

Discovering
Forest Park



Revised July 2019

Welcome to Discovering Forest Park

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Forest Park! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

Why Be a Member of a Church?

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

-1 Corinthians 12:12

Key Truths

1. Church membership is biblical.
2. Church membership is _____.
3. Church membership is evidence that you take God's Word seriously.

The Goal of This Class

That I will commit myself to Jesus and to the _____ of Jesus.

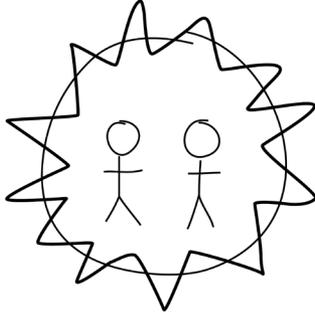
Part One: Our Salvation

For now we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and we who have been baptized into union with Christ are enveloped by Him. We are no longer Jews or Gentiles, or slaves or free men, or even merely men or women, but we are all the same—we are Christians; we are one in Jesus Christ.

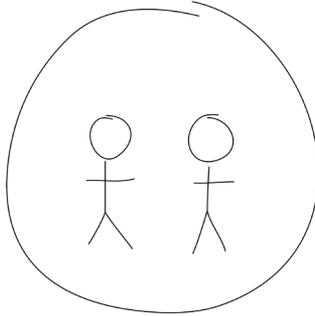
-Galatians 3:26-28 (LB)

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

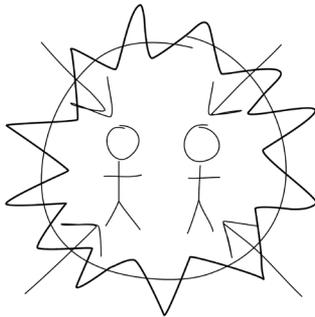
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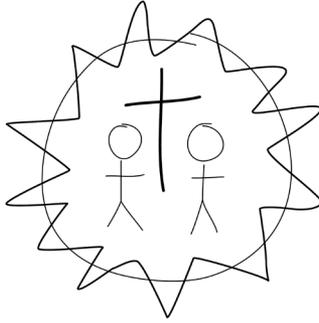


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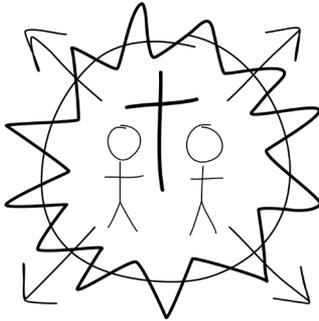


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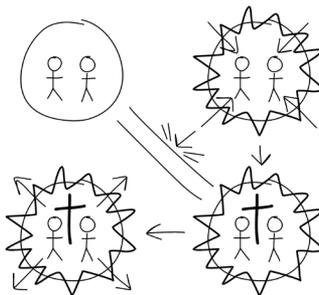
RESTORED FOR BETTER



SENT TO HEAL



ONLY THROUGH JESUS



How to Receive God's Forgiveness and Life

1. _____ that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong.

-1 John 1:9

2. Believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose again.

If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

-Romans 10:9

3. _____ God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.

For it is by grace you are saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the free gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

-Ephesians 2:8-9

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

4. Invite Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director ("Lord") of your life.

To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn!—not a physical rebirth...but from the will of God!

-John 1:12-13

Jesus says, "Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in..."

-Revelation 3:20

You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:

"Heavenly Father, thank you for loving me in spite of my sin. I need You in my life. I repent; I turn away from my sin. Please forgive me. I believe Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave. I want to follow Him from now on. Come into my life and make me a new person inside. And use me in your plan to help heal the world."

Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, will be saved.

-Romans 10:13

Questions About Baptism

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by _____.

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.

-Mark 1:9

2. Because Christ commands it.

Jesus said, "Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

-Matthew 28:19-20

3. Because everyone who followed Jesus in the New Testament got baptized.

What Is the Meaning of Baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

*For when you are baptized, you were **buried** with Christ, and in baptism you were also **raised** with Christ.*

-Colossians 2:12

2. It illustrates my new _____ as a Christian.

Why Be Baptized by Immersion?

1. Because _____ was baptized that way.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.

-Matthew 3:16

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

*Now John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, **because there was plenty of water**, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.*

-John 3:23

3. The word *baptize* means to "_____ under water."

4. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection!

