

# Membership Requirements

## I. Rationale for Membership Requirements:

- A. Every membership-based organization has membership expectations. In most cases they are clearly spelled out. First Cutlerville also has membership expectations (e.g. attendance, making profession of faith, giving, etc.) but they are currently unwritten. The transition team recommends we put them in writing and encourage our members to meet them.
- B. The transition team recommends using them in the following ways:
1. In the new membership class - they will help define what we expect of our members
  2. In Profession of Faith - in both the pre-profession class and when someone appears before the elders to profess their faith - these expectations will define the conversation
  3. In Family Visiting - Elders would use these "requirements" as the focus of their discussion
  4. In a Personal assessment - Annually, normally in the fall at the beginning of the church year - members would be encouraged to do a personal assessment of their faith formation journey using these criteria and set personal goals for growing spiritually during the coming year
- C. These requirements would also mandate/require the church's staff and leadership to provide spiritual formation opportunities for people to meet these "requirements."

## II. Background

- A. The expression, "Every member a minister" has gained wide popularity in recent years. While the first Reformation gave the Word of God back to the people of God, a second ongoing reformation is giving the Work of God back to the people of God. While this principle is Biblical, its reality is still a work in progress. The goal of ministry is to bring those who are separated from God into full mature followers of Christ.

*"...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).*

*"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ." (Ephesians 4:15).*

*"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." (Colossians 1:28)*

*"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured" (Colossians 4:12)*

- B. To encourage members to become fully mature in Christ, to assist the church in continuing to be "the Church" for each other and our community, to continue to develop leaders within the congregation as it moves forward, and to usher in the Harvest of God's Kingdom, every member is challenged to embrace the following marks of maturity and membership:

### III. Membership Requirements

- A. Grace:** Members will be able to give testimony of their growing relationship with Jesus Christ as the free gift of God's grace.

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:8).*

*"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (John 5:11).*

*"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. Do this with gentleness and respect..." (I Peter 3:15).*

- B. Growth:** Members will intentionally strive to deepen their faith in Jesus Christ and be able to identify the path they are taking toward spiritual maturity.

*"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence— continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13).*

- C. Group:** Members will be active participants in the community of saints through corporate worship and involvement in a small study, prayer, or ministry group

*"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup>that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup>I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20-23).*

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).*

- D. Gifts:** Members will identify, develop and deploy the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to them for the building of the body of Christ and for their witness in the world. In the body of Christ, every member is essential and required to use their gifting to serve Christ's body and world.

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 4:10-11).*

- E. Giving:** Members will generously give of their time, gifts and financial resources to the building of Christ's Church and Kingdom. Members are the primary ministers of the church.

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).*