

The Martindale District

Established, 1973



Members Information

Updated, 2023

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Introduction

Why a revision of our Members' Commitment, and what were the principles that guided the rewriting process?

Almost half of the district leaders were not in their current leadership roles when our Member's Covenant was reviewed and updated in 2012. We realized that we understand and apply the expectations of the covenant in a variety of ways. We wanted to review and revise it, owning our understanding and practice of it. Here are some principles that guided this fresh explanation of what it means to be a member of a church in the Martindale District.

1. **Keep it positive**...write with language that expresses what we will do rather than what we don't do.
2. **Keep it commitment-based**...honor the voluntary choice of a believer to commit themselves to a local church through membership.
3. **Keep it relational**...promote healthy conversations, even if they are "hard." We want this document to create a clear expression of our commitment so that there can be conversation when that commitment is in question.
4. **Keep it new**...create a format that isn't just a copy and paste of our former covenant.
5. **Keep it helpful**...provide context for this members' commitment to be understood. (i.e., additional explanation, resources and Scripture) and design it to work digitally by adding links to other resources.
6. **Keep it "district"** ...connect the commitment we make to each other as church members to the shared commitment our district churches make to accomplish the vision of District Reimagined. This document reflects the commitments we as district leaders are willing to make and to teach for the best interest of our district and its vision.

History of Martindale District

The Martindale District celebrates 50 years of existence in 2023! Where did we come from? How did we begin? In Chapter 8 of the book, *They Were Gentle Among Us* (by J. Carl Sensenig, 1997), we find this opening line—“The early 1970’s were tumultuous times in church life within the Weaverland District [Lancaster Mennonite Conference].” This book reflects on the life and leadership of Carl’s father, Earl M. Sensenig, the first Bishop of the Martindale District. Prior to 1973, there was no Martindale District, only the Weaverland District. The “tumultuous times” that impacted the Weaverland District included the resignation of two consecutive bishops who had been ordained to take the place of J. Paul Graybill, the aging Bishop of the Weaverland District, whose health was failing. The popularity of fundamentalism, taught at Lancaster Bible College, especially the idea of eternal security, combined with the beginning of the Eastern Church in 1968, all contributed to these “tumultuous times” for church leaders. To help ease this tension and the different perspectives in the Weaverland District about how to respond, a vote was taken in September of 1973 to create a second district. This vote passed and the Martindale District was formed. Weaverland, Goodville, and Bender’s Mennonite Churches remained the Weaverland District, while Martindale, Churchtown, Lichtys, Cambridge, and Tamaqua formed the new Martindale District. Our district has been served by three bishops: Earl M. Sensenig (ordained August 3, 1974), Nelson Bowman (ordained July 30, 1995), and Daryl L. Weaver, (ordained October 12, 2014).



District Reimagined

In 2020, we launched a 10-year vision for our district, called *District Reimagined*. We like how a vision sharpens our goal, narrows our focus, and calls for everyone to get on board. Our individual willingness to commit to this as leaders, members, and congregations strengthens our district relationships with one another. The links below take you to an explanation of the vision, mission, and core values of District Reimagined and the relationships that leaders invest in to lead our district.

[Vision](#)

Martindale District...local conservative Anabaptist churches, experiencing growth and multiplication as followers of Jesus engage the Kingdom of God.

[Mission](#)

Serving our righteous King (“Jesus is Lord”) by submitting to His reigning kingdom (“I will build my church”) and sharing His relevant Gospel (“Go...make disciples.”)

[Core Values](#)

Commit...to our church.

Contribute...our gifts.

Cultivate...our growth.

Communicate...effectively.

Celebrate...our success.

Vision

Local conservative Anabaptist churches experiencing growth and multiplication as followers of Jesus engage the Kingdom of God.

Mission

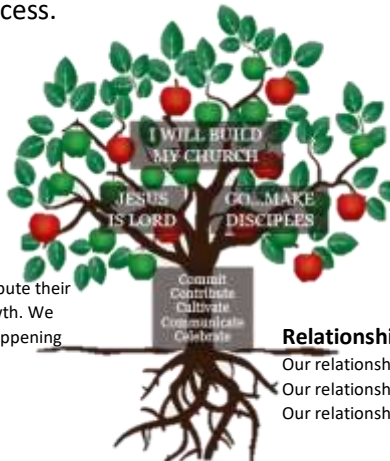
Serving our Righteous King (“Jesus is Lord”) by submitting to His Reigning Kingdom (“I will build my Church”) and Sharing His Relevant Gospel

Values

Committed members contribute their gifts and cultivate their growth. We communicate how that is happening and celebrate when it does.

Relationships

Our relationship to the Godhead
Our relationships with each other
Our relationship with our shared agreements



A Local Conservative Anabaptist Church

*Local churches...*we believe that a connection and commitment to a local church is the best way for people to participate in the kingdom of God. A local church helps members understand the family of God, accountability, and the value of relationships. This regular connection strengthens us as we follow Jesus. We believe the Holy Spirit places the DNA within local churches, so they have everything needed to reproduce and multiply.

*Conservative Anabaptist churches...*we teach and live the doctrine and principles expressed in the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith. (MCoF) Generally, churches that use the 1963 MCoF are viewed as “conservative” while churches that embrace the 1995 MCoF tend to be labeled as more “liberal.” We have continued to embrace the 1963 MCoF instead of the 1995 MCoF (which other LMC districts and MCUSA use) for three reasons. The understandings of the 1963 Confession of Faith were that:

- Credentialed leadership roles in the church are for men. While men and women are equal in value, we understand Scripture to designate the responsibility for leadership of the church to men.
- Divorced persons should remain single rather than remarry and when coming to faith, a divorced person who has remarried (while their first spouse is still living), is living in adultery and should separate and seek reconciliation with their first spouse.
- God’s order of headship is honored by a man’s uncovered head and a ladies’ covered head.

We respect the fact that good Christian brothers and sisters may differ on the specifics of interpreting these Scriptural principles. However, our district has chosen to teach and practice these understandings. As conservative Anabaptists, we prioritize a shared commitment to one another (brotherhood) and to agree on how to live out our obedience to Scripture.

