

Christianity 101

The Summitview Community Church Membership Class

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All scriptures in this document are from the New International Version of the Bible (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

Knowing God

Membership in His Universal Church

Who is God to Us?

He is our Creator...

*This is what the LORD says...who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things,
Isaiah 44:24*

God made us to _____ us. (Relationship)

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving towards all he has made.
Psalms 145:17*

God made us to be like _____. (Purpose)

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,
Genesis 1:26*

*... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:24*

He is our Judge...

God has standards for _____ He has made.

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)

God's standard is _____ because He Himself is perfect.

*Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
Matthew 5:48*

*Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.
Habakkuk 1:13a*

God will judge _____ He has made by His standards of perfection.

*Far be it from you to do such a thing... treating the righteous and the wicked alike.
Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?
Genesis 18:25*

*For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:14*

Where Do We Stand Before God?

We have fallen short of God's standards...

We have fallen short of God's standards and brought evil into His creation. (_____)

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23*

*There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.
Ecclesiastes 7:20*

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
1 John 1:8*

God Judges...

God judges our _____, our _____, and even our _____.

*God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:14*

*But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.
Matthew 12:36*

*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
Matthew 5:28*

Our _____ have rejected God's place of being first in our lives. (_____)

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; ...
Isaiah 53:6a*

*These are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the LORD's instruction.
Isaiah 30:9*

What are the Consequences of Sin and Rebellion?

Anxiety, Pain, Guilt and Emptiness

*There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.
Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy
may be grief.*

Proverbs 14:12-13

*Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you....
How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart!*

Jeremiah 4:18

Separation from God

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Isaiah 59:2

Judgment by God

God's judgment on sin is _____.

For the wages of sin is death,

Romans 6:23

The soul who sins shall die.

Ezekiel 18:4

Death ultimately means an _____ separation from God.

He will punish those who do not know God ...They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

2 Thessalonians 1:8,9

What If We Want to Make Up for What We Have Done?

How can a man stand before God and claim to be righteous? Who in all the earth can boast that he is clean?
Job 25:4

Our Religion Isn't Enough

Listen to Jesus' words to some of the most religious people on earth:

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Matthew 7:22-23

The benefit of religion is that it can teach us what is right and wrong. However, God's penalty for doing wrong is not going to church, it is _____.

Our Good Works Aren't Enough

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
Isaiah 64:6

I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you.

Isaiah 57:12

Good works are certainly admirable and the world needs more of them, but the penalty of God for evil works is not doing good works. God's penalty is _____.

Doing Our Best Isn't Enough

No one does his or her best *all* the time – all of us sin at times.

God's standard is based on what we do, not on what we intend.

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

James 2:10

God's penalty for past sin is not trying harder, it's _____.

The only thing we can do _____ to make up for our sin is to receive God's penalty for sin: death.

the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough--

Psalms 49:8

Who is Jesus Christ?

Why is Jesus Called a _____?

Jesus Christ was, and is, _____ in human form, the second person of the Trinity.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1,14

Through His life, Jesus revealed _____ the character of God.

No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

John 14:9

Jesus answered:... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

John 1:18

Through His death, Jesus received _____ the penalty from God for our sin.

Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John the Baptist introducing Jesus)

John 1:29

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:10

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

1 Peter 3:18

In Jesus' death God expressed His _____ for us, His commitment to _____ evil, and His ability to _____ His purpose for us.

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:7-8

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.... the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5,6

...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.

Hebrews 10:14

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

How Can I Know for Sure God Has Saved Me?

I write these things to you ...so that you may know that you have eternal life.
1 John 5:13

God receives us just as we are, when we receive Him just as He is.

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--
John 1:11-12

God is our loving Creator, and our rightful Judge. We must receive Him as that.

This is what the LORD says--your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, ...I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.
Isaiah 44:24; 48:17

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.
Jeremiah 24:7

We must receive what He has done for us, believing and trusting in the love and forgiveness God offers us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9

And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.
1 John 4:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

We must receive Him by responding to His offer, calling upon God as He has revealed Himself in _____, acknowledging our sin and need and entrusting ourselves to Him to save us.

...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For ..."Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. "
Romans 10:9,12,13

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.
Acts 4:12

Christ's resurrection is a believers' assurance that they too will be resurrected to be with Him _____.

...because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

2 Corinthians 4:14

...so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews 9:28

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,...and the dead in Christ will rise ...And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Do these things make sense to you?

Do you believe they are true?

Have you ever come to God, humbly acknowledging your sin before Him,
and told Him you were putting your faith in Jesus to save you?

If not, would you like to do that?

A note about baptism:

While salvation is by faith alone (baptism is not required), baptism is still an important step for a believer to take. We will talk more about this in the next session.

Foundations

The Summitview Statement of Faith

Statement of Faith

Our Statement of Faith represents the 'non-negotiable' truths upon which we build everything else. These are fundamental beliefs that we hold.

As members of a church, there are many things about which we may agree to disagree. We may hold different views of certain less important points of doctrine. However, in the things listed here in the Statement of Faith, we must be united because they are so foundational. Part of membership at Summitview is agreement to subscribe to these items.

Note: The sections that are shaded (like this section) are additional comments that clarify each part of the statement of faith and talk about what each one means for our church. They are not themselves part of the actual Statement of Faith.

The Scripture

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. It was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and was written without error in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in faith and in every age.

