



# Membership Covenant

## ***A Membership Covenant has important benefits:***

- Membership helps us gather and grow as a flock under God's protection and direction.
- We become His team of believers under His shepherding leaders.
- We begin to clearly identify our roles in the Body of Christ.
- It defines how we can work together in mutual edification (improvement), gospel sharing, and discipleship.
- It helps us organize and sustain a community of Jesus Christ's disciples striving to understand and exercise the lordship of Jesus over all creation.

***Heritage Christian Fellowship is a gospel-centered body of believers, dedicated to making disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples of Jesus Christ***

This Membership Covenant describes the principles that govern our community at Heritage Christian Fellowship:

- Understanding Doctrinal Distinctives to ensure all instruction at Heritage is biblically accurate, gospel centric, and consistent with historically accepted Christian beliefs.
- God's expectations for each of us as we strive to fit into His divinely arranged community seeking to submit to His guiding Spirit and be His gospel sharing disciples.
- Understandable expression of the biblical roles of pastors, elders, and Covenant Members of the Heritage community and their mutual accountability.
- Dedication to impacting our neighborhoods, city, region, and the world with His gospel influence by being missionaries wherever we go, whatever we do, whenever the divine opportunities arise.



**As you go through this Covenant, here is what we will be covering:**

- How God designed the Church
  - The Universal Church
  - The Local Church
- What is a Covenant?
- Portrait of the Heritage Community
  - Membership
  - Our Perspective of Jesus' Gospel and Kingdom
  - Our Biblical Directives
  - The Values and Ethics of the Kingdom of Light
  - His Shepherds and His Sheep – Accountability
  - Prioritized Resources
  - Transparency
  - Commitment to Discipleship
  - Unity of Purpose and Practice
- What it Takes to Become a Covenant Member
  - Statement of Basic Beliefs
  - The Statement of Theological Distinctives
- Covenant Obligations
  - Heritage Elders to the Heritage Body
  - Covenant Members to the Heritage Body
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## How God Designed the Church

### The Universal Church

In the beginning God created all things. Then he established humanity to be his physical image in creation. He asked humankind to exhibit His reign and rule over creation through the exercise of His attributes. He is determined to dwell with His people intimately and be their God. He expects them to express his image individually and corporately. He wants His people to worship him authentically and transparently. However, mankind, beginning with Adam, decided to reign over his own life and worship himself instead of God.

Through His son Jesus Christ, God in His grace is re-establishing His relationship with mankind. He is creating a new humanity called the Universal Church. Beginning at Pentecost, God in the person of the Holy Spirit again dwells with His people through the Church and exercises His attributes and rule in the physical world.

### The Local Church

Jesus established the pattern of Local Church creation through the Disciples as He sent them out into the world to spread the gospel. Through Local Churches, we grow in likeness to the image of our King and will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth after all things have been put under the authority of Jesus.

Heritage is a divinely established Local Church comprised of like-minded, adopted sons and daughters, representing this reality. We grow in holiness, maturity, and fruits of the Spirit by sharing ourselves with one another and our community. We are sustained by Jesus in His kingdom of Light that overpowers Satan and the world and his kingdom of darkness. Our community strives to exercise God's authority and image corporately and as individuals.

Membership in a Local Church represents a willingness by believers to submit to Jesus' kingdom authority:

- Through understanding it Biblically,
- Expressing it in all parts of our lives,
- Sharing it with others in the kingdom of darkness, and



- Growing in producing fruits of God's grace and love.

As members of a divine assembly, each Covenant Member has a role in the local family of God to build up others towards an ever-increasing likeness to Jesus. As aliens in the enemy's territory, we need community for protection, nourishing, accountability, transformation in Christlikeness, and reaching the lost.

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

A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties. Covenants define obligations and commitments, but they are different from a contract because they are relational and personal. Starting in Genesis, God enters into a series of covenants with various humans seeking to redeem His world. With Jesus, came the last and ultimate covenant. In this covenant, we receive the forgiveness of sins and God's empowering Spirit to help us live as God intended, honoring and worshiping Him and loving others as ourselves. If at any time one of the parties of this church covenant continues in a state of unfaithfulness to its provisions, the other is released from certain obligations.

