

Point of Grace Membership Covenant

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:4-5

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:26-27

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:10-13

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1 John 3:16

Why Membership?

Very near the heart of what it means to follow Christ is loving others. The kind of love to which Jesus calls us is much more than sentiment or even random acts of kindness. Real love involves allowing others to depend on you through good times and bad. It has to do with devotion, interdependence, faithfulness, and giving of oneself to others. This is the only kind of love that builds great relationships and transforms communities. At times, it's not easy, but over time, it makes life extraordinary. "Membership" is a biblical concept described most succinctly in Romans 12 and the value permeates every page of the Bible. In fact, the words "each other" and "one another" occurs over 60 times in the New Testament. Each occurrence is an admonition from the heart of God related to how we care for fellow believers. Jesus promised that this kind of love is what marks his followers and changes the world. It's more important than charisma, eloquence, buildings, money, and brilliant ideas. Real love.

Our desire is for everyone to feel accepted and valued regardless of where one might be on their spiritual journey. Our hope is that many who don't know Christ or are immature in their faith will be part of our fellowship, that they will feel loved by God and his people, and take every opportunity to grow in Him. Even though all are welcome to attend, the standard for membership is high because Jesus' call is extraordinary. We wish to promote and safeguard a devotion to God and his body that approximates the obedience and devotion to which Jesus himself calls us.

Membership is important legally as well as spiritually. When we as believers of Point of Grace become members, we're declaring our commitment to each other and God's work through our body in this community. Like adult children leaving the house, it gives us greater responsibility and opportunity to make decisions together that affect our future, our part in the greater kingdom of God. These decisions relate to our leadership, our vision, and how to use our resources to accomplish our mission. When someone becomes a member, he is saying, "You can count on me." When our body faces important decisions, we need to count on members who love God, love his Church, love his word, and love each other like Christ.

Membership Eligibility and Responsibilities

- Having been "born again" by **believing** God has provided forgiveness and salvation through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus; by **asking** for this grace and forgiveness personally; and by **giving** one's life in faith to God's good will and sanctifying work. This is the faith and repentance called for in scripture (John 3:1-18).
- Having been baptized in water as an act of decisive obedience to Christ or willingness to be baptized at the next available opportunity. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Romans 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13, 14; Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:1-2, 15; 1 John 1:6, 7).
- Acceptance of the "Tenets of Faith" as set forth in Article IV of Point of Grace's bylaws (our complete constitution is available at http://www.pogcc.org/values_beliefs.html). Most of the beliefs are in complete agreement with biblical teaching in all Evangelical churches. None are without very strong biblical support. Some

members in our body may hold different beliefs at some points—especially in regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit described in Acts, the reality of hell, and details related to end times. In regard to hell, members must accept that hell is real and unsaved people face eternal judgment. Regarding eschatology (end times), members must believe that Jesus will return and can return at any given moment and we are to live accordingly. For membership, it's important to have a positive view of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the believers experienced in Acts, believe that God still baptizes in the Holy Spirit today, and to desire everything God deems best for us.

- Having reached at least 18 years of age.
- Having regularly attended services of, and supported, Point of Grace for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to the date of application for membership.
- Agreement to being governed by the bylaws of this assembly, and of the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God, as both may be amended from time to time.

We affirm that to be a member of this spiritual family is to be committed to developing a growing relationship with Jesus and growing relationships with other members of His body. In the context of these relationships, we commit to God and to one another that we will prize and protect the unity of our church family by:

- Acting in love toward other members (Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:2-3, 32, 1 Peter 1:22).
- Refusing to gossip or stir up dissension (Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 6:16, 19; Proverbs 16:28).
- Supporting leaders appropriately and biblically--neither blindly nor negatively (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).
- Resolving conflicts by biblical guidelines given us, his church (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1).

We will participate in the ministry of our church family by:

- Regularly worshiping with the large group on weekends and participating in a formal small group or some other intentional, consistent, welcoming, group of POG members/constituents for the sake of friendship, discipleship and commitment to biblical community (Hebrews 10:25).
- Willingness to contribute generously and regularly to the financial support of the church. We believe the tithe (10% of one's income) is a very healthy practice that God blesses; however, we understand and respect different interpretations of this Old Testament principle. Such giving is a very real expression of worship, concrete indicator of trust, and important means to provide ministry for others. Our church keeps all giving confidential (except for the bookkeeper for purpose of tax receipting). No one else, including leadership, knows who gives what so that a person's giving may be between the individual and God (Malachi 3:8-12; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).
- Developing a servant's heart (Matthew 20:26-28; Galatians 5:13).
- Discovering our gifts and serving the body with them (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12).

We will partner in the mission of our church family by:

- Praying for its health and growth (Philippians 1:4-5; Colossians 1:9-10).
- Inviting others to attend (Luke 14:23).
- Warmly welcoming those who visit (Romans 15:7).
- Sharing Christ as we have opportunity both here and around the world (1 Peter 3:15).

Yes, I agree that these principles are biblical and part of God's design for his Kingdom to advance in the world through local churches like ours. With God's help, I am ready to become a member of Point of Grace Community Church.

Name: _____

Date: _____