



Vertical

CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP

COVENANT



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VERTICAL CHURCH EXISTS TO BRING GLORY TO GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES, LIVING IN GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY, AND EXTENDING THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS.

WHAT IS MEMBERSHIP?

Membership at Vertical is participation in a body of believers united to Christ and thus to each other. In many ways, church membership is like being part of a family. The key difference is that unlike your physical family—in which none of us choose our parents or siblings—the church is a family that you do choose. Thus, membership means calling a specific church ‘home’ and taking responsibility to ensure the health and growth of those in your church family. Put simply, membership means committing to take part in the life of a local church as a sign of our identity in Christ, a means by which to serve our brothers and sisters, and to unify our efforts for the sake of the Gospel.

WHY IS MEMBERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its individual members. As the Scriptures say, “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (*1 Corinthians 12:21*). Likewise, a member of the church cannot say to another member that he or she is unnecessary. We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (*Romans 12:3-8*). In short, contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other! In addition to that, membership brings with it all the benefits of being a part of something bigger than yourself:

1. You are not ashamed to identify with Christ or His people. *Mark 8:38; Matt.16:18*
2. You stop trying to be a “lone ranger” Christian. *1 Cor.12:14-20; Rom. 12:4-5; Heb. 13:17*
3. You openly demonstrate the reality of the body of Christ. *1 Cor.12:27; Rom. 12:4-5*
4. You receive the care of, and become accountable to, spiritual leaders. *Heb.13:7,17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13*
5. You participate in a stronger, more unified effort of God’s people on mission. *1 Cor.12-4-7; Acts 2:42-47, 6:1-7*
6. You encourage other believers to become committed to a local body. *Heb.10:24-25*

WHO CAN BE A MEMBER?

The most obvious and most important qualification is that members are followers of Jesus, i.e., people rescued by the grace of God who trust Him, love Him, and are given new desires to obey Him. Because a church is a community of people who rejoice in the gospel and strive to live out its implications for their lives, it makes sense that membership in a church is limited to those who believe the gospel and follow Jesus because their hope is placed in Him. Joining a church through membership, therefore, is neither just part of showing up, nor is it an act of duty that earns the grace of God. On the contrary, church membership is a response to the faith in Christ already present in your life, as seen in other signs of faith like baptism or joyful obedience to Jesus’ commands.



CONFESSION OF FAITH

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Vertical Church.

GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are coequal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27 // Psalm 90:2 // Matthew 28:19 // 1 Peter 1:2 // 2 Corinthians 13:14

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is coequal with the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins by death on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days demonstrating His power over sin and death and accomplishing our redemption. He ascended to Heaven where he fulfills the ministry as Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate for His people, and He will return again someday to earth to reign as King.

Matthew 1:22, 23 // Isaiah 9:6 // John 1:1-5, 14:10-30 // Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25, 9:24 // 1 Corinthians 15:3- 4 // Romans 1:3-4, 5:6, 8:34 // Acts 1:9-11 // 1 Timothy 6:14-16 // Titus 2:13

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son of God. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling, empowering, and sealing them unto the day of redemption.

Acts 1:8 // 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16-17, 12:12-13 // John 16:7-13, 14:16-17 Galatians 5:25 // Ephesians 1:13, 5:18 // Romans 8:9 // 2 Corinthians 3:6

THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the final authority for faith and life. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without error.

2 Timothy 3:16, 1:13 // 2 Peter 1:20-21 // Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6 // Proverbs 30:5 // Matthew 5:18 // John 16:12-13

MAN

People are made in the image of God. People are the supreme object of God's creation, made by Him and for Him. But through Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. All of us are now marred by sin and utterly incapable of returning to God apart from a work of grace. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ alone.

Genesis 1:26-27 // Psalm 8:3-6 // Romans 3:11-23, 5:12,18, 8:8 // Isaiah 59:1-2 // Ephesians 2:1-3, 12 Colossians 1:21 // Philippians 3:18 // James 4:4 // John 8:34 // Titus 3:3 // 2 Timothy 2:26

SALVATION

Salvation is God's free gift to us made possible through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can never make up for our sin by self improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ and His work alone can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.

Romans 6:23 // Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10 // John 1:12-13, 3:16, 6:37-40, 10:27-30 // Titus 3:5 // Galatians 3:26 // Romans 5:1, 8:1, 31-39, 10:9-10 // 1 Peter 1:18-21 // 1 Corinthians 1:4-8 // 1 Peter 1:5

THE CHURCH

The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. We recognize baptism and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church.

Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27 // 1 Corinthians 11:22-26, 12:12-14 // 2 Corinthians 11:2 // Acts 14:27, 18:22, 20:17 // 1 Timothy 3:1-13 // Titus 1:5-11

THE CONSUMMATION

According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth to establish His kingdom; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever with the Lord. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

John 3:16 // Romans 6:23, 8:17-21 // 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17 // 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10 // Hebrews 9:28 // Revelation 7:9-17, 20:11-15 // 1 Corinthians 2:7-9



DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES

While the doctrines expressed in the "Confession of Faith" are those that are recognized to be universal and primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs about which the leadership of Vertical Church is passionate. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that Vertical Church will preach, teach, practice, and counsel in accordance with these theological convictions. All members must be committed to preserving unity and peace in regards to these secondary matters found here in Vertical Church's doctrinal distinctives.

1) WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT GOSPEL CENTRALITY.

We believe the gospel is the good news of what God has graciously accomplished for sinners through the sinless life, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, namely our forgiveness from sin and complete justification before God; this gospel is also the foundation for our confidence in the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom, and the consummation of His purpose for all creation in the new heavens and new earth.

This gospel is centered in Christ, is the foundation for the life of the Church, and is our only hope for eternal life; this gospel is not proclaimed if Christ's penal substitutionary death and bodily resurrection are not central to our message.

This Gospel is not only the means by which people are saved, but also the truth and power by which people are sanctified; it is the truth of the Gospel that enables us to genuinely and joyfully do what is pleasing to God and to grow in progressive conformity to the image of Christ. The salvation offered in this gospel message is received by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; no ordinance, ritual, work, or any other activity on the part of man is required in order to be saved.

Mark 1:1 // Luke 24:46-47 // John 3:16-18 // Romans 1:16-17 // Romans 1:18-25 // 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:2; 15:1-4 // 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 9:13 // Galatians 1:6-9 // Ephesians 1: 7-10 // Colossians 1: 19-20 // 2 Timothy 1:8-14 // 2 Peter 3: 11-13 // Jude 3-4 // Revelation 21-22

2) WE ENTHUSIASTICALLY EMBRACE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD'S GRACE IN SAVING SINNERS.

We affirm that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, not on the basis of foreseen faith but unconditionally, according to His sovereign good pleasure and will.

We believe that through the work of the Holy Spirit, God will draw the elect to faith in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously and effectually overcoming their stubborn resistance to the gospel so that they will most assuredly and willingly believe.

We also believe that these, the elect of God whom He gave to the Son, will persevere in belief and godly behavior and be kept secure in their salvation by grace through faith.

We believe that God's sovereignty in this salvation neither diminishes the responsibility of people to believe in Christ nor marginalizes the necessity and power of prayer and evangelism, but rather reinforces and establishes them as the ordained means by which God accomplishes His ordained ends.

John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30 // Acts 13:48; 16:30-31 // Romans 3-4; 8:1-17,31-39; 9:1-23; 10:8-10 // Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-10 // Philippians 2:12-13 // Titus 3:3-7 // 1 John 1:7,9

3) WE JOYFULLY BELIEVE, TEACH, AND PRACTICE CREDO-BAPTISM.

We believe that the clear teaching and example of Scripture is that a person should be baptized upon coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is a means of grace in which professing believers are immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. It is a sign of a believer's death to sin and life in Christ's resurrection. Thus, this New Covenant sign should be applied to every person who believes in their heart and confesses with their mouth that "Jesus is Lord."

The mode of baptism described in God's Word is immersion - meaning that the believer's entire body is submerged under the water before being brought back up. This corresponds to the burial and resurrection of Christ, which we now share in as His followers. Therefore, we regularly practice baptism by immersion, although we recognize there may be occasions where another mode of baptism is necessary in extreme circumstances.

Matthew 3:16; 28:19 // Acts 2:41; 8:12; 8:34-40; 10:44-48; 16:30-34; 22:14-16 // Romans 6:3-4 // Galatians 3:27 // Ephesians 4:4-6 // Colossians 2:12-13 // 1 Peter 3:21

4) WE RECOGNIZE AND REST UPON THE NECESSITY OF THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR ALL OF LIFE AND MINISTRY.

The Holy Spirit is fully God, equal with the Father and Son, whose primary ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ; He also convicts unbelievers of their need for Christ and imparts spiritual life through regeneration (the new birth).

The Spirit permanently indwells, graciously sanctifies, lovingly leads, and empowers all who are brought to faith in Christ so that they might live in obedience to the inerrant Scriptures.

The model for our reliance upon the Spirit and our experience of His indwelling and empowering presence is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who was filled with the Spirit and entirely dependent upon his power for the performance of miracles, the preaching of the kingdom of God, and all other dimensions of his earthly ministry.

The Holy Spirit, who indwelt and empowered Christ in like manner, indwells and empowers us through spiritual gifts He has bestowed for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. We all recognize that they are divine provisions central to spiritual growth and effective ministry and are to be eagerly desired, faithfully developed, and lovingly exercised according to biblical guidelines.

Matthew 3:11; 12:28 // Luke 4:1, 14; 5:17; 10:21 // John 1:12-13; 3:1-15, 34; 14:12; 15:26-27; 16:7-15 // Acts 2:14- 21; 4:29-30; 10:38 // Romans 8:9; 12:3-8 // 1 Corinthians 12:7-13; 12:28-31; 14:1-33 // 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 // Galatians 3:1-5 // Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18

5) WE ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO BOTH THE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EQUALITY OF MALE AND FEMALE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF MALE HEADSHIP IN THE CHURCH AND HOME.

Both men and women are together created in the divine image and are therefore equal before God as persons, possessing the same moral dignity and value, and have equal access to God through faith in Christ.

