



CONNECTIONS CLASS

We are excited that you have chosen to participate in this class. Connecting with and committing to the people of God is one of the first intentional steps a follower of Christ takes toward spiritual maturity. This class is for everyone who wants to build a better relationship with God and His people here at FCC.

We know from the Bible that God wants us to grow. As Peter tells us, *"God has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. **For this very reason, make every effort to grow adding to your faith...**"* (2 Peter 1:3-8)

God has placed FCC on in North San Diego County to call people into a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to help them deepen their devotion to God and His Word, their community with God's people, and their sacrificial service to our world.

Not only is it a joy to obey Him out of gratitude for all he has done for us, but we also find fulfillment and joy when we serve Him. It is our prayer that, together, we may all continue to *"grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

-Pastor Douglas Baker
& the Board of Elders

Purpose for the Class

That we will learn what it means to belong to

_____ (as a follower of Jesus) and to the **FCC**
_____ as a member.

Overview of the Class

Part 1

- **The Basics of Connecting**
- **Our Stories**
- **God's offer of New Life**

Part 2

- **FCC's Statement of Purpose**
- **Living Out Our Devotions**
- **Baptism and Communion**

Part 3

- **Our Statement of Faith**
- **Elders/Membership at FCC**
- **FAITH Small Groups**

The Basics of Connecting

1. The Church is a _____.

"You are a member of God's very own family....and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Eph 2:19 (TLB)

2. God encourages us to be a _____ of a Church Family.

3. A Christian without a Church family is an "_____."

What makes FCC a Family?

Our Stories

Our Mutual Love and Commitment

Our Structure and Ministries

Our Stories

1994-95: Coastal Attendees at *Emmanuel Faith Community Church* in Escondido met to discuss beginning a new church in the North Coast area of San Diego County. A home in Rancho Santa Fe became the site for a new Bible study and the group soon grew to 60-70 believers.

Nov. 3, 1996: *Faith Community Church by the Sea* was born as EFCC's first English-speaking church plant meeting in the *Del Mar Hilton* ballroom.

1996-1999: FCC grew to 450 attendees and began looking for property on the North Coast to expand.

2000-01: Organizational and relational problems occurred leading to the resignation of the Senior Pastor and a painful time of fragmentation of membership and ministries. The remaining 30 members committed their lives to seeking God's will for the future.

Nov. 2001: Pastor Douglas Baker was called to serve as the Senior pastor of FCC.

2002: FCC began rebuilding its membership, ministries, and mission/vision for the future.

June 2003: God miraculously opened the door for FCC to purchase 7.73 acres of abandoned nursery property out of bankruptcy court.

2004: FCC moves its Sunday worship services from the *Del Mar Hilton* to *Ada Harris Elementary School* in Cardiff by the Sea.

2008: FCC moved its Sunday worship services to the *Encinitas Community Center* in Encinitas, a target area for service and outreach.

2010: FCC received a \$6 million offer for the nursery property and negotiated a sale that would fund a future weekly ministry site as well as a debt free base for future ministry.

2012: FCC purchased land in Carlsbad with enough money left-over to fund a brand new church building.

2013: FCC moved Sunday Services from the *Encinitas Community Center* to the *Boys & Girls Club* (Bressi Ranch Clubhouse) in Carlsbad.

2014: In March, FCC broke ground on the new property in Carlsbad.

Feb. 2015: FCC's new church building and campus were completed and opened for ministry debt free.

Our Core Values

F _____ on our Relationships with God through His Word

Intimacy with God through worship, prayer, and obedience to the Word of God is foundational to bringing honor and glory to God, alignment of our lives for His purposes, and honoring Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives.

A _____ in our Relationships with others

Through community we empower the values and priorities of God's kingdom in our relationships of marriage, family, church, and with unbelievers representing God's presence in our world.

I _____ in Ministry

To be involved in a ministry to others according to God's personal unique design is fundamental to releasing God's grace in and through our lives and essential for a dynamic engaging church body.

