

Canberra Baptist Church Profile - 2021

The following church profile has been prepared to represent a picture of the church, its ministry, life, ethos and values in 2021.

Vision and values

The church mission statement is 'Building a vibrant and open community which is responsive to God's love in Christ and committed to serving God and people'.

The church has three goals. Led by the Spirit, we will:

- explore together what it means to follow Jesus today,
- build an inclusive, caring community, and
- share God's love and justice in words and actions.

The church values the diversity represented in its community and seeks to accommodate the needs of everyone and their interests in its life and worship. It welcomes and affirms followers of Jesus regardless of background, gender or sexuality and invites them to participate fully in the life of the Church.

The church is ecumenical in outlook, stressing unity rather than uniformity. It operates within the Baptist tradition (particularly relating to freedom of conscience, congregational government, and the autonomy of the local church) and values its affiliation with the NSW and ACT Baptist Association but welcomes other Christian perspectives. It cooperates with other churches and organisations such as the ACT Churches Council and the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. It warmly embraces the necessity of reconciling with the indigenous people of Australia and actively seeks ways in which it may contribute. It has a strong social concern within its local community and at national and international levels.

The church community

The church community comprises about 250 adults and children, of whom 143 are formal members. The church has a strong core of members who have been active in the church for many years. The congregation lives across Canberra with a smaller number living in the immediate vicinity of the church buildings.

Worship

Since the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has shifted to one morning services each Sunday at 10:00 am, which is also delivered via Zoom. On one Sunday each month a parallel family church service for families with younger children is held in the church hall. The average number of participants in services over the last 12 months is 130, but this has varied between 97 and 164, with notable peaks when family church is held.

The style of worship is thoughtful and structured with preaching that is challenging both spiritually and intellectually, as well as seeking to equip people for life and ministry in the world. Music is a feature of worship and a variety of musical material is used including hymns from Baptist Praise and Worship and contemporary songs. The church is fortunate in having a capable and committed choir and instrumentalists to lead worship.

Youth, young families and young adults

About 18 families with children of high school age or younger are active in the church. Family church is the main activity aimed specifically at young families.

The youth ministry comprises social activities on a Friday night, camps and a regular study and discussion group. Members of the youth group are responsible for organising family church. The number of young people participating in activities varies between 12 and 18.

There are about 25 young adults in the church community and three small groups cater for this age group.

Currie Crescent Community Centre

The Currie Crescent Community Centre was established as a pilot program in 2014, and in 2015 the church decided to establish it as an ongoing ministry of the church. Its purpose is to:

- Be the vehicle for the church to initiate programs which serve the local community, particularly the needy
- Facilitate church community engagement
- Promote linkages between activities and help to establish and sustain those activities.

The Community Centre is based in the church buildings and hosts a wide range of activities. Some programs are run by the church or with heavy involvement from church members. These include Kingston Babies (parents' group), Kingston Kids (a playgroup), a free professional counselling service, yoga classes, and Cooking Circles (a group of people who come together once a month to prepare and eat a meal). Other programs are run by other organisations who hire space. These include music, dance, and scouting activities. Further details are at www.curriecrescent.org. Recently, Tara's Angels, a subsidiary of BaptistCare that provides post-crisis support for women who have experienced domestic violence, decided to move its offices to the Community Centre, partly because they saw an opportunity to connect their clients into a supportive community network.

The church established the Kingston Organic Community Garden on the church site and continues to be involved in its operation. The Garden provides residents of Kingston and surrounding areas, irrespective of their income, background, race or religion, with an opportunity to participate in organic gardening with their neighbours, thereby building community cohesion and understanding and raising awareness about health and nutrition, food production, waste management and environmental sustainability.

Other contacts with the community

People within the church are involved in a variety of mission and service opportunities both as part of the church and in a private capacity.

Since 2013, a very successful school holiday program, the SMAD camp, has been run in late January. SMAD stands for Sports, Music, Art and Drama. It was the vision of two of our young people to create a fun environment where children can hear about and experience God's love. The camp was booked out within a week of registrations opening for 2015, and 138 children attended, which

included 119 children from the local community. It also provides a great opportunity for leadership development for our youth group, who assist with the program.

A significant outreach opportunity to bring the real message of Christmas to the community is the annual Carols in the Park event.

The church assists refugees and supports international aid and development through our Thank Offering and Christmas Offering.

Property

The church occupies around 2 hectares (nearly 5 acres) of prime real estate in the heart of Canberra. The land tenure is a perpetual church lands lease with the Baptist Union of Australia as trustee. The church complex includes the Church building, a hall, lounge, meeting rooms, offices and manse.

The property is well maintained and its facilities are well utilised by community groups and in this way is a local and wider resource. There is a large array of solar panels on the Waldock Hall and the feed in tariff from these panels is added to the Thank Offering funds.

The church manse is adjacent to the church on the same lease.

Finance

The church is in a sound financial position. In 2020-21 it had operating income of \$335,631 and expenditure of \$306,633. As of 30 June 2021, net cash reserves were \$498,954. The church has a history of meeting or exceeding its budgets most financial years and has operated with a surplus in four of the last five financial years.

Conclusion

Canberra Baptist church is a strong and well-established church that seeks to represent Christ and proclaim the gospel with all its contemporary relevance, offering new life in the risen Christ as the means of redemption and spiritual growth of the whole person. It endeavours to proclaim a message of hope and relevance to people in the 21st century.

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