



DISCOVER
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

A WELCOME FROM OUR PASTORS

In the studies that follow, we want to help you discover more about Christ Community Church. We hope to make the case that *membership* and *commitment* are actually good ideas—indeed, *biblical* ideas that have stood the test of time and displayed the wisdom of God for generation after generation.

We have designed this survey of membership around a course of independent study supplemented with our availability to help you if you have any questions. Membership in Christ's church requires some basic biblical background, which the packet will help provide. But it is also important that you feel like this is a church of people with whom you can relate and grow in Christ. To that end, we encourage you to take the opportunity to get to know us through our small groups, fellowship events and in just hanging out with us.

As for the lessons, you'll notice that they are designed for you to complete at your own pace. Take your time with them. Chew on them. Look up the verses and answer the questions. Periodically, we will have a "Discover Christ Community Church" class where you can work through the content with others. For information on the next class, email Byron Peters, byron@cccpc.org.

Ultimately, membership is your decision. This course does not commit you to join CCC. But, should you wish to join, all that will be left for you to do is 1) complete an interview with an elder, 2) write out your personal testimony - one page, 3) fill out a Ministry Interest Form, and 4) sign the Covenant of Membership.

We hope this course proves helpful to you! Please do not hesitate to call or email us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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WHAT IS NECESSARY TO BE A MEMBER OF CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH?

Lesson 1

In this first lesson, we're going to try to help you answer the question, "What is necessary for me to be a member of Christ Community Church?" You'll notice that there are only two things that we (following Scripture) require for membership: (1) A credible profession of faith in Christ, and (2) Willingness to affirm vows to the church.

THE FIRST THING THAT IS NECESSARY FOR MEMBERSHIP IS A CREDIBLE PROFESSION OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

When we enter into a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, we are given new life (John 3:1-8). We move from being objects of God's wrath to objects of his mercy (John 3:36; 1 Peter 1:3), and from enemies to sons and daughters (Romans 5:10; Romans 8:14-17). We are united to Christ and, therefore, to each other in him (Ephesians 2:19-22). We are a family in covenant with God and with one another.

It is this covenant unity in Christ that gives meaning and substance to the idea of "church membership." Notice how Scripture describes the Church as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:21-33), the people of God (2 Corinthians 6:16), God's household (1 Timothy 3:15) and the flock of God (John 10:1-13). The Church isn't God's optional afterthought. In fact, the Apostle Paul says that "God placed all things under [Jesus'] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:22). John Calvin, the great 16th century theologian, put it this way: "He cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother." Or, as the Westminster Confession of Faith (one of our constitutional documents) puts it, "Apart from the church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

A "credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ" is what is truly essential for membership in any Christian church, including Christ Community Church.

Using the following verses to inform your answer, write out what you think it means for someone to make a "credible profession of faith in Christ."

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John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

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Ephesians 2:1-10 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

THE SECOND THING THAT IS NECESSARY FOR MEMBERSHIP IS A WILLINGNESS TO AFFIRM THESE VOWS

Membership in the Church is “covenantal.” That means it involves promises, vows, and responsibilities. First, God’s promise (covenant) is to save all who come to him through faith in Jesus Christ. And in response, we take vows to trust and obey him. So, it is fitting that when we join a church, we affirm certain beliefs and make certain promises that express the central message of the Bible.

When you join Christ Community Church, you will be received into membership on the basis of your willingness to affirm these statement and take these vows by means of signing a “Covenant of Membership.”

Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?

Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Church and promise to study its purity and peace?

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WHY IS MEMBERSHIP IN CHRIST’S CHURCH IMPORTANT, ANYWAY?

If there is any institution that labors under gross misunderstanding and poor press reviews, it’s the Church. Yet, despite all our “issues,” the Church is still the apple of God’s eye, His Bride. And ugly or not, he is committed to her. So, we should be too.

In this lesson, we want to help you wrap your head and your heart around the church. Take your time with these passages. Enjoy them. You might just find yourself falling in love with this ugly Bride too.

