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# Our History

On September 24, 1977 a dozen people gathered in the home of Art and Jennie Foreman in Enumclaw for an evening of singing, prayer, and fellowship. What was intended as a one-time event turned into a weekly gathering. As the numbers grew each successive week, it was necessary to move to larger homes in Enumclaw and then to Buckley.

It became apparent that God was at work in this small group and that He was planting a church in our midst. A board was chosen to be the Spiritual oversight of this ever-growing group of people and they immediately set about to form a corporation to officially become a church within the State of Washington. The church became known as Praise the Lord Fellowship, and Harry Oldenburger was chosen as the first Pastor and was ordained on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1978. The Scriptures upon which the church was founded were as follows:

*Psalm 78:53, "And He led them on safely so that they did not fear,"*

*Isaiah 43:21, "The people I have formed for myself will declare my praise."*

During this time we out-grew the home in Buckley, so we rented the White River Middle School Cafeteria for our Sunday morning services. For the next eight years our meetings were held at the White River Elementary School and then the White River High School. Over time, a piece of property was purchased in Buckley for us to build our own church building upon, but the city would not allow it. We then sold the property and purchased the six acres we currently own. Groundbreaking for our own church building took place on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1986 and was completed in February of 1987. As we have grown, so has the size of our building. To date we've added a children's wing, office wing and two portables.

Praise the Lord Fellowship continued to grow in size and in ministry, and soon additional pastors, elders and ministry workers were added to support the mission of the church. On May 22, 1994, after 15 years of dedicated and faithful service, Pastor Harry Oldenburger officially retired as Senior Pastor of PTLF. It was at the same service that Pastor Tom Goetz was ordained as the new Senior Pastor of the church.

In May of 1999, Pastor Tom and the elders officially adopted to change the name of Praise the Lord Fellowship to Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship. Building on the foundation that was laid in prayer, Pastor Tom and the elders, after seeking the Lord for a new vision for our church, believed that the Lord had given us a three-fold mandate:

Restore Lives

Build Disciples

Release World Changers

In addition, the Lord gave to Pastor Tom the following Scripture for our church as we walked into a new season:

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion – to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; **that they may be called oaks of righteousness**, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. (Isaiah 61:1-4)*

Under the leadership of Pastor Tom and his God-given gift of teaching, the church grew not only in numbers but also in depth of knowledge of God's word and maturity in Christ. After over 30 years of faithful ministry, 13 at our church, Pastor Tom Goetz retired and Pastor Michael Majack became the Senior Pastor in October of 2007. Pastor Mike and JoLee were two of the original 12 people that met in the Foreman's home in 1977. He has served as an elder since 1983 and had come on full time staff as a pastor in 1999. The Lord gave Pastor Mike the following Scripture for our church:

*Psalm 16: 5-6: Lord you have assigned me my portion and my cup, you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.*

In November 2015, we experienced yet another leadership transition at Rainier Hills, as Paul Majack assumed the role of Lead Pastor. Through all these changes and transitions, God's grace has been upon our church in tangible ways and we rejoice at how he has cared for us from the very beginning.

We know that the Lord has providentially established our church in this place and time for a reason. We believe that the Lord has called us to be a light and a refuge on the plateau area for those of us who are in Christ, and specifically for those who are lost and in need of the gospel. We have seen God's hand and blessing upon us over the years. He has been true to His word, in that He has led us safely on, He has used us to minister to those in need, and He has given us a delightful inheritance. We continue to seek His will and His purpose for us as a church, and in all things we desire to glorify Him!

# Our Vision

**Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship exists to glorify God through lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

That is why we are here. That is why we exist. Not just as individual Christians but as the body of Christ. Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship is a church that He established in this place at this time, to accomplish His purposes on the plateau.

He has given us a part to play in His plan of redemption, specifically bringing Him glory as we make much of the One who has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. We are ransomed sons and daughters who have been saved from our sin, and who have been given a hope and a purpose in life that is bigger than just living our life for our comfort and happiness.

You see, the church is not just about us. The church is not just for us. Our church exists for God Himself, to make much of Him and to make Him known. We have been called to live a life submitted to the Lordship of Christ, and to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those that He has called us to minister to. The God who is glorified when we are saved is also to be glorified in our growth as disciples of Jesus Christ as we seek to obey His commands out of love for Him, which is rooted in the love that He has for us His children.

Our hope and prayer is that the Lord would use us as the means by which those in our community would experience the transforming power of God's love, and through the work of the Holy Spirit, live their lives in such a way that Jesus Christ is glorified in all things.

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)*

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:9-12)*

**Think about it:**

**Think about the Vision of the Church. Is this vision one that you can wholeheartedly support as a member of this church? In what ways do you believe God would have you support the vision of this church in your life and ministry to the church and to the community?**

# Our Core Values:

Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship has three core values. These values are the guiding principles by which we live out the vision God has given us as the body of Christ. Our methods and practices may change over time as we are directed by the Holy Spirit, but these values will not change. They are the foundation upon which the entire ministry of the church is built.

## **Core Value: Gospel**

### **Knowing and Loving the God Who Created us and Loves us**

The Gospel is the good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, through which we can be saved from our sin and God's wrath and be reconciled to God our Creator. It is this Gospel of grace that reveals to us the depth of our sin and need for a Savior. It is this Gospel that reveals to us the extravagant love and grace of our Triune God, who has saved us in accordance with the will of the Father, through the work of the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is through the message of the Gospel that we are saved. It is through the message of the Gospel that we are continually freed from the bondage of sin and grow in the Christian life; to become more like Jesus. It is through the message of the Gospel that we have a hope and future, one that we as the church are to proclaim to all people: Salvation alone by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

The gospel is at the foundation of who we are in Christ and what we do as a church. Whether it be our sermons, our songs, our prayers, all are shaped by the truth of the Gospel. The ministry that we do as a church is the proclamation of this good news, both in the words we speak and in the way that we serve and love those around us.

*"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).*

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).*

*"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures..." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).*

# Core Value: Family

## Loving and Serving Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We view our church as a family, as we are all sons and daughters of our heavenly Father that He has established and brought together. Therefore, we desire to be a family of believers who love, encourage and care for each other. The Apostle Paul speaks of the church as the body of Christ, different parts that work together and that need each other in order to function properly and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament is full of encouragement for us to love and care for each other. Being a part of and investing in a church family is an essential part of how we grow in Christ. This should not be limited to the service time that occurs on any given Sunday morning. Rather, we should continually invest in each other's lives through small groups, consistent fellowship, and humbly serving together, knowing that our growth will occur over time as we engage with each other in meaning and intentional ways.

What does that mean for us? It means that one of our core values is that we be a family with a purpose. We are called to encourage, challenge and equip each other for ministry. We are called to grow together as disciples of Jesus; becoming more like Him in our words, actions, attitudes and relationships. We know that God has brought us together and see each day the evidences of His grace at work in the lives of our church family. He is at work in us to will and to work for His good pleasure. He does this through His Word, His Spirit, and His body; the church family that He has established for our good and His glory.

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”  
(Hebrews 10:23-25).*

*“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

*“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10).*

*“...through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13b).*

# Core Value: Mission

## Loving and Reaching the Lost

We desire to reach out to those who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, and to lead them to a saving faith found only in Him. We believe this happens in two different ways. The first is Evangelism, which is the proclamation of the Gospel. In order for people to hear of what God has done, they need to be told. This is why we hold so highly the preaching of God's word in our Church services. However, evangelism must not be limited to Sunday mornings. All of us, if we have been saved, have been given the command to go and make disciples; we are called to share the Good News.

The second way we want to do this is through service. We desire to serve those within our church community and those outside our church community to reflect the love of God to those He desires to save. Jesus said that He came not to be served, but to serve, and we want to follow His example. We believe it is a priority for us, as well as a privilege, to meet needs, alleviate hardships or suffering, seek justice, and care for people. This happens on a corporate level where we may take on a particular project or initiative as a church, but also on an individual level as well, where we encourage our members to love and serve their neighbors and their community, with the hope that a door may be opened to share the Gospel with someone in need.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).*

*"...learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause" (Isaiah 1:17).*

*"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (James 1:27).*

**Think about it:**

**Think about the Core Values of the Church.**

**Do you agree with them?**

**Are you willing to support and pursue them in your own life, as well as in the life of the church?**

# What We Believe

## **Our Statement of Faith**

1. We believe the entire Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God and the only standard for faith and conduct.

