



The Garden Church

Membership Class Packet

For: Those 17 and older, who have attended TGC for at least six months and are sensing the Lord's invitation to make this church their home.

Purpose: To help bring clarity to membership, and the direction of this congregation by examining: Our Culture and Pathway, Our Doctrine and Church Structure, Spiritual Gifts and Service, and Our Covenant.



Session 1: Our Culture & Pathway

Theme: *Becoming a Church That Looks Like Jesus*

WHAT THIS CLASS IS

This class happens over two Sunday afternoons, and it's meant to help you prayerfully discern whether this is the family God is inviting you to walk with in this season.

If you're seeking membership here at The Garden, this class is required, but I want to be clear from the start: This class does not obligate you to join as a member at TGC.

Our heart is clarity, not pressure.

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

From the very beginning, the church has always lived in a sacred tension.

**The church is a hospital for sinners
and a training ground for saints.**

That means two things are always true at the same time:

- Everyone is welcome to come as they are
- And no one is expected to stay as they are

How does the church hold that tension with clarity, grace, and health?

The answer the Scriptures give us is **belonging**.

Ephesians 2:19–22

“So, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”



At The Garden, we think about belonging in three relational circles.

Visitors. Friends. Family.

Visitors

Visitors are invited to *come and see*.
Come see what it looks like to do life here.
They can sit, listen, observe, and ask questions.

No one expects a visitor to have it all figured out.
They are invited to come exactly as they are.

Friends

Friends are those who have stuck around.
They're building relationships.
They're beginning to serve, connect, and participate.

There is more expectation here, but not ownership yet.

Friends are deeply valued.
But friends don't yet carry the same responsibility or voice that family does.

Family

Family is where covenant begins.

Family members don't just attend, they belong.
They don't just consume, they contribute.
They don't just receive care, they help carry it.

Family says, "These are my people, and I'm committed to walking with them."

How do we know who is who?

This is where membership comes in.

Membership is how we move from attending to belonging.

Membership is how we lovingly and clearly identify who family is.

It tells us:

- Who the elders are responsible to shepherd
 - Who has a voice in the direction and health of the body
 - Who is committed to the mission at The Garden.
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OUR MISSION & DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

Everything we do as a church flows from one simple mission.

Delight in Jesus. Make Disciples. Model the Gospel.

Delight in Jesus

This is where everything begins. Our walk with Jesus shouldn't be fueled by guilt, but by joy. We don't just want to believe in Jesus; we want to enjoy Him.

Make Disciples

Discipleship isn't a class you graduate from; it's a lifelong journey of becoming more like Jesus together. And we do this through rhythms and relationships of grace.

Model the Gospel

The message we preach should be visible in the way we love, forgive, repent, serve, and welcome others.

WHAT DOES A FAITHFUL CHURCH LOOK LIKE?

Acts 2:42-47

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE GOSPEL?

Here's what we believe about the gospel.

- While we were dead in our sin, God's kingdom broke into the world through Jesus
 - Who loved us to make us lovely, not because we were
 - Who died so we might live, not just eternally, but *right now*
 - And who rose by the power of the Spirit and released us on mission in that same power
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OUR FUTURE HOPE

Revelation 21:1-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And, he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also, he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

OUR MISSION

Delight in Jesus. Make Disciples. Model the Gospel.

"This is what we want to do."

OUR VISION

"To help people experience the joy of knowing Jesus, grow into mature disciples, and live in a way that reflects the gospel to the world."

"This is why we exist."

OUR DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

Our definition of a disciple is:

Someone who will **be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did.**

ABIDE — Be with Jesus

Cultivating intimacy with Christ through worship and community.

TRAIN — Become like Jesus

Growing through rhythms and relationships of grace.

PROCLAIM — Do what Jesus did

Living sent lives that declare and display the gospel.



WHEN ARE WE SUCCESSFUL?

