



partnership

*"...because of your
partnership in the
gospel from the first
day until now..."*

**PHILIPPIANS
1:5**

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With Included Resources:

Partnership Covenant
Spiritual Gifts Assessment
Read: *Tithes and Offerings, Your Questions, Answered*

A Place For You
Breeze Online Database
Read: *I am a Church Member*





Much of this booklet was adapted from David Mathis, *"Why Join a Church?"*, Kevin DeYoung, *"6 Reasons Why Church Membership Matters."*, Inland Hills Church *"Membership Requirements and Commitment"*, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, *"Membership and Baptism"*, and EvFree Fullerton *"Membership"*, and New Life Community Church, *"Partnership"*.





Why Become a Partner at The Bridge?

One of the most counter-cultural things you can do is become an engaged member of a faithful local church. In our flighty and noncommittal age, neither non-Christians nor Christians are naturally inclined to find a place to put down roots and make longstanding-objective commitments for the good of others. We want to keep our options open and, above all, preserve our own freedom of choice, rather than make a covenant for the long haul and embrace a framework for real life in all of its ups and downs.



But what if you went against the grain and became part of the solution to the modern problem of being so noncommittal? What if you joined the rebellion, and pledged your loyalty and engagement to a Gospel-centered local church?

Whether you call it “membership,” “partnership,” or something else, the New Testament assumes some form of committed, accountable belonging as a reality for every true follower of Jesus. Each Christian has a definite place of local belonging. “In the New Testament,” John Piper observes, “to be excluded from the local church was to be excluded from Christ.”

Scripture talks about how believers are members of a body. In this same way, church membership is a public declaration of your commitment to this body. In the Bible this is called a covenant.

It is not like membership at a country club or Costco, where you pay a fee and expect a benefit; rather, it means that you are invested and willing to serve. It means that you will seek to be a blessing to other members. Most organization members are consumers — the organization exists to serve them. The church of Christ is a completely different community — membership means ministry and service, going from being a consumer to becoming a provider of God’s love and care to others. At The Bridge, we take seriously that we are a church not for ourselves, but for others.

In short, the main difference between “attenders” and “members” at The Bridge comes down to one word: commitment.

SIX REASONS TO PUT DOWN ROOTS

In light of this, here are just six reasons to go against the noncommittal grain and lay down roots at The Bridge.

- 1 | In joining The Bridge Church you make visible your commitment to Christ and his people.**



Partnership 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 where God expects you to live out your faith. 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.

We live in 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.”

It's not just about being cared for, it's about making a decision and sticking with it. 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. Partnership is one way to stop dating churches, and marry one.

3 | We can be overly independent.

In the Western world, it's one of the best and worst things about us. We are free spirits and critical thinkers. We get an idea and run with it. But who's running with us? And are any of us running in the same direction? Partnership 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 Partnership keeps us accountable and encourages your perseverance.

When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are letting the pastors and other members of The Bridge know that we intend to be committed in attendance, giving, prayer, and service. 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?"

In a good church covenant, we yoke ourselves to accountability while we're in our right minds, in case someday sin gets a foothold in our hearts and blinds us to the truth. Church discipline is hard, but so good. The purpose is always restoration, and God often has been pleased to use this difficult means to pour out his striking grace (James 5:19-20).

5 | Joining The Bridge will help your pastors, elders, staff and life group leaders to be more faithful shepherds.

This helps to bring clarity to the leadership about who is in their "lot," who is "in their charge" (1 Peter 5:3), who in particular are they called to serve and shepherd, and to which they should "pay careful attention" (Acts 20:28). It is for your own good in being intentionally thought of and cared for by the leadership.

In other words, you formally joining The Bridge helps the church leadership fulfill their ministry. How are they to shepherd the flock if they don't know who is in that flock and who is not?

It is difficult, if not impossible, to respect and esteem your leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13), and honor them (1 Timothy 5:17), and obey and submit to them (Hebrews 13:17) without identifying yourself to



them and submitting to the partnership structure that allows them to know and care best for those in their charge.

6 | For the good of non-Christians.

