

Who or what are Baptists?

What about Believer's Baptism ? And Church Membership ?

Belonging to EDBC

EDBC welcomes all those who have a personal Christian faith and commitment; and those who are exploring faith or "just looking" for God. We hope to help you discover that you belong in this family of faith. Christian faith is best lived as part of a **community** of believers. Reading the Old Testament shows that God called out a "Chosen People"- a "holy nation" who were set apart to show how God rescues and restores people to a living relationship with Him.

These people of faith (read Hebrews 11 for details!) not only lived according to the Ten Commandments, but were also living examples of the grace of God. Grace is *undeserved love and favour*. Their faith was lived in the real world; they made mistakes, they sometimes chose to sin, and they tried to serve God wholeheartedly. God's grace in their lives made the difference between being *religious* and being *holy*.

The New Testament introduces Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world. He was Lord of all, yet came to "seek and save the lost." He established a group of disciples, followers who were **learning from Jesus**. After the crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, God sent His Holy Spirit to fill the disciples with holy love and power. They were called and equipped to continue the work of Jesus. As the number of disciples grew rapidly, they formed churches. Each church was a **community of Christians** who existed to **share God's love with others**. EDBC is a church that tries to live in the same way as the New Testament church. We are people with a purpose- to live out Christianity in a way that makes a positive difference. We are a **community of Christians**, who go on **learning from Jesus**, and who are spending our lives **sharing God's love with others**.

History and links

East Dartmoor Baptist Church was founded by joining together Baptist congregations in Bovey Tracey, Moretonhampstead, and Lustleigh. Later on, Chudleigh became part of EDBC. They joined forces to give mutual support and encouragement, share a Minister and promote evangelism. Baptist churches in this area go back to 1658 in Bovey. The present church was constituted in 1773, and our Hind Street Chapel opened in 1824. We associate with other Baptists and with other Christian groups.

The Torbay District

16 Baptist churches in fellowship who work together to reach the communities of South Devon.

South West Baptist Association

Baptist churches in Devon, Dorset, Cornwall, & Somerset relating together to encourage Kingdom growth in SW England. It is the local expression of the Baptist Union.

Christians Together locally

We work in partnership with other Christian churches in the district, recognising there are differences and distinctives.

The Evangelical Alliance

We also belong to the Evangelical Alliance which unites evangelicals across Britain and provides a "national voice" in faith and politics.

The Baptist Union of Great Britain

Is 2000+ churches all covenanted together in a Union of Christians who share similar values, theology, and congregational patterns of church government. There is a central "resourcing" body, based at Didcot, offering support to Baptists in the UK.

BMS World Mission (The Baptist Missionary Society at work)

Baptists co-operate together in the world-wide effort of mission. This is aided by BMS World Mission, who help Baptist churches combine personnel and resources into an effective missionary force. The BMS is the oldest "modern" missionary society; it was started by William Carey in 1792. This began a new wave of world mission which is still rolling!

What about Baptism?

Baptism in the Bible was clearly for those who had a personal faith: who *believed in Christ* and *repented* from sin. The purpose of baptism is to publicly confess your personal faith & commitment to Christ, and to identify with Him and with His people (the Christian Church). Believer's Baptism is generally by immersion.

Baptism doesn't make you a believer, it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not "save" you, only faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring - it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

At EDBC, candidates for baptism are old enough to **believe** and **understand** the true meaning of baptism. (*Families are offered a service of thanksgiving and dedication of infants, but this is **not** baptism.*) It is a membership requirement in EDBC that members shall *normally* have been baptised as believers in the way Jesus demonstrated, but special circumstances may be recognised from time to time. Please talk to us about your own situation.

**Moving forward
in faith
TOGETHER**

Making decisions: Church Members are invited to come to a "Church Meeting" to seek God's guidance together. Baptists work in a covenant relationship, a "for-better-or-worse" agreement to work together for the glory of God.

EDBC appoints Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, who together make up the leadership team. They are servants who lead; others also carry leadership responsibilities. All are accountable to the Church Meeting. Membership carries real privileges as well as important responsibilities.

You can't have one without the other! As a member, you can help shape the future of this church.

**Belonging Together
in Christ**

What to do now

If you are a Christian who has not yet been baptised as a believer, and you wish to publicly testify to your faith through **Believer's Baptism**, please speak to a Minister, an elder or deacon.

(If you are unsure who these people are, just ask one of the other worshippers to point them out to you.)

We will arrange for you to come to a course where believer's baptism and belonging to the church are explored.

Christians (*including those who have already been baptised*) who wish to become **church members** are invited to speak to a Minister, an elder or deacon. They will be able to explain the process to you, and explain more about what being a member means in practice. Enquirers are given a "Belonging to EDBC" form and a copy of the church rules, and you will be able to meet with two members to share your story of faith and ask anything you want to about the church.

Contact

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East Dartmoor Baptist Church

*Affiliated to the South West Baptist Association,
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and the Evangelical Alliance*