



Center City Church

Membership Packet



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Membership Overview

In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul tells us that the greatest love story ever told is between Jesus and His bride, the church. Being united with Christ and being united with His bride go hand in hand. To belong to Him is to belong to His people, as the Apostle Paul so beautifully describes earlier in Ephesians:

*“Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:10).
“Therefore (having received the gospel of grace) you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone.” (Ephesians 2:19-20)*

Being a church member is being united not merely to fellow believers, but being united in will, purpose and identity to Jesus Himself. He is our beloved and we are His. This marriage changes everything about our lives. Jesus cares about the church, so it is natural that those of us who are members of it would take serious joy in the position and privilege we have as Christ’s bride.

Being a member of a church does not save you; belonging to Jesus by grace through faith saves you. However, Scripture makes it clear that those who are saved are joined to Jesus’ Church (Acts 2:41, 47).

Center City Church is a family of God centered on knowing Christ and making Him known. Just as physical families need physical structures to provide security, safety, and a place to belong together, spiritual families need structures to support the purpose and aims of the church. While the house itself is not the family, the house is designed not only to protect, provide and strengthen the family but also to invite others in through hospitality.

The centerpiece of this family is our Father. The church home is where we help each other encounter God the Father. It is where we gather to be centered and (re)centered on His great love for us in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It’s the place where we encourage one another in growth and for glory. It’s the place where we are strengthened when we are weak and weary. It’s the place that continually reorients us to the Person of Christ. It’s the place to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and mourn with those who are mourning.

Becoming a member of a church isn’t like joining a country club. Rather, church membership is like being adopted into a family. By acknowledging who you already are as a child of God in Christ. Membership is an outward expression of that inward reality. We live



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out that identity when we joyfully commit to a mini local church family within the larger global church Family of God.

Moving towards church membership needs a clear process that includes clarity and connection with patience. In other words, after going through this process, if you aren't ready, we want to give you time to feel good about this step within God's family. Our process includes three main components (1) Pre-work / reading to make the most of the membership meetings. (2) Two membership teaching sessions (3) personal connection with at least one elder. Here are the steps to ensure clarity and confidence in becoming a member at Center City.

1. Read prior to attending our first Membership Class the following:
 - a. [Our Mission](#) and [Our Values](#)
 - b. [Statement of Faith](#)
 - c. [Membership Overview](#)
2. Read prior to attending our second Membership Class the following:
 - a. [Elder Affirmation of Faith](#)
 - b. [Relational Commitments](#)
 - c. [Excerpts from By-laws and Constitution](#)
3. Personal connection with at least one elder to go through your journey with Jesus (see [Marking Out Your Story Worksheet](#) worksheet) and further questions about Center City and the commitment page ([Membership Covenant](#)).

After signing the commitment page, you are presented to the members for approval and then to the church for Public Presentation¹.

Anyone wishing to become a member by leaving another church (transferring Membership) must do so well and for good reasons. This will be discussed during the Membership Interview so as to be able to honor the previous church and all involved.

¹ Commissioning and Public Presentation: All Elder-approved membership candidates will be recommended by the Elders to be affirmed by the congregation at a Center City Family meeting. Then the individual will covenant with and be commissioned as members of Center City Church. The new member will be presented before the Church fellowship to be welcomed and blessed by the congregation and baptized if not previously done so at a Gospel positive and scripture believing church.



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Our Mission

We wanted to keep our statement *simple, sticky, and sound*. *Simple* means using the fewest words possible. Simplicity is needed for our particular context in post-modern, post Christian San Diego. As we are seeking to reach largely unchurched and dechurched folks, a simple and clear mission statement goes a long way. *Sticky* means memorable, repeatable and pass-on-able. As we seek to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12), we want our people to be able to share our mission easily and succinctly. *Sound* means that while cannot say everything that we want to say, we want each chosen word and phrase to have strong biblical foundations undergirding them. Lastly, our mission statement must be true not only to who we are and but also to who we continually aspire to be.

That said, our Mission Statement is the following:

“We are a family of God, centered on knowing Christ, and making Him known.”

A Family of God:

For many people in San Diego, the word church carries vague or nondescript connotations. By defining the Church as the family of God, we are seeking to help our members understand the familial love and connection of those united by the precious blood of Christ. In such a multicultural city with so many different definitions and approaches to family, the Church as the family of God inspires relational unity, purpose, and love that are only possible through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

As our society moves toward increasingly dysfunctional families, identifying primarily as the family of God denotes relationships, love, time spent, intentionally, and one-anothering. Christ Himself sought to teach His own disciples this reality in Matthew 12:46-50.



