



# Covenant Life

## church

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12

### Covenant Life Church Membership Covenant

The membership covenant of Covenant Life Church is birthed out of our love for the church and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy, which is found in the presence of the Lord. The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions.

As one who has been led by the Spirit of God to repent of my sins, believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior, and place my faith in the finished work of Jesus on my behalf; As one who has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by immersion following my conversion; I solemnly and joyfully enter into a covenant with other believers of Covenant Life Church and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will covenant together:

- to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final authority on all issues.
- to pursue Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines, and to teach our children the same.
- to repent quickly of sin and to submit myself to the accountability of others and discipline of the church in the event of sin.
- to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ.
- to actively participate in the life of this church by attending weekly services, properly observing the ordinances of the church, joining a missional community, participating in members' meetings, and serving both those within and outside of Covenant Life.
- to love our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and to consider their interests in higher regard than my own.
- to pray for the ministries, members, mission, elders, leadership, and activities of Covenant Life Church.
- to spur other believers on to love and good deeds, all the while refraining from anything that produces division or disunity in the body of Christ.
- to steward the resources God has given us, leading to regular and generous financial giving, as well as participation in biblical community and other service opportunities that are sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary.
- to pray for and make the most of opportunities to share the gospel...to live all of life with gospel intentionality.
- to use the gifts given by the Spirit to edify Covenant Life Church and the world at large.
- to submit to the elders that God has entrusted to lead the church.
- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another.
- clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both the elders and members of Covenant Life Church
- establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for the body of Covenant Life
- serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness
- Each of these functions is in accordance with the document's overall vision to provide an accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that Covenant Life Church would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. [the Covenant Life Church membership covenant is located on the back of this document]

## Covenant Life Church Membership

The church exists for the display of the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Followers of Jesus have graciously been invited into God's redemptive purposes in the world. From the beginning, God has been creating and calling forth His people for the display of His glory in a grand narrative of redemption and reconciliation. Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, the gospel is the means by which the world is being made right. The gospel also carries with it the promise of ultimate renewal, a restoration even more glorious than Eden, and thus believers eagerly anticipate the return of Christ. The Church (universal) is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world. The Church (universal) is being used to write God's beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation. In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus. The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God, the bride of Christ, and the body of Christ. Just as the human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its members. We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit. Thus, contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other...we belong together. Membership at Covenant Life Church is participation in a family, a microcosm of the universal household of God. All members are united to Christ and thus to each other. Unity within the church is expressed in love for God and a love for others, both those within the family and those who are not. Because of the identification of Christ with His church, Christians are expected to display His gospel in a manner, which is worthy of Him (Ephesians 4.1).

## What is a Covenant?

A covenant is generally defined as "a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." A number of covenants are found within Scripture, some between men and God and others solely between men. Some covenants are unconditional, meaning that two or more parties obligate themselves in such a way that the obligation of each party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other. In other words, there is a pledge to be faithful to the covenant regardless of the other person's faithfulness. Other covenants are conditional, meaning that the obligation of one party is at least in part dependent upon the faithfulness of the other. While God's gracious covenant with the Church (universal) is unconditional, the local church covenant itself is in part conditioned upon the faithfulness of each party. The covenant at Covenant Life Church contains many conditions that are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ-follower regardless of any failure on the part of the local church to live up to her covenant obligations. If at any time a member feels as though the corporate body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and

humbly express concerns to the leadership of the church. If the church elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness then the member is freed from his or her membership obligations and is encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church's disobedience. While focusing primarily on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her elders and individual members, the covenant is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

## Statement of Basic Belief

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Covenant Life. I believe...

- the Scriptures are true, authoritative, and sufficient (Psalm 119.7-11; 2 Tim. 3.16-17; 2 Peter 1.20-21)
- that there is only one God (Deut. 6.4; Isaiah 45.5-6; Isaiah 46.9-10; John 17.3; 1 Tim. 2.5)
- that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and that the Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit, the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son (Gen. 1.26; Psalm 45.6-7; Psalm 110.1; Matt. 3.13-17; Matt. 28.17-20; 1 Cor. 12.4-6)
- that I am, along with all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action a sinner (Gen. 6.5; Psalm 51.5; Jeremiah 17.9; Romans 3.23; 5.8, 12-21; 7.18; Eph. 2.1-3)
- that the deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Gen. 2.15-17, Gen. 3.19, Rom. 5.12; 6.23; James 1.14-15)
- that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully human (Matt. 1.20; Luke 2.52; John 1.1-4, 14; Col. 1.15-20; Heb. 1.1-3)
- that Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (John 1.29, 10.1-18; Rom. 5.8; 1 Cor. 15.1-4; 2 Cor. 5.21; Gal. 1.4; 1 Ptr. 3.18)
- that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matt. 28.1-20; Mark 16.1-8; Luke 24.1-53; John 1.20-21.25; 1 Cor. 15.12-34)
- that Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14.3; Acts 1.11; 1 Thes. 4.16; Heb. 9.28; 1 John 3.2; Rev. 1.7)
- in a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment (Matt. 25.31; John 5.28-29; Acts
- that only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can I be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3.18, 14.6; Acts 4.12; Rom. 3.21-26; 1 Tim. 2.5-6)

## Statement of Biblical Doctrine

While the doctrines expressed in the previous section are those that are recognized to be universal and primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs about which the leadership of Covenant Life Church is passionate. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that Covenant Life Church will preach, teach, and counsel in accordance with these theological convictions. I understand it is a responsibility of covenant membership to have read "What We Believe" (<http://covenantlifetampa.org/about-us/beliefs/>) in its entirety and address any questions, comments, or concerns, with an elder of Covenant Life Church. I also understand that Covenant Life Church has certain theological convictions to which it is strongly committed. For instance, divine sovereignty, gifts of the Holy Spirit, believer's baptism by immersion, role of men and women in the church and home, and relationship of God's glory to man's joy. Finally, I understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace; I will adhere to Covenant Life's "Statement of Biblical Doctrine," and I will not be divisive over Covenant Life's theological distinctives expounded in "What We Believe."

## Biblical Obligations of Covenant Life Church Elders to the church body

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is a comprehensive overview of the requirements for elders as defined within Scriptures. The elders covenant...

### Statement of Basic Belief

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Covenant Life. I believe...

- to appoint elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in Scripture (1 Tim. 3.1-13; Titus 1.5-9; 1 Peter 5.1-4)
- to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the Spirit (Acts 20.28; 1 Peter 5.1-4)
- to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love (Matt. 28.16-20; Eph. 4.15-16; James 5.14; 1 Peter 5.1-4)
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole Scripture (Acts 20.27-28; 1 Tim. 4.16; 2 Tim. 4.1-5; Titus 2.1)
- to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Eph. 4.11-16)
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matt. 7.15; John 10.12-13; Acts 20.28-31; 1 Tim. 1.3-7; 1 John 4.1)
- to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole (Matt. 18.15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6.1; James 5.19-20)
- to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated in the church covenant (Phil. 3.17; 1 Tim. 4.12; Titus 2.7-8; 1 Peter 5.3)

