



Membership

Table of Contents

Welcome 3

Overview of the Membership Class 4

What is the purpose of Edgewood Bible Church? 5

What is membership? 5

How does one become a member? 5

What are the blessings of membership? 6

How do you grow at Edgewood Bible Church? 6

Church Leadership 7

Places to Grow and Serve 8

Our Church Covenant 9

A Closer Look at Biblical Church Membership 12

Doctrinal Essentials 19

By-Laws 21

 Article I: Name 21

 Article II: Purpose & Function 21

 Article III: Statement of Faith 21

 Article IV: Membership 21

 Article V: Leadership & Officers 24

 Article VI: Ordination 32

 Article VII: Dissolution of Corporation 32

 Article VIII: Amendments 32

Membership Application 34

Membership Agreement 35

Dear Prospective Member,

Welcome to Membership Class

Isolation. We were never made to live this way. God designed us from the very beginning to be with people, to have relationships with others, to be committed to others in some way. But what happens too often is that we live lives alone, disconnected, and separate from others. We, as a church family, are encouraged that you are desiring to take the next step in learning what it means to be connected to our church family.

A few things that we need to establish from the beginning:

1. There is no perfect pastor or church leaders in our family.
2. There are no perfect church members.
3. There is a perfect Savior that we serve.
4. We desire to work together as the church to serve our Savior!

We hope we didn't lose you above on #1 or #2. We look forward to serving with you to make much of #3 and #4. We are thankful for the opportunity to get to know you, your salvation story, your gifts, and your desires to serve God here at Edgewood Bible Church.

Your Imperfect Pastor,

Jeff Coulter

Overview of the Membership Class

Objectives:

- We want to help you understand:
 - Biblical Church Membership
 - Blessings of Membership

Potential Responses:

1. Take steps to become a member at Edgewood Bible Church.
2. Decide that Edgewood Bible Church is not the church family for you.
3. Address unanswered questions with our leadership team.

Too often, people evaluate a church in much the same way they choose a cruise ship.

CRUISE SHIP:

- Do I like the music they play in the ballroom?
- Do I like the captain and staff?
- Do I get good service and are my needs met?
- Is it pleasant and comfortable?
- Do I like the experience enough to sail with them again?

BATTLESHIP:

We believe a more appropriate metaphor for a church is a BATTLESHIP, and the right questions to ask are:

- Is the ship flying the right flag and fighting for a clear mission?
- Does the captain understand that he and his staff serve a higher authority? Do they gladly take their orders from Him?
- Do the officers create opportunities for all crew members to be prepared and successful on their tour of duty?
- Is each individual given an opportunity to contribute in a significant way to the mission?
- Is every individual cared for, developed, and honored in their efforts?

In short, as a part of the body of Christ, God calls us to be contributors not consumers.

What is the purpose of Edgewood Bible Church?

As a part of our disciple-making process, we gather each week at EBC for a corporate time of worship. The worship service occurs at 10:30am. We believe that we cannot be sanctified as believers in Christ without meeting together. We desire all members to be regular attenders to Sunday morning worship. When we gather in our weekly worship services we hear God's Word, we sing God's Word, we pray God's Word, we read God's Word, we see God's Word in the ordinances of Baptism and Communion, and we give according to God's Word.

At EBC we seek to be an obedient church by fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:19- 20). We take our call to make disciples seriously. In doing so we believe it is important for us to "teach the things Christ has commanded us."

Please read what we believe are the doctrinal essentials to live by as described later in this packet.

What is membership?

Membership is much more than attending a worship service on Sunday morning. Members of EBC are called to serve the church family, to sacrifice for the cause of Christ, and are responsible to pray and minister to one another. When joining as a member of EBC you are committing to be a part of a spiritual family that will provide support and encouragement in your walk with Christ. At EBC, membership is extended to all believers who:

- Desire to live a life separated from sinful habits of the flesh and worldliness.
- Evidence a burden for those without Jesus Christ as Savior and desire to be used to share the Gospel.
- Have been baptized as a believer.
- Demonstrate a commitment to each other and to God by consistently giving of one's time, talents, and financial support to the ministry of the Church.
- Complete the following membership process.

How does one become a member of EBC?

Becoming a member of EBC is a five-step process with two additional steps that are encouraged: (1) Read through the Membership packet. (2) Agree with our church covenant and the statement on church discipline which is confirmed with your signature. (3) Meet with a team of two elders to share your personal testimony and to ask any questions that you may have. (4) Be introduced to the congregation as a potential member of EBC. The following steps are not required but highly encouraged. (1) Select a care group to join. (2) Choose and commit to an area of service at EBC.

Following this process, we encourage the congregation to pray about your appointment of membership for two weeks, and if they have any issues about your membership, they are to come to you directly to discuss these issues. If there are any issues that cannot be settled, we would ask that both parties would come speak to the elders. If there are no concerns, you will be welcomed into membership with other new members during a Sunday morning service to be scheduled at a later date.

What are the blessings of membership?

Membership is a commitment to a local church, but with that commitment comes incredible blessings. Here are at least four: (1) It will connect you with a spiritual family who can support you in your walk with Jesus, (2) It is a place where you can exercise your spiritual gifts of ministry to serve the body and the community, (3) It allows you to voluntarily place yourself under the spiritual care of the pastors and elders, and (4) It provides you the accountability needed in the process of growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ. There are more blessings not listed and we look forward to experiencing those with you as you join with us!

How do you grow as a member of EBC?

Another part of our disciple-making process is growing in your walk with Christ by joining a care group. We strongly encourage people to join a care group if they are not presently a part of one. These groups are important because it gives opportunity for people to grow together in their walk with the Lord. In our care groups we seek to accomplish three things:

- 1) Bible Study – helping people understand more about the Word of God and how it applies to their daily lives.
- 2) Fellowship - helping people experience community as the body of Christ and to understand their life as a Christian is not just for themselves.
- 3) Accountability – helping people strive to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. Allowing other people to encourage spiritual growth in each other's lives.

For a current offering Bible Studies, Equipping for Life Classes, and other ministries, visit www.EdgewoodBibleChurch.org. Please contact Pastor Chris Short for information or to help get plugged into a Care Group.

