

December 6, 2016



Dear BEFC Family,

We keep membership meaningful by asking everyone to reaffirm their commitment to Becker Evangelical Free Church every year! We each express this by signing our "Affirmation of Commitment."

The church is important to God! The local church is the place where we are called to connect so that we can learn how to follow Christ, grow up in Him, love one another and discover and use our gifts to do the good works that God has planned in advance for us to do. The Bible describes the church as the Family of God, the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the fellowship of believers and the Temple of God. We believe that God is calling people to a hearty commitment to His Church!

We're here to make every willing person a healthy, reproducing believer and to produce measurable spiritual development and maturity in our church family and those entrusted to our care. God has called us to build our church on the foundation of the Great Commandments: to whole-heartedly love God and other people. As we love God and each other well, we follow the Great Commission to make disciples in our area and around the world. We would like you to partner with us in these Kingdom efforts.

Please take time to read through our Statement of Faith, Our Commitment to Reconciliation, and the Affirmation we are inviting you to sign. Pray over these things, ask any questions you have, and sign and return the Affirmation sheet by the end of the year.

If you have never been a member at BEFC before, we ask that you attend a one-time membership class so you can learn more about us as a church. We want you to feel as informed as possible. We also want you to have every opportunity to ask the questions that are important to you. Once you have attended this class, you are free to sign and return the Affirmation of Commitment.

We are excited about God's direction for our church in 2017 and about joyfully locking arms with you as we step into the New Year together! Let's continue the mission of Jesus Christ together as members of the BEFC family.

BEFC Pastoral Team

FAQ: MEMBERSHIP AT BEFC

Q Is membership at BEFC different than what I grew up with?

A Yes! Unlike most other churches, we have no lifetime membership. In most churches you become a member and you're locked in for life. Here at BEFC, membership is an annual affirmation of our commitment to four things: personal growth, regular attendance, financial support and serving the church. It is simply an opportunity to affirm our gospel partnership with this local church for one year.

Q Is membership required?

A No. Membership is not required to participate here. You can get baptized, take communion, join a small group... everything... without being a member. For those who would hold a position of influence, membership is strongly encouraged. We desire the focus that comes from knowing that those who are shaping our church are committed to it and have submitted to its leadership for accountability.

Q Is membership Biblical?

A The New Testament (NT) describes two levels of church connectedness. One is the *Universal Church*. If you're a Christian, you are a member of the *universal church* because you are united with Christ. The NT also talks about *local churches*. Most of the NT is written to or about specific local churches. It becomes clear that some people were part of each church and some were not. Whether they wrote down membership lists like churches do today; we don't know. We do know that the church leaders and the community knew which people were part of each local body and which were not. Some form of local church membership was obvious. How formal that process was is less obvious.

The Bible also talks about church discipline. I've pastored for 15 years and have been called to intervene when people choose to pursue sin and refuse to repent. When a teacher starts teaching false doctrine or a man begins an affair or someone is accused of taking money or touching a child inappropriately... we need to be able to follow up to love those involved well and to protect the rest of the body from harm. Membership helps us protect the vulnerable.

With all the debate about US citizenship these days, I'm amazed that we get to become citizens of God's kingdom by being born again by God's grace through faith in Christ. To add to those blessings, we get to become citizens of this local body of Christ called Becker Evangelical Free Church! Even though my membership is automatically renewed through my position as pastor, I still sign the Affirmation each year because I'm proud to call BEFC my home and I want to be part of the team!

Thank you for your Partnership for the Gospel!

Pastor Patrick Drury

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

2. The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

3. The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

4. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

5. The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

6. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in

the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

7. The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

8. Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

9. Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

10. Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

OUR COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Our church is committed to building a “culture of peace” that reflects God’s peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that bitterness, unforgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate for the people whom God has reconciled to himself through the sacrifice of his only Son (John 13:34-35; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14).

Therefore, we look to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit for guidance on how we can respond to conflict in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and preserve our witness for Christ. As God gives us his wisdom and grace, we are committed to actively teaching and encouraging one another to live out the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation:

Personal Peacemaking

- Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).
- We will try to get the “logs” out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29). If we have a problem with others, we will talk *to* them, not *about* them.
- We will make “charitable judgments” toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will go promptly to seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
- When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as he has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).
- When we discuss or negotiate substantive issues, we will look out for others’ interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

Assisted Peacemaking

- When two of us cannot resolve a conflict privately, we will seek the mediation of wise people in our church and listen humbly to their counsel (Matt. 18:16; Phil. 4:2-3). If our dispute is with a church leader, we will look to other leaders for assistance.
- When informal mediation does not resolve a dispute, we will seek formal assistance from our church leaders or people they appoint, and we will submit to their counsel and correction (Matt. 18:17-20).
- When we have a business or legal dispute with another Christian, we will make every reasonable effort to resolve the conflict within the body of Christ through biblical mediation or arbitration, rather than going to civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). If the other party attends another church, our leaders will offer to cooperate with the leaders of that church to resolve the matter.
- If a person coming to our church has an unresolved conflict with someone in his former church, we will require and assist him to make every reasonable effort to be reconciled to the other person before joining our church (Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 12:18).
- If we have a legal dispute with or within our church and cannot resolve it internally through the steps given above, we will obey God’s command not to go into the civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Instead, we will submit the matter to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration, in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (www.Peacemaker.net).

Above all, we pray that our ministry of peacemaking will bring praise to our Lord Jesus Christ and lead others to know his infinite love and peace.



2017 AFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT TO BECKER EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

The Mission of BEFC is to make every willing person a healthy, reproducing believer. Our Vision is to produce measurable spiritual development and maturity in our church family and those entrusted to our care.

This is my affirmation of commitment to Becker Evangelical Free Church. As a member of this body of believers I will, through God's enabling, endeavor to be faithful and accountable in the following areas:

1. PERSONAL GROWTH

I commit myself to the regular reading of God's Word (Psalm 119); prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17); self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5); obedience (John 14:21,23); victory over sin (Galatians 5:16); a constant looking to Christ in faith (Hebrews 12:1-2); and the filling and control of the Holy Spirit in my own life (Ephesians 5:18).

2. REGULAR ATTENDANCE

I will make it a priority to attend worship services (Hebrews 10:25). I will obey Jesus' new command to "Love one another" (John 13:34-35) by faithfully connecting with my brothers and sisters in Christ in a small group or in other intentional, relational venues. I will seek to build personal relationships for mentoring and accountability (2 Timothy 2:1-2).

3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

I will faithfully support the ministry of Becker Evangelical Free Church. My giving will be motivated from a heart of gratitude to God and as an act of worship to Him (Philippians 4:18). I recognize that giving should be regular and proportionate (I Corinthians 16:2); voluntary; cheerful; intentional; and abundant (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

4. SERVING

I desire to discover and develop my spiritual gifts and use them to serve the body of Christ for mutual edification (Ephesians 4:11-13), discipleship of believers (I Corinthians 12:7- 13:13) and outreach to those not yet saved (Matthew 28:18-20).

Please initial below:

_____ ***I have read and affirm the EFCA Statement of Faith.***

_____ ***I have read and affirm Our Commitment to Reconciliation.***

*I look forward to worshipping and serving Jesus Christ as a member of Becker Evangelical Free Church in the year **2017!***

Signed: _____, **Date:** _____

Print _____

Pastoral Team Affirmation: _____

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[Please return to the church office by **January 8**]