



MEMBERSHIP AT EPHEBUS CHURCH

The purpose of this class is to provide an overview of Ephesus Church. We will discuss our beginnings, our beliefs, where we are going and how you can partner with the mission of the Ephesus.

THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP

As Christians, we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Ephesus Church holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in Charlotte, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).

Being a member of Ephesus Church is really about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving Jesus, loving fellow people, and loving the city. Members who enter into a covenant with Ephesus Church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service.

WHY "EPHEBUS CHURCH"

Ephesus Church is a church in Uptown Charlotte. We're about people, culture, this city and Jesus. The Apostle Paul planted a church in the center of the city of Ephesus, which was then a part of the Roman Empire. Ephesus was a growing, vibrant city, the center of trade and commerce in its part of the world, much as Charlotte is today. The church Paul planted loved Jesus and loved their city. We want to be a church that does the same, thus Ephesus Church. We're a church that wants to love Jesus, love people and love this city. (See Acts 19)

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES OF EPHEBUS CHURCH

MISSION- Ephesus will reach those who are successful, affluent, savvy, downtrodden, calloused, mobile, spiritual, searching, in-need, engaged, and creative with the unwavering truth of Jesus Christ. To reach them, we will be culturally savvy yet biblically solid. We will be relational and open yet unwavering in our foundation. We will be about worship and the bible yet creative in our approach. We will engage the culture at its source yet draw creativity from God the Father. Simply, we will be missionaries of the gospel to the culture. Through this, Jesus will be lifted up as Savior, lives will be transformed and our city impacted.

VISION- Ephesus Church will be a place that is impacting the entire region of Charlotte, NC with the reality of who Jesus Christ is and what it means to be in relationship with Him. Ephesus will intentionally become involved in the Uptown area of Charlotte, NC initially, and the larger region going forward, so as to be relevant and engaged in the culture of this city and region. We will engage people with the gifts, abilities and resources to intentionally impact their community while growing in their own walk of faith. We will see families formed and healed, leaders trained and released and the very culture of Charlotte impacted by Jesus and the cross. We will be known and well spoken of throughout the community as a church that loves Jesus, loves people and loves the city.

WE SUM UP THE VISION AND MISSION WITH THIS STATEMENT:

“LOVE JESUS, LOVE PEOPLE, LOVE THE CITY”

VALUES:

- ❑ **JESUS-** Ephesus Church will proclaim Jesus as God’s virgin-born Son— His sinless life, atoning death and literal resurrection providing the only way to salvation (Acts 4:12)
- ❑ **MISSIONAL-** Ephesus Church will be about the mission Jesus has assigned us to. This means we will seek to understand the culture and people God has called us to impact so as to most effectively present the unchanging truth of Jesus Christ and the cross and so be missionaries to the culture.
- ❑ **OPENNESS TO ALL-** Ephesus Church will be a place that is open to anyone, no matter his or her lifestyle background or personal style. While we will welcome all, this does not mean we will support unrepentant sin, but will love and instruct everyone in the truth of Jesus and the life He has called us to.

- BIBLICAL- Ephesus Church will be unashamedly about the entire Word of God believing it to be wholly inspired by God, inerrant and our final source for guidance and instruction.
- CREATIVITY- Ephesus Church will value creativity in all that we do, believing God to be the ultimate source of creativity and therefore worthy to be honored through the use of all that he has gifted us with.
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT- Ephesus Church will intentionally work to be engaged in the communities in which it exists, and not to separate ourselves, while at the same time maintaining biblical integrity. We believe God has called us to be loving, supporting and uplifting to the communities and city in which we exist.
- SIMPLICITY- Ephesus Church will maintain a simple structure whenever possible, only adding ministries, programs or systems when clearly directed by God to do so.
- FAMILY- Ephesus Church will work to encourage and strengthen the family.

We intentionally seek to create an atmosphere based on these values that is casual in style yet challenging spiritually. It can be said that we are conservative theologically yet culturally liberal. This is a unique and fairly new trend in the US church. Recent history has shown a divergence of these two concepts. Either a church is conservative theologically, or liberal culturally but not both concurrently. This raises several dangers. If a church is solely focused on maintaining a conservative theological standard without engaging the local culture missionally it becomes ineffective and ingrown. If a church seeks to be liberal culturally so as to better ingratiate itself with the local community it is in danger of becoming overly ecumenical or syncretistic at the expense of the foundational truths of Scripture. God has called Ephesus Church to be missionaries to our local community in a contextual and relevant way, yet remain focused on His truth revealed to us in all of Scripture.