The Value and Meaning of Church Membership

Scriptural Basis for Membership

There are points made on both sides of the discussion about whether church membership is helpful. We do value a process (church membership) for people to visibly demonstrate their commitment to the Kingdom of God through their commitment to and membership in a local church. We read in Acts about believers being added ([Acts 1:15, 2:41-47, 6:1](#)) and see New Testament references about identifying and removing members ([Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5](#)). Epistles were often written to specific churches in specific towns. We conclude that these examples provide a basis for the church to be visible—it should be possible to tell who has committed to it.

A Defined Group

Scripture describes the church, like a flock, temple, body, family, household, and community, assuming the sense of a known and defined group. The church is referred to as a body with many members ([I Corinthians 12](#)) and a family with many siblings ([Romans 8:15-17](#)). Because God speaks so clearly about acceptable and non-acceptable behavior in His Kingdom, we believe a church has been given the authority to offer accountability to one another and agree on how to obey and live out the principles of the Kingdom in our present day as Jesus taught in [Matthew 16:18-19; 18:15-20](#).

We believe the authority Jesus gives to a local church is an invitation to...

- ...worship Him.
- ...gather in His name to discern and declare His will on earth as it is being done in Heaven.
- ...advance the Kingdom of Heaven against the gates of Hell.
- ...invite people to belong to God's family through repentance.
- ...validate those who are citizens of the Kingdom.
- ...share our gifts and be encouraged by other members.

The following pages contain several documents that our district uses to explain membership in our local district churches. Scripture contains all we need to know to be saved. But we also acknowledge the diversity of Christianity and believe it is important to explain how we practice

Biblical principles to promote unity in our churches, safeguard sound doctrine and practice, and to serve as a witness to others. Here are several levels of commitment and connection.

- Our commitment to faith in Jesus and obeying His Word connects us to the global Church.
- Our commitment to the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith, connects us to the conservative Anabaptist church and LMC.
- Our church’s commitment to *District Reimagined* connects us to the Martindale district and LMC.
- Our commitment to the District Members’ Commitment connects us to our local church.



A Conservative Anabaptist Culture?

As a conservative Anabaptist district of churches, connected to a more progressive fellowship of districts and churches in LMC, we find ourselves at a unique place of living out what it means to be Mennonite. We are grateful for a larger group of leaders and resources to connect with so that we can #1) relate to and understand the broader Mennonite Church, #2) take advantage of training/equipping

opportunities with other leaders #3) learn to relate to, and own our faith and practice among others, who are not “right like us” and #4) receive credentialing oversight and accountability for leaders.

We also value our identity and connection to conservative Anabaptism and how that segment of the Mennonite church has interpreted Scripture. Scripture can be taken out of context to prove a point or to explain why we do something. However, a church is responsible to explain how to best live in obedience to Scripture and create a counterculture to confront the ungodly, selfish culture of our world. We do not need a verse for everything we do if we agree that what we do helps us faithfully create a culture of nurture and obedience for believers. This is our way of practicing [Romans 12:2](#) to “...be not conformed, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Our members’ commitment aligns with some commonly held conclusions of the conservative Anabaptist church:

- Baptism and church membership being connected.
- Church leaders being called from their own congregation.
- Teaching for the Christian women’s veiling.
- Teaching marriage as one man and one woman, for life.
- Avoiding jewelry, wedding bands, and alcohol.

Is the culture of conservative Anabaptism perfect? No, it has had some flaws that are worth critiquing. In our emphasis on “living right” we have not always paid enough attention to “thinking right” and have not always thoroughly taught or explained why we believe what we do. As fathers, there are times we have depended on the church to provide an explanation for us, rather than owing our own beliefs and leading our family in developing convictions. With a focus on not wearing jewelry and dressing modestly, we can easily miss applying principles of simplicity to other areas like our hobbies, houses, or vehicles. And while it seems culturally acceptable to teach against using alcohol, we have often avoided the impact of gluttony on our health as well. The persecution early Anabaptists experienced has led us to believe that we

are better off being “the quiet in the land” rather than actively sharing our faith as Jesus commands.

But on a positive note, we believe that conservative Anabaptism, as an expression of faith and practice, has something to offer our world. We want to engage with this idea and invite people into conversations to discover why we believe and practice what we do. While the documents that follow do not provide an exhaustive explanation, we believe they are a good start to helping us understand the commitment to Conservative Anabaptism and membership in our district.

Mennonite Confession of Faith, 1963

Adopted by Mennonite General Conference August 22, 1963

Preamble

The Mennonite Church, begun in Switzerland in 1525, was a part of the Reformation which attempted to restore the New Testament church. We conceive the church to be a body of regenerated believers, a fellowship of holy pilgrims baptized upon confession of faith in Christ. As committed believers we seek to follow the way of Christian love and nonresistance, and to live separate from the evil of the world. We earnestly endeavor to make Christian disciples of all the nations.

In its beliefs the Mennonite Church is bound ultimately to the Holy Scriptures, not to any human formulation of doctrine. We regard this present confession as a restatement of the Eighteen Articles adopted at Dordrecht in the Netherlands in 1632 and of the other statements adopted by our church. In this expression of our faith, we sincerely accept the lordship of Jesus Christ and the full authority of the written Word of God, the Bible, and seek to promote the unity of the brotherhood, to safeguard sound doctrine and life, and to serve as a testimony to others. [Scriptures cited after each article are representative, but not exhaustive.]

Article 1. God and His Attributes

We believe in almighty God, the eternal Spirit who is infinite in His attributes of holiness, love, righteousness, truth, power, goodness, and mercy. This one and only God has revealed Himself as existing eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father

We believe that God is the Creator of all things, a God of providence, and the Author of our salvation through Christ. Although He is too great to be comprehended by the human mind, through Christ we can truly know Him. In redeeming love, He entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham, later with the people of Israel, and has now made

through Christ an eternal covenant in which He offers to the human race the forgiveness of sins and the blessings of divine sonship to those who will repent and believe.

