

DISCOVERING MEMBERSHIP AT FCFMC

You Belong!

“...This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You’re no longer strangers or outsiders. You **belong** here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone.” **Ephesians 2:19, The Message**

Why Membership?

- 1. Commitment** - Be part of God’s family.
Unite yourself with Christ’s body by committing to a church family.

“...All of you together are Christ’s body and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.” **1 Corinthians 12:27, NLT**

- 2. Accountability** - Be a growing part of God’s family.
Allow your church family to challenge you to grow.

‘If another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path... share each other’s troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.’ **Galatians 6:1-2, NLT**

- 3. Ministry** – Be a contributing part of God’s family.
Contribute for the good of your church family and the world.

“As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love: **Ephesians 4:16, NLT**

What Makes FCFMC a Family?

Four things that unite us:

- **Our Salvation** (What God has done for us)
- **Our Purpose** (Why we exist as a church)
- **Our Commitments** (What we believe and how we live)
- **Our Structure** (How you and I fit into a bigger picture)

Welcome

to this introduction to membership at Frankford Community Free Methodist Church. We're glad you've chosen to find out more about FCFMC.

This seminar is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have people from different backgrounds, this seminar is designed to clarify who and what our church is.

This introduction to FCFMC is divided into three parts and is taught by our Pastor so that you have an opportunity to become acquainted with him and to understand the VISION and PHILOSOPHY of FCFMC.



SALVATION AND SACRAMENTS AT FCFMC

“For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26-28, NLT

- What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- The Sacrament of The Lord's Supper

What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

Many people live their entire lives without ever knowing “WHY?” They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or what God's purpose is for their lives. The most basic question anyone can ask is, “*What is the meaning of my life?*” Every person wants to be happy. People try many ways to seek it:

- ... Some look for happiness by **acquiring possessions**.
- ... Some look for happiness by **experiencing pleasure**.
- ... Some look for happiness by **gaining prestige and power**.

However, real happiness comes from understanding my purpose in life.

A. Why Am I Here?

1. God made me to love me!

“Long before he laid down earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!)”
Ephesians 1:4-5, The Message

2. We were created to enjoy a personal relationship with God and to manage all of the rest of God’s creation! This makes us special!

“So God created human beings in his own image. ... Then God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it.’” Genesis 1:27-28, NLT

“Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.” 1 Timothy 6:17, NLT

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10, NIV

When we know and love God and live in harmony with His purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| ◆ Clear Conscience
Romans 8:1 | ◆ Life & Peace
Romans 8:6 | ◆ Purpose
ROMANS 8:28 | ◆ Help with Weakness
Romans 8:26 |
| ◆ Confidence/Security
Romans 8:31 | ◆ Power & Strength
Romans 8:39 | ◆ Fulfilment
Philippians 4:13 | ◆ Freedom
Philippians 4:19 |

This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then are so many people unhappy?

B. What is the problem?

1. People have a natural inclination to be boss and to ignore God's principles for living.

"Look out for Number 1. Do your own thing."
"It's my life and I'll do what I please!"

2. The Bible calls this attitude sin.

"We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way." Isaiah 53:6, The Message

*"If we claim we have no sin, we are **only fooling ourselves** and not living in the truth." 1 John 1:8, NLT*

"It's your sins that have cut you off from God." Isaiah 59:2, NLT

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." Romans 3:23, NLT

When our relationship with God isn't right it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives – marriage, family, career, relationships, finances, etc.

When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before they turn to God.

"There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 16:25, NIV

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

"My mother was a Christian so..." "I'll give up all my bad habits."
"I'll work real hard and earn it." "I'll be religious and go to church."

C. What is The Solution?

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have come. He **alone** is the **way!** **Jesus has already taken care of the problem of your sin!**

Jesus Christ said, "***I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.***"
John 14:6, NIV

*"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life **through** Jesus Christ our Lord."*
Romans 6:23, NLT

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

"God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."
Romans 5:8, NLT

"There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and human beings. He is the man Christ Jesus."
1 Timothy 2:5, NIV

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. When we learn of how God restores us to Himself, we need to individually accept what He has done for us.

D. What Does God Want Me To Do?

1. Admit God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive you for ignoring Him.
(Sin is choosing to ignore God and His ways.)

*“If we **confess** our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” 1 John 1:9, NLT*

2. Believe He was raised from the dead and is alive today.

*“If you **confess** with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and **believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9, NLT*

3. Accept God's free gift of salvation. You can't earn it, so don't try!

*“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is **not a reward** for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.” Ephesians 2:8-9, NLT*

4. Invite Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life.

*“But to all who **believed** him and **accepted** him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.” John 1:12-13, NLT*

*“Everyone who **calls on the name** of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13, NLT*

5. Live a new life because of God's grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must **continue to follow him**.” Colossians 2:6, NLT*

*“We keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to **live a life worthy** of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored **because of the way you live**, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, NLT*

*“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to **help you and be with you** forever -the Spirit of truth... You know him, for **he lives with you** and will be in you.” John 14:15-17, NIV*

Jesus gave His followers two visible symbols of salvation. In the church today we call them *sacraments* (outward signs of what God has done inside us). They are **Baptism** and **The Lord's Supper** (also called Holy Communion or The Eucharist).

The Sacrament of Baptism

A. Why Should I Be Baptised?

1. Christ commanded it.

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.’”

Matthew 28:18-19, NLT

2. Baptism illustrates Christ's promise to create a new life in me through the death and resurrection of Christ.

“Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection, God raising you from the dead as he did Christ.” Colossians 2:12, The Message

“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT

3. Baptism illustrates my acceptance by God into the Christian community.

“Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 12:13, NLT

Baptism does not make you a believer--it declares that you **already believe**. Baptism is like a wedding ring: it's the outward symbol of the inward commitment you made to trust Christ as a new believer. The water is a symbol of cleansing and symbolizes that your sins have been washed away by Christ.

B. How May I Be Baptized?

The Free Methodist Church offers 3 methods of baptism:

- ◆ **By immersion** = a person is dipped under the water.
- ◆ **By sprinkling** = water is sprinkled on a person's head.
- ◆ **By pouring** = water is poured over a person's head.

All three can be meaningful moments of commitment. The method of your baptism is not as important as your public profession of your faith in Christ. If you were baptized as an infant, you need to now publicly declare your decision to follow Christ.

C. When Should I Be Baptized?

As soon as possible after you have put your faith in Christ.

*“Those who believed ... were baptized and added to the church **that day**.”* Acts 2:41, NLT

Baptism is not the sign that you are perfect. It is a symbol of Christ's acceptance of you and your acceptance of Him. It represents that you have decided to follow Jesus.

The Sacrament Of The Lord's Supper

Jesus never asked His followers to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection.

A. What Is The Lord's Supper? (Based on Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11)

1. It is a simple act.

"On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread." 1 Corinthians 11:23) NIV

2. It is a reminder.

"...and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.'" (11:24)

3. It is a symbol.

"In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people - an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.'" (11:25)

4. It is a profession of faith.

"For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again." (11:26)

5. It is a continual observance.

"Do this to remember me as often as you drink it" (11:25)

6. It is a means of grace.

"When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ?" (10:16)

B. Who Should Take The Lord's Supper?

Those who understand and believe.

"If you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself." 1 Corinthians 11:29, NLT

C. How Do I Prepare Myself For The Lord's Supper?

Personal preparation comes by way of self examination.

"Anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup." 1 Corinthians 11:27-28, NLT

Personal preparation comes by...

◆ **Self-Examination**

1 Corinthians 11:27

◆ **Confessing my sins**

1 John 1:9

◆ **Restoring Relationships**

Matthew 5:23-24

◆ **Faith in Christ's Sufficiency**

Ephesians 2:8-9

◆ **Re-commitment**

Romans 12:1

D. How Often Should I Take The Lord's Supper?

As often as you can! It's a special means by which the Lord draws near to strengthen you in your faith.

VISION AND MINISTRY AT FCFMC

*“Live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church.
Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”*

1 Corinthians 1:10, NLT

- Free Methodist Church In Canada Vision & Mission
- Our (FCFMC's) Vision & Mission

Free Methodist Church in Canada Vision

It is the vision of The Free Methodist Church in Canada to see healthy churches within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond.

Free Methodist Church in Canada Mission

Find, befriend and introduce seeking people to Jesus Christ and the fellowship of his people.

Mature those who desire to grow in Christlikeness.

Commission prepared people to purposeful service.

Interpret life theologically. Invest resources strategically.

Celebrate that God's presence and power makes all things possible.

Our (FCFMC'S) Vision

Show Christ to Quinte West.

Our (FCFMC'S) Mission

F <u>allow</u>	Jesus with our heart, soul, mind, & strength (discipleship)
C <u>elebrate</u>	God's presence & power in our lives (worship)
F <u>ind</u>	befriend and introduce seeking people to Jesus Christ and the fellowship of his people (evangelism)
M <u>ature</u>	those who desire to grow (discipleship)
C <u>ommission</u>	prepared people to purposeful service (ministry)

These are based on the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39) & the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), as well as other teachings in Scripture.

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.”
Matthew 22:37-39, NLT

“Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.”
Matthew 28:19-20, NLT

“...speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body ... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” **Ephesians 4:15-16, NIV**

1. We exist to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.” **Matthew 28:20, NLT**

“Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.’” **Matthew 16:24, NLT**

Following means obedience, doing what Jesus told us to do. **(Luke 6:46)**

Following means change, reordering our hearts, minds and lives to the way of Jesus.

(Romans 12:2)

Following means sacrifice, giving our lives as Jesus did for the good of others.

(Matthew 16:24)

Following means reward, receiving the temporal & eternal benefits of a life lived for Jesus.

(Mark 10:29-30)

2. We exist to celebrate God’s presence and power in our lives.

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. **Matthew 22:37, NLT**

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.” **Romans 12:1, The Message**

“It’s who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That’s the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration.”

John 4:23-24, The Message

Expressions of Worship

- | | | |
|--------------|--|-----------|
| ◆ Singing | ◆ Participating in the sacraments (baptism, Lord’s supper) | ◆ Praying |
| ◆ Meditating | ◆ Commitment or re-commitment of your life to God | ◆ Giving |
| ◆ Obedience | ◆ Hearing or Reading the Word | |

3. We exist to find, befriend and introduce seeking people to Jesus Christ and the fellowship of his people.

*“Go and make disciples of **all the nations**.” Matthew 28:19, NLT*

“Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.” Matthew 10:6-8, The Message

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him **unless someone tells them?**” Romans 10:13-14, NLT*

Why Our Church Must Never Stop Growing

a) Because God wants everyone to be saved.

*“The Lord is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but **everyone** to come to repentance.”
2 Peter 3:9, NV*

See also: 2 Corinthians 5:14; Luke 15:3-10; Matthew 9:12-13

b) Because there is always always room for more.

*“Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, **so that the house will be full.**” Luke 14:23, NLT*

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me **everywhere.**” Acts 1:8, NLT*

c) Because God wants it to grow.

