

Community of Faith Church

"Growing faithful followers of Christ!"

Prayer · Evangelism · Outreach · Worship · Discipleship



Pastor & Leader Booklet- COMPLETE **FAITH STEPS**

1. Meet with Directing Pastor
2. Attend *FAITH STEPS* Class
3. Covenant Membership & Baptism
4. Enter the COF Daily Walk Community

Detailed Outline of **FAITH STEPS**

STEP 1- Meet with the Directing/Campus Pastor

- A. Initiate **Faith Steps** with bulletin response stub
- B. Meet with the Directing/Campus Pastor to discuss spiritual journey.
- C. The Pastor will get you signed up for the next **Faith Steps** Class.

STEP 2- Attend **Faith Steps** Class

- A. The Church's Mission and Vision & Introduction to ¹CV⁵. (Class 1)
- B. The 5 Core Values (Class 2- CV¹&CV²/Class 3-CV³&CV⁴/Class 4 CV⁵)
- C. The Way of the LORD- Living a life with a Kingdom View. (Class 4)
- D. FAT Sheep Principle: Faithful-Available-Teachable. (Class 4)
- E. Covenant Membership and Baptismal needs. (Class 4)
- F. Sign-up for the next **PLUMB LINE CLASS**. A discipleship class designed by Pastor Troy aimed at building our Community of Faith toward its vision of growing faithful followers of Christ. (Class 4)

STEP 3- Covenant Membership & Baptism

- A. If Christian Baptism has not occurred, a baptism date will be set.
- B. Sign COF Covenant Commitment Card and be presented before the Church Body during a regular worship service or family meeting.

STEP 4- Enter the COF Daily Walk Community

- A. If already connected to the church through our DWSG Community, no action is needed.
- B. If one has not become connected to a DWSG, we will work with the Covenant Member to find a good DWSG to begin their Daily Walk journey.
- C. After **Faith Steps**- We encourage new Covenant Members to watch for our next **Plumb Line** class designed by Pastor Troy at building our Community of Faith toward its vision of growing faithful followers of Christ. **The Plumb Line** class is a must for those desiring to be used by God at the next level in our Community of Faith.

¹ CV = Core Values. The 5 Core- Values of Community of Faith are abbreviated: CV¹, CV², CV³, CV⁴ & CV⁵.

STEP 2- Attend Faith Steps Class

A. The Church's Mission and Vision:

At the core of our *Faith Steps* Class is a belief that the "Old School" basics transcend time and generation. The process of growing a Faith Community is found in the prescription of the teachings of God through the Prophet Isaiah. In **Isaiah 28:10 & 13**, God shows us, in a very simplistic model, how we are to build our Faith Community: *"For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."*^{-nrsv}

We understand that when the Church is functioning according to Her mandate, **Isaiah 54:17** reminds us that, *"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,"* says The Lord.^{-nkjv}

We are even told in scripture by Jesus Himself, when we stand on *"The Rock"*, the very *"gates of hell shall not prevail against it"*²- your Church.

We consider "The Church", The Body, as being like **The Tip of God's Spear to the World**. We can only be an effective and fervent Church by being faithful and obedience to Word of the God. To be effective, the local Body must have a clear-cut understanding of its purpose in God's pastures. We know that God has many folds, *ref. John 10:16*, with many under-shepherds, and as such, we here at Community of Faith, to be an effective and fervent Church that is faithful and obedient to the Word, must have a clear-cut understanding of **The Mission** our specific fold has received.

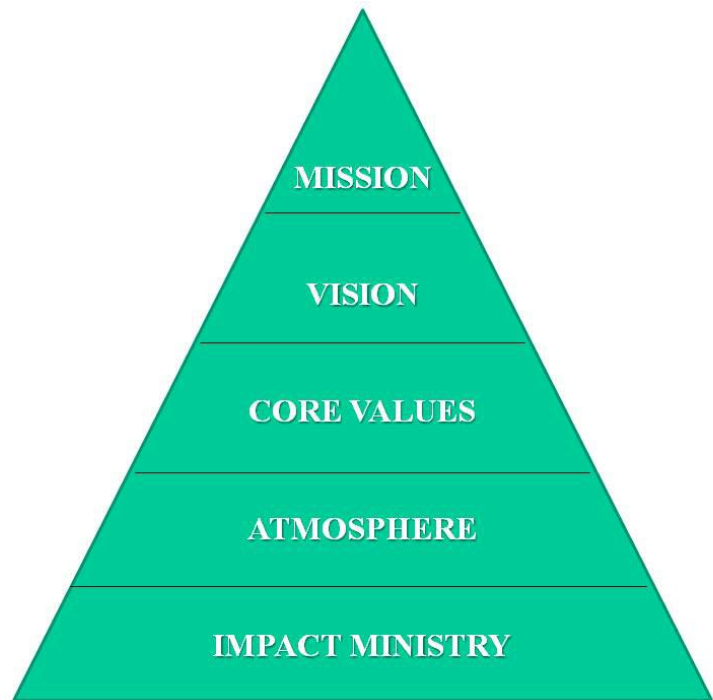
Of course, The Great Commission, **Matthew 28:18-20**, is the ultimate Mission that drives all believers and the Church. *Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

²⁰Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."^{-nlt} However, while we have one Great Commission each local body of believers receives different assignments in order to carry out the fulfillment of that Mission.

² King James Version: Matthew 16:18

Strategically, *The Tip of His Spear*, to be effective, is based on some very simple precepts:

1. The point of that spear is **THE MISSION** of the CHURCH. The Mission being that church's special assignment within the Great Commission.
2. Behind that point rests **A VISION** for carrying out that Mission. The Vision is the vehicle for accomplishing the Mission. It is not just flung out there blindly but with a purpose grounded in the leadership of the Holy Spirit by those assigned by God to give spiritual direction to the local Body.
3. In providing stability to the work come **THE CORE VALUES**. The Core Values provide the parameters, range, direction & boundaries that keep the Church on track with its vision, and thus effective and lethal in carrying out The Mission Plan. The Core Values (CV¹⁻⁵) maintain the church's balance and effectiveness.
4. A good strategic plan includes an understanding of the environment- **THE ATMOSPHERE** in which we operate. Atmosphere is the key to creating and maintaining an environment that is optimal for living out the Core Values, Vision and ultimately fulfilling our Mission assignment. The Atmosphere includes important understandings, covenants and terminology that inform each body as to how we will work together as the BODY. In many churches they are implied, good, or bad, but it is always best to operate in an environment of clarity & transparency. (*Atmosphere examples- Theocracy, Team Ministry, Transparency, Excellence, Relationship, Accountability, Covenant, Liberty, Diversity, Hospitality, Caring, Serving, Loving, Communication...*)



5. Finally comes **IMPACT MINISTRY**. When Mission, Vision, Core Values and Atmosphere are right, the Body of Christ represented by our **COMMUNITY OF FAITH** will be “*healthy and growing and full of love!*”^{Eph 4:16} The gifted believers that make up the specific flock provide the gifts, talents and abilities that will reflect and carry out our mission through impact ministry, which can be programs, ministries and outreaches, both short and long-term, as well as both task-orientated and people-orientated. The Impact Ministry is what puts weight behind the tip of the spear and is what makes the church a powerful tool in the Lord’s work.

Mission & Vision ***The Big Picture at Community of Faith***

The Mission of this FAMILY OF GOD is spelled out in its name:
COMMUNITY OF FAITH.



The Vision to accomplishing this mission will require us to work together in **“GROWING FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST”** through the core values (CV⁵) of **PRAYER, OUTREACH, EVANGELISM, WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP.**

B. Introduction to CV⁵.

What is CV¹⁻⁵?

CV¹⁻⁵ are the foundation stones envisioned by your Pastors and Elders to support the Mission and Vision of this Church. The Core Values create the foundation for building a strong *House of God*. When these Core Values are built with a principle of interconnectedness, they are capable of honoring God with a fruit that is **sustainable** and **reproducible**. You will hear these 2 words used regularly as they are some of the building blocks behind our DNA. **Sustainable** and **reproducible**, alongside our **FAT Sheep Principle**, are some of the most valuable keys in building a faith community that will outlast us and ultimately see the lost saved and the Kingdom come, no matter how long the Lord waits to return for His beloved Church.

We believe it is our Mission, Vision and CV¹⁻⁵ that build a fervent and effective ministry that can be transferrable and reproducible to other locations and to the next generation. We believe our model calls for our faithful love of God and each other as we fulfill the Great Commission. In short, we are trying to live out Ephesians 4:16.

Ephesians 4:16 nlt

He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Demonstrate CV¹⁻⁵ with Diagram

The CV¹⁻⁵ creates more than additional focus points, we believe the 5 Core Values create a dynamic and synergetic effect, building a great *House of God*.



CV¹ - Prayer



Simply defining- Prayer

– Connecting with a loving God

In speaking of prayer, Oswald Chambers insightfully writes in his May 26 entry of ***My Utmost for His Highest***, a book considered by many to be the devotional of devotions, the following: *“If we think of prayer as the breath in our lungs and the blood from our hearts, we think rightly. The blood flows ceaselessly, and the breathing continues ceaselessly; we are not conscious of it, but it is always going on.”*

If we see prayer as the means of persuading God to do, or give us something, we have missed the central point. God already knows what we have need of, as He is **Omnipotent**, **Omnipresent** and **Omniscient**. God wants only the very best for us. The purpose of our prayer is to invite Him to give us that very best.

Matthew 16:19 nlt

*“And I will give you the keys **of** the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”*

It does not say He will give us the keys **“to”** the kingdom of heaven. We do not need keys to get into heaven. Spiritually speaking, we become a part of that community of faith through our confession, repentance, and invitation of Jesus into our lives. From our heavenly position, in Christ Jesus, we are given the keys **“of”** heaven to use to release and bind things on earth.

Prayer is the main key to unlocking this great power God has given His children. Prayer releases God in our lives. Prayer releases God on earth in the same way He set the universe in order by His simple spoken word. As we pray, we need to consciously speak things that agree with God's order and perspective for us. Things such as hope, love, joy, peace, etc...

Faith is another key, and it is closely associated with prayer. Faith is a force as surely as any physical force in the universe. Faith has the power to move absolutely anything. (Ref. Mark 11:24) Faith gives muscle to our prayer, releasing God into action.