Men and women are together the recipients of spiritual gifts designed to empower them for ministry in the local church and beyond. Therefore, men and women alike are to be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to utilize their gifting in ministry, in service to the body of Christ, and through teaching in ways that are consistent with the Word of God.

Both husbands and wives are responsible to God for spiritual nurture and vitality in the home, but God has given to the man primary responsibility to lead his wife and family in accordance with the servant leadership and sacrificial love modeled by Jesus Christ.

The Elders/Pastors of each local church have been granted authority under the headship of Jesus Christ to provide oversight and to teach/preach the Word of God in corporate assembly for the building up of the body. The office of Elder/Pastor is restricted to men.

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18 // Acts 18:24-26 // 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 // Galatians 3:28 // Ephesians 5:22-33 // Colossians 3:18-19 // 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7 // Titus 2:3-5 // 1 Peter 3:1-7

6) WE EMBRACE A MISSIONARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS ROLE AS THE PRIMARY MEANS BY WHICH GOD CHOOSES TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH.

The church has a clear biblical mandate to look beyond its own community to the neighborhood, the nation, and the world as a whole; thus mission is not an optional program in the church but an essential element in the identity of the church.

We are called to make Christ known through the preaching of the gospel and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring His lordship to bear on every dimension of life. We believe we are responsible neither to retreat from our culture nor to conform to it, but with humility, through the Spirit and the truth of the gospel, to engage it boldly as we seek its transformation and submission to the lordship of Christ.

Isaiah 52:7 // Matthew 10:5-25; 28:18-20 // Luke 4:18-19; 24:46-47 // Acts 28:31 // Romans 10:14-15 // 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 // Galatians 2:10 // Ephesians 3:10; 4:11-16 // 2 Timothy 4:1-5 // Hebrews 10:23-25 // 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10



MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is a two-way promise that is made between two parties. Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants. Some are made between God and man (*Genesis 6,9,15; Ezekiel 20; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 31; Matthew 26*), while others are solely between men (*1 Samuel 18, 2 Samuel 5*). Our covenant includes a statement of faith in Christ, a summary of core biblical doctrines, the promises of the elders to the members, and the promises of members to one another. Though the covenant defines the relationship between members as the constituent parts of the local church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His bride, the Church (*Ephesians 5:25*).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

I am a Christian saved solely by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ and His perfect life, substitutionary death, and physical resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life.

John 3:16-18 // Romans 3:23-26 // Ephesians 2:8-10

I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be as revealed in the Scriptures.

Matthew 1:20, 26:64 // John 1:1-4,14; 4:25-26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25-27; 14:6-7; 15:5 // Colossians 1:15-20 // Hebrews 1:1-3

I continually repent of my sins, having been made a new creation in Christ.

1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

I agree with the Confession of Faith expressed in this membership packet. I understand that Vertical Church has certain theological convictions to which it is strongly committed and I will not be divisive over the doctrinal distinctives listed herein, but rather strive diligently to preserve unity and peace on all secondary issues.

THE COMMITMENT OF ELDERS TO MEMBERS

Having been appointed according to the criteria assigned to elders in the Scriptures, we joyfully submit as under-shepherds to the Chief Shepherd as we lead this body and continue to appoint biblically qualified elders. *1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4*

We will prayerfully seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit. *Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5*

We will care for you and seek your growth as a disciple in Christ, in part by equipping you for service and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick. *Ephesians 4:11-13; James 5:14*

We will provide teaching and counsel from Scripture. *Acts 20:27-28; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18*

We will be on guard against false teachers and teachings. *Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7*

We will lovingly exercise church discipline when necessary. *Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20*

We will set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members. *1 Cor 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12*

We ask for your prayers for the Lord's protection and guidance as we strive to remain steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. *1 Corinthians 15:58*

THE COVENANT OF VERTICAL CHURCH MEMBERS

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with this local church. *John 1:12, 6:63, 16:7-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 2:41, 8:38; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Acts 2:42*

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *Ephesians 4:1-3*

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require. *Romans 12:10, 16:17-18; Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15-17; James 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 3:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 5*

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others. *Hebrews 10:23-25; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 25*

We will endeavor to bring up any person in our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends. *Deuteronomy 6:1-12, 11:18-20; Matthew 5:16, 6:6; Ephesians 6:4; Mark 5:19; Luke 5:19; Ephesians 5:15*

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. *Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2*

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life. *Ephesians 5:15; Titus 2:12; Romans 6:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:13-25*

We will submit to and pray for the elders and other appointed leaders of the church, following biblical procedures for church discipline and diligently striving for unity and peace. *Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5*

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations. *Ephesians 2:21-22; Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 10:10, 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5, 11:24-34; Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Acts 1:8, 2:42, 11:29; 2 John 1:9-11; Galatians 6:6; Malachi 3:8-10; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Luke 24:46-48*

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. *Acts 18:27-28; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 3:23; Hebrews 10:24-25*

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

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Vertical Church and is an acknowledgement of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to meet with the leadership of Vertical Church if at any time I am no longer able to commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Vertical Church.

NAME(S) _____

SIGNATURE(S) _____

DATE _____