- *The Bible becomes our first and primary source when seeking to understand God, man, and the world. When there is conflict between the Bible and another source we will choose to side with the view the Bible puts forth.*
- *Because the Bible is so critical, it becomes important that every believer regularly spend time reading and studying God's Word. Each of us should be involved in the life-long pursuit of getting to know this book better, and be ready to turn to it whenever a question arises.*

God

There is but one God, infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and love, the Creator of the universe, eternally existing in three persons —Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— each of whom possess all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.

- *Understanding the true character of God (as described by the Bible) is important in order to fully grasp other important concepts such as sin, judgment, and grace. Having a good understanding of who God is helps us understand better who we are and how we must relate to our God.*
- *The word 'Trinity' is never found in the Bible and yet the concept is clearly communicated. A belief in the Trinity means acknowledging that God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one and the same 'entity', the one and only true God, not separate gods. And yet each 'person' of the trinity has unique qualities and roles, and there is a distinct relationship between the three persons. It is a difficult concept to wrap our minds around, and yet it is a belief that differentiates orthodox Christianity from other belief systems (some of which would still claim to be Christian).*

Man

God created man in His own image, and man, as he was originally created, was innocent before God. But man chose to sin by disobeying God, and therefore was alienated from his Creator and came under divine condemnation. Thus all human beings are born with a corrupted nature and without spiritual life, and are totally incapable of pleasing God in and of themselves.

- *Many of the philosophies of our day start with the assumption that man is basically good. These philosophies touch our day-to-day lives because they shape things ranging from parenting advice to psychology to government. However, the Bible communicates that our 'natural' state, into which we are born, is one that tends first toward rebellion and sin. Whether or not you hold the Biblical view of this subject will greatly shape your 'worldview'.*
- *Because of our corruption, we do not have anything good to offer God. This leaves no way for us to put ourselves in a right standing with God which points to our need for Jesus Christ.*

Jesus Christ

God the Father, by His own choice and out of love for sinful men and women, sent Jesus Christ into the world to reconcile sinners to Himself. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He is God in the flesh, both true God and true man. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and voluntarily suffered and died as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins, thus satisfying God's justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He bodily ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, makes intercession for His own. He will return to earth —personally, visibly, and bodily— to judge all men and establish His kingdom.

- *This means everything to us! Our life, identity, hope, and future are defined by what Jesus did for us.*
- *We must recognize the Deity of Christ because if Jesus were only a man, he too would be sinful and have his own penalty to pay. Because he is God, and therefore perfect and sinless, he could act as our substitute on the cross.*
- *We must remember that Jesus is alive today and we will see him again, either when we die or when he returns to earth.*

Salvation

Men and women are freed from the penalty for their sins not as a result, in whole or in part, of their own works, goodness or religious ceremony, but by the undeserved favor of God alone. God declares righteous all who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation.

- *We cannot think that our salvation is a result of what we do. Our righteousness, our good standing before God, is accomplished only through what Christ did for us on the cross and is entirely a gift which is completely unmerited.*

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ, to convict men and women of their sins, and to impart new life to all who place their faith in Christ. He indwells believers from the moment of spiritual birth, seals them until the day of redemption and empowers them to live a life pleasing to God.

- *From the moment of our salvation, God is with us at all times!*
- *We need to recognize the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We cannot revert to trusting in our own effort, we must be constantly dependent on the power and council of the Holy Spirit to live our lives. We must walk in the Spirit on a daily basis.*

Assurance

All who are born again of the Spirit can be fully assured of eternal life from the very moment they put their faith in Christ. This assurance is not based upon any kind of human merit, but upon the fact of God's election, upon Christ's complete payment for sins and upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is the deposit guaranteeing their inheritance.

- *Just as there is nothing we can do to gain our salvation, there is nothing we can do to lose it!*
- *Even though we are new creations in Christ when we are saved, old habits, desires, and patterns sometimes crop up again and we sin. However, the penalty for those sins has already been paid if we have truly put our faith in Jesus Christ.*

The Resurrection of the Dead

At physical death, the believer enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his or her body to everlasting glory and blessing. At physical death, the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his or her body to everlasting suffering, judgment and condemnation.

- *Death is not the end! All of us are eternal beings.*
- *What awaits us depends on our standing before God at the time of physical death. Heaven awaits those who have trusted in what Jesus did at the cross. Hell awaits those who have remained in sin and in rebellion against God.*

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Jesus Christ has instructed those who believe in Him to be baptized in water as a symbol of their new birth in Christ. Baptism would be by immersion and is only for those who have personally believed in Christ. The Lord also instituted the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of His suffering, death and resurrection. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper have any merit in helping a person obtain eternal life.

- *While baptism is not required for salvation (remember, it is not our works that save us), it is clearly commanded by Jesus. It should be one of the first outwardly visible acts of obedience to Christ for every believer (although it is never too late if you have been a believer for some time but have not yet been baptized).*
- *At Summitview we baptize people during services at our building, or in swimming pools, or in rivers or lakes, or anything available that allows us to immerse the person that wants to be baptized!*
- *Because it represents the new life of someone who has professed their faith in Christ, we do not believe that the practice of infant baptism fits with what is described in the Bible.*
- *The Lord's Supper (Communion) is an important practice of remembrance that every believer should take part in. The act is symbolic, but the act of remembering Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is a critical part of the Christian life.*
- *At Summitview we primarily practice communion at our house church and small group meetings. From time to time we will also incorporate it into a Sunday service.*

The Church

All true believers make up the church worldwide and should assemble together in local churches—for worship, prayer, fellowship and teaching—to become conformed to the image of Christ and to become equipped to carry out the “Great Commission” that Christ gave His followers in Matthew 28:19-20.

