



Heartland

ALLIANCE CHURCH

Membership Manual



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Preface

The church is the central means of bringing Christ's message of hope to our world. It is a real privilege to be a part of God's Kingdom and to function as his servants here at Heartland.

Membership in the local church allows us to be accountable to Christ and to each other. This provides us with much needed feedback and encouragement, as well as protection from the deception and schemes of the enemy.

Membership also speaks of our connection to Christ and to those who make up his church, creating a synergy in our efforts for the cause of Christ in this world. What a privilege, an honor, a calling and responsibility to be at the leading edge of all that God is doing through his church in these days.



Introduction

Heartland Alliance Church was birthed with a clear and compelling God-given vision that has guided us in these early years. As we continue to grow as a church family, and as we seek to accomplish those things that God has called us to, the question can be asked, “Who is responsible to ensure that we stay true to our calling, and who should participate in determining what the next leg of the journey looks like?” In many respects, this membership process has been designed with a view to answering these questions.

In developing this Self Study Membership Manual, Heartland’s current leadership team took the position that in order for membership to have real value we need to call members to a life that is consistent with vision and core values we believe God has called us to as a church. While this means that our membership process will be different than that of other churches in our community, we’re okay with that. We believe that membership is important and are willing to do the hard work of “getting it right”.

At first glance, the sheer size of this manual can be intimidating. Please don’t let that deter you from moving ahead. We want to remind you that there is no time limit on completing this course. While some may want to complete it in one lengthy sitting, others may want to incorporate it into their daily study/devotion time. Either way, we anticipate the course will typically require between 5 and 10 hours to complete. Now before you go on, we want to give you a brief overview of what lies ahead.

In **Section One**, we look at the church, starting with the universal church, then the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada and finally, Heartland Alliance Church.

Section Two will examine membership. We will provide answers to the questions “Why should I become a member?”, “How do I become a member?” and “What are the requirements/characteristics of a member?”

Section Three unpacks the “Five Characteristics of a Member” in a self-study format. Here you will be asked to interact with scripture as it relates to these characteristics and to provide short answers.

Section Four is an opportunity for you to affirm your alignment with each of the membership characteristics you’ve studied.

Section Five explains the process for the membership interview, membership acknowledgment and membership renewal.

Section Six is the membership covenant; the agreement you will need to sign in order to become a member.



Section 1—THE CHURCH

What is the Church?

The church is made up of people spiritually joined together with our Heavenly Father, by the Holy Spirit, through our common faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Leader, with the mission of furthering God's Kingdom here on earth.

The Church: Both Universal and Local

The universal church consists of all people past and present, who have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. In 1 Corinthians 15:9, Paul claims that he persecuted “the church of God” prior to his conversion. In Ephesians 1:19-23, Paul refers collectively to the followers of Christ as “the church”.

We are also part of a local church, meaning we assemble with others, both believers and unbelievers, in our region, city or community. Each assembly has its own uniqueness based on a particular cultural expression, style and theological emphasis.

Several references in Acts mention specific regional assemblies such as “the church at Jerusalem” (Acts 11:22), and “the church at Antioch” (Acts 13:1). In Hebrews 10:25 we are admonished to “not give up meeting together”.

Clearly, as Christians, we have a connection with believers throughout history, the intangible universal church. However we are also called to be in relationship with believers in our own time and region, members of a tangible local church. The local church is the visible subset of the glorious universal church.

Scriptural Metaphors Describing the Church

Various metaphors have been used by writers of the New Testament to describe the nature of the church. These metaphors are instructive in appreciating our relationship to God and to each other.

Family

God is our Father, we are his children and brothers and sisters to each other.¹

Body

A vital living organism that consists of many parts capable of coordination and cooperative efforts.²

Branches

We are an extension of Christ, as a branch extends from a vine.³

Bride

As a groom adores his bride, so are we the object of God's love.⁴

Temple

We are the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.⁵

God expects the church to be: relational (family), capable (body), growing and bearing fruit (branches), pure (bride), and holy (temple).

¹ John 1:12, Ephesians 3:15

² Romans 12:3-8

³ John 15

⁴ Ephesians 5:25-30

⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:19

Why did God Establish the Church?

Just as God has a purpose for each of our lives individually, God also has a purpose for the church, all believers collectively. Through the church a five-fold mission is fulfilled:

Pursuing

We will fulfill our created purpose as we revere and enjoy God in all we do, worshiping Him in spirit and in truth. We will live desiring His presence, depending on His power, aligning with His purpose and obedient to His Word. We will call out to Him personally and corporately, with expectation that He will answer.

Connecting

We will live life together in small groups, knowing others and being known. We will live lives of transparency and accountability at every level, speaking the truth in love.

Becoming

We will become whole people through Christ's life in us. We will live as Kingdom people under the filling and control of the Holy Spirit, carrying out God's plan here on this earth.

Serving

We will meet the practical needs of our community and serve our church by giving sacrificially of our time and resources, with no strings attached. We will equip ourselves by developing and using all the gifts, becoming the hands and feet of Jesus

Reaching

We will share the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed throughout our community, planting churches as we go. We will go, and partner with others who go, around the world to take the gospel to those who have not heard

6 John 1:10-13, Ephesians 3:14-19

7 Matthew 22:27-38

8 John 13:34-35, Ephesians 4:15-16, Hebrews 3:13

9 Luke 14:25-34, Philippians 3:7-11, 1 Peter 1:13-16

10 Matthew 28:18-20

The Heartland Alliance Story

This section covers our history as a denomination and a local church; our statement of faith; our denominational distinctive; as well as Heartland's mission, vision, values and governance affairs.

Our Christian & Missionary Alliance Roots

The vision for Heartland Alliance emerged in 2003 and became a reality in September 2004. But the story of Heartland Alliance is in fact intertwined with many other stories, including the founding of Sherwood Park Alliance and the birth of the Christian and Missionary Alliance over 100 years ago.

Imagine the year 1857. The community of Sherwood Park existed only as bald prairie, the neighboring city of Edmonton boasted a population of 700 souls, and Canadian confederation was still ten years away. God was at work, nearly 5300 kilometers away in Prince Edward Island, in the heart of 14-year-old Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) as he accepted Christ in the library of his tutor.

A.B. Simpson dedicated himself to the service of his Savior, and God honored his dedication by igniting within his spirit a passion for reaching the souls of the poor neglected masses at home and abroad. At 21, Albert Simpson preached his first sermon at Knox Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, thus beginning a lifetime of Christian service.

Albert was 32 when he began holding crusades in Louisville, Kentucky. God showed up, and approximately 6000 people came to accept Christ as their Savior. But while God was moving through Simpson's ministry, he was also calling Albert to a deeper relationship with him. In his late 30s Simpson experienced divine healing of his respiratory problems and chronic heart disorder. This life-altering experience led to further seeking and eventually to embracing baptism by water immersion. Ultimately God's plan of revealing himself to Albert caused him to seek the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

As Simpson put it, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second chapter in one's spiritual history, a transition from the regeneration of the conversion experience to the transformation into "the temple of the Holy Ghost". Out of this experience flows the power to manifest holy character, supernatural gifts and divine healing; the capacity to receive divine guidance and to endure suffering in the service of Christ; and the authority for governing the Church.

A.B. Simpson, now 42 years old and filled with the Holy Spirit, would experience a God-ordained meeting with a Toronto pastor, John Salmon. Salmon had launched an independent ministry to the “least, last and lost”. The kindred spirits of Salmon and Simpson forged an instant lifelong friendship as they combined their two ministries into a single effort, *The Christian and Missionary Alliance*. The Alliance was birthed in 1887 with the first ordained missionary, Dr. William Cassidy, a medical doctor from Toronto, being commissioned to work in China. Sadly, Dr. Cassidy died of smallpox en-route to China, yet his willingness to go where God leads exemplifies the spirit of the Alliance church even today.

From the willingness and obedience of one man, many more people took up the mission we express locally as “loving God, and loving people”.

Growth of the Movement

The Christian and Missionary Alliance movement grew during the 1920s on both sides of the Canadian/American border. In the Canadian west, saddle-bag preachers visited homesteads and in the east, evangelistic campaigns saw many come to Christ. In 1921, a small unorganized group in Edmonton calling itself the Beulah Mission sent a letter to District Superintendent Roffe, which resulted in John Henry Woodward preaching his first sermon to a congregation of about 30 people in Edmonton. In the later 20s, the Alliance movement launched a radio ministry; a technology that extended the good news message to thousands of people across the prairies, British Columbia, Alaska, the Yukon and the Northwestern United States.

