

Guide to Membership



CHRIST COMMUNITY
— CHURCH —

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Introduction

This “Guide to Membership” documents Christ Community Church’s shared confession of faith in Jesus Christ. It states the biblical teachings we believe to be essential to our faith and the biblical principles by which we agree to govern our fellowship.

This document is not intended to stand alone, but only with the reinforcement of the Word of God – the Bible. The Word of God is changeless and is the source of the principles used in writing this document.

For the purposes of Christ Community Church’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is the final, interpretive authority on the Bible’s meaning and application.

This document can be amended or changed as the need to further define the structure or scope of the ministry of Christ Community Church arises. The elders may appoint a temporary task force to study the need for change and to recommend necessary revisions. The results of the task force shall be presented to the elders, and if the elders deem the changes necessary, they shall present the changes to the membership for affirmation by numbered ballot by return of at least 50% of the ballots, of which 85% must be in favor of the changes. Minor revisions not affecting our theology, ministry philosophy, or overall structure and government shall be made at the discretion of the elders and shared with the membership.

Our Vision and Mission Statements

The vision of Christ Community Church is to bring glory and praise to God, to proclaim the hope of salvation in Christ to Eastern Idaho and beyond, and to lead disciples into the joy of Christ-centered community.

The mission of Christ Community Church is to make disciples of Jesus who gather to worship in Spirit and in truth (Jn 4:23), who grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), and who go into the world proclaiming the Gospel (Mt. 28:19-20).

Trademark Expression: Exalting Christ together

Our Vision Statement (Long Version)

In the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer, Christ Community Church will strive to be . . .

1. A church that brings glory and honor to the Triune God. Led by God's Spirit, we will cultivate an inspiring and an attractive community of wholehearted worship and praise to Him.
2. A church that is transformed by the life of Christ through accurate biblical teaching. A church that relentlessly and persistently proclaims the Gospel message.
3. A church that matures in Christ. We will create small groups, classes, seminars, and training environments that promote the spiritual growth and health of all believers.
4. A church that experiences healthy growth by making new disciples who become disciple-makers of their friends, family, and neighbors.
5. A church where children, youth, individuals and families can experience God's salvation, restoration, and purpose for their lives.

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6. A church that experiences an ever-increasing burden for local and foreign missions: To go where Christ has called us; To send and support long and short-term missionaries; To train each member of CCC to think and live “missionally” in the world.
7. A church that is led by qualified and trained leaders. We will raise up new leaders and volunteers through a recognition of God’s gifting and calling, through leadership mentoring and training, and strategic placement in ministry.
8. A church that promotes belonging as we relationally invite the residents of Idaho Falls and the surrounding area to gather and worship the one true God.
9. A church that regularly calls the congregation to corporate prayer for our people and our nation.
10. A church that strategically partners with other area Christian churches in order to seek unity in Christ and cooperation in the true Gospel.
11. A church that serves Christ by meeting the spiritual and material needs of those in our community.
12. A church that regularly gives visible and public witness to the life of God’s people.

Essentials of Faith and Teaching

The Bible

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible—God’s infallible written Word, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that it was verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error in the original manuscripts (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We hold that God has providentially preserved the biblical texts, thus, we affirm the Bible to be God’s word (Matthew 5:18; Mark 13:31; John 17:17). It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it

speaks, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God. It is eternal and relevant for all time (Matthew 5:18). The writings of the Bible are united in a single purpose – to declare the person and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

Scripture, in its entirety, originated with God and was given through the agency of chosen men. Therefore, Scripture speaks with the authority of God through the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of its human writers. Some statements of Scripture may be difficult to understand because of our lack of knowledge of the original language, historical context, and culture of the writers. Nevertheless, the things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clear in Scripture that all who are aided by God's Spirit may understand them (2 Peter 3:15-18; 1 John 2:27 [For more information on our beliefs, see "The Bible is God's Word" position paper.](#)

God

There is one true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; 46:9), infinite in being and perfection (Job 11:7-9), eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality (Psalm 90:2; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19). God is Spirit (John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17) and unchanging in His attributes (James 1:17). He is holy (Isaiah 6:3), all-powerful (Genesis 17:1; Job 42:2), ever-present (Psalm 139:7-10), and all-knowing (Psalm 147:5). God is love (1 John 4:8, 16)—mercifully forgiving sin (Exodus 34:6-7) and rewarding those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6)—and yet perfectly just, hating all sin (Psalm 5:5).