## **Portrait of the Heritage Community**

Under Jesus's teaching, and the Holy Spirit's inspiration, our covenant-based community unites a Local Church group of faithful disciples in a shared expression of His Kingdom reality. Covenant Members of Heritage share beliefs, convictions, and a passion for mutual submission and communal expression of Jesus' reign.

### **Membership:**

- Provides clarity about the convictions, mission, and function of the Local Church and the individuals who call it their home.
- Defines how we interpret the Biblical presentation of the Church and the Kingdom of God.
- Describes how we agree to live and labor together.
- Helps us seek truth, love, submission, correction, and humbleness when interacting with each other so that the Spirit builds and protects our community against each other's fallenness, Satan and his forces, and the darkness of the world.

### **Our Perspective of Jesus' Gospel and Kingdom**

- Jesus was born, lived a righteous and obedient life, died, arose, and now reigns as king in heaven and over His Church.



- His death ransomed all who will trust in him by faith and paid the debt of their offenses against God. By being raised from the dead, he demonstrated his authority to give eternal life to all who believe.
- He has been given all authority in the universe to restore it from sin and the powers of darkness. His people await the full consummation of His redemptive plan at the return of Christ.
- As a Local Church, Heritage strives to be a humble, submissive, and useful tool for His work.
- Each Covenant Member understands, accepts, and assumes this community-centered work.

## **Our Biblical Directives**

The New Testament has clear commands both for the individual and the Universal Church. Many of these cannot be obeyed outside of actively belonging to a Local Church assembly (Jn 15:12-17; Eph. 4:1-6; Col. 3:12-17).

## **The Values and Ethics of the Kingdom**

The values and ethics of the Kingdom of Light are completely opposite of this world. The local church allows an individual to change their predisposed thinking and affections reflecting the world to that of heaven. When a Christian gives up his or her self-loving individualism and commits to a local body of believers such as Heritage, he/she submits all they have to Jesus' lordship. This is an important commitment and a vital step in the life of a believer.

## **His Shepherds and His Sheep - Accountability**

Our Heritage elders are Biblically called to feed and care for the sheep of God's kingdom- His people who confess His Son as Lord. His shepherds are accountable for caring for, leading, teaching, and protecting those under their authority and will be specially judged by Jesus Himself. By the same Biblical standards, His sheep are commanded to submit to this elder oversight and to speak into each other's lives. Our Membership Covenant creates a Biblical context and mutually accountable community that reflects the lordship of Jesus for all of us.



Being a Covenant Member at Heritage Christian Fellowship assures you that there is someone who cares enough to see you as you are and counsel you with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.. Covenant Membership fosters a genuine relationship by which you are known, loved, cared for, and prayed over. Mutual growth into the image of Christ is fostered through speaking truth in grace, love, and encouragement.

### **Prioritized Resources**

Though in Jesus' name we care for all, the Local Church functions like a family and our family Covenant Members come first in terms of prioritizing time and resources. By building a healthy and supported community we are better able to serve those outside of membership and make a greater impact in our neighborhoods, larger community, and the suffering world around us.

### **Transparency**

One of the chief desires of our Local Church elders and body are to live and lead transparently. At Heritage, all Covenant Members are encouraged to remain informed as to the health and function of the Local Church and to ask questions that arise out of participating in church functions and teachings. Leadership seeks input from Covenant Members and expects to be accountable to them at all levels including Biblical instruction and fiscal responsibility. Regular communication with Covenant Members fosters transparent accountability. This helps create opportunity for mutual communication that unites us in corporate vision and direction.

### **Commitment to Discipleship**

As a divinely established Local Church, our body is deeply invested in Jesus' mandate to grow in our personal discipleship and make new disciples. This commitment is integrated into every aspect of our community.

