

What is the electoral roll?

The electoral roll is a list of people who elect Parochial Church Council members and Church Wardens at our Annual Church Parochial Church Meeting. Every Church of England church is required to have one. The electoral roll is the closest thing we have to a membership list.

Why join the electoral roll?

The Bible doesn't tell us to, so we don't have to join it. But, it could be helpful...

- **...for us.** Committing publically may help us stay committed to Jesus and the church.
- **...for the church.** Joining helps others know we're committed to Jesus and one another.
- **...for the pastors.** It helps them know who (under Jesus) they're caring for (Hebrews 13:17).

What commitments does joining require?

Hebrews 10:19-25 identifies Christian commitments reflected in the electoral roll form.

1. A commitment to God: 'let us draw near to God' (v22)

Section 1 says: 'I am baptised'. Baptism doesn't make someone a Christian, but is a public sign of someone's relationship with God (Romans 6:3-5, Acts 2:38, 8:12) and membership in Christ's church. Questions and answers in the Church of England baptism service explain this commitment:¹

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?	I reject them.
Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?	I renounce them.
Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?	I repent of them.
Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?	I turn to Christ.
Do you submit to Christ as Lord?	I submit to Christ.
Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?	I come to Christ.

2. A commitment to truth: 'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess' (v23)

Box 2C requires belief in 'the doctrine of the Holy Trinity'. This means a person is committed to believing what the Bible teaches about God: that there is one God who exists as three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The ancient Apostles' Creed summarises some important truths about God from the Bible:

I believe in God, the Father almighty , creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord , who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit , the holy catholic [or 'universal'] Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

¹ This liturgy and the Apostles' Creed taken from, Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/christian-initiation/baptism-and-confirmation>

3. A commitment to church: 'let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together,' (vv24-25)

Box 2B says: 'I have habitually attended public worship' for six months. Is it our long-term habit to gather with the church each week? Of course church membership isn't only about Sundays. In 1954 (church membership isn't a new idea!) the Church of England produced a Bible-based guide:

A Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership²

All baptized and confirmed members of the Church must play their full part in its life and witness. That you may fulfil this duty we call upon you:

- To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life, and to bear personal witness to Him.
- To be regular in private prayer day by day.
- To read the Bible carefully.
- To come to Church every Sunday.
- To receive the Holy Communion faithfully and regularly.
- To give personal service to Church, neighbours, and community.
- To give money for the work of parish and diocese and for the work of the Church at home and overseas.
- To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to His Church.
- To care that children are brought up to love and serve the Lord.

Being in a home group can be a great help too!

Can I join if I don't have a Church of England background?

Yes, that's fine! Here at All Saints' we ultimately unite around Jesus Christ and His word, not a denominational banner. If you're concerned about declaring yourself to be 'a member of the Church of England' please do come and have a chat with a church leader.

When filling in the form I tick EITHER 2A, 2B, or 2C. BUT only box 2C requires me to make all three 'commitments'. What if I tick 2A or 2B?

It seems natural to read the boxes as making assumptions.³ So, if you're a resident of the parish who wants to join the roll (tick box 2A), we would hope that you're committed to gathering with the church family and to the Bible's truth about God. Similarly if you don't live in the parish but have been habitually attending for six months (tick box 2B) we hope you're also committed to the Bible's truth about God. Another way of thinking about it is that everyone has to be 'baptised' (see section 1). In a sense this represents a public commitment to God, the Bible's truth and the church family.

What's the bottom line?

If you're not sure about anything in this guide or on the form, please do come and speak to one of the church leadership team before completing it. It's a serious commitment, so it would be great to talk to you about your questions first.

The electoral roll form is essentially asking if you're committed to Jesus Christ, His truth, and His family – specifically this part of it: All Saints' Loose. If you are that's great! We're due to be sharing more of our church vision soon. We would love you to join us in **'going for growth in Christ'**.

Bible verses taken from *New International Version*.

² Taken from John Stott, *Your Confirmation*, (Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), p.117

³ Ian Paul argues this carefully here: <https://www.psephizo.com/life-ministry/does-the-church-of-england-have-members/>