While North America sank into the depression of the dirty 30s, people turned to God in tremendous numbers, causing the Alliance movement to grow in stark contrast to the economy of the day.

The Alliance message offered people hope in the truth of the Bible, the redemptive love of our Savior, and the belief that lives could be transformed through God’s power.

This message of power and hope is captured in the Alliance Statement of Faith. This statement has stood the test of time, expressing, even today, our essential core beliefs.

Statement of Faith

A “Statement of Faith” is a set of core biblical beliefs that form the doctrinal foundation for everything we do, both as a denomination and as a church. Our statement of faith is a common bond that links us with our sister churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada.

1 There is one God¹, who is infinitely perfect², existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.³

2 Jesus Christ is true God and true man.⁴ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.⁵ He died upon the cross, the just for the unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood. He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures.⁶ He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.⁷ He will come again to establish his kingdom of righteousness and peace.⁸

3 The Holy Spirit is a divine person, sent to indwell,⁹ guide, teach and empower the believer, and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.¹⁰

4 The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of his will for the salvation of people. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.¹¹

5 Humankind, originally created in the image and likeness of God,¹² fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All people are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³ The destiny of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment, but that of the believer is everlasting joy and bliss.¹⁴

1 Isaiah 44:6, 45:5-6

2 Matthew 5:48, Deuteronomy 32:4

3 Mathew 3:16-17, 28:19

4 Philippians 2:6-11, Hebrews 2:14-18, Colossians 2:9

5 Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:35

6 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, 1 John 2:2, Acts 13:39

7 Hebrews 4:14-15, 9:24-28

8 Matthew 25:31-34, Acts 1:11

9 John 14:16-17

10 John 16:7-11, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

11 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21

12 Genesis 1:27

13 Romans 8:8, 1 John 2:2

14 Matthew 25:41-46, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

6 Salvation has been provided only through Jesus Christ. Those who repent and believe in him are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit and are thereby regenerated (born again), justified, sanctified and granted the gift of eternal life as adopted children of God.¹

7 It is the will of God that in union with Christ, each believer should be sanctified thoroughly,² thereby being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to God, receiving power for holy living and sacrificial and effective service toward the completion of Christ's commission.³ This is accomplished through being filled with the Holy Spirit, which is both a distinct event and a progressive experience in the life of the believer.⁴

8 Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil as taught in the Scriptures, are privileges for the Church in this present age.⁵

9 The universal Church, of which Christ is the head, consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through his blood, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by Christ to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.⁶ The local church, the visible expression of the universal Church, is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together to worship God, to observe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to pray, to be edified through the Word of God, to fellowship and to testify in word and deed to the good news of salvation both locally and globally. The local church enters into relationships with other like-minded churches for accountability, encouragement and mission.⁷

10 There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust: for the former, a resurrection unto life,⁸ for the latter, a resurrection unto judgment.⁹

11 The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal and visible.¹⁰ As the believer's blessed hope, this vital truth is an incentive for holy living and sacrificial service toward the completion of Christ's commission.¹¹

1 Titus 3:5-7, Acts 2:38, John 1:12, 1 Corinthians 6:11

2 1 Thessalonians 5:23

3 Acts 1:8

4 Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:16-25

5 Matthew 8:16-17, James 5:13-16

6 Ephesians 3:6-12, 1:22-23

7 Acts 2:41-47, Hebrews 10:25, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, Acts 11:19-30, Acts 15

8 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

9 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

10 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

11 1 Corinthians 1:7, Titus 2:11-14, Matthew 24:14, 28:18-20

Denominational Distinctives of the Christian and Missionary Alliance

CHRIST OUR SAVIOR



The great overriding theme of Scripture is salvation. Since the beginning of time, God has been prepared to respond to man's lost-ness and his inability to do anything about it. The gospel offers forgiveness, justification and eternal life to sinners through faith in Jesus Christ.

We proclaim that Jesus Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, and gave his life as a ransom for our lives. We teach that we are redeemed through his precious blood, justified by his death and resurrection, made righteous through his righteousness and accepted by God in his name.

The person who puts his or her personal trust in Jesus Christ as Savior becomes a new creation.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8, NIV)

CHRIST OUR SANCTIFIER



Sanctification occurs when Jesus Christ dwells in our hearts and walks in our steps so that we live like him. Coming to the end of ourselves, we willingly replace our self-sufficiency with the complete lordship of Jesus Christ.

Simply depending on Christ alone moment by moment, we yield ourselves completely to God and place full confidence in Christ our Sanctifier to live his life through us each day.

The Holy Spirit works within us to reveal Jesus known to us as our Sanctifier, who supplies every need of our spiritual life. This experience marks a definite and distinct crisis in the history of a person's relationship with Christ.

"Christ Jesus ... is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30, KJV)

CHRIST OUR HEALER



Through his death and resurrection, Jesus purchased and provided physical strength and healing for believing, obedient Christ-followers. He bore our sins and our sicknesses on the cross. By faith, we draw strength and health from his life and his touch until our life's work is done.

Laying hold of Christ's healing power involves three conditions: First, we must be completely yielded to Jesus, living in such a way that serves and honours him. Second, we must believe without doubt the biblical promise for our own physical strength and healing. Third, we must abide in Christ for our physical life, drawing our strength and depending continually on him.

"[Jesus] healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'He took up our infirmities, and carried our diseases.'" (Matthew 8:16-17, NIV)

CHRIST OUR COMING KING



Jesus will personally return to earth as visibly as when he ascended. His coming will establish the millennium, his glorious reign of righteousness and peace. He will be the enthroned King of kings and Lord of lords before whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We are motivated by his imminent return to proclaim the gospel to as many as possible. The hope of Christ's return calls us to holiness, watchfulness and to an earnest faithfulness in sending the gospel message to every person on earth.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14, NIV)

"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11, NIV)

Heartland Embraces Sherwood Park

Throughout the 40s and 50s the Alliance movement saw steady growth, and in 1958 a new story thread emerged from Beulah Tabernacle (formerly Beulah Mission). God moved in the hearts of two women, Lucy Jaques and Jean Ellis, to start a Sunday School in the community of Sherwood Park, which at the time had a population of 600 people. By 1961 the Sunday School program, originally housed in Campbelltown School, had flourished to a full service conducted in the Community Hall by Rev. Graham Clarke. Two years later, the outreach became organized under the Christian and Missionary Alliance as Sherwood Park Alliance, located on Sherwood Drive. Lucy and Jean may well be considered the spiritual grandmothers of Heartland Alliance.

Since the establishment of Sherwood Park Alliance Church, the Christian and Missionary Alliance has gained recognition as an official denomination in North America (1974); convened their first Canadian General Assembly of 228 churches (1980); and celebrated a centennial year by commissioning 204 Canadian missionaries worldwide (1987).

And the story continues with a new thread as God spoke to a group of people at the Sherwood Park Alliance Church. Their vision for a church plant within Sherwood Park was supported by a 97 percentage vote of the membership of Sherwood Park Alliance. On July 4, 2004 Heartland Alliance Church met at Festival Place for the first of its “pre-launch” services; 325 people were in attendance.

On September 12, 2004, Heartland Alliance opened its doors for the first service in its leased location on Premier Way. Within weeks a second service was added to accommodate the swell in attendance as 500 people called Heartland their church home. Within eight months, a Saturday evening service was initiated to make room for the growing number of people seeking God. Average attendance continued to grow and in August of 2014 Heartland moved into its own building on Highway 21 in Sherwood Park with over 1000 people calling Heartland ‘home’.

The story of “how we got here” is a series of intertwining threads involving people that “love God and love people”. The passion for lives that God gave A.B. Simpson has been passed down to us. As we acknowledge the threads from the past that bring us to the present, we must also prepare ourselves to move forward in our mission, *to love God and love people!*

Mission, Vision and Values

OUR MISSION: LOVING GOD, LOVING PEOPLE

*'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'
This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'. (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV)*

Heartland Alliance Church embodies the heart of our denomination, while reflecting our unique church community through our Mission, Vision and Values.