A DEFINITION OF “THE CHURCH”

The Church is:

- a. The community of all believers in Jesus Christ
- b. called out of the world in all times and places
- c. but called together in the world in particular times and particular places where
- d. professed believers and their children gather
- e. around the true message of salvation in Jesus Christ as proclaimed
- f. verbally in the Word of God, the Bible,
- g. and visually in the sacraments of God, baptism and the Lord’s Supper,
- h. in order to worship God,
- i. build up one another,
- j. and evangelize all the peoples of the world.

Answer the following questions using the definition above.

Q. Who makes up the church?
A.

Q. What message stands at the “heart” of the church?
A.

Q. How is this message proclaimed (two ways)?
A.

Q. What are the three purposes for which the church exists?
A.

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Read through the verses below that support the definition above. Take time to mark them up as you notice how God describes his church. Ask God to help you see how much he loves his church.

1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Eph 3:10-11 His intent was that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord

Col. 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Acts 2:42 And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

2Tim. 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

1Tim. 4:13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

1Cor. 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Phil. 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT FOR HELPING KEEP US IN LINE WITH THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. 1 TIM 3:14-15

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1Tim. 3:14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

The Church supports the truth of the gospel like a witness supports the truth. As "the Church," Christians are the principal earthly witness to this truth. Hence, we are described as a "pillar of the truth." Without the church, the truth would not fall as a house without a foundation. It would simply be without this clear witness. The truth itself would not change or be diminished. The world would only be more cut off from all that is true and beautiful and good without the gracious witness of the church.

We need the church to help us know and understand the truth about the world, about ourselves, and about who He is. The Lord Jesus has established a true, visible church to be such a trustworthy guide for his people. As in the Old Testament the tribe of Levi was set aside to be the custodians of the revelation from God delivered through prophets (Leviticus 10:11; Malachi 2:4-7; Nehemiah 8:7-8; II Chronicles 15:3), so in the New Testament pastors and teachers have been set aside through ordination (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; I Timothy 4:14) to "guard the sacred deposit" of the gospel (I Timothy 6:20; II Timothy

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1:14; Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28-31) announced by Jesus through his apostles (Ephesians 2:20). Additionally, each member is called to grow in his or her ability to know and apply God's Word (2 Timothy 3:17).

- Q. What do you learn from the following verses about the relationship between the church (the body of Christ) and the truth?
A.

3 John 3-4 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Ephesians 4:21-25 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

1 Peter 1: 22-23 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT FOR HELPING US LOVE OTHERS WITH CHRIST'S LOVE.

All around us we see the consequences of our failure to love as God loves. Marriages break apart. Work relationships are tense. Parents and children are at each others' throats. But God has given us the Church not only to guard the truth, but to teach and enable us to love as he loves (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-8). By his Spirit, God enables his people (the Church) to forge bonds of love that really make a difference. Marriages are rescued. Work relationships are sweetened. Parents and children learn to live for Christ and not simply for their own agendas.

Love is patient, kind and selfless. In the family of God, the Church, we learn what it means to live this way with people who are very different from us. We learn how the love of Christ forges bonds that link us even though we have different skin color, different incomes or different ages. And we learn to love a world that needs to know love that never fails, never abandons and never loses hope.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:34)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law (Romans 13:8)

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart (1 Peter 1:22)

- Q. How do these verses help you think about what "love" in the Church should look like?
A.

THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT FOR HELPING US SUBMIT TO CHRIST'S AUTHORITY. HEBREWS 13:17

None of us naturally likes authority—until we consider living without it! Imagine a world with no laws, no police, no parents setting limits for their children. We wouldn't last long.

God has designed us to live under authority. He has given us governmental authorities to help protect our property and persons. He has given us social structures like marriage and family so that we can learn to live to serve and not just to be served. And God has given us the Church that we might live under the wise and loving direction of his Word. This works out in a couple of directions.