When we see:

- People trusting God's Word over their worries
- Spiritual formation through rhythms and relationships of grace, (people looking more like Jesus).
- Healthy multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches, not just unhealthy splits when we disagree.

THE RHYTHMS OF GRACE

What we call rhythms of grace, are ancient practices that were on full display in the life of the Lord Jesus. His life was one shaped by the rhythms of grace, also known as spiritual disciplines, spiritual practices, or holy habits. No matter what you call them, these rhythms should shape our individual and communal lives as followers of Jesus.

“They help us grow in godliness, not earn it.”

The 10 Rhythms:

- Devotion
- Prayer
- Fellowship
- Worship
- Repentance
- Generosity
- Service
- Witness
- Sabbath
- Multiply



ABIDE – Be with Jesus

- **Devotion** – Letting the Word dwell richly in us (Col. 3:16)
- **Prayer** – Ongoing conversation with God, not just crisis moments (1 Thess. 5:17)

TRAIN – Become like Jesus

- **Fellowship** – Known and loved in real community (Heb. 10:24–25)
- **Worship** – A whole-life response to God's mercy (Rom. 12:1)
- **Repentance** – Regular returning to grace, not shame (Acts 3:19)
- **Sabbath** – Resting to remember God is God and we are not (Heb. 4:9)

PROCLAIM – Do what Jesus did

- **Generosity** – Joyfully stewarding what God has entrusted to us (2 Cor. 9:7)
- **Service** – Using our gifts to build up others (1 Pet. 4:10)
- **Witness** – Living and speaking the gospel naturally (Acts 1:8)
- **Multiply** – Investing in others who will follow Jesus after us (2 Tim. 2:2)

OUR GOSPEL-CENTERED CULTURE

Culture is simply the shared values and behaviors that shape who we are.

We aim to be:

- **A Culture of Joy - Delighting in Jesus is our foundation.**
- **A Culture of Formation - The Word should order our lives, and the Spirit should form our habits.**
- **A Culture of Authenticity - We are broken people in need of a perfect savior and we always will be.**
- **A Culture of Grace - Jesus met us in our brokenness, but He did not leave us there.**
- **A Culture of Kingdom Partnership - We want to partner with multiple churches, and organizations for the growth of the kingdom, not just our church.**



Session 2: Our Doctrine & Church Structure

Theme: How Truth and Love Shape a Healthy Church

WHAT WE BELIEVE (DOCTRINE)

Distinctives

Gospel Centrality

From small groups to Sunday gatherings, we will abide in His presence, engage in His practices, and proclaim His gospel. Our dependence on Him is good news. Our desire to look more like Him is good news. In all that we do, we will center ourselves on proclaiming the good news, or gospel of Jesus Christ, because it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe (Rom 1:16).

The Sovereignty of God in Salvation

At the Garden Church we believe that salvation is the work of God from start to finish (Rom 1:16, 6:23; Phil 2:12-13; John 1:12-13, 3:16-18, 6:44, 14:6; Eph 1:13-4, 2:8-9). With that, our leadership will hold to a strong view of the sovereignty of God, but give grace for the members of the body to understand this differently, as long as that understanding is not disruptive or divisive (Titus 3:10; Rom 16:17-18; 1 Cor 11:18-19).

Need for the Holy Spirit in all Life and Ministry

We depend entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit in all we do. He is fully God—one with the Father and the Son—and continues to work today just as He did at creation, in the life of Jesus, and at the birth of the Church at Pentecost. As followers of Christ, we must intentionally create space each day to re-center our hearts on Him. It is through His presence that we are empowered, reminded, and renewed—knowing that He has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4).

