



GRANITE

Community Church

CHURCH PROFILE



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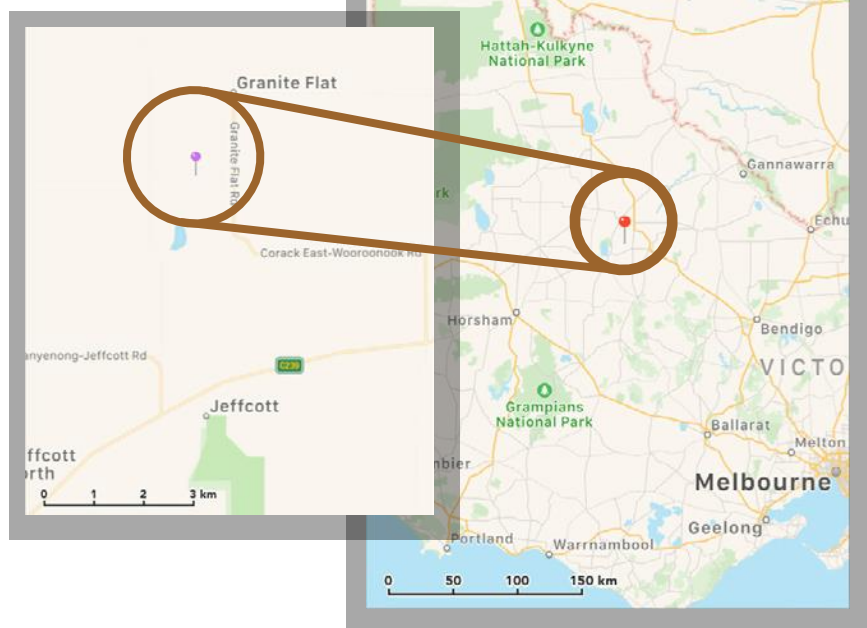
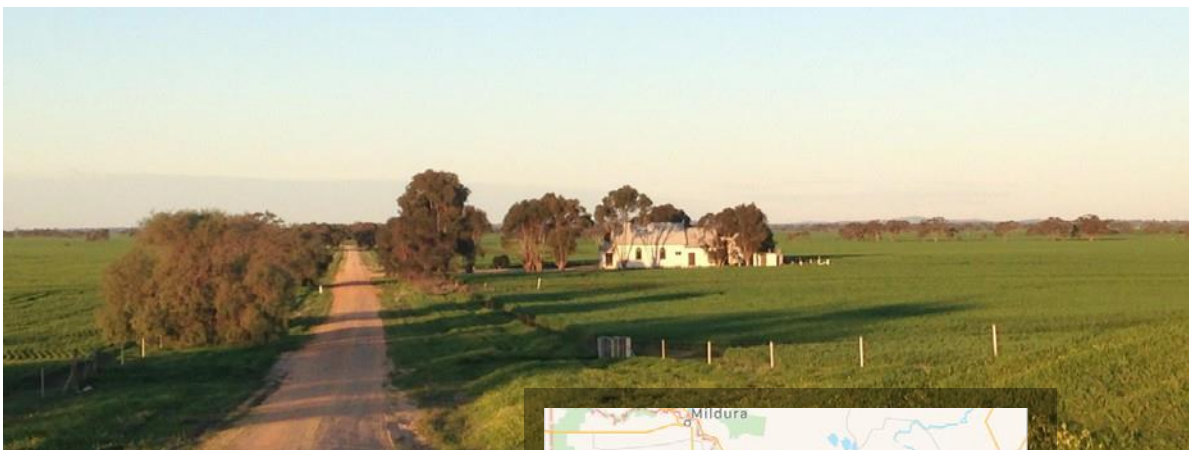
WHO ARE WE?

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Granite Community Church is approximately 275km North-West of Melbourne, within the Buloke Shire. The Buloke Shire community comprises the five major towns of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof; and the five smaller townships; Berriwillock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem.

The church is situated in a paddock, centrally located between the townships of Charlton (23km), Wycheproof (24km), Donald (27km), Birchip (41km) and St Arnaud (51km - Northern Grampians Shire).

Buloke Shire Council is one of Victoria's most sparsely populated municipalities. At the time of the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics census there were 6,201 people living in 3,191 households.



WHO ARE WE?

2016 Shire Age Demographic

The Buloke Shire is a homogenous community with most residents being born in Australia, with 1.1% of these being Indigenous Australians.

