

Gathering Place Partnership Covenant

Introduction

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:1–2 NIV)

As Christians, we are members of God’s household (**Eph. 2:19**) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each part is serving as it is designed. 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**). Gathering Place holds its partners in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (**Acts 17:26–27**).

“³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:3–8 NIV)

Being a partner (member) of Gathering Place is really about being part of a family. All partners are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, fellow Christians, and non-Christians. Partners who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the leadership is covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

“⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:8–10)

What is a covenant?

A 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 Gathering Place covenant includes a statement of faith, a statement of biblical doctrine, the responsibility of Gathering Place to its partners,

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and the responsibility of partners to the ministry and mission of Gathering Place. Though the covenant does define the relationship between partners 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**).

Statement of faith

- I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who he claimed to be (**Isa. 53:6; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25–26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25–27; 14:6–7; 15:5**).
- I am a Christian saved from the eternal wrath of God by faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through his death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (**John 3:16–18; Rom. 3:23–26**).
- I have been baptized into the faith of the Triune God and made a new creation in Christ (**Romans 6:1-7; John 3:5-6; Col. 2:11-13; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 5:17**).

Statement of biblical doctrine

- I agree that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the ultimate doctrinal authority on all matters of faith and teaching (**Isa. 55:11; 1 Cor. 15:3–4; 2 Tim. 3:15–16; Heb. 4:12**).
- I agree that the core of Christian teaching is: **Faith alone** (*Sola Fides*), **Grace alone** (*Sola Gratia*), **Scripture alone** (*Sola Scriptura*).
- I agree with the core beliefs of Gathering Place, which are founded upon historic creeds (e.g. *Apostles' Creed* and *Nicene Creed*) and expressed in *Luther's Small Catechism*.

Responsibility of Gathering Place to its partners

- We covenant 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**).
- We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping and training you for service (**Eph. 4:11–13**) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (**James 5:14**).
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (**Acts 20:27–28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17–18**).
- We covenant to encourage and provide opportunity to grow in your relationship with God, with partners of this faith community and with those who are not yet part of God's family (**2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Peter 3:18; Col. 1:9-11; Heb. 10:23-25**).
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the calling of church partners (**1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12**).

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My responsibility to the mission of Gathering Place

- I have read and understood the doctrinal profession of Gathering Place and hold it to be true to God’s Word (**Eph. 4:1–3; Heb. 13:7, 17**).
- I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the norm and standard for teaching and Christian life (**Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16–17**).
- I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, worship and the practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship opportunities, communion, Wednesday “over the fence” activities, a missional community, service, and 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 grow in faith and service through my commitment to a missional community, where I will consider three critical relationships of the Christian life: 1. **UP – LIFE WITH GOD.** (**John 6:37-39; Col. 1:5-6; 1 Peter 2:1-3; John 15:1-8; Matt. 7:24**) 2. **IN – LIFE IN FAMILY.** (**Acts 2:42 – 47; 1 Cor. 1:9-11; Phil 2:1-3; John 13:35; Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:1-3**). 3 **OUT – LIFE FOR OTHERS.** (**John 17:20-23; Matt 4:19; 28:19; 5:16; 1 Cor. 9:22**).
- I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and tithes (**Prov. 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, joyful, and voluntary (**Rom. 12:1–8; 2 Cor. 8–9; 12:7–31; 1 Peter 4:10–11**).
- I will not hold membership in any secret organization that requires adherence to a profession in conflict with Scriptures and the Christian faith (**James 5:12; Matt. 5:34-37; Eph. 5:11-12; 1 Cor. 6:14-18; John 14:6**).
- I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ. (**Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:1–5; 2 Cor. 2:5–8; Gal. 6:1–5, 8; 2 Tim. 2:25**)

My commitment to the mission of Gathering Place

The mission of Gathering Place is building the community of Christ to reach the community.

I have read the covenant of Gathering Place and commit to participate in this mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, that my identity would be in him, my worship would be for him, my fellowship would be through him, and my interaction with the culture would be for his glory.

Name _____ Date _____