

## **WHY MEMBERSHIP?**

Membership is a declaration that I intend to follow Jesus from within the authority He exercises through my local church. After the death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the work of Jesus in this world is continuously described within the framework of local churches. Most of the NT letters are written to local churches rather than to individuals. Those written to individuals often describe how that individual ought to be leading his local church (see 1 Timothy 3). Even Paul's missionary work is done under the auspices of the local churches in Antioch and Jerusalem, to which Paul would periodically report. God clearly values the local church and authorizes pastors and elders to engage in a relational form of leadership from within the local church structure (see 1 Peter 5:1-5, Hebrews 13:17, and others.) Membership simply acknowledges that I believe that Jesus is working through my local church and that I intend to follow Him from within this particular body

### **Membership Reflects Our Commitment and Connectivity.**

- First, scripture says we are a body.
- To reject the value of membership is to deny what God has already established in fact.

### **The Bible Teaches Covenant Community.**

- Scripture teaches that we can be a part of the body, and we can be apart from the body.
- There is no such thing in the New Testament as a church without some recognition of belonging—membership. This has to involve some sort of formal process.

### **People Need Church Membership.**

- People need membership commitment because they need to be connected to a Christian community.
- Individualist Christianity is a myth and a damaging pursuit. "from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the Son he loves." (Col. 1:13) A kingdom has a king that has subjects and his kingdom is a community where we function together as God's people.

**To become a formal member at Trinity**, you need agree and sign the commitment form at the end of this packet and send it into the church office. Then we will arrange to have you share a short 3-5 minute testimony at our next Shepherding Board meeting to affirm your faith in Jesus.

By becoming a formal member, you are given various privileges and responsibilities. Our goal is not to devalue non-members, but to put the ownership and leadership of our church in the hands of those who are in alignment with our Biblical mission and theology. These privileges and responsibilities include:

**Voting:**

- *Lead Pastors:* New Lead Pastor candidate is recommended by the board, our formal members gather to vote on this recommendation. If this candidate receives a simple majority and accepts the offer, they become the new Lead Pastor. Lead Pastors are responsible for hiring staff, running the day-to-day operations of the church, and chairing the board.
- *Board and Officers:* Every year during our Annual Business Meeting, formal members elect Shepherding Board members and other officers. Our board consists of 6 lay members that each serve for a 3 year term and the Lead Pastor. Every year, two lay members leave our board for a required year-long hiatus, and two new lay members join the board. The board is entrusted by the congregation to oversee and govern the church. This includes guarding doctrine, setting our strategic direction, assisting in hiring key staff, and financial oversight.
- *Annual Budget and Major Building and Debt Decisions:* The congregation serves as a check and balance to the board and lead pastor in major financial decisions.

The Wesleyan Church has a unique blend of shared governance and decision-making authority divided between the board, congregation, and pastor. The Iowa-Minnesota District of the Wesleyan Church also serves as a check and balance to local church authority.

**Serving as an Elected Officer:**

Only members can serve as elected officers. In addition to the board, we have a Trustee, a Treasurer, and we send delegates to our annual District Conference. Also, membership in the Wesleyan Church is required before a pastor is ordained.

**Annual Membership Reaffirmation:**

Members are required to reaffirm their membership every year, usually in March. When someone does not reaffirm their membership, we contact them to ensure that

they want to be removed, and then we remove them from our membership rolls. There are several advantages to yearly reaffirmation:

- It provides another piece to our discipleship strategy. Rather than it being an additional “burden” or a requirement for members to “prove themselves,” it is a joyful recommitment to a discipleship relationship with Trinity.
- Yearly affirmation provides proactive annual accountability for each member and their commitments. It creates another touchpoint with each member for better care, shepherding, and discipleship.
- Yearly reaffirmation allows us to better maintain our membership rolls, which minimizes church politics.

