



# The Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches of Australia

## A CHURCH FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY"

The Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches is an inclusive, Evangelical and Spirit-filled expression of the Episcopal Church which seeks to meet the needs of unchurched and churched people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We agree on the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's completed work and the sufficiency of the Scriptures as the basis for our corporate life and worship. We affirm the essentials of the faith as revealed in the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed and the 39 Articles of Faith. We encourage flexibility in liturgy to allow for differing social and cultural requirements.

The only requirement for membership in the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches is affirmation of The Doctrinal Essentials. In the Doctrinal Essentials we affirm decision-making based on Scripture, tradition and Godly wisdom. The Word of God, Incarnate and written, provides the foundation for the following doctrines which we affirm along with the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds:

- Salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's unmerited favour and graciousness;
- The Christian's mission is to follow the Great Commandment (Mark 12:29-31) and to fulfil the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20);
- Jesus Christ is the only Way to salvation, the only Truth and the only Life on whom people may put their trust and obtain eternal life. Only those who receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord become children of God. As His children we are called to renounce any and all beliefs and activities which teach doctrines contrary to the Word of God;
- The primary mission of the Church is to reach unbelievers and the unchurched, introduce them to a personal and life-changing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and provide the contexts necessary to strengthen the faith and walk of children, young people and adults;
- The Christian life is marked by the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. Self-control includes fidelity in marriage, abstinence from any homosexual activity and continence outside the bonds of marriage;
- God has entrusted to us the stewardship of creation and the protection and validation of the sanctity of all forms of human life, from conception to the grave;
- Corporate worship is characterized by Holy Spirit led, decent and orderly liturgy which reflects a balance between verbal proclamation of the Word and visual demonstration through the Sacraments, including Baptism and Communion.

## CONGREGATIONAL STRUCTURE

The structure of the local church is based on the customs and needs of the local congregation, including the terms used to describe positions of service in the church. Each member congregation, regardless of size, shall be autonomous and self-supporting. Diocesan/Regional lines of oversight may be geographic, affinity or mission derived.

**The Ministers of the Church** are all the faithful members who serve in the areas in which they have been gifted and empowered by the Lord. The objectives of ministry are reconciling people to God the Father, through the finished work of the Lord Jesus and teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded in His Name.

**Lay Leaders** are those who have demonstrated a willingness and ability to disciple others and whose lives are wholesome examples to those they serve.

**Lay Pastors/Elders** are experienced Lay Leaders who train and develop the Lay Leadership of the congregation and are appointed and supervised by the clergy.

**The Deacon/Assistant Pastor** assists the Senior Pastor in the development of leadership teams designed to expand the ministry of evangelism and outreach in the community. Assistant Pastors, though clergy, are encouraged to be bi-vocational, so that support of those with dire needs can take precedence over clerical salaries.

**The Rector/Senior Pastor** primary role is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The Senior Pastor has the primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Word of God, leading worship and administering the Sacraments. Senior Pastors are encouraged to be bi-vocational and are under the spiritual direction and supervision of his/her Bishop.

**Bishops** guard the biblical faith, evangelistic mission and unity of the Church. The Bishop oversees the ministry of the church and equips, encourages and facilitates church growth and church planting. Apostolic gifts, vision and ministry team development are the primary requirements of the position of Bishop.

## THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNION OF EVANGELICAL EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

The primary mission of the Church is the expansion of the Kingdom of God. The people, clergy, and bishops of the church are responsible for recruiting, training, and appointing Spirit-filled, faithful leaders to serve in the expansion of the Church. We seek to affirm faithful expressions of Christianity around the world. Membership in the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches is based on willing affirmation of The Doctrinal Essentials by individuals and congregations who share the vision to faithfully evangelize the lost, lonely and broken-hearted of this world.

The stewardship of our ministry gifts includes affirming and training those from our congregations who are uniquely gifted for ministry. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, who anoints men and women for service in His Church. The Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches endeavours to facilitate rather than restrict gifted people in Gospel service.

## THE CORE VALUES OF THE COMMUNION OF EVANGELICAL EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

### Church Planting

Fulfilling the Great Commission by extending the borders of the Kingdom of God, in various places, through planting new churches.

### Life Groups

Caring for people in small groups so that the needs of each person are met in a relevant and effective manner in an atmosphere of love and acceptance.

### **Biblical Preaching/Teaching**

Upholding the truth of God's Word, revealing His plans and purposes for our lives and ministries.

### **Relevant Worship**

Touching the heart of God and listening to His voice as we celebrate His presence with the people of this Evangelical, Spirit-filled and Sacramental worshipping community.

### **Lay Ministry Mobilization**

Faithfully serving the Lord with our spiritual gifts, sharing our time, talents and treasures. Equipping each person to be disciples who are making disciples who follow the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Personal Holiness**

Growing in our relationship with Jesus through confession of sin, prayer, a personal devotional life, and mutual accountability with other Christians.

### **Discipline & Restoration**

Honouring, respecting, and applying Biblical boundaries concerning authority and accountability in relationships which provide an atmosphere of safety, freedom, and mutual trust.

### **Compassion Ministries**

Responding to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of people through direct involvement and referral to professional support agencies.

### **Seeker Sensitivity**

Great care and concern for the unchurched, the youth and the children are considered in the planning and implementation of programs and services. Our desire is to remove roadblocks to knowing and maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus.

### **Evangelism/Outreach**

Extending Biblical faith, hope and love through the verbal proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people within our sphere of influence, and supporting those who have specialized ministries of evangelistic service and compassion.

### **Rest & Recreation**

Time for reflection, refreshment, and recreation is an integral part of our enjoyment of God and His creation. Our spiritual, emotional and physical health are important aspects of the stewardship of our hearts - the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### **Intercessory Prayer**

Engaging in prayer support for healing, deliverance, and restoration for individuals, families, and communities in need.

### **Tithing**

Commitment to the Biblical standard of 10% of our increase. Offerings and alms above the tithe are encouraged to meet the evangelism and compassion needs of those in dire financial situations.