T _____ Lives

All ministries of Faith Community Church contribute to disciple-making and personal spiritual transformation into the likeness of Christ through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures and through loving accountable relationships.

H _____ for a Broken World through New Life in Christ & His Gospel

We seek to live out our faith in a broken world and in love, to engage people in the Scriptures to help them come to new life in Christ.

Your Story

1. WE ALL HAVE A STORY THAT SOMEONE _____!

*"As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but **this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life....**' He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. **I was blind but now I see!**'"* John 9:1-3, 25

2. REMINDER TO US: WE ARE ALL SAVED BY _____!

*"At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, **not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.** He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."* Titus 3:1-7

3. THE GOOD NEWS NEVER BECOMES _____!

HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY:

1. DESCRIBE YOUR LIFE BEFORE YOU KNEW JESUS

Give enough details so that your story reflects specifically what happened to you. Avoid using unrelated information or inappropriate material.

Keep it brief.

2. DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO TRUST CHRIST AS SAVIOR

Say enough **about the Lord** so that those who are listening will have a clear idea of how God worked in your life and, in turn, how a person can come to know Christ as Savior.

Include one or more of the following key concepts:

- ◆ I realized I was a sinner...
- ◆ I understood that Jesus died for me...
- ◆ I knew that I couldn't earn my way to heaven...
- ◆ I trusted Jesus, or I put my hope in Jesus...
- ◆ **I grew up in the church** but I didn't realize...

3. DESCRIBE YOUR LIFE SINCE TRUSTING JESUS AS SAVIOR

For example, changes that He has made in your life, or struggles He has helped you overcome. How is your life different since you trusted Him?

HOW TO MAKE SURE OUR STORIES INCLUDE GOD AND HIS NEW LIFE

STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD:

STEP ONE: REALIZE GOD HAS _____ FOR MY LIFE.

God loves you and wants you to experience New Life—abundant and eternal.

The Bible says...

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." John 10:10

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

So, why don't more people have this abundant life that God planned for us to have?

Step Two: RECOGNIZE _____ OF SIN.

God created us in His own image to share His abundant life. He also made us, but not as robots who automatically love and obey Him. God gave us a will and freedom of choice. The sad truth



is that all people have chosen to disobey God and go our own willful way. People still make this choice today. This results in separation from God.

The Bible says...

"They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts." Ephesians 4:18

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

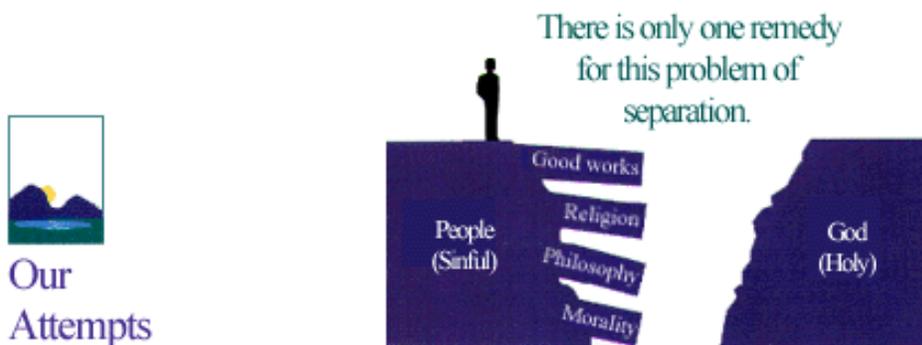
God gave mankind 10 simple commands...and each of us has broken at least one of them (Exodus 20)

- 1.** You shall have no other gods before me.
(Make God your highest priority)
- 2.** You shall not make for yourself any idols
(Look to God for the provision of your needs)
- 3.** You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
(Use God's name with Respect- no thoughtless references)
- 4.** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **(Set aside a day of rest different from the rest of the week)**
- 5.** Honor your father and your mother. **(Respect your parents)**
- 6.** You shall not murder. **(Don't intentionally take a life)**

- 7. You shall not commit adultery. **(Be Faithful in Marriage)**
- 8. You shall not steal. **(Don't take what is not yours)**
- 9. You shall not bear false witness. **(Don't lie or gossip)**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbors house, wife, tools (servants), possessions (Ox, donkey), nor anything that is your neighbor's." **(Be content with what you have)**

Our Attempts to Reach God

People have tried in many ways to bridge this gap between themselves and God...



