

INTRODUCTION TO OUR FAITH AND PRACTICE

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This booklet provides an overview of the beliefs and governance of Christ Church to those that are considering becoming members. It is focused primarily on the mission and vision of Christ Church, the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, and the structure, practices, and life of Christ Church.

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WHY WE EXIST

It is difficult to read the Scriptures without recognizing the priority of the church. From the book of Acts—where apostles and disciples travel to plant churches where there were none before, and visit existing churches to further equip the saints—to the 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament that are letters written to support churches, we see that the New Testament is largely about planting and building churches.

This is all because of Christ's calling to his disciples to make new disciples and to baptize them in Matthew 28. This Great Commission is essentially a mission that begins with the risen Christ calling his followers to go and start churches in Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. It is Christ's Gospel that defines our mission, empowers our mission, and brings forgiveness and true life to all people, no matter who they are or what they have done. The Gospel proclaims that Christ willingly came to die for us while we were his enemies—ones who made the cross and all it represents necessary. And because Christ came to us in love, humility and service, we, as his followers, go out in love, humility and service with a desire to love and serve our neighbors and our world.

HOW WE STARTED

In 2009, Christ Church started with a core of 20 people as a church plant sent out by Wellspring Church in the East Bay to spread the gospel in San Francisco. By the grace of God, we have grown in number, seen people come to faith in Christ, baptized many, and been a part of planting other churches in the Bay Area, including sending out our first associate pastor to plant Grace Alameda in 2013.

Christ Church continues to be both a place where seekers and skeptics can encounter Jesus and his committed followers can be challenged in their faith and grow. We want others and ourselves to ever more deeply understand who Jesus is, why he is the one who matters most in our lives, and how to live passionately for him in San Francisco. While we have learned so much and are always seeking to improve, our core vision is simple and remains the same. We exist to make disciples in Christ, Together, for the City and the World.

HOW WE VIEW MEMBERSHIP

Scripture reveals that the primary instrument of God's plan for accomplishing his purposes in our lives and on this earth is his Church. All followers of Jesus are members of the universal church, but we are called to live out our lives in fellowship with other believers in a particular local church. Membership in a particular local church provides a context for us to live out all of the "one anothers" in Scripture with real people whose names we know and whose lives we care deeply about. We want to do church in a way that helps us to view our lives and world through the lens of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

A few things membership is not:

- An unchangeable, eternally binding covenant on the same level as the one between God and his people
- A formality without real meaning to how we live
- The final step in getting involved in a church
- A country club membership with privileges and perks
- Finding friends to save and satisfy ourselves

Membership means that we make the following commitments to each other:

To Follow Jesus – by living as a disciple, submitted to Christ in every area of life, every day of the week.

To Be the Church – in the unity bought for us by Christ, live in gospel community on Jesus' mission to go out and make disciples. Serve, care and pray for our leaders and each other. At Christ Church, Community Groups are our primary context for living out the gospel.

To Speak Truth in Love – by graciously calling one another back to the gospel, submitting to Scripture in love, meekness and humility. To encourage, teach and learn from each other.

To Give – of time, talent and treasure to advance the mission of the church.

To Show Up – in one another's lives, and at the Sunday Gatherings where we are awakened to worship and growth, assured of our faith, advancing the gospel in public, and increasing our joy in our shared faith.

Our Membership Process

PROCESS

The Christ Church membership process is simple yet thorough. We want to assess two things: 1) Are you a Christian? 2) Do you understand what it means to be passionately committed to Christ and to function as a healthy member of this particular local church? Our membership process involves three steps:

Step 1: Explore

- Join us at one of our regular Welcome Lunches to connect with leaders and other newcomers. Please e-mail info@christchurchsf.org for more information.
- We also highly encourage visiting a Community Group.
- Listen to the most recent Vision Sermon Series and study through our Mission and Vision, What We Believe, and our Ecclesiology and Governance sections in the following pages of this booklet.

Step 2: Interview

- Fill out the Christ Church Membership Application at the back of this booklet.
- Once you submit your application to an elder or your Community Group leader, they will schedule your membership interview
- The interview provides a context to ask questions about Christ Church, to talk through what it means to be a church member, and to hear about how you came to Christ.

Step 3: Public Affirmation

- At our next Membership Sunday you will stand up with all the other new members and will be prayed for by the whole church.

Our Mission and Vision

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Making disciples in Christ, Together, For the City and the World.

