

MEMBERSHIP AT BETHEL CHURCH

BETHEL'S HISTORY

On May 21, 1874 a meeting was held to organize a church on the present location of Bethel Church. It was to be known as Bethel Congregational Church of Kingston, and was one of a handful of [Congregational churches](#) that remained independent when the United Church came into being in 1925.

Bethel remained an independent Congregational church for twenty-four years before voting for union with the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada on May 18th, 1949. We are proud of that heritage and of our ministry to people from every walk of life over the years. By the grace of God, Bethel continues today with a vision to be "Responding to the Heart of God; Transforming the Heart of the City, the Nation and the World."

SO WHAT IS "MEMBERSHIP"?

1. *The Universal Church:*

A person comes into the Family of God through faith in Jesus Christ and in His sacrificial death. At the moment of this "spiritual birth", the new believer is also placed into membership in the Body of Christ which is His Church. This is an act of God – membership in the Universal Church.

But membership in the Universal Body of Christ is an *invisible* reality - no one is able to see how the Body of Christ functions apart from the presence of the visible local church in the world.

2. *The Local Church:*

The local church, then, is the *visible* representation of the Body of Christ in a single location and at a particular time. Jesus Christ is the Head and the believers make up the Body. Each believer is spiritually related to all other believers in an interdependent way.

And becoming a member of the local Body is a visible matter as well - it puts you into a living relationship with other Christians with whom you can share common needs, goals and ministry. Joining a local church is the means of identifying with the Christian presence in the world.

Here at Bethel, we view membership as a privilege. We believe that identification with a local church is essential and that membership offers the greatest potential for individual participation:

- First, by taking official membership in Bethel, you are making a statement of **IDENTIFICATION** with us - that you are in essential agreement with our doctrine and philosophy of ministry, and that you desire to grow and serve with us.
- Second, membership also means **INVOLVEMENT** in the life of Bethel, in its purpose and its people. You will also be involved in the decisions and direction of Bethel's future as God continues to lead us forward together.
- Finally, membership is an **INVESTMENT** — of prayer for your fellow members, of financial support for the ministry and of yourself as you take time to be available for God.

Naturally, because of the implications and responsibilities, it is understood that membership is available only to those over the age of 18.

WHY WOULD I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER?

- Because there is no other institution so loved by Christ as His bride, the Church.
- Because I believe the Christian life is intended to be experienced together with others - it is a life in community, not in isolation.
- Because I need the others who fellowship here. I am grateful for its contribution to my life and to the well-being of my community.
- Because it seriously endeavors to help me grow in my discipleship, both with God and with others.
- Because I desire to serve Christ in ministry to my fellow believers and to a lost world.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Every member in a local church is essential and has responsibilities. Each is important to the vitality and well-being of the church and its life.

As a result of this:

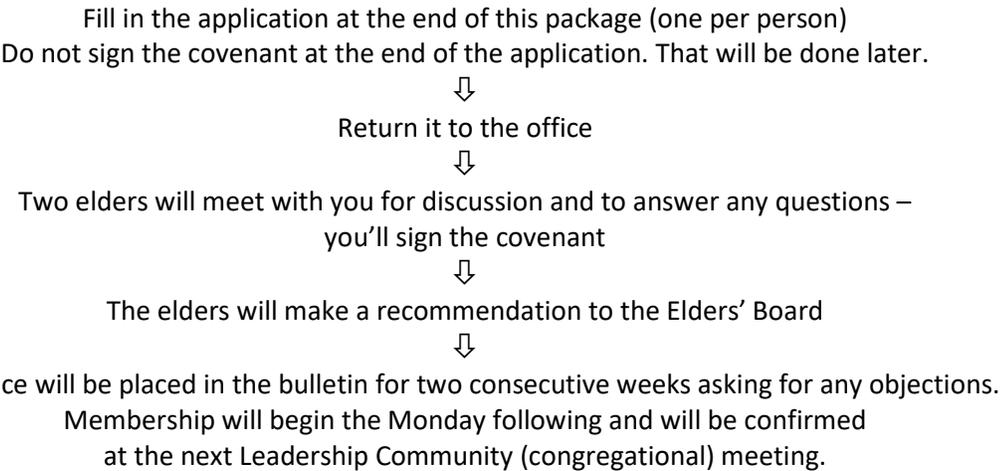
- I am responsible to promote and protect my church.
- I am responsible to yield to the Headship of Jesus Christ as expressed through the pastors, elders and leaders of my church.
- I am responsible to show my commitment to my church with my presence, my prayers and my support of its ministries and programs in proportion to the way God has blessed me.

