

# **MEMBERSHIP at COLLEGE HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH**

This booklet will address topics related to membership at College Heights Baptist Church, starting with a Biblical understanding of the church and going to the practical implications of church membership today.

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## I. A Biblical Understanding of the Church

### A. The Foundation of the Church

- The confession of faith of Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” – Matt. 16:13 – 10
- The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ’s redeeming work by his sacrificial death for us and his victorious resurrection from the dead. See Acts 2:22-36; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Col. 1:15-20
- Foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as chief cornerstone – 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-22

### B. The Birth of the Church

After Jesus’ resurrection He appeared to his disciples over a 40 day period teaching them about the kingdom of God. He told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come on them. Ten days later, on the feast of Pentecost the church was born. See Acts 1 & 2

- Believers together in unity in one place
- Outpouring of the Holy Spirit with special signs
- Gathering of Jewish people from many nations
- Proclamation of God’s Word in many languages
- Peter’s sermon – Joel’s prophecy of Holy Spirit; Peter’s proclamation of message of Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection
- Response – 3000 believers baptized to become the core of the church in Jerusalem

### C. The Mission of the Church

- The Great Commandment – Jesus reinforced the great command of the Old Testament law, to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. To his disciples he added the phrase, “Love one another **as I have loved you.**” See Matt. 22:37-40; John 13:34, 35

- The Great Commission – Before Jesus returned to heaven he commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations. He told them they would be his witnesses beginning at Jerusalem and going to the ends of the earth. The good news of the gospel was for the whole world. John 3:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

#### **D. The Life of the Church**

The church soon formed a vibrant community in Jerusalem that has become a model for the church. See Acts 2:42-47: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” After a brief description of church life it concludes, “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” These components describe a balance of ingredients that are essential to healthy church life.

- The Apostles’ Teaching. In the church we receive teaching directly through reading the Word of God, or indirectly, through teaching from the Scriptures. This includes:
  - Public preaching and teaching by pastors and/or church leaders.
  - Small groups where we have the opportunity to interact with the Scriptures with others, sharing insights, asking questions and grappling together with the implications of understanding and living out God’s truth.
  - Personal reading and study of God’s Word.
- Fellowship. This speaks of activity together and our common bond as members of God’s family, a deep sense of unity and love for one another. See Phil. 1:27; 2:1-5. In the early church this consisted sharing in their public worship, gathering in homes and sharing their material possessions with one another in a spirit of joy. For us this includes:
  - Public services, where there is opportunity to greet one another, share what God is doing in our lives and praying together in times of need

- Small groups provide opportunity to share both the joys and struggles of life, as we study the Scriptures together. This often results in practical sharing as well as we seek to meet needs of one another.
  - Ministry together. People involved in ministry together often form a deep bond of fellowship, whether on music teams, youth or children's ministry, building or service projects.
- Worship. "Breaking of bread" speaks of the worship of the early church. It centered around the observance of the Lord's Table or communion, the celebration of Christ's sacrificial death for us and his risen life.
    - Public services give opportunity to worship God together in song, raising our voices together to praise our wonderful Lord and Savior. Scriptures, prayer, testimony and preaching are integral parts of this worship, as well as the Lord's Table, celebrated once a month, usually the first Sunday.
    - Small groups also have a component of worship as we rejoice together and praise God for what he has done through prayer and/or song.
    - Personal worship takes place as we respond to God through the Scriptures, the world he has created, as we see God at work in our lives, and as we seek to serve him in every aspect of our lives.
- Prayer. Prayer may include our praise and worship, but also our confession of sin or need, our personal requests to God and our intercession for others. This may happen in our worship services, small groups or as individuals, at any time, day or night.
- Outreach. The early church constantly reached out to those who did not know Jesus. Then and now people are attracted to Jesus because of the vibrant life of the Christian community, (Acts 2:42-47) because people share their stories of what God has done, (Acts 8:4-40; 11:19-21) and through events deliberately designed to share the good news of Jesus (Acts 13 – 20).

