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Membership Manual

This Notebook Belongs to:

WHAT MAKES FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH A FAMILY?

FOUR THINGS UNITE US

- Our Salvation (What God has done for us)
- Our Statements (Why we exist as a church)
- Our Strategy (How we fulfill our purpose)
- Our Structure (When & where we fulfill our purpose)

OUTLINE

Session One: Our Salvation

- What it means to be a Christian
- The symbols of salvation: Baptism & Communion

Session Two: Our Statements

- Our purpose statement
- Our core values
- Our faith statement
- Our lifestyle statement

Session Three: Our Strategy

- Our Strategy
- How we will do this

Session Four: Our Structure

- How Faith Community Church is structured
- Our Affiliation
- Membership Covenant
- Benefits to Membership

SESSION ONE
OUR SALVATION

26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26–28 (ESV)

"Jesus said to him, " I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me."

John 14:6 (NASB)

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Everyone wants happiness and joy. Real joy and happiness come from understanding my PURPOSE FOR LIVING.

I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. I was planned for God's PLEASURE.
Revelation 4:11
Psalm 147:11
Psalm 149:4
Acts 17:24-28
2. I was formed for God's FAMILY.
Ephesians 1:5
1 Peter 1:3-4
Hebrews 12:5-6
3. I was created to become like CHRIST.
Romans 8:29-30
Philippians 2:5-8
Genesis 1:26
Colossians 1:9-15
4. I was shaped for SERVING God.
Ephesians 2:8-10
1 Peter 4:10-11
Isaiah 43:20-21
1 Corinthians 12:4-7
5. I was made for a MISSION.
John 17:14-19
Acts 20:24
2 Corinthians 5:17-20
Matthew 28:19-20
6. I was created to ENJOY a personal relationship with God.
John 10:10
1 Timothy 6:17

When we know and love God, and live in harmony with his purposes for our lives, it produces tremendous BENEFITS in our lives.

Romans 8:1 CLEAR CONSCIENCE

Romans 8:28 PURPOSE

Romans 8:6 LIFE & PEACE

Romans 8:26 HELP WITH WEAKNESS

Romans 8:38-39 SECURITY

Romans 8:31 CONFIDENCE

Philippians 4:13 POWER & STRENGTH

Philippians 4:19 GOD'S RESOURCES

John 8:31-36 FREEDOM

This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then are most people really not happy and experiencing the joy that God intends?

II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to BE BOSS and to ignore God's principles for living.

The Bible calls this attitude SIN.

- Isaiah 53:6
- 1 John 1:8
- Isaiah 59:2
- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6:23a
- Proverbs 16:25

III. WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

- John 14:6
- Romans 6:23b
- 1 Timothy 2:5

God has done His part to bring you to himself. To restore our relationship with him, He has taken the initiative. The way is a person (Jesus Christ). He has taken care of our sin problem.

IV. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1. ADMIT that God has not been first place in your life and ask him to forgive your sins.
1 John 1:9
2. BELIEVE that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that he rose again on Easter, and is alive today.
Acts 4:12
Romans 10:9-10
3. ACCEPT God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.
Ephesians 2:8-9
John 1:12

Our relationship with God is restored only by what HE has done!

REPENT AND ASK Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director (LORD) of your life. (Resident and President)
Romans 10:9-10
John 1:12-13
Acts 2:37-41

THE SYMBOLS OF SALVATION

BAPTISM

I. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1. To follow the example set by JESUS.
Mark 1:9-11
2. Because Christ COMMANDS it.
Matthew 28:18-20
3. It demonstrates that I really am a BELIEVER.
Acts 16:27-34; 18:8
John 2:3

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

1. It illustrates Christ's DEATH/BURIAL and resurrection.
1 Corinthians 15:1-6 Romans 6:3-6
Colossians 2:12
2. It illustrates my NEW LIFE as a Christian.
2 Corinthians 5:17
Romans 6:4

Note: Baptism does not make you a believer; it shows that you have already believed. Baptism does not save you; only your faith in Christ does that. It is an outward symbol of an inward change. Ephesians 2:8-9

III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

1. Because JESUS was baptized that way.
Matthew 3:16-17
2. Every baptism in the BIBLE was by immersion.
Acts 8:38-39
3. The word "Baptize" means to IMMERSE.
4. It best symbolizes a BURIAL and RESSURECTION.

IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Everyone who has BELIEVED in Christ.

Acts 2:41

Acts 8:12-13

What about children? Baptism vs. Dedication.

Dedication of infants and children is the symbolic giving of our children back to the Lord, understanding that He has entrusted them to our care so that we might bring them up in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord.

V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as possible!

Acts 2:41, Acts 8:35-38

Can my family be baptized together?

What should I wear?

Will I have to say anything?

What about special needs?

THE LORD'S SUPPER

What is the Lord's Supper? 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

1. It is a SIMPLE ACT. (verse 23)
2. It is a REMINDER. (verse 24)
3. It is a SYMBOL. (verse 25)
4. It is a PROCLAMATION. (verse 26)
5. It is a celebration of our SALVATION. (Matt. 26:28)

Who should take the Lord's Supper?

Only those who are CHRISTIANS. Mark 14:22-26

1 Corinthians 11:29, "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."

How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:27-28

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|-------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| BY... | 1. Self-Examination | 1 Corinthians 11:27 |
| | 2. Confessing my sins | 1 John 1:9 |
| | 3. Recommitment | Romans 12:1 |
| | 4. Restoring relationships | Matthew 5:23-24 |

When and how often should we observe the Lord's Supper?

There are no instructions on particular methods or timetables. The only instruction we have is to observe it until He comes again. Faith Community Church will typically celebrate the Lord's Supper monthly on the last Sunday of the month.

SESSION TWO

FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH'S STATEMENTS

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV)

Our Purpose:

Faith Community Church exists to glorify God by **celebrating** our faith in Jesus Christ, **growing together** in our faith as followers of Jesus Christ, and **sharing** our faith in Jesus Christ.

Celebrating our Faith:

We will lead Christians to bring glory to God and Jesus Christ our Savior through corporate and individual worship as directed by His Holy Spirit. (Hebrews 10:25, Acts 2:40-47, Psalm 100, 1 Corinthians 10:31)

Growing Together in our Faith:

We will gather in large and small groups throughout our community to teach the truth and application of God's Word. In our relationships with one another we will help all believers in Christ mature in their faith. We will make it a practice to pray together, serve together, and grow together for the building up of Christ's body which is the church. We will hold each other accountable and help each member live out their faith in Christ daily. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, Ephesians 4-6; Romans 12)

Sharing our Faith:

We will proclaim the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ by being "on mission" in our community, state, and throughout the world. We will demonstrate Christian love for each other by serving each other and our community. We will train up and send out members of our church family to "plant" new churches throughout our state and around the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; John 20:21, Joshua 24:15, Acts 2:40-47, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

The Biblical Basis For Our Purpose:

The purpose of the church is found in God's Word:

Matthew 22:36-40 - The Great **Commandment**

Matthew 28:19-20 - The Great **Commission**.

Five biblical truths are found in these scriptures:

1. To "Love God with all your heart" is **WORSHIP**.
2. To "Love your neighbor as yourself" is **MINISTRY**.
3. To "Go...make disciples" is **EVANGELISM**.
4. To "Baptize" is to incorporate into **FELLOWSHIP**.
5. To "Teach them all things" is **DISCIPLESHIP**.

Our Statement of Faith

See Constitution and By-Laws

THE FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH WAY

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on what the Bible teaches, we feel very strongly about the following seven practices:

- **The BIBLE as our sole authority.**

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Since God’s word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority, we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is “What does the Bible say?” We practice daily Bible reading, Bible study, and Bible memorization. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

- **AUTONOMY of each local church.**

Colossians 1:18 (ESV)

18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe every local church should be self-governing and independent of any denominational control.

- **PRIESTHOOD of every believer.**

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Revelation 1:6 (ESV)

6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. Every believer is a minister and has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading.

- **TITHING.**

Leviticus 27:30 (ESV)

30 “Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD’s; it is holy to the LORD.

“Bring the **WHOLE TITHE** into the storehouse...” Malachi 3:10

Malachi 3:10 (ESV)

10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

At Faith Community Church we practice tithing for the support of Christ’s Body, the church, as God commands. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the biblical standard of giving.