In Christ - We are committed to Scripture and the Gospel. Jesus Christ created and sustains all life. He came to earth so that we could experience abundant life in him. Christ is the center of God's plan to redeem the whole world and we want him to be the center of our lives. Christ Church will proclaim Christ and his gospel as we gather together weekly to hear the gospel preached, to sing and pray, and to share the Lord's Supper. (John 1; 1 Corinthians 11; 1 Corinthians 15)

Identity: We are **Family**. We are united to Christ and adopted into God's family. We live out our identity as his children and as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Together - We are committed to Community and Fellowship. As followers of Christ we are called to pursue relationship with one another and to live out all of life together. We live in community because we are united together in Christ. We receive the Gospel promises individually, but we are called to live them out corporately. God gives us deep friendships and family to help us with all that we face in life. As we follow Christ and love and serve one another we put Christ's love on display. (John 17; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Peter 2)

Identity: We are **Servants**. We are called to serve each other, our neighbors, and the world.

For the City - We are committed to bringing life to our City. We will go in the power of the Holy Spirit into our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces with a desire to bring the message of the Gospel to those who do not know Christ. We will go as Christ came to us, in love and humility with a heart to serve. We believe in the life-transforming power of the Gospel and will work to see that power displayed in the City as we serve practical needs and share the message of Christ. (John 17; John 20; Matthew 28; Acts 1)

Identity: We are **Sent**. Jesus was sent into this world and as the Father sent him, he now sends us.

OUR CONNECTION TO HISTORY

While Christ Church at Park Presidio is a new church, we recognize that God has been building his Church for 2,000 years beginning with the very first followers of Christ. The clear theme of God's dealings with his people from the very beginning until today is his enduring faithfulness in the midst of their failings. We look back in history and find plenty of heroes and villains, those that served mankind in courageous ways and those that oppressed, those that clearly proclaimed Christ and those that perverted Christ's message for their own gain. Through it all God has preserved the message of the Gospel. So many faithful churches and faithful people have come before us, and while we are indebted to them all, we are particularly grateful for the leaders of the Reformation. The Reformation stood against the oppression and false teaching of a corrupt church and confessed the message of salvation by Christ alone. As we seek to confess Christ as they did, we benefit from the clear confessions of faith that they left behind.

When the message of the Gospel has been challenged, the response of Christians throughout history has been to confess their faith, and to bring definition to what they believe and why they believe it. Doing so strengthened their faith and equipped them to bring clear words of hope to a lost and dying world. The Nicene Creed is one of the earliest and most abiding confessions of God's people. It provides a basic structure for how to understand the Bible and has guided faithful Christians in all denominations for over 1600 years. We follow the basic structure of the Nicene Creed as we lay out what we believe the Scriptures teach about God the Father, Christ and his Gospel, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Church in this section of the booklet.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one holy catholic (universal) and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE BIBLE AND THE GOSPEL

The Bible is the story of God's unfolding plan of redemption for humanity from beginning to end. The Bible does not just contain the Gospel, the Bible's central message is the Gospel. Adam was created in covenantal relationship with God and promised a future consummation. If Adam had been faithful in his covenant trial, he would not only have entered the consummation himself, the whole creation would have come with him. But Adam chose sin and rebellion instead. This original sin, this act of legal and relational rebellion against God, corrupted humanity. Since Adam's original rebellion, every human being is born with a sinful nature. The effects of sin are both legal and transformative: we are guilty and corrupt. Our natural abilities to reason, observe, experience, and judge remain intact, but our moral ability is gone. The problem is not that we cannot but that we will not turn from our sin to the living God (Jn 8:44).

All of the gifts that God gave to humanity to accomplish his purposes and to live for his glory, are instead used for selfish gain and to work against God. But just as all humanity stands in solidarity with Adam, having inherited all of the effects of the fall, we can now stand in solidarity with Christ, as a part of God's plan to bring redemption and consummation to a fallen world. In Adam we are imprisoned (Ro 5:12), but in Christ, the Second Adam, we are set free to be truly human (Jo 8:36). The history of redemption that leads from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22 is God's rescue mission for humanity.

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

Christ Church affirms the following historical Creeds and Confessions:

The Apostles' Creed (390 AD)

The Nicene Creed (325/381 AD)

The Creed of Chalcedon (451 AD)

Heidelberg Catechism (1563 AD)

Westminster Confession of Faith (1647 AD)

The Confessional Statement of the Gospel Coalition (2009 AD)

The New City Catechism (2012 AD)

THE BIBLE, SELF-DISCOVERY, AND THE TRINITY

We are created in the image of the Triune God. Therefore, if we want to understand who we are we must begin with God. There can be no self-discovery without first discovering God because our identity flows from who he is.