*“...he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and **it grows as God nourishes it.**” Colossians 2:19, NLT*

*“I [Jesus] will **build my church.**” Matthew 16:18, NLT*

Non-Biblical Excuses For Not Growing

“God isn’t interested in numbers.”

“Large churches are impersonal.”

“Our church wants quality, not quantity.”

4. We exist to mature those who desire to grow.

*“Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to **maturity**.” Hebrews 6:1, NIV*

*“**Grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18, NIV*

*“He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ’s followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ’s body, the church, until we’re all ... **fully mature** adults, **fully developed** within and without, **fully alive** like Christ.”*

Ephesians 4:11-13, The Message

The core of the discipleship process in our church is the small group. Every member needs to be part of one. It is in these groups that we can grow close in seeking God, supporting one another, and encouraging one another to grow.

5. We exist to commission prepared people to purposeful service.

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39, NLT

*“From him the whole body ... grows and builds itself up in love, as **each part does its work**” Ephesians 4:16, NIV*

*“Each person is **given something to do** that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful...”*

1 Corinthians 12:7-8, The Message

“Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.” Matthew 10:6-8, The Message

*“**On your way!** But be careful—this is hazardous work. You’re like lambs in a wolf pack.” Luke 10:3, The Message*

We minister to our Christian family. (John 15:12-17; John 13:35)

We minister to anyone in need. (Matthew 25:31-40)

OUR COMMITMENTS AT FCFMC

- What We Believe
- How We Live

What We Believe

A. Three Key Attitudes:

- ♦ In **essential** beliefs – we have **unity**. (Ephesians 4:4-6)
- ♦ In **non-essential** beliefs – we have **liberty**. (Romans 14:1,4,12,22)
- ♦ In **all** our beliefs – we show **charity**. (1 Corinthians 13:2)

B. The Apostle's Creed

The essentials of the Christian faith are summarized in the three sentences of "The Apostles' Creed" written in 390 A.D. The word "creed" comes from the Latin word *credo* meaning "I believe".

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Reflections on the Apostles' Creed

As you read the creed, you will realize that we believe:

God is all powerful. God is the Creator. Jesus Christ is God. The Holy Spirit is God . A person's sin can be forgiven. The virgin birth, death, bodily resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus Christ are true. The Church is a world-wide fellowship of Christians as well as a local body ("catholic" means "universal"). Healthy Christians ("saints") share with and assist each other in a church. There will be bodily resurrection when Christ comes again. Beyond this life, there is life that never ends. Amen!

C. The 21 “Articles of Religion” of the Free Methodist Church

- ◆ Develop the essential teachings of The Apostles' Creed more fully from a Methodist perspective.
- ◆ Express the beliefs of Free Methodists around the world.

WHAT FREE METHODISTS BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

The Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, the maker and preserver of all things. In the unity of this Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one in eternity, deity, and purpose; everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. (*Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 3:13-15; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3; 5:19-23; 14:9-11; 16:13-15; 2 Cor3:14*)

The Son

His Incarnation

God was Himself in Jesus Christ to reconcile people to God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, He joined together the deity of God and the humanity of humankind. Jesus of Nazareth was God in human flesh, truly God and truly human. He came to save us.

For us the Son of God suffered, was crucified, dead and buried. He poured out His life as a blameless sacrifice for our sin and transgressions. We gratefully acknowledge that He is our Saviour, the one perfect mediator between God and us. (*Matt 1:21; 20:20; 26:27-28; Luke 1:35; 19:10; John 1:1, 10, 14; 2 Cor 5:18-19; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:17; 9:14-15*)

His Resurrection and Exaltation

Jesus Christ is risen victorious from the dead. His resurrected body became more glorious, not hindered by ordinary human limitations. Thus He ascended into heaven. There He sits as our exalted Lord at the right hand of God the Father, where He intercedes for us until His enemies shall be brought into complete subjection. He will return to judge all people. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (*Matt 25:31-32; Luke 24:1-7; 24:39; John 20:19; Acts 1:9-11; 2:24; Romans 8:33-34; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:1-4*)

The Holy Spirit

His Person—

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. Proceeding from the Father and the Son, He is one with them, the eternal Godhead; equal in deity, majesty, and power. He is God effective in Creation, in life, and in the church. The incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. He continues to reveal, interpret, and glorify the Son. (*Matt 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15*)

His Work in Salvation

The Holy Spirit is the administrator of the salvation planned by the Father and provided by the Son's death, resurrection, and ascension. He is the effective agent in our conviction, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. He is our Lord's ever-present self, indwelling, assuring, and enabling the believer. (*John 16:7-8; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:9, 14-16; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 4:6*)

His Relation to the Church

The Holy Spirit is poured out upon the church by the Father and the Son. He is the church's life and witnessing power. He bestows the love of God and makes real the lordship of Jesus Christ in the believer so that both His gifts of words and service may achieve the common good, and build and increase the church. In relation to the world He is the Spirit of truth, and His instrument is the Word of God. (*Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Peter 1:21*)

WHAT FREE METHODISTS BELIEVE ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE

Authority

The Bible is God's written Word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit. It bears unerring witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word. As attested by the early church and subsequent councils, it is the trustworthy record of God's revelation, completely truthful in all it affirms. It has been faithfully preserved and proves itself true in human experience. The Scriptures have come to us through human authors who wrote, as God moved them, in the languages and literary forms of their times. God continues, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to speak through this Word to each generation and culture. The Bible has authority over all human life. It teaches the truth about God, His creation, His people, His one and only Son, and the destiny of all humankind. It also teaches the way of salvation and the life of faith. Whatever is not found in the Bible nor can be proved by it is not to be required as an article of belief or as necessary to salvation. (*Deuteronomy 4:2; 28:9; Psalm 19:7-11; John 14:26; 17:17; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21*)

Authority of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New. Both Testaments bear witness to God's salvation in Christ; both speak of God's will for His people. The ancient laws for ceremonies and rites, and the civil precepts for the nation Israel are not necessarily binding on Christians today. But, on the example of Jesus we are obligated to obey the moral commandments of the Old Testament. The books of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. (*Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 10:25-28; John 5:39, 46-47; Acts 10:43; Galatians 5:3-4; 1 Peter 1:10-12*)

New Testament

The New Testament fulfills and interprets the Old Testament. It is the record of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is God's final word regarding humankind, his sin, and his salvation, the world, and destiny. The books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation. (*Matthew 24:35; Mark 8:38; John 14:24; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 2:2-6; Rev 21:5; 22:19*)

WHAT FREE METHODISTS BELIEVE ABOUT HUMANKIND

A Free Moral Person

God created humans in His own image, innocent, morally free, and responsible to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. By the sin of Adam, humankind as the offspring of Adam is corrupted in their very nature so that from birth they are inclined to sin. They are unable by their own strength and work to restore themselves in right relationship with God and to merit eternal salvation. God, the Omnipotent, provides all the resources of the Trinity to make it possible for humankind to respond to His grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. By God's grace and help humans are enabled to do good works with a free will. (*Genesis 1:27; Psalm 51:5; 130:3; Romans 5:17-19; Ephesians 2:8-10*)

Law of Life and Love

God's law for all human life, personal and social, is expressed in two divine commands: Love the Lord God with all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself. These commands reveal what is best for man in his relationship with God, persons, and society. They set forth the principles of human duty in both individual and social action. They recognize God as the only Sovereign. All peoples created by Him and in His image have the same inherent rights regardless of sex, race, or color. All should therefore give God absolute obedience in their individual, social, and political acts. They should strive to secure to everyone respect for their person, their rights, and their greatest happiness in the possession and exercise of the right within the moral law. (*Matthew 22:35-40; John 15:17; Galatians 3:28; 1 John 4:19-21*)

Good Works

Good works are the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ, but works cannot save us from our sins nor from God's judgement. As expressions of Christian faith and love, our good works performed with reverence and humility are both acceptable and pleasing to God. However, good works do not earn God's grace. (*Matthew 5:16; 7:16-20; Romans 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; Titus 3:5*)

WHAT FREE METHODISTS BELIEVE ABOUT SALVATION

Christ's Sacrifice

Christ offered once and for all the one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. No other satisfaction for sin is necessary; none other can atone. (*Luke 24:46-8; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8-11; Galatians 2:16; 3:2-3; Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:13; Hebrews 9:11-13, 25-26; 10:8-14*)

The New Life in Christ

A new life and a right relationship with God are made possible through the redemptive acts of God in Jesus Christ. God, by His Spirit, acts to impart new life and put us into a relationship with Himself as we repent and our faith responds to His grace. Justification, regeneration, and adoption speak significantly to entrance into and continuance in the new life. (*John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:9-10*)

Justification

Justification is a legal term that emphasizes that by our new relationship in Jesus Christ we are in fact accounted righteous, being freed from both the guilt and the penalty of our sins. (*Psalm 32:1-2; Acts 10;43; Romans 3:21-26, 28; 4:2-5; 5:8-9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 3:9*)

Regeneration

Regeneration is a biological term which illustrates that by our new relationships in Christ we do in fact have a new life and a new spiritual nature capable of faith, love, and obedience to Christ Jesus as Lord. The believer is born again. He or she is a new creation. The old life is past; a new life is begun. (*Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 5:24; Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; Titus 3:4-5; 1 Peter 1:23*)

Adoption

Adoption is a filial term full of warmth, love, and acceptance. It denotes that by our new relationship in Christ we have become His wanted children freed from the mastery of both sin and Satan. The believer has the witness of the Spirit that he or she is a child of God. (*Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5-6; 1 John 3:1-3*)

Entire Sanctification

Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by faith and obedience. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, and his neighbour as himself, and it prepares him for greater growth in grace. (*Leviticus 20:7-8; John 14:16-17; 17:19; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 15:8-9; Romans 5:3-5; 8:12-17; 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Thess 4:7; 5:23-24; 2 Thess 2:13; Hebrews 10:14*)

Restoration

The Christian may be sustained in a growing relationship with Jesus as Saviour and Lord. However, they may grieve the Holy Spirit in the relationships of life without returning to the dominion of sin. When they do, they must humbly accept the correction of the Holy Spirit, trust in the advocacy of Jesus, and mend his relationships. The Christian can sin wilfully and sever their relationship with Christ. Even so by repentance before God, forgiveness is granted and the relationship with Christ restored, for not every sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit and unpardonable. God's grace is sufficient for those who truly repent and, by His enabling, amend their lives. However, forgiveness does not give the believer liberty to sin and escape the consequences of sinning. God has given responsibility and power to the church to restore a penitent believer through loving reproof, counsel, and acceptance. (*Matthew 12:31-32; 18:21-22; Romans 6:1-2; Galatians 6:1; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2; 5:16-17; Rev 2:5; 3:19-20*)

