

# Welcome to Communion Chapel's Membership Class

We are glad you have chosen to find out more about Communion Chapel! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain the beliefs of Communion Chapel and our purpose.

## **The Basics for This Class**

*"...You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Ephesians 2:19 (LB)*

## **Key Truths:**

1. The church is Family.
2. God expects you to be a Member of a church family.

## **The Goal of This Class**

...That I will commit myself to Christ and to the Communion Chapel Family.

# Our Story

**Communion Chapel began** as a home fellowship group of eleven people on May 5, 1989. That summer the founding pastor, Alex Mandes, and his wife, Julie, led the Bible study on Wednesday nights in a community center near Woodlawn Lake, which is an Hispanic urban area near downtown San Antonio. The outreach church was geared toward the predominantly Hispanic community of the area. Later, in 1989, the church was incorporated as Woodlawn Bible Church and became a member of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), and the first service was held on Easter Sunday 1990.

The initial facility was located in the Northwest Shopping Center on Fredricksburg Rd. and served as our home until the winter of 1994. We had grown to about 70 members and, at that time, we also changed our name to Communion Chapel EFCA. By this time, it was apparent that the Lord was forming a multi-cultural church that was not only unique to San Antonio but was unique within the EFCA denomination itself.

In the year 2000, we once again experienced the need to move. We purchased our current facility at 5719 Mobud St. and had a growing congregation of approximately 160 members on any given Sunday. We continue to strive to minister to the people that the Lord brings to us as well as outreach to the community around us. We have a strong commitment to missions, both locally and internationally. This commitment is realized through financial support of various missionaries, Communion Chapel missions programs to the inner city, international outreaches, and numerous individual members serving on short term mission trips around the world.

**Today**, Communion Chapel is a growing evangelical church that ministers to a diverse body of believers. We are ideally located in north central San Antonio at the crossroads of two major thoroughfares: on the Northwest quadrant Loop 410 and Bandera Road. The church's facility is a converted storefront located in a busy industrial/business area. Our heart is to minister to those God may bring our way and to whom God leads us. While not a Hispanic church, we are currently about 65% Hispanic and 30% Anglo, which is close to the population breakdown of San Antonio. We feel we are poised in the perfect city to reach this multicultural population for Christ.

In October 2006, Pastor Alex accepted a position with the EFCA national team to direct Hispanic ministries. On April 22, 2007 Communion Chapel voted Michael Pratt to become their second senior pastor. Currently, the church is enjoying growth in several areas of ministry. Average Sunday attendance is around 75, including children and adults. Sunday mornings include a middle school through adult Sunday school, and elementary Sunday school program. There are weekly ministries also for fellowship groups, youth, AWANA, men's gatherings, and women's Bible study.

# Session One

## Our Salvation

*“For now we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and we who have been baptized into union with Christ are enveloped in Him. We are no longer Jews or Gentiles, or slaves or free men, or even merely men or women, but we are all the same – we are Christians; we are one in Jesus Christ.”* Galatians 3:26-28 (LB)

### What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

#### Why Am I Here?

**A. God made me to love me!**

God says, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love!”* Jeremiah 31:3

*“Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ...because of His love. God had already decided that through Jesus Christ He would make us His children – this was God’s pleasure and purpose.”* Ephesians 1:4-5 (GN)

**B. We were created for a personal relationship with God and to all of the rest of God’s creation! This makes us special!**

*“So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said...live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.”* Genesis 1:27-28 (LB)

*“God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”* I Timothy 6:17

*Jesus said, “I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness!”* John 10:10

**C. When we know and love God, and live in harmony with His purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our lives.**

Like What?

**Clear Conscience**

Romans 8:1

**Purpose**

Romans 8:28

**Power & Strength**

Philippians 4:13

**Life & Peace**

Romans 8:6

**Confidence**

Romans 8:31

**Fulfillment**

Philippians 4:19

**Help with Weakness**

Romans 8:26

**Security**

Romans 8:39

**Freedom**

John 8:32, 36

#### What’s the problem?

The Bible calls it *sin*.

