

Membership Covenant

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We are excited for you to be entering into Covenant Membership with The Church at 4Points. From the beginning of our church, we have been praying that God would call partners to our church to help us live out the mission He has given us in His word. We place a high value on membership, and are excited for you to be uniting with our church family through this process. The Covenant Membership process was birthed out of our love for the local church and its individual members. The primary purpose for this Membership Covenant is to commit to one another in membership in regards to:

1. The acknowledgement of an alignment of beliefs between the membership candidate and the church’s statement of Biblical and theological beliefs.
2. The acknowledgement of eldership in the local church, and the Biblical obligations of the Elder Body of The Church at 4Points to the individual Covenant Members.
3. The acknowledgement of the Biblical calling on individual members of the body of Christ specifically regarding covenant membership at The Church at 4Points.

As an affirmation of the calling God has placed on you to enter into membership with our church, the Membership Covenant includes all information related to membership at our church including the Statement of Beliefs.

Our prayer is that through your involvement with The Church at 4Points, you will continue to grow in holiness as we collectively pursue God together in community.

**Introduction**

The beauty of the gospel of Jesus is that he has rescued and redeemed a people to be his possession to help accomplish his global mission of redemption. We believe that the body of Christ has been commissioned to go into all the world and make disciples of every people group for God’ global glory. Though this mission speaks broadly to the global church, we recognize that scripture sets apart the local church to be the local expression of the global church that God uses to usher in his kingdom in the neighborhoods to the nations.

Our statement of basic beliefs is the response to what we believe to be clearly communicated in God’s word. All Christians everywhere say they believe the Bible, but this statement of belief clariﬁes what The Church at 4Points and the members that make it up believe about the Bible’s teachings. Though there are open-handed theological beliefs, the following are core convictions that are necessary to unite in membership with our church.

The following beliefs represent the core of our beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualiﬁes one from membership in The Church at 4Points.

**Theological Convictions**

* We believe concerning the Bible that the Scriptures are true, authoritative, and sufﬁcient. The Bible is God’s inspired and authoritative Word, and is God’s witness of Himself to all humanity. The 66 books of the Bible are free from any error in its original writings, and provide truth directly from God. For additional statements on inerrancy, see The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. (Psalm 19:7-11; 2   Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
* We believe that there is only one God who has revealed himself through both the divine scriptures and through creation. He is the creator of both heaven and Earth. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; 46:9-10; John   17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5).
* We believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and that the   Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit, the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
* We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He was born of a virgin, and is both fully God and fully human. Through him, all things were created and came into being, and he holds all things together by the power of his word. (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
* We believe that Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin, that he physically rose from the dead, and that he physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return for the final judgement and the consummation of the kingdom. (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8 Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 10:1-18; 14:3; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 15:12-34; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
* We believe that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son, and He is sent by the Father and the Son to regenerate hearts, and give new life through Jesus. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ through faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the hearts of all believers. (John 15:26-27; Ephesians 1:13-14)
* We believe that all humanity (Christ excluded), are by birth and action sinners. Sin has fractured all things, and has left all of creation in desperate need of salvation. We believe that all humans are under condemnation and apart from Christ are subject to the wrath of God against sin. The deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:19; 6:5; Psalm 51;5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8; 5:12; 6:23; 12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 1:14-15)
* We believe that only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can I be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy. It is only through faith in the completed work of Jesus that we can experience union with Christ, and meet the righteous requirement of God that is available through the righteousness of Jesus on our behalf. We believe that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again. Salvation is only by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ (John 3:5-8, 18; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).
* We believe in a future physical resurrection of the dead. Jesus Christ will return to the world in the future to judge the living and the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
* We believe that both men and women are created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order. Male headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall and was not a result of sin. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership. In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men. In regard to the church, men and women will both have leadership roles, but the office of elder is reserved exclusively for men. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission–domestic, religious, or civil–ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:16-18, 2:21-24, 3:1-16; Daniel 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; Titus 2:2-6; 1 Peter 3:1-7).
* We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime; it is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the opportunity for spiritual growth and sanctification through mutual sacrificial love and service, the framework for intimate companionship, the gift of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19)

**Theological Distinctives**

In addition to the above closed-hand beliefs, we also hold secondary, open-handed distinctives that are not held by all Christians. Complete agreement with these beliefs is not required for membership, but it should be recognized that the leadership of the church will preach, teach, and counsel from a theological perspective based on these beliefs.

