

Springwood Presbyterian Churches

FAITH
HOPE
LOVE





About our churches

Springwood Presbyterian Churches is a growing community of four church families who gather at our Springwood and Winmalee sites. We are committed to the kingdom of Jesus Christ and demonstrating through word and action how the Lordship of Jesus reaches into every sphere of life. We are passionate about seeing the gospel proclaimed in its full height, breadth and depth.

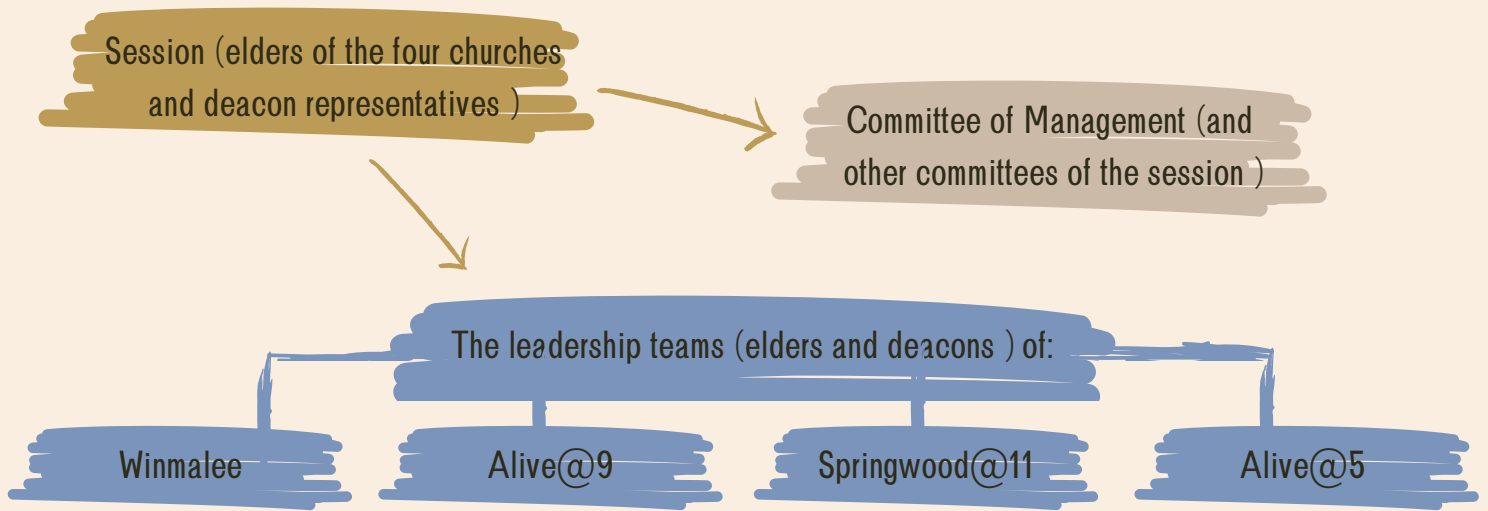
We believe that the scriptures speak into our world today and into the complexity of modern life. We believe that God speaks through His word and by His Spirit to form us and invite us into participating in His kingdom work. We believe that the world is broken and marred by sin. We believe that we need a saviour who will wash us clean and give us new hearts to live for God. We believe that saviour is Jesus.

Nestled in the heart of the Springwood Village, our church is in a great location to be a presence in the community. We have a passion for reaching out to our community and welcoming people in. Our ministries of Open Church, Playtime and Under the Cedar play a significant role in our connections with community.

We operate under the model of leadership teams, where each of our four churches is cared for by their own team of elders and deacons. We have a Session comprised of elders and deacon representatives who oversee matters impacting the whole group of churches. We believe it is imperative that the church be building up the body of Christ in their God-given gifts and looking to empower men and women to take opportunities to learn and grow and enact their gifts for the glory of God.

In our churches, we are committed to seeing gifts being used and developed for the building up of the body of Christ. At our churches, women preach and participate in leadership.

How our churches are structured



What We Believe

There is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father made all things through the Son, sent the Son for our salvation, and unites us to himself through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully human, and is the perfect revelation of the Father and the perfect representative of humanity. He suffered and died on the cross for all human sin, was raised bodily on the third day, and ascended to heaven. Standing in for humanity before the Father, Jesus Christ provides the perfect human response to God.

The Holy Spirit brings sinners to repentance and faith, assures believers of their forgiveness and acceptance as God's dearly loved children, and works in them to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ. Through the work of the Spirit, we are united to Jesus and become children of God.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God that testifies to Jesus Christ. It reveals to us what God is like so that we can know him. It reveals to us what we are like, so we can know ourselves. And it reveals to us God's unfolding plans in Jesus, so that we can have hope and joy. Salvation comes only by God's grace and not by works, and it is experienced through faith in Jesus Christ.

We believe that God is at work in the life of his church, drawing together a people who are invited to participate in the kingdom of Jesus. The church is both beautiful and messy as we wrestle with the tension of sin and sanctification. Gathering together with God's people teaches us how to navigate relationships and life in accordance with God's wisdom and ways.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.

Questions and Answers

How are our church families related to each other?

The word "church" is used in multiple ways throughout scripture. It can refer to local gatherings, yet is also used to refer to the people of God who gather in a town or a city. Indeed, the whole gathering of God's family worldwide is also called the "church." Thus, whilst each of our church families are independently overseen by leadership teams and express their gathered life in different ways, we belong to a kingdom that is bigger than ourselves. We partner together in various ministries and share staffing, property and a budget. We meet together for combined gatherings. We pray for each other and with each other.

What does the Session do?

