



Model Membership Agreement

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

_____ A. Statement of Faith
(initial)

We believe [insert Church's statement of Faith here].

_____ B. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality
(initial)

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive, covenantal union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, any use of pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church,

(Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4).

_____ C. Statement on Church Discipline:
(initial)

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastoral Staff [Board or similar body] and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastoral Staff [Board or similar body], is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall, be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, and dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastoral Staff [Board or similar body] short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Pastoral Staff [Board or similar body], as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18: 15-20.

[Optional provision] The members of this church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time.

_____ D. Statement on Mediation
(initial)

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peace Maker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion, (1 Cor. 6: 1-7).

The mediation will be governed by the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (*ICC Rules*), which we agree to follow, unless modified as stipulated by the parties. (The ICC Rules can be accessed at: http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.nuIWL7MOJtE/b.5335917/k.D8A2/Rules_of_Procedure.htm.) In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the *ICC Rules*, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of this dispute through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

_____ E. Statement on Life
(initial)

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God. Human life at all stages – including pre-born and end of life – should be valued and respected, (Psalm 139).

_____ F. Statement of Biblical Authority
(initial)

The above Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our [governing board][pastor][elders][Doctrinal Committee] is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

I have reviewed the statements above as indicated by my initials before each of them, and agree to be governed by all the provisions herein.

Date

Name