

# What You Need to Know Before Joining Our Church

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The Excelsior Springs Church

[www.ExcelsiorSpringsChurch.com](http://www.ExcelsiorSpringsChurch.com)

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## I. Our beliefs and practices

### 1. The nature and person of God

#### A. The Trinity

- i. The LORD is one God (**Deu 6:4; 1Co 8:6**).
- ii. The LORD is three persons (the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost) who are one God (**1Jo 5:7**).
- iii. See sermons on the Trinity: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/trinity>

#### B. The Deity of Jesus Christ

- i. Jesus Christ is God (**Joh 1:1-3 c/w Joh 1:14; 1Ti 3:16; Joh 8:58**).
- ii. See sermons on the Deity of Jesus Christ:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/deity-of-Jesus-Christ>.

#### C. The Sonship of Jesus Christ

- i. Jesus Christ is the Son of God (**Mar 1:1; Joh 10:36**).
- ii. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in His human nature (**Luk 1:35**), not His divine nature (**Joh 1:1-3**).
- iii. Jesus Christ is not *eternally begotten* or *eternally generated*.
- iv. See sermons on the Sonship of Jesus Christ:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/sonship>.

### 2. Sovereign grace

#### A. Total depravity

- i. Man in his natural state apart from grace is spiritually dead (**Eph 2:1**).
- ii. In this state he cannot hear (**Joh 8:47**), understand (**Rom 3:11**), or believe the gospel (**Joh 10:26**) because it is foolishness to him (**1Co 1:18; 1Co 2:14**).
- iii. In this depraved state, he is also incapable of doing good (**Rom 3:12**), being subject to the law of God (**Rom 8:7**), pleasing God (**Rom 8:8**), or fearing God (**Rom 3:18**).
- iv. See sermons on Total Depravity:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/sovereign-grace>.

#### B. Unconditional election

- i. Given man's fallen state in which he is incapable of meeting any condition to be saved, if any are to be saved, God must choose to save them.
- ii. God chose and predestinated a portion of mankind (**Rom 8:29-30**) called His elect (**Rom 8:33**) to make them His children who are holy and without blame before Him (**Eph 1:4-5**).
- iii. God's election of His people was not based on their will or works, but only on His grace and mercy (**Rom 9:11-16**).

- iv. See sermons on Sovereign Grace:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/sovereign-grace>.

#### C. Limited atonement

- i. God did not choose to save the entire human race; He only elected a portion of it called His sheep (**Joh 10:26-28**).
- ii. Jesus only died for His sheep (**Joh 10:11, 15**).
- iii. Jesus died for His church (the sheep) (**Eph 5:25-27**) which was chosen by God and given to Him to save (**Eph 1:4; Joh 17:2**).
- iv. See sermons on Sovereign Grace:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/sovereign-grace>.

#### D. Irresistible grace

- i. All of the elect for whom Christ died will irresistibly be given a new spirit possessing eternal life at some point in their lives, which is called regeneration (**Tit 3:5**).
- ii. This is also called being born again which happens when the Spirit of God chooses (**Joh 3:3-8**).
- iii. It is also called *quicken*ing which happens when a sinner is dead in sins and therefore has no ability to resist (**Eph 2:1**).
- iv. When Jesus calls a sinner from spiritual death to spiritual life by the power of His voice, the recipient *shall live* (**Joh 5:25**).
- v. It is the grace of God which saves a sinner, not the preaching of the gospel which tells him about it, that is irresistible.
- vi. Our belief in *Irresistible Grace* distinguishes us from Calvinists who essentially believe in *Irresistible Gospel*.
- vii. See sermon on Irresistible Grace vs. Irresistible Gospel:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/irresistible-grace-vs-irresistible-gospel>.

#### E. Preservation of the saints

- i. The saints cannot lose the *eternal* life that Jesus Christ gave them because it is *eternal* (**Joh 10:28**).
- ii. They are preserved forever by the power of God (**Psa 37:28**).
- iii. Jesus will not lose a single person that God the Father gave Him to save (**Joh 6:37-39**).
- iv. Our belief in *Preservation of the Saints* distinguishes us from Calvinists who believe in *Perseverance of the Saints*.
- v. See sermons on Sovereign Grace:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/sovereign-grace>.

#### F. Unconverted elect

- i. Some of God's elect who are saved by His grace have yet to hear the gospel and are therefore unconverted (**Act 18:9-11**).
- ii. Some of God's elect have their faith overthrown and are deconverted, but are yet His children saved by grace (**2Ti 2:18-19**).

- iii. Some of God's elect are never converted in this life, but are nevertheless His elect (**Rom 11:28-29**).
- iv. Our belief in the *Unconverted Elect* separates us from Arminians and most Calvinists who deny this doctrine.
- v. See sermons on Unconverted Elect:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/unconverted-elect>.

#### G. Temporal salvation

- i. Temporal salvation is a term that refers to salvations that the elect can experience in this life in addition to the eternal salvation that they already have (**2Ti 2:10**).
- ii. Temporal salvation includes being saved from ignorance of God's righteousness, trying to establish your own righteousness, deception and bondage, the power of Satan and sin, fear of death, chastisement from God for sin, and an untoward and wicked generation.
- iii. Temporal salvation also includes being saved to the knowledge and assurance of election and eternal life, fellowship with God and believers of like-faith, fullness of joy, rest, and victorious living.
- iv. Understanding the doctrine of temporal salvation is essential to understanding how all of the verses in the Bible that tell the elect that they must do something to be saved reconcile with all of the verses that say that God saves His elect by grace alone without their works.
- v. See sermon on Temporal Salvation which gives verses to prove each of the points listed above: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/basic-bible-doctrine-part10>.