*“All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way.”*

Isaiah 53:6

*“If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth.”*

*I John 1:8*

### **What does sin do to our relationship with God?**

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

*“The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God.”* *Isaiah 59:2 (LB)*

*“All have sinned and fall short of God’s glorious ideal.”* *Romans 3:23*

When our relationship with God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives – marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

### **What’s the solution?**

Jesus Christ said, *“I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!”* *John 14:6*

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person!

Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem!!!

*“The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* *Romans 6:23*

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

*“God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us.”* *Romans 5:8*

*“God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.”* *I Timothy 2:5*

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

### **What does God want me to do?**

#### **D. Recognize that you are a sinner.**

*“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* *Romans 3:23*

#### **E. Believe that Jesus died for your sins at the cross and that His sacrifice is sufficient to give you eternal life.**

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* *Romans 5:8*

*“For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”* *Romans 6:10*

**F. God's free gift of salvation – don't try to earn it.**

*"For it is by grace you are saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2: 8-9*

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

**G. The moment you trust Jesus for eternal life, the Holy Spirit dwells in you.**

*"To all who **receive** Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who **believe** this are reborn! – not a physical rebirth...but from the will of God!" John 1:12-13*

If you have believed the above, now would be a good time to pray this simple prayer of thanks to God:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for helping me realize that I am a sinner and that your Son, Jesus Christ, paid in full for my sins at the cross. From this moment on, I know that I am your child and that I have eternal life. Please help me know more about You, and may I grow to be a mature Christian. In Jesus name, Amen!"

### **The Importance of Being Baptized**

#### **Why should I be baptized?**

**A. To follow the examples set by Christ**

*"At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river." Mark 1:9*

**B. Because Christ commands it**

*"Jesus said, 'Go then, to all people everywhere and **make them my disciples**, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and **then teach them** to obey everything I have commanded you.'" Matthew 28:19-20*

**C. It is an outward demonstration of an inward belief as a believer.**

*"...many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized." Acts 18:8*  
*"We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands." I John 2:3*

#### **What is the meaning of baptism?**

**A. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.**

*"Christ died for our sins...He was buried...and He rose again." I Corin. 15:3-4*  
*"For when you are baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ." Colossians 2:12*

**B. It illustrates my new life as a Christian.**

*"When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!" II Corinthians 5:17*

*“By our baptism then, we were **buried** with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was **raised** from the dead...so also **we may live a new life!**”*  
Romans 6:4

Baptism doesn't make you a believer – it shows that you already believe. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart that you are His!

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith**...it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”*  
Ephesians 2:8-9

### **Why be baptized by immersion?**

Because Jesus was baptized that way

*“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.”* Matthew 3:16

Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

(example) *“...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...”* Acts 8:38-39

The Greek word “baptizo” means “to immerse or dip under water”.

It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection!

### **Who should be baptized?**

...Every person who has believed in Christ.

*“Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized...”* Acts 2:41

*“Simon himself believed and was baptized.”* Acts 8:13

*“But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News... and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”* Acts 8:12

At Communion Chapel, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

At Communion Chapel, we believe that all believers should be baptized by immersion. Those baptized as believers anywhere will be accepted at Communion Chapel. Those not yet baptized will be granted membership if they commit to be baptized as soon as reasonably possible!

### **The Meaning of the Lord's Supper**

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But, He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are Baptism and The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

#### **I. What is The Lord's Supper? (I Corinthians 11:23-26)**

##### **A. It is a simple act.**

*“The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, **took bread**...” (vs. 23)*

**B. It is a reminder.**

*“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; eat it **in remembrance** of me.’” (vs. 24)*

**C. It is a symbol.**

*“In the same way, He took the cup, saying, ‘**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.’” (vs. 25)*

**D. It is a statement of faith.**

*“For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, **you proclaim the Lord’s death** until He comes back.” (vs. 26)*

**II. Who should take The Lord’s Supper?**

...Only those who are already believers. (Mark 14:22-26)

*“For anyone who eats and drinks **without recognizing the body of the Lord** eats and drinks judgment upon himself.” II Corinthians 11:29*

**III. How do I prepare myself for The Lord’s Supper?**

*“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord **in an unworthy manner** will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. **A person ought to examine himself before he eats** of the bread and drinks of the cup.” I Corinthians 11:27-28*

**By...**

**A. Self-Examination**

I Corinthians 11:27

**B. Confessing My Sins**

I John 1:9

**C. Recommitment**

Romans 12:1

**D. Restoring Relationships**

Matthew 5:23-24

**IV. When and how often should we observe The Lord’s Supper?**

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord’s Supper. He instituted it on a Thursday night. We will have The Lord’s Supper almost every Sunday.

