



REDEEMER CHURCH

MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP

CONTENTS

The Gospel	4
The Church.....	5
Is Church Membership Biblical?	6
Why Join a Local Church?	8
Our Mission, Values, and Vision	9
Our Basic Beliefs.....	11
Our Membership Covenant.....	14
How Should Members Act?	15
Committed Church Members	16
Staying Connected	17
How to Become a Member	18
Membership Form	19



THE GOSPEL

“God saves sinners” (John Owen).

“God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith”” (Romans 1:16–17).



Religion is about me.
The gospel is about Jesus.

Religion is what I have to do to get to God.
Gospel is what Jesus did to get me.

Religion is what I have to do to be accepted by God.
Gospel is what God did to make me acceptable to Him.

Religion is I obey, therefore I am accepted.
Gospel is I am accepted, therefore I obey.

The goal of religion is to get good things from God such as health, wealth, insight, power, and control.
The goal of the gospel is that we get God; he gives Himself as the greatest gift.

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope” (Timothy Keller, Meaning of Marriage).



THE CHURCH

CHURCH (n.). *ekklesia* (Greek); literally: called out ones.

In Titus 2:14, we learn that Jesus, “gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

“According to the NT, the church is primarily a body of people who profess and give evidence that they have been saved by God’s grace alone, for his glory alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. That is what a NT church is; it is not a building. The early Christians didn’t have a buildings for almost 300 years.... The collection of people committed to Christ in a local area constitute a church” (Mark Dever, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church).



IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP BIBLICAL?

“Membership in a local church is not an antiquated, outdated, unnecessary add-on to true membership in the universal body of Christ; membership in a local church is intended as a testimony to our membership in the universal church. Church membership does not save, but it is a reflection of salvation. And if there is no reflection of our salvation, how can we be sure that we are truly saved? As John explains, ‘If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen’ (1 John 4:20)” (Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*).

1. WE ARE COMMANDED TO MEET TOGETHER REGULARLY FOR OUR OWN GOOD AND FOR THE GOOD OF OTHER CHRISTIANS.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12-13).

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Hebrews 10:24-25).

2. WE ARE COMMANDED TO USE OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO BLESS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BODY.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12:3-8).



3. WE ARE COMMANDED TO LOVE OTHER CHRISTIANS WITH ACTIONS, NOT MERELY WITH WORDS.

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:16-18).

4. WE ARE COMMANDED TO JOYFULLY SUBMIT TO SPIRITUAL LEADERS WHO KEEP WATCH OVER OUR SOULS.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you (Hebrews 13:17).

5. WE ARE COMMANDED TO EXERCISE CHURCH DISCIPLINE TO PRESERVE THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH.

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you (1 Corinthians 5:1-2).

Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him (2 Corinthians 2:5-8).



WHY JOIN A LOCAL CHURCH?

1. LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP HELPS ENSURE WE HAVE BIBLICALLY-QUALIFIED LEADERS WATCHING OVER OUR SOULS AND GUARDING US AGAINST FALSE TEACHING.

(*Hebrews 13:17, 1 Timothy 4:1-5, 2 Timothy 3:1-9*)

“The world is not going to uphold the truth of God for you. It is in a faithful, Bible-teaching church that you will be taught the truth — the truth about yourself, the truth about God, the truth about your need to know God through Jesus Christ, the truth about living most wisely and abundantly, and the truth about Judgment and eternity” (Don Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church*).

2. LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP PROVIDES A CONTEXT TO RECEIVE WISDOM AND GODLY COUNSEL FROM MORE MATURE CHRISTIANS. (*Titus 2:1-10*)

“The longer I’m a Christian, the more aware I become that I cannot live the Christian life on my own. My individual and direct relationship with God through Jesus is the greatest privilege and He is truly all I need — and yet God in His wisdom has created all of us to need others, too. Is this a contradiction? Not at all — for God has ordained that much of His grace flows to us through others” (Josh Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*).

3. LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP PROVIDES A CONTEXT TO GROW IN GRACE. (*2 Peter 1:3-11*)

“The Holy Spirit brings the church into existence through the gospel word. Through that same gospel word he continues to change people so that they become less lovers of self and more lovers of God and others. This is the community life that models the gospel because it is the life for which we were made” (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester, *Total Church*).

4. LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP GREATLY STRENGTHENS OUR WITNESS TO THE LOST.

(*Acts 2:42-47*)

“Even as imperfect as we are, if God’s Spirit is genuinely at work in us He will use our lives to help demonstrate to others the truth of his Gospel. This is a special role we have now that we won’t have in heaven — to be part of God’s plan, to take his Gospel to the world” (Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*).

“If a man can’t be cured of churchgoing the next best thing is to send him all over ... looking for the church that ‘suits’ him” (Screwtape, from C. S. Lewis’ *Screwtape Letters*).



OUR MISSION, VALUES, AND VISION

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

MISSION

We exist to make disciples for Jesus through the power of the Spirit for the glory of the Father and the joy of all kinds of people.

VALUES

We aim to accomplish our mission by proclaiming the good news of Jesus, by serving our neighbors and our city, and by learning and working together as members of God’s one family.

VISION

We hope to be a community known for its commitment to Gospel proclamation, sacrificial neighborhood service, and shared life together; its racial and socio-economic diversity; and its clear and contagious love for Jesus.



P R O C L A M A T I O N

S E R V I C E

C O M M U N I T Y

OUR BASIC BELIEFS*

THE SCRIPTURES: The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. (*Psalms 19:7-10; Matthew 5:17-28; Luke 24:44-46; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*)

GOD: There is one and only one living and true God. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. (*Genesis 1:1; John 14:6-13; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 John 5:7*)

GOD THE FATHER: God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. (*Exodus 3:14; Romans 8:14-15; Ephesians 4:6*)

GOD THE SON: Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. (*John 1:1-18; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15*)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. (*Genesis 1:2; Psalms 51:11; 139:7; John 16:7-14; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Peter 1:21*)

MANKIND: Man is the special creation of God, in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every person of every race possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. (*Genesis 1:26-30; Isaiah 6:5; Romans 3:10-18, 23; 5:6-12, 19; Ephesians 2:1-22*)

SALVATION: Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. (*Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:21; John 3:3-21; Acts 2:21; Romans 5:8-10; Ephesians 2:8-22*)

GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE: Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. (*Genesis 12:1-3; John 6:44-45, 65; 10:27-29; Ephesians 1:4-23*)



THE CHURCH: A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. (*Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 5:1-4*)

BAPTISM & THE LORD'S SUPPER: Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. (*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 10:16-21; Colossians 2:12*)

EVANGELISM & MISSIONS: It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ. (*Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 9:37-38; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15*)

THE LORD'S DAY: The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion. (*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2*)

LAST THINGS: God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell. The righteous will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. (*Matthew 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:40; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28*)

EDUCATION: The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists. (*Deuteronomy 6:1-10; Job 28:28; Proverbs 4:1-10; Matthew 5:2; 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-16*)

STEWARDSHIP: God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions. (*Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Peter 18-19*)



COOPERATION: Christ's people should organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations. (*Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10-17; 3:5-15; Philippians 1:15-18*)

THE CHRISTIAN & THE SOCIAL ORDER: All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society in the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. (*Exodus 20:3-17; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:13-16; 43-48; 22:36-40; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; Ephesians 6:5-9*)

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal. (*John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:13; Philippians 3:20*)

FAMILY: God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. (*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7*)

*Baptist Faith and Message (2000)



OUR MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

We believe God, in His infinite wisdom and sovereign grace, has called and joined together every member of Redeemer Church as a visible expression of His Church on the earth. As a result, we agree to work and to pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (*Ephesians 1:22, 4:3, John 17:21–23, 1 Peter 3:8, Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Colossians 3:13–15, Hebrews 12:14*)

