

# Membership Covenant

## Eden Worship Center

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“When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.” Ecclesiastes 5:4-5

### **Purpose**

When anyone enters into relationship with God by grace from, and faith in, the person and work of Jesus Christ they are entering into two covenants. The first is to journey with God for the rest of their lives and love Him fully. The second is to journey with His other children in the community of the local church. Your membership in a church is an official recognition of this, and the purposes of the Eden Worship Center Membership Covenant are:

- To clarify the Biblical expectations and obligations for both the elders at EWC and the individual members of the EWC body.
- To encourage consistency, accountability and loving unity within the church family.
- To accomplish God’s call for the EWC church family.

This covenant does not imply that you will perfectly keep your promises, but that the desire of your heart is to fulfill each of the responsibilities stated to the best of your ability. We trust that your commitment will be a blessing to your own journey in Christ, as well a blessing to those around you.

### **What is a Covenant?**

Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants; some between God and man (Genesis 6, 9, 15; Ezekiel 20; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 31; Matthew 26), while others are solely between men (1 Samuel 18, 2 Samuel 5). Some covenants are unconditional, meaning that two or more parties obligate themselves in such a way that the obligation of each party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other. In other words, there is a pledge to be faithful to the covenant regardless of the other person's faithfulness. Other covenants are conditional, meaning that the obligation of one party is at least in part dependent upon the faithfulness of the other. While God's gracious covenant with the Church is unconditional, the local church covenant itself is in part conditioned upon the faithfulness of each party. If at any time one of the parties, the individual member or corporate church body, fails in its obligations, the other party is freed from certain aspects of the covenant. The membership covenant

of EWC consists mainly of general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc., whether they are members of EWC or not. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ-follower regardless of any failure on the part of local church to live up to her covenant obligations.

Although the expectations of this membership covenant consist of general Christian obligations; all Christians are not required to carry out those obligations as a part of the EWC family. Therefore, if at any time an individual member feels as though the corporate church body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the leadership of the church. If the church elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness, then the member is freed from his or her membership obligations and is encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church's disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere. While focusing primarily in language on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her elders and her individual members, the covenant is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

## **Statement of Core Beliefs**

The following statements represent the central beliefs of Christianity. These are the things that all true Christians, throughout history, all around the world have held in common. Therefore, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from Membership in Eden Worship Center.

### **We believe...**

- The Bible is the fully inspired Word of God. It is without error, and is the supreme and final authority for all matters of life and belief. (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21)
- There is only one true and living God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who eternally exists in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who are equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in all the work of the Godhead. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
- Man was created by God in His own image, but through his sin incurred physical and spiritual death. As a result, all humanity (Christ excluded) are born

with a sinful nature, and are sinners by choice, and therefore under condemnation and without hope apart from salvation in Christ. (Genesis 1:26; Romans 3:22–23, 5:12–21; Ephesians 2:1–3)

- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He was born of a virgin, and is both fully God and fully human. (Luke 1:35; John 1:1–2; Colossians 1:15–20; Hebrews 1:1–3)
- The Gospel – the good news of God’s saving actions towards sinners through Jesus Christ. Namely, that He took on human nature, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death for sinners, and physically rose from the dead. (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18)
- Salvation is a free gift that comes only by God’s grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Those who repent, forsake sin, and trust in Jesus Christ and His death on their behalf, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures. They are delivered from condemnation, receiving forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. (John 3:16; Romans 3:23–24; 2 Corinthians 5:17–19; 1 John 1:9)
- Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven, where He perpetually makes intercession for His people, and will one day physically and visibly return to earth to establish His kingdom. (Acts 1:9–11; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1–2; Revelation 1:7)
- In the future bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost: Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal joy, living and reigning with Christ. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to endless punishment. (Matthew 25:31–46; John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15)

### **Biblical Obligations of EWC Elders to the EWC Church Body**

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, pastors and elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is a rather comprehensive overview of the requirements for elders as spelled out within the Scriptures.

## **With the help of the Holy Spirit, the church leadership covenants the following:**

- To meet the criteria assigned to pastors and elders in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- To appoint elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- To prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- To lovingly caring for you and seeking your growth in Christ (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12)
- To provide teaching and counsel from the whole counsel of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18)
- To helping you in times of need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 2:14-17)
- To pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14)
- To be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1)
- To lovingly exercise church discipline when necessary – for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1)
- To help you become equipped to serve Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13)
- To set an example and join you in fulfilling the obligations of church membership (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12)

## **Biblical Obligations of EWC Members**

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as "living by the Spirit" (Galatians 5; Romans 8). The requirements of this membership covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the Biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible, yet non-exhaustive, explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

**With the help of the Holy Spirit, I, the undersigned, covenant the following:**

- To submit to the Scriptures as the final authority on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14–17; 2 Peter 1:19–21)
  - I have read and understood the EWC Statement of Core Beliefs, and I am in full agreement with everything it says. I have also read and understood the EWC Statement of Faith and agree to promote unity, and fight against divisiveness, in any area where I may differ from the position of the church (1 Timothy 4:13; Ephesians 4:1–3).
  
- To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines. My commitment to follow Jesus Christ will be evident through my regular participation in Sunday worship services, communion, my willingness to serve where needed, engaging in Biblical community, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Psalm 105:1–2; 119:97; Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 10:23–25; 2 Peter 1:3).
  
- To steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14–30; Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 8–9; 1 Peter 4:10–11).
  
- To pursue reconciliation when offense occurs, and reject all opportunities to speak gossip or slander. If two or more of us cannot resolve a matter privately – whether it is personal or has church, business, or legal implications – we will obey God’s command to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) by looking to our church for assistance, and cooperating with our leaders or wise people they recommend to resolve the matter through Biblical mediation or arbitration (Matthew 18:15–16; Ephesians 4:29–32; 1 Corinthians 6:1–8). Note: If a person coming to EWC has an unresolved conflict with someone from his former church, we will assist him in seeking to be reconciled to the other person before joining our church (Matthew 5:23–24; Romans 12:18).
  
- By God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13–16, 4:1–3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death, while

stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:

- I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography (Romans 13:11–14; 1 Corinthians 6:15–20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8; Hebrews 13:4).
- I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to work towards reconciliation, with the help of the pastors and elders at EWC before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1–12; Mark 10:1–12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10–11). Note: for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6.
- I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28–32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3–18).
- To take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1–13).
- To submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by following the Biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another (the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration), and receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached Biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:9–13; Hebrews 12:5–11).
- To do the following when I sin:
  - Confess my sin to God and to fellow believers
  - Repent and seek help to put my sin to death
  - Submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church, and be diligent to strive for unity and peace within the Church (Romans 8:13; Ephesians 4:1–3; Colossians 3:5; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:16; 1 Peter 5:5; 1 John 1:6–10).
- If I move from this place, I will unite with some other church where I can carry out the spirit of this agreement and the teaching of God's Word (Hebrews 10:23–25).

# Membership Covenant

Eden Worship Center

Having Believed the Gospel and thus received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and being in agreement with the Eden Worship Center Covenant, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Eden Worship Center body.

**New Member Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed First and Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please sign and return this page to the Eden Worship Center office