The Son

We believe in Jesus Christ the divine Son of God, who was with the Father from all eternity, who for our salvation took upon Himself human nature, and who by His redemptive death and resurrection conquered the forces of sin and Satan and atoned for the sins of mankind. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and in God's redemptive purpose was crucified. He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now as Lord and Christ at the right hand of the Father intercedes for the saints. He is the Lord and Savior of all Christian believers, and the coming judge of the living and the dead. We believe in His full deity and full humanity according to the Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who was sent by the Father and the Son to bring to individuals the redemption of Christ. We believe in His personality as set forth in the Scriptures: that He loves, searches, testifies, guides, empowers, and intercedes for the saints.

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; Matthew 22:37; John 1:18; John 3:16; Romans 8:1-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 11:6.*

Article 2. Divine Revelation

We believe that the God of creation and redemption has revealed Himself and His will for men in the Holy Scriptures, and supremely and finally in His incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God's purpose in this revelation is the salvation of all men. Although God's power and deity are revealed in His creation, so that the nations are without excuse, this knowledge of Him cannot save men, for it cannot make Christ known. God revealed Himself in saving word and deed to Israel as recorded in the Old Testament; He fulfilled this revelation of Himself in the word and deed of Christ as recorded in the New Testament. We believe that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, that men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. We accept the Scriptures as the

authoritative Word of God, and through the Holy Spirit as the infallible Guide to lead men to faith in Christ and to guide them in the life of Christian discipleship.

We believe that the Old Testament and the New Testament together constitute the Word of God, that the Old Covenant was preparatory, that its institutions were temporary in character, and that the New Covenant in Christ is the fulfillment of the Old. We believe that the Old Testament writings are inspired and profitable, and as the divine word of promise are to be interpreted in conjunction with the divine act of fulfillment recorded in the New. Christian doctrine and practice are based upon the whole Word of God, the word of promise of the Old Covenant as fulfilled in the New.

The message of the Bible points to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to Him that the Scriptures of the Old Testament bear witness, and He is the One whom the Scriptures of the New Testament proclaim. He is the key to the proper understanding of the entire Bible.

Psalm 19; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:1-16; John 20:31; Romans 1:19, 20; 2 Timothy 3:15, 16; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Hebrews 8:6, 7; 1 John 1:1-5.

Article 3. God's Creation and Providence

We believe that in the beginning God created all things by His Son, and that all existence is therefore finite and dependent upon God, the Source and End of all things visible and invisible. He created man in His own image, which set man apart from the animal creation. In free will, moral character, superior intellect, and spiritual nature, man bore the image of his Creator.

In His providence God is concerned with the lives of His children, and in everything works for their eternal good. He hears and answers their prayers. By Jesus Christ He upholds the entire creation. He is Sovereign over all things, but He is not the author of sin. He has endowed man with the power of self-determination, and He holds him responsible for his moral choices.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; Psalm 139:7-12; Matthew 10:29; John 1:3; Romans 8:28; Colossians 1:16, 17; James 5:16.

Article 4. Man and His Sin

We believe that God created man sinless and holy, and subjected man to a moral test as a means of bringing him to full spiritual maturity. Man yielded, however, to the temptation of Satan and by willful disobedience to God failed to maintain that holy condition in which he had been created. This sin brought depravity and death to the race. Although men are sinners by nature because of Adam's fall, they are not guilty of his sin. Those who perish eternally do so only because of their own sin. The most grievous sin is the stubborn refusal to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. As a fallen creature man is self-centered, self-willed, rebellious toward God, unwilling to yield to Christ, unable to break with sin, and under divine judgment.

We believe that children are born with a nature which will manifest itself as sinful as they mature. When they come to know themselves to be responsible to God, they must repent and believe in Christ in order to be saved. Before the age when children are accountable to God, their sins are atoned for through the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus Himself assured us that children are in the kingdom of God.

Genesis 1:27, 31; Genesis 3:1-19; Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 18:16; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:10.

Article 5. Christ, the Savior from Sin

We believe that there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. The purpose of the incarnation of God's eternal Son was to redeem men from sin and death, to destroy the power and works of the devil, and to reconcile men to God. As a prophet, the Lord Jesus not only proclaimed God's Word; He was in His very person the Word of God. As a priest, He Himself was the sacrifice for sin, and now makes intercession with the Father for the saints. As our risen Lord and King He is vested with all authority in heaven and on earth.

In His life the Lord Jesus demonstrated perfectly the will of God. Although tempted in all points as we are, yet He never sinned. Through the shedding of His blood, He inaugurated the New Covenant, broke the

power of sin for those who exercise faith in Him, and triumphed over Satan. By His resurrection from the dead, Christ accomplished the full justification of those who believe in Him. By faith each believer is united with the risen and glorified Christ, the Lord of glory.

Luke 19:10; John 1:1; Acts 2:33; Romans 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:15; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14, 15; Hebrews 4:15; 7:11.

Article 6. Salvation by Grace through Faith

We believe that men are saved, not by character, law, good works, or ceremonies, but by the grace of God. The merits of the death and resurrection of Christ are adequate for the salvation of all men, are offered to all, and are intended for all. Salvation is appropriated by faith in Christ. From all eternity God knew who would be the believers in Christ, and these persons foreknown as believers are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Those who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord receive the gift of righteousness, are born again, and are adopted into the family of God. Saving faith involves the giving of the self to Christ, a full surrender of the will, a confident trust in Him, a joyful obedience to His Word as a faithful disciple, and an attitude of love to all men. It is the privilege of every believer to have the assurance of salvation. The God who saves is also able to keep each believer unto a happy end in Christ. As long as the believer lives, he stands in need of the forgiveness, cleansing, and grace of Christ.

John 3:16; John 10:27-29; Romans 4; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:8-10; 1 John 5:13; Jude 24.

Article 7. The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life

We believe that Christ as Lord and Savior does His work through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin. Through the Holy Spirit those who believe are born again. The supreme ministry of the Spirit is to lead men to Christ and His salvation. As Christians yield to Christ and obey His Word, the Holy Spirit transforms them into the spiritual image of Jesus Christ and enables perseverance in faith and holiness. He empowers them as effective witnesses to Christ and His salvation, fills

their hearts with love for all men, and moves them to practice Christian discipleship. The Holy Spirit bestows upon each believer such gifts as He wills for the building up of the body of Christ. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is God's seal of ownership of the Christian believer. He is God's guarantee that He will also redeem the bodies of believers on the day of Christ.