The Shire has an increasing migrant population of Filipino, Thai and Indian people.

For more information regarding the Shire demographics please go to <https://www.buloke.vic.gov.au/buloke-shire>

Buloke Life Brochure can be found at <https://www.flipsnack.com/woofme dia/buloke-residents-pack-2021/full-view.html>

Demographic of Granite Community Church congregation:

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-5 (Preschool)	5	3	8
6-12 (Primary)	3	5	8
13-18 (Secondary)	8	5	13
19-25	-	-	-
26-40	3	5	8
41-50	3	4	7
51-60	5	8	13
61-70	7	6	13
71-80	3	4	7
81+	2		2
Totals	39	40	79

Agriculture (grain and livestock) is the predominant industry in the Shire, employing 20.6% of people. Other major employers are the Health Care, Education, Manufacturing and Construction Industries.

OUR CHURCH

Granite Community Church is a well-established church that is growing and welcoming. We seek to be a relevant expression of the Family of God, people who love one another and our communities with the Gospel love of Jesus Christ.

Before becoming part of the Baptist Union in 2007, Granite had been affiliated with the Methodist church circuit and had also operated as a non-denominational church (For a more detailed church history refer to Appendix 1).

There are few Evangelical churches in the area, so people from all walks of life and diverse denominational backgrounds gather and fellowship regularly.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

God

There is one God who is eternal. He is infinite in power, wisdom, holiness and love. God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ as the second Person of the Godhead is eternally one with God the Father of whose person and glory Jesus is the accurate expression. To become human He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary; the nature of God and human nature were united in one Person; truly God and truly human. He lived, died, and rose again to the glory of the Father. Through faith He is our salvation and our hope. *Hebrews 10:14, Romans 14:9*

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity is eternally one with the Father and the Son. He is sent to achieve the divine purpose of God in the world and in the Church. The Divine Essence of God who indwells believers and points them to Jesus.

The Bible and its use

The Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the infallible and authoritative Word of God and its teaching is sufficient, absolute, supreme and final. They were written by the holy people of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and have supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. *2 Timothy 3:16*

Baptism

Baptism is the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and a symbol of their fellowship in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

The basis for welcoming people into the church membership

People are accepted into membership on their statement of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and agreement with the doctrinal statement of the church.

Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and represents the central truths of the New Covenant. All who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who are in fellowship with His people shall be invited to share in the Lord's Supper at each observance.

The human condition

People were made in the image of God and for fellowship with God. By sin mankind fell from grace and fellowship with God and are corrupted. Apart from God's grace, people are helpless and hopeless.

The purpose, place and mission of the church in today's society

The Church is the people of God. Our purpose is to worship God, build up and encourage believers, and to reach out into our community with the love and gospel of Christ.

Mission forms one of the important ministries of the Church, and should be pursued as fulfillment of Jesus' command – *Matthew 28:16-20*

The role of the congregation

Granite Community Church is a congregationally governed church. The congregation is ultimately responsible for the doctrinal purity of the church. We believe that members should exercise their gifts to serve and build up the church.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The role of the Pastor

The Pastor has wide responsibilities toward the overall effort pursuing the vision of the church and the teaching of Jesus. This can encompass any aspect of church life, but will usually be focused on preaching, teaching, pastoral care and supporting the congregation in the expression of their spiritual gifts.

Membership

Granite Community Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

Our relationship to other church denominations

Ties with local churches have not been greatly developed and exist mainly through the friendships and dealings of the congregation.

The place and importance of prayer

Prayer is foundational to the life and function of Granite Community Church.
1Thessalonians 5:16-18



OUR CHURCH VISION & MISSION

Vision:

Following Jesus, loving each other and our communities

Mission: *[how we fulfill the vision]*

- We will grow into the likeness of Christ through a close relationship with Him and each other.
- We will fellowship in corporate worship through songs & hymns of praise and grow through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.
- We will meet in small groups to encourage one another in the study of God's Word.
- We will express our relationship with Jesus Christ through service in our communities and building personal relationships.
- We will strive individually and corporately in prayer for the Lord's guidance, empowerment, and growth.
- We will take the good news of the Gospel to our local communities, nation and world.

Gospel – Relationships – Mission – Community – Service



OUR CHURCH LIFE

Congregational involvement in leading worship

Congregation members participate in leading worship, exercising such gifts as lay preaching, service leading, music ministry and Sunday School tasks. Traditionally the church has welcomed regular visiting speakers who share the preaching workload and support the minister.

