



**PHOENIX  
BIBLE  
CHURCH**

Covenant Membership

# Covenant Membership

## WHY COVENANT MEMBERSHIP?

The most common description of the church in the New Testament is a "body" (Eph 4:4-16 as one example). And a body has "members" who are connected and contributing in essential, but different ways.

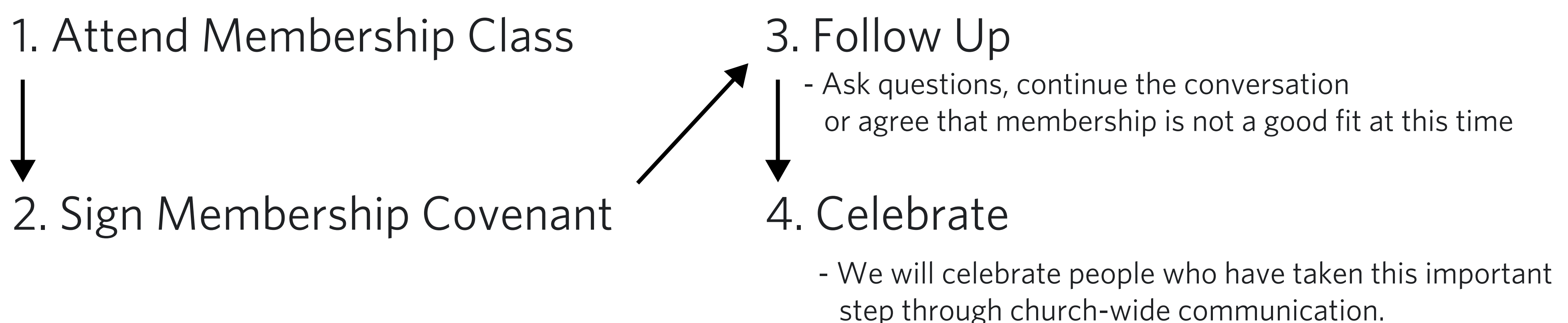
- Membership provides you a clear path and people to help you intentionally and effectively grow as a follower of Jesus.
- Membership provides your leaders a better opportunity to get to know, care for, and equip you in ways that are relevant to your daily life.
- Membership provides a vivid picture of the beauty of the diverse, dedicated church, wrapped around the glory of Jesus.

## THE MEANING OF "COVENANT"

Over and over again throughout scripture, God makes covenants (sacred promises) with his people. In the process, he calls them to a pattern of life and worship that is best for them and most glorifying to him. In addition to these divine covenants, there are various human covenants found in the bible, where people make different commitments to one another. These biblical realities represent the heart behind Covenant Membership at Phoenix Bible Church, and why we've intentionally adopted the language of "Covenant Membership" instead of just "Membership".

"Membership", in our current culture, brings to mind ideas of privileges and rights that members receive by pay certain dues. "Covenant Membership" communicates active participation, intentionality and mutual commitment within the context of a sacred relationship between God and all those who choose it.

## WHAT'S THE PROCESS?



# Our Story

## OUR STORY

### 2014

Phoenix Bible Church is planted in October 2014 with a mission to see "Love Move" in the city of Phoenix, Arizona. Following the dissolution of the Phoenix campus of Seattle-based Mars Hill Church, a group of determined people, led by Pastor Tim Birdwell, consider the possibility of planting a new church "from the ashes". Phoenix Bible Church is established and begins evening gatherings in downtown Phoenix at Grace Lutheran Church.

### 2015-2016

Phoenix Bible Church begins gathering at ASU Preparatory Academy in downtown Phoenix on Sunday mornings. A deep connection is formed with people in the downtown community, specifically, in the Garfield Neighborhood.

### 2017-2018

Given one month to find a new gathering location, God provides an opportunity for Phoenix Bible Church to begin gathering on the campus of Phoenix Christian Preparatory School in the Historic First Methodist Church chapel. A partnership begins with Phoenix Christian as Phoenix Bible Church focuses ministerial efforts on the people of Central Phoenix.