Informally, brothers and sisters encourage one another, teach, instruct and guide one another according to God's Word.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

More formally, God gives elders to help guide and guard his people through the proper teaching of his Word.

Heb. 13:17 Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

(Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders at Miletus--Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Matthew 18:15-20 If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed[a] in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Q. What benefits can you envision from having this sort of relationship with elders and other members in the church? What questions does this raise?

A.

Summary: Take just a moment to look over the lesson. See if you can write what you learned about the importance of the church in one sentence:

WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT PRESBYTERIANISM AND THE PCA?

Lesson 3

We describe Christ Community Church as “a congregation rooted in biblical, historic Christianity and affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).” That simply means we want to put first things first. That “first thing” is the gospel, (the “evangel”)—the good news of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. This is absolutely essential to salvation. First and foremost, we are Christians.

But, we are Presbyterians. Presbyterianism, as we know it today, originated during the time of the Protestant Reformation (16th century). Therefore, it is often associated with what is known as “reformed” or “covenant” theology. Simply put, presbyterianism is distinguished by a foundational interest in the Bible as God’s Word, God’s glory as our chief end, God’s sovereignty as our firm anchor and the grace of the gospel of Jesus as our great hope.

Presbyterianism is also a system of principles about how churches are to be governed, how God is to be worshipped, how and when people are to be baptized, etc. While the Bible speaks to these issues, and they are therefore important, we welcome as members all who affirm the essentials of the gospel. There is freedom to disagree on important, but non-essential, matters. Being Presbyterian is not necessary for salvation.

OUR VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

At the heart of reformed theology is an absolute commitment to the authority and infallibility of Scripture. All we know about God and what we are to believe about him and the duties he requires of us are to be found in Scripture alone. Scripture is inspired by God, is necessary for salvation through Christ, is sufficient as the lens through which to interpret all of life and is clear to all who would seek to understand it.

Q. What do you notice from these verses about Scripture’s origin and authority?

A.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21 Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Q. What does Jesus have to say about Scripture in Matthew 5:17-18 and Luke 24:44-49?

A.

Matthew 5:17-18 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

Baptism marks a person's solemn admission into the church of Jesus Christ. It is a sign pointing to the faithfulness of Christ, and a seal of God's promise to save all who believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Look up the following verses and write down what you notice about the importance of baptism. If you have not been baptized, you will have that opportunity when you join the church.

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

1 Cor 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Q. Do you have any questions about our approach to baptism?

A.

OUR VIEW AS A DENOMINATION: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The PCA is a Presbyterian Church which continues to hold to the Confessional Standards which have historically rooted Presbyterianism. These are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the Shorter Catechism.

As a denomination, the PCA is committed to both reformation and revival. We believe that the church must constantly be reforming itself according to the Word. We must never deviate from God's Word; and we receive and adopt the standards of our church as containing the system of doctrine taught in that Word. But we believe that the Word will always challenge us to change; and the Word will always bring life and never merely external or nominal religion.

Please visit www.pcanet.org. This is our denominational website.

Q. What questions do you have about Presbyterianism in general or the PCA in particular?

A.

WHAT IS CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH ABOUT, AND HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Lesson 4

It's clear from Scripture that every church is called to be involved in 3 things:

Worship (Psalm 29). The church exists for worship! This lies at the heart of our personal lives and our life as a body.

Nurture (Ephesians 4:11-16). The church exists as a body to be built up and to build one another up in Christ. God has made us so that each of us has a part to play in this body of Christ.

Outreach (Matthew 28:18-20). The church has a commission to "go and make disciples." We are to spread the good news of the gospel to every tongue, tribe, people and nation.

But what is our particular part in this grand Kingdom work? What has God called Christ Community Church to be and to do?

OUR MISSION

The mission of Christ Community Church is to glorify God by connecting the riches of Christ to the realities of life.