When Jesus gave the great commission to the disciples he told them,

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

*Matt 28:18-20*



This meant that the original disciples were to embody the life and teachings of Jesus as they shared the gospel with others – and we are to do the same. At Heritage, we believe a disciple is a person who has faith in Jesus, is growing in the likeness of Jesus, and is teaching others to follow Jesus.

A disciple continues to increasingly surrender every aspect of life to the authority of King Jesus. We help make a disciple when we encourage another person to surrender all of life to the rule of Jesus as King and to live under the values of His Kingdom. Therefore, as a Local Church, we emphasize:

- Growing in a spiritually mature knowledge of the scriptures that leads to obedience,
- Nurturing our personal relationship with God,
- Expanding the depth of fellowship with those around us.
- Reaching the world around us with the truth of the Gospel

### **Unity of Purpose and Practice**

A Heritage covenant member is joining a body of believers united in theological belief, doctrinal conviction, Christian practice and missional strategy. This shared purpose and vision enable covenant members to steward resources together, labor together, strategize together, and celebrate the grace of God together as he works in and through our community. We celebrate Christ's love, joy, peace, forgiveness, righteousness, and miracles as a community, while building unity and yielding fruit.

## **What it Takes to Become a Covenant Member**

To become a Covenant Member of Heritage Christian Fellowship you must:

- Be a baptized follower of Christ.
- Attend Heritage for a minimum of six months.
- Read and agree to this Heritage Christian Fellowship Membership Covenant and the Heritage Mission and Core Values statement.
- Attend a “Heritage Basics” meeting.
- Meet with an elder
- If transferring from another Local Church, we ask, but do not require, a brief interview between the leadership of the sending church and Heritage.

### **Statement of Basic Beliefs**

What follows is a statement of Biblical truths organized into what are called doctrinal positions or topics. Upon these we build all of our community and expect our Covenant Members to agree:.



## ***We believe***

- The Scriptures are true, authoritative, and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- There is only one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, who eternally exists in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6, 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7, 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- All things exist for the glory of God (Psalm 148; Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 61:3; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 1:3-14).
- The Holy Spirit is currently protecting, facilitating, and empowering the work of the church and each believer. He transforms us into the image of Jesus, distributes spiritual gifts to EACH believer, illuminates truth and understanding of the bible, and upholds each local church to exercise unity and peace (Jn. 14: 26; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:16-26; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- God has created the universe, all material and immaterial. He sustains it, is restoring it from the destructive work of sin, and will usher in a fully restored creation at the end of Biblical prophecy. Humans are the only creature made in God's image and so we are the beginning of the restoration project (Gen. 1-2; John 1; Rom. 8: 18-27; Eph. 2:1-10; Rev. 21-2).
- All humanity, Christ excluded, is sinful by both birth and action (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 5:12-21, 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- The deserved penalty for sin is physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:19; Romans 5:12, 6:23; James 1:14-15).
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- Jesus Christ died as the sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for sin (John 1:29, 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will one day physically return (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25, 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Only those who turn from sin and to Jesus in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal reward. Those who do not turn from sin and to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- Only through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).





- The Kingdom of God has been inaugurated by the person and work of Jesus. All believers are translated from the Kingdom of darkness to His Kingdom of Light (Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 1:13-14).
- In recognizing and submitting to Jesus as both the Lord of the Universe and the purpose of the Bible, a human creature becomes born again and becomes an adopted son or daughter of the creator God. The church constitutes this family of God. This encompasses every local church past, present, and in the future (Rom. 8: 14-17; 2 Cor. 6:18).
- As a child of God, we are daily being transformed into the image of our King through active participation in a local church community. According to Ephesians 4:23-24 we “put off our old self...and are renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Jn. 6:35-40; Rom. 8:28-39, Chp. 12-15; 2 Cor. 3: 17-18; 2; Eph. Chps 4, 5; Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:9).
- Our inheritance of eternal life is secured since we are united with Christ in his death and likewise will be raised from it as he was. In him, death no longer has any power over us and we pursue daily spiritual growth to become more like Jesus. Conquering sin and trading wickedness for righteousness (Rom. 6).
- The church was created by and for Jesus to be his body and exercise the kingdom realities of heaven in ourselves, our homes, our relationships, and our world. Thereby spreading the good news of Jesus in our personal identity, relationship, word, and deed (Mat. Chps 5-7; Parables of Jesus; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 4).
- The expression of the Kingdom of Light through the church defeats Satan and the powers of this world that are against God. This rebellion will be ended and punished at the end of Biblical prophecy (1. Cor. 15:20-28; Eph. 6:10-18; Col.1 Thess. 5:1-11; 1 Pet. 5:6-11; Rev. 19:17-21, 20:11-15).