- **IMMERSION** .

Colossians 2:12 (ESV)

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

We practice baptism by immersion under water-the way Jesus was baptized and the way the Bible commands.

- **SPIRIT-LED** Living.

John 15:4–5 (ESV)

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Galatians 5:16 (ESV)

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God’s power within us. So we seek to practice a daily dependence on God’s Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

- **TELLING** others about Christ.

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

It is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian to share the Good News with those God brings us into contact with. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.

SESSION THREE
FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH'S STRATEGY

Mark 10:45 (ESV) For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Celebrating our Faith – Public Worship and Private Worship:

We will lead Christians to bring glory to God and Jesus Christ our Savior through corporate and individual worship as directed by His Holy Spirit. (Hebrews 10:25, Acts 2:40-47, Psalm 100, 1 Corinthians 10:31)

Growing Together in our Faith – Growing closer to God and each other in discipleship, fellowship, and service:

We will gather in large and small groups throughout our community to teach the truth and application of God's Word. In our relationships with one another we will help all believers in Christ mature in their faith. We will make it a practice to pray together, serve together, and grow together for the building up of Christ's body which is the church. We will hold each other accountable and help each member live out their faith in Christ daily. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, Ephesians 4-6; Romans 12)

Sharing our Faith - EVERY Christian is a missionary, or an imposter:

We will proclaim the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ by being "on mission" in our community, state, and throughout the world. We will demonstrate Christian love for each other by serving each other and our community. We will train up and send out members of our church family to "plant" new churches throughout our state and around the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; John 20:21, Joshua 24:15, Acts 2:40-47, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

SO...HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

- **WORK FROM GOD'S PURPOSES**
Matthew 22:36-40 & 28:19-20 = 5 purposes from the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
- **INVOLVE EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY**
1 Peter 4:10 (ESV) As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...
- **LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND THE LOST**
John 13:34-35 (ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 3:16 (ESV) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- **LET GOD LEAD**

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,...

Ephesians 4:30 (ESV) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (ESV) Do not quench the Spirit.

- **USE MULTIPLE METHODS FOR REACHING THE LOST**

1 Corinthians 9:22–23 (ESV) To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

- **WORK TOWARD MATURITY IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE**

Ephesians 4:13–15 (ESV) ...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

- **KEEP PEOPLE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PROGRAMS**

Genesis 1:27 (ESV) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

- **BE OPEN AND WELCOMING TO GUESTS AND NEWCOMERS**

Matthew 7:12 (ESV) “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

- **BIBLE-BASED TEACHING THAT APPLIES TO REAL LIFE**

James 1:22 (ESV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV) For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- **INTENTIONAL MISSIONS**

Matthew 28:19–20 (ESV) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:8 (ESV) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

2 Corinthians 5:18–20 (ESV) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- **EVALUATE FOR EFFECTIVENESS**

Colossians 3:17 (ESV) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

SESSION FOUR
THE FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH STRUCTURE

1 Corinthians 14:33 (ESV) For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

HOW FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH IS STRUCTURED

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions, but by the Bible.

We believe that the Bible teaches that New Testament churches were and are to be pastor/elder led and congregationally governed. The nature of the church determines its structure.

1. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP.

Acts 2:42

It is essential for a fellowship to have UNITY and HARMONY.

Ephesians 4:3

Romans 14:19

A good structure promotes unity and downplays DIVISIONS and DIFFERENCES.

1 Corinthians 11:17-18

At Faith Community Church we are elder led, congregationally governed, and member served. We will vote on very few items as a church including:

- Annual budget & leadership team of Elders
- Purchase of land or building
- Calling the Pastoral Elder & paid staff
- Changes in the church constitution and bylaws

Why? Voting tends to create DIVISION.

(See Constitution and By-laws)

2. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY.

1 Peter 3:8; Galatians 6:10

Because we are a family, we operate primarily on the basis of

RELATIONSHIPS not RULES.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 ; 1 Timothy 3:1-7

3. THE CHURCH IS A BODY.

1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23; Colossians 1:8, 2:19

Therefore, we function on the basis of SPIRITUAL GIFTS not

 ELECTED OFFICERS . Consequently, we function as teams not committees.

We are a body not a business! We are an organism not an organization!

