

The Open Icon Church Covenant

for the year to the Church Anniversary, 18th June 2027

Your Name:

Called together by God as the body of Christ and as a sign of his coming kingdom, by the power of the Holy Spirit we commit ourselves to love one another and to follow Jesus in a shared life of faithful commitment to God's call.

We are called into **COMMUNION** with God and with one another:

- to share each week in our celebration of the Lord's Word and Table;
- to share in prayer together during the week;
- to gather regularly (physically and/or online) to eat, play, work, sing, pray, and talk together; and
- to offer to God the worship of us all.

We are called to **OFFER OURSELVES** to God and one another:

- to welcome and honour all who would journey with us;
- to seek reconciliation across anything that divides us;
- to contribute our share of the work and financing of our life, prayer and ministry; and
- to work together in discerning God's call to us in this time of uncertainty and change, and in bringing to life the emerging vision.

We are called to attend to the **VOICE** of God:

- in scripture reading and prayerful silence;
- in creation and human creativity;
- in the stranger, the outcast, the broken, and the little ones; and
- in one another.

We are called to **EAT AND DRINK** as a sign of the hospitality of God's reign:

- to share with others over drinks or meals (when it is safe to do so); and
- to consume responsibly and give generously.

We are called to **NON-CONFORMITY** with the ways of the world:

- to resist all greed, selfishness, infidelity, violence, and exploitation;
- to resist the impulse to abandon generous care for others and succumb to fear and selfishness in times of crisis;
- to allow God's ways to shape our ways; and
- to confess that we are entangled in sin, and need help to break free.

We are called to be **AMBASSADORS** for Christ, sent into the world he loves:

- to live like Jesus, loving our enemies, healing the broken, feeding the hungry, standing up for the oppressed, welcoming the outcast, and proclaiming the new culture of God;
- to represent and promote Jesus's values of life, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, and sustainable stewardship in the places where we live, work and play; and
- to allow God to call and send us into new areas of mission and ministry.

We are called to **NURTURE** faith and growth in ourselves and others:

- to look for and nourish the seeds of love and grace;
- to cultivate the practices of Jesus-centred spirituality and discipleship;
- to feed the voice of hope, yet listen to the voice of despair; and
- to surrender ourselves to God, trusting God to hold us when we cannot hold ourselves.

We are called to live **THANKFULLY**:

- to cultivate a heart of gratitude, looking for the blessings in all things; and
- to take every opportunity to be or bring a blessing to others.

Thus called, we enter this covenant, gratefully acknowledging that it is only by the grace of God that we can do anything.

The Open Icon Church Covenant

for the year to the Church Anniversary, 18th June 2027

Your Name:

Called together by God as the body of Christ and as a sign of his coming kingdom, by the power of the Holy Spirit we commit ourselves to love one another and to follow Jesus in a shared life of faithful commitment to God's call, as the *Open Icon Baptist Church*.

My summary of my own sense of call to be part of Open Icon Baptist Church (e.g. what draws me to this church, why it matters to me, why I want to commit myself to it)

We are called into **COMMUNION** with God and with one another:

- to share each week in our celebration of the Lord's Word and Table;
- to share in prayer together during the week;
- to gather regularly (physically and/or online) to eat, play, work, sing, pray, and talk together; and
- to offer to God the worship of us all.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- This section is primarily about our main gatherings for worship and prayer. The year usually contains 50 gatherings on Sundays and 9 that fall on other days (Christmas Eve, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Paschal Vigil, Ascension, Transfiguration, All Saints Day). You might wish to set yourself a goal of attending at least a particular percentage of these. Think about making your goal high enough to challenge you, but not so high as to be unrealistic.
- There are also currently shorter gatherings online for daily prayer 18 times a week. Again, think about making your goal high enough to challenge you, but not so high as to be unrealistic.
- If there is another activity that you often find yourself choosing in preference to worship, think about whether you could set yourself a goal of prioritising worship more often. Be specific.
- You might wish to set a goal of attending our Advent and Lenten Retreat days.
- You could also include here any commitment you are making to other regular or semi-regular gatherings with Open Icon people for prayer or meditation, e.g. the meditation sessions in the chapel or a prayer partnership or group.
- Could you visit another church(es) with some other Open Icon people, and gather afterwards (perhaps over lunch) to reflect on the experience and discuss what we could learn from this church?

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some personal goals that are related to worship and prayer, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

We are called to **OFFER OURSELVES** to God and one another:

- to welcome and honour all who would journey with us;
- to seek reconciliation across anything that divides us;
- to contribute our share of the work and financing of our life, prayer and ministry; and
- to work together in discerning God's call to us in this time of uncertainty and change, and in bringing to life the emerging vision.

<i>How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year</i>	<i>Suggestions and Examples</i>
<i>Relationships, inclusion, reconciliation, care</i>	• Are there particular people at Open Icon who you need to change the way you relate to? • Could you make a goal of swapping contact details with newcomers and then contacting them during the week? • Could you make a goal to regularly (perhaps fortnightly?) contact at least one Open Icon person who might be needing a little extra care, support or encouragement at present or who you don't yet know very well yet (phone, text, visit, meet for coffee, or something)?
<i>Participation in Governance</i>	• Can you make a goal of attending the AGM and congregational discernment forums? • Could you aim to attend one or more Host Meetings this year? • Could you join the Host Group and participate in their meetings each month?
<i>Contribution to the Work</i>	• Could you host a small gathering to participate in the Sunday worship together? • Could you organise some small gatherings to bring people together socially, or for learning or action? • Could you learn to host online prayer liturgies. • Could you aim to attend working bees? • Do you have practical or administrative skills that you could use in service of the church?
<i>Contribution to the Finances</i>	For a guide to thinking about this, visit http://southyarrabaptist.church/members-guide/money/ It is not compulsory to show a dollar figure here (though you may). You could instead express a commitment to giving at the rate determined by the online calculator, or to giving a certain percentage of your total income.
<i>What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.</i>	
<i>Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some personal goals that are related to self-offering, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.</i>	

