



PARTNERSHIP



GREEN HILLS CHURCH EXISTS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD BY
MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS.

WE ARE A SOJOURNING COMMUNITY OF IMPERFECT, YET
REDEEMED PEOPLE WALKING BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT; IN LINE WITH THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE; UNITED
AROUND THE NAME AND PURPOSE OF JESUS CHRIST.

WE ENDEAVOR TO SEE EVERY PERSON BUILDING CHRIST'S
CHURCH FOR NASHVILLE AND THE NATIONS.

INTRODUCTION

Green Hills Church partnership covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual partners whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is found in the presence of the Lord. The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:

- To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both the elders of Green Hills Church and the individual partners of Green Hills Church body.
- To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Green Hills Church body.
- To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

Each of these functions is in accordance with the document's overall vision to provide an accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that Green Hills Church would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

Green Hills Church partnership covenant is comprised of a section on:

- **the Church,**
- **the nature of covenants,**
- **a statement of basic beliefs,**
- **a statement of theological convictions,**
- **the obligations of Green Hills Church elders to Green Hills Church body,**
- **the obligations of partners to Green Hills Church body.**

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The church exists for the display of the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God's redemptive purposes in the world. Since the beginning, God has been creating and calling forth His people for the display of His glory in a grand narrative of redemption and reconciliation. Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, the gospel is the means by which the world is being made right. The church is God's redemptive body for declaring this gospel to the ends of the earth. The gospel also carries with it the promise of ultimate renewal, a restoration even more glorious than Eden, and thus believers eagerly anticipate the return of Christ.

The Church universal (i.e., all believers everywhere) is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Cor. 5:17-20). The Church universal is being used to write God's beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation. In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body (i.e., a particular group of believers in a particular locale) is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Eph. 2:19), the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2, 9) and the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31). 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its individual partners. To be a Christian – a disciple and follower of Jesus – is to be in interdependent connection with other believers through a local church. As the Scriptures say, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12:21). Likewise, a partner of the church cannot say to another partner that he or she is unnecessary. We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:3-8). Contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.

WHY PARTNERSHIP?

Partnership at Green Hills is participation in a family, a microcosm of the universal household of God. All partners are united to Christ and thus to each other. Unity within the church is expressed in love for God and a love for others, both those within the family and those who are not. Because of the identification of Christ with His church, Christians are expected to display His gospel in a manner which is worthy of Him (Eph. 4:1).

Why do you call it Partnership?

Historically, the church has long used the language of membership to express the covenantal commitment that individual believers make with one another to submit to the authority of the church and remain accountable to each other and leadership for holy living. And rightly so. Frequently, Paul refers to the body of Christ as composed of individual members (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Eph. 4:16).

Membership in our culture, however, communicates something far different than the picture we believe is widely portrayed of committed Christians in the New Testament. Membership in the church is not like membership at a country club, reward program, or exclusive society. Membership, culturally, comes pre-packaged with connotations of consumerism and passivity. Members typically assume a posture asking for benefits that accrue to them.

Membership in a church is different. Here at Green Hills, membership means active participation and embracing a sense of ownership in the mission and vision of the church. It means ministry and service, and adopting the posture of servant leadership (Matt. 20:25-28) – believing that we are a church for the sake of others, not primarily ourselves. This is a kind of deep commitment that requires meaningful participation in the ongoing life, health, and growth of the church. Ultimately, when we read the pattern set forth by exhortations placed upon New Testament members, we believe *Partnership* best encapsulates the weighty commitments expected of the people of God.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is generally defined as “a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action.” Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants, some between God and man (Gen. 6, 9, 15; Ezek. 20; Hos. 2; Jer. 31; Matt. 26), while others are solely between men (1 Sam. 18, 2 Sam. 5). In some covenants, one party binds his or herself to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the agreement. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to adhere to the obligations. While God’s covenant with the Church universal is an example of the former, the local church covenant represents the latter. If at any time one of the parties of this church covenant continues in a state of unfaithfulness to its provisions, the other is released from certain obligations.

The Green Hills Church covenant formally binds individual partners to one another in a mutually edifying relationship for the purpose of maturing in Christ and imaging the gospel.

The covenant of Green Hills Church contains many conditions that are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians, whether partners of Green Hills Church or elsewhere, are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ-follower regardless of any failure on the part of local church to live up to her covenant obligations.

