

# MEMBERSHIP AT PARMA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

## 1. Introduction

1. A Membership in a temporal local church as part of the visible body of Christ provides certain privileges and carries specific responsibilities. There are many similarities and some differences between membership in a temporal local church and inclusion in the spiritual body of Christ. Inclusion in the spiritual body of Christ is a simple reality, and is based on faith in Jesus Christ which restores a person to a right relationship with God. That kind of faith must give true evidence in a transformed life, characterized primarily by a devoted love for God and a pure love for mankind. Inclusion in the spiritual body of Christ gives a person complete access to God the Father through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and can only be truly known by God as the Judge of all mankind's thoughts and intents of the heart.

1.B Membership in a temporal local church is also primarily an extension of faith in Christ, which brings a person into a living, right relationship with God the Father. Rather than being purely an individual experience, membership in the temporal local church is essentially a relationship with other believers who are engaged in a common identity and a common purpose. Because of the nature of social, legal, and corporate issues that come into play in human organizations, membership in the temporal local church must be regarded somewhat differently than inclusion in the spiritual body of Christ. Where members of the spiritual body of Christ do not debate and decide issues by motions and votes, the members of the temporal local church must follow that very process. Members of the spiritual body of Christ do not create legal commitments which must be completed with integrity, but members of a temporal local church, in fact and in real time, must do that very thing. Members in the spiritual body of Christ cannot create any effective illusion or deception to God of what is true about their faith and walk with God, but the temporal local church must be able to guard itself, and especially its youngest and weakest members, from those who would manipulate the organization or its opportunities for wrong purposes.

1.C Accordingly, membership in the temporal local church must be treated differently than inclusion in the spiritual body of Christ. It must be recognized that what is spiritual and eternal is of greater importance, and what is temporal and temporary is of lesser importance. Nonetheless, it is still of great importance how a local church establishes its boundaries for its membership, and specifies what are the privileges and responsibilities of membership within it.

## 2. Membership

Parma Christian Fellowship Church provides for two distinct and yet related classes of membership. The first is Fellowship Membership (for identity and ministry) and the second is Church Membership (for voting and leadership.)

## 2.A Fellowship Membership (Identity and Ministry)

2.A.1 Fellowship Membership is open to any person who has made a personal decision to place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, with the outward evidences of baptism and testimony, and who wants to be included in the identity of Parma Christian Fellowship Church. For children and youth under the age of 16, a parent, guardian, or other adult very familiar with the person must provide supportive testimony as to the personal faith and spiritual awareness of the candidate. Any person who is a member of another church or community of faith may request a letter of transfer from that organization to Parma Christian Fellowship Church, and join as a Fellowship Member. The requirements for Fellowship Membership are as follows:

- ❑ submission of a completed Fellowship Membership Commitment to the President of the Church, which will be reviewed by the Leadership Team in consultation with the pastor, and submitted for approval to the Church
- ❑ a personal spoken or written testimony to a duly called meeting of the current Church Members of Parma Christian Fellowship Church
- ❑ a minimum 3/4 vote of approval by those Church Members present
- ❑ public affirmation of the Fellowship Membership Commitment.

2.A.2 Fellowship Membership provides the privileges of identity with the temporal local church of Parma Christian Fellowship Church, the privileges of regular and ongoing ministry opportunities to others in the environment of the church, as well as access to all services provided by the church to its members. Fellowship Membership carries the responsibilities of regular attendance at worship, growth, and ministry opportunities. As responsible stewards who worship God wholeheartedly, Fellowship Members honor God and support the ministries of the church through giving freely of their resources of time, effort and possessions, and maintaining a willing involvement in the general life of the church.

2.A.3 A Fellowship Member may request in writing at any time that their membership status be dropped. Whenever a Fellowship Member joins another local church or community of faith, Fellowship Membership ceases. Fellowship Members may request a letter of transfer to another church or community of faith, and their status would be determined by that organization. Fellowship Membership may be revoked by a 3/4 vote of the Church Members at a duly called meeting of Parma Christian Fellowship Church, for clear evidence of the person's actions, character or attitudes that are in violation of the teachings of Scripture and cause harm or disrepute to the name of Christ or to Parma Christian Fellowship Church. Fellowship Members must participate in the annual Celebration of Common Identity and Purpose in order to continue as members. Upon death, Fellowship Membership in Parma Christian Fellowship Church ceases.

## 2.B Church Membership (Voting and Leadership)

2.B.1 Church Membership is open to any person who has been a Fellowship Member of Parma Christian Fellowship Church for a minimum of 3 months, and who are 16 years old or older. The requirements for Church Membership are as follows:

- ❑ Fellowship Membership for at least 3 months
- ❑ Age 16 or older

- ❑ submission of a completed Church Membership Covenant to the President of the Church, which will be reviewed by the Leadership Team in consultation with the pastor, and submitted for approval to the Church
- ❑ a personal spoken or written testimony to a duly called meeting of the current Church Members of Parma Christian Fellowship Church
- ❑ a minimum 3/4 vote of approval by those Church Members present
- ❑ public affirmation of the Church Membership Covenant.