John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 12:11-13; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Ephesians 5:30.

Article 8. The Church of Christ

Nature

We believe that God's redemptive work in history has led to the establishment of the Christian church. Christ established His church when He poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In preparation for this church, He entered into covenant relationships with Abraham and his seed. Today the spiritual "seed of Abraham" are those who have faith in Christ, the people of God, the body of Christ, composed of believers from all races and nations. The church is the fellowship of those who are in the kingdom of Christ, the assembly of those who believe in Him, the brotherhood of the saints. The church is corporately the dwelling place of God in the Spirit, His holy temple. It is the visible body of those who are Christian disciples. Membership in the church is dependent upon a voluntary response to God's offer of salvation in Christ.

The primary unit of the church is the local assembly of believers. It is in the congregation that the work of teaching, witnessing, and disciplining is carried on. In order to maintain the unity of the church it is Scriptural and profitable for congregational representatives to meet together in conferences. The concern for the welfare of the whole church calls for Spirit-led conferences to assist local congregations in maintaining Biblical standards of faith, conduct, stewardship, and missions. The decisions of such conferences should be respected by the individual congregations and members.

Function

It is the function of the church to demonstrate to the world the will of God, to witness to all men of the saving power and intention of God in Christ, and to make disciples of all the nations. The church seeks to lead all men to the obedience of faith. Believers unite in the church for instruction and nurture, for worship, for inclusion in the witnessing and evangelizing body of Christ, for the observance of the ordinances, for Christian fellowship, and for the discipline of the Word and the Spirit of God. The Spirit leads the church to discover the gifts which He has bestowed upon the members for the building up of the body. The church has the obligation to speak authoritatively on God's will. It shall listen to the Word of God and obey it in the moral and spiritual conflicts of each era of history.

The church is called to be a brotherhood under the lordship of Jesus Christ, a loving fellowship of brethren and sisters who are concerned for the total welfare, both spiritual and material, of one another. This concern results in the attempt to help the erring brother find the right path; it includes sharing generously both financial aid and the word of encouragement, and a willingness to give and receive counsel.

Discipline

We believe that the Lord Jesus has given authority to His church to exercise discipline. The purposes of discipline are to lead each member to full stature in Christ, to restore to full fellowship the members who fall into sin, to clarify for all members the meaning of Christian discipleship, to promote the purity of the church, to warn the weak and immature of the serious character of sin and disobedience to God's Word, and to maintain the good name and witness of the church before the world. In this work the church employs public teaching, private counseling, intercessory prayer, earnest warning and rebuke, and sympathetic encouragement. If disobedience persists, the church may withhold the right to commune until the individual repents. And the church must, with a deep sense of loss, recognize that the one who goes on to full apostasy and spiritual ruin has severed his relation with Christ and His body. The standard in church discipline is the Word of God as

interpreted by the brotherhood. The entire congregation should share in the work of discipline and seek earnestly to win the fallen member.

Ceremonies and Practices

The Lord Jesus and His apostles instituted ordinances for the church to observe permanently as symbols of Christian truths. The apostolic church literally observed them. Among these are baptism with water, the communion of the Lord's Supper, the washing of the saints' feet, the holy kiss, the laying-on of hands in ordination, the veiling of Christian women, the anointing of the sick with oil, and the institution of Christian marriage. When the church observes ordinances as expressions of a heart of faith, divine blessings are received, and a Christian witness is given.

Since the Lord Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week, the Christian church, following apostolic precedent, observes the first day of each week in memory of the Lord's resurrection.

The Church and Healing

We believe that the church should exercise a ministry of prayer for those who are in need. Prayer for the sick may be accompanied by a symbolic anointing with oil by the elders of the church. In response to the prayer of faith, and in accordance with His will, God heals in various ways, through the use of the healing arts, or by direct intervention. When healing does not occur, we believe that God's grace is sufficient. The full redemption of the body will come only at the return of Christ.

Exodus 2:24; 24:8; Matthew 5:13, 14, 23, 24; Matthew 18:15-18; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 15; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11; 2 Corinthians 3:2; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 3:6-9; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 4:13; 1 Timothy 5:20; James 2:14-17; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:9.

Article 9. The Mission of the Church to Society

We believe that Christ has commissioned the church to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe His commandments. Jesus entrusted to the church the stewardship of the Gospel, and promised the power of the

Holy Spirit for the work of evangelism and missions. This ministry of reconciliation is inherent in the very nature of the church. The church is interested not only in the spiritual welfare of men but in their total wellbeing. Jesus Himself fed the hungry, healed the sick, and had compassion on the poor. The church should likewise minister to those who are in physical or social need and to those who are physically or emotionally ill. The church should witness against racial discrimination, economic injustice, and all forms of human slavery and moral degradation.

Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 6:56; Romans 1:16; Romans 8:23.

Article 10. The Ministers of the Church

We believe that it is the intention of Christ that there should be shepherds in His congregations to feed the flock, to serve as leaders, to expound the Word of God, to administer the ordinances, to exercise, in cooperation with the congregation, a Scriptural church discipline, and in general to function as servants of the church. Ordination is accompanied by a laying-on of hands, symbolic of the church assigning responsibility and of God imparting strength for the assignment. In addition to the primary office of apostle, in the New Testament church there were such gifts as prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The early church had regional overseers such as Timothy, and bishops (pastors) and deacons in the local congregations. Upon the pastors lay the responsibility for the leadership and pastoral care of the congregations, and the deacons served as their helpers. In each era of the life of the church, Christ through His Spirit seeks to lead the church to adapt its organization to the needs of time and place. The church is a brotherhood, and its organizational structure should ensure the full participation of the members with their spiritual gifts in its life and discipline. It is the duty of the church to give financial support to those whom it asks to serve as evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Matthew 23:8; Matthew 28:19; Acts 15:6; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 9:14; Ephesians 4:11, 12; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-

13; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

Article 11. Christian Baptism

We believe in obeying the instruction of the Lord Jesus to baptize believers with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In order to qualify for baptism one must repent, turn to Christ in sincere faith, and accept Him as Lord. We regard water baptism as an ordinance of Christ which symbolizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine cleansing from sin and its guilt, identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and the commitment to follow Him in a life of faithful discipleship. Since baptism with the Holy Spirit is a pouring out, we generally practice pouring as our mode of water baptism.