### 2019-2022

Phoenix Bible Church celebrates five years and adds a second full-time staff member. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, livestream and production infrastructure is updated to care for a socially distanced church. The partnership with Phoenix Christian progresses with mutual facility investments and multiple campus enhancements. Following the addition of a second Sunday service, attendance grows to a high of 400 people on Easter Sunday 2022. The church's second homegrown missionary is commissioned to South America, and the staff team expands from two to seven. Fall attendance outpaces the capacity of the meeting spaces on the Phoenix Christian campus. In early 2022, a conversation begins with the leadership of Bethany Bible Church and Phoenix Bible Church surrounding the exploration of a union as one church.

# Our Story

## **2022 (AN EXPLORATION OF UNIFICATION)**

### **February - April**

Initial meetings begin with Phoenix Bible Church's leadership team and Bethany Bible Church's leadership team regarding the potential of the two congregations unifying as one church. Pastor Tim Birdwell shares at a Vision Night in March about the early conversations about the possibility of a union with Bethany Bible Church. Bethany's leadership team shares with the congregation that a exclusive phase of exploration has begun to examine the potential of a union with Phoenix Bible Church.

### **May - July**

Pastor Tim Birdwell preaches at Bethany's Sunday service in May. As the union discussions progress, both congregations hold evenings to pray and ask questions of the respective leadership teams. Pastor A.C. Caswell preaches at Bethany's Sunday service in June. In July, Pastor Tim Birdwell, Kyle McLain, and PBC Worship lead an entire Bethany Sunday service.

### **August - September**

Leadership teams begin meeting every Monday night to work through key factors of the potential unified church and regularly share affirmed details with both congregations. Both congregations come together to serve alongside each other in August. The college and young adults ministries of both congregations plan a joint mission trip together.

### **October - December**

The leadership teams of both churches unanimously vote to approve the union of both churches as Phoenix Bible Church. A celebratory night of music and prayer is announced along with the official unification timeline. Christmas Eve service is scheduled as one unified service on the 7th Avenue campus.

## **2023 (BETTER TOGETHER FOR PHOENIX)**

Phoenix Bible Church and Bethany Bible Church celebrated a unification Sunday on January 22, 2023 on the 7th Avenue campus located at 6060 N 7th Avenue. Our story now continues forward as one unified Phoenix Bible Church.

# Mission, Marks and Methods

## OVERVIEW

- The primary purpose, identity, and existence of Phoenix Bible Church is rooted in Jesus and the Word of God. In short, we are a Christ-centered, bible-based church.
- Phoenix Bible Church is non-denominational. We are also connected to a church network called "Converge", which focuses on starting and strengthening churches worldwide.

## MISSION

*To help people love Jesus, live like Jesus, and lead others to Jesus - "Love Moves"*

- We love Jesus because we deeply know and believe his person and work. We not only know and believe Jesus, but commit to a lifetime of following Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We live like Jesus as we learn how to turn from sin and walk in His righteousness by the power of the Spirit. We aren't merely concerned with the way to the Kingdom, but the way of the Kingdom (e.g. the 8 beatitudes, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, personal and social righteousness)
- We lead others to Jesus as we invite others to love and live like Jesus. We realize there are spiritually bankrupt people without Jesus all around us. This realization, compels us to passionately share and show the love of Jesus in our homes, neighborhoods, cities, and nations.

