



SANTA BARBARA

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Foundations



WELCOME!



Santa Barbara Community Church is a community of people dedicated to the glory of God! We are convinced that God is supreme, indeed sovereign over all things, and that we find our greatest joy when we submit to his loving lordship in all of life. We are convinced that God himself is the solution to life's deepest problems and the answer to our deepest needs. We are convinced of the gospel, that is, that Christ died for our sins and thus made it possible for us to be forgiven of those sins and enjoy fellowship with the living God.

Furthermore, we are convinced that the church is neither a building, nor primarily an organization, but rather, the church is what the New Testament calls the Body of Christ. We are cemented together by God's love, formed

into a family of believers by God's grace, and sent into the world because of God's missionary mandate. With all of the above in mind, we welcome you to the life of Santa Barbara Community Church. We invite you to visit, inquire and enjoy worshipping God with us. And if SBCC should be a community to which you would like to belong, we will welcome you with open arms!

Use the information here as a guide for both learning about and becoming involved in this body of believers. Much of our church life happens in small groups – from our youngest members on up. Jump in to further explore and deepen your faith among others! We are excited to join you in your pursuit!



CONTACT US

Address:

1002 Cieneguitas Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Phone:

(805) 687-7797

Email:

hello@sbcommunity.org

Web:

sbcommunity.org



A PERSONAL NOTE

One of the great joys of our role is to have the so-called “Membership Interview” with those who have recently participated in a Foundations gathering. Most often, when we begin a “Membership Interview,” the person we’re sitting across from or on the phone with asks, “So, what questions do you have for me?” We laugh and say that the purpose of the conversation is the exact opposite: to allow those applying for membership to ask any lingering questions they may have for us. We hope that what you learn in these pages spurs on questions and fruitful discussion of topics as wide-ranging as baptism, shared leadership in the church, homegroup participation, the history of the church, SBCC’s approach to ministry, and the specifics of the membership covenant. We look forward to your questions and hope God uses this time to guide you in your consideration of membership with all of us who are called Santa Barbara Community Church. Blessings on the journey!

Benji Bruneel and Mike Willbanks

Lead Pastors



FOUNDATIONS

LET US KNOW YOU CAME...

Today's Date: _____

I'm attending today because:

- ☐ I am visiting or considering making SB Community my home church and am here to learn more.
- ☐ I am regularly attending SB Community and am interested in becoming a member.
- ☐ I am already a member of SB Community but have not participated in Foundations before.

Name: _____

Spouse's Name (if married): _____ ☐ Attending today, too.

(Minor) Children's Names: _____

Address/City/Zip: _____

Home phone: _____

His cell: _____

Her cell: _____

His email: _____

Her email: _____

Note: Community Connect is SB Community's internal, online, secure database which serves as a church directory and provides information about the SB Community groups in which one participates. Additionally, with the exception of our weekly all-church eAnnouncements, it is SB Community's primary avenue for group email communication. If you are not already using Community Connect but are considering making SB Community your church home, you can get started...

- ☐ Yes, I am interested in Community Connect. Please contact me with more information.
- ☐ I/We would like our email address(es) added to the eAnnouncement list. Please send me the link to subscribe.

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FAMILY CULTURE



AS A PEOPLE SEEKING TO BE JOYFULLY FAITHFUL...

...we value and pursue:

- Leadership and ministry marked by playfulness, humility, laughter, a high view of Scripture, and commitment to prayer.
- Taking the gospel seriously, but not ourselves too seriously.
- That God has spoken authoritatively in the Bible and that believers are to respond to God's Word with lives of submission and obedience (e.g. Psalm 119:9-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- That God moves in response to prayer (e.g. Genesis 18:22-33; Acts 12:1-17). In the mystery of his sovereignty, God invites his people to present their petitions, requests, praises, and longings before him in prayer (e.g. Luke 18:1-8; Philippians 4:6). As such, we want to be a people who are devoted to prayer.

AS A PEOPLE SEEKING TO BE COLLECTIVELY INVESTED...

...we value and pursue:

- Encouraging the participation of many over the performance of a few.
- That the Scriptures teach that all believers are filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered for ministry both in the local church setting and in the surrounding community. As a result, all believers are expected and encouraged to use their gifts "for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).



We seek to be a church family who is... joyfully faithful, relentlessly relational, collectively invested, and generously engaged.



AS A PEOPLE SEEKING TO BE RELENTLESSLY RELATIONAL...