The Church

The church is created by God; it is the people of God. Christ Jesus is its Lord and Head; the Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is both divine and human, heavenly and earthly, ideal and imperfect. It is an organism, not an unchanging institution. It exists to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. It redemptively ministers to persons. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that it should be holy and without blemish. The church is a fellowship of the redeemed and the redeeming, preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments according to Christ's instruction. The Free Methodist Church purposes to be representative of what the church of Jesus Christ should be on earth. It therefore requires specific commitment regarding the faith and life of its members. In its requirements it seeks to honour Christ and obey the written Word of God. (*Matthew 16:15-18; 18:17; Acts 2:41-47; 9:31; 12:5; 14:23-26; 15:22; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 11:23; 12:28; 16:1; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:9-10; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:14-15*)

The Language of Worship

According to the Word of God and the custom of the early church, public worship and prayer and the administration of the sacraments should be in a language understood by the people. The Reformation applied this principle to provide for the use of the common language of the people. It is likewise clear that the Apostle Paul places the strongest emphasis upon rational and intelligible utterance in worship. We cannot endorse practices which plainly violate these scriptural principles. (*Nehemiah 8:5, 6, 8; Matthew 6:7; 1 Corinthians 14:6-9; 1 Corinthians 14:23-25*)

The Holy Sacraments

Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ. They are means of grace through faith, tokens of our profession of Christian faith, and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, He works within us to quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith. (*Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 22:16; Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26; Galatians 3:27*)

Baptism – Water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord, signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ to be administered to believers, as declaration of their faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour. Baptism is a symbol of the new covenant of grace as circumcision was the symbol of the old covenant; and, since infants are recognized as being included in the atonement, we hold that they may be baptized upon the request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training. They shall be required to affirm the vow for themselves before being accepted into church membership. (*John 3:5; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-17; 9:18; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-29; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:5*)

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death. To those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. The supper is also a sign of the love and unity that Christians have among themselves. Christ, according to His promise, is really present in the sacrament. But His body is given, taken, and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. No change is effected in the element; the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ. Nor is the body and blood of Christ literally present with the elements. The elements are never to be considered objects of worship. The body of Christ is received and eaten in faith. (*Mark 14:22-24; John 6:53-58; Acts 2:46; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; 10:16; 11:20, 23-29*)

WHAT FREE METHODISTS BELIEVE ABOUT LAST THINGS

The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is a prominent Bible theme providing the Christian with both his task and hope. Jesus announced its presence. The kingdom is realized now as God's reign is established in the hearts and lives of believers. The church, by its prayers, example, and proclamation of the gospel, is the appointed and appropriate instrument of God in building His kingdom. But the kingdom is also future and is related to the return of Christ when judgment will fall upon the present order. The enemies of Christ will be subdued; the reign of God will be established; a total cosmic renewal which is both material and moral shall occur; and the hope of the redeemed will be fully realized. (*Matthew 6:10, 19-20; 24:14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:20-25; Philippians 2:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; 2 Peter 3:3-10; Revelation 14:6; 21:3-8; 22:1-5, 17*)

The Return of Christ

The return of Christ is certain and may occur at any moment, although it is not given us to know the hour. At His return He will fulfill all prophecies concerning His final triumph over all evil. The believer's response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, readiness, and diligence. (*Matthew 24:1-51; 26:64; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 17:26-37; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 12, 20*)

Resurrection

There will be a bodily resurrection from the dead of both the just and the unjust, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrected body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable. The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of resurrection unto life to those who are in Him. (*John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 51-57; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14*)

Judgment

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness in accordance with the gospel and our deeds in this life. (*Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 11:31-32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:15-16; 14:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27-28; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 3:7*)

Final Destiny

Our eternal destiny is determined by God's grace and our response, not by arbitrary decrees of God. For those who trust Him and obediently follow Jesus as Saviour and Lord, there is a heaven of eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence. But for the finally impenitent there is a hell of eternal suffering and of separation from God. (*Mark 9:42-48; John 14:3; Hebrews 2:1-3; Rev 20:11-15; 21:22-27*)

The doctrines of the Free Methodist Church are based upon the Holy Scriptures and are derived from their total biblical context. The references [given for each section] are appropriate passages related to the given articles. They are listed in their biblical sequence and are not intended to be exhaustive.

How We Live

A Our Membership Covenant

Beliefs must be translated into action. Based on what the Bible teaches, Free Methodists around the world commit themselves to shape their lives around the following principles:

1. As Regards God

As God's people, we reverence and worship Him. We commit ourselves to cultivate habits of Christian devotion, submitting to mutual accountability, practicing private and corporate prayer, studying the Scriptures, attending public worship, and partaking of Holy Communion. We commit ourselves to observe the Lord's Day, setting it apart for worship, renewal, and service. · We commit ourselves to give our loyalty to Christ and the church, refraining from any alliance which compromises our Christian commitment. This we do, by God's grace and power.

2. As Regards Ourselves and Others

As a people, we live wholesome and holy lives and show mercy to all, ministering to both their physical and spiritual needs. We commit ourselves to be free from habits and attitudes that defile the mind and harm the body, or promote the same. We commit ourselves to respect the worth of all persons as created in the image of God. · We commit ourselves to strive to be just and honest in all our relationships and dealings. This we do, by God's grace and power.

3. As Regards the Institutions of God

As a people, we honour and support the God-ordained institutions of family, state, and church. We commit ourselves to honour the sanctity of marriage and the family. We commit ourselves to value and nurture children, guiding them to faith in Christ. We commit ourselves to seek to be responsible citizens, and we pray for all who lead. This we do, by God's grace and power.

4. As Regards the Church

As God's people, we express the life of Christ in the world. We commit ourselves to contribute to unity in the church, cultivating integrity, love, and understanding in all our relationships. We commit ourselves to practice the principles of Christian stewardship, for the glory of God and the growth of the church. We commit ourselves to go into our world and make disciples. This we do, by God's grace and power.

B Goals of the Christian Journey

The Scriptures affirm that God's purpose for humanity, from before creation, was that we should "be holy and blameless before him in love" (*Ephesians 1:4; I Timothy 2:4*). God's purpose was far from empty. For, from before creation, his purpose had reality in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ (*Ephesians 1:4; II Timothy 1:9*). The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are God's clear statement of the origin, purpose and goal that he has for humanity. For "with all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." (*Ephesians 1:9-10*)

The Christian journey is a part of this plan, which was set forth in Christ. The Christian journey is only possible because of God's eternal purpose, the redemption he made for us in Christ, and the living presence of his Spirit in our lives.

Because of God's plan, the goal of the Christian journey is nothing less lofty than to attain "to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (*Ephesians 4:13*). The goal of the Christian journey in this life is that we should grow into Christ-like maturity. When we enter the life to come, our journey will be complete because we will be like God in an even fuller way than is possible now: "What we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." (*1 John 3:2*)

Therefore, we as Free Methodists affirm with God's Word that the proper goal for our Christian life is this Christ-like maturity, which the Bible describes as holiness and righteousness (*Matthew 5:6; 1 Peter 1:16*). We acknowledge that this is only possible because of the grace that he so richly provides.

Understanding the Contents

This unit is intended to describe some significant features of the Free Methodist understanding of the Christian journey. It is intended to promote in our churches an understanding of the way of salvation, Christian character, and Christian responses to modern issues. It is also a place to find some resources for Christian discipleship. This unit has the following sections:

- ◆ The first section describes the way of salvation, including the process by which God, through the activity of his Spirit, makes it possible for sinful humans to enter the Christian journey and to grow into Christ-like maturity.
- ◆ The second section is a description of genuine Christian character and the spiritual disciplines that nourish and support Christian life.
- ◆ The third section addresses the Christian's response to certain pressing issues that are a part of Christian life in the modern world, as it relates to God, oneself and to others.
- ◆ The fourth section contains resources for local churches, to help them lead people in a discipleship process toward Christ-like maturity.

1. THE WAY OF SALVATION

This section, on the way of salvation, describes the Free Methodist standard of teaching on the biblical doctrine of salvation. These paragraphs are an elaboration of what is affirmed in the Articles of Religion, in their statements on Humankind and Salvation. They represent our understanding of the clear teaching of scripture on the process by which God, through the activity of his Spirit, makes it possible for sinful humans to enter the Christian journey and to grow into Christ-like maturity. The way of salvation is the path God has laid out for us to begin the Christian journey, and to grow in faith.

The way of salvation includes God's gracious initiative for salvation, awakening to God, repentance, trust, assurance, consecration, and sanctification.

GOD'S GRACIOUS INITIATIVE FOR SALVATION

In love God has graciously provided for the salvation of all humankind. God is love. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, was sent by the Father as an expression of God's love for the world. The cross shows the extent of Jesus' love for all. The love of God is further expressed to the world through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Only those who respond in repentance and faith can experience His grace as a redemptive reality.

The Christian life can be consciously experienced because it is a relationship between persons - the personal God and humans made in His likeness. Every person is confronted by this personal God, but the outcome of this confrontation is affected by how each person responds.

God deals with all persons as free and responsible. Therefore, He not only makes His grace available awaiting our free response, but He also reveals Himself and makes known His life to all who put their trust in Him.

The redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ is experienced as an awareness of His love and fellowship. Those who are justified by faith experience the peace of God. When His Holy Spirit comes to the heart, there is joy. The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence is the assurance of our relationship to God as His dear children.

AWAKENING TO GOD

The Scriptures teach that by nature, humans are corrupt in every aspect of their beings and have gone far from original righteousness. Added to the depravity common to all because of the Fall, there are the enslaving effects of committed sins. We are unable in ourselves to come to God, but God in His grace reaches out to every sinner.

God takes the initiative in making sinners aware of their needs, using His Word, the revelation in Jesus Christ, the gospel proclamation of the church, the witness of individuals, and the circumstances of life. By such means, the Holy Spirit awakens sinners to their needs and to the truth of the Gospel (*John 16:8,13*). Awakened, they must make a response, either rejecting the call of God or turning to God in repentance and faith.

REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

Awakened by the Holy Spirit to their lost condition before God, persons may move toward God. Since "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (*Romans 3:23*), all must repent in order to come into a right relationship with God.

Repentance calls for a sincere and thorough change of mind. To repent is to turn from sin with genuine sorrow and to turn to God in confession and submission. The whole person is involved: mind, feelings, will. Repentance is more than regret for wrongdoing or sorrow at being caught. It is personal sorrow that one has sinned against God. Repentance demands a radical turning from sin and a sincere turning to God.

Sincere repentance leads to moral renewal, often evidenced by restitution - the effort to right one's wrongs whenever possible. Acts of restitution, as in the case of *Zaccheus*, are certainly fruits befitting repentance (*Luke 9:8; 3:8*). Neither repentance nor restitution save, however. Salvation is by faith in Christ (*Romans 5:1*).

TRUST / FAITH

Trust, also known as faith, is utter reliance upon God (*II Corinthians 3:4-5; I Timothy 4:10*). Trust includes full acceptance of the promises of God, complete dependence on Christ's sacrifice for salvation, and unconditional commitment to the will of God. God's grace and blessings are open to those who turn to Him with full reliance on His integrity, love and power.

Christians experience God's loving care and guidance as they trust and follow Him (*Ephesians 3:12*). When they think they are sufficient unto themselves they become frustrated by trying to do for themselves what God wants to do for them. Self-sufficiency is inconsistent with perfect trust (*I Timothy 6:17*).

