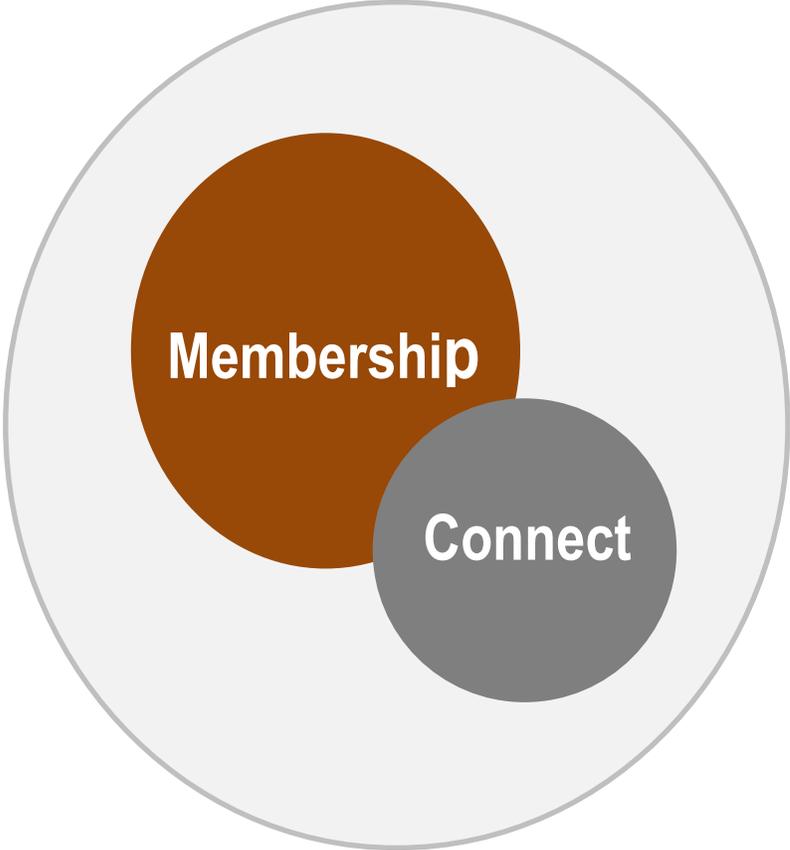


CALVARY FELLOWSHIP



OVERVIEW AND CONNECTED IN CHRIST

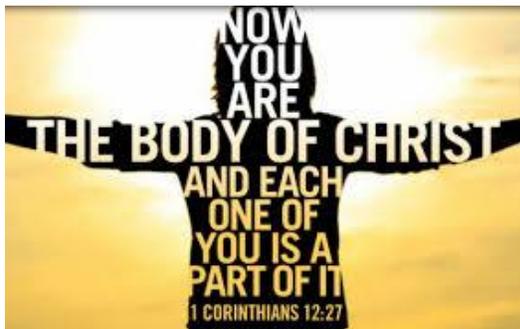
I. CONNECTED IN CHRIST

MEMBERSHIP CONNECT PROCESS

Membership Connect begins today with this overview of our membership process and teaching on what it means to be *Connected in Christ*. You will then work through the rest of this workbook at your own pace. At any point along the way feel free to contact Pastor Mike Edelman via email (medelman@cfdowntown.com), phone (610.363.7171 x2140) or personal meeting to discuss questions you may have.



The Membership Connect process concludes with a lunch on the 3rd Sunday of the month (10/16, 11/20, 12/18, 1/15, 2/19, 3/19, 5/21). Once you have read *I Am A Church Member* and this workbook, complete your Membership Application and contact pastor Mike to reserve a spot at an upcoming Membership Connect Lunch. You'll be able to meet others who are completing the membership process and ask whatever questions you may have from anything that has been discussed throughout the program. Once we receive your application, one of our elders/pastors will contact you to schedule a follow-up meeting to hear your testimony of faith in Jesus and spend time in prayer together to conclude the Membership Connect process.