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:16-21; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 3:21.

Article 12. The Lord's Supper

We believe in observing the communion of the Lord's Supper as an ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ to symbolize the New Covenant. We recognize the bread and the cup as symbols commemorating Christ's broken body and shed blood, of our spiritual life in Him, and of the spiritual unity and fellowship of the body of Christ. Each believer shall examine himself so as not to partake of the sacred emblems carelessly or while living in sin. The church shall invite to the Lord's table only those who have peace with God and with their fellow men, and who share the faith of the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed faithfully until the Lord comes.

Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 26.

Article 13. Symbols of Christian Brotherhood

We believe in the observance of the washing of the saints' feet as an ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus. By His example Christ rebuked the pride and rivalry of the apostles and showed them that Christian

discipleship involves obedience to His lordship and loving service. This ordinance reminds us of the brotherhood character of the church, of our mutual duty to serve and admonish one another, and of our need for continuous cleansing in our daily walk. In the New Testament the holy kiss and the right hand of fellowship are also symbols of Christian love in the church of Christ.

Luke 22:24; John 13:1-17; Romans 16:16; Galatians 2:9; 1 Timothy 5:10.

Article 14. Symbols of Christian Order

We believe that in their relation to the Lord men and women are equal, for in Christ there is neither male nor female. But in the order of creation God has fitted man and woman for differing functions; man has been given a primary leadership role, while the woman is especially fitted for nurture and service. Being in Christ does not nullify these natural endowments, either in the home or in the church. The New Testament symbols of man's headship are to be his short hair and uncovered head while praying or prophesying, and the symbols of woman's role are her long hair and her veiled head. The acceptance by both men and women of the order of creation in no way limits their rightful freedom, but rather ensures their finding the respective roles in which they can most fruitfully and happily serve.

Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28.

Article 15. Marriage and the Home

We believe that at the beginning of human history God instituted marriage. He ordained that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and that the two shall become one in love and mutual submission. It is God's will that marriage be a holy state, monogamous, and for life. It is also fully acceptable to God to serve Christ unmarried. Marriage was instituted for the happiness of the husband and wife and for the procreation and Christian nurture of children. Christians shall marry only in the Lord, and for the sake of spiritual unity in the home they should become members of the same congregation. The Christian home ought regularly to have family worship, to seek faithfully to live

according to the Word of God, and to support loyally the church in its mission. We believe it is appropriate for parents to pledge themselves to the faithful Christian nurture of their children.

Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Ephesians 6:1, 4.

Article 16. Discipleship and Nonconformity

We believe that there are two opposing kingdoms to which men give their spiritual allegiance, that of Christ and that of Satan. Those who belong to Satan's kingdom live for sin and self, and refuse the obedience of faith. The kingdom of Christ is composed of those who have been born again and who have entered into a faith union with the Lord Jesus Christ. In them the fruit of the Spirit is in evidence. They recognize the lordship of Christ, and perform all manner of good works. They seek for holiness of heart, life, and speech, and refuse any unequal yoke with unbelievers. They manifest only love toward those of other races, cultures, and economic levels. They regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and crucify their flesh with its affections and lusts. They therefore avoid such things as harmful drugs, beverage alcohol, and tobacco. We believe that their adornment should be a beauty of spirit, expressed in attire that is modest, economical, simple, and becoming to those professing Christian faith. They should seek to be Christian in their stewardship of money and possessions. Their recreational life should be consistent with the Christian walk. Through the Spirit they should put off the old man and put on the new.

Matthew 7:13, 14; Luke 9:23-26; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:12, 19; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:20-32; Colossians 1:13; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4.

Article 17. Christian Integrity

We believe that it is a major Christian obligation to be strictly truthful and transparent in life and doctrine, with no secrecy or hypocrisy. The Lord Jesus Christ has forbidden to His followers the use of any and all oaths, because of the finite limitations of human beings, and the

obligation always to speak the truth. In legal matters we therefore simply affirm the truth. We are opposed to membership in secret societies or lodges, because such membership would involve an unequal yoke with unbelievers, and because these organizations employ hierarchical titles, require oaths, stand for organized secrecy, and may offer salvation on grounds other than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that it is in the church that we should find love, fellowship, and security.

Matthew 5:33-37; Matthew 23:7-10, 16-22; John 18:20; Acts 4:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; James 5:12.

Article 18. Love and Nonresistance

We believe that it is the will of God for His children to follow Christian love in all human relationships. Such a life of love excludes retaliation and revenge. God pours His love into the hearts of Christians so that they desire the welfare of all men. The supreme example of nonresistance is the Lord Jesus Himself. The teaching of Jesus not to resist him who is evil requires the renunciation by His disciples of all violence in human relations. Only love must be shown to all men. We believe that this applies to every area of life: to personal injustice, to situations in which people commonly resort to litigation, to industrial strife, and to international tensions and wars. As nonresistant Christians we cannot serve in any office which employs the use of force. Nor can we participate in military service, or in military training, or in the voluntary financial support of war. But we must aggressively, at the risk of life itself, do whatever we can for the alleviation of human distress and suffering.

Matthew 5:38-48; John 18:36; Romans 5:5; Romans 12:18-21; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4; James 2:8; 1 Peter 2:23; 1 Peter 4:1.

Article 19. The Christian and the State

We believe that the state is ordained of God to maintain law and order. We seek to obey the New Testament commands to render honor to the

authorities, to pay our taxes, to obey all laws which do not conflict with the higher law of God, and to pray for our rulers. The church should also witness to, the authorities of God's redeeming love in Christ, and of His sovereignty over all men. In law enforcement the state does not and cannot operate on the nonresistant principles of Christ's kingdom. Therefore, nonresistant Christians cannot undertake any service in the state or in society which would violate the principles of love and holiness as taught by Christ and His inspired apostles.