Mark 11:24 nlt

I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours.

Another key is **Obedience**. It is also closely associated with prayer. We must see ourselves as working in partnership with God. We are "Christ's Ambassadors", scripture tells us. (Ref. 2 Cor 5:20 & Ephesians 6:20) There are things that only He can do, and we must allow God to do those things in the spirit, while not neglecting those things, we should be doing in the natural realm to be in cooperation with Him. God will not do His part, until we are obediently doing ours. It is through prayer that we come to understand what His part is, and what our part is, in any given situation.

Mark 16:15-16 nlt

And then he (Jesus) told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. ¹⁶Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

Prayer is like **Resistance Training**. Prayer teams us up with God in a way that always wins! For the *Faithful follower of Christ*, Prayer is like resistance training. (Ref. James 4:7-8) The more we pray, the stronger our relation becomes. The more we train, the greater we become at resisting the roots of sin and the enemy.

James 4:7-8 nlt

So humble yourselves before God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** ⁸ **Come close to God, and God will come close to you.** Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

Prayer is the key to *Growing the Faithful Follower of Christ*. As our Life's experiences are the external pressure, the resistance training that God uses to build up our internal spiritual strength, and that internal strength is found in our prayer life. The more we RESIST, the more we can grow. The strongest faith is borne out of effective resistance training in times of adversity. Let us, above all things in Christ, be grounded in prayer!

CV²- Outreach



Simply defining- Outreach

– Demonstrating God's Love to Others!

Outreach is our window, our opportunity to release God's love and power to every area of life! It is a genuine demonstration of God's love to others—touching people with the love that grasped us and offering to pass it on.

Philippians 2:13-17 nlt

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. ¹⁴ Do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵ so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶ Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. ¹⁷ But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.

Outreach is not about finding out what's in your heart and doing it, but it is about finding out what's in God's heart and pleasing Him by allowing Him to flow through you according to the gifts, talents, and passions He has placed inside of you.

3 KEYS TO REAL OUTREACH

1. Outreach is a byproduct of the **IN-REACH** that Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, has made into your life.

OUTREACH- Flows from the **INSIDE OF THE CHURCH OUT.**

OUTREACH is not exclusive to the lost community but is more effective to the lost community when already reflected in the **COMMUNITY OF FAITH** doing the OUTREACH.

As we have seen, **OUTREACH begins inside the Believer's heart & flows out.** But it just doesn't jump out on the streets. It starts first at the home of the BELIEVERS- THE CHURCH. The PROOF to the world of our COMMISSION, our MANDATE, is so to speak—in our **OWN PUDDING (a/k/a-WITNESS)!**

John 13:34-35 nlt

So now I am giving you a new commandment: **Love each other.** Just as I have loved you, **you should love each other.** ³⁵ **Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."**

OUTREACH, done inside the sheep fold well, communicates the value of the Faith community. As we care for **ONE ANOTHER**, we gain credibility in being able to authentically care for **THEM!**

2. Outreach is an **OUTFLOW** of the Grace you & I have received!

"Outreach requires a STRONG CORE- Great Outreach is always the result of having a STRONG CORE faith!" -Troyism

You can only REACH-OUT effectively as far as you can uphold. If you want to reach out further & more effectively, you must strive to build a stronger core of faith to sustain the reach.

"Changed Lives— Changes Minds, and Outreach starts, with Changing mine THEN WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLDS!" -Troyism

OUTREACH- is a clear MANDATE of our life in Christ, and our life in Christ should drive us to REACH-OUT!

Matthew 25:31-46 nlt

“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ **For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’**

³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing?

³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

⁴⁰ “And the King will say, **‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’**

⁴¹ “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. ⁴² **For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’**

⁴⁴ “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

⁴⁵ “And he will answer, **‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’** ⁴⁶ “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

OUTREACH is not done to the person. It is no different than your WORSHIP, PRAYER, or TITHE. It will not be pleasing to the Lord unless it is delivered from the heart.

This means all our OUTREACH efforts should be done as if they were being done “**as unto the LORD**” *When I... was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, in prison...YOU?*

Again, OUTREACH is a MANDATE for the Believer. It is what separates the FAITHFUL from the RELIGIOUS. It is what defines the *Faithful Follower of Christ* from the *Counterfeit Follower*.

You can only flow in what you have received. For it to be **REAL OUTREACH** it must flow out of your core faith experience.

3. OUTREACH is **IMPACT**:

If we get it in our hearts, if we get it right in our churches, if we understand the mandate, then our OUTREACH can have a real **IMPACT** on the world.

- **OUTREACH**, done effectively, shaves off the callous layers on the Seeker’s Heart. *(They see us doing it and they desire such.)*
- **OUTREACH**, done effectively, brings the threshold of the World closer to the reality of the Cross. *(They see the Gospel in its’ real light- living, not just the words of 4 writers- Mat, Mark, Luke & John.)*
- **OUTREACH**, done effectively, exposes the **SEEKER** to the life of **CHRIST**. *(We become Jesus to the World, offering the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick & imprisoned TRANSFORMING HOPE!)*

3 Keys to Outreach Summarized

1. Outreach is a byproduct of the **IN-REACH** that Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit has made into your life.
2. Outreach is an **OUTFLOW** of the Grace you & I have received!
3. Outreach is **IMPACT**.

OUTREACH is about perspective, and not yours either. It is about seeing the world through **JESUS’** eyes and then living it out **AS HE WOULD**.

It is a world from HIS Perspective, one with OUTSTRETCHED ARMS!

Pastor Troy writes, “Many have asked me ‘**What separates OUTREACH from SOCIAL WORK?**’ The answer is **Holy Presence!** Outreach is your Holy Witness of His Holy Presence in your life.”

James 1:22-25 & 27 nlt

But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says.

Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ **For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.**

²⁴ **You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.**

²⁵ **But if you look carefully into the perfect**

law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it...²⁷

Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

CV³- Evangelism



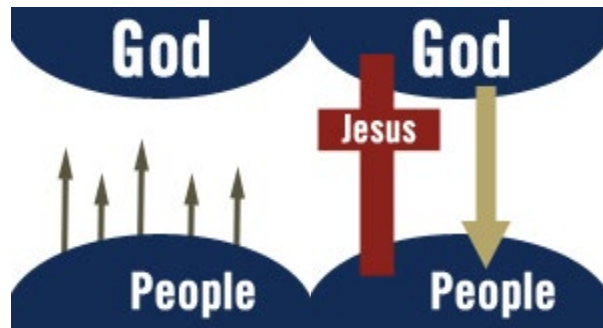
Simply defining- Evangelism

– Telling people about God’s love

Evangelism, in its simplest form, is telling people about what God has done for us! How His Word has become **REAL, ALIVE and ACTIVE** in our lives. Evangelism is not generic, nor factory built, it is highly custom, it is personal. It is your revelation story of what God has done in you.

To be effective at evangelism **YOU** have to have personally experienced the **REVELATION OF CHRIST** yourself.

GOSPEL PRESENTATION HERE



There is no way you or I can become Evangelistic without our own personal knowledge and relationship with **JESUS CHRIST**. And if you have such personal knowledge and a relationship, there should be no way you can keep quiet or be ashamed, as Paul tells us in Romans 1:16. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...” -nkjv*

You **CAN'T SHARE** with people about a LOVE, especially AGAPE/LOVE, that you have not experienced.

You may say, “I can’t save anyone”, and this is true. It is the great and precious “Blood of the Lamb” that paid the price for my sins and cleanses me from all unrighteousness. But in the midst of this, people can only be saved who LEARN and ACCEPT this great gift.

The Faithful are the ones who **DO** the Word! **THE FAITHFUL** more than love God, they are the **Lovers** of God!

a. Evangelism in the WORD.

The Word **EVANGELISM** is rooted in the word **EVANGEL** which is to bring “The Good News”, “The Gospel” or a “good message” or “glad tidings”. **Evangelism** or the act, **Evangelizing**, comes from the Greek word:

εὐαγγελίζω *euaggēlizō*, (**yoo-ang-ghel-id´-zo**); to announce good news (“evangelize”) The Gospel:— declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (The Gospel).³

As *Faithful Followers of Christ*, we receive 2 clear calls or mandates in the New Testament.

³Strong, James: *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996, S. H8674

- i. The **General** Call or Commission to the **Apostolic Church** to Evangelize:

Mark 16:15-16 nlt

And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News (*nkjv-the Gospel*) to everyone. ¹⁶Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

Matthew 28:18-20 nlt

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

- ii. The **Personal** Call or Commission to every disciple to Evangelize in their **Daily Walk**:

Romans 1:15-17 nlt

So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.

¹⁷ This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

1 Peter 3:15 niv

But in your hearts set apart 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. But do this with gentleness and respect,

nkjv

But sanctify (*set apart/consecrate*) the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

b. A Modern Contextualization of Evangelism.

Pastor Troy's Story of- "KAT the Moocher!"

"I found this cat outside my door back in the 80's, eating some scraps I had left out. The cat was obviously a stray. So, I put some more food out. The next day there was another with her, and the third day a third cat appeared. So, on the 3rd day, I took the first cat inside and found her obviously to have been someone's house cat, as she took immediately to house living. I moved the bowl inside, which got rid of the visitors, and then named the cat-- "Kat the Moocher."



In essence, "KAT the Moocher" was a great CAT EVANGELIST. He went out every day offering hope and bringing another cat to find the food of life. This is a great metaphor for how the Gospel should work in the life of the Church and through the life of the Disciple of Jesus Christ. In essence, we have all received salvation as an incredible gift, we get in by MOOCHING, so to speak. We all enjoy a life in Christ based on an invitation by God to mooch on the generosity of HIS Son, Jesus', sacrifice for our sins. Salvation is mooching in on the BREAD OF LIFE, but EVANGELISM is refusing to be stingy and telling others where we find our Hope.

*Charles Spurgeon, the Great Evangelist,
had my favorite definition of Evangelism:*

**"IT IS ONE BEGGAR TELLING ANOTHER BEGGAR
WHERE TO FIND BREAD."**

Jesus comes into your life and desires to **FLOW THROUGH YOU**, in order that **YOU MAY BE A VESSEL**, a witness of His Grace, Mercy and Love to the World that *none should perish.* (Ref: John 3:16)

Evangelism is simply allowing,
JESUS, WHO HAS COME INSIDE YOUR LIFE, TO COME OUT!