Another good reason for joining a church is the good of those who are not there yet — even those who don't yet know Jesus. Because we reach out and show Christ better as part of a committed, stable community (John 13:35). A lone-ranger Christian doesn't make the best witness for Christ. Rather, someone who is grounded, has a home, and is part of a solid church community of support is best prepared to draw others into the kingdom. And the whole community together serves to put Christ on display better than individual Christians alone.

This happens best not in fly-by-night, uncommitted associations, but in deep, committed, long-standing, life-together relationships in this time-tested arrangement called the local church.

PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF BECOMING A BRIDGE PARTNER

- All Partners are able to affirm Elders and Deacons, as well as the new fiscal year budget. In addition, partners are eligible for these offices after one year of partnership in good standing.
- Partners have the right to a vote of affirmation in official Congregational meetings and special gatherings.



The Story of God

Creation



The Fall



Church



Israel



Jesus



New Creation



What is the Gospel?

“Through the person and work of Jesus Christ, God fully accomplishes salvation for us, rescuing us from judgment for sin into fellowship with him, and then restores the creation in which we can enjoy our new life together with him forever.”

- Tim Keller

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus sacrificially died on the cross for our sins, defeated death and Satan through his resurrection, and now offers his followers the Holy Spirit to get a foretaste of heaven until he returns to complete his redemption project.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 10:9-10 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be



saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 21-22 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 2:4-9 ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.





The History of The Bridge

IN THE BEGINNING

The Bridge began with 10 people gathering in a Corona home around the dream for a multi-cultural church community to be established in the previously untouched area of the South Chino Preserve. After a few properties in the Chino Preserve fell through, The Bridge discerned God's direction to continue forward in a different location. In 2001, The Bridge began holding Sunday services at Ranch View Elementary School in south Ontario, and eventually settled in a commercial space on Roswell Ave in Chino.



A NEW HOME

In 2007, our mother and sending church, Chino Valley Reformed (later known as Oaks Community Church) went through a critical transition in leadership, and The Bridge and Oaks began to pray for what eventually became the merger between The Bridge and Oaks Community Church. With this opportunity came a huge blessing of a “permanent home” for The Bridge, yet potential challenges with a multi-generational community. Both congregations embraced these challenges, and we became one church later that year.

Meanwhile, a congregation of 5 Spanish speaking families, La Senda, began to meet throughout Ontario and Chino. La Senda soon outgrew their space, and by means of the merger between Oaks and The Bridge, the planters of the Bridge and La Senda began to collaborate on strategies to work together to reach the entire nearby community. After working together under the same roof but under different leadership for 3 years, the

planters of both churches sensed the Spirit’s leading towards greater unity in order to truly be a multi-ethnic church. With great joy and with a sense of fulfillment, La Senda became The Bridge En Español, an integral part of this new “One Church” with two gatherings in two different languages.

FULL CIRCLE

In 2012, Mission Pointe Church, a Lutheran congregation aiming to plant a church in the Preserve in South Chino, joined the body of The Bridge. Through this miraculous display of providential union, The Bridge acquired Mission Pointe’s property on Pine Ave in the Preserve and began to re-envision our original dreams of a church in South Chino. In June 2016, The Bridge sold the property on Oaks and moved temporarily to hold gatherings at Ontario Christian High School. Our long-held dream of being a church on Pine Ave in the Chino Preserve came true on February 16, 2020.





Early construction site of our new home in The Chino Preserve.

THE LIFT NETWORK

Lift Church Network is an affiliation of Southern California congregations committed to the mutual support of Lead Pastors, board members (Elders, Deacons), and key volunteers who are dedicated to advancing the message and ministry of Jesus in their church, and through their church, to be the light of Jesus in their city.

Our mutual support comes from deepening friendships, informal and formal gatherings, intentional equipping, and personal and professional help in times of need.

The Lift Network Mission

- We Lift up Jesus
- We Lift up the Gospel
- We Lift up one another
- We Lift up the burdened and weary
- We Lift up the world around us

www.liftchurchnetwork.org





Vision

In the Chino Valley as it is in heaven

If God were in charge of running your family, neighborhood and city—what would that look like? What would it look like for heaven to practically invade earth—the world as you know it to be? The sick healed. Enemies reconciled. The poor fed. Broken families restored. Pollution eradicated.