...we value and pursue:

- Freely offering grace and friendship with one another.
- Being a spiritual family sharing life together even when things are hard.
- That God calls people to lifelong discipleship, that is, pursuit of becoming more like Christ and learning to live life according to his example and teachings (e.g. John 15:13-15; Romans 8:29; 1 John 2:3-6). We believe that small groups are a primary vehicle for furthering one's discipleship.
- That church life should be marked by the kind of mutual submission, encouragement, and practical expressions of community described in Acts 2:42-47.
- That God does not save people into an isolated experience of faith, but rather invites believers to commit to a particular, local expression of the worldwide church (e.g. Acts 11:19-26; Hebrews 10:23-25).



AS A PEOPLE SEEKING TO BE GENEROUSLY ENGAGED...

...we value and pursue:

- An open-handed connection to the larger community and world.
- That the message of God's redemption of the world through Jesus Christ is good news to be shared (e.g. Acts 4:13-20; Romans 10:9-15).
- That Christ commanded his disciples to be bearers of the good news of the gospel and the blessings of the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth (e.g. Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). To that end, SB Community desires to engage in mission both close to home and around the world through trusted, gospel-centered ministry partners.

FAMILY CULTURE

JOYFULLY FAITHFUL

DISTINCTIVES

SB Community Church is a vibrant, joy-filled spiritual family that enjoys a long tradition of sound Bible teaching, deep relational connection, and engagement with the kingdom of God and mission of God. Each church has unique characteristics and SB Community is no exception! Here are some important, high-level descriptors that outline what you can expect to encounter in this church family both in belief and practice.

- We are an evangelical, Bible-teaching church.
- We best fit in the Reformed theological tradition.
- We are a part of the Converge affiliation of churches.
- We teach and practice believers' baptism.
- We are committed to an approach to church life that calls for high investment in one another's lives and the life of the broader church family.
- We practice shared leadership at every level and see the primary role of church leadership as equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.
- We affirm the ministry of gifted and Spirit-empowered women in every arena of church life, including as Elders and in preaching.
- We uphold traditional and historical Bible teaching on marriage.
- We believe that personal faith has social implications and we advocate and work for justice in our community and in the world.
- We enjoy a strong commitment to gospel engagement and demonstrate a generous posture toward other kingdom-aligned churches and ministries, both locally and globally.

If you would like any additional information on these commitments, please feel free to reach out. We would be happy to provide supplemental information as you discern whether SB Community is the local church family of which you'd want to be a part.

THE CHURCH

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the church was born with the coming of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

In short order those who had faith in Christ began to see themselves as a part of group of like-minded believers in what the Bible calls the church.

The church is not a building or even primarily an organization. The church is the gathered community of Christians (saints) who live out their commitment to Christ in the context of spiritual relationships in an organism called the church. Jesus reflects his presence to the world through this group of interdependent people called the church. When God calls us into a vertical relationship with himself, he also calls us into a horizontal relationship with other believers in local churches. The New Testament uses many metaphors or word pictures to describe the church.

- Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)
- A dwelling place for God (Ephesians 2:22)
- Spiritual house, holy priesthood, chosen people, holy nation (1 Peter 2:4-12)
- Family of believers (Galatians 6:10)

While all Christians are a part of the larger (universal) church that is made up of all believers around the world, in the New Testament we find that believers are always associated with particular local churches. Many of the letters in the New Testament are written to these local bodies of believers.

- To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus...
- To the churches in Galatia...
- To the church of God in Corinth, those sanctified in Christ Jesus...
- To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his saints...
- To the church of the Thessalonians...

The Bible describes the church as absolutely essential to God's plan for redemption and of cosmic significance.

His intent was that now, through the church, *"the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms..."* (Ephesians 3:10)

In *The Living Church* (2007), John Stott bluntly states what we believe at SB Community.

I trust that none of my readers is that grotesque anomaly, an unchurched Christian. The New Testament knows nothing of such a person. For the church is at the very center of the eternal purposes of God.

Church is not a place you go to, but rather a congregation you are a part of. The apostle Paul offers his summary of the church when he says, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). All of the descriptions of the church in the New Testament point to an interdependent spiritual family, with all of the joys and problems that go with family life.

DOCTRINE

We believe...

As a church we want to emphasize the central beliefs of Christian orthodox faith. This means we find our unity in the central tenets of the Christian faith: God is sovereign; sin and rebellion from God is our core problem; Jesus is the answer; the Bible is true; and Heaven and Hell are real.