CV⁴- Worship



Simply defining Worship

– Expressing Love to God!

Worship is done to an **audience of ONE!** And that audience of “One”, for the faithful follower of Christ, is the LORD. We love God in Worship, not just in the sanctuary on Sunday, but we should be doing it early in the morning in our personal devotional life, throughout our day as we walk with Him, and in the evening as we tell Him Good night! In short, WORSHIP is simply through both corporate and private acts- *“Expressing your Love to God!”*

“My Worship starts when I rise, heads into my devotion time in the morning, carries me through my day and prepares me to receive His peace in my evening’s rest. Worship is my love affair with My Beloved!”—Pastor Troy

By definition, worship is ascribing **worth** to something or someone. True worship is also a matter of the heart. It must be felt. It cannot be ritualistic or just an external action of going through the motions. True worship is a heartfelt expression of love, adoration, admiration, fascination, wonder, and celebration. It is something that happens in your heart and soul when you begin to praise God for who He is and thank Him for what He has done. Whether privately or corporately, worship is about **expressing** love for God.

Worship is not just singing songs and getting a good feeling in your heart. Genuine worship is seeing God for who He really is – His power, His greatness, His holiness, His sovereignty, His love, and His compassion – and then giving Him what He’s worth – the best of your time, your talents, your thoughts, your words, and your deeds.

True worship is seeing the tremendous worth of God and, in response, giving Him the **best** of everything you have. This is why we consider our offerings of time, skills, and finances to be an act of worship. We are saying with our **sacrifice** that our love and value of God is greater than using those same things for ourselves. Worship is an intentional sacrifice with the purpose of loving God.

Paul writes in the Book of Romans about giving your life as a living sacrifice is the true and raw form of worship. Why? Because nothing is more **precious** to you than your life. To give that life to God and live to His plan for you means you give up your plans, ambitions, and selfish desires. If your life is the most valuable thing you possess, then to give it to God ascribes the highest worth and value you are capable of producing.

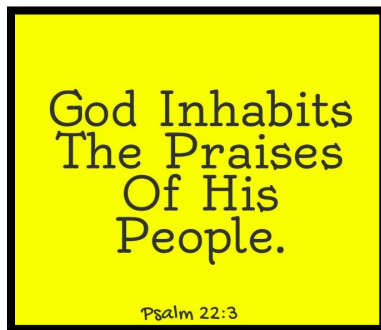
Romans 12:1-2 nlt

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Why We Worship

Humanity has a **natural tendency** to worship. Think of celebrities, famous athletes, video games, television, and anyone or anything else that people adore and give money, time, and attention to. This is our natural to devote our energy to something. We worship God because giving our attention to Him is better than giving that attention to anyone or anything else. Why? Because as we spend time with God in worship, He changes us. If you do not think we were designed to worship, look at these two pictures from two different music events. One of them is a worship event and the other is a secular concert. Which is which? Hard to tell because the people are expressing themselves the same. This is because the expressions are the same, the object and heart are the difference.

Worship is a big deal for your walk with God. When we worship, we are entering the presence of God. We are making a statement that says, we are devoting this amount of time and energy to God's glory.



The Bible, in **Psalm 22:3** makes it clear that **God inhabits the praises of His people**. This means that where people are worshipping, they will meet with God. This is so important because being in the presence of God will bring healing, direction, growth, refreshment, and clarity in your faith. God is a loving and wise King. Time devoted to God allows us to receive His grace while also showing our adoration and appreciation for what God does in our lives.

Psalm 63:1-11 nlt

¹O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you
in this parched and weary land where there is no water.

²I have seen you in your sanctuary
and gazed upon your power and glory.

³Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you!

⁴I will praise you as long as I live,
lifting up my hands to you in prayer.

⁵You satisfy me more than the richest feast.
I will praise you with songs of joy.

⁶I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night.

⁷Because you are my Helper,

I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings.

⁸I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely.

⁹But those plotting to destroy me will come to ruin.

They will go down into the depths of the earth.

¹⁰They will die by the sword and become the food of jackals.

¹¹But the king will rejoice in God.

All who trust in him will praise him, while liars will be silenced.

A FEW GREAT CHRISTIAN LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES ON WORSHIP

Louie Giglio defines worship as

*“Our response to what we value most.
Whatever is worth most to you is what you worship.”*

Charles H. Spurgeon wrote

*“God is to be praised with the voice,
and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation.”*

C.S. Lewis writes about worship

“We only learn to behave ourselves in the presence of God.”

Jack Hayford writes

“Worship changes the worshiper into the image of the One worshiped.”

Ways to Worship

The most common way to worship is through music. It is an opportunity for an individual or a whole group to tell God how good He is. It is also a **verbal declaration** of our belief and reverence of God's glory. In a group setting, such as a church worship service, it allows the whole congregation to be united in their worship of God.

There are other ways we can worship. Find things that you could normally do to honor yourself or others and do them for God. We can produce art that is inspired by God to revere Him, write in a way that focuses on the glory of God and brings Him honor, or many other ways.

Worship ultimately is about bringing honor to God. It is not a lifestyle we can **unconsciously** live. Worship is intentionally taking time to focus solely on God and praise Him for His goodness.

Genuine worship is a response to an invitation, to express and proclaim our love and devotion to the **ONE** we value most.

This invitation, from the Creator to those He loves, welcomes us to encounter His presence, to know Him, connect with Him, express our love to Him, to declare His value & worth in our lives and to be transformed by His love for us. The Apostle Peter declares of the believer:

1 Peter 2:9 nlt

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

When we come together to worship, we participate with the Holy Spirit in creating an atmosphere for His Presence to fall and flow upon us, in us, and through us; this occurs as we, **TOWDAH**, Hebrew for praise, which means that *the believers all speak or sing the same thing, the truth, about Him and to Him*. As we worship in Truth, we focus upon Him with unveiled faces and open hearts, it is there the true nature of our Heavenly Father and His glory begin to be revealed to us.

Worship is not a religious function or a rite. We are not witnessing to merely fulfill a demand, but because He loves us, and that love compels us to respond to Him with our worship. We don't sing, shout, lift our hands or dance, just because they are listed in scripture, we worship as one has a deep seated and passionate love affair with their Beloved. As a believer, it should be our pleasure and privilege to worship. In our worship, we find connection with the LORD. Worship is an invitation we make to God, which is why we typically begin with prayers of invocation, inviting Him to join us upon the throne of our praise for a divine encounter through heartfelt-and-passionate worship. *(Go read the Song of Solomon as an Illustration that Solomon, the wisest of men, gave us to understand the nature of the love affair we are to have with God and that He desires for us.)*

Worship is not about a **preferred style**, it is about expressing love to God, and just like in dating and courting our spouses, there are a plethora of ways we can express our love to God through worship as a Community of Faith. Look at David, God's favorite worship leader in Psalm 150:

It is less about the quality of the action, and more about the heart and motivation. We see this in the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-16. Cain goes through the motions, while Abel honors God with his gifts. Think about how you can express your love to God and what you can give as a sacrifice to ascribe value and worth to the one our God who is most worthy of our highest praise and worship.

Psalm 150 nlt

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heaven!

² Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequalled greatness!

³ Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn;
praise him with the lyre and harp!

⁴ Praise him with the tambourine and dancing;
praise him with strings and flutes!

⁵ Praise him with a clash of cymbals;

praise him with loud clanging cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Let's close this section on our CV⁴- Worship with a great way to understand the heart of Worship from the words of Pastor Troy:

WORSHIP-

Is what **YOU** & I were created to **DO!**

WORSHIP- is the **WHY** to it all.

The "Why" is about our most important relationship!

We are saved to know and love Him. But also, to be loved and known by Him- The Lord. -Troyism

CV⁵- Discipleship



Simply defining- Discipleship

– Maturing in God's Love!

As we have journeyed through our CV¹⁻⁵ hopefully the House of God metaphor is beginning to make sense. Once again, our CV¹⁻⁵ are being expressed in the image of a building with *prayer* as the **grounding foundation**, the two **walls** being *evangelism* and *outreach*, and the final two, *worship* and now *discipleship*, forming the **covering/roof**.

To expand the House of God, all these factors must be expanded in a coordinated way to maintain the whole Body's structural integrity.

Maturing is defined in Wikipedia as: “When bodily growth has completed and/or reproduction can begin.”

Better than Wikipedia is JESUS’ own CLASS on the concept of MATURING DISCIPLESHIP. In the parable of *The Seed Thrower*, Jesus explains our responsibility to grow to MATURITY.

Luke 8:11-15 nlt

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God’s word. ¹² The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved. ¹³ The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don’t have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation.

¹⁴ The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And **so they never grow into maturity.**

¹⁵ And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, **good-hearted people who hear God’s word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.**

Being a DISCIPLE is about creating fertile soil in our lives so that the WORD OF GOD can take root and thrive, to the point that we become **reproductive**, defined by **bearing much fruit.**

Discipleship: According to Oswald Chambers is “...*personal, passionate devotion to a Person; the Lord Jesus Christ.*” The Greek word for disciples is **matheteuo** (pronounced **mat-ee-too-o**) and means “*to teach, make a disciple, to be instructed.*”

The root word for discipleship is **discipline** and Merriam-Webster says it is “...*to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control.*”

- **Galatians 5:23** lists “*self-control*” as a “*fruit of the Spirit.*”^{-nkjv}
- **In John 15:5**, Jesus defined a disciple as one learning how to live as part of a vine: “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*”^{-nlt}
- **In Luke 9:23-24**, Jesus said, “...*If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.*”^{-nlt}

Being a disciple includes learning how to deny your flesh and strengthen your spirit. It is about reserving your life for the things of Christ alone that bring His Father, your God, honor, and glory and that are pleasing in His sight. As the scripture says, “...*the spirit is willing, but the body (flesh-nkjv) is weak.*” -Matthew 26:41 nlt

The disciplines we learn as disciples should, empowered by the Holy Spirit, help us to be more consistently victorious over the temptations and evils of the world, the flesh and the devil!

