

South Church Membership

And [God] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ –Ephesians 4.11-12

The apostle Paul proclaims that God provides local leadership to lovingly guide & direct His Church. Leaders equip the saints for ministry through the preaching and teaching of God's Word (see also 1 Timothy 3.2). As overseers, elders & deacons attend to the physical & spiritual needs of the local church family (see Acts 6, 20.28 and Titus 1.9). Our Lord calls His leaders to humbly serve the members whom He has placed in their care (see Acts 20.28 and Luke 22.26).

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. –Acts 20.28

In order for church leadership to equip, encourage, guide & direct the flock, they must be able to distinguish between visitors, acquaintances, and those truly committed to our local South Church family.

A membership covenant provides our church family with a clear idea as to who in the congregation has agreed upon and is committed to walking together in loving obedience & fellowship. In today's come-&-go, take-it-or-leave-it culture, it is important for our church family—leadership & membership alike—to know who can be relied upon and held accountable to Biblical Truth.

Without a membership of mutually dedicated, responsible and accountable people, whose lives are submitted to Biblically-qualified church-appointed leaders (Ep4.1-3,11-12,Hb13.17,1Pt5.5), anyone could simply say, "I don't care what you think. You can't judge me. I'll just go down the street to the next church where no one will question my sin." But God so loved His Church family that He gave her one another, and supplied her with pastors, elders and deacons to disciple & help mature her through the ministry of His Word (Ep4.1-3).

While elders & deacons are God's gifts to the local church for spiritual & physical guidance, direction and equipping, it is not these governing leaders, but local church members who have the authority under the Lord & according to His Word in Ephesians 4, Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5, Acts 15.

The South Church Membership Covenant states the general principles of our worship & life together.

If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. –1 Peter 4.11

South Church Membership Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord & Savior, and, on the profession of our faith and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ worshiping at South Church.

By God's grace through the power of His enabling Holy Spirit, I will do my best to joyfully...

- worship God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit as three Persons, yet one God
- submit to the authority of the Scriptures (Ps119,2Ti3.14-17,2Pt1.19-21)
- help the South Church family grow in the knowledge of the Lord (1Th2.7)
- walk in Christian love (Ep5.2), dedicating ourselves to holiness (Hb12.4,1Pt1.13-16) & disciplined Christian living (1Co5.9-13,9.27,Ps141.5,Mt18.15-20,Hb12.5-11)
- walk carefully in the world (Ep5.15,Ja4.4)
- be just in our dealings (Mi6.8)
- be faithful in our engagements (Lk16.10,Mt25.23)
- be exemplary in our behavior (Ro12.2), confess sin to God & fellow believers, repent & seek help from the Body of Christ in putting my sin to death (Ro8.13,Co3.5,Ja5.16,1Jn1.6-10)
- avoid all gossip (Pv11.13,16.28,26.20), backbiting (Ja4.11-12,Ep4.29) and excessive anger (Ep4.26,31)
- seek God's help in abstaining from illegal drugs, and any food or drink practices that may bring unwarranted harm to the Body of Christ or jeopardize our own or another's faith (Ep5.18,Pv20.1,Ga5.19-21,Ro1.28-32,13.13,1Co6.19-20,Ja3.3-18)
- live in Christian sympathy to the trials & difficulties of others (1Pt3.8,Ep4.32,Mt5.7,Ro12.15)
- be courteous in speech (Co4.6)
- be slow to take offense (Ja1.19), eager for reconciliation and mindful to secure reconciliation without delay as directed by our Savior who gave His life to reconcile us to God (Mt5.9,23-24,18.15,2Co5.18-19)
- educate our children in the Christian faith (Pv22.6,Dt6.6-7)
- pray for one another (Ja5.16,1Ti2.1)
- physically, prayerfully and financially support the ministries of the South Church family (Hb10.23-25,Ep6.18,1Co16.1-2,Ac2.42-47,Ti3.14,Mt25.14-30,Ro12.1-2,2Co8-9,1Pt4.10-11)
- help spread the Gospel to all personally, locally, and globally (Mt28.19-20)

I agree that, as "child of the light", I should walk differently from the world, living in accord with the articles of our Christian faith wherever the Lord may use me and wherever I may worship.

Should I move on from the South Church family, as soon as I am able, I will unite with another local church family to continue my growth in the spirit of this covenant & principles of God's Word.

Signed:

Date:

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