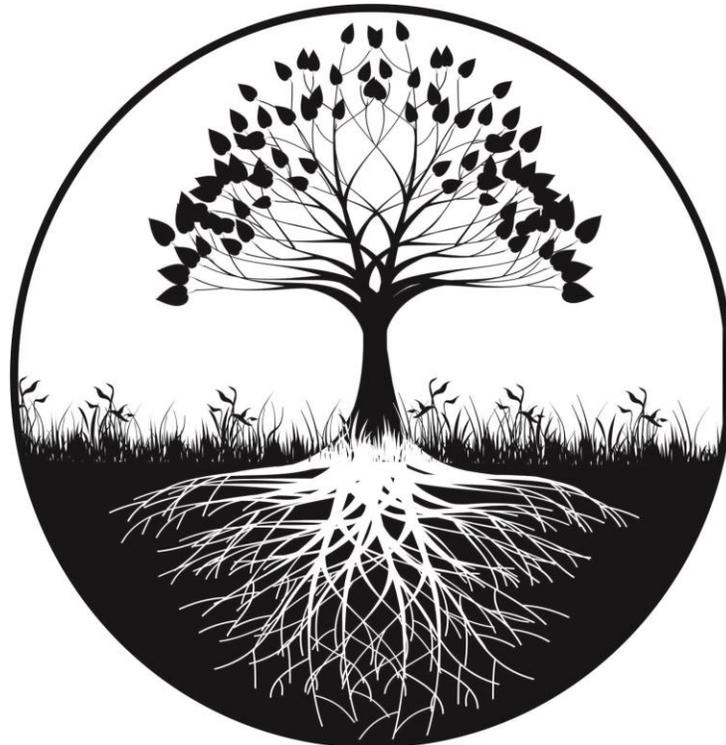




# MEMBERSHIP COVENANT





## General

The members of this local church recognize that we are more than an organization, even more than an evangelistic or teaching organization. We are a community of faith and a family in Jesus Christ. While various meetings of our community will include attenders and guests, we also have fully participating members. The difference between “attenders” and “members” can be summed up in the word “commitment”.

## **At Restored Community Church, we recognize the need for a formal “covenant” membership for at least four major reasons.**

**Biblical:** Christ is committed to the church. In Ephesians 5:25 Paul wrote, “... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...” (NAS) Also, in the New Testament, believers clearly identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted, committed participants.

**Cultural:** We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything... a job, a marriage, our country. The attitude has produced the phenomenon of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Formal church membership swims against the current of “consumer religion.” However, commitment builds character.

**Practical:** Membership defines who can be counted on. Every team has a roster. Every school has an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our community, our family. Formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they fulfill their God-given task of shepherding. Restored, by its very design, attracts seekers, spiritual explorers, observers and guests but at some point, it is important to identify those who truly comprise the “flock” at Restored – the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church.

**Personal:** Membership produces spiritual growth. The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. A person cannot be accountable without being committed to a specific church family. Membership provides proper care to the member. Recognizable membership moves each of us out of the fog of our good intentions and into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to “step out of the bleachers” and make a commitment to Christ and to a specific body. Membership can be a significant “defining moment” in one’s lifelong discipleship journey.

## **What is Membership?**

The Bible actually describes two kinds of “membership”. Scripture contains many references to the once-and-for-all union with Christ and his body, which happens at the instant of conversion (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22; 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-22). At that moment, a person becomes a “positional member” in the universal church of Jesus Christ, based solely on his or her merit and grace. Positional membership is eternal and unchanging. However, the Bible also urges positional members to continue growing by becoming covenant members in a specific local assembly (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:25-31; 14:12; 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Timothy 3:14-15). We cannot see the invisible bond of positional membership, but we can identify those who are the covenant members here at Restored.

***The Restored Community Church membership covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual members. We long for a committed “Oneness” in Christ.***

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The purpose of the church is to display the glory of God because everything exists for His glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God's restorative work in the world.

Since the beginning, God has been creating and calling His people for the display of His glory in a grand story of redemption and restoration. Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, the gospel is how the world is being made right. The gospel also carries with it the promise of ultimate renewal, a restoration even more glorious than Eden, and so now we as believers eagerly anticipate the return of Christ. The Church Universal (i.e., all believers, everywhere) is the way God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). The Church Universal is being used to write God's beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation. In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body is much more than a commitment to regular attendance or active involvement in community. It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ. The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2, 9), and the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. 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 members. As the Scriptures say, "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the hand 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 different gifts according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:3-8). Contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.

