

# Belong

THE JOURNEY



 CONNECT

 GROW

 SERVE

 HOLY SPIRIT

 PARTNER

## PARTNERING WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

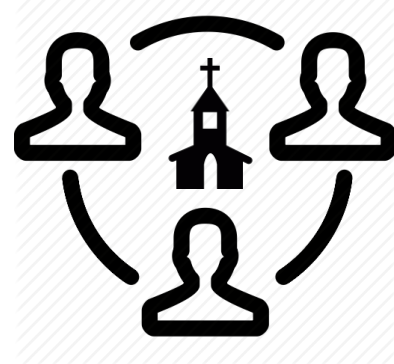
God's family functions much like a natural family does. Every member has roles and responsibilities, takes ownership, protects, loves, supports, and makes sacrifices that help the family succeed. The "Church" is God's family. It is both global and local.

*"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." Ephesians 4:15-16*

**GLOBAL CHURCH**  
Matthew 16:15-20



**LOCAL CHURCH**  
Matthew 18:15-22



## WHY THE LOCAL CHURCH MATTERS?

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God wants every believer in Jesus to be a healthy part of his local church family—the local church family is who you practice your faith with. Without local church communities, God’s people aren’t able to build each other up in their faith, and there is no community to champion God’s kingship, his salvation, his love, and his justice in that local community.

### Believers in a local church should do these things together:



We all need a place to belong—a place where we are accepted for who we are. A healthy family who has relationship and is committed to each other.



We grow best in the security of loving, safe relationships. In community we receive care, teaching, encouragement, and correction from each other. We strive to be a safe place where we have permission to not be perfect, but to keep growing in the same direction—towards Jesus.



Each community of local church believers shares the same vision and values; builds the kingdom of God together by aiming at the same goals; and equips every member to play their part. Everyone is needed. We all have spiritual gifts that God wants to use to build His kingdom.

#### **PETRA’S MISSION**

“Empowered to bring Jesus’ love, healing, and hope to the world.”

#### **PETRA’S HISTORY**

Petra began as a church plant in 1983. Petra is part of the Hopewell Network of Churches, a nondenominational fellowship of churches with Anabaptist roots. The network consists of about fifteen churches stateside and six international networks worldwide. Additionally, Petra values collaboration and partnership with other likeminded churches in our region.

**YOUR PARTNERSHIP** -- We believe you are here to be equipped to fulfill God’s vision for your life and to become an important factor in fulfilling the vision God has given to Petra Church. Acts 4:33; 26:19; Joel 2:28; Exodus 14:15-16; Ephesians 3:21.

# WHAT ARE WE PASSIONATE ABOUT? – CORE VALUES

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These are the non-negotiable priorities that drive everything we do. We are passionate about these!

## **1. Devotion to Jesus**

We're passionate about every person encountering Jesus for themselves and experiencing personal salvation and relationship.

## **2. Sharing Jesus With Others**

Through personal relationships and intentional outreach, we are committed to sharing Jesus' love, healing, and hope with our friends and neighbors locally and globally.

## **3. Following Jesus**

Our goal is for each of us to follow in Jesus' steps as we think like him, love like him, live like him, and serve like him.

## **4. Partnering with the Holy Spirit**

We believe it is through the Holy Spirit, his empowering baptism, and spiritual gifts that we can live as Jesus' disciples and complete the mission he entrusted to us.

## **5. Enjoying God's Presence**

Above all else, our pursuit in church, ministry, and life is experiencing God's transforming presence.

## **6. Healing Grace**

We receive Jesus' healing love and power in our broken lives and bodies through grace filled ministry.

## **7. Grow in Groups, Serve in Teams**

The love of Jesus becomes real when we do life together in groups, serve on teams, and live in loving relationship with each other.

## **8. Guidance and Encouragement from the Scripture**

We draw wisdom and direction from our lives from the fully inspired authority of God's Word.

## PETRA PROCEDURES

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Here are some of the ways that we do things around here that may be different from other churches.

1. Every person must experience their own personal salvation and relationship with Jesus Christ. *1 Cor 3:11; Matt.16:16-18*  
—As opposed to inheriting faith from family, or believing that “going to church” is good enough to get you to heaven.
2. Every believer is baptized based on their confession of who Jesus is. *Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:19*  
—As opposed to baptizing children, or using baptism to become a church member.
3. Every believer in the community is equipped by God to be a minister of his love, grace, and truth. *1 Peter 2:5-9; 2 Cor. 3:6*  
—As opposed to clergy doing all the ministry.
4. Growing in Jesus in daily living and in community. *Acts 2:42-47; Matt. 16:24-25*  
—As opposed to relying on creeds, and catechisms as a means to affirm “right-standing.”
5. A New Testament form of church governance: leaders operating within a team of elders who discern God’s vision, strategy, and wisdom for the community. *Acts 15, 14:23, 16:4*  
—As opposed to voting on church decisions or vesting authority with no accountability.