Complementarianism

God created both men and women in His image—equal in dignity, worth, and value—yet distinct in role (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 2:11-3:7; Titus 2:2-6; 1 Pet. 3). Sadly, throughout history, these biblical teachings have often been misused to belittle, silence, or harm others. Any interpretation of Scripture that strips a person of their God-given dignity fails to honor the Imago Dei in them. At The Garden Church, we hold to a complementarian view of church and home leadership. We affirm and encourage women to serve, teach, and lead in a wide range of ministry roles, while we reserve the office of elder for qualified men (1 Tim. 2:11-3:7). We desire for both men and women to live out their unique callings with the full dignity and worth given to every image bearer of God, and to do so in joyful submission to His wise, beautiful, and good design as revealed in creation and affirmed in His Word.



The Mission of the Church

Ever since the introduction of sin in the garden of Eden, God has been on mission to restore us back to His presence (Gen 3:8-9). He sent Jesus on mission to take away sin. He sent the Holy Spirit on mission to empower us. And He sent the church on mission to make disciples. It matters how we present ourselves as the household of God, because the outside world is watching to see if we really know who God is (1 Pet 2:12; 1 Tim 3; Col 4:5-6; Rom 12).

Statement of Faith

The Triune God

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. The three are distinct in role, but one in being. God reveals Himself as love (1 John 4:8,16). Love cannot exist without relationship (Genesis 2:18; 1 Cor 13:5; 1 John 4:18-19; Matt 5:48; Gal 5:13). Therefore, we can be certain that God is indeed and has always been in perpetual relationship with himself (Deu. 6:4; John 10:30; 2 Cor 3:17). He did not create the world out of loneliness, but out of an overflow of His perfect love and relationship with the Son and the Spirit (Genesis 1:2, 26-27; John 1:1-4, 17:24; Eph 1:3-6). The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit work together, independently but always in unison, with different roles, but the same purpose, all so that we can commune with God relationally.

Revelation

We can either guess about who God is or we can know who God is through His revealed Word. We believe that the Bible is God's revelation, helping us to trust Him, and navigate this world. It is alive, active, all powerful, all revealing, and dangerous if mishandled. (Hebrews 4:12-13). It is the inerrant, infallible word of God in its original form, authored by the Holy Spirit and man, from everlasting to everlasting, sufficient in its content, authority, and truth (Isaiah 40:8; Psalm 119; Matthew 5:17-18, 24:35; John 17:17; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2). Even in knowing the superiority of the word of God we can often miss its intent (John 5:39), and abuse it for selfish gain (1 Tim 4:1, 16, 6:3-5; 2 Tim 4:3-4). The Word became flesh and dwelt among us as Jesus, the Christ (John 1:1-4). The Bible is the written word of God, and Jesus is the incarnate Word of God. Because of this, they have the authority to pick and choose what is right and true and beautiful in us, instead of us claiming authority to pick and choose what is right and true and beautiful in them.

Creation of Humanity

Human beings are the only created beings in Genesis 1 that were made in the image of the triune God (1:26-28). They were created male and female, with equal worth and distinct roles. It was not good that man was alone (without community), so God made him a "helper," the Hebrew word "ezer." This is the same word used for God elsewhere in Scripture. So, woman is a helper for man, as God is a helper for man. The purpose of mankind is to be fruitful and multiply image bearers in the land who continually build shalom (peace, wholeness) communities that glorify the author of life and promote human flourishing.



The Fall

Mankind chose to break shalom by trusting a lie from Satan, which Adam considered to be more reliable than the word of God. When shalom broke, it broke all around. Between God and man, man and man, God and creation, man and creation, and every other element associated with that created order. Sin immediately affected mankind and everything else, and continues to pervade our lives. Sin has stolen intimacy from us and our father. Sin burdens us and puts us in opposition to God's will. Sin enslaves us (John 8:34; Rom 7:19-20). Sin kills us (Rom 6:23). It is a burden (Gal 6:1-2), a debt (Matt 6:12), and an illness (Mark 2:17), that defiles (Gal 5:19-21).