Jesus' ministry and message can be summed up with these words of his, "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15) Heaven and earth were meant to overlap, and Jesus is on a mission to bring them together once and for all. That's why, in the famous Lord's prayer, Jesus prays, "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10). The story of the Bible is all about God loving us so much that He is committed to restoring and healing our broken lives and the world through Jesus Christ. He invites us, The Bridge, to participate with Him in seeing His kingdom come, His will be done, in the Chino Valley as it is in heaven.



Mission

Be with Jesus Become like Jesus Do what Jesus did

When Jesus gathered his followers and commanded them to “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19) he used the Greek word *mathetes*, which meant student – or, perhaps more accurately, apprentices. Go and make apprentices.¹

Apprentices of rabbis in Jesus' time had three goals: being with the rabbi (Mark 3:14), becoming like the rabbi (Luke 11:1), and doing what the rabbi did (Matthew 10:1-15). This required everything of the apprentices, and it was considered a privilege to be called into this way of life.

Our purpose is to be apprentices of Jesus who – over time and from one degree to the next (2 Corinthians 3:18) – learn ways of living each day in the Chino Valley that **enable us to be with him, become like him and do the things he did**. We want to be students learning the patterns of heaven and how to paint them ourselves.

As we do this together, we believe we'll see not just see our own lives changed, but the Chino Valley changed too.

¹ <https://pattern.org.uk/read-more>



Mission

BE WITH JESUS²

- Silence + Solitude
- Sabbath
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Bible Reading

BECOME LIKE JESUS

- Dealing With Your Past
- Discovering Your Identity and Calling
- Forgiving
- Community
- Simple Living
- Embrace Grieving & Loss
- Develop a Rule of Life

DO WHAT JESUS DID

- Preaching the Gospel
- Making Disciples
- Teaching the Way
- Healing the Sick
- Eating & Drinking With People Far From God
- Doing Justice
- Peacemaking
- Praying
- Prophesying
- Standing Up Against Religious & Political Corruption

² <https://practictheway.org>





1 | Rooted in the Scripture

We find our identity and purpose in the Story of God.

2 | Fueled by the Holy Spirit

We depend upon the power of God's Spirit alive in us.

3 | Transformed in Community

We participate in loving communities that form and change us.

4 | Compelled to Generosity

We give because Jesus gave it all away for us.

5 | Moved to Outreach

We do everything to connect with those disconnected from Jesus.