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*  
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*  
(Hebrews 4:12)

2. We believe there is only one God, creator of heaven and earth, who exists as three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is fully God, co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal and yet each personally distinct from the other.

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)*

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)*

*And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*  
(Matthew 3:16-17)

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*  
(Matthew 28:19-20)

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)*

*... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (1 Peter 1:2)*

3. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son and Savior of the world, eternally existing with the Father and Holy Spirit. We believe that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was physically raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is exalted at the right hand of the Heavenly Father and that He is true God and true man.

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)*

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)*

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)*

*So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19)*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3, 14)*

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)*

*For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

*Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)*

*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)*

4. We believe in the personal salvation of believers through repentance, turning from their sin, and placing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which results in right standing before God and eternal life. Salvation is obtained by the grace of God through faith rather than through any human effort or works.

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. (John 3:16-17)*

*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)*

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...(Romans 3:23-24)*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

*... he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:5-7)*

5. We believe in water baptism by immersion, for those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ, in order to fulfill His command.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... (Matthew 28:19)*

*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)*

6. We believe in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fills us at salvation, is at work in us in our sanctification, and will continue to fill and empower us in our walk with Christ. We believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the church today and should be pursued and practiced in accordance to the Scripture.

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:17-18)*

*1 Corinthians Chapters: 12 – 14*

*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit... (Ephesians 5:18b)*

*But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)*

*...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (1 Peter 1:2)*

7. We believe in celebrating our covenant relationship with Jesus Christ and remembering the sacrifice He paid for our sins by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Communion).

*And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:17-19)*

*For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

8. We believe in the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to His church to make disciples among all peoples. We believe that the church is the primary means by which God has ordained to build his kingdom on the earth, through the proclamation of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

*For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone*

*preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:13-15)*

*...so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 3:10)*

*For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5)*

9. We believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ in power and glory. We believe that at the final judgment those that have placed their faith in Jesus will be physically raised from the dead to live and reign with Christ forever. We also believe that those who have not placed their faith in Jesus will be physically raised from the dead to eternal punishment and separation from God's presence.

*(Matthew 25:31-46)*

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*

*For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)*

*... waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ... (Titus 2:13)*

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. From His presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)*

10. We believe that the Christian Life will be characterized by progressive spiritual growth and sanctification, with the evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)*

*For this is the will of God, your sanctification... (1 Thessalonians 4:3a)*

*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)*

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:18)*

**Think about it:**

Please carefully review our Statement of Faith. Do you agree with them?

Are you willing to support and pursue them in your own life, as well as in the life of the church?

Is there anything that you either disagree with or aren't sure you agree with?

Are there any significant issues that are going to make it difficult for you to engage here? If not, can you agree to not be divisive or speak against the positions of the church?

If you have any questions about this, please feel free to talk to us about them. A great time to do this is when you meet with an elder during the membership process. If there is a difference of belief that you feel may impact your ability to be a member here, please feel free to set up a time to get together with an elder so we can talk about it.

In some cases, disagreement in doctrine may mean that we cannot allow you to be a member at our church.

This will be handled on a case by case basis in the elder interview.

## **Biblical Convictions**

### **We Are a Charismatic Church**

As noted in our statement of faith, we believe that all the gifts of the Spirit, including those identified as Supernatural Gifts (i.e. Tongues, Prophecy, Miracles) are available for us today. In fact, if you spend some time with us, there's a good chance that you'll see those gifts operating within the life of our church, whether it be within the service on a Sunday morning, or in the everyday ministry life of our church. Our desire is that we would be a church that operates in the power of the Holy Spirit through the gifts He has so graciously given to us. We would encourage all members to pursue and practice the gifts that God has given them (1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, and 14:39) and that it would be done in love (1 Corinthians 13), humility, and in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40) in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 14:37), for the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 14:4-5, 14:12, 14:26), and to the glory of God alone. Finally, we do not believe that the gift of tongues (or any other individual spiritual gift) is required in order to be considered 'Spirit-filled', as it is the Spirit who gives us gifts according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:11).

### **Our Church is Led By Qualified Male elders**

We believe that men and women, both created by God, are of equal value and worth and share equally in the blessing of salvation (Galatians 3:28-29). We also affirm that in God's perfect wisdom He has given us both clear and complementary roles in our homes as well as in the church as revealed in His Word (Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7). Men and women are both given gifts by the Holy Spirit to be used for the edification of the church (Joel 2:28, 1 Corinthians 12-14), and both have a vital role to play in the life and health of a local church family and can do so in a variety of roles and functions. However, we believe that God has identified clearly in His Word that the role of pastor/elder must be set apart for biblically qualified men (1 Timothy 2:11-15, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9). This is discussed in more detail below under the section on Leadership.

## **What We Believe About Baptism and Child Dedication**

As stated above, we believe that baptism is the biblical response for those who have made a genuine profession of faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that baptism is not a requirement for salvation, but is a response to the saving work of God in a believer's life and therefore, is to be administered only to those in whose life we can identify the evidences of God's grace in salvation.

While we do not hold to the practice of infant baptism, one of the things we do as a church is stand with the parents as they dedicate their children to the Lord, as we see Hannah do in 1 Samuel 1:11 and 28, and with Mary and Joseph presenting Jesus to the Lord at the temple in Luke 2:22. This is by no means a requirement of salvation, but a public declaration by the parents that they will by God's grace raise their child in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:4-25). We use this opportunity to celebrate, thanking God for the blessing of a child and prayerfully asking that God would draw the child to Himself at an early age, causing his or her life to be lived for His glory.

## **What We Believe About Gender, Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's own biological sex is a rejection of the image of God in that person.

We believe that marriage is defined as one man and one woman in a covenant relationship under God (Genesis 2:24). We also believe that marriage is a divine institution created by God Himself for our joy and human flourishing (Genesis 1:27-28), as well as a picture of His love for His bride, the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Therefore, to define marriage in any other way, (i.e. homosexual marriage, long term cohabitation, etc.) does not meet the biblical qualifications and intended design for marriage given by God who created it (Matthew 19:4-7, Mark 10:6-9).

In addition, we believe that God has created sex as a gift to be shared only within marriage. Therefore, we consider all other sexual activity, whether it be fornication, adultery, pornography, or homosexuality to be a sin that must be repented of and abstained from (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18). We believe that those guilty of both heterosexual and homosexual sin can find healing, freedom, and forgiveness through the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, whether that be through the renewing of their mind (Romans 12:1-2) and a change in sexual desire or the grace to renounce their sinful sexual desires and walk in abstinence in accordance with God's Word (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, 1 John 1:9, James 5:16). As Christians, we are commanded to reach out in love and truth to minister to those struggling with sexual sin and gender identity, not to ostracize or judge them as they contend in faith to pursue sexual purity and wholeness.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality. (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

# Open-handed and Close-handed Issues

There are a variety of other doctrinal and philosophical issues that we as Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship have not taken a formal position on. These are things that we would call 'open-handed issues', meaning that while individuals may have convictions about them, we view these as secondary issues and freedom should be given within our church to hold to different positions as long as the beliefs fit within the spectrum of biblical Christianity. In essence, these are theological topics and issues that we may disagree on but will not allow to divide us. Following is a list of some of the issues we would identify as open-handed:

End Times: We affirm that Christ will be returning and we are to anticipate His coming. However, we believe that the nature of His return (the time and the way He will return, the tribulation, the millennium, etc.) is an open-handed issue.

Creation: We affirm that God created the universe and thus we do not believe in an atheistic or naturalistic evolution. However, we believe that the exact way that God created the universe (literal days or symbolic days, old earth or new earth) to be an open-handed issue.

