

DISCOVER BEL AIR
A NEW MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE



SEPT 11 - OCT 30

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* FOR ELECTRONIC VERSION ONLY: Fillable pages to be completed and emailed to melissa.sique@belair.org (save page(s) to your computer, fill out electronically, save again and email to Melissa).

PERSPECTIVE SPEAKERS

CARING MINISTRY (The one-anothers of Scripture).....	Cosme Palma
INTIMACY WITH GOD IN PRAYER	Anderson Isiagu
COMMUNITY/LIFE GROUPS.....	Jeff Kaminski
KIDS & STUDENT MINISTRIES.....	Cristina Bradford & Kristen Orr
OUTREACH.....	Joanne Marcos
GIVING BACK / SERVING AT BAC.....	Richard Turner
PEAK DISCIPLESHIP.....	Mike Morgan

CLASS FORMAT

Each class will start promptly at the published time and follow the same format each week:

- WELCOME
- PERSPECTIVE INTERVIEW
- TEACHING: ESSENTIAL IDEA
- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TIME
- NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING

Note: It's very important to be on time as classes will begin on the hour. We will break in to small groups about 30 minutes after starting. You can miss up to TWO classes if you are considering membership. If you must miss a class, we ask that you go online and listen to the Essential Idea and Perspective Interview (about 20 minutes for both) for the class(es) you missed. (They really are Essential Ideas!) Then email Melissa (melissa.sique@belair.org) to confirm.

You can find all class content for each week at belair.org/classes. (For questions email: melissa.sique@belair.org)

WHAT IS THE MEMBERSHIP PROCESS?

We would like you to DISCOVER BAC and your unique role in our faith community before you make up your mind about membership. This class, offered a couple of times each year, is an eight-week overview of Bel Air Church.

It consists of learning a little more about Jesus and Bel Air Church, small group discussion, reflection on your journey with Jesus and how He's calling you to serve Him. You'll also have the opportunity to meet some of the congregational leaders and staff members here at our church.

If, at the end of these eight weeks, you decide that you want BAC to be your church – as a member (and we hope you do!) – the DISCOVER BAC journey culminates with the reception of New Members into the church body during our worship services. By the end of this journey of discovery, it is our hope that you will be excited to be part of Bel Air Church membership! We know you'll meet new people and make great friends. We believe you'll feel empowered to serve out of the abundant gifts God has uniquely given you, and that you'll have some clear "Next Steps" in mind for your faith journey.

The real-time class experience is irreplaceable because of the people you'll meet and get to know during this time. However, you can miss up to two of the eight classes and still join as a member. We ask, if you do have to miss one or two classes, that you listen to the class recording that you will find in the Dropbox link you should have received. (Email melissa.sique@belair.org if you need it.) Pastor Kim would love to hear your thoughts on the session content once you've listened (hopefully before the next class meets).

The only requirement for membership at BAC is a personal expression of faith that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. At the end of our class experience, a few elders from our church will join us to briefly share what it means to him or her to experience Jesus as Lord and they would love to hear a little of your own faith journey and personal understanding of Jesus.

We at BAC know that God is calling us to big things in our lives, our families, our neighborhoods, our city and our world. We know it will take all of us. Are you ready to step in with two feet and join us?

A DISCOVERY OF YOUR SIGNIFICANCE AT BEL AIR CHURCH

Session 1

You are the Church.

If you've been here any length of time, you've probably heard Pastor Drew say it—the Church is not a building. The Church is not a geographical location, an organization, or a staff of paid professionals. The Church exists because of people like you who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, come together as a community centered around the reality of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Simply said, “You are the Church.”

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Romans 12:5 *“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”*

1 Corinthians 12: 12–14, 27 *“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. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”*

– Imagine for a moment, when you think of a body, what do you envision? We probably all envision a different body type. How many of us think of just one head? How many of us envision just one heart? Scripture tells us that the body of Jesus is large enough to encompass all the difference and diversity in body type we can ever imagine. How awesome is that!! But we are all brought together under just one head—Jesus, the head of this unique body which is the Church.

Note: Scriptures are NRSV unless otherwise stated.

THE CHURCH AS AN EMBASSY

2 Corinthians 5:18-20a *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us."*

- Imagine again... When you think of an embassy, what do you first envision? A foreign country? A secured or guarded building? These are the images we see on TV or in the news. But the Miriam Webster dictionary actually defines the word "embassy" quite differently and particularly in this order:
 - o A body of diplomatic representatives
 - o A mission undertaken officially by diplomatic representatives
 - o The official residence of an ambassador
- An embassy isn't first and foremost a location or a building – it's a group of people undertaking a mission together! What a great description of the Church! We are Ambassadors! We are the Embassy!

As you "Discover Bel Air" through this class in the next weeks and, hopefully, in an unfolding, never-ending response to God's faithfulness and love for you, we want you to know that you can't fully discover Bel Air Church (BAC) without discovering your own unique significance here. We believe that every person God brings to our community brings a particular gift to this body and the body is lessened and weaker without the gift that is particularly yours to share.

Members of a body can't "opt in" or "opt out." They are in it together for the long-haul, supporting, healing, stretching, strengthening and GROWING one another. People who take on a God-sized mission don't do it alone. They build a network of relationships, supply lines and surround one another in prayer.

We ask that you will think about these concepts in the course of the next few weeks and that, on the horizon, you'll consider the possibility of membership at Bel Air Church. Are you being moved to be planted and to grow here? Will you commit to helping BAC grow in ways only you can?