The Plan of God

But when the fullness of time came (Gal 4:4), God sent His Son, Jesus, the better Adam, as the promised offspring of Genesis 3:15 to remove sin and restore shalom. When He came He emptied himself in countless ways, meeting people affected by the break of shalom where they were. He humbled. He extended worth. He encouraged. He rebuked. He taught. He listened. He showed us how to live by showing us how to die. Once crucified, God proclaimed the sufficiency of His life through the resurrection of His body. He sent the Holy Spirit of promise to seal all who would believe, and called those believers to go and make more believers, promising to sanctify us, by remaking us into His image, within the community of His church.

The Gospel

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ fulfilled in God's plan. It changes everything. Because of what Jesus has done, we live differently. We spend our money differently. We interact with others differently. We view family differently. We view the world differently. Everything that is good and true and beautiful the gospel can redeem. Everything that elevates self and sin, the gospel opposes. The gospel is the lens that we view our lives through. It reminds us that we were created by God, to image God in all that we do, resulting in human flourishing and glorifying our creator. Exalting Him, and not ourselves. At The Garden Church, our simple definition of the gospel is: While we were dead in our sins, God's kingdom was proclaimed on earth through Jesus, who: Loved us to make us lovely. Died for us that we might live. Rose from the dead and released us on mission to reclaim the hearts of all who would have faith to believe what He has done. To respond to the gospel we simply: Believe it. Repent (or turn away) from our sins and, Receive the Holy Spirit.

The Redemption of Christ

Jesus is God and Man. Because Jesus is God, his sacrifice is sufficient, and because he is man, our sanctification, which causes us to look more like him (Gal. 2:20-21), allows us to humbly follow his example. If Jesus is not God, his sacrifice is not sufficient, but God answered the sufficiency in Christ's resurrection, and through the witnesses that saw him with their own eyes (1 Cor. 15:1-11; 2 Pet. 1:16). If Jesus is not man, then he did not break the curse of Adam and the law. But Scripture speaks to the saving work of Christ who in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) came and did what the law could not (Rom. 8:3). Through Adam's disobedience all men became sinners and through Christ's obedience all men who have faith, have the right to be called sons of God (Rom. 5:19; John 1:12). He was born to show us how to live (Luke 2:10-11). He lived to show us how to lay our lives down (John 13:12-17; 15:12-15). He died that we might be redeemed and reconciled to the Father (John 17:6-26). He ascended to prepare for us a



place and intercede on our behalf for the work he has completed (Luke 14:1-2; Heb. 7:23-27; John 19:30; Rev. 21:6). Jesus Christ is our advocate, the great mediator. We have been chosen in him to be holy and blameless, adopted as sons of God through him. We have been redeemed through his blood, forgiven of our trespasses against God. We've been let in on the mystery of all history in him. Everything that didn't make sense, has been summed up in him. We heard the word of truth, which is the gospel of our salvation in him. We believed in him and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the down payment of our inheritance. And all of this is to the praise and the glory of his name (Eph. 1:3-14).

The Power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit proceeds from an overflow of the relationship found in God the Father and God the Son. He points to Christ as worthy of worship (1 Cor 12:3; Phil. 3:3), he acts as our helper (Jn. 14:16), he is the down payment for our inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14), and he is our sanctification and freedom (2 Cor. 3:17-18). The Holy Spirit was at work in creation, and throughout Scripture, as his power is still at work today. Upon our profession of belief in Jesus as the Christ with our heart and our mouth, the Spirit seals us with the promise of God, sanctifies us to look more like Him, points us to Jesus, illuminates the Word, produces fruit, works in unity, and never contradicts the Father or the Son (Gen 1:2; Psa. 51:11; 1 Sam. 16:13-14; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:3; Jn. 16:13-16; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph 4:1-3).

