

# Membership Covenant



## Introduction

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

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

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

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

*“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (1 Peter 4:8-10)*

## What is a covenant?

A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ps. 76:11). The word “Covenant” means “to agree, to be of one mind, to come together.” It is a binding and solemn agreement to do or keep from doing something. This agreement is instrumental for covenant living in the context of accountability to simply get together with a specific plan and purpose.

The Eaton Church of the Brethren covenant includes a statement of faith, a statement of biblical doctrine, the obligations of ECOB to its members, and the obligations of members to ECOB. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his bride, the church (Eph. 5:25).

## Statement of faith

- I am a Christian saved from the eternal wrath of God by faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through his death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life(John 3:16-18).
- I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who he claimed to be.
- I have repented of my sins and have been made a new creation in Christ (1 John 1:9).
- In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized to personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and to publicly demonstrate my commitment as a disciple of Jesus (Col. 2:12).

## Statement of biblical doctrine

- **About God**
  - God is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.
- **About Humanity**
  - We are made in the image of God, to be like Him in character. We are the supreme object of God's creation. Although we have tremendous potential for good, everyone is marred by an attitude of rebellion toward God called sin. Sin separates people from God.
- **About Eternity**
  - People are created to exist forever. Every person will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally in union with Him is heaven. Heaven and hell are places of eternal existence.
- **About Jesus Christ**
  - Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary by miraculous conception, lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days demonstrating His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory where He is the only Mediator between God and people, and will return again to earth. He will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- **About Salvation**
  - Salvation is a gift from God to all people. Men and women can never make up for their sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can a person be saved from sin's penalty. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He gives assurance in His Word that He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation.
- **About God's Dependability**
  - Because God gives man and woman eternal life through Jesus Christ, and adopts them as His own, salvation is received and maintained by the grace and power of God - not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives believers the assurance of salvation. No power in the universe can separate God's children from Him.
- **About the Holy Spirit**
  - The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily.

- **About the Bible**
  - The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is God's word to all. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are inspired by God, and are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.
- **About Faith and Practice**
  - Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. This church recognizes that it cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.

## Obligation of Eaton Church of the Brethren to its members

- We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13).
- We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28).
- We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture.
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers.
- We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20).
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Tim. 4:12).

## My obligation to Eaton Church of the Brethren as a member

- I have read and understood the ECOB statement of Biblical doctrine and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3).
- I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- I will adhere to ECOB's position on primary theological issues, and I will not be divisive over secondary issues.
- I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, ECOB community, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Acts 2:42-47).
- I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary.
- I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Heb. 13:17).
- I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Matt. 18:15-17).
- I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, homosexuality, pornography, and fornication (Rom. 13:12-14); I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my pastors, and my conscience dictate (Gal. 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 (1 John 1:6-10).

## **My commitment to the mission of Eaton Church of the Brethren**

*The mission of Eaton Church of the Brethren is to 'enable every person to experience the living Christ in life-transforming ways'.*

I have read the mission statement of the Eaton Church of the Brethren and commit to participate in this mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, that my identity would be in him, my worship would be for him, my fellowship would be through him, and my interaction with the culture would be for his glory.

## **My covenant of commitment with the Eaton Church of the Brethren**

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of ECOB and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify ECOB leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding ECOB.

By signing below I accept and promise to uphold this covenant to the best of my ability, in recognition of my commitment to God, our church and members of this team.

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Name

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Date