**Think about it:**

**Think about our Biblical Convictions. Do you agree with them?**

**Is there anything that you either disagree with or aren't sure you agree with?**

**Are they significant issues that are going to make it difficult for you to engage here?**

**If not, can you agree to not be divisive or speak against the positions of the church?**

**What about our open-handed issues? I know that some have very strong opinions about these topics.**

**If you do, can you agree to live in harmony with those in our church family who may disagree with your position and not cause any strife or divisions on these issues?**

**As with our Statement of Faith, we'd love to talk with you about this if you have any questions as you consider membership at our church.**

# Our Leadership

First and foremost, Jesus is the Head of our church (Ephesians 5:23) and all of us, leaders and members alike are members of His body (1 Corinthians 12). He is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4) and the leaders of this church are merely under-shepherds; called to lay down our lives to serve those that God has placed in our care.

## **Why Elders?**

An elder is one of a plurality of biblically qualified men who jointly shepherd and oversee a local body of believers. As numerous passages in the New Testament indicate, the words “elder” (presbuteros), “overseer” (episkopos), and “pastor” (poimēn) all refer to the same office or position of leadership within the church, which we call an elder or pastor (we use the terms interchangeably).

While some churches are led by one Pastor who is the sole leader of the church, we do not believe this is wise or biblical. We believe that a church led by a plurality of elders (or multiple elders) best represents the biblical model for church leadership from Scripture. Following are just a sampling of texts from the New Testament that reflect this model:

*Acts 14:23 “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church...”*

*Titus 1:5 “...and appoint elders in every town as I directed you...”*

*James 5:14 “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church...”*

*1 Tim 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor...”*

## **Why Male Elders?**

First of all, we believe that both men and women share equally in the blessings of salvation (Galatians 3:26-28) and are of equal value and worth in the sight of God as we are both made in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). We also affirm that both men and women have both been given gifts by the Holy Spirit to be used for the edification of the church (Joel 2:28, 1 Corinthians 12-14). The Bible is very clear that women do have significant roles to play in the life and ministry of the church, and God has specifically gifted them and called them to serve in a variety of roles and functions. In fact, if you spend any time here at our church, you will see both men and women serving in a variety of ways in the life of the church.

However, we believe that God has clearly identified in His Word that the role of pastor/elder must be set apart for biblically qualified men (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, see also 1 Timothy 2:12-15, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35). This does not mean that women are any less valuable or gifted than men in the life of the church. Once again our value is not based upon a role or position. It is because God has given us clear commands in Scripture in how we are to operate as a church, as well as in our homes (Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7) and our churches. One of

the main priorities for the elders is to train up both men and women for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16), and to release them to use the gifts God has given them to build up the church. Our hope for all of us is that by God’s grace we can embrace the roles and responsibilities He has ordained for us and in doing so, maximize our joy and effectiveness and bring glory to Him who created us.

## Qualifications of Elders

The Bible is very clear on the qualifications for an elder of the local church. Paul addresses this both in his letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 3) and Titus (Titus 1).

<b>1 Timothy 3:2-7</b>	<b>Titus 1:6-8</b>
Above Reproach	Above reproach
Husband of one wife	Husband of one wife
Sober-minded	Children are believers
Self-controlled	Not open to charge of debauchery/insubordination
Respectable	Not arrogant
Hospitable	Not quick tempered
Able to Teach	Not a drunkard
Not a Drunkard	Not violent
Not violent but gentle	Not greedy for gain
Not quarrelsome	Hospitable
Not a lover of money	Lover of Good
Must manage his own household	Self-Controlled
Not a recent convert	Upright
Well thought of by outsiders	Holy
	Disciplined
	Hold firm to the trustworthy word
	Able to give instruction in sound doctrine
	Able to rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine

Almost all of the qualifications given, with the exception of ‘able to teach’ in 1 Timothy 3 and ‘able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it’ in Titus 1, are about character, not gifting. The overriding qualification is a man who is above reproach in all areas of his life (marriage and family, social life, business life, and spiritual life). In fact, his life is to be a model of godliness so that the congregation may follow in his example (Philippians 3:17).

## Responsibilities of Elders

The Bible has much to say about what the elders are to do within the church body. It is not a position that is outside of normal ministry life, but is firmly entrenched within the life of the church. Here's some of what the Bible says:

- Oversee and care for the church (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 3:5)
- Ministry of the Word and Prayer (Acts 6:4, 1 Tim. 5:17, 1 Tim. 3:2, James 5:14)
- Instructing in correct doctrine and refuting false doctrine (Titus 1:9)
- Shepherding God's people (1 Pet. 5:1-3).
- Equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).

What does that look like in our church? The elders meet regularly to discuss our vision, direction, finances, strategy, and to pray for God's leading. In addition to our regular meetings, the elders are serving and leading in many different capacities in the church; from the weekly preaching of God's word, praying for people, to leading different ministries, small groups, and serving in other areas where we can support those in our care.

## How Are Elders Chosen?

Elders are chosen from those who are members of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship. We are looking for men whose lives reflect the character and gifting required of those who would be considered for the position as set forth in the Bible (as discussed above) and who are already graciously giving of their time, talents and treasure in service to the church. Much time is spent in discussion and prayer before the elders approach a possible candidate and ask them to consider the calling. Often there are many men within the church that may meet the criteria, however not all will be called for eldership.

Once a candidate (or candidates) are chosen, they will then walk with the current team of elders for no less than 1 year before they would be considered for ordination. During that time, their life and ministry is examined by the elders as well as the church at large to confirm their character, gifting and calling.

Our current elder team is made up of 6 men. Three of the elders are full time staff members of the church and 3 serve in leadership as volunteers. We do not have a set number of elders, but we have consistently had between five to seven elders at any one time. There are no time limits to their service, but they can step down due to their own personal circumstances, or can be removed by the remaining elders for just cause.

**Think about it:**

**Think about how the church is governed.**

**Do you agree with this form of church leadership? If not, why not?**

**Is this an issue that will not be a hindrance to your investment and support of the church?**

**Will you be able to support and submit to the leaders of this church as directed by the Bible?**

# Our Ministry Team

## Pastors/Elders

Mark Babbitt	Elder
J. Michael Majack	Elder/Pastor
Paul Majack	Elder/ Lead Pastor
Roy McKenzie	Elder
Morgan Thatcher	Elder
Chris VanHoof	Elder/Pastor

## Ministry Leaders

Kit Hackett	Prayer Ministry Director
Catrina Majack	Women's Ministry Director
Amy Thatcher	Children's Ministry Director
Alan & Katie Strutz	Youth Ministry Directors
Marcia Suhoversnik	Care Ministries Coordinator

## Ministry Staff

Elisa Gross	Bookkeeper
Jenna Smith	Office Manager
Marlene Weikart	Hospitality
David Young	Facilities

# Our Covering

Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship is an independent non-denominational church. However, in a desire to align ourselves with other gospel-centered charismatic churches, we became a part of the LifeLinks International Fellowship family of churches in January 2012. David Wells, the LifeLinks Team Leader, as well as the other members of the LifeLinks council, support and care for our church and our leadership through prayer, ministry and service. In addition, other LifeLinks leaders and friends minister in our church throughout the year.