If you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus, you **ALREADY ARE** a member of God's family. This is the primary membership that is referenced in the Bible. This membership is a gift, something to be treasured. It's not a legalistic obligation. When we trust Jesus as Savior we identify with Him through baptism and with the other members of His body through a local church.

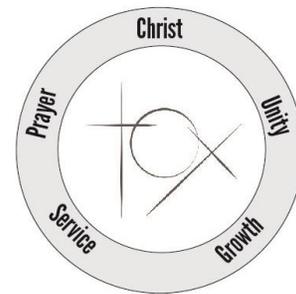
"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

Membership at Calvary Fellowship represents our commitment to live out together Jesus' mission to go and make disciples, living and loving more like Jesus and helping others to do the same. Connected, as a family of believers, we commit to love one another, build each other up into Christ and lead others to do the same. While all Christians are a part of the universal Church, God's word gives clear instruction to belong to a specific local church.

In a recent Sermon Series called *I Love My Church*, we reminded our church family of the joy and privilege of being a member of the body of Christ and we incorporated the theme of being CONNECTED in various ways as members of a local church. Membership Connect will remind you that as a follower of Jesus you are not only *Connected in Christ*, but as members of God's household you are also ...

- Connected in Unity
- Connected in Growth
- Connected in Service
- Connected through Prayer



How is being a member of a church like being part of a family?

What kinds of things get in the way of us viewing church membership as a privilege?

OUR PURPOSE, MISSION AND VISION

We are thrilled that you have shown interest in becoming a member of Calvary Fellowship. Our mission is quite simple. We want to follow Jesus and proclaim the simple but life-changing message of the gospel across Chester County and around the world.

This requires the presence of Christ in his people, living as disciples who make disciples of Jesus. We believe the church is God's household (Eph. 2:19). We are God's family called to devote ourselves to one another in loving relationship (Acts 2:42) both showing what God is like and calling others to join his family through faith in Jesus Christ. Though the Church is one household with one God and Father over us all, we believe it's important to devote ourselves to a local expression of the family, submitting ourselves to one another under biblically qualified elders for the purpose of ongoing care, equipping and development for ministry, and faithfulness to our doctrine and mission. Our membership commitment is an expression of our desire to learn and live as a family together on mission to fulfill Jesus purpose, mission, and vision for us.

At Calvary Fellowship we are unified around our purpose to glorify God in all that we do (Psalm 115:1). We are unified around our mission to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). And we are unified around our 2 cross vision based on Luke 9:23.

We decided that rather than writing out a lengthy vision statement, we'd just draw a picture. You'll see this picture at the top of every web page and on almost every document that's associated with Calvary: Two crosses. If you can remember two crosses, you've got the vision.

It's not just our vision, it's Jesus' vision for your life. Take a look at the pictures below, and we'll briefly describe what you're seeing.

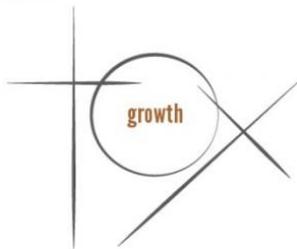
JESUS' CROSS



The first cross is Jesus' cross. I Corinthians 1:18 says (the bold is ours), "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing..." We recognize that it's hard to get through that cross. Believing that Jesus and His death are the ONLY way to a relationship with God and the ONLY way to obtain eternal life... well, it's a potential stumbling block! That's why we love the second part of that same verse which says, "...but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

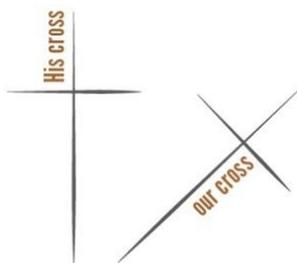
After we put our faith and whole trust in what Jesus did on that cross in redeeming us, we are His children! Now it's time to grow, grow, grow.