Church Leadership

Elders, Deacons, Ministry and Church Staff

Staff Elders:		
Pastor Jeff Coulter		Jeff.Coulter@edgebible.org
Pastor Chris Short		Chris.Short@edgebible.org
Non-Staff Elders:		
Eric Peterson		Eric.Peterson@edgebible.org
Ryan Peterson		Ryan.Peterson@edgebible.org
Jeff Rogers		jeffeysemail@gmail.com
Deacons:	Ministry:	
Jim Dorrough	Facilities	Jim.ebc@hotmail.com
Louise Ferguson	Bookkeeping	finance@edgebible.org
Kris Hakanson	Facilities	facilities@edgebible.org
Aaron Peterson	Hospitality	squaredelh@gmail.com
Kristin Peterson	Communications	ebc@edgebible.org
Gary Rice	Practical Care	gvrcamrice6@gmail.com
Rebecca Rogers	Welcoming	jrrogers7@hotmail.com
Christy Smith	Bookstall	bookstall@edgebible.org
Staff:		
Zach Kispert, Pastoral Assistant		Zach.Kispert@edgebible.org
Kristin Peterson, Office Manager		ebc@edgebible.org
Preschool:		
Marcie Coe, Director		preschool@edgebible.org

Places to Grow and Serve at Edgewood Bible Church

Children's Ministries

Serving children from birth – 6th grade

Nursery

Amanda Rice, 253-732-5212

Volunteers care for ages birth-to-3 during Sunday School/church/events.

Sunday School

Contact Greg Coe, 253-426-5882

Volunteers teach 3-5 yr./gr 1-2/3-4/5-6

Children's Church

Kristin Peterson, 206-234-7056

Volunteers teach class for age 4-7 during portion of worship service.

Awana

Donna Ragazzo, 253-222-0082

Wednesdays, 6:15pm

Volunteers lead & disciple kids.

Student Ministries

Serving youth from 7th grade – 12th grade

Youth/Teens

Zach Kispert, 253-209-1043

Sundays, 5:30-7:30pm

Volunteers bring snacks.

College & Career

Weekly Bible Study

Jeff Rogers, 253-508-9174

Tuesdays, 7:00pm

Participants engage in studies on various topics

Adult Ministries

Audio/Visual team

Pastor Chris Short, 661-331-4010

Volunteers are trained for sound/video for Sunday services, VBS, events.

Building Maintenance

Kris Hakanson, 253-863-3909

Volunteers help with maintenance projects.

Care Groups

Pastor Chris Short, 661-331-4010

Participants enjoy fellowship, Bible study, and accountability together in a home setting.

Equipping for Life Classes

Pastor Chris Short, 661-331-4010

Participants study Scripture and topics related to spiritual growth.

Grounds/Entrance Flowers/Plants

Contact Mike Ferguson, 253-301-7274

Volunteers maintain grounds & help yearly "spruce-up."

IT (Information Technology)

Gary Lent, 253-848-1116

Volunteers are called upon to help as needed.

Men's Bible Study

Len Smith, 253-387-9222

Saturdays, 7:30am

Participants study & discuss upcoming sermon passage.

Mercy Ministry

Valorie Rice, 253-927-8018

Volunteers make meals for births, illness/recovery.

Louise Ferguson, 253-927-8018

Volunteers help prepare and set food out at memorial services.

Missionary Card Team

Penny Lent, 253-258-7660

Volunteers meet monthly to prepare cards for missionaries.

Moms in Prayer

Heike Saylor, 253-841-8942

Participants meet weekly to pray for students

Music

Pastor Chris Short, 661-331-4010

Volunteers serve once a month on a worship team.

Visitation

Coordinator Needed

Volunteers visit EBC members in hospital/home/recovery sites.

Welcomers

Rebecca Rogers, 253-732-0130

Volunteers greet worship service attendees.

Women's Bible Studies

Contact the office, 253-927-2767

Tuesdays & Thursdays

Participants meet to study, discuss and pray together weekly.

Although the information above is always subject to change, please note that some reorganization is planned for early 2022.

Our Church Covenant

Introduction

Christians have always understood that their belief in Jesus produced a certain kind of life. Faith without works is dead (James 2:17). However, the New Testament reveals that one of the best places where we see faith worked out is in the local church. Jesus himself taught his disciples, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). The apostles gave expression to this in their letters to the early churches in all their “one another” commands. As a result of being united in the gospel, Christians are to love one another (1 John 4:11), serve one another (Gal. 5:13), accept one another (Rom. 15:7), be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10), bear with one another (Eph. 4:2), teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16), offer hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9), and carry out many other such commands to one another. In other words, in the unity of the church, the truth and beauty of the gospel is to be displayed.

As a result, Christians have long understood that committing to a church meant not only committing to Scriptural truths but committing to a way of life. So Christians would give expression to the latter commitment through a Church Covenant. Rather than being a summary of the doctrinal teaching of Scripture (Doctrinal Statement), the Church Covenant is a summary of the ethical teaching of Scripture, outlining the kind of life that these Christians were committing to living out and wanted to be held accountable to in joining that church. Below is our church covenant with a brief commentary on each commitment.

Opening

Having, as we trust, been brought by Divine Grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

Our Church covenant opens with a reminder of our gracious salvation that was bought by our Lord Jesus Christ and through salvation he brings His gracious aid as we are united with Him. This is the foundation of every commitment we are making in the Christian life. We are not pursuing these things in order to be saved, but doing these things as a result of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

Engaging in Community

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Our first commitment is to work and pray for the unity of the church family. We believe and teach that this is only possible through the gift of the Holy Spirit that God has placed in every Christian through the gospel. We seek to give expression of that unity as we seek to live in the bond of peace with one another. Whether life is going well or not, we will seek to live in unity as committed Christians, cherishing each other.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as become the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We cannot fight sin and walk in holiness alone. The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. God, in his sovereignty and grace, gave us a local body of believers to help one another in love, as we walk with Christ. In joining this local church family, you are committed to being a part of what God is doing, both in growing in your own spiritual walk and helping others grow. We will gently and carefully admonish each other, so as to keep us holy as we pursue Christ in our lives.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We are not to give up meeting together because we know that it is in that context that we get to live out the truth of the gospel in community. We will make attendance to the Sunday morning gathered worship a priority for our lives and we will commit to be in regular prayer for the members of Edgewood Bible Church. We commit to pray through the membership directory of EBC, and other needs as made known through the church family.