FOR MORE ON THE VISION OF EPHEBUS CHURCH PLEASE LISTEN TO THE PODCAST “VISION REVISITED” FROM SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2008. YOU CAN FIND THIS ON THE MEDIA PAGE AT WWW.EPHESUSCHURCH.TV.

WHAT EPHEBUS CHURCH BELIEVES

Ephesus Church is part of the Foursquare denomination.

- Declaration of Faith (see attached “Doctrine of the Foursquare Church”)
- Foursquare is a Pentecostal denomination. This means we embrace the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the life and work of the Christian today
- History of Foursquare:

From its beginning at Angelus Temple, in Los Angeles, CA, in the late 1920's, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel has now grown to include more than 1800 churches in the United States and nearly 30,000 worldwide. There are currently more than 3 and a half million members in 123 countries around the globe.

- The name Foursquare: "Foursquare" is a biblical term used of the tabernacle in the Book of Exodus, of the Temple of the Lord in *Ezekiel 40:47*, and of Heaven, as described in the Book of the Revelation. The term "Foursquare Gospel" was given in the inspiration of revival to the denomination's founder, Aimee Semple McPherson, during an evangelistic campaign in Oakland, California in 1922. It represents that which is equally balanced on all sides, established and enduring. Such confidence in the power of the Gospel is also expressed by the verse, *Hebrews 13:8*, displayed in Foursquare churches proclaiming, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever."

The Foursquare symbols stand for Jesus Christ as:

- Savior *Hebrews 7.25* (Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.)
- Baptizer in the Holy Spirit *Acts 1.5-8*
(**5** for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**6** Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. **8** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me ^{F1} in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- Healer *Matthew 8.17*
17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."
- Soon and Coming King *1 Thessalonians 4.16-17*
16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

EPHESUS CHURCH LEADERSHIP & STRUCTURE

- **Elders-** Oversee the spiritual health of the church. In the Foursquare Church, elders are not synonymous with Pastors/Clergy. These are lay leaders that the pastor relies on for prayer, support, and wisdom.
- **Church Council-** Responsible for the financial health of the church. Approve annual budget and expenditures in partnership with the Pastor.

- ❑ **Deacons-** At Ephesus Church, deacons are leaders in various areas of ministry. We seek to redeem the biblical definition and standard of Deacons as leaders in ministry in partnership with pastors.

Denominational structure

- ❑ **Division-** local group of 5-6 churches overseen by a Divisional Superintendent. The division exists to provide support and encouragement to local Foursquare Churches. The Divisional Superintendent for Ephesus Church is Pastor Farrell Lemings of Grace Covenant Church in Cornelius.
- ❑ **District-** larger geographical group of churches overseen by a District Supervisor. Beginning in the summer of 2009, our district will encompass most of the states of the Southeast and the District Supervisor will be Pastor Scott Reese of Atlanta. The district provides direct oversight and accountability to the local church spiritually, financially and in leadership.
- ❑ **National Church Office-** Oversees the Districts and provides administrative support for Foursquare Churches in the United States.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP AT EPHEBUS CHURCH

At Ephesus Church we place a high regard on members and the commitment they have made to the local church (Ephesians 2:19). With the commitment of the members, Ephesus Church covenants to provide spiritual support and nurture, prayer and care, and a place to live out each member's God-given giftings and abilities as missionaries of the Gospel to the Charlotte region. Membership at Ephesus Church also provides the opportunity to oversee certain areas of ministry that are only available to members. Non-members are encouraged to serve throughout the church to better discover who God made them and the vision of Ephesus Church, but are limited from serving in roles of leadership. With these benefits and opportunities comes a higher degree of responsibility to the mission and work of the church as well as the support of the church. Members of Ephesus Church covenant to use their gifts and abilities to serve the vision and mission of Ephesus Church within the church and throughout the Charlotte region (Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:7-12) as well as pray for the church, leadership and each other (Acts 2:42). Members also covenant to give to and provide for the material needs of the church through giving, tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10, Matthew 23:23-26, Corinthians 8-9). Members will not be divisive to the teaching at Ephesus Church, and understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17). *See also attached Foursquare Bylaws on membership.*

Upon completion of this Membership Class, potential members will agree to and sign the Ephesus Church Membership Covenant as well as meet with a pastor to confirm their commitment to Ephesus Church.