	VALUE	VISION
1	Pursuing	We fulfill our created purpose as we revere and enjoy God in all we do, worshiping him in spirit and in truth. We will live desiring his presence, dependent on his power, aligning with his purpose and obedient to his word. We will call out to him personally and corporately, with expectation that he will answer.
2	Connecting	We will live life together in small groups, knowing others and being known. We will live lives of transparency and accountability at every level, speaking the truth in love.
3	Becoming	We will become whole people through Christ's life in us. We will strive to become Christ's reflection under the filling and control of the Holy Spirit, partnering with God as he carries out his plan here on this earth.
4	Serving	We will meet the practical needs of our community and serve our church by giving sacrificially of our time and resources, with no strings attached. We will equip ourselves by developing and using all the gifts, becoming the hands and feet of Jesus.
5	Reaching	We will share the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed throughout our community, planting churches as we go. We will go, and partner with others who go, around the world to take the gospel to those who have not heard.

OUR ORGANIZATION

Heartland Alliance Church is a member of a worldwide family of churches known as the Christian & Missionary Alliance. Organized locally, the church is governed by the “Local Church Constitution”. The highest functioning authority of the local church is the Board of Elders, which is responsible to the local membership and answerable to the superintendent of the Western Canadian District of C&MA.

Governance of the church is carried out at annual meetings of the membership. Business affairs such as receiving reports and financial statements, and electing Board members are a responsibility and privilege of membership.¹

The church operates to its fullest potential when members exercise their talents and gifts in the service of their local congregation.

¹ More information on local church governance is provided in Appendix A.



Section 2—MEMBERSHIP

Why Membership?

The first criterion of membership is to be a follower of Christ. But the question may be asked, “Do followers of Christ necessarily need to be members of churches?” How is membership any more meaningful than regular attendance?

Consider the following four reasons to become a member of a local church:

First, the precedent of local believers joining together to build each other’s faith dates back to the book of Acts. While they may not have had formal membership, the early believers clearly belonged to specific local gatherings.

Second, membership is a public declaration of one’s commitment to the health and vitality of a local body of believers. Commitment may be a passé idea in other spheres of our post-modern culture, but in the discipleship journey of a Christ-follower, commitment is a major step toward spiritual growth and maturity.

Third, membership is a way to identify believers who are bonded with the mission, vision and values of a local body, and are willing to be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church.

Finally, membership offers the privilege and responsibility of participating in the business affairs of the church. Electing elders, approving budgets and voting at congregational meetings are all member-only activities. As a member you may even be called to an appointed or elected office within the church.

The Membership Process

The process of becoming a member has four steps:

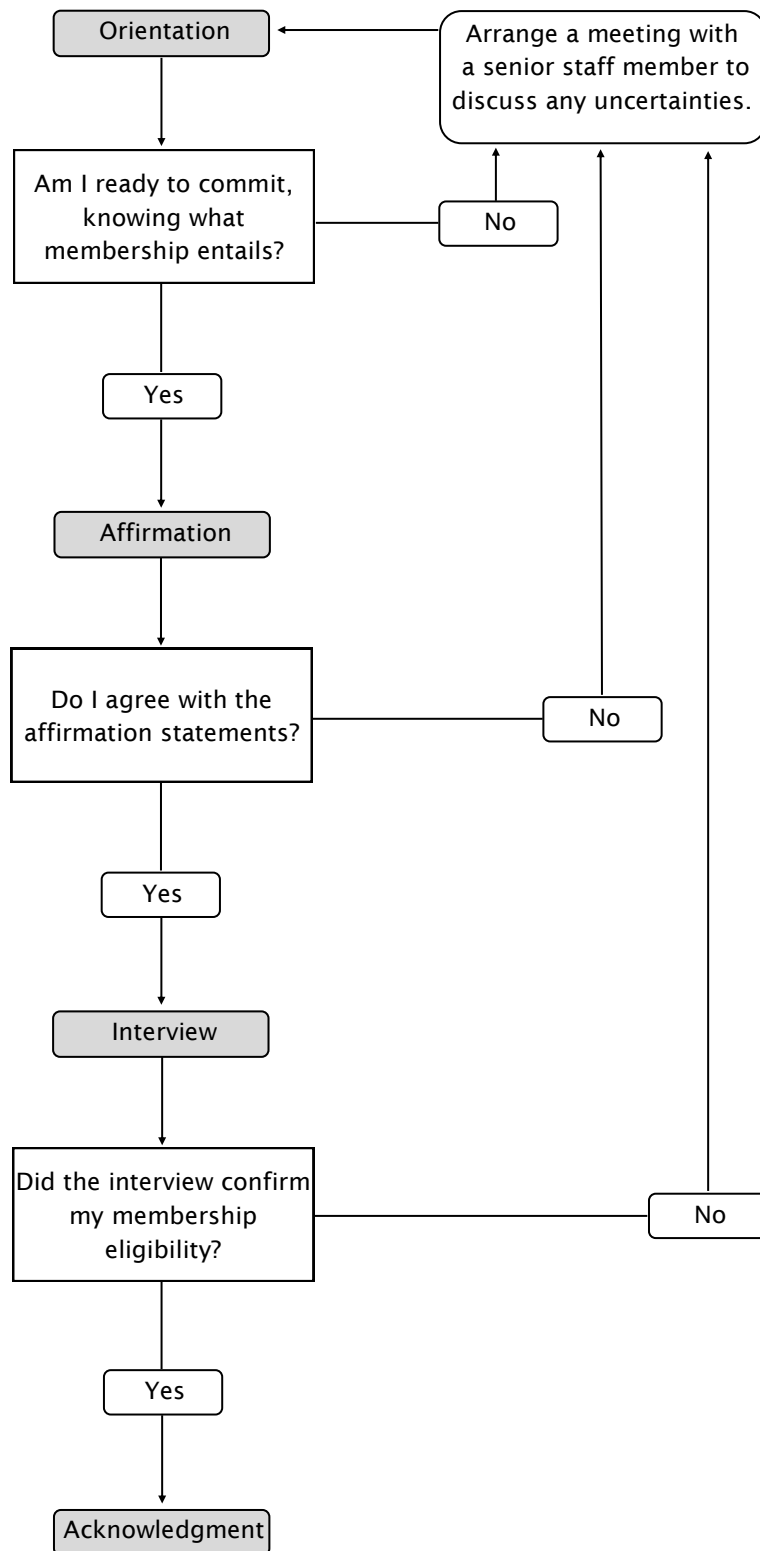
Orientation: Using the self-study section of this guide we invite you to reflect on the biblical precepts for membership at Heartland Alliance. The self-study materials are designed to guide you in a self-assessment of your spiritual growth and readiness for the commitment of membership. Take as much time as you need. It is important to understand the commitment you are contemplating.

Affirmation: The second step in the membership process provides you with the opportunity to agree with a core set of values and beliefs held in common by the members of Heartland as well as the larger denomination. The affirmation step provides an opportunity to review the evidence of God's work in your life.

Interview: An informal interview will be arranged to review your affirmation material. Any difficulties arising out of the interview can be referred to a senior staff member. If your affirmations are aligned with the mission and vision of Heartland Alliance, both you and the interviewer will confirm the membership by signing the Heartland Alliance Membership Covenant.

Acknowledgment: The final stage of the process is public recognition in our weekend service bulletin introducing you as a new member to the congregation at large. This gives the entire local body a chance to acknowledge the growth of our church family!

Reviewing the steps toward membership in the diagram on the opposite page provides a better understanding of the overall process and the options available at each decision point on the path. The decision to seek membership is a self-initiating process. Given that you are reading this guide, you have already started the investigation process. As you proceed, please feel assured that at any time if you have any uncertainties or concerns, you are invited to arrange a meeting with a staff member to further discuss the issues.



Characteristics of a Member

Loving God and loving people is the primary responsibility of every member at Heartland Alliance. As a follower of Christ we use his life as an example, especially in the way we interact with one another and in the way we portray Christ to our local community.

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Below are the five key areas of responsibility that each member of the church needs to be held accountable for both individually and corporately.

1. PURSUING GOD'S PRESENCE

God is holy and unlike any other. Worship is the believer's active response, mind, emotions, will, body and spirit, to all that God is and says and does.

As a result, members at Heartland will be people who:

- Trust Jesus only as their Savior
- Walk in obedience of believer's baptism
- Pursue personal intimacy with God through study, prayer and spiritual disciplines
- Gather regularly with other believers to celebrate Communion and to participate in corporate praise and worship

2. CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY

God exists in perfect community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God created us to live in community as well.

As a result, members of Heartland will be people who:

- Live life together with others in a small group, knowing them and being known
- Resolve conflicts as they arise by speaking the truth in love
- Actively participate in the decision-making process of the church
- Submit to the loving leadership and oversight of the Board of Elders

3. BECOMING LIKE JESUS

God desires that the lives of his children reflect who he is.