We believe in the triune God of the Bible. We believe that God created the universe and that he created humanity in his own image. Because of our disobedience to God (sin) we are helpless and hopeless until God rescues us from our predicament (redemption). Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, lovingly gave his life for us so that we might know and enjoy fellowship with God. We believe that Jesus is coming again to judge the earth and establish a new heavens and a new earth.

We believe...

- The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, to be the verbally inspired word of God; the supreme and final authority in faith and life.
- That there is but one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- That Jesus of Nazareth was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
- That all human beings were created in the image of God without sin or defect; that we all have sinned in Adam, and thereby incur not only physical death, but spiritual death. This results in separation from God; that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and

that those who reach moral responsibility still sin in thought, word and deed.

- That Jesus died and rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is coming again to reign on earth.
- That Jesus is the Christ; that his death provided atonement for humanity's sin and that all who place their faith in Him as Lord and Savior are justified before God.
- That all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church; that the members of this one spiritual community are directed to associate themselves together in local churches; and that the establishment of local churches is clearly taught in the New Testament. The local church is part of the global Church.
- That all who place their faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated spiritually by the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God, adopted into his family by faith, and saved into his community of saints.
- That all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are called to a holiness of life as evidenced by obedience to God's word. This includes participation in baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- That there will be a bodily resurrection of all to face the righteous judgment of God: the unsaved, to punishment and eternal separation from God; and the saved, to eternal life with God, fully knowing and enjoying him forever.

PRAYER

Wednesday Prayer: This has been SB Community's "school of prayer." A morning session is led each week at SB Community Church at 6:45am. Contact the church office for details.

Days of Extraordinary Prayer: At times during the year we spend a day in prayer with groups gathering every hour from 6am until 5pm. We call this prayer meeting a day of "Extraordinary Prayer" because we are mostly praying not for the "ordinary" (jobs, health, direction), but for the extraordinary things we desire most. That is, we pray for the blessing of God on his church, for revival and renewal.

Prayer Groups: If you are interested in a women's prayer group or other prayer groups, please contact the church office for more information.

Prayer Teams: Every Sunday, we have teams of two available to pray with during or after a service. If you would like current information on this ministry, please Contact the church office for details.



FAMILY CULTURE RELENTLESSLY RELATIONAL

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AT SB COMMUNITY CHURCH

If you call SB Community your church family, you are encouraged to make small group membership a part of your life. Ever since the earliest days of Jesus' ministry, his followers have gathered in small groups to learn, worship, pray, and encourage one another for life and ministry. For many of us, gathering regularly with a "little church" has been one of the most important factors in our spiritual growth over the years. At every level of ministry, SB Community tries to incorporate small groups in to our ministry models, from Sunday School to youth group, to women's Gathering groups, to Praxis groups for men, and more.

Homegroups

Homegroups are a bedrock ministry of our church family. The founding pastors loved to recall that when the church had 30 people, it had three homegroups!

In homegroups, we meet weekly in small groups of approximately 6-18 people to:

- Read and study scripture along with the sermon series.
- Pray and worship together.
- Build friendships and care for one another.
- Encourage one another toward spiritual maturity and joy in Christ.

Most homegroups are intentionally multi-generational. Homegroup members also bless the larger church family by serving together in children's ministry on Sundays 2-3 times per year (suspended during Covid-19).

Homegroups meet in two sessions per year, from mid-September to early December and again from late January to mid-May. Signups are open in August and in January.

How to thrive in a homegroup:

To build community and trust, we all make every effort to be prepared, be present, and be real.

- Homegroups use written study guides that follow alongside the Sunday sermon series. Expect to spend 45-60 minutes preparing for your homegroup gathering. You can split this time up into shorter daily segments. Spend time reflecting on the relevant Bible passage. Consider the questions and mark any that you particularly want to discuss during homegroup. Come ready to contribute and also to listen to others.
- Try to come each week--this honors the rest of your group and contributes to building the trust that will help us all to grow. Arrive on time if possible. Set your phone aside. Notify your leaders if you won't be able to attend.
- We all long for authentic relationships, and homegroups can be a place where we are truly known and loved. Honor each other's vulnerability. Keep information shared by others confidential.
- If you're comfortable speaking out in a group, or talk a lot, regulate yourself. Leave space for others to talk. Ask questions to draw out others.
- Respect others' views, do not argue, do not interrupt. As trust grows, be willing to build relationships and to encourage each other.

Our prayer as pastoral staff is that each homegroup grow spiritually, personally, and in community life as we study the Bible together. May you engage in and enjoy the riches of God's word each week!

