

Church Membership Covenant and Agreement

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

_____ **A. Statement of Faith**
(initial)

_____ **B. Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**
(initial)

_____ **C. Statement on Church Discipline**
(initial)

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Board of Elders and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Board of Elders, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the Board of Elders short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstances (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Board of Elders, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

The members of this church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject, has been concluded as determined by the Board of Elders.

_____ **D. Statement on Mediation**

(initial)

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor 6:1-7).

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

_____ **E. Statement on Life**

(initial)

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable dignity and sacred before God in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps 139).

_____ **F. Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct**

(initial)

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all

that we believe. For purposes of Newtown Bible Church's faith, doctrine, practice policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is Newtown Bible Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

I have reviewed the statements above as indicated by my initials before each of them, and agree to be governed by all the provisions herein.

Name

Date