

Island Community Church Participating Membership Manual

To assist you in taking significant steps in your lifelong journey of following Christ

Introduction

Island Community Church exists to help people become joyful, mature, Christ-dependent worshipers and followers of Jesus. In the Gospels, Jesus taught two great truths that furnish the core values of ICC. They are known as the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Mark 12:30-31

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.

Matthew 28:19,20

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."

NIV

Our Vision Statement:

***Building a Christ-centered community
Committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commandment
and the Great Commission***

God sent His son, and He desires that we receive Jesus and His incredible gift of an eternal relationship with Him. As His children, He calls us to know and love Him with our entire being. Through God's presence and power, we are also called to love others as ourselves, and to introduce others to Him in loving, honest relationships. It has been said, "Love the Lord with everything you have; and remember that you have never looked into the eyes of a person that didn't matter to God."

We desire to be a Christ-centered biblical community. That means we must grow in our knowledge of - and most importantly - our love and obedience to our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Our desire is not to be an organization, but to become an interdependent *organism*. God wants us to function as one body, rather than a conglomerate of saved-but-isolated Christians. That means that we must be Christ to one another – to genuinely care for each other, to be accountable to one another, and to support each other.

A vital step anyone can take after becoming a Christian is to move from being a *spectator* to becoming a *key player*. To be a player, it is customary to join the team. It is not enough to simply say, "I am a baseball player." If you are not playing on a team, there is something missing! When you become a participating member, you move from being a spectator in the stands to being a starter on the playing field. But this is far more important than a game – *it is our very reason for being on earth*.

Becoming a member is the culmination of important steps. But it's not an end in itself, any more than finally being hired means your work is finished. To become a participating member of Island Community Church is to affirm both where you are spiritually and what spiritual-life direction you are taking. It is a step of discipleship, a milestone on a lifelong path as we seek to follow Jesus together. Are you ready to take a serious and joyous next step in your Christian journey of becoming a participating member of Island Community Church? If so, just turn the page –

Membership With Island Community Church

Romans 12:5

So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. NIV

Island Community Church purposes to be a safe place for seekers to hear the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. But that alone does not make ICC a church. One of the core elements that makes a church a church is community. There are visitors, attendees, and then there are members.

One might assume that as long as you profess Christ, what is the need for any further identification with a local church? Isn't it enough simply to call yourself a Christian and attend services somewhere regularly? What is the need or point of formal membership?

Three Reasons

First, the concept of membership is biblical. While the term "church membership" is not used in the Bible, the concept is implicit throughout the New Testament. Believers clearly identified themselves with a specific, local body, and were challenged to become a devoted, participating part of that body.

Second, formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding. It is difficult, at best, to shepherd those who belong to another flock or no flock at all. ICC, by its very nature and design, attracts people of all types and levels of commitment – seekers, observers, guests, committed Christians moving into the area, and the uncommitted. (We hope that will always be the case.) But at some point, it is important to identify those who truly comprise the "flock" of ICC – the core that can be counted on to

build and sustain the ministries of the church. These are also the committed “family members” who should receive priority in the allocation of finite church resources.

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

NIV

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, membership benefits the individual. In a culture where commitment is no longer highly valued, recognizable membership is an important step that moves each of us out of the vague clouds of our good intentions into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to “step out of the bleachers” and publicly affirm a commitment to Christ and His work through the local body. In this sense, membership can be a significant, “defining moment” in one’s lifelong discipleship journey.

“Positional” and “Participating”

But how exactly do you define a member? In a sense the Bible describes two kinds of membership. Scripture is full of references to the once-and-for-all union with Christ and His body, which happens at the instant of your conversion (I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22, 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-22). At that moment, you become a “positional member” in the universal Church of Jesus Christ, based solely on His merit and grace. “Positional membership” is eternal and unchanging.

But then the Bible also urges “positional members” to continue growing by becoming “participating members” in a specific local assembly (Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:25-31; 14:12, 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; I Timothy 3:14-15). Obviously, you may be a “participating member” of several different local bodies

during the course of your lifetime while maintaining a permanent “positional membership” in Christ’s universal Church. We cannot see the invisible bond of “positional membership,” but we can identify those who are the “participating members” here at Island Community.

The Five G’s

How can “participating membership” be described biblically? An outline called “The Five G’s” borrowed from Willow Creek Community Church provides a convenient and simple answer to this question.

GRACE

The individual appropriation of the saving work of Christ

This occurs when a person transfers a dependence on self-righteousness and trusts fully in the fact that Jesus Christ, God’s one and only Son, died on the cross and rose again, paying all the penalty that was owed for our sin.

(John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9)

GROWTH

The ongoing evidence of a changing life and pursuit of Christ-likeness

This would include following the Lord’s instruction to be baptized after salvation, and to participate regularly in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper.