*From the LifeLinks Website ([www.lifelinks.org](http://www.lifelinks.org)):*

*LifeLinks is a relational-based family of churches with a broad Statement of Faith that focuses on the essentials of Christianity rather than areas of controversy. We believe a healthy relational foundation allows people with minor doctrinal differences to work well together in advancing God's Kingdom. Because of our focus on building strong relationships, members of the LifeLinks family always have someone to gain support from in moments of difficulty or to celebrate with in times of victory.*

*Network input to a congregation is always in response to the invitation of local church leadership and respects the autonomy of that fellowship. In addition, those giving apostolic oversight to a local church are available for consultation both to the leaders and congregational members thereby providing a high level of relational accountability.*

*The LifeLinks Family is open to all who sincerely love the Lord and are willing to assent to our basic beliefs and membership conditions. Participation in network conferences and events is encouraged prior to a church or individual seeking membership to help confirm that the association is a good fit. This process also allows people to get to know our apostolic leaders and possibly determine whom they will relate to once they join LifeLinks.*

*The Apostolic Council meets several times a year to seek God and give direction to the network. A strong relational bond between Council members enables them to support one another as well as the churches for which they are responsible.*

*Although autonomous, churches within the LifeLinks family have a real sense of identification and connection with one another. Strong regional, national, and international relationships are formed as congregations partner to plant new churches, serve together on short term missions teams, participate in ministry and youth training programs, and attend network conferences and camps.*

# Our Ministries

Our ministry philosophy is this: we want to be as simple as possible in our ministries. Sometimes we can become so busy trying to keep all the programs running within the church that we don't have the time and energy to minister to those outside the church. We want to do only those things that we believe God has called us to do to encourage and support our church family and to reach our communities. The ministry of the church is not just the ministry at the church (although it is a part), but takes place on a daily basis in the lives, jobs, homes, and neighborhoods of our members. To that end, we as leaders are committed to equipping members to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12) and to operate in their gifts so that the church grows into a mature, healthy body (Ephesians 4:15-16). Following is a list of some of the ministries we have going on at the church to support our core values and mission:

## Family Ministries

**Home Groups:** These are small groups of people from our church who meet in homes throughout the week to build relationships, study God's Word, and pray together. The foundation of our small group ministry is built upon three things: Fellowship, The Word, and Prayer. We see this as an essential part of the Christian life, as well as an opportunity to invite those around us who may not attend church to grow in their knowledge of God through our times together. Our hope is that everyone who calls our church home would be an active part of a Home Group.

**Children's Ministry:** The Children's Ministries department at Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship has many programs in place to help teach your children about Jesus and God's Word. Our volunteers use a variety of different teaching methods to help your child grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. These include Bible stories, small groups, singing, crafts, drama, puppets, puzzles and games. All of our dedicated volunteers who staff our classrooms have been interviewed by church staff and have undergone a background check.

**Awakening Youth:** Our youth gatherings are Sunday Nights at 6:15pm in the Portables behind the church building. Each week we gather together for a time of fun, fellowship, worship, teaching and small groups. In addition we have several special events, camps and opportunities to serve the community at large throughout the year. All youth (6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) are welcome.

**Women's Ministry:** We have a very healthy Women's ministry at our church, with two Bible Study groups that meet throughout the year, one on Thursday mornings and one on Tuesday nights.

**Men's Ministry:** The Men's Ministry at Rainier Hills meets monthly on Sunday nights for dinner and a time of encouragement through teaching and sharing. We also have other events throughout the year, including a Campout at the church at the end of July.

**Overcomers:** For those 50 and older (or younger...anyone who's hungry is welcome!), we gather once a month after church for a time of fellowship and a home cooked meal.

**Community Caring:** Community Caring exists to provide for the physical, relational, and emotional needs of our church and surrounding communities through practical means and acts of service. Through this ministry we support a local elementary school by providing weekend meals for children who otherwise wouldn't have meals to eat, provide gift cards to families in need during the holiday season, as well as a variety of other giving and serving opportunities that arise that we can support!

## Support Ministries

**Prayer:** We have a vibrant prayer ministry going on at our church. There are numerous opportunities throughout the week where we gather together to pray.

**Hospitality:** We want everyone who walks in the doors, whether they're old-timers or first time visitors to feel welcomed and cared for, whether that be by our ushers or greeters on a Sunday morning, or by providing a welcome place/atmosphere for special events in decorating/setup or behind the scenes to prepare for our gatherings.

**Worship/Audio and Video:** The worship team at Rainier Hills exists to bring glory to God in all things. Our desire is to use the gifts that God has given us, whether it be up front leading in worship or serving behind the scenes on the audio/video team, to serve the congregation and glorify God through song.

**Helps:** One of our goals is to take care of those within our church, as well as in the community who have particular needs that they are unable to address on their own. Whether it is meals during a recovery or minor repair/maintenance, we have a group of people who have volunteered their time and expertise to serve our church members and those in the community who we can care for in practical ways.

## Community Groups

We believe that this facility is a gift from God given to us to bless those within our church family, but also as a blessing for our community. As a result, we have opened our doors to host groups from both inside and outside of our church. Some of these groups are Christian-based, and some are not. Many of these groups have been born out of a desire for folks with a common interest to gather together for relationship building, enjoyment, and support.

**Think about it:**

**Think about our Ministry Philosophy.**

**Is this something that you will support as a member of our church?**

**One of the things we ask of our members is that they participate in and support the ministries of the church.**

**Is this something you will pursue either before or shortly after becoming a member?**

# Missions

Our church supports a number of local ministries in our community that are meeting practical and spiritual needs. In addition, we support a number of international missionaries who have been called by God to give their lives in order to fulfill the Great commission. Here are the Missionaries and ministries that we support as a church family:

## **Local ministries we support financially**

- Christian Biker Tabernacle, Tacoma, WA ([www.christianbikertabernacle.org](http://www.christianbikertabernacle.org))
- Care Net Pregnancy & Family Services – Puyallup ([carenetps.org](http://carenetps.org))
- Pastor Moses Latella – Neuma Church, Spokane, WA ([neumaspokane.com](http://neumaspokane.com))

## **Missionaries we support around the world**

- Jesus & Maria Chima, Mexico
- Africa Renewal Ministries, Uganda
- Pastor Moses Male - Africa Renewal Ministries, Uganda
- Dolcemina Ilioa, Romania
- Heartcry Home for Rescued Women, Moldova
- John and Abha David - Anusaran, India
- Pastor Biju Poulouse - Abundant Life Church, Indore, Madya Pradesh, India.
- Sheika and Haka - Missionaries in Mongolia
- Pastor Fred Sekyewa – Celebrate Hope Ministries, Uganda

In addition to our consistent monthly support for the above, we also provide opportunities throughout the year for our church family to give generously to meet needs on a local and global scale. For example, we often collect money to give out gift cards for those in need during Christmas. We also help support individual members of our church who choose to serve the Lord in short term mission opportunities. In addition, in our lobby we have the International Café, where we serve an assortment of coffee drinks from trained baristas before and after the service on Sunday mornings. All proceeds from the café go specifically to missions.

**Short Term Missions:** We often have members from our church family going on short term mission trips that we send out with blessing. In addition, we hope to send out teams from the church on a semi-regular basis to minister with our missionaries and support the work of other ministries/missionaries we feel led to partner with in the work of the Gospel.

# Membership at Rainier Hills

The first thing we want to say is **that everyone is welcome at Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship**. All of the ministries that we have, whether it be our Sunday Morning Services, Life Groups, or other groups are open for every person to attend, whether they are a member or not. In fact, we would encourage anyone who is new to the church to jump into church life and spend some time getting to know us well before making a decision about whether or not this is your church home. To that end, we want our church to be an open and inviting place for anyone who may come and visit us, regardless of where you may be on your spiritual journey.

## What is Church Membership?

Membership is not just a name on a list, a card you carry in your pocket or a way of determining the success of a church. **Membership is a covenant between committed people and the leadership of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship. It is an informed commitment to the vision, values, doctrine and philosophy of ministry of Rainier Hills, a willing submission to the leadership of the church, and a public commitment to embrace your unique role in the church family and in the mission God has called us to in our community.** In short, to be a covenant member simply means that an individual is identified with, is accountable to, and is a contributing participant in our church family as a part of the body of Christ.

## Why Church Membership?

Some might wonder why we need to have church membership in the first place. There are three main reasons why we believe that church membership is not only helpful but necessary for us to be most effective in our church life and witness.

### 1. We believe that membership is biblical

*“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it”  
(1 Corinthians 12:12, 27).*

While the term ‘Church Membership’ is not found in the Bible, it is affirmed and assumed throughout the New Testament, where leaders and members were joined together in an ongoing, accountable, committed, relational community. Christian believers clearly identified themselves with a specific and local fellowship, and this relationship was lived out in meaningful and tangible ways, both in how the church functioned and how members and leaders cared for each other.