Pursuing Christ Together

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

An example of our pursuit of Christ is in the home. In whatever living situation you find yourself in, we understand that we are to use our lives to point people to Jesus, especially those who are nearest to us. However, often these close relationships can be some of the hardest ones to share the gospel. But in the church, we pray for one another and encourage one another to persevere.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

Our relationships should be characterized by a concern for others, whether in rejoicing with them in their joys or bearing patiently with one another and pointing each other to our hope in the gospel.

Proclaiming the Gospel

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

As our church, we bear witness to the truth of the gospel corporately. Therefore, our corporate witness begins not with our proclamation, but in the way we help one another walk in faithfulness and holiness. Sin is deceitful and we need other believers to humbly and lovingly

point us towards the truth. In guarding one another from sin, we preserve the witness of the church.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

And so, we commit ourselves to working together to promote the proclamation of the gospel here at EBC. This happens primarily on Sunday mornings, as we gather to hear the preaching of the Word, and to observe baptism and the Lord's Supper. But this also takes place as the members of this church scatter throughout the city of Edgewood and beyond to take the gospel into their workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and even as we send workers who take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

For as long as we live and follow Christ here on earth, we commit ourselves to doing this not as lone rangers, but in the context of the local church family. We long for that day when we will all be gathered together in one congregation. But until that day, we give expression to that hope as we commit ourselves to local churches wherever God places us.

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it a good idea for a church not only to have a Statement of Faith, but also a Church Covenant?
2. Does this covenant's picture of church community line up with what you've experienced? What about it would you enjoy? What about it would be difficult?
3. What is the relationship between our personal pursuit of Christ and our corporate pursuit of Christ?
How does our corporate life together relate to our mission to proclaim the gospel?

A Closer Look at Biblical Church Membership: Why should you join a church?*

Introduction

Think of four people and their attitudes toward church:

1. John – He follows Jesus but is not into “organized religion.” He feels he worships best by going for a hike on Sunday.
2. Leann – She is a church hopper. Here for a while, there for a while, and somewhere pretty much every Sunday.
3. Natasha – She found a great Singles Group. She is always there on Sunday night, and shows up at church in the morning when the sermon seems like it’ll be interesting.
4. Joseph - He loves the preaching at his church, but tends to slip out right afterward. He’s never really thought about joining. What’s the point?

What do all these people have in common? They all see themselves as Christians. They all see the church as somewhat unrelated to their faith. Perhaps you’ve encountered people like this. Or perhaps this describes you at some point in your life.

We want to suggest that according to the New Testament they all share a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be a Christian.

The Purpose of the Church in the Book of Ephesians

The question we want to think about is: Why should I join a church? Not just attend a church, not just join a small group, but why should I join a church?

And we’ll begin by looking at an overview of Ephesians. Chapter 1 is a beautiful description of our salvation, which began before the beginning of time:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. – Ephesians 1:3-6

And how is it that we’re saved from our sins, to the praise of God’s glory? Chapter 2 lays out the gospel, which has come to us in this present age:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. – Ephesians 2:4-5

That's the theology. And now the application: the first implication of the gospel we come to as we finish chapter 2 is that the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles is gone. Destroyed.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one [Jew and Gentile] and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. – Ephesians 2:14-16

This unity is so profound that Paul even calls it a mystery—hidden for generations but now made known.

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. – Ephesians 3:6

Now. Why did God do this? Why rescue sinners from their sin and join them together in one Body? Why create unity between redeemed Jews and Gentiles who have nothing in common but Christ?

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Ephesians 3:10-11

Isn't that amazing? And maybe hard to believe? "Through the church? God intends to do these amazing things through the church?"

This narrative of God's plan of salvation seems to be an odd place to introduce that most institutional aspect of the Christian religion. But apparently this is what God is doing. God's plan to glorify Himself centers on the local church.

The church isn't fundamentally about instruction, or about singing songs. It's about a community of people who are different from each other in the world's eyes, as different as Jews and Gentiles coming together—and yet who live together in unity and love because they share Christ in common. Instruction fuels this community. Praise is the response. But at its core, the church is community, for the praise of God.

Think back to what Jesus says in John 13:36: "A new command I give you: 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."

Love between Christians isn't just an "extra credit" part of the Christian life. It's essential.

And this is hard. Church is messy. It hurts. It's not easy to love people who're different from you. But that's the whole point, isn't it? That love is different in kind from the world's love. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?"

That's why a small group of people just like you doesn't accomplish the goal God's set out for the church. That's why a singles group isn't a church. That's why attending church but not investing in messy, difficult, God-glorifying relationships isn't living up to God's plans for the church. It's one thing to live a holy life in isolation from everyone else. But that will be no different from the world.

What's different, though—revolutionary in fact—is Christians who love each other; who are committed to each other; who have difficult conversations and share in each other's joys and burdens. That's the church. And that's why, if you consider yourself a Christian, you need to be a meaningful member of a local church.

Think, for a minute, of the images the New Testament uses for the church.

- Sometimes Paul uses the image of building (1 Corinthians 3:9, Ephesians 2:21, 2 Corinthians 6:16)
- Sometimes we see the very famous image of a body (Romans 12:4-5, Hebrews 12)
- Sometimes the church is a flock (1 Peter 5:2).
- Sometimes the church is a family (1 Timothy 3:15. Ephesians 1:5).

But in all these images, we should ask, "If we are Christians, what should our relationship to the church be?"

- Where are the bricks? They are in a building, and if they aren't connected to the building then they can't really identify with it. They would simply be rubble lying around in a heap.
- If we are members of physical body, then how can we not be attached to it? To be dismembered from a body is grotesque.
- If we are sheep, we are going to be in a flock. To be separated from the flock is to expose yourself to danger.
- If we are called to be God's children, we are going to be in His family. We are to no longer live as orphans, but to realize we have been adopted into a family of brothers and sisters.

In all of these images that are used about being a Christian in the New Testament, we clearly see that there is a corporate reality to our spiritual lives, and this is expressed in the local church.

A Biblical Case for Church Membership

So, what exactly does it mean to be committed to a church? One way to answer that question is by walking through some of the so-called "one-another" commands in Scripture. Those commands are given in the context of the local church and when we put them together, they take the shape of committed relationships, what we call church membership.

Love One Another

First, much of this body life involves commands to "love one another."

