

# Membership Covenant

*City On A Hill Church exists to  
invest itself in the lives of others,  
live the gospel of Jesus Christ,  
and follow Him together.*



## **Why do we need a covenant?**

God has graciously chosen to redeem for Himself a people who are called by His name, forgiven, and given a restored relationship with Him. All this and more is possible because God has said He wants it to be so. He made the decision to covenant with us.

Because of our relationship with God, we can now extend this gracious, life giving relationship to others by becoming a part of a covenant bearing Church.

Submitting to a local church accomplishes a number of crucial things. Church membership:

1. Identifies us with Christ.
2. Distinguishes us from the world.
3. Guides us into the righteousness of Christ by presenting a standard of personal and corporate righteousness.
4. Acts as a witness to non-Christians.
5. Glorifies God and enables us to enjoy his glory.
6. Identifies us with God's people.
7. Assists us in living the Christian life through the accountability of brothers and sisters in the faith.
8. Makes us responsible for specific believers.
9. Protects us from the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

In other words, "the covenant commitment of the local church makes the invisible new covenant visible. It's an earthly symbol, sign, or analogy of this wonderful heavenly reality" (Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love*, 267).

## **What is a Covenant?**

According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, a covenant is "a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." The covenant that God makes with Abram in Genesis 15 is an example of a covenant where God assumes all the obligations of both sides of the agreement. 2 Samuel 5 tells of a covenant made between

men where both sides would be required to fulfill certain terms of the agreement. Anyone seeking to become a member of City On A Hill Church would be entering into an agreement like the second example.

There are many principles taught in scripture that apply to followers of Christ everywhere. This document in no way covers all of these teachings. The goal here is to make clear to all who would seek membership with City On A Hill Church the obligations that both the individual and the Church enter into together, to the glory of God and the building up of the body of Christ.

## **What is the Church?**

The church refers to all those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ (Titus 2:14), repented of their sin (Mark 1:15), and who have become part of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). Those who are part of the church universal have been called out of their former way of living to become something entirely new, with a whole new reason for living. This new way of life seeks to sacrifice self for the benefit of others, become a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1-2), and find its functional place alongside other believers in Christ. In this way, the local Church is compared to a human body in scripture, each person becomes an indispensable part to ensure it's overall health. No matter what the culture around us says or what conditions it places on the value of an individual, we need each other and are incomplete without each other.

All City On A Hill members are part of the family of God. We are in Christ and united together with Christ. As family members we recognize the need to live in a way that honors Christ and protects our union. This is the most effective way to show the world around us the love of Christ (John 13:35).

## **Doctrinal Convictions**

What makes our beliefs distinct can be divided between beliefs that are primary to all followers of Christ and those we believe are important but secondary in position.

### **Essential beliefs**

As an EFCA Church, we have adopted its Statement of Faith – Basic beliefs for all followers of Christ. The points below should be carefully read and understood. If any point is unclear, it is the responsibility of the individual to seek to grow in knowledge and appreciation before entering into a membership covenant.

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

### **God**

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

### **The Bible**

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

### **The Human Condition**

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated

from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

### **Jesus Christ**

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

### **The Work of Christ**

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

### **The Holy Spirit**

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

### **The Church**

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

## **Christian Living**

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

## **Christ's Return**

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

## **Response and Eternal Destiny**

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

## **Other beliefs**

The Statement of Faith above is limited to doctrines that are of primary importance to us as a Church. At the same time, there are other beliefs not listed here that will be taught from scripture that not all Christ followers enjoy complete agreement on. The Pastor and the Elder Team have theological convictions when it comes to the sovereignty of God, the role of men and women in the church, and baptism, to name a few. For example, there is room at City On A Hill Church for differences of

interpretation regarding how and when Christ will return, see our Constitution, Article IV.

If anyone, member or not, has a concern regarding any biblical teaching, these concerns should be brought before the Elders in a timely and loving way. No member should give an opportunity for division to enter into our Church over any issue that is not considered primary to the gospel of Christ and the essential teachings of scripture.

## **Leadership responsibilities**

*Elders covenant with the Church to . . .*

- Exercise oversight in a selfless, loving way that would please God (1 Peter 5:1-4).
- Care for the people of the Church, feed, them, keep them from danger, seek the welfare of the sick and injured, and bring back those who have strayed (Ezekiel 34:1-6; Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14).
- Teach and counsel from the bible (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- Equip other believers for ministry work (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- Select new elders for affirmation (including staff members) to serve according to biblical criteria (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-13).
- Be ready for false teachers and teachings and protect the Church (Acts 20:28-31).

- Lovingly discipline those believers in sin, for their benefit and the benefit of the entire church (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- Set an example in pursuing our Churches mission, living it's values, and fulfilling the obligations of Church membership (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8).

### **Member responsibilities**

*All members of COAH covenant with each other to . . .*

- Submit to scripture in all things (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- Seek to abide in Christ as an on-going lifestyle (John 15).
- Participate regularly in worship at City On A Hill Church, fellowship with other believers, and pursue gospel centered, outward living (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25).
- Use the gifts, resources, finances, and talents that God has given me to glorify God and provide for the ministry needs of City On A Hill Church. This involves giving regularly and participation in Church events, in a cheerful way (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- Walk in unity with other believers (Ephesians 4:1-6).
- Long to be filled more and more with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Through this Spirit filling, grow also in a desire for holy living (1 Peter 1:13-16).
- Do away with all sinful actions and attitudes that are contrary to holy living. Some examples of these are:
  - Sexually immoral practices and lifestyles, including adultery, premarital sex, pornography, and anything outside of heterosexual and monogamous marriage (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
  - Other activities consistent with the old nature, including illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossiping, etc. (Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).
  - Selfish choices that directly result in causing another believer to stumble (Romans 14:14-23; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13).
- Submit to God's discipline in their lives by accepting it from other believers in a loving and humble way (Psalm 141:5).
- Follow biblical procedures for church discipline when sin is evident. The goal of which is repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:15-20).
- Confess and repent of sin and seek godly help to learn how to put personal sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- Notify the Church if I intend to remove my membership for righteous reasons and attend another Church in the future.