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all things in them out of nothing, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom, and goodness (Genesis 1:1ff; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11). By His

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sovereign power, He sustains His creation (Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16-17). By His providence He operates throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes (Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:11).

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the eternal second person of the Godhead, who took on flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth (Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:6-8). Thus, He became perfect man without ceasing to be God – two complete natures, divine and human, existing in one person (Colossians 1:19).

Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and voluntarily died on the cross for the sins of mankind as their substitute, according to the eternal plan of God, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone (1 Peter 2:21-25; John 10:17-18; Acts 2:23; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Matthew 20:28; 1 John 2:1-2). He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, and rose from the dead in His physical body (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). He ascended into heaven, where He is in the presence of God the Father (Acts 1:9-11). He is the only mediator between God and man and continually intercedes on behalf of believers (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:24-25).

Jesus Christ will return to earth literally, personally, and visibly. He will return to meet all believers in the air—the dead first and then those who are alive (Titus 2:13-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Peter 3). The imminence of His coming should motivate believers to live godly lives.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ (John 16:12-15). He convicts and draws people to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth, and seals them until the day of redemption (Titus 3:5; Romans 8:2-4; Ephesians 1:13-14). He baptizes believers into the

Body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). Every believer is to yield to the control of the Holy Spirit and, so, be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). In this way, believers experience the power to “put to death the deeds of the body,” to bear spiritual fruit, to please God, and to glorify God (Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

Man

Mankind (male and female) was created in the image of God and blessed with communion with God (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). Our first parents (Adam and Eve), however, disobeyed God’s command and fell from their original blessed state (Genesis 3:1-24). Because of their sin, they and all of their descendants (all mankind) were alienated from their Creator and incurred God’s just condemnation. Moreover, this historic fall brought about the corruption of man’s nature, so that of himself, man is totally unable to please God or accomplish anything that pertains to salvation (Romans 3:9-20; 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-3). Thus, every person is in need of forgiveness, regeneration, and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Salvation

The salvation of man is the work of God’s free grace and is not earned through human works or religious ceremony (Mark 10:17-21; Isaiah 64:6). God gives His righteousness to those who repent of their sin and trust in Christ alone for salvation. He justifies them in His sight on the basis of Christ’s death in their place, for their sins (John 3:16-18, 36; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:4-7). God gives assurance in His Word that, when He has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He will continue performing it until the day of its completion (Philippians 1:6; 1 John 5:13; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30).

The Bible affirms the bodily resurrection of all people: those who have received Jesus Christ as their personal

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Lord and Savior to everlasting life, and those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ to everlasting punishment (1 Corinthians 15:22-24; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15).

The Church

There is one true universal church comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. All those who come into union with Jesus Christ become part of His body, the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23).

God has provided His commands and His direction for the church in His Word, the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the source of the church's power. The Holy Spirit leads and guides the church through God's Word in a way which is consistent with God's Word. The Holy Spirit's role is to indwell, guide, and empower believers in order to conform them to the character of Christ (Psalm 119; John 16:13; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:10-11; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18; Galatians 5:16-25; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17; Titus 1:1-3).

Scripture commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word of God, fellowship, service to the congregation, outreach to the world, and observance of baptism and communion. The local expression of the church occurs wherever God's people meet together regularly in obedience to these commands. The members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ under the leadership and watchful care of elders and the supportive leadership of deacons (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-21; Galatians 6:2,10; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 10:24-25).

The church is commanded to make disciples of all nations by the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper (communion) are commanded by Christ. These sacraments, or ordinances, are to be practiced by the church. They are not to be regarded as a means of salvation but as a means to bring glory to Him (Matthew 26:19-29; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Acts 2:41).

Faith and Practice

Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We recognize that we should not and cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible (Romans 14:1-23; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

Statement on Marriage

Because God has ordained marriage and the Bible defines marriage as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and God, Christ Community Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman (Genesis 2:20-25; Matthew 19:3-10). Further, the pastors and staff of Christ Community Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Christ Community Church shall not be used for weddings other than those between one man and one woman.

Sanctity of Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image (Genesis 1:26-30). This includes human life in all its dimensions: pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through physical death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

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We believe this “Essentials of Faith and Teaching” to be an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches. All members shall refrain from advocating doctrines that are contradictory to this statement and from advocating any doctrine not included in it in such a way as to cause dissension (Ephesians 4:1-6; Titus 3:9-11).