## OUR MARKS

*These are the marks of a disciple carrying out our mission:*

- Gospel Identity
- Spirit Reliance
- Renewing Rest
- Biblical Framework
- Generous Stewardship
- Deep Connection
- Missional Engagement

## OUR METHODS

*These are the methods by which we carry out our mission:*

- The Power of Gathered Praise and Proclamation (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- The Beauty of Diverse Gospel Community (Acts 2:42-47, Rev 7:14)
- The Urgency of Gospel Mission (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

## Our Leadership

- Phoenix Bible Church is led by both Elders and Staff as they carry out servant-hearted, sacrificial leadership. The Lead Pastor guides the primary vision, and along with the Executive Pastor and Staff, leads the weekly ministry of the church. The Elders provide care, oversight, protection, and accountability.
- Elder candidates submit themselves to a thorough process designed to assess and equip in 3 key areas informed by Scripture (1 Tim 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5):
  - 1. Who is an Elder? (Character)
  - 2. What does an Elder do? (Competency)
  - 3. How does the Elder Team function? (Culture)

## Mission, Marks and Methods

### **OUR MARKS (EXPANDED)**

*The marks of a disciple of Jesus who is loving Jesus, living like Jesus, and leading others to Jesus.*

#### **Gospel Identity**

That you would know, believe, and live the good news of Jesus Christ.

#### **Biblical Framework**

That you would immerse in the Scriptures, so you can engage the world.

#### **Deep Connection**

That you would belong to and participate in grace-filled, truth saturated community.

#### **Spirit Reliance**

That your decisions and directions in life would be shaped by a humble dependance on the Holy Spirit.

#### **Generous Stewardship**

That you would utilize the resources God has given you to give consistently, compassionately, and sacrificially.

#### **Missional Engagement**

That you would actively join God's culture-renewing, disciple-making work through both word and deed.

#### **Renewing Rest**

That you would set aside intentional time weekly for sabbath rest and worship.

# Mission, Marks and Methods

## **OUR METHODS (EXPANDED)**

*The methods by which we carry out our mission to love Jesus, live like Jesus, and lead others to Jesus.*

- **The Power of Gathered Praise and Proclamation (Hebrews 10:24-25)**

- Sunday gatherings
- PBC Kids
- PBC Youth
- Relationships
- Church Online (Livestream)
- Starting Point
- Connect Nights
- Baptisms

- **The Beauty of Diverse Gospel Community (Acts 2:42-47, Rev 7:14)**

- Join a Team
- Join a Community Group
- Host a Community Group
- Equip Nights
- Studies
- Missions
- Share Your Faith
- Generous Giving
- Corporate Prayer
- Covenant Membership

- **The Urgency of Gospel Mission (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)**

- Lead a Team
- Lead a Community Group
- Lead in Next Gen (Kids, Youth)
- Discipleship Groups
- Lead a Study
- Lead a Mission
- Lead Prayer Initiative
- Lead in Internship
- Lead on Staff
- Lead as Pastor/Elder

# Statement of Faith

## **A NOTE ABOUT OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH:**

*There are a lot of theological words and concepts that may be new to you or seem complex. We understand that and would love to see membership as a “starting point for conversation and learning together”, instead of expecting you to arrive with complete understanding.*

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## **THE BIBLE**

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being verbally inspired and completely inerrant in the original writings, and of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

*(Matt 5:17-18; Luke 24:27, 44; John 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21)*

## **GOD**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*(Matt 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 6:27; Acts 5:3-4; Heb 1:8; 2 Cor 13:14)*

## **CHRIST**

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.

*(Matthew 1:16, 20-25; Luke 2:40, 52; Luke 7:48; John 11:35; Philippians 2:5-8)*

## **MAN**

We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word and deed.

*(Genesis 1:26; Genesis 2:17; Genesis 6:5; Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 8:6-7; Ephesians 2:1-3)*

# **Statement of Faith**

## **SALVATION**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.

*(John 1:29; John 3:16; Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21)*

## **RESURRECTION & ASCENSION**

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into Heaven, and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate.

*(John 20:20; Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1)*

## **SECURITY**

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God, a relationship in which they are eternally secure.