CONCLUSION

So Church membership means taking your specific place in the Body of Christ--a place that only you can fill because of the unique purpose God has given you. Meanwhile, the church maintains its commitment to nurture you in your Christian walk and mission.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

It's a relatively simple process:



Note: You may be asked to participate in a Newcomers' Class within the first six months of joining Bethel.

ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

By all means feel free to contact the office if there are any questions we have not answered in this document.

Bethel Church

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date of Birth: (day/month/year) _____

Gender: M F

Marital Status _____

Spouse's name (if applic.): _____

Children's names (if applic.): _____

CHURCH BACKGROUND

How long have you been a born-again believer? _____

Have you been baptized as a believer? If yes, date and method (immersion etc.) :

If no, why not? _____

What other church affiliations have you had, if any? _____

Name and address of most recent church membership/affiliation:

Name and phone number of a pastor we could contact as a reference:

Have you been involved in church ministry (at Bethel or elsewhere)?

GIFTS AND TALENTS

List any gifts, talents and hobbies which you would enjoy sharing at Bethel Church:

TESTIMONY

Briefly state when and how you came to believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour (attach additional sheets if necessary).

RESPONSE TO DOCTRINE

Please read the doctrinal statement at the end of the application (Appendix A), as well as our Philosophy of Ministry (Appendix B). Record any questions or concerns you may have below.

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

In making this commitment to membership at Bethel Church, I declare the following:

- I believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son who died on the cross to pay for my sins. He will be the judge of all humanity at the appointed time.
- I believe in One God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.
- I commit to protecting the unity of the church fellowship in a loving spirit by acknowledging that I am under the spiritual authority of my pastor and our church leaders.
- I will undertake to pray for Bethel and her congregation on a regular basis.
- I will support the church by giving of my time, talents and finances in proportion to the way God has blessed me.

I understand that in keeping this covenant, my membership will be maintained (in accordance with procedures outlined in the Bethel By-Law) and that if I choose to withdraw my membership, I will notify the office of Bethel Church in writing (by electronic or traditional means).

Signature of Applicant

Signature of Witness (Elder)

Date: _____

APPENDIX "A" TO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE (BETHEL CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE IV)

A - The Divine Authority and Plenary Inspiration of the whole Canonical Scriptures

We believe that "All Scripture is God-breathed". By this, we understand that the whole Bible is inspired, in the sense that the Holy Spirit gave the identical words of the sacred writings (in the original manuscripts) to the holy men of old, chosen by Him to be the channel of His revelation to man. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Mark 12:26-36; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Acts 1:16; 2:4)

B - The Trinity of the Godhead

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections. They are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience. (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:6-8; John 1:1-4; Isaiah 63:8-10; Acts 5:3-4; Matthew 28:19,20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Mark 12:29; Revelation 1:4-6; Hebrews 1:1-3)

C - The Deity and the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in the essential Deity and the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We affirm that all the Scriptures, from first to last, are centered upon Him, His Person and work, His sacrificial death upon the cross and His coming again. (Isaiah 7:14; John 5:39; Matthew 1:18-23; Acts 1:11; 17:2, 3; 18:28; Luke 1:35; Acts 26:22, 23; 28:23)

D - The Personality, Deity and Present Mission of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, the Third Person of the Trinity, who is now, throughout this age of Grace, here present in the true Church. He was sent for the express purpose of revealing Christ Jesus both to the members of the Church, that they may be comforted, instructed and built up in their most holy faith, and to the world, that sinners may be convicted of sin, of God's righteousness, and of His judgment. (John 7:38,39; 14:16,17; 15:26; 16:8,13-15; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4)

E - The Fall of Mankind

We believe that man and woman, originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, fell from their high and holy estate through wilful disobedience, by eating the forbidden fruit. As a result, the threatened penalty of death was then and there inflicted, so that they totally lost all spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and subject to the power of the devil. (Genesis 1:26; 2:17; Ephesians 2:1-3; Isaiah 64:6; 1 Timothy 5:6; John 5:40; 6:53; 1 John 3:8)