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Church leadership is both necessary and pleasing to God and to a healthy church.

Jesus is the Senior Pastor of SB Community Church

- *And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church...Ephesians 1:22.*
- The Church is a monarchy—not a democracy.
- The leadership given to Elders and Pastors is primarily one of responsibility to carry out the commands of Christ.

God ordained church leadership to serve under the monarch:

- Acts 20:17 – Elders = *presbuteros*
- Acts 20:28 – Overseers = *episkopos*... Keep watch over



yourselves and all the flock (poimen) of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (NIV)

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 – Bishops = *episkopos* and refers to the “office”
- Titus 1:5-9 (same passage with pastors, *presbuteros*)
- 1 Peter 5:1 “So I exhort the elders (*presbuteros*) among you, as a fellow (*sum-presbuteros*)”

God ordained that the church be led by godly leaders:

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7
- Titus 1

Church leadership should and can be a joy for all involved.

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith...Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:7, 17

How church leadership works in SB Community Church:

- SB Community is primarily an elder-led church. This means that the elders have the final authority, responsibility and charge of SB Community.
- The congregation appoints and affirms the elders.
- Currently we have 9 elders serving SB Community.
- A consensus model of leadership is utilized.
- The elders serve the church in prayer.

The elders serve the church in leadership by...

- Feeding the Body of Christ: oversight of what we will study next

- Caring for the staff
- Discerning where God is leading at this time
- Monitoring whether our worship services are needing adjustment
- Oversight of Local & Global Engagement board, preschool board
- The elders guard the flock from false teachers/teaching. (Titus 1:9-11, Acts 20:29, 31)
- The elders prepare a church budget.
- The elders host an annual congregational meeting.

Principles of elder-leadership:

- Functional rather than positional
- Serving rather than receiving
- Equipping rather than doing
- Team sport rather than individual

The elders of the church work to provide leadership, direction and vision for the body of Christ (Acts 6:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-10). The New Testament always describes the leaders of local churches in the plural. Leadership at SB Community begins as a shared ministry of servant-minded elders.

STAFF

Presently SB Community has a staff consisting of 20 men and women that serve the church. Some of these staff members we call pastoral staff and others serve in administration and with the care of our facilities. Some of these staff members are full-time and others part-time. The pastoral staff serves the church in a myriad of ways in giving leadership, in teaching, discipling and in raising leaders within the church to serve in many different ministries both within and outside of the church community. The administrative staff, again, serves in a variety of ways from book-keeping, to administration, to the care of our facilities.



STAFF

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James Asselin
pastor-worship & men's
ministries
james@sbcommunity.org
(408) 373-4306



Benji Bruneel
lead pastor
benji@sbcommunity.org
(805) 689-6255



Paige Chase
interim pastor-children &
families
paige@sbcommunity.org
(805) 453-3306



Mario Cobian
facilities caretaker
mario@sbcommunity.org
(805) 886-9346



Mandy Drewes
pastor-students & families
mandy@sbcommunity.org
(805) 258-9858



Kim Faraudo
ministry coordinator-
elementary
kim@sbcommunity.org
(805) 729-0302



Rhonda DuPar
children's assistant
rhonda@sbcommunity.org
(805) 895-4274



Deana Gilman
church administrator
deana@sbcommunity.org
(805) 452-2285



Ken Hwang
pastor-local & global
engagement
ken@sbcommunity.org
(857) 225-2251



Joanne Herdrich
pastor-congregational
care & women
joanne@sbcommunity.org
(805) 252-9049



Christine McKee
high school ministry
associate
christine@sbcommunity.org
(805) 279-3266



Karen McLean
executive pastor
karen@sbcommunity.org
(805) 895-9517



Claire Moore
associate pastor-children
claire@sbcommunity.org
(805) 455-2250



Brian Nesbit
junior high ministry
associate
brian@sbcommunity.org
(571) 442-1307



Arianna Pacheco
prechool director
arianna@trinity-
preschool.org
(805) 881-1801



Erin Patterson
pastor-homegroups
erin@sbcommunity.org
(805) 722-2642



Carolee Peterson
communications director;
children's pastoral
assistant
carolee@sbcommunity.org
(805) 895-4064