#### H. Purpose of the gospel

- i. The purpose of the gospel is to locate and educate the regenerate.
- ii. The purpose of the gospel is to call the sheep into the fold and feed them, not to turn goats into sheep.
- iii. The purpose of the gospel is to tell God's children that God saved them, that they need to repent and believe the gospel, and that they need to obey God by being baptized and added to the church.
- iv. The grace of God saved us and gave us eternal life (**2Ti 1:9**); the gospel brings life and immortality to light by telling us how God saved us (**2Ti 1:10**).
- v. Belief of the gospel is the evidence of eternal life, not the cause of it (**Joh 5:24**).
- vi. See sermons on The Purpose of the Gospel:  
[https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/audio/by/album/the\\_purpose\\_of\\_the\\_gospel](https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/audio/by/album/the_purpose_of_the_gospel).

### 3. King James Version of the Bible

- A. The scriptures were given by the inspiration of God (**2Ti 3:16**).
- B. God promised to preserve His word forever (**Psa 12:6-7; Mat 5:18; Mat 24:35**).

- C. This requires doing so in copies and translations since the original autographs were destroyed millennia ago.
- D. The KJV was translated from the true text of the word of God in Greek (the Textus Receptus, otherwise called the Received Text, the Traditional Text, the Majority Text, the Syriac Text, the Byzantine Text, etc. which represents over 85% of the available Greek manuscripts) and Hebrew (the Masoretic Text) by scholars of impeccable credentials.
- E. The modern versions were translated from a corrupted text of the word of God (the Westcott and Hort text which came in large part from two highly corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts).
- F. "Two manuscripts, one in the Pope's library, the other in a wastepaper bin in a Catholic monastery; and two Anglican clergymen--are the reason why the late 20th century Church is awash with modern versions." (Dr. Jack Mormon, *Forever Settled*, p. 266)
- G. By it's fruit, the KJV has proven itself to be the preserved word of God in the English language.
- H. See sermons and videos on the KJV and the modern bible versions:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/bible-versions>.

#### 4. Baptism

- A. There are five qualifications for a valid baptism:
  - i. A proper administrator (validly ordained pastor of a true NT church) (**Mat 28:16-20**)
  - ii. A proper candidate (penitent believer) (**Mat 3:5-8; Act 2:37-38; Act 8:12**)
  - iii. A proper belief (Jesus Christ is the Son of God) (**Act 8:36-38**)
  - iv. A proper mode (immersion) (**Rom 6:4-5; Joh 3:23; Mat 3:16**)
  - v. A proper result (addition to a true NT church) (**Act 2:41-42; 1Co 12:13, 27**)
- B. If a man's baptism did not meet these five requirements, then he must be re-baptized (or actually, he must be *baptized* for the first time).
- C. See sermons on Baptism: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/baptism>.

#### 5. Biblical creation

- A. God created the heavens and the earth and all that's in them in six literal 24-hour days (**Gen 1; Exo 20:11**).
- B. There was no death before sin (**Rom 5:12**),
- C. Therefore, the theories of evolution and theistic evolution which say that there was millions of years of death prior to man evolving is a lie.
- D. The earth is approximately 6,000 years old according to the chronology in the Bible.
- E. The theory of evolution is a lie with no scientific evidence to support it.
- F. See sermons on Creation vs. Evolution:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/evolution>.

#### 6. Baptist Church Perpetuity

- A. Our church has an unbroken lineage to the church that Jesus built.
  - i. Jesus said that His church would never be destroyed (**Mat 16:18**).

- ii. This means that there has always been a true church of Jesus Christ on this earth at all times since the first coming of Christ.
  - iii. Jesus ordained the apostles and committed the preaching of the gospel to them who then ordained other men and committed it to them who did likewise (**2Ti 2:2; Tit 1:5**).
  - iv. This process of ordination continued down through time in true churches until today.
  - v. The churches of Jesus Christ went by various names throughout history such as the Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Paterines, Catharists, Petrobrussians, Henricians, Arnoldists, Waldenses, Anabaptists, English and Welsh Baptists, Regular Baptists, and Primitive Baptists.
  - vi. Our church has come through the lineage of the Primitive Baptists through the Welsh Baptists in Wales.
- B. We are not Protestants
- i. True Baptist churches did not come out of the Protestant Reformation.
  - ii. They (going by various names) predated the Roman Catholic Church by 300 years.
  - iii. They existed along side the Roman Catholic Church for 1200 years prior to the Protestant Reformation.
  - iv. They were the faithful churches that were brutally and mercilessly tortured and slaughtered by the Catholic Church for hundreds of years prior to the Reformation.
  - v. They were the churches that were persecuted by the Protestants in Europe and America in the 16-18th centuries.
  - vi. Any church that came out of the Protestant Reformation (including Reformed Baptists), or came from a church that did, are not true churches, but are reformed Catholic Churches.
- C. See sermons on Baptist Church History:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/baptist-church-history>.

## 7. Church structure and government

- A. Our church is not a 501c3 corporation.
- i. The NT church belongs to Jesus Christ who created it (**Mat 16:18**).
  - ii. State corporations belong to the government that created them.
  - iii. We must only render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's (**Mat 22:21**).
  - iv. Jesus Christ is the only head of the church (**Col 1:18**).
  - v. See video on why Churches Should Not Be 501c3 Corporations of the State:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/churches-should-not-be-501c3-corporations-of-the-state>.
- B. Denominations and associations
- i. There are no denominations or associations of churches in the Bible.
  - ii. There are only individual local churches in the Bible.
  - iii. Each local congregation is "the church" (**1Co 6:4; 1Ti 3:5**), not part of the church.

- iv. Each local congregation is "the whole church" (**Rom 16:23; 1Co 14:23**), not part of the whole church.
- v. Each local congregation is "the body of Christ" (**1Co 12:27**), not part of the body of Christ.
- vi. Our church is not part of any denomination or association.
- vii. See sermons on Church Autonomy and Independence:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/church-autonomy>.

#### C. One-pastor church government

- i. The church is to be overseen and ruled by one pastor who executes the law of God (**Tit 1:5; Heb 13:7,17**).
- ii. If a church is large enough to have multiple elders (pastors), there will still be one presiding/responsible pastor that has the rule (**Act 15:13-21**).
- iii. Smaller churches do not need multiple elders.
- iv. See sermons on One Pastor and Church Government:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/one-pastor>.