- *The church is the Body of Christ. Therefore, each of us that make up that Body must serve the function God created us to fulfill. Involvement in the local church is not only for our benefit, but also for the benefit of others in the church and as service to Christ.*
- *Regular and ongoing fellowship is a necessary part of the Christian life.*

Mission, Vision, Practice

Our Marching Orders and Core Values

Marching Orders

If there are any Bible passages that 'summarize' our mission as a church, it would be the two we will look at in this section. These define in simple terms our marching orders, both individually and corporately.

The Greatest Commandments

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.'³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:28-31

Our purpose is to glorify God in all we do. As Christians, this is expressed in a complete and consuming love for God that encompasses our entire being. This is what Jesus describes in the "most important" commandment.

Second only to loving God is loving our neighbor. Our eyes should always be open to the needs that arise around us and we should be prepared to use every resource given to us by God to meet those needs and to support and encourage.

The Great Commission

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

This command was given by Jesus to his disciples before he ascended to heaven. As Jesus' disciples today, it applies to us as well. The work of spreading the gospel does not fall on pastors and other church leaders alone, it is a work in which we all get to participate! As individuals, we should think about how we can best share the good news with our children, neighbors, friends, and coworkers. As a church we should think about how we can reach our community, nation, and world.

Core Values

What follows in the rest of this section is taken directly from a paper published in 2006 entitled “The Core Values and Practices of Great Commission Churches.”

It is important to note that these 'values' do not carry the same weight as the items in the Statement of Faith. As we said in that section, the Statement of Faith contains “non-negotiables” that we cling to tightly and must be united around. When it comes to these Core Values, there is room for different views.

Some churches within GCC may emphasize some of these Core Values more than others. As individuals we may hold differing views on some of these items. We are committed to staying united even when those differences exist.

You may personally hold a different position on one or more of these items as they are laid out here, and that is fine. You can still be a member and differ your view of some of these areas. However you should know that these values will be taught at times at conferences, during Sunday messages, or at house church or small group meetings.

The full paper (with more information on how these came to be and how we see some 'flexibility' in these areas) can be found on the GCC web site at www.gccweb.org.

We present these things to you because, in a sense, these values define the 'personality' of our church and GCC. We hope that you see things here that you are excited about and can take ownership of along with us!

The Grace of God

A. VALUES

1. God's grace through Jesus Christ is our bedrock and power supply for our salvation, our life in Christ and our ministry, both individually and as churches (2 Corinthians 9:8).
2. God's grace to those who believe in Christ includes the following:
 - a. Our wonderful forgiveness through the death of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7).
 - b. God's passionate and unconditional love for us in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:19).
 - c. The truth that eternal life is a free gift from God, received by faith apart from our religious or moral works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - d. The power and strengthening God gives us by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:16).
 - e. Our glorious position in Christ as new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17).
 - f. The power given by God to Christians to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil as well as to preserve us in trials and difficult circumstances (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - g. The supernatural power to do ministry (John 15:5; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9).
 - h. The future grace we will receive in heaven and at the return of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13).
 - i. The grace we receive from God to meet whatever need we may have (Hebrews 4:16).
3. Grace will lead to works, and result in fruit in people's lives (Ephesians 2:8- 10).
4. Those who have been born again by the Spirit are eternally secure and will not lose their salvation. (1 Peter 1:3-5).
5. We believe in a balance between God's grace and man's responsibility. We believe the Bible teaches both the sovereign grace of God and the solemn responsibility of man to trust, obey and serve God. (Philippians 2:12-13).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. When we sin, God's grace teaches us not to wallow in shame or make attempts to regain God's favor through our works, since we know we have already been cleansed by the blood of Christ once for all and are eternally accepted by God (Hebrews 10:14, Romans 8:31-39).
2. We aspire to model grace, not legalism, in churches where people can openly deal with their sins, failures, and weaknesses.
3. We aspire to proclaim a message to unbelievers and believers in which the grace of God in Jesus Christ is central.
4. God's grace inspires us to show every consideration to all men, knowing that we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient and deceived and enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, yet God had mercy on us (Titus 3:1-3).

Commitment to God and His Word

A. VALUES

1. Our supreme desire is to glorify God. Our love for God and devotion to Him must be our deepest passion and greatest motivation—more than possessions, human relationships, and personal accomplishments, including ministry accomplishments (Matthew 22:37; Philippians 3:7-8).
2. Our lives and our ministries must aspire to wholehearted devotion to God through worship, through prayer and through studying, memorizing, meditating upon, obeying, and teaching His Word (Ezra 7:10).
3. We value a faith-filled, childlike approach of simply believing and obeying the Scriptures (Matthew 18:3-4; Acts 17:11).
4. Christian maturity is a work of God by the Holy Spirit. We do not believe that simply being a Christian a long time makes a person mature. Rather, following and trusting God and obeying His Word over time are the primary factors in becoming spiritually mature (Psalms 111:10).
5. The Bible is our final authority for doctrine and practice and our instruction manual for life. It is God's revealed communication for matters of our faith, for our personal lives, for raising our families, for our behavior in the workplace, and for all ministry (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
6. We recognize that the Bible is sometimes difficult to understand and was written in different languages and to different cultures than our own and that we must work hard to correctly understand it (2 Timothy 2:15).
7. In determining truth, if there is a conflict between what we believe the Bible teaches and what we believe the sciences or social sciences teach, we will give precedence to our understanding of the Bible (Psalms 1: 1-3).
8. Obedience to God's Word is crucial to an accurate understanding of the Bible. Without such an attitude of humility, His Word becomes mere knowledge which eventually leads to pride and possibly deception (James 1:22).
9. All of us are under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures as our ultimate and final authority. Yet God has given us human authorities that we are to submit to and obey within their God-ordained spheres of authority. Wives should submit to husbands (Ephesians 5:22), children to parents (Ephesians 6:1), church members to elders (1 Peter 5:5), employees to employers (Ephesians 6:5-6), and citizens to the civil government (Romans 13:1-7).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. A common practice for a member in a GCC church is to have a daily devotional time, in prayer and reading the Bible.
2. Another common practice is for church members to have extended times alone with God (at times with fasting) for the sake of personal direction, encouragement, reflection, and spiritual nourishment.
3. We desire to develop our Biblical understanding in community, since listening to different opinions, experiences and perspectives and working them out together inevitably gives us a clearer picture of the true meaning of the Scripture.