"Nearly all the wisdom which we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self...It is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to understand himself...Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God...Without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self." (John Calvin)

God is Triune

The Old Testament constantly insists that there is only one God, the self-revealed Creator, who must be worshiped and loved exclusively (Deut. 6:4-5; Isa. 44:6– 45:25). The New Testament agrees (Mark 12:29-30; 1 Cor. 8:4; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5) but speaks of three personal agents, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working together to bring about salvation (Rom. 8; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:2). The historic formulation of the Trinity (derived from the Latin word trinitas, meaning "threeness") seeks to circumscribe and safeguard this mystery (not explain it; that is beyond us), and it confronts us with perhaps the most difficult thought that the human mind has ever been asked to handle. It is not easy; but it is true.

In the baptism of Jesus, we see the Father speaking from heaven and the Spirit descending from heaven in the form of a dove as Jesus comes out of the water (Mark 1:10-11). In John 1:1 it is affirmed that Jesus is God and, at the same time, that he was "with God"- thereby indicating that Jesus is a distinct Person from God the Father (cf. also 1:18). And in John 16:13-15 we see that although there is a close unity between them all, the Holy Spirit is also distinct from the Father and the Son.

The fact that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons means that the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. Jesus is God, but he is not the Father or the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, but he is not the Son or the Father. They are different Persons, not three different ways of looking at God.

The personhood of each member of the Trinity means that each Person has a distinct center of consciousness. Thus, they relate to each other personally – the Father regards Himself as “I,” while he regards the Son and Holy Spirit as “You.” Likewise the Son regards Himself as “I,” but the Father and the Holy Spirit as “You.”

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinct and united, worked collaboritively in creation and redemption.

Father: 2 Timothy 1:2 – Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Son: Hebrews 1:8 – But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

John 1:1, 18 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3-4 – But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied to men but to God.”

Bruce Ware described the function of the Trinity as a “3-part harmony in which each ‘Voice’ sings the same song, following the same composition and reading off the same page, yet each ‘Voice’ joyfully sings a different part, and the three together contribute a richness and texture that no one voice alone could accomplish.”

GOD THE FATHER

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1 clearly proclaims the order of the universe. God, the eternal, self-existent, and almighty Creator spoke the world and everything in it into existence. He stands apart from creation, but is delighted to reveal himself to creation. As those created in God's image, we cannot attain true self-knowledge until we have contemplated God and attempted to understand ourselves from his perspective. We can have a tendency to see ourselves as upright, just, wise, and holy, until we are convinced, by clear evidence, that we are not. This clear evidence comes from the Scriptures. We go to the Scriptures to learn about God and then ourselves. God has revealed Himself to us generally in the created order, but specifically in his Scriptures. God created the world and continues to cherish and protect it.

God the Father orders and directs all things according to his purpose and pleasure. He has created humanity to bring him glory and honor, through his grace. While he is transcendent, he is also actively involved in his creation, offering an eternal relationship with him through his Son Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:9; John 5:19-24; Ephesians 1:3-6; 2:1-10).

God has put knowledge of himself in every human being, but our natural tendency is to suppress that knowledge (Romans 1:18). By suppressing that knowledge we deny our identity as image bearers of God and further mar his image in us. We are given over to all kinds of rebellion that manifests itself in the proliferation of sin that we see in the world and in our own hearts. But even though "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), God is both "just and the justifier" and has made a way in Christ for human beings to be reconciled to God, to be "justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith." (Romans 3:24, 25)

What We Believe

CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL

Jesus Christ is both the eternal Son of God and the virgin-born Son of man. Fully God and fully man, he surrendered nothing of his deity during his life on earth. His sinless, sacrificial offering on the cross satisfied God's justice, offering atonement for all of humanity's sins for all time. We believe in his bodily resurrection, his physical ascension, and his visible return to earth to establish his kingdom (John 1:14-18; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 20:11-15). The proclamation of all that Christ has done is what is commonly referred to as the gospel.