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

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### REQUIREMENTS:

Our desire is that as you better understand who we are, where we are going, and why we exist, you will be willing to take the next step and commit to being part of the Petra Church family.

- Complete all 5 BELONG classes.
- Schedule a LAUNCH conversation.
- Fill out a membership application.

### PERSONAL COMMITMENTS:

- A. SALVATION IN JESUS. I acknowledge Jesus as the only way of salvation. Through repentance I have personally received Jesus Christ as my Savior.
- B. MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT OF 10 YEARS. I am at least 10 years of age or older.
- C. WATER BAPTISM. I have been baptized publicly as a believer.
  1. Petra begins baptizing believers at the age of 10.
  2. To anyone joining the community who has been infant-baptized by another church, we ask you to be baptized again upon your personal confession of faith as a believer.
- D. GROWING SPIRITUALLY. I commit myself to growing in my faith continually, surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus, and developing habits:
  1. Regular time in God's word
  2. Regular times in prayer
  3. Regular times of fellowship in church and small groups
  4. Regular tithing – See *Appendix Tithe*
- E. AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURES. I accept the full authority and inspiration of all scripture and commit to obeying it as the authority over my life.
- F. HOLY SPIRIT. I commit to growing my relationship with the Holy Spirit. I accept every aspect of his ministry in my life including, his holiness, his fellowship, his gifts, his power and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

## COMMUNAL COMMITMENTS:

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- A. COMMIT TO THE WEEKEND SERVICE. I commit to regularly attending Sunday services. I commit to finding community and regular times of fellowship in church and in Petra Groups.
- B. SUPPORT THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY. I commit my support to the vision, values, and purpose of my church and its leadership. I am willing to come under the spiritual authority of this community.
- C. SHARING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH
  - 1. By praying for its growth and health.
  - 2. By sharing the gospel with those whom God has placed in your life.
  - 3. By welcoming and caring for those who come to Petra.
  - 4. By discovering and using my gifts and talents.
- D. PROTECTING THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH.
  - 1. By acting in love towards others.
  - 2. By speaking in ways that build others up.
  - 3. By following the vision and the counsel of the leaders.
  - 4. By walking in forgiveness when offended.

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you agree to these personal and communal commitments, and have completed all five topics, then you can fill out a MEMBERSHIP Application. Your signature on the application is your way of committing yourself to these values. The Application is included at the end of this packet.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

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- A. We believe in one God, eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19; Heb. 11:6; Deut. 6:4
  
- B. We believe in Jesus Christ as God who became flesh, born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life, was crucified for our sins, was resurrected from the dead, and ascended, sitting at the right hand of the Father as the exalted Lord and head of the church. Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 1:4; Col. 1:15-19; Eph. 1:22-23; Jn. 1:14; Heb. 1:1-6
  
- C. We believe in the deity and person of the Holy Spirit, his indwelling presence, regenerating work, empowering baptism, spiritual gifts, and equipping ministry in the church today. Ezk. 36:26; Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:1-18; Joel 2:28-29; Jn. 14:26; 16:7-10; 16:13
  
- D. We believe that all Scripture is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God, and is fully reliable and trustworthy. It is inerrant in the original text. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jn. 10:35 Gal. 1:11-12; Prov. 30:5; Heb. 4:12
  
- E. We believe God created the heavens and earth and all that is in them in six days. We believe that God has created human beings in his divine image with a special dignity accorded to them out of all the works of creation. They were made for relationship with God. Gen. 1:1, 31, Jn.1:3; Gen. 1:26-27, 31; Ps. 8:5-6; Gen. 3:8-9
  
- F. We believe, beginning with Adam and Eve's sinful rebellion, we have all received a sinful nature and been given over to the enslaving powers of evil and eternal death and separation from God. Gen. 2 & 3, Rom. 1:21-32, Rom. 5-7, Ps. 14:2-3, Eph. 2:1, Rom. 3:12, 23
  
- G. We believe that, only through Jesus Christ, God offers salvation from sin and a new way of life. We receive God's salvation and are born again by the Spirit of God when we repent and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is by faith, through God's grace, that we are saved. Jn. 3:16, Acts 4:12, 1 Jn. 4:14, 2 Cor. 5:19, Matt. 26:28, Eph. 2:5-9, Rom. 3:20-31, Rom. 5, Heb. 2:14-14, Col. 2:13-15
  