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46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. **47** Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” **48** He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” **49** Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. **50** For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

What a profound jaw-dropping statement, especially in the context of a communal culture where family was everything. Christ, who redefined theological realities, spiritual realities and religious expectations, also redefining family. By God’s grace, we long for a more true and Godward experience of the family of God.

Centered on:

While they are short words, prepositions are significant. The difference between doing kingdom work *for* God and *with* God is profound. It is easy to slip into thinking we are doing kingdom work for God, as if God were served by human hands and needed anything (Acts 17:23-24). Yet, all kingdom work is really an invitation to more deeply live out of our union with Christ by abiding in Him who is the vine (John 15). Apart from Him, even with the best strategy, the best building, and the best music, we can do nothing. It is natural to share the disciples’ excitement at being used to advance the kingdom of God (Luke 10:17). However, we want to remember to rejoice that our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

As God shows us the work He is doing in the world, we are seeking to come alongside Him and praying that He would establish and give permanence to the works of our hands (Psalm 90:16-17). We recognize that unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it (Psalm 127:1). That said, we know that we have a part to play in doing the works of light while it is still time (John 9:4).



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...knowing Christ and making Him known:

"But whatever was gain to me I count as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead." - Philippians 3:7-11

Knowing Christ by faith, personally, relationally, powerfully is at the heart of our church. To know Christ is to know God: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The word that the Apostle Paul uses here 'to know' is not just intellectual but also affectual; this knowledge is not only factual knowledge but personally and experiential. We want people to know Christ through justification, sanctification, and glorification. Knowing Christ personally means knowing Him through His word. Peter declared where are we to go; you have the words of eternal life. (John 6:67). Later on the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples, 'beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:27)'.

To make Him known is the inevitable reality and overflow of knowing Him. In the book of Acts an amazing statement is made of those who came to know Christ powerfully and personally: *Acts 4: 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.* These unschool and ordinary men went on to say this six verses later: *Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."* They who had grown to know Him and be with Him, couldn't stop making Him known.



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Our Values

Our values are our passion; it's what we bleed. It's the blood that flows from the Heart of this Church, namely Jesus through His body. Just like blood gives vitality to the body, so too do our values give life to our mission. These values are both apparent (should be seen in us) but also ever expanding (should be growing in us). While there are so many things to value through our beautiful Creator, these are the values that have most shaped us that we want to see shape our church.

Cut us open and we hope to bleed the following six values. The later five ultimately flow from and radiate out of the central value of God's worth

1. **God's Worth**

God's glory, Jesus centrality, the Spirit's presence and power. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Luke 10:27)

2. **God's Word**

The authority, the boundaries, the mystery, the freedom and guidance that comes from living under God's word. (2 Tim 3:16, Isaiah 40:7)

3. **God With Us:**

Dependence on God (1 Peter 5:6-7, Philippians 4:7-8, 2 Chronicles 20:12, John 17:24)

4. **God's People**

Being God's church, both gathered and scattered (Acts 5:42, 2:38 - 42, Hebrews 3:13, 10:24)

5. **God's Work**

Making, Maturing, and Multiplying disciples of Jesus (Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:18-19, Ephesians 4:13, 2 Tim. 2:2)

6. **God's Way**

Team Ministry with Point Leadership. We value being a family on mission together (team) with clear leadership to neighbors and the next generation. (Mark 6:7, Acts 14:23)



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Statement of Faith

1. The Word of God

We believe the Bible is God's written revelation to man. It is composed of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. It is verbally inspired in every word, and absolutely inerrant in the original documents. We affirm the infallibility, sufficiency, and authority of Scripture. We affirm its supreme infallibility in all matters of faith and conduct.

2. The Trinity

We believe there is but one Living and true God, an infinite, all-knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons -- the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each equally deserving worship and obedience.

3. God the Father

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, He hears and answers prayers and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

4. Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ is God's only begotten son, and has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfection as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe He is not only truly God and truly man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born from a virgin. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of his people, and His personal visible return from heaven.

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person and is fully God. As the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, the Holy Spirit baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption.

6. Creation

We believe that all things were created by the Sovereign God for His glory. We believe that all humanity (male and female) is created in the image of God and possesses intrinsic value and worth. We believe that marriage is a union between male and female. We believe that we have been created for work, rest, and community. Despite being created in God's image, we believe that we are a fallen humanity.



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7. Regeneration

We believe every person is a sinner by nature and by choice and is, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe the salvation of man, who is sinful and lost, is instantaneous and accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God when the repentant sinner - enabled by the Holy Spirit - responds in faith. This salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works. All Christians are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.