As we discipline ourselves, through discipleship, we saturate ourselves in our Daily Walk with the knowledge of God and His Word, and through this we are exposed to the character of Christ and, in due season, the fruit of His Spirit should become more and more evident in our witness.

One of the great scriptures on discipleship reminds to “**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**” 2 Timothy 2:15 kjv

Maturity is not PERFECTION or COMPLETION- It is a state of being able to bear fruit and GIVE BACK that which has been given to YOU through the gift of Christ Jesus. –Troyism 623.10

In Wesleyan theology, there is a doctrine called **CHRISTIAN PERFECTION**. This states, in essence: *It should be the goal of every believer to achieve CHRIST'S LIKENESS, understanding we will probably not achieve that perfect mark, yet STRIVING REGARDLESS toward that high mark, knowing that as we strive— HIS GRACE, HIS MERCY and HIS LOVE will fill in the gaps.* The great apostle to the Gentiles, a real scholar and follower of the Lord, Paul said:

Philippians 3:12-16 nkjv

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call (nlt- the heavenly prize) of God in Christ Jesus.**

¹⁵ **Therefore let us, as many as are mature, (nlt-spiritually mature) have this mind;** and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

BEING A DISCIPLE: is not so much about **ARRIVING**; but about the **JOURNEY**. It is not just about finishing as it is about **CONTINUED PRODUCTION**. It is about staying on the **GREAT COMMISSION** until we meet Christ or He returns, whichever comes first in our lives. Ultimately, as *Faithful Followers of Christ*, it is our goal to fully **MATURE IN GOD'S LOVE**. As we said earlier, the mark of the *Faithful Follower of God* is found by walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

4 KEY DISCIPLESHIP FUNDAMENTALS:

1. **ACCEPT:** We need to be sure we are **BORN AGAIN**. It starts with you accepting Jesus Christ as your personal savior. It begins with a personal relationship. According to John 3, "*you must be born again!*"

A PRAYER MODEL FOR A PRAYER OF SALVATION:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

2. **CONNECT:** We then must realize, as 1 Corinthians 2:14 states, that the **"natural man"** does not understand the things of the Spirit of God and can't even **comprehend** the Kingdom of God. So, by the same faith that we ACCEPT Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we must, by that same FAITH, invite the Holy Spirit to connect us to the heart and soul of God.

A PRAYER MODEL FOR A PERSONAL PENTECOST IN ONE SEEKING TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Father, forgive me for placing myself before you. Again, I repent of my sins, I invite your son, Jesus to be the Lord of my life, and I put my whole trust in you. I place my life in your hands and ask you to come into my life in a more powerful way with the promised gift of your Holy Spirit. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to know and do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, asking for the outpouring of your Holy Spirit upon my life. I ask you to guide and direct me as I seek to serve you. You are my God and my King, and I will ever praise and serve you. Amen!

3. **MINISTRY:** Next, we need to learn how to have a Daily Walk like **Jesus**. Earlier we read where Paul admonished a young believer, Timothy, to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that*

*needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*¹⁻² *Tim 2:15 kjv*

The end goal is found in striving to make our lives a “**living sacrifice**” to the Lord.

Romans 12:1-2 nlt

And so, dear brothers and sisters, **I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.** This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

We are called to become His modern-day Levities, His personal “*royal priests*”, offering our lives in service to His purpose and plan.

1 Peter 2:9 nlt

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You **are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession.** As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

4. **DISCIPLE:** Finally, we are called to **GO FORTH**, and **OFFER CHRIST to others.** As we mature, we then are called to repeat the cycle by fulfilling the Great Commission and offering a witness for Jesus Christ to others. Freely you have received, now freely give!

Matthew 28:18-20 nlt

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ **Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.** ²⁰ **Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

Whether you are a new believer or a seasoned believer- Your Daily Walk Continues until you hear JESUS SAY TO YOU- **“Well done my good & faithful servant- enter into your REWARD!”**

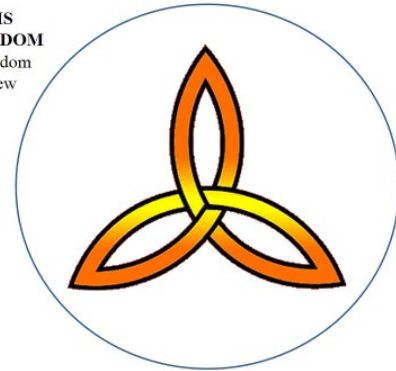
DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT LEARNING TO WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS or as one author states:
“In the dust of Rabbi Jesus.”

C. The Way of the LORD- Living a life with a Kingdom View.

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE WAY OF THE LORD?

1. **His Kingdom: We must choose the Kingdom View over a secular World View.** *(The Foundation to this is our ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS LORDSHIP. God spoke it all into existence. From the VOID- the LORD spoke, and it was. In other words, HIS WORD is like a federal law, taking precedent/superseding all other state & local laws. Likewise, the secular worldview can never lead us to a contrary view or stance against the Kingdom View.)*

HIS
KINGDOM
Kingdom
View

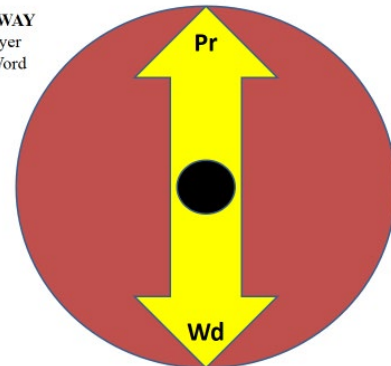


2 Corinthians 5:16-17 nlt

So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2. **His Way ←→ Word & Prayer.** *(His Way is our OS/Operating System- which is grounded in the Word and fervent Prayer.)*

HIS WAY
Prayer
& Word



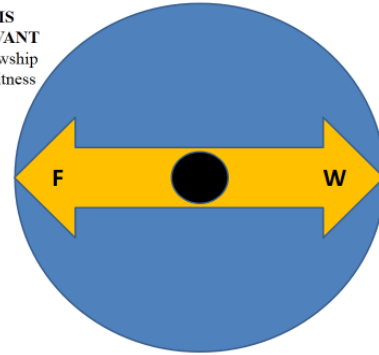
Ephesians 4:21-24 nlt

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

3. **His Servant ←→ Witness & Fellowship.** *(Being His Servant- calls us to be an APP. An APP is the tool/vehicle that makes our OS useful for living out the reality of HIS WAY for us in our Daily Walk, as*

His Faithful Follower, as we serve His Kingdom in this World. An OS without an APP is not fun and not useful.)

HIS
SERVANT
Fellowship
& Witness



Romans 12:1-2 nlt

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. ²Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

HIS WAY
Prayer
& Word

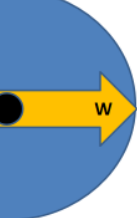
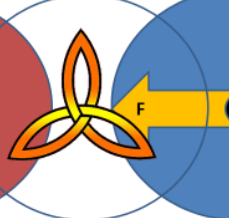
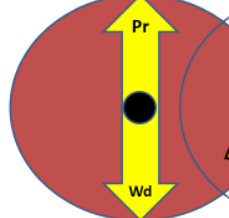
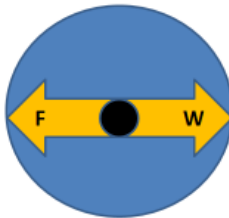
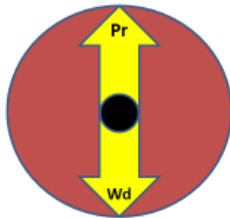
HIS
KINGDOM
Kingdom
View

HIS
SERVANT
Fellowship
& Witness

HIS WAY
Prayer
& Word

HIS
KINGDOM
Kingdom
View

HIS
SERVANT
Fellowship
& Witness



THE WAY OF THE LORD

is found in **HOLINESS & RIGHTEOUSNESS.**



THE WAY OF THE LORD
Holiness & Righteousness

Isaiah 35:8-10 nlt

⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

We are called to live, serve, give, tithe according to the OS of the Kingdom way, not the world's way. We are called to apply this by living a way that is RIGHTEOUS and HOLY, knowing His way always overrides our way—For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the Glory forever!

-Troyism 706.13

D. FAT Sheep Principle: Faithful-Available-Teachable.



John 10:7-11 nkjv

⁷ Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

I want to wrap up our work by looking at how I understand God's mission for YOU! The Mission of this FAMILY OF GOD is spelled out in its name: **COMMUNITY OF FAITH.**

The Vision to accomplishing this mission will require us to work together in **"GROWING FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST through the core values of PRAYER, OUTREACH, EVANGELISM, WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP."**

In Essence, our GOAL at Community of Faith is to be a church full of **HEALTHY, HAPPY & PRODUCTIVE "FAT" SHEEP.**

FAT Sheep are: Faithful-Available-Teachable

F-FAITHFUL: (What a huge, powerful & strong word) *adj.*

- 1 : steadfast in affection or allegiance.
- 2 : firm in adherence to promises or in observance of duty.
- 3 : given with strong assurance. (i.e. "faithful promise")
- 4 : true to the facts, to a standard, or to an original (i.e. "faithful copy")

What FAITH is/ Synonyms: constant, devoted, fast, good, loyal, pious, staunch (or stanch), steadfast, steady, true & true-blue.

What FAITH IS NOT/ Antonyms: disloyal, faithless, false, fickle, inconstant, perfidious, recreant, traitorous, unfaithful, & untrue.

Hebrews 11:1-3 nkjv

Now faith is the substance/realization of things hoped for, the evidence/confidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds/ages were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Hebrews 12:1-2a nkjv

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...**

- **FAITH** is about one who **DOES** the Word!
- The **FAITHFUL** more than love God, they are the **Lovers** of God! (Ref. Song of Solomon- "I am my Beloved's and He is mine!")

The space between the FIRST STEP & the LAST STEP with Christ is FAITH! –Troyism 424.9

A-AVAILABLE: *adj.*

1: present or ready for immediate use

2: willing to do something or to assume a responsibility (i.e. “available candidates”)

What AVAILABLE is/ Synonyms: accessible, acquirable, attainable, obtainable & procurable.

What AVAILABLE is not/ Antonyms: inaccessible, unattainable, unavailable & unobtainable.

John 16:9-10 nkjv

The world’s sin is unbelief (**unfaithfulness**) in me. ¹⁰ Righteousness is **available** because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.