- Good works: Salvation by Addition
- Religion: Salvation by Tradition
- Philosophy: Salvation by Cognition,
- Morality: Salvation by Subtraction

When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before turning to God.

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- "My mother was a Christian so...I am too"
- "It doesn't matter what you believe, just be sincere."
- "I'll give up all my bad habits., that should please God"
- "I'll work real hard and earn it."

- “I’ll be religious and go to church.”

The Bible says...

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” Proverbs 14:12

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” Isaiah 59:2

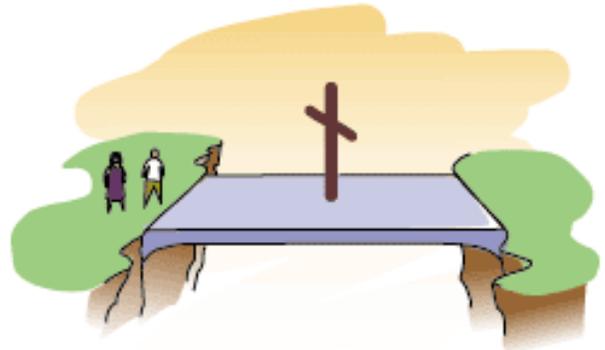
Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives — marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

No bridge reaches God...except one.

Step Three: REJOICE! THERE’S _____!

Jesus Christ died on the Cross and rose from the grave. He paid the penalty for our sin and bridged the gap between God and people.



The Bible says...

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.” 1 Timothy 2:5

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” 1 Peter 3:18

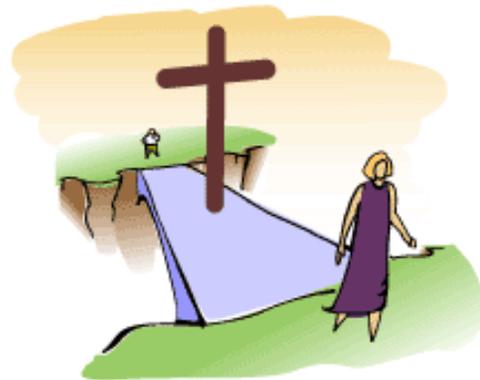
“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

"It was through what his Son did that God cleared a path for everything to come to him--all things in heaven and on earth--for Christ's death on the cross has made peace with God for all by his blood. ²¹ This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies and hated him and were separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions, yet now he has brought you back as his friends. ²² He has done this through the death on the cross of his own human body, and now as a result Christ has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are standing there before him with nothing left against you..."
Colossians 1:20-22 (TLB)

God has provided the only way. Each person must make a choice.

Step Four: Respond with _____ and _____ in Christ

We must understand who Jesus that He deserves to be our Lord and Savior; that we must change our mind about who controls our life; and that we need to ask to be forgiven for our sins.



is;

The Bible says...

"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." Luke 15:7

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

Where are you in relation to God?

If we want to Connect with God and experience the New Life he offers through the forgiveness of your sins...here is what to do:

1. **A**_____ your need for forgiveness (I have broken the Ten Commandments and sinned against God).
2. **B**_____ that when Jesus Christ died on the cross he was dying for you personally to pay for your sins and that He rose from the grave victorious over death and sin's power.
3. **C**_____ your sins to God (agreeing with Him about your spiritual condition and lamenting it) being willing to turn from your sins and self-centeredness.
4. **D**_____ control of your life to Him to change and direct you as He desires through His indwelling Holy Spirit.