If at any time an individual partner feels as though the corporate church body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual partner to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the leadership of the church. If the church elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness, then the partner is freed from his or her partnership obligations and encouraged to seek partnership elsewhere given the church’s disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer partnership elsewhere.

While focusing primarily in language on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her elders and her individual partners, the covenant is first and foremost an acknowledgement of general Christian obligations and an agreement to enter into those duties for God’s glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from partnership at Green Hills Church.

I believe:

- The Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient. (*Ps. 19:7-11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21*).
- There is only one God, creator of heaven and earth (*Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-6; 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5*).
- God is triune, existing eternally in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit. The Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son (*Gen. 1:26; Ps. 45:6-7; 110:1; Matt. 3:13-17; 28:17-20; 1 Cor. 12:4-6*).
- All humanity, apart from Christ, is sinful by both birth and action (*Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23; 5:8, 12-21; 7:18; Eph. 2:1-3*).²
- The deserved penalty for sin is both physical and spiritual death (*Gen. 2:15-17; 3:19; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Jas. 1:14-15*).
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully human (*Matt. 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Col. 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3*).
- Jesus Christ died as my sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (*John 1:29; 10:1-18; Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pet. 3:18*).
- Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, physically ascended into heaven, and will one day physically return (*Matt. 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25, 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:12-34; 1 Thess. 4:16; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 1:7*).

STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward.³ Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (*Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15*).
- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward.³ Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (*Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15*).
- Only through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (*John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Tim. 2:5-6*).⁴
- The church is all those from every tongue, tribe, and nation who have from ages past to present been united to Jesus Christ through faith by God's grace. The church is God's chosen means for accomplishing his plan of redemption by making disciples. The church is Christ's bride awaiting his return; Christ's body of which he is the head; and Christ's building in which God dwells and is worshipped. The church universal is made visibly manifest in the presence of local congregations of believers (*Matt. 16:15-19; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 9:31; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Heb. 11:39-40; 1 Pet. 2:5-10; 5:1-4; Rev. 21:2-3*).

²We recognize that Adam and Eve were not "born" and were not created sinful; rather, they became sinful through their action.

³This is not intended to deny the salvation of Old Testament saints, but is instead a recognition that they were saved through faith in Jesus Christ though the content of that faith was less clear than it is for us on this side of the cross and resurrection.

⁴See previous footnote

STATEMENT OF THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

While the doctrines expressed in the “Statement of Basic Beliefs” are those that are recognized to be universal and primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs which the leadership of Green Hills Church holds as convictions. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of partnership, but it should be known that Green Hills Church will preach, teach and counsel in accordance with these theological convictions.

For instance:

- Divine sovereignty and man’s will
- The nature of continuous gifts of the Holy Spirit
- The complementarian role of men and women in the church and home
- Baptism by immersion

It is a responsibility of covenant partnership to have read Green Hills Church’s Beliefs (www.greenhillschurch.org/beliefs) in their entirety and address any questions, comments, or concerns with a pastor or elder.

By entering into Partnership, I understand:

- that Green Hills Church has certain theological convictions to which it is strongly committed.
- the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace.
- that I will adhere to Green Hills Church’s “Statement of Basic Beliefs,” and I will not be divisive over Green Hills Church’s theological convictions found here in the “Statement of Theological Convictions” and expounded in the church’s Beliefs.

ELDERS COVENANT

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual partners. The following is a rather extensive overview of the requirements for elders as spelled out within the Scriptures.

As shepherds and overseers of Green Hills Church, elders will:

Teach and Guard Doctrine

- Appoint elders and deacons (including staff who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (*1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4*).
- Provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (*Acts 20:27-28; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 2:1*).
- Equip the partners of the church for the work of ministry (*Eph. 4:11-16*).

Provide Direction

- 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 of the Spirit (*Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4*).
- Set an example and join partners in fulfilling the obligations of church partnership stated below (*Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Pet. 5:3*).

Exercise Discipline

- Care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (*Matt. 28:16-20; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 1:28; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4*).
- Guard against false teachers and teachings (*Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1*).
- Lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole (*Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20*).

PARTNERS COVENANT

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as “living by the Spirit” (*Rom. 8*).