#### D. Deacons

- i. There is only one scriptural duty for a deacon which is taking food to widows (**Act 6:1-6**).
- ii. Deacons were ordained for that business alone (**Act 6:3**).
- iii. There is no other duty given to deacons in the Bible.
- iv. Therefore, if a church doesn't have a sufficient number of widows that need food taken to them, the church doesn't need any deacons.
- v. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given the rule or authority of the church.
- vi. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given a teaching office.
- vii. For non-pastoral tasks that need to be taken care in the church, those that have the gift of helping can assist the pastor (**1Co 12:28; 1Co 16:15-16**).
- viii. See video called What are Deacons For, and Should Your Church Have Any?: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/what-are-deacons-for-and-should-your-church-have-any>.

### 8. Expiration of the Sign Gifts

- A. The sign gifts such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, special knowledge, healing, raising the dead, casting out devils, etc. were given to the NT church for a period of 40 years beginning with the first miracle Jesus did in 30AD and ending in approximately 70AD (**Mic 7:15 c/w Joh 2:11; 1Co 13:8-10**).
- B. The sign gifts were given to convince the unbelieving Jews who required a sign (**Joh 4:48; 1Co 1:22**) and to confirm the word of God spoken by the apostles (**Mar 16:20; Heb 2:3-4**).
- C. Once the New Testament was written and the unbelieving Jews were either killed or carried captive into all nations in 70AD, the purpose for the sign gifts ceased and so did the gifts themselves.
- D. Modern sign gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and miraculous healing are lying signs and wonders done by the power of Satan (**2Th 2:9; Rev 16:14**).



- E. See sermons on The Sign Gifts:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/charismatics>.

9. Israel

- A. God was done with the nation of Israel after 70AD (**Mat 21:43-44; Mat 23:34-39; Luk 21:24**).
- B. The Israel of God are God's elect who are in Christ, both Jew and Gentile (**Gal 6:15-16; Gal 3:7; Gal 3:29; Rom 2:28-29; Php 3:3**).
- C. There is no prophecy of Israel returning to the land of Palestine after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.
- D. God does not have a special plan for the Jews.
- E. The unbelieving Jews in the modern nation of Israel are antichrists (**1Jo 2:22-23**).
- F. They hate Jesus Christ and God the Father (**Joh 15:23-25**).
- G. We should not be supporting them in any way (**2Ch 19:2**).
- H. See sermons on Israel: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/us-foreign-policy-in-the-middle-east-is-it-biblical-part1> and <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/us-foreign-policy-in-the-middle-east-is-it-biblical-part2>.

10. End Times and the Return of Christ

- A. Jesus set up His kingdom (kingdom of God/heaven), which is His church, at His first coming (**Dan 2:44 c/w Mar 1:14-15 c/w Mat 16:18-19**).
- B. Jesus reigns from heaven over His kingdom on earth for a figurative 1000 years between His first and second comings (**Rev 20:4**).
- C. Jesus bound Satan at His resurrection for a figurative 1000 years (**Rev 20:2 c/w Col 2:14-15 c/w Mat 12:29**).
- D. Satan will be loosed near the end of time (**Rev 20:7**).
- E. Jesus will return on the last day of time to resurrect the dead (**Joh 6:39**), gather His people unto Him (**1Th 4:16-17**), and destroy the wicked (**2Th 1:7-9**).
- F. There is no literal, earthly millennial reign of Christ in Jerusalem after the second coming.
- G. There is no secret rapture of the saints seven years or 3.5 years prior to the second coming of Christ.
- H. See sermon series on Millennialism, End Times, and the Reign of Christ:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/millennialism>.

11. The resurrection of the body

- A. On the *last day* of time, Jesus Christ will return and resurrect all men from the graves (**Joh 11:23-26; Act 24:15**).
- B. The just are resurrected to eternal life; the wicked are resurrected to eternal damnation (**Joh 5:28-29**).
- C. The resurrection will be a literal, physical, bodily resurrection of the dead (**Job 14:12-15; Job 19:25-27**).
- D. If there is no physical, bodily resurrection from the dead, then Jesus Christ is not risen, and we are yet in our sins (**1Co 15:12-19**).

## 12. Eternal punishment

- A. The soul and spirit of the wicked go to hell immediately upon death where they are tormented in flames (**Luk 16:22-24; Jud 1:7**).
- B. The suffering in hell never ends (**Mar 9:43-48**).
  - i. It is eternal damnation (**Mar 3:29**).
  - ii. It is a place of everlasting fire (**Mat 18:8**).
- C. After the resurrection, the wicked and hell itself are cast into the lake (**Rev 20:14-15**).
  - i. The lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels (**Mat 25:41**).
  - ii. The devil will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of time and will be tormented day and night forever and ever (**Rev 20:10**).
  - iii. After they are resurrected and judged by Jesus Christ, the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his angels (**Rev 20:15**) where they will have everlasting punishment inflicted on them (**Mat 25:46**).
    - a. Everlasting - 1. a. Lasting for ever; infinite in future duration; endless; = eternal A. 3.
    - b. Punishment - 1. a. The action of punishing or the fact of being punished; the infliction of a penalty in retribution for an offence; also, that which is inflicted as a penalty; a penalty imposed to ensure the application and enforcement of a law.
    - c. Punish v. - 1. a. *trans.* As an act of a superior or of public authority: To cause (an offender) to suffer for an offence; to subject to judicial chastisement as retribution or requital, or as a caution against further transgression; to inflict a penalty on.
    - d. Penalty - 1. Pain, suffering.
  - iv. The smoke of their torment will ascend up forever, and they will have no rest day nor night (**Rev 14:9-11**).
- D. See sermons on Eternal Punishment: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/hell>.