At Forest Park, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of us were "confirmed" as children.

When Should I Be Baptized?

As soon as you have believed!

The Meaning of the Lord's Supper

What Is the Lord's Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper to get us to **look back** at his sacrifice on the cross, **look to the side** to see His work in and through His church, and **look to the future** for His return. The supper is all about Jesus past present and future.

...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; eat it in remembrance of me."

-1 Corinthians 11:24

Who Can Participate in the Lord's Supper? (Mark 14:22-26)

Only those who are already believers.

For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

-1 Corinthians 11:29

Part Two: The Forest Park Statements

Let there be real harmony among you so there won't be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

-1 Corinthians 1:10 (LB)

Our Vision

Helping people take
their next step toward God

Our Strategy

Creating environments where people
worship, grow and serve

We Worship

WORSHIP: Expressing _____ to God

"...the Father seeks worshipers...and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

-John 4:23-24

Expressions of Worship:

Singing (*Ephesians 5:19*)

Commitment (*Romans 12:1-2*)

Praying (*Psalms 95:6*)

Hearing the Word (*John 17:17*)

Giving (*1 Corinthians 16:1-2*)

Baptism (*Romans 6:3-4*)

Meditating (*Habakkuk 2:20*)

Lord's Supper (*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

How Jesus Worshiped

It was the custom of Jesus to worship on the weekend.

He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom.

-Luke 4:16

We plan our services so God can speak to the hearts of beginners.

Our preaching is filled with life application.

Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

-James 1:22

It was also the custom of Jesus to worship daily.

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

-Luke 5:16

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

-Joshua 1:8

We Grow

We want you to grow with God and grow with _____.

We want our LifeGroups to enjoy deep Bible study.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

-2 Timothy 3:16

We want our LifeGroups to do life together.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

-Act 5:42

We want every member to be in a LifeGroup because we believe it is the best method for helping you grow with God and grow with others.

Advantages of Being in a LifeGroup

1. You can develop some amazing friendships.
2. You can learn how to follow Jesus at a deeper level.
3. You can get answers to your questions.
4. You can get and give support in times of need.
5. You can be held accountable for your spiritual development.
6. Your character will grow.

How Do I Find a LifeGroup?

Every campus has a location in the Lobby with information about LifeGroups. You can also search available LifeGroups on our website at forestpark.church/lifegroups-search.

RightNow Media Video Library

If you put your email address on your membership application, we will send you a link to sign up to get free access to a huge online library of discipleship resources through the RightNow Media video library.

Resources on Our Website (forestpark.church)

LifeGroups Information = forestpark.church/lifegroups

Serve Opportunities Search Tool = forestpark.church/serve

Online Sermon Messages = forestpark.church/sermons

Online Giving = forestpark.church/give

Sermon Audio and Video Podcasts on iTunes = Search "Forest Park Messages"

We Serve

The heartbeat of Forest Park is our ministries.

Every member needs to be a part of one.

Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities...and there are different kinds of service to God (ministry)...All of you together form the one Body of Christ and each of you is a separate and necessary part of it.

-1 Corinthians 12:4-5,27(LB)

At Forest Park:

Every member is a _____. Every task is important.
Every member is a "10" in some area.

We want every member to serve in the church and in the community.

The happiest people in our church are letting God use them in ministries that are changing people's lives.

Our Outreach Strategy: i³

Invest in friendships with people who don't know God.
Invite them to be your guest at church.
Involve them in your LifeGroup and place of service.