Acts 4:19; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 1:20-22; Ephesians 5:23; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2.

Article 20. The Final Consummation

We believe that in addition to the physical order with which our senses are related, there also exists an eternal spiritual order, the realm of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the angels, and of the church triumphant. We believe that at death the righteous enter at once into conscious joy and fellowship with Christ, while the wicked are in a state of conscious suffering. The church militant lives and witnesses in this present evil world, a world in which apostasy from God is to become even more pronounced. The church also looks forward with hope to the day of the Lord, to the personal return of Christ, and the glorious future of the kingdom of God. In His triumphant Second Coming Christ will judge Satan, and usher in the consummation of all things. His coming will introduce the resurrection, the transformation of the living saints, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of His glorious reign. He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, cleanse the world by fire, create new heavens and a new earth, consign unbelievers to eternal punishment, and usher His children into the eternal bliss of the world to come.

Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:34, 41; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22, 23; John 5:22; 1 Corinthians 15:24, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:4; 1 Peter 1:4; 2 Peter 3:3-13; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 21:4; Revelation 22:3.

May God enable us all to attain His eternal kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world, that with His blessed Son we may enjoy fullness of life for ever and ever.

Martindale District Member's Commitment

Our Member's Commitment is divided into 3 sections with a total of 12 commitments. The three sections are -- our district's mission of *Serving our righteous King ("Jesus is Lord") by submitting to his reigning kingdom ("I will build my church") and sharing His relevant Gospel ("Go...make disciples")*.

Section #1: Serving our Righteous King -- "Jesus is Lord."

Foundational Scriptures

Romans 1:16-17: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

Philippians 2:10-11: *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Commitments

#1) LORDSHIP & SALVATION: I am committed to making Jesus Lord of my life and following Him in obedience as one of his disciples. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord of my life. I believe the grace of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit in me enable me to follow Jesus faithfully. I will develop habits of prayer, fasting, Scripture reading and study, believing the Bible is the inspired Word of God and the standard for my faith and practice. As a disciple of Jesus, I will abide in His word ([John 8:31-32](#)) in order to bear fruit ([John 15:5-8](#), [Galatians 5:22-23](#)). These additional references highlight the power of our connection to God's Word and His lordship. ([Psalm 1, 119:97-99](#), [Matthew 16:24-26](#), [Philippians 3:7-11](#)) I recognize that Scripture teaches believer's water baptism as an outward act of my repentance, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and profession of faith to follow Jesus and identify with the body of Christ. ([Acts 2:38-46](#), [Romans 6:1-6](#))

#2) A KINGDOM CITIZEN: I am committed to living a life characterized by peace and suffering love – overcoming evil with good or “non-resistance”—whether that adversity comes from a brother, a stranger,

or from another country. By declaring that Jesus is my Lord, I recognize I am a part of the Kingdom of God and a pilgrim in this world. I accept the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus' explanation of how citizens in His Kingdom live. ([Matthew 5-7](#), [John 18:36](#)). I recognize that God puts governments in place for the good of society and to accomplish His purposes ([Romans 13:1-7](#), [Daniel 4:17](#)). I will pray for our governments ([1 Timothy 2:1-4](#)) and obey them unless what they ask causes me to disobey God or Scripture ([Acts 5:22-32](#), [1 Peter 2:13-17](#)). The government's God-ordained methods of maintaining order in society are different from the scriptural teaching of love and overcoming evil with good ([Romans 12:18-21](#)). I seek to bring peace by being willing to put myself at risk in the face of evil, trusting God's protection. The following statements are practical ways to live out my commitment to peace:

- I recognize that holding political office or joining the military, even in non-combatant roles (i.e., military chaplain, cook, medics etc.), calls me to pledge allegiance to an earthly kingdom, and thereby contradicts my commitment to the Kingdom of God.
- I recognize that nationalism and patriotism contradict the Kingdom of Jesus and that there are devastating effects of attaching my faith to my country's flag.
- I recognize that to consistently show my allegiance to Jesus' Kingdom, I must carefully evaluate how/if I participate in patriotic events, voting, and jury duty (especially in cases of capital punishment).
- I recognize the legal requirements to register with the Selective Service at age 18. For more information on registering as a conscientious objector and alternate service, see this link from the [Selective Service System](#) or go to <https://www.sss.gov/conscientious-objectors/>
- I recognize the warning Scripture gives about using lawsuits in secular courts to settle disputes and will not seek to gain personal advantages through lawsuits. ([1 Corinthians 6:1-8](#)).
- I recognize it is my responsibility to live at peace with everyone as much as is possible within me. ([Matthew 5:38-48](#)).

#3) SANCTITY OF LIFE: I am committed to honoring the sanctity of all life and will proactively seek the spiritual, physical, and emotional health of others as well as my own. God is the Creator, Sustainer and Finisher of life, which has its beginning at the time of conception ([Jeremiah 1:4-5](#), [Psalm 139:13-16](#), [Psalm 90:10-12](#), [James 4:13-16](#)). As followers of Jesus, for me to take human life, whether by abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or in any other circumstance, is wrong and forbidden by Scripture ([Exodus 20:13](#), [Matthew 5:21-26](#)). I recognize the value of preparing a living will to guide end-of-life decision-making and will be a comfort and support to members making hard decisions about how to best honor life when it appears to be coming to an end on this earth.

My body is the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, and I am a part of Christ. For this reason, I will honor the Spirit's presence in me by caring for my health in the following ways, allowing me to glorify Christ and honor the price He paid to purchase my salvation. ([1 Corinthians 6:9-20](#)).

