

WHY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Membership Classes offered throughout the year are a great help in learning about Village Seven, her beliefs and approach to ministry. All are welcome to attend the Membership Class without obligation. The class *is* a prerequisite for church membership.

Although becoming a member of Village Seven is not required for participation in our congregation or ministries, it is the best way to be a genuine part of the church. We believe that membership at Village Seven is a privilege and invite you to consider joining our covenant community.

Membership in a church is not like membership in a social club or other organization. Most organizations exist to serve their members. The church of Christ is a completely different community—one in which members seek to serve others. At Village Seven, we take seriously that we are a church not for ourselves but for others.

One of the primary reservations many people have about joining any church is, "If I'm already a member of the Body of Christ, why do I need to join a church?"

The fact is that although all believers are members of the church as an organism—the Spiritual Body of Christ—it is only by a public promise that anyone can be a part of the church as an organization. The benefits of such vary widely, but included among them is the fact that you receive the care of, and the accountability to, spiritual leaders. Just as you are making a public commitment to support your fellow members, they have made the same commitment to support you. By formally joining the church, you cease to be an independent Christian and become, instead, part of a community.

Your public vows in joining the church serve as a powerful reminder that you are not ashamed to identify with Christ or his people as you openly demonstrate the reality of the Body of Christ. Membership also gives you the right to participate in shaping the ministry of the congregation, allowing you to be part of a stronger, more unified effort of God's people. While Village Seven does not require membership before allowing you to be a part of the church's activities, becoming a member opens you to greater opportunities to use the spiritual gifts God has given.

The vows you are asked to take fall under four categories:

1) Doctrinal: You must believe the Bible.

2) Character: You must seek to grow into the likeness of Christ, not through proud self-reliance but through constant repentance and trust in the Holy Spirit.

3) Community: You promise regular involvement in the life and ministry of the congregation.

4) Accountability: You hold yourself accountable to the leadership and to one another to live up to these promises, and you seek to be a biblical peacemaker in your relationships.

If you decide to stay involved with Village Seven without membership, there will be no effort to pressure you into joining. We do not intend to exclude anyone from activities if they have chosen not to pursue formal membership.

How to Become a Church Member

To become a member of Village Seven Presbyterian Church, you need to take our Membership Class and be interviewed by the elders.

The Membership Class covers topics like: Our Vision and Values, The Good News, Community, Our Doctrinal Distinctives (What It Means to Be Reformed and Covenantal), What it Means to Be Presbyterian, Serving in the Church, and Stewardship.

The elders interview you to hear your profession of faith and your testimony of Christian experience. They will ask you are assent to the following declarations and promises, by which you enter into a solemn covenant with God and His Church.

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?

2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?

3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to further its purity and peace?

Upon your profession of faith, the interviewing elders will recommend you for membership to the Session (board of ruling elders). The Session will approve you to be added to the membership of the church.

You will then be notified of when you will be publicly received into membership of Village Seven Presbyterian Church during a worship service. You will come forward with others joining the church, answer the membership questions, and be received into the fellowship of the church.