Music

The church sings both traditional and contemporary hymns and choruses with piano or guitar accompaniment. A full audio-visual system is utilised which allows for easy projection of video and audio in the main church building.

Minister

The pastor is expected to preach regularly to build up and support the congregation. Evangelistic sermons that challenge and call people to repent and believe in the person and work of Jesus are encouraged.

The pastor is to officiate communion regularly, but other congregational members may lead and preside over the communion service.

Building

There is easy access to the church and the other rooms that support the main sanctuary. We have dedicated Sunday School teaching areas, cry room, refurnished kitchen (including coffee machine), fenced playground and toilets (with disabled access). The building is air-conditioned and heated. The building and land is mortgage free.

Parking and church access

The church is accessible in all weather conditions with road signs on all major arterial roads. Parking is available at the church. Ramps and paths ensure easy

access for those with limited mobility. Child proof fencing separates the church from the car park area.

Christian education

We strongly support religious instruction. At present only one member of the church is able to teach SRI at her local school. Sunday School provides a weekly opportunity to teach children Bible stories.

Support for denominational and interdenominational organisations

The church prayerfully and financially supports several missionaries and their organisations, and have them share and participate in our church life and activities.

Decision-making and information sharing style

The church is overseen by an Eldership, of which the Pastor is a member. There is also a Diaconate, which looks after the practical issues of the church. The decision-making style of the church varies according to the need and the decision being made.

The church holds quarterly meetings to discuss and vote on pertinent issues, while the Deacons and/or Elders make other day-to-day decisions. Information is communicated within Church services, via monthly church bulletin, on the notice board, website, via email, social media, text and/or letter.

The church has a modern and easily accessible website that is used to communicate church activities and events. The webpage also provides audio of previous sermon series and other practical information including contact numbers, maps and directions. This and our Facebook page allow easy communication with the wider community and immediate congregation.

CHURCH MINISTRIES

Being a community church, Granite has fostered a culture of contribution whereby all members of the congregation are encouraged to participate in the life of the church, exercising their God-given gifts for the benefit of the wider community. We allow ministries to be exercised according to the presentation of people's gifts, or a call to fulfil a need.

Examples of how the church is serving God include:

SMALL GROUPS

There are a number of small Bible Study groups operating within the church.

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS (MOPS)

MOPS or Mother's of Preschooler's is a mother's group and a children's playgroup rolled into one. The group is designed so mums can build friendships, be encouraged, and gain practical parenting strategies, while their kids are cared for.

Donald MOPS meet fortnightly. Guest speakers present information on a wide range of practical topics including depression, personal health, parenting, firstaid, sign language for kids and many more.

MOPS is an effective outreach for Granite Community Church with the majority of mums not active church attendees.

It connects the Church to the Donald community building strong and long-lasting relationships at an important stage of motherhood.



granite community Church | profile



CHURCH MINISTRIES

CHURCH MINISTRIES:

Granite continues to work and partner with other churches in the area with members of the congregation organising and/or participating in:

- Kid's Club
- Christmas Carols and Easter services
- Small Groups/Bible Studies
- MOPS
- Youth Group

Granite Community Church maintains a good relationship with several para-church organizations. Presently members contribute and participate in a variety of programs including the:

- Wimmera Easter Convention
- Donald "Look First" Opportunity Shop
- ESA (Equipping Servicing Assisting) camps and programs
- CWCI (Christian Women Communicating International)

CHURCH ACTIVITIES:

- Annual Anglesea church camp
- Family movie nights "Flicks in the Sticks"
- Shared lunches and picnics
- Open air Easter service at "The Rocks"
- Creation of Christmas hampers for those in need
- Other social gatherings – water-skiing, fishing, bonfires, 4WD trips, Caravan trips, etc.



FUTURE MINISTRIES & DIRECTION

Current ministries of the church we want to maintain

- Teaching and preaching
- Community support and outreach/ evangelism
- Children and youth work
- Bible study and spiritual development
- Fellowship – social gatherings
- Mission awareness, promotion, and action
- Worship preparation and leading
- Pastoral care and visitation

New directions of ministry that we want to consider

- Further emphasis on prayer and a wider involvement in prayer activities
- Discipleship
- Community youth and children's programs
- Young Adults



HISTORY

Appendix 1: History

THE SHORTENED GRANITE CHURCH STORY



Granite Community Church was established in 1876 when a group of selectors and their families who were believers met for church in their private homes for worship and teaching. After a time, they built a mud brick church doubling as the Granite School during the week. This building no longer stands. The current building was built in 1906 with extensions taking place over the years to accommodate the growing congregation.