THE GROWTH CIRCLE



After you come to know Jesus, you should become a sponge. Learning, praying, and meeting with other Christians at church and in smaller group settings is both natural and important. The Bible becomes your guide for every aspect of life. But it's not enough to stay in that circle.

OUR CROSS



Now for that second cross.

Luke 9:23 says, "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'"

After we get "through the cross," so to speak, and begin to grow in Christ, it's time for us to get *under* our cross. Jesus Himself gives that very instruction to anyone who wants to be His disciple.

If it's hard to grasp how to do this, try starting every single day with this prayer:

"Jesus, I am all yours today. Whatever you want me to do, I will do it. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to, with your help and by your power, do everything you ask of me."

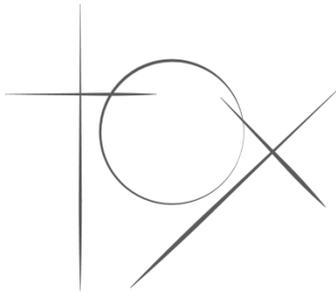
Then live your day with the expectation that Jesus will take you up on it. Knowing the Bible well is an absolute must, since God mostly speaks to us through His word!

Denying yourself can involve forgiving an enemy and praying for him/her instead of allowing yourself to wallow in self-pity or hatred (Matthew 5:43-48). Getting under your cross can mean giving up something of value in order to meet the need of someone else (1 John 3:17). There are a million ways to live out "denying yourself" and "taking up your cross." You just have to decide what God is telling you to do right now—and then live it out by His grace.

A WAY OF LIFE

So there you have it in pictures. Whenever you see the two crosses at Calvary, you can remember that the first cross represents Jesus' cross that purchased your salvation. The second cross is your cross to take up daily and carry. We look forward to living this out together!

As members of Calvary Fellowship we are ...



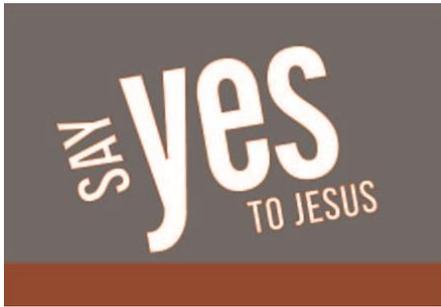
- Committed to *pointing people to the cross of Christ* – trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- Committed to *guiding people through the cross* – establishing them in the faith and equipping them to serve the Lord.
- Committed to *inspiring people to take up their cross* – living and loving more like Jesus and helping others to do the same as we deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him.

What encourages you most about our 2 cross vision?

In which of the three elements of the vision would you like to grow/develop most in the next year?

These commitments are intended to be lived out in relationship with one another and within the context of the local church. Jesus established the church to be a public, earthly institution that would identify, affirm, and oversee those who profess to believe in Him (Matthew 16:18-19, 18:15-20).

Jesus established the church to publicly declare those who belong to Him in order to give the world a display of the good news about Himself (John 17:21-23). Jesus wants the world to know who belongs to Him and who doesn't. And how will the world know this? They are to see which people publicly identify themselves with His people in the visible, public institution He established for this very purpose. They're to look at the members of His church. Jesus intends for His people to be marked out as a visible, public group, which means joining together in local churches.



You'll see these cards all over the place. We encourage you to keep a few with you at all times to share with people when God opens the door to talk about His love for them demonstrated through Jesus Christ.

Saying "Yes" to Jesus and trusting Him as Savior is as easy as **A, B, C** ...

Admitt that you are a sinner and need a Savior

People tend to divide themselves into two groups: Good people and bad people. But God says that every person who has ever lived is a sinner and that any sin separates us from God.

The Bible begins with people enjoying the presence of God. We were created to be in relationship with our Creator. But, very soon, sin entered into the world and into the hearts of people and put a barrier between God and humanity. The Bible states that "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It's a universal, spiritual problem. It contaminates every part of us: our physical bodies, our minds, our relationships, our emotions, our decision-making abilities and our destiny.