AVAILABILITY IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF JESUS’ OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER. IN STRIVING TO BE LIKE CHRIST, WE MUST LEARN TO MAKE OURSELVES AVAILABLE TO GOD!

Jesus does not ask anything of us that HE HAS NOT ALREADY WALKED IN HIMSELF.

BEING A “FAT” SHEEP: is an attitude thing.

- Faith is the **BASE!**
- But our AVAILABILITY is the **Desire of God**, it is our UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to our CREATOR, KING and GOD.
- Our AVAILABILITY creates the **CONNECTION**, the CONDUIT, to a strong relationship with God.
- The **More Available** we are to the LORD- the Better the CONDUIT, the Better the LORD can flow in our lives.

T-TEACHABLE: *adj.*

1: capable of being taught or

2: apt and willing to learn

What TEACHABLE is/ Synonyms: educate, instruct, train, coach & instill.

What TEACHABLE is not/ Antonyms: stubborn, bullheaded, ignorant, unable to learn or unwilling to learn. What does that say?

Lots of sheep are FAITHFUL, many are available, but what makes a sheep a prized sheep of the flock is the last ingredient: **TEACHABILITY!**

2 Timothy 2:15-16 kjv-nkjv

Study to show thyself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

The best teacher for the believer is the **HOLY SPIRIT**, who teaches us to live and react with the Spirit of Jesus:

John 14:26 nkjv/amplified.

But the Helper (*Grk-Paraclete/kjv-Comforter/rsv-Counselor, nlt-Advocate*), **the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name (JESUS), He will **teach you all things**, and **bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**

- **BEING TEACHABLE: is not** about age, because my grandfather became an expert on the computer in his 80's.
- **BEING TEACHABLE: is not** an aspect of wealth, because people from the poorest of homes and countries have made something out of nothing but HARD WORK.
- **BEING TEACHABLE: is not** an aspect of ethnicity or culture, because some of the greatest people of our day come from all ethnicities and hues of color.
- **BEING TEACHABLE: is** a matter of attitude, will and spirit, with all of this beginning with HUMILITY. *"A humility that confesses I do not know it all, I do not have all the answers, but I come to learn from the one that does through God's Grace!"*
- **BEING TEACHABLE: is** a defining characteristic for the **GODLY MAN or WOMAN**. It differentiates the **GREAT/"FAT" SHEEP** from the **GOOD/"Skinny" SHEEP!**

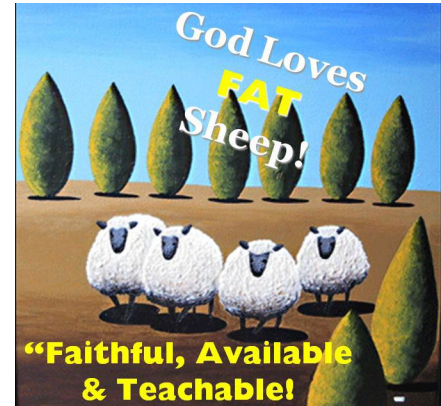
As we learned in the TBAV (*Troy Benitone Amplified Version*) in PROVERBS 24:16 ***"The righteous fall, but they GET BACK UP-
LEARNING FROM THEIR FAILURES ON HOW TO BECOME BETTER SHEEP!"***

Proverbs 24:16 nkjv/tbav

“For a righteous/(faithful) man may fall seven times and rise again, (because he is available to GOD & because he is Learning from his failures before God on how to become a better sheep), But the wicked (the unfaithful, unavailable & unteachable) shall fall by calamity.

(tbav- Troy Benitone Amplified Version)

**FAT Sheep are:
Faithful-Available-
Teachable.**




E. Covenant Membership and Baptismal needs.

- **By-Laws & Constitution.** (See Attachments)
- **Covenant Membership Card.** (See Next Page)
- **Discussion of Baptismal Needs**

F. Sign-up for the next PLUMB LINE CLASS. *A discipleship class designed by Pastor Troy aimed at building our Community of Faith toward its' vision of growing faithful followers of Christ.*

The Plumb Line Class is a 12-level experience at unlocking the standards God has for us and how we can measure up to the vertical challenge God has for us in growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!!



**The
PLUMB LINE**

*Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My People”
— Amos
7:8b*

A discipleship class designed by Pastor Troy aimed at building our Community of Faith toward its vision of growing faithful followers of Christ.

Community of Faith Church

COMMUNITY

OF

Faith

CHURCH

Growing Faithful
Followers of Christ!

Prayer

Connecting with a loving God

Evangelism

Telling people about God's Love

Outreach

Demonstrating God's love to others

Worship

Expressing love to God

Discipleship

Maturing in God's love

Commitment Card

Head of Household Information:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

It is my desire to be a member of Community of Faith Church. I confess Jesus Christ as my savior and I am committed to the teachings of His Word. I am committed to the mission, vision, and core values of Community of Faith Church and I will be faithful as a member with my time, talent, and tithe.

- I am renewing my membership at Community of Faith Church
 I want to be received as a new member of Community of Faith Church
 I would like to be baptized
 I am making this commitment with my family members listed below:

Name: _____ Name: _____
Name: _____ Name: _____
Name: _____ Name: _____

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15

Community of Faith Church's Driving Mission Text:

He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:16 (New Living Translation)

CONSTITUTION OF COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Amended: May 7, 2023

PREAMBLE

In order that the witness of this church may be carried out in accordance with scriptural doctrines; that its worship, teachings, ministry, and fellowship may be conducted in harmony with Christian principles; and that its business affairs may be administered in an orderly fashion and in a responsible manner consistent with biblical teachings, we do adopt and set forth this constitution and its accompanying bylaws. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to its associate churches, affiliate churches and other churches in the body of Christ.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND INCORPORATION

This Church shall be called **Community of Faith**, located at 5208 Meadowland Pkwy, Marion, Illinois 69295 (*Formerly addressed as: 1105 North Refuge Road, Carterville, Illinois.*) This Church shall be a subsidiary corporation unified under the leadership and oversight of the Hands of Hope Foundation and will serve as the head of a new **Community of Faith Church Global Family**. This Body has been incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws.

ARTICLE II - FOUNDING VISION

Community of Faith was born in the heart of God. It was conceived in the mind of God, and its vision was given to men to be carried out in the power of God.

In 1979, while serving as evangelism director of the Illinois Baptist State Association, God called John Somers to leave his work and begin a new church in southern Illinois. At the same time, Les Snyder was also called by the Lord to leave his position with a church near Chicago and he became the first music minister.

Together, they came to southern Illinois to establish a non-traditional church. It was to be regional in outreach, have multiple pastors, have a ministry to pastors, and have or help sponsor a school. It was to be a house of prayer, meeting the material needs of people in addition to spiritual needs – a “church without walls”.

The initial word, given from Isaiah 19: 18 and 19, indicated an area at the intersection of Illinois routes 13 and 148, which the Lord miraculously made available. Home prayer meetings preceded the first service, held Sunday, November 4, 1979, at John A. Logan College, Carterville, Illinois. The church was constituted January 27, 1980, as Community of Faith Baptist Church.

About a year later, when the Lord was bringing people from many denominational backgrounds, He clearly instructed that the words “Baptist Church” be removed from the church name. His intent was for it to be a community of faith! The ministries of the church developed as the people responded to the Lord’s promptings, enabled by His gifts and blessing.

ARTICLE III – MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to be a “COMMUNITY OF FAITH”. We hope to achieve that with the Vision of “GROWING FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.” Those Core Values are PRAYER,

OUTREACH, EVANGELISM, WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP. And our Core Values, the very foundation stones we will use to shape this House of God. All that we do will be GROUNDED IN PRAYER, we will bring people in by OUTREACH & EVANGELISM, and together we will WORSHIP and spend time in DISCIPLESHIP.

ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH

The core beliefs of Community of Faith Church are grounded in Biblical truth and summed up by the "Apostles' Creed".

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church***, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***The holy Catholic Church is a traditional statement. This is not a reference to the Roman Catholic denomination. Rather, it refers to the

Unified body of Christ as seen in scripture. The word "catholic" means united.

Summary of our Core Beliefs:

The Trinity/Triune God: God is THREE in ONE- Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

God as Father: God is Father Almighty, Creator of the Universe.

God as Son: Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He died on the cross, the complete and final sacrifice for our sins according to the Word. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father He is both our High Priest, Advocate and Judge.

God as Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living through the spiritual gifts, and the understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

Free Will: The gift offered by God's Prevenient Grace that allows all humans to reject or accept His plan for our life.

Original Sin: Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through atonement and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can man be saved and receive the spiritual life God offers to all who call Him Lord & Savior.

The Atonement: Comes in Jesus Christ who became the final Passover Lamb offering Himself, a lamb without blemish, offering His blood and life as the only acceptable offering to God for the sin debt of humanity both original and actual.

The Resurrection: The triumph of Jesus over the Grave, which promises the believers triumph over the Grave.

Justification by Faith: The Shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God into eternal life. By our justification we join the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9, Revelations 1:6) and our commissioned to take the Good News to the World (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Word of God: The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old & New Testament are the Written Word of God. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God it is the truth without any mixture or error in its original writings. It is the complete revelation of God's will for the Church. It is the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Where it speaks God is calling us to listen and obey.

The Church: The Church is composed of all such persons (Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head.

Additional Theological & Biblical Reference to our Core Beliefs:

1. **God, the Father:** God, assisted by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, made the heavens and the earth. He is referred to by Jesus as Father and by Paul as Abba. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Genesis 1:1; Psalms 68: 5; Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 26:39; Romans 8:15; James 1:17.
2. **The Person and Work of Christ:** The Lord Jesus, the Christ, and the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. Our redemption and salvation are guaranteed to us by His physical resurrection from the dead. Luke 1:38; John 1:1, 14 and 18; Romans 3:24-26; I Corinthians 15:4; Colossians 1:15-20; I John 2:2.
3. **The Personality of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, regenerates believers in Christ, sets each member in the Body of Christ, the church; indwells them, seals them unto the day of redemption, teaches all truth and bestows spiritual gifts upon each saved believer. Jesus baptizes and fills with the Holy Spirit those yielded to Him. John 15:26; 16:7-15; I Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; I John 2:27.
4. **Holy Scriptures:** The Holy Bible, as set out in the original manuscripts, is the verbally inspired Word of God; authoritative, inerrant, and God-breathed. Matthew 5: 18; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21.
5. **Holiness:** God has called Christians out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – from sin to holiness. It is God's will that we partake of His nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. Matthew 5:48; John 8:1-11; II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:16; II Peter 1:4.