## **E. The Power of the Church**

The power (“dunamis” – dynamic) of the church is the Holy Spirit. The church is not just an organization that runs on the abilities and energies of its people, but is a fellowship of people energized by the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus left his disciples he promised that he would not leave them as orphans but would send the Holy Spirit to guide and teach them (John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15). With the picture of the vine and its branches he taught them that they must remain in him and draw their energy and strength from him (John 15:1-17). After his resurrection he told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit and with it the power to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4-8). If the church is to accomplish God’s purposes today, it must rely on the power and direction of the Holy Spirit.

## **F. The History of the Church**

- Old Testament Roots
  - God’s promise to Abraham – “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Gen. 12:1-3
  - Israel was to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” and a witness to the whole world. Ex. 19:6
  - David was conscious of God’s purpose for the nations to hear about God and turn to him. Ps. 9:11; 18:49; 22:27.
  - Solomon, in dedicating the temple, wanted all peoples of the earth to know the LORD is God. 1 Kings 8:59-60
  - The prophets spoke of the nations coming to the Lord. See Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:10; 42:1-7; 56:6, 7; 60:1-3; Jer. 1:5.
- New Testament Roots
  - Prophecy of Simeon – Jesus’ coming “a light for ... the Gentiles and for glory to ... Israel.” Luke 2:28-32
  - Jesus’ coming for the nations – Matt. 12:17-21
  - The gospel to be proclaimed to all nations – Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8
- New Testament Era
  - Birth at Pentecost – Acts 2
  - Growth in Jerusalem & Judea – Acts 3 – 7
  - Persecution - gospel spreads to Samaria, Ethiopian and Antioch – Acts 8, 11:19-30
  - Conversion of Saul – Acts 9

- Gospel to Gentiles – Cornelius the centurion—Acts 10-11
- Missionary journeys “ends of the earth” – Acts 13 – 28  
Gospel spread through Asia (Turkey), Macedonia and Greece to Rome. Paul’s ambition to preach where Christ was not known. – Rom. 15:17-20
- Advance of Christianity
- By 600 CE, most of the area surrounding the Mediterranean, including north Africa was considered Christian, extending as far as the British Isles.
- By 1200 CE, Christianity had spread through most of Europe, but the rise of Islam meant a decline in the Middle East and North Africa.
- By 1800 CE, the Christian faith had expanded to the Americas, South Africa and Australia through western exploration and colonization. In Europe the church had divided into Roman Catholic and Protestant.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of missions with leaders like William Carey in India, David Livingstone in Africa and Hudson Taylor in China. The vision was to take the gospel to the whole world.
- Today Christianity has spread to almost every nation and people group on earth, and nearly one third of the population is at least nominally Christian. Christians may come from any ethnic or language group. In many areas Christians are severely persecuted. There is still a great need to proclaim the good news to all nations.

## **G. Pictures of the Church**

- **People of God** – Peter describes the church as a community of God’s chosen people. This is a continuation of the promises to Israel at Sinai and of Hosea’s prophecy. See Ex. 19:4-6; Hosea 2:21-23 & 1 Pet. 2:9, 10.
- **Theme: Chosen people, God’s possession**
- **Family of God** – We are God’s family (Ephesians 2:19-22). We are no longer outsiders, foreigners, or strangers, but members of God’s family and citizens of heaven. We belong to one another and are commanded to love and care for one another. See John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-12, 19-5:1.
- **Theme: Love and fellowship within the church**

- **The Flock of God** - We are “God’s people and the sheep of His pasture.” (Ps. 100:3) Christ, the Good Shepherd cares for us and leads us in His way. The metaphor of shepherd or pastor is used frequently to describe how spiritual leaders feed, care for and protect the flock of God’s people. See John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4
- **Theme: God’s Care for His People**
- **Body of Christ** - The church is pictured as a living organism which draws direction and nourishment from Christ. The body describes the inter-connectedness of the members as they care for one another and work together in an atmosphere of truth and love. See Romans 12:3 – 8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:7-16.
- **Theme: Unity and Diversity**
- **Holy Temple** – God’s people are described as a building, a holy temple, a place of worship indwelt by God’s Spirit. This metaphor is used for individual Christians as well as the people of God together. Eph.2:21-22; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20
- **Theme: God’s Presence in the World**
- **Bride of Christ** – Christ is described as the bridegroom and the church as his bride. This speaks of the mutual love and commitment between Christ and the church. It is also associated with our expectation in waiting for Christ’s return. See Eph. 5:25-28, 32; John 14:1-3; Rev. 19:9; 21:9-14
- **Theme: Purity/Holiness, Expectation of Christ’s Return**

## H. The Ordinances (Baptism and Communion)

The ordinances of Baptism and Communion were instituted by Christ to remember his finished work.