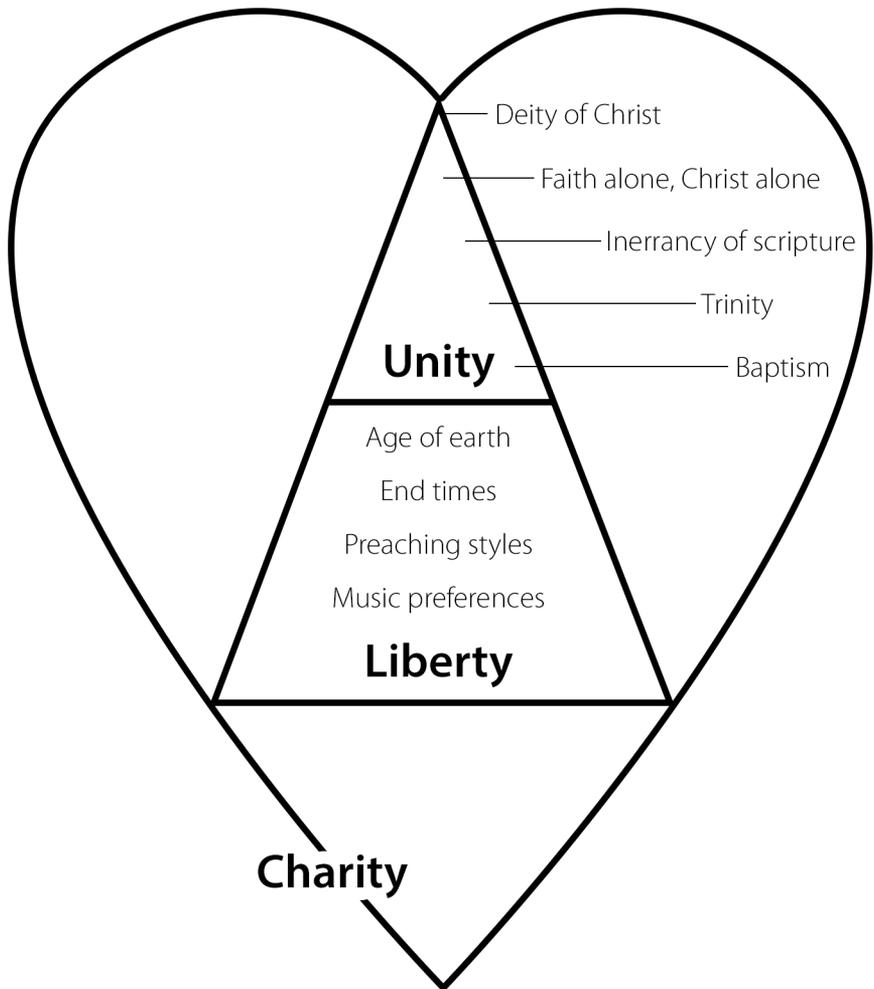
Our Statement of Faith

What We Believe

In essential beliefs we have _____ . (Ephesians 4:4-6)

In non-essential beliefs we have liberty. (Romans 14:1,4,12,22)

In all our beliefs we show charity. (1 Corinthians 13:2, Ph)



Other Basic Beliefs

About God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Gen 1:1,26,27; Gen 3:22; Ps 90:2; Matt 28:19; 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Cor 13:14

About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Mat 12:22, 23; Is 9:6; Jn 1:1-5; Jn 14:10:30; Heb 4:14-15; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Rom 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Tim 6:14-15; Titus 2:13

About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Cor 3:17; Jn 16:7-13; Jn 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 1:13; Gal 5:25; Eph 30:5

About the Bible

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 2 Tim 1:13; Ps 119:105, 160; Ps 12:6; Prov 30:5

About Human Beings

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Gen 1:27; Ps 8:3-6; Is 53:6a; Rom 3:23; Is 59:1-2

About Salvation

Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8-9; Jn 14:6; Jn 1:12; Titus 3:5; Gal 3:26; Rom 5:1

About Eternal Security

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.

Jn 10:29; 2 Tim 1:12; Heb 7:25; Heb 10:10-14; 1 Pet 1:3-5

About Eternity

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

Jn 3:16; Jn 14:17; Rom 6:23; Rom 8:17-18; Rev 20:15; 1 Cor 2:7-9

Human Sexuality Policy

Forest Park welcomes everyone from all walks of life to attend church events and activities. Jesus is for everyone, therefore, his church is for all who are seeking to know God and discover His will. All people are created by God and are loved by God. Differing opinions on matters of life and spirituality may arise between attenders, but we insist that God would have us to treat everyone with dignity and respect. In regards to human sexuality, there are differing opinions, but Forest Park believes there is a clear scriptural standard.

Standard: The biological sexuality of human beings has been created by God and should be accepted and stewarded as a gift from God the Father and not altered (Gen 1:27). The biblical standard for human sexual behavior is a monogamous heterosexual relationship between a husband and wife (Gen 2:24; Mark 10:6-8). Sexual intercourse outside of these boundaries is contrary to God's design and will (Hebrews 13:4). We recognize that all human beings fall short of God's standards (Rom. 3:23), and the sin nature resides in every person from birth (Ps 51:5, Rom 5:12). Resisting desires which are contrary to God's will honors Christ (Col 3:5, Rom 6:13, 1 Cor 6:18-20).