For greater depth, please review the Heritage Christian Fellowship Statement of Biblical Doctrine [here](#)

For our statement on marriage and sexuality, please review the Heritage Christian Fellowship Statement of Marriage and Sexuality [here](#)

### **Statement of Theological Distinctives**

While the doctrines expressed in the Statement of Basic Beliefs are recognized to be universal and primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs that we are passionate to proclaim. Complete agreement is not required for Covenant Membership, but members should expect that we will preach, teach, and counsel in accordance with these convictions:



- **Divine Sovereignty**

God is sovereign over all things such that there is no aspect of reality outside of His ultimate control. Though God's rule extends to all things, it is particularly His sovereignty over the work of salvation that is a theological distinctive. We believe that God moves first—choosing to save and move towards those whom He elects to save through His redeeming grace. Isa. 45:7-9; Acts 13:48; Eph.1:4; 2:8-10; Rev. 4:11.

- **Election and Free Will**

We also believe there are passages where the Bible makes clear man's responsibility to respond to God's goodness and grace. We feel no necessity to reconcile the two, but rather to believe both as true and teach accordingly. We then teach the grandeur of the sovereignty of God and His grace in calling the elect into His family, and we issue calls to respond to this good news, trusting that God will work in the hearts of those who hear and are called (Psalm 115:3, 135:6; Ephesians 1:3-14, Romans 8:26-9:23; Philipians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). We also acknowledge, as expressed in Hebrews 3:12-15 and Hebrews 6:4-6, we are to be careful about "crucifying the Son of God all over again" by falling away from the faith and becoming hard of heart.

- **The Centrality of the Gospel**

We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ embodies the eternal divine plan to redeem creation. Through Christ God is producing, sustaining and bringing to glory for all eternity a people for Himself. All creatures in rebellion against God will be defeated. The demonic work and consequences of their rebellion will be overcome, and creation will be completely transformed for God's glory and purposes. We who accept and realize Jesus as Lord are the first fruits of the execution of this plan. (Mark 1:14-15; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:4-6)

- **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit that we see exercised in the Scriptures have not ceased with the death of the last Apostle or the closing of the New Testament canon. They are available today and are to be eagerly desired and practiced in submission to the Spirit speaking through the Scriptures (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16).

- **The Complementary Roles of Men and Women**

Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value but are different by divine design. As part of God's good created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church, especially as it comes to teaching and authority.



These role distinctions are God's grace to man and woman and are to be protected, preserved and practiced for His glory and our joy. Women should not be prohibited from serving or operating in any area of church life that is not expressly forbidden in scripture, and in fact, should be encouraged and empowered to serve the body of Christ to the best of their abilities as God has gifted them (1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-35; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

- **Believers Baptism by Immersion**

We practice Christian baptism by the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the triune God (John 3:23, Matthew 3:16, Acts 8:38). We also practice the dedication and consecration of children by the elders and congregation.

- **Open-Handed Eschatology**

We believe in the bodily return of Jesus to the earth, the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment of the living and the dead before the judgment seat of Christ. We strongly believe in the second coming of Jesus and honor the differing views or convictions within the body of Christ on the issue of timing and sequence of last events (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:1-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31-46).

## **Covenant Obligations**

### **Heritage Elders to the Heritage Body**

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are called by the Holy Spirit and given His power and influence to exercise Jesus' call to feed His sheep. This includes protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the corporate church body and its individual members. The following is an extensive overview of the requirements for elders as spelled out within the Scriptures followed by a specific Elder Covenant.