A Prayer You Can Pray:

Dear Lord Jesus,
I know that I have broken your commands and stand before you as guilty. I know that you must judge all sin and I admit to you my need for your forgiveness for those sins. I believe that you came to this world, lived a perfect life, and that you willingly sacrificed your perfection for my imperfection...exchanging your holiness for my sinfulness so that I might be set free and given a new lease on life...a fresh start...a clean slate. I now choose to repent of my sins, accept your forgiveness, and give you control over the new life you have offered me. Thank you for answering my prayer, for forgiving me, and giving me a new heart to follow you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

"Jesus Christ said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me!'" John 14:6

Next Step: WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

The Bible says...

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

Did you sincerely entrust yourself to Jesus, giving him ownership of your life?

Then right now he has wiped away your past sinful history and given you a brand new start...a new life!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

When we entrust ourselves to Jesus, we are born into God's family through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer. This is called regeneration, or the "new birth."

This is just the beginning of a wonderful new life in Christ. To deepen this relationship you should:

- 1. Read your _____ everyday to know Christ better.**
- 2. Talk to God in _____ daily.**
- 3. _____ about Christ.**
- 4. Worship, _____, _____ at church.**
- 5. As Christ's representative in a needy world, demonstrate your new life by your love and concern for others.**

Part 2

Our Statement of Purpose

"To call people into a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, through living out our Devotion to God, God's People, and our World."

Why this Purpose?

* **Jesus _____ this purpose in his Life**

Jesus' Devotion to God and the truth of His Word:

"I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me...I always do what pleases Him...if you hold to my teachings you are really my disciples, then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free..." John 8:28-32

Jesus' Devotion to God's People:

Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:49-50

Jesus' Devotion to the World:

The most common question Jesus asked:

"What can I do for you?"

"Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!'

The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' Jesus stopped and called them. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. 'Lord,' they answered, 'we want our sight.' Matthew 20:30-33

*** This is what we are _____.**

In all four of the Gospels (the records of his life) and in Acts (the record of the New Testament church's early years) this is what we are told to do (Mt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2:42-47 and 4:1-12).

*** The devotions are vital to Christian _____.**

We believe these three actions of devotion are vital to the life of every Christian for personal growth.

*** To understand _____, our World needs Christians who live out His devotions.**

Our world needs to experience from Spirit-filled Christians in order to understand who Jesus is and what he wants to do for them. We are his hands and feet.

3 Key Beliefs:

1. We believe people will respond to Jesus Christ and desire a relationship with him when they experience three things: _____, _____, and _____.

Truth:

*"Then You will know the truth and **the truth will set you free.**" Matthew 8:32*

*"This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved **and to come to a knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time." 1 Timothy 2:3-6*

God's truth for mankind is found in the pages of the Bible.

A Love Relationship:

***"By this will all men know** that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:35*

*"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for **he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.**" Romans 13:8*

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

As people experience this kind of loving community they often decide they do not want to live without it.

Met Needs:

*“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the lost of this world run after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them.**”* Matthew 6:31-32

When the real pressing needs of a person’s life are met by someone who cares, they are more willing to stop and listen to why they care. That gives us the chance to speak about Jesus.

2. We believe that each part of this vision leads naturally _____.

Devotion to God, knowing Him and obeying His word **leads to** caring about God’s people, because He does.

Our end goal as Christians is not knowledge alone.

The Bible tells us that “Knowledge puffs up, love builds up.”

Devotion to God’s people results in sacrificial

service to our world.

As the church equips God's people and they live out the Spirit-filled life, **the natural outcome is to have compassion** for hurting people in our world and to seek ways to love and serve them in the name of Christ.

The more we experience genuine family life and deep community with God's people, the less selfish and self-centered we will be.

As our needs are met, our hearts are healed, our inner reserves are filled...we will become more and more ready to give to others because of what we have received.

Devotion to God's World leads to response from people as they experience the truth and love of God meeting real hurting needs in their lives.

3. We believe the end goal of maturity is _____ and _____. We do not want to stop with just knowing truth, we want to live it out with our lives.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:15-16

Living Out Our Devotions

The difference between "*attenders*" and "*members*" can be summed up in one word: _____!

Devotion to God

"Living as if the most important thing in the world is to know, love, honor, and obey God no matter what the cost."