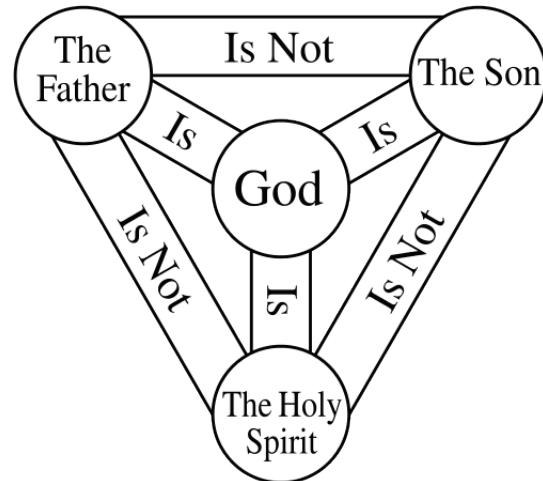
What is the Gospel? This is a simple, yet profound question. How you answer this question impacts how you live now and for all eternity. Take a moment to think about how you would answer that question. God's answer begins in Genesis. God created the earth and all that is in it and it was good. Adam and Eve rebelled against God and his good rule and corrupted all that was good. But in the midst of what seemed a hopeless future for all humanity, God made a promise. God promised that a future descendent of the woman would one day come, crush the head of the serpent and redeem mankind. Evil, death, sin, oppression, rebellion and suffering would once for all be defeated. The Bible is about the person and work of Jesus Christ from start to finish. This is the central story of human history and needs to be the central story of our lives and churches. This is the Gospel. Christ has done what we could never do. He perfectly obeyed God on our behalf. Where Adam failed, Christ did not. Christ became sin for us, taking away the punishment that we had earned, so that we might stand before God as righteous and dearly loved children.

"Faith in the gospel restructures our motivations, our self-understanding, our identity, and our view of the world. Behavioral compliance to rules without heart-change will be superficial and fleeting. The gospel is therefore not just the ABCs of the Christian life, but the A to Z of the Christian life. Our problems arise largely because we don't continually return to the Gospel to work it in and live it out." (Timothy Keller)

The Work of the Holy Spirit

As followers of Christ we have been united to Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our ability to know God and to be united to Christ is given to us by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sent forth from the Father and the Son to indwell believers. The Spirit daily gives us the power to live lives that glorify God, but apart from him we are still powerless. The Spirit's primary work is to transform who we are and what we do because of who Christ is and what he has done. Not only this, but we also live in the knowledge that, since Christ has risen, we too will be resurrected when he comes again in glory. We know all of this because the Holy Spirit is living and active in our lives and in the Church.

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:16–17)



The Church

Scripture tells the story of God calling his people out of the world and joining them together as one body in Christ, culminating in Christ establishing his Church. "Although the church is often thought to be a human institution, a social arrangement to facilitate the interests and mission of like-minded people, as it indeed it is, the Bible presents it as primarily a consequence of the character and purposes of the Trinitarian God" (The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology). Scripture shows us what the Church is called to be and do.

"The Church is the creation of God by his Word. Moreover, God's new creation (the Church) is as dependent upon his Word as his old creation (the universe). Not only has he brought it into being by his Word, but he maintains and sustains it, directs and sanctifies it, reforms and renews it through the same Word. The Word of God is the sceptre by which Christ rules the Church and the food with which he nourishes it." (John Stott)

"A church that is unsure of its mission will not be effective in carrying it out. In a day when the church at large has a confused understanding of its mission, a return to a thorough study of Scripture is necessary. The church cannot afford to let urgent needs or pressing circumstances set its agenda. That agenda has already been set in its parameters by Jesus and needs to be defined and understood in relation to Jesus' mission." (Andreas Kostenberger)

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-21)

CHURCH LIFE

Sunday Gatherings - We gather together weekly to hear the gospel preached, to sing and pray, to fellowship, and to share the Lord's Supper.

Sacraments - Baptism and the Lord's Supper, together, are the sign and seal of God's covenant with us and remind us of his continued love toward us. The sacraments point us back to God's faithfulness to deliver his people from the waters, judgment, and death, and forward to our final deliverance when we will be gathered together with Jesus Christ at the great Wedding Supper of the Lamb. Scripture attributes great significance to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christ commanded baptism in the Great Commission (Mt 28:19) and personally instituted the Supper. In baptism we participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Ro 6:3-4) and in the Supper we participate in his body and blood (1Co 10:16). Christ is truly given to all who hear the gospel and receive baptism and the Lord's Supper, yet he must be received for everlasting life.

Community Groups - We have small groups that meet during the week in neighborhoods throughout the city. We meet to pray, enjoy fellowship, connect relationally, spend time learning more about Jesus, and serve our city. These groups are the main context for connecting with the life of the church. Community Groups give us the opportunity to walk out all of the "**One Another**s" in Scripture that are listed on the next page.