**The elders of Heritage are evaluated, selected and held to account based on the primary Biblical texts concerning eldership:**



**1 Timothy 3:1-6**—The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

**Titus 1:5b-9**—Appoint elders in every town as I directed you— 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

**1 Peter 5:1-3**—So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

## **As an elder of Heritage, I covenant...**

- To seek the Holy Spirit daily for personal spiritual growth.
- To prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of my ability based on my study of the Scriptures and by following the leading of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- To care for the body of the Local Church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- To provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- To equip the members of the Local Church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- 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 discipline of members 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; James 5:19-20).
- To set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of Local Church Covenant Membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

### **Covenant Members to the Heritage Body**

As those who have lives transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and His grace, we seek to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this as “living by the Spirit” (Rom. 8). The requirements of the Membership Covenant are not intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, the Covenant seeks to be an accessible, non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces and expectations of Local Church Covenant Members.

### **As a Member of Heritage, I covenant...**

- To submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- To follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
  - By being baptized after my conversion.
  - By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion.
- To regularly participate in the life of Heritage by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community, and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- 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).
- 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, homosexuality, 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 walk through steps of marriage reconciliation at Heritage before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11). For the role of the Local Church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the Local 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 refrain from such activities that the Scriptures deem foolish (Romans 14:14-23).
  - 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.
    - Graciously 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).
    - Submitting to this covenant which signifies my agreement with the church by-laws, doctrinal statement, and covenant.
    - I agree to live, teach, and provide counsel in accordance with and not contrary to these documents. I understand and agree to Heritage Christian Fellowship's by-laws when I join this church body in membership.
    - I understand that this covenant requires the church to take progressive steps of discipline whenever a person rebels against God and their rebellion is exhibited through word and action. I expect the Elders to intervene in my life in the formal stages of church discipline for the sake of the unrepentant person and the body as a whole.



- Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church and shall be applied in cases of sexual misconduct, gossip, divisiveness, dishonesty, and other various expressions of sin. In accordance with the biblical pattern generally outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, a person who evidences such sin will be confronted in an initial one-on-one meeting, followed by escalating engagement by ministerial and pastoral staff and Elders.
  - Where the steps of discipline are exhausted in cases of unrepentant and/or habitual sin, the Elders will consider removing a person from membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration. This removal may or may not include a prohibition to attend Church services and events, depending on the circumstances. In addition, it might include public disclosure of removal from membership and the circumstances leading to this decision to the corporate membership of the Church. Those so disciplined will in turn be restored to fellowship where the Board Elders have determined that appropriate repentance has occurred.
  - The process of discipline within the Church is in accordance with Matthew 18 and other applicable Biblical Texts, always with a heart of love and a goal of restoration.
- 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 (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
    - To submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the Local Church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

## **Annual Covenant Renewal**

While we view such a covenant and its implications and obligations to be a longstanding commitment, for the sake of organization and for more accurate care of the church body, our desire is to create a pathway for each Covenant Member to renew or sever his or her Covenant Membership on an annual basis.



Each year after the Covenant Member Annual Meeting, Heritage will send a series of email communications to determine if you desire to continue your Covenant Membership. This typically takes place in January/February. A total of two emails will be sent to the email address on file. If you do not respond, you will receive a phone call from one of the elders as a last effort to contact you. If no response is received, your membership will be revoked and your information will be archived in our church management software.

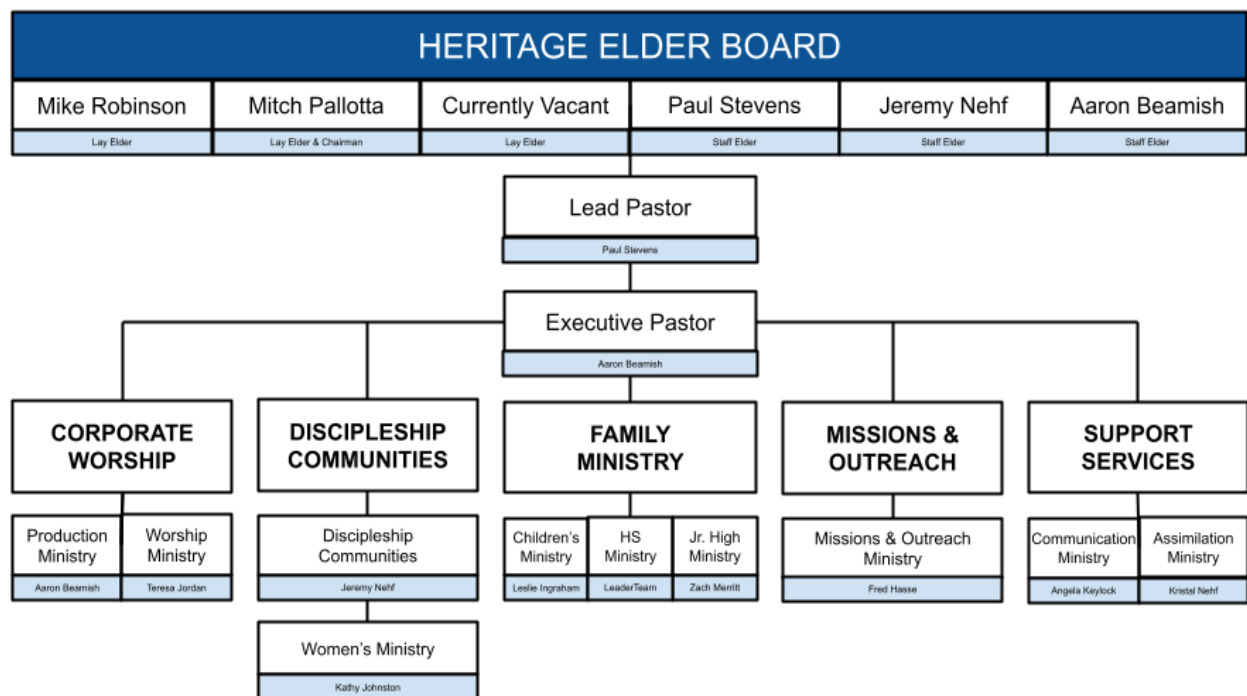
If you decide to withdraw your membership at a time other than Heritage's annual renewal, you must notify the elders in writing either by mail (943 Automation Way, STE A, Medford, OR 97504) or by email ([elders@heritagefellowship.net](mailto:elders@heritagefellowship.net)).

The Elders are available to answer any questions you might have regarding Covenant Membership at Heritage. Feel free to contact us by email at [elders@heritagefellowship.net](mailto:elders@heritagefellowship.net). We are more than happy to help with any questions or provide copies of the Heritage Christian Fellowship Bylaws, which detail other operations, procedures, and structures.



## ADDENDUM

The Elder Board is entrusted with the governance of the Church, leading the Church from a centralized vantage point. This oversight includes, but is not limited to, teaching, protecting, leading, disciplining, equipping and caring for the corporate Church body and its individual Covenant Members as well as the oversight of all ministry, operations and finances of the Church. The Elder Board is also responsible for being obedient to the Scriptures in the doctrine of the Church, establishing the overall vision of the Church and appointing new Elders. Below is an outline of the leadership governance and accountability structure at Heritage Christian Fellowship.



### Associate Membership

Someone who wishes to associate themselves with Heritage Christian Fellowship, but cannot meet one or all of the following requirements listed in this document can apply for Associate Membership. The only requirement for Associate Membership is commitment to Heritage's Articles of Faith (IX) in our Statement of Biblical Authority, Basic Beliefs, and Marriage and Sexuality. Associate Membership is required for anyone serving at Heritage Christian Fellowship.

Associate Members shall not have voting privileges and cannot realize the benefits



of a Covenant Member, except for participation in services, which includes weddings and similar ceremonies with the consent of the Executive Board. For those wishing to serve at Heritage who are not Covenant Members, this Associate Membership option is described herein as the “Servant/Leader Agreement.” The Servant/Leader Agreement defines Associate Membership and describes all requirements and benefits of Associate Membership.