



Membership Commitment

I confirm my belief and understanding of the Core Doctrines of the Christian faith as summarized by the Five Solas of the Reformation:

Christ Alone: We are saved solely by Christ's work on the cross, not of any other means. (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

Scripture Alone: The Scripture is the only standard for faith. (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Faith Alone: We are justified by faith in Christ and His work. (Galatians 2:16,3:8, 3:24,26; Ephesians 2:8,12, Hebrews 12:1-2)

Grace Alone: We are not saved by our work(s), only Christ's work will save. (Romans 3:24, 5:15; Ephesians 1:7, 2:5, 8-9)

For the Glory of God Alone: Salvation is for mankind's benefit, but God's Glory. (John 17:1-5, 21:19; Acts 7:2; 1 Corinthians 2:8, 10:31, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

As a part of my membership, I agree to:

Be Faithful in Attendance The New Testament teaches that the church is the body of Christ, and that God has called every member to a life devoted to the growth of the body. In other words, Scripture exhorts all believers to edify the other members by practicing the "one-anothers" of the New Testament (Hebrews 10:24-25) and exercising their spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 1 Peter 4:10-11). Mutual edification can only take place in the context of the corporate body of Christ. Exhortations to this kind of ministry presuppose that believers have committed themselves to other believers in a specific local assembly. Church membership is simply the formal way to make that commitment.

Honor the Elders Biblical doctrine is to be taught and defended, so the church needs teachers and guardians of healthy doctrine. Elders are God's stewards (Titus 1:7). The Holy Spirit made them overseers over the flock (Acts 20:28), and they are called to feed them the truth and guard them from what is false (Acts 20:28-31).

In Acts 6, a necessary division of labor occurs in the life of the early church. Caring for the all the needs of the flock could make devotion to the Word and prayer virtually impossible. Deacons come into existence to help care for the practical needs of the flock as they come up. Elders serve the body by devoting themselves to the ministry of the Word (1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:1-4). Deacons serve the body by meeting practical needs. This service frees up the elders so that they can fulfill their service to the body. Both offices are necessary for the health of the body and are an assumed part of a healthy church (Philippians 1:1). Both offices have clear character requirements (Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-13).

Membership, discipleship, and discipline are connected together. The Lord adds to the number of the church those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). This is a beautiful picture of church membership because there were no isolated Christians (the Lord added the believers to the number of the church), and there were no nominal Christians (those added to the number of the church were those who were being saved). Members covenant to watch over one another in love so that believers keep their singular confidence in Christ.

Church discipline protects the purity of the body and guards against the reproach that comes on the name of Christ when professing Christians fail to represent Christ rightly to a watching world (1 Corinthians 5:1–11). Failure on the part of a professing Christian to respond to corrective Biblical instruction requires the removal of a person from church membership for the purpose of future reconciliation (1 Corinthians 5:12–13, 1 Timothy 1:19–20). Church discipline is a public statement on the part of the church that it can no longer affirm a person's profession as a follower and representative of Christ. Thus, church discipline protects the name and reputation of Jesus on earth by ensuring that people who claim to represent Jesus represent him rightly, while lovingly pursuing the erring member.

Be Discerning We recognize that the Bible is the final arbiter on all matters of faith. A church does not get to define itself; it must hold fast to what the Bible teaches. The church is the "household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). God alone can define his house. The Bible is filled with the call to hold fast to "sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:8–11, 2 Timothy 1:13–14).

God entrusts his Word to the church so that biblical doctrine will be heralded and taught (2 Corinthians 4:1–2, Titus 2:1), not merely so that it will be identified and catalogued. This teaching also includes defending the church against false teaching. False teachers and false teaching must be swiftly identified and corrected for the health of the body (1 Timothy 6:3–5, Titus 1:9).

Seek unity and not cause division. Resolving conflict at the lowest level possible.

Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words, and actions (1 Corinthians 10:31).

- We will try to get the "logs" out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matthew 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Proverbs 19:11).
- We will seek to refrain from all gossip, backbiting, and slander, this includes listening/encouraging to others to commit this sin (Ephesians 4:29-32). If we have a problem with others, we are commanded to talk to them, not about them.

- We will endeavor to make charitable judgments toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Corinthians 13:7).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will seek reconciliation without delay (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15).
- When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Proverbs 12:18; Ephesians 4:29; Galatians 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Palms 141:5; Proverbs 15:32).
- As we seek to resolve differences with others, we will look out for their concerns and interests as well as our own (Philippians 2:3-4).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as freely and fully as He has forgiven us so that we might glorify His reconciling grace (Ephesians 4:32).
- When two or more of us cannot resolve a conflict privately—whether it’s personal or has church, business, or even legal implications—we will obey God’s command to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) by looking to our church for assistance and cooperating with our leaders or wise people they recommend to resolve the matter through biblical mediation or arbitration (Matthew 18:16; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
- If we have a conflict with a person who attends another church, we will make every effort to cooperate with our church leaders as they seek to work with the leaders of the other church to resolve the matter in a biblically faithful manner.
- If a person coming to our church has an unresolved conflict with someone in his former church, we will assist him in seeking to be reconciled to the other person before joining our church (Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 12:18).
- When a conflict involves matters of doctrine or church discipline, we will submit to the procedures set forth by the Elders.
- If we have a dispute with or within our church as a corporate body and cannot resolve it internally through the steps given above, we will make every effort to resolve our differences through biblical mediation or arbitration before we resort to other processes.

Pray for the Fellowship

The church is also an assembly of those who constantly seek the Lord in prayer. Jesus taught the disciples that they ought always to pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1). It would not be a matter of if they would pray, but when and how they pray (Matthew 6:5–13). Part of the church’s warfare is to pray at all times in the Spirit

(Ephesians 6:18). This dependence glorifies God as we get the help, and he gets the glory (Psalm 50:15).

I _____ hereby commit to a covenant membership with the Elder's and fellow members of Shawnee Bible Church.

Signature: _____ **Date:**