Love the brotherhood of believers. - 1 Peter 2:17

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. -Galatians 6:10

And this isn't just a fuzzy feeling inside, but is eminently practical. This is love with staying power. *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. – Romans 15:1*

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality... Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. – Romans 12:13, 15-16

Just like a marriage doesn't image Christ's love for the church if the husband or wife gets up and walks off the first-time sacrifice becomes real, love in a church doesn't say much about the power of the gospel if there is no commitment, no staying power. What is important about these passages just mentioned—and there are dozens more like them—is that they are given to all Christians, not just to an elite few. This kind of deep, committed love for other Christians isn't something that we just grow into over time. No, it's expected of all Christians. And it's something you can only do with Christians you rub shoulders with on a regular basis.

So, if you're a Christian, you need to put yourself in a place where you can love in this kind of way—and where you give others the opportunity to love you like this.

Encourage One Another

This second group of one another commands has to do with encouraging each other's faith.

Encourage one another and build each other up. - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. – Hebrews 10:24

It's good to be a generally encouraging person. But is that what these two authors have in mind? The author of Hebrews goes on in the very next verse to tell us explicitly what he means.

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. – Hebrews 10:25

Obedience to this New Testament command to encourage each other is to be done quite specifically in the context of the local church.

Have you ever thought about you encouraging others in your church as part of God's big plan? Maybe God's plan isn't all about you in an individualistic sense, about how you can be sure to witness to 2.5 more people on average each month, and get your quiet times 7 minutes longer over the year, and your individual holiness in some measure developed. These things aren't bad, but could it be that God is about something larger and grander than that?

Maybe even more than he cares about you, he cares about you giving up yourself to build up your brothers and sisters in the local church. And perhaps by your pouring your life into other people in a committed fashion, those who are weaker in the faith will be strengthened, and God will be glorified.

Guard One Another

The third group of commands has to do with guarding one another. In Hebrews, the author writes to Christians about their responsibility for each other.

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless... - Hebrews 12:15-16

Or there's that famous passage in 1 Corinthians 5 where Paul writes to the Corinthian church:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. – 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

It seems that the man in 1 Corinthian 5 thought of himself as a Christian. He probably went to church regularly. He probably did all the things that a person would do in that church community. And that is precisely the reason why Paul had to write and tell them to take action. Somehow, they had to make it clear to him (for his sake!) that his life was that of a non-Christian. That was a loving thing to do, not only for the man, but also for others around him. By such an action, Paul wanted to make the gospel clear to unbelievers and believers alike.

As we are careful to hold each other accountable to living consistently with the gospel, everyone who is watching can see “Ah... this is what Christianity is. This is what it means to follow Jesus. This, and not that.”

Again, commands like Hebrews 12 or 1 Corinthians 5 aren't just for super Christians. All Christians are to have this kind of relationship with a local church. As fallen people, we're prone to self-deception. And the main thing that God has set up for us to deal with self-deception is the local church. The church is kind of like an assurance of salvation co-op. It is being in a community of people where we get to know them and we allow them to get to know us. That's how we see whether or not we're living out this Christianity that we profess.

Obey Your Leaders

And then there's a fourth category of commands made to every Christian about their life in a local church, having to do with leaders.

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. – Hebrews 13:17

Now, this verse has implications for both church members and church leaders.

- For church members: are you to obey every Christian leader who comes along? No. You're to obey the leaders of your own church, the ones who you've signed up to submit to.
- And for church leaders: will we give account for every Christian? No. We'll give account for a particular flock, namely the one who has recognized you as a leader.

How would this work if everyone was just a church consumer, hopping around from one place to another? Which leaders are they to obey? And pity those poor church leaders! How are they to know which souls they'll give account for someday?

Members of this church have had one of the Elders hear their testimonies. Elders have asked them questions about their understanding of the Gospel and have committed to pray for them and shepherd them. We know who has committed themselves to this church and we've committed ourselves to them.

The only reason why churches exist is because people realize, "OK, no church is perfect. But I'm going to settle in this place and try to prosper here spiritually. I agree with what they teach—their statement of faith—and how they're trying to live together—their church covenant. So I'll live life together with them, committed to them."

That's the kind of commitment that allows us to live out Hebrews 13:17.

Putting it all together

Now, if you're going to obey all these commands, some things need to be true of your relationship with a church.

- It has to be a committed relationship. This kind of love and encouragement can't happen without real commitment.
- It has to be a relationship with a defined group of people. Church leaders need to know who they're giving account for, for example.
- And it has to be a voluntary association but one in which you're giving these people permission to do things for you that you may not necessarily like at the time—as we saw in the 1 Corinthians 5 example of church discipline.

Now, what do you call this kind of committed relationship with a defined body of believers where you give them permission to speak truth into your life?

We've decided to use the term the apostle Paul uses in his letters as he describes Christians as members of the body of Christ. There's no place in Scripture where you'll explicitly see a command to

sign a piece of paper and become a member of a local church. But when you piece all these “one another” commands together, what it adds up to is what Christians through the centuries have referred to as... church membership.

And it's why we make such a big deal about membership in this church. Because next to your commitment to follow Jesus Christ through baptism, becoming a church member is the most basic commitment that you will be called to make in your spiritual life.

Conclusion

Why is church membership important? Because it enables us to live out the “one another” commands of Scripture—and in so doing it validates the power of the gospel. But ultimately, it's important because God loves the church.

In Acts 9, Saul (later Paul) has a run-in with the risen Christ. Jesus appears to him and Saul falls to the ground. Do you remember what Jesus says to him?

He doesn't say “Saul, Saul, why are you going to persecute those Christians?” He doesn't say “Saul, Saul, why are you going to persecute the church?” He says, “Saul, Saul, why are you going to persecute me?” (Acts 9:4) Jesus so clearly and closely identifies with the local church that he refers to the congregation of Christians in Damascus as “me.” It appears that's why Paul uses the image of the church as the body of Christ, and Christians as its members. His first Christian conversation, I think, had that truth at its core. As he says many years later, the church is the body of Christ, that God bought with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

Friends, this is what God is all about! He loves his church, and he has made the local church the centerpiece in his plan to make his glory visible to all people under heaven. Whether it is this body or another, our prayer is that you will join yourself into a local church as the Bible instructs you and that you will have the privilege of seeing God's kingdom lived out.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Church membership can be defined as a committed relationship with a definite body of believers where you give them permission to speak truth into your life. How can God use this commitment to help us grow spiritually?