* We believe that God is completely sovereign over all things including salvation. We believe that it is exceedingly good news that salvation is not dependent on any works or desires of man, but is rooted in the glorious election of the Saints by God. In love, God predestined his people for adoption. We believe that it is through the gift of a changed heart, that God grants the faith to believe in the grace that is offered to us through Jesus. (Psalm 115:3; Ephesians 1:3-14; Romans 8:26-9:23; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
* We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit as outlined in God’s word, and exercised in the early church have not ceased with the death of the last Apostle, or the closing of the New Testament canon. They are available to the church today, practiced in submission to the Holy Spirit, and best exercised in the context of community. The word of God will be the authority on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16)
* We believe in two ordinances which have been given to the church. Both ordinances are for those who have received salvation through Jesus, and have become a Spirit-ﬁlled disciple. The first is baptism and is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person’s union to Christ through salvation. We believe that a believer uniting with our church family should be baptized after conversion, and the precedent should be immersion in water baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is meant to symbolically depict the union to Christ realized in the life of the believer through the death and resurrection of Jesus. (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12; Luke 3:21-22; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:36-38) We believe that the ordinance of communion is to be taken only by those who have become Spirit-ﬁlled disciples of Jesus. This ordinance, like baptism, is a symbol of the body and blood that was broken and shed by Jesus on our behalf. As we come to the Communion Table, we remember the cruciﬁxion of Jesus. (John 6:35; Luke 24:30; Luke 22:19-20; Matthew 26:26-28; Acts 2:42-461 Corinthians 11:17-34)
* We believe in a plurality of elder leadership. Jesus is the head of the church, but the word makes evident that the church will be governed by a plurality of leadership called Elders that are made up of both Staff Elders and Non-Staff Elders. (Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

The following topics help to explain how the above beliefs shape the beliefs and practices of our church in regards to the following topics:

**What is the Gospel and Salvation?**

A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the first step to entrance into a Biblical church community. Though the process of sanctification is a life-long process, we believe in the following as a definition of salvation:

God created things perfect. Flawless. Perfect Rhythm. Despite the perfection of God’s creation, sin entered the world through the original sin of Adam and Eve. Through this event, all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action are sinners. (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21;7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3). The deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:19; Romans 5:12; 6:23; James 1:14-15). Jesus Christ entered into our world, the eternal Son of God, born of a virgin, fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3). He died as the substitute to pay the penalty for our sins (John 1:29; 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18). After His death which served as the payment for our sin debt, Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34). Rising from the dead, Jesus conquered death, and through His life, we are regenerated into true life through Him. He physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7). Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). Anyone who trusts in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3:18; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

**What is Baptism?**

Baptism as a verb is derived from the Greek word “baptizein” which means “dip, plunge, or immerse.” Although salvation is accomplished because of what Jesus did for us and not through baptism, we believe that believers should follow through in baptism by immersion after conversion as the Biblical model for baptism. In Mark’s account of the baptism of Jesus, he illustrates baptism by immersion when he writes, “and when he came out of the water.” In Acts 8:36, we also see the immersive form of baptism when Philip baptizes the Ethiopian Eunuch by going “down into the water.”

 It is also modeled throughout the New Testament that salvation precedes baptism, and so we believe that there is a proper order for baptism in that one should be baptized after truly responding to the gospel in faith. It is impossible to truly “demonstrate” through the outer obedience of baptism the change that has happened internally in our hearts until we have actually experienced salvation. In the New Testament description of the church, those who were saved through Jesus Christ were then baptized, and then added to those counted as the “church.”

One of the most visible external expressions of the internal change that God brings to our lives is the ordinance of baptism. Baptism is an important step of obedience for Christians as it is a visible declaration of your personal acceptance of the gospel in your life. In baptism, Christians are immersed in the water, identifying the death and burial of our former ways with the death and burial of Jesus Christ as the one who makes this possible. Our rising out of the water identifies the new identity we have in Christ with the resurrection of Jesus offering salvation and an empowered life through the Holy Spirit. Through this we see that the underlying motivation for baptism for a Christian is in the identification of our lives with Jesus.

We read in the gospels of the example of baptism that was modeled by Jesus Himself, as Matthew’s account in Matthew Chapter 3:16 says that “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.’” We obviously hold to the theological truth that baptism is not a part of our salvation experience, but is an act of obedience, modeled by Jesus, that brings great pleasure to the Father.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Jesus issues the mission for His followers to accept as His redemption plan for mankind is carried out and completed on the Earth. In Matthew 28, Jesus says, “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.” The Great Commission is about making disciples. God’s plan is for discipleship to happen within His community, the church. Baptism is as much about the symbol of the work Christ has done for us and in us, as it is about publicly declaring and identifying with His church.

**What is the Church?**

To understand who we are as the body of Christ, it is important to define a Biblical view from scripture of what the church is and how this shapes our understanding of the local church.

In Titus 2:11-14, we read of the purpose of the gospel in the formation of the church:

***For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.***

In Acts 2:42-47, we see an important scripture on what it means to be the church:

***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.***

Though there is so much more in scripture concerning who and what the church is, we see these basic theological principles adapted from The Baptist Faith and Message 2000:

1. In a general sense, the New Testament speaks of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.
2. In a specific context, the church is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.
3. Each congregation operates under the supreme Lordship of Christ and through called local leadership. Its scriptural offices are elders/pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

**What is Discipleship?**

We strongly believe discipleship is a process, it is a cultivation. This cultivation is a passive process on one hand where the Spirit is working in us to transform our hearts; however, it is active on the other in that we are called to strive to walk in obedience to commands, experience the means of grace available to us, and practice spiritual discipline. The Great Commission calls us to continue in this sanctification process both personally, and corporately as we seek to encourage each other in our walks to become more like Jesus.

