



# COMMUNITY CHURCH

*cultivating Christian community*

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## membership reaffirmation

Dear Member,

Thank you for your continuing membership with us here at Community Church! With the annual meeting approaching, it's that time of year again to reaffirm your membership. We are so thankful for your involvement and participation with us as we together seek to exalt our God, equip one another and extend grace to an unbelieving world, all for the glory of Jesus Christ!

The process of reaffirmation is straightforward: review the doctrinal statement, the mission and distinctives of Community Church, and if you're still in alignment with our church you sign a piece of paper and you're done. But we would like to invite you to leverage this reaffirmation process for your own spiritual growth this year. Included in this package is a set of reflection questions designed for you to answer on your own, and then for you to discuss with someone you trust in the faith. These questions have been generated to remind all of us of the importance of growth as a hallmark of the Christian life as we live and learn more and more who God is, what Christ has done, and what the Holy Spirit continues to do in our lives.

So we encourage you to reflect on these questions, come up with your answers, and then invite a friend over for coffee or out for breakfast and share your answers with one another. Or use the questions as a discussion guide with your Community Group. Again, this reflection exercise is not a requirement for continuing membership, but it is an opportunity to share your life with someone else and to come alongside someone else as together we all seek to be the kind of people Christ calls us to be.

Please complete the enclosed "membership reaffirmation form" and submit it to one of the elders by Sunday, January 24. There will also be a box on the piano for collecting these forms.

Again, thank you for being a part of our community of faith, for serving this body in the many ways you do, and for your continuing desire to be a part of what God is doing in us, among us, and through us in this world.

In Him,  
Together with you,  
For the elders,  
And the membership,

Timothy Bushfield  
Lead Pastor, Community Church of East Gloucester



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## membership reaffirmation form

(submit this form to an elder, or to the box on the piano)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Continuing to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of my life, I affirm my continuing membership with Community Church of East Gloucester. I have read and understood the church's doctrinal statement, as well as its statement of mission and distinctives. I continue in my decision to partner with Community Church according to these articulations of the heart and direction of this church.

I am a regular attender of Community Church and I commit to contributing my time and energy to the church by using the gifts and abilities the Lord has given me to support the ministry and work of the body. I commit to a lifestyle of extravagant generosity which includes giving to the church as a declaration of God's rule over all areas of my life and an expression of thankful worship for the Lord's provision.

I willingly submit myself to the leadership of the church in matters of Christian faith and practice, asking the church as a community to keep me accountable to the faith I profess. I commit myself to growing in my relationship with Jesus Christ toward Christian maturity for the glory of God. Should my lifestyle cease to be consistent with a growing, maturing faith, I ask the church to intervene with love and grace in matters of church discipline.

I recognize that I continue to have the opportunity to meet with an elder to discuss any questions or concerns I might have about the church or my own life before signing and submitting this reaffirmation, and I have taken that opportunity if it was necessary.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## mission and distinctives

### MISSION STATEMENT:

As a church, we acknowledge and participate in broad mission of every church, namely to exalt God, equip the Church, and extend God's grace to an unbelieving world. Our church is unique, however, in how we accomplish the broader mission of the Church.

*The mission of Community Church is to cultivate Christian community.*

"*Cultivate*" is a biblical concept found in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. Cultivation emphasizes the Christian life as a process of life-long learning involving effort, nurturing, providence, growth, harvesting, and reproduction.

"*Christian*" is defined and clearly articulated in our Doctrinal Statement. It reminds us that we share a common set of beliefs with millions of Christians worldwide, including: the deity of Jesus Christ; the Bible as the word of God and foundation for all matters of faith and practice; the person and work of the Holy Spirit; relevant, expository, and biblical preaching; and the importance of public worship, evangelism, missions, and prayer.

"*Community*" is our unique approach to cultivating Christians. Community is defined by our distinctives (core values): grace, equipping, participation, collaboration, and sending. In a Christian community, grace governs all relationships, believers are equipped for life and ministry, members participate in ministry, leaders work collaboratively, and disciples live lives of purpose, seeing themselves as being sent into the world to make a redemptive impact.