Besides attending on Sunday mornings for worship, what is one other thing you could do in the next few weeks to get more connected?

**this content borrowed from Hinson Baptist Church and Capitol Hill Baptist Church*

Doctrinal Essentials

An additional document, Doctrinal Instruction, which follows Doctrinal Essentials, is set forth as a further explanation of our doctrinal teaching. This document presents a more detailed explanation of our understanding of orthodox Christian teaching and also gives the scriptural basis for our teaching in Christian theology. You must agree to these Doctrinal Essentials to be a member of Edgewood Bible Church.

The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.

(Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

God

We believe in one God, Creator of and Sovereign over all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; Genesis 1:1; Psalm 115:3; 1 Timothy 1:17; Matthew 28:19)

We believe that the Father, through creation, is father to all men. He becomes, by the grace of adoption, the intimate father of all whom He has sovereignly redeemed through Jesus Christ. (Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:5)

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and truly man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Through His perfect obedience and atoning death, He has fully satisfied the justice of God, propitiating God's wrath and securing eternal righteousness for all who receive Him through faith. He arose bodily from the dead and has ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now High Priest and Advocate for all who believe.

(John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 4:14-16)

We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and, that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all who believe into the body of Christ, indwelling, guiding, empowering, and sealing them unto the day of redemption.

(John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14)

Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God, but, in Adam's sin, fell, inheriting a sinful nature, becoming alienated from God, and, of himself, is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition.

(Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)

Salvation

We believe that salvation is wholly of God, ordained by the Father, purchased by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

(Romans 8:28-29; Ephesians 1:4-6; John 3:5-7)

We believe that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ provides the only ground for justification and redemption for all who believe, and that this salvation is, by the grace of God alone, obtained through faith alone in the work of Christ alone.

(Romans 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:8-9)

The Church

We believe that the true church is composed of all such persons who have exercised saving faith in Jesus Christ, been born of the Spirit, and, by the Spirit, are united together in the body of Christ of which the Lord Jesus is the head.

(1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18)

We believe that believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

(Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.

(1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 20:28)

Last Things

We believe in the personal, visible, bodily, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

(Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Titus 2:12-13)

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

(Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29)

By-Laws

OUR STANDARD: The Word of God

We believe that the church must exist and function on the principles laid down in the Scriptures. There are sufficient guidelines in the Scriptures as to how the church is to act and operate. The church is to be the body of the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ. To be thus, the church must be Bible-centered.

When the church as a whole is Word-conscious, believers see themselves in the sphere of the eternal. Heaven, hell, redemption, sin and the reality of a loving and sovereign Creator have gravity to them. The preaching of the Word is seen as the source of the knowledge of the Creator and the clear declaration of His one and only plan for their salvation. We, at Edgewood Bible Church, stand as a Bible-centered church.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this local assembly, a church incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Washington shall be Edgewood Bible Church.

ARTICLE II: Purpose and Function

The purpose of this local assembly is to glorify God through making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, calling people to repentance from sin and to faith in him, and edifying the Body of Christ to the praise and glory of His grace. This we endeavor to do by corporate, as well as individual, worship, praise, prayer, and study of God's Word.

To the same end:

1. We purpose to edify fellow Christians in the "most holy faith" by the preaching ([Jude 20](#)) and teaching of God's Word, by prayer, by fellowship, and by the breaking of bread ([Acts 2:42](#)).
2. We purpose to make the Gospel of Jesus Christ known to the world by the preaching and teaching of God's Word, by lifestyle, and by sending and supporting, financially and otherwise, of Christian Missionaries ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Acts 1:8](#)).
3. We purpose to "do good to all people, especially to those of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

ARTICLE III: Statement of Faith (Doctrine)

Refer to our Statement of Faith, or [Doctrinal Instruction](#).

ARTICLE IV: Membership

Section 1: Purpose of the Membership

The assembly of Christian believers who have applied for membership and have been accepted shall be individual members of this local church body, united for the purpose set forth in Article II.

Section 2: Active Membership

Active membership in Edgewood Bible Church shall be open to all persons who confess Christ as Savior and Lord and who have been baptized. Only active members of Edgewood Bible Church will be given the opportunity to serve as leaders in specific ministries under the appointment and direction of the Pastoral Staff and Board of Elders. Members who are not in good standing or who are under the discipline of the Church as set forth by Article IV, Section 10 will be asked to step down from any context of leadership until such matters are resolved Biblically and the Board of Elders has restored them to active membership.

Section 3: Application for Membership

All requests for membership shall be made to a Pastor or Elder of Edgewood Bible Church. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of these Bylaws. Each applicant shall meet with two or more Elders, giving testimony to their personal faith in Jesus Christ, their commitment to the Bible as God's inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word, and their agreement to submit to the Bylaws of Edgewood Bible Church, including the doctrinal teaching of Edgewood Bible Church as expressed in Article III. The Elders conducting the interview will then submit their names to the Board of Elders for approval.

Section 4: Denial of Membership

If, upon the review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the Board of Elders determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the Board shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision. At a later date, if the applicant has repented and demonstrated faith in Jesus Christ they will be encouraged to apply for membership.

Section 5: Admission of Applicants

Applicants admitted to membership shall present themselves at a worship service designated by the Pastor and Board of Elders, at which time new members received by the Board or Elders shall publicly express their desire for membership. The Congregation will be given 14 days and two Sundays to approach the desired member with any concerns relating to their personal testimony and character. If these concerns are not resolved Biblically, the existing member should, as principles set forth in Matthew 18 ask for accompaniment of another member of good standing and preferably an elder or pastor to come with them to address the concerns together before the desired member. If the issue remains unresolved at this point, the matter must be brought before the Board of Elders for final resolution. At which time if there is deemed to be evidence of an unrepentant heart and manifestation of unbiblical attitudes the desired members request to become a member will be denied and restitution will be sought before the members will be considered for membership again. If during the 14-day period no issues are brought to the attention of the Board of Elders, the desired member will

be asked to publicly affirm his or her membership commitment and be acknowledged as a member.

