

Membership Agreement

- I. The gospel is the hope of the world. As we read the Scriptures, we see the overarching themes of God's providence, power and provision to reconcile mankind and the created world to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we aim to be explicitly Gospel-centered in all that we preach, teach, and practice. We believe...
 - A. The Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
 - B. There is only one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, who eternally exists in three distinct Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6, 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7, 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
 - C. All things exist for the glory of God (Psalm 148; Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 61:3; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 1:3-14).
 - D. All humanity, Christ excluded, is sinful by both birth and action (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 5:12-21, 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
 - E. The deserved penalty for sin is physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:19; Romans 5:12, 6:23; James 1:14-15).
 - F. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, John 1:14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
 - G. Jesus Christ died as the sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for sin (John 1:29, 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
 - H. Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25, 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
 - I. There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Only those who turn from sin and to Jesus in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal reward. Those who do not turn from sin and to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
 - J. Only through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

- II. The Elders of Refuge Christian Fellowship Covenant - 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 an extensive overview of the requirements for elders as spelled out within the Scriptures. We covenant:
- A. To appoint elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - B. 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 of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - C. To care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16 Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - D. To provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
 - E. To equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
 - F. To be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
 - G. 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 (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
 - H. To set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).
 - I. We will strive to fulfill these responsibilities with humility, courage and faithfulness, knowing that "We are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account." -Hebrews 13:17 Following the example of that great shepherd of the sheep - The Lord Jesus Christ
- III. Biblical Obligations of the Members to Refuge Christian Fellowship Members - As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as "living by the Spirit" (Romans 8). The requirements of this membership covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible yet non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith in Christ produces. I covenant:

- A. To submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
 - B. To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
 - C. To follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church: by being baptized after my conversion and by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion.
 - D. To regularly participate in the life of Refuge Christian Fellowship by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
 - E. To steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
 - F. By God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:
 - G. I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
 - H. I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation before pursuing a biblically grounded divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6).
 - I. I will refrain from sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).
- IV. I will refrain from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish (Romans 14:14-23). And to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present an occasion to sin to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

- V. To submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by: following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another – the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
- VI. To receive righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).
- VII. To do the following when I sin: confess my sin to God and to fellow believers, repent, and seek help to put my sin to death. (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- VIII. To submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).
- IX. To do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons: to notify the appropriate staff member and to seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.