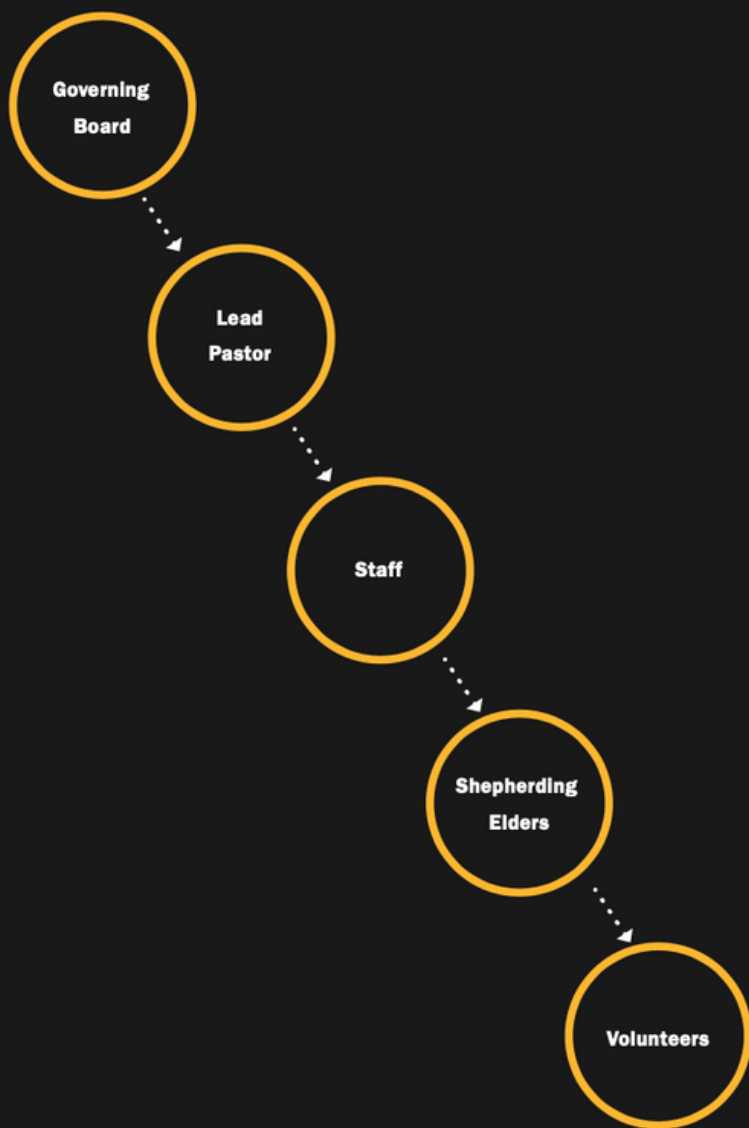


The Bridge's Governance Model

GOVERNING BOARD: ELDERS, DEACONS, AND THE LEAD PASTOR

Board Roles – The Lead Pastor guides the Governing Board, made up of Elders and Deacons. Elders encourage, support, oversee, and evaluate the Lead Pastor. Deacons monitor the ongoing finances of The Bridge. Together, the Board approves the annual budget, as well as oversees and keeps the Lead Pastor accountable. The Lead Pastor in turn oversees all staff, daily decisions, and operating functions of The Bridge. Each year the Board presents the congregation the annual budget for affirmation. Also, each year the Board asks the congregation for new nominations, interviews the nominees, decides on new Board members, and presents the final decision(s) to the congregation.





Statement of Faith

The Bridge holds to the essential historic orthodox Christian beliefs as expressed in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, as well as the Lausanne Covenant. While we hold firmly to the central tenets of our faith, we leave room for disagreement in secondary matters that are not essential for salvation.

1 | The Bible

The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) as originally written was penned by men inspired by God. It is completely true in all that it affirms. The Bible is God's source of divine revelation and is the final authority on all matters to which it speaks.

2 | God

There is one God – creator and sustainer of all things, holy, perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present, loving, faithful, righteous, gracious and merciful - who exists forever in perfect community as three persons (the Trinity): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three persons are co-equal and co-eternal but are distinct from one another.

3 | Humans

God uniquely created human beings, male and female, in His own image and designed them for relationship with Him and each other. They are to share in God's governance over the earth as co-stewards



with Him. As God's image bearers, humans have inherent worth and special responsibility.

4 | Sin

In union with Adam and Eve and their fall into Satan's temptation, humans are sinners by nature and choice and are alienated from God and under His judgment. The effects of sin permeate all of creation, including: our relationship with God, with each other and with the earth.

5 | Jesus

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, one person in two natures (the second person of the Trinity). Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. He will one day personally and physically return to earth and reign as King.

6 | Salvation

Jesus' death on the cross is the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His sacrificial death and victorious physical resurrection defeated sin, Satan and death and are the only grounds for salvation. Salvation from our sinful condition is a free gift from God to us. It is not something we earn or deserve. It is offered in grace and received by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

7 | The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit makes people aware of their need for Jesus Christ, convicts them of their sin, and fills them with God's presence. The Holy Spirit also indwells and empowers believers to become more like Jesus, to live an obedient life,





and to carry on God's mission and work on the earth by giving spiritual gifts to everyone.

8 | Church

The church is the community of baptized followers of Jesus from all races, times and places. The church is not a building, nor a program. Jesus is the head of the church, and we are members of His body. The church exists to proclaim and demonstrate the good news of Jesus to the world in our everyday activities. The local church gathers regularly with appointed leaders, is committed to one another, practices the sacraments, and functions like a family to further the mission of God's kingdom.

9 | Sacraments

Jesus gave the Church two Sacraments: baptism and communion. Sacraments are a physical and tangible sign of the truth of the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, they do help sustain and nourish believers. Baptism is a sign and seal of God's covenant of grace with us and our children. Fundamentally, it signifies our union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. The Lord's Supper is a means by which Christ continually nourishes, strengthens and comforts us. In it, the bread represents his broken body and the wine or juice represents his shed blood.