## 13. The sabbath

- A. The sabbath law was only ever given to Israel in the Old Testament (**Exo 31:12-17**).
- B. No Gentile was ever under the sabbath law.
- C. The Old Testament was abolished by Jesus Christ's death which put the New Testament into effect (**Eph 2:15; Heb 8:13**).
  - i. The ten commandments which were engraven on stones were abolished along with the rest of the law of Moses (**2Co 3:6-14**).
  - ii. Nine of the ten commandments (all but the sabbath commandment) are repeated in the New Testament and are therefore still binding on Christians today.
  - iii. There is no commandment to keep the sabbath in the New Testament after the death of Christ.
- D. The NT tells Christians to not let anyone judge them with respect to keeping sabbath days (**Col 2:16**).
  - i. The reason being is that the sabbath was a part of the law of Moses which was taken out of the way by Christ (**Col 2:14**).
  - ii. It was a shadow of Christ who was to come (**Col 2:17**).

- iii. Jesus is our sabbath (our rest) (**Heb 4:3, 9-11; Mat 11:28-30**).
  - iv. Christians are not under the sabbath law.
  - v. If they want to rest one day per week, they have liberty to do so, but they are not commanded by God to do so.
- E. See sermons on The Christian and the Old Testament:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/old-testament>.

#### 14. The names of God

- A. God's names are given in the KJV.
- B. Some examples are:
  - i. God (**Gen 1:1**)
  - ii. LORD (**Gen 4:1**)
  - iii. Jehovah (**Exo 6:3**)
  - iv. Lord (**Mat 4:7**)
  - v. The Almighty (**Job 5:17**)
  - vi. Father (**1Jo 5:7**)
  - vii. Jesus (**Mat 1:21**)
- C. The KJV translators were correct to translate God's name ("YHWH" in Hebrew) as "LORD" the majority of times in the Old Testament.
  - i. The reason is because *God* translated "YHWH" as *Lord* in the New Testament.
    - a. Jesus Christ Himself when quoting from the Law translated the Hebrew "YHWH" as the Greek "Lord" (**Mat 22:37 c/w Deu 6:5**).
    - b. The apostles, under the inspiration of God, likewise translated the Hebrew "YHWH" as the Greek "Lord" in the NT (**Act 4:26 c/w Psa 2:2**).
  - ii. The KJV translators were simply following the example of Jesus and the apostles who translated "YHWH" as "Lord" under the inspiration of God when they translated "YHWH" as "LORD" in the OT.
  - iii. See video on why The KJV is Right to Translate YHWH as LORD Instead of Jehovah: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/the-KJV-is-right-to-translate-YHWH-as-LORD-instead-of-Jehovah>.
- D. God's name for English speakers is not Yahweh, Elohim, G-d, Yeshua, Yahshua, Yahushua, or any other name not found in the KJV.
- E. If God wanted English speaking people to call Him by those names, He would have put them in the KJV.

#### 15. Flat earth

- A. We are NOT Flat-earthers.
- B. Since the flat earth movement is growing quickly, I have included this in the list of our beliefs.
- C. The earth is globe (**Isa 40:22**).
  - i. Circle - 1. a. A perfectly round plane figure. In *Geom.* defined as a plane figure bounded by a single curved line, called the circumference, which is everywhere equally distant from a point within, called the centre. But often

- applied to the circumference alone, without the included space. 2. b. Naut. great circle sailing: navigation along the arc of a great **circle of the earth**.
- ii. Equator *n.* - 2. *Geog.* A great **circle of the earth**, in the plane of the celestial equator, and equidistant from the two poles. 3. a. *transf.* A similarly situated **circle on any heavenly (or, occasionally, any spherical) body**.
- D. It is hung upon nothing in empty space (**Job 26:7**).
- E. See sermons on Flat Earth Refutation: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/flat-earth-refutation>.

## 16. Pagan Holidays

- A. The holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Halloween are all "Christianized" pagan holidays.
  - i. Christmas was the Catholic name given to the pagan holiday of Natalis Solis Invicti (birth of the unconquered sun) which celebrated the birthday of the sun a few days after the winter solstice.
  - ii. Easter was the Catholic name given to the pagan fertility holiday of Ishtar, Astarte, Eostre, etc. that was celebrated around the spring equinox.
  - iii. Halloween was the Catholic name given to the pagan Druidic celebration of Samhain where evil spirits were appeased by giving them food on October 31st.
  - iv. Any encyclopedia will verify these facts.
- B. God forbids incorporating pagan practices into His worship (**Deu 12:29-32; Jer 10:2-4; 2Co 6:14-18**).
- C. These pagan holidays honor devils (**1Co 10:20**).
- D. We must worship God in the manner that He commands and not add or diminish anything from it (**Mat 28:20; 1Co 11:2**).
- E. No member of the Excelsior Springs Church will celebrate Christmas, Easter, or Halloween.
- F. See sermons on Pagan Holidays: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/holidays>.

## 17. Closed communion

- A. Most churches hold one of three positions on communion.
  - i. Open or free communion: anyone who professes to be a believer is free to partake.
  - ii. Close or strict communion: any member of a church of like-faith can partake.
  - iii. Closed communion: only the members of the local church can partake.
- B. Our church practices *closed communion* for the following reasons.
  - i. Communion is a local church ordinance.
    - a. Instruction in the Bible concerning communion is given to local churches, not Christians in general, associations, or denominations.
    - b. An example of this is Paul's instruction to the local church at Corinth (**1Co 1:2 c/w 1Co 11:20-34**).
  - ii. The communion service is a communion of the blood and body of Christ (**1Co 10:16**).