Kathy Roberts
accounts receivable
kathy@sbcommunity.org
(805) 682-8046



Mike Willbanks
lead pastor
mike@sbcommunity.org
(805) 448-7039



Andy White
5th/6th ministry associate
andy@sbcommunity.org
(805) 705-2092

ELDERS



Steve Baker
stbaker@westmont.edu



Benji Bruneel
benji@sbcommunity.org



Cameron Carey
nomadblldr@gmail.com



Kim Grant
kcabagrnt@gmail.com



Rosemary Maione
rosemarymaione@gmail.com



Aaron Marshall
aaron.r.marshall@gmail.com



Mike Willbanks
mike@sbcommunity.org



Matt Wood
mwood2727@gmail.com



The church is not an assembly of loosely associated individuals who happen to show up when there is nothing better to do.... Rather, the church is a congregation, a family of people deeply committed to God and to one another. Without commitment (membership, belonging), we don't really have a church.

**FAMILY CULTURE
COLLECTIVELY
INVESTED**

EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY

What is your "part?" Did you know that you have one? Santa Barbara Community Church began as a small group of young and inexperienced people with a vision for church inspired by the church in Acts – all members contributing their gifts for the greater good of the larger church body. Today, we are a different church in many ways. But we still need each other in order to grow in Christ. Our church is to be an integrated group of diverse members who are committed to loving and serving Jesus together – an every member ministry.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
Ephesians 4:11-16



DISCIPLESHIP AND DISCIPLINE

Discipleship:

Disciples are what the church is trying to make. Disciple-making is the goal of the church to the end that God is glorified in his being worshipped by mature believers.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Colossians 1:28-29

Discipline:

Loving discipline is to the church what loving correction is in a family.

Definition: God exercising spiritual authority through a local church to restore an erring believer. –Warren Wiersbe

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-20

New Testament Examples Of Church Discipline:

- 1 Corinthians 5 (some sort of sexual impropriety in one family)
- 1 Corinthians 7 (lawsuits among believers)
- 2 Thessalonians 3:16ff. (some who don't work to support their family)
- Titus 3:9-11 (divisiveness)
- Galatians 6:1-2 (unspecified specific sin)

Loving discipline is to the church what loving correction is in a family.

SB COMMUNITY CHURCH AND MEMBERSHIP

If you are trusting by faith in Jesus Christ as your savior, are in harmony with the doctrinal statement and approach to church life and service of SB Community, have been baptized, and desire to be a committed participant in this church family, you are invited to become a member of SB Community. At the conclusion of Foundations there will be an opportunity to join the church. (For a helpful article on why we believe church membership is important, please see “Why Bother With Church Membership?” at the end of this packet, Appendix A.)

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR CHURCH AS A MEMBER

God has faithfully provided leaders to oversee our church - specifically elders, overseers, and pastors (or shepherds). But the Church, indeed SB Community Church, does not belong to its leadership. It belongs to Jesus. As such, our leadership is called to certain responsibilities under Christ, just as its members are called to fulfill their part in church family life - together for God's glory and for mutual spiritual growth and thriving life together in the Spirit. So what are church leaders called to provide the church?

- Prayer for the church - for its health and vitality, specific individual needs, and for crisis situations, to name a few.
- Regular discussion together on how to work toward an increasingly healthy church.
- Protection from heresy and misleading or sinful cultural practices.
- Provision of truthful, “spiritual food” - biblically-based teaching and sound doctrine.
- Shepherding of individuals within the church family.
- To be present in life situations - in births, marriages, deaths, decisions, and to be involved with its members if they should go astray.
- To be among the body, “doing” life together, fellow disciples using God-given gifts just as members offer theirs, all in service to one another, the church.
- Members together committed to the good of one another as fellow citizens of Christ's kingdom, as brothers and sisters in Christ's family.





WHAT YOUR CHURCH CAN EXPECT FROM YOU AS A MEMBER

We often refer to the church as a family and being part of a family comes with both privileges and responsibilities. To that end, the membership covenant seeks to spell out what members can gladly expect from church leadership and from other members while also stating what expectations will, in turn, be placed on new members. These expectations are not burdensome, but the kind of joyful practices that help create and foster unity in our church family! The expectations of the membership covenant are listed here:

- I will pursue God in my daily life through practices such as Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship.
- I will submit to the authority of God's Word and seek, by God's grace, to live a life that pleases him.
- I will make weekly corporate worship a priority.
- I will participate in a small group gathering where I can practice the "one anothers" of the Christian life.
- I will gladly give of my time, talents, and financial resources for the expansion of God's kingdom.
- I will find a place to use my gifts to love and serve in the name of Christ.
- I will seek the unity of the church for the sake of the gospel.
- I will pray for my church family and its leaders regularly.