While never reaching the goal, it should be the desire of every Christian to live out the fulfillment of the Great Commandment – to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (be Christ to our neighbor).

Through the presence and help of the Holy Spirit, we desire to grow in our knowledge of, and intimacy with our Savior Jesus Christ. We believe that God calls each of us to read and meditate

on His written word and precious gift to us, the Bible. In addition, God invites us to communicate and have fellowship with Him in prayer.

(II Peter 3:18)

GROUPS

Participation in the body of Christ and connection with others in significant relationships through small groups

(Acts 2:46)

GIFTS

Serving Christ's body according to each individual's spiritual giftedness and passions

(Romans 12:6-8)

GOOD STEWARDSHIP

Honoring God with one's resources of time, talent, and treasure
This includes giving of your time in serving others through ministry opportunities of the church, using your life for God's purposes, and honoring Him with your material resources: supporting the church using the biblical principle of tithes and offerings as a goal to carry out the ministry locally and abroad.

We believe these five statements capture the essential "marks" of someone devoted to Christ and His Church. These characteristics are biblical – they have not been artificially manufactured. As such, we believe they should provide the criteria for participating membership at Island Community Church. Simply put, if you are evidencing these characteristics within our body, then you truly are a participating member. As a church, we want to formally affirm that fact and celebrate it!

Where Do I Go From Here?

If you wish to explore a participating membership at ICC, please continue reading this manual and complete the form on page 13. If you have any other questions, don't hesitate to call the church office. The membership process at ICC has been designed to be a personally enriching, discipling step in your ongoing walk with Christ. We hope you will experience the many benefits of taking this step soon.

Responsibilities and Privileges Of Membership

It is our desire that every member of Island Community Church receives God's love and participates in the life of the church family by following Christ. By His indwelling presence and power, we are to do as He would do, live as He would live.

The Five G's (which qualified you as a participating member) provide a pattern for following Christ in our church family. Driven by His love and empowered by His presence, we live in grace, commit to growth, participate in a group, use our gifts, and practice good stewardship.

FOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Another way to look at the requirements of membership is to break them down into the following four areas:

RESPONSIBILITY #1 – Personal Purity: *To bring to the church family a submitted, Spirit-filled self.*

Our connection with the Lord is the source of everything we have to give to others, and Jesus made it clear: "Apart from Me

you can do nothing.” (John 15:5). A yielded heart is a powerful tool in God’s hands. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to increase in personal purity and to grow in spiritual maturity. Seeking God together, we desire to encourage each other as we hunger to become more like Christ.

RESPONSIBILITY #2 – Relational Integrity: *To pursue honorable, safe, and loving relationships in the family; among friends, co-workers, and neighbors; and in the body.*

It does no good to keep one part of our body healthy if we continually mistreat another. The unhealthy part can jeopardize the well-being (and even the very life) of the strong parts – a diseased liver will eventually stop even a healthy heart from beating. Our relational world is a lot like our physical body – we cannot afford to neglect any part of it and think it will have no adverse effect on other parts of our lives. Participating members take seriously Paul’s admonition: “So far as it is up to you, be at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:18) We must pursue loving behavior with all people in our world, and reconciliation in strained relationships. Though there are times others will not allow us to make peace, we do what we can so that we can say with Paul, “For our proud confidence is this...that in holiness and godly sincerity ...we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.” (2 Corinthians 1:12)

RESPONSIBILITY #3 – Organizational Loyalty: *To contribute to the church your time, talents, and treasure and to be responsive to the leadership God has established.*

If someone is a participating member of ICC, that participation will be evident. We might ask ourselves questions such as the following. Other than attending services passively, what does my calendar show about my connection to the church?

Would someone watching me over the course of a typical week acknowledge I'm a "player" rather than a sideline observer? Is the church a place where I give or merely take? If everyone was involved with the same degree of passion and loyalty as I am, would this be a healthy church?

RESPONSIBILITY #4 – Interpersonal Maturity: *To seek to serve more than to be served.*

When Jesus washed His disciples' feet, He not only wanted to show His love toward them – He pointed out the profound implication of His actions. He asked, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." (John 13:12-15)

Sometimes we fall into the regretful, almost infantile attitude of wanting "the church" to do more for us. But WE are the church. If the church isn't doing something, it could be that we are the one not doing it, and we may be the only ones who can make it different. Too often we slip into a consumer mentality- we "shop" for services we think are important. But we're not the shoppers at a spiritual convenience store: we're the proprietors here. Stocking the shelves is OUR responsibility. "Meeting needs" is what WE do for others, and in the process, we find out what Jesus meant when He said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Washing feet...isn't that the servant's job? No, it was the Savior's job. And He told us it was also ours! Jesus showed by His example, life, and death that loving our neighbor includes serving and giving sacrificially of ourselves to others and their needs.

PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Just as the key word “participating” describes the responsibilities of members, that word also implies that there are benefits. Specifically, being a participating member means that you now have the opportunity to influence key decisions of the church. Participating members may also receive priority for facility usage and staff members’ time (such as wedding, funerals, benevolence needs, personal support in your area of ministry, etc.). From time to time, meetings or other functions may be held which are for “members only.” These events could be called to either inform the core of the church of a major concern or to garner input from the body. Therefore, they are limited only to those who are participating members. Finally, virtually all leadership positions in the church require participating membership as prerequisite. The primary reason to become a participating member, however, is not to gain a personal advantage, but to identify ourselves with the characteristics, or marks, of biblical maturity. Since we’re all pursuing Him, we ought to be pursuing these qualities as a way to be pleasing to Him - first and foremost.

What Island Community Church Believes

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, which is uniquely God-inspired, without error, and the final authority on all matters on which it bears. As the Bible teaches, there is one God, eternally existing in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — each possessing all the attributes of Deity.

God created humans to have fellowship with Him, but they defied God by sinfully going their own way. As a result, we need God's saving grace to end our alienation from Him. Salvation comes only through God's saving grace — not human effort — and must be received personally by repentance and faith.

Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, lived a sinless life on earth and voluntarily paid for our sin by dying on the cross as our substitute. This accomplishes salvation for all who receive grace by trusting in Him alone. He rose from the dead and is the only Mediator between God and us. He will return to earth one day to consummate history.

The Holy Spirit draws sinners to Christ. He permanently indwells and equips believers for personal growth and service to the church. The church's role is to glorify God and serve those in need. At the end, everyone will experience bodily resurrection and the judgment. Those forgiven through Christ will enjoy eternal life and fellowship with God.

Our more detailed Statement of Faith begins on page 14.

As a church family we thank God for you, and we are very grateful for your hunger to seek God and draw closer to Jesus with us! We are also thankful for your desire to consider God's will for you regarding membership at Island Community Church.

If you would like to continue pursuing membership with us after reading this manual, please complete the form on the following page and return it to the church. We are excited that God is working in you and in us, and we thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey with Him! By His grace and power, we pray that He will enable us all to draw closer to Him as we fulfill His purposes, all for the glory of our amazing God and Savior Jesus Christ!

Col. 1:18-20 NIV

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Listed below is a more detailed and traditional Statement of Faith that Island Community Church has historically maintained.

As you read these statements, you will see that they are rich with spiritual truth. Do not try to hurry through these pages, but read them slowly and thoughtfully. Ask yourself throughout, “What difference does this truth make in my life? If I didn’t know or believe this, would it matter?”

1) The sole basis for our belief is the Bible, which is uniquely God-inspired, without error, its original documents being the “God-breathed” Word of God, the written record of His supernatural revelation of Himself to man, without any errors in its statements. It is the final authority on all matters on which it bears. II Timothy 3:16; John 10:34; Psalm 89:34; Hebrews 6:18; II Peter 3:16; Revelation 22:18,19.

2) There is one God, eternally existent, Creator of heaven and earth. He is manifested in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each possessing all the attributes of Deity. Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6; John 14:9; I Timothy 3:16; I John 5:7; Genesis 1:2.

3) The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God who took on flesh and dwelt on earth. He is sinlessly perfect and gave Himself as our substitute (substitutionary atonement or sacrifice) by shedding His blood and dying on a cross as the payment for our sins. After three days He came back from the dead. His death, burial, and resurrection was the payment and proof that all of our sins (past, present, and future) have been paid. 1 John 2:2; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:9; 9:2-28; 10:10-14; Acts 13:38-41; Titus 2:14; I Peter 2:24; I John 3:5.

4) God is absolutely sovereign and in His sovereignty gives man a free will to accept or reject the salvation that He has provided. It

is God's will that all would be saved and that none should perish. God foreknows, but does not predetermine any man to be condemned. God permits man's destiny to depend upon man's choice. I Timothy 2:4; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2; II Peter 3:9; John 5:64-65; Acts 10:34; I Corinthians 1:21; Ephesians 1:5-14; Romans 8:29-30; 9:30-32.

5) Each member of the human race is fallen, sinful, and lost; regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of man. The moment a person receives Christ as his Savior, the Holy Spirit immediately indwells him, and he/she is sealed until the day of redemption. Romans 3:23; John 3:7; 7:39; I Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:13-14; Luke 24:49; Titus 3:5.

6) Man is saved by undeserved mercy through faith in Christ's redemptive work, and nothing of man enters into his salvation. It is a free gift. Man's efforts, or works, regardless of how good or well intended they are, have nothing to do with it. Neither before nor after salvation do man's works determine man's salvation. Salvation is by the finished work of Christ, and nothing can be added to it. Eph. 2:8, 9; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 11:6; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5; Romans 3:22.