We will uphold the Basic Beliefs. We will submit to the recognized leadership. We will admonish those who are disobedient to the Word, encourage the timid, help the weak, exercise patience toward all, and work for reconciliation. We will ask God for grace to speak, think, and act toward one another in love at all times. (*Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 1 Corinthians 13, Colossians 1:11*)

We will support God's work in and through Redeemer by regularly, joyfully, and sacrificially giving our time, talents, and treasures. We will serve with the strength God supplies, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (*2 Corinthians 9:7, Acts 2:44–45, 20:35, 1 Peter 4:11*)

We will meet regularly to worship God, to edify one another, and to guard ourselves against the deceitfulness of sin. If we move from this place, we will unite with another local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word (*Hebrews 10:25, 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Ephesians 4:29–32*)

We will fulfill the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and mourning with those who mourn. (*Galatians 6:2, Romans 12:15, John 13:34*)

We will strive to make true disciples of Christ beginning in our homes and spheres of influence by sharing the message of reconciliation entrusted to us whenever and wherever God gives opportunity. We will build multigenerational faithfulness by telling the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done. (*2 Corinthians 5:18–20; Matthew 28:18–20; Romans 10:14–15, Psalms 78:4–7*)

We will live in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all His power; that the watching world may observe our holy and distinct lives and glorify our Father in heaven. (*Colossians 1:10–12, Matthew 5:16, Philippians 2:14–15, 2 Thessalonians 1:10–12, 1 Peter 2:12*)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. (*2 Corinthians 13:14*)



HOW SHOULD MEMBERS ACT?

“Love one another”

(John 13:34).

“Encourage each other ... Build each other up”

(I Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11).

“With all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love”

(Ephesians 4:2).

“Let us consider how to stir one another
to love and good works”

(Hebrews 10:24).

“Forgive whatever grievances you may have
against one another”

(Colossians 3:13).

“[Let us] not neglect to meet together,
as is the habit of some”

(Hebrews 10:25).

“Outdo one another in showing honor”

(Romans 12:10).

“Don’t grumble against each other”

(James 5:9).

“Carry each other’s burdens”

(Galatians 6:2).

“Confess your sins to one another
... that you may be healed”

(James 5:16).

“Be kind and compassionate to one another”

(Ephesians 4:32).

“Pray for each other”

(James 5:16).

“Teach and admonish one another”

(Colossians 3:16).



COMMITTED CHURCH MEMBERS REGULARLY, JOYFULLY, AND SACRIFICIALLY...



SOME PRACTICAL TIPS ON STAYING CONNECTED

- Come early on Sundays and stay late.
- Offer and accept hospitality.
- Commit to a Community Group and/or Sunday school class.
- Cultivate “off the books” discipling relationships.
- Attend and participate in Member Meetings.

NOTES



HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

1 ATTEND
the New Member's Class.

2 SIGN
the Membership Covenant.

3 MEET
with an Elder.

For many years I took an individualistic approach to the Christian life. I was concerned about my growth as a Christian, my progress in holiness, my acquisition of ministry skills. I prayed that God would enable me to be more holy in my personal life and more effective in my evangelism. I asked God's blessing on my church and the Christian organization I worked for. But as I learned more about true fellowship, I began to pray that we as the Body of Christ would grow in holiness, that we would be more effective witnesses to the saving grace of Christ. It is the entire Body—not just me—that needs to grow" (Jerry Bridges, *The Crisis of Caring*).



MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Children: _____

I am transferring my membership from another church (if so, which).

☐ Yes ☐ No

I completed the New Member's Class.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I read and affirm Redeemer's Basic Beliefs.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I read and affirm Redeemer's Membership Covenant.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature

Date





2111 S. Blue Bell
(979) 251-9220
redeemberbrenham.org