Notice a few things about this mission statement:

Our mission is about the "riches of Christ"—who he is and what he does. In Luke 24, Jesus tells his disciples (after his resurrection) that he himself stands at the center of all God has been doing since the beginning of the world (Luke 24:44). Paul tells us that Jesus Christ is to "have first place in everything" (Colossians 1:18). If we can help connect people to Jesus Christ, we've done the most important and significant and life-changing thing we can do

Our mission is about the "realities of life." Life comes at us hard and fast—with blessings and opportunities, or difficulties and challenges. The Bible teaches us that every one of these "realities" of our lives are there because God is up to something good (see Romans 8:28). If we can help to show how Jesus is relevant to every joy and every challenge, we've done something worthwhile and fundamental.

Our mission is about "connecting." Every church faces many challenges, but two "disconnects" concern us especially. First, many Christians tend to separate what Christ has done in the past and what he promises to do in the future from what he is doing here and now. We know he came first to live, die, and be raised on our behalf, and we know he is coming again to judge the living and the dead. Amazing truths! But Christ is also very much about changing and equipping us in the "here and now." Therefore, we aim to close the gap by becoming a community that applies Christ's riches to our present realities.

Second, many Christians tend to separate ministry from relationship. We tend to think "ministry" is what we do in formal, structured settings, like Sunday worship or Bible study, whereas "relationship" is what we do in casual, unstructured settings, like daily

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conversation. But God places a premium on our daily interactions. Therefore, we want to close the gap by becoming a community that seizes the mundane moments for helping one another change and serve.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit applies all that Christ has done and, through illuminating God's Word (the Bible) to us, is the One who bridges that gap until Jesus comes again (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Our mission is about the glory of God. If, from start to finish, we grow up into a church that connects the riches of Christ to the realities of life, we believe we will have glorified God. Ultimately, this is what we are about, since this is the work God himself is about in Christ "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Ephesians 1:3ff).

OUR VISION

We envision God transforming us by his Word and Spirit into the likeness of the risen Lord Jesus, so that we see as he sees and love as he loves, proclaiming Christ, making disciples, and renewing society in visionary gospel community. In this we rejoice, offering all God has given back to him in praise.

If our mission is the "north star," then our vision is a picture of what it will look like when God enables us to be fulfilling our mission.

Our vision begins with God. The first thing we envision is God doing a work in and among us. God is our only hope for transformation.

Transformation is by "Word and Spirit." God does not transform us in the abstract. Rather, by his Spirit he uses his Word preached and taught and studied, in the context of a visionary gospel community, to bring change.

Transformation is "into the likeness of the risen Lord Jesus." Jesus is our goal. Like the Apostle Paul, we long to be people who "consider everything loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus" our Lord (Phil 3:8). We want to know, love, serve, trust and obey Jesus Christ.

We want to "see as he sees and love as he loves." As human beings created in the image of God, we are always seeing and loving. We are always interpreting and worshipping. So much of the wreck we make of our lives is caused by not seeing the world as it really is—as God's world, created for his glory. We also err by not loving as Jesus loves. We are selfish and petty rather than selfless and lavish. Jesus is about helping us think and love rightly (Rom 12:1-2; John 17:26).

We want to proclaim Christ. Paul said, "I determined to know nothing among you except Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). We believe that the knowledge of Jesus Christ and a personal relationship with him is to be proclaimed to all the world. We want to be about that proclamation.

We want to make disciples. This is at the heart of Jesus' mandate for his church (Matthew 28:18-20). We want to help people become joyful, faithful, biblically informed, and passionate followers of Jesus Christ.

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We want to renew society. The Kingdom of God changes everything because it changes ultimate loyalties (Luke 14:25-35). When hearts are turned to Jesus, and when disciples of Jesus are made, society is changed and renewed.

We want to do all of this in “visionary gospel community.” We need each other (Hebrews 3:13) And yet we need to maintain a vision that keeps us moving beyond ourselves (1 John 2:10).

