God to change you. Anger, gossip, greed, sexual impurity, jealousy and many other things are all for God to change in us. There are no behavioural entry requirements for this church family. There is an abundance of grace for each one who loves Jesus, longs to know him better but falls short in the way they live their life. There's a challenge to live more like Jesus and we cheer one another on as God does that in us.

There are behavioural requirements for our leaders, who are custodians of the DNA for the family. These can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.

A decision, not a habit

Becoming a member isn't a one-time decision. We choose every day whether we will continue to follow Jesus, and we will review and recommit to our Central membership each year. We will reaffirm our core beliefs and our own key values, and promise to live these out in the year to come. What it means to be a member won't change. Involvement, decision-making and church meetings will still be important. We'll still regularly celebrate baptisms and welcome people baptised in different traditions of church.

Everyone gets involved

We believe that everyone has a role to fulfil.

We ask everyone to join one team; using their gifts and giving their time in one ministry area.

We believe in having effective leaders in place, who live with integrity and lead as Jesus did. We will continue to have leaders direct and encourage the church and staff team.

It's important to us that our leaders are effective at sharing about the things they give their time and attention to. As a church we trust them to know when issues should be brought to the church family for wider discussion.

We believe in the responsibility of the church family to be part of the decision-making. We do this through nominating and electing elders and supporting, trusting and praying for them. As a church we also take responsibility to be involved with certain strategic decisions at church meetings, as led by those we have elected.

Our beliefs

We believe there's only one God, who made and rules over everything, who is perfect, powerful, knows everything, has no beginning and will never end. God is in relationship with himself – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three persons, one God.

Father

The Father is love. God reveals himself in the bible as a gentle, forgiving Father, intimately involved with every detail of our lives. He's compassionate, holy, patient and just. He keeps his promises and answers our prayers. God made everyone in his image, and desires that everyone he made knows him.

Ephesians 3:14–15; Luke 11:11–13

Son

God has written himself into the story of world history as a man – Jesus. We see what God is like by seeing what Jesus did, what he said, and the way he related to other people. Jesus is the Son of God. He came to earth fully man and fully God, born of a virgin. He lived a life without sin and chose to die on the cross to deal with our sin. Jesus encouraged people

to follow him and called them his disciples. Jesus welcomed in the Kingdom of God as heaven on earth. He rose from the dead on the third day and ascended to heaven where he sits at the right hand of God. He'll return in power and on that day those who have believed him will be with God forever, and those who don't will be separated from him in hell.

John 1:1–18; Philipians 2:6–11

Spirit

The Spirit draws alongside us with direct communication from God's heart to ours. Because we're God's children, we can hear his voice to us. As we participate with the Holy Spirit's mission to heal, restore and redeem the broken parts of our lives and this world, he brings the very power and presence

of God into our lives. The Holy Spirit enables us to follow Jesus and represent him; sharing his heart with others in word and action.

*John 14:15–18; 26; Acts 2:1–4;
Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 12:1–11*

The Cross

God's world and people are broken. Sin is a reality that we grapple with every day. On the cross, Jesus died for sinners. In his dying and rising again, he freed us, defeating his enemy and ours, Satan, and making it possible for us to live in relationship with the Father again, forgiven for every sin.

Colossians 1:15–20; Ephesians 2:14–18

Jesus' Resurrection

When Jesus rose from the dead, the power of Christ triumphed over evil and now lives in us today. Because he's alive, we can all live in freedom and with power. Life in all its fullness is available to us.

1 Corinthians 15

The Bible

The Bible is the word of God. It tells the story of who God is and what he has done for us. We see how God has been faithful and powerful among his people through the generations. Our church is committed to making the story of Jesus – told throughout the whole bible – the starting point and guide for the way we live, the ultimate standard of truth. We want to teach, train, stretch

and challenge each other as we allow the story of God to live in us and spill out of us.