8. The Church

We believe that all who put their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church, of which Christ is the head. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by building its members up in the faith, by instruction of the word, by fellowship, by keeping the ordinances, and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world. The formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own. We believe in the local church consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith and associated for worship, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and evangelism.

9. The Last Things

We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved; the saved unto the resurrection of life and the unsaved unto the resurrection of damnation. We believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ and the restoration of all things.



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Elder Affirmation of Faith

View our Elder Affirmation of Faith

[Here](#)

*Center City Church adopts this Elder Affirmation of Faith from our sending Church, Bethlehem Baptist Church, in Minneapolis, Minnesota

Relational Commitments

View our Relational Commitments

[Here](#)



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Excerpts from By-laws and Constitution

Full version link [here](#)

Article IX

Corporate Membership

Section 1: Corporate Members

The Corporation shall have no members. Any action which would otherwise require approval by a majority of all members shall only require approval of the Board of Elders. All rights which would otherwise vest in the members shall vest in the Board of Elders.

Section 2: Members of the Fellowship

Nothing contained in Section 1 of this Article shall be construed to limit the right of the Corporation to refer to persons associated with the Corporation as 'members' even though such persons are not corporate members, and no such reference in or outside of these Bylaws shall constitute anyone being a member, within the meaning of Section 5056 of the California Nonprofit Corporation Law. The Corporation may confer by amendment of its Articles or of these Bylaws some or all of the rights of a member, as set forth in the California Nonprofit Corporation Law, upon any person or persons who do not have the right to vote for the election of officers or on a disposition of substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or on a merger or on a dissolution or on changes to the Corporation's Articles or Bylaws, but no such person shall be a member within the meaning of said Section 5056.

Article X

Church Membership

Section 1: Membership

Membership in Center City Church will be open to all persons who confess Christ as their Lord and Savior, who show evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized as a believer in obedience to Christ, who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible and who have completed the required membership process. Each Member must affirm by signature their agreement with the church covenant, doctrinal statement, and the bylaws of Center City Church. The members of the church shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership with leadership from the elders. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith or such other evidence as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2: Membership explained:

Membership is a formal relationship between Center City Church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church. In



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membership Center City Church formally affirms an individual's profession of faith and baptism as credible; it promises to give oversight to the individual's discipleship; and to exercise discipline according to Scripture when necessary. The individual formally commits to working for the unity, good, and edification of the church and joyfully submits themselves to the service and the authority of its leaders.

Section 3: Voting Rights of Membership

Membership in this church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall entitle the member to vote at a meeting of the members on three primary things: 1) Affirmation and removal of members 2) Appointment and removal of officers 3) Anything else that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for affirmation. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to members who are in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action, and who have passed their sixteenth (16) birthday. Each member is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

Section 4: Denial of Membership

The Board of Elders has complete authority to deny a person membership if they determine that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, has not been baptized as a believer, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle. The decision made by the Board shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

Section 5: Admission of Applicants

Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the board of elders, at which service such applicants shall publicly affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as members.

Section 6: Responsibilities of Members

Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of the church body and shall submit to the authority of the Elders.

Section 7: Church Discipline

1. The purpose of church discipline: First, discipline aims to expose. Sin like cancer, loves to hide. Discipline exposes sin so that it might be cut out quickly (I Cor. 5:2). Second discipline aims to warn. A church does not enact God's retribution through discipline. Rather, it stages a small play that pictures the great judgment to come (I Cor. 5:5). Discipline is a compassionate warning. Third, it aims to save. Churches discipline when they see a member taking the path toward death. Church discipline aims to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him to recognize that Jesus is better than their sin and to turn back to him through repentance and faith (Gal. 6:1). Fourth, discipline aims to protect. Just as cancer spreads from one cell to another, so sin quickly spreads from one person to another (I Cor. 5:6). Fifth, discipline aims to present a good witness for Jesus. Church discipline helps preserve the attractive distinctiveness of God's people (I Cor. 5:1).
2. Four foundational assumptions for church discipline:
 - a. An expectation of transformation (Rom. 12:1-2). The New Covenant promises



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that God's people will live transformed lives through the power of the Spirit (Ez. 36:25-29). Even if that change comes slowly, churches should expect change—the visible fruit of God's grace and Spirit. Discipline is the right response to a lack of visible fruit, or, even more, the presence of bad fruit.