In an organization “maintenance” becomes the focus. In an organism “ministry” becomes the focus.

At Faith Community Church we will have a simple structure so we can maximize

 MINISTRY and minimize MAINTENANCE .
Ephesians 4:11-12

4. OUR STRUCTURE:

- The People are the MINISTERS .
- The Staff and Elders are the ADMINISTRATORS .

Our Church Covenant

As a member of Faith Community Church, having made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and been scripturally baptized, I do covenant before God as I am enabled by His Holy Spirit to:

 Live my life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area.

 Accept the Word of God as my authority for faith and every day living, and seek to meditate on and apply its truths daily.

 Follow and be equipped for service by the church leadership as they are led by the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the Word of God.

 Maintain the unity of the church by acting in love toward other members, discovering my spiritual gifts and finding my place of service within this local body, and allowing myself to be held accountable to the standards of God’s Word by this local body.

 Participate in the great commission by being involved in missions to my community, my state, my country, and to the ends of the earth.

 Willingly give of my time, talents, and treasure, in obedience to God’s Word, to support the ministries and missionary outreach of this church.

 Unite as soon as possible, should I leave this local body, with some other church where I can carry out the spirit of this covenant and principles of God’s Word.

OUR AFFILIATION

Faith Community Church is an autonomous church that guides itself in its own affairs. Believing that we can accomplish more in cooperation with the larger body of Christ than we can on our own, we have chosen to affiliate with the following organizations:

Baptist Churches of New England

A fellowship of 370 churches and church plants that cover the six New England states, the Baptist Churches of New England was formed in 1967 for the purpose of reaching New England for Christ. The vast majority of the member churches are new church plants begun by the Southern Baptist Convention. The Baptist Churches of New England receives a significant amount of its financial support from member churches, Lifeway Christian Resources, and the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. www.BCNE.net

Southern Baptist Convention

A fellowship of over 50,000 churches worldwide and in all 50 states, the Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in America. The Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1848 and supports over 6,000 missionaries around the world. This fellowship is funded by a unique and effective mission system called the Cooperative Program, in which every member church voluntarily gives to support the missions program. The organization maintains six seminaries, two mission boards, and a variety of related organizations that help it serve its member church effectively. www.sbc.net

For almost 170 years, Southern Baptists have sought to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere. The Southern Baptist Convention was formed with a Gospel vision. Its founding charter identifies its singular focus: ...for the purpose of eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the Baptist denomination of Christians, for the propagation of the Gospel... The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to be a network of more than 50,000 cooperating churches and church-type missions banded together to make an impact of God's Kingdom. While no two Southern Baptist churches are alike, there are certain commonalities that bind Southern Baptists together, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, or locale. This fellowship is funded by a unique and very effective mission system called the Cooperative Program, in which every member church voluntarily gives to support the missions program. The organization maintains six seminaries, two mission boards and a variety of related organizations that help it serve its member churches effectively. www.sbc.net

WHY PARTNER WITH THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION?

- It is the largest association of Christian churches in America. One out of every ten churches in America is associated with the Southern Baptist Convention with over 15.9 million members.
- It is the most diverse association of churches. The SBC includes every race, nationality and ethnic group. Each Sunday, services are held in over 80 languages in the United States.
- It is one of the fastest growing groups. The Southern Baptist Convention baptizes over 1,000 new Christians a day in the United States and on the average, begins five new churches each day.
- The stated goal of the Convention is to give everyone in the world a chance to hear the gospel. The members of Faith Community Church are excited to be a part of a group with that kind of vision.

WHY NOT JUST AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH?

We are an independent church! Every Southern Baptist Church is independent. There is no denominational control or hierarchy as there are in many denominations. Each church is self-governed and determines its own affairs. For example, every Southern Baptist church:

- Chooses its pastor.
- Owns its buildings and property.
- Determines how it will financially support its own mission and ministries.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF AFFILIATING WITH THE SBC?

- It allows for us to identify with other Christians around the world who are known for their commitment to Biblical teachings. We have no man-made creed. The Bible is our sole authority.
- It allows our church to participate in the largest missionary organization in the world. Through the SBC Cooperative Program, we will help support over 10,000 missionaries in North America and around the world.