Expectations: Staff, deacons, ministerial leadership, worship leaders and teachers of Forest Park, including helpers/assistants in the student and children ministries, and those who go on mission trips are required to live and teach within this biblical standard. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must affirm the teachings of scripture even if the culture around us disagrees. Leaders at Forest Park are expected to live holy lives including abiding by the biblical standard for human sexuality. For those who fall short of God's standards, we believe and proclaim forgiveness and redemption from sin through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Membership: Because of our fallen nature, all members of Forest Park fail to live up to the high standards of scripture for sexual conduct. Jesus went so far as to equate lust with committing adultery, a very high standard. While all are welcome to worship and fellowship at Forest Park, official membership is open to everyone who genuinely desires to abide by God's standard, as defined above, with regard to their sexual behavior, even if they do not fully agree with it.

Unity + Liberty

It's not mandatory that your beliefs match up 100% with what our church believes. But if you join our church, it's important that you not teach anything CONTRARY to our core beliefs. Private differences of opinion are fine, but for the sake of unity, we don't want anyone to spread beliefs that oppose our core beliefs.

Our Core Values

Evangelism: Lost people matter to God so they matter to us.

Grace: We love people when they least expect it.

Sacrifice: We give up what we love for what we love even more.

Simplicity: We do less so we can accomplish more.

Excellence: Doing our best honors God.

Innovation: The Gospel never changes, but our strategy for sharing it with our culture does.

Unity: We don't have to agree on every point to love each other and serve God together.

Part Three: The Forest Park Structure

For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace... Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

-1 Corinthians 14:33,40

How Our Church Is Structured

The structure of the church should *not* be determined by culture, business practices or denominational traditions.

The nature of the church determines its structure.

1. The church is a _____.

They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship...

-Acts 2:42 (Ph)

A top priority in a fellowship is harmony and unity.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
-Ephesians 4:3

Any attitude that causes disunity is a sin.

Colossians 3:15; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:14; Proverbs 17:14; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27; Philippians 2:1-3; Colossians 2:2; Philippians 4:2; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 Corinthians 14:33; John 13:34-35; 2 Timothy 2:23; Romans 15:5-6; Romans 12:16-18; Colossians 3:13-14; Psalm 133:1

Implication: A good structure promotes unity and downplays differences.

...(Often) your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that you come together as a church, there are divisions among you...

-1 Corinthians 11:17-18

Voting tends to create division.

2. The church is a _____.

1 Peter 3:8; Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 2:10-12; 1 Peter 4:17

So we operate on the basis of relationships, not rules.

*Don't reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a **father**. Treat the young men as brothers, and the older women as **mothers**. Treat the younger women as **sisters**...*

-1 Timothy 5:1-2 (Ph)

3. The church is a _____.

*1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23; Ephesians 1:22-23;
Colossians 1:18; Colossians 2:19*

Therefore, we function on the basis of spiritual gifts, not elected offices.

At Forest Park we have a simple structure so we can maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.

*God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for **works of ministry**, so that the body of Christ may be built up...*

-Ephesians 4:11-12

Our Structure

The people are the ministers. The pastors are the administrators.

There are dozens of ministries in our church operated by members.

4. The church is a _____.

John 10:1-30; Matthew 26:31; Matthew 25:33

Therefore, it is cared for and led by shepherds.

*To the elders I say...**Be shepherds** of God's flock, serving as overseers...*

-1 Peter 5:1-2

Our Affiliation

The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest association of Christian churches in America.

47,000 churches and 15 million members

The SBC is a highly diverse association of churches.

SBC churches include every race, nationality and ethnic group. Each Sunday, services are held in over 100 languages in the U.S.

The SBC is a group that helps a lot of people come to know Christ.

The SBC baptizes over **4,500 new Christians and starts nearly thirty-five new churches a week** in the U.S. We support more than 8,000 missionaries serving all over the world.

Why not just be an independent church?

We *are* an independent church! Every SBC church is completely independent. There is no denominational control. Every SBC church chooses its own pastor, owns its own buildings, and determines its own programs.

A Brief History of Forest Park

In 1846, God moved in the hearts of 23 frontier farmers to start a church. We built a small log cabin for worship on Shoal Creek and elected William Farmer to be the first pastor. During the Civil War era, the church building burned down—twice! In 1884, God led us to move to Joplin where we purchased land on Range Line across from what is today the North Park Mall. We changed our name from the Shoal Creek Baptist Church to Forest Park.