- H. We believe the church is a community of redeemed people worldwide under the Lordship of Jesus who meet regularly to be discipled, worship, share communion, fellowship, and carry out the great commission together. Jesus established the local church to function with ordained leaders and a form of governance that protects, guides and releases people in their gifts to minister. The church functions under the theocratic rule of God with clearly defined elders. Local churches are accountable to apostolic leaders. Eph. 4, Acts 2, Acts 11, 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Gal. 3:26-29
  
- I. We believe the mission of the church is to take the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations, making disciples of them, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things as commanded by Jesus Christ. The mission of the church includes ministry to the poor and helpless. Acts 1:8, Matt. 28:18-20, Mk. 1:15, 2 Cor. 5:14, Eph. 2:17-20

- J. We believe that the baptism of believers with water is a pledge of their covenant with God. It identifies them with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is a sign of their cleansing and freedom from sin, and their commitment to walk in the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Immersion is our primary mode of baptism. Rom. 6:1-6, Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:22-24, 36-41, 8:26-39, Gal. 3:26-29, Col. 2:10-15
- K. We believe that through the Lord's Supper the church renews its covenant with God and with each other, and participates in the life and death of Jesus Christ until he comes. 1 Cor. 11:23-32, 10:16-17, Lk. 22:15-30, Jer. 31: 31-34
- L. We believe in practicing discipline the church is to liberate erring brothers and sisters from sin, and to restore them to a right relationship with God and to fellowship in the church. Matt. 18:15-22, Jn. 20:23, Gal. 6:1-2, Deut. 19:15, Eph. 4:15, 1 Cor. 5:3-5, 2 Cor. 2:5-1
- M. We believe that God created humankind in His image, intentionally male and female (Genesis 1:27), with each bringing unique qualities to sexuality and relationships. Sexuality is a wonderful gift from God to be expressed in marriage for procreation, union, and mutual delight or in celibacy in devotion to God (I Corinthians 7:32-35). We believe that marriage is the union of one man and one woman and is a sacred covenant designed by God to be a lifelong relationship and commitment between a husband and a wife (Matthew 19:3-6). We will teach and uphold God's marriage design but also seek to minister to those who suffer the consequences of its brokenness. We also affirm and believe and will teach the Scriptures which state that...
  - Fornication, which is sexual relations prior to marriage, is sin. (I Corinthians 6:18-20; I Thessalonians 4:1-8
  - Adultery, which is sexual relations outside of marriage, is sin. (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27);
  - Homosexuality, which is sexual relations between the same sex, is sin. (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27);
  - Involvement in pornography, pedophilia, lascivious conduct and transgender behavior is sin. (Matthew 5:28; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Colossians 3:5; 1 Peter 4:3);
  - Any kind of other sexual perversion is sin. (I Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21).

All of these are outside of God's blessing and design for sexual expression. We further believe that sexual sins can be forgiven by God's grace when those involved repent and turn from and seek deliverance from these sins. (I Corinthians 6:11). We, as a church, will not support anything that...
  - Promotes sexual immorality, or;
  - Promotes the acceptance of homosexuality or transgenderism as a lifestyle approved by God, or;
  - Defines marriage as anything other than God's design of one man (husband) and one woman (wife) for life.

N. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to discipleship, to take up our cross and follow him. Phil. 3:10, Rom. 12:1-2, Matt. 5-7, 1 Peter 2:21, 2 Tim. 2:11-12, Mic. 6:8

O. We believe it is God's will for Christians to refrain from violence in human relationships. This includes how we treat the unborn and elderly. Led by the Holy Spirit, we will follow Christ in the way of peace and the sanctity of human life. Isa. 2:2-4, 11:1-9, Hos. 2:18, Matt. 5: 8-12, 38-48, 6:14-15, 26:52, 1 Peter 2:21-24, 1 Cor. 6:1-16, Rom. 12:14-21



P. We place our hope in the reign of God and its fulfillment in the day when Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead: the unsaved into the everlasting punishment of hellfire, and the saved into eternal bliss with Christ. We await God's final victory, the end of this present age of struggle, the resurrection of the dead, and a new heaven and a new earth. Judg. 8:23, Mk. 1:15, Phil. 2:8-11, Rev. 11:15, 15:3-4, 21 & 22, 1 Cor. 15:12-58, Jn. 5:28-29, Matt. 10:28, 23:33, Matt. 9:43-48, Lk. 16:23

## APPENDIX: TITHE

Financial giving is a spiritual principle taught in the Bible for God's people in both the Old and New Testament. There were several ways in which God directed his people to give. They were required to give the first fruit of their crops and herds to God's work. They were required to tithe on the increase and they also gave numerous special offerings throughout the year.

### **Tithe:**

The practice of giving our tithe to God goes way back to the book of Genesis. It is a spiritual principle God set in place before it was listed as a requirement in the law and it continues into the New Testament. This means that the tithe was not discontinued when the law was discontinued because it pre-dated the law. It is a God-ordered financial discipline with wonderful promises attached to it.