Section 6: Responsibilities of Members

1. Each individual member shall pursue the unity of the faith in cooperation with the other members of this local body of believers, and shall purpose to serve in consideration of the other members of this local church, under the leadership and oversight of the Elders.
2. Each member is responsible to exercise his/her spiritual gifts to the other members of the assembly in regular participation in the life and services of the church, and to provide voluntary financial support of the church as the Lord prospers.
3. Each member shall walk uprightly in the world so that by life and witness others will be attracted to the Savior.
4. Membership in this church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but each member is given the responsibility and opportunity to discuss, advise, encourage, and affirm those matters that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for counsel and affirmation.
5. Each member, according to [Hebrews 13:17](#) is instructed to obey their leaders and to submit to them. Furthermore, they are to possess a spirit in doing so that allows the leadership to do this "with joy". Members who do not display this Biblical attitude of submission will be pursued, encouraged, and instructed in this process. If their attitude remains contentious and there is a continual pattern of sinful behavior to stir up strife among the brethren, they will be formally brought under the discipline of the Church as set forth by Article IV, Section 10.

Section 7: Non-Voting Membership

Edgewood Bible Church members shall have no voting rights. Any action which would otherwise require approval of the members shall only require approval of the Board of Elders. All rights which would otherwise vest in the members shall vest solely in the Board of Elders. This shall not be construed to limit the right of the Edgewood Bible Church to refer to persons associated with Edgewood Bible Church as 'members'.

Section 8: Congressional Affirmation

Certain items, at the discretion of the Board of Elders, may be brought before the members of Edgewood Bible Church for affirmation. The affirmation process may provide the congregation with time to comment, in a Biblical fashion, on a topic prior to the final decision being made by the Board of Elders. Matters presented to the congregation will be at the sole discretion of the Board of Elders unless otherwise specified in the by-laws. Elders have the sole decision-making authority of Edgewood Bible Church.

Section 9: Removal of Membership

The removal of members from this church is subject to the discretion of the Board of Elders. Any individual member may be removed from membership of this church for the following reasons:

1. Lack of regular attendance in a worship service for a period of three months or longer unless reasonable mitigating circumstances exists

2. Request of transfer of membership to another church
3. Exercise of the fourth stage of church discipline with no demonstration of repentance

Section 10: Active Membership

The church must properly and lovingly exercise church discipline upon those members who in the judgment of the Board of Elders have persisted in sinful behavior without demonstration of godly repentance ([2 Corinthians 7:9-10](#)).

The purposes of church discipline are:

1. To maintain purity in the local church ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#))
2. To deter sin in other members ([1 Timothy 5:20](#))
3. And to seek after the spiritual well-being of the sinning believer by calling him or her to Biblical conduct in their way of living ([Galatians 6:1](#)).

The procedure shall be according to [Matthew 18:15-17](#), allowing reasonable time for repentance after every effort has been made to call, exhort, and admonish the person.

Members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, who err in doctrine or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline.

Section 11: Regular Meetings

A meeting of the church members shall be held annually. This annual meeting will be the time for the members to consider reports of the affairs of Edgewood Bible Church and affirm such other business as the Board of Elders determine shall be brought before the meeting (see Article IV, section 8), including but not limited to affirmation of the appointments made by the Elders of those who shall be newly installed as Elders and Deacons (see Article V, Section 1.3).

Section 12: Notice of Meetings

Notice of the annual meetings shall be given from the pulpit by someone designated by the Board of Elders, for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. In addition, notice shall be published in the church bulletin for two successive Sundays prior to such meeting.

ARTICLE V: Leadership and Officers

Section 1: Board of Elders

1. Powers

Subject to the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation and these By-laws and of pertinent restrictions of the Statutes of the State of Washington, all the activities and affairs of Edgewood Bible Church shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who are responsible for shepherding and oversight.

The Board of Elders shall constitute the board of directors of this not-for-profit corporation. Without prejudice to such general powers, but subject to these same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Board shall have the following powers in addition to other powers enumerated by the Bylaws:

- A. To select and remove all the officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer of the board of directors), pastors, staff, and employees of Edgewood Bible Church; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, and with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these Bylaws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- B. To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of Edgewood Bible Church as are required to fulfill the purposes as are more fully set out in the Articles of Incorporation, and generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of Edgewood Bible Church and to make such rules and regulations consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, and with these Bylaws, as they deem best.

To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purposes of Edgewood Bible Church and to cause to be executed and delivered, in Edgewood Bible Church's name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidences of debt and securities.

2. Responsibilities of the Board of Elders

The fundamental responsibility of the Board of Elders is devoting themselves to prayer and the Word. The Board of Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in the Church. The responsibilities of the Board of Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Doctrinal Instruction statement and member commitments; overseeing the process of Church discipline; governing and organizing the Church; examining prospective candidates for office; conducting worship services; administering the ordinances of Baptism and Communion; equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry; training believers for leadership in the church; teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally; correcting error; overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church; mobilizing the Church for world mission; and engaging in personal evangelism.

3. Number of Elders

The Board of Elders will consist of at least one more appointed, Non-vocational Elder than current Vocational Elder(s). If this balance is not met, the Board of Elders will seek out new members to maintain the balance.

All Staff Pastors shall be deemed Vocational Elders and shall serve for purposes of these bylaws as long as they are employed by the Church in the role of Pastor.

4. Nomination and Selection of Non-Vocational Elder

Recommendations to fill the office of Elder may be requested from all church members, as

the need for an elder is determined by the Board of Elders. A nominating committee consisting of two elders and one deacon shall be appointed by the Board of Elders, who will also designate a chairman of the committee. This committee shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. A recommendation of nominees prepared by the nominating committee shall then be submitted to the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders shall then approve, disapprove, or add to the list of nominees. The list of nominees shall be publicly posted in alphabetic order at the location of the worship services, and also printed in the church bulletin at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting of the church members. At the annual meeting, or at the gathering of corporate worship, the nominees shall be presented to the members to affirm the decision of the Board of Elders. A time period of 30 days will be given for any members with concerns relating to the character and qualifications of the recommended non-vocational Elder to go to them to resolve any concerns. If the members concerns are not resolved the member must come to the Board of Elders in order that the Board of Elders may discern the issues that are involved. If the Board of Elders decide that the candidate is not "above reproach" ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#)), the recommendation will be denied. If the slate of nominees is affirmed by the church members, then newly elected non-vocational Elders shall assume office immediately.

