



# FAMILY MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

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## OVERVIEW

Park Community Church exists to be and make disciples of Jesus by living as a family of sons and daughters who pursue God, brothers and sisters who practice his commands, and neighbors and witnesses who proclaim his gospel.

Park Community Church Membership Covenant is an expression of our desire to be family together, committed to one another with love and unity, as a witness to the world around us for the sake of the gospel and the glory of God.

## WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

All people who have chosen to receive Jesus Christ's work on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins and who now follow him as Lord and Savior are members in the universal body of Christ. As such, our primary responsibility and accountability is to God himself, to whom we will give an account for how we live (Rom 14:12; Heb 4:13).

It is for this very reason that we believe in local church membership. Both the Old and the New Testament were written to groups of people covenanted together in relationship with God and one another, and we believe Christians will be held accountable for their involvement in the local church. Following the pattern of Scripture, Park Community Church is to be a covenant community, having meaningful membership to help our church grow up into Christ as we increasingly learn to obey his commands (Mt 28:18-20; Eph 4:11-16).

We call it "Family Membership" because of our conviction that the church is the family (household) of God (2 Cor 6:14-18; Eph 2:18-21; 1 Tim 3:15).

## WHERE IS MEMBERSHIP IN THE BIBLE?

While there aren't examples of a membership class, application, or covenant signing in the Bible, the entire context of the Old & New Testament is rich with themes of membership. Below are a few selected passages that give a picture of membership in the Bible. Take a few moments and look at them, noting words that communicate the idea of membership: Gen 2:18-24; 17:1-8; Acts 2:42-47; Rom 12:3-13:5; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:1-16; Col 3:12-17.

## WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

- 1) It's an assumed reality for the New Testament Christian.
- 2) It fosters obedience to Jesus' commands.
- 3) It gives you specific identification as a follower of Christ.
- 4) It communicates to the church leadership that you are invested in the church and that the church has a responsibility to invest in you.

- 5) It offers spiritual protection and guidance from the Elders in accordance with the pattern of church governance described in the Scriptures.
- 6) It gives you a voice and a vote on congregational matters.
- 7) It creates discipling relationships in the context of true biblical community.
- 8) It allows for accountability among the church family.
- 9) It's a required step for holding church leadership positions.
- 10) It is a practical way to say that you are a part of something larger and greater than yourself.

### **WHO CAN/SHOULD BECOME A CHURCH FAMILY MEMBER?**

Christian adults (18 years or older) who agree with our Statement of Faith and PCC's Constitution & Bylaws and align with our distinct ministry philosophy.

There are a number of secondary beliefs that we are passionate to proclaim. Not all Christians hold these beliefs, but they are nonetheless important and true as we understand the Scriptures. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that we will preach, teach and counsel in accordance with these biblical convictions.

## **MISSION AND VISION**

**MISSION (Why We Exist):** To be and make disciples of Jesus Christ

**VISION (How We Live):** To live as a family of sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and neighbors and witness

**VALUES (What We Do):** Pursue God. Practice his commands. Proclaim his gospel.

- **Pursue God** [Sons & Daughters]. God our Father has adopted us as sons and daughters, giving us free access to him. We seek to grow in our knowledge and love of God by pursuing him through prayer, worship, and the study of his Word.
- **Practice Jesus' Commands** [Brothers & Sisters]. Jesus has united us as brothers & sisters to live out his ways. We seek to know and love one another in community, caring for each other's spiritual and physical needs by practicing obedience to all of Jesus' commands.
- **Proclaim Jesus' Gospel** [Neighbors & Witnesses]. The Holy Spirit has empowered us to live as neighbors & witnesses in the world. We seek to know and love others through community engagement and proclaiming God's story of redemption in word & deed.