- **SEX:** I affirm God's design for sex to be enjoyed in biblical marriage. It is defined as a permanent, sacred bond between one man and one woman, terminated only by death. I believe that all sexual relationships outside of marriage are perversions of God's design. I embrace my God-given, biological sex at birth, and believe efforts to alter my sexuality or that of others, is wrong and a rejection of the image of God he or she bears and the person He created them to be. ([Leviticus 18:22-24](#), [Psalm 139:13-18](#), [Romans 1:18-32](#)).
- **ABUSE:** I acknowledge that abuse to others, whether sexual, emotional, spiritual, verbal, or physical, is a sin against God our Creator and does not honor the sanctity of human life or His image which they are created in. I will cooperate with my church and its expectations for mandated reporters.
- **PORNOGRAPHY:** I agree that viewing pornography is sinning against God and other human beings, taking advantage of them and the image of God they are created in. Pornography pollutes my mind, promotes sinful lust, ruins relationships, and leads to addiction. Its presence in my life makes me unable to honor life as God calls me to. ([Matthew 5:27-30](#), [1 Corinthians 6:12-20](#))
- **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND SUBSTANCES:** Since my body is God's home and I am created in His image and designed to reflect Him

to the world, I will practice a healthy lifestyle. This includes appropriate work, play and exercise, and avoiding gluttony/poor hygiene. ([Genesis 1:26-27](#), [1 Corinthians 6:12-20](#)) I also will not use, produce, distribute, or sell addictive or mind-altering products such as alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or illegal drugs. I will seek and accept the best practices of our medical community when the treatment of illness or pain may include (legal) substances listed above. For more information, here is a link to a document that outlines work that Martindale District Leaders did regarding [medical marijuana](#). I recognize that Scripture includes a few references to the benefits of wine/strong drink, but because of the much greater harm and potential addiction to myself, my family and friends, I will avoid alcohol, including social drinking. ([Proverbs 20:1](#), [Luke 21:34-36](#), [1 Peter 4:1-6](#))

- RESTORATION: I will compassionately encourage and help care for members who are struggling with the above areas and help restore them with God's grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. I will accept counsel and accountability when dealing with my own sin or indiscretion about how I honor the sanctity of life with my body and health. I recognize counseling, trauma, and addiction ministries may be necessary interventions to help myself and others lead the healthy life God intends. ([Galatians 6:1-10](#))

#4) HEADSHIP ORDER: I am committed to a visible expression of God's order of headship. I understand that God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Jesus, establishing an order of headship in which man is the head of a woman, Jesus is the head of a man, and God the Father is the head of Jesus, His Son.

As a man, my short hair and uncovered head shows my submission to God's order of headship. I am committed to being a leader, submitting to Jesus' call for me, creating a safe, protecting environment for those I lead, and sacrificing my life to do so just as Christ gave His life for the church.

As a woman, covering my long hair is an expression of my acceptance of God's headship order in this world and a sign of power to the angels in the spiritual realm. I am committed to wearing my hair up under a veil

of sufficient size that isn't a statement of fashion or trend. ([1 Corinthians 11:1-16](#))

#5) MARRIAGE & HOME: I am committed to the family as the foundational unit of church and society and believe in the permanency of marriage, terminated only by death. I believe God created men and women with distinct sexual and biological differences, roles and responsibilities, declaring His human creation to be very good. In my home, I accept the role of husbands/fathers in modeling loving, selfless leadership, the role of wives/mothers to be respectful, nurturing submission, and the role of children to be obedient, living with honor and submission to their parents. Honor, goodwill, and fairness will characterize my relationships in business, neighborhood, church and family living. ([Ephesians 5:21-30](#), [6:1-9](#), [1 Peter 2:13-25](#)).

I affirm God's design that marriage is a permanent, sacred bond between one man and one woman, terminated only by death. I understand that our society, in its opposition to God's Kingdom and Jesus' teachings, has been willing to oppose the sanctity of God's design for marriage. I accept the understanding that those who are married to (or living with) another person while their first spouse is living is a violation of God's intention and is the sin of adultery. I accept our church's practice of not granting membership to those who are married to and/or living with a divorced spouse. I recognize that patterns of lust, fantasy and pornography are also called adultery by Jesus and carry the same devastating effects that divorce can have.

I am committed, along with my church, to caring for and seeking reconciliation for those who have been impacted by broken relationships and failed marriages. I understand that, while divorce is something God hates, people who have experienced divorce can find redemption and healing and honor God by living a single life, even if their marriage has failed. ([Malachi 2:10-17](#), [Matthew 5:27-32](#), [19:1-9](#), [1 Cor 7:10-16](#))

Section #2: Submitting to Jesus' Reigning Kingdom -- "I will build my church."

Foundational Scriptures

Matthew 16:15-19: He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 18:15-20 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Commitments

#6) CHURCH INVOLVEMENT: I am committed to regular attendance and participation in worship services, membership responsibilities, discipleship opportunities (i.e., Sunday school, small groups, etc.) for the spiritual growth of myself and my family. The New Testament Church celebrated the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week by gathering on that day for worship, fellowship, teaching and giving. ([Acts 20:7](#), [1 Corinthians 16:2](#)). I believe that gathering for worship is an important part of a Christian's life ([Hebrews 10:23-25](#)) and should be prioritized, especially on the Lord's Day, to celebrate His resurrection. (Persons interested in membership are asked to attend for at least six

months so that relationships can be built, before applying for membership.)

Because of God's example of taking one day out of seven to rest, I will protect the Lord's Day from being a regular workday and find ways in my personal life and family to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, recognizing it as a day to rest, worship, do good, and serve others.

([Matthew 12:1-14](#)) I will participate in my congregation's practices of Counsel Questionnaires and home visitation, where members are invited to reaffirm their desire for membership and participation in Communion. *"Each believer shall examine himself so as not to partake of the sacred emblems carelessly or while living in sin. The church shall invite to the Lord's table only those who have peace with God and with their fellow men, and who share the faith of the church."* (1963 MCoF)

There are times non-members participate in Communion, but we understand Communion to be primarily practiced as part of our commitment to our church rather than as an evangelistic tool. ([1 Corinthians 11:17-34](#))

#7) ACCOUNTABILITY: I am committed to accountability as a member of my congregation and will share my spiritual gifts and abilities to make my congregation better. I will be humble enough to receive advice and confident enough to share it with others. I understand that my church's health is impacted by my willingness to participate in it. ([Romans 12](#), [1 Corinthians 12](#), [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)) I will do my best to live at peace with God and others ([Matthew 5:21-26](#)). When faced with conflict or offense, I will try to resolve it by following [Matthew 18:15-20](#). I recognize that unconfessed sin affects my testimony and relationship with God, my church, and community. I will practice confession of my sin to God for His forgiveness and take responsibility for confession and restitution where other relationships are impacted. I recognize that appropriate public confession can bring freedom from the habit and bondage of sin. ([Proverbs 28:13](#), [1 Timothy 5:19-20](#), [James 5:13-19](#), [1 John 1:5-10](#)).