We're looking forward to the answers that the Holy Spirit reveals to you during Discover BAC!

PERSPECTIVE: *Caring Ministry*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 1

We encourage you to fully engage in these “small group” sessions as a time of dynamic reflection together, facilitated by one of our trained volunteers. These are groups where we hope to engender trust, confidentiality and the courage to be vulnerable. We pray the blessing of community is given by God to you through these groups. Enjoy your time!

Note: There are time restraints to sharing, and facilitators have been asked to keep us on schedule. Please review Appendix C on page 59 for Small Group Commitments.

- Getting to know one another: Share your name, where you live, what you do, how long you've been attending BAC and what you hope to gain from the Discover BAC class.
- What does it mean to you to hear “YOU are the Church”?
- Have you been part of a community of believers? How have you experienced the care and love of God through that community? Have you been disappointed or hurt by such an experience before?

NEXT STEPS (optional):

- Consider what God may want to do uniquely through you at BAC. If you'd like, write down a few notes about whatever God brings to mind.
- Pray about what it means for you to be planted and to grow as an essential and unique part of a faith community.
- Grow in community at BAC by joining a Life Group.
- Ask us how you can meet your Deacons. (Caregiving in your own neighborhood!)

A CHURCH
CENTERED AROUND JESUS

Session 2

THE UTTER CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

BAC is a community of believers which is defined by the reality of who Jesus is in our lives. Faith in Jesus Christ is what identifies and shapes us here (and this is the only criteria for becoming a member of this church!)

As we look to how the Bible defines what a church is, we see that every metaphor for the church revolves around the reality of who Jesus is:

- 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 describes Jesus as the Head and us as the Members that make up the Body of Christ.
- Ephesians 2:19–22 describes Jesus as the Cornerstone then together we are Living Stones that make up the Temple of God.
- Philippians 3:20 describes Jesus as the King and us as Citizens that make up the Kingdom of God.
- 1 Peter 2:9 describes Jesus as the High Priest and us as Priests that make up the Royal Priesthood.
- Luke 14:27 describes Jesus as the Teacher and us as His Disciples.
- Acts 11:26 describes Jesus as the Christ and us as Christians that make up the Church.

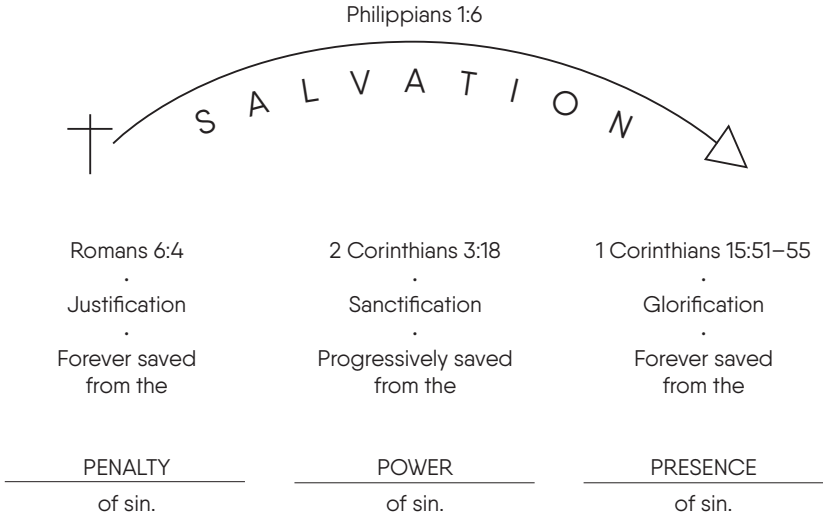
OUR TRUE IDENTITY IN CHRIST

A LIFE OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Romans 10:9–10 reminds us that the moment you say “Yes” to Jesus, every single one of these statements becomes a reality in your life.

We are justified (declared “not guilty” of sin).....	Romans 3:24
No condemnation awaits us.....	Romans 8:1
We are set free from the law of sin and death.....	Romans 8:2
We are sanctified (made holy) in Jesus Christ.....	1 Corinthians 1:2
We are pure and holy in Christ.....	1 Corinthians 1:30
We will be made alive at the resurrection.....	1 Corinthians 15:22
We are new persons.....	2 Corinthians 5:17
We are made right with God.....	2 Corinthians 5:21
We are one in Christ with all other believers.....	Galatians 3:28
We are marked as belonging to God by the Holy Spirit.....	Ephesians 1:13
We have been raised up to sit with Christ in the heavenly realms.....	Ephesians 2:6
We are God’s masterpiece.....	Ephesians 2:10
We have been brought near to God.....	Ephesians 2:13
We share in the promise through Christ.....	Ephesians 3:6
We can come with freedom & confidence into God’s presence.....	Ephesians 3:12
We are members of Christ’s body, the church.....	Ephesians 5:29, 30
We have been given fullness in Christ.....	Colossians 2:10
We are set free from our sinful nature.....	Colossians 2:11
We will have eternal glory.....	2 Timothy 2:10

THE ARC OF SALVATION



A PRAYER FOR EVERYONE

“Lord Jesus, I know that I am broken and I am done trying to live a good life on my own. I believe you lived the perfect life I could not live and yet sacrificed your life so that I might receive all that you accomplished through your life, death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins and save me. With empty hands of