The Bible states that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Death is the just penalty and punishment for sin. In the Bible, the word "death" means "separation". There are three degrees of separation people experience because of the problem of sin:

Physical Separation: Every obituary is a reminder that all of us are mortal. Our physical death, separation from this life, is the result of sin in the world (Genesis 2:17).

Spiritual Separation: Sin puts a barrier between us and God and prevents us from enjoying a relationship with Him. The holiness of God prevents Him from compromising Himself and turning a blind eye to sin. He must, instead turn His back on us.

Eternal Separation: Some have thought hell to be an imaginary place. However, the Bible teaches that sin leads to a very real separation from God forever (1 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

This inward sin problem cannot be cured by outward actions. No matter how good, helpful, truthful or kind we might try to be, none of us will ever be able to change the condition of our sinful heart. Only God can do that. And He did!

Believe that Jesus Christ died for your sin and rose again

There is no way to God except through Jesus (John 14:6). It's God's grace that allows you to come to Him – not your own efforts to "clean up your life" or work your way to Heaven. You can't earn it. It's a free gift.

Jesus came to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He visited our world, took on human flesh and lived a perfect life deserving no punishment. Yet Jesus willingly took on Himself the just penalty for our sin by dying on the cross. By taking our place, He exchanged our imperfection for His perfection. Think about this truth: "God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Commit your life to follow Him

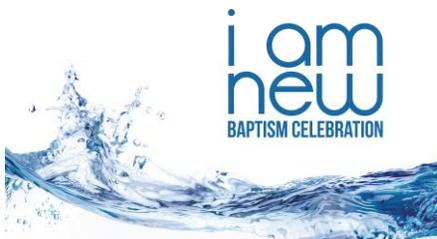
Forgiveness is a gift from God, but a gift has to be accepted. To receive eternal life, you must accept that Jesus Christ saved you from your sin and then commit yourself to follow Him.

A transformed life is a free gift of God. It is not earned. It isn't purchased. It is personal and non-refundable. It is the ultimate gift that will last forever. And, it's available to you. You may respond to God's gracious provision simply through faith. You can trust Jesus for who He is and what He has done for us. The Bible speaks about this step into new life:

"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. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." [Romans 10:8-9]

Having received the free gift of salvation, believers are also to respond to God's grace by observing the two ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Participation in these ordinances contributes in no way to one's salvation. These are outward signs of the inward grace that has already taken place in the life of the believer.

Jesus told His followers: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". Jesus' followers were to take the message of salvation around the world and as others became followers of Jesus, these new believers would publicly identify themselves with Him.



Baptism is a public testimony of what Christ has done in your life as a Christ-follower. It is a symbolic picture of death, burial and resurrection— and new life! When you are baptized, you are obeying Christ's command in the Bible for all believers, and you are telling the world that Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life. No matter what your age or background, baptism is a natural and important step in your journey as a Christ-follower.

So by participating in baptism, a new follower of Jesus symbolically aligns themselves with new beliefs and a new community. Simply put, baptism is an external sign of an internal change that has taken place in someone's heart. It is not a means of salvation but a response to salvation.