10 | Eternal Life

There will be a bodily resurrection of all the dead: of the believer to everlasting life to dwell and reign with the Lord in the new heaven and new earth, and of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting separation from God.



What's Your Story?

“My story is important not because it is mine... but because if I tell it anything like right, the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is also yours...it is precisely through these stories in all their particularity...that God makes himself known to each of us more powerfully and personally. If this is true, it means that to lose track of our stories is to be profoundly impoverished not only humanly but also spiritually.”

- Frederick Buechner

Everyone has a story and every story matters!³ In fact, The Bible is one giant story of God working in and through humans to restore His creation. We're a part of the best story ever—the good news of Jesus. Our story matters because it's a part of God's bigger story of redemption. We share our stories because we want to tell people about how Jesus has transformed our lives! While we are one of the main characters in our stories, the main character is always Jesus and we always want to point people to Him. Our stories of victory, strength, and faith need to be told to encourage others, and at the

³ <https://www.marinerschurch.org/your-story-matters/>



same time our stories of pain, difficulty, and struggle need to be shared too to comfort others.

Consider these questions below to help you reflect on significant events and seasons in your life, both positive and negative, that have helped shape and form your story to be more like Jesus:

- What life experiences have helped your spiritual journey?
- Was there ever a time you doubted God?
- Was there a time when you wanted more of God in your life?
- What about my life before Christ will relate most to the non-Christians I know?
- When was the first time you heard the Good News about Jesus? What were your initial thoughts?
- Was there a particular event or experience that gave you a deeper understanding of who God is, or a deeper sense of who He made you to be?
- Have there been specific events or seasons in which God has blessed you, or difficult seasons that you experienced His faithfulness?





Your Story Timeline



Requirements

What do you need to believe in or do in order to partner with The Bridge Church?

1 | Be a follower of Jesus

Are you someone who credibly professes their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior? (You will need to share your testimony with 2 Elders)

2 | Be Baptized

Have you been baptized (age does not matter)?

3 | Attend our Partnership Class

At the end of the class, if you wish to become a partner, you'll have the opportunity to sign a partnership covenant that outlines the commitments all Bridge partners are asked to make after being interviewed by 2 Elders.

4 | An active participant

Can you commit to actively pursue our vision, attend Sunday gatherings, serve on a team utilizing your gifts and passions, partake in a life group, and regularly contribute financially to the church? Without the sharing of your time, talent and treasure, partnership is meaningless and not necessary.

5 | Confess the same faith as The Bridge...

...and is willing to actively live on mission as a follower of Jesus together with The Bridge. A partner should be able to affirm The Bridge's statement of faith, mission, vision, and values. Are you someone who



agrees with our stated beliefs and who intends to pray for The Bridge's growth, invite the unchurched, warmly welcome visitors, and take steps to become missional in all we say and do?

6 | Honor and submit...

...to the leadership of the church, act in love toward others, and refuse to gossip. If a person isn't willing to follow the church's leaders, he/she will inevitably stir up division and strife. It's best for him/her to join a church whose leaders he/she can obey and a vision they can embrace.



Affirmation of Partnership at The Bridge Church

The following will be asked of you in front of the Church:

- 1 | Do you accept God's grace fulfilled in Jesus Christ, revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only way to eternal life?
- 2 | Do you promise to protect the unity of the The Bridge by accepting the spiritual guidance of the Church, obeying its doctrines and teaching, acting in love toward others, refusing to gossip, and following the leadership thereby seeking the things that make for unity, purity and peace?
- 3 | Do you promise to pray for yourself and others, seeking to become more like Jesus as together we pursue to live out the Christian faith as we are intentional to pray for The Bridge's growth, invite the unchurched, warmly welcome visitors, and take steps to become missional in all we say and do?
- 4 | Understanding that the Christian life is a journey do you promise, to the best of your ability, to live out your life in Christ by active participation, versus by being a consumer, in the life of the Bridge as demonstrated by faithful attendance to worship, and the offering of time, talent and treasure to the glory of God?















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