6. **Salvation**: Salvation is a gift of God through grace and is received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. John 1:12; Romans 3:25-26; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.
7. **The New Creation**: God's masterful work of creating the universe by His Word is exceeded only by the greatest masterpiece of His workmanship, namely, a Christian. Becoming a new creation helps us to face life knowing that our identification with Christ enables us to hold fast to our confession, overcome in life and be more than conquerors in Christ. II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.
8. **The Total Depravity of Man**: Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam's sin, the human race fell. Man inherited a sinful nature and became alienated from God. Man is totally unable to regain his former position by or through his own means. Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalms 53:3; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:12; I John 1:8.
9. **The Church**: The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is vested all the power for its government. According to His commandments, Christians are to associate themselves into communities of local churches. God admonishes His people to assemble regularly for worship. God still heals, delivers, and works miracles through His church. Deuteronomy 12: 5-7; Isaiah 53:5; John 14:12-14; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:25; 13:8; James 5:14-15; I Peter 2:24.
10. **The Head of the Church**: The Head of the Church is Christ Himself. He is the final and ultimate authority in all matters of faith, doctrine, and decision. All divinely approved church practices in the New Testament reflect the Church's own acknowledgement of God's hand directing the Church. Where the Church failed to submit itself to Christ, He spoke firmly and unequivocally in denunciation. He expresses His will today through the Holy Spirit and the written Word. Matthew 11:27; 28:18; John 5:27; 14:16-18 and 26; 16:13-14; 17:2; Acts 13:2-4; 14:26-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 2 and 3.
11. **Baptism**: Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ; of remission of sins and of his giving himself up to God, and to live and walk in newness of life. It is not a prerequisite to salvation. Matthew 3:6-8; Mark 1:5, 9 and 15; Luke 3:3-16; Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12.
12. **The Lord's Day**: The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance and should be employed in exercise of worship and spiritual devotion. Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 2:27-28; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.
13. **The Lord's Supper**: The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and juice of grapes; and to be observed by His Church until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice but is designed to commemorate His death and our communion with Him and with our church fellowship. It is open to all believers. Matthew 26:26-28; I Corinthians 11:23-26.
14. **Citizenship**: Civil government is of divine appointment and established by God for the good order of human society. Government officials are to be prayed for and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6-7; Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7.
15. **Marriage**: The first institution that God gave mankind was marriage. He joined a man and a woman in a special and sacred union. To this union He gave a special gift – sexuality. This gift expressed in any other form (example: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, transsexuality, or bestiality) does not have God's approval. Genesis 2:18-25; 3:16; 4:1;

Exodus 20:14 and 17; Song of Solomon; Matthew 19:1-6; Ephesians 5:22-31; Revelation 19:7-9.

16. **The Responsibility of Believers:** All believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior. It is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scripture and seek to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world. Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16 and 25; II Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:16-20.
17. **Sanctity of Life:** All human life was created by God and should be valued. The valueless ending of human life is not approved of by Him. Abortion and euthanasia are not acceptable means of dealing with life's difficulties. Exodus 20:13; II Peter 3:19.
18. **Stewardship:** God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. All we have and are we owe to Him. We recognize the Lord as owner of all our possessions. Christians cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally should contribute their talents, abilities and possessions to advancing the Savior's cause on earth. The purpose of the tithe is to enable us to discharge some of the tremendous sense of obligation and indebtedness we have toward God and to teach us to always put God first in our lives. Deuteronomy 14:23; Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4 and 19-21; Luke 12:16-21; Acts 2:44-47; Romans 6:6-22; I Corinthians 4:1-2; Philippians 4:10-19; I Peter 1:18-19.
19. **Last Things:** At the end of the age, every person will be judged. The unrighteous will go to Hell, a place of everlasting punishment. The righteous, through Christ, will receive their reward and dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; Revelation 19-22.
20. **The Second Coming of Christ:** Jesus will return personally and visibly to the earth according to His promise. Believers are to live sensible, righteous and godly lives in the present age looking for His imminent return. Matthew 24:27-44; Titus 2:12-13.

ARTICLE V- CHURCH COVENANT

Because our God, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is a covenant-keeping God, demonstrating His eternal love for us through the death of His only Son on the cross in order to provide complete redemption for our sins and by His indwelling Spirit transforming us into the likeness of His Son, we desire to respond to His love by obeying His command and loving Him with all our heart, mind and soul; and to love each other as He has commanded.

We further choose to forgive each other as He has forgiven us through Christ Jesus and to encourage and comfort each other using the same comfort we have received from God.

As Jesus prayed for us, we also desire to be brought to complete unity so that the world will know Jesus is sent from God to save all who will believe in Him. In accordance with Ephesians 4:16 nlt—*“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”*

Genesis 1:1; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Deuteronomy 7:9; Matthew 6:12; Matthew 22:27-28 and 39; Matthew 26:28 or 27-29; John 3:16-18; John 14:15-17; John 15:12; John 17:23; II Corinthians 1:3-5; II Corinthians 3:16-18; II Corinthians 11:25-26; Ephesians 4:16 and 32; Colossians 1:1-20; Colossians 3:13; Hebrews 9:11-15

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT

The governance of this church shall fall under care, trust, custody, and future stewardship of the Board of Directors of the Hands of Hope Foundation, who will function as the governing Board of Elders & Mothers of Community of Faith for all Global operations and as general overseers of the mission, vision, and core values with the Executive Director serving as the ecclesiastical leader and lead general overseer for its global operations.

Further, the new Board will be fully vested to develop and join with other local Community of Faith church fellowships and network together to form a “*Denomination body and network*”. A local Community of Faith Church leadership model and plan for local church operations shall be developed with all its church planting partners and friends, and for the operation of its own associate member churches and affiliate member churches under its covering as a denominational network in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Apostles Creed and the Great Commission.

The Board will develop local church and regional Boards of Elders & Mothers that will provide leadership on their behalf at the local and regional leadership operation models to provide for the oversight of the various local churches and global regions under its care in conversation and in covenant with those local church fellowships.

ARTICLE VII – CONDUCTING CHURCH AFFAIRS

The conduct of the affairs of Community of Faith not addressed in the Articles of Incorporation or this constitution will be outlined in the bylaws of Community of Faith. These bylaws define the church’s organizational structure, the role of members in the structure, and the operating procedures.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be repealed, altered, or amended when an oversight has been discovered or when a need to change becomes apparent. The Board of Elders & Mothers shall have a time of local congregational input from its pastors, leaders, and members, and then will enter a time of prayer and final discernment. Afterward, as the Board of Elders & Mothers sense unity with the will of God, they can move forward to adopt the proposed changes to this constitution.

This amended Constitution was adopted the 7th Day of May 2023 by a unanimous decision of the Board of Elders of Community of Faith to the Glory of God. (Reference: Community of Faith Church, Special Called Meeting to Finalize the Resolution of Unification with the Hands of Hope Foundation dated Sunday, May 7, 2023.)

Board of Elders & Mothers Approving the Amended Constitution:

Elder: Rev. Dr. Troy D. Benitone

Mother: Mrs. Beth Benitone

Elder: Dr. Jeffrey Parks

Mother: Dr. Sherrie Parks

Elder: Mr. Jerry Johnson

Mother: Mrs. Kim Johnson

BYLAWS OF COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Amended: May 7, 2023

ARTICLE I – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of Community of Faith shall consist of such persons who have accepted and publicly confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and have been received into the church by one of its pastors have completed new members training, profession of faith and baptism.

Section 101 – Qualifications

Persons presenting themselves for membership may be accepted in the following manner:

- by profession of faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, as Savior, and through baptism according to the command of Christ; and
- by commitment to church covenant classes (*i.e. Faith Steps & Plumblines or their equivalent*); and
- by reception in a public worship service and through confession and acknowledgment of our covenant of commitment: *“It is my desire to be a member of Community of Faith Church. I confess Jesus Christ as my Savior and I am committed to the teachings of His Word. I am committed to the mission, vision, and core values of Community of Faith Church and I will be faithful as a member with my time, talent, and tithe.”*

Section 102 - Role of Members

Every member of the church 18 years old and above is entitled to participate in the nominating of pastors, local elders, local deacons and/or church leaders and to provide input at family forums.

Every member of the church 18 years old and above is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for any of the above-mentioned leadership roles in the church.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section 103 – Discipline

At Community of Faith, we want to emphasize that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) is available for counselling and guidance. Action taken shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than for punishment.

Discipline procedures:

- Should any member of this church be found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life, the church reserves the right and has the responsibility to administer scriptural forms of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:11-13, and Galatians 6:1-2. Such discipline will be administered through the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*). Should faithful efforts by the Board of Elders & Mothers render no promise of reform or manifest no spirit of repentance on the part of the member in question, the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) may terminate that person’s membership.
- A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings.

- A member removed from fellowship by disciplinary action may be re-instated by a decision of the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

Section 104 - Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated due to the death of the member or when the member unites with another church.

The name of any member who is inactive for a period of six months, without just cause, will be put in an inactive file. Every effort shall be made by the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) to bring that person back into the fellowship. If there is no evidence that the member intends to rejoin the fellowship, his or her name shall be removed from membership after an inactive period of one year.

Should a member be an offense to the church and/or the Lord, the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) may terminate that person's membership, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring repentance and amendment.

Any person whose membership has been terminated, for any offense, can be restored by a decision of the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

Section 105 - Conflict Resolution

Should a dispute arise between members, The Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) are available for counsel and guidance.

Disputes among members should, as much as possible, be resolved in accordance with the principles set out in Matthew 18:15-17.

If the first two steps found in Matthew 18:15-17 still leave an unresolved dispute, then the matter shall be brought to The Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) for final resolution on behalf of the Church.