The Kingdom of God

We believe the kingdom of God has always spread through messy people trusting the word of the Lord over the worry of the world. Jesus speaks about the kingdom of God throughout the gospels as the place where God reigns and man obeys (Mark 1:15; Matt 5:3, 10, 20, 6:9-10, 33, 7:21, 13:31-50, 21:43; Luke 17:20-21; John 3:3; Acts 1:3, 28:31). Where kingdoms of the world are built through conquest and control, God turns that upside down and says that his kingdom is a gift only given to those who admit their inability to earn it (Luke 18:17). Jesus is the giver of that kingdom, which we can only receive by faith. Jesus inaugurates the kingdom (Mark 1:15). Jesus is the kingdom (Luke 17:21). Jesus declares the kingdom (Luke 8:1). Jesus demonstrates the kingdom (Luke 11:20). Jesus deploys the kingdom (Luke 10; Matt 28:18). Jesus purchases the kingdom (Col 2:14-15). Jesus returns the kingdom (Rev 19:16).

God's New People

The church is the household of God (Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 4:17; Luke 15:11-32) signifying not only a place of confession and reconciliation, but also of discipline and expectations. When referring to others in the church of the New Testament, phrases such as little children, brothers and sisters, brethren and beloved (Jas. 1:16, 2:15; 2 Thess. 3:13; 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14; Jn. 13:33; 1 Jn. 4:4) are often used to denote the relational familiarity of all who are in Christ. Throughout the Old Testament we are also given consistent references to the people of God, their children, children's children, future generations, and their fathers who were before (Gen. 5:1, 45:10; Ex. 31:16; Num. 14:18; Deu. 6:4-9, 10:15). Therefore, within the entirety of Scripture, we see the familial and relational nature of Yahweh to his people. But through the work of our Lord Jesus, The church of the New Testament, has become God's New People, a family freed from the genealogy and geography that was limited to the people of the Old Testament. Now, through the blood of Jesus, we, as this new people, have been reconciled and redeemed, bought and adopted into the family of God by His grace, through our faith.



Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. Baptism is like our wedding day. It is not when we fall in love with Jesus and understand what He has done, but rather, it is when we outwardly profess that love within the context of a body that will help us walk out our new life in faith. There are many in our context that misunderstand the biblical reason for baptism. Although, it is an important outward declaration, it is not for salvation, or to say it another way, you cannot just be baptized and be saved. It is a commitment to Christ lived out in a commitment to Christ's church which leads to a life lived out in union with Him. If baptism is the wedding ceremony in which a believer publicly declares his or her commitment to Christ, the Lord's Supper is similar to an anniversary celebration in which the wedding vows are renewed. Through the ordinance of the Lord's Supper we renew the commitment to Christ and our family looking back in remembrance of His sacrifice, looking here at the faith and endurance of the saints and looking to the future when He will return and we will feast and fellowship in glory.

The Restoration of All Things

As we witness Jesus ascend in the book of Acts, we are given an incredible promise by two messengers in white robes...he is coming back (Acts 1:9-11). We believe that Jesus will come again in the same way that he left, to consummate the kingdom he inaugurated. He will dwell with his people, and remove all death, pain and sadness. He is making all things new (Rev 21:1-5). The righteous shall rise for their inheritance, but the guilty will by no means go unpunished (Rev 21:7). He will be our temple and our light and we will be with him forever.



HOW IS THE CHURCH STRUCTURED?

TGC is a Baptist church, which simply means we give to a co-op that is helpful in raising up new leaders, and sending people. And we affirm believers' baptism, which is baptizing those who profess belief, not babies. We have no oversight from other Baptist churches, although we do have some partners. And if I felt like the Baptists were going in a way this church could no longer support, then we would leave, without hesitation.

LEADERSHIP & HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

Members

Members are family. We are members of *one another*, not an organization.

Members:

- Commit to life together
- Care for one another
- Hold one another accountable in love

Members vote on:

- Hiring the Lead Pastor
- Electing Elders
- Major financial decisions (property, loans)

Members are also:

- Invited to members' meetings
 - Eligible to serve in certain ministries (kids, youth, worship, groups, security)
-

Pastors

Pastors are elders on staff.