- a. Communion - 1. Sharing or holding in common with others; participation; the condition of things so held, community, combination, union.
- b. The bread represents the body of Christ (**1Co 10:17**).
  - (i) It represents the physical body of Christ that was broken for us (**1Co 11:24**).
  - (ii) It also represents the spiritual body of Christ, which is the membership of the local church (**1Co 10:17 c/w 1Co 12:27**).
  - (iii) The members of the local church are represented as *one bread* and *one body* and they are *partakers of that one bread* (**1Co 10:17**).
  - (iv) Partaker - 1. One who takes a part or share, a partner, participator, sharer.
  - (v) Therefore, only the members of a particular local church should partake of communion with their particular local church.
- iii. Communion and church discipline are intricately connected and cannot be separated.
  - a. The bread used for communion was the bread that was used at the Passover which was unleavened bread (**Mat 26:17-19 c/w Mat 26:26 c/w Exo 12:8**).
  - b. Leaven represents evil and sin (**Mat 16:6,12; Mar 8:15; Luk 12:1; Gal 5:7-9**).
  - c. Since the local church is "one bread and one body" (**1Co 10:17**), the church should purge out leaven from among them so as to be unleavened (**1Co 5:6-8**).
    - (i) This purging of leaven out of the church is done by delivering commonly known sinners out of the church unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (**1Co 5:1-5**).
    - (ii) Delivering a person unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh is done by "put[ting] away from among yourselves that wicked person" (**1Co 5:13**).
    - (iii) Putting away a wicked person from among the church is done by not keeping company with him (**1Co 5:9**).
    - (iv) Not keeping company with a person is not eating at the communion table with him (**1Co 5:11 c/w 1Co 5:8**).
    - (v) Paul's instruction about not keeping company and eating the Lord's Supper with a commonly known sinner was only in reference to "a brother" (**1Co 5:11**), not every sinner in the world (**1Co 5:10**).
    - (vi) The local church only judges those who are members *within* their church, not them that are *without* the membership of their church (**1Co 5:12-13**).
  - d. How could a local church withhold communion from a commonly known sinner in their membership, and at the same time serve communion to a stranger off the street, or even to a member of

another church of like-faith whom they knew little or nothing about and have no authority over?

- C. See sermon series on Communion:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/communion>.

18. Feetwashing

- A. Jesus commanded His church to wash each other's feet (**Joh 13:13-15**).
- B. This ordinance was given to the same disciples the same evening immediately following the institution of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (**Joh 13:1-5**).
- C. It is therefore just as binding on a New Testament church as is communion.
- D. See sermon on Feetwashing: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/feetwashing>.

19. Male leadership and speaking in church

- A. Only men can hold positions of authority in the church (**1Ti 3:1-5; 1Ti 3:8-12; Tit 1:5-6**).
- B. While women play an important and vital role in the church, they are not to be in positions of authority nor teach in church (**1Ti 2:12**), nor can they speak in church (**1Ti 2:11; 1Co 14:34-35**).
- C. Women can speak when the church is not assembled for public worship.
- D. Women can teach other women and children outside of church (**Tit 2:3-5**).

20. Rules for church members

A. Hair length

- i. Women must have hair long enough to cover their heads, which must at a minimum be long enough to cover the ears and back of the neck (**1Co 11:5-6,15**).
- ii. Men must have short hair which is not long enough to cover the ears and back of the neck (**1Co 11:4,7,14**).

B. Modest clothing

- i. Women should be clothed in modest apparel (**1Ti 2:9**).
- ii. Women's clothing should completely cover from above their breasts (including all cleavage) down to their knees.
- iii. Women's clothing should not be so tight as to allow every body contour to be seen which has the same effect as if they had no clothes on (yoga pants, spandex, etc.).
- iv. Men's clothing should at a minimum cover from their waists to their knees.
- v. These clothing standards should be maintained at all times and in all places outside of the home, including swimming.
- vi. See sermons on Modest Clothing:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/modesty>.

C. No tattoos after being baptized

- i. Tattoos were prohibited under the law of Moses (**Lev 19:28**).
- ii. We are not under the law of Moses today.

- iii. The New Testament has nothing to say about tattoos.
- iv. As the pastor, I have to make judgment calls in grey areas such as this.
- v. I have to maintain a good conscience when doing so (**1Ti 1:19**).
- vi. I cannot in good conscience allow church members to get tattoos after they are baptized.
- vii. If a person got a tattoo prior to being baptized (as I myself did), it will not prohibit him from being baptized, nor will he be judged for it by anyone in the church.

D. No getting drunk

- i. Drunkenness is a sin for which a man will be excluded from the church if it is commonly known (**Gal 5:21**).
- ii. Such excludable sins must not be tolerated even once (**Eph 5:3**).
- iii. See sermons on Church Discipline:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/church-discipline>.

E. No smoking marijuana

- i. Smoking marijuana causes intoxication and therefore falls into the same category as *drunkenness*.
- ii. Therefore, no member of the church shall use marijuana except for medical uses prescribed by a doctor.
- iii. See sermon on Marijuana:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/marijuana>.

21. Christian liberty

A. The following things fall under the heading of Christian Liberty.

- i. Things such as these are permissible, with caveats, when done in moderation if one's conscience allows it (**Rom 14:1-6**).
- ii. Christians should not be judging each other for the use or abstention from use of things such as these (**Rom 14:3**).
- iii. A man whose conscience is not clear regarding such things should abstain from them until his conscience is okay with them (**Rom 14:14,20,23**).
- iv. Christians in the church should not intentionally offend their brethren by partaking of such things in their presence if they believe them to be questionable or wrong (**Rom 14:15-16,19-22**).

B. Food

- i. All food, with the exception of blood, animals that were strangled, or animals that were sacrificed to idols (**Act 15:20**), are acceptable for a Christian to eat (**Rom 14:14; 1Ti 4:4-5**).
- ii. If a Christian thinks it best to abstain from meat or any other type of food, he is at liberty to do so (**Rom 14:2-3**).
- iii. There is no Christian diet.

### C. Alcohol

- i. The Bible allows for moderate drinking of alcohol as long as one doesn't become drunk (**1Ti 5:23; Eph 5:18**).
- ii. See sermons on Alcohol: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/alcohol-1> and <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/alcohol-2>.

### D. Dancing

- i. There is a time to dance (**Ecc 3:4**).
- ii. Those that want to engage in wholesome dancing are free to do so.
- iii. There are some types of dancing that are obscene and sinful and must be abstained from.
- iv. Most dancing that takes place in clubs, bars, concerts, etc. (and sometimes weddings) amounts to *revelling*.
  - a. Revelling - Riotous or disorderly merry-making or festivity; a revel; also, great delight or joy.
  - b. This type of dancing and partying must be abstained from by Christians (**Gal 5:21**).

