



“Join The Movement”

The Sanctuary Covenant Membership

Overview

- > Introduction to The Movement
- > ***Focus:*** Our Cause
- > ***Formation:*** Our Call
- > ***Foundation:*** Our Confession
- > ***Function:*** Our Community
- > ***Fulfillment:*** Our Commitment
- > ***Family:*** Our Covenant
- > How To Become a Covenant Member
- > ***Statement of Faith***—Marriage and Human Sexuality



Introduction *To The Movement*

Scripture says: "...Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." -Romans 12:1-2

As Christians, we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:9), called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Here at *The Sanctuary Fellowship*, we believe we should hold members in high regard; we expect them to lead the culture as missionaries of the gospel. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this region, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).

Romans 12:3-8 states: "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."

The Sanctuary is really a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders, pastors, and leadership are covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, to provide counsel, aid, and prayer, while teaching and guiding them. 1 Peter 1:4-8 says it this way: "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..."

So Why A Covenant?

A covenant is: “An agreement that brings about a relationship.”

Our covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ezek 20:44; 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos. 2:19-20; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:13). *The Sanctuary Fellowship* Covenant includes a statement of faith, a statement of biblical doctrine, the obligations of The Sanctuary to its members, and the obligations of members to The Sanctuary. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25).

Application

All of our members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to this Doctrinal and Religious statement on Marriage and Human Sexuality to qualify for involvement with the ministry. This is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that does otherwise will impede and burden our integrity and religious mission.

Authority

The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle and conduct. The Sanctuary Fellowship, Pastors, and Elders are charged with the ministerial responsibility of Biblical interpretation and promulgating religious policy. The Sanctuary Fellowship, Pastors, and Elders will determine life application as well as final matters relating to church theology, philosophy, Christian practice, faith, divine truth, morality, and theological and doctrinal resolutions.

*Ephesians 5:25-27
*Ephesians 5:31
*Colossians 3:5
*1 Thessalonians 4:3
*Hebrews 13:4
*1 Timothy 1:8-10
*Jude 1:7
*Revelation 19:7-9
*Revelation 21:2

Pastoral Care

*Matthew 11:28-30
*Romans 3:23
*Ephesians 2:1-10
*1 Corinthians 10:13
*Hebrews 2:17-18
*Hebrews 4:14-16



Focus: *Our Cause*

***Celibacy** – The Sanctuary Fellowship believes that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within The Sanctuary Fellowship. (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18, 21-24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-8, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 7:1-8, Matthew 19:12, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Romans 12:10, 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Holy Scripture

Marriage and Human Sexuality

*Genesis 1:26-28

*Genesis 2:18-24

*Genesis 19:5-10

*Exodus 20:14

*Leviticus 18:7-23

*Leviticus 20:10-21

*Deuteronomy 5:18

*Judges 19:22-24

*Matthew 5:27-28

*Matthew 15:19

*Mark 10:5-9

*Romans 1:26-27

*1 Corinthians 6:9-13

*1 Corinthians 5:21

*Galatians 5:19

*Ephesians 4:17-19

***Sexual Immorality** – The Sanctuary Fellowship believes that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful. Consequently, The Sanctuary Fellowship members must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage. (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:7-23, Leviticus 20:10-21, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 15:19, Matthew 5:27-28, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5)

***Sexual Identity** – The Sanctuary Fellowship believes that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, The Sanctuary Fellowship members must affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex – including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct. (Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

***Sexual Orientation** – The Sanctuary Fellowship believes that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother and child. Consequently, The Sanctuary Fellowship members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered. (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-9, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelations 19:7-9, Revelation 21:2)

Purpose: *The Sanctuary Fellowship* is a movement of people who are passionate to glorify God in everything and enjoy God with everyone.

Process: Experiencing the life of glorifying God in everything and enjoying God with everyone entails exhibiting eight Scriptural characteristics/descriptions of a true follower of Jesus. These descriptions, although not exhaustive, are broad enough in scope to be encompassing and inclusive of what it means to live as though Jesus is your life, not your religion. *The Sanctuary Fellowship* exists to equip you to live this life. These eight characteristics are at the heart of everything we do and say here. We will go through all eight of these characteristics/descriptions in our “Fulfillment” section of this material.

Passion: Every church has something they are most passionate about. They usually call these “core values,” meaning the pillars that identify the nature of what the community of believers is all about. We are passionate about Jesus, and these values help govern all we do.

Our General Values

1. Everything is for the glory of God. Everything!
2. The Bible is true and should be taught from its historical context.
3. God is more important than anyone or anything.
4. Jesus is salvation. He is the gospel.
5. Jesus’ death on the cross and His irrefutable resurrection are the most significant acts of God in restoring all things.
6. The gospel is both the word and work of God to share in every nation.
7. We are to be “Jesus” to people. We should live like Him in the power of His Spirit.

8. The Church is God's agent of change and restoration of all things through the gospel of Christ.

9. We, the Church, are to help people as we understand that we all have issues that need help.

10. We recognize that in our world the oppressed have been overlooked. We believe the Church has a responsibility to know and love them.