Here are a number of Scriptures that we believe reflect the concept of church membership from the New Testament:

- The example of the church as a Body (1 Corinthians 12)
- Accountability to specific church leaders (Heb. 13:17, 1 Thess. 5:12-13, 1 Tim. 5:17)
- Pastors/leaders responsible for specific sheep (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2-3)
- Church Discipline (Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:12-13, 2 Cor. 2:6)
- List of Widows (1 Timothy 5:9-16)
- Congregational Decision-Making (Acts 15:22)
- Responsibility within the family of faith (Gal. 6:10)
- God gives spiritual gifts to followers of Jesus for the upbuilding of the church. (Rom 12:3-8; 1Cor 12:4-31) Gathering of the whole church (1 Cor. 12:12-13)

## 2. We believe that membership is practical

*“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17).*

For the church leaders, membership is an essential way for us to identify those whom we have the responsibility under God to care for, those who we will give an account for before God. We want to ensure that our limited time, energy and resources are spent first on those who are members of our church, since we are specifically charged with their care. This would include things such as counseling and visitations/meetings, leadership opportunities, as well as financial assistance when the needs may arise.

That same verse also encourages as members of a church ‘to obey your leaders and submit to them.’ Church membership is a clear public declaration by an individual of their desire to be held accountable by the leaders God has placed over them, and to know who they are accountable to.

We are always in the process of identifying, discipling, and training upcoming leaders in the church. In essence, church membership is the front door into leadership in the church. **In fact, we require that anyone who desires to lead or serve in any position of influence within the church be a member in good standing at Rainier Hills.** While this may seem restrictive, it is important for us to know that those who are leading and serving in our church are in agreement with the vision, values, and beliefs of the church. This is for our own protection and for the health of our body.

### 3. We believe that membership is beneficial

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”  
(Hebrews 10:23-25).*

Many believers never experience the reality of authentic and supportive relationships with others because they never take the step of becoming a member of a specific body so that those relationships can be developed over time.

Here are just some of the benefits of membership:

1. It identifies an individual’s personal profession of Christ. (Romans 12:5, Ephesians 2:19)
2. It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage people in their walk with Christ (Galatians 6:1-2, Hebrews 10:24-25).
3. It gives people a place to discover and use their gifts in ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-27).
4. It places people under the spiritual protection of godly leaders (Acts 20:28-29, Hebrews 3:17).
5. It gives people the accountability they need to grow (Ephesians 4:16).

The Christian Life was not meant to be lived on our own, but as an integral part of a body that depends upon each other, needs each other, and supports each other as we grow. That’s the way that God designed it and the way He set up the church. In a world that is becoming increasingly individualistic, we need to flee isolation and engage in meaningful relationships. The New Testament is full of ‘One-Anothers’ for the church; encouraging us to engage in each other’s lives as part of a family<sup>1</sup>.

This is what membership is about. It’s not about control or legalism, it’s about belonging and ownership. It’s being a part of a family. Church membership is a way of saying, “I belong to this particular body and commit to exercising my God-given gifts here for its up-building and flourishing, alongside others who are doing the same.” It’s being invested in and accountable to a group of like-minded believers who care for each other, encourage and challenge one another, and pray and support each other in all areas of life. It’s serving and giving of your time, talents and treasure to support the mission of the church to accomplish what God has called us to in loving and serving our community as we share the Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> For more study on this, please see the Appendix, which includes an article that provides a list of all the ‘One-Anothers’ in the New Testament as compiled by Jeffrey Kranz (Overviewbible.com).

# Why Do We Have a Covenant?

Being a member of a church has to do with living out your corporate identity as a part of Jesus' people, the local church. One of the ways we express this type of relationship in our culture is by affixing our signature to an agreement (we call it a covenant) that describes the biblical foundations for our relationships as people in a local church. We believe this is necessary for the following reasons:

## **1. It is a public declaration to your church of your commitment to the body**

It's a way of saying, "I am declaring myself to be formally committed to this individual, group or organization". Given the nature of our corporate identity in Christ, as expressed in the Scriptures, how much more should we formally commit ourselves to other brothers and sisters in Christ as part of a local church in a specific context?

## **2. It ensures that everyone is clear about the responsibilities and expectations of both members and leaders**

We want to make sure that there are no surprises when it comes to what it means to be a member at Rainier Hills. We have clear responsibilities and expectations for members and leaders alike. In short, we expect every member to give of their time (participation in community, Sunday gatherings), talents (serving in some way), and treasure (regularly, sacrificial, joyful giving) to the church. The membership covenant spells out what this looks like and signing the covenant is a way to ensure that we are all on the same page as to what commitment to our family requires.

## **3. It provides a level of accountability for both the members and the leaders (who are also members)**

Our signature on the covenant is a public commitment that we will abide by the covenant as we support our church and grow in Christ. The covenant will be signed by the prospective member and an elder during the membership interview, at which time we will do our best to make sure all questions regarding membership have been answered to the best of our ability. This signature provides a level of accountability for us all if questions or concerns should arise regarding a member or leader of the church, particularly with regard to their commitment to the church and to a life of holiness. This is not to be used in a legalistic way, but as a way to encourage our growth in the "...the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

# Our Membership Covenant

## **As pastors and elders of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, we covenant:**

To appoint elders and other leaders who meet the qualifications described in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

To continually and prayerfully seek God's guidance for Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, and to steward the resources entrusted to the church to the best of our ability based upon our study of the Scriptures and following of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

To care for the church and seek its 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).

To provide teaching and counsel from the entirety of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Titus 2:1).

To equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).

To be on guard against false teachers and false teachings (Matthew 7:15, Acts 20:28-31, 1 Timothy 1:3-7, Titus 1:9, 1 John 4:1).

To lovingly exercise church discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, for the good of the one disciplined, and for the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1, James 5:19-20).

To set an example by joining the members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, 1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

## **We, the members of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship covenant:**

To submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21).

To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, communion, and the practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1, Acts 17:11, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Ephesians 5:1-21, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).

To regularly participate in the life of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel centered community and serving those within and outside the church. I understand that if I relocate and am unable to attend Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, I should inform them of my move and find another Bible-believing church to unite with in faith, service, and life (Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:23-25, Titus 3:14).

To share the responsibility of my church by praying for its growth, by inviting the unchurched to attend, by warmly welcoming those who visit, and by seeking to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20, John 20:21, Colossians 4:2-6, 1 Peter 2:12).

To steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in our church community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8-9, 1 Peter 4:10-11).

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, 1 Peter 4:1-3). I will refrain from sinful behavior as the Bible, and my conscience dictate (1 Corinthians 8:7, Galatians 5:19-21). 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 (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5, 1 John 1:6-10).

To 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 a stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

To affirm God's good design of gender, marriage and sexuality as follows:

- God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's own biological sex is a rejection of the image of God in that person.
- Marriage is a God designed covenant between one biologically born man and one biologically born woman in an exclusive life-long union. (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6).
- God created sexual intimacy as a gift to be shared only between a man and a woman joined in marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Hebrews 13:4, Proverbs 5:15-19).

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.
- Receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Psalm 141:5, Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Hebrews 12:5-11, 1 Timothy 5:20, Titus 3:10-11).

To submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church. I have read and understand the Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship Statement of Faith and Biblical Convictions and I will not be divisive regarding its teaching. (Ephesians 4:1-3, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:5).

**Having confessed to being a baptized Christian, by God's grace and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I desire to unite with the Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship family as a covenant member. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship.**

# How Do I Become a Member?

For those who wish to become a covenant member at Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, we would identify the following steps as a pathway to membership<sup>2</sup>:

## **Step 1: Follow Jesus**

Are you a Christian? Do you embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God has saved us from our sin through the redemptive work in the person of Jesus through His sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection? Have you repented of your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ alone for your forgiveness and eternal life?

Have you been baptized in response to the commands of scripture as an outward sign of your faith in Christ?

## **Step 2: Get To Know Us**

Our hope is that before you would consider becoming a member that you would spend some time getting to know us as a church. That would include participating in our Sunday services, as well as taking part in the other ministries and meetings we provide as a church (i.e. Life Groups).