- Abraham tithed to God through the priest Melchisedec 430 years before the law was established through Moses. (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1-10)
- Jacob also practiced the tithe. (Genesis 28:20-22)

There were clear instructions that they were to tithe on all their income both cash, crops and animals. (Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 14:24-25; 26:1-15; 2 Chronicles 31:4-14) Basically, whatever is income for us whether it be our salary, business, gifts, inheritance are things we are to tithe on.

In the New Testament we see the spiritual community practicing tithing and Jesus telling them it was proper and right for them to do so. (Matthew 23:23) Instead of declaring that tithing is no longer part of the New Covenant, Jesus said tithing is something they ought to be doing. Nowhere does Jesus say the tithe is discontinued. Jesus affirmed it as something we as his followers should be doing today.

**The tithe was considered 10% of a person's income.** All that we have belongs to God. He lets us keep 90%. That's a pretty good deal. We trust the Holy Spirit to guide each person as to whether to tithe on their net or gross income.

God instructed that their full tithe and first fruits were to be brought into the storehouse and not given elsewhere. (Nehemiah 10:37; 13:12; Malachi 3:10)

The storehouse was part of the temple or church system of their day. The Levites were the ones who staffed the temple. It was out of the provision of the storehouse that the Levites, priests and the temple needs were provided for. The poor among them were also cared for out of the storehouse provision. (Nehemiah 10:35-39; 12:44)

**The local church would be the equivalent of the storehouse today. This would indicate that our full tithe is to be given to the local church God has called us to be a part of.**

God has set in place the system of the tithe for the local church to function. Other ministries outside the local church are supported through freewill offerings which we will look at shortly. **The 10% tithe is simply the minimum required of God's people.** The children of Israel would regularly give 23% of their annual income.

When we hold back the tithe, the work of the local church suffers, and God takes it personally. The tithe is a debt we owe to God. The prophet Malachi says we are robbing God if we don't bring our full tithe into the storehouse. (Malachi 3:7-12)

When they brought their tithe into the storehouse they put it into the priest's hands as an undesignated gift for them to use as they discerned best. The same is true today. The tithe is given as an undesignated gift to be used however the local church leadership deems best. Primarily for the support of staff, facilities, and ministries of caring for people and reaching the lost.

### **Offerings:**

In the Bible, in addition to the tithe there were many other types of offerings and collections people were encouraged to participate in.

These additional offerings were called freewill offerings or thank offerings. This was not considered a debt to God (like the tithe) but was a love gift to God to show one's gratitude and love for God. (Exodus 36:3-7; Deuteronomy 12:6; Ezra 2:68)

This was given either to the local storehouse or to other projects such as the building of the tabernacle and temple. In the New Testament it was used as a special mission offering to help the poor beyond their local church. It was a freewill offering. (2 Corinthians 8-9)

Offerings beyond the tithe can be designated for purposes such as supporting a missionary, para-church ministries, building pledges, or giving to relief organizations to help with disasters.

### **Mutual Honor:**

If we honor God in our giving He will honor us for our faith and obedience.

We teach the importance of tithes and offerings not just because the church has needs but because it is God's avenue of blessing into our lives individually. When we honor God with our giving he rebukes the devourer and he blesses our finances. That is his promise to us.

### **Malachi 3:10-12**

*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty.*

When we follow God's principles with right motives, he in return pours out his blessing on our lives. Some say they can't afford to give but the real truth is, we can't afford not to give. For when we give, God blesses and multiplies the seed that we sow. (Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Luke 6:38)

If you haven't tithed before. It's like sowing seeds. You might not see results over night, but if you are faithful you will reap in due season from the promises of God.

God's desire is for us to give with a grace filled heart because we love God and want to honor Him. We know we are grace givers when we give joyfully, generously, biblically and sacrificially.



## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Married \_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Employment \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITMENTS:

✓ Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? \_\_\_\_\_ At what age? \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Have you been water baptized since you accepted Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_ At what age? \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If you were baptized as an infant, we ask you to be baptized again based on your confession of faith as a believer.

✓ What is the most recent church you have attended or have held membership at?

Church's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Have you completed all five BELONG topics required for membership application and had a "Launch" conversation with a Pastor?

Date you completed your last BELONG topic? \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Are you willing to come under the spiritual leadership of the church and commit yourself to the confession of faith, practices, vision, bylaws, and terms of membership? If so, sign below.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

After completion of the BELONG topics your application will be processed. Upon approval, you will receive a Membership Certificate and your membership will be published in the church e-bulletin. If the pastor has further questions, he/she may ask to meet with you.