“In this we rejoice, offering all God has given back to him in praise.” All the fruit of our lives is to be for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Q. What thoughts or questions do you have about our mission and vision?

A.

BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership and Discipleship

We understand that growing in our ability to connect the riches of Christ to the realities of life is not “painting by numbers” or “jumping through hoops,” but wisdom that comes from Christ in the context of committed relationships and biblical Christian education. So we will work to help our members determine a discipleship plan that will be best for them and their family. We ask our members to keep their elder informed as to how they are progressing as disciples of Jesus Christ. Three elements are integral to our discipleship:

Love Love exists in relationships. We encourage every member to participate in one of our small groups, as they are able. This is the group that will know you best. This is where true “gospel community” is lived out.

Growth Growth takes curiosity, education, mentoring, and time. We encourage every member to participate in Sunday School. This is the place where the riches of Christ can be better understood and new friends made.

Worship Worship is at the heart of all we do. God calls every member to wholeheartedly engage in the worship service each Sunday, and then go out to offer all God has given back to Him in praise.

A calling, privilege and responsibility close to the heart of each of our elders is the call to shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:1-5). Each member of CCC has an elder who will know and pray for them.

Q. How might you want to be discipled and grow as a Christian in the context of CCC?

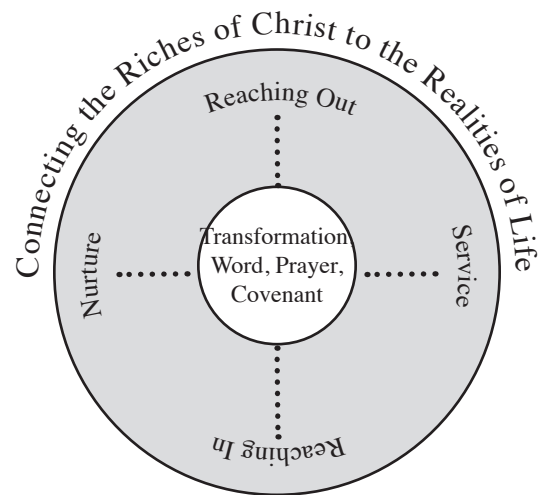
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Small Groups: Community Groups and Ministry Teams

The mission of Christ Community Church is to glorify God by connecting the riches of Christ to the realities of life. While the practical outworking of this mission is felt in multiple ways in the life of our church, it is felt nowhere more keenly than in our **community groups**. It is here, within the context of mutual giving and receiving that we seek to make connections between Christ's riches and life's realities, and to experience the goal of being transformed into the image of the risen Lord Jesus, so that we see as he sees and love as he loves.

As the diagram illustrates, our Community groups involve us together in studying the word, praying together, and living in covenant community. We follow the sermon series in our studies, so that new people can easily jump into our groups. Contact one of our pastors to get more information about our community groups.



Gifts

God has given his people gifts. **Spiritual gifts** are from God to us and are to be used in the context of the church to serve and build others up. Read these passages and mark the gifts that are listed. These lists are not exhaustive of all the gifts God gives his people, but they are representative of the types of gifts he gives.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

*Romans 12:3-8
Ephesians 4:7, 11-13*

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The process of discovering one's spiritual gifts is an exciting one. Usually it involves trying your hand at many different things so that, over time, you begin to see what you enjoy and what you are especially gifted at. It also helps when we notice other's gifts and encourage their expression and use. God's calling and gifts may also change over the course of time, so we ought to be open to new undertakings in Kingdom service.

Q. What might your spiritual gifts be?

A.

God also gives us **material gifts**, and has designed his church so that ministry might be financed through the giving of material gifts to the work of the church. Read the following verses and ask, "What principles of giving do they teach?"

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Matthew 6:19-20 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Scripture recognizes three basic types of **material gifts**.