ATTACHMENTS

DOCTRINE OF THE FOURSQUARE CHURCH

The Holy Scriptures We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God: true, immutable, steadfast, and unchangeable (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Eternal Godhead We believe that God is triune: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the Three are coexistent, coeternal, and equal in divine perfection (1 John 5:7).

The Fall of Man We believe that man, created in the image of God, by voluntary disobedience fell into the depths of sin and iniquity, bequeathing sin's nature and consequences to all mankind, with their accompanying loss of intended meaning and purpose (Genesis 1:27; Romans 5:12).

The Plan of Redemption We believe that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, took our place, and with His life's blood purchased the pardon for all who believe in Him (John 3:16; Titus 2:14).

Salvation Through Grace We believe that salvation is wholly through grace; that no human righteousness or merit can contribute to our receiving God's love and favor (Ephesians 2:8).

Repentance and Acceptance We believe that, upon sincere repentance and a whole-hearted acceptance of Christ, we are justified before God through Jesus' sacrificial death (Romans 10:6-10; 1 John 1:9).

The New Birth We believe that the change that takes place in people at conversion is a very real one; that having received righteousness in Christ and having received of His Spirit, people will have new desires, interests, and pursuits in life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20).

Daily Christian Life We believe that it is the will of God that those who have been born again grow in sanctification, become partakers of His holiness, and daily grow stronger in the faith, power, prayer, love, and service (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper We believe that being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is an essential response to Jesus' command, testifying to His lordship as Christ and King (Romans 6:4). We believe in observing the Lord's Supper, receiving the broken bread and the fruit of the vine with joy and faith as we partake anew of the life and triumph of Christ's Cross (1 Corinthians 11:24-26)

Baptism in the Holy Spirit We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers believers to exalt Jesus, to live lives of holiness, and to be witnesses of God's saving grace; we expect the Spirit's incoming to be after the same manner as that in which He came upon believers in the days of the Early Church (Acts 1: 5, 8; 2:4).

The Spirit-Filled Life We believe that it is the will of God that believers walk in the Spirit moment by moment, serving the Lord and living lives of patience, love, truth, sincerity,

and prayer (Ephesians 4:30-32; Galatians 5:16, 25).

The Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit We believe that the Holy Spirit bestows enabling ministry gifts upon believers, and that these gifts will build up the Body of Christ through edification and evangelism (1 Corinthians 12:1-11); as evidence of a Spirit-filled life, believers should show spiritual “fruit”: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22-25).

Moderation We believe a Christians’ moderation should be obvious to others and that relationship with Jesus should never lead people into extremes of fanaticism; their lives should model that of Christ in uprightness, balance, humility, and self-sacrifice (Colossians 3:12, 13; Philippians 4:5).

Divine Healing We believe that divine healing is the power of Jesus Christ to heal the sick in answer to the prayer of faith; He, who does not change, is still willing and able to heal the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to faith (Mark 16: 17, 18; James 5:14-16).

The Second Coming of Christ We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; the certainty of His coming and the fact that no man knows the hour of His coming prompt our evangelistic efforts; that the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven, the dead in Christ shall rise, and the redeemed will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (Matthew 24:36, 42, 44; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

Church Relationship We believe that it is our sacred duty to identify ourselves with a congregation of believers with whom we can worship God, observe the ordinances of Christ, exhort and support one another, labor for the salvation of others, and work together to advance the Lord’s Kingdom (Acts 16:5; Hebrews 10:24).

Civil Government We believe that civil government is by divine appointment and that civil laws should be upheld at all times except in things opposed to the will of God (Acts 4: 18-20; Romans 13:1-5).

Judgment We believe that all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ: the redeemed to be delivered unto everlasting life, and the unrepentant unto everlasting punishment (Revelation 20:11, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Heaven We believe that heaven is the glorious habitation of the living God and the eternal home of born-again believers (John 14:2; Revelation 7:15-17).