Stewardship - What we do with what God has given us is inextricably linked to our worship both corporately and individually. As a body of believers, we worship corporately by contributing our time, talents, and treasure to our local church. We do not come to God or his church as consumers, we come as family and full participants in his mission. We respond to God's gifts and kindness by giving in return, so that the gospel can continue to reach others through the work of the church. We think differently about stewardship when we realize that everything we have and everything we are comes from and belongs to God.

Life in the City - No matter how long God has called each of us to live in San Francisco, we want to live as intentionally as we can. People often move to cities like San Francisco to "pillage" (to get an education, build a resume, enjoy the food, have wonderful experiences, etc.) and not to build. And while none of that is wrong, as followers of Jesus, we have been sent by God to our neighborhoods and workplaces primarily to build and to serve. We are all called to ask ourselves, "How long do I think God has called me to live here and what do I think God is calling me to do in that time?"

What We Believe

"The One Anothers"

- love one another** John 13:35 and 16 other times
- be devoted to one another** Romans 12:10
- honor one another above yourselves** Romans 12:10
- live in harmony with one another** Romans 12:16
- build up one another** Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- be likeminded towards one another** Romans 15:5
- accept one another** Romans 15:7
- admonish one another** Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- care for one another** 1 Corinthians 12:25
- serve one another** Galatians 5:13
- bear one another's burden** Galatians 6:2
- forgive one another** Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13
- be patient with one another** Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13
- be kind and compassionate to one another** Ephesians 4:32
- submit to one another** Epheisans 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5
- consider others better than yourselves** Philippians 2:3
- look to the interests of one another** Philippians 2:4
- bear with one another** Colossians 3:13
- teach one another** Colossians 3:16
- comfort one another** 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- encourage one another** Hebrews 3:13
- stir up one another to love and good works** Hebrews 10:24
- show hospitality to one another** 1 Peter 4:9
- employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another** 1 Peter 4:10
- clothe yourselves with humility towards one another** 1 Peter 5:5
- pray for one another** James 5:16
- confess our faults to one another** James 5:16
- do these things because we belong to one another** Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25

We see a pattern of humble, mutual submission throughout the first-century church in local and extra-local governance. Even the Apostles that Christ himself sent out to spread the gospel message did not act as individuals disconnected from one another, nor did they lord their authority over the church, but made decisions in mutual submission to one another, to the church's elders, and to all the believers. Whether in replacing Judas with Matthias (Acts 1:14-26), choosing deacons to care for the church's widows (Acts 6:1-7), sending Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3), or determining God's will for the church with regard to the law of Moses (Acts 15), the apostles and elders of the early church were mutually submitted to one another, making decisions in prayer and plurality. We are committed to this pattern.

Our elders and deacons are selected from the congregation and are affirmed by the members of Christ Church prior to being installed. The elders and deacons function together to lead, serve, and govern the church.

Elders are a gift from God to the church and should be honored and respected, but the elders and members are all to be mutually submitted to one another under the authority of God's Word. The whole church is responsible to hold each other accountable to the authority of the Word (Matt. 18:15-17; Acts 17:11). The church is Christ's body and each part of the body is indispensable and interdependent on every other part (1 Cor. 12:14, 19). We seek to follow the standards of Scripture and the guidance of history in the structure and governance of Christ Church.

The following pages include our "Formal Resolution Process" that guarantees every member a voice and a process to resolve both interpersonal and doctrinal disputes. The "Formal Resolution Process" is binding and ensures that the elders do not have the right to change the settled doctrine of the church without the affirmation of the congregation, and ensures that the elders are accountable to the congregation. The "Formal Resolution Process" was largely drawn from Ken Sande at Peacemaker Ministries and the Presbyterian Church in America's Book of Church Order. We have also included excerpts from our bylaws that relate to the structure and governance of Christ Church.

We want every member and prospective member to understand our ecclesiology and governance structures. The elders are committed to transparency and forthright communication.

FORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

To protect the unity of the body of Christ, Christ Church at Park Presidio has developed the formal resolution process detailed below.