All Nations Reached With the Gospel

A. VALUES

1. Out of our love for God and people (The Great Commandment, Matthew 22:37-40), our mission as individuals and as churches is to fulfill the Great Commission—making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that Christ commanded (Matthew 28:18-20.)
2. God’s desire is that every individual in the church personally embrace the Great Commission—that, in one sense, we are all “missionaries” wherever we are located. All believers are to be “on mission,” to do their part in reaching their city, nation, and the world for Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9).
3. While personally embracing this mission, God’s will is that every individual work together with others as a team, serving within his giftedness and unique role as part of that team in fulfilling the Great Commission (Ephesians 4:11-16).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. A practice of churches in our association has been to equip and train members to effectively share their faith with nonbelievers.
2. Our church members take to heart Paul’s words when he said that he “did all things for the sake of the gospel” and consider how their life decisions regarding family, moves, career opportunities, etc. may affect their success in reaching the world.
3. Churches and members in our association seek to be “culturally relevant” to those we are trying to reach with the gospel.
4. Although we aspire to reach all generations with the gospel, we place a special emphasis on ministry to the next generation.
5. Church planting is a key strategy in fulfilling the Great Commission.
6. Participation in short term mission teams, domestically and internationally, has been a common practice of GCC churches.
7. Inspired by Jesus’ call to serve the least in Matthew 25, our churches practice acts of compassion and service to the poor and needy in our local communities and beyond.
8. Based on the example in Acts 1:8, Great Commission churches have generally sought to follow a principle of progressive geographical expansion, reaching people in their city, their region, their nation and the world.
9. In international ministry, we believe both in Christians leaving their own country to spread the gospel to other countries and in entrusting the work to nationals. Because of cultural and language factors, we prefer, whenever possible, to entrust the reaching of a particular country to the nationals that have been saved and raised up.

The Church

A. VALUES

1. God has commissioned and established the local church as His primary means of fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission—loving God and others by winning people to Christ, building them to maturity, raising up leaders, and sending teams to start new churches (1 Timothy 3:15).
2. As patterned in the New Testament, we believe that God sends teams of mature leaders to other cities, regions, and cultures to preach the gospel, gather converts into new churches, establish them in correct doctrine and life practice, and appoint leaders for the new churches. These missionary teams are to be sent out and supported by their local churches. (Acts 13:1-3; 14:21- 28)
3. We value cooperation between Great Commission churches in a geographical region for mutual edification, accountability, and mission endeavors. To facilitate this, our churches partner with “church ministry teams” which coordinate regional mission efforts, encourage pastors, provide accountability, and assist in leadership training (2 Corinthians 8).
4. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of each local church and that each local church, once it has been established and elders appointed, has final human authority over its affairs under Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23).
5. We believe that the church should function as a family, as a body, and as an army. (1 Timothy 5:1-2; Romans 12:4; Ephesians 6:10-18).
6. A key verse used in churches in describing church life is Acts 2:42: “And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
7. We believe that the Scriptures combined with the local church are God’s primary system for providing pastoral care and the healing of souls. While God may lead pastors to refer certain individuals to godly, Biblically based counselors as a supplement, this works best when it is coordinated with the efforts of the church and its leaders (2 Timothy 3:16, Ephesians 4:15-16).
8. While God can use outside authors, teachers, and seminars to supplement the ministry of the Word in each local church (1 Corinthians 4:15), God desires the local church to be the primary source of preaching and teaching of the Scriptures for the building up of believers.

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. It is typical for churches to organize around small groups for building friendships, Bible study, accountability, outreach, providing pastoral care and developing leaders.
2. It is a common practice in churches in our association for members to be “best friends,” sharing their lives together, in community, throughout the week.
3. As an example to the world, the church is to live in integrity and holiness. In that regard, occasionally, it has been necessary to exercise church discipline for individuals who are unrepentant of known sin.
4. GCC church members are encouraged to practice tithing, financially supporting the local church leadership and church ministries by giving the first 10% of their income to the local church. In addition, the common practice is for each local church to financially support its GCC church ministry team by tithing to that team.