5. Qualifications

Each member of the Board of Elders must be an active member of Edgewood Bible church and possess the qualifications described in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1:6-9](#). He shall be:

- A. Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:6-7](#))
- B. Husband of one wife; a one-woman man who is devoted to his wife ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:6](#))
- C. Temperate, sober, vigilant ([1 Timothy 3:2](#))
- D. Sober-minded, prudent ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:8](#))
- E. Of good behavior, orderly, respectable ([1 Timothy 3:2](#))
- F. Given to hospitality ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:8](#))
- G. Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:9](#))
- H. Not given to wine ([1 Timothy 3:3](#); [Titus 1:7](#))
- I. Not violent; not pugnacious; not contentious; not easily angered or quick-tempered ([1 Timothy 3:3](#); [Titus 1:7](#))
- J. Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle ([1 Timothy 3:3](#))
- K. Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy base gain ([1 Timothy 3:3](#); [Titus 1:7](#))
- L. Rules well his own house; his children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God ([1 Timothy 3:4](#); [Titus 1:7](#))
- M. Not a novice; not a new convert ([1 Timothy 3:6](#))
- N. Has a good report or reputation with outsiders ([1 Timothy 3:7](#))
- O. Not self-willed ([Titus 1:7](#))

- P. A lover of good men and things ([Titus 1:8](#))
- Q. Just, fair ([Titus 1:8](#))
- R. Holy, devout ([Titus 1:8](#))
- S. Self-controlled ([Titus 1:8](#))
- T. If married, it is the command of Scripture that the wife of an elder possess the qualifications described in [1 Timothy 3:11](#) and [Titus 2:3-5](#). They must be dignified, reverent in behavior, not slanderers, sober minded, faithful in all things and to teach what is good to younger women, to love support and submit to their husbands, love their children and to be keepers of the home.

6. Term for Non-Vocational Elders

Non-vocational Elders approved by the Board of Elders shall serve for three years. A Non-vocational Elder completing a three-year term may be approved by the Board of Elders to one or more subsequent three-year terms, provided he has engaged in a process of evaluation and assessment at the end of each term. The process of evaluation and assessment shall be as specified by the Board of Elders.

7. Non-Vocational Elder Rest

If the Board of Elders determines that a Non-vocational Elder needs an extended rest for a season because of a legitimate need or circumstance (e.g., illness, tragedy), then that Non-vocational Elder may be considered an inactive and non-voting Elder for a set period of time as determined by the Board of Elders.

8. Vacancies

A vacancy or vacancies in the Board of Elders shall be deemed to exist in case of significant growth of membership or the death, resignation, or removal of any Non-Vocational Elder.

9. Removal of Elders

Any Elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Elders if he is found to be physically or mentally unable to perform the shepherding responsibilities as an elder, or is found to be spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scriptures, including [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1:5-9](#)) after thorough investigation by the Elders in accordance with the procedures prescribed by Scripture. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Board of Elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. When an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the church and the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service as prescribed in [1 Timothy 5:20](#).

10. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held. Regular meetings shall be open to church members to observe, except for discretionary matters during the Board's executive session.

11. Decisions of the Board of Elders

After prayerful consideration and discussion, decisions shall be reached by a majority vote, in a spirit of humility with each Elder regarding one another before himself. In decisions regarding the installment of an elder or the removal of an Elder, unanimous agreement is required - with the exclusion of the vote of the Elder being removed.

Section 2: Lead Pastor

1. Description of Position

- A. The Lead Pastor shall be a man of God, called by God as an under shepherd of God's people, gifted by the Holy Spirit for this position.
- B. The Lead Pastor shall serve as a fellow Elder, as the overseeing spiritual leader, and is responsible to the Board of Elders.
- C. The Lead Pastor shall be called to this position at Edgewood Bible Church by the Board of Elders of Edgewood Bible Church and affirmed by the membership.
- D. The Lead Pastor shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations:
 - i. The Board of Elders reserve the right to dismiss the Lead Pastor upon giving him three months' notice of their intention to dismiss.
 - ii. The Board of Elders shall have the authority to terminate the Lead Pastor's ministry any time within the three months should the Board deem it necessary for the best interest of the church to do so, provided that if the Lead Pastor's ministry is terminated abruptly in this manner, he shall receive salary for 30 days in advance.
 - iii. The Lead Pastor must give three months' notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Lead Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time limit if both the Lead Pastor and the church by mutual agreement provide otherwise.
- E. After three years, the Lead Pastor shall have access to Sabbaticals. Sabbaticals are not vacations. We encourage the vocational elder to see vacations as time completely away from his regular work and with the focus aimed squarely on his family. Sabbaticals are precisely aimed at reinvigorating and renewing the mind and heart of the pastor through research, missions travel, writing, etc.

The Lead Pastor is granted two weeks of sabbatical each year of service. Unused sabbatical time may accumulate each year up to a maximum of 12 weeks. He may take a maximum of twelve weeks sabbatical in a calendar year, whether consecutively or separately, upon approval from the Board of Elders.

2. Duties

- A. The Lead Pastor shall attend to the duties of the spiritual ministry of preaching and teaching.
- B. He shall perform all the usual functions of the ministry.
- C. He shall arrange for and conduct all public and regular services of the church and shall be responsible for general spiritual welfare of the church.
- D. He shall oversee and give guidance to the pastoral and office staff.

3. Membership

By virtue of his office, the Lead Pastor (and his wife) shall become members of Edgewood Bible Church. He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees.

Section 3: Staff Pastor

1. Description of Position

- A. A Staff Pastor shall be a man of God, called by God as an under shepherd of God's people, gifted by the Holy Spirit for his position.
- B. He shall serve under the authority of the Lead Pastor serving in the role of direct oversight and ministry guidance for any and all Staff Pastors.
- C. All Staff Pastors shall be deemed Vocational Elders and shall serve for purposes of these bylaws while they are employed by the Church in the role of pastor.
- D. A Staff Pastor shall be appointed to his position at Edgewood Bible Church by the Board of Elders of Edgewood Bible Church, including the Lead Pastor, and affirmed by membership (see Article IV, section 8).
- E. A Staff Pastor shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations:
 - i. The Board of Elders, including the Lead Pastor, reserves the right to dismiss a Staff Pastor upon giving him one month notice of their intention to dismiss.
 - ii. The Board of Elders, including the Lead Pastor, shall have the authority to terminate a Staff Pastor's ministry any time within the one month period should the Board deem it necessary for the best interest of the church to do so, provided that if the Staff Pastor's ministry is terminated abruptly in this manner, he shall receive salary for 30 days in advance.
 - iii. A Staff Pastor must give one month notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Staff Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time limit if both the Lead Pastor and the church by mutual agreement provide otherwise.
- F. More than one Staff Pastor may be hired by the Board of Elders to serve at Edgewood Bible Church.
- G. After three years, a Staff Pastor have access to Sabbaticals. Sabbaticals are *not* vacations. We encourage the vocational elder to see vacations as time completely away from his regular work and with the focus aimed squarely on his

family. Sabbaticals are precisely aimed at reinvigorating and renewing the mind and heart of the pastor through research, missions travel, writing, etc.