Principles of the Resolution Process

We strive to have leadership that is open to observations and disagreement. We want the members of the church to feel at ease and appreciated when they bring a concern. This process ensures thoughtful attention to all concerns. The process is designed to ensure that every member of the congregation can be heard and all parties involved in any dispute can work towards resolution and unity. This formal resolution process is to be used when a complaint cannot be resolved through informal measures, and the matter is too serious to overlook. We have derived this process and the Scriptures listed below from Peacemaker Ministries following “3 P's of Satisfaction”:

- Process satisfaction, which requires a clear and fair process where everyone involved agrees that they have had a reasonable opportunity to present their side of the matter (1 Cor. 14:40)
- Personal satisfaction, which requires treating everyone respectfully and equally, just as you would want to be treated (Matt. 7:12, James 2:1-4)
- Product satisfaction, which requires a final solution that is as just and equitable as is humanly possible (Micah 6:8; Prov. 28:5)

We will seek to ground any formal complaint process in Scripture. The elders of Christ Church and any party bringing a complaint will seek to be submitted to the authority of Scripture and carry out the proceedings in accordance with the following Scriptural principles:

A. “Do to others what you would have them to do you” (Matt. 7:12). Continually ask yourself, “If I had brought this complaint, or if I was the person accused of wrongdoing, how would I want the investigators to proceed at this particular step?”

- B. Appoint an investigative team whose objectivity and impartiality is beyond question (Lev. 19:15). Tell both the accuser and the accused who the nominees are for the team. If either of them doubts the objectivity of a team member, make every reasonable effort, within the limits of your governing structure, to replace that team member with a more acceptable person.
- C. Seek advice from an outside conciliator. When faced with particularly complex issues, it may be wise to involve a trained conciliator who can offer advice to all those involved in the situation and help them follow a process that promotes understanding and reconciliation (Prov. 13:10).
- D. Insist on receiving firsthand information. Do not accept hearsay, anonymous or secondhand reports (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19). Do not depend on the accuser's interpretation of the leader's conduct or motives, or on the leader's interpretation of the accuser's words or motives. Go to original sources and hear the relevant information with your own ears.
- E. Avoid surprises. Give people ample notice of planned meetings and discussions so that they have time to adjust their schedules and prepare what they want to say.
- F. Give the accused leader the opportunity to hear testimony against him and to make a prepared defense (Deut. 19:16). In some cases it may be appropriate for investigators to gather preliminary information and talk with witnesses on their own, but the accused leader should eventually have the opportunity to hear and respond to any adverse witness or evidence that may be considered by those who will render a final decision in the matter.
- G. Take time to prayerfully seek consensus. When an investigative or leadership team reaches a decision by a slight majority, it will often experience a severe backlash from people in the church who feel that the team did not diligently seek God's will in the matter. Ensuing attacks can overwhelm the remaining leadership team, which will be weakened by its own lack of unity. Therefore, unless extenuating circumstances necessitate an immediate decision by a simple majority, it is wise to take time to thoroughly investigate a complaint and prayerfully arrive at a decision that the entire team can sincerely support, especially if others are likely to criticize their judgment.

H. Fully explain the reasons behind your final decision to all appropriate parties involved. Avoid every appearance of a cover-up and leave no room for doubt as to why you decided as you did. List the central facts and guiding biblical principles and explain your conclusions clearly and specifically.

I. If a leader has done something wrong, encourage him to confess it, take responsibility for his actions, and make needed changes (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9). In cases of serious sin or violations of trust, or when there is a lack of genuine repentance, a leader may be required to resign his office. But when he clearly demonstrates a repentant and teachable spirit and the offense does not automatically disqualify him for office, he should be reassured of God's grace and forgiveness, and given an opportunity to show how God is helping him to change. Similarly, if it is discovered that the accuser brought the complaint without valid grounds, the accuser should be encouraged to repent and change.

J. Provide a way to appeal unresolved issues. When a dispute between a member and a leader in a local church cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, Scripture indicates that the church should provide some kind of appeal process that allows the parties to appeal the matter to a person or persons who are not involved in the matter and whose objectivity is beyond question (see Exod. 18:19-26; Deut. 1:17; Acts 15:1-31).

Steps of the Resolution Process

Step 1: Receiving the Complaint. When a complaint is brought verbally or in written form to any elder or leader of Christ Church, the elders will schedule a meeting to hear the complaint within 2 weeks. The elders will provide a copy of the resolution process to the individual bringing the complaint and request that the complaint be provided in written form if possible.