ASSURANCE

God gives assurance of salvation and peace of heart to all who repent and put their faith in Christ (*Romans 5:1*). The Holy Spirit witnesses to their own spirits that they are forgiven of their sins and adopted into the family of God (*Romans 8:16*).

Christians have peace with God through Jesus Christ because guilt is taken away and fear of judgement removed (*Hebrews 6:11; 10:22*). God continues to give assurance to believers through the Scriptures, the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit, and love for and fellowship with other Christians (*I John 3:14*).

CONSECRATION

God calls His people to set themselves apart to His will and purpose (*Romans 6:13; 12:1*). Anything thus set apart is said to be consecrated.

All Christians are called to be holy and without blame before God in love (*Ephesians 5:27*). Christ demands that His disciples follow Him in mind and spirit (*Romans 7:24-25*). If Christians are to witness effectively in the world, they must be distinguished by righteousness, peace, joy, faith, hope, and love (*John 13:35; 14:15; Galatians 5:22-24*). God wants a special kind of people for His work (*Matthew 16:24; Romans 14:17; 8:6-9; John 17:17; Psalm 100:2*). When Christians sincerely follow Christ and listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks in the Scriptures, they should sense this need of cleansing from inward sin. They should desire earnestly to be filled with the love of God and long for a relationship with Christ which will satisfy their deepest inward need and empower them to serve and obey the Lord (*Ephesians 5:1-2:14; I Corinthians 13:13; 14:1; Acts 1:8*).

Christians, therefore, must consecrate themselves to God and surrender their wills to the will of the Heavenly Father (*Matthew 19:21*). Those who desire inward sanctification must deny themselves, bear the cross, and follow Christ. Devotion to self is idolatry. A Christian who is divided in loyalty cannot serve God victoriously and steadfastly. Christ must be given the pre-eminence. He must be the Lord of the Christian's life.

Therefore, to open themselves to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, believers must give themselves without reservation to God. They freely yield all to the purposes of God and devote every desire and ambition to the service of Christ rather than to self (*Colossians 3:8-13*). Christians cannot be delivered from the dominion of sin if they permit self to reign in their lives. They cannot serve two masters (*Matthew 6:24*).

SANCTIFICATION

Christ gave himself "even unto death" for the cleansing of His church (*Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 13:12*). His disciples are called to be holy (*I Peter 1:15-16; II Corinthians 7:1*). Christ provided for believers to be entirely sanctified, in the atonement (*Hebrews 9:13-14; 10:8-10*). Accordingly, Paul prayed "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it" (*I Thessalonians 5:23-24*). Sanctification begins with regeneration. It continues throughout the believer's life, as the believer co-operates with the Spirit. A deeper relationship with Christ is possible when the believer is fully cleansed in heart (*Psalm 51:5-13; I John 1:5-2.1*).

God the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier (*I Thessalonians 4:7-8; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2*). Coming into the life at conversion, He fills with His unrivalled presence when the Christian's consecration is complete, cleansing the heart and empowering for witness and service (*John 3:5; Romans 8:9; Galatians 3:3; Acts 1:8*). He sheds God's love throughout the heart and life of the Christian (*Romans 5:5; I John 4:12-13*).

Accepting the promise of God by faith, believers will enter into a deepened relationship with Christ (*II Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6-7*). They will be enabled to love God with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind, and their neighbour as themselves (*Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 5:25-62*). They will know an inner surrender to all the will of God, and their lives will be transformed from inner conflict with sin to glad obedience (*Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-25*). Inward sanctification cleanses Christians from sin and delivers from the idolatry of self (*I Peter 3:2-3; I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:15-20*). When they are cleansed, they are not made perfect in performance, but in love (*Hebrews 6:1; 12:14; Matthew 5:43-48; I John 4:12-13*).

2. GENUINE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Christian character begins with life in the Spirit, and is nourished by the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life.

Christians have a new relationship with God and a new life in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In new Christians, the joy of this new life in Christ may for a time obscure the need for growing up in Christ. People who have been Christians for some time can sometimes become complacent. Therefore, every Christian must ultimately choose between growth and decline.

This section describes some of the spiritual disciplines that are essential for Christians. Through the exercise of these and other spiritual disciplines, growing Christians will become increasingly sensitive to both good and evil, steadily learning to distinguish between them. The Holy Spirit will guide them, in harmony with the Scriptures. Growing Christians learn to be alert to the Spirit's directives, so they may resist temptation and respond to God's call to higher living.

PRAYER

Prayer is an indispensable means of growth toward Christ-likeness. In prayer the Christian talks and listens, confesses and adores, asks and thanks. Prayer should be as conversation, avoiding artificial phrases and tones. Sincere prayer changes the supplicant and often the circumstances (*James 5:16*). The Bible teaches that both individual and group prayer are effective for those who are in Christ. Prayer takes us beyond ourselves and emphasizes our dependence on God. Both prayer and Bible study should be regular, without becoming mere rituals (*Psalms 119:11; 10:5*).

STUDY OF THE WORD

The Bible is our source for discovering how we may grow. It is the Christian's "growth manual." It must be taken seriously as the final authority for our lives; therefore, it ought to be read, and diligently studied for its meaning. God will speak to growing Christians through its pages if they are listening. The value and meaning of life are found in this book. The prayerful study and application of scripture is a means of cleansing and of changing attitudes and behaviour.

LIFE IN THE CHURCH

Growing Christians find their supportive environment in the fellowship of believers. They do not live independently from the Body of Christ. Worship requires a proper attitude toward God. It involves the believer's active participation. Believers should prepare their minds and spirits for worship. Sincere followers of Christ reach out to

God in praise, thanksgiving, dedication, confession, faith, and service. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are vital parts of the life of the church that were commanded by the Lord. God has promised to graciously meet the person who faithfully takes part in these sacraments. As a part of the Body of Christ, believers must take part in corporate church worship, as well as in the other ministries of the church. Small group participation is a means of grace and growth. Support, insight, inspiration, and discipline are fruits of fellowship.

SERVICE AND MINISTRY

Growth comes with the acceptance of full responsibility for the use of natural talents and spiritual gifts in service and ministry. The Holy Spirit endows every believer with natural abilities for service and ministry. These are a trust. They must be used only in ways that will glorify God. To use God-given abilities well is to nurture personal growth. The Holy Spirit also distributes, as He wills, spiritual gifts of speech and service for the common good and the building of the church (*1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10,11*). Spiritual gifts are to be exercised under the lordship of Christ with His love and compassion, and are not to be the cause of division in the church.

The believer is to seek as the evidence of the Holy Spirit's fullness, not the gifts themselves, but the character and power of the Holy Spirit.

LOVE OF OTHERS

Growth in Christ requires taking responsibility to love others, all of whom are loved by God and made in His image. The quality of a Christian's relationships with others affects the quality of their own lives. Growth in Christ requires readiness to mend relationships both with God and with others (*James 5:16*). The Ten Commandments, summarized into two commandments by Jesus, (*Luke 10:25-28*) teach the nature of our relationships with God and with others. Christians will express their love both by deeds of kindness and by personal words of witness that point to Christ as the embodiment of God's love and the Saviour of the world.

3. CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD

This section arises from the experience of Free Methodists as they have lived out Christ's command to holiness in the modern world. Therefore, it describes a Christian response to pressing issues in the contemporary world.

There is no claim made that this is a complete or final description of an appropriate Christian response to all of the important issues faced in the modern world, or that such a description could ever be written. Rather, the approach taken in the following paragraphs illustrates the ways in which a Christian must form a responsible and Biblically appropriate response to contemporary issues.

A member of The Free Methodist Church adopts the following description of Christian life in the modern world as an authoritative guide to living an authentic Christian life today. The church recognizes however that a Christian's conscience is not bound by this description as though it were a new law that is above the gospel itself. Rather, this vision of the Christian life is an expression of how we believe God's Word leads us to live a genuine Christian life today. We trust that the following description of genuine Christianity may be used by God to help Free Methodists form their consciences according to God's Word. We trust that the Holy Spirit's guidance will lead each member of the Free Methodist Church into a conviction about how he or she ought personally to grow into the likeness of Christ in every part of life.

The statements of principle set out below arise out of the direct, clear teaching of scripture and have as their authority not human tradition but God's Word [*statements of principle are indicated by italicized text*]. The application statements that follow each statement of principle arise from God's Word, but we do not claim that they represent in every case the direct, clear, unambiguous teaching of scripture. Rather, these paragraphs represent the historic understanding of Free Methodists concerning the implications of central Biblical principles

to pressing issues in contemporary life. Therefore, the teachings of these paragraphs do not constrain us with the same authority as the principle statements, though they have the authority to instruct our consciences. Ongoing helps in applying some of these principles are available on The Free Methodist Church in Canada website. We believe that a life lived according to all of the following statements would be a life that is “worthy of the calling to which we have been called” (*Ephesians 4:1*).

AS REGARDS GOD

False Worship

Jesus Christ affirmed the Old Testament commandment, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:29-30; Deuteronomy 6:4-5, NIV). The worship of any other person, spirit, or thing is idolatry.

We abstain from all practices that lead to idolatry. Occult practices, such as spiritism, witchcraft, and astrology must be avoided. Moreover, Christians are to be on guard against the idolatries of the heart - the worship of things, pleasures, and self (*1 John 2:16*).

The Lord's Day

God makes clear in Scripture by both example and command that one day in seven is to be devoted to worship and rest (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11). Jesus declared that the Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27). We need a special day in which we turn from our daily work to worship God and to renew body, mind, and spirit. The early church moved from observing the last day of the week - the Jewish Sabbath to worshipping God in Christ on the first day of the week - the Lord's day, the day of His resurrection.

In keeping the Sabbath principle in a Lord's day setting, we participate in corporate worship with the Christian community as the essential activity of Sunday (*Hebrews 10:25*). We refrain on that day from unnecessary labours and commerce, and recognize that salvation comes not from our own strivings but by grace, as we rest in God (*Isaiah 58:13-14; Hebrews 4:9*). Pastors and others who must be involved in necessary work on Sunday are encouraged to observe the Sabbath principle on another day.

Divine Healing

All healing, whether of body, mind, or spirit has its ultimate source in God who is “above all and through all and in all.” God may heal by the mediation of surgery, medication, change of environment, counselling, corrected attitudes, or through the restorative processes of nature itself. God may heal through one or more of the above in combination with prayer, or by direct intervention in response to prayer. The Scriptures report many cases of the latter kind of healing in connection with the life and ministry of Jesus, the apostles and the early church.

