



VILLAGE CHURCH
at midlothian

Member Covenant

updated May 2012

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Explanation

"...Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." – Romans 12:1-2

As Christians, we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Village Church at Midlothian holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in His sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).

"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." – Romans 12:3-8

Being a member of Village Church at Midlothian is really about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time the church leaders are covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..." – First Peter 4:8-10

What is the Church?

The church exists for the display of the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God's redemptive purposes in the world.

Since 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 (i.e., all believers, everywhere) is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). 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 body (i.e., a particular group of believers in a particular locale) 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 Christ.

The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2, 9) and the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its individual members. As the Scriptures say, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Corinthians 12:21). Likewise, a member of the church cannot say to another member that he or she is unnecessary. We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:3-8). Contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.

Membership at Village Church at Midlothian 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 that is worthy of Him (Ephesians 4:1).

What is a covenant?

A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ezek. 20:44; 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos. 2:19-20; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:13). The Village Church at Midlothian covenant includes a statement of faith, a statement of basic belief, the obligations of Village Church to its members, and the obligations of members to Village Church. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His glory and His bride, the church (Eph. 5:25).

Statement of Faith

I am a Christian saved solely by the grace of God from His eternal wrath by faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through His death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (John 3:16-18; Rom. 3:23-26; Eph. 2:8-10). I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be as revealed in the Scriptures (Isa. 5:6; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25-26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25-27; 14:6-7; 15:5). I have repented of my sins and have been made a new creation in Christ (First John 1:9; Second Cor. 5:17). In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized to personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and to publicly demonstrate my commitment as a disciple of Jesus (Col. 2:12; First Pet. 3:21).

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 Village Church at Midlothian.

I believe...

the Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5).

The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit. The Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 29:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

I am, along with all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action a sinner (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).

the deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:12; 6:23; James 1:14-15).

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, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my 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).

Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34).

Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).

there will be 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 in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

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; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Statement of Biblical Doctrine

While the doctrines expressed in the “Statement of Basic Belief” 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 Village Church at Midlothian is passionate. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that Village Church will preach, teach and counsel in accordance with these theological convictions.

I understand that it is a responsibility of covenant membership to have read the “Statement of Biblical Doctrine” (www.villagechurch.cc) of Village Church at Midlothian in its entirety and address any questions, comments, or concerns with a pastor. I also understand that Village Church’s doctrine is also communicated and specified through various channels, such as sermons, published materials, and other writings distributed by Village Church at Midlothian. I will adhere to Village Church’s “Statement of Basic Belief” and I will not be divisive over Village Church’s theological distinctives and convictions.

Commitment of Village Church at Midlothian to its members

We covenant that your pastors, elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (First Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, First Peter 5:1-4).

We covenant to seek God’s will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; First Peter 5:1-5).

We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).

We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; First Tim. 5:17-18).

We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).

We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; First Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).

We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (First Cor. 11:1, Phil. 3:17; First Tim. 4:12).

My commitment to Village Church at Midlothian as a member

I have read and understood the Village statement of Basic Belief and Biblical Doctrinal and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).

I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; Second Tim. 3:16-17).

I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, Village Church Community Groups, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; Second Peter 1:3).

I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in a Community Group (Rom. 12:1-8; Second Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; First Peter 4:10-11).

I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family without relinquishing my membership through a formal written notice (Heb. 13:17).

I covenant to submit to discipline by God through His Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise. I agree not to pursue any legal action in regards to measure taken in accordance with church discipline (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5, 6; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).

I agree, by God’s grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (Second Cor. 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication (Job 31:1; Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12-14; First Cor. 6:9-7,16; Heb. 13:4); I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my pastors, and my conscience dictate (First Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21). I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Village Church before pursuing 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). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13, Col. 3:5; First John 1:6-10).

My commitment to the mission of Village Church at Midlothian

We are changed people seeing lives changed through the mission of Jesus.

Village Church Mission Statement: Village Church at Midlothian exists to connect people to God through the hope that is found in Jesus and to teach them to live His mission in this culture to reproduce their faith in others.

I have read the mission statement of Village Church at Midlothian and commit to live out this mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, that my identity would be in Him, my worship would be for Him, my fellowship would be through Him, and my interaction with the culture would be for His glory.

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Village Church and is acknowledgement of my submission to the leadership of the church as they submit to Christ. I accept the responsibility to notify Village Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Village Church at Midlothian. If I should leave the church for righteous reasons, I agree to notify an appropriate staff member and seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.

Member Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Village Pastor Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____