11. We believe that religion does not help people, but by loving God and loving people we do help them.

12. People matter more than programs.

13. Authenticity is treasured. No pretense. No pretending. (redundancy intended)

14. Church is people, not a building.

15. Christianity is a movement, not an institution.

16. Worship is how you live, not just an isolated act on Sunday.

17. We believe you should join a church because of what they believe and how they express that in helping people.

18. We believe that by living an exciting life of faith, we can have a thrilling journey with God.

19. Loving, serving, and giving are some of the most simply significant expressions of Jesus, and we should be about them everyday.

20. We believe God is at work through the Sanctuary.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

MARRIAGE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

Preamble

*We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide (2Timothy 3:16-17). Since the Holy Bible does not speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

*We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace these unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth.

Religious Beliefs

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

***Marriage** – The Sanctuary Fellowship defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother and child. (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33)



Statement of Faith
Marriage and Human Sexuality

Our Distinct Values

We want to glorify God in everything and enjoy God with everyone. Within this scope of purpose are a few distinctions that set The Sanctuary apart in its purpose from many other churches. These distinctions may sound subtle, but they are the very fiber of our core values. As we glorify God, they are the focus of our cause to carry out our purpose.

1) Gospel Saturated

The gospel is what we live in, by, and through. It is the message we live and speak. In salvation Jesus has immersed us in his forgiveness, power, and love. Everything we are about involves promoting Him, the gospel, to the world by saying what He said and doing what He did. When we understand that we live out of our identity in Christ, produced and sustained by the gospel, we will live in the power of Him. We are passionate about going into our culture and saying what He said and doing what He did.

2) Transformissional People

Transformissional means that you are changed in order that you can be on mission. In other words, Jesus changes your life each day so he can use you to live missionally (or as a missionary) everywhere you go and in everything you do! Christians are not a people who merely attend “services” in a building, but rather people who are transformed into missionaries. EVERY follower of Jesus is a missionary. It is people becoming and living as a missionary in their neighborhood, at work, school, play, and everywhere. This cause, to live and speak the gospel in all of life, means every single person in the church must live on mission.

Thus, The Sanctuary is a group of missionaries united by a common relationship with Jesus Christ. We want to share him with Fort Bend County and beyond by serving and loving the community through preaching the gospel, by saying what He said, and doing what He did.

3) Community Obsessed

We value authenticity and the depth of relationship that community brings. This is not easy and requires caring for one another, carrying each other’s burdens, sharing our possessions, praying and confessing our sins to each other, and suffering and celebrating together. In community, we get together to “be Jesus” to others so that they can be transformed by His power. The way of

Jesus cannot be lived alone. We believe that to be healthy followers of Jesus we must love God devotedly and also love each other deeply. This cannot be done without living in community with one another. Therefore, we commit to actively participate in a Life Group and ministry teams so that we can be a part of living missionally in our neighborhoods with our church family.

4) *Compassion Mongers*

Christ didn't just teach love, He is love. You see His love manifest to all, but in a peculiar way to the oppressed and marginalized in our world. So, we believe the Church should be the primary agency of caring for the helpless (orphans, widows), homeless, hungry, and hurting people of our world. This should be done globally (yes global and local together)! We will go out of our way to help the hurting and to love those labeled as unlovely.

5) *Scripture Addicts*

The Bible is what dictates every action in our moment. It is our guide for all life and practice.

3. Participate in community: All members of The Sanctuary are expected to participate in community. We call these Life Groups and we want you in one. To learn how to join a group, visit the website (www.thesanctuaryfellowship.com). Under “Ministries” there is a tab marked “Life Groups”.

4. Learn what we believe: Prospective members are required to take the Covenant Membership Class and answer a few basic evaluation questions in order to establish clarity.

5. Affirm what we believe: | During the Next Steps Class, you'll be asked to complete a questionnaire about your relationship with Jesus (based on the growth goals of a follower of Jesus). At this time you'll also be asked to pledge to giving regularly to the Sanctuary, identify the particular community group you are involved in or are going to be involved in, and sign the covenant member covenant.

6. Welcome! You have joined the movement! After you have been through the process for membership, a staff leader will officially affirm your status as a member of The Sanctuary Fellowship. We will celebrate your active participation in the great work God is accomplishing in our midst is both expected and celebrated (Acts 17:26, Eph 2:10)! Your membership will be shared with the entire church family at a Sunday gathering at which time a Covenant Member Certificate is given to each new member.



Formation: Our Call

Celebration

God is to be worshiped and celebrated as the One who is restoring all things in Christ. Thus, for those who have experienced this restoration, all of life is worship. We celebrate the divine in the daily by pursuing lives of hope, gratitude, and generosity. We believe that festivals and feasts are good. We invite others to feast and festival with us in celebration of the redemption that God brings to all things through Jesus.

RESPONSE: We covenant to live WORSHIPFULLY, celebrating God's redemption of all things.

Giving

The people of God in the Old Covenant gave a minimum of ten percent of the "first fruits" of their labor. God has required even more giving to and from the church in the New Covenant. It is difficult to do all that God has set before us if everyone does not give. Ten percent would be a great place to start as there is precedent for that in ages past. God desires cheerful generosity in our giving to His work through the Church. Therefore, we believe that every person who is "in" with us must give with a cheerful heart and with generosity.

RESPONSE: We covenant to GENEROUSLY give at least 10% of our financial resources as an offering to God through The Sanctuary Fellowship.