Key Concepts:

Standing in Awe of God, trusting Him, and faithfully passionately following His will

Key Biblical Word: Obedience

Key Need Met: Truth

Devotion to God's People

"Living as if the most important thing in the world is to treat others better than myself."

Key Concepts:

Building such close relationships with other believers that real needs become obvious and we can joyfully partner with them to meet those needs

Key Biblical Word: Fellowship (Koinonia)

Key Need Met: Friendship

Devotion to God's World

"Living as if the most important thing in the world is to demonstrate God's love & share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone I meet."

Key Concepts:

Growing in an acute awareness of our community's critical needs and sacrificially giving of ourselves without charge to meet those needs so that we win a right to share the Gospel

Key Biblical Word: Sacrifice

Key Needs Met: Hope & Help

BAPTISM

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection.

He gave the Church two visible symbols (called "*ordinances*") as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: (1) Baptism and (2) The Lord's Supper.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

1. THE WORD BAPTIZE LITERALLY MEANS TO
_____ **IN WATER.**

*"...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized them. **When they came up out of the water...**" Acts 8:38-39*

2. IT CAN ALSO HAVE A FIGURATIVE MEANING:
_____ WITH CHRIST

*"But now you have arrived at your destination: By faith in Christ you are in direct relationship with God. Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—**Christ's life**, the fulfillment of God's original promise." Galatians 3:27 (MSG)*

THE MESSAGE OF BAPTISM

1. BAPTISM ILLUSTRATES MY _____ AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS.

*"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a **new life**."* Romans 6:3-4

2. BAPTISM IDENTIFIES ME WITH CHRIST'S **DEATH**, _____.

*"We were therefore **buried with him through baptism** into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been **united** with him like this in his **death**, we will certainly also be **united** with him in his **resurrection**."* Romans 6:4-5

THE MOTIVE FOR BAPTISM

OBEDIENCE: Jesus Christ _____.

*"Therefore **go** and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Matthew 28:19-20

THE MISUSE OF BAPTISM

NOT _____ FOR _____

*"For **it is by grace you have been saved**, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**not by works**, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9*

Baptism does not make you a believer—**it shows that you already believe**. Only your faith in Christ can save you. Baptism is an **outward symbol** of a heart commitment to Jesus.

THE SPECIFICS OF BAPTISM

There is no reason to delay. **As soon as you place your trust in Christ, you can and should be baptized**. If you wait until you are "perfect," you'll never get there!

*"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip **baptized** him." Acts 8:35-38*

COMMUNION

*"The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, **took bread...**"*
(vs. 23)

I. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER? (1 COR. 11:23-26)

IT IS A _____

*"...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; eat it **in remembrance** of me.'" (v. 24)*

IT IS A _____

*"In the same way, He took the cup, saying, '**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.'" (v. 25)*

IT IS A _____

*"For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death** until He comes." (v. 26)*

II. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Only those who are already _____ in Christ
(Mark 14:22-26)

"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself."
2 Corinthians 11:29

III. HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER?

*"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner** will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to **examine himself** before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."* 1 Cor. 11:27-28

By...

1. **Self-** _____
1 Cor. 11:27

2. _____ **My Sins**
1 John 1:9

3. _____
Rom. 12:1

4. **Restoring** _____
Matt. 5:23-24

IV. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord's Supper. Here at FCC we remember His sacrifice for us the first Sunday of each month during our Sunday Worship Service.

Part 3

Our Statement of Faith

In essential beliefs — we have _____.

*"Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to **be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.**" 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT)*

In non-essential beliefs — we have _____.

*"Accept him whose faith is weak, **without passing judgment on disputable matters...** Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God." Romans 14:1,4,12,22*

In all our beliefs — we show _____ (love).

*"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2*

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE...

1. ABOUT THE BIBLE: _____

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God. God so superintended the human authors that while retaining their own individual personalities and writing styles they chose the very words that God intended. Their original writings were free from error. The Bible is the believer's only infallible rule for faith and practice (*Psalms 19:7-9; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*).