The requirements of this partnership covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this covenant functions primarily as an accessible yet non-exhaustive framework of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

As a Partner of Green Hills Church, I will:

Worship Christ

- Seek to live in obedience to the teaching of Scripture as the ultimate authority and final arbiter on all issues (*Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21*).
- Pursue growth in Christian maturity through corporate worship, Scripture reading, prayer, learning in community, and submission to godly leadership and practice of spiritual disciplines (*Lk. 18:1; Jn. 14:21; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-22*).
- Be baptized or acknowledge my baptism as a believer. (*Rom. 6:3-4*).
- Participate in communion with Green Hills Church (*1 Cor. 11:23-26*).
- Follow the example of Christ in personal and corporate holiness* (*Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 4:1-3*).

Pursue Community

- Regularly participate in the life of Green Hills Church by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community and serving those within and outside of this community (*Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; Titus 3:14*).

PARTNERS COVENANT

- Utilize the time, gifts, and resources God has given me to promote the spiritual vitality and well-being of this church family. I know this involves knowing and being known by others, serving in practical ways, speaking truth in love, receiving help, resolving conflict, and praying for others (*Rom. 12:3-21; Eph. 4:1-16*).
- Steward my finances and give generously to support the needs and mission of the church as a cheerful and sacrificial giver (*Matt. 25:14-30; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; 2 Thess. 1:3*).
- Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit. I understand this will involve submission to church elders and other appointed leaders, confessing my own sin to God and other believers, receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached by fellow believers, graciously following biblical guidelines for discipline where sin is evident in another (*Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18; 15-20; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 12:5-11, 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5*).

Live on Mission

- Live out and share the gospel both locally - to my family, neighborhood, workplace, circle of friends, and city - and globally - declaring the gospel to all nations - with my church family at Green Hills (*Jer. 29:7; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:4-8*).
- Pursue intentional, transparent relationships with the lost and least in my sphere of influence. I know this will involve giving generously, blessing and listening to people around me, working to restore the areas of brokenness in our city, practicing hospitality, living in repentance and faith, and praying for those whom God puts in my life (*Matt. 5:13-16; Jn. 17:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:12*).

**Examples abound. Below are a few actions addressed in the Scriptures:*

- *Practicing complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual, monogamous marriage. This includes fleeing from all forms of sexual infidelity - adultery, fornication, and pornography (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 6:15-20, 10:8; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).*
- *Seeking to preserve the gift of marriage and agreement to walk through steps of reconciliation at Green Hills Church before pursuing divorce (Matt. 19:1-12; Mk. 10:1-12; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; re: the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for resolving legal matters within the church assembly in 1 Cor. 6).*
- *Refraining from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip, and other sinful behavior as Scripture dictates (Rom. 1:28-32, 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:18; Jas. 3:3-18).*
- *Taking Christian freedom seriously by choosing the welfare of brothers and sisters in Christ by refraining from activities that might foolishly lead them astray (Rom. 14:14-23; 1 Cor. 8:1-13).*

BECOME A PARTNER

At Green Hills Church, Partnership is defined by committing to be in relationship with Jesus Christ and other Partners through serving and community. Partnership also involves accountability to the leadership of the church and a commitment to practice good stewardship principles by regular giving marked by growing generosity.

I am committing to be a Partner:

Name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr _____

Date of Birth _____ Marital Status: Single / Married

Spouse (if applicable) _____

Children & Ages (if applicable) _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Occupation _____ Phone _____

Name of former church _____ City/State of former church _____

Baptism (check one):

- I have trusted Christ as my Lord & Savior and was baptized after my profession of faith.
Baptism Date (approx) _____ Baptized by (church name): _____
- I have trusted Christ as my Lord & Savior and have not been baptized after my profession of faith.
- I would like to talk with one of the pastors further about baptism.

By signing this document I affirm that:

- I have trusted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and have been baptized (or will be baptized at the next opportunity) following my profession of faith.
- I enthusiastically support the mission and leadership of Green Hills Church and desire to mature as a disciple of Christ.
- I have read and assent to all articles of the Partnership Covenant. I willingly enter into covenant Partnership with other Partners at Green Hills Church.
- As Partner, I am jointly responsible for whether or not this church family continues to faithfully proclaim the gospel – that is for what this church teaches and whether or not its Partners' lives remain faithful.

Signed _____ Date _____

Confirmed (pastor's signature) _____ Date _____





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