Biblical Principles of Church Government

Leadership in the Local Church

God’s plan for leadership is revealed in Scripture. He launched the church by providing apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These believers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, initiated the spread of Christianity and brought local churches into existence through their teaching and preaching (1 Corinthians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 15:20).

As churches became established in the faith, and when more than one man became qualified, elders were appointed to continue the pastor-teaching ministry in each local church. The elders were given the ultimate responsibility for the oversight of that particular church body and the shepherding of its members (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

Some elders and other leaders will inevitably give more time to the spiritual leadership of the church than others and will be called to fill more demanding responsibilities. The church will assume responsibility to provide monetary compensation for those who are called to greater responsibilities (1 Corinthians 9:9-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Deacons were also appointed to serve in specific tasks, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders from performing their biblical responsibilities (Acts 6:1-7; Philippians 1:1).

These leaders, along with all members of the local body, form a unique organism – the local church. We at Christ Community Church follow this biblical pattern of the plurality of godly leadership: the oversight and watchful care of elders and the supportive leadership of deacons. Scripture teaches that we are to lovingly support our leaders and submit to their leadership (1 Timothy 5:17-19; 1 Peter 5:5; Hebrews 13:17).

God calls each of us to different areas of service and responsibility in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). As under-shepherds of Jesus Christ (the true Shepherd), elders are entrusted with the authority of spiritual oversight in the local church. Nevertheless, it is well to remember there is actual equality in Christ among elders, deacons, and all members of the body (Galatians 5:28).

Elders

Responsibilities of Elders

- 1. Shepherd the Flock** – Serving in humility, elders are to guide, direct, guard, and protect the members of the local church, seeking to meet their needs, guarding against false teachers, and warning against harmful influences (Acts 20:28-32; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
- 2. Lead Through Example** – Elders are to provide a scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before the congregation of a properly balanced life with a single purpose: to glorify God (1 Peter 5:3).
- 3. Teach and Exhort** – Elders are to see that the congregation is fed through insightful and accurate biblical instruction and admonition. They are to actively teach and defend the Christian faith (Titus 1:9; 1 Timothy 3:2; Philippians 1:1, 7).
- 4. Refute Those Who Contradict the Truth** – Elders are to confront those who are teaching what they should not teach or who are continuing in a pattern of

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behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. Thus, elders are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and community (Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9).

5. **Manage the Church** – Elders are to oversee the life of the church with the assistance of deacons and other godly leaders. They must be people who can “rule well” (1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17).
6. **Pray for the Sick** – Elders are to pray for the spiritual and the physical well-being of the members of the congregation (James 5:14).

Qualifications for Elders

(from 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9)

1. **Above Reproach** – Elders must be blameless, presenting no patterns of Scriptural disobedience or grounds for accusation.
2. **Husband of One Wife** – A married elder must be a devoted husband, totally committed morally and emotionally to his spouse. Past or present marital status is not a sole indicator of suitability for service as an elder.
3. **Temperate** – Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
4. **Prudent** – Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. **Respectable** – Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.
6. **Hospitable** – Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.

7. **Able to Teach** – Elders must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way (2 Timothy 2:24; 4:2).
8. **Not Addicted to Wine** – Elders must be free from all addictions, not just alcohol.
9. **Not Pugnacious** – Elders must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness, not having a quick temper.
10. **Not Contentious** – Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
11. **Free From the Love of Money** – Elders must not be stingy, greedy, or dishonest in private or business affairs. They should not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but rather should be a model of giving. Their desire to hold the position of elder should spring from a motive of service to both God and the congregation and leading by the Holy Spirit.
12. **Manage Own Household** – Elders must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children (pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents).
13. **Not a New Convert** – Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality.
14. **Good Reputation with Outsiders** – Elders must be well respected by unbelievers and be free from hypocrisy.
15. **Not Self-willed** – Elders must not be stubborn, insensitive, or prone to force opinions on others. They must be more interested in service than self-glorification. They must be willing to limit their liberty in Christ for the sake of others.