### E. Having children, and using non-life-killing methods of birth control

- i. The New Testament doesn't command us to replenish and multiply in the earth like God commanded Adam and Eve and Noah and his family to do (**Gen 1:28; Gen 9:1**).
  - a. We are not commanded in the NT to have children, nor are we told how many to have.
  - b. Therefore, it is a matter of liberty as to how many children Christians decide to have.
- ii. That being said, it is a blessing to have children (**Psa 127:3-5**).
  - a. Those who don't want to have children should examine their motives for not doing so.
  - b. If the motives are selfishness, greed, laziness, or other sinful things, then such Christians should consider their ways.
- iii. Christians have liberty to use non-life-killing methods of birth control.
  - a. These include "charting," "early withdrawal," condoms, female condoms, diaphragms, tubal ligations (female tube tying), and vasectomies (male tube tying).
  - b. None of these methods kill a fertilized egg; they only prevent fertilization.
  - c. Birth control pills which contain progestin (and nearly all, if not all, of them do) have the potential to kill a fertilized egg by not allowing it to attach to the uterine wall.
  - d. Using them could cause the death of a human being (**Isa 7:14 c/w Mat 1:23**) and is therefore forbidden.
- iv. See video on Birth Control: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/should-christians-use-birth-control>.



- F. Card playing, watching movies, listening to music, entertainment, etc.
  - i. None of these things are inherently sinful and are therefore areas of liberty.
  - ii. All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient nor edifying (**1Co 10:23**).
  - iii. Certain types of card playing, movies, music, and entertainment are harmless (or at least relatively so).
  - iv. Gambling, and especially high-stakes gambling, is not wise.
  - v. Many (probably most) movies, music, TV shows, and entertainment contain moral filth and should be abstained from (**1Co 15:33**).
  - vi. These things will have to be considered on a case by case basis by Christians.

## II. Prerequisites for baptism

1. If you have been properly baptized before, you do not need to be re-baptized.
  - A. In order to have been properly baptized, your baptism needs to have met the five scriptural requirements given above, which are:
    - i. Proper administrator (validly ordained pastor of a true NT church)
    - ii. Proper candidate (penitent believer)
    - iii. Proper belief (Jesus Christ is the Son of God)
    - iv. Proper mode (immersion)
    - v. Proper result (addition to a true NT church)
    - vi. See the section above on [Baptism](#) to see if your baptism met these requirements.
  - B. If your baptism was valid and we don't know you, then you will be asked to give a profession of faith (see below), and the church will take a vote to receive you into membership.
2. If your baptism was not scripturally valid, you will need to be baptized.
  - A. In order to be baptized you must:
  - B. Repent of all past sins, moral and doctrinal (**Act 2:37-39**).
    - i. Repent *v.* - 1. *refl.* To affect (oneself) with contrition or regret for something done, etc. 3. *intr.* To feel contrition, compunction, sorrow or regret for something one has done or left undone; to change one's mind with regard to past action or conduct through dissatisfaction with it or its results.
    - ii. If you currently or previously have held beliefs contrary to the scriptural beliefs listed above, you must repent of those false beliefs (**Mar 1:15; 2Ti 2:25**).
    - iii. You must also repent of all of your sins (**1Pe 1:15-16; Rom 6:19**).
    - iv. You must bring forth fruit (evidence) of your repentance (**Mat 3:7-8**). For instance:
      - a. If you have not been working (and you can be, and should be), you need to get a job (**1Ti 5:8; 2Th 3:10**).

- b. If you have been doing drugs, you need to stop and remain sober for a sufficient length of time.
- c. If you are an alcoholic, you need to break your addiction and remain free of it for a sufficient length of time.
- d. If you are fornicating, you must stop.
- e. If you are living with a girlfriend or boyfriend, you either need to move out or get married.
- f. If you view pornography, you must quit.
- g. For children living at home, if you are rebellious, you must humble yourself and submit to your parents and prove to them you have changed.
- h. If you listen to wicked music, you must stop and get rid of it.
- i. If you celebrate the pagan holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Halloween, you must quit.

C. Make a public profession of faith including:

- i. Belief in
  - a. The Trinity
  - b. The deity of Jesus Christ
  - c. Jesus Christ is the Son of God
  - d. The death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Christ
  - e. The return of Christ
  - f. KJV is the word of God
- ii. Confession of sins (**Mat 3:6**)
- iii. Belief that Jesus died for your sins and gave you eternal life (sovereign grace)
- iv. State that you have repented of all of your past sins, both moral and doctrinal.
- v. State that you are putting your hand to the plow and not looking back (**Luk 9:62**).

D. You will need to write out your profession of faith and email it to the pastor ahead of time.

- i. He will review it and make sure it is acceptable.
- ii. You will then read it publicly to the church prior to your baptism.
- iii. The church will be asked if anyone has a reason that you should not be baptized (**Act 10:47**).
- iv. If none can forbid water, you will be immersed fully in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
  - a. If possible, you will be baptized in a river or a natural body of water.
  - b. If not, you will be baptized anywhere there is enough water to fully immerse you in.
- v. When you come out of the water you will be a member of the church.

3. Attire for baptism

- A. Don't wear a white shirt.

B. Wear modest clothing.

III. Requirements of church membership

1. Attendance requirements

A. Resident members

- i. Resident members are those members who live approximately two hours or less from church.
  - a. If a member lives two hours or less and is in sufficient health and financial condition, he should be assembling with the church on a weekly basis, weather permitting.
  - b. This is not a law set in stone; a member's personal situation will be taken into account by the pastor when determining how often he should be in church.
- ii. There is no specified number of allowable absences from church.
- iii. Everyone needs to take a vacation from time to time.
- iv. Try to keep your number of absences to a minimum, not for the pastor's sake, but for God's sake Who deserves your worship and demands that you present your body a living sacrifice (**Rom 12:1**).
- v. If you are going to be absent, inform the pastor ahead of time.