2 Timothy 3:16–17; Hebrews 4:12

His Kingdom

A kingdom is any place where the king is in charge. Jesus came declaring that the Kingdom of God is at hand; that God's power and influence was breaking into the world we live in. We see glimpses of the Kingdom around us – in ourselves, and in the people we meet. As disciples of Jesus today, we seek, embrace and build his Kingdom here.

*Mark 1:19; Matthew 6:33;
1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 1:6; 12:10*

The Church

Anyone who follows Jesus belongs to his Church. Local church exists as a foretaste of God's Kingdom here on earth. It is the community where we are formed and learn to follow Jesus together; strengthening our faith, and discovering the ways God has gifted us and called us. We gather in the presence of the Holy Spirit around the practices of prayer, worship and reading scripture, and we celebrate communion and baptism as activities gifted to us by Jesus Himself. The church does not exist solely for itself but to usher in the Kingdom of God on this earth and reflect God's image to all those who do not know Jesus yet.

*Acts 2:42–44, Romans 8:29,
1 Corinthians 12:12, Revelation 1:6*

Our Vision

Loving Edinburgh

Edinburgh is our home and we want to love and serve the people that live in and around this city. We believe that God's love can transform lives and communities and we want to see that happening in the places that we live. Our desire is to be a church of empowered disciples who live confident, Jesus-centred lives, bringing about God's transformation in the places we have been called to.

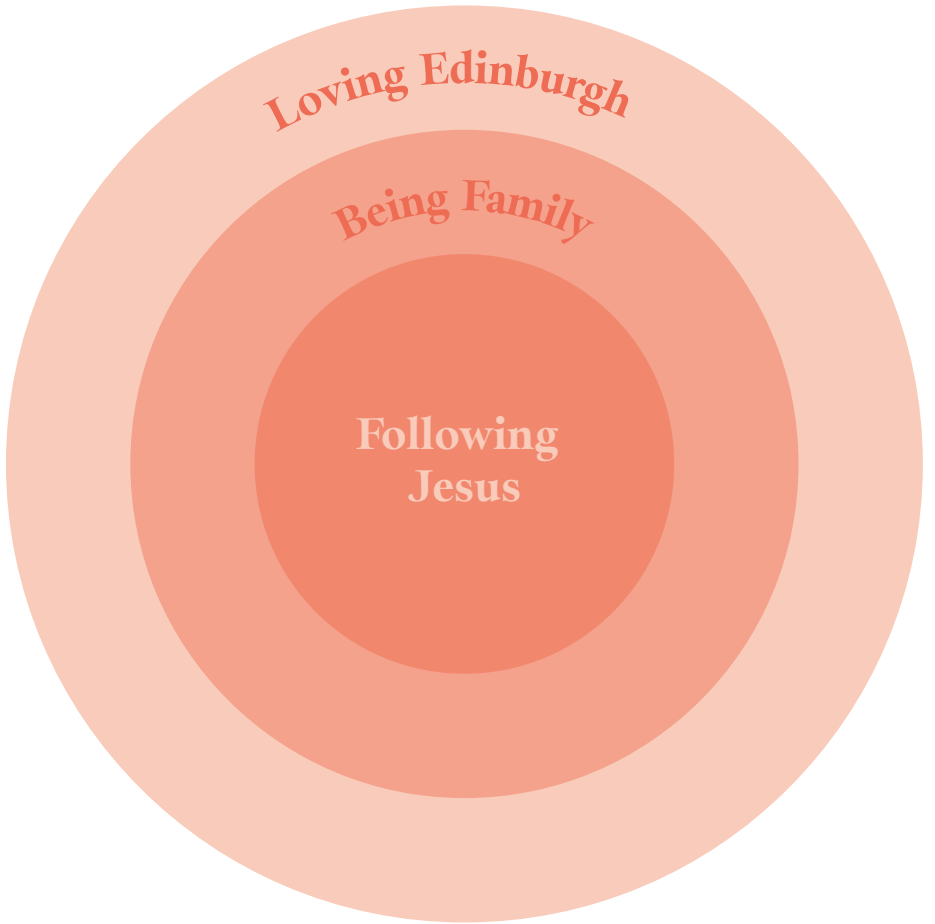
We want to plant churches. We long for each part of the city to have a church that loves and serves their locality, lives as family and follows Jesus together.