- Baptism and Communion are **tangible** activities. They involve our minds and our senses. We taste the bread and wine and feel real water as we are baptized.
- Baptism and Communion are **simple** activities.  
Thomas Ogden says, “There is something refreshingly simple about the sacraments Jesus instituted; they are hardly more impressive than a bath and a meal. Life in Christ begins with a cleansing bath of repentance and pardon; it continues with nurturing food and drink.”



- **Believer's Baptism**

- Believer's Baptism follows a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ which includes repentance from our sins (Acts 2:38) and belief in his saving work on the cross.
- In baptism a believer is telling the church and the world that he/she wants to be identified as a follower of Christ and is choosing to follow him for the rest of his/her life.
- At College Heights we baptize by immersion because we believe it best symbolizes the dying of the old self and raising to life of a new person in Christ. They have been washed and regenerated. Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12
- At College Heights believer's baptism is a prerequisite for church membership.

- **Communion (The Lord's Supper)**

- Jesus instituted the communion at the Last Supper, the Passover meal with his disciples, before his death. He took the bread representing his body broken for us, and the cup representing his blood shed for the remission of sins. They represent the new covenant he established by his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. See Matt. 26:26-30.
- Communion is an act that only followers of Christ should participate in.
- Communion is both an individual act and a community act. We remember what Christ has done on the cross in forgiving our sins and giving us new life. We renew our commitment to follow him. But we also gather as the Christian family to celebrate our fellowship with one another and commitment to follow Christ together.
- Communion looks forward to Christ's coming and the marriage feast of the Lamb. Together "we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Rev. 19:9
- At College Heights we celebrate communion once a month, usually the first Sunday of the month.

## **II. Church Membership Today**

The New Testament church recognized believers as members upon conversion and/or baptism. They would participate in a church congregation in their own community, though there may have been no formal membership. The church was often persecuted and banned from meaningful participation in society. The church continued to meet, often secretly, for teaching, worship and fellowship, even when threatened. Today, in our society, the church is free to meet without threat of persecution. The church is recognized as a charitable society, with certain privileges and responsibilities. The church is able to issue tax deductible receipts for gifts, but it is also accountable to the government for integrity in managing its affairs fiscally and organizationally.

As an organization the church operates under the Societies Act. It submits its constitution and by-laws to the government, and is required to submit reports on its finances, officers and major business annually. Unless there is mismanagement of its affairs, the church is unlikely to face interference from the government. The church is still able to operate according to biblical principles, but is also required to have an organizational structure in harmony with the Societies Act. Membership is important in maintaining the church's place in our community and enabling it to function organizationally in our society.

### **A. The Process of Membership**

The process of membership at College Heights Baptist Church is fairly simple. Three requirements are made of any person who wants to become a member:

- Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- Baptism by immersion (materials are available separately)
- Commitment to the vision and goals of College Heights Baptist Church and a determination to participate in the life and ministry of the church.

As spiritual caretakers of the church, it is the responsibility of the elders to ensure that these requirements are met. Those pursuing membership will be given information about the church and will

attend a class or meet a pastor and/or elder to discuss membership. Two elders or a pastor and an elder will interview each candidate and hear his/her testimony, and respond to questions about the church and how it functions, and opportunities for spiritual growth and service.

You may become a member of College Heights Baptist Church on the recommendation of the elders. You are not required to become a member when you are baptized, but we strongly encourage you to consider membership.

## **B. Privileges of Membership**

The first section of this manual described the mission and life of the New Testament church and pictures used to describe it. At College Heights Baptist Church we want to live by the same principles of church life. Our goal is to have leaders in touch with God's Spirit and sensitive to the needs of the people, and people who genuinely care for and encourage one another. Our vision is to actively practice both the great commandment and the great commission. Our goal is to equip people to live for Christ and serve him in their community. It is privilege to belong to this kind of a family.