Church Leadership

A. VALUES

1. Recognizing Christ as the Head of the church, we further recognize that He has appointed certain men of character to be spiritual elders, or pastors in the local church. These men have the final human authority in their church's affairs and decisions (Titus 1:5).
2. We believe that the terms "elder," "overseer," and "pastor" each refer to the same position (Acts 20:17, 28).
3. The New Testament model is that of a Christ-centered submissive plurality of pastors rather than a single pastor leadership structure (Acts 14:23; Phil, 1:1).
4. Elder/pastors are to be appointed based upon the character qualities described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
5. Leadership in the church must be radically different from leadership in the world. The greatest in the church must be the servant of all. Church leaders are to be humble servants, aggressively teachable, responsive to criticism, and models of always learning, growing, and improving.
6. We believe that the character qualities and doctrinal understanding needed to become an elder/pastor/overseer are best developed within the local church. We view additional training (such as that offered by Bible schools or seminaries) not as a qualification for a pastor, but rather as a possible supplement to the equipping of a pastor within the local church (Titus 1:5).
7. We value and esteem women in the church and encourage their ministry in various roles, but in accordance with the New Testament, we reserve the office of elder/pastor/overseer for men alone (1 Timothy 3:1; 2:12).
8. A pastor/elder is to be a servant, modeling Christ-like humility, teachability and love, as well as a leader, demonstrating faith, courage and strength in managing the church (Luke 22:26; Hebrews 13:7).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. Churches in our association have practiced a plurality of elders model with elders having equal authority in the church, rather than a traditional senior pastor model. Some churches have chosen to select one of the elders to provide servant-leadership to the community of elders for the management of the church. Yet, even in these cases, the church is being led by Jesus Christ through the community of elders, not through just one man.
2. In GCC churches, the practice is for elders to be active as the spiritual leaders in the church, whether or not they are paid church employees.
3. Our practice in Great Commission Churches is to encourage men and women to share the word of God with each other (Col. 3:16)—but to do so in a way that does not violate 1 Timothy 2:12: "I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man." How this verse is interpreted and applied varies somewhat from church to church and culture to culture.
4. In Great Commission Churches our preference is to have more than one elder in each church. However, where this does not exist, our preferred practice is for that one elder to select a group of mature men to act as an advisory group in order to protect, encourage, and confirm him in his leadership of the church.
5. Although there are exceptions, our general practice is to develop and appoint leaders (elders and staff) from within the local church.

Oneness (Love and Unity)

A. VALUES

1. We strongly revere the “doctrine of love and unity” within all of Christendom. God desires unity between believers as a high priority and we strive to maintain a unity with every believer, both within and without our association (Ephesians 4:3).
2. We believe that our unity must be centered in Jesus Christ and in the truth of the gospel and of the scripture. Unity is maintained and enhanced as we believe and obey the scriptures, unite in a common vision, and follow the Lord together.
3. We value a deep “Jonathan-David” covenant love and loyalty for one another, particularly among leaders in churches, regions, nationally and internationally (1 Samuel 18:1).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. For the sake of the gospel and the Great Commission, our practice has been to avoid divisive arguments on “gray areas” of doctrine.
2. When disunity arises on ministry and doctrinal issues, our practice is to encourage leaders to persevere in seeking unity so that the church can move forward.
3. When members have a disagreement with the leadership on secondary issues, our practice is to grant full fellowship to that member as long as he/she respects the teaching of the elders and does not create strife or disunity through that issue.
4. One reason that we advocate an elder-led (versus a congregational led) structure is that it promotes and encourages unity in the church.
5. Recognizing the spiritual warfare that exists and that our enemy seeks to divide, we place a high value on building and maintaining unity between elders and between their wives.
6. We promote the practice of church members being empathetic listeners, humbly seeking first to understand and then to be understood (Romans 12:15; James 1:19).
7. We promote the practice of defending and believing the best of one another, and not receiving an accusation against another person or an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. (1 Timothy 5:19)
8. We seek to honor, love, pray for, and cooperate with God-fearing and Bible- believing churches and leaders in our cities and regions. Our goal is not to compete with other churches but to cooperate as allies in furthering the Kingdom of God.
9. In international ministry we aspire to support, cooperate with and honor the national Christians in each country, striving for the unity Jesus prayed for in John 17. We believe that God will honor our church planting efforts as we first humbly seek counsel from and unity with national Christian leaders in each country.

Raising Godly Families

A. VALUES

1. We believe that strong families are foundational for the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development of each individual; for healthy relational patterns within the church; and for stability in society. Strong families produce strong churches and strong communities (Ephesians 5:22-6:4).
2. We value both the husband and the wife mutually loving and honoring one another, in following Christ's supreme example. We also promote differing but complementary roles in the family with the husband as the head of the household, loving and leading his wife, and his wife honoring, supporting, and submitting to her husband wholeheartedly (Ephesians 5:22-33).
3. We believe that human sexuality is a gift and is to be celebrated and practiced exclusively within the marriage covenant between one man and one woman. Therefore, in accordance with the Bible, we consider homosexuality, adultery and fornication to be sin (1 Corinthians 6:9).
4. We believe that life is a gift from God that begins at conception and should be valued and protected at all stages of development and ability (Psalms 139:13- 16).
5. We aspire to provide compassionate ministry to those who are divorced while at the same time teaching that God hates divorce and wants couples to stay married. Churches in our association (with some exceptions) generally teach that God permits remarriage after divorce in two instances—marital infidelity or if an unbeliever leaves a believing spouse. (Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7:15).
6. Parents are responsible for their child's upbringing in matters of spiritual, academic, and personal training. The means each parent uses to fulfill this responsibility will vary—and includes the parent choosing other people or institutions in that training, such as local churches, home school resources, public schools, and Christian school (Ephesians 6:4).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. When we evaluate a married man for leadership, we look at the strength of his marriage and his family before evaluating his ministry skills and other credentials.
2. Although ministry is important, we hold that one's home life takes precedence over ministry outside the home.
3. Our practice is to encourage families to be "on mission," actively involved in evangelism, discipleship and church planting.
4. Our practice is to affirm those whom God has led to be single in a desire to have an undistracted devotion to the Lord.
5. A common practice for families in our churches is to train children in accordance with the wisdom and instructions found in the book of Proverbs, including godly parental example, verbal instruction and correction, and spanking.