#8) GENEROSITY: I will practice living and giving generously by sharing my gifts of time, prayer, finances, and hospitality with fellow members in my church and community. I believe the Scriptures teach the giving of tithes and offerings and will practice mutual aid within my church,

giving generously and cheerfully to the offerings and needs we identify. I will share my resources with others in need and understand Scripture instructs me to financially support those that minister the Gospel to me. ([Malachi 3:6-10](#), [II Corinthians 8:1-15](#), [II Corinthians 9](#), [1 Cor 9:9-14](#))

#9) LEADERSHIP ROLES: I will support the leadership structure and function of my local church. I affirm the model of team leadership in my church and the specific roles of bishop, pastor, deacon, elder and/or pastoral support teams. I support my congregation's practice of calling and credentialing men to serve in these roles of leadership. I also understand that as a member, I am responsible for helping to make my church successful and to look out for the other members, too, not simply relying on my leaders to do that. I will honor the leaders in my church, follow their example and teaching, and support them through prayer and financial support. ([I Timothy 5:17-20](#), [Hebrews 13:7-17](#))

Section #3: Sharing Jesus' Relevant Gospel -- "Go...make disciples."

Foundational Scriptures

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Commitments

#10) GOSPEL FOR ALL: I will honor the power of the Gospel by not limiting my relationships to only those I agree with or who already are believers. I believe the Gospel is not limited to ethnicity, race, geography, political boundaries, economic status, or privilege. I will learn to share the Gospel and make disciples in whatever context God

has called me to work, play, and serve. I recognize God's heart for the vulnerable (i.e., widows, orphans, strangers & foreigners), and His desire that they, too, would experience His good news and become part of His family. I respect the image of God in each soul of humanity and am willing to cross into and learn from other cultural contexts, believing God is capable of restoring beauty and order where sin has wrought chaos. ([James 1:26-27](#), [Luke 4:18-21](#), [Ephesians 2:11-22](#))

#11) GREAT COMMISSION: I will find ways to participate in Jesus' Great Commission to go make disciples, baptize those who believe, and teach them all things that Jesus has commanded.

- *"GO...":* I will listen for God's voice and answer His call to go share the Gospel where He is sending me. I will support the sending of missionaries locally and globally, whether I am called to go or to help someone else who is being sent.
- *DISCIPLESHIP & DISCIPLE-MAKING:* I will continue my lifelong journey of becoming like Jesus by obeying His message and practicing His habits, and helping others do so, too. I know that Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and the discernment of fellow believers help me understand how to follow Jesus. I will also work on my ability to invite others, who are not yet disciples of Jesus, into a relationship with Him and show them what it means to follow Jesus, connect with other believers, and make disciples. ([Matthew 28:18-20](#), [II Corinthians 5:12-21](#))

#12) LIFE MESSAGE: I will live so my life's message draws people to salvation and the knowledge of the truth. I will support and practice the following applications of New Testament principles that our district believes are valuable so that our lives attract people to *"the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus"* who desires all to be saved and come to know the truth. ([I Tim. 2:1-7](#))

- *STEWARDSHIP:* I will be accountable as a steward of what God has entrusted to me like my spiritual gifts and talents, the earth and its resources, and my possessions, time, and money. I will use these assets to build the Kingdom of God and lay up eternal treasures, rather than treasures here on earth. Because honesty and integrity are characteristics of God's children, I will take responsibility for personal debts and financial obligations rather than using bankruptcy to avoid responsibility. I recognize the

addictive nature of gambling and lotteries and will not spend my money on them. ([Matthew 5:19-34](#), [1 Timothy 6:3-19](#))

- **MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT:** *I will seek to be transformed by renewing my mind, rather than squeezed into the mold of the culture and world around me.* I will guard against wasting time on media and entertainment. I will consider appropriate content for myself and family and guard against mindlessly consuming content that distracts my relationship with Jesus, my church, or my family. ([Ephesians 5:1-21](#), [1 Peter 2:11-12](#), [Philippians 4:8](#))
- **ADORNMENT & CLOTHING:** *I will invest in my inward character and beauty rather than my outward adornment.* As a man, I will be a prayer warrior for government leaders and those in authority “...with holy hands, lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.” (1 Tim. 2:8, NLT) I will embrace my role and influence as a godly leader and sacrifice my life for those I love and lead, making sure anger and controversy do not characterize my relationships. As a woman, I will honor my natural and inward beauty by practicing 1 Tim. 2-9-10 to “...be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. 10 For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do. (NLT) For men and women, we recognize clothing is needed because sin entered the world. The attempt of Adam and Eve to cover themselves was not sufficient until God appropriately dressed them. As men and women, we will support one another by dressing in clothing that modestly covers the body (i.e., pants for men, skirts/dresses for women). Because of the above principles of inward beauty and character rather than outward adornment, I am willing to avoid jewelry and wedding bands. I also understand that these principles should be more consistently applied to other accessories I wear. ([Genesis 3:8-21](#), [Colossians 3:12-17](#) | [1 Timothy 2:8-10](#), [1 Peter 2:9-12](#), [1 Peter 3:1-4](#))

Conclusion

Those who choose to become members of our district churches will have the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment each year through our regular processes of Counsel Questionnaires or Home Visits.

These commitments are intended to represent our best effort to be faithful to the Lord Jesus and His example and teachings for us, the doctrine that was delivered to us by the apostles, and the life and practice that we believe will encourage faithfulness by all of us as conservative Anabaptists. We believe that we will be healthier churches when all of us are willing to commit to one another and be held accountable by one another for our commitments.

The District Members Commitment will be reviewed by District Leaders every 5-7 years to keep our commitments relevant to one another.