F - The Total Depravity of Mankind

We believe that this spiritual death, or total corruption of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire race of men and women, with the exception of the man Christ Jesus alone. Thus, every child of Adam is born into the world with a sinful nature. (Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:5; John 3:6; Romans 5:12-19)

G - Salvation by Grace through Faith

We believe that sinners are saved by Grace through Faith alone. It is the gift of God, not of works. We further believe that every saved man or woman is justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 5:1; Titus 2:11-14)

H - The Atonement by the Blood of Christ

We believe that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and made a curse for us, dying in our place. He was the final Sacrifice acceptable to God and is able to save every sinner who repents. (Leviticus 17:11; Galatians 3:13; Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; John 1:12; 1 Peter 1:18, 19 and 2:24; Romans 5:6-9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:27)

I - Regeneration by the Holy Spirit

We believe that, owing to universal depravity and death in sin, no one can see or enter the kingdom of God unless born of the Spirit, at which point he or she becomes a new creation, sealed to the day of Redemption. (John 3:5-8; James 1:18; Galatians 6:15; 1 Peter 1:23; Ephesians 1:13; 1 John 5:1; Titus 3:5)

J - The Believer's Security and Assurance

We believe in the Eternal Security of all who are born again by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ. It is their privilege to be assured of their present salvation and eternal safety. (John 10:28, 29; John 5:24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:33-39)

K - Sanctification

We believe that the members of the body of Christ are sanctified ones. They are perfected as to their standing forever by the one offering of the blood of Christ, and are one with Christ in sanctification. As to their state, they may be sanctified daily by the Word, by the blood of Christ, and by the in-working presence and power of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24 and 5:25-27; John 17:17-19; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10; 13:12; Romans 15:16; 1 John 1:7-9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Jude 1)

L - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

We believe that, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the whole company of believers, as promised by Christ, and they were collectively baptized into one body. This was the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ. (Matthew 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13)

Since that time this baptism occurs individually at the moment of salvation, at which time the believer is also indwelt by the Spirit. (John 14:15-18; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Romans 8:9)

We believe that the New Testament distinguishes between being indwelt by the Spirit, which is true of all believers, and being filled with the Spirit, which is the believer's privilege and duty, producing power in Christian witness. There is one baptism of the Spirit and it is into the Body of Christ, but there are many fillings. Pentecost is an historical event and is not repeated. (Acts 2:4, Acts 4:8-31; Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 5:18)

M - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the Church to glorify Christ in the building of His Body (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of these gifts for the perfecting of the saints for the works of their ministry (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). It is not God's will that any one gift should be given to all believers, although all believers have at least one gift (1 Corinthians 12:18-21, 29, 30). We further believe that spiritual gifts should always be exercised within the limits expressly given in the Scriptures (e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:23-40).

We believe that speaking in tongues (Acts 2:11; 1 Corinthians 14:6-15) and the working of miracles were sign gifts (1 Corinthians 14:22; Hebrews 2:3, 4) demonstrated in the early church to authenticate God's revelation through the apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12) and to authenticate the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-48). We believe that today such signs are not necessary to give evidence of the baptism or of the filling of the Spirit, nor are they a mark of spiritual maturity. (1 Corinthians 12:13; Hebrews 2:3, 4).

We believe that special Divine revelation for authoritative Scripture ceased with the Apostolic age (Revelation 22:18, 19; Ephesians 2:20; Galatians 1:8, 9; John 14:26).

N - The Unity of the True Church in the Mystical Body of Christ

We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God by the Holy Spirit. By the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles. We are thus members one of another and knit together by love. (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:3-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Colossians 2:19)

O - The Pre-Millennial Coming of our Lord

We believe this present age will end with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will first receive His Church unto Himself, and then establish the throne of David upon the earth. He will reign in righteousness over it for a thousand years. (2 Samuel 7:16; John 14:1-3; Psalm 72:7-8; Acts 1:10, 11; Isaiah 9:6, 7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Micah 5:2; Hebrews 9:28; Luke 1:32, 33; Titus 2:13)