The primary aim of discipline shall be restoration of the members to fellowship with God, the other party, and the church Body. Community of Faith has not only the right, but also the duty to practice such discipline in a Christian manner and to protect the integrity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE II – GENERAL OVERSEERS & ECCLESIASTICAL LEADERSHIP OF GLOBAL OPERATIONS

The Board of Directors of the Hands of Hope Foundation, functions as the governing Board of Elders & Mothers of Community of Faith for all Global operations and as general overseers of the mission, vision, and core values with the Executive Director serving as the ecclesiastical leader and lead general overseer for its global operations.

Section 201 – The Executive Director and Ecclesiastical leader

The Executive Director will function as the ecclesiastical leader and lead general overseer of the Community of Faith Church and its subsidiaries. The purpose of this union is to allow

Community of Faith Church to serve as the global base or denominational headquarters to begin a new church family network.

The Executive Director and lead general overseer will be responsible with approval by Global Board of Elders & Mothers to appoint Regional Ecclesiastical leaders and assistants to provide for effective oversight of the mission, vision, objects and core values of those Community of Faith families in that region for all day-to-day regional operations through those respective Community of Faith local churches.

Section 202 – Relationships in the Community of Faith Global Family

Community of Faith Church will feature four basic levels of relationships in its network: **(1) Community of Faith Associate Member Pastors & Churches, (2) Community of Faith Affiliate Member Pastors & Churches, (3) Partners of Community of Faith & (4) Friends of Community of Faith.**

- 1) **Community of Faith Associate Member Pastors & Churches-** are local churches and/or pastors that we have established, planted or who have agreed to come under the formal ecclesiastical leadership and covering of the Community of Faith Church Global Family and are recognized as a formal part of our greater church family. Said, Associate pastors and/or churches, are a part of the Community of Faith Church Global Denominational Structure and shall have local church governance in keeping with the Community of Faith Church basic requirements. Associate Member Local Church Senior Pastors and Associate Pastors shall be ordained or have said, previous ordination or license to preach, recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Church. Each Associate Member Local church's senior pastor and a local elected lay-leader, after receiving the recommendation of their pastor and elected by the local body, shall serve as a full-member of our COF Advisory Board in that Region and said Regional Leader will be a part of the COF Global Advisory Board led by ecclesiastical leader.
- 2) **Community of faith Affiliate Member Pastors & Churches-** are local churches and/or pastors that desires an Affiliate Membership with Community of Faith Church because it is still active or connected to another governing body or denomination, and as a result, is not able to be an Associate member, can enter into a "Covenant Relationship" with Community of Faith Church's efforts to grow and develop faith-based communities. While they carry their own ecclesiological model, their Senior Pastor's ordination or license-to-preach must be recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Church. Each Affiliate Member Local Church's Senior pastor and a local elected lay-leader after receiving the recommendation of their pastor and elected by the local body shall serve as a member with the right of voice on our COF Advisory Board in that Region and said Regional Leader will be a part of the COF Global Advisory Board led by ecclesiastical leader.
- 3) **Partners of Community of Faith-** Individuals, Organization, Churches, Business, and other such Entities who enter a "*formal relationship*" to partner with us in a project, outreach or with a specific faith-community will be known as Partners of Community of Faith. These partners are independent free agents, but with a formal common interest and a formal covenant partnership and relationship on a more long-term basis. Such Partners shall be recognized as a special Partner of the Hands of Hope Foundation and the Community of Faith Church Global Family.

- 4) **Friends of Community of Faith-** Individuals, Organizations, Churches, Business, and other such Entities who share our Mission & Vision who walk alongside us to support, facilitate and partner in our work will be known as Friends. These Friends function as independent free agents, but with common interest and communal support for special projects, events, or work on both a short and long-term basis shall be recognized as special Friends of the Hands of Hope Foundation and the Community of Faith Church Global Family.

Further, a local Community of Faith Church leadership model and plan for local church operations shall be developed with all its church planting partners and friends, and for its own associate member and affiliate member pastors and churches in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Apostles Creed, and the Great Commission.

Section 203 – Approval & Appointment of Leadership in the Community of Faith Global Family

The Executive Director, as the General Overseer will approve and appoint ecclesiastical leadership to guide the Community of Faith Church Global family in its various global regions, and in turn, approve the appointment or call of pastoral leadership to be the leaders of our Community of Faith Associate Member Churches and will provide an affirmation for the leaders of our Community of Faith Affiliated Member Churches.

ARTICLE III –

GLOBAL, REGIONAL & LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Church leadership includes all Elders, Mothers, Pastors, and Leadership Team Members/Deacons serving the church whether locally, regionally, or globally.

- must be active in the life and work of the church as a baptized believer in Jesus Christ;
- should seek the Lord and delight in Him;
- should give adequate time to daily quiet time, personal prayer and study of the Word;
- should strive after godliness;
- should be a pastor to his/her own family first;
- should spend time together with his/her family in prayer, spiritual conversation, and the Word;
- should meet the needs of his/her spouse, deepening their intimacy and relationship together;
- should be a soul winner and regular in bringing their tithes;
- should be an example to the believers as outlined in I Peter 5:1-3.

ARTICLE IV – LOCAL BOARD OF ELDERS & MOTHERS

Section 301 – Responsibilities

The Local Churches Board of Elders & Mothers shall consist of all pastors, elders and mothers. The Local Board is responsible for the administration of the local church under God's authority and in particular is responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the local church and its members. Collectively the Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall:

- define and interpret the overall objectives and aspirations of the church, which will produce progress toward fulfilling the scriptural purposes for its existence;

- oversee the development of strategies by the various boards, committees, ministry groups, and individuals, using available resources to meet the goals of the church. This includes all programs, ministries, meetings, and other efforts of the church. Individual Elders & Mothers may be assigned as liaison to various boards and leadership teams for specific periods of time;
- obtain from the Body nominations of those who are willing and qualified to serve as Elders, Mothers, Pastors and Leadership Team Members/Deacons serving the church whether locally, regionally or globally;
- become aware of the spiritual needs and concerns of those in the congregation, and assist in the establishment of goals for the church based on these spiritual needs and concerns;
- administer scriptural forms of church discipline to members, as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, when a member is found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life;
- act in termination of membership as provided in the bylaws;
- ensure all candidates for position of Elder or Mother are fully qualified according to the bylaws;
- suspend or remove church leaders when necessary;
- appoint persons to and dismiss persons from paid or unpaid administrative or staff positions. For paid positions, appointments should follow sound budgetary practices. Dismissal of persons from administrative or staff positions requires a decision of the Local Board of Elders & Mothers.

ARTICLE V – LOCAL ELDERS & MOTHERS

Section 401 - Selection and Removal

Local Churches Elders & Mothers shall be nominated by the local church body, approved by the current Local Board of Elders & Mothers, and shall serve in that capacity in staggered terms of five years. A local elder or mother may be suspended indefinitely by a decision of the Local Board of Elders & Mothers. Local Elders may be removed from office upon their own request. There shall be no less than five Elders & Mothers, but no more than seven.

Section 402 – Vacancy

At the end of an Elder's or Mother's term of service or at any time a vacancy occurs, the remaining Elders & Mothers shall make and can receive nominations from the Body and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in selecting a man to be affirmed by the church Body as a new elder or mother to be affirmed by the church as a new elder. It is our purpose and plan to select Elders and Mothers that are in healthy marriages and to offer them as a couple to leadership. Where one has demonstrated a Biblically exemplary single life according to scripture, a single Elder or Mother of the Church could be discerned to serve on the Board of the Local Church.

Section 403 – Qualifications

Elders & Mothers should be qualified in accordance with the Word of the New Testament passages Ephesians 4:11-16, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-3. Elders & Mothers should be men and women of intellectual and spiritual maturity, with proven Christian character and sound judgment, exemplary in their conduct, and effective leaders and teachers. They must

be men and women who passionately believe they are called to this place of ministry. Additionally, Elders & Mothers shall be members of Community of Faith and shall have proven themselves before the membership in other capacities of service. Elders & Mothers shall be consecrated by Community of Faith with the laying on of hands by the current Local Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of their directing/lead/senior pastor.

Section 404 – Responsibilities

Each Elder or Mother, individually and according to the situation, should

- be equipped to teach God’s Word according to Acts 6:4, Ephesians 4:11, Titus 1:9;
- establish relationships of support and accountability with other elders & mothers, so that no gap is left for the enemy to enter;
- meet with other elders & mothers of the church at the stated times for the purpose of prayer, discussion, making decisions related to the life of the church, and other duties pertaining to the Local Board of Elders & Mothers;
- be available to pray for the sick according to James 5:14-15, and faithfully pray for the whole church ministry according to Acts 6:4
- Elders of the Church shall give priority in leadership, counsel, guidance and mentoring of boys, sons, husband, fathers and men. Mothers of the Church shall give priority in leadership, counsel, guidance and mentoring of girls, daughters, wives, mothers and women. Elders & Mothers of the Church together should stive to use their collective wisdom and leading to provide the same for couples, families and households as examples of Godly houses according to Joshua 24:15.

ARTICLE VI- PASTORS

The New Testament indicates that the early church had several pastors in many of the congregations. The pastoral staff at Community of Faith consists of a Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor and Associate Pastors. Additional Part-time Local Pastors may be added as the Local Board of Elders & Mothers perceives the need. All pastors should strive to meet the scriptural calling as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7. All pastors shall be ordained ministers with doctrinal beliefs consistent with the Community of Faith Statement of Faith.

- Associate Member Church Senior Pastor’s shall be ordained or have said, previous ordination or license to preach, recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Global Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of its Executive Director and lead general overseer who will be responsible with approval by Global Board of Elders & Mothers to appoint Regional Ecclesiastical leaders and assistants to provide for effective oversight and approval of ordination or recognition of credentials of its Associate Member Church Senior and Associate Pastors.
- Affiliate Member Local Church’s Senior Pastor', while they carry their own ecclesiological model, their Senior Pastor’s ordination or license-to-preach must be recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Church Global Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of its Executive Director and lead general overseer who will be responsible with approval by Global Board of Elders & Mothers to appoint

Regional Ecclesiastical leaders and assistants to provide for effective oversight and recognition of credentials of its Affiliate Member Church Senior Pastor.

Section 501- Selection of Pastors

The Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall solicit candidates and interview them. Said candidates can be recommended and referred to the local board for consideration by recommendation of the General Overseer or the Regional ecclesiastical leader from the Community of Faith Church Global Family by the local church.