- b. The work of representation: Christians are called to represent Christ on earth (Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:20). They called to make him known through the lives and words. Discipline is the right response when Christians fail to represent Jesus and show no desire for doing so.
 - c. The local church's authority: Jesus gave the local church the authority of the keys to officially affirm and oversee citizens of his kingdom. Churches don't make people Christians. The Spirit does that. But churches have the declarative authority and responsibility for making public statements before the nations about who is and isn't a Christian. A church's act of excommunication, therefore, consist of the public statement that it can no longer vouch for an individual's citizenship in heaven. Excommunication is a church's declaration that it can no longer affirm that an individual is a Christian (Mt. 16:17-19).
 - d. Membership as submission: Christians are called, as a matter of obedience to Christ, to submit to the affirmation and oversight of local churches (Heb. 13:17). When threatened by a possible act of discipline, therefore, church members cannot simply preempt the church's action with a resignation.
3. The process of church discipline: Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however,
- a. It shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then
 - b. The warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then
 - c. It shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders determines that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church at a regularly scheduled worship service or at a meeting for the members in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service or at a meeting of the members. If, however, the erring individual



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does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then

- d. He or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service or a meeting of the members. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, turns from their sin, demonstrates genuine repentance, and request reinstatement before the Board of Elders, upon the elders accepting the repentance as genuine he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.
4. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service or a members meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:
 - a. Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, (1 Cor. 5:1-5);
 - b. Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the elders (Romans 16:17);
 - c. When a sin is so deliberate, repugnant, and indicative of a deep double mindedness that the elders are left unable to give credence to a profession of faith. In such cases even if the offending party claims to be repentant the church may need to proceed with excommunication give time to determine the genuineness of the repentance;
 - d. Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).
5. Agreement of Members to Submit to the Process of Church Discipline: The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree to submit to this process and that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignation from membership is possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.
6. Members of Center City Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone being endangered exists (Romans 13:1-7), as well as other violations of scripture that may not result in physical danger.



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7. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders, a member, non-member regular attender, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.
8. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders, the names of any members who have not attended a worship service or their Missional Community for a period of six months or longer may be removed from the membership rolls.

Section 8: Regular Meetings

A regular annual meeting of the church members shall be held in January of each year. At such regular annual meetings, the members shall hear a report of the affairs of the Corporation, and transact any other business that the Elders determine shall be brought before the meeting.

Section 9: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by order of the Lead Pastor, or by a quorum of the members of the Board of Elders.

Section 10: Notice of Meetings

Notice of regular meetings shall be given from the pulpit by the Pastor for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

Section 11: Quorum

At all meetings of the members, whether regular, special or adjourned, the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 12: Voting Rights

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the Corporation, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the Corporation, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of the Corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal. Said property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.



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Marking Out Your Story Worksheet

God has been moving in your life and writing out your story as you have come into a relationship with Him! While there is only one way to get to heaven, there are countless ways to get to Jesus. The following questions are a guide to help you first discern, then articulate your story so that you can “let your light shine before others for the praise of God in heaven” (Matthew 5:17)!

Remember that Your story doesn’t validate your relationship with Christ, it’s just a way for people to see Jesus. (The evidence of a truly changed heart is seen through real change in your thoughts, desires, and actions brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit. (Eph 1:13-14)

Question # 1 - Creator - How did God begin to start working in your life? Who did God put in front of you?

Question # 2 - Creation - What was your identity built on? (This doesn’t have to necessarily be a morally-depraved thing or something looked down upon. In fact, often we build our lives on good things that we have wrongly made ultimate. ie. family relationships, sports, opposite sex relationships, grades/success)

Question # 3 - Fall - How did this identity begin to fail you? What problem or issue did God use to begin to wake your desires for God? What sin or idols did you begin to see as sins against God? What, if any, doubts, fears or struggles were you experiencing that got your attention? What was your solution to fix these things? (ie. try harder, try something different, change attitude)



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Question # 4 - Redemption - What happened for you to respond to God? In other words, how is Jesus the hero of your story? How has he become the solution? How did Jesus get your attention? How did He start to change your affections?

Was there an experience, a promise in Scripture, a passage, a Bible Study, a sermon, a conversation with someone? In Galatians, Paul traces how God changed two areas of his life: the direction of his zeal and his chasing of man's approval. What are two areas of your life that you can similarly trace God's transformation through?

Question # 5 - New creation - In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul writes to this church explaining salvation: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" In what ways have you seen that God is creating a new you from the inside out through the Holy Spirit given to you? What areas have you seen change since becoming a Christian? What area of your life do you still see the need for change where only Jesus can help?



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Membership Covenant

In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul tells us that the greatest love story ever told is between Jesus and His bride, the church. Being united with Christ and being united with His bride go hand in hand. To belong to Him is to belong to His people, as the Apostle Paul so beautifully describes earlier in Ephesians:

Therefore (having received the gospel of grace) you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:19-20)

Being a church member is being united not only to fellow believers, but being united in will, purpose and identity to Jesus Himself. He is our beloved and we are His. This marriage changes everything about our lives. Jesus cares about the church, so it is natural that those of us who are members of it would take serious joy in the position and privilege we have as Christ's bride.