P - The Resurrection of the Body

We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in bodily form, according to the Scriptures. Thus He became the first fruits of them that sleep. Upon His return He will raise out from among the dead those that have died in Christ, this being the first resurrection; and after the thousand years, He will raise those that have died in unbelief from their graves to receive their sentence. (Psalm 90:3, 4; John 5:28, 29; Isaiah 26:19; † 1 Corinthians 15; Daniel 12:2; Romans 1:4 and 8:23; Revelation 20:5,6)

Q - The Eternal Blessedness of the Saved, and the Eternal Punishment of the Lost

We believe that the attitude either of reconciliation or enmity toward God is fixed eternally at death. We believe that the saints of all the ages will be forever with the Lord, and will become joint heirs with Him as their Redeemer in His inheritance. Further, there is an appointed day for the judgement of the wicked, when they will be cast into the Lake of Fire, there to remain forever and ever, in varying degrees of torment, according to their works. (Daniel 12:3 and 7:22-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8 and 22:11)

R - The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the Father of lies, a murderer from the beginning and the great deceiver of all nations. He will be overcome by the Lord Jesus Christ (as the seed of the woman) and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Finally, he will be committed to the Lake of Fire with all his angels, to be tormented forever and ever. (Job 1:6-12; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; John 8:44; Ephesians 6:12-16; Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10; Genesis 3:15)

S - Divine Healing of the Body

We believe that the Divine healing of the body is not in the Atonement in the sense that Salvation and forgiveness of sins are in the Atonement. According to the New Testament, the suffering and death of Christ was substitutionary, penal and vicarious. While Jesus died for sin, it is nowhere taught in Scripture that Christ died for the effects of sin, and sickness is directly or indirectly the effect of sin. (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18)

T - Baptism

We believe that our Lord and Saviour clearly prescribed the simple rite of Baptism by immersion for His believing disciples. It is a symbol and proclamation of the sinner's death to sin and his resurrection and newness of life in Christ Jesus. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38 and 8:12)

U - The Lord's Supper

We believe that our Lord and Saviour clearly prescribed the solemn rite of the Lord's Supper as a memorial of His death for His believing disciples. It is to be kept by His disciples until He comes again, according to His promise and the Father's revealed plan. (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27)

APPENDIX “B” TO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

BETHEL’S PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY (BETHEL CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE III, SECTION 2)

Bethel Church’s vision is:
*“Responding to the Heart of God;
 Transforming the Heart of the City, the Nation and the World.”*

This vision is at the centre of our Vision Pathway, illustrated below. And although the vision may grow and change with time, it revolves around the four (coloured), unchanging “boundary markers”:



1. Mission

The Mission of the church is to love God passionately and serve others significantly.

2. Strategy

The above mission is accomplished by helping disciples:

- Grow in Intimacy with God
- Grow in Intimacy with Others
- Grow in Acts of Service

3. Values:

- Teamwork ('we' vs. 'me')
- Excellence (not 'so-so' but 'bravo')
- Authenticity ('permission to speak freely')
- Relevance ('updated' vs. 'outdated')
- Solidarity ('being FOR people, being WITH people')

4. The Marks Of A Disciple:

- Diligently Seeking God
- Biblically Measured

- Prayerfully Engaged
- Relationally Healthy
- Fully Committed to the Whole Gospel for the Whole World

Everything we do must be in keeping with the Vision Pathway above. Thus, in order to accomplish the strategy mentioned above:

- We evangelize the people around us and throughout the world, with the desire to bring them to repentance of sin, and to faith in Christ Jesus (Matthew 28:19, 20; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 3:19,26,30; Ephesians 2:8,9; Hebrews 11:6).
- We establish every Christian in...
 - ... an assurance of their salvation, of answered prayer, of forgiveness of sins, of victory in Christ, and of guidance in the will of God.
 - ... a daily "quiet time" with God, including a personal intake and learning of His Word, and prayer
 - ... a meaningful fellowship with other Christians through attending the worship services called by the church, group prayer and Bible studies and personal friendships and small groups with other Christians.
 - ... a method of making a coherent gospel presentation and using their testimony as an evangelistic tool (Acts 16:5; Romans 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Hebrews 13:9; 2 Peter 1:12).
 - ... We equip spiritual leaders who will give pastoral leadership to individuals or groups of people for the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 2:2).
 - ... We encourage all the people that God brings into our fellowship, in the development of their spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:23-25; Philippians 2:1-4).