Membership at Restored Community Church is participation in a family, a small part of the universal household of God. All members are united to Christ and to each other. Unity within the church is expressed in love for God and a love for others, both those within the family and those who are not. Because of the identification of Christ with His church, Christians are expected to display His gospel in a manner worthy of Him (Ephesians 4:1).

## WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is generally defined as "a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties, especially for the performance of some action." In the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants. Some are 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). Some covenants are unconditional, meaning that two or more parties obligate themselves in such a way that the obligation of each party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other. In other words, there is a pledge to be faithful to the covenant regardless of the other person's faithfulness. Other covenants are conditional, meaning that the obligation of one party is at least in part dependent upon the faithfulness of the other. While God's gracious covenant with the Church Universal is unconditional, the local church covenant itself is in part conditional upon the faithfulness of each party. If at any time one of the parties, the individual member or corporate church body, fails in its obligations, the other party is freed from certain aspects of the covenant.

We come along side you in this covenant and dedicate ourselves to love you and lead you as Christ leads us. We ask that you also commit yourself to this covenant and come along with us as we dedicate our lives to Christ and walk out His plan for the body of Restored Community Church.

We understand that certain circumstances may provide valid grounds to transfer membership elsewhere (moving, calling, church discipline, etc.)

## Covenant Membership Process

To become a covenant member of Restored, a person

- must have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (as the leader of one's life and the forgiver of one's sins),
- must have been baptized by immersion in water in an obedient response to one's salvation received in Christ and following His example of baptism in the gospels.
- must support: Restored's statement of basic belief, Restored's roles of Pastors, Elders and members
- must be in communication with a member of the Restored leadership team about membership
- and must have signified the above by entering into a covenant relationship with the church by signing this document

## BASIC BELIEFS

The following beliefs represent the core of our beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately communicate these beliefs is not required, the rejection of any of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership in Restored Community Church.

I believe...

- that the Scriptures are true, authoritative, and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God; and that the Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit, the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
- that I am, along with all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action a sinner (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- that the deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:12; 6:23; James 1:14-15).
- that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin, and is both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- that Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (John 1:29; 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
- that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-52; John 20:1-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34).
- that Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
- in a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- that only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can I be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3:18; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).
- That God is the God of Restoration and through Him all things are restored through Christ Jesus (1 Peter 5:10)

## BIBLICAL DOCTRINES

While the doctrines expressed in the “Basic Beliefs” are those that are recognized to be the core beliefs within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs that the leadership of Restored Community Church is passionate about. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that Restored Community Church does preach, teach, and counsel in accordance with these convictions. Some examples:

- The gifts of the Holy Spirit
- The role of men and women in the church and home
- The relationship of God’s glory to man’s joy

In signing this covenant, I understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace. I will adhere to Restored Community Church’s “Basic Beliefs” and I will not be divisive over Restored Community Church’s theological distinctive found in the Churches Biblical Doctrines

# **THE ROLES OF THE RESTORED COMMUNITY CHURCH PASTORS AND ELDERS TO THE RESTORED COMMUNITY CHURCH BODY**

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, Pastors and elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is an overview of the requirement for Pastors and elders as spelled out within the Scriptures.

## **The Pastors and elders covenant...**

- to appoint elders and deacons according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to prayerfully seek God's Will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
- to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

## THE ROLES OF THE MEMBERS TO THE RESTORED COMMUNITY CHURCH BODY

As those who have experienced the grace of a life restored 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

### I covenant...

- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final word on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17;).
- to pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to regularly participate in the life of Restored Community Church by attending weekly services, becoming part of a LifeGroup, engaging in biblical community and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- to use the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death, while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:
  - I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Restored Community Church before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6).
  - I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity staying clear of adultery
  - I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip, and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).
- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, not becoming a stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).
- to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
  - following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another – the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration. Matthew 18, Galatians 6:1
  - receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).
- to do the following when I sin:
  - confess my sin to God and to fellow believers. (James 5:16)
  - repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10).
  - to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and will be diligent to strive for unity and peace within the Church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5)





## Signature Page

Having believed the gospel and have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and being in agreement with The Restored Community Church Membership Covenant, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with The Restored body.

New Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please turn this section into a Restored Community Church Leadership Team Member**