Being a member of a church does not save you; belonging to Jesus by grace through faith saves you. However, Scripture makes it clear that those who are saved are joined to Jesus' Church (Acts 2:41, 47).

Center City Church is a family of God centered on knowing Christ and making Him known. Just as physical families need physical structures to provide security, safety, and a place to belong together, spiritual families need structures to support the purpose and aims of the church. While the house itself is not the family, the house is designed not only to protect, provide and strengthen the family but also to invite others in through hospitality.

The centerpiece of this family is our Father. The church home is where we help each other encounter God the Father. It is where we gather to be centered and (re)centered on His great love for us in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It's the place where we encourage one another in growth and for glory. It's the place where we are strengthened when we are weak and weary. It's the place that continually reorients us to the Person of Christ. It's the place to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and mourn with those who are mourning.

Becoming a member of a church isn't like joining a country club. Rather, church membership is like being adopted as a child into a family. Membership is an outward expression of that inward identity as children. We live out that identity when we joyfully commit to a "mini-local-church family" within the "universal church family of God."



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Membership Covenant

One of our greatest convictions regarding church membership is that it should be meaningful and beneficial to all. One important way we can make our membership meaningful and beneficial is by covenanting together as a church family.

By God's grace, as members of Center City Church, we affirm this covenant for the Glory of God, the strengthening of one another, and for the advancement of the gospel.

As a member of Center City Church,

- I covenant to pursue Jesus who pursues me. I covenant to confess and repent regularly, to regular Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship with my Center City Family. My relationship will be evident through participating in weekly worship services, engaging in biblical community, serving those within and outside of this church, and living a life that glorifies God (Psalm 1:1-2, Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:23-25, Galatians 6:10, 1 Corinthians 10:31).
- I covenant to submit to the authority of the Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Proverbs 30:5, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- I covenant to submit to the leadership and affirmation of faith of the Elders (1 Peter 5:5). I agree with the Center City Church Statement of Faith, Core Values and Mission.
- I covenant to join the church in the mission of making disciples of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).
- I covenant to follow the Center City Relational Commitments, specifically to not create division with the church family. I will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Ephesians 4:1-3, Hebrews 13:7, 13:17).
- I covenant to steward the resources that God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasures. This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Proverbs 3:9, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8-9, 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- I agree, by God's grace, to pursue holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus. I will pursue complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from such practices as cohabitation, premarital sex, adultery, and pornography (Job 31:1, Proverbs 5, Romans 13:12-14, 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, Ephesians 5:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Hebrews 13:4).
- If married, I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Center City before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:1-9, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 1 Corinthians 6:1-11).



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- I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gluttony and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my pastors, and my conscience dictate (Philippians 3:18-19, Romans 1:28-32, 13:13, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:18).
- Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death through the power of the gospel (Matthew 5:23-24, Romans 8:13, James 5:16, 1 John 1:6-10, 1 Corinthians 1:18).
- I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with my Christian brothers and sisters, to submit to discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Psalm 141:5, Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, Hebrews 12:5-11, Galatians 6:1-8, 1 Timothy 5:20, 2 Timothy 2:25, Titus 1:9, 3:9-11, Revelation 2:5-7, 2:14-15).
- I accept the responsibility to notify the Center City Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any important questions, comments or concerns regarding Center City Church.

After reading, praying, and processing what it means to believe and belong to Center City Church, I, _____, by God's Grace, for His glory, through His Spirit, and for the spread of the Gospel, commit to this church and to its leaders.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Elder Covenant

Our Elders, as members adhering to all the commitments above, covenant to also..

- To provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture that accords with sound doctrine in accordance with the Elder Affirmation of Faith (Acts 20:27-28, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Titus 2:1).
- To train and put forward elders and pastors who will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- To prayerfully seek God's will for our church and to steward her resources in a wise and God-honoring manner.
- To care for and seek the growth of the church body, in part by equipping them for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13) and praying for them, particularly when sick (James 5:14).
- To be on guard against false teachers (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 you in fulfilling the responsibilities of church members (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philipians 3:17, Titus 2:7-8, 1 Peter 5:3).

FOR ELDERS TO SIGN:

After reading, praying, and processing what it means to believe and belong to Center City City, I, _____, by God's Grace, for His glory, through His Spirit, and for the spread of the Gospel, I commit to Lead this church as an Elder, with the strength that God provides.

Signature: _____

Date: _____