# Session Two

## The Communion Chapel Statements

*“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”* I Corinthians 1:10 (LB)

### **Our Mission Statement: Why We Exist As A Church**

The mission of our church is to be a blessing to the world by bringing people to the Lord and to offer them a loving fellowship that will equip them to serve others and sanctify the Lord in their hearts.

**We believe Abraham was greatly blessed, and we, who follow in his faith, as spiritual children, are meant to be a great blessing to the world!**

*“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.”* Genesis 12:2

*“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”* Acts 20:35

*“And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;”* I Corinthians 4:12

*“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”* Galatians 3:8-9

*“...not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”* I Peter 3:9

We assert that God’s plan for reaching the world is by actively being a light to the world and letting God’s Spirit flow through us (being a blessing) as we obey Him and balance ourselves in obeying Him in all that He has called us to do!

We believe that there are five areas in which we must be faithful in our ministry at Communion Chapel in order for God to bless us and that that blessing may flow to the rest of the world.

Communion Chapel exists to bless:

**Bring people to the Lord (Evangelism – Matthew 28:19-20)**

**Love each other (Fellowship – Hebrews 10:24)**

**Equip the Body to Minister (Discipleship – Ephesians 4:11-12)**

**Serve in and with the Body (Ministry – Galatians 6:10)**

**Sanctify God in Worship (Worship – I Peter 3:15, Psalm 100)**

It is in this blessing that the church will grow and fulfill God’s purpose in the world!

Let’s look closer at the five reasons we exist.



# I. Bring people to the Lord - Evangelize

## A. Evangelism

*“His intent was that **through the church**, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...”* Ephesians 3:10

*“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But who can ask Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells him?”* Romans 10:13-14 (LB)

## B. Why our church must never stop growing

### 1. Because God loves people.

*“The Lord...is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but wants everyone to come to repentance.”* II Peter 3:9; II Cor. 5:14; Luke 15:3-10; Matt. 9:12-13

### 2. Because God commands us to reach out.

*“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, **so that My House will be full.**”* Luke 14:23 (LB)

*“...you will be my witnesses...”* Acts 1:8

### 3. Because God commands us to grow.

*“Under Christ’s control, the whole Body is nourished...and grows as **God wants it to grow.**”* Colossians 2:19 (GN)

*“(Jesus) I will build my church.”* Matthew 16:18

# II. We exist to love each other. – Fellowship

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* John 13:34-35

# III. We exist to equip God’s people. – Discipleship

*“Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ **and go on to maturity...**”* Heb 6:1

*“**Grow in grace** and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* II Peter 3:18

*“(God has given) ...some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all...become mature...like Christ.”* Ephesians 4:11-13

*“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...”* I Peter 3:15

#### **IV. We exist to serve in and with the church – Ministry**

*“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples – **that you have love for one another.**”*

*John 13:35*

*I John 3:16-17; Matthew 25:34-40; Hebrews 13:16; Romans 12:13*

The heartbeat of Communion Chapel is our small groups (CARE Groups). Every member needs to be a part of one.

*“Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities...and there are different kinds of **service to God (ministry)**...All of you together form the one Body of Christ and **each of you is a separate and necessary part of it.**”*

*I Corinthians 12:4-5, 27 (LB)*

At Communion Chapel...

- Every member is a minister.
- Every task is important.

#### **V. We exist to sanctify God in Worship.**

*“Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”*

*Matthew 4:10*

*“...The Father seeks worshippers...and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”*

*John 4:23-24*

### **Our Statement of Faith: *What We Believe***

**See the appendix. You will find our Statement of Faith on the first page of our Constitution.**

# Our Lifestyle Statement: *What We Practice*

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.