## **Step 3: Go Through Our Life at the Hills Membership Class**

## **Step 4: Pray and Consider**

We would encourage you to take time to pray and consider whether or not you can give yourself wholeheartedly to the vision and values of this church and if you will be an active and healthy participant in the life of the church. The following questions may be helpful as you seek the Lord:

Read and pray over our vision and values. Do you believe you can wholeheartedly support and contribute to the mission of this church?

Are you committed to faithfully attend and participate in the corporate gatherings and to support the ministry of the church with your prayers and finances?

Have you carefully read our Statement of Faith and Biblical Convictions? Is there anything you disagree with? If you disagree with a core belief of the church (i.e. doctrine of God, salvation by grace through faith, person and work of Jesus, heaven and hell), then you will not be allowed to be a member here. If you disagree with a biblical position we hold that is not central to our salvation, will you be able to not be divisive or teach against these beliefs of the church?

Have you carefully read and affirmed our Membership Covenant?

Think about the leaders of the church. Do you believe they are leaders that you can follow and submit to their guidance as those who will give an account for your soul?

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<sup>2</sup> Membership is available for those who are 18 or older.

### **Step 5: Meet With an Elder**

The last step of the process will include an interview with one of the elders. You can meet with any elder you choose and can contact them directly to set up your meeting. If you would like us to assist in connecting you with an elder to meet with, feel free to email us at [info@rainierhills.org](mailto:info@rainierhills.org).

The goal of this meeting is to provide an opportunity to do the following:

- It allows us to continue to get to know you and for you to get to know us. We'll ask some questions of you to make sure you're ready for this commitment. Here's an overview of the types of questions we will ask.
  - Tell us about how Jesus saved you?
  - Explain to us what the Gospel means to you.
  - What brought you to Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship?
  - Where did you go to church before you came here? Why did you leave?
  - Why do you want to become a member here?
  - Is there anything in our Statement of Faith you may not agree with?
  - Is there anything in our Biblical Convictions that you may not agree with?
  - Where do you believe God would have you serve in our family?
  - How can we best support you as your leaders?
- It provides an opportunity for you to make sure any questions or concerns you may have are completely addressed.
- It allows us to make sure all members understand what is expected of our members and leaders.
- We will be able to walk through the Church Covenant together, to be signed by both the member and the elder.
- It is an opportunity for us to pray together as we establish this new relationship as a church family.

### **Step 6: Engage!**

Once you are a member, jump into the life of our church family with both feet by loving, giving and serving. Also, as a new member you will be introduced at our next Family Meeting, which happens quarterly. You will stand in front of the church alongside the other new members and state in one sentence why you have become a member here, after which the whole church will pray over you.

# Appendix

# How to Leave a Church

There are many reasons why someone would leave a church. Unfortunately, in our experience, most people end up leaving a church the wrong way or for the wrong reasons, which is difficult on the church and unhelpful for the individual. Leaving a church should not be a decision that is made quickly, but one that is saturated in prayer and walked through in relationship with your church family. Therefore, we have put together the following steps in order to help you walk through the process of leaving a church that we hope will be beneficial for both the church and the individual.

## **1. Examine Your Motives - Why am I leaving?**

The reasons that people leave churches are many. Some are good, some are bad, and many are hard to discern. Leaving a church because you are moving away is a good reason, and we want to send you with blessing and encourage you to join a new church family once you get established in your new community. Leaving a church because of an offense or hurt feelings, without working through the issues with those involved first is a wrong reason to leave a church.

Before you leave, it is important that you check your heart, your attitude, your motives, and your reasons for leaving. If you are unsure, it would be wise to seek good counsel from godly friends or church leaders who can help you think through the process.

## **2. Speak to the Leaders**

If you're serving in some capacity of the church, it is important that you let your ministry leaders know you're leaving as soon as possible. The same would apply to your Life Group leaders if you are a part of a Life Group. When communicating with your leaders, personal communication is preferable to written communication, but make sure you communicate. Whatever you do, please don't just leave without telling your leaders.

## **3. Resolve Any Outstanding Conflicts or Issues**

Our hope would be that you would speak to your leaders before you make a decision to leave the church in order that we can walk with you as you seek the Lord in this decision. If you have legitimate reasons to leave (i.e. you're moving away) then you have nothing to hide and we want to send you with our love and blessing. If you desire to leave the church because of a conflict or offense, we want the opportunity to work through these issues. If the reasons for leaving are critical of the church leadership, we want you to be honest with us; we need you to speak the truth, but it's important that you do so in love (Eph. 4:15). God may use your situation to help us as a church and as a leadership team.

#### **4. Don't Leave the Church Hanging**

If you're actively involved in a ministry in the church, your role will need to be transitioned to another member. When possible, we would ask that you do what you can to fulfill your ministry commitment to support the church in the time of transition until someone has been found to take your place. We don't want to hold you back from leaving if you're supposed to go, but please do what you can to not drop the ball on the people who you have committed to.

#### **5. Leave with Blessing**

If you can, say goodbye to your church family and friends who may be affected by your leaving. Do what you can to encourage and bless them, and speak well of the church to those inside and outside the church. Chances are the first question people will ask after hearing of your leaving is 'Why?' It's tempting in these times to focus on the shortcomings of the church instead of building up the church in your conversations. Remember that the church you left, even with its imperfections, is the bride of Christ that He loves. Do what you can to honor the church (and its people) as you go.

Some of you may have come to the realization that you left your previous church for the wrong reasons and have ended up here, or you left in the wrong way, slandering and gossiping about the church instead of honoring the church. If that's the case, we would encourage you to go back and make sure that you take care of any outstanding issues or offenses before you become a member here. It may mean repenting to the church leaders and members if the Holy Spirit reveals areas of sin in your heart that He in His mercy wants to address. It also may mean that the Lord wants to draw you back to that church. If that's the case, we are excited for you and want you to be where the Lord would have you. We are all the body of Christ, working together to make much of His name!

# Conflict and Church Discipline

Conflict<sup>3</sup> is an inevitable part of our lives as individuals, particularly in our relationships, including those within our church family. Conflict is not necessarily bad or destructive. Even when conflict is caused by sin and causes a great deal of stress, God can use it for good (see Rom. 8:28-29). As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, conflict actually provides three significant opportunities. By God's grace, you can use conflict to:

- Glorify God (by trusting, obeying, and imitating Him)
- Serve other people (by helping to bear their burdens or by confronting them in love)
- Grow to be like Christ (by confessing sin and turning from attitudes that promote conflict).

These concepts are totally overlooked in most conflicts because people naturally focus on escaping from the situation or overcoming their opponent. Therefore, it is wise to periodically step back from a conflict and ask yourself whether you are doing all that you can to take advantage of these special opportunities.

## **1. Glorify God**

When the Apostle Paul urged the Corinthians to live "to the glory of God," he was not talking about one hour on Sunday morning. He wanted them to show God honor and bring him praise in day-to-day life, especially by the way that they resolved personal conflicts (see 1 Cor. 10:31).

As mentioned above, you can glorify God in the midst of conflict by trusting Him, obeying Him, and imitating Him (see Prov. 3:4-6; John 14:15; Eph. 5:1). One of the best ways to keep these concerns uppermost in your mind is to regularly ask yourself this focusing question: "How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?"

## **2. Get the log out of your own eye**

One of the most challenging principles of peacemaking is set forth in Matthew 7:5, where Jesus says, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

There are generally two kinds of "logs" you need to look for when dealing with conflict. First, you need to ask whether you have had a critical, negative, or overly sensitive attitude that has led to unnecessary conflict. One of the best ways to do this is to spend some time meditating on Philippians 4:2-9, which describes the kind of attitude Christians should have even when they are involved in a conflict. The second kind of log you must deal with is actual sinful words and actions. Because you are often blind to your own sins, you may need an honest friend or advisor who will help you to take an objective look at yourself and face up to your contribution to a conflict.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: The majority of this section is adapted from the book entitled *Resolving Everyday Conflict* by Ken Sande (Baker, 2011). More information on this topic can be found at [www.peacemaker.net](http://www.peacemaker.net)

When you identify ways that you have wronged another person, it is important to admit your wrongs honestly and thoroughly. The most important aspect of getting the log out of your own eye is to go beyond the confession of wrong behavior and face up to the root cause of that behavior. The Bible teaches that conflict comes from the desires that battle in your heart (James 4:1-3; Matt. 15:18-19). Some of these desires are obviously sinful, such as wanting to conceal the truth, bend others to your will, or have revenge. In many situations, however, conflict is fueled by good desires that you have elevated to sinful demands, such as a craving to be understood, loved, respected, or vindicated.