*(John 1:12; John 10:28-30; Acts 16:31; Romans 8:28-39; Titus 3:5; Jude 24)*

## **CHRIST'S RETURN**

We believe in "that blessed hope," the personal and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*(John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-6).*

## **AFTERLIFE**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

*(Luke 16:19-26; John 5:25-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15)*

# **Beliefs and Cultural Issues**

## **A NOTE ABOUT OUR BELIEFS AND CULTURAL ISSUES:**

*There seem to be a few key areas in our culture today that are highly discussed in regard to what an individual or church believes. Instead of being indirect or unclear, we hope to lovingly communicate exactly where we stand in regard to a few of these important issues. As with everything, our reference point is the Bible and we humbly, but boldly lean on God's words, not ours.*

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## **ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN**

The Bible is clear that both men and women are completely equal in dignity and value, made in the image of God. They both enjoy access to God by faith in Jesus and are encouraged to serve Jesus and be developed to their full potential in the mission of God.

*(Genesis 1:27, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 3:26-29, Proverbs 31, Titus 2).*

We believe women can use their skills and gifts to serve in a variety of ways including different roles on staff and in ministry leadership. Regarding the specific role of church elder, we believe the consistent pattern throughout the New Testament is that the distinct role of "elder, overseer, or pastor" in the church is given to qualified men. These men are called to carry out servant-hearted, sacrificial leadership in the church through: shepherding, prayer, teaching sound doctrine, and equipping the saints for ministry.

*(1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, & 1 Peter 5).*

## **MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY & GENDER**

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning that is sanctioned by God and that is the joining of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as outlined in the Bible. It is our conviction that the Bible instructs sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman within the covenant of marriage, and the expression of sexual intimacy outside of this covenant is sinful and not according with God's good and gracious design. While we hold to this understanding of Scripture, we do not believe that sexual sin is "the sin", but rather "a sin" and God's love and forgiveness is available to all who repent.

*(Genesis 1:27-31, 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-33; Matthew 19:4-6; Matthew 5:28, Romans 1:24-27, 1 Timothy 1:10, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20)*

# **Beliefs and Cultural Issues**

## **MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY & GENDER (CONTINUED)**

Male and female distinctions are woven into the origins of creation and the image of God. Jesus affirms these distinctions as a part of God's design in creation. While Jesus acknowledges those who are “born eunuchs” (which could be similar to intersex conditions we see today), He simultaneously affirms the male/female binary as normative for creation.

*(Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:4-12, Deuteronomy 22:5)*

## **CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE**

From the story of Exodus to the Law and Prophets, the Old Testament has a wealth of examples regarding God's heart to bring freedom to the oppressed and care to the vulnerable. This example continues in the New Testament across the life and ministry of Jesus, as He heals the sick, cares for the poor, feeds the hungry, and ministers to the suffering.

The church, both informed by Scripture and compelled by the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to care for the poor, orphan, widow, sojourner, and anyone who is vulnerable among us.

*(Lev 23:22, Zechariah 7:9–10, The Gospel Accounts, Luke 4:18-21, Luke 10:25-37)*

## **SANCTITY OF LIFE**

All human life bears the image of God and has inherent dignity, value, and worth. Therefore, all human life should be protected and respected. This includes life in the womb, people with special needs, and people with any type of illness or injury. Phoenix Bible Church opposes abortion, discrimination, bullying or any other threat to the preciousness of life. In addition, we seek to proactively care for pregnant mothers, orphans, and children with special needs.

*(Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:15-16, Isaiah 49:1, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17)*

# **Beliefs and Cultural Issues**

## **RACISM**

Racism is the sin of partiality manifest in hearts and societies on the basis of skin color or ethnicity. God created one human race made in his image that contains a plurality of ethnicities designed to reflect the unity, equality, and distinctiveness within the Trinity. When humanity rebelled against God, the earliest consequences were division between God and humanity and between one another. Phoenix Bible Church desires to practice for eternity by reflecting a multi-ethnic family wrapped around the glory of Christ. We rejoice that the gospel of Jesus provides the resources to not only heal humanity's division from God, but also from one another.