## **I. Bible as Our Sole Authority**

*“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to do what is right.”*  
II Timothy 3:16

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.

## **II. Autonomy of Each Local Church**

*“Christ is the head of His Body, the church. He is the source of the Body’s life...”*  
Colossians 1:18 (GN)

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 from any denominational control.

## **III. Priesthood of Every Believer**

*“Christ loves us, and by His death He has freed us from our sins and made us a **kingdom of priests** to serve God...”*  
Revelation 1:6 (GN)

*“You are...**the King’s priests**...God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God.”*  
I Peter 2:9 (GN)

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full-time” Christian service regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading.

## **IV. Purposed Giving/Tithing**

*“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”*

*“A tithe of everything you produce belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.”*  
Leviticus 26:30

*“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”*  
I Corinthians 16:1-2

At Communion Chapel, we expect our members to be purposed in their giving for the support of Christ’s body, the church, as God teaches. We recognize that giving 10% is a numerical goal from the example of the Old Testament. We believe that regular purposed giving will help members to grow in spiritual maturity.

## **V. Immersion**

*“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ...”* *Colossians 2:12 (GN)*

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

## **VI. Spirit-led Living**

*(Jesus said) “I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing.”* *John 15:5*

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. (Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 5:18)

## **VII. Telling Others About Christ**

*“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”* *1 Peter 3:15*

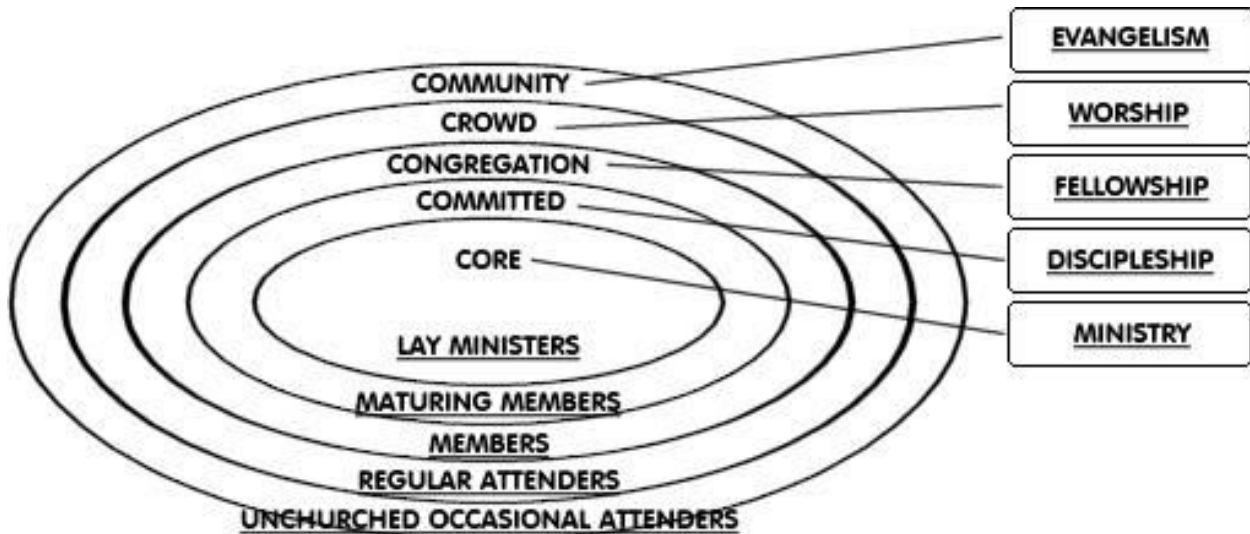
It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those with whom God brings us into contact. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.

# Session Three

## The Communion Chapel Strategy

(Paul said) "I have been all things to all sorts of people that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do all of this for the sake of the Good News." I Corinthians 9:22-23 (Ph)

### Five Circles of Commitment



There are five areas where we must commit ourselves for ministry at Communion Chapel in order for God to bless us and in order for the blessing to flow to the rest of the world.