Being Family

We are family together – we are different kinds of people from different places who share our lives generously with each other. We choose to follow Jesus, and being a member of his body – his family – is what flows out of what we believe about him. We are loving Jesus and each other – we can't do one without the other.

Following Jesus

We are following Jesus. We call ourselves disciples because the most important thing in our lives is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do. We want to be formed in the ways and teachings of Jesus, and become more like him. We are missional disciples – people who love Jesus, live for Jesus, and show and help others to do the same.



Loving Edinburgh

Being Family

**Following
Jesus**

Our commitment

We'd love for you to call this your church. Each year we stand together to make these promises to God as disciples at Central. We won't always get it right, however as followers of Jesus these are the promises we make as far as we are able by the power of the Holy Spirit within us;

1

To love and follow Jesus, placing him at the heart of my life. The Holy Spirit is making me more like Jesus and I want to be open to everything he wants to do and change in me.

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Philippians 3:8

2

To be a disciple who makes disciples.

God wants to continue to teach me, show me new things, bless and challenge my life. Often this is through other people, and so I will commit to a Community where I can be discipled and in turn disciple others, making my life open to them.

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2

3

To invest in relationships with people who don't know Jesus

and to take every opportunity to show, be and speak Jesus wherever I am. Mission is the calling of the Church and each disciple, starting with me.

Then Jesus said, 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'

Matthew 28: 18–19

4

To seek first God's Kingdom.

I belong to a different Kingdom from the world around me, one unseen not seen, where forgiveness reigns and the love and power of God is known. I expect to see His Kingdom come in signs and wonders. I will abide and rest in Him rather than strive to see change come from my own efforts. I will live out of my authority as a child of the King and not be ashamed of my weakness.

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

Matthew 13:31–32

Our commitment

5

To get involved in the life of this church family,

I am part of the body of Christ and have been given gifts which my church family needs me to discover and use. Where possible I will be part of one Community, serve regularly on one team and regularly attend one Sunday gathering.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2: 42–47

6

To be open handed with everything God has given to me.

Generosity will mark my life. God can be trusted to provide for me and so I am free to give to my church family and to others in need without fear.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

7

To support those in leadership

within our church family. I will take every opportunity to encourage, pray and support the leadership in all they do, and commit to asking questions and bringing accountability with grace and kindness.

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Hebrews 13:17

8

For women and men called to leadership,

we will endeavour to live out the teaching of Jesus in all areas of our lives while we lead. The leadership will commit to developing godly character, discerning God's heart for the church; praying, listening to the wider church community, and being accountable.

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.

1 Timothy 3:1-4

For women and men called to leadership (an appendix)

As a leader at Central you are committing to live out the teaching of Jesus in all areas of your life while you lead. This includes developing godly character, discerning God's heart for the church; praying, listening to the wider church community, and being accountable.

Developing godly character

Following Jesus Christ demands a distinctive lifestyle that impacts upon attitudes to money, possessions, time, work, leisure, social action and relationships. The lifestyle we affirm is based on the teaching of the Bible and commends the Christian faith. We should develop integrity, generosity, humility and holiness and avoid falsehood, theft, anger, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed (Ephesians 4:17–5:21; Colossians 3:5). In our present culture we feel the need to emphasise that leaders display distinctiveness in the area of sexual purity, avoiding even a 'hint of sexual immorality.' (Ephesians 5:3).

Discernment

Discerning God's heart for the church through spending time with Jesus by reading his word, praying and listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Developing an active prayer life both individually and in community by praying for individuals, the wider church community, the city, our nation and the wider world.

Listening

As leaders, we do not lead alone but lead in community, and so we strive to listen to the wider body as this relates to the direction and vision of the church.

Accountability

Although we strive to do what is right and what is in the best interests of Central, we understand the need for accountability so that we can learn from others, and take responsibility for what we have been called to lead with sufficient support around us. This is most often done through Huddles.



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