

## Joining Calvin PCA

The following declarations and promises are established by the Presbyterian Church in America. All prospective members are asked to assent to each of these five statements as part of the process of joining Calvin PCA.

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

## Inquirer's Class

Unless transferring from another PCA church, we ask all prospective members to take an "Inquirer's Class" taught by our pastor. The class covers a variety of topics relevant to our doctrine, denomination, worship practices, and the Christian life. This class gives potential members an opportunity to get to know our church and learn more on what the Christian life is all about. It is offered on weekends periodically throughout the year. Please talk to our pastor if you are interested in attending.



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### Sundays at Calvin PCA

Sunday School: 9:00 AM  
Morning Worship: 10:15 AM  
Evening Worship: 6:30 PM

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*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself... (Ephesians 5:25).*



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# A Colony of Heaven

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## Membership at Calvin PCA

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Although we don't often think about it, membership in a local church is one of the most important components of our Christian faith, growth, and sanctification. When Jesus calls his people to salvation he calls them into a family, a body, a fellowship... he calls them into his church.

At Calvin PCA, we believe that church membership is both biblical and vital. The church is a colony of heaven and Jesus is her head. To join a local church is to testify to this world that Christ is your King and that you belong to another kingdom entirely. Indeed, there are few practical blessings of the Christian faith greater than membership in Christ's church.



## Welcome to Calvin PCA

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;  
to all who mourn and long for comfort;  
to all who struggle and desire victory;  
to all who sin and need a Savior;  
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;  
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;  
and to whoever will come--  
*this church opens wide her doors and offers her  
welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

### The Church According to Scripture

The biblical images that describe Christ's church are astonishing. Although the local church may seem small and irrelevant today, we do well to remember the magnificent biblical realities that define her true identity under Christ.

- The church is God's temple, the very place that God gathers his people together and speaks to them as his beloved children (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21).
- The church is an outpost of the kingdom of God, a colony of heaven, a foretaste of the eternal New Jerusalem (John 18:36; 1 Pet. 2:9-11).
- The church is the household of God, a family bound together with God as our Father and Christ as our Brother (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17).
- The church is the body of Christ, united under his headship, blessed with a diversity of gifts, representing Christ to the world (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12).
- The church is a pillar of truth, a bulwark of certainty and hope in uncertain times (1 Tim. 3:15).
- And, the church is the bride of Christ, a people betrothed to God, set apart from the world for that great wedding day at the end of the age (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:7, 21:2).

## Why Membership Matters

The question of church membership is one of the most pressing questions of our modern day. Is formal church membership biblical? Is it required? Is it what Jesus intended for his church? Is it not possible, and perhaps even preferable, to have a local fellowship of mutual love and corporate communion without the formality of church membership?

Each of these questions are commonly raised as objections to church membership today. At Calvin PCA we believe that church membership matters. In fact, we believe the membership in a local body of believers is one of the most practical and beneficial aspects of the entire Christian life. Here are a few reasons why:

1. **Throughout the Bible God has always formally distinguished his people from the rest of the world.** In the Old Testament this formal designation took place through circumcision, the Passover, various Levitical laws and feasts, formal covenants ("I will be your God, you will be my people") and censuses. In the New Testament the church continued these formal distinctions, designating new Christians as those "added to their number" (Acts 2:41,47), making declarations of who belonged to the local Christian fellowship and who did not (Mt. 18:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1ff), and speaking frequently of "members" with reference to the local church body (Rom. 12:4ff; 1 Cor. 12:12ff; Eph. 5:30).
2. **The local visible church is a necessary expression of the universal invisible church.** We may speak in lofty terms of our membership in the invisible church, but God's design is always for that membership to be lived out in the context of a local church. This is why

most of the New Testament epistles and Jesus' seven letters of Revelation were written to specific local church bodies, and not merely the invisible church broadly conceived.

3. **Church discipline is impossible without formal membership.** If excommunication is a necessary, though lamentable last step in the process of reclaiming sinners for Christ and leading them to repentance, then the church must first have a clearly designated communicant membership roll. In other words, we must first formally recognize who is "in" before we are able to take someone "out" according to the commands of Scripture (Mt. 18:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1ff).
4. **Our obligation to the "body" requires church membership.** 1 Cor. 12:12-31 speaks frequently of our status as belonging to the body and of our need to serve the body according to our gifts. We can neither serve nor be members of an undefined body.
5. **Membership is necessary for mutual accountability and proper shepherding.** When we join a church we enter into a mutual agreement of accountability and shepherding oversight with her members and officers. The Bible commands Christians to obey their leaders and submit to their authority (Heb. 13:17), and leaders to faithfully shepherd the flock (1 Pet. 5:2). For these commands to be obeyed we must know who our leaders are and who the flock is—and this is done through our faithful practice of formal church membership.
6. **Church membership strengthens our gospel-witness to the world.** When we join a church we are making a public declaration that we belong to the people of God, that we truly trust in Christ as our Lord and Savior, that we are sincerely committed to all of the blessings and requirements the Christian life entails, and that we also love the very same church for which Christ "gave himself up" (Eph. 5:25).

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On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of  
hell shall not prevail against it.  
(Matthew 16:18).

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