- Each candidate shall address the congregation as directed and scheduled by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers.
- The Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall schedule a fellowship with the candidate and the congregation.
- After selecting a primary candidate, the Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall call for a family forum to share their impressions of the candidate and how they believe God is leading them regarding his selection. At the conclusion of their presentations, the Board shall ask for congregational input and a time of discernment and prayer will take place. After that, when the Local Board of Elders & Mothers believes they have sensed unity with the will of God, they shall announce their decision.
- The Local Board of Elders & Mothers will then request that the General Overseer (*or the designated ecclesiastical leadership appointed to guide the Community of Faith Church Global family in that specific global regions*) to approve the appointment or call of a pastor to be the local leaders of a Community of Faith Associate Member Church.
- Together the Local Board of Elders & Mothers along with the ecclesiastical leadership for the region will plan and hold an ordination and installation service or a recognition and installation service for those pastors who have previously been ordained as a pastor.

Section 502 – Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor

A. Qualifications

The Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor should meet the qualifications as outlined in Article III of the bylaws of Community of Faith. They must passionately believe that they have been called by God to serve in this place.

B. Responsibilities

The Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor should function as the chief shepherd for the Body, guarding the spiritual health of the church staff and encouraging a holy life before God and the church family. Each church officer in turn is mutually responsible for encouraging the directing pastor to lead a holy life before God and the church family. The directing pastor should strive to maintain harmonious relationships with all church associate pastors, leaders, and staff.

- The lead pastor should be the spokesman representing the church staff, as well as serve as supervisor for the employees of the church.
- The lead pastor should minister to the congregation through the regular preaching and teaching from the scriptures.

- The lead pastor should be available to visit and pray for the sick according to James 5:14-15.
- The lead pastor should faithfully pray for the church Body and ministry.
- The lead pastor should be available to pray with and counsel members of the Body.
- The lead pastor should establish relationships of support and accountability with the other associate pastors so that no gap is left for the enemy to enter.
- The lead pastor should establish relationships with area pastors and seek to find areas to work together to strengthen the Body of Christ in the region.

Section 503 - Associate Pastors

All associate pastor positions are full-time paid positions having a specialized ministry such as administration, outreach, students, youth, small groups, Christian education, or any other ministry according to the needs of the church. The associate pastors should be capable of serving as backup for the lead pastor in all pastoral roles. These positions take their general vision and direction from the Lead Pastor in conjunction with The Local Board of Elders & Mothers but manage their own specialty areas. They also serve as members of the Board of Elders & Mothers.

Section 504 - Part-time Local Pastors

Part-time, bi-vocational Local Pastors may be added to the staff when the need warrants, having specific outlined responsibilities provided by the Board of Elders & Mothers.

Section 505 - Removal of a Pastor

A pastor will be called for an indefinite period of time. The pastor's tenure of service shall terminate upon his resignation, or by a decision of the Board of Elders & Mothers. Grounds for removal of a pastor include, but not limited to, significant departure from the Statement of Faith of Community of Faith, substantial departure from biblical conduct and lifestyle, and serious failure to fulfill the duties of the pastoral office. In the event there arises a circumstance that warrants the dismissal of any of the pastors, the Board of Elders & Mothers will communicate appropriate information to the local Body.

Section 506 - Compensation and Benefits

All pastoral salaries and benefits will be determined by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers working in conjunction with the appropriate budgetary teams that might exist in the church. (See Section 603.) A total monetary package will be prepared for each pastor position. The salary of each pastor and other compensation such as social security, insurance, pension, etc. shall be specified in writing and made part of the call. Likewise, such items such as vacation, attendance at meetings and conferences, moving expenses, and other agreed-upon conditions shall be addressed in the call. The call shall be in the form of a written agreement. Compensation for each pastor shall be reviewed annually. Changes in compensation and initial conditions of employment are to be enacted by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers, with recommendations from the Lead Pastor and in consultation with the appropriate budgetary teams. (See Section 603.) No pastor shall be involved in setting his own compensation, or that of other pastors.

Section 507 - Outside Endeavors

Involvement by any Lead or Associate Pastor in work or other endeavors outside of the church and its ministries should be approved by the Board of Elders & Mothers.

The work or endeavors of Part-time Local Pastors is outlined in their call by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers (See Section 504), but if that changes, the changes need to be updated and verified to being still within the agreed call. It is important that our work is representative of and pleasing to the Lord.

ARTICLE VII – LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS FUNCTION IN THE BIBLICAL ROLE AS DEACONS

Section 601 - Selection and Removal

Leadership Team Members function in according to the Bible as Deacons. Deacons in the Bible are men and/or women who have been nominated by the Body and approved by the Board of Elders & Mothers with a recommendation by their Lead Pastor to serve in a ministry area within the local church. A Leadership Team Member/Deacon serves by a decision of the Local Board of Elders & Mothers. They function like the Levites did to the Aaronic Priestly family as assistants and helpers to fulfill the mission, vision and core values of the Body.

Section 602 – Qualifications

Leadership Team Members/Deacons must be members of Community of Faith. They should be men or women of spiritual discernment, exemplary in their Christian character and conduct, and of good reputation in the community outside of the church. They should be willing to be servants of the church Body in accordance with the meaning of the work as outlined in Acts 6:1-6 and should be qualified in accordance with the guidelines in I Timothy 3:8-13. Leadership Team Members/Deacons should be consecrated by Community of Faith with the laying on of hands by the Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of the Lead Pastor.

Leadership Team Members/Deacons are to serve under the leadership of, and report to, the Board of Elders & Mothers. Since they are to be responsible for various business functions, practical duties, ministry areas, established outreaches and other functions or activities of the local church, it is suggested that the leadership team member/deacon possess abilities, gifts, experience, certifications, education, and talents in the realms of (but not limited to) the area they are being assigned to serve.

All of the work of the Leadership Team Members/Deacons fall under the supervision and guidance of the Board of Elders & Mothers, under the direction and leadership of the Lead Pastor. The Leadership Team/Deacon is there to enhance, strengthen and expand the work of the Lead Pastor and Board of Elders & Mothers, and allow them to be more effective. It shall never supersede or be a substitute or pull away from their responsibility to provide leadership to the local church.

Section 603 – Responsibilities

A Leadership Team Member/Deacon should

- visit the sick, elderly and others requiring contact with or from the church;

- become aware of the physical needs of those in the church and community at large, and to develop and implement methods of meeting those needs;
- distribute money from church benevolence funds consistent with biblical guidelines and procedures established by the Local Board of Elders & Mother;
- devise and implement effective biblical methods of collecting the gifts of the Lord's people;
- assist the church in understanding biblical financial stewardship;
- assist the Local Elders & Mothers and Pastoral Staff in leading services, ceremonies and offering the ordinances as directed;
- provide for ministries to children, youth, singles, adults and various groups where their specialized ministry is discerned as needed by the local church;
- to serve as assistants to staff pastors in various areas of ministry to make enhance and make their work more effective;
- keep accurate written minutes of all Leadership Team Meetings and to be submitted to the Lead Pastor and the Local Board of Elders & Mothers;
- fulfill the responsibilities of trustees who serve as legal officers of the church where needed;
- to serve as a finance team or secretary monitoring budgets, salaries and planning expenditures.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH STAFF

The Board of Elders & Mothers shall select and remove staff members of the church, as well as fix their compensation and job responsibilities. No staff member shall be involved in setting his or her own salary or benefits. The church secretary and/or church treasurer shall keep accurate records of all church business, preserve all church documents, and maintain a register of church membership. The church secretary and/or church treasurer may be designated as a corporate officer (church secretary) for state legal purposes.

ARTICLE IX – ANNUAL GATHERING

Local Community of Faith Churches will hold an annual gathering. The annual meetings will include a report and discussion of the annual budget and any other pertinent documents. The Local Board of Elders & Mothers may call additional gatherings if the need or discernment for such arises.

Section 801 - Calling and Notification of Meetings

All Annual Gatherings will be announced from the pulpit or published in the church bulletin on two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting. Such announcements shall state the date and time of the meeting, and an agenda along with an outline of the called or planned topics to be reported or discussed.

Section 802 – Moderator

The Lead Pastor, or in a vacant pulpit, a Representative of the Board of Elders & Mothers shall be appointed by the Board of Elders & Mothers to act as the moderator for the Annual Gathering.

Section 803 - Transaction of Business

The Community of Faith year runs from January 1 and continues through December 31 of the same year.

Section 804 – Procedures

Official minutes of all Annual Gatherings shall be recorded and the Minutes from the annual gathering shall be made available to members of the local church and provided to the regional leadership as a record of the meeting.

ARTICLE X – PROPERTY

All property purchased by the local Community of Faith will be held in the name of the local church. All funds received by the local church will be held in an account belonging to Community of Faith. No property will be distributed to pastors, staff members or church members without the approval of the local Board of Elders & Mothers. Unused property will be sold for a reasonable market value or donated to another church or 501c3 organization or NGO outside the USA.

ARTICLE XI – POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Community of Faith will not endorse any candidate, donate, or contribute to any candidate's political campaign, participate or engage in political fundraising events, distribute statements for or against a particular candidate, nor engage in any other activity that may favor or oppose a candidate.

Registering people to exercise their right to vote, and providing voter guides for informational purposes is permissible, as long as they remain neutral.

ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be repealed, altered, or amended when an oversight has been discovered or when a need to change becomes apparent. The Board of Elders & Mothers shall have a time of local congregational input from its pastors, leaders, and members, and then will enter a time of prayer and final discernment. Afterward, as the Board of Elders & Mothers sense unity with the will of God, they can move forward to adopt the proposed changes to these Bylaws.

These amended Bylaws were adopted the 7th Day of May 2023 by a unanimous decision of the Board of Elders of Community of Faith to the Glory of God. (Reference: Community of Faith Church, Special Called Meeting to Finalize the Resolution of Unification with the Hands of Hope Foundation dated Sunday, May 7, 2023.)

Board of Elders & Mothers Approving the Amended Constitution:

Elder: Rev. Dr. Troy D. Benitone

Mother: Mrs. Beth Benitone

Elder: Dr. Jeffrey Parks

Mother: Dr. Sherrie Parks

Elder: Mr. Jerry Johnson

Mother: Mrs. Kim Johnson