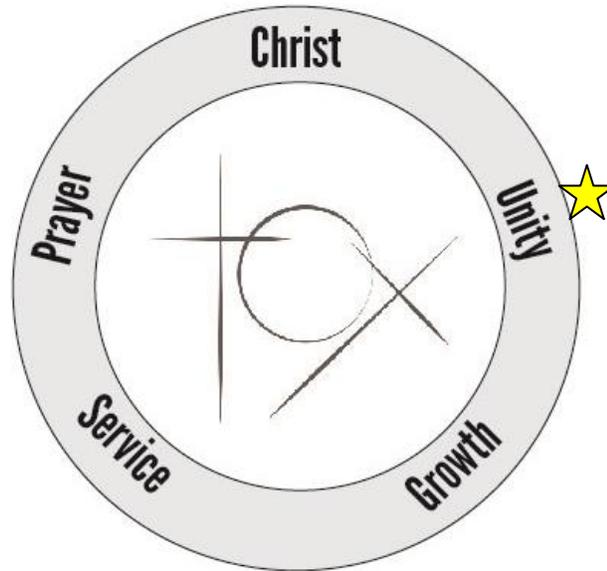
At Calvary Fellowship we regularly schedule *I Am New* Baptism Celebrations during our Sunday Worship Services or our special Gathering Services. If you have not been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ, we encourage you to take this step of obedience as soon as possible. It is not a pre-requisite for membership at Calvary Fellowship but it was the first act of obedience in the early church for those who said "Yes" to Jesus.

There is a place in your Membership application to write out your testimony of how/when you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior. As you begin this Membership Connect process, let that be your first step as you testify that you have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. If you have never written your personal testimony, the next two pages provide a framework for this and a place to write a rough draft.

In doing so you affirm that you are *Connected in Christ* and a member of God's family with a desire to be

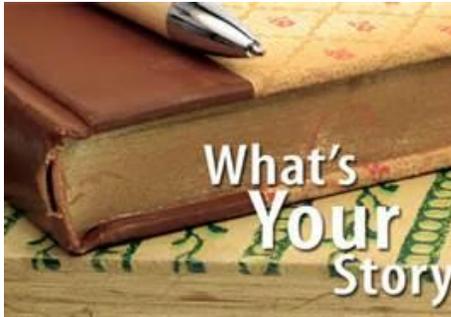
living like a member of His family in relationship with others in this local church.

The rest of the workbook will provide a summary of what it looks like to be living as members of God's family, not only Connected in Christ but also ... Connected in Unity, Connected in Growth, Connected in Service, and Connected through Prayer. In the next chapter you'll discover more about the encouragement and power of being *Connected in Unity*.



As you conclude this chapter, complete pages 1-3 in your Membership Application.

WRITING AND SHARING YOUR PERSONAL FAITH STORY



We all love to listen to a good story. Every time we tell our story of God's grace in our lives, we give honor and glory to Him. The Scriptures tell us to always be prepared to give an answer for the reason for the hope that we have. We are witnesses for Christ and witnesses are called to testify to what they have seen, heard and experienced. Here are some thoughts about what surrounds your personal testimony.

- It is your personal story! [Acts 26:4-29]
- It should glorify Christ, not you or your sinfulness.
- It should explain the gospel clearly [Romans 1:16-17, Colossians 4:4, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4]
- It should be given with a dependence on the Holy Spirit. [1 Thessalonians 1:4-5]

THE STRUCTURE

There are at least three key parts to your testimony:

- What your life was like before Christ. [A brief summary with an acknowledgement of your sin and your need for a Savior.]
- How you came to faith in Christ. Testify to what you believe Jesus' death on the cross accomplished for you and what you believe about Jesus Christ.
- What has transpired since you came to faith in Christ.

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- It should communicate the gospel with key verses. The emphasis should be on Jesus Christ and not just ourselves. Remember the attitude of John the Baptist, Jesus must become greater, and you must become less.
- It should fit on a single page, be readable in two or three minutes. It should also be flexible enough to expand or adapt when necessary.
- Keep it simple and avoid using words that only others Christians may understand.

Next Step: If you have not done so yet, use the next page to write out a draft of your personal faith story. You can include your final version with your membership application at the end Membership Connect. Remember that above all, the focus of your testimony is to testify to what you believe about the Lord Jesus and what His death and resurrection accomplished for you.

Use the space below to write a few paragraphs that summarize your life before Christ, how you came to trust in Jesus, and how He is active in your life today. Remember to include a few key verses that clearly articulate the gospel.

My Life prior to trusting Jesus Christ as my Savior

When and how I came to faith in Christ

My life now as I walk with Christ