

Membership at The Village Church

Our Joyful Commitment

Church membership is a **vital and joyous expression** of our union with Christ and His body, embodying the local and committed outworking of our universal identity. It is a **counter-cultural declaration** that we belong to Jesus and to one another as a gospel-bound family, committed to loving, serving, and encouraging each other.

Membership provides the **structure for spiritual protection and care** under our elders. It clarifies our commitment to the mission of the gospel in a specific place and people, embodying the biblical framework we describe as **“deep work, over time, in community.”**

Membership is not institutionalism; it is about **incarnationally living out our identity as the family of God**—for our good, the good of others, and ultimately, for the glory of God.

Our Commitments as a Church Family

We've summarized the biblical expectations of membership into three core commitments. These are the ways we, as a church, commit to live out our faith together, empowered by the Holy Spirit and for the glory of God.

1. **We are biblically serious.** We humbly live by God's Word.
2. **We are spiritually alive.** We eagerly seek the Spirit for life and wisdom.
3. **We are missionally sent.** We generously bring the gospel to our neighbors and the nations.

Detailed Biblical Expectations

These three commitments flow from the following biblical expectations for all members and elders of The Village Church.

Our Commitment to You (Expectations of Elders)

As shepherds and overseers, the elders of The Village Church are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the church body. Our elders commit to:

- **Appoint** elders 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). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Prayerfully seek** God's will for the church community and steward resources to the best of their ability, based on their study of the Scriptures and following of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1–4). **[Spiritually Alive]**
- **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). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive | Missionally Sent]**

- **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). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Equip** the members of the church for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11–16). **[Biblically Serious | Missionally Sent]**
- **Be on guard** against false teachers and teachings (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28–31; 1 Tim. 1:3–7; 1 John 4:1). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **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). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Set an example** and join members in fulfilling the expectations of church membership (Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7–8; 1 Pet. 5:3). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive | Missionally Sent]**

Your Commitment to One Another (Expectations of Members)

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel, we have the opportunity to reflect the character and hope of Jesus Christ. As members of this church family, we commit to:

- **Submit** to the authority of the Scriptures as the final word on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14–17; 2 Pet. 1:19–21). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Pursue** the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and the practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Eph. 5:1–21; 1 Thess. 5:12–22). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive]**
- **Follow** the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
 - By being baptized after our conversion, which is referred to as “believer’s baptism.” **[Biblically Serious]**
 - If you were previously baptized (by sprinkling or immersion) in a different Christian tradition *before* your conversion to Christ, we ask that you be baptized in accordance with the church’s scriptural interpretation.
 - If you were baptized by immersion *before* you actually became a Christian, we ask that you be baptized following your actual conversion in accordance with the church’s scriptural interpretation.
 - If you were baptized following conversion, but by a different mode (sprinkling, not immersion), then we affirm this as believer’s baptism, while maintaining immersion is both the picture of baptism in the New Testament and the meaning of the word “baptize” (to dip, immerse, or plunge) in the original language.
 - Our view on “believer’s baptism” (immersion after conversion) is an act of response that aligns with our foundational scriptural interpretation; thus, it is a requirement for membership. Regarding our other theological

positions—complementarianism, the sovereignty of God in salvation, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit—we understand that faithful members may hold differing biblical positions across a spectrum of belief.

- If you have been previously baptized (sprinkled or immersed) in a different Christian tradition before confessional conversion, to pursue membership at TVC is to affirm the scriptural interpretation of believer's baptism by immersion post-conversion, and if necessary, to be baptized in agreement with this tradition.
 - By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Jesus Christ through communion. **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Regularly participate** in the life of The Village Church by attending weekly worship gatherings, engaging in community, and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42–47; Heb. 10:23–25; Titus 3:14). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive | Missionally Sent]**
- **Steward** the resources God has given us, including our time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular and cheerful financial giving to The Village Church, serving the body, and sacrificial participation in community (Matt. 25:14–30; Rom. 12:1–2; 2 Cor. 8–9; 1 Pet. 4:10–11). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive | Missionally Sent]**
- **Walk in holiness** by God's grace and through the Spirit's power as an act of worship. This means we strive to put sin to death while stirring up love and good deeds in one another (1 Pet. 1:13–16, 4:1–3). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive]**
- **Refrain** from activities the Scriptures deem foolish and take seriously our Christian freedom, especially in actions that could be a stumbling block to another (Rom. 14:14–23; 1 Cor. 8:1–13). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Submit** to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
 - Following the biblical procedures for church discipline when sin is evident in another, always with the hope of repentance and restoration (Heb. 12:6, Matt. 18:15–20, 2 Cor. 5:11). **[Biblically Serious]**
 - 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). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Confess** our sin to God and to fellow believers, and repent and seek help to put sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6–10). **[Biblically Serious | Spiritually Alive]**
- **Submit** to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church, and diligently strive for unity and peace within our church family (Eph. 4:1–3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5). **[Biblically Serious]**
- **Notify** the church leadership if we leave, and seek another gospel-believing church where we can carry out our biblical responsibilities. **[Missionally Sent]**

TVC Statement of Faith

The Village 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 historic formulations, we are situated within the evangelical, Reformed, and Baptist traditions.

The basic doctrines within The Village Church Statement of Faith represent what we believe to be core elements of biblical teaching. We expect all members of The Village Church to affirm these doctrines.

The theological distinctives within The Village Church Statement of Faith reflect what distinguishes The Village Church from other churches that would affirm the basic doctrines. These distinctives indelibly shape the way that The Village Church is led and the direction the church is headed. We do not expect all members to embrace all aspects of these distinctives, but members should expect that the distinctives will be maintained in all ministry environments at The Village Church, and members may not teach contrary to them.

