

Faith Community Bible Church (FCBC)

Membership Document

(Approved by the Elders 11/14/2007)

What do we mean by church?

The word "church" is commonly used to refer to a building where religious services are held. We are referring here to its original meaning which is a gathering of people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior and Lord and believe what the Bible says that He said about Himself, specifically that He is "the Son of the living God" and that He would "build His church" upon that belief (Matthew 16:16-18).

While Jesus did not leave a template defining how the church should operate, He did leave us with the mandates of baptism and communion, practices passed down from the very earliest times that have been conducted on every continent by all believers. These practices are part of the process of discipleship in which believers are changed into the image of Christ and, as transformed changed persons, go and make disciples of all nations. We also have glimpses from the book of Acts into the activities of the early church: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). In addition, Paul's epistles give numerous admonitions and encouragements to the churches he planted in Asia Minor and Europe: "When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church" (I Corinthians 14:26).

In other words, there appears to be a great deal of liberty in how gathered believers express their community with one another and with God. Some meet in households of just a few, while others meet in stadiums with thousands. Some are governed by a senior pastor, while others are governed by presbyteries or by elders, or even democratically by the congregation. One of the great strengths of the people of God around the world is their diversity of expression. While FCBC acknowledges that many different expressions of church are possible, we choose to embrace a particular kind of structure and have a specific set of values which govern our meeting together. This does not diminish our love for the global body of Christ and the many forms which a church might take; we simply recognize the human need for definition, and the reality that people have preferred ways of gathering, worshipping, learning and serving together.

Why join a church?

As with everything we humans do, our motivations for joining a church are often mixed. Certainly it's common to join for social reasons. It's also common to join because we want to learn more about God and Jesus and how we are to live. At FCBC, it's OK to join for those reasons, but we want you to join for another more basic reason. We want you to join FCBC to strive along with the rest of us to understand what it means to have and, grow in a strong, personal relationship with Jesus.

Choosing to join a local church is a decision that requires careful consideration. Those who join a local church do so because they have decided to love and serve God. They have decided to be a part of a living, breathing organism that is the focus of affection of the heavenly Father. The church is the present expression of Jesus Christ to the world around us. Joining a local church implies a desire to be a part of what God is doing through and in this particular congregation and on the earth.

In joining a local church, a person chooses to identify themselves not only with Jesus Christ, but also with all other people who confess faith in Him, both locally and world wide.

What is the vision and values that FCBC is built upon?

The purpose of the church has always been defined by our Lord Jesus Christ and His intent towards her. The Church is the "Bride of Christ," and she is also the "Body of Christ". As the Bride, she is to love the Lord her God with all her heart and mind and strength. As the Body of Christ, she is to love her neighbor as herself. All other purposes and objectives of the church are founded on these two truths.

Here at Faith Community Bible Church, the basis for our vision and core values, are founded upon these truths: the Bible and our relationship with God. This vision and core values are expressed in the FCBC Statement of Doctrine.

Our vision at FCBC is to “Glorify Christ, Grow more Christ-like together, Go into the world with Him.”

The four core values that support our vision are:

- 1) Worship/prayer
- 2) Community
- 3) Discipleship
- 4) Mission

We give focused time, attention, and resources to these areas. These values largely shape the ways we express our life as a church.

Worship/Prayer. Our Father in heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, are the object of our worship, adoration and prayer (Matt. 6:9 & 22:37-38).

We provide opportunities to worship/pray during:

Sunday services, House group meetings, prayer meetings, special meetings and events and personal devotionals.

Community. We believe that sharing life together with other believers of Jesus is a fulfillment of the Scriptures and a model of life in the early church. Expressions of community provide opportunity for people to love and serve one another (Rom. 15:4-21).

Some of the ways we express community at FCBC include:

House groups, Sunday services, Family meetings, ministry teams and expressions of love in action (helping with a move; helping with meals in a time of need, etc.)