*(Ephesians 2:14–16, Romans 10:12, Galatians 2:11–13, Revelation 7:9)*

## **POLITICS**

While we love our country and are beyond grateful for the costly freedoms we experience, we are ultimately Christian over American, Republican, or Democrat. As a church, we will pray for our leaders and respect governing authority, but will not proclaim a political agenda or stand with a political party. Instead we will proclaim Jesus and stand with the word of God on all issues. We are to submit to worldly authorities and at times may partner with them to affect change consistent with kingdom ethics, but should never idolize leaders, policies, or expect the government to do the work of the church.

*(Romans 13:1--8, 1 Peter 2:13--15, Matthew 6:33)*

# Open-Handed Issues

*The following are issues that we consider “open-handed,” meaning that while individuals within our leadership and church may have convictions about them, they are secondary issues and freedom should be given within our church to hold different beliefs as long as the beliefs remain within the framework of biblical Christianity.*

## **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

While we believe “spiritual gifts” to be an open--handed issue, we do not believe that the gift of tongues is required as evidence of salvation.

*(1 Corinthians 12:1-11)*

## **END TIMES**

While we believe “end times” to be an open-handed issue, we do not believe that Jesus has already returned. We anticipate his future coming.

*(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)*

## **CREATION**

While we believe “creation” to be an open--handed issue, we do not believe in atheistic or naturalistic evolution.

*(Genesis 1:1-2:25)*

## **BAPTISM**

While we believe baptism is a public profession of faith in Jesus made by believers, we are willing to discuss covenant membership with individuals who have a strong stance from Scripture regarding infant baptism that applies to their own baptism.

*(Matthew 28:18-20)*

## **Leader Covenant**

*Leadership at Phoenix Bible Church is rooted in service and expressed in love to Jesus and His church. Elders and leaders are responsible to steward God's people, in the areas of care, direction, doctrine, and service. This takes place through various ministry environments and the primary responsibilities listed below.*

*By God's grace and through the power, help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, church leadership of Phoenix Bible Church covenants the following:*

To lovingly care for you and seek your growth in Christ  
(*Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12*).

To provide teaching and counsel from the Scriptures and that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word.  
(*Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18, Acts 20: 27-28*)

To help you in times of need as your needs are made known.  
(*Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 2:14- 17*)

That your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures  
(*1 Tim. 3:1-13 & 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4*)

To pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick.  
(*James 5:14*)

To exercise restorative church discipline with gentleness and love, when a member is in persistent, unrepentant sin.  
(*Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal.6:1*)

To seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit.  
(*Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5*)

To set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church membership.  
(*1 Co. 11; Philip. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12*)

# Member Covenant

*Covenant Members contribute to the life and health of Phoenix Bible Church in critical and invaluable ways. Covenant Members are responsible to give voice and input in order to partner with the elders in their leadership of the church. In addition, as followers of Jesus, each has been given gifts by the Holy Spirit with the responsibility to pursue active ministry for the accomplishment of the mission of the church and the care of its members. This takes place through various ministry environments and the primary marks listed below.*

*By God's grace and through the power, help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, members of Phoenix Bible Church covenant to pursue and model the 7 Marks of a disciple:*

## **Gospel Identity**

That you would know, believe, and live the good news of Jesus Christ.

## **Biblical Framework**

That you would immerse in the Scriptures, so you can engage the world.

## **Deep Connection**

That you would belong to and participate in grace-filled, truth saturated community.

## **Spirit Reliance**

That your decisions and directions in life would be shaped by a humble dependence on the Holy Spirit.

## **Generous Stewardship**

That you would utilize the resources God has given you to give consistently, compassionately, and sacrificially.

## **Missional Engagement**

That you would actively join God's culture-renewing, disciple-making work through both word and deed.

## **Renewing Rest**

That you would set aside intentional time weekly for sabbath rest and worship.

*By signing this covenant, members affirm the mission and beliefs of Phoenix Bible Church and seek to partner toward that end.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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