How to Become a Covenant Member of The Sanctuary

The Membership Process:

1. Be with us on Sundays as often as possible for worship, celebration, Bible Study, and ministry. Support and encourage other believers by joining us for corporate worship each week.
2. Start by serving: Volunteer for a missional project, be a part of a weekly ministry team, or serve on a Sunday ministry team.

RESPONSE: We covenant to go on this journey with devoted *INTENT*, never desiring to hold anyone back, but always pressing forward with everyone.

Community

We value authenticity and the depth of relationship that community brings. This is not easy and requires caring for one another, carrying each other's burdens, sharing our possessions, praying and confessing our sins to each other, and suffering and celebrating together. In community, we go together to "be Jesus" to others so that they can be transformed by His power. The way of Jesus cannot be lived alone. Therefore, we commit to actively participate in a community group so that we can be a part of living missionally in our neighborhood with our church family.

RESPONSE: We covenant to go *INTIMATELY* with each other and passionately participate in a community group, because we were made to live in community.

Serving

Life is a mission trip. We believe that the church is God's ongoing presence in the world. Led by the Spirit of God, we are passionate about relieving suffering and fighting injustice, joining the God of the oppressed in living out the transforming message of the resurrected Jesus. Jesus calls His church to be a compelling force for good in the world, and we believe that the church is at its best when it serves, sacrifices, and loves, and cares about the things God cares about. We were created to live for something larger than ourselves.

RESPONSE: We covenant to go *INFLUENTIALLY* because Jesus calls us to serve the world.

Founding Pastor, Thomas Young

After graduation from Oklahoma Baptist University and 3 years of Seminary, Thomas Young began serving in pastoral leadership at three different Baptist churches as a Student Pastor. For 11 years, he traveled in this capacity all over the world telling the message of Jesus. God had been dealing with Thomas about starting a New Testament church, rooted in the gospel, that would "say what Jesus said and do what Jesus did" in the culture of Ft. Bend County, Texas. With no money, no sponsoring group or church, and a handful of believers, The Sanctuary was launched on February 11, 2007. It began meeting in the Cine-mark Theaters in Richmond/Rosenberg at the Brazos Town Center. On October 25, 2009, the Sanctuary made another amazing move and step of faith. They moved to Saratartia Middle School to be more centrally and strategically located to better reach Ft. Bend County.

Today, The Sanctuary Fellowship grows as it becomes a vibrant expression of God's Word and love to Ft. Bend County and the world. The church is in constant pursuit of equipping people to be a community of believers that are passionate about glorifying God in everything and enjoying God with everyone.

The Acts 29 Network of Churches (acts29network.org)

In early 2008, The Sanctuary joined the *Acts 29 Network* of churches. The Network was founded by Pastor Mark Driscoll, founder of *Mars Hill Church* in Seattle, Washington. Mars Hill is one of the most influential churches in the world. The network comprises churches that are committed to teaching and starting gospel-centered, missional churches all around the world.

Keep reading and discover the detailed description of the *Acts 29 Network* and an outline of the beliefs and core values of its churches. The Sanctuary is truly a part of an international movement.

Acts 29 is a community of Christ followers that are first Christians, second Evangelicals, third Missional, and fourth Reformed. The more lengthy answer is included below and intentionally omits some finer points of doctrine and secondary issues, as we allow the elders in its local churches to operate according to their convictions on these matters.

First, we are Christians, which distinguishes us from other world religions and cults. Therefore, we adhere to both the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

Second, we are Evangelicals and in agreement with the doctrinal statement of the National Association of Evangelicals:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired,
the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally
existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy
Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ,
in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles,
in His vicarious and atoning death through His
shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His
ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in
His personal return in power and glory.
We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful
people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is
absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy
Spirit, by whose indwelling, the Christian is
enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of
both the saved and the lost; they that are saved
unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost
unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, we are Missional:

We believe that our local churches must be
faithful to the content of unchanging Biblical
doctrine. (Jude 3).

Truth

We affirm the Bible is the truthful account of historic orthodox Christian faith and we see ourselves in a long line of generations taking part in the endless conversation between God and people. The Bible is the Word of God to us. It is our sole authority, and we must both individually and corporately learn its teachings and embody all it says. To know where we're going, we have to know where we've been.

RESPONSE: We covenant to look with *INTENSITY*
at God's character, His creation, and the
Scriptures to learn the roots of our faith so we can
go onward, and that the message of the gospel
of Jesus be passed on to the next generation.

Embrace

We embrace salvation as a gift of God and deem that baptism is the confession of the reality that Jesus has given us His saving grace. We cling to the cross of Christ as the only lasting solution to the separation between God and man as well as between man and mankind. God is bringing completeness to all things, and we embrace that this happens only through Jesus. We embrace the change that God is continually birthing in our lives. We embrace Him with the awareness that a changed life is now inevitable.

RESPONSE: We covenant to look *INSIDE* our
hearts, and embrace the change in our lives
and in this body of believers.

Journey

We are sure that God has called us to be HIS people. He is taking us somewhere. We will inspect every step of the way to be sure we are walking in faith, humility, and change. We choose not to try to predict anything. We will live confidently knowing that God is ours and we are HIS. The Christian life is a mission trip journey. We believe that God has chosen people from every tribe and nation, so we accept people as God accepts them.

(Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).

