
MEMBERSHIP

AT REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

 Reformed Baptist Church of Kalamazoo

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MEMBERSHIP AT REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

Dear brother or sister in Christ,

If you are reading this letter, it is because you have shown an interest in formally joining with us as we worship God, build up the church, and spread the gospel. This is truly exciting! We praise God for you and all those He brings to fellowship with us. We will not use gimmicks to attract you to our membership. Instead, we trust that the Holy Spirit Himself has led you to us and convinced you to serve Christ with us.

HOW CAN I BECOME A MEMBER?

Here's how our membership process work at RBC:

Membership Criteria

All membership candidates must profess faith in Christ Jesus alone and must have been baptized as a believer in Jesus. Those who have not been baptized as a believer will be baptized before the church as entry into membership at RBC.

Membership Process:

- Applicants complete the Membership Application in the packet and return it to one of the elders as soon as possible, along with the other items on the Membership Checklist (see below).
- Applicants must complete the membership class which is offered regularly throughout the year. This class is designed to help people know who we are and what we are about as a local church.
- Applicants will meet with 2 of the elders who will conduct a short membership interview. The elders will either approve of the applicant or request a follow-up meeting to discuss issues that have arisen during the membership process.
- Membership candidates (approved) will be announced 2 weeks prior to welcoming them into membership where they will be introduced to the church through their baptism and/or testimonies during a Sunday worship service.

Membership Checklist:

The following items should be turned into the pastor in charge of teaching the new member's class in order to complete the Membership Application process:

- Completed & signed Membership Application (pg. 3-4)
- Read the 1689 Confession of Faith (see link on RBC New Members Page)
- Read the RBC Constitution (see link on the RBC New Members Page)
- Read & Signed Accountability Form (pg. 7-8)
- Electronic Copy of your personal testimony sent to armstrje@gmail.com (see guidelines on pg. 9)
- Digital photo of you (or full family) for church directory (email armstrje@gmail.com)
- Letter of good standing from your former church (*if applicable*)

***** Items must be completed, turned in / emailed by the beginning of session 1 of the new member's class.**

If you have questions regarding the membership process, please email Pastor Josh at armstrje@gmail.com.

My God richly bless you as you seek His direction in your life!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Address _____

Phone #'s _____ E-mail _____

Birthday ____ / ____ / ____ Marital Status _____ Marriage Date ____ / ____ / ____

Children

Birthdays

- _____ / ____ / ____
- _____ / ____ / ____
- _____ / ____ / ____
- _____ / ____ / ____
- _____ / ____ / ____
- _____ / ____ / ____

Please mark which, if any, of your children have been baptized as believers.

I was baptized as a believer on ____ / ____ / ____ at _____

I have previously been a member of _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Why did you leave the church mentioned above?

Are you willing to commit to this church as outlined in our church covenant (RBC Constitution Article IV)? _____

What spiritual gifts do you believe the Lord has given to you (1 Cor 12-14; Ro. 12:6-8; Eph 4; 1 Pet. 4:8-11) and how do you intend to serve this body of believers?

Do you desire to be involved in any of the following opportunities for edification and service?

HELPS

- be a greeter
- help with church attendance
- help with church maintenance
- help in the church kitchen
- help with computer technical support
- help with graphic design
- help with decorating
- serve as a nursery worker (female)

HOSPITALITY**TEACHING**

- teach Sunday school
- teach a care group
- teach at KGM / Juvenile Home
- teach other: _____

CARE / MERCY

- visit the elderly
- help with car repairs
- lend a car or give a ride

- invite those new to RBC to my home
- host overnight speakers / guests
- make & deliver a meal to someone in need
- adopt a college student

WORSHIP / MUSIC

- join the worship team
- help with sound and/or projection
- lead worship during:
 - care group
 - prayer meeting
 - special Sunday
 - other: _____

OUTREACH/EVANGELISM

- be trained to become a full-time missionary
- help with care for missionaries

Please give this form and a copy of your testimony to one of the elders as soon as you are able to do so. Thank you.

OUR CONSTITUTION

Article VI - Membership

(A) ELIGIBILITY

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who have subsequently been baptized by immersion, who give assurance of their willingness to obey the Word of God, who are in fundamental agreement with the articles of faith and practice stated in this constitution, who are willing to submit to the government of this church, who are not under biblically warranted discipline from any other church of like faith and practice, and who are not members of any secret society.

(B) APPLICATION

All applications for membership shall be made to the elders. All applicants shall be required to meet with the elders for a membership interview, share their personal testimony of salvation and Christian experience, and if approved for membership, shall be given opportunity to share their testimony before the church. It shall be the responsibility of

the elders to determine the eligibility of the applicants as described above.

(C) ADMISSION

Applicants who have been approved by the elders for admission into membership will sign an accountability form, have the right hand of fellowship extended to them at a Sunday service, and their names will be added to the membership roll, noting the date they joined and how they were received into membership. Those who have not been baptized will be received into membership through baptism. Those who have previously been baptized will be received into the church through transfer, profession of faith, or restoration, upon the recommendation of the elders.

(D) DUTIES

1. Members shall strive to keep their covenant obligations. They should honor and esteem their pastors and pray for them daily. They will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church and, if at any time they find themselves opposed to the fundamental

doctrines of this church, they will not seek to disrupt its fellowship, but will seek out the elders for special counsel. If a satisfactory solution is not found, they will withdraw from its membership.

2. Every member of this church is expected to attend its meetings, work for its up-building, guard its name in the community, and contribute regularly and according to his ability for the expenses of the church.
3. Members shall strive to keep the elders and deacons informed of spiritual or material needs.
4. Support for this church shall be through voluntary offerings.

4. Death. When any member is removed from our midst through death, their name will be removed from the roll. We take comfort knowing that these names remain in the Book of Life!

When a person is removed, the name, date, and reason that the person was removed will be recorded.

(E) REMOVAL

Church membership is a serious matter and it should not be terminated lightly. Members may be removed from the church through:

1. Transfer. A member in good standing who requests to be dismissed to the fellowship of another church of like faith and practice will be granted a letter of transfer upon a request from the church they wish to join. A member in good standing who requests to be removed from this church in order to unite with a church not of like faith and practice will be granted a letter of Christian character upon a request from the church they wish to join.
2. Excommunication. When a person is excommunicated, their name will be removed from the membership roll.
3. Termination. In cases where a transfer or excommunication is not applicable, a member in good standing may be removed at the discretion of the elders.

ACCOUNTABILITY FORM

1. Although there are many sins that may be forgiven without entering into the process of church discipline (Proverbs 10:12; 19:11; and Ephesians 4:1-3), it is biblically necessary when a person: refuses to repent of sin (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1), causes division within the church (Titus 3:9-11), or promotes false teachings (Romans 16:17-18; 2 John 1:9-10).

2. Church discipline will usually follow this process:

First, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.” (Matthew 18:15) The person who sinned will be confronted privately. The purpose is to clearly identify the sin involved and call the person to repentance.

Second, “But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” (Matthew 18:16) At this point other members become involved. It is their responsibility to determine if the initial accusation is true or false. If they find that the accusation is false, then the matter must be dropped immediately. If they find that the accusation is true, then they must try to persuade and convince the person who sinned to repent.

Third, “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.” (Matthew 18:17a) Since the person has hardened his heart and refused to repent, the matter must be made known to the church. A special meeting will be called to publicly inform the congregation of the charges. The church, under the guidance of the elders, will then decide how to work together to confront the straying member.

Fourth, “And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:17b) The person who stubbornly refuses to repent must be removed from the fellowship of the church and no longer receive the privileges and benefits of church membership. In cases of church discipline a church vote is required to remove a name from the membership roll.

Since the NT presents a varied approach to church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; Titus 3:10-11), and there are occasions in which the offender makes it impossible to complete all the steps outlined in Matthew 18, the elders may accelerate the process of church discipline, or skip steps, as they deem necessary, with the exception of the final step requiring a church vote. During the process of discipline the elders may also limit certain privileges of membership to encourage repentance, including but not limited to:

removal from church offices, committees, functions, ministries, and withholding participation in the Lord's Supper.

The intention is to bring about repentance, reconciliation and restoration as quickly as possible to avoid harm to the individual, the church and most importantly the name of Jesus Christ. As soon as the individual repents, the process of church discipline will stop. Even after the person has been removed from the fellowship of the church, they may repent and be restored (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

3. If a member leaves this church or requests to withdraw their membership while in the process of church discipline, such disassociation will in no way function to end the church disciplinary process. This church will continue the disciplinary process until restoration has been achieved or the member is removed from membership as described in point 2 above.

4. If a member leaves this church because of church discipline and it comes to the attention of this church that the member is either seeking membership or regularly attending another church, the elders of this church may inform the leadership of that church about the reasons for the disciplinary actions taken by this church.

By signing this form I acknowledge that I have read and understood the practice of church discipline at this church. More than that, I agree with it and desire this kind of accountability in my life, knowing that it will benefit my own soul, keep this church holy, and glorify God!

Signature

Pastor's Signature

Print Name

Date

Date

Pastor's Signature

Date

PREPARING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

WHAT IS A PERSONAL TESTIMONY?

Simply put, a personal testimony is the story of how you came to personally have a relationship with Jesus Christ. It may also include your experience of God's faithfulness in living the Christian life since coming to salvation.

Giving a personal testimony, simply telling what eternal life has meant to you, can be used to encourage other Christians in worship or in persevering in their walk with the Lord. Your testimony is also an evangelistic tool that can be the starting point for sharing the gospel with others.

- 1 Peter 3:15 says, "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."
- 1 John 5:11-12 says, "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."
- Matthew 24:14 says, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

The Bible contains examples of personal testimonies. In John 4:28-30, 39-41, you can read the testimony of the Woman at the Well. Check out Mark 5:18-20 for the testimony of a heal demoniac. Mark 7:31-37 tells the testimony of a deaf, mute man whom Jesus healed. The Apostle Paul shared his testimony in Acts 22:1-21.

PREPARING A TESTIMONY

Here are a few suggestions for preparing a 3-5 minute personal testimony:

- Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you prepare and write your testimony (James 1:5)
- If you became a Christian as a child, emphasize what eternal life has meant to you.
- Focus on God's faithfulness and His work in your life. Details about your sinful past detract from your objective.
- Remember that there is nothing we did or can do to save ourselves. Use phrases like "God showed me I was a sinner in need of Him", "I trusted in the work of Christ alone for my salvation", "I cried out to Him to save me".
- Include Scripture that is meaningful to you.
- Answer these three questions:
 1. **My Sinful Condition:** Who was I before I came to know Christ?
 2. **The Gospel Solution:** How did God open my eyes to my need for Christ?
 3. **Living the Gospel:** What difference has a relationship with Christ made in my life?

