



SOUTH BARWON

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

South Barwon Christian Reformed Church Profile

South Barwon is a growing church in Geelong (Australia), with a lot of strategic potential. Geelong is an expanding city with new suburbs opening up and a variety of people and cultures moving in. We are a church filled with mature and maturing believers - young and old with established leadership pathways which are bearing fruit. We have under-utilised outreach opportunities and have just begun running regular outreach services. South Barwon CRC has a strong ministry team approach including volunteer ministry leaders, two to three interns per year, an employed youth worker and an administration worker.

South Barwon is currently a church of approximately 180 people, with average weekly attendance of about 110, including children. We are blessed to have people of all ages with many families with younger kids and teenagers, and have had a number of new people and families join the church in the last 12 months. We have been meeting for the last 20 years in the main auditorium of the Reformed Theological College (RTC) in Waurn Ponds. The church currently has four elders, a team of deacons, a pastoral care team, programs for children and young people, and about eight Growth Groups.

Our History

South Barwon is a member of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. It was planted south of the Barwon River in Geelong over 30 years ago. From the start, the church was planted with a desire to reach the lost with the gospel so that people might come to know and love the Lord Jesus. Due to this gospel heart we planted a new church in 2013 called the Hub. We planted on the outskirts of Geelong, with a small group of highly committed people. Sadly, although the church plant grew and was effective in reaching out, after several years it did not become financially independent and, combined with a severe lack of manpower, the going was very tough. Thus, the decision was made to bring the Hub to a close in early 2020. Most of those from the Hub re-joined us at South Barwon and we retain a deep desire to reach out in our community.

In 2018 the elders began a process of clarifying our values, mission and vision. This coincided with undertaking 'The Vine Project' to develop the discipleship culture of our church. We adopted a new mission statement: Making, Maturing and Mobilising Committed Followers of Jesus. Since then, we have been seeking, with the Lord's help, to see this mission become part of the culture of South Barwon, with each group and ministry owning and living out this mission. By God's grace we have been blessed to see some changes in church culture, particularly in the areas of Maturing and Mobilising. We have a well established internship program (with two to three interns per year). A copy of our Values, Mission and Vision can be found at the end of this document.

Church Council has recently been seeking to employ an Outreach Worker and although no suitable candidates were found and the process is now on hold, we are keen to improve our church culture in 'making' committed followers of Jesus.



SOUTH BARWON

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

A few things make South Barwon unique as a church. Among them are Barkley Hall, the 3216 Connect Op shop, as well as the RTC. Barkley Hall is a student residence of RTC and houses many international students. In the past South Barwon has held evangelistic BBQs for the students. The potential for friendships and outreach is certainly there. 3216 Connect is an Op shop begun by South Barwon and still has a strong connection with us. The Op shop is run by volunteers and raises lots of funds used to help people in the community and abroad, and has established connections with many other community agencies. The presence of the RTC is a wonderful and active resource to draw on for preaching, service leading, eldership and leadership.

As of November 2022, our previous pastor Clinton Berends, took up the role of Ministry Development Coordinator in the CRCA, finishing his ministry at South Barwon, while remaining a member of the congregation. As such we are looking for a new pastor to continue the work in our church.

South Barwon CRC's Values, Mission and Vision

The following statements were adopted by Session in December 2018, following consultation with the wider church. They provide the church, and particularly leadership, with the overarching direction of the church for the coming years.

Values:

South Barwon is a contemporary Reformed church, committed to:

- knowing and teaching the Bible
- loving and living the gospel
- making and maturing disciples
- reaching and serving the community

Contemporary Reformed church

As a Reformed church, we love the truths of the Reformation that focus on the glory of God, the uniqueness and sufficiency of Christ, and the power and priority of God's word. We are utterly committed to teaching and living these truths, and to presenting them in a way that is relevant to the city and culture in which God has placed us. We desire to be a church where timeless truth connects with the people and culture of today.

Knowing and teaching the Bible

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, powerful to transform God's people both individually and communally. We seek to be a church that is Bible-focused, growing in our knowledge of God's Word, so that we grow in deeper relationship with Christ and are completely shaped by it. We seek to teach the Bible in every context of church life so that every person is equipped to minister the Word to others.



SOUTH BARWON

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Loving and living the gospel

The gospel is the good news that through Jesus, God is redeeming and restoring us and our broken world. We seek to be utterly gospel-centred, with this good news setting the agenda for everything we do as a church. We want to grow in our love for the gospel, and to have it shape every part of our lives for the glory of God.

Making and maturing disciples

At the heart of our church life is the call to make and grow disciples. Everything we do as a church has this goal in mind, so that people who don't know Jesus would come to living faith in him, and those who have faith grow deeper and stronger in their relationship with Jesus.

Reaching and serving the community

As God's people, we are called to be salt and light in our community and wider world, making a difference to the lives of others and sharing with them the good news of Jesus. We will be active in addressing issues of concern, locally and beyond, while intentionally seek to connect with our local community, individuals, families and groups, building relationships of love so that we might share the gospel with others.

Mission Statement:

Making, maturing and mobilising committed followers of Jesus

Vision:

South Barwon CRC aspires to be a growing and thriving multi-generational, multi-cultural church, that glorifies God by worshipping him, building people up in their faith and reaching out with the gospel to the Geelong region and beyond. We want to be Reformed Evangelical in our theology, contemporary in style, and outward looking in our focus. We envisage South Barwon as a medium sized church (200-300 people) with a team ministry model, that establishes other services, sites or a network of church plants.