

ARTICLE I - Members

SECTION A - CHURCH MEMBERS

1. Qualifications

Church Members will be those who affirm the Statement of Faith and Covenant of the Church.

1. Prospective Members may present themselves directly to the Pastor or Elders or may be recommended to them by any Member.
2. Qualified candidates will be recommended to the Church for membership by the Pastor, or Elders and will be voted upon at any regular or special business meeting of the Church.
3. Prior to being presented to the Church for a vote of membership, prospective Members will complete the Church's Membership Course and participate in a membership interview with the Elders.

2. Reception

The reception of Church Members will be held at a Sunday service.

1. Duties

It is the duty of all Members to remain in good standing. Members in good standing are faithful to the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, faithfully attend the services of this Church, give regularly for its support and its benevolences as the Lord enables, share in its organized work, and are not under Church discipline. Individuals not following these duties will be considered "Inactive Members" as described in Paragraph 5, Item d.

1. Biblical Conflict Resolution and Restoration
2. Our Commitments

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict (Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26; Matt. 5-9). We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ (1 Cor. 10:31-11: 1; Rom. 8:28-29, Jas 1:2-4). Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on His grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:

Glorify God. Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we seek to please and honor God - by depending on His wisdom, power, and love; by faithfully obeying His commands; and by seeking to maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude (1 Cor. 10: 31; Jas

4:1-3; Psalms 37:1-6; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:12; John 14:15; Jas. 3:17-18; Rom. 12: 17- 21; Mark 11:25).

Get The Log Out Of Your Own Eye. Instead of attacking others or dwelling on their wrongs, we will take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts – confessing our sins, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we leave caused (Matt. 7:3- 5; 1 John 1:8-9; Prov. 28:13; Col. 3:5-14; Luke 19:8).

Gently Restore. Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will choose to overlook minor offenses, or we will talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When a conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner (Matt. 18:15-20; Jas. 5:9; Prov. 19:11; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).

Go And Be Reconciled. Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation – forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences (Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Matt. 7-12; Phil. 2:3-4).

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an assignment, not an accident. We will remember that success, in God's eyes, is not a matter of specific results but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that our service as peacemakers brings praise to our Lord and leads others to know His infinite love (Matt. 25:14-21; 1 Pet. 2:19, 4:19; Rom. 12:18; John 13:34-35).

Our Process

This Church is committed to resolving in a biblical manner all disputes that may arise within our body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (Matt. 5:9; John 17:20-23; Rom. 12:18; Eph. 4: 1-3) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Scripture (Prov. 19:11; Matt. 5:23-25; 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are obligatory on all Christians and absolutely essential for the well-being and work of the Church. Therefore,

Any and all disputes in this Church shall be resolved according to biblical principles, as provided in this By-law.

When a Member of this Church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another Member or the decision by a Church Leader, he shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows:

Self-examination: The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself and take responsibility for his contribution to a problem (Matt. 7:3-5), and he shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious that it cannot be overlooked (Prov. 19:11; Prov. 12:16; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:8).

Go to the offender: If the offense is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the offender in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed his own wrongdoing (Matt. 18:15).

Involve others: If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences (Matt. 18:16). These other people should normally be Elders or other Members of this Church, although in some cases they may be other respected Christians in the community, or trained conciliators from a Christian Church or Christian Conciliation ministry committed to biblical principles. At the request of either party to the dispute, the Church shall make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

If Church efforts to secure reconciliation fail, the Church may exercise the corrective steps of Church discipline as described in 5 below, Termination of Membership.

If a dispute arises within the Church or between a Member and the Church and cannot be resolved through the internal procedures described above, it shall be resolved as follows:

The dispute shall be submitted to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, and judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

All mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith and our basic form of government, unless this requirement is modified or waived by all parties to the dispute.

If a dispute submitted to arbitration involves a decision reached by the voting Members of the Church, the arbitrators shall uphold the Church's decisions on matters of doctrine and Church discipline.

This section covers all Members, as well as the Church as a corporate entity and its agents, including its Pastors, Officers, Staff, and Volunteers. It covers any and all disputes among Church Members, and includes, but is not limited to, claims arising from or related to Church Membership, doctrine, policy, practice, counseling, discipline, decisions, actions, or failures to act, including claims based on civil statute or for personal injury.

By joining this Church, all Members agree that these methods shall provide the sole remedy for any dispute arising against the Church and its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the Church in a civil court or agency, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

If a dispute or claim involves an alleged injury or damage to which the Church's insurance applies, and if the Church's insurer refuses to submit to mediation or arbitration as described in this section, either the Church or the Member alleging the injury or damage may declare that this section is no longer binding with regard to that part of the dispute or claim to which the Church's insurance applies.

Any person whose Membership has been terminated for any offense may have it restored by vote of the Church upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

1. Termination of Membership

1. Any Church Member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any other evangelical Church is entitled to receive it upon written request. In case of removal to another community, such request should be made promptly. This letter will be valid as a recommendation for only one year from its date, unless renewed, and this restriction will be stated in the letter.
2. If a Member desires to join a religious body with which this Church is not in fellowship or which would not receive its letter, the Church may, upon request, give a certificate of good standing and terminate the Membership.
3. If a Member in good standing requests to be released from the covenant obligations to this Church, such a request will be granted, and the Membership terminated after the Church will have patiently and kindly endeavored to secure a continuance in its fellowship.
4. Persons, while yet holding Membership in the Church, who for a period of six months have the ability yet have not been faithful to the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, have not been faithful to the services of the Church, and have not given regularly for its support and its benevolences, as the Lord has enabled, will, upon the advice of the Elders, and after due notice to them, be presented to the congregation for a vote to be placed on a list of "Inactive Members." They will not thereafter be included in statistics of regular Church Members nor be allowed to vote.
5. After a period of one year, when their prolonged absence or other conduct indicates that they have abandoned their Membership with this Church, the above defined "Inactive Members" shall, after due notice to them, be dropped from the roll of the Church by the congregation by a 2/3 vote of the Members present.
6. Membership shall be terminated by the congregation by a 2/3 vote of the Members present if any of the following reasons exist:
 7. Failure to respond to correspondence,
 8. Unknown address, and/or
 9. Formal/Corrective Church discipline.

SECTION B - RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Church Members who are eighteen years of age or over, and in good standing (Article I, Section A, Item 3) will be eligible to hold any position for which they are qualified and will have the right to vote upon all matters.

Church Members who are under the age of eighteen and in good standing (Article I, Section A, Item 3) will have voting privileges except in matters of finance.

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