



**HUMBLY GLORIFYING GOD**

## **Membership Covenant and Statement of Faith**

### **Introduction**

The Weaver Baptist Church Membership Covenant comes out of the love for the church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is only found in the presence of the Lord. There are three primary purposes for this covenant:

1. To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both the Elders of Weaver Baptist Church and the individual members of Weaver Baptist Church.
2. To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Weaver Baptist Church.
3. To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

Each of these functions is in accordance with the document's overall vision to provide an accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that Weaver Baptist Church would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. The Membership Covenant and Statement of Faith consist of five sections:

1. The Church
2. The Nature of Covenants
3. Statement of Faith
4. Obligations of the Elders to the Church Body
5. Obligations of Members to the Church Body

### **Section 1: The Church**

The Church exists to display the glory of God because all things exist for His Glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus have the opportunity and responsibility to be a part of something much larger than ourselves. We have been generously invited into God's redemptive purpose for 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 promises a renewal of all things and the church eagerly anticipates 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). Considering this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in

the 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 the mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so also 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 Weaver Baptist Church is participation in a small part of the family 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 that is worthy of Him (Eph. 4:1).

## **Section 2: The Nature of Covenants**

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 several 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.

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.

## **Section 3: Weaver Baptist Church Statement of Faith**

Weaver Baptist Church is a church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to contending for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). In unity with the historic Christian church, we believe and confess the Apostles, Nicene, and Chalcedonian Creeds as accurate representations of Scripture’s teaching. In addition to these, we

are situated within the evangelical, reformation, and historical Baptist traditions. The basic doctrines within the Weaver Baptist Church Statement of Faith represent what we believe to be core elements of biblical teaching. We expect all members of Weaver Baptist Church to affirm these doctrines.

### **The Doctrine of Revelation**

*God has made Himself known to the world in Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and creation.*

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the perfect revelation of who God is. Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), “The exact imprint of his nature” (Hebrews 1:3), and a perfect reflection of God the Father (John 5:19).

We believe the Scriptures, the sixty-six (66) books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God and are therefore without error in their original writings. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and free from error. The Scripture is sufficient for all that God requires for us to believe and do and is, therefore, to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises (Isaiah 40:6–8). As God’s people hear, believe, and obey the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel (Romans 10:14–17).

### **The Doctrine of God**

*We believe in one God eternally existing as one essence and three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each of whom is fully God, yet there is one God.*

We believe in one God eternally existing as one essence and three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person is fully, equally, and eternally God, yet there is one God. Each person has precisely the same nature and attributes and is worthy of precisely the same worship, honor, and praise. The entire Christian faith is bound together with the confession of God’s Trinitarian nature (Matthew 28:18–20).

We believe in God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth. We believe in the Son, God from God, eternally begotten but not made, who in history assumed to Himself a human nature for the sake of our salvation (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:3). He is fully God and fully man. Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him, all things hold together by the word of His power (Colossians 1:15–20). He suffered, died, was buried, resurrected, ascended, and sits at the right hand of the Father until He returns for the final judgment and consummation of the Kingdom. We believe in the Holy Spirit who eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son and is sent by the Father and Son to give new life (John 15:26–27). The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate (Ephesians 1:13–14). The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God’s Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped, as God. He is the third person of the Trinity.

The triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. As the immortal and eternal Creator, He sovereignly rules over all of His creation (Psalm 24:1).

### **The Doctrine of Creation and Providence**

*We believe that God created the world from nothing and governs all things at all times in all places.*

God created the whole world from nothing (Genesis 1:1–2; Psalm 24:1). God’s creative work is the overflow of the love present within the Trinitarian fellowship. Creation, according to the design of God, was good (Genesis 1:3–31).

God does not let the world exist; He makes the world exist. He upholds the universe by the word of His power, and He holds the world together in Himself (Colossians 1:17).

### **The Doctrine of Humanity**

*We believe that all humanity is created in the image of God and possesses intrinsic dignity and worth.*

God made humanity—male and female—in His own image (Genesis 1:27–30). Set apart as His image bearers, every human being is sacred. All men and all women, bearing the image of God, are meant to represent God in His creation (1 Corinthians 10:31). God declares the created order to be very good, distinguishing men and women as His agents to care for, manage and govern over it. They enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union in the covenant of marriage that establishes the only God-ordained pattern of sexual relations for men and women. In God’s wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value but are distinct by divine design. As part of God’s good, created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church. As it relates to the church, men and women are both expected to lead; however, the office of elder is reserved for qualified men (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1).

### **The Doctrine of Sin**

*We believe that sin has fractured all things, leaving the world in desperate need for salvation.*

Through the temptation of Satan, humanity transgressed the command of God and fell from their original holiness and righteousness (Genesis 3). Now the entire human race inherits a corrupt nature that is opposed to God and His law (Romans 3:9–20). Therefore, all humans are under condemnation. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to the mind, will, body, and affections. Unregenerate humanity lives under the dominion of sin and Satan (Ephesians 2:1–3). He is at enmity with God, hostile toward and hateful of God.

## **The Doctrine of Salvation**

*We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.*

We believe that, due to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again (John 3:5–8); that salvation is only by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ; and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith are declared righteous by God and become children of God (Hebrews 10:19–25). We believe the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that act of God by which the Holy Spirit imparts a new nature and a new spiritual life, not before possessed, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus (Galatians 2:20). The mind is given a holy disposition and a new desire to serve God, the dominion of sin is broken, and the heart is transformed from a love of sin and self to a love of holiness and God. Salvation is the work of God alone so that no man may boast (Ephesians 2:8–10).

## **The Doctrine of the Church**

*We believe that the Church is the body of Christ sent into the world to shine forth the glory of God.*

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful humanity into the fellowship of Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12:12–31). By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that newly redeemed humanity. The Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Church is an extension of the ministry of Jesus in the power of the Spirit. The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples (Matthew 28:18–20). The Church is called to make disciples through worship, prayer, the teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances, fellowship, the exercise of our gifts and talents, and the proclamation of the gospel both in our community and throughout the world.

We believe there are two ordinances of the Church. One is that of believer's baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the other is the Lord's Supper. Water baptism is only intended for those who have received the saving benefits of Christ through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. In obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, believers are baptized by water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts the release from the mastery of Satan, sin, and death. As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we come to the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

## **The Doctrine of Resurrection and Consummation of the Kingdom of God**

*We believe that Jesus Christ is returning to the world in the future to judge the living and the dead.*

The consummation of all things includes the future, physical, visible, personal, and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the glorification of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the consummation, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, is finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment (Revelation 20:7–15), but the righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the eager expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new (Revelation 21:1–5).

### **Section 4: Obligations of the Elders to Church Body**

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

#### **The Elders Covenant...**

- 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).
- 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 Peter 5:1–4).
- 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).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27–28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Tim. 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 teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28–31; 1 Timothy 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 (Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19–20).
- 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).

## Section 5: Obligations of Members to the Church Body

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, 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” (Romans 8). The requirements of this membership covenant 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.

### Members Covenant to...

- To submit to the authority of the Scriptures 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, and 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 follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
  - o By being baptized after my conversion and participating in the baptism of others.
  - o By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion (the Lord’s Supper).
- To regularly participate in the life of Weaver Baptist Church by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community, and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 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 the community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14–30; Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 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 Peter 1:13–16, 4:1–3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit.
- To refrain from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish (Romans 14:14–23).
- 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 submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
  - o Following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another—the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
  - o Receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:9–13; Hebrews 12:5–11).
- To submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1–3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).
- To do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:

- To notify the church leadership (Pastor or Elders).
- To seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.