Any time you become excessively preoccupied with something, even a good thing, and seek to find happiness, security or fulfillment in it rather than in God, you are guilty of idolatry. Idolatry inevitably leads to conflict with God ("You shall have no other gods before me"). It also causes conflict with other people. As James writes, when we want something but don't get it, we kill and covet, quarrel and fight (James 4:1-4).

There are three basic steps you can take to overcome the idolatry that fuels conflict. First, you should ask God to help you see where you have been guilty of wrong worship, that is, where you are focusing your love, attention, and energy on something other than God. Second, you should specifically identify and renounce each of the desires contributing to the conflict. Third, you should deliberately pursue right worship, that is, to fix your heart and mind on God and to seek joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction in him alone.

As God guides and empowers these efforts, you can find freedom from the idols that fuel conflict and be motivated to make choices that will please and honor Christ. This change in heart will usually speed a resolution to a present problem, and at the same time improve your ability to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

### **3. Gently Restore**

Another key principle of peacemaking involves an effort to help others understand how they have contributed to a conflict. When Christians think about talking to someone else about a conflict, one of the first verses that comes to mind is Matthew 18:15: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." If this verse is read in isolation, it seems to teach that we must always use direct confrontation to force others to admit they have sinned. If the verse is read in context, however, we see that Jesus had something much more flexible and beneficial in mind than simply standing toe to toe with others and describing their sins.

Just before this passage, we find Jesus' wonderful metaphor of a loving shepherd who goes to look for a wandering sheep and then rejoices when it is found (Matt. 18:12-14). Thus, Matthew 18:15 is introduced with a theme of restoration, not condemnation. Jesus repeats this theme just after telling us to "go and show him his fault" by adding, "If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." And then He hits the restoration theme a third time in verses 21-35, where He uses the parable of the unmerciful servant to remind us to be as merciful and forgiving to others as God is to us (Matt. 18:21-35).

Jesus is clearly calling for something much more loving and redemptive than simply confronting others with a list of their wrongs. Similarly, Galatians 6:1 gives us solid counsel on what our attitude and purpose ought to be when we go to our brother. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently." Our attitude should be one of gentleness rather than anger, and our purpose should be to restore rather than condemn.

Yet even before you go to talk with someone, remember that it is appropriate to overlook minor offenses (see Prov. 19:11). As a general rule, an offense should be overlooked if you can answer "no" to all of the following questions:

- Is the offense seriously dishonoring God?
- Has it permanently damaged a relationship?
- Is it seriously hurting other people? and
- Is it seriously hurting the offender himself?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, an offense is too serious to overlook, in which case God commands you to go and talk with the offender privately and lovingly about the situation.

As you do so, remember to:

- Pray for humility and wisdom
- Plan your words carefully (think of how you would want to be confronted)
- Anticipate likely reactions and plan appropriate responses (rehearsals can be very helpful)
- Choose the right time and place (talk in person whenever possible)
- Assume the best about the other person until you have facts to prove otherwise (Prov. 11:27)
- Listen carefully (Prov. 18:13)
- Speak only to build others up (Eph. 4:29)
- Ask for feedback from the other person
- Recognize your limits (only God can change people; see Rom. 12:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26)

If an initial conversation does not resolve a conflict, do not give up. Review what was said and done, and look for ways to make a better approach during a follow up conversation. It may also be wise to ask a spiritually mature friend for advice on how to approach the other person more effectively. Then try again with even stronger prayer support.

If repeated, careful attempts at a private discussion are not fruitful, and if the matter is still too serious to overlook, you should ask one or two other people to meet with you and your opponent and help you to resolve your differences through mediation, arbitration, or accountability (see Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8)

#### **4. Go and be reconciled**

Even though Christians have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others. One of the most unique features of biblical peacemaking is the pursuit of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Even though Christians have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others. To cover up our

disobedience we often use the shallow statement, "I forgive her – I just don't want to have anything to do with her again." Just think, however, how you would feel if God said to you, "I forgive you; I just don't want to have anything to do with you again"?

Praise God that He never says this! Instead, He forgives you totally and opens the way for genuine reconciliation. He calls you to forgive others in exactly the same way: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Col. 3:12-14; see also 1 Cor. 13:5; Psalm 103:12; Isa. 43:25). Remember that forgiveness is a spiritual process that you cannot fully accomplish on your own. Therefore, as you seek to forgive others, continually ask God for grace to enable you to imitate His wonderful forgiveness toward you.

## Church Discipline

*"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17 ESV)*

Church discipline is the process of confronting sin to achieve repentance and restoration. It is also intended to prevent unrestrained sin from spreading to others and protect the honor of Jesus Christ. The informal process of church discipline happens any time a believer confronts another believer about his or her sin and encourages repentance and peacemaking. This is a normal part of the Christian life, particularly within the context of a church family who are encouraging and sharpening one another as we grow.

The formal process of church discipline typically begins when the individual in sin is unwilling to repent over an extended period of time, after having been approached through the initial process Jesus outlines in Matthew 18:15-17 and following the pattern of handling conflict that we've already addressed. Therefore, most formal church discipline is not as much about the sin as it is about the hard-hearted unwillingness to repent for sin.

The process of church discipline concludes when the believer either repents or is formally removed by the elders from participating in the church. In extreme cases, the elders are given authority to handle church discipline in a public manner, once again following the clear directions given to us in the Bible (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Additionally, those who intentionally stir up divisions in the church should be dealt with and disciplined with greater swiftness. Our hope is that we would never have to go through this, but the reality of life has shown us that this is sometimes necessary, and the Bible has given us clear instructions as to how to carry this out, for the good of the church and the glory of God.

# Financial Stewardship

The Bible has a lot to say about money. In fact, it's one of the things Jesus spoke about the most. The Bible speaks of how we should view money, make money, manage our money, spend our money, and distribute our money. As a member of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, you are affirming the biblical call to be a good steward of the financial resources that the Lord has entrusted you with, which includes giving to the church. Our membership covenant addresses this topic as follows:

*I covenant to steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in our church community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8-9, 1 Peter 4:10-11).*

The truth of the matter is that the church needs money in order to function properly, and the responsibility is on the members (and leaders, who are first and foremost members) to support the ministry of the church. Your generosity is vital to the health of our church, but also to our own spiritual health and growth in Christ. This should not be a burden for us, but a joy and an opportunity to invest what God has given us into His work and into our family. What follows is an overview of the Biblical principles about financial stewardship. Our hope is that you would prayerfully read and reflect on these principles and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you how you should order your life and your finances<sup>4</sup>.

## **An overview of giving:**

- Everything in heaven and on earth belongs to God (1 Chronicles 29:11, 16; Psalm 24:1-2; 50:10-12; 89:11).
- God entrusts creation as a stewardship to mankind beginning with Adam (Genesis 1:28, 2:15).
- Giving is an act of worship (Genesis 14:20, 28:22).
- Giving is an act of grace (2 Corinthians 8:6-7), and a response to grace.
- Jesus uses parables to illustrate stewardship truths (Luke 12:42-48, Luke 16:1-13)

## **As disciples of Jesus, we:**

- Serve God, not money (Luke 16:1-15).
- Give inconspicuously, not publicly; our motive is key (Matthew 6:1-14).
- Invest in heavenly treasure, not earthly treasure (Matthew 6:19-24).
- Are provided for by God (Matthew 6:25-34).
- Give sacrificially in proportion to what we have (Mark 12:41-44).
- Focus on giving over receiving (Acts 20:35).
- Sometimes be the recipient of financial support (Luke 8:1-3).