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- 16. Not Quick Tempered** – Elders must be able to exercise self-control and patience in difficult situations.
- 17. Loves What is Good** – Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
- 18. Just** – Elders must be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on Scriptural principle.
- 19. Devout** – Elders must be reverent, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own spiritual walk (Acts 20:28).
- 20. Holding Fast the Faithful Word** – Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Selection of Elders

Scripture gives evidence of the first elders being appointed by the founders of the church. This implies that the existing spiritual leadership of the church be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders to insure selection based on spiritual qualifications rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. Therefore, it would appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situation. Christ Community Church uses the following process to select elders:

- 1.** Each year, current members shall be provided with:
 - a) information and biblical teaching regarding the biblical qualifications of elders and the responsibilities of elders and,
 - b) a list of all men who are members of the congregation.
- 2.** Keeping in mind the biblical qualifications of elders, members shall be asked to prayerfully submit the

names of men who are members of Christ Community Church, whom they feel qualify as elders.

3. Members whose names are submitted shall be notified. These men will be encouraged to engage in self-appraisal in light of the scriptural qualifications. At any point in the selection process a man may withdraw his name from consideration if he does not believe that he meets the qualifications or if circumstances in his personal life prevent faithful service at the current time.
4. The elders shall prayerfully review all the nominees and select those individuals whom they believe to be qualified to serve as elders. Serious consideration will be given by the elder board to all nominees based upon the following criteria:
 - a. Membership and involvement in ministry at Christ Community Church.
 - b. Meeting the qualifications for elders as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
 - c. Demonstrated heart for shepherding and leading the church body and a track record as a mature, cooperative, team player.
 - d. Personal desire by the individual to be an elder.
 - e. Evaluation of the current status of the individual's family life, ministry life, career life, personal life, and financial life. For instance, is the person's life free of circumstances that would hinder faithful service as an elder at Christ Community Church for the next 2 or more years?
5. Those nominees selected as prospective elders will, at the discretion of the currently serving elders, be asked to agree to undertake a period of training and orientation designed to inform them of the demands of service as an elder and to prepare them for

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service. It is understood that new prospective elders may require a longer period of training and orientation than men who have previously served as elders.

6. Upon completion of training, and assuming he is still willing to serve and the currently serving elders still believe he meets the elder qualifications, the prospective elder shall be announced by November 8th to the members of Christ Community Church, who will have 30 days to show cause why he would not be qualified to serve.
7. At the end of the 30-day, period the prospective elder shall be presented to the members of Christ Community Church for affirmation by numbered ballot. Affirmation shall require the return of at least 50% of the ballots, of which 85% must be in favor of approval. Prospective elders who receive affirmation of the membership will be publicly commissioned by the current elders (Acts 15:3) and begin service immediately.

Scripture indicates no fixed term of service for elders. The following terms shall be practiced at Christ Community Church in order to encourage new leadership and to provide a time of rest for elders who have served for a long time.

Each elder shall serve for a minimum of two years and a maximum of five consecutive years. In each calendar year, all elders who have served five consecutive years shall step off the elder board and remain off for at least one year. After a one-year absence, an individual will not automatically return to active service as an elder, but may rejoin the elder board by being recognized through the regular elder selection process.

An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision or by a unanimous decision of the other elders. An individual who leaves the board of elders

is not precluded from future service as an elder, but he must again be recognized through the elder selection process described above. Each year there shall be a purposeful evaluation by the individual elder and the other elders of the individual's continued service. The biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his continued service, shall be considered.

Senior Pastor

The role of the Senior Pastor is grounded in the New Testament principles of spiritual gifts and leadership. The Senior Pastor, like any member of the Body of Christ, is uniquely gifted to take up his role and perform it with a spirit of Christian excellence.

The Senior Pastor must pastor the flock of God as an elder. His primary responsibilities are to pray for the needs of the body and to preach and teach the Word of God. Preaching and teaching must be performed accurately, with authority, and in a manner which communicates to the hearer. The goal of such praying, preaching, and teaching is to produce a mature body of believers, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who are equipped to perform the work of the ministry.

Pastoring the flock of God also includes exercising leadership in the daily management and development of pastoral staff and church activities. The Senior Pastor must continually hold purpose and direction before the congregation, in public and private, in example and speech, so as to promote a spirit of teamwork and unity.

The Senior Pastor must not be responsible to minister in areas unrelated to his primary function as teaching elder. The senior pastor must not be burdened with other responsibilities which detract from his study time and devotion to the Word of God. If this occurs, the result will be to miss the goal of a mature body of believers who are working together in a spirit of unity.