- A. 1<sup>st</sup> Circle - Commitment to the Community**  
Ministry to unchurched, occasional attendees (Evangelism - Bring people to the Lord)
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle – Commitment to Crowds**  
Ministry to regular attendees (Worship – Sanctify God in Worship)
- C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle – Commitment to the Congregation**  
Ministry to members (Fellowship – Love Each Other)
- D. 4<sup>th</sup> Circle – Commitment to the Committed**  
Ministry to maturing members (Discipleship – Equip the Body to Minister)
- E. 5<sup>th</sup> Circle – Commitment to the Core**  
Ministry to the Lay Leaders (Serve – Serve in and with the Body)  
Communion Chapel’s objective is to keep moving people toward the center by encouraging personal spiritual commitments.  
Specifically, we call our people to four basic commitments.

# Session Four

## The Communion Chapel Structure

*“For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace...Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”*  
*I Corinthians 14:33, 40*

### I. How Our Church is Structured

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions. The nature of the church determines its structure.

#### A. The Church is a Fellowship.

*“They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship...”*  
*Acts 2:42 (Ph)*

A top priority in a fellowship is harmony and unity.

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*  
*Ephesians 4:3*

*“So let us concentrate on the things that make for harmony and the growth of our fellowship together.”*  
*Romans 14:19 (Ph)*

ANY attitude that causes disunity is sin.

*Colossians 3:15, I Corinthians 1:10, II Timothy 2:14, Proverbs 17:14,  
II Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 1:27, Colossians 2:2, Philippians 4:2, I Peter  
3:8,  
I Corinthians 14:33, John 13:34-35, II Timothy 2:23, Romans 15:5-6,  
Romans 12:16-18, Colossians 3:13-14, Psalm 133:1*

#### B. The Church is a Family.

*“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other,  
loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.”*  
*I Peter 3:8 (LB)*  
*Galatians 6:10, Hebrews 2:10-12, I Peter 4:17*

So we operate on the basis of relationship not rules.

*“Don’t reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a father.  
Treat the young men as brothers, and the older women as mothers. Treat the  
younger women as sisters...”*  
*I Timothy 5:1-2 (Ph)*

*“(A pastor) must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him  
with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his family, how  
can he take care of God’s church?”*  
*I Timothy 3:4-5*

#### C. The Church is a Body.

*I Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23, 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 2:19*

We are a body – not a business! We are an organism – not an organization!  
Therefore, we function on the basis of spiritual gifts, not elected offices.

*“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. We each have different gifts according to the grace given us.”* Romans 12:4-6

In an organization, “maintenance” becomes the focus; but, in an organism, “ministry” is the focus. At Communion Chapel, we have a simple structure so that we can maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.

*“God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”* Ephesians 4:11-12

## II. Our Structure

### A. Equippers/Administrators & Ministers

1. **The Pastors are the “equippers/administrators”.**
2. **The People are the “ministers”.**

Currently, there are many different ministries in our church that were begun and are operated by members.

### B. The Church is a Flock.

(Jesus’ favorite description of the church.)

*John 10:1-30, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 25:33*

Therefore, it is cared for and led by shepherds.

*“Jesus asked Simon Peter, ‘Do you really love me?’ ‘Yes Lord,’ said Peter. ‘Then **take care** of my sheep.’”* John 21:16-17

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the *same* church leaders:

- “Poimen”
- “Presbuteros”
- “Episcopos”

*“To the **elders** I say...**Be shepherds** of God’s flock, serving as **overseers**...”* I Pet. 5:1-2

*“Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived he said to them...Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be pastors of the church of God...”* Acts 20:17-18, 28

*See also Titus 1:5-7, I Timothy 5:17*

## III. What It Means to Be a Member

The difference between “attendees” and “members” can be summed up in one word: commitment. At Communion Chapel, we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons.