B. Nonresident members

- i. Members who reside more than a four hour drive away from church are considered nonresident members.
- ii. Members who reside between a 2-3.5 hour drive away from church are quasi-resident members.
- iii. The Bible allows for nonresident membership (**Col 4:9**).
- iv. Attendance requirements of nonresident members varies based on their distance from the church.
- v. The minimum requirements are *roughly* as follows:
  - a. >12 hour drive (or flight required): 1 Sunday per year
  - b. 4-12 hour drive: 3 Sundays per year
  - c. 2.5-3.5 hour drive: 1 Sunday per month
  - d. 2-2.5 hour drive: 2 Sundays per month
  - e. <2 hour drive: every Sunday
- vi. The three Sundays per year requirement for those within a day's drive is based on the principle given in the Old Testament (**Exo 34:23**).
- vii. Nonresident members are required to attend at least one communion and footwashing Sunday per year.
- viii. Nonresident members should try to make their visits on communion and footwashing Sundays when possible.
- ix. These requirements are not set in stone and can be modified based on personal circumstances such as health and financial condition.
- x. Nonresident members are certainly welcome and encouraged to attend church more often than the minimum requirements.

- C. Nonresident members when not in church
  - i. Nonresident members must listen to the previous week's sermon at home on Sunday mornings.
  - ii. They should set aside a specific time on Sunday morning to listen to the sermon, pray, and sing hymns.
  - iii. They should treat Sunday mornings just as seriously as they would if they were close enough to attend church each Sunday.
  - iv. If they are faithful with little, God will bless them with more (**Mat 25:21; Luk 16:10-11**).
  - v. Nonresident members should meet regularly on Sunday mornings with other nonresident members in their area if there are any.
  - vi. See video on Nonresident Church Membership: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/non-resident-church-membership>.
  
- 2. Financial support of the church and pastor
  - A. Church members should give to the Lord of the firstfruits of all their increase (**Pro 3:9-10**).
  - B. Part of giving to the Lord is financially supporting the pastor that God has given them (**Heb 13:16-17 c/w Gal 6:6**).
    - i. Communicate v. - 1. *trans.* To give to another as a partaker; to give a share of; to impart, confer, transmit
    - ii. He feeds the brethren spiritually, and they provide for him physically (**1Co 9:6-11**).
    - iii. Normally, the pastor should be able to live off of the monetary contributions of the church members (**1Co 9:13-14**).
    - iv. When a church is few in number, this may not be possible; and when such is the case the pastor will have to work a second job (**Act 18:3; Act 20:34**).
  - C. Church members are also required to support the financial needs of the church.
    - i. Financial needs of the church include things like:
      - a. Financial support for widows in the congregation that meet the Biblical requirements (**1Ti 5:3-16**).
      - b. The cost of a meeting place, whether owned or rented.
      - c. Helping out poor brethren in the church (**Gal 2:10; Rom 12:13**).
    - ii. The Excelsior Springs Church does not take a regular collection for church needs at this time.
    - iii. Therefore, church members should be setting aside some of their Lord's money and saving it for a time when it is needed (**1Co 16:1-2**).
  - D. See sermons on Giving to God: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/giving-to-God>.
  
- 3. Maintain contact with the pastor and church members
  - A. Nonresident members should be checking in with the pastor by phone or email at least once per month.
  - B. They should also keep in contact with other church members also (**Mal 3:16**).

4. Being of one mind and unified in the faith
  - A. Church members should be unified in the faith (**Rom 15:5-6; Php 1:27; Php 2:2**).
  - B. Members of the church should all be speaking the same thing doctrinally (**1Co 1:10**).
  - C. The church is not the court of the Areopagites where everyone shares their own diverse and strange doctrines (**Act 17:21; Heb 13:9**).
5. Supporting other members
  - A. Church members should bear each other's burdens (**Gal 6:2**).
  - B. They should both rejoice and weep together (**Rom 12:15**).
6. Being subject and accountable to the pastor and other members
  - A. Church members must submit to one another (**Eph 5:21; 1Pe 5:5**).
  - B. A church is accountable to a pastor who gives an account of them to God (**Heb 13:7,17**).
7. See sermon on What it Means to Be a Church:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/what-it-means-to-be-a-church>.

#### IV. Pastoral authority

1. The pastor (elder, bishop, overseer, steward) has the rule over the church (**Heb 13:7,17; 1Ti 5:17**).
2. The pastor is given authority by God to rebuke, reprove, warn, admonish, and exhort church members of their duties to God and His law (**Tit 2:15; 1Th 5:12; 2Ti 4:2**).
3. The pastor should be obeyed when he is exercising the authority that God has given him (**Heb 13:17**).
4. The pastor is not a lord over the church, but rather a feeder, leader, and example to them (**2Co 10:8; 1Pe 5:1-3**).
5. See sermons on Pastoral Authority: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/one-pastor>.

#### V. Dealing with problems in church

1. Interpersonal problems
  - A. If you are offended by another church member, either forget about it or address it with him alone, and don't tell anyone else about it (**Pro 25:9; Mat 18:15**).
  - B. Do not whisper, talebear, or backbite behind your brother's back.
  - C. If he will not hear you, you can either drop it or you can take one or two others with you and tell him his fault again in their presence (**Mat 18:16**).
  - D. If he won't hear them either, you can drop it, or you can take it before the church (**Mat 18:17**).
  - E. If he won't hear the church, then he will be excluded from the church (**Mat 18:17**).
  - F. Before you take it to the final level, remember:
    - i. Mercy rejoices against judgment (**Jam 2:13**).
    - ii. Love covers a multitude of sins (**1Pe 4:8**).

- G. If a brother asks for forgiveness, forgive him, and don't bring it up again (**Col 3:12-14**).
- H. See sermons on Dealing With Problems in the Church:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/dealing-with-problems>.