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The Senior Pastor should not be the only individual to exercise the gift of preaching and teaching. The New Testament emphasizes the need for other gifted teachers. One of the roles of the elders in the church is to facilitate ministry to the body in areas where there is a real need. This may occur through delegation of a particular task or appointment of a particular leader. As a result, the Senior Pastor is free to minister in his gift area.

The Senior Pastor shall automatically be an elder and shall serve continually in that capacity, as a voting member of the elder board. All other pastors shall serve on the elder board as non-voting members. They will attend elders' meetings and give input as they desire, but will not vote.

The Senior Pastor shall be supervised by, and shall report to, the voting elder board. The pastoral staff shall not participate with the voting elder board in supervising the Senior Pastor. All pastoral staff shall be supervised by, and shall report to, the Senior Pastor.

Selection of the Senior Pastor

The elders shall be responsible to conduct a search for possible candidates to fill the position of Senior Pastor in the event that position is vacated. A search committee may be formed at the discretion of the elders to help facilitate this process.

Once the elders have selected a candidate, that candidate shall be presented to the congregation for affirmation by numbered ballot by participation of at least 2/3 of the current members, of which 85% must be in favor of approval.

Staff Members

Staff members are to be considered co-ministers and, therefore, should be selected on the basis of the following criteria, in accordance with the New Testament principles of leadership:

- Love for the Lord and the display of a consistent godly walk.
- Specific commitment to the Christ Community Church body and co-leaders.
- Gifts, abilities, or credentials that qualify them for their area of ministry.

All staff members are required to meet deacon qualifications. The elders, however, may specify that a certain position must be filled with an individual possessing the qualifications of an elder. It is expected that all pastoral staff positions will be filled with individuals possessing the qualifications of an elder. All staff members fulfill a position of leadership and will serve as role models for other believers. Therefore, spiritual qualifications and walk are of the utmost importance.

The elders shall be responsible for the overall supervision and watchful care of the staff, including staff selection and dismissal when necessary. All non-pastoral staff members shall be supervised by, and shall report to, the elder board or a designated pastoral staff member. The specific roles and job descriptions for each staff member shall be determined by the elders in conjunction with the Senior Pastor. Staff salaries and compensation shall be determined annually by the elders.

Deacons

Responsibilities of Deacons

(from Acts 6:1-7)

Deacons (both men and women) are to serve under the direction of the elders, undertaking those areas of service necessary for the church's functioning that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders (pastors and staff) from performing their biblical responsibilities. No specific ongoing roles are mentioned in Scripture,

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probably because service needs change. Therefore, the role of deacons should be flexible.

Romans 16:1 indicates that women also served as deacons in the early Church. Christ Community Church affirms the role of women serving the church body in this way. It is presumed that women deacons would have the same basic qualifications and role as men deacons and would be selected following a similar manner.

Qualifications of Deacons

(from 1 Timothy 3:8-12)

- 1. Individuals of Dignity** – Deacons must be mature, of sound mind and character, yielded to the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Not Double-Tongued** – Deacons must demonstrate verbal consistency. They must not be prone to saying one thing to one person and something else to another.
- 3. Not Addicted to Wine** – Deacons must be free from all addictions, not just alcohol.
- 4. Free From the Love of Money** – Deacons must not be stingy, greedy or dishonest in private or business affairs. They should not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but rather should be models of giving.
- 5. Holding to the Mystery of Faith with a Clear Conscience** – Deacons must have a sound knowledge of Christian truths and a lifestyle in accord with them. They must not be easily swayed from the truth. Their desire to hold the position of deacon should spring from a motive of service to the Lord and the Body of Christ.
- 6. Beyond Reproach** – Deacons must display a lifestyle free from ongoing patterns of Scriptural disobedience.

7. **First Tested** – Deacons must have proven over time that they are faithful and that their walk is credible.
8. **Women Must be Faithful, Dignified, Temperate, Not Malicious Gossips** – Women deacons must be devoted to the Lord and yielded to the control of the Spirit.
9. **The Husband of One Wife** – A married deacon must be devoted and totally committed morally and emotionally to their spouse. Past or present marital status is not a sole indicator of suitability for service as a deacon.
10. **Manage Household Well** – Deacons must have well-ordered households, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children (pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents).