- Preaching & teaching
- Prayer
- Vision
- Shepherding the church publicly



At The Garden, this role is held by qualified men, not because women are inferior, but to honor what we believe Scripture teaches about church leadership.

Elders

Elders provide spiritual oversight and care for the church, including the pastors.

- Guard doctrine
- Shepherd souls
- Lead humbly
- Give an account to God

They serve by leading. (1 Peter 5:2–3)

Administrative Leadership Team

This team helps steward systems, finances, communication, and logistics.

- Free pastors and elders to focus on shepherding
 - Ensure ministries are supported and sustainable
 - Help the whole body function well
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Deacons

Deacons lead by serving.

- Meet practical needs
- Protect unity
- Support the mission

Deacons may be men or women.
(Acts 6)

Staff

Staff handles day-to-day ministry operations.

- Support ministries
- Execute vision
- Serve under elder oversight



Budgets are:

- Approved by elders
 - Supported by members
-

HOW THIS ALL FITS TOGETHER

The goal of all this is not control, it's care and protection.

- Members participate
- Elders shepherd
- Pastors lead spiritually
- Deacons serve practically
- Staff supports daily ministry
- Administrative leaders strengthen systems

Different roles. Same mission. One body.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

- **Elders** lead and govern with prayerful dependence and communal wisdom
 - **Staff** carries out ministry with clarity and flexibility under the care of the elders
 - **Members** affirm major decisions, vote on key transitions, and contribute to the church's health through feedback and participation
-

ASSIGNMENT

- Next week: Spiritual Gifts, Serving, and the Covenant
- Assignment: Complete the spiritual gifts assessment BEFORE next session:
- This will help you begin identifying how God has uniquely shaped you to contribute to the body.



Session 3: Spiritual Gifts & Service

Theme: *Every Member a Minister*

WHY WE SERVE

Ephesians 2:8-10 - We are saved *by grace*, but also *for good works* (Eph. 2:10)

Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 - The Spirit distributes different gifts to each person (Rom 12; 1 Cor. 12)

Ephesians 4:11-16 - When every part of the body works properly, the church grows (Eph. 4)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AT THE GARDEN

1. Administration

You organize systems and people effectively.

- (1 Cor. 12:28; Ex. 18:21)
- *Admin Team, Event Planning, Operations*

2. Teaching

You communicate God's Word with clarity and depth.

- (Rom. 12:6-8; 2 Tim. 2:2)
- *Youth, Kids, Groups, Curriculum Writing*

3. Wisdom

You apply biblical truth in timely, practical ways.

- (James 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:8)
- *Discipleship, Mentorship, Elder Discernment*

4. Shepherding

You care deeply for others and walk with them spiritually.

- (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 5:2-3)
- *Small Group Leader, Youth Mentor, Deacon Roles*

5. Evangelism

You love helping others take next steps toward Jesus.

- (Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5)
- *Welcome Team, Outreach Events, Local Missions*

6. Leadership

You cast vision, mobilize others, and steward influence.

- (Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 5:17)
- *Team Leader Roles, Ministry Development*



7. **Mercy**

You empathize with hurting people and move toward them.

- (Rom. 12:8; Col. 3:12)
- *Benevolence, Visitation, Compassion Ministries*

8. **Giving**

You joyfully invest resources into kingdom work.

- (Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:7)
- *Generosity Projects, Benevolence, Supply Drives*

9. **Knowledge**

You seek and share deep biblical insight.

- (1 Cor. 12:8; Prov. 15:14)
- *Study Groups, Teaching Prep, Theological Development*

10. **Prophecy**

You boldly speak truth to strengthen and align the church.

- (1 Cor. 14:3; Rom. 12:6)
- *Prayer Team, Discipleship, Exhortation*

11. **Discernment**

You recognize truth from error and sense spiritual dynamics.