Every Member a Minister

A. VALUES

1. Rather than a clergy-laity system, we affirm the “priesthood of all believers.” All Christians are “priests,” according to 1 Peter 2:5-9, empowered through the Holy Spirit to worship God and be workers in the church and the world.
2. The elders have the responsibility to train and equip the members in ministry, but not to actually perform all of the ministry of the church (Ephesians 4:11-16).
3. God desires each member to utilize his or her unique spiritual gifts in ministry (1 Peter 4:10-11).
4. All ministry is in vain without the help of, and our reliance upon, the Holy Spirit. He is our source of power in the church and in the believer. He is our Helper in all matters of faith, service, and direction (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

B. COMMON PRACTICES

1. Churches in our association seek to equip members with certain basic spiritual disciplines such as daily devotional times, serving in the church, sharing the Word with believers, and sharing the gospel with unbelievers.
2. From the example of the Jerusalem church in Acts 8:1-4, the practice of many church members has been to voluntarily and spontaneously spread the gospel to new areas and new people groups, without relying upon pastors or paid staff.
3. While encouraging the use of spiritual gifts, most churches in our association have understood some of the gifts to be “sign” gifts, whose purpose is to authenticate the message to unbelievers. For example, most would understand the gift of tongues to be the super-natural ability to speak a known language as a sign to unbelievers (Acts 2), rather than a “private prayer language,” as taught by many charismatic churches.
4. Our practice has been to allow both pastors and non-pastors to baptize a new believer and to administer the breaking of bread (communion).
5. Our historical practice is for our church’s ministry to be both centralized (in a rented or church-owned building) and decentralized—ministry performed by church members in homes and in the marketplace (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:20).

Belong

Being a Growing and Contributing Member of Summitview

The Importance of the Local Church

The local church is how you and I 'function' as a part of God's universal church. In this session, we are going to look at some different ways that the Bible describes the local church, then we will move on to some specific attributes of Summitview Community Church.

The New Testament uses many word pictures to describe the local church. Here are some of them:

- A Family (Ephesians 3:15)
- An Army (2 Timothy 2:3)
- A Body (1 Corinthians 12)
- A Flock (John 10:27)
- A Fellowship (Acts 2:42)
- A Building (Ephesians 2:21-22)

What do all these have in common?

Individual parts or members combine together to create something that is _____ than just a sum of the parts.

The Church Is a Family

I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.
2 Corinthians 6:18

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.
1 Timothy 5:1,2

God's family values _____.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
Ephesians 4:3

...stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.
Philippians 1:27

God's family has life transforming _____.

The "one another verses" contain 33 different commands given over 50 times.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
John 13:34

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
Romans 12:10

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
Romans 15:7

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.
Galatians 5:13

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
Ephesians 4:2

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
Ephesians 5:21

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
Colossians 3:16

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
1 Thessalonians 5:11

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.
Hebrews 10:24

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
James 5:16

God's family is _____ to one another.

... God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'
Hebrews 13:5

As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
John 13:34

Keep on loving each other as brothers
Hebrews 13:1

The Church Is an Army

An army has an _____.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-21

You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.

Matthew 5:13, 14

An army has an _____.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Ephesians 6:11

An army makes _____.

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:3

The Church Is a Body

Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others.

Romans 12:4 (LIV)

The church grows through its connection with _____, the Head.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:15-16

Each part has been given a _____ purpose.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7

But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ... The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable ... God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

selected from 1 Corinthians 12:18-27

Each part exists for the sake of the _____.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:10

The Church Is a Flock

Therefore it is cared for and led by _____.

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow-elder... Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:1-3

The _____ appoints leaders for a local church.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 20:28

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leadership position:

"Poimen"	(Shepherd, Pastor)
"Presbuteros"	(Elder)
"Episcopos"	(overseer, bishop)

The primary qualifications for leadership in the church are _____ related.

Now the overseer must be:

<i>above reproach</i>	<i>the husband of but one wife</i>	<i>temperate</i>
<i>self-controlled</i>	<i>respectable</i>	<i>hospitable</i>
<i>able to teach</i>	<i>not given to drunkenness</i>	<i>not violent but gentle</i>
<i>not quarrelsome</i>	<i>not a lover of money</i>	

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1 Timothy 3:2-7 (See also Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3)

God charges pastors to lead as servants who will give _____.

your leaders...keep watch over you as men who must give an account.

Hebrews 13:17

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow-elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:1-3

Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Matthew 20:25-28

God calls Christians to trust that _____ through the elders he has appointed.

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:7

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Hebrews 13:17

Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

1 Timothy 5:19,20

The Church Is a Fellowship

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and ...devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:41,42

A fellowship is a group of people who _____ and are _____ a common goal or interest. For the church, that goal is knowing and pleasing the Lord Jesus Christ.

So let us concentrate on the things that make for harmony and the growth of our fellowship together.

Romans 14:19 (Ph)

Anyone who claims to be a Christian and also claims the right to a habit of life that opposes what Christ taught should no longer be recognized as a part of that fellowship.

I have written to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

1 Corinthians 5:9-15

If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him... Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

2 Thessalonians 3:14,15

[Jesus said,] "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Matthew 18:15-17

The Church Is a Building, That Is, God's Temple

you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:5

...you are...God's building...you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you

1 Corinthians 3:9,16

God's financial provision for the church is the _____ as it was for the temple of the Old Testament - the giving of His people.

Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:13,14

The church is more than an organization or club that we join. Our membership in the church is to be an integral part of our life. In it we are to have our closest and most life changing relationships (*like a family*), we connect with the greatest purpose to which we could give our lives (*like an army*), and we discover the unique gifts God has given us to offer others (*like a body*). We also discover that God has provided leadership to help us grow (*a flock*), a pursuit of a Christ like life that unites us (*a fellowship*), and that the church has become the temple of God, financially supported by those who are part of it (*a building*).

Our Organization

Growing Bigger and Smaller through Serving One Another

The pattern of the first century church life seemed to be marked by _____, consisting of large meetings with the entire church and small meetings in homes.

We believe this simple pattern provides all that is necessary in the _____ church schedule to carry out God's purposes for the church.

Our church is structured so that the ongoing schedule involves members in a number of ways. Here are some of these opportunities. Ultimately the goal for each of these (and all we do as a church) is _____.

Large Group Meeting on Sunday Mornings

Worship

Teaching

Outreach

House Church Meetings

Also for worship and teaching, but in a smaller context in someone's home, house churches meet twice a month. House church members also often meet (on weeks the house church does not meet) in even smaller environments, sometimes in small groups (8-20 adults) in homes and sometimes in men's and women's groups.

The idea of Summitview's house church plan is to create a _____ environment within the larger church that gives an opportunity for everyone to be involved. They do not stand alone but only work in conjunction with Sunday morning meetings and with the smaller group meetings that 'grow' out of the house church relationships.

Small Group Meetings

"Much of the Christian life is caught, not taught."

House churches break down even further into smaller groups. Sometimes these are small groups of adults that meet together regularly in people's homes (perhaps 8-20 adults). Sometimes they are men's groups or women's groups.

These small groups and house churches are a big part of how we see God working at Summitview. Small groups and house church are often the _____ places - and sometimes the _____ places - to fulfill the "one another" commands for the church.

Through these groups, nearly all the _____ group functions of the New Testament church can be accomplished.

Fellowship
Discipleship
Support
Accountability
Friendship
Encouragement
Worship
Outreach

The intent of small groups is that members would _____ spiritually and the group would grow numerically and _____ into new small groups over time.

Individual Relationships

Often as people get to know one another better and gain a hunger to grow in their knowledge of Jesus and in their desire to learn how to live like Him, they will seek out individuals (or small groups of 3 or 4) to meet regularly. These are environments where people can challenge one another at deeper levels, where honesty and accountability are critical.

This type of intense relationship is not for everybody, but for those who desire such path, we strongly encourage it.

Ministries That Make the Church Possible

...serve one another in love.
Galatians 5:13

Our emphasis at Summitview is that God's work is accomplished more effectively by _____ relationships than by _____ ministries. Therefore the number of ministries in the church is kept small.

Even with this emphasis there are hundreds of serving positions that are _____ to enable us to "serve one another" effectively.

We believe that the serving necessary to enable the church to fulfill its purpose is both an opportunity and a responsibility that is part of the life of _____ Christian.

In summary, the structure of Summitview is kept _____. The general church schedule consists of:

a regular _____ group meeting,
a regular _____ group and _____ church meeting,
and _____ the church through a needed ministry.

Our Strategy

“One Life at a Time, One World in Our Lifetime”

Part One: “One Life at a Time,...”

The Diamond - One Person’s Pathway

Getting People up to Bat -

Connecting with the World We Live In.

As a church we are committed to pursuing a seamless and relevant _____ with our community. We desire to provide every opportunity we can for people in our community to hear the message of the Gospel.

- City-wide Outreaches
- Community Service
- Small Group or House Church Activities

First Base - Committing to Membership

Growing through being part of the body.

- Membership Class 101
- Membership Covenant

Second Base - Committing to Maturity

Growing through walking with God.

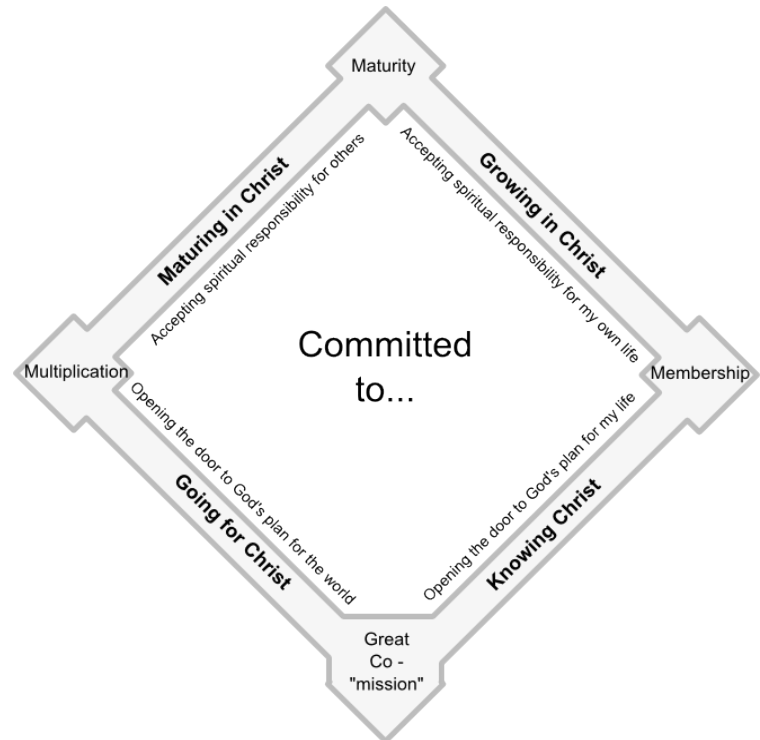
- Christianity 201
- Bible reading, prayer, giving, fellowship and personal life management.
- Maturity Covenant

Third Base - Committing to Multiplication

Growing through helping others grow.