Discipleship. Jesus' teaching emphasized the importance of both being a disciple and of making disciples. The church is to minister to its members by nurturing and building them up so that everyone can be “presented mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28). This is done by the preaching and teaching of the Word (the Bible), and by administering communion and baptism. The leaders of the church are called, as Paul said in Ephesians 4:12, “to equip the saints (believers) for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” Through this process of discipleship, an amazing transformation takes place as we become more like Jesus; this is the primary goal and objective of our discipleship.

At FCBC we express this through:

Sunday sermons, adult Sunday School, House group Bible study, Youth and Children’s ministry, participation on ministry teams, opportunities for training and equipping for ministry, personal devotions and receiving the ministry of prayer and godly counsel for healing and spiritual freedom.

Mission. Jesus clearly commissioned the church to go and make disciples of all nations and to preach the gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 28:18-20). We believe that this responsibility rests upon each member of the church, and not just on our leaders or missionaries.

Some expressions of mission at FCBC include:

Overseas missions, local outreach activities to the Triangle Neighborhood, UW-Madison campus, and the poor; House group activities (outreach, missionary support); each person being a representation of Jesus love, truth and power where they live, work and study.

Location of FCBC.

FCBC is located on the corner of Regent and Park Streets. God has led FCBC on an amazing and wonderful journey since its inception in 1977. This journey has led us to our present location which we believe is fundamentally linked to our purposes and calling as a church in Madison. This is the location where we are learning to put into practice all that Jesus has commanded us to be and become. We gladly join with other churches in Madison, seeking to make disciples as Jesus said, and to make the Church in Madison more visible.

Some Ministry beliefs you can expect to see in practice at FCBC.

We believe in the priesthood of all believers, which means that each person has God-given gifts and talents to contribute to the life of the church. We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have always been available to those who believe in Jesus and follow Him. We believe Jesus baptizes men, women and children with the Holy Spirit, empowering them to do the works that He did. We encourage, teach and equip our members to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to minister in all the gifts of the Spirit. Some of the more common expressions of the Holy Spirit's power during ministry at FCBC include prophecy, tongues, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, healing, deliverance, and faith. Ministry in the power of Holy Spirit with the gifts of the Spirit is a regular part of our Sunday worship services, prayer meetings, and house groups.

What are the benefits of being a member of FCBC?

- Opportunities to learn and grow as a lover of God and disciple of Jesus.
- Opportunities for training and equipping for ministry and discipleship.
- Participation in a house group.
- Participation on a ministry team that allows you to use your gifts and serve the church.
- Participation in local and overseas missions and outreach activities.
- Opportunity to grow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

What are FCBC's expectations of members?

- Be saved and baptized in the Lord Jesus Christ in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Grow and excel as a worshiper and lover of God, cultivating a lifestyle of worship, prayer and service.
- Cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus that is meaningful and growing.
- Learn and grow in love for their brothers and sisters as they would love themselves.
- Come under the authority of FCBC's leadership, willingly pursuing relationships that provide accountability and growing into a mature disciple of Christ.
- Participate regularly in the life and community of FCBC by attending Sunday services and being involved in a house group.
- Give time, gifts, and finances to the church on a regular basis.

How is membership defined at FCBC? What is the process of becoming a member of FCBC?

- Personally accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and be baptized.
- Completion of FCBC New Members class.
- Meet with an Elder to verify agreement with the FCBC Statement of Doctrine, and agree to the FCBC Covenant.
- Participation in a house group unless an exception is approved by the Elders.

How is FCBC funded? What is FCBC's budget?

FCBC is funded by the regular financial offerings of its members. Members have always given generously to run the church. God has blessed us in our 30+ years of existence as FCBC has never ended a year where expenses exceeded income.

The budget for FCBC is developed by the Elders and other leaders under the direction of the Treasurer. The budget runs on the calendar year and is set up to reflect FCBC's vision, strategy, and core values. For instance, at least 10%, and usually more, is designated each year for Mission's giving. There is a weekly update on giving in the church bulletin, and a monthly summary report is posted at the back of the church.

How can I get involved in FCBC's ministries?

You can contact one of the Elders or ministry leaders, or call the church office to find out.