- (1 Cor. 12:10; Heb. 5:14)
- *Prayer Ministry, Pastoral Support, Safety Team*

12. **Faith**

You have bold confidence in God's power and promises.

- (Heb. 11:1; 1 Cor. 12:9)
- *Prayer Team, Vision Initiatives, Encouragement*

13. **Apostleship**

You pioneer new ministries or contexts for the gospel.

- (Rom. 15:20–21; Eph. 4:11–12)
- *Church Planting, New Ministry Launches*

14. **Service / Helps**

You quietly meet needs and support others practically.

- (1 Pet. 4:10–11; Acts 6:2–4)
- *Set-up/Teardown, Hospitality, Facility Team*

15. **Hospitality**

You create welcoming, warm spaces for others to feel seen.

- (1 Pet. 4:9; Rom. 12:13)
- *Greeters, Coffee, Events, Meals Ministry*

16. **Exhortation**

You inspire and strengthen others through encouragement.

- (Rom. 12:8; Acts 14:22)
- *Prayer, Follow-up, Teaching Support*



SERVING AT THE GARDEN

Ministry Opportunities:

- Worship Team
- Admin Team (Member)
- Teacher / Curriculum Creator (Member)
- Coffee & Food
- Greeter Team
- Tech Team
- Youth Ministry
- Group Leader (Member)
- Prayer Team
- Security/Safety Team (Member)
- Children's Worker (Member)

Which ministry might align with your gifts and bring you joy?

Through what has been taught and the spiritual gifts test results you have received, please write down 3 options:

I believe God may be calling me to serve in...



Session 4: Our Covenant & Next Steps

(READ THE COVENANT HANDOUT)

WHAT'S NEXT?

There are three responses after taking this class:

1. "I need more time."

That's great! There is no rush to make this commitment. Reach out to a pastor or elder. We'd love to grab coffee and keep the conversation going.

2. "This isn't for me."

That's also great! We honor the clarity given by the Lord. If another church would be a better fit, we want to bless you and help you connect.

3. "I'm ready!"

That's awesome! The next step is to schedule a Covenant Conversation with an elder.

FINAL CONNECTION POINTS

Vine Groups: Join a group at thegardenchurctx.com/groups

Serving: Use your gifts! thegardenchurctx.com/serve

Baptism: If you haven't been baptized, this is your next step of obedience
thegardenchurctx.com/baptism

Email Newsletter: Stay informed and engaged
<https://thegardenchurctx.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1098191>



The Garden Membership Covenant

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a sacred promise, an intentional, relational commitment. In Scripture, covenants are how God binds Himself to His people (Gen. 9, Jer. 31, Matt. 26). In the local church, membership is a covenant made between individuals and a gospel community, reflecting the mutual commitments we make to Christ and to one another.

Covenants are not contractual like employment, nor transactional like a grocery store relationship. They are covenantal, like our marriages. They say, “I’ll be there even when you can’t be.” They are built on grace, not performance. And in the church, they are dual commitments: between member and elder, sheep and shepherd, believer and body.

At The Garden Church, covenant membership is not about joining an organization but about living as the family of God. This covenant expresses the biblical expectations of all believers and clarifies what it means to belong, grow, and serve together in this body.

What We Believe (Doctrinal Summary)

These beliefs reflect the **Closed-Handed Doctrines** of The Garden Church. They are rooted in historic, orthodox Christianity:

We believe:

- The Bible is the inspired, authoritative, and sufficient Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Psalm 19:7–11).
- There is one God—Father, Son, and Spirit—eternally existing in three persons (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19).
- Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, born of a virgin, crucified for our sin, risen bodily, and returning in power (John 1:1,14; 1 Cor. 15).
- Humanity is sinful by nature and action, in need of salvation (Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:1–3).
- Salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus alone (Eph. 2:8–9; John 14:6).
- The Church is Christ’s body, empowered by the Spirit to make disciples of all nations (Acts 1:8; Eph. 4:11–16).
- There is a future resurrection of the dead—eternal joy for believers, and eternal judgment for those apart from Christ (John 5:28–29).



