



Church Membership Class

Why Church Matters

1. The church is Jesus' idea. Matthew 16:18
2. We are called to gather & work together. Hebrews 10:24-25
3. We are an interconnected body. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27

Why Membership Matters

1. To acknowledge our commitment to each other. Romans 12:4-10
2. To commit to living in accountability with each other. 1 Corinthians 5:1-12
3. To put our lives under spiritual authority. Hebrews 13:17

Why So Formal?

1. So we can care for each other better. Acts 6:1-6
2. So Elders / Pastors know who they are responsible to shepherd. 1 Peter 5:2

This Is Forward

History:

- 85 years old
- Long term commitment to the mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus

Our Vision: *what we aspire to accomplish as a church*

Being the light of Jesus in our region and around the world. (Matthew 5:14)

Our Mission: *how we pursue accomplishing the vision God has called us to*

Make disciples of Jesus who love God, love others, and serve the world. (Mark 12:30-31; Matthew 28:19-20)

Core Values: *The culture we aim for in our attitudes and actions as a church*

1. A church led by Jesus. *Colossians 1:17-18*
 - The Word of God is our authority in belief and practice.
 - The Holy Spirit is guiding and empowering our ministry.
 - We seek the Father's will and blessing through prayer.
2. A church who gives God their best. *Colossians 3:23; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11*
 - In everything we do, we give and serve to the best of our ability.
 - We are generous with our finances and in our relationships.
3. A multiplying church. *Matthew 4:19; Acts 1:8; Jeremiah 29:7; John 1:40-42*
 - We are committed to both planting other churches and being a multi-site church.
 - We are intentionally serving our neighbours and seeking the welfare of our region.
 - We are unashamed in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus as the hope for the world.
4. A church committed to unity. *John 13:35; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:1-3; Matthew 6:33; Philippians 2:3*
 - We are committed to seeing all people grow as disciples of Jesus – no matter their age, gender, or ethnic background.
 - We are committed to our articles of faith and lifestyle statements but give space for differences in other matters of faith and practice.
 - In our relationships within the church – we see others as more important than ourselves.
 - In our relationships within the broader body of Christ – we seek first the Kingdom of God.
5. A church of contributors. *1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Philippians 2:1-8*
 - We are committed to being a church where the norm is to participate in the mission God has given us.

Membership at Forward

For any believer and follower of Jesus who has been baptized by immersion

Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38;

1. Voting Member: age 18 years or older
2. Non Voting Member: under 18 years of age

Agreement in belief and practice with our Articles of Faith and Lifestyle Statement

Articles of Faith

GOD - We believe there is but one true and living God; that He is infinitely holy, eternal, and perfect in all His attributes; that He possesses Omniscience (all knowledge), Omnipotence (all power) and Omnipresence (everywhere present); and exists in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in unity (the state of being one), trinity (the union in one Divine Being of three forms of manifestation) and triunity (three in one) of these three separate personalities. These are One God.

CHRIST - We believe in the virgin birth, sinless life, all-sufficient, substitutionary death, victorious bodily resurrection, present intercession, and the personal and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe He is God the Son and the Son of God.

HOLY SPIRIT - We believe in the absolute deity and personality of the Holy Spirit; that He is the divine Agent in the sinner's regeneration and the believer's sanctification.

THE BIBLE - We believe the Bible to be the Word of God; that the sixty-six books comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired; that the Bible is the final authority and our only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

SATAN - We believe in the reality and personality of Satan; that he is the enemy of God and of the children of God; that he is the power behind the world's godless activity; that his destiny in "the lake of fire and brimstone" is settled. As regards the believer, Satan is to be reckoned for what he is - a conquered enemy.

MAN - We believe that man came by way of direct divine creation, and not a product of evolution; that through disobedience he became a fallen creature, totally depraved, and is now spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Thus, he is spiritually destitute and dependent on the mercy of God.

SALVATION - We believe salvation is by the sovereign electing grace of God; that it has been provided for all and is obtained by grace through faith in the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the eternal security of the believer. We believe when the righteousness of God in Christ has been imputed, that all are responsible to Jesus Christ for their lives and service.

FUTURE THINGS - We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ and that as Christians, "We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." We believe in the resurrection of the just to eternal blessedness and the resurrection of the unjust to judgement and eternal punishment.