As church leaders our goal is to:

- **Pray** for you consistently.
- **Preach** and teach the Word of God in a way that will build you up and enable you to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
- **Provide** care, encouragement, counsel and practical assistance to help you.
- **Prepare** you to assume positions of responsible ministry at the right time.
- **Present** you with opportunities for service, to use your abilities for God.

## C. Responsibilities of Membership

The picture of the church as a body clearly implies that each member has a significant role in the functioning of the church. Each part needs to be nurtured, and each part needs to be involved in serving fellow members. The New Testament gives more than 25 “one another” commands which show us how we can love one another and care for, support and serve one another. Being a member of College Heights Baptist Church will include the following:

- **Regular attendance at church services.** Church services provide opportunity to worship together, be taught from the Scriptures, to enjoy fellowship and to serve one another. Heb. 10:25 says, “Let us not give up meeting together, ... but let us encourage one another.”
- **Participation in small groups.** Care groups give opportunity to develop deeper relationships with people, to learn God’s Word in an atmosphere where you can ask questions, share insights and encourage and pray for one another. This is one of the best ways to obey the “one another” commands of Scripture. Some care groups take on service projects. Participation in care groups is strongly encouraged.
- **Financial support.** Tithes and offerings of its people provide the church’s primary support. Offerings provide salary for staff, funding for church programs, benevolent needs, building maintenance, and support for missions locally and internationally. Paul commends the church of Macedonia for sacrificial giving in spite of financial hardship. “They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.” (2 Cor. 8:5) He instructs the Corinthians, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Cor. 9:7, 8)

- **Serving others.** Scripture teaches us that God gives every believer at least one spiritual gift to serve God. There are many opportunities to serve within the ministry of the church—music and worship, Sunday school, youth ministry, child care, leading small groups, building maintenance, women’s or men’s ministry, sound booth or power point projection. Others may serve ministries in the community. It is important for everyone to have an area of service. In Ephesians 4 Paul tells us that God has given gifted leaders to the church “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” so that we will grow in unity, knowledge of Christ and maturity to become Christ-like. As we speak the truth in love, the whole body, “grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (see vss. 11 – 16)
- **Participation in church business.** College Heights Baptist Church has a congregational form of government. A Council of Elders assists the pastoral staff in establishing vision, overseeing and guarding the spiritual health of the church. The Board of Directors administers the business of the church and oversees the organizational structure. As a member you have the right and responsibility to share your input in discussions and decisions we will face as a church. Together, we initiate new ministries, set budgets, and are accountable for current ministries. Members are involved in decision-making and we value your attendance at church business meetings.
- **Praying for one another.** Paul says, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Eph. 6:18)

### III. The North American Baptist Conference

#### A. Who Are We?

The North American Baptist Conference is a family of over 400 churches with more than 75,000 worshippers in the United States and Canada. Its roots are in ministry to German immigrants to the United States and Canada, but today North American Baptists are a diverse group of believers representing many cultures and languages. You'll find us worshipping in small rural churches, large auditoriums, schools, storefronts, and homes. In addition we have the privilege of bringing the gospel to five continents (Africa, Asia, South America, Europe and North America) through mission endeavors.

**B.** The **mission** of the North American Baptist Conference is *to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ at home and internationally*. This can best be accomplished as we combine the strength of all member churches. The International Office seeks to support this mission by helping churches and mission fields develop leaders who are able to multiply ministries in their respective settings.

**C. Priorities** of the North American Baptist Conference are:

- **Leadership Development** - Leaders need resources and training to maximize their impact in developing disciples.
- **Ministry Multiplication** - The effort to assist every NAB church to see the gospel of Christ impact their community and beyond.
- **The Best Cared for Missionaries** - Investing in them the resources and support that allows them to fulfill the call of God on their lives.

## **D. Statement of Beliefs**

### **The Word**

1. We believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of himself to humanity (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error – the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (I Peter 1:23-25; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17). It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (I John 5:9-12; Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2).