## **STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

*I believe:*

- I am a sinner deserving eternal punishment for my sin (Rom 3:23, 6:23; Eph 2:1-3)
- it is only by God's mercy and grace that I am offered the free gift of salvation through the perfect and sacrificial life, death, and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16; 14:6; Eph 2:4-10)
- that by repenting of my sin, believing in Jesus' final and sufficient work on the cross, and placing my faith in him, I have received the Holy Spirit and am spiritually born again (Ez 36:25-27; Jn 3:3; Rom 8:11; 12-17; Eph 1:13-14)
- my most important identity is as a child of God (2 Cor 6:18; Gal 4:4-7; 1 Jn 3:1)
- it is my responsibility to treat the members of this church as loved and valued brothers and sisters in Christ by practicing Jesus's commands in community (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Jn 5:2-3)

- the Holy Spirit has sent me to live in the world as a neighbor and witness, proclaiming the gospel in word and deed (Jn 17:18; Acts 1:8; Col 3:17; 4:2-6; James 1:22; 2:26)
- Jesus is the sole head of the church (Mt 16:18; Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:15-23) and has called me to be an active member of the body of Christ in the context of the local church.

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **God**

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

### **The Bible**

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

### **The Human Condition**

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

### **Jesus Christ**

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

### **The Work of Christ**

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

### **The Holy Spirit**

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

### **The Church**

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

### **Christian Living**

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

### **Christ's Return**

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial\* return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

### **Response and Eternal Destiny**

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

- EFCA Statement of Faith

*\*Park membership requires agreement with fundamental doctrines, excluding "premillennial"*

## **BIBLICAL OBLIGATIONS OF PARK COMMUNITY CHURCH**

### **OBLIGATIONS OF PCC LEADERS TO ITS MEMBERS**

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members.

#### ***We covenant...***

- that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures, pray and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
- to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
- to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
- to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

## **OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS TO THE CHURCH BODY**

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as “living by the Spirit” (Rom. 8). The requirements of the Membership Covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible yet non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

### ***I covenant...***

- to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter in all things (Ps 19:7-11; 2 Tim 3:16-17).
- to strive, as best I can in the power of the Holy Spirit and by the grace of Jesus Christ, to live in accordance with Scriptures and our Statement of Faith.
- to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of Park Community Church.
- to align myself with the mission, vision, and values of Park Community Church.
- to, in all things, strive to follow the Great Commandment to love God and others (Matt 22:37-30; Jn 13:34-35; 1 Cor 13; 1 Jn 4:7).
- to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples (Matt 28:18-20) by living among the Park Community Church family as a son/daughter who pursues God, brother/sister who practices Jesus’ commands, neighbor/witness who proclaims the gospel. This includes participating regularly in worship services and in discipling relationships, and serving those inside and outside of this church (Acts 2:42; Heb 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- to sacrificially contribute my time, finances, and spiritual gifts toward the ministry of Park Community Church (1 Cor 12; Rom 12:3-21; Eph 4:1-16).
- to submit to the elders of Park Community, as God would see fit (Heb 13:17-18).
- to submit to the discipline of God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Ps. 141:5; Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-13; Heb 12:5-11).

**Covenantal Statement** (adapted from the 1955 St. Louis Park Evangelical Free Church Covenant)  
*Having been led, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, and upon profession of my faith in Him, I do now, in the presence of God and Park Community Church, most seriously and joyfully enter into covenant with Park Community Church by becoming a Family Member.*

*By the aid of the Holy Spirit I agree to walk with the church in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, reverence and service; to promote its work of faith, its labor of love and steadfastness of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ; and to sustain its worship of Jesus Christ, its doctrines, disciplines, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.*

*I further agree to contribute, as God may prosper me, of my money to support the church, the relief of the needy, and the spread of the gospel through the world. I promise to maintain regular habits of devotion in Bible reading and prayer; and to be an example of the gospel to the children of the church, discipling the next generation, and seeking the salvation of the lost.*

*I will strive to walk with discretion in the world, to be just in my dealings, faithful in my engagement, and Christ-like in my attitude. So far as I am able, I agree to attend the stated meetings of the church and to be zealous to advance the Kingdom of God. I will serve the church family with brotherly love; remembering others in prayer, comforting others in sickness and distress, courteous in speech, slow to take offense, ready for reconciliation, mindfully obeying the commands of our Savior.*