2. ABOUT GOD: _____, _____ PERSONS

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are identical in essence and equal in power and glory; they possess the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience (*Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*).

3. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST: _____, _____ NATURES

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He came to reveal God to mankind and to redeem our sinful race by giving Himself as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, satisfying God's righteous judgments against sin. He then arose bodily from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand where He intercedes

on the believer's behalf. All the Scriptures, from first to last, testify of Him (Luke 1:34-35; 24:27; John 1:1-2, 14, 18; Romans 3:24-26; 8:34).

4. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT: _____

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person who convicts the world of sin, gives eternal life to those who place their trust in Christ, unites all believers to Christ in one body by His baptizing ministry, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, fills (controls) those who are yielding to Him, and empowers them for service. He seeks to direct their attention not to themselves nor to their experience, but to Christ (*John 3:5-8; 14:16-17; 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18*).

5. ABOUT MANKIND'S SPIRITUAL CONDITION: _____

We believe that man was originally created in the image of God, but subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, lost his spiritual life, and became dead in sins and corrupt in nature. These effects of sin have been transmitted to the entire human race, Jesus Christ excepted, and thus every person born into the world is alienated from the life of God and incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition apart from divine grace (*Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalms 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3*).

6. ABOUT GOD'S OFFER OF NEW LIFE: _____

We believe that salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin is possible only as the gift of God's grace. It cannot be gained by good resolutions, sincere efforts, nor submission to the rules, regulations, or ordinances of any church, but is freely bestowed on all who put their faith in Christ and trust in the work which Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary. All who so trust the Savior pass from death unto life, are forgiven of their sins, accepted by the Father, and born into His family by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (*John 5:24; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23*).

7. ABOUT SECURITY OF OUR SALVATION: _____

We believe that all who have been born again by God's transforming grace are secure in Christ forever. It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, not on the basis of their own worthiness, but on the basis of God's faithfulness and the testimony of His Word. However, this assurance must not become an occasion for sin. The reality of their faith in Christ is demonstrated by subjecting their fleshly natures to the power of the Holy Spirit and by doing the good works for which He saved them, especially by demonstrating a Christ-like love for one another (*Matthew 7:20; John 10:27-29; 13:34-35; Romans 6:13; 8:28-39; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; John 3:14,23; 5:13*).

8. ABOUT THE CHURCH: _____

We believe that all who have placed their faith in Christ are united by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body, the *Church*, of which Christ is the Head. This body was formed on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own. The

members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies for instruction, worship, prayer, fellowship, service, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are likewise to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:3*).

9. ABOUT THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: _____

We believe that enabling gifts for service are bestowed according to God's own will upon all believers by the Spirit of God to be exercised for the edification of the *Church* and for the glory of the Lord. These gifts are sovereignly bestowed by God in order to fulfill specific purposes in His program. We believe that, as a sign to unbelievers, the biblical gift of speaking in tongues was speaking in existing languages which the speaker had never learned and that it was never the common nor necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Spirit. We further believe that while God may choose to heal supernaturally, the healing of the temporal body is not assured by Christ's atoning work on the cross; the complete deliverance of the body from sickness awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection (*Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 27-31; 13:8-10; 14:21-22; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Ephesians 4:7-13; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 2 Timothy 4:20*).

10. ABOUT THE SECOND COMING: _____

We believe in the literal, physical, visible, and personal Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We believe each Christian ought to live in anticipation that the end of the age could

occur during their lifetime. We also believe that events surrounding the End Times will include increasing wickedness and persecution of God's people in this world, the removal (Rapture) of God's church, the resurrection of the Dead in Christ, God's divine judgment on a disbelieving world, the great and final Battle of Armageddon where the armies of Antichrist are defeated, the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom where Christ rules for 1000 years, and the ultimate creation of a new heavens and earth as our new eternal home and place of service under God's sovereign and benevolent rule. (*2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6*).

11. ABOUT ETERNITY: _____ & _____

We believe that at death the souls of believers pass immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ. When Christ returns for the *Church* they will be reunited with their glorified bodies and associated with Him forever in glory. At death the souls of unbelievers pass immediately into torment. At the close of the millennium they will be reunited with their bodies, judged before the great white throne, then cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be separated from God forever in conscious punishment (*Luke 16:19-26; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15*).