We are called to attend to the **VOICE** of God:

- in scripture reading and prayerful silence;
- in creation and human creativity;
- in the stranger, the outcast, the broken, and the little ones; and
- in one another.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- We have been encouraging the holding of one-off Story Sharing Gatherings focussed on one person sharing some stories/ reflections on any aspect of their own faith and discipleship or what it means for them to be a follower of Jesus in their daily life. Guidelines and resources are available. Could you commit to hosting one, and make a goal to attend a number of others?
- Could you and a few other Open Icon regulars commit to meeting together regularly for Bible study and prayer?
- Could you and some other church people organise an outing to enjoy a natural environment or an artistic/cultural experience?
- Who are the people at Open Icon who are least like you? Could you make a goal of sometimes choosing to spend time with them and inviting them to tell you something of how they see and experience the world?

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some personal goals that are related to spiritual attentiveness, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

We are called to **EAT AND DRINK** as a sign of the hospitality of God's reign:

- to share with others over drinks or meals (when it is safe to do so); and
- to consume responsibly and give generously.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- Could you issue and open invite for a few people to gather at your place on a Sunday to participate in worship together and share a meal together afterwards? Or just accept a few such invites from others?
- Are you someone who loves holding dinner parties or going out to restaurants with friends? Could you make a goal of gathering a different group of Open Icon people around a meal a certain number of times this year?
- Or could you make a goal to regularly (perhaps monthly?) gather over a meal or a drink with at least one Open Icon person who might be needing a little extra care or who you don't yet know very well yet?
- Could you team up with some other Open Icon regulars to volunteer in one of the local food parcel ministries?

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some personal goals that are related to hospitable and responsible consumption, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

We are called to **NON-CONFORMITY** with the ways of the world:

- to resist all greed, selfishness, infidelity, violence, and exploitation;
- to resist the impulse to abandon generous care for others and succumb to fear and selfishness in times of crisis;
- to allow God's ways to shape our ways; and
- to confess that we are entangled in sin, and need help to break free.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- Could you team up with some other Open Icon people to participate as volunteers in one or more events of social service, social outreach, protest, or social justice activism?
- Could you invite a group of other Open Icon people to read a relevant book together and then gather to discuss its ideas and how you might be able to respond to them in practice in your lives?
- Are there one or two other Open Icon people who you could meet with semi-regularly to talk honestly about your respective challenges in aligning your mindset and lifestyle with the culture of God, and to encourage and pray for one another?

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some goals that are related to personal transformation, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

We are called to be **AMBASSADORS** for Christ, sent into the world he loves:

- to live like Jesus, loving our enemies, healing the broken, feeding the hungry, standing up for the oppressed, welcoming the outcast, and proclaiming the new culture of God;
- to represent and promote Jesus's values of life, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, and sustainable stewardship in the places where we live, work and play; and
- to allow God to call and send us into new areas of mission and ministry.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- Could you team up with some other Open Icon people to participate as volunteers in one or more events of social service, social outreach, protest, or social justice activism?
- Are there some other Open Icon people with whom you share a concern and passion to respond to a particular need in our world, and could you organise together to take appropriate action?
- Is there some way that Open Icon could better represent and promote Jesus's values for which you could take some leadership?

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some personal goals that are related to representing the culture of God in the world, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

We are called to **NURTURE** faith and growth in ourselves and others:

- to look for and nourish the seeds of love and grace;
- to cultivate the practices of Jesus-centred spirituality and discipleship;
- to feed the voice of hope, yet listen to the voice of despair; and
- to surrender ourselves to God, trusting God to hold us when we cannot hold ourselves.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- Could you team up with some other Open Icon people to participate in a retreat, workshop or course promoting healthy spiritual understandings and practices?
- Could you invite a group of other Open Icon people to read a relevant book together and then gather to discuss its ideas and how you might be able to respond to them in practice in your lives?
- Are there particular spiritual practices that you'd like us to explore more at Open Icon, e.g. walking the labyrinth, or fasting? Is there something you could do to help get this underway?
- Are there one or two other Open Icon people who you could meet with semi-regularly for some sharing and mutual accountability around spiritual disciplines, and to encourage and pray for one another?

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some goals that are related to nurturing personal faith and growth, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

We are called to live **THANKFULLY**:

- to cultivate a heart of gratitude, looking for the blessings in all things; and
- to take every opportunity to be or bring a blessing to others.

How I intend to contribute to our shared living out of this call this year

Suggestions and Examples

- Could you make a goal to regularly (perhaps fortnightly?) contact at least one Open Icon person to thank them for something good you have noticed about who they are or how they contribute to our church or our world?
- Are there one or two other Open Icon people with whom you could meet once a year (or more) to reflect together on the things that have been most beneficial for you in our congregational life, prayer and ministry? You might also use such a gathering(s) to reflect on how the covenant has helped you, and/or to work encouragingly together on ideas for the content of your respective covenants for the next year.

What am I hoping for? (Optional) You may wish to list some consequences that you hope to see emerge from this area of our shared life, or some ways that you are hoping the church can help and support you in this area.

Individual Practices (Optional) For your own benefit, you may wish to list some personal goals that are related to gratitude and blessing others, but which are not part of the shared life of our church.

Thus called, we enter this covenant, gratefully acknowledging that it is only by the grace of God that we can do anything.