2. Answer: Fill out the eight characteristics questionnaire (turn in with the Covenant Card)

3. Repeat the Covenant response aloud as led by the class leader.

4. Sign up and commit to a place of service.

Joining Together

The Life: Glorify God in everything, and enjoy God with everyone.

The Lifestyle: Experiencing this life means exhibiting the eight characteristics of a Christ follower. We are here to equip you to do just that.

Covenant

At The Sanctuary we have all committed to a covenant. We ask that you know and join in this covenant with us as well:

Jesus is the hope of the world. This hope is actualized and revealed to the world by the Church. To join it is to join a cause, a movement, a revolution. It's the movement of God's people collectively who are awakened with the grace and love of God. We want to awaken this love in as many people, places, and ways as possible. And we want to celebrate the measurable and vivid changes that God's grace and love brings. So, look honestly at this and consider what is required. You are not joining an institution but an active, living, and ever-changing movement that will require what God requires: *YOUR LIFE* exchanged for *HIS LIFE*.

We believe that our local churches must be faithful to the continually changing context of the culture(s) in which they minister. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

We believe that our mission is to bring people into church, so that they can be trained to go out into their culture as effective missionaries.

Fourth, we are Reformed:

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth.

We believe that God created man and woman in a state of sinless perfection with particular dignity as His image bearers on the earth.

We believe that our first parents sinned against God and that everyone since is a sinner by nature and choice. Sin has totally affected all of creation including marring human image and likeness, so that all of our being is stained by sin (e.g. reasoning, desires, and emotions).

We believe that because all people have sinned and separated themselves from the Holy God, He is obligated to save no one from the just deserved punishments of hell. We also believe that God in His unparalleled love and mercy has chosen to elect some people for salvation.

We believe that the salvation of the elect was predestined by God in eternity past.

We believe that the salvation of the elect was accomplished by the sinless life, substitutionary atoning death, and literal physical resurrection of Jesus Christ in place of His people for their sins.

We believe that the salvation of the elect, by God's grace alone, shows forth in the ongoing repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ that leads to good works.

We believe that God's saving grace is ultimately irresistible and that God does soften even the hardest heart and save the worst of sinners according to His will.

We believe that the gospel should be passionately and urgently proclaimed to all people, so that all who believe may be saved through the preaching of God's Word by the power of God's Spirit.

We believe that true Christians, born again of God's Spirit, will be kept by God throughout their life, as evidenced by personal transformation that includes an ever-growing love of God the Father through God the Son by God the Spirit, love of brothers and sisters in the church, and love of lost neighbors in the culture.

We believe that God is Lord over all of life and that there is nothing that can separate God's children from His gift of salvation.

We believe that the worship of God is the end for which people were created, and that abiding joy is only to be found by delighting in God through all of life, including hardship and death, which is gain.

What do Acts 29 churches not believe?

Because Acts 29 is often associated with other movements, we frequently get questions about emerging theological controversies. To help clarify our beliefs, we believe it may also be helpful to declare what we do not believe. In stating what we are not, we do not seek to attack those who disagree with us, but rather distinguish ourselves so that pastors considering joining our network are aware of who we are, as well as who we are not.

We are not liberals who embrace culture without discernment and compromise the distinctives of the gospel, but rather Christians who believe the

My obligation

To the Sanctuary Fellowship as a Covenant Member

1. Affirm who we are and what we believe.

I have read and understood The Sanctuary doctrinal statement and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7-17)

I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation with a life that glorifies Jesus. (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts. 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3).

I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Proverbs 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary. (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9 12:7-21; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

I covenant to submit to the discipline of God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise.



Function: *Our Covenant*

truths of the Bible are eternal and therefore fitting for every time, place, and people.

We are not fundamentalists who retreat from cultural involvement and transformation, but rather missionaries, faithful both to the content of Scripture and context of ministry.

We are not isolationists. We seek to partner with like-minded Christians from various churches, denominations and organizations in planting church-planting churches.

We are not hyper-Calvinists who get mired down in secondary matters, but rather pray, evangelize, and do good works because we believe that the sovereign plan of God is accomplished through us, His people.

We are not eschatological Theonomists or Classic Dispensationalists (e.g. Scofield) and believe that divisive and dogmatic certainty surrounding particular details of Jesus' Second Coming are unprofitable speculation, because the timing and exact details of His return are unclear to us.

We are not egalitarians and do believe that men should head their homes, and male elders should lead their churches with masculine love like Jesus Christ.

We are not Open Theists and do believe in the sovereignty and foreknowledge of God in all things.

We are not religious relativists and do believe that there is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus Christ alone.

We are not nationalists seeking to simply improve one nation, but instead ambassadors of the King of Kings commissioned to proclaim and demonstrate the coming of His kingdom to all nations of the earth.

We are not moralists seeking to help people live good lives, but instead evangelists laboring that

people would become new creations in Christ.

We are not relativists and do gladly embrace Scripture as our highest authority above such things as culture, experience, philosophy, and other forms of revelation.

We are not Universalists and do believe that many people will spend eternity in the torments of hell as the Bible teaches.

We are not naturalists and do believe that Satan and demons are real enemies at work in this world and subject to God.

We are not rationalists and do believe that not everything can be known, but that God calls us to live by faith with mystery and partial knowledge regarding many things.

We are not evangelical feminists and do believe that God reveals Himself as a Father and is to be honored by the names He reveals to us without apology.