Step 2: Hearing the Complaint. A minimum of three elders will be present at the meeting and meeting minutes will be kept. The individual bringing the complaint can bring up to 2 people to the meeting to either provide personal support or corroborate the complaint. The individual bringing the complaint will be provided with ample time to explain their concern. The elders will then have the opportunity to ask the individual questions and seek to understand the complaint. A written form of the complaint will be presented to the individual bringing the complaint at the end of the meeting and the individual bringing the complaint will have the opportunity to affirm that it accurately represents the concerns. The elders and the individual will determine whether resolution is possible at that time or whether further

investigation and consideration is required. If a leader has done something wrong, he will be encouraged to confess it, take responsibility for his or her actions, and make needed changes. If further investigation and consideration is required, then another meeting will set within 30-60 days or an agreed upon date if more time is required.

Step 3: Investigation. If the individual bringing the complaint or the elders believe further investigation is required then the elders will appoint an investigative team whose objectivity and impartiality is recognized by both the elders and the party bringing the complaint. The investigation will be conducted in accordance with the principles detailed above. The investigative team will keep all findings confidential and will produce a report which will be provided to the elders and the individual bringing the complaint. The team's work will be completed within 30 days of the original meeting if possible. If the investigative team cannot finish its report within 30 days, the individual bringing the complaint will be notified of the cause of the delay. The investigative team will seek to present its findings without bias.

Step 4: Consideration. The elders will meet to discuss the report and come to consensus on their response to the findings. If a leader has done something wrong, they will encourage him to confess it, take responsibility for his actions, and make needed changes. The elders will produce a written document that details their consensus and grounds their decision as much as possible in Scripture. A prescribed response will be included in the document so progress can be reviewed at a later date as determined by the elders.

Step 5: Responding to the Complaint. A minimum of three elders will be present at the meeting and meeting minutes will be kept. The individual bringing the complaint can bring up to 2 people to the meeting to provide personal support. The elders will present their consensus to the individual bringing the complaint. Any parties that need to ask forgiveness of another party will be encouraged to do so.

Step 6: Appealing. If either the individual bringing the complaint or those found to be at fault are not in agreement with the findings of the elders, the decision can be appealed to an outside review board not involved in the matter and whose objectivity is beyond question. The outside review board will review the matter and produce their findings in writing within 30 days of the appeal. The outside review board should be drawn primarily from the elders or deacons of Wellspring Church and Grace Alameda Church. If a suitable board cannot be identified from those churches, then the pool of elders and deacons can be expanded to churches in the Bay Area affiliated with Acts 29, the Gospel Coalition, or the Presbyterian Church in America. The individual bringing the complaint, the individual the complaint has been brought against, and the elders must be in agreement on the makeup of the outside review board.

Step 7: Resolution of Appeal. The outside review board will review all meeting minutes, the report of the investigative team, if there is one, the written complaint, and any other documents related to the matter. The outside review board may wish to conduct additional interviews of its own or to speak with the individual that appealed the original decision. If any such interviews are conducted then a transcript or minutes of the interview will be provided for the file. The outside review board will send its findings to the elders of Christ Church along with instructions for how they recommend the appeal be resolved. The elders will meet to discuss the appeal and come to consensus. If the elders are in agreement with the outside review board then they will schedule a meeting within 14 days of receiving the findings with the individual that brought the complaint and any individuals with unresolved issues related to the complaint to seek final resolution. The individual bringing the complaint can bring up to 2 people to the meeting to provide support.

If the elders do not agree with the findings of the outside review board they must reply to the board within 14 days detailing clear and Biblical reasons why they do not agree. If the elders and the outside review board are not in agreement then the elders will write a report detailing their consensus and provide it to the outside review board and the individual bringing the complaint. The elders will then schedule a meeting within 14 days with the outside review and the individual bringing the complaint to pursue resolution. The elders will do everything possible to seek resolution, unity, and peace.

Step 8: Appeal to the Church. If the complaint is related to a shift in the settled doctrine of Christ Church, and not merely a personal dispute, then the final reports of the outside review board and the elders will be made available to the members of Christ Church for their review within 14 days. The elders are required to schedule a congregational meeting to provide a venue for open discussion of the complaint.

Step 9: Church Affirmation. If the elders desire to pursue a shift in the settled doctrine of Christ Church, they must poll the members of Christ Church, record the votes, and have the affirmation of greater than 75 percent of the members of Christ Church.