Selection of Deacons

The need for supportive leadership will arise as the various ministries of Christ Community Church develop. The responsibility to identify particular needs and choose leaders to address those needs will rest with the elders of Christ Community Church. Some ministries will be especially critical to the stability, unity, and vitality of Christ Community Church and therefore will require the leadership of a deacon who is chosen by the elders and affirmed by the congregation.

The process for choosing deacons will be:

1. When a ministry position which requires the leadership of a deacon becomes open or is newly identified, the elder board or a sub-group of elders shall identify and interview potential candidates for consideration for leading that ministry. The elders will consider the following criteria:
 - a. Membership and involvement in Christ Community Church.

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- b. Meeting the biblical qualifications of deacon.
 - c. Demonstrated leadership skills and a track record as a mature, cooperative, team player.
 - d. Personal desire by the individual to be a deacon and a passion for ministry in the area for which they are being considered.
 - e. Evaluation of the current status of the individual's family, ministry, career, character, and financial life to determine whether they are free of circumstances that would hinder faithful service for the next two or more years.
2. With their consent, suitable candidates shall have their name presented to the membership of Christ Community Church, who will be given 30 days to show cause why that person should not serve as a deacon.
 3. At the end of the 30-day period, the prospective deacon shall be presented to the members of the church for affirmation by numbered ballot. Affirmation shall require return of at least 50% of the ballots, of which 85% must be in favor of approval. Deacons who are affirmed will be commissioned publicly and begin service immediately.

A deacon will be asked to serve for a minimum of two years. If the elder board determines that an individual no longer meets the qualification of deacon or is no longer providing adequate leadership for their ministry, they may remove that person by consensus of the elder board (a quorum of 75% of the elders must be present at the vote) and then choose a new leader by following the above process.

If an individual member of Christ Community Church feels that an elder, deacon, or staff member is no longer providing adequate leadership, they should first discuss their reservations with that individual. If the matter cannot

be resolved in that way, the member should approach the elder board with their concerns.

Organizational Structure

Beyond the specific statements above, our *Structure of Ministry* does not require any particular organizational structure. The brief overview of our present organizational structure given below is provided simply as an aid to help the body understand and engage in ministry at Christ Community Church. In order to promote, support, and develop our various ministries, we have organized our staff, elders, deacons, deaconesses, and volunteers within four Ministry Divisions:

- 1. Worship and Fellowship** – The focus of this division is to help us respond to God’s presence in corporate worship, which is worthy of and brings glory to Him. The ministries in this division desire to help us grow to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matthew 22:37), so that our lives might be “to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:11-12). The ministries in this division currently include: Friendship, Prayer, and Worship.
- 2. Christian Education and Discipleship** – The focus of this division is to help us grow in our faith as Christ’s body and to equip us to do the work of the ministry “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-16). The ministries in this division currently include: Adult Education, Family and Children’s Ministry, Student Ministries, and Men and Women’s Ministries.
- 3. Missions, Evangelism and Outreach** – This division’s focus is to help us be faithful and effective in proclaiming Christ crucified to those who have not yet trusted in Him (Matthew 28:19-20). This division helps

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us share God's love and forgiveness locally, nationally, and internationally as we support fulltime missionaries and meet monetary, physical, and spiritual needs. The ministries in this division currently include: Missions, Samaritan Ministry, Outreach, and Helping Hands Ministry.

- 4. Support** – Our Support Division helps coordinate, strengthen, and enable the ministries above through faithful stewardship of the material resources, time, money, and energy with which God has entrusted us (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:4-8). The ministries in this division currently include: Financial Operations, Facility Care, Office and Administration, Media and Communications, and Staff Care.

Standards for Character and Conduct

Christ Community Church is completely and permanently dedicated to the Word of God as our guide for shaping character, evaluating behavior, setting values, creating standards, and judging all matters of character and conduct. Therefore:

- We expect all our members and leaders to strive to follow God's Word in all matters of character and conduct.
- We will use the Word of God in judging all questions of character and conduct in our members and leaders.
- We will act in accordance with the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-20 in addressing any brother or sister (in our membership, our leadership, or our circle of friends) who is living in violation of the standards, commands, and expectations of the Word of God.

- We will continually approach our brothers and sisters with a spirit of grace, a commitment to truth, and a heart to win them back to fellowship with the Lord and with other believers.