In 1948, we relocated to 7th and Range Line. The church experienced great growth under the leadership of Thurman Kelly, who was our pastor for more than 30 years. After a church split in the late 1970s, our members voted to abolish committees and be a staff-led church. Free from politics and bureaucracy, Forest Park flourished and had a much greater impact on our community and world.

John Swadley has been our Lead Pastor since 1996. Forest Park Carthage launched in August 2007 as a way for our members living in that area to better reach out to their neighbors. Forest Park North launched in September of 2009 as an outreach to the Carl Junction, Webb City, and north Joplin areas.

What It Means to Be a Member

The difference between “attenders” and “members” can be summed up in one word: _____.

At Forest Park we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons.

1. A Biblical Reason: Christ Is Committed to the Church

...Christ loved the church, and He gave His life for it.

-Ephesians 5:25

2. A Cultural Reason: It Is an Antidote to Our Society

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything— a job, a marriage, our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Membership swims against selfishness. Commitment always builds character.

3. A Practical Reason: It Defines Whom We Can Count On

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

4. A Personal Reason: It Produces Spiritual Growth

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

What is expected of me as a member?

At Forest Park we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

The Forest Park Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Forest Park’s statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Forest Park church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church...

- ...by acting in love toward other members.
- ...by refusing to gossip.
- ...by following the leaders.

So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.

-Romans 15:19 (Ph)

Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.

1 Peter 1:22 (GN)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you.

-Hebrews 13:17

2. I will support the vision of our church...

- ...by attending a weekly worship service.
- ...by growing with other believers in a LifeGroup.
- ...by serving in a ministry.

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together..but let us encourage one another.

-Hebrews 10:25

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant...

Philippians 2:3-4,7

Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...

-1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)

What Is Next?

Fill out both sides of the membership application (the last page of this booklet), tear it out, and give it to your campus pastor. He will help you complete the membership process and answer any questions you have. You will also want to find a LifeGroup and a place to serve. We are praying that your relationship with God reaches new heights as you keep taking your next steps toward God at Forest Park.

We'd Like to Get to Know You

Please fill out both sides and return to your campus pastor.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Male Female Date of Birth: ___/___/___

Single Married

My occupation is: _____

Business: _____

I have the following expertise: _____

I attend: Joplin Carthage North at 9:30 am 11:00 am

I am currently involved in a LifeGroup. _____

I want to get involved in a LifeGroup.

Email me information about RightNow Media Bible studies.

I am currently serving in the following area(s). _____

I'm interested in finding a place to serve. Please contact me.

I have been active in the following churches in the past:

Church Name Position of Service

How would you describe your relationship to Christ?

Agnostic I'm not sure what I believe.

New Christian Committed Christian _____

I've been a Christian for a while, but I need to grow closer to God.

Information of Family Members

Spouse's Name: _____ Date of Birth: ___/___/___

Children

First Name Last Name Birth Date Lives with You? Attends FP?

Check the box(es) of the children who are baptized believers who want to join Forest Park with you.

Membership Application

Forest Park Baptist Church

Four Requirements

Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ and trusted Him for your salvation?

Yes _____
When? _____ Where? _____

Yes, during this class

Have you been baptized by immersion (under water) after you committed your life to Christ?

Yes _____
When? _____ Where? _____

I want to be baptized at Forest Park.

Have you completed Discovering Forest Park?

Yes _____
Date _____

Do you desire to abide by the Forest Park Membership Covenant?

Yes, I do! _____
Please sign your name and date.

Welcome to Our Family!

To be completed by Forest Park Representative

Desires Membership at Forest Park Baptist Church By:

- Profession of faith and believers' baptism
- Believers' baptism (has previously accepted Christ)
- Baptism scheduled for (date): _____

To be baptized at which campus: Joplin Carthage North

Sunday 9:30 am

Sunday 11:00 am

Letter from (name of church): _____

Address: _____

Statement

Associate Member

Forest Park Representative: _____ Date: _____



Forest Park Joplin

725 S Highview Ave
Joplin, MO 64801
417-623-4606

Forest Park Carthage

2535 S Grand Ave
Carthage, MO 64836
417-358-9955

Forest Park North

5898 N Main St #101
Joplin, MO 64801
417-623-2199