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 (Matt. 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; Heb. 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 (Col.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 (Eph. 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, 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 (Ps. 24:1).

Doctrine of Revelation

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

We believe that God has made Himself known to His creation. He has revealed Himself to us in His Son, the incarnate Word (Heb. 1:1–2), in Scripture, the inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16), and in creation (Ps. 8; Rom. 1:20).

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” (Col. 1:15), “the exact expression of his nature” (Heb. 1:3) and a perfect reflection of God the Father (John 5:19).

We believe the Scriptures, the 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 (Is. 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 (Rom. 10:14–17).

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 (Gen. 1:1–2; Ps. 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 (Gen. 1:3–31).

God doesn’t 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 (Col. 1:17).

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 (Gen. 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 Cor. 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. For more on Sexuality, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage, see the statements from our Elders and bylaws below.

Distinctive • Complementarianism

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 Tim. 3; Titus 1). For more on this distinctive, read our Women in Ministry Statement.

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 (Gen. 3). Now the entire human race inherits a corrupt nature that is opposed to God and His law (Rom. 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 (Eph. 2:1–3). He is at enmity with God, hostile toward and hateful of God.

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 (Heb. 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 (Gal. 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.

Distinctive • Sovereignty of God in Salvation

The salvation of humanity is fundamentally the work of God. Before the foundation of the world, God elected His people, setting His affection and grace upon them (Rom. 8:29–30). In love God predestined His people for adoption (Eph. 1:4–6). Faith is a gift of grace that is given by the mercy and pleasure of God, so that no one may boast. Apart from the intervention of God, humanity cannot choose of his own accord to worship God and pursue righteousness (Rom. 3; Eph. 2:1–3). God's sovereignty in salvation is comprehensive; from first to last, all of salvation is the work of God.

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 Cor. 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 (Matt. 28:18–20). The Church is called to make disciples through worship, prayer, 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 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. This is known as believers' baptism that occurs post-conversion, and is distinctly different from Christian traditions that baptize infants.

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.

Distinctive • Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Holy Spirit that we see on display in the New Testament are still active within the life of the church. These gifts did not end with the close of the New Testament or the death of the last apostle (1 Cor. 12:1–11).

Distinctive • Baptism by Immersion

The precedent we find in the New Testament is baptism following conversion by immersion into water. Baptism by immersion is meant to symbolically depict the believer's real union to Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:1–14).

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 (Rev. 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 (Rev. 21:1–5).

Sexuality, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Though various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of marriage, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1–9, Mark 10:1–12).

Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord (Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4).

As a consequence, the Church regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or

even lustful intent toward such, as sinful and ultimately unsatisfying. Moreover, the Church also regards as sinful the intent or desire to surgically alter one's biological sex to a different sex. Since the body is a creation of God, the Church holds sexual identity to be biologically determined, and associated gender norms are to be observed as appropriate to biblical standards. Disagreement with one's biological sex only leads to spiritual confusion and emotional chaos (Genesis 1:27, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

In order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical example to the Church Members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity or united to the Church in membership should abide by and agree to this, "Statement on Marriage and Sexuality" and conduct themselves accordingly.

Though sinful sexual expression is egregious (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7).

Furthermore, there is a difference between temptation and unrepented sin. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet He never sinned. Members, employees, volunteers and attendees of the Church wrestling with all manner of sexual temptation will find a Church ready to point them to Jesus and join with them to fight for their obedience to Christ. Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to Himself. As a church desiring to follow Christ fully, the Church will be a safe place for men and women fighting sexual temptations of all kinds. For those fighting temptation and repenting of sin, the Church will provide love, care and direction (Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16).

The Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality does not provide grounds for bigotry, bullying or hate, as we fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, regardless of his or her lifestyle. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated as sinful and are not in accordance with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of the Church.

This statement specifically gives the Elder board the right and authority to prohibit acts or omissions, including but not limited to (a) permitting any Church assets or property, whether real property, personal property, intangible property, or any property or asset of any kind that is subject to the direction or control of the Church, to be used in any manner that would be—or, in the sole determination of the Elders, could be perceived by any person to be— inconsistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality; and (b) permitting any Church facilities to be used by any person, organization, corporation, or group that would or might use such facilities to convey, intentionally or by implication, what might be perceived as a favorable impression about any definition of marriage other than that contained in this Section.

The Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Scriptures, upon which this Church has been founded and

anchored, and this statement shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of Members or the general public; influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

Statement on Divorce and Remarriage

Marriage is the sacred and covenantal union between one man and one woman, and God's intention is for marriage to last a lifetime (Gen. 1–2). When a divorce occurs, it is always a result of sin (whether from one spouse or another). However, divorce is not always sinful. Biblically, divorce is permitted, but not required, on the grounds of sexual immorality (porneia) or abandonment (Matt. 5:31–32; 19:1–9; 1 Cor. 7). We believe sexual immorality (porneia) is best understood biblically as consisting of a range of actions with varying degrees of severity. We believe physical, sexual or other forms of abuse can be a form of abandonment. Marriage reconciliation can be the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work, but it may not always be wise, possible or biblically commanded.

When divorce is not biblically warranted, any subsequent remarriage (to someone other than the original spouse) results in biblical infidelity. In situations where divorce is biblically warranted, remarriage is possible. Christians who have been remarried following an unbiblical divorce should remain with their current spouse but follow the biblical admonition to repent and be forgiven of their past sins and make whatever amends are necessary.

We acknowledge that the subject of divorce and remarriage is biblically challenging in its interpretation and requires prayerful discernment and often a team of wise counselors in its personal application. In all instances, it includes complexity and nuance that cannot be oversimplified into a blanket policy, but requires prudence, patience and pastoral sensibility.