The Staff Pastor is granted two weeks of sabbatical each year of service. Unused sabbatical time may accumulate each year up to a maximum of 12 weeks. He may take a maximum of twelve weeks sabbatical in a calendar year, whether consecutively or separately, upon approval from the Board of Elders.

2. Duties

A Staff Pastor shall perform the duties as prescribed for them by the Lead Pastor consistent with their job description and the needs of the ministry of Edgewood Bible Church.

3. Membership

By virtue of his office, a Staff Pastor (and his wife) shall become members of Edgewood Bible Church.

Section 4: Pastoral Assistant

With the approval of the elders, the lead pastor may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as Pastoral Assistants. These shall not be Pastors and are not considered Vocational Elders. Should the congregation recognize a Pastoral Assistant as an elder, he will assume the title and responsibilities of Staff Pastor and Vocational Elder as described in Article 5, Section 3.

Description of Position

- A. A Pastoral Assistant shall be a man of God.
- B. A Pastoral Assistant shall serve under the authority of the Lead Pastor serving in the role of direct oversight and ministry guidance.
- C. A Pastoral Assistant shall be appointed to his position at Edgewood Bible Church by a decision of the Board of Elders of Edgewood Bible Church.
- D. A Pastoral Assistant shall remain in office for minimum of 1-year subject to the following reservations:
 - i. The Board of Elders, including the Lead Pastor, reserves the right to dismiss a Pastoral Assistant upon giving him 30 days' notice of their intention to dismiss.
 - ii. The Board of Elders, shall have the authority to terminate a Pastoral Assistant's ministry any time within the 30 day period should the Board deem it necessary for the best interest of the church to do so.
 - iii. A Pastoral Assistant must give one month notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Staff Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time limit if both the Lead Pastor and the church by mutual agreement provide otherwise.

- E. More than one Pastoral Assistant may be hired by the Board of Elders to serve at Edgewood Bible Church.
- F. By virtue of his position, a Pastoral Assistant (and his wife) shall become members of Edgewood Bible Church.

Section 5: Board of Deacons

1. Duties

A Deacon/Deaconess shall be a member of Edgewood Bible Church appointed by the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons, then affirmed by the membership to assist the Elders in specific ministries of the church. A Deacon/Deaconess is to serve and provide leadership for ministries of Edgewood Bible Church under the direction of Elders and in harmony with the Deacon Board.

2. Qualifications

The qualifications for a Deacon/Deaconess are set forth in [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#) and the model provided in Acts 6:1-7. A Deacon/Deaconess shall be a man or woman of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not found of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach.

3. Terms for Deacons/Deaconesses

Deacons/Deaconesses approved by the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons shall serve for three years. A Deacon/Deaconess completing a three-year term may be approved by the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons to one or more subsequent three-year terms, provided they have engaged in a process of evaluation and assessment at the end of each term. The process of evaluation and assessment shall be as specified by the Board of Elders.

4. Removal of Deacons/Deaconesses

Any Deacon/Deaconess may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Elders if they are found to be physically or mentally unable to perform the responsibilities of a deacon, or is found to be spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scriptures, including 1 Timothy 3:8-13) after thorough investigation by the Elders in accordance with the procedures prescribed by Scripture, including [Matthew 18:15-18](#) and [1 Timothy 5:19](#). When a Deacon/Deaconess is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify them from ministry, and if they refuse to repent from that sin, the removal shall follow the church's process for Church Discipline outlined Article IV, Section 10.

5. Deacon/Deaconess Rest

If the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons determines that a Deacon/Deaconess needs an extended rest for a season because of a legitimate need or circumstance (e.g., illness,

tragedy), then that Deacon/Deaconess may be considered an inactive and non-voting Deacon/Deaconess for a set period of time as determined by the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons.

Section 7: Other Committees and Councils

As circumstances and needs require, the Board of Elders may establish committees to fulfill specific needs of the church ministry. All such committees shall be responsible to the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI: Ordination

A man may be ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Edgewood Bible Church after having received a favorable recommendation by the Elders and an Ordination Council made up of Pastors and Christian Leaders.

ARTICLE VII: Dissolution of Corporation

In the event of the dissolution of Edgewood Bible Church, the Church's property shall not be conveyed to any organization created or operated for profit or to any individual, but all assets remaining after payment of the corporation's debts shall be conveyed or distributed to another Corporation(s) with purposes similar to Edgewood Bible Church as determined by the Board of Elders, under applicable provisions of Internal Revenue Law and Regulations as a non-profit corporation.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by unanimous agreement of the Board of Elders.

Membership Application

Please carefully work through the following application. It is designed to assist you in articulating your faith and desire for church membership.

First & Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____

Occupation: _____

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐ Remarried

Church previously attended: _____

Are you still a member of this, or another church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please give the church's name and address.

Church: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Please give a description of your relationship with Jesus Christ in the following areas:

(please use another sheet of paper or the back of this page)

- When and how did you come to know Jesus Christ as your Savior? (Include in your remarks your understanding of what it means to be a person who has come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Also include any Scripture passages or verses that are significant to your understanding of salvation.)

Have you been baptized since you became a Christian? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Immersion ☐ Sprinkling

What way(s) do you desire to serve within our church family (based on your interests, abilities, gifts, and time)?

Membership Agreement

We are honored and thankful for your desire to become a part of the body of Christ here at EBC. Your application will be given to the Elders for their review. Please acknowledge that you agree with these statements:

Membership Covenant

I have read and am in full agreement with the Membership Covenant.

Doctrinal Essentials and By-Laws

I have read the By-Laws and Doctrinal Essentials. I am in full agreement with Article IV of the By-Laws regarding church membership and church discipline.

If you have any reservations or unanswered questions about the Doctrinal Essentials or Membership Covenant, please wait until after your Elder interview to sign.

(printed name)

(signature)

(date)