The above statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of FCC's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline our Elder Board is FCC's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Other Key Beliefs:

On the Sanctity of Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically and mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1:4-5).

On Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and himself (Gen 1-2), FCC will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastors and staff of FCC shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally the facilities and property of FCC shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb.13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate

sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, polyamory, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of FCC as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to FCC's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by FCC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).

We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual with a different perspective are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of FCC.

On Christianity and Politics

Our primary goal as a church is to assist people to know God through his Word and to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus, so that they become devoted in their love for God, God's People, and the World. As a church we do not promote any particular political party or parties. To the degree that any political party agrees with God's Word, we will be in agreement with it. To the degree that it disagrees with God's Word, we will be in disagreement with it.

FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH IS AN ELDER-LED CHURCH

WHAT IS AN ELDER?

The Bible describes the spiritual leaders of God's church as biblically qualified men who are appointed to act as pastor/shepherds. They were usually called Elders or Overseers.

THE BENEFITS OF HAVING ELDERS

The role of Elders in our church life is essential, life-giving, and challenging. They lovingly carry our burdens to God in prayer; watch over and lead our congregation with diligence, humility and concern; and protect us by providing truth for us from God's word. Paul encouraged Timothy and the church at Ephesus to recognize and appreciate the Elders *who "rule well, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."* (1 Tim. 3)

HOW ARE THEY SELECTED?

Elders are first and foremost selected by the Holy Spirit as Acts 20:28 reminds us- *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."*

God affirms this within the hearts of those he is calling to serve as Elders. 1 Timothy 3:1 reminds us- *"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."* Added to this is the Apostle Paul's practical step of having current spiritual leaders appoint Elders. He writes to Titus (1:5) *"This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you."*

With these thoughts in mind, at the end of each year the current FCC Elder board prayerfully evaluates their own hearts as to whether God would have them continue to serve as Elders at FCC for the next year. At the same time they also consider how God may be moving other specific men toward Elder service at FCC, evaluate the spiritual qualifications of those men as found in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1, and inquire about their interest in serving as Elders as well as our congregations sense of God's calling on their lives. When such men are found they are invited to participate in a nine month Elder leadership training program.

WHAT ARE THE ELDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

Our Elders are first and foremost shepherds and pastors of our flock at FCC. They do not see themselves as members of a corporate board that dictates policies for others to follow or generate tasks for others to act on. Rather they have four primary tasks which God expects of them: 1) to faithfully and clearly teach the Word of God, 2) to regularly pray for the flock (Acts 6:1-4), 3) to courageously lead the church in fulfilling God's purposes for it, and 4) to determinedly protect the children of God entrusted to their care. 1 Peter 5:1-3 records the need for exercising exemplary oversight of the church- *"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."* It is in this context that our Elders desire to know and be known by God's people.

CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO ELDERS

Because our Elders are committed to serving the congregation joyfully and sacrificially, God encourages us to respond to their leadership with humility and respect. Hebrews 13:7 tells us, *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."* Verse 17 goes on to command *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."*

WHY MEMBERSHIP?

"Christ loved the church, and he gave his life for it." Eph. 5:25

I. For a _____ Reason:

- Christ is committed to the church
- The early church modeled it (Acts 2:41-42)

II. FOR A _____ REASON:

- It is an antidote in our society

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything. This attitude has even produced a generation of "church shoppers and hoppers." Membership swims against the current of America's "consumer religion." It is an unselfish decision.

Commitment always builds character.

III. For a _____ Reason:

It defines who can be counted on; Every team must have a roster; Every school must have an enrollment; Every business has a payroll; Every army has an enlistment; Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. *Membership identifies our family.*

IV. For a _____ Reason:

- It produces Spiritual Growth

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth in our "one another's."

You cannot be accountable when you're not committed to any specific church family.