Discipline and Restoration of Members

Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs his walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the body, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church among non-believers.

Scripture teaches that confrontation should be approached and carried out with an attitude of love, concern, and humility. It should be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to be quick to forgive when there is a genuine expression of repentance on the part of a fellow believer.

Scripture, therefore, encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual well-being and teaches them to confront in love where there is evidence of sin. The goal for such confrontation is restoration of an erring Christian to fellowship with Christ and His body. We acknowledge the following biblical procedure for such confrontation as taught in Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 5:2; Corinthians 2:5-11; & Galatians 6:1-5:

1. If one has knowledge of ongoing sin in the life of a fellow believer, he should go promptly and confront the individual in private.
2. If there is no expression of repentance, he should reprove the individual in the presence of two or three witnesses.
3. If there is still no repentance, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought before the church. In the Christ Community Church structure, the matter

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should at this point be brought before the elders, as representatives of the church.

4. If there is no evidence of genuine repentance after confrontation by the elders, the elders should bring the matter before the whole congregation.
5. If there is still no evidence of repentance, Scripture teaches that the individual should be removed from the body and believers should break fellowship with him, until such time as there is genuine repentance.
6. When God does grant recognition of sin and repentance, the elders should promptly and lovingly lead in restoring the individual to fellowship.

Note: The same biblical principles and procedure for confrontation apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body. Scripture indicates that it is the responsibility of the believer to go promptly to his brother or sister when he has been offended or when he has reason to believe that he may have done the offending.

Membership in a Local Church

Purpose of Membership

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified themselves and committed themselves to a particular local body. We at Christ Community Church recognize the advantages of formal membership in order to implement the New Testament principles of commitment, accountability, and stewardship in the local Body of Christ (Acts 2:43-47; 11:26; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1).

Membership in Christ Community Church should not be confused with the act of becoming a Christian. An unbeliever becomes a Christian when he or she repents of their sins and trusts Christ as Lord and Savior. At that

point, he or she is raised from spiritual death to new life (Ephesians 2:1-6) and baptized into the one body of Christ by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). In this way, those saved by grace through faith are already members of the church in the most important sense. This is the way that the New Testament uses the term “member.” In contrast, as used below, “membership” is a practical expedient which helps Christians in the local church practice the biblical principles of commitment, accountability and stewardship.

Criteria for Membership

Christ Community Church membership shall be open to anyone twelve years of age or older who has trusted Christ as their Savior, has been baptized as a believer, and who takes the prescribed steps for membership (which are described in the section *Procedure for Becoming a Member*). Members eighteen years of age and older shall be voting members.

The church is commanded by Christ to make disciples of those who do not yet know Him, to baptize them, and to train them to observe Christ’s teachings (Matthew 28:18-20). Christ commanded baptism both as an act of obedience and as an act of identification with Him. Baptism is a visual representation of the spiritual transformation that has occurred inside an individual who has trusted in Christ for forgiveness of their sins (Romans 6:1-14).

We believe that baptism should follow conversion to Christ as a conscious act of obedience. We practice baptism by immersion because it most accurately reflects the meaning of the original word baptize.

Any person who has been baptized as a believer—whether at Christ Community Church or another church and whether by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion—shall be considered as having fulfilled this requirement for

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membership. Any person who has not been baptized as a believer shall be asked to submit to baptism by immersion before joining Christ Community Church (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 16:31; 18:8). We recognize that some believers who were baptized prior to their conversion may feel strongly that their baptism is valid and will desire not to be baptized a second time, while still desiring membership. In these cases, we will ask that the person meet with the elders and express their biblical convictions regarding this matter. The elders may waive the requirement of believer's baptism on the basis of such an interview.

Membership in the Body of Christ requires submission to Christ in every area of our lives. It requires purposeful commitment to and accountability to other believers and the careful stewardship of the resources God has given us (Galatians 6:1-5; Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 13:17) such as:

Our Time – Consistent fellowship with other believers is vital to the Christian life. Therefore believers should be willing to adjust their schedules to give priority to being with the body of Christ when it is corporately assembled. We must be willing to give of our time to build His Kingdom and to pursue those things of eternal significance (Romans 12:1-8; Titus 2; Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 6:33; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Romans 14:7-8).

Our Gifts and Talents – The Body of Christ is composed of many interdependent members, each uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the body. Therefore, each member should seek to identify, develop, and utilize his spiritual gifts and abilities and seek a place of service within the body, with the support and affirmation of the body (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-16; Matthew 25:14-30).