1876 – the Granite Methodist Church was established

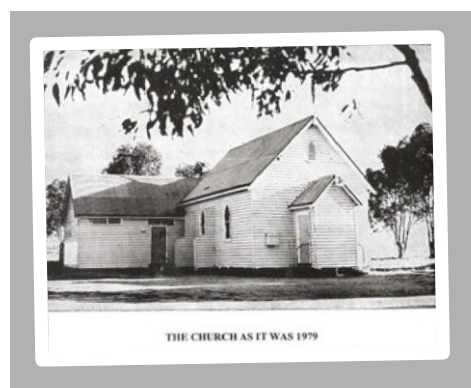
1906 – The church building was built on the current site. The Granite Methodist Church congregation decided not to become an official member of the Charlton Methodist circuit but rather stay as a 'Preaching Place'. The reason for this decision was that a number of the members enjoyed the fellowship of the Salvation Army Corp and it was felt that if they became an official member of the Methodist church the

Salvation Army would not be able to conduct services in the Church. This decision, 61 years later, enabled the Church to withdraw from the Victorian Methodist Church without losing the property. The title was held by the Granite Church Trustees.

1914 – 1919 1st World War and **1939 – 1945** 2nd World War- saw young men from the Church serve in the Forces

1948 – A kitchen and backroom were built to assist with social gatherings held at the Church. The highlight being the annual Tea Meeting followed by a concert. A number of local preachers from among the Granite members, took services throughout the district

1967 – There arose very real differences relating to doctrine and the authority of the scriptures with the Methodist minister and the Granite congregation. As a result, the Church became an independent non-denominational church. The official name, Granite Community Church was adopted. During the next 20 years, local preachers from within the congregation and further afield conducted the services, including visiting missionaries. A feature of Church life was the fortnightly Bible Studies with the studies prepared and presented by the men and women of the congregation. Christian Endeavour was held simultaneously for the children.

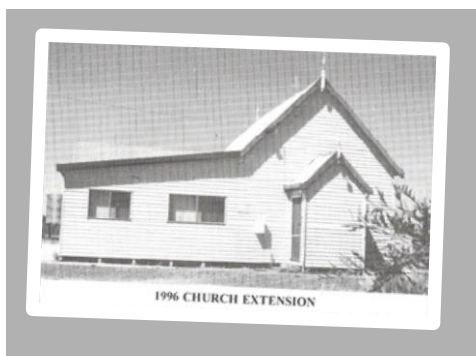


HISTORY

1972 – A Sunday School room extension was built due to the growing number of children attending Sunday School, reaching a maximum of 30 children

1979 – Centenary Celebrations were held to praise and thank God for the continuous life of the Church

1990s - Constitutional change was adopted establishing Elders and Deacons, with 3 congregational meetings per year as the form of church governance to assist the pastor.



1996 & 2000 – A meeting room and foyer were added for the expanding congregation and later the Wilkur South Baptist Sunday School room was moved to the Granite Church

1993 – 2010 - A 17 year period of drought and poor Spring rains saw many farmers and their families suffer substantial loss of income. The Granite Church members showed God's love within its surrounding community by distributing financial relief and grocery packages and also lead public prayer for rain.

2007 – Granite Community Church became a member of the Baptist Union of Victoria

2010 – 2011 – Major floods broke the drought but the need for flood relief replaced the drought assistance. Granite Church again aided the community with groceries, love and support.

2001 – 2013 – Café Church ran as an outreach in Donald, complimentary to the Sunday morning service at Granite. The informal service was based around a light meal with the program varying from guest speakers, games, skits, testimonies and special themes.

1990 – 2021 – The Church has appreciated and been blessed by the services of Pastors, Gordon McCartin, Bruce Stewart, Ken Danes, Tom Playford, Jono Ingram and Ash Buchanan.

1876 – 2022 – From a family on each 320 acre block to a family on 5,000 acres, the Church has seen its members drawn from an extensive population to a more sparse spread of families and yet God has blessed the Granite Community Church with a congregation that is replenished each year by families seeking to worship and be taught from God's Word, believing it to be the infallible Word of God.

Note: a more detailed and thorough exploration of the Church history can be obtained by reading the booklet 'One Hundred Years and More' Granite Community Church from 1876 to 2002 and the 2002 -2016 revision





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