We believe that in the discipleship process we will follow closer to Christ. Our purpose is not just to grow closer in relationship as a solitary pursuit, but to actively engage in discipleship relationships with others. Our aim as the church is to grow in maturity as disciples of Jesus, and to witness our lives growing collectively together to be more like the people God created us to be.

A disciple of Jesus will grow in many ways, but the following help to define our view of this transformation that occurs in discipleship:

* **Transformed Hearts**: Disciples of Jesus must first be born again. Our hearts are transformed by God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This transformation cannot take place through works, or your own will, but it requires the Spirit of God transforming your heart so that your heart is seeking the heart of God, and the things he has a heart for. (Galatians 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 8:16-17; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Romans 8:18-39; Ephesians 1:11-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-3
* **Transformed Minds**: Disciples of Jesus believe in the word of God, and order their lives around it. As a disciple of Jesus abides in the word of God, their minds are transformed by the Holy Spirit to become like Jesus. A disciple of Jesus will be passionate about the word of God, and will seek to see the world and their own lives through its teachings and walking in obedience to its instruction. (John 15:7-11; John 8:31-32; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Colossians 3:1-10; Ephesians 4:17-32)
* **Transformed Affections:** Disciples of Jesus desire what Jesus desires. Disciples of Jesus grow to love what He loves, value what He values, and hate what He hates. Their affections are set on the things of God, and those affections grow to supersede the attractions of sin and the things of this world. They grow to obey God out of desire, not simply out of duty. (John 4:13-14; Matthew 13:44; John 6:35;10:10; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:4; Job 23:12; Psalm 42; 63:1-8; Matthew 4:4; 6:5-15; 22:37; 1 John 2:15-17; Galatians 5:16-24; 1 Thessalonians 1:10
* **Transformed Will**: Disciples of Jesus walk in obedience to God. Disciples of Jesus obey God by obeying everything His word teaches. They do not obey to make themselves right with God, or to add anything at all to the work of Christ, but out of the faith, hope and love that flow from the gospel. (John 14:15-21; 15:14-17; Matthew 28:19; James 1:22-25; Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 12:1-2)
* **Transformed Relationships**: Disciples of Jesus love and serve like Jesus. Disciples of Jesus love one another as Christ has loved them and love their neighbors as themselves. This love expresses itself practically in forgiveness and service, even to our enemies. Our love includes our church, our families, the global body of Christ, the lost, and the poor. (Mark 10:43-45; John 13:35; Matthew 6:12-15; Romans 12:3-21; Ephesians 2:14-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 1 John 3:16-18; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Romans 9:1-5; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; James 2:14-17; Romans 15:1-6)
* **Transformed Purpose:** Disciples of Jesus are actively engaged in the mission of God. They share the gospel, disciple other believers, and engage in the global spread of the gospel to the nations. (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-53; Acts 1:8; Acts 20:22-24; Psalm 67; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Revelation 7:9-10)

\*The above definitions are adapted from *Six Marks of a Disciple of Christ* available from the International Mission Board.

**Membership Covenant**

**As an elder of The Church at 4Points, I covenant the following:**

1. to appoint elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
2. to prayerfully seek God’s will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
3. to care for the church and seek her 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).
4. to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
5. to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
6. to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
7. to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
8. to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

**As a Covenant Member of The Church at 4Points, I covenant the following:**

1. As a member of The Church at 4Points, I have entered into a relationship with God through the blood of Jesus Christ. I recognize that this is not my own doing, but is through faith in the completed work of Jesus for my salvation. This has been signified through believer’s baptism.
2. As a member of The Church at 4Points, I affirm the Statement of Beliefs as detailed to me in the Covenant Membership Packet.
3. I covenant to strive for unity and peace among the members and leadership of The Church at 4Points including elder involvement in situations of disunity among members. In following the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20, this may include the giving and receiving of spiritual discipline when necessary for the good of the person, the edification of the collective body, and the glory of God.
4. I will commit to prioritize sacrificial service to individual members of The Church at 4Points by participating in discipleship relationships, practicing the one anothering’s of scripture, and offering my spiritual and material gifts and resources to others in the body, including but not limited to the resources of time and money.
5. I will commit to prioritize gathering with the body of The Church at 4Points for worship, the study of the Bible, prayer, the practicing of the ordinances, and the giving of my tithes and offerings. Though gathering will happen in other settings, I commit to prioritize regular attendance in the corporate worship gathering of the body on Sundays.

By signing below, both the Elders of The Church at 4Points and the Members of The Church at 4Points enter into Covenant Membership.

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Elder of The Church at 4Points Member of The Church at 4Points

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Elder of The Church at 4Points