### DISTINCTIVES:

We also recognize that we are distinct due to our church culture, which emphasizes community, the core components of which are grace, participation, collaboration, equipping, and sending.

**Grace** We believe grace should govern all relationships. Therefore, we extend grace to one another for the sake of unity, growth, and witness; and we extend grace to unbelievers with the hope that they may experience redeeming grace.

**Equipping** We believe it is the duty of the church to make disciples by training Christians for life and ministry. Therefore, we desire to help every believer to identify their gifts, to develop their abilities, and to equip them for effectiveness in ministry.

**Participation** We believe that every Christian is called to ministry and uniquely gifted to build up the church and engage the world. Therefore, we invite every believer to cultivate a lifestyle of ministry and provide opportunities for participation in ministry.

**Collaboration** We believe that ministry and church leadership should be a group effort. Therefore, we embrace collaboration at every level of ministry and leadership to ensure that multiple perspectives are creatively brought to bear on our ideas, decisions, and ministries.

**Sending** We believe that all Christians are sent into the world to serve the spiritual and practical needs of their neighbors for the sake of the gospel. Therefore, we communicate the gospel in relevant ways to people in our community and partner with those who are active in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.



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## doctrinal statement

*As a church we accept these areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been general agreement among all biblical Christians. However, because of our conviction that we are part of a larger body of believers, we desire to allow for freedom of conviction on other doctrinal matters, provided that any interpretation is accurately based upon the Bible alone, and that no such interpretation shall become an issue that hinders the ministry to which God has called us.*

**We believe** the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God, and that it is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. (2 Tim. 3:15,16; 1 Peter 2:2)

**We believe** there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Duet. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; Mark 12:29; John 5:17-30)

**We believe** in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His complete and perfect humanity.

**We believe** in the virgin birth, in His sinless life and His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal, future return to Earth in power and glory to rule over the nations. (Isaiah 7:14; Acts 2:22; 1 Cor. 15:3,4; Acts 1:9-11)

**We believe** that man and woman were created good and upright in the image of God, but that they voluntarily sinned by disobeying God and thereby were alienated from God, and incurred both physical and spiritual death. That historic fall brought all mankind under divine condemnation. Because of the fall, each person's nature is corrupted, and they are thus totally unable to please God. (Gen. 1:26,27; Rom. 5:12-19)

**We believe** that regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to salvation, and His indwelling presence necessary for the living of a Godly Christian life; and that it is only by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ that people can be saved. The salvation of all who believe is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness or religious ceremony. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifies them in His sight. (Luke 24:37; Rom. 3:16; 10:13-15; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7)

**We believe** in the Holy Spirit as a person, separate and distinct from and co-equal in the triune Godhead with the Father and the Son. He is sent to dwell within the heart of each child of God, to comfort and to lead into all truth. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 2:4; 10:44-46; 5:8,9)

**We believe** in the victorious reign and future personal return of Jesus Christ, who will judge all people with justice and mercy, giving over the unrepentant to judgment and condemnation but receiving the redeemed into eternal life. (Matt. 25:26; Mark 9:34-38; Rev. 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8)

**We believe** that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body, which is composed of all people, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith. God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures and for mutual encouragement. (Eph. 1:22,23; 2:22; Heb. 12:23)

**We believe** that Christians are to be baptized as believers and to partake in the Lord's Supper on a regular basis. (However, since our church believes that persons of other Christian denominations are part of one body of believers; we recognize and accept baptisms by other Bible believing churches.) (Matt. 29:19; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Matt. 26:20-29)



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## membership reaffirmation reflection tool

The following questions have been generated as a tool to assist you as you reflect on your year being a member of Community Church. They have been oriented around the distinctives of the church, but hopefully you will see that working together they provide a comprehensive look at the Christian life.

You do not have to answer all of the questions! But it is our hope that in working through them, you will provide opportunity for the Holy Spirit to connect with you on one or two areas of growth in your life - areas that perhaps He wants to point out to you so you can celebrate your victories, or areas that He's working on and needs to remind you of. Either way (and hopefully both ways!) it is our prayer that by discussing the questions that become most important to you with another believer that you trust, you will be reminded that we are all on a journey of faith, and that following Christ is a process of daily surrender to His best for our lives.