Open-Handed Doctrines: Members may hold different convictions on issues like spiritual gifts, the age of the earth, or end times, while honoring the church's teaching and striving for unity in love.

For more on our beliefs, see thegardenchurchtx.com/beliefs

Our Mission, Pathway, and Culture

At The Garden Church, our mission is simple:

Delight in Jesus. Make Disciples. Model the Gospel.

We follow the **Garden Pathway** as our model of discipleship:

- **Abide** — Be with Jesus
- **Train** — Become like Jesus
- **Proclaim** — Do what Jesus did

And we live this out through a culture marked by:

- **Joy in Christ**
 - **Formation in Community**
 - **Authenticity in Grace**
 - **Unity in Mission**
-

The Garden Church Elders Commit to:

- Appoint elders and deacons according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (*I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4*).
- Prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the Spirit (*Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4*).
- Care for the church, in part by praying for you regularly, and to seek her growth in grace, truth, and love (*Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1-4*).
- Provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (*Acts 20:27-28; I Timothy 4:16; II Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1*).



- Equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- Be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; I Timothy 1:3-7; I John 4:1).
- Lovingly exercise biblical discipline when necessary for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole (*Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20*).
- Set an example for and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (*Philippians 3:17; I Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; I Peter 5:3*).

As a Covenant Member, I Commit to:

ABIDE — Presence with Christ and His People

- Prioritize time with Jesus through the rhythms of **devotion, prayer, worship, and fellowship**
- Live rooted in the Word and dependent on the Spirit
- Participate in weekly worship gatherings and belong to a Vine Group
- Reorient my heart daily to the gospel and beauty of Christ

TRAIN — Formation into Christlikeness

- Practice **repentance, generosity, and service** as normal rhythms of grace
- Receive spiritual leadership with humility and accountability
- Grow in obedience to Jesus and in love for His church
- Train my household to walk in the way of Jesus

PROCLAIM — Participation in Christ's Mission

- Commit to live as a sent person—sharing the gospel through my life and words
- Use my spiritual gifts to build up the body in unity and love
- Partner with others inside and outside our church to model the gospel locally and globally
- Multiply disciples, groups, and leaders as God provides

Life Together as the Family of God

In this covenant, I also commit to:

- Submit to the authority of Scripture as the final word on all matters



- Joyfully support the vision and teaching of the elders, while pursuing peace and unity (Heb. 13:17; Eph. 4:1–3)
- Participate regularly in communion and baptism
- Walk in personal holiness and integrity, including purity in marriage or singleness, and repentance when I fall short
- Pursue relational reconciliation and loving correction within the body when needed (Matt. 18:15–17)
- Steward my time, finances, and gifts for God’s mission through this church

This covenant reflects the grace we’ve received in Christ. It is not legalism, but love. Not duty, but discipleship. It is our joy to walk together in His name.

Final Commitment

I have completed the Membership Class and fully affirm the doctrine, mission, and pathway of The Garden Church. I have turned from sin, trusted in Jesus, and have been baptized as a believer. I now commit to walk in joyful covenant with this church family, under the guidance of its elders and in shared pursuit of Christ’s glory.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____



The Garden Church

Covenant Conversation

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How long have you been involved with The Garden Church?
2. What makes you want to be a member at The Garden Church?
3. What is the gospel? What has your response been to it?
4. When did you become a Christian? Tell me about that.
5. Were you ever baptized?
6. Did you attend any churches before The Garden Church? Were you a member? What motivated your leaving? Do any churches currently consider you a member?
7. Have you read our Membership Covenant? Do you have any questions or concerns?
8. Will you follow the leadership of The Garden Church as they follow the Scriptures and our distinctives?
9. Describe the role you want the church to play in your life.
10. What questions and/or concerns do you have for me?