- Involvement in active personal discipleship
- Involvement in small group or church multiplication
- Leadership training (Great Commission Leadership Institute, for example)
- Small group or house church leadership

These steps toward Christian maturity in Summitview are accessible to _____.



Our goal as a church is to support people, one individual at a time, in taking each of the steps that bring them to full _____ in Christ.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

The _____ and leaders of Summitview are developed largely by growing through each one of these steps.

Part Two: "...One World in Our Lifetime."

Jesus told His first "church" that He had plans for them that began in their own town, continued into other _____, then on to places they would consider the very ends of the earth.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8

His plans for His churches is no different today. Jesus' goal for our church is to fulfill his purposes in our own _____ and then multiply that process into other places in our country and _____.

In 1984 a group of college students and other young people set out from a Great Commission Association of Churches (now Great Commission Churches) location in Ames, Iowa for a summer outreach in Fort Collins. That led to the planting of a church there later that year. Over time Summitview Community Church of Fort Collins began to grow, and more members and pastors were added.

In 1995, Summitview of Loveland was started by a pastor and families from the Fort Collins Church. Then in 1999, families from the Loveland church started a church in Salt Lake City. As of 2009, that church has now multiplied to three churches with two in the Salt Lake area and one in Provo.

In 1997, Steve Nelson's family and 16 other adults brought their families from Fort Collins and came here to Greeley to start this church. In 1999, Perry Paulding and his family moved back from Iowa to Greeley to help with the church. Then in 2001, Perry was recognized as the second pastor. In 2007, Doug Dale was recognized as another pastor in Greeley, taking the place of Steve Nelson who joins a team from the Greeley and Fort Collins churches to plant a church called The Rio in El Paso, Texas.

Many other churches were planted across the country and around the world during those same years that the three Summitview churches were growing and multiplying in Northern Colorado and beyond. That is the legacy that we are a part of and it is the vision that we will continue to pursue in the years to come. As the Spirit leads and God provides the people and resources, we will continue to plant churches from this one. Just as we expect our small groups to grow and multiply in order to reach more and more people, we expect the same from our church as a whole.

Our Affiliation

Summitview Community Church is part of Great Commission Churches (GCC – previously known as Great Commission Association and then Great Commission Association of Churches). GCC had an informal beginning in 1969 when a group of young people, moved by the example of what God had done in the book of Acts, began starting student fellowships with a goal of pursuing the Great Commission given by Jesus.

Summitview also works with GCC's sister organization, Great Commission Ministries which focuses on campus and international ministry. Great Commission Latin America and Great Commission Europe are also part of the family of ministries with which we are associated.

The Association now consists of over 100 churches and campus ministries in the United States. There are also many churches throughout the world, including places such as Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the Ukraine, Germany, and a number of countries in Central and South America. Support from churches in GCC was instrumental in establishing this church and has also been a help in starting each of our new congregations.

More information about GCC and the exciting things that are happening throughout the world through its members can be found at the literature table, by asking one of the pastors, or by looking up www.gccweb.org and www.gcmweb.org on the Internet.

Why Membership?

Whether membership in a church is formal or informal, there is a difference between “attenders” and “members” that can be summed up in one word: _____.

Making a definite commitment to be part of a local church is important for at least 4 reasons:

A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers & hoppers”. Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

A Practical Reason: It defines who can be counted on

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. A membership commitment identifies our family.

A Personal Reason: It produces spiritual growth

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

A Biblical Reason: Christ is committed to the church

*...Christ loved the church, and he gave his life for it.
Ephesians 5:25*

At Summitview, formal membership is our way of clearly communicating who we are and what we value as a church family, and offering people a clear way to become part of that family.

Is Membership Required?

No. You are welcome to be a part of our church without committing to formal membership. It is not required in order to serve within the church (with the exception of leadership positions). However, membership is a way to declare that you are a part of our church family and are united with our vision.

What Is Expected of Me as a Member?

At Summitview we would never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

Summitview Membership Covenant (Member Copy)

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized as He commands, and having attended or listened to the four Summitview Community Church of Greeley membership class sessions and being in agreement with Summitview's Belief Statement, structure, strategy, and affiliation, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Summitview church family. In doing so, I commit to living in a way that honors God, with the understanding that the church has a biblical obligation to exercise church discipline as set forth by Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:15-17. I submit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will be faithful to honor God as a part of my church

...by attending regularly with a heart to grow as a Christian

Let us not give up meeting together, ... but let us encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:25)

...by living a godly life

*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
(Philippians 1:27)*

...by regular financial giving to God through my church

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits... (Proverbs 3:9)

2. I will unite with the goals of my church

...by inviting others to attend and welcoming those who do

*Love must be sincere... Honor one another above yourselves... Practice hospitality.
(Romans 12:9,13)*

...by supporting the changes that growth brings

For I have come ...not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. (John 6:38)

...by serving my church with the gifts and talents God has given me

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)

3. I will support the leaders of my church

...by praying for them

Brothers, pray for us. (1 Thessalonians 5:25)

...by following their leadership

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

...by refusing to gossip

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29)

4. I will love the fellow members of my church

...by pursuing the standard of relationship with them described by the "one another" verses in the Bible.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34)

...by refraining from that which produces disunity or division between members.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)

...by being open and accountable to others for the sake of my Christian growth.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Please keep this copy in your notebook. If you desire to become a member of Summitview, please sign and turn in the copy on the next page to one of the pastors.

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Name (please print – one person per form please) _____

Signature _____ Date _____