Our Treasures – Everything over which we have control is, in reality, owned by God. We have been bought by Christ's blood (1 Peter 1:17-19). We are His, and His

Kingdom should become the treasure we pursue. Stewardship is the act of placing all of our personal resources at Christ's disposal. Our giving is in response to Christ's giving up of Himself for us. We recognize the New Testament principle of proportional, regular, generous giving as the standard for Christians (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 6:38; Philippians 3:7-8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-7; Malachi 3:7-12; Romans 12:13).

Our Fellowship – We must continually seek to develop a spirit of mutual love, concern, encouragement, and the bearing of one another's burdens. We are to be concerned for each other's spiritual well-being, stimulating each other to a deeper walk and commitment to Christ. Moreover, when there is evidence of sin, we must lovingly confront one another according to biblical principles, thus preserving the integrity of the body, the spirit of peace, and the bond of unity (Psalm 133; Luke 17:3-4; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 4:1-6, 25-32; Philippians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:5-10).

Procedure for Becoming a Member

At Christ Community Church, we believe membership is an important step of commitment to God and to the local body of believers. The benefits of membership include: 1) helping to select new elders, deacons, and deaconesses; 2) serving as elders, deacons, and deaconesses; and 3) counting on the prayers, spiritual encouragement and material help of our fellowship in times of need.

We urge every attender of Christ Community Church to strongly consider becoming a member. Nevertheless, we do not insist on membership, and we do not look down on those who are not members. The procedure for becoming a member of Christ Community Church may seem rigorous. Our intent is simply to insure that those who join know us well and that we know them well.

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Those wishing to join Christ Community Church must:

1. Be at least 12 years of age.
2. Have made a personal decision to place their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.
3. Be baptized, or have been baptized, as a believer in Jesus Christ.
4. Complete the membership class, which is offered periodically to explain the beliefs, mission, vision, structure, and strategies of Christ Community Church.
5. Complete the membership application and sign the Christ Community Church membership covenant (these forms can be found at the end of this document).
6. Be interviewed by an elder or appointed leader in order to verbalize their personal testimony and resolve any questions or issues of concern.
7. Be approved by the elder board.

New members will be publicly introduced and welcomed at a Sunday morning service soon after their acceptance into membership.

Christ Community Church desires to maintain accurate and current membership records while ensuring that its members have an ongoing, active relationship with Christ Community Church. Therefore, upon notification that a member is no longer attending Christ Community Church, the circumstances of their non-attendance will be ascertained, and, if warranted, the member's name will be removed from the membership list.

Christ Community Church Application for Membership

1. Name: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

2. Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____

3. Age: 12–20 _____ 21–30 _____ 31–40 _____
41–50 _____ 51–60 _____ 61 & over _____

4. Children at Home (please indicate name and age):

5. Current Occupation/Employer:

Membership Covenant of Christ Community Church

My signature below certifies that, having placed my trust in Jesus Christ as my Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with the beliefs, mission, strategy, and structure of Christ Community Church, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite in membership with the Christ Community Church family. I commit myself to God and to the other members of Christ Community Church to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church
 - ...by acting in love toward other members,
 - ...by refusing to gossip,
 - ...by following the leaders, and
 - ...by practicing grace and truth in all my relationships (Romans 14:19; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 3:3-4; Hebrews 13:17).
2. I will share the responsibility of my church
 - ...by praying for its growth,
 - ...by inviting the unchurched to attend, and
 - ...by warmly welcoming those who visit (1 Thessalonians 1:2; Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7).
3. I will serve in the ministry of my church
 - ...by discovering my gifts and talents,
 - ...by being equipped to serve,
 - ...by developing a servant's heart, and
 - ...by finding a place of service in the body (1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 2:1-7).
4. I will support the testimony of my church
 - ...by attending faithfully,
 - ...by living a godly life, and
 - ...by giving regularly (Hebrews 10:24-25; Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Leviticus 27:30).

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Signed: _____

Date: _____

When you have completed the application to this point, please give this form to any elder or mail it to the church office. An elder will contact you for the membership interview.

9. Interview with an Elder

Elder: _____ Date: _____

Comments:

10. Action of Elder Board

Receive into Membership: Yes _____ No _____

Date: _____