The goal of the resolution process is to consistently practice these principles in order to resolve as many complaints as possible in a redemptive manner. "In the process, people can be encouraged to express their concerns productively. Leaders can be protected from false accusations and encouraged to grow where needed. The reputation of the church or ministry can be preserved. And most importantly, God's name will be honored as his people respond to one another as Christ would, with justice, integrity, and righteousness." (Ken Sande, Peacemaker Ministries)

CHRIST CHURCH BYLAWS

Every church is legally required to create bylaws, governing documents that explain the purpose and parameters of the church. On the next pages, we have excerpted the sections of the bylaws directly related to how the church is structured and governed. If you would like to read the bylaws in their entirety, they are posted on the church's website.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

This Corporation is organized for exclusively religious purposes...Our commission is summarized as follows: "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20).

ARTICLE III - Church Membership

Section 1. Purpose of the Fellowship - The congregation of Christian believers who have applied for membership and have been duly accepted shall constitute a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation at Article II, and in Article II of these Bylaws.

Section 2. Active Membership - Active membership in Christ Church of San Francisco shall be open to all persons who confess Christ as their Lord and Savior, who have been baptized, and who have turned away from the patterns of sin referenced in, but not limited to, passages like 1 Corinthians 6, Galatians 5, and 1 Peter 4.

Section 3. Applications for Membership - All requests for membership shall be made to a Pastor, Elder, or Deacon. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with our "Introduction to Our Faith and Practice" booklet. A Pastor, Elder, or Deacon shall meet with the applicant following receipt of the application. Each applicant shall assent to the Statement of Faith, subscribe to the Bylaws, and shall be publicly affirmed as members before at a regularly held Sunday Gathering.

Section 4. Denial of Membership - If, upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the Elders determine that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the Elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

Section 5. Admission of Applicants - Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the Lead Pastor and Elders, at which service such applicants shall publicly affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as members.

Section 6. Responsibilities of Members - Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body and shall submit to the loving rule of the Elders.

Section 7. Regular Meetings - A regular annual meeting of the church members shall be held at the principal meeting location of the church (as the same shall be from time to time designated in the minutes of the Board) in January of each year. At such regular annual meeting, the members shall consider reports of the affairs of the Corporation, and transact such other business as the Elders determine shall be brought before the meeting.

Section 12. Dismissal from Membership - Those admitted to membership can be removed from membership if they have not attended a Sunday worship service in over 6 months or if the individual moves away. Members can also be removed from membership in accordance with Article X or if a member in good standing resigns from membership.

ARTICLE V - Board of Directors and Elders

Section 2. Qualification and Appointment - The initial Board of Directors was set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. Subsequent appointments of Directors of the Corporation may be made by a vote of a two-thirds majority of the Directors at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors, or at a special meeting convened for that purpose. The Board of Directors are required to be active Elders.

Section 8. Qualifications of Elders - Each member of the Council of Elders must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- (a) Above reproach as God's steward (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- (b) Husband of one wife; a one-woman man (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- (c) Not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome (Titus 1:7)
- (d) Not arrogant or quick-tempered (1 Tim 3:3)
- (e) Not a drunkard (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (f) Not violent or greedy for gain; Not a lover of money (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3)
- (g) Hospitable, a lover of good (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (h) Sober-minded, self-controlled (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (i) Upright, holy, respectable and disciplined (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (j) Able to teach; Holding firm to the trustworthy word (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- (k) Must manage his own household well (1 Tim 3:4)
- (l) His children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (1 Tim 3:4; Titus 1:7)
- (m) Not a new convert (1 Tim 3:6)
- (n) Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Tim 3:7)

Section 17. Decisions of the Council of Elders - Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration in a spirit of unanimity and humility, with each Elder or Director regarding one another before himself.

ARTICLE VI - Diaconate

Section 1. Deacons and Deaconesses - The Deacons and Deaconesses shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and shall be nominated by the congregation and affirmed by the Elders and the congregation. The Deacons and Deaconesses shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints, aid in the general spiritual care of the church, and perform other duties as needed. A Deacon shall be a member of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not fond of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach.

Membership Application Card

1. Affirmations

I affirm that my only hope in life and death is that I am not my own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to my Savior Jesus Christ.

Yes: _____

I affirm the Nicene Creed as an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches.

Yes: _____

I affirm that God inspired the Scriptures and that the Scriptures can be trusted as his authoritative Word.

Yes: _____

2. I have read the "Mission and Vision", "What We Believe", and "Ecclesiology and Governance", understand what is expected of me as a member, have prayed, and am ready to commit.

Yes: _____

3. I am available for interview by an Elder or Community Group Leader and can be reached by:

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Name & Signature: _____ Date: _____