We are not embarrassed by the bloody death of Jesus Christ and do believe He died as a substitute for the sins of His people in selfless love.

We are not ashamed and do proclaim a loving gospel of grace which sounds like foolishness and offensiveness to the unrepentant while also saving multitudes with ears to hear good news.

We are not polemicists who believe that it is our task to combat every false teaching but are passionate about preserving the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#7 - Loving: Loves God with all his or her heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loves people, especially the marginalized, oppressed, orphans and widows.

#8 - Reproducing: Multiplies by investing in others to lead them to become passionate disciples of Christ.

#9 - Worshipping- A disciple of who lives life to the glory of God as a response to God's revelation of himself; with his whole mind and body, soul and spirit, in song, word and deed.



Foundations: Our Confession

The Sanctuary Fellowship is a movement of people who are passionate to glorify God in everything and enjoy God with everyone.

As a church, we are here to help equip you to fulfill all that we believe and desire to do. We desire for each person to grow in maturity in Jesus. There are eight primary characteristics that should be continually nurtured in every person's walk with God. To do what you must do, you must be what you should be. These eight traits are what we are committed to every person foster in their life. It is the process by which we will accomplish what God has called us to do together.

A healthy productive Christian living in community as a covenant member of The Sanctuary Fellowship has the following 9 characteristics of spiritual growth:

#1 - Convert: *A passionate disciple of Jesus Christ (disciple means learner) who makes the worship of God his or her life.*

#2 - Growing: *Learns biblical doctrine and theology with the purpose of putting what is known into everyday practice as Jesus constantly changes his or her life (sanctification), becoming "theology on fire."*

#3 - Missional: *A minister in everyday life, first to his or her own family, then to all those around them. Christians are missionaries who live and tell the gospel as ambassadors and evangelists locally as well as globally.*

#4 - Giving: *A giver of money, time, resources, gifts, and talents because he or she believe its is all God's anyway.*

#5 - Praying: *Someone who makes prayer a normal part of life by applying the Scriptural truth of "praying without ceasing."*

#6 - Committed: *Committed to Christ, family, and to the local church.*



Function: *Our Commitment*

Theology

It can be said that theology is everything. We believe that. What a church believes, or its orthodoxy (right doctrine), is paramount because it will dictate what it does. What you believe will dictate what you do. However, believing the right things without sincerity, love, and faith is bad orthopraxy (right practice). So, we believe that good doctrine and passionate living go hand in hand. Effective followers of Christ should possess both, not one or the other, as this would lead to an imbalanced spiritual life. We call this balance *theology on fire!*

In the following section we will share our doctrinal beliefs. We are passionate in our adherence to what the Scriptures (The Holy Bible) teach about Christianity. We are sincere in our desire to be considered as members of the heritage of orthodox Christianity. By “orthodox Christianity” we mean: the Christian faith as it adheres to the teachings of Scripture as supported and verified by the first three Ecumenical Councils of the Church held during the early beginnings of the church. Generally speaking, these Councils consisted of unparalleled credible Biblical scholars and church leaders who in unity defended against attacks on the distinct, untainted, and most commonly held doctrinal interpretations of The Bible. In other words, we are proud to say we follow the teachings of what has historically been deemed by the most common, influential, scholarly, credible community of Jesus’ followers across the world and throughout history. And for centuries have promoted what are the plain, simple, accurate, and Biblical teachings of Christianity.

To restate this is not unwarranted redundancy. What a church believes is one of the, if not the, most significant thing a church and its members consider. Read, learn, listen, and above all grow in your understanding of these most basic and foundational doctrines of the Christian faith.

Doctrinal Confession

Beliefs and Statements about the Bible

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the essential and infallible record of God’s self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by Him. Therefore, as originally given,

the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession or theology, must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12, 13)

The Glory of God

The glory of God is what the entire Bible and Christian gospel are about. Therefore, it should be said that the supreme duty of man and the chief end of every living thing and the superior consideration of every action or event is: the glory of God. The glory of God is everything.

(Romans 11:36; Isaiah 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Corinthians 1:27-31; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 2:10-11; Philippians 4:19; 1 Timothy 1:17; Psalm 96:1-4, 8; Psalm 97:6; Proverbs 16:4; Revelation 21:23; Isaiah 66:19; 1 Chronicles 16:29; Revelation 4:11)

The Trinity

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal. They are equal in nature, essence, and perfections. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet each is truly Deity. One God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is the foundation of Christian faith and life. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Malachi 2:10; Genesis 1:26; John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Matthew 28:19; 1 John 5:7; Isaiah 48:16)

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, became fully man without ceasing to be fully God. He is the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.

Missional Projects

As each person ministers individually through living the gospel each day where they live, the church also collectively works together to serve the world at times. Projects are varied and include things such as: helping at a homeless shelter, refurbishing a home, giving water bottles out at an event, or giving out items in time of need.

Ministries

Men's and Women's Ministry, Next Gen Ministry which includes Sanctus and TSF Kids are just a few of the ministries for Sanctuary members to use their talents to be used by God.

The church is not a place where the staff makes up ministries and then tells the church to get involved. Ministries should come from the members of the body as each person listens to God and examines his or her gift. Members should hear God's call for them to participate in a ministry or lead one. Ministries should be birthed on a regular basis as needs arise and people respond to God's call for them to serve in that ministry, never forgetting that everyone is a minister, and ministry is to take place everywhere all the time!