*A truly Christian perspective on healing reflects the New Testament view of salvation, which holds together God's sovereignty, God's loving goodness, and God's ultimate wisdom. These divine realities reach beyond what humans can fully grasp. We hold together our confidence that salvation is something that has already happened (e.g. *Ephesians 2:5-8*) and that it is something that is happening right now (e.g. *11 Corinthians 2:15*), and also that it is something that we still await at the final coming of Christ (e.g. *Romans 5:9-10*). Thus there are two erroneous approaches to healing: One is to stress only healing now (because in Jesus, and through the gift of the Spirit, salvation has indeed fully and powerfully come). The other is to expect healing only in the resurrection (because the final redemption will come only when Jesus returns). Both perspectives alone are distortions which miss the creative “already/not yet” tension of New Testament thought.*

Consistent with the Scriptures, therefore, we urge our pastors and group leaders to help people to seek healing of every sort. We make opportunity for the sick, afflicted, and broken to come before God in the fellowship of the body of Christ in confidence that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is both able and willing to heal (*James 5:13*). We recognize that although God's sovereign purposes are good and we are sure that He is working toward a final redemption that assures wholeness to all believers, He may not grant physical healing for all or full healing in this life. We believe that in such cases God still receives glory both now and then through the resurrection to life everlasting.

The ministry of healing is not to be ignored in the church. We do not expect that the emphasis on, or means employed in, the varied ministries of healing will be the same in different churches (or in different small groups, or in individual Christians) or in the same church or group or individual believer at different times. We call the church to both examine and prize our differences in this regard, always aware of the 'already/not yet' scriptural tension outlined above.

Secret Societies

The Christian's supreme loyalty is to Jesus Christ who is Lord (Romans 14:9; Acts 2:36). In every association Christians must keep themselves free to follow Christ and obey the will of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Therefore, we abstain from solemn oaths of secrecy shared with unbelievers which cloud our witness.

Those voluntary associations which demand an oath, affirmation, promise of secrecy, or a secret password as conditions of membership are to be considered secret societies. In contradiction to the teaching of Christ and the New Testament, these societies require pledges and vows which bind the future actions of those who join (*Matthew 5:34-37*). As Christians therefore, we refuse to swear unreserved loyalty to any secret society since we see such an allegiance to be in direct conflict with unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord. We must keep ourselves free to follow the will of the Lord in all things.

Most secret societies are religious in nature. Prayers are offered, hymns are sung, and members engage in acts of worship before an altar. Chaplains are chosen to lead in worship and to conduct funerals. But the worship of these societies is unitarian, not Christian; the religion is moralistic, not redemptive; and the ends are humanistic, not evangelical (*Acts 4:12*). We refrain, therefore, from membership in all secret societies and when we unite with the church we resign from active membership in any lodge or secret order previously joined.

We do not require those who become members of the church to cease all payments necessary to keep in force insurance benefits previously contracted through lodge membership.

AS REGARDS MYSELF AND OTHERS

Worth of Persons

We are committed to the worth of all humans regardless of sex, race, colour, or any other distinctions (Acts 10:34-35) and will respect them as persons made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and redeemed by Christ's death and resurrection. The Old Testament law commands such respect (Deuteronomy 5:11-21). Jesus summarized this law as love for God and neighbour (Matthew 22:36-40). He ministered to all without distinction and His death on the cross was for all (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

We are therefore pledged to active concern whenever human beings are demeaned, abused, depersonalized, or subjected to demonic forces in the world, whether by individuals or institutions (*Galatians 3:28; Mark 2:27*). We are committed to give meaning and significance to every person by God's help.

Remembering our tendency to be prejudicial, as Christians we must grow in awareness of the worth, rights and needs of others.

Self Discipline

One attribute of the Spirit's indwelling presence is self-control (Galatians 5:23). The Scriptures instruct us to honour the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

As Christians we desire to be characterized by balance and moderation. We seek to avoid extreme patterns of conduct. We also seek to keep ourselves free from addictions or compulsions.

Since Christians are to be characterized by a disciplined style of life, we attempt to avoid selfish indulgence in the pleasures of this world. It is our wish to live simply in service to others, and to practice stewardship of health, time, and other God-given resources.

We are committed to help every Christian attain such a disciplined life. Although unhealthy habits are not easily broken, believers need not live in such bondage. We find help through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the counsel and support of other Christians.

Possessions

As Christians we regard all we possess as the property of God entrusted to us as stewards. We are people who exercise critical judgment about what we acquire and possess. We do not make possessions or wealth a priority (Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:16-21). Rather, as stewards we are people who give generously to meet the needs of others and to support ministry (II Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-13).

As Christians we refrain from income generation in all forms (through employment, investments, grants/bursaries, etc.) from sources inconsistent with the ethics and practices of our faith.

Income generated through gambling lacks both the dignity of wages earned and the honour of a gift. Even as entertainment, it excites greed, destroys the initiative of honest toil, exploits a neighbour, and often results in addiction. We refrain from gambling in all its forms for conscience' sake, and as a witness to the faith we have in Christ.

While customs and community standards change, there are changeless scriptural principles of moderation and modesty that govern us as Christians in our attitudes and conduct. Whatever we buy, use, or wear reflects our commitment to Christ and our witness in the world (I Corinthians 10:31-33). We therefore avoid extravagance and apply principles of simplicity of life when we make choices as to the values that we project through our possessions.

Life in the Workplace

As Christians we are called to be servants of all. This norm is equally applicable to employer and employee (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-41). Our concern for justice is primarily a concern to do justice and only secondarily a concern to obtain justice.

We believe that all persons have the privilege to be gainfully employed irrespective of sex, race, colour, national origin, or creed (Romans 10:12).

We recognize the privilege of employees to organize for their betterment. Oath-bound secret pacts or acts of violence designed to violate or defend their rights cannot be condoned. We also recognize the right of employees to remain independent of such organizations.

As Christians we do not view management and labour as necessarily hostile to each other. They need not bring distrust and hostility to their place of work or the negotiating table. We resist the exploiting of people or seeing them merely as economic units. We discourage rigid confrontation and favour a problem-solving approach to disagreements.

We endeavour to make our witness effective where we work, remembering that as Christian employees we are responsible first to God and then to our employer and the organization. As Christian employers we have a responsibility to deal fairly and kindly with our employees, preserving the witness of Christian character in both word and deed (*Matthew 7:12; Colossians 3:17*).

Entertainment

We evaluate all forms of entertainment in the light of Biblical standards for holy living, and recognize that we must govern ourselves according to these standards. The Scriptures say, “we have an obligation - but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live” (Romans 8:12,13 NIV).

In a culture where pleasure is ardently pursued, we must exercise care regarding our recreational activities. We face a multitude of entertainment media - television, videos, movies, recorded music, the internet, dances, magazines, novels, etc. Since many of these are pursued in the home, we cannot be legislated into wise choices; we must make them from a renewed heart. In the case of children and young people living at home, however, our convictions as Christian parents should prevail.

Our choices regarding entertainment must recognize some modern diversions promote violence, excite sexual desire or awaken greed, and certain atmospheres encourage and promote tolerance of vice and vulgarity.

We commit ourselves to be moderate in our pursuit of entertainment, regarding carefully the wise use of time and money and the stewardship of the body so as to avoid evil of every kind and honour Christ in everything.

Therefore when making choices with regard to entertainment, before the Lord we should forthrightly answer such questions as: Does this activity enhance or reduce my witness as a Christian? Does it contradict the teachings of Scripture? Is my conscience clear? Will participation expose me to unnecessary temptation? Is this activity in any sense enslaving?

Misuse of Substances

As Christians we believe that life is full, abundant, and free in Jesus Christ (John 8:35; 10:10). Therefore, we commit ourselves to be free from whatever damages, destroys, or distorts His life in us.

Illicit drugs are prime offenders. Because various forms of narcotics cause untold damage to people and relationships and such drugs restrict personal development, damage the body, and reinforce an unrealistic view of life, we avoid their use.

Because Christ admonishes us to love God with all our being and our neighbour as ourselves, we advocate abstaining from the use of alcoholic beverages (Mark 12:30-31). The abuse of alcohol, a legalized drug, is damaging to individuals, families, and society. It is unpredictably addictive and its destructive effects cannot be fully measured. Its abuse leaves a trail of broken marriages, family violence, crime, industrial loss, ill health, injury, and death. As concerned Christians, we advocate abstinence for the sake of health, family, and neighbours. Moreover, we see the adverse social consequences as so pervasive that we seek by advocating abstinence to make a united social witness to the freedom Christ gives.

Because we believe Christians are to treat their bodies as sacred trusts, we advocate abstaining from the use of tobacco. It is a major cause of a variety of cancers and other diseases, as well as being an expensive and socially offensive addiction. We take seriously the words of Paul, the apostle, “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body*” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV).

Because drug dependency of any kind inhibits fullness of life in Christ, we guard against the indiscriminate use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Though the therapeutic value of such substances may be great, their potency, proliferation, and easy accessibility require that as Christians we be vigilant against their misuse.

We believe that the intemperate consumption of food is a form of abusing the body which may result in illness and obesity. We eat healthily so as to preserve the strength of our bodies and so extend our years of usefulness as servants of Christ.

We endeavour by God’s help to be understanding and supportive toward those who come to Christ with problems of addiction. We believe in Christ’s power to deliver (Romans 6:13; Galatians 6:2). But we acknowledge the difficulties of overcoming the bondage of addictions, and desire to give whatever help and support are needed while fellow Christians seek full deliverance.

As a further evidence of an awakened conscience, we advocate refraining from the cultivation, manufacture, or promotion of these substances which are harmful to health.

Pornography

The Scriptures warn that those who participate in sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). The use of pornography is a vicarious participation in sexual immorality. Such participation includes viewing, listening to, or purposefully imagining others engaged in sexual activities. Therefore as Christians we abstain from pornography and oppose its use and work toward removing its legitimacy and availability.

Human sexuality is a gift from God which is debased and damaged by pornography. This damage is personal, relational and cultural. Pornography causes a desensitizing of conscience, a perversion of sexual desire and a decay of moral values. It often victimizes the innocent and unsuspecting. It is a rampant degenerative force.

The church has a corporate responsibility to provide education, protection and God’s redeeming care for those susceptible to or addicted to pornography.

Sexual Intimacy

The biblical vision for healthy sexual intimacy is that it is a gift from God reserved for marriage between one man and one woman. Sexual intimacy creates a unique life-long bond that Scripture describes as “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:16). When expressed within the commitment of the marriage covenant, sexual intimacy is a great blessing and source of fulfillment. The marriage covenant is designed to protect this one man and one woman bond against that which is destructive and harmful to the couple, their children, the extended family, and society as a whole when one acts contrary to God’s design for sexual intimacy.

- ◆ The Bible calls pre-marital sexual intimacy “fornication”, and lists it along with other forms of immorality as sin (Galatians 5:19-21). Bonding sexually to a person to whom one has not covenanted in marriage robs the bond of an eventual marriage of its exclusivity. Similarly, sexual intimacy outside of a marital union occurring after

divorce or the loss of a spouse is also fornication and undermines the biblical design for healthy sexual intimacy (*1 Corinthians 7:8-9*).