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<sup>4</sup> This information was taken from Money Matters in the Church by Aubrey Malphurs and Steve Stroope (2007: Baker Books), particularly Appendix A: A Theology of Financial Stewardship

**The Apostle Paul teaches us to give in the following ways:**

- Generously (2 Corinthians 8:2-4; 9:6).
- Regularly/systematically (1 Corinthians 16:2).
- Proportionately (1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 8:11-12).
- Sacrificially (2 Corinthians 8:3-5).
- Willingly (2 Corinthians 8:11-12).
- Voluntarily (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Eagerly (2 Corinthians 8:10-11; 9:2).
- Enthusiastically (2 Corinthians 9:2).
- Excellently (2 Corinthians 8:7).
- Strategically (2 Corinthians 9:12-15).
- Scrupulously (1 Corinthians 16:3-4; 2 Corinthians 8:18-21).

**The Apostle Paul teaches us to give the following amounts:**

- A proportional amount (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:11-12).
- A generous amount (2 Corinthians 8:2-3; 9:5-6, 11).
- A heartfelt amount (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- A sacrificial amount (2 Corinthians 8:3).

**The Apostle Paul's teaches us the benefits of good giving:**

- God's generous blessing (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).
- The supply of people's needs (2 Corinthians 9:12a).
- Praise to God (2 Corinthians 9:12b-15).

God is the one who supplies all of our needs according to His riches in glory. We are called to be good stewards of all that He has given to us, which includes giving back to Him through the church that He has given to us for our own good and for the glory of His name. We often pray that God would help us not to hold onto our things too closely, including our money, but that we would give generously and look to Him as our source and our reward.

# All the “One Another” Commands in the New Testament

(Courtesy of Jeffrey Kanz, Overviewbible.org)

“One another” is two words in English, but it’s only one word in Greek: ἀλλήλων (ah-LAY-loan). It’s used 100 times in 94 New Testament verses. 47 of those verses give instructions to the church, and 60% of those instructions come from Paul. These commands come from Jesus, Peter, John, Paul, and James, and they’re scattered across the New Testament. Make sure you read these in context. Don’t just stop at this list: dig into these passages to see what the author was talking about. When you look at these verses, a few more common themes show up.

**Kissy-kissy:** Yes! Four of the “one another” commands are about kissing. Please check out the cultural settings of these verses before planting one on your pastor’s cheek next weekend.

**Unity:** One third of the “one another” commands deal with the unity of the church.

1. Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
2. Don’t grumble among one another (John 6:43)
3. Be of the same mind with one another (Romans 12:16, 15:5)
4. Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
5. Wait for one another before beginning the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 11:33)
6. Don’t bite, devour, and consume one another (Galatians 5:15)
7. Don’t boastfully challenge or envy one another (Galatians 5:26).
8. Gently, patiently tolerate one another (Ephesians 4:2)
9. Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
10. Bear with and forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
11. Seek good for one another, and don’t repay evil for evil (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
12. Don’t complain against one another (James 4:11, 5:9)
13. Confess sins to one another (James 5:16)

**Love.** One third of them instruct Christians to love one another.

1. Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12,17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 4:7, 11; 2 John 5)
2. Through love, serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
3. Tolerate one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
4. Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14)
5. Be devoted to one another in love (Romans 12:10)

**Humility.** About 15% stress an attitude of humility and deference among believers.

1. Give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:10)
2. Regard one another as more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
3. Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
4. Wash one another's feet (John 13:14)
5. Don't be haughty: be of the same mind (Romans 12:16)
6. Be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
7. Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)

**Here's the rest:**

1. Do not judge one another, and don't put a stumbling block in a brother's way (Romans 14:13)
2. Greet one another with a kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12)
3. Husbands and wives: don't deprive one another of physical intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:5)
4. Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
5. Speak truth to one another (Ephesians 4:25)
6. Don't lie to one another (Colossians 3:9)
7. Comfort one another concerning the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
8. Encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
9. Stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)
10. Pray for one another (James 5:16)
11. Be hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

Of course, Jesus and the apostles give many more instructions to the church; these "one another" passages are a good start, though.

# Our Membership Covenant

(With all verses included)

## **As Pastors and Elders of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, we covenant:**

To appoint elders and other leaders who meet the qualifications described in the Scriptures.

*“The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy. 3:1-13).*

*“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-- if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:5-9) .*

*“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:1-4).*

To continually and prayerfully seek God’s guidance for Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, and to steward the resources entrusted to the church to the best of our ability based upon our study of the Scriptures and following of the Holy Spirit.

*“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).*

*“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:1-5).*

To care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love.

*“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:16-20).*

*"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).*

*"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28).*

*"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14).*

*"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:1-4).*

### To provide teaching and counsel from the entirety of Scripture.

*"... for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 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 20:27-28).*

*"Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:16).*

*"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).*

*"But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).*

### To equip the members of the church for the work of ministry.

*"And he 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, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:11-16).*

### To be on guard against false teachers and false teachings.

*"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15).*

*"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. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).*

*"As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions" (1 Timothy 1:3-7).*

*"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9).*

*"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).*

To lovingly exercise church discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, for the good of the one disciplined, and for the health of the church as a whole.

*"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:15-20).*

*(1 Corinthians Chapter 5)*

*"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).*

*"My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).*

To set an example by joining the members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below.

*"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).*

*"Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us" (Philippians 3:17).*

*"Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).*

*"Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us" (Titus 2:7-8).*

*"...not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3).*

**We the members of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship covenant to the following:**

To submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues.

*Psalm 119*

*"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:14-17).*

*"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21).*

To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, communion, and the practice of spiritual disciplines.

*"And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).*

*"Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).*

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).*

*"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:1-21).*

*"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).*

To regularly participate in the life of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel centered community and serving those within and outside the church. I understand that if I relocate and am unable to attend Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship, I should inform them of my move and find another Bible-believing church to unite with in faith, service, and life.

*"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47).*

*"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:23-25).*

*"And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful" (Titus 3:14).*

I will share the responsibility of my church by praying for its growth, by inviting the unchurched to attend, by warmly welcoming those who visit, and by seeking to make disciples of all nations.

*"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20).*

*"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you'" (John 20:21).*

*“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison-- that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Colossians 4:2-6).*

*“Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).*

To steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in our church community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary.

*"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'" (Matthew 25:14-30).*

*"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to 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).*

2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:10-11).*

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, 1 Peter 4:1-3). I will refrain from sinful behavior as the Bible, and my conscience dictate (1 Corinthians 8:7, Galatians 5:19-21). 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 (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5, 1 John 1:6-10).

*"Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:13-16).*

*"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry" (1 Peter 4:1-3).*

*“However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled” (1 Corinthians 8:7).*

*“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).*

*“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13).*

*“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5).*

*“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:6-10).*

*“I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Romans 14:14-23).*

*“Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"-- yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble”*

*(1 Corinthians 8:1-13).*

To affirm God’s good design of gender, marriage and sexuality as follows:

- God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one’s own biological sex is a rejection of the image of God in that person.
- Marriage is a God designed covenant between one biologically born man and one biologically born woman in an exclusive life-long union. (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6).
- God created sexual intimacy as a gift to be shared only between a man and a woman joined in marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Hebrews 13:4, Proverbs 5:15-19).

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:24).

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous (Hebrews 13:4).

Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love (Proverbs 5:15-19).

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, with the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
- Receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise.

"Let a righteous man strike me--it is a kindness; let him rebuke me--it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds" (Psalm 141:5).

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:15-20).

"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. 'Purge the evil person from among you'" (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

"And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:5-11).

"As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear" (1 Timothy 5:20).

*“As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned” (Titus 3:10-11).*

To submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church. I have read and understand the Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship Statement of Faith and Biblical Convictions and I will not be divisive to its teaching.

*“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3).*

*“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17).*

*“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5).*

# Map of Rainier Hills Christian Fellowship