## 2. Doctrinal disagreements

- A. If you have a doctrinal disagreement with anything that the church believes or that the pastor has taught, you must take it up with *only* the pastor.
  - i. The pastor is responsible to maintain doctrinal purity in the church (**Tit 2:7**).
  - ii. The pastor is responsible to maintain doctrinal unity in the church (**Eph 4:11-13**).
  - iii. The pastor must charge church members to teach no other doctrine (**1Ti 1:3**).
  - iv. Therefore, it is the pastor alone that doctrinal disagreements must be addressed with.
- B. Discussing doctrinal disagreements with other church members, or promoting beliefs or ideas that are contrary to what the pastor has taught, will only cause strife, variance, confusion, and division in the church, which must not happen (**1Co 1:10**).
- C. If the pastor is wrong in something that he has taught, then respectfully and privately address it with him and attempt to convert him from the error of his way (**Jam 5:19-20**).
  - i. Once he has been converted from his error, he can convert the rest of the church.
  - ii. If the pastor is still convinced that he is right after you have made your case, then consider what he has said.
  - iii. If possible, it would be wise to drop it for a while and pray to God for more understanding.
  - iv. If after due consideration you are still convinced that the pastor is wrong, then admonish him a second time (**Tit 3:10**).
  - v. If he doesn't change his mind after the second admonition, then reject him (**Tit 3:10**) and charge him with heresy before the church and let the church decide if he is innocent or guilty.
    - a. If the church finds the pastor guilty, he will be excluded for heresy (**Gal 5:19-21**).
    - b. If the church finds the pastor innocent, you will be excluded for heresy (**Gal 5:19-21**).
  - vi. This is not merely theoretical.
    - a. In the Minneapolis Church which I pastored for five years, I allowed and encouraged a brother to do the very steps that I listed above.
    - b. He ended up charging me with heresy before the church.
    - c. I gave him my pulpit and allowed him to accuse me of heresy and to try to make his case to the church.
    - d. Afterwards I defended the doctrine that I had always taught, and the church sided with me, and he was excluded for heresy.
- D. See sermons on Dealing With Problems in the Church:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/dealing-with-problems>.

### 3. Problems with the pastor

- A. If you have a problem with your pastor personally, talk to him about it (**Pro 25:9**).
- B. If you think he has made an error in a judgment call, talk to him about it (**Pro 25:9**).
- C. Do not whisper, talebear, or backbite behind your pastor's back.
- D. If you can't come to an agreement and be at peace, you can choose to part company (**Act 15:38-40**) and join another church of like-faith.
  - i. This is not merely theoretical.
  - ii. When I pastored the Minneapolis Church, I allowed brethren to transfer to another church of like-faith when they had a problem with me.
- E. See sermon on Dealing With a Beef With Your Pastor:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/dealing-with-a-beef-with-your-pastor>.
- F. See sermons on Dealing With Problems in the Church:  
<https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/dealing-with-problems>.

## VI. Church discipline

1. The church must be a holy body (**1Co 3:16-17; 1Co 5:6**).
2. If a member defiles himself, he must be removed (**1Co 5:7**).
3. There are lists of sins in the Bible that are sins for which the church must exclude members (**1Co 5:11; 1Co 6:9-10; Rom 1:29-32; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; 2Th 3:6-15; 2Ti 3:1-5**).
4. If a member commits one of the sins in those lists and it is *commonly known* among the church (**1Co 5:1**), the church must put him out of the church (**1Co 5:4-5, 13**).
5. This is done by barring him from eating the Lord's Supper with the church (**1Co 5:7-8, 11**), excluding him from keeping the ordinance of feetwashing, and disallowing him to have any say in church matters or decisions.
6. If the sin is *not* commonly known, but is only known by one or a very small number of church members, the offender can be addressed privately by one of the members, and if he repents, the offence can be covered and doesn't need to be brought before the church (**Jam 5:19-20**).
7. The purpose of church discipline is to bring the sinner to godly, sorrowful repentance for what he has done (**2Co 2:6-7**).
8. If the excluded brother exhibits a broken and penitent spirit for what he has done and seeks restoration to the church, he will be required to complete a one year (**1Co 16:1-2 c/w 2Co 8:10 & 2Co 9:2**) probationary period to prove that his repentance is genuine and sincere, after which he will be restored to church membership (**2Co 2:6-8**).
9. See sermon series on Church Discipline: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/church-discipline>.

## VII. The serious nature of church membership

1. Being baptized is a commandment from God that all believers must obey (**Act 2:38**).
2. In order to be a disciple of Christ, a man must be baptized, which is the first step in his walk with Christ.
3. Being baptized adds a man to a local church (**Act 2:41-42**) and makes him a Christian (**Joh 4:1 c/w Act 11:26**).
  - A. Being baptized doesn't make one a child of God -- the grace of God does that.

- B. Being baptized makes a child of God into a disciple of Christ, which is a Christian.
- 4. The local church is the kingdom of God (**Luk 22:29-30 c/w 1Co 10:16-17**)
  - A. The kingdom of God (local church) is entered by baptism (**Luk 7:29-30 c/w Mat 21:31-32 c/w Luk 16:16**).
  - B. See sermons on The Kingdom of God: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/kingdom-of-God>.
- 5. Therefore, in order to remain a Christian and a disciple of Christ, one must be a faithful member of His church which is His kingdom.
- 6. Never look back once you have put your hand to the plough (**Luk 9:62**).
- 7. Those that forsake assembling with the saints will be judged severely by God (**Heb 10:22-31**).
- 8. Church members are free to transfer membership to another true and faithful church, but if they forsake assembling with a true and faithful church altogether, they will be excluded from the church and turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (**Heb 10:25 c/w 2Th 3:6,14 c/w 1Co 5:4-5**).
- 9. See sermon series on Church Discipline: <https://www.excelsiorspringschurch.com/church-discipline>.

#### VIII. Membership transfer

- 1. If a member desires to transfer membership to another church of like-faith, he may do so.
- 2. There may be circumstances in which a church member finds himself that would make it necessary for him to move to another state and join another true church.
- 3. If the reason for transferring membership is dissatisfaction with the church or the pastor, just remember that the grass isn't always greener on the other side (but it is sometimes).
- 4. But even if the transfer is due to a personal disagreement with the pastor or another member (**Act 15:38-40**), we will transfer your membership and wish you well, assuming the other church has agreed to receive you.