



**TRAILS
CHURCH**

Membership Covenant

The Trails Church Membership Covenant is birthed out of our love for our church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is found in the presence of the Lord as we joyfully partner together in the Gospel.

The Trails Church Membership Covenant consists of a section on the Church, the nature of covenants, the obligations of The Trails Church Pastors to The Trails Church body and the obligations of Members to The Trails Church body.

What Is the Church?

The church exists for the display of the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God's redemptive purposes in the world.

Since the beginning, God has been creating and calling forth His people for the display of His glory in a grand narrative of redemption and reconciliation. Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, the gospel is the means by which the world is being made right. The gospel also carries with it the promise of ultimate renewal, a restoration even more glorious than Eden, and thus believers eagerly anticipate the return of Christ. The Church universal (i.e., all believers, everywhere) is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Cor. 5:17–20). The Church universal is being used to write God's beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation. In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body (i.e., a particular group of believers in a particular locale) is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Eph. 2:19), the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2, 9) and the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–31). 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its individual members. As the Scriptures say, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the

feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12:21). Likewise, a member of the church cannot say to another member that he or she is unnecessary. We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:3–8). Contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.

Membership at The Trails is participation in a family, a microcosm of the universal household of God. All members are united to Christ and thus to each other. Unity within the church is expressed in love for God and a love for others, both those within the family and those who are not. Because of the identification of Christ with His church, Christians are expected to display His gospel in a manner which is worthy of Him (Eph. 4:1).

What Is a Covenant?

A covenant is generally defined as "a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants, some between God and man (Gen. 6, 9, 15; Ezek. 20; Hos. 2; Jer. 31; Matt. 26), while others are solely between men (1 Sam. 18; 2 Sam. 5). In some covenants, one party binds his or herself to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the agreement. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to adhere to the obligations. While God's covenant with the Church universal is an example of the former, the local church covenant represents the latter. If at any time one of the parties of this church covenant continues in a state of unfaithfulness to its provisions, the other is released from certain obligations.

The covenant of The Trails Church contains many conditions that are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians, whether members of The Trails Church or elsewhere, are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ-follower regardless of any failure on the part of the local church to live up to her covenant obligations.

If at any time an individual member feels as though the corporate church body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the leadership of the church. If the church elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness, then the member is freed from his or her membership obligations and encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church's disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere.

While focusing primarily in language on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her elders and her individual members, the covenant is first and foremost an acknowledgment of general Christian obligations and an agreement to enter into those duties for God's glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

What is expected as a Member of the Trails Church?

Members of The Trails Church Launch are asked to commit to: 1) Attending our weekly gatherings, 2) Participating in ongoing discipleship, 3) Sharing their life and the Gospel with those who haven't repented and believed upon Jesus, and 4) Using your gifts to help establish our church.

1) ATTENDING OUR WEEKLY GATHERINGS.

Over the last few years, our commitment to gathering weekly together as Christians has been tested by various laws, leading to an even deeper understanding of the amazing benefits of gathering weekly together as Christians. Thus, when gathering is legal, and when it is illegal, we are committed to gathering together as a church in obedience to God's Commands through His Word. It is in these times where we hear the Word preached to our hearts, sing the truths demonstrated through the Word in response to God's kindness in the Gospel, confess sin and celebrate the sacraments, and use our collective gifts in hospitality, friendship, bearing burdens, prayer, and various other outworkings. Thus, as Members, we are committed to not forsaking the gathering together of the church and follow through with that commitment by gathering together for weekly worship gatherings.

2) ONGOING DISCIPLESHIP RELATIONSHIPS.

Members also commit to being known by others within our church and commit to being actively involved in Discipleship Relationships with others (whether that is in small groups, bible studies, mens/womens studies, etc). As we continue to grow larger as a church, we also want to get smaller by groups like this that knit us together as a church so that we might all be known.

It is also our desire that Members would commit to sharing our lives with one another as we gather at various times throughout the week to pray, eat, grocery shop, watch movies, celebrate major events, and hang out to build friendship so that we are truly building a community that is centered around the Gospel. We understand that there are various seasons of life where this may seem more difficult, but it is during these

seasons (death, new babies, engagement, times of sickness, and pandemics) where we will actually need one another more involved, rather than less involved, in our lives.

3) SEEKING OUT WAYS TO SHARE YOUR LIFE AND THE GOSPEL.

One of our main aspirations is to see people welcomed into Christian community that may have never even called a Christian their friend. Our hope is that they may see our manner of living, hear our conversations, and begin to ask questions as we share about our great hope in Jesus in the midst of everyday life situations.

Because of this, one of the main things we call our Members to do is to give your life away building relationships with nonChristians. The goal, however, isn't to have you as a sole missionary trying to build relationships all on your own. Instead, our church family wants to actively join you by making ourselves available to build relationships, sharing our lives and the Gospel with them.

So, our Members strive to invite people into their lives; to share their lives and the Gospel with these individuals, with the desire of seeing this person repent and believe upon Jesus as their greatest hope in life and death.

4) USING YOUR GIFTS.

Whatever gifts you might have, we would love to encourage and equip you to use those gifts for the mutual benefit and encouragement of our church. If you have some gift that you might feel could be useful, connect with us and we'd love to discuss further.

We love to have Members serve in whatever capacity they are able during our worship gathering time: preaching, singing, bringing snacks, Scripture reading, helping set up/tear down, teaching kids/youth, and other ways. This also extends to using your gifts in other practical ways like: creating opportunities to invite nonChristians and Christians together for community over meals and warm hospitality, helping run Evangelistic programs or other ministries, handling finances, discovering ways to serve in the community, volunteering alongside partner churches, etc.

Commitment to Members from the Pastors of the Trails

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, pastors are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is a rather extensive overview of the requirements for pastors as spelled out within the Scriptures.

THE PASTORS/LEADERSHIP COMMIT

- to appoint pastors and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- 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 of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Matt. 28:16-20; Eph. 4:15-16 Col. 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-16).
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
- 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 (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Pet. 5:3).

COMMITMENT OF MEMBERS TO ONE ANOTHER:

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as "living by the Spirit" (Rom. 8).

The requirements of this membership commitment are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible yet non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

I COMMIT:

- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).
- to pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-22).
- to follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
 - by being baptized after my conversion.
 - by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion.
- to regularly participate in the life of The Trails Church by attending weekly gatherings, engaging in gospel-centered community and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- to steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary (Matt. 25:14-30; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Pet. 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 Pet. 1:13-16, 4:1-3).

Christians should also strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit; so, we commit to:

- to refrain from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish (Rom. 14:14-23).

- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another| (1 Cor. 8:1-13).
- 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 believers (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Heb. 12:5-11).
- to do the following when I sin:
 - confess my sin to God and to fellow believers
 - repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- to submit to the pastors, as far as they are submitting to God’s Word and upholding our Statement of Faith, and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5).
- to do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:
 - to notify my small group leader and the pastors.
 - to seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer

Signature

Date