- ◆ Extra-marital sexual intimacy, which Scripture calls “adultery”, transgresses God’s moral law and betrays the marriage covenant. Adultery damages the one flesh union in that it contaminates the exclusive bond of marriage and undermines trust (*Exodus 20:14, Mark 7:20-23*).
- ◆ Same-sex sexual intimacy is regarded by the Scriptures as immoral because it is a distortion of God’s creation design. The Scriptures speak explicitly against same-sex sexual intimacy as sin (*Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Timothy 1:3-11*). Same-sex sexual behaviour is different from same-sex sexual attraction; and persons with same-sex inclinations, like all others, are accountable to God for their choices and actions.

In all of the aforementioned instances, all persons are accountable to God for their thoughts, words and deeds (*Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11*). Because Christians are part of fallen humanity we must deal with many inclinations to sin. We trust the grace of God is available and completely adequate to forgive and transform (*1 John 1:9; Hebrews 7:25*).

The church has a corporate responsibility to be God’s agent of transformation to persons as they learn to live a Christian life that pursues the best of God’s design for healthy sexuality. This transformation can best occur as the church provides a loving and supportive environment. Because the sexual desire is so powerful, counselling is recommended as a part of the church’s pastoral care.

The biblical vision for healthy sexual intimacy is in contrast with that of our culture. We support the biblical vision that opposes all cultural mores and practices that promote and legitimize premarital, extra-marital, and same-sex sexual intimacy.

Abortion

The intentional abortion of a person’s life, from conception on, must be judged to be a violation of God’s command, “You shall not commit murder,” except when extreme circumstances require the termination of a pregnancy to save the life of the pregnant woman. Induced abortion is the intentional destruction of a person after conception and before delivery by surgical or other means. Therefore, induced abortion is morally unjustifiable except when the act has been decided upon by responsible and competent persons, including Christian professional counsel, for the purpose of saving the life of a pregnant woman. Abortion, when it serves the ends of population or birth control, personal preference or convenience, and social or economic security, must be considered as selfish and malicious.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy involves religious and moral values, as well as medical and legal realities. Therefore, as Christians we do not make our decisions only by the extent of the permissiveness of civil laws or the possibilities of safe medical procedures. Christian morality demands that we consider both the Biblical commandment and the human situation in which the law must be applied. As Christians, we believe that human life, in all its stages, is sacred because life exists in relation to God

Compassionate alternatives and long-term care should be offered to women considering abortion.

We counsel physicians and parents to understand that the moral commandment and the law of love are transgressed when human life is destroyed for selfish or malicious ends.

AS REGARDS DIVINELY APPOINTED INSTITUTIONS

There are at least three divinely appointed, earthly institutions. One of these is marriage and the family. A second is the church. A third is the secular government. Only the church, among these institutions, will last in eternity. Nevertheless, the Scriptures have clearly placed a great deal of importance on how we act with respect to each of these institutions, before the return of Christ.

This section is intended to describe a Christian point of view on these important institutions. Important principles are the focus: there is no attempt to be comprehensive. Principle statements, represent what we believe are the central, clear teaching of scripture on these institutions. We also believe that the application statements that accompany the principle statements are clear inferences from the Scriptures, but they are presented here to assist our churches and members in applying scriptural principles.

The Christian and Marriage

Principles Regarding Marriage

Nature of Marriage: At creation God instituted marriage for the well being of humanity (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). Marriage is the joining of one man and one woman into a lifelong relationship which the Scriptures call “one flesh.”

Sexual intercourse is God’s gift to humanity, for the intimate union of a man and woman within marriage. In this relationship, it is to be celebrative (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage is therefore the only proper setting for sexual intimacy. Scripture requires purity before and faithfulness within marriage. Likewise, it condemns all unnatural sexual behaviour such as incestuous abuse, child molestation, homosexual activity and prostitution (I Corinthians 6.9; Romans 12:6-27).

We believe therefore that marriage should be safeguarded and supported by both the church and society and should be formalized with public vows. It is not enough for a couple to live together in private commitment; we believe that they are to covenant before God and the state.

Nurturing Healthy Marriages

The Free Methodist Church urges its people to enter the covenant of marriage prayerfully. In accordance with the apostle’s command (*II Corinthians 6:14*), we expect them to marry only believers. Ministers are required to use diligent care when being requested to solemnize a marriage. While our ministers may officiate at the marriage of two unbelievers, those who unite believers to unbelievers go contrary to the explicit teachings of the Scriptures. Before entering into marriage, our people should counsel with their Christian leaders. Young people contemplating marriage should seek parental consent. Our ministers shall not officiate at the marriage of any person under age, unless parents or guardians are present or have given written consent, and unless two witnesses are present who know the couple. There are wedding guidelines available from the director of personnel’s office that you need to follow with respect to requests to officiate at marriages.

We desire that our churches provide instruction in sex education and preparation for marriage. Pastors shall see that all candidates for marriage have received premarital guidance, using materials consistent with denominational teaching. We further encourage local churches to provide resources such as seminars and retreats to strengthen marriages and build Christian homes.

Healing Troubled Marriages

The church which is alive to God has spiritual resources for marriages in trouble. The chief resources are the renewing power of the Holy Spirit and the Word, prayer and the sacraments, counsel and support. Through the church's ministry, God can bring healing and reconciliation.

Therefore, if our members find their marriage in crisis, we encourage them to seek the counsel of the pastor and submit to the guidance of the church. Professional counsel may be necessary. We recognize that domestic violence, emotional and/or physical, does occur in church-related families. It often jeopardizes the safety of a spouse or children and may threaten life itself. These family members need both spiritual and emotional healing (*Malachi 2:13-16*).

Separation should not be entered into lightly, or as a matter of convenience. When after counsel with the pastor, it is recognized that a deteriorating situation is destroying the marriage relationship, Christians may separate. In all cases, the way to reconciliation must be kept open (*1 Corinthians 7:10-11*). Even when a marriage is violated by sexual infidelity, the partners are encouraged to work for restoration of the union.

Principles Regarding Divorce

When one marriage partner is a Christian and the other a nonbeliever, we believe that the Christian may not for that reason divorce the unchristian mate (*1 Corinthians 7:12-13*), because Christian love may redeem the unbeliever and unite the home in Christ (*1 Corinthians 7:16*).

When a marriage is violated by sexual infidelity, the partners are encouraged to work for restoration of the union. Where reconciliation is impossible, a divorce may be allowed. (*Matthew 5:32; 19:9*)

Desertion is the abandoning of a marriage without just cause. We believe that a person denies the faith that deserts a spouse deliberately and for an extended period of time. When the desertion leads subsequently to divorce, the deserted partner is no longer bound by the marriage (*1 Corinthians 7:15*).

Where reconciliation is impossible in a troubled marriage, we acknowledge that divorce may be unavoidable (*Matthew 5:32; 19:9*). When marriages break down completely, we recognize that, in the words of Jesus, "hardness of heart" is implicit on one or both sides of the union (*Matthew 19:3-8; Mark 10:5-9*).

Though the Scriptures allow divorce on the grounds of adultery (*Matthew 5:32*) and desertion (*1 Corinthians 7:10-16*), it does not mandate divorce and we advise counsel with church leaders to seek other alternatives. One of these may be for both to live celibately.

Recovery After Divorce

Divorce always produces trauma. It is the breaking of a covenant, thus violating God's intention for faithfulness in marriage (*Malachi 2:13-16*). For this reason divorced persons should be helped to understand and remedy the causes for the divorce. They should seek pastoral counsel. Professional counsel may also be necessary. If unhealthy patterns of relating exist, they must be helped to replace them with new attitudes and behaviours that are Christ-like (*Colossians 3:1-15*). Repentance and forgiveness are crucial to recovery. The goals of the process are personal healing and restoration to wholesome participation within the church. The church must extend its concern to family and others affected by the divorce.

Remarriage After a Divorce

A divorced member or one who is considering marriage to a divorced person must come under the authority, counsel and guidance of the church.

Persons who have been involved in divorce while in a state of unbelief shall not for that reason alone be barred from becoming members, even though they remarry. Similarly, believers are not prohibited from marrying a person who was divorced while an unbeliever. A member of the church divorced from an adulterous spouse or, deserted by an unbelieving mate, after attempts at forgiveness and reconciliation have been rejected, may remarry (*Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-11; I Corinthians 7:15*).

Refusal of Counsel

When a member divorces a spouse in violation of the Scriptures, or remarries without seeking the counsel or following the guidance of the pastor or the membership care committee, the committee shall review the case and recommend appropriate action to the official board. Corrective action shall include removal from leadership, and may include suspension, or expulsion from membership.

Exceptional Cases

Cases may arise for which the pastor or the membership care committee can find no explicit direction in this *Manual*. In such cases, the pastor, after consultation with the committee, shall confer with the bishop.

Same-Sex Marriages and Blessings

The Free Methodist Church in Canada holds that Christian marriage can only be the union of “one man and one woman” who have made a public covenant and vow before God and the state (Genesis 2:20-24, Mark 10:6-9). Therefore, it would be a breach of the doctrine and polity of our church for ministers or members of The Free Methodist Church in Canada to conduct a Christian blessing of a union between a same-sex couple, or to perform the marriage of a same-sex couple. In light of our beliefs, ministers and members of The Free Methodist Church in Canada reserve the right of conscientious objection to any demands to perform marriages of same-sex couples.

The Free Methodist Church in Canada holds that its congregations are stewards of the church property. The blessing of a union between a same-sex couple or the performance of a same-sex marriage in any Free Methodist church would be a violation of consecrated Free Methodist property. Therefore, such blessings or marriages may not be performed at Free Methodist churches.

Use of Free Methodist Church Facilities

It is the policy of The Free Methodist Church in Canada that the facilities of Free Methodist churches are to be rented or used only by individuals or groups that are not incompatible with the goals, values, policies and statements of The Free Methodist Church in Canada and for purposes which are not incompatible with the goals, values, policies and statements of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

Education of Children

The Free Methodist Church views the education of its children as a parental responsibility (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Ephesians 6:4). Part of that responsibility may be delegated but not relinquished to public, private or Christian institutions of education.

The church wishes to support public schools and recognizes the challenge to Christian teachers, parents and students to be as lights in the world. When parents choose to use Christian schools or home schooling, we also support them in their decision. We request that our children be excused from assignments and activities which conflict with the values held by the denomination. When conflicts arise, we request of the school that the student's academic standing not be jeopardized, and when necessary, other assignments be given.

The church is concerned that concepts of first origins shall have fair consideration in our public schools. Instructional materials are available that permit a scientific treatment of the several concepts of origin, including special creation (that all basic life forms and life processes were created by a supernatural Creator). We therefore urge that the concept of special creation be presented in, or along with, courses, textbooks, library materials, and teaching aids dealing with the subject of first origins.

The Christian and the Church

The church is part of God's eternal plan to make a people for himself who would be "holy and blameless before him." It was instituted by Christ during his ministry when he commissioned the church to be his unique representative in the world. Therefore, the Scriptures speak of the church as the Body of Christ. The church has been empowered for its ministry by the active, ongoing work of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost. Just as New Testament letters were written to churches in particular places, made up of particular people, the church is not only universal, but also must be visible and local.

