

What questions are asked in this public affirmation of faith?

Two questions are asked:

1. Do you by God's grace believe that Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord?, and
2. Will you with the help of the Holy Spirit faithfully participate in the life and ministry of this church, supporting its teaching, leadership, and vision?

We hope this pamphlet has been helpful to you. If you have any other questions, please contact us. We are here to help you find your place in Bethel CRC.

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BETHEL CHURCH: SHINING LIGHT, SHOWING LOVE

It isn't really about
coming to church...
it's about coming
to life.



EXPLORING...



Children's Ministries

**Church Family
& Small Groups**

Community Involvement

Membership

Worship

Youth Ministries

WORSHIP GATHERING:

Sundays 10 am

Supervised nursery & Sunday School available

OFFICE HOURS:

Most weekdays from 9 am to 3 pm



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EXPLORING... Membership



Thank you for your interest in exploring what membership means at Bethel CRC. We'd like to share with you the WHY, the WHAT, and the HOW of membership.

THE WHY OF MEMBERSHIP

Romans 12:5 says that "In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to the others." This is one of the beautiful pictures of the church that we find in the Bible – the church is the body of Christ. Jesus is the Head, the church is the body, and everyone in the church is a different body part. Being a Christian isn't just about believing in Jesus, it's also about belonging to the body of Christ, His church.

For many the word "membership" has an institutional feel about, that it's just about being on an organization's list. We, however, see being a member of a local church as being a part of the body of Christ, connected to the life of the body and contributing to the vitality of the body. A member of the church is someone who is actively and intimately related first to the Head of the body, Jesus Christ, and then to the rest of the body parts, the other members of the church.

Here are some reasons why we believe that being a member of a local Christian church is important:

- It identifies you as a genuine believer, by your open public commitment.
- It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage you.
- It places you under the spiritual protection of godly leaders.
- It gives a place to discover your gifts and use them in ministry.
- It helps you join forces and pool resources with more people, making a greater impact in our community and world.

THE WHAT OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Christ's church is first and foremost about a personal commitment to Jesus as your Saviour and Lord. That commitment flows in gratitude that is also lived out in community with biblical responsibilities in being part of the body of Christ, the church. These are ways to grow as a member of the body to experience and share the vitality of the full and abundant life Jesus came to give.

Therefore, we have the following expectations of members:

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| WORSHIP | Participate faithfully in worship services. |
| MINISTRY | Discover your God-given gifts and use them in ministry both within and outside Bethel CRC. |
| STEWARDSHIP | Contribute faithfully to the ministry budget. |
| SUPPORT | Promote the unity of Bethel CRC and support the leadership, mission, and vision of the church. |
| SMALL GROUPS | We encourage participation according to interest and ability, ideally in an ongoing Small Group. |

THE HOW OF MEMBERSHIP

How do you become a member of Bethel? If you're a new believer, you are ordinarily asked to first attend the Alpha course and then our membership orientation. Alpha is a 10-week introduction to Christian faith and life, typically offered in the fall.

Those who join from other Christian churches are asked to attend our membership orientation, typically offered on a weekday evening for three weeks in October and/or February. Alternate arrangements are made when this may not be realistic or timely. In these sessions we explore who we are, what we believe, and how we do ministry. Active members of other Christian Reformed churches who transfer their membership to Bethel have a one session orientation and complete a membership transfer covenant as part of the transfer process.

Those who have never been an active full member of a church do two sessions beyond the membership orientation, in preparation for profession of faith. This includes those who are baptized members of Bethel.

After the appropriate sessions, and at your request, one or two elders will arrange a visit to informally discuss your personal faith and your place in the life of Bethel. After discerning together that this is the right move for you, ordinarily your public profession of faith (for baptized members and new believers), or your public affirmation of faith (for those joining from other Christian churches) will be scheduled for a worship service.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What if I'm still not ready to become a member of Bethel CRC?

That's fine. We welcome you to continue to participate at the level you are able. Many people are regular attenders for some time before they take the formal step of membership. Of course we would love to see you become a member as soon as possible, but we will always respect your pace and place. We do want you to be aware that some ministry roles and leadership positions require membership so as to formally come under the spiritual authority and accountability of the church's leadership. Also only members over 18 year of age can vote at congregational meetings.

What if I disagree with something that is taught or practiced at Bethel CRC?

First of all, discuss it with us. Maybe it's something the Lord would have us change. If it's a matter of personal preference or possibly biblical interpretation, then we may have to agree to disagree. We do, however, ask that those who choose to join us will promote the unity of Bethel, by supporting our teaching, leadership, vision, and mission.

Why do you ask members from other Christian churches to take the membership orientation?

First, this is so that the new person can come to know and affirm as his or her own the vision, teaching, ministry, and membership guidelines of Bethel. Secondly, it is so that we can get to know the new person, assessing their needs and gifts for ministry.

Why do you ask members from other Christian churches to publicly affirm their faith?

First, we believe it's important for Christians to publicly assure a new church community that they love the Lord and are willing to serve Him with them. Secondly, this allows for the public celebration of a new member's arrival into the new church body.