By assenting to these expectations—while also learning of the commitments one can rightly expect from other members of the church family—each person who signs the membership covenant is agreeing to live out church life in a certain way.

SB COMMUNITY AND GIVING

We believe that generous giving is an essential part of Christian discipleship (1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9). The Elders report our giving regularly to the congregation. Two times each year (in February and August) we collect a Special Offering for the Poor. This giving is above and beyond our regular giving. Giving can be made...

In Person

- We have two giving boxes in the entryway of the church sanctuary.

By Mail

- Gifts can be made payable to Santa Barbara Community Church and mailed to Kathy Roberts at Santa Barbara Community Church, 1002 Cieneguitas Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93110.

Electronically

- Community Connect (<https://sbcommunity.ccbchurch.com/>)
- SBCommunity.org (www.sbcommunity.org/give/)
- SB Community mobile app (obtainable through the Apple Store and GooglePlay online).



LOCAL & GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Our Position

"God is on mission. He has been on mission throughout history to accomplish His purpose throughout the earth. Each time we see God in the Bible, He is acting in accordance with His purpose: to reveal Himself in order that His name would be glorified, that His Kingdom would be established, and that some from every people would be reconciled to Himself" (Henry T. Blackaby & Avery T. Willis, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*).

"Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation" (Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God*).

Therefore, Santa Barbara Community Church longs to be on mission and engaged with what God is doing locally and globally. Furthermore, we hope to grow and send out partners from our church body both into the greater Santa Barbara area as well as around the world to declare and demonstrate the glory of the Kingdom of God.

Mutual Edification:

Our hope is to have a reciprocal relationship with each partner we support. We want partners sent out from SB Community to return to the church to teach, encourage, and inspire our church body.

Long-Term vs. Short-Term:

The majority of our mission giving is devoted to long-term mission work. We also recognize that God often uses short-term mission trips to cultivate a passion and calling to the mission field. As a result, we often give some financial support to those participating in short-term mission trips on a case-by-case basis.

Balance:

We seek to have holistic missional balance in our engagement. We believe this balance applies to areas such as geography, gender, age, race, and kind of mission work.

Prayer:

We pray as a church regularly for God's mission and for those who are faithfully serving as local and global partners. As we grow in being mission-minded, our desire is for every member of our church family to be involved and engaged in God's mission.

The Committee for Local and Global Engagement (CLGE)

We have a Committee for Local and Global Engagement that oversees and gives direction to the mission of SB Community. This group meets monthly to strengthen ongoing relationships with those receiving financial and prayer support from the church, make recommendations to the board of elders about future directions we might take as a church, and give general oversight to this vital area of our church's ministry. If you are interested in finding out more about our church's local and global engagement, talk to one of the CLGE members or contact Ken Hwang.

For a list of our Ministry Partners, visit www.sbcommunity.org/missions.



APPENDIX A

WHY BOTHER WITH CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

by Kevin DeYoung

I've been asked the question before. Sometimes it's said with genuine curiosity—"So explain to me what membership is all about." Other times it's said with a tinge of suspicion—"So tell me again, why do you think I should become a member?"—as if joining the church automatically signed you up to tithe by direct deposit.

For many Christians membership sounds stiff, something you have at your bank or the country club, but too formal for the church. Even if it's agreed that Christianity is not a lone ranger religion, that we need community and fellowship with other Christians, we still bristle at the thought of officially joining a church. Why all the hoops? Why box the Holy Spirit into member/non-member categories? Why bother joining a local church when I'm already a member of the universal Church?

Some Christians—because of church tradition or church baggage—may not be convinced of church membership no matter how many times "member" actually shows up in the New Testament. But many others are open to hearing the justification for something they've not thought much about.

Here are just a few reasons why church membership matters.

1. In joining a church you make visible your commitment to Christ and his people. Membership is one way to raise the flag of faith. You state before God and others that you are part of this local body of believers. It's easy to talk in glowing terms about the invisible church—the body of all believers near and far, living and dead—but it's in the visible church that God expects you to live out your faith.

Sometimes I think that we wouldn't all be clamoring for community if we had actually experienced it. Real fellowship is hard work, because most people are a lot like us—selfish, petty, and proud. But that's the body God calls us to.

How many of Paul's letters were written to individuals? Only a handful, and these were mostly to pastors. The majority of his letters were written to a local body of believers. We see the same thing in Revelation. Jesus spoke to individual congregations in places like Smyrna, Sardis, and Laodicea. The New Testament knows no Christians floating around in "just me and Jesus" land. Believers belong to churches.