So make an opportunity to get together with another believer to talk about your spiritual growth. This can be done one-on-one, or even at a Community Group where each of you share one or two areas of challenge and growth over the past year. Pray for each other.

We would be very interested in your feedback on using a reflection tool like this. Was it helpful? Did you actually use it for personal reflection? Did you get together and share your life with someone else? Did the Holy Spirit use it to encourage you in looking back on the past year? Did He use it to convict you of areas in your life that you need to yield to the Lord? If you're willing, email your feedback to <tim@eastgloucester.org>. We'd love to hear it!

May these questions be a catalyst for sharing your lives together as fellow members of the body of Christ, and may the Lord continue to grow you and shape you into the person He wants you to be, that you might know Him, love Him and serve Him better and better!

On behalf of the elders,

Pastor Tim

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## Reflection Questions:

### *Grace:*

1. Am I continuing to grow in my understanding of God's grace applied to my own life? Are there specific sins or patterns of sin that God has been working on in me? Have I been experiencing His transformation in these areas of my life? Have I been able to practice repentance (stop! turn around!) and accept his forgiveness for me?
2. Have I been able to extend grace to others because God has extended it to me? Have I been less frustrated with other people; have I been able to see things from their points of view more often? Have I been less judgmental as I have interacted with others both in the church and in the world around me? Would people characterize me as "a gracious person?" How can I contribute to making Community Church a place that is growing in extending grace?

### *Equipping*

3. Am I taking responsibility for my own growth through personal study and prayer on a regular basis in the form of reading the Bible, practicing a regular prayer life, or some other discipline of focusing my heart and mind on the Lord and growing in Him? If not, why not and how can I address this in the coming year?
4. Have I been growing as I have worked to apply the Word of God from sermons on Sunday mornings, Bible studies I attend, or Community Groups in which I have been involved? Have I been intentional about making life choices that honor Christ and growing in my ability to do so?
5. Am I investing and contributing in any way to be equipping someone else? Have I been a part of a prayer partnership, and accountability group, a ministry team or a mentoring relationship where I am helping to equip others in their life of faith? Have I experienced the surprise of my own personal growth that happens when I invest in someone else?

### *Participation*

6. In what ways have I been participating in the life of the community here at church? Am I involved in a Community Group? If not, what is preventing me from doing so? Am I involved in serving somewhere in the church to help facilitate being in community together? If not, what has been preventing me from doing so? Would I be more likely to characterize myself as a spectator or an active participant in this community of faith?

**7.** Am I able to actively participate in worship at church? Am I able to worship in song, in prayer, as we celebrate communion together, as we study His Word together? Do my personal preferences get in the way of a united, community expression of worship? Have I increased in my ability to be free to worship both on Sunday mornings, and personally in my own life?

**8.** Am I involved in the world outside the church? Am I cultivating relationships with neighbors, coworkers, and others in your community? Am I aware of the issues facing people in today's world? In what ways am I interacting and participating in the greater community?

## *Collaboration*

**9.** Have I been growing in my ability to work together with other believers for God's kingdom purposes? Am I growing in my ability to see other people's perspectives and work together with them? Are there relationships that I need to pay attention to in order to bring reconciliation or healing where conflict has taken place? Have I been willing to do the work of being honest with others and accepting admonishment from other people?

## *Sending*

**10.** Can I name the missionaries we support here at the church? Have I been praying for them on a regular basis? Am I involved in supporting other initiatives of compassion and mercy and evangelism outside of the officially-supported few we are partnered with as a church? Have I written to any of our missionaries this year? In what ways can I envision myself being more actively involved in global missions this coming year?

**11.** Do I understand that I have also been sent into this world as God's ambassador? In what ways have I been able to live out my faith in the various facets of life? Family? Work? Recreation? Have I been able to love people in action-oriented ways because they are precious to God? How have I been bringing the message of reconciliation with God into the unbelieving world around you?