If you have a ministry you are prompted about or feel lead to start that we don't participate in now, discuss it with an elder and we'll see how we might partner with you.

He is perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him all things are held together by the word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in Him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world having shed His blood and died a vicarious substitutionary death on the cross. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, He rose bodily from the grave on the third day, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and for a period of forty days appeared to over five hundred witnesses performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of His body, the church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all, as He is coming again to judge the living and the dead. (John 1:1–2, 14; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3–5; Acts 1:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1–2; John 1:1–2, 14; Luke 1:35; 1 Peter 4:5; Romans 14:9; 2 Timothy 4:1)

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped as God, the Third Person of the Trinity. (John 16:8–11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18)

Man

God made man – male and female – in His own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Because of this, man became completely and contemptibly alienated from God and his enemy (dead, blind, darkened, ignorant, lost, hard of

heart, hostile). Being separated from his Maker, yet responsible to Him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections, leaving him unable on his own to remedy his lost condition. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

(Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 8:21; Genesis 6:5; Numbers 15:37-39; 1 Kings 8:46; Job 15:14-16; Psalm 14:1-3, 51:5, 94:11, 130:3; Proverbs 4:23, 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20, 8:11; Isaiah 6:5, 53:6, 64:6; Jeremiah 10:14, 13:23, 17:9; Matthew 7:11, 15:19; Mark 10:18; Luke 17:10; John 2:24, 3:36, 6:44, 15:5, 16; Acts 3:16, 16:14; Romans 1:18-2:16, 3:9-20, 23, 5:12, 7:18-20, 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14, 12:3; 2 Corinthians 3:5, 4:3, 11:3; Ephesians 2:1-6, 4:17-19; Colossians 2:13; 1 Timothy 2:25, 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:5; James 2:10, 3:2, 8; Revelation 9:20, 16:9. 1 Kings 8:46; Job 15:14-16; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 17:16-20; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)

The Gospel

Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel; His resurrection is the power of the gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches, and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross.

Man's Response to the Gospel

Man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free gift of God for His own pleasure and glory. Man cannot save him-

5. Installation: The final approving of elders will be done in a worship service as a time of publicly verifying the validity of the candidate for appointment. There will be:

- Sharing of the candidate's qualifications for the appointment
- Laying on of hands by chosen leaders
- Prayers offered by the church

Deacons

In the New Testament, deacons were chosen as men "full of the Holy Spirit and faith" to ensure that orphans and widows were not overlooked when food was being given out each day. The word "deacon" literally means "servant". Thus, deacons are servants in the church who ensure people who have needs are not being overlooked or uncared for.

Deacons are chosen by the church to serve. They are installed as servants to be prayed for as they serve. They are not a board of directors that tells everyone what to do.

Team leaders

The church has various ministry teams. Leaders are chosen to lead and guide those teams to fulfill the call and cause of the church.

Life Groups

Life Groups meet on a weekly basis all over the area. They provide care, prayer, missional opportunities, and instruction for The Sanctuary family. They are the vehicle by which we continue to have intimacy with each other as we grow larger in number. They are the place where deep friendships are formed and no one is overlooked. Thus, involvement is strategically important for every member.

has borne, or the office he has held, but only the quality of his deeds and the character of his mind and heart.”

In Acts 14:23, we are instructed to appoint elders in every church. There was not one leader, but a multiplicity of leaders. Even in the Jewish culture, the people were lead by a council of elders. The council was one of Israel’s oldest and most fundamental institutions.

Selection and Examination of Elders

1. Due to the immense serious nature of the task and the significance of their qualifications, selection and examination are to be done in a public forum. *1 Timothy 3:10* says, “And let these [deacons] also [like the elders] first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.” *1 Timothy 5:24-25* says, “The sins of some men [prospective elders] are quite evident, going before them to judgment [human examination]; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.”

2. Although the elders select other elders and are to take the lead in all church procedures, this does not mean that the congregation is totally passive in helping lead the church. Biblical elders want an informed, involved congregation.

3. If objections or accusations are voiced as to a candidate’s character, the elders should investigate to determine if the accusations are Scripturally based. God’s standards alone, not group popularity, govern God’s house.

4. *Examination:* There must be an allotted time to examine the prospective elder regarding his knowledge and ability to use his Bible to counsel people and direct the church. For example, the candidate should be able to open the Bible and answer questions such as “What does the Bible teach about divorce and remarriage?” “Where in the Bible does it teach Christ’s divine nature?” “What is the gospel message?” “What does the Bible say about male-female roles?” What does the Bible say about church discipline?”

self. Grace and faith are God’s gifts through Christ and given to those whom He calls. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and by God’s grace for saving faith in Christ. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by Kingdom service or works. Neither repentance nor works save. However, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become Christ’s disciple.

The Process:

Romans 8:28-30

“Foreknowledge”- God’s intimate knowledge of events and His people. (Acts 2:23; Romans 11:2; 1Peter 1:2; 1:20)

“Predestined”- literally means “to mark out beforehand” (Acts. 4:28; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:5,11)

“Justified”- means to be legally acquitted from wrongdoing (Romans 1:17; 3:21-25; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 2:8-9)

“Sanctified”- is the process of maturity as God conforms us to His Son’s image. (Romans 8:13, 29; 12:1-2; 1Corinthians. 6:11, 19, 20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Col. 1:28; Hebrews 13:20-21)

“Glorified”- the final completion of God’s purpose in salvation, which includes our death and resurrection. (Romans 8:17, 8:29; 1Corinthians 15; Colossians 1:27, 3;4)

Sanctification

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed, and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Spirit, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to live in the world so that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith knowing they will have to give an account

to God for their every thought, word, and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship, and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the end, which is most certain.

Assurance of the Believer

The redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Even though Salvation is forever, a believer should not use this truth as an occasion to live in sin. Abuse of this liberty is seen as deplorable in the Scriptures. (Romans 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11–15; (John 6:37–40; 10:27–30; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:4–8; 1 Peter 1:5; Phil. 1:7).

The Holy Spirit (Empowerment and Gifts)

The Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness and service. The promise of the Father is freely available to all who believe in Jesus Christ, thereby enabling them to exercise the powers of the age to come in ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ at conversion and imparts His supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and the work of ministry in the world. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with power to witness. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today and are to be earnestly desired and practiced. They are essential in the mission of the church in the world today.

It is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to develop and minister according to the gift(s) and grace of God that is given to them. (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 13; Ephesians 4:7–8; Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Peter 4:10–11)

The Church

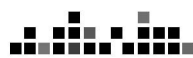
God by His Word and Spirit creates the church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church Universal is made up of those

A church exists to be used by God to continue HIS plan to restore all things. Thus, it must be first and foremost for Him and for His glory. In other words, the church is not here trying to “cater” to the wants of a middle class society, but rather to join God in His global plan of bringing completeness to everything. Many American churches set out to lure you by the “look what we got” pitch. Most of their energy is spent planning and programming for anything YOU want... so you will come. We asked, “What if the church focused on God's glory, and then, spent all their time, energy, and resources restoring things?” Things like feeding those without food, caring for orphans and widows, giving a bike to someone in Africa who has to walk hundreds of miles, teaching AIDS prevention in third world countries, or helping a neighbor across the street who is depressed or terminally ill. We are a “transmissional” church. We believe that God transforms us to put us on a mission with HIM. That's the difference here at the Sanctuary. We want to be used to change the world and believe that God is calling you to be part of the plan of restoration. We want to help enable you to realize the life God gave you. Life itself is a mission trip.

Elders and Pastoral Leadership

In the New Testament a simple observation can be made: two significant apostles (Paul and Peter) assign the task of shepherding the local church not to a single person but to a group of elders. The “Senior Pastor” form of leadership is neither biblical nor practical. Our paradigm of leadership follows the Bible as it clearly promotes a balanced dispersion of leadership and a co-lateral authority among elders/pastors. The following are the foundations for biblical eldership that have been adopted by *The Sanctuary Fellowship*. They provide the biblical basis for our practice of being a church led by a plurality of elders. Thus, we are an elder, team-led church.

Qualifications for Elders are listed in: 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. These Biblical qualifications are our guide for every elder. They provide our governance of the basis of who is selected and what accountability guidelines will be provided for sustaining effective ministry. Each elder must live by these qualification standards as a way of life, and they are possible by loving Jesus in all we do. Author J. Oswald Sanders in his book *Spiritual Leadership* states it this way, “The final estimate of men shows that history cares not an iota for the rank or title a man



Function: *Our Community*

who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. Therefore it is both local and global. Christ is the HEAD of the church. The church is HIS bride. The church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in the entire world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the church is the making of disciples through the living in and preaching of the gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church and are required to devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer. All members of the Church Universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context, they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The local church is free from external authority and control. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries, all members of the church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of the ministry. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in His service in relation to one another and to the world.

The church has two sacraments that are expressions of Jesus life, death, and resurrection power. They are baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion). These sacraments are viewed as vital ministries in the Community of Christ for both individual and community spiritual development. They are essential to the mission, identity, and message of the kingdom of God, but they do not confer grace upon the individual. They merely provide an expression of the work grace has done and is doing in the life of the church. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25–27; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 3:20–21; Acts 14:27; 18:22; 20:17; 1 Timothy 3:1–3; Titus 1:5–11; Acts 13:1–4; 15:19–31; 20:28; Romans 16:1,4; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16; 1 Corinthians 5:4–7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1–4; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; 1 Timothy 3:2–7; Titus 1:6–9; 1 Peter 5:1–3; Acts. 14:23)

The Sanctuary Fellowship Baptism Doctrine

Baptism is:

Commanded by the Lord

Baptism is clearly **commanded** of people who are genuine followers of Christ, and is far more than a simple rite or ritual that they go through.

- Jesus made it clear that baptism was to be an ongoing practice for the Church as disciples are made.

Matthew 28:19-20 - "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."

- Early church practices tell us that baptism was commanded by Jesus, that it was not delayed and was observed upon conversion.

Acts 2:38 - And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A Public Expression of a Regenerated Life, United to Jesus to eternal life

Baptism is an **outward expression of the inward transformation** and new life of a believer. This new life is secured by faith in Jesus Christ. This is a matter of great importance as it is a dramatic portrayal of the death of our unbelief, rebellion, and idolatry, and our resurrection to new life, faith, and submission in Jesus Christ.