2.B.2 Church Membership continues all the responsibilities and privileges of Fellowship Membership. Church Membership also provides a voice and a vote at meetings of the Church Membership, and the privileges and responsibilities of leadership in any aspect of Parma Christian Fellowship Church. Church membership carries the same responsibilities of Fellowship Membership, plus a clear and obvious commitment to strive toward a complete and mature Christian life as described in the Church Membership Covenant.

2.B.3 A Church Member may request in writing at any time that their membership status be dropped. Whenever a Church Member joins another local church or community of faith, Church Membership ceases. Church Members may request a letter of transfer to another church or community of faith, and their status would be determined by that organization. Church Membership may be revoked by a 3/4 vote of the Church Members at a duly called meeting of Parma Christian Fellowship Church, for clear evidence of the person's actions, character or attitudes that are in violation of the teachings of Scripture and cause harm or disrepute to the name of Christ or to Parma Christian Fellowship Church. Church Members must participate in the annual Celebration of Common Identity and Purpose in order to continue as members. Upon death, Church Membership in Parma Christian Fellowship Church ceases.

### 3. Membership Reaffirmation

3.A Membership in Parma Christian Fellowship Church is primarily a relationship between people who are engaged in a common identity as a church and a common purpose: to glorify God through Jesus Christ and to transform our communities for the cause of Christ. Therefore, the reaffirmation of membership is an important part of celebrating our common identity and common purpose.

3.B On the first week of November, in connection with the Annual Meeting of the Parma Christian Fellowship Church, a Celebration of Common Identity and Purpose will be held. Prior to that Celebration, all current Fellowship and Church Members must complete a Reaffirmation of Membership and return it to the Leadership Team. Any member may change their class of membership if they so desire, according to the procedures identified above. Any new members may complete a Fellowship Membership Commitment at that time also. All persons reaffirming their relationship within Parma Christian Fellowship Church by participating in the Celebration of Common Identity and Purpose will continue in their current class of membership.

3.C If a member is unable to attend the Celebration of Common Identity and Purpose because of health or distance, that person must complete a Reaffirmation of Membership, and

return it with an adequate explanation of why they cannot attend, prior to the Celebration. The explanation may also be communicated verbally with any member of the Leadership Team, if a written form is not possible. The Leadership Team may grant permission for the member not able to attend the Celebration to continue at his or her respective level of membership for the new year.

3.D The membership of any person choosing not to participate in this Celebration as identified above will cease. Any person whose membership has lapsed may apply for Fellowship Membership as identified above at any time. A complete and official list of all Fellowship Members (for identity and ministry purposes) and all Church Members (for voting and leadership purposes) will be maintained by the elected secretary of Parma Christian Fellowship Church.

**THE FELLOWSHIP MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT  
FOR  
PARMA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Maiden Last

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City State ZIP

**For all Fellowship Membership Candidates:**

Yes  No Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? \_\_\_\_\_  
Date (if known)

Yes  No Have you been baptized? \_\_\_\_\_  
Location (if known) Means of Baptism Date (if known)

Yes  No Do you understand and agree with the Statement of Faith of Parma Christian Fellowship Church, and do you want to become a Fellowship Member of this church?

Yes  No Will you do all you can to love and obey God wholeheartedly and to have loving and appropriate relationships with other people?

Yes  No Will you maintain regular involvement in the worship, growth and ministry opportunities of the church, and will you support your church in giving freely of your time, effort, and possessions for the glory of God?

Yes  No Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If yes, please identify your current status: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No Will you permit the leadership of Parma Christian Fellowship Church to obtain an investigative report of your background, if deemed advisable or necessary, for certain ministry opportunities?

Who is the current PCF Church Member who will provide supportive testimony of your faith and understanding of Fellowship Membership? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person

**For Fellowship Membership Candidates under the age of 16:**

Name of Parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No Do you have your parent or guardian's permission to become a Fellowship Member of Parma Christian Fellowship Church?

All of the above statements are true. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

**THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT  
FOR  
PARMA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Maiden Last

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City State ZIP

For all Church Membership Candidates:

Yes  No Will you continue to maintain all the commitments you have previously made for Fellowship Membership as a Church Member?

Yes  No Will you do all you can to transform your community and places of living, work, recreation, learning, and leisure for the cause of Christ?

Yes  No Will you do all you can to live carefully as a representative of Jesus Christ and a witness of Him to others, giving consistently and sacrificially of your time, effort and possessions to advance the cause of Christ through your church and beyond it everywhere in the world?

Yes  No Will you do all you can to live transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, becoming conformed to the likeness of Christ in your character?

Yes  No Will you do all you can to live a holy and devoted life, free from the mastery of the wrong and destructive influences of this world?

Who is the current PCF Church Member who will provide supportive testimony of your faith and understanding of Church Membership? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person

All of the above statements are true. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date