As a result, members of Heartland will be people who:

- Become like Christ as they pursue him as Lord
- Seek to live a life of obedience to God's Word
- Live dependant on the Holy Spirit to fill and empower them each day
- Build and influence others toward greater spiritual maturity

4. SERVING OTHERS FREELY

God sent his Son to establish the Kingdom of God. We can serve him and build his Kingdom when we selflessly serve those around us.

As a result, members of Heartland will be people who:

- Contribute to meeting the practical needs of those around them
- Commit to developing and using their spiritual gifts
- Participate whole-heartedly in Heartland's ministries and initiatives
- Give sacrificially of their time, abilities and financial resources

5. REACHING OUR WORLD

God's message of salvation through Jesus is for all people. We are called to take that message first to our own community and ultimately around the world.

As a result, members of Heartland will be people who:

- Look for opportunities to share the good news with those around them
- Represent Jesus well as they live their life in the workplace and community
- Are willing to go and/or support others who go to take the message of Jesus around the globe



Section 3—ORIENTATION

Introduction to Membership Self-Study

The objective of this initial step is to ensure that prospective members understand the character qualifications for membership and the corresponding responsibilities and benefits of membership. We invite you to complete this self-study program at your own pace. The purpose of this self-study investigation is to give you an opportunity to assess your own spiritual growth and to come to a conclusion on whether membership is the next step in your spiritual journey. The conclusions you reach about your spiritual life are confidential. If uncertainties arise it may be advisable to discuss your concerns with a staff member or small group leader. As with most self-discovery processes, the value in this exercise will be proportional to the level of openness and honesty with which you answer the questions.

Value 1: Pursuing God's Presence

*"The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."*¹

The idea that humans were created to worship is not much of a stretch when one observes the world in which we live. Most of the population of the planet can be identified as worshipers of one religion or another and in our North American culture we've turned to worshipping secular things.

Even the Israelites, set free from the bondage of Egypt, created idols to worship when they felt estranged from their savior. Beyond the "golden calf" incident, the nation of Israel dealt with a recurring problem of worshipping the foreign gods of the earlier inhabitants of Canaan. The evidence, both ancient and recent, seems to declare that human beings were created to worship.

Worship, by its nature is a continuum. We can worship out of fear, awe and even hope, however, the highest form of worship flows out of adoration. As we comprehend the character of God, our adoration for his holiness and love naturally leads us to worship. For this reason, our worship experience is dynamic, being constantly refined as we come to a deeper and more intimate knowledge of our Savior and Lord.

God desires that we worship him, not because he needs something from his creation, rather because worship is our natural inclination as he reveals himself to us. In commanding us to glorify him, God is inviting us to enjoy him. God wants to restore to us the same relationship he once shared with Adam. God desires our worship because our freely offered adoration is evidence that we are entering into the relationship the Creator is offering us.

¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1647

Section 3 - Orientation :: Pursuing God's Presence

Mankind was created to have a direct relationship with God, as evidenced by Adam's conversations with God in the Garden of Eden. How do the following verses describe mankind's condition after Adam's fall?

Romans 3:10-18, 23

Galatians 3:22

What has become of mankind as a result of losing our relationship with God?

Romans 6:23

Restoring relationship with God is only possible through his efforts to reach us. What do the following verses say about God's plan to restore us into right relationship with him?

Romans 5:6-8, 10

1 Peter 3:18

John 14:6

Sometimes we're afraid to admit our sinfulness because to do so feels so hopeless. Many of us react to that sense of despair and decide to become "religious". We try to change our behaviors so we feel, and appear, better. After carefully reading Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7, write a letter to yourself explaining why you can't and don't have to earn God's acceptance.

Dear

[illegible]

Section 3 - Orientation :: Pursuing God's Presence

God is inviting each one of us back into relationship with him. Through our free will we choose to become active participants in the restoration. What do the following verses say about our response to God's offer of relationship?

Romans 10:9-10, 13

Galatians 2:16

What was the practice of the new believers in Acts after receiving God's gift of salvation through Jesus?

Acts 8:36-38, 16:14-15

According to Romans 6:4-5, what does baptism signify?

In Acts 2:38, Peter commands those listening to “repent and be baptized”. Many people, maybe you too, were baptized as a child. The pattern in the New Testament (example: Acts 18:8) is “believe and then be baptized”. Why do you think it would be appropriate for a person to be baptized after his or her conversion instead of before it?

Living As A Worshiper

The word “worship” in Scripture reflects both attitude and action towards God. What can we learn from the following verses about acceptable worship?

John 4:24

Hebrews 12:28

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 4:8-10

The Psalms are written as a book of prayers, praise and worship. What can we learn from the following passages about what it means to pursue intimacy with God?

Psalm 1:2

Psalm 42:1

Psalm 62:1

Psalm 84:1-2

Psalm 119:9-16

Psalm 122:1

Further Thoughts

Christ followers understand, and have individually received, Christ's saving grace. They have abandoned all attempts to earn God's favor through accomplishments of their own and find security only through Christ's sacrificial death on their behalf.

In obedience to Christ's command, they have undergone water baptism as believers, giving outward witness to the inner cleansing and renewal experienced in him.

Value 2: Connecting in Community

God exists in perfect community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God created us to live in community as well. A cursory study of human behavior would indicate that we want to organize ourselves in social groupings for mutual benefit, our families, neighborhoods and nations are evidence of our need to belong. When we come into relationship with God, he opens up an entirely new way to belong: he offers us his Kingdom community. Our local church is a manifestation of the universal Kingdom of God; our participation in this Kingdom is based on our relationship with God and with each other.

God has given us his Word, the Bible; prayer, direct communication with him; and his Holy Spirit, to live in us and help us grow. These are valuable tools but they aren't all he's given us: he also gave us each other. At Heartland, our local church has two wings that offer unique forms of community. Through our weekend services, the large group wing, we unite with our entire church community; and in the small group wing, we build personal and caring relationships with each other.

As humans, we are created in the image of God, and as believers we desire to develop Christ-likeness. When we come together in community, we provide encouragement and edification to one another. The community is enriched by the uniqueness of each individual member.

In the Kingdom of God we service each other in various ways. The Kingdom was designed so that each of us contributes as well as receives. When we worship together in the large group wing, we can enter a dimension of God's beauty experienced through no other means. When we sit with members of our small group, someone can powerfully remind us of what we can't see, that God is working in us, that we're going to make it, that the affection of God is not just for "the world", it's for me. When we're together as fellow kingdom dwellers, someone can literally say "You, _____ (*insert your name*), matter to God so much that he personalized his plan of salvation so there would be room for you." Or we can hear, "I know you're going through a tough time, but you're not alone; God is with you, and we're all with you." These are the moments of beauty that give us the glorious hope that we radiate to our families, neighborhoods and nation.

The Community of Believers

The early believers in Christ did not want to live their new life alone. What can you learn about their relationships with each other from the following verses?

Acts 2:44-47

Acts 4:32-35

James 5:16

The writer of Hebrews actually gave a command about community life in Hebrews 10:24-25. How would you rephrase this passage in modern terms?

The Few in the Midst of Many

Jesus did not merely speak to masses of people during his ministry. What reasons can you give for his strategic decision in Luke 6:12-13?

Mark 3:14 describes the same incident, but adds the simple phrase “with him” to the appointment of the Twelve. What do you think is meant by that phrase and why was it important for them to be “with him” for that time?

In addition to large groups, where else did Christians get together according to Acts 2:46 and 1 Corinthians 16:19?

What do you suppose they got out of these smaller, house-sized group meetings that they didn’t get out of larger gatherings?

Section 3 - Orientation :: Connecting in Community

Why would it be impossible to fulfill the following biblical commands if you were only attending weekend services without having any close relationships?

Galatians 6:1-3

Proverbs 27:17

Colossians 3:16

At times, it appeared Jesus wanted just a few disciples by his side. What is the significance relationally of what Jesus did in Mark 14:32-35?

Concerning Jesus' actions, can you draw any parallels to your own life and needs? If so, what are they?

Christ-like Attitudes In Every Relationship

Colossians 3:18-23 and Titus 2:2-10 describe several spheres, or roles, in which we are to behave in Christ-honoring ways. How many can you identify? List them below.

What would you say is the common thread through all of them, in other words, what is Paul saying that applies to everybody on the above list?

All of us play the role of followers at some level of our Christian experience. What do the Scriptures below teach about the characteristics of a good follower in the church?