2. Making a commitment makes a powerful statement in a low-commitment culture. Many bowling leagues require more of their members than our churches. Where this is true, the church is a sad reflection of its culture. Ours is a consumer culture where everything is tailored to meet our needs and satisfy our preferences. When those needs aren't met, we can always move on to the next product, or job, or spouse.

Joining a church in such an environment makes a counter-cultural statement. It says "I am committed to this group of people and they are committed to me. I am here to give, more than get."

Even if you will only be in town for a few years, it's still not a bad idea to join a church. It lets your home church (if you are a student) know that you are being cared for, and it lets your present know that you want to be cared for here.

But it's not just about being cared for, it's about making a decision and sticking with it—something my generation, with our oppressive number of choices, finds difficult. We prefer to date the church—have her around for special events, take her out when life feels lonely, and keep her around for a rainy day. Membership is one way to stop dating churches, and marrying one.

3. We can be overly independent. In the West, it's one of the best and worst thing about us. We are free spirits and critical thinkers. We get an idea and run with it. But whose running with us? And are any of us running in the same direction? Membership states in a formal way, "I am part of something bigger than myself. I am not just one of three hundred individuals. I am part of a body."

4. Church membership keeps us accountable. When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are placing ourselves under leaders and submitting to their authority (Hebrews 13:7). We are saying, "I am here to stay. I want to help you grow in godliness. Will you help me to do the same?"

Mark Dever, in his book *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, writes,

Church membership is our opportunity to grasp hold of each other in responsibility and love. By identifying ourselves with a particular church, we let the pastors and other members of that local church know that we intend to be committed in attendance, giving, prayer, and service. We allow fellow believers to have great expectations of us in these areas, and we make it known that we are the responsibility of this local church. We assure the church of our commitment to Christ in serving with them, and we call for their commitment to serve and encourage as well.

5. Joining the church will help your pastor and elders be more faithful shepherds. Hebrews 13:7 says "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority." That's your part as "laypeople". Here's our part as leaders: "They keep watch over you as men who must give an account." As a pastor I take very seriously my responsibility before God to watch care for souls. At almost every elders' meeting the RCA Book of Church Order instructed us "seek to determine whether any members of the congregation are in need of special care regarding their spiritual condition and/or not making faithful use of the means of grace." This is hard enough to do in a church like ours where there is constant turnover, but it's even harder when we don't know who is really a part of this flock.

To give just one example, we try to be diligent in following up with people who haven't been at our church for a while. This is a challenge. But if you never

become a member, we can't tell if you are really gone, because we might not be sure if you were ever here! It's nearly impossible for the elders to shepherd the flock when they don't know who really considers them their shepherds.

6. Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make promises. When someone become a member at University Reformed Church, he makes promises to pray, give, serve, attend worship, accept the spiritual guidance of the church, obey its teachings, and seek the things that make for unity, purity, and peace. We ought not to make these promises lightly. They are solemn vows. And we must hold each other to them. If you don't join the church, you miss an opportunity to publicly make these promises, inviting the elders and the rest of the body to hold you to these promises- which would be missing out on great spiritual benefit, for you, your leaders, and the whole church.

Membership matters more than most people think. If you really want to be a counter-cultural revolutionary, sign up for the membership class, meet with your elders, and join your local church.

APPENDIX B:

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SBCC

1979

On the 3rd Sunday of September, a dozen or so believers gather in a living room in Montecito and start studying the book of Acts. They also pray and worship God together. SBCC has begun.

After three weeks of meeting in a living room, we move and begin to meet in the back of a restaurant/bar on State Street, called 1129 State Street. Our small group ministry, known as Homegroups begins.

1980s

1981: When SB Community is exactly 1 year old we have outgrown the bar and move to meet at La Mesa Community Church. We begin meeting at 4:00 in the afternoon. To some in Santa Barbara, we begin to be known as the afternoon church.

In the early '80s, Homegroups expand, missions commitments begin, children's ministry and a Sunday school program start, an elder board is established, and Steve Jolley and Reed Jolley are employed as pastors. During this time the church enjoys slow but steady growth.

1989: After nine wonderful years at La Mesa Community Church we have grown to about 300 attending on Sundays and have outgrown our facility. We move to Saint Mark Methodist Church and continue to meet in the afternoon.