Hell We believe that hell is a place of darkness, deepest sorrow, and unquenchable fire, which was not prepared for man but for the devil and his angels; yet it will become the place of eternal separation from God for all who reject Christ as Savior (Matthew 13: 41, 42; Revelation 10:10, 15).

Evangelism We believe that soul winning is the “one big business” of the Church on earth, and that every hindrance to worldwide evangelism should be removed (James 5:20; Mark 16:15).

Tithing and Offerings We believe that tithing and offerings are ordained of God to sustain His ministry, spread the Gospel, and release personal blessing (Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2).

FOUR SQUARE BYLAWS ON MEMBERSHIP

From the *Handbook for the Operation of Foursquare Churches*

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. A member of a Foursquare church can trust that the pulpit of their church will be filled by a minister trained in accordance with, and personally adhering to, the doctrines of the “Declaration of Faith” and the bylaws of the Foursquare denomination.
2. The individual member is strengthened (see “Declaration of Faith,” XVI, Church Relationship).
 - a. The fellowship of the local congregation is a source of blessing, refreshing and encouragement.
 - b. The local congregation provides a place of service for each member, resulting in the building up of the body of Christ: "... the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).
 - c. The member may also be chosen by the local congregation to serve in the administration of the local church.
 - d. The Lord promises blessing on those who tithe. The local church offers people the scriptural place to give their tithe (“Declaration of Faith” XXII, Tithing and Offerings).
 - e. The local member may receive federal income tax exemption for contributions.

THE PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP (Bylaws, Article 13.6.5)

1. Church membership offers a member the right of voting at both the local church and international levels. Voting privileges are offered to those 18 years of age and older.
 - a. The local church membership meetings allow the membership to elect, after prayerful consideration, such officers as are considered necessary to administer the church business as stated in the bylaws. Those elected are given an opportunity and a place to serve the Lord.
 - b. On the national and international level, the local church membership has the benefit of representation. In addition to their pastor, they may vote on any business matter conducted by the convention body. This representation is according to the size of the

membership of the local church (Bylaws, Article 5.5.C).

2. Church members may suggest, for the consideration of the council and pastor, ideas for advancement of the gospel in the community and denomination as a whole.

E. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Wherever men and women are endowed with rights, privileges and benefits, they must likewise be willing to accept responsibilities. Each member bears a distinct responsibility. Wherever they go they are a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, the local church and the denomination. Their conversation, attitude, associates and activities reflect for good or bad.

2. The membership is responsible for the following:

a. Partnering with the Lord in the numerical and spiritual growth of the church (Acts 2:42-47; Isa. 66:8)

b. The material needs of the church (Acts 6:1-5)

c. The spiritual welfare of one another, a ministry that is shared by all (Heb. 3:12, 13; 1Cor. 12:14, 26; Gal. 6:1; 1Thess. 5:14)

d. The spiritual and material support of their pastor (Heb. 13:7; Ex. 17:11-13; Gal. 6:6; 1Thess. 5:12; and 2 Thess. 3:1,2).

e. The behavior and conduct in the local body (1Tim. 3:15).

f. The mission of the church at home and abroad (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

F. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP {Bylaws, Article 13.6.1}

In order to be entitled to membership in a Foursquare church, a person must fulfill the following criteria:

1. Show evidence of a genuine born-again experience and godly Christian life.

2. Give verification of having been baptized in water by immersion.

3. Subscribe and adhere to the doctrine of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, as outlined in the "Declaration of Faith."

4. Submit to the rules and regulations that pertain to membership as set forth in the articles of incorporation and the bylaws.

EPHESUS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

AS A MEMBER AT EPHESUS CHURCH, I AGREE AND COVENANT TO THE FOLLOWING:

- I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- I have read and understood the Ephesus Church and Foursquare doctrinal statements, vision and mission and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).
- I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, Home Group involvement, communion, Ephesus Church service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25).
- I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5, 8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).
- I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication (Job 31:1; Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-7:16; Heb. 13:4); I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my pastors, and my conscience dictate (1 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10).

I commit to live out the vision and mission statement of Ephesus Church as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, that my identity would be in him, my worship would be for him, my fellowship would be through him, and my interaction with the culture would be for his glory.

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Ephesus Church and is an acknowledgement of my submission to the pastors and leadership of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify Ephesus leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Ephesus Church.

NAME (PRINT AND SIGN)

DATE