1 Corinthians 16:15-16

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Hebrews 13:17

Section 3 - Orientation :: Connecting in Community

2 Timothy 2:23-24 points out that, unfortunately, quarreling can happen among members of the church. How would you put into your own words what our attitude and response should be?

Put in your own words the procedure Jesus outlines for conflict resolution in Matthew 18:15-17.

With the passages from 2 Timothy and Matthew as a background, what are some of the common ways of handling conflict that are not in harmony with what the Bible teaches?

What is the issue Romans 16:17-18, Titus 3:10, James 4:1-3 and Jude 1:19 have in common?

Why do you think the Bible is so strong about its message not to cause divisions or factions in a church?

Further Thoughts

Kingdom citizens honor God's call to participate in community in order to grow in Christ-likeness, to express and receive love and to carry out the ministry of the church.

Personal relationships, the vehicle for expressing and receiving Christ's love, are fostered in the small group wing of Heartland Alliance. Within small groups we experience community and receive support as we pursue discipleship growth. Large group wing worship experiences arise from the growth and renewal that is incubated in the small group wing. Everyone is encouraged to belong to a small group so that they may experience the complete community/church experience at Heartland.

Our community is a precious gift from God and as members of the Kingdom we can all protect the unity of our fellowship. Below are several guidelines for governing ourselves within the Kingdom:

- Pursue Christ-honoring relationships at home, within the church and in the work place, and be committed to pursuing the biblical pattern of reconciliation when conflict arises.
- Support the leadership of the church and be biblically submissive to it.
- Affirm and uphold the fundamental truths of Scripture (as summarized in our Statement of Faith) and refrain from promoting other doctrines in ways that cause dissension.

Value 3: B e c o m i n g L i k e J e s u s

"I think we need to throw out this plant, it's all withered and brown."

"The company is in trouble, our net sales have leveled off for the last four quarters."

"Christina is already two months old but hasn't grown beyond her birth weight, we've got to do something, Doctor!"

What do the above statements have in common? They all presume it's in the nature of vital things to grow. All living organisms are programmed by their DNA to go through stages of growth until they eventually reach maturity. To be alive, by God's design, is to change and grow.

Why then so some Christians not mature spiritually? What steps can we take to protect our own inner health when we stagnate and stop growing spiritually speaking? A word used to describe "Becoming Like Jesus" is discipleship. Discipleship is the key to experiencing all God has for you in the Kingdom.

Worship flows out of our relationship with God, worship begins with our first encounter of God's grace. Discipleship is about our ongoing response to God's grace over a lifetime. Our walk with God begins by grace and it also continues by grace. Some Kingdom dwellers fall into the trap of thinking their work, or following the rules, automatically produces spiritual maturity. To try to grow through one's own efforts alone is as much out of harmony with God's plan as not growing at all. Both lead to spiritual frustration.

Discipleship is a balance between owning the responsibility to grow, which requires resisting what keeps us from maturing, and trusting in the help and power of the Holy Spirit to bring about Christ-like character in us. If we commit to moving forward, we will experience the blessings of Kingdom life in our everyday lives, and marvel at the miracle of spiritual growth.

Pursuing Growth

In Colossians 2:6-7, Paul uses several different words or phrases to describe the faith the people had. List below as many terms as you can find from those verses.

In Colossians 3:5-17, Paul describes two opposites: what shouldn't be the case for believers and then what should. List below as many of the characteristics of those opposites as you can find.

Say no to ...

Say yes to ...

Peter paints a similar picture in 2 Peter 3:17-18. In both passages, Paul's and Peter's, who is assigned the responsibility for spiritual growth? What are you doing now in your own life to fulfill the command of verse 18?

Section 3 - Orientation :: Becoming Like Jesus

Practically speaking, what else could you do to further your “discipleship”?

Paul the Apostle knew well that Jesus had saved him, yet he talks of a “striving” and a “reaching” for something in Philippians 3:10-16. How would you put into your own words what Paul was working so hard to do in his life?

In light of what you just wrote, what does verse 16 mean?

What is Jesus trying to say about growing as a Christian in John 15:4-5?

How do you reconcile Christ’s command to “abide” with the strong commands to “strive” in previous passages studied?

Holy Spirit: Power for Living

What was the defining event on the day of Pentecost?

Acts 2:1-4

What can we learn about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives from the following passages?

Acts 2:38

Acts 8:14-17

Romans 8:9

Galatians 3:14

Ephesians 5:18

Luke 9:1-2

The Bible: Direction for Growth

What do the following verses teach about the importance of Scripture in the life of a growing Christian?

Psalm 1:2-3

Hebrews 4:12

Psalm 119:9-24

According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, who is the real author of the Scriptures?

What are the different ways you are equipping yourself with the Word of God (v.17)?

How would you put in your own words the warning in James 1:22-25? What specific ways are you tempted in this area?

Prayer: Conversing with God

What do Luke 5:16 and 6:12-13 tell us about Jesus' prayer life and his need to get alone periodically? What are the implications for you personally?

How is it possible to obey Ephesians 6:18 in our day and age?

We are also called to pray with others. What can we learn from Matthew 18:19-20?

The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines are not ends in themselves. How would you describe the result of a spiritually disciplined life according to Ephesians 3:16-19?

When Growth Isn't Happening—Addressing Sin

What is the clear call of God on every believer's life and conduct in 1 John 2:4-6 and 1 Peter 1:14-16?

As long as we're forgiven, why does it make any difference whether we sin or not? (Romans 6:1-2)

What remedy is available to us as believers when we mess up and fall short of God's commands? (1 John 1:9)

According to Romans 6:3-14, how does a believer find freedom from their natural tendency to sin? How does this play out in your life?

What is the Holy Spirit's role in holy living? (Romans 8:9-16)

Divine Healing, Body Ministry

What do the following two passages teach us about physical healing? (Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 8:16-17)

Further Thoughts

Kingdom dwellers know the grace of God that saved them is only the beginning of his work in them. They gratefully respond by actively pursuing a lifelong process of discipleship in Christ and seek to become conformed to his image. To this end, they consistently nurture their spiritual development through prayer, worship, and Bible study.

They regard the Bible as the final authority in all areas that it teaches about and desire to be wholly obedient to it. Citizens in the Kingdom honestly confront areas of personal sin and engage the Holy Spirit's power in seeking to turn from sin. Overcoming sin's temptation, with the help of the Holy Spirit, enables us to extinguish our worldly patterns of living and develop a strong kingdom life that honors the Lordship of Christ our Redeemer.

Value 4: Serving Others Freely

"The church should do something!"

The above statement is often uttered out of frustration as someone, usually a church member, witnesses a glaring need. Most often the individual is right, the church should do something. At the very least, this kind of dilemma is proof that we are capable of perceiving the needs that exist around us.

Jesus demonstrated love in the "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". Our Lord was moved to action even though we were unworthy. This powerful demonstration of God's love is the heart of the gospel, doing what is right simply because it is good. As Christ-followers, we mirror the "heart of the gospel" when we take action for the benefit of others.

As recipients of the King's grace, we understand how marvelous it is to receive something we don't deserve. Acts of service are an expression of God's grace that we can give each other. Sometimes we don't give our gifts, not because we don't care about others, but simply because we are too busy with our own lives. Our Lord is calling us to sacrifice a part of the time we spend looking after our own needs and use that time to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Everything we have is a gift from our God. Scripture says that the farmer may plant seeds in the ground, but he is powerless to provide rain or make the seeds grow. This analogy is particularly meaningful for Albertans, as our provincial economy is bankrolled by oil deposits. We may extract and refine the oil, but only the Creator can produce it. If God has entrusted his resources to us, do we not have a responsibility to use those resources in a manner with which he would be pleased?

True religion, as defined in James 1:27, is taking care of the widows. It is being of service to those in our church family, in our community and across the globe.

Within the Kingdom of God each one is empowered for service and there is nobody closer to a situation than the one who sees the need. If you find yourself tempted to say the church should do something, as a Kingdom beneficiary you are really saying, *"I should do something"*. God in his wisdom calls us to needs where we can be of service. Sometimes God expects us to take a step of faith and do our part, trusting him for the final results. As Kingdom builders, we are called to contribute the talents and resources that God has given us. Our Lord invites you to follow his example and make a difference in the life of someone else.

The Need for, and Privilege of, Serving

Read Matthew 9:36-38. Now imagine Jesus visiting a weekend service at Heartland. After the service, you and he sit in the lobby and watch the hundreds of people walk out. He sighs as he sees the streams of attendees pass by and then says to you the exact words from Matthew 9. Explain in your own words what you think is on his mind and heart at that moment.