### A. A Biblical Reason: Christ is committed to the Church.

*“...Christ loved the church, and he gave his life for it.”* Ephesians 5:25

**B. A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society.**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers”. Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion”. It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

**C. A Practical Reason: It defines who can be counted on.**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

**D. A Personal Reason: It produces spiritual growth.**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

What is expected of me as a member? At Communion Chapel, we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

**IV. The Communion Chapel Membership Covenant**

“Having received Christ as my Savior and been baptized, and being baptized, and being in agreement with Communion Chapel’s statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Communion Chapel church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

**A. I will protect the unity of my church**

- ...by acting in love toward other members.
- ...by refusing to gossip.
- ...by following the leaders.

*“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.”* Romans 15:19 (Ph)

*“Live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.”* Romans 15:5 (LB)

*“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.”* I Peter 1:22 (GN)

*“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.”* Ephesians 4:29

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

**B. I will share the responsibility of my church**

- ...by praying for its growth.
- ...by inviting the unchurched to attend.
- ...by warmly welcoming those who visit.

*“To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.”* I Thessalonians 1:2



*“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.”* Luke 14:23 (LB)

*“So warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.”* Romans 15:7 (LB)

**C. I will serve the ministry of my church**

- ...by discovering my gifts and talents.
- ...by being equipped to serve by my pastors.
- ...by developing a servant’s heart.

*“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...”*  
I Peter 4:10 (Ph)

*“God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”* Ephesians 4:11-12

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant...”* Philippians 2:3-4, 7

**D. I will support the testimony of my church**

- ...by attending faithfully.
- ...by living godly life.
- ...by giving regularly.

*“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another.”* Hebrews 10:25

*“But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.”* Philippians 1:27 (Ph)

*“Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering.”*  
I Corinthians

16:2

*“A tenth of all you produce is the Lord’s, and it is holy.”* Leviticus 27:30

**E. I will submit to church discipline.**

Members of the church are expected to conduct their lives in accordance with Biblical standards of holiness as they grow to become more like Christ. When a member knowingly ignores the direct commands and prohibitions of Scripture, he shall be dealt with according to the principles of restoration and discipline found in such passages as:

*“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”* Matthew 18:15-17

*“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be*

*tempted.”*

*Galatians 6:1*

## **V. Our Affiliation**

We are associated with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of some 1,250 autonomous churches united by a mutual commitment to serve our Lord Jesus Christ with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God. We are committed to cooperate with one another in ministry and fellowship as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission which Christ has entrusted to His Church. The growing ministry of the EFCA currently extends to some 40 countries of the world.

The term “Evangelical” refers to our commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel and to the authority of Scriptures as being inerrant in the original autographs and the only safe and sufficient guide to faith and practice.

The term “Free” refers to our form of church government as being congregational. Evangelical Free Churches depend upon the active participation of lay people in the decisions and directions of the local church.

**What makes the Evangelical Free Church of America distinct?** “In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ.”  
--Chrysostom

1. The Evangelical Free Church of America is inclusive, not exclusive. Membership requires commitment to sound doctrine as expressed in our Statement of Faith. However, a person is not excluded from membership because he or she does not agree on every fine point of doctrine. Within the Evangelical Free Church, there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.
2. The Evangelical Free Church of America is evangelical but not separatist. We have deep convictions based on the authority of God's Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. We also do not make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness; but, we are not separatists.
3. The Evangelical Free Church of America is ecumenical in spirit though not in structure. We believe in the spiritual unity of the church, though not necessarily in structural union. We join with other Christians in other denominations of like precious faith in common goals and ministries to accomplish the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. But, we believe that there is strength in diversity and that it is important to preserve our distinctness.
4. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in liberty with responsibility and accountability. We believe in Christian liberty, but freedom always has its limitations. Responsible Christians do not abuse freedom.
5. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational dimensions of Christianity. We believe the Scriptures must be applied to our individual lives with warmth of heart, warmth of message, and warmth of concern. We believe it is essential to have solid biblical content in our doctrinal understanding of faith.
6. The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs. The Evangelical Free Church is committed to a congregational form of government. We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.