### **The Person of God**

2. We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 86:15; Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He exists eternally in three coequal persons who act together in creation, providence and redemption (Genesis 1:26; I Peter 1:2; Hebrews 1:1-3).
  - a. The Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe; He hears and answers prayer (I Chronicles 29:11-13; Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending his Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Saviour (I John 4:9-10; John 3:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31)
  - b. The Son became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18). Being fully God and fully man, he revealed God through His sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21, Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules over all creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever present Lord (Romans 8:34; John 14:23).

- c. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, He convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Saviour and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18; John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5-6; Romans 8:16). At regeneration and conversion, the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 12:5-8; I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christlikeness in all who yield to Him (Acts 4:31; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

## **The Rest**

3. We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and do His will (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). The holy angels are obedient spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7, 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice revolted and fell from their exalted position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1; I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10)
4. We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be steward over His creation (Genesis 1:26-28). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 8:22). Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9-18, 23). Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him (Ephesians 4:27; II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 16:23). Nonetheless, everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly



through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12; I Timothy 2:5).

5. We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 20:21). An individual is united to Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). As a child of God, the believer is acquitted of all guilt and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 3:12).
6. We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:41-42, 47; Luke 24:45-48). Each church is a self-governing body under the lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28). The form of government is understood to be congregational (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:3-6; 15:22-23).

The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Saviour Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

7. We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience

with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27, John 8:32; II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21; Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from the control by the other (Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders, and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.

8. We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christlike spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 9:23; Titus 1:12, Philippians 4:8-9; I John 3:16-17; James 2:1-4).

We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 6:1-4)

9. We believe God, in His own time and in his own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10, Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth (Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7; 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41, 26; Revelation 20:10). The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

## E. College Heights Baptist Church

College Heights Baptist Church is part of the B.C. Association of churches, a family of more than 25 churches in our province, including three in Prince George.

College Heights Baptist Church is located in a young and vibrant community within Prince George, British Columbia. If you join us on Sunday morning you'll notice people of various ages and diverse backgrounds unified in worshipping God and seeking His will for their lives through the study of the Bible.

The seeds for our church were planted in 1972 when Fort George Baptist Church decided to start an extension project in an outlying area. A home Bible study began in College Heights which soon led to regular worship services being held at College Heights Elementary School. Then, in May of 1979, construction of our current church facility began.

Today this building is home to an average of 350 people each Sunday morning. And, all these years later our desire remains the same:

*“ We exist to thrill the heart of God by making committed followers of Jesus who are able to help others follow Him.”*

Fully committed followers of Jesus have these characteristics:

- G**lorify God through meaningful worship

- R**elate together in biblical community

- A**pply God's truth through discipleship

- C**ultivate a lifestyle of service

- E**xpand God's kingdom through evangelism

### Current Ministries

For information on current ministries at the church contact visit the church website, [www.mychbc.ca](http://www.mychbc.ca).

For further information contact the church office, 250-964-4181 or [office@mychbc.ca](mailto:office@mychbc.ca) or any of the pastoral staff.

## **IV. Growing as a Church Member**

Healthy growth as a member of a church involves personal spiritual growth as well as growing through our connection with the Christian family. We do not grow in isolation, but as members of a body, draw encouragement and strength from other parts of the body, and in turn contribute to their growth. Here are a few tips for continued growth.

### **A. Personal Spiritual Growth**

- Personal time with God. Each of us need a personal time of fellowship with God in order to grow spiritually. Jesus used the example of the vine and the branches. He said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) Personal time with God, sometimes called a "quiet time," is a time to hear from God, to talk to him and to spend time in his presence. For most people a consistent time and place work best. This may include:
  - Scripture reading. This is the discipline of listening to God. Paul says, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong with our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do." (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In other Scriptures God's Word is likened to food that nourishes us. Reading the Bible systematically is best, reading through a complete book before going on to something else. You might try alternating Old and New Testament books. Find a system that works for you. Most important is that you listen to what God is saying to you. Meditate or think about what you have read and ask God how he wants you to live.
  - Prayer. Prayer is talking with God, speaking and listening. We can thank God for what he has done for us and praise him for who he is. We can ask forgiveness for our failures and express our love to God. We can talk about problems we face and ask God for wisdom and strength to live for him. We can bring him the needs of others, Christian and non-Christian friends and acquaintances.