The Session is made up of the elders from each of the churches and a female deacon representative from each of the leadership teams. It meets at least four times a year on the fifth Thursday evenings of a particular month, and at other times when necessary. The Session has oversight of the whole group of churches and prayerfully discusses ministries, strategies and issues that impact all the churches. In the Code Book of the Presbyterian Church of NSW there is a lot more information about the role and responsibility of the Session. You can download the Code Book from <http://pcnsw.org.au/index.php/code-administration-forms/the-code-and-policies>

What do each of the Leadership teams do?

A leadership team is made up of elders and deacons from that particular church family. The church leadership teams meet monthly, and more often when necessary to prayerfully oversee the life of the church community of which they are part. Leadership teams are particularly responsible for overseeing pastoral care, worship gatherings, and their church's ministries.

What is the Committee of Management?

Managers are elected each year to form the Committee of Management (COM) which has responsibility to support and equip the ministries of the churches through the allocation of finances and resources. The COM meets monthly, and at other times when necessary. The Treasurer attends COM meetings and presents financial reports there. COM meetings are not closed meetings. Other members of the churches are welcome to sit in on these meetings if they would like to do so.





Questions and Answers continued...

What is an elder?

An elder is an overseer of the church community to which they belong. Sometimes elders are described as shepherds who have a role in caring for, guiding and teaching those in their care. In the Presbyterian system, elders are elected for life. In the Code Book of the Presbyterian Church of NSW there is a lot more information about the role and responsibility of elders.

What is a deacon?

Deacon is a term which, in the literature of the Bible, means “servant”. Deacons, like elders, are leaders, but they don’t have oversight of the entire church. Instead, they are focused on serving and leading their particular church family, often in specific ministry areas. In our churches, deacons are elected for a three-year term.

How does a person become a member of one of the churches?

A member is a person who has made a formal and public commitment to love and serve their church family. Before becoming a member, people meet with the minister and/or an elder to express their commitment to Jesus and to learn more about our churches. If people decide to become members, they make the following two promises at one of the church meetings: Do you confess your faith, love and hope in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Do you promise, in dependence on grace, to serve God as a member of this church, supporting the church in whatever ways are possible and growing as a disciple of Jesus?

Why should I become a member?

In this era, lots of people see church as secondary or unimportant in terms of their discipleship. But we believe that commitment to a church community is important. Becoming a member makes that commitment quite explicit. In becoming a member, a person is saying to the church, “I want to grow as a disciple of Jesus within this community, and I want to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus too”. A person needs to be a member before they can be invited to become an elder, deacon, or manager. Also, one important task of members is to vote when a new minister is being called to the churches.

Questions and Answers continued...

Which people make up the staff of the churches?

There are lots of volunteers who work in the ministries of the churches. We are very grateful for the large number of people who take care of various areas of work on behalf of the churches. We also have a number of staff who are paid from the budgeted income of the churches. Each staff member is also either an elder, deacon, or manager.

Currently, our paid staff members are

Luke Pereira: Minister, employed four days per week, in leadership with the Winmalee@9 church and with an oversight role of the four churches and staff

Rod Thompson: Assistant to the Minister, employed one day per week, in leadership with the Springwood@11 church

Debbie Creelman: Administrator, employed four days per week across the churches

Paul Karlik: Assistant to the Minister, employed three days per week, in leadership with the Alive@5 church

Richard & Judy Shumack: Assistants to the Minister, employed four days per week, in leadership with the Alive@9 church

What are some of the distinctives of Presbyterianism?

The word "Presbyterian" comes from the Greek word for "elders" and reflects a commitment that the leadership of the church is not in the hands of one person, rather a team of leaders. The Westminster Confession is an important document in the history of Presbyterianism. It was written in 1646 and is supported by other documents such as the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Convictions of the Presbyterian heritage include:

- God** - Triune, creator, sovereign, gracious, covenantal
- Grace** - Everything is a gift, creation as well as salvation, God takes the initiative, we live out of gratitude
- Bible** - Inspired, authoritative, trustworthy; bears witness to Jesus and the kingdom of God.
- Jesus** - The only way of salvation; God incarnate; Lord and Saviour
- Church** - body of Christ, leadership consists of elders and deacons, baptism of children of believers as well as believers



What is the Westminster Confession of Faith?

The Westminster Confession of Faith is an important document in the Presbyterian Church of Australia. When becoming an elder or deacon, one of the promises made is to “affirm that you hold to ‘the Westminster Confession of Faith, read in the light of the Declaratory Statement’ and that you will ‘assert, maintain, and defend’ that doctrinal position.” As such, this confession provides a basic summary of the theology and doctrine of what we believe scripture teaches. The Westminster Confession is not a perfect document. It was written in 1646 and was formulated as a response to the overreach of Government in religious matters. There are numerous modern challenges that the WCF does not address directly. The value of the WCF is that it provides clarity about what we believe and what we teach through a document that was rigorously wrestled with by a large group of Christians. The Confession is there to help us, but God is the one who rules us by his Word. For more information, see the document: “Doctrinal Foundations for Ministry: The Westminster Confession of Faith,” by John McClean.

What is the Presbytery?

A presbytery is a group of Presbyterian churches in a particular region. We are part of the Presbytery of Western Sydney. The Presbytery meets about eight times a year. Usually, the minister who has been called and appointed to the churches and an elder attend Presbytery meetings. The Presbytery has oversight of our churches. We report to the Presbytery and inform them of how the churches in Springwood and Winmalee are going on a regular basis.

How are staff paid?

The staff are paid from the giving of the church communities.

What other costs do the churches have to pay?

We have all the normal costs associated with the properties we utilise, office equipment, ministry costs etc. We also pay to be part of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW. The incomes and expenditures of the churches are outlined in the annual budget, which is discussed and then approved at the Combined Churches Meeting (CCM)in November each year. The audited accounts of the churches are received annually, usually at a meeting held in the following March/April.