## How to Prepare a Personal Testimony

Any subject matter can be presented more effectively by careful organization. A carefully prepared testimony, empowered by the Holy Spirit, can be of immediate and effective use in nearly every witnessing situation. It should be our desire to present Christ in such a clear, attractive, yet simple way, that those who hear will not only want to know Him, but they will also know “how” to know Him personally.

### “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of a 3-Minute Testimony

#### **Do:**

1. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5-6).
2. Follow a three-point outline: “My Life with Christ”.
  - a. Life before knowing Christ.
  - b. How you came to know Christ (be specific).
  - c. Life after you received Christ (changes He has made – what He means to you now).
3. Emphasize point “c” above if you became a Christian as a small child.
4. Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion. Include relevant, thought-provoking, secular facts and experiences.
5. Write in such a way that others will feel associated with you in past and present experiences.
6. Give enough details to arouse interest.
7. Use at least one, but at the most two, Scripture verses.
8. Edit carefully, and rewrite as necessary before your final draft.

#### **Don’t:**

1. Use Christian jargon. Words such as “saved, convicted, converted, born again,” and “sin” do not communicate truth to the average non-Christian. Though these words and phrases are precious to us, they are often misunderstood and consequently ridiculed by non-Christians.
2. Be too wordy, beat around the bush, or emphasize how bad you used to be.
3. Speak in glittering generalities. Avoid words like “wonderful”, “glorious,” etc.
4. Mention church denominations, especially in a derogatory way.
5. Speak critically or negatively about any other individual or group.
6. Give the impression that the Christian life is a “bed of roses.”

### **When You are Asked to Share Your Testimony, Be Sure to:**

1. Share it with loving enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).
2. Speak loudly and clearly in a natural, relaxed tone of voice (avoid ministerial “twang”).
3. Avoid mannerisms when you speak such as: rubbing your nose, jingling coins in your pocket, swaying, clearing your throat, and using “uh’s” and “ah’s”.
4. Avoid arguing and other high pressure methods of getting a “decision” for Christ. Remember men are “born of the Spirit,” not through the persuasiveness or logic of men, though God may use both.
5. Avoid preaching at people. Present your testimony, not a “preachimony”.
6. Smile often! Ask the Lord to give you a happy, radiant face.
7. Memorize your testimony and practice it until it becomes natural.

# Testimony Work Sheet

Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way:

How I received Christ:

After I received Christ, these changes took place:

**Pertinent or favorite verse by which I might close:**

# We'd Like to Get to Know You!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(city, state, zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: M / F    Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_    Date of Birth   /  /  

Circle one:      single      married      widowed      divorced

My occupation is: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

I have the following expertise:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I have not been active in a church for:      1 yr      5 yrs      10 yrs      longer

I have been active in the following churches in the past:

<u>Name of Church</u>	<u>Yrs Involved</u>	<u>Position(s) of Service</u>
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

How would you describe your relationship to Christ? (check one)

- I'm not sure what I believe.
- New Christian
- Committed Christian
- I've been a Christian for a while, but I need to grow closer.

-continued on other side-

### Information on Family Members

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth    /   /   

Does your spouse attend Communion Chapel? (circle one)    yes / no

Children's first & last names	Date of Birth	Lives w/you?	Attends church here?
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no
_____	<u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>	yes / no	yes / no

Are there any special needs that you or one of your family members has that would be helpful to know?

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### III. The C.O.M.M.U.N.I.O.N. Strategy

#### 9 Principles that Make Our Church Unique

- C Climate of Acceptance.** *“Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”* Romans 15:7
- O Oriented for Growth, not for Control.** *“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established – that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”* Rom. 1:11-12
- M Members Equipped to Minister.** *“And He Himself gave some...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”* Ephesians 4:11-12
- M Mindful of the Needs of the Seekers.** *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.”* Romans 15:1-2
- U Unselfish Leadership.** *“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.”* Matthew 20:27
- N Need Oriented Preaching.** *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed;...”* Luke 4:18
- I Incorporating People into Fellowship Groups.** *“...but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* Hebrews 3:13
- O Organized by Purpose Principles.** *“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.”* Philippians 3:14-15
- N Next Generation Worship.** *“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth.”* Psalm 96:1

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