LOCAL CHURCH - We believe a New Testament local church to be a company of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together for: the ministry of the Word, mutual helpfulness and edification, the observance of the ordinances; and the propagation, to the ends of the earth, of the faith once delivered to the saints. We believe a local church should be sovereign, under God, with no ecclesiastical authority higher than itself. We believe Christians should abstain from carnal indulgences, separate themselves unto God "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

ORDINANCES - We believe there are but two church ordinances - baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe baptism to be the immersion in water of a believer in testimony of union by faith with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. We believe the Lord's Supper to be the partaking of bread and the "fruit of the vine" in testimony of the death of Christ and efficacy of His shed blood, and is to be observed "till He come." Since this is the Lord's table, no believer shall be excluded from participation.

Lifestyle Statement

In view of the need for Christian churches to maintain biblical standards in a secular society, we, the Members of Forward Baptist Church, hereby affirm the following statement on Christian Lifestyle.

1. We affirm that the Bible clearly reveals God's will for the lifestyle of His redeemed people.

We deny that biblical standards in such areas as the family and sexuality are outdated in modern times.

Deuteronomy 4:2; Psalm 119:89; Matthew 5:17-19; Mark 13:31; Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:6-11.

2. We affirm that human sexuality is a good gift from God to be received with thanksgiving.

We deny that sexual activity outside of marriage is necessary for the full development of human personhood.

Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Proverbs 5:18-19; Song of Songs; Hebrews 13:4

3. We affirm that in the Bible God defines marriage as a life-long, exclusive covenant between a man and a woman.

We deny that same-sex relationships constitute marriage in the biblical sense.

Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2-3

4. We affirm that only within marriage as defined in #3 above is sexual activity pleasing to God.

We deny that homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, bestiality, adultery, premarital sex or pornography are pleasing to God.

Exodus 20:14, 17; Leviticus 18; Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 5:1-2; 9-13; I Cor. 6:9-10; I Cor. 7:3-5, 8-9; Ephesians 5:3-5; I Thessalonians 4:1-8.

5. We affirm that the above four guidelines are clearly based on Scripture and therefore constitute the will of God for the Members and Adherents of Forward Baptist Church and we further affirm that the above four guidelines shall serve as the basis for pastoral care and church discipline.

We deny that the use of the above four guidelines is motivated by anything other than a reverent fear of Almighty God our Maker, Redeemer and Judge, and our sincere desire to obey His commandments revealed in Scripture.

- 5.02 Each Voting Member, Non-Voting Member and Adherent of Forward Baptist Church shall be required to live a lifestyle consistent with biblical principles as set out in the New Testament and comply with the doctrines and principles as set out in the Articles of Faith.

A covenant we make to each other

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of the church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the distressed, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously train our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; and to cultivate Christian sympathy in all our relationships. We shall not bring to the Church a complaint against any member for personal trespass or offence until we have taken the first and second steps pointed out by Christ (Matt. 18:15-17), thus endeavouring to settle all private offences without publicity.

We shall endeavour to live soberly and righteously in this present world, abstaining from whatever is unbecoming the Christian character; and as baptism signifies death to sin and resurrection to holiness, so we shall seek to walk in newness of life.

The Responsibility of a Member

The following is a summarized version of what is outlined in the By-Laws and Mission of the church.



How Forward Church Functions

PART OF A BROADER COMMUNITY

With over 500 other churches, we are a member of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.

MULTI-SITE CHURCH

We are one church with multiple sites to gather for local expressions of worship and fulfilling our mission.

COUNCIL OF ELDERS

- A body of spiritually qualified men who govern / oversee all aspects of the church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 - Elected by the members of the church.
 - Term of 2 years
 - Maximum consecutive number of terms is 3 – totaling 6 years of service
- Formulate and recommend Policy statements to the church
- Oversee the spiritual discipline of members
- Receive no remuneration for their service
- Hold the Lead Pastor(s) accountable to the Scriptures and policies of the church.

LEAD PASTOR(S)

- Non-voting member of the Elders Council.
- Responsible for day to day oversight and shepherding of all sites of Forward Church.
- Elders vote to recommend calling or removal of a Lead Pastor. Requires 80% vote of the Elders.
- Members vote to call or remove a Lead Pastor. Requires 75% vote of the membership.

OTHER STAFF

- All other staff are selected by the Lead Pastor(s) with approval from the Board of Elders for other pastoral staff.

Process for Membership



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION LINK:

<https://forward.churchcenter.com/people/forms/218782>

NOTE: If, at any time, you wish to remove your membership. You simply need to inform an Elder or Pastor of your desire to resign.