7) Every true child of God possesses eternal life, being justified freely by grace, through faith in Christ and His redemptive work. He is sanctified by God, is sealed with the Holy Spirit, is safe and secure for all eternity; and he cannot lose his salvation. However, a Christian can, through sin, lose his fellowship, joy, power, testimony, and reward, and incur the Father's chastisement. Relationship is eternal, being established by the new birth. Fellowship, however, is dependent upon conformity to His will and purposes for our lives. I Corinthians 3:11-17; Hebrews 12:5-11; I Corinthians 11:30-32.

8) The Church began with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and is composed of all those who have placed their trust in Christ as personal Savior. By the Holy Spirit we are all baptized into the one body of Christ. Water baptism is not a part of salvation, but is a testimony to the world, demonstrating that one wants to identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 6:19, 20; Acts 2:1-4; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Acts 10:47.

9) A True child of God has two births; one of the flesh, and the other of the Spirit, giving man a flesh nature and a Spirit nature. The flesh nature is neither good nor righteous. The Spiritual Man does not commit any sin. This results in warfare between the Spirit and the flesh, which continues until physical death, or the return of the Lord. The flesh nature of man does not change in any way with the new birth, but can be controlled and kept subdued by the new man. John 3:3-7; Romans 7:15-25; 8:8; Gal. 5:17; I John 3:9; I Peter 2:23; I John 5:18; I John 1:8.

10) The true child of God is not under the Law, but under grace: saved by grace, and disciplined by grace. Romans 6:14; Romans 11:6; II Corinthians 3:17.

11) Repent (metanoieo) means "to change the mind." Repentance in salvation means a change of mind from dependence on self, philosophy, or religion as a means of attaining forgiveness for sins and earning salvation. We must be fully dependent upon God's way of salvation. While repentance in its pure meaning and definition does not in any sense include a demand for a change of conduct before or after salvation, it is understood that the inter working of the Holy Spirit will lead to a new walk and set of desires. Acts 20:21; II Corinthians 7:8-10; Matthew 21:32.

12) There will be a resurrection of the saved and the lost; of the saved unto eternal life, and of the lost unto eternal punishment. These two resurrections are separated by at least a thousand years. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:1-5; Matthew 25:41.

13) Satan is a real being, the author of sin, and he and his angels shall be eternally condemned due to their rebellion and rejection of God. Ezekiel 28:15, 17; Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41.

It is every Christian's duty and privilege to make clear God's plan of salvation, wherever and in whatever vocation he or she may be. Mark 16:15; I Thessalonians 2:4; I Peter 3:15.

The general plan of salvation as outlined in God's Word is as follows and is believed and practiced by Island Community Church: There are, of course, no set steps in leading a person to Christ. This is a general outline that has proven successful.

- All have sinned. Romans 3:10; 3:23; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; James 2:10.
- The penalty for sin is death. Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:20.
- Perfection is required to enter heaven. Revelation 21:27; Habakkuk. 1:13.
- Man can do nothing on his own to obtain this perfection. Ephesians 2:8,9; Galatians. 2:16; Romans 4:5.
- God provided One to bear our sins in our place and to impute to man His righteousness. That sin-bearer is Jesus Christ. II Corinthians. 5:21; Philippians 3:9; Isaiah. 53:6; I Peter 3:18.
- Man needs only believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior for salvation. John 3:16; Romans 10:9; John 1:12; Acts 16:31.

- Man can be certain of his salvation now, and can be sure that his salvation cannot be lost because eternal life is just that - eternal. John 6:37, 39; John 10:28; I Peter 1:5; Hebrews 10:10-14; I John 5:13.

We view the following doctrines as doctrines that one should not part fellowship over, and opinions may vary on some aspects of these. But we hold them as part of our historical statement of faith and beliefs.

14) We believe in the personal pre-tribulation and pre-millennial return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9-11; Revelation. 4:4; Isaiah 26:17-21; 27:1; II Thessalonians 2:1-8; Revelation 3:10; Luke 21:36; Titus 2:13.

15) God can heal, but physical healing is not in the atonement. God heals miraculously today when it is His perfect will to do so. Healing cannot be claimed through the guarantee of the atonement. At times, it is God's will for sickness not to be removed. II Corinthians. 12:8-10; James 5:14-16.

16) The gift of tongues (other dialects or languages) was a manifestation of the Spirit's power solely for the demonstration of God's wisdom, purpose, and power in the establishment of the early church, and always was in a language that was in use. Acts 2:16; I Corinthians 14:22. As in all workings of God, He may choose to allow this gift to be used today to explain His plan of salvation to one who may not speak the language of the speaker. Island Community Church does not embrace what might be called the "Modern Tongues Movement."