1990s

In the 1990s our Homegroup ministry remains vibrant, missions

commitments expand, staff is added, and we enjoy robust church life.

In 1991 we add a second service, meeting at 4:00pm and 6:00pm.

In 1998 we have outgrown Saint Mark Methodist. In particular we see more families with children coming and we are in need of more children's ministry space. SB Community moves its Sunday services to Living Faith Center.

2000s

During this decade SB Community slowly begins to have more age diversity in the church. What had been predominately a very young church is now finding itself ministering to people in all age brackets. Staff increases, children's ministries expand, missions ministry becomes more focused, and Homegroups remain at the center of church life.

In the 2000s the elder board moves to a rotation system with elders now serving six-year terms.

After nine years of Sunday worship services taking place at Living Faith Center an unplanned and remarkable change takes place for a church that has rented its meeting space for over 27 years.

2008

SB Community merges with Trinity Baptist Church. This is a time of transition as leaders learn how to steward a church campus, meld two churches into one, care for the elderly, and enjoy a vibrant preschool ministry of 60 children on a daily basis. For the

first time since 1981, SB Community has a morning service at 10:00am along with its afternoon services at 4:00 and 6:00pm.

2010

In September of this year, SB Community moves to two morning services at 9:00 and 11:00 and one afternoon service at 4:00.

2019

A year after our founding pastors, Reed & Steve Jolley, step down from lead pastoring, Mike Willbanks and Benji Bruneel move into the co-pastoring role. SB Community Church celebrates 40 years of church life!

PRESENT

Today SB Community remains a growing church as we journey along together. We have formed a formal vision statement, focused in on our strengths and calling. We have garnered the help of technology as we navigate ministry in a time and place of deep cultural change in our world. Though much has changed from those earliest days, at our core we still strive to be a family of believers that loves Jesus and each other, and cling to conviction, community, and compassion both within our community and in the world. In all that we do, our highest aim is to bring glory to the God who has called us his own and shown us his grace at every step along the way.



Membership Covenant

Last Name: _____

(Spouses must complete and submit their own responses.)

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

YOUR STORY

Membership in a local Christian church presupposes that a person has had a life-changing encounter with Jesus. In the space below, please share some of the story about how you came to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. (Feel free to use a separate page if more space is needed.)

YOUR CHURCH BACKGROUND

If you have never previously been a part of a church, we are so glad are with us! If you have a previous church background, where have you been involved? If you are changing churches within the SB area, what is the reason for the change?

YOUR BAPTISM

The Scriptures teach that every believer is to be baptized as a physical demonstration of our spiritual union with Jesus.

☐ I have been baptized. [Date of baptism: _____ My birthdate: _____]

- If you were baptized as an infant, do you believe from your reading of Scripture that this was a legitimate baptism? ___ Yes ___ No
- Would you like to have a conversation with a pastor to discuss this. ___ Yes ___ No

☐ I would like to schedule a date to be baptized.

YOUR COMMITMENT

Church membership is a gift! Not only did Jesus come to make the Father known to us through his life, grant us salvation through his death and bring us assurance through his resurrection, through faith in Christ we have also been made part of a new family, the church.

Like in any family, there are privileges and responsibilities that are part and parcel of being in the family of God. This means that members of SB Community we should be able to expect certain things of one another. Recognizing that certain seasons of life make exceptions necessary, membership generally entails the following commitments:

- I will pursue God in my daily life through practices such as bible reading, prayer, and fellowship.
- I will submit to the authority of God's word and seek, by God's grace, to live a life that pleases him.
- I will make weekly corporate worship a priority.
- I will participate in a small group gathering where I can practice the "one anothers" of the Christian life.
- I will gladly give of my time, talents, and financial resources for the expansion of God's kingdom.
- I will find a place to use my gifts to love and serve in the name of Christ.
- I will seek the unity of the church for the sake of the gospel.
- I will pray for my church family and its leaders regularly.

The fact that you should expect these same things from the other members of your church family is a gift to you! When we all fulfill our responsibilities in the family, we all benefit. And most importantly, God is glorified as his people prioritize his kingdom before their own comfort and preferences.

- ☐ I am happy to make these commitments.
- ☐ I understand and agree with the doctrinal statement of SBCC.
- ☐ I have attended Foundations and desire to become a member of SBCC.

Signature

Date

Please return your completed application to Deana Gilman in the office or mail it to 1002 Cieneguitas Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93110. If you have questions, contact Deana at 687-7797 or deana@sbcommunity.org.

Pastoral Review Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notes: