

MEMBERSHIP POLICY & AGREEMENT

A. Members of Sturgeon Baptist Church

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Church Constitution, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The membership of this Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Bylaws. We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

B. Statement of Faith

We believe the purpose of Sturgeon Baptist Church shall be the worship of Almighty God according to the teaching of the Word of God, practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus as set forth in the New Testament, and sustain the ordinances and doctrines and preach and spread among all people the Gospel of God's salvation by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

C. Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, transgender conduct, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.) We believe in order to preserve the function and integrity of Sturgeon Baptist Church, as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Sturgeon Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:1-16; 1 Thess 5:22). We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Sturgeon Baptist Church.

D. Statement on Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

E. Member Duties

Members are expected, first, to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life; and, to attend habitually the services of this church, to give regularly for its support and its causes and to share in its organized work.

F. Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Sturgeon Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Pastor in consultation with the deacon body is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

G. Statement on Church Discipline

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal 6:1). The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastoral Staff and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastoral Staff in consultation with the deacon body, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline. Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastoral Staff in consultation with the deacon body short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Pastoral Staff in consultation with the deacon body, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who remain in unrepentant sin for the purpose of terminating their membership by a majority vote. Upon evidence of repentance, any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored by a majority vote of the Church. (Matthew 18:15-20).

H. Statement on Mediation

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion. (1 Cor 6: 1-7.) Mediation will be governed by the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC *Rules*), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. (Visit: http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.nuIWL7MOJtE/b.5335917Ik.D8A2/Rules_oCProcedure.htm to access the ICC *Rules*.) In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected, and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

I. Participation and Voting Rights

Members in good standing (not under disciplinary action and in regular attendance) may act and vote in the transactions of the Church.

J. Becoming a Member

Each person desiring and believing God is calling them to be a member of Sturgeon Baptist Church, including those transferring from another like body of faith, will participate in a nine-week class to help them understand the beliefs of the Church and to understand how the Church functions, as well as undergo a believer's baptism (*if not already occurred*). To be Biblically baptized means that a person has repented of their sins and turned to God by placing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, believing He is the perfect Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and arose bodily from the grave. Believer's baptism is by immersion in water and comes after the salvation experience of a person, understanding that their baptism was symbolic in nature and had no saving qualities. Upon successful completion of the class, initialing and signing this membership agreement, and baptism the candidate for membership may be voted on by the congregation at the next scheduled business meeting. A simple majority vote will be needed for membership.

K. Terminating Membership by Transfer

Upon receiving a written request for a transfer of membership from another Baptist church the congregation will vote on the request at the next scheduled business meeting. After approval, a transfer of membership will be granted in writing and submitted to the requesting church.

L. Covenant of Fellowship for Sturgeon Baptist Church

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him as our Savior and our Lord, and having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit upon our profession of faith, relying on his gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another.

We will join together in common belief; affirming and treasuring together a common faith built upon the only authority for our faith and action – the inerrant and infallible Word of God. We are a historic Southern Baptist congregation which holds to and cherishes the faith that has been delivered to us. As a summary of the faith we profess we gladly hold to and join our hearts in affirming the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, which is a summary statement of belief from the Southern Baptist Convention, to which our local body is joined.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit among our body in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes members of a Christian church, exercise affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully encourage and admonish one another as occasion may require.

We will hold our membership with this body as a sacred union and as such will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for regular worship and instruction, nor will we neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will seek to bring up all those who at any time may be under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice in each other's happiness and seek to grieve with tenderness and sympathy for each other's griefs as we join together to bear one another's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that we have been bought with a price and are not our own. We were buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life, therefore we will devote ourselves to growing throughout our life in sanctification seeking to display his goodness and glory to the world around us and to live in such a way that no dishonor or insult might be given to Him or his people.

We will seek to be bound in our union with one another, and as such if and when serious rebellion or insult through sin is brought into this body we will humbly submit to the loving but necessary discipline of this church enacted and enforced in the hope of repentance leading to the restoration of our fellowship.

We will work together for the continuation of a faithful gospel ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine.

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

We will be bound by this church's covenant, constitution, and statement of faith in all matters pertaining to church membership and church discipline.

We will, if and when we should move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with another local church where we may carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

We will know and affirm that our membership and bond with this body of believers will be recognized as terminated following the death, transfer of membership, or voluntary resignation of any member. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the pastoral leaders and deacon body and with the simple majority vote of the members present at any regular or special meetings of the membership. If and when we unite with another local body of like faith, our letter and statement of membership will be granted from this congregation following an affirmation by a majority vote of our local congregation during a regularly scheduled session of business.

I have reviewed the statements above as indicated by my initials and agree to be governed by the provisions herein.

Signature

Date

M. Members Contact Information:

Member Name: _____

Member Spouse Name (if applicable): _____

Member Children's Names/Ages (if applicable): _____

Member Phone Number: _____

Member Address: _____

Member Email Address: _____

Would you like to be added to the Church Email Prayer Chain?: _____ YES _____ NO

Member Date of Birth: _____

Would you like added to the Birthday Calendar?: _____ YES _____ NO

Wedding Anniversary (if applicable): _____

Would you like added to the Anniversary Calendar?: _____ YES _____ NO

Would you like to know more about?:

Mark (X) the areas below you'd like to get more information about, and we'll have someone contact you. Get plugged in!

- Children's Programs available _____ YES
- Youth Programs available _____ YES
- Bible Studies available _____ YES
- Sisters in Christ _____ YES
- Missions _____ YES
- Serving in the church _____ YES