Tithes. "Tithe" means one-tenth of one's income. In the Old Testament, this was the standard requirement God demanded from his people. How much more, in light of the gift of Jesus Christ and forgiveness of sins, ought the New Testament church offer up tithes to God from all he gives us? (Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-34; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23)

Offerings. Offerings are special gifts, normally given out of assets and not income, for specific projects. These include gifts to the facility fund and to world missions. (Exodus 35:1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:1-20; 2 Corinthians 8-9)

Alms. Alms are gifts given directly to the poor or gifts given through our regular "alms offerings" to help with mercy needs. (Deuteronomy 15:11; Proverbs 21:13; Matthew 6:2-4)

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A third gift God has given all of us is the gift of **time**. Our desire is that each member will seek to discern God's calling with respect to the time he or she gives in service to the church. For example, sign up to help with facility set-up, greeting, youth ministry, music, works of mercy, prayer, administration, etc., following Christ who "did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 10:45).

Ephesians 5:15-16 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

notes

Q. What questions might you have about the use of your gifts of time, talent and treasure for the work of the Kingdom through Christ Community Church?

A.

Government and Discipline

In addition to the right preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the sacraments (Baptism and Lord's Supper), a third mark of the church is discipline. Discipline is first of all "positive"—the teaching and instruction that comes in the context of the family of God. But it can also be "negative" in the sense that sin is exposed. Most often God uses our close family and friends to reveal our sin, resulting in the wonderful experience of repentance and forgiveness (1 John 1:9). But in some rare instances, church members become hardened to their sin, and begin to live in ways that bring dishonor to Christ.

What is the church to do in this situation? Fortunately, the Bible has instruction for us.

Because the administration of biblical discipline is so important and requires such sensitivity and wisdom, our Book of Church Order has clear guidelines to direct us in such circumstances. Please see Matthew 18:15-20 and Galatians 6:1, and visit <http://www.pcanet.org/bco/> if you are interested in seeing how biblical discipline is handled in the PCA.

Should you join CCC and then leave our area, we will continue to maintain your name on the roll of our church until you join another church. The process of you moving your membership to another church is generally called a "transfer of membership." It has been the practice of the church historically to keep a person "on the roll" until they have transferred their membership to another branch of Christ's church. So, say you move from Chapel Hill to Michigan for graduate school. You take a couple of months to visit various churches. You find one you like and decide to join. So you go through their membership class and they receive you into membership. Ordinarily, the church will ask whether you are joining their church by transfer from another church, so that they can notify the previous church of what has taken place. Once we receive word that another church has received you into their membership, our elders complete the loop by transferring your membership.

Perhaps an analogy from Scripture will help. The Bible describes church members as "sheep" (Psalm 23; John 10, for example). In terms of the scenario above, the "sheep" has moved from one shepherd's care to another. The first shepherd will not just let the sheep go and hope it finds a new flock! He will watch over it until he is sure that the new shepherd "has" that sheep.

We find that sometimes people have not understood the importance of joining a church when they relocate. So they pay little attention to this important matter. After 6 months or a year, they wonder why we are still contacting them and praying for them. From their perspective, they have moved on. But from our perspective, they are still under our care (and we are accountable to God for them—see 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). If after a year they have not made any attempt to join another church and are not showing any signs of wanting to do so, we will erase their name from the roll of our church as an act of pastoral discipline. Of course, every situation is different. We have kept people on our rolls for several years as they have moved frequently or been unable to take a membership class at a new church before moving to their next location. But generally, members who relocate have a year to join another church. Because our church has so many transient members, we feel it important to underscore this so that there is no misunderstanding in the future.

Q. What questions do you have about our practice of church discipline?
A.

Nursery Service

Caring for children is a constant challenge faced by churches like ours. So, from the very beginning, the session of decided that every able-bodied member would be expected to serve in the nursery a number of times a year. Here's how we put it:

The session of Christ Community Church is excited to institute a nursery care policy that automatically assigns nursery duty to all who are members or who are on track for membership in CCC (and not teaching in SS or Children's Worship).