It is good to have set times for prayer, but we can talk to God at any time about anything in life. A good model for prayer is the Lord's prayer in Matt. 6:9-13.

*"Our Father in heaven..."* It begins with awe and adoration for our Heavenly Father and our relationship to him.

*"Your kingdom come, your will be done..."* Think about God, his kingdom and purposes before our own.

*"Give us today our daily bread"* God cares about our daily needs, both material and spiritual. Bring them to him.

*"Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors..."* Come to him confessing our failures and sins, find his forgiveness, and extend his forgiveness to others.

*"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."* Bring him the trials we are facing and draw on his spiritual strength and protection.

- Other helps may be Christian music that helps us worship God, listening to sermons or teaching material, good books-- devotional books, theology, biography or others.
- Witnessing. When Christ is in our life we have a desire to share what he has done with others, so they might come to know him too. Peter tells us, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15) A good way to be prepared is to write out your story. It could include:
  1. What my life was like before I met Jesus.
  2. How I realized I needed Jesus.
  3. How I committed my life to Jesus.
  4. The difference Jesus has made in my life.Think about your story and be ready to share it with others, trusting God to provide opportunities and wisdom.
- Serving. Look for opportunities to serve God in your community—your home, neighborhood, work place, community organizations, etc. Paul says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Gal. 3:9)

## **B. Growth in Community**

As Christians we are not lone rangers, but part of a family, a community of God's people. We are members of "one body" and are meant to grow and serve together in community.

- Be regular in attendance. Participate in worship services, joining your voice in song, Scripture reading and prayer, responding to the teaching of God's Word and enjoying the fellowship of God's people.
- Participate in a care group. This is one of the best ways to grow personally in your spiritual life, to develop deeper friendship and fellowship with others, and to contribute to others through sharing, prayer and practical service.
- Take advantage of training opportunities. Periodically there will be teaching or seminars on specific topics—spiritual gifts, managing finances, missions, marriage or parenting. Through these you can grow in areas of Christian living and ministry.
- Look for opportunities to serve. There are many areas to serve within the Church community—music and worship, teaching Sunday school, child care, youth ministry, care group leadership, men's and women's ministries, missions, care of facilities, etc. Assess your God-given gifts and abilities and look for a place where you can serve. If you need help, talk to one of the deacons or pastoral staff. Jesus set the example in serving by washing his disciples' feet, and says, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:15) Paul says, "Serve one another in love." (Gal. 5:13) Your primary area of ministry may be in the church or in the community, through your work or community organizations such as Child Evangelism Fellowship, New Life Centre, International Student Ministries, Youth for Christ, Ness Lake Bible Camp or The Pregnancy Care Centre.
- Give financially to further God's kingdom. Support church ministries, missions, Christian organizations, and don't forget the needy. "Freely you have received, freely give."
- "Love your neighbor as yourself." Christ's law of love is to permeate all we do within the church family and the community around us. Jesus said, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34, 35)

## Membership Application

I have received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord, and desire to become an active member and support the ministries of College Heights Baptist Church. Therefore I apply for membership.

First & Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone\*: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed

☐ Remarried          Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Members in Your Current Household	Relationship	Birth Date

Church previously attended (name of church and city/province)

Have you been baptized? ☐ Yes    Date: \_\_\_\_\_    ☐ No

Do you wish to be baptized? ☐ Yes    ☐ No

I have read the Statement of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws of College Heights Baptist Church. As a member of this church I will abide by these documents, endeavor to serve the Lord and his work faithfully, and seek to fulfill my membership responsibilities to the best of my ability.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\* If available and applicable

## **Church Experience/Involvement**

*Please indicate your church leadership and ministry involvement*

Bible teaching received \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bible teaching experience (SS or other) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Leadership experience:

- Children's ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Youth ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Adult ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Administration \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Gifts and Abilities**

Spiritual gifts \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Skills and abilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Community group involvement \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_