The church is also the people of God in the world. In both Old and New Testaments this fact is amply illustrated. The Lord of the church gives gifts to His people to serve one another and to minister in the world. Christians who live in independence from the church may not forfeit their faith but will deprive themselves of the spiritual resources and opportunities God Himself has ordained. Consistent with the Scriptures, we affirm membership in the church.

When the Holy Spirit gives new life in Christ, at the same time He effects our spiritual entrance into the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Free Methodist Church in Canada is one denomination among the many other legitimate visible churches in Canada and the world. Entrance into the membership of one of our churches is a visible and local sign of entrance into the universal church.

Membership in the Church

In accordance with this, our church provides means by which persons who are born of the Spirit may enter into a Membership Covenant and register their membership in a local church in a public way. We provide categories for believers under the age of majority and adults. As an aid to Christian development we provide membership instruction, which may be followed by entrance into membership.

Leadership in the Church

Leadership in the church is an honour that has accompanying responsibilities and sacrifices. The Scriptures provide descriptions of the qualities of leaders in such passages as: Exodus 18:21, Acts 6:3, 1Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Those who are chosen to lead in the church do so in a spirit of humility and dependence upon God. They must be spiritually mature individuals whose lifestyle shall be in harmony with the Scriptures, the doctrine of

The Free Methodist Church in Canada, the principles of the Membership Covenant and of the Goals for Christian Conduct. They must live personal and public lives that clearly exemplify these principles.

The Christian and the State

As Christians, we are citizens of the kingdom of God and of this world. We receive benefits from and bear responsibilities to both relationships. Our first allegiance is to God, but that does not release us from responsibilities to our own country if such relationships do not conflict with the clear teachings of the Scriptures (Romans 13:1-7). We recognise the sovereign authority of government and our duty to obey the law (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7). Thus, we bear the responsibilities of good citizenship.

Civic Participation

As Christians we pray for “all who are in high positions” (*I Timothy 2:2*) and are “subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution.” (*I Peter 2:13*). We actively participate in civic life by involvement in efforts for the improvement of social, cultural, and educational conditions (*Matthew 5:13-16*). We oppose degrading cultural influences (*II Peter 2:4-10*). We exercise the responsibility to vote.

War and Military Enlistment

We believe, however, that military aggression, as an instrument of national policy is indefensible (*Isaiah 2:3-4*). The destruction of life and property, and the deceit and violence necessary to warfare are contrary to the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ (*Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 5:44-45*). It is, therefore, our duty as Christians to promote peace and goodwill, to foster understanding and mutual trust among all people, and to work with patience for the renunciation of war as a means to settle international disputes (*Romans 12:18; 14:19*).

It is our firm conviction that none be required to enter military training or to bear arms except in time of national peril and that the consciences of our members be respected (*Acts 4:19-20; 5:29*). Therefore, we claim exemption from all military service for those who register officially with the church as conscientious objectors to war.

Swearing Oaths

Vain and rash swearing is forbidden by our Lord (*Matthew 5:34; James 5:12*). We hold that the Christian religion does not prohibit the taking of an oath when it is required by a public official. In every case, the Christian must speak in justice and truth (*Jeremiah 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:25*).

AS REGARDS THE CARE OF CREATION

As Christians we affirm with Scripture that all creation declares the glory of God (*Psalms 19:1-4*). Since we worship the Creator and believe that Christ’s redeeming work “...reconciles to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven...” (*Colossians 1:20*), we value creation and participate in activity that restores, protects, and respects the earth. This demonstrates our love for God.

4. UNDERSTANDING LIFESTYLE ISSUES IN THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT AND GOALS FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY.

Because the Membership Covenant and Goals for the Christian Journey are part of the Constitution of the Free Methodist Church, the recent changes to it came about as result of a referendum decision that was made by Free Methodists all around the world, not just the Canadian church. In essence, the covenant moved from a “legal base” (with a longer list of specific behaviours/attitudes) to a “principle base” (with a shorter list of guiding, overarching principles).

Some of our people fear that we now have an easier covenant that points us in the direction of compromise with sinful living. The opposite is true. The new covenant when it addresses lifestyle issues says, “As a people, we live wholesome and holy lives and show mercy to all, ministering to both their physical and spiritual needs. We commit ourselves to be free from habits and attitudes that defile the mind and harm the body, or promote the same...”

Clearly, this principle maintains the denomination’s longstanding position of calling people to be committed to living healthily by avoiding addictive substances like alcohol and tobacco. It also reminds us, for example, to not over-eat, or over-work – two sins against the body that we often “wink at”, joke about, or even encourage in our church circles.

When the Membership Covenant is principle-based, then the question is raised as to when one can be considered a member of the fellowship of God’s people.

Our previous approach saw membership as the “graduation diploma” at the end of a discipleship process that prepared people to live within specific requirements (such as not drinking alcohol, etc.). The present approach sees membership as the “doorway” into the discipleship process that will not end in this life. People who have received Christ can become members even though they still have much in their lives to work on. As we continually allow the Holy Spirit to make new applications of the covenant’s principles at deeper and deeper levels, we will become progressively healthier as Christians.

On the other hand, if we take a covenant (previous or present) and then ignore it and do not go on to grow in grace, the opposite is surely tragic.

Here is the focus. Let us “fix our eyes on Jesus” and, with the Holy Spirit’s enabling, commit to live a life of joyful obedience, dealing with everything that keeps us from becoming more like Him.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Other resources may be available on The Free Methodist Church in Canada website at www.fmcic.canada.org.

STRUCTURE AT FCFMC

- How Our Church Is Structured
- Our Denomination: The Free Methodist Church In Canada
- The Maturity Journey
- What It Means To Be A Member
- The Next Step

1. How Our Church Is Structured

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

The Nature of the Church Determines Its Structure

A The Church is a fellowship .

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
Acts 2:42 NIV

A top priority in a fellowship is unity and harmony .

*“Make every effort to keep the **unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace.”* Ephesians 4:3, NIV

*“So then let us aim for **harmony in the church** and try to build each other up.”* Romans 14:19, NLT

♦ ANY attitude that causes disunity is sin .

(Colossians 3:15; I Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:14; Proverbs 17:14; 2 Corinthians 13:11;
Romans 15:5-6; 12:16-18, Psalm 133:1)

♦ The Implication: A Good Structure promotes unity and downplays differences .

“[Often]...your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you...” 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, NLT

At FCFMC, members vote on:

- ♦ Official Board members
- ♦ Annual budgets
- ♦ Nominating Committee members
- ♦ Major decisions (e.g., land purchase, building)

B. The Church is a family .

*“All of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other **as brothers and sisters**.
Be tender hearted, and keep a humble attitude.” 1 Peter 3:8, NLT*

So we operate on the basis of relationships not rules .

*“Don't be harsh or impatient with an older man.
Talk to him as you would your own father, and to the younger men as your brothers.
Reverently honour an older woman as you would your mother, and the younger women as sisters.”
1 Timothy 5:1-2, The Message*

C. The Church is a body .

*“We are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole,
not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people.
Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. Romans 12:4-6, The Message.*

See also: I Corinthians 12:26; Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18

We are a body not a business .

We are a organism not a organization .

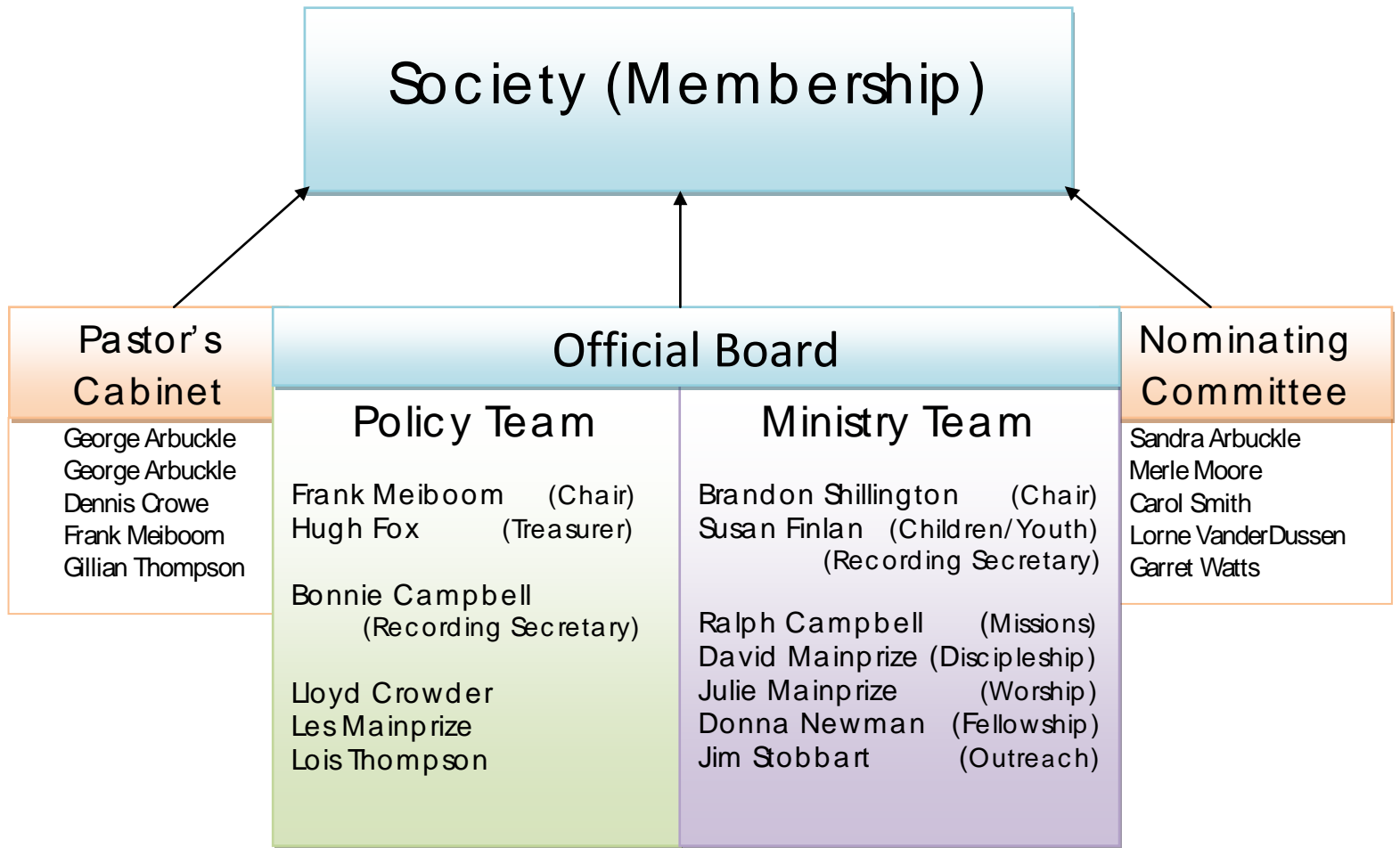
An organization focuses on maintenance .