Consider the benefits:

Fulfilling our membership vows as many hands work together to lighten the constant (blessed!) load of caring for our little ones.

The opportunity to get to know other members of CCC while caring for our children.

Nursery duty probably only 6-7 times a year.

Relief for parents who normally are the ones who end up staffing the nursery—the very ones who need a break!

It gives us a very tangible way to fulfill the vow we make when infants are baptized in our church: "Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the Christian nurture of this child?"

If you cannot work on the date assigned to you, please take initiative to switch with someone else on the list and email the Nursery Coordinator of the change. If you are uncomfortable serving in this way, please talk this over with your ruling elder or with our Children's Director, Lori Stepp.

The session of CCC is so excited about this because it is perhaps the most tangible opportunity yet for the saints of Christ Community Church to demonstrate the fact that we are a family and a body in Christ. For Christ's sake, for the children's sake, and for our nursery coordinator's sake, let's follow Christ in serving these little ones, remembering His example, "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve . . ." (Mark 10:45).

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THE COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP

You are received into membership in Christ Community Church on the basis of your signed Covenant of Membership. Please take time to carefully consider whether you can, in good conscience, make these vows. If so, we ask you to sign the Covenant of Membership.

Believing myself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy, and Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, I receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel, I resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that I will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ, I promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of my ability, and I submit myself to the government and discipline of the Church and promise to study its purity and peace.

_____ (Signature) ___ I have been baptized ___ I need to be baptized

_____ Print Name _____ (Date) _____ (Approx. Date of Baptism)

Current Mailing Address: _____

Current E-Mail Address: _____

Current Phone Number: _____

I wish to join by the following method:

___ 1) By transfer of membership from _____ Church.

Denomination: _____

At what address should we write the church for your membership letter?

_____ (zip) _____

___ 2) By reaffirmation of faith

___ 3) By profession of faith (Have you been baptized?) _____

___ 4) As an associate member

What is the name and address of your home church?

_____ (zip) _____

Family Information:

The names and membership status of other my immediate family are as follows:

Spouse: Name: _____

Baptized (Yes / No) Date of Baptism _____

Membership is held at another church (Yes /No)

Name and Address of church, if applicable: _____

Child: Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Baptized (Yes / No) Date of Baptism _____

Membership is held at another church (Yes /No)

Name and Address of church, if applicable: _____

Child: Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Baptized (Yes / No) Date of Baptism _____

Membership is held at another church (Yes /No)

Name and Address of church, if applicable: _____

Please list other Children on the Back of this Covenant

**PLEASE SIGN THIS COVENANT AND GIVE TO AN ELDER OR MAIL TO
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 1526 E FRANKLIN ST. SUITE 201, CHAPEL HILL, NC 27514**

How to Write Your Personal Testimony

There are many great resources available to help you write out the story of how you came to know Jesus Christ in a compelling, non-threatening way (just type “Writing a personal testimony” on Google and you’ll find some good help). We encourage you to make it a goal to use this exercise as the start of that process, so that you can be ready to bear witness to Jesus Christ through a well-prepared and thoughtful look back at God’s work in your life.

The goal of this exercise is not so much to present that polished, 3-minute testimony (as worthy a goal as that is!), but to give the elders of Christ Community Church a window into your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Please write, in a page or two, the following main points.

1. Start with a brief description of your life before Christ. We don’t need all the details, but help us to understand what life before Christ was like. If you don’t remember a time before you knew Christ, then what has spiritual growth looked like for you over the years?

2. Next, describe how you came to know Christ. Why was Jesus becoming attractive to you as the answer to your sin problem? What Scriptures were especially meaningful to you? What role did repentance and faith in Christ play?

3. Finally, describe what your life has been like after coming to know Christ. How have you grown? Where do you still long to grow more?

Ministry Team Interest Form

To fill out the Ministry Team interest form, type this link into your browser and fill out the online form.

bit.ly/5wCWgT