- Scripture teaches that our baptism is the physical display of Christ's completed work. It is a picture of our unity with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

Romans 6:3-11

- Furthermore, it serves as a clear mode of communicating the gospel message and displays the power that Jesus possesses to redeem sinners. This allows for the church to celebrate the Lord's work, and for unbelievers to see the power of God through a transformed life.
- While baptism is in no way a precursor to salvation, it is an outward sign or symbol of that salvation.

Undistracting excellence:

We will try to sing and play and pray and preach in such a way that people's attention will not be diverted from God-centeredness or from the substance of worship by shoddy ministry, nor by excessive finesse, elegance or refinement. Natural, undistracting excellence will let the truth and beauty of God shine through. (1 Corinthians 14:24-26 & 40)

Honest Communication:

We renounce all sham, deceit, hypocrisy, pretense, artificiality and posturing. We do not want an atmosphere of performance but an atmosphere of a community that has had a radical and personal encounter with the Almighty God. (Ephesians 4:14-16)

The blending of historic and contemporary music:

If a song is scriptural in its content, and singable in nature, it does not matter if it is 500 years old or was written yesterday. We will also seek to be creative, using our musical gifts and talents to write new songs, creating new expressions for the declaration of the glory of God. (Mathew 13:52)

Reserved Solely for Genuine followers of Christ (Believers Baptism)

As stated above, baptism symbolizes the genuine transformation in the heart of a redeemed individual. Therefore, baptism should not be administered to anyone other than those that have been born again. It must be made plain that baptism does not save sinners; Jesus does. Evidence for baptism being reserved for genuine believers can be found in the following passages:

Acts 8:12; 26-38

Acts 10:44-48

Colossians 2:11-12

Galatians 3:25-27

- In light of our understanding of these texts regarding Believer's baptism:
- We do not baptize infants or unbelievers.
- We take Baptism very seriously, seeking to honor Christ in the highest degree. Therefore, we discuss baptism with every person desiring to be baptized and baptize on the basis of a genuine conversion.
- We will re-baptize those who were baptized prior to their conversion or in heretical churches or cults.

Acts 19:1-5

Correctly Administered by Immersion

We believe that the Biblical mode of baptism is by immersion and administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- As the Christian is immersed in water, it identifies them with Jesus' death and burial in their place. Coming up out of the water identifies the Christian with Jesus' resurrection which has conquered the power of the grave, and empowered His followers to live new life by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:3-4 - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Mark 1:9-11 - In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, You are my beloved Son; with you I am

well pleased.

- The language in both of these passages would be inconsistent with sprinkling or pouring water over someone's head. What seems to be implied is complete submersion, and therefore, total saturation.

- Furthermore, the Greek word that we translate "baptize" is the word: βαπτίζω or "baptizō." According to Thayer's Lexicon, this word means to "dip repeatedly, to 'immerge,' submerge" or to "cleanse by dipping or submerging; to wash, to make clean with water."

- Even figuratively, sprinkling and pouring water over one's head would fall far short of the intended meaning and weight that this Greek word carries.

Done in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

We baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because it was commanded by Jesus.

Matthew 28:19 - 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

- We do this in part so that the act of baptism is sanctified and set apart. This is a spiritual act through which a believer commits to following Christ's example.

- To be baptized into someone's name is to call upon their power, align oneself with their character, and live out their teaching.

- Furthermore, in baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are making an appeal to the Lord to be present in this act. The whole purpose of baptism is to recognize the saving work of the Lord, and failing to call on His name and honor Him would cause us to miss the point. The Lord Himself is the point.

The Sanctuary Fellowship fully embraces this affirmation of baptism:

Uncompromisingly commanded by the Lord Jesus.
Universally administered to Christians entering the early church. Uniquely connected to conversion as an unrepeatable expression of saving faith.

(John Piper on Baptism)

If you are interested in being baptized at The Sanctuary Fellowship, you must attend the baptism classes, contact the church to reserve a time and place for baptism, and fully understand and agree with our doctrine regarding baptism.

Worship Principles

God-centeredness: The highest priority will always be placed on the vertical focus of our Sunday morning gatherings. Knowing that HE is the source of our satisfaction, our goal is to experience God in such a way that he is glorified in our affections. (Romans 11:36, Psalm 96)

Bible based and Bible saturated:

The content of our singing, praying, welcoming, preaching and artistic communication will always conform to the truth of Scripture. The truth of God's Word will be woven through all we do in worship and will be the foundation of all appeal to authority. (Psalm 119:49-56; Rev 22:18-19, Hebrews 4:12)

Head and heart:

Our worship will appeal to clear thinking about spiritual things based on knowable truths about God. We desire worship that aims at kindling deep, strong, and real emotions toward God. (Mark 12:30, John 4:23)

Expecting the powerful presence of God:

We do not just direct ourselves toward HIM. We earnestly seek him to draw near according to the promise of James 4:8. We believe that in worship God draws near to us in power, and makes himself known and tangibly felt for our good and for the salvation of unbelievers in our midst.

The manifestation of God and the common good:

We expect, hope and pray (according to 1 Corinthians 12:7) that our focus on the manifest presence of God is good for people. Therefore, a spirit of love for each other is necessary to authentic worship.

Earnestness and intensity:

We will avoid a trite, flippant, superficial, frivolous atmosphere, and set an example of reverence, passion and wonder. (Isaiah 6:1-5)