An organism focuses on ministry .

At FCFMC we have a simple structure so we can maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.

*“These are the gifts Christ gave to the church; the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists and the pastors and teachers.
Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.”
Ephesians 4:11-12, NLT*

The Structure of FCFMC



*Arrows denote flow of accountability.
 Effective: September 2010-August 2011*

The Policy Team overlooks matters concerning:

- Trusteeship
- Financial
- Historical
- Office
- Custodial

The Ministry Team overlooks matters concerning:

- Children/Youth Ministries - Sunday School, Youth Group, Nursery
- Missions Ministries – Fundraising, Mission Events
- Discipleship Ministries – Small Groups, Library, Transportation, Gifts, Moral Issues
- Worship Ministries – Music, Sound, Lighting, Ushering, Greeting, Pulpit Supply, Communion
- Fellowship Ministries – Social Events, Coffee, Fellowships, Kitchen Committee
- Outreach Ministries – Community Visitation, Food Pantry, Community Contact Events, Benevolence

2. Our Denomination: The Free Methodist Church in Canada (FMCIc)

A. Our Family Tree

- ◆ The Church of England -- John Wesley and the Methodist Movement (1700's)
- ◆ The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States (1700's – 1800's)
- ◆ The Free Methodist Church -- Founded in 1860 -- B. T. Roberts

Free pews .

Freedom for slaves .

Freedom of the Holy Spirit .

Freedom from secret societies .

The Free Methodist Church in Canada

First congregation in Galt, Ontario 18 76

The Canadian Jurisdictional Conference was organized in 19 74

The Canadian General Conference was organized in 19 90

FCFMC began in 19 17 when the local Bible Christian Society asked the Free Methodist Church to take over the evangelical work in the area.

B. Benefits We Share With Other Free Methodist Churches in Canada

- ◆ Prayer network with hundreds of people across Canada.
- ◆ Visionary leadership from our Canadian bishop and executive team.
- ◆ The FMCIc Ministry Centre is located in Mississauga, Ontario.
- ◆ Church Development program that focuses on planting new churches across Canada and revitalizing existing churches.
- ◆ Resourcing of ideas from a whole network of other Free Methodist churches.
- ◆ National periodicals (Mosaic), our national website and a national email connection provides support, advice and inspiration to pastors and churches.
- ◆ Giving Streams to support Global Ministries around the world, ministry development in Quebec, church planting in Canada and Leadership Development in Canada.
- ◆ Access to a Free Methodist child sponsorship program that supports children in developing nations where Free Methodist missionaries work. (International Child Care Ministries)
- ◆ A national scholarship program to prepare lay and pastoral leaders for the future.
- ◆ A pool of pastoral leadership to draw from in the event of a pastoral change.
- ◆ A well organized group pension and benefits program for pastors.
- ◆ Partnership with US based Free Methodist World Missions and Asian Free Methodists through APFMMA to support ministries around the world.

3. The Maturity Journey

A. FOUR CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT

1. Membership

is a commitment to Christ and FCFMC .

“We are all parts of Christ's Body, 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 need all the others.” Romans 12:4-5, NLT

2. Maturity

is a commitment to develop habits necessary for spiritual growth.

“You must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18, NLT

“.. train yourself to be godly.” 1 Timothy 4:7, NLT

3. Ministry

is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities to serve God and others.

“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another) 1 Peter 4:10, NLT

“There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord... All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:4, 27, NLT

4. Missions

is a commitment to share the Good News with others.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses telling people about me everywhere.” Acts 1:8, NLT

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do it with gentleness and respect...” 1 Peter 3:15, NLT

We have these covenants because we become what we are committed to .

4. What It Means to Be a Member

The difference between “attendees” and “members” can be summed up in one word: Commitment

A Reasons For Membership

At FCFMC we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for 4 reasons:

1. **A BIBLICAL Reason: Christ is committed to the church.**

“...Christ loved the church, He gave up His life for her.” Ephesians 5:25, NLT

2. **A CULTURAL Reason: It is an antidote to our consumerism.**

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 and hoppers.” Membership swims against the current of Canada’s “consumer culture.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

3. **A PRACTICAL Reason: It defines who can be counted on.**

Every team has a roster. Every school has an enrolment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

4. **A PERSONAL Reason: It contributes to 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.

B Requirements and Rights of Membership

1. **Baptism**

If you have already been baptized, wonderful!

If not, you need to talk with the pastor to make arrangements for this.

2. **Membership Class with the Pastor**

You need to participate in a membership class offered by the pastor. This will help orient you to the basic of Christian faith as well as what our church believes and how it functions. You may have additional questions during or following this class and if so be sure to approach the pastor for help discovering the answers. This also helps the pastor become acquainted with you to be able to recommend you for membership.

3. **Policy Team Approval**

The Pastor recommends to the Policy Team new members at FCFMC. If you are transferring your membership from another church, the Pastor will also need to inform the Policy Team.

4. **Covenant Day**

When your membership at FCFMC has been approved by the Policy Team, arrangements will be made for you to take your membership covenant in front of the congregation. The pastor will prepare you for this.

THE RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP ARE:

1. To vote and hold office upon reaching the age designated by the general conference.
2. Trial and appeal if charged with failure to maintain the conditions of membership, with the specific provision that joining another religious denomination or sect shall of itself sever membership in the church without trial.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP MAY BE TERMINATED ONLY BY:

1. Voluntary withdrawal (including permission to withdraw under complaint).
2. Joining another religious denomination or sect or a secret order.
3. Expulsion after proper summary proceeding, or trial and conviction.
4. Persistent neglect of church relationship by a member, which in effect is voluntary withdrawal.

PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Membership in the church is a high privilege and responsibility. We believe the covenant required of members is consistent with the teaching of the written Word of God. Faithfulness to the covenant is evidence of the individual member's desire to sustain a saving relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord, to bring glory to God, to advance the cause of God on earth, to preserve the unity of the body of Christ, and to cherish the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church.

MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY

When a member does not keep his covenant and habitually violates his vows, it is the responsibility of minister and members to point to the failure and to seek in love to restore the member. If, after these steps have been taken, the member does not keep his commitments, he must be dealt with in accord with the due processes of the church.

C. Membership Confession, Commitment and Covenant

A member of the Free Methodist Church, trusting in the enablement of the Holy Spirit and seeking the support of the other members of the church, makes the following confession and commitments as a covenant with the Lord and the church.

Pastor: Beloved in the Lord, you have been baptized into Christ and come now to be received into membership in this congregation of the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice, with you, in all God's mercies that have brought you to this hour; and we join our prayers with yours as you make this sacred undertaking.

Pastor: Do you have the assurance that God has forgiven your sins through faith in Jesus Christ?

Candidate: I do.

Pastor: Do you believe the Bible is God's written word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit and do you accept its authority for what you must believe and how you must live?

Candidate: I do.

Pastor: Do you here resolve, by God's grace, to be Christ-like in heart and life, opening yourself fully to the cleansing and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of the Scriptures, and the nurture and fellowship of this church?

Candidate: By God's enabling grace, I do resolve.

Pastor: Do you accept the Articles of Religion, the Membership Covenant, the Goals of the Christian Journey, and the government of the Free Methodist Church, and will you endeavour to live in harmony with them?

Candidate: Trusting God's power to aid me, I do.

Pastor: As a follower of Jesus Christ, will you embrace the mission of the Free Methodist Church within and beyond this congregation, and will you join us in giving sacrificially of your time, talents and resources to help us carry out that mission?

Candidate: With God's help, I will.

Pastor: I offer you the right hand of fellowship. I welcome you into The Free Methodist Church. May the experience of membership in this body enrich your life and the life of our church; and may your contribution to its life strengthen both you and all of us.

5. What Next?

Small Groups! An excellent ‘next step’ in your journey. It’s in these smaller environments that we have opportunities to share, listen, and encourage one another in our faith. We are not meant to live in isolation, and a small group is a great way to make meaningful connections with other people.

Service! There are a few different activities we can do that help us grow and mature through connection with God and other people, and serving others is one of the most effective ways to make these connections. Serving takes our focus off ourselves and helps open our hearts to the extravagant love of God flowing to us and through us to others. Other than a few key staff people, we are volunteer based and would love to talk with you about possible ways you could volunteer here. We also encourage you to find a place you are needed in your community and serve there. Don’t just sit in the stands; join a team, sign up, and get in the game! Engaging in serving others is part of God’s mission for you!

Spiritual Growth! In our Wesleyan tradition we practice six holy habits that help produce spiritual growth. We encourage everyone to regularly receive these six ‘means of grace’ through which God enlivens, strengthens and confirms faith. These six paths will guide us whether we are in a large gathering of worship or in a small group.

1. The Scriptures – We preach and teach from the Bible because it is one of God’s chief means of grace (1 Corinthians 1:21). We are learning how to cultivate the lectio divina (divine reading) practice of listening to the Holy Spirit by studying and applying the Bible through a personal and frequent (we recommend daily) time alone with God.

2. Christian community – We want to help each person find a place to belong and become an accountable, contributing participant in fulfilling God’s mission. This vision of spiritual growth through Christian community is an alternative way-of-life to our culture’s trend of fragmentation, isolation, consumerism, and cocooning. John Wesley described this as “Christian conferencing.” When a person becomes part of a small group community they are allowing God’s grace to work in their life through the instruction and encouragement of others.

3. Prayer – We encourage each person to both develop a personal practice of prayer and participate in the safe, confidential environment of a small group where they can receive prayer from friends for growth needs and concerns.

4. The Lord’s Supper – We offer the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as a time to renew our love for Christ, examine our obedience, receive forgiveness, restore broken relationships, and rekindle our compassion for others.

5. Works of Mercy – We encourage acts of compassion toward our neighbors. Because we are called to a ministry of priesthood (1 Peter 2:5 & 9) and because we are called to love others as part of God’s plan of redemption (Luke 10:30-37), we try to find practical and creative ways to help our neighbors and work to build friendships rather than win arguments.

6. Fasting – We observe regular degrees and forms of fasting as a means of renewing our intention and energy for holy living. The purpose of fasting is to safeguard our soul from being absorbed by the culture. It gives us the ability to say, “That’s enough,” so we can live simply with uncluttered lives and rekindle our focus on God.

Membership Application

Frankford Community Free Methodist Church (FCFMC)

Four Requirements

1. Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ and received assurance that your sins are forgiven, and will you continually pursue growth in grace?

Yes _____
when? where?

2. Have you been baptized?

Yes _____
when? where?

or

I want to be baptized.

3. Have you completed *Discovering Membership at FCFMC* (C.L.A.S.S. 101)?

Yes _____

4. Do you accept the “Articles of Religion”, principles in “Goals of the Christian Journey” and the structure of church government, and do you purpose to live by the principles of the “Membership Covenant”?

Yes, I do!

Please sign your name

Date

When you have completed this application, please forward it to the Senior Pastor so that they can arrange to meet with you.

God Bless You! It has been a pleasure having you in *Discovering Membership at FCFMC*.

Keep Growing!