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT:

In applying for membership in *Faith Community Church*, my purpose is to cooperate fully with the other members to advance the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ through this church. As I join with fellow believers in this commitment, I sincerely affirm that I am trusting solely in the merits of Jesus Christ for my salvation from sin. I also affirm that I have read and do not take issue with the Statement of Faith. In anticipation of membership, I gladly covenant with God that by His enabling grace I will endeavor to conduct my life in accordance with the following **7 scriptural principles**:

1. _____

I will sincerely pray that Christ be exalted and that lives be blessed through the ministries of this Church.

*"Finally, brothers, **pray** for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you."*
2 Thess. 3:1

2. _____

I will endeavor to live in a way that consistently honors Jesus Christ, whom I acknowledge as the Lord of all my life.

*"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life **worthy of the calling** you have received."* Eph. 4:1

3. _____

I will participate as regularly as possible in worship and fellowship with this congregation.

*"Let us **not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Hebrews 10:25

4. _____

I will seek to discover my spiritual gifts and to use them in some form of Christian service within this Church.

*"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of **service**, so that the body of Christ may be built up."* Eph. 4:11-12

5. _____

I will endeavor to participate faithfully in the financial support of the ministries of this Church.

*"...Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his **heart to give**, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work..."* 2 Cor. 9:6-9,11

6. _____

I will refrain from propagating any scriptural interpretations that differ from those set forth in the Connections Class material.

*"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be **no divisions** among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."* 1 Corinthians 1:10

7. _____

I will abstain from any practices that violate clear biblical principles regarding my moral behavior or my responding to the spiritual oversight of the leaders of FCC.

*"Do you not know that the wicked will **not inherit the kingdom** of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."* 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

*"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. **Let them do this with joy** and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."* Hebrews 13:17

My COVENANT WITH GOD

My acceptance of the above scriptural principles is a pledge to the Lord and is made in joyful anticipation of working together with others to promote the spiritual ministries of this Church.

RESOLUTION AND RESTORATION

If my adherence to the scriptural principles above is called in question and should the matter then be taken up by the Board of Elders, I agree to submit the difference or charges to the Board. If I remain unwilling to settle the difference on scriptural ground (Matthew 18:15-17), then I agree that the Church should drop my name from the roll of Church membership.

*"If your brother sins against you, **go and show** him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, **take one or two** others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it **to the church**; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."*
Matthew 18:15-17

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

FAITH Groups

FAITH Groups are weekly gatherings where we can build deep and lasting friendships, be loved, prayed for, encouraged, involved with God's word, and offered accountability for personal growth.

Our FAITH Groups all vary

- Some serve dinner each week
- Some offer childcare
- Some are an hour...others last longer
- Some are deeply intellectual and use lots of Bible study books
- Some focus on topical studies and depend on group reflection
- Some meet throughout the year...others take seasonal breaks

BUT, all of our FAITH Groups take time to learn more about God, his word, each other, and serving others!

It is our goal for **FAITH Groups** to be the primary vehicle in which the people of *Faith Community* grow in discipleship and learn to disciple others.

All three of our **devotions** (to God, God's People, and the World) can be effectively cultivated through a FAITH Group model.

Additionally, it is in these **FAITH Groups** that our core values are taught, caught, and applied to every day life. Because we believe that it is in these groups that **faith** and **community** come together—it is our desire to see our members be a part of one.

Connections Class

Name _____

Phone _____

Mark all that apply below:

- Because of what I learned through this Connections Class***, I have decided to entrust myself to Jesus as my personal Savior from sin, and to follow Him as Lord.
- I understand that God has called me to publicly declare my faith in Jesus Christ by being **baptized**. Please give me information about the next baptism class.
- I commit to **tell "my story"** to the church on a Sunday morning. Let's schedule a time slot during an upcoming service to share.
- I am applying for FCC membership (*Please fill out and turn in the membership application from your packet*).
 - The most recent church I have been a part of is:

 - I am/was a member there.
- I am interested in being a part of a **FAITH Group**.
- I am interested in serving in the following ministry
_____.

Signature _____ **Date** _____