What was Paul's attitude toward working in God's service in 1 Timothy 1:12?

Do you personally think we have a "laborer" shortage at Heartland today? Explain why you say that.

Section 3 - Orientation :: Serving Others Freely

What factors or attitudes have hindered your involvement at times?

Often we think of service as being limited to what we do in church. According to Matthew 25:31-46, what “criteria for service” will be used by Jesus to separate those who truly followed him from those who did not?

James 1:27 describes a kind of religion that is pure and faultless and accepted by God. In your own words describe what this would look like in your own community.

Where, if anywhere, are you involved in these kinds of service?

Different Parts, One Body

The Bible compares the Church to a human body, with Christ as the head and all of us as different parts, or members, of the body. Summarize in a sentence or two what Paul is trying to convey in 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

What is the reason we each have differing abilities within the church? (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

Why do you think Paul stresses the singular source behind the various spiritual gifts he describes?

Romans 12:4-8 also speaks of our differing functions in the body of Christ. What is the source of these differences?

Knowing that we're differently gifted in the body of Christ, what do you think are some of the potential problems to be avoided?

Serving With Our Resources

What percentage is common to the following biblical stories of giving?

Genesis 14:18-20

Leviticus 27:30, 32; Malachi 3:8-10

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus affirms the Old Testament concept of the tithe. What is your reaction to his teaching in this verse?

What is the implication of these verses on your own possessions? (Matthew 6:19-24)

Further Thoughts

Kingdom participants recognize that the church is composed of interdependent members, each uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the body and furthering the ministry of the church.

They therefore seek to discover, develop and deploy those God-given gifts and to seek a place of service within the church, with the support and affirmation of the body.

Further, they desire to be responsible caretakers of the material resources that God has entrusted to them. They recognize the tithe (10 percent of one's earnings) as the historic standard of giving in Scripture. Moreover, in response to Christ's abundant giving, they increasingly submit their resources to his Lordship and display a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness in supporting the work of the church and giving to those in need.

Value 5: R e a c h i n g O u r W o r l d

The San Francisco Call Bulletin, August 14, 1945, declared the good news “War Over!” as its headline. People thronged into the streets, overjoyed that no more young men would have to be sacrificed on the altar of world peace ... at least for a while.

The end of World War II has been indelibly imprinted on our collective memories by the images of ticker tape parades welcoming soldiers home. Yet a more profound good news story continues to resound from 2000 years ago.

If a headline had been printed it might have read “Death is Conquered!” The Greeks may not have had newspapers, but their word “gospel”, which means good news, became permanently attached, synonymous, with the redemption story of how Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf as payment for our sins.

Christ finished his mission of redemption on the cross for all people across all time. Yet every year the world’s population grows with new people that need to hear the gospel message that Christ died for them. As we have accepted God’s plan of salvation, Christ has commanded us to also tell others the good news that they too might be saved from the punishment of sin.

Our lives form a complex web of connections with people at our workplace, our home and every space in between. Excluding for the moment friends and colleagues, we could each list those recognizable people whose names we’ve never asked—the cashier at the grocery store, the barista at the coffee shop, the person who delivers our newspaper and others. St. Francis of Assisi said, “Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.” Our actions speak volumes to those that we haven’t taken the opportunity to get to know. Each Kingdom citizen should substantiate the gospel message through the actions of their everyday lives.

Our citizenship in the Kingdom is dependent on our willingness to serve the King. Some Kingdom dwellers are called to active roles of evangelism, taking the message of Jesus to our community and around the globe. Those who go must be supported by others that believe the importance of spreading the good news. Each of us needs to be open to doing God’s will as it is revealed to us.

Lost But Not Forgotten

Scripture teaches us that without Christ, men are bound for eternal separation from God in hell. What does 2 Peter 3:9 tell us about God's desire for ALL men?

Our Part

What is God's plan for communicating his plan of redemption for humanity? (Romans 10:13-15)

Section 3 - Orientation :: Reaching Our World

As believers, we each bear the responsibility to share the salvation story. Describe, in your own words, how the following verses suggest we should be prepared to share the gospel message.

1 Peter 3:13-17

Colossian 4:5-6

1 Peter 2:12

Share a personal story of how God has given you opportunity to communicate the gospel to others.

God's Part

As we fulfill our part, sharing the gospel with others, what do the following scriptures state God will do?

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Luke 15:10

Further Thoughts

It is daunting to realize that God, in his infinite wisdom, has chosen us to announce his plan of salvation to our generation.

Our responsibility to the gospel is captured in Marshall McLuhan's famous quote "the medium is the message". God has chosen us as the medium to deliver his message. How fitting that the message of life everlasting is carried in living messengers whose daily actions speak louder than printed words.



Section 4—AFFIRMING THE FAITH

In contrast to the orientation step, the affirmation phase invites you to make clear your responses to the qualifications of membership. *Personal Response* pages are designed to gather your thoughts regarding the essential values, beliefs and commitments that we hold in common as members of Heartland Alliance.

These questions will guide you through the essential affirmations of membership and you are encouraged to express yourself openly. You will be asked to bring your Personal Response section with you to the interview (whatever is shared there will be kept in confidence).

Personal Response

Please briefly describe your spiritual journey to this point, including your decision to make Jesus your personal Savior and Lord.

Note: Much misunderstanding exists about what it means to “be a Christian”. Church attendance, belief in God, strong commitment, ... etc., are all good but none of them make you a Christian in the biblical sense. If you’re at all unclear as to whether or not you’re a Christian, we’d like to clear up any confusion you have, please don’t feel embarrassed if you’re not sure. Do not go any further on this response sheet for now. Set up a time as soon as possible to meet with your small group leader or a staff member to discuss your uncertainties. This matter is of vital importance to every member (every person really!) so please get the input we’ve suggested before taking any more steps.

Have you been baptized as a believer? _____ Yes _____ No

Describe when and where.

Note: While we respect the religious heritage of those who have been baptized as infants, we believe Scripture teaches that baptism should come after a person has personally received Christ. We therefore require that a person be baptized by his or her own choice before becoming a member of Heartland Alliance (although that baptism does not need to have occurred at Heartland Alliance). If you have not been baptized since making a commitment to Christ, please contact the church office. We would be happy to make arrangements for you to take the next step of your faith journey at our next baptismal service.

Section 4 - Affirming the Faith :: Personal Response

Prayer, worship and Bible study are vital elements in pursuing God's presence and becoming like Jesus. Describe how you are presently nurturing your spiritual growth through these and other spiritual disciplines on your own.

Note: In asking you to describe your spiritual habits, we want to be careful to avoid the mistaken notion that legalistic formulas and rigid rules guarantee a healthy devotional life. It is more important that your walk with Christ simply be characterized by regular and meaningful input. What matters is that you're becoming more like him and that you're taking it upon yourself to improve your relationship with him privately and not being solely dependent on what public meetings provide.

Have you ever asked God to fill you with his Holy Spirit? ____ Yes ____ No

How do you know that you've been filled and what ongoing evidence is there?

Can you identify your spiritual gifts? If so, what are they?

Are you responsibly using your spiritual gifts in a place of service within the church?

_____Yes _____No

If yes, in what area? If no, do you intend to?

Section 4 - Affirming the Faith :: Personal Response

Are you involved personally in meeting the practical needs of others? _____ Yes _____ No

Explain:

Note: One of the core values of Heartland Alliance and a teaching of the New Testament is that the members of the body are the ministers. Practically speaking, the church cannot grow in a healthy fashion unless all of its core believers are sharing the ministry load. So, we ask all members to contribute to the body by using their gifts in some place of service. At the same time, we recognize that demanding seasons of life, or other unusual circumstances, may require reducing the amount of involvement or taking a "break" for a period of time. In any case, it should be their desire and intention to re-engage in some level of service, even if only on a periodic basis.

How do you act on your desire to communicate the love of Jesus to people in your circle of influence?

Do you regard the Bible as God's final authority in all areas of the Christian life and do you desire to be wholly obedient to it?

_____ Yes _____ Yes, except for ... _____ No

Please explain any reservations you have.

Note: If you have a major concern with living under the authority of the Bible, you will probably not want to go any further with this process—it would be out of order for anyone to be a participating member of Heartland Alliance without being in submission to Scripture. However, it may still be valuable to meet with your interviewer to discuss your reservations.

In your pursuit of becoming more like Jesus, what areas are most difficult for you and most frequently need more attention?

Are there any ongoing patterns of sin in your life that you are not willing to turn from and are not yielding to Christ?

Note: This question is a very hard one to face because we are all wrestling with “something” and none of us has reached sinless perfection. There may come a time for some of us when we just quit trying. Either through discouragement, or maybe a hardened will, we just stop trying to grow and give up the fight. Christ’s reputation is far more likely to be marred when his followers engage in willful sin with no thought of repentance than when a sincere believer falls to a temptation he or she desperately wants to overcome. Those Christ-followers with yielded hearts who honestly confront areas of personal sin with the help of the Holy Spirit please God, what more could anyone do? If you’re not open to change, not ready to have at least one other person help and offer accountability or other support, or if you’re only at the early stages of confronting a sin pattern, then it may be best to defer participating in membership until growth has occurred. If you have any hesitation, you should discuss this question in complete frankness with your interviewer.

Are you involved in any relationships anywhere, such as within the church, at work or at home that would bring dishonor to God or his church? _____ Yes _____ No

If so, please describe the situation.

As far as it is up to you, are you committed to pursuing the biblical pattern of “living at peace with all men” by dealing with past, present and future relational conflicts? _____ Yes _____ No

If not, please explain.

Note: Relational breakdowns are usually complex matters. We recognize and respect that. At the same time, members should be willing to engage in the strenuous process of conflict resolution. They should display open hearts, a willingness to examine and address personal issues that may have contributed to the conflict and an openness to receiving counsel where appropriate.

Section 4 - Affirming the Faith :: Personal Response

How do you demonstrate your commitment to communicating the love of Jesus to those around the world who have never heard?

Do you desire to extend Christ's saving grace to others in your circle of influence?

_____ Yes _____ No

Explain

The Heartland Alliance Statement of Faith (reference page 13) summarizes the basic truths of Scripture. (If you haven't reviewed it in detail, please do so now.)

Do you wholeheartedly affirm that statement? _____ Yes _____ No

If not, what are your specific reservations?

Will you refrain from promoting doctrines that are in conflict with our Statement of Faith?

_____ Yes _____ No

Do you affirm the Mission, Values and Vision of Heartland Alliance? (reference page 19)

_____ Yes _____ No

If not, what aspects are you unable to affirm and embrace?

Consistent with God's call to commitment and community within a local church body, how regularly do you participate in the corporate gatherings of Heartland?

Note: We have not established set number of services one could miss in a year before you would fail to qualify for membership. Seasons of life sometimes require extraordinary responses that preclude church attendance, as do health concerns, family problems, being out of town on business or other unavoidable circumstances. Having said that, it is important that participating members value the ministries of the weekend services and that they come to church even if they don't particularly feel like it. Mature believers come to meet God as well as each other.

Are you connected to a small group of believers here at Heartland Alliance for the purpose of growth, loving support and accountability? _____ Yes _____ No

If not, please explain why.

Section 4 - Affirming the Faith :: Personal Response

Describe the quality of your small group life and how it is impacting your spiritual growth?

Note: It is easy to come to large group gatherings and get a false sense of our spiritual or personal condition. Furthermore, large meetings where anonymity is honored give us no opportunity to enter into someone else's needs and be God's agent of help to them. The value of "group" is that somewhere, on a regular basis with a few other believers, all members have face-to-face meetings that help shape them—places they give and receive care. We believe that a Heartland small group is an optimal place for that to happen. But we realize that some individuals may be committed to the value of significant relationships without, for various reasons, being in a formal group at a particular time. So we give a lot of latitude as to what kind of group this might be. The key is to get in a group and grow, to become a more mature disciple of Jesus Christ.

One of the responsibilities of membership is to be involved in making decisions regarding the church's future ministries and direction. Will you actively engage in the decision making process at Heartland? _____ Yes _____ No

Do you believe the way you use your material wealth is God-honoring in all respects?
_____ Yes _____ No

If no, in what areas?

What action are you taking to make changes?

In light of the tithe as a biblical precedent for giving, do you regularly support this body using 10 percent as a goal to reach (or surpass as God prospers)?

_____ Yes _____ No

If not, describe your current practice and ways you're moving toward this goal.

If proportionate giving becomes possible for you (that is, giving beyond 10 percent of your income), what dreams do you have for using your resources so the Kingdom can expand locally and around the world?

Note: People can fall prey to a variety of errors in the area of giving. One extreme is to become compelled by guilt or legalistic “obedience”. Paul said God loves a cheerful giver. Reluctant, joyless giving evidences an issue that needs to be addressed. Paul also warned against unbalanced, irresponsible giving that ignores personal needs and can actually create financial dependence (2 Corinthians 8:12-15, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12, 1 Timothy 5:8). Yet another extreme is unplanned and haphazard giving that reflects neither faithfulness nor generosity.

What has shaped Heartland Alliance’s position regarding giving? The Old Testament provides the backdrop instructing God’s people to give the first 10 percent of their income back to him and as such, it ought to move us all toward adopting at least that percentage. In response to Christ’s lavish grace, the New Testament goes on to teach proportional giving and spurs us to doing even more to advance the Kingdom locally, and beyond, as God individually prospers and leads. That leaves it up to us, the “membership core” of the church to pool our resources in a committed fashion so that our own needs can be met and ministry extended to those beyond our four walls.

It is in this spirit that we ask participating members to support this church with their tithes. We realize for some this will be a goal to attain over time; for others, it’s already a mark they can surpass as God leads. In any case, we believe that God will bless and empower us as we joyfully band together to advance his cause.

Conclusion

We hope this opportunity to take “spiritual inventory” has been rich and affirming. Remember, we are not looking for “perfect Christians” who live struggle-free lives. We are looking for those who are committed to Christ, to his church and to ongoing spiritual growth.



Section 5—Confirmation

After preparing your affirmation responses, you will need to contact the church office for an interview. The purpose of the interview is NOT to determine whether you are a “perfect Christian”. Rather, it is your opportunity to affirm your commitment to Christ, to Heartland and to a lifelong process of spiritual growth.

If, during the course of the interview, any concerns arise from your personal responses, the interviewer may recommend delaying the confirmation of membership, recommending instead that these concerns be discussed with a senior staff member. This is not a denial of membership; it is an opportunity to examine an issue that may need attention. If requested, the interviewer will help the individual develop a specific plan to address the issue so that the candidate can move forward toward full membership. When the interview proceeds without any concerns arising, the interviewer will sign the candidate’s Heartland Alliance Membership Covenant, confirming all requirements have been met. The new member will return the covenant to the church office.

The Interview

People tend to process information at a much deeper level when they discuss an issue rather than simply think or read about it. That's why an honest and confidential conversation about your affirmations with an interviewer comes after you've completed your personal responses. The purpose of the confirmation interview is to affirm your commitments, accurately assess the condition of your spiritual life and plan where you'd like to go next. This step of participating in membership may seem a little scary because of its emphasis on vulnerability, but it is highly beneficial because it offers both clarification of what's going on and accountability to effect changes for the better. Perhaps at this stage more than any other, we live out what it means to be part of Christ's church.

The person who conducts your interview is trained to facilitate your meeting. He or she takes this appointment seriously and wants to make sure you get the maximum benefit. The interviewer is instructed to listen attentively, ask meaningful questions about your responses and most importantly, support you appropriately as you take this next step in your spiritual journey. If you sense problems, the interviewer is there to help. In some rare cases, the interviewer may want to "press the pause button" and wait on your participating in membership until some issue is addressed. If a problem does arise, especially if the two of you disagree about anything you've discussed related to whether or not your membership should be confirmed, a senior staff member must be called in for a follow-up meeting. Again, the whole purpose is to address issues and move forward, not shame you or hold you back in your spiritual progress.

To set up an interview, simply call the church office. We'll have someone get in touch with you and set up a time for the interview. Please allow an hour to an hour-and-a-half and bring the following to your interview:

- The Self-Study filled out (note any questions you'd like to discuss)
- The Personal Response pages filled out (also note any questions or qualifications you'd like to discuss)

The interview may be conducted wherever decided upon by those involved. A noisy, public place would not be suitable; choose a location where quiet, meaningful conversation can take place uninterrupted. At the conclusion of your interview, one of two things will happen. Your interviewer will either confirm you and sign your new member confirmation or you will agree to another meeting

with a senior staff member to discuss whatever issue is of concern. Realize that both of these steps represent progress. They both have your spiritual well-being as top priority. They both result in personal growth and spiritual development. They both carry the assurance that God's plan for you is unfolding right on schedule: "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6).

If your membership is confirmed, your interviewer will turn in your signed Membership Covenant to the church office. The process of becoming a member doesn't end with a signature on a covenant though; the process completes with public recognition of each new member's inclusion into the church body. Your name will be included in the weekend services bulletin acknowledging you as Heartland's newest member and you will receive a Membership Certificate.

Membership Renewal

It is common to find local church membership roles that are ridiculously inaccurate. Often, several times more “members” show up on the list than actually show up for the weekend services. People may be listed who don’t even live in the area anymore; or if they do, they haven’t attended the church in years. (Some churches even have deceased members on their list!) This problem stems from a philosophy that says once a person has been accepted into the fellowship of the church he or she should be considered a member for life, unless the church is notified of a change.

At Heartland Alliance, we want our membership list to reflect accurately who is a participating member and who is not. To ensure this accuracy, we renew everyone’s membership yearly. In this way, we can be sure we don’t lose touch. The names on our roll represent people, real people. Every one of them continues to affirm that he or she is a participating member in the church, not just a series of bytes on the database of the church’s computer. We think it a matter of integrity both for the church and for each member to be sure our membership information truly reflects reality.

Two values shape the membership renewal process at Heartland Alliance:

1. Renewal shouldn’t become a formality. Like the initial affirmation/confirmation process, renewal should provide participating members with a valuable spiritual experience.
2. The integrity of the membership roster should be upheld. Our renewal process insures that integrity.

What exactly are the steps for renewing membership? It all begins with the anniversary of your celebration. Each year, shortly after your anniversary date, you’ll receive a renewal form. You will read over the material, fill in the appropriate information and pray about your decision to renew. In most cases the renewal will be signed and forwarded to the church office. If you have any questions or concerns about your renewal, your small group leader (or a staff member) would be glad to discuss those with you.

If any concern arises that needs further discussion, a senior staff member, or another qualified person, may get involved. As with the initial participating membership interview, there is nothing “automatic” about how you’ll proceed. The main thing is to accurately assess where you are spiritually, where you want to be and how best to get there. When you are contacted about your membership renewal, think of it as a way to say “Count on me” once again. We promise it won’t be a tedious experience. If you have any questions about this process, contact the church office.



Section 6—HEARTLAND ALLIANCE CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Savior and having surrendered my life to him as Lord, having been baptized as a believer and being committed to the principles expressed in the objectives, purposes and statement of faith in the Christian and Missionary Alliance local church constitution, I now feel led to join the Heartland family. In doing so, I affirm my agreement with Heartland Alliance Church's Mission, Vision and Values, and submit myself to the loving rule and oversight of the Board of Elders. I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

Live life **Pursuing God's Presence**—I will pursue intimacy with God through personal and corporate times of prayer, praise, study, reflection and other spiritual disciplines.

Live life **Becoming Like Jesus**—I will seek to live a life obedient to God's word and allow him by his Holy Spirit to make me more and more like Jesus.

Live life **Connecting in Community**—I will live life together with other believers, allowing them to know me and speak into my life.

Live life **Serving Others Freely**—I will give generously of my time and resources, seeking to meet the practical needs of others with no strings attached.

Live life **Reaching Our World**—I will seek to represent Jesus well as I live my life in this community and look for opportunities to share the good news with those I meet.

The Board of Elders covenants to uphold its mandate as Heartland Alliance Church's elected authority under God, responsible for the church's effective ministry. This includes:

- Responsibility for the fulfillment of Heartland Alliance Church's Mission, Vision and Values.
- Legal accountability for the church's operations.
- Providing spiritual leadership, governance and management of the church.

The Board of Elders covenants to conduct itself, both individually and corporately, according to the Constitution and Bylaws of Heartland Alliance Church and of the Canadian Christian and Missionary Alliance and in complete agreement with Scripture, especially as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Name of Member Candidate (*please print*)

Signature of Member Candidate

Date

Signature of Interviewer

Date

Signature of 2nd Interviewer (*if applicable*)

Date



Appendices

Appendix A

Heartland Alliance Church Leadership & Governance

Heartland Alliance Church is part of a worldwide family of churches, the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church (the C&MA). All Canadian Alliance churches are members of the Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada. We are then more directly involved on a provincial level in what is known as the Western Canadian District of the C&MA, headquartered in Calgary. Finally, as a local church we have our own membership that carries out the mandate in our own community. Each organized church is governed by the “Local Church Constitution”, as approved by the C&MA in Canada. A local church can adopt additional bylaws, policies and regulations as long as they do not contradict the Local Church Constitution.

The highest functioning authority of the local church is the Board of Elders. The Board is answerable both to the membership and to the Western Canadian District Superintendent as defined in the constitution. Criteria for membership on the Board are the biblical qualifications of an elder. The senior pastor or a member of the Board appointed by him will be the chair. The senior pastor has the primary responsibility for oversight of the Board and the church and functions within the job description approved by the Board. Specific details of how the Board works and its responsibilities are described in our bylaws.

Heartland will hold annual meetings of the membership to receive reports and financial statements as well as to elect Board members from among the voting membership to be responsible for the affairs of the church between annual meetings. Additional meetings during the year allow the leadership to communicate on relevant topics as well as to give members the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.

Day to day operations at Heartland are the responsibility of the Executive Team, made up of the senior pastor, the executive pastor and other individuals they may appoint to the team. The Board sets the general direction for the church, providing overall spiritual direction as well as ensuring that the church operates with up-to-date policies and guidelines.

Appendix B

Local Church Constitution

The Canadian Christian & Missionary Alliance Local Church Constitution

OBJECTIVES

The Local Church Constitution has been framed and adopted by the General Assembly of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, the denomination's highest legislative body.

Because each Christian and Missionary Alliance church is an integral part of the national and worldwide fellowship, it is united in governance, fellowship and service in order to promote unity of faith in the fullness of Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King, thereby facilitating the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each local church shall be governed by the following constitution.

This constitution has two objectives:

- To state the purpose of this local church and to define the nature of the relationships of this local church to The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada and the district of which it is an integral part; and,
- To stipulate the enabling instruments, legal procedures and the empowering conditions under which this local church is to carry out its local and worldwide work.

The local church is the fundamental unit of Christian fellowship as exemplified in the Scripture. Faithfulness in multiplying churches around the world that are nourished in the Bible and full of the Holy Spirit is the scriptural pattern for carrying out the redemptive purposes of God and the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior. The statement of our founder A.B. Simpson is as relevant today as when he gave it in his address to General Council in 1912:

"We need to be perfectly adjusted in our loyalty to Christ and at the same time in our responsibility to the special trust which He has committed to our hands God does not want us to be afraid of losing our consecration by being true to The Christian and Missionary Alliance, by knowing how to keep rank and by marching loyally under our own standard.

"Further, we must have the right adjustment of our home and foreign work, and the interdependence each upon the other, the home work as the constituency of the foreign and the foreign as the outlet and complement of the other.

"Our foreign work is not only the fulfillment of the supreme duty of the Church of Christ, but the loftiest inspiration and uplift of our whole Christian life at home.

"God grant that this work may never lose its old simplicity, self-sacrifice and separation, not only from the secular but from the religious world in its spirit and practice. But at the same time, we must keep abreast of the progress of our age and be men and women of today in our message and ministry to our generation."

PURPOSES:

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and persuading men and women to become his disciples and dependable members of His Church.

Certain principles condition the implementation of this purpose:

- The church fosters spiritual maturation through participation of its members in worship and nurturing activities according to their maturity, gifts and abilities in ministering to the needs of the body in her task of evangelization at home and abroad.
- The church observes the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper and complies with the biblical qualifications for selection of church leadership. She considers the basic methods of communicating the gospel to be through worship, preaching, teaching, witnessing and example. She takes discipline and restoration of the offender seriously. She holds that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is essential for holiness of life and effective witness. She affirms the necessity for fervent prayer, faithful service and sacrificial giving as modeled by Christ Himself. She regards social service and good citizenship as outgrowths of the gospel.
- The local church is the visible, organized expression of the body of Christ. She conducts her affairs decently and in order. She organizes herself so that all members can contribute according to their gifts and abilities to the total working of the body. She operates on the assumption that the congregation finds broader meaning and outreach by fulfilling her biblical responsibilities within and beyond the life and witness of the denomination.

The church cultivates fellowship and not sectarianism. Her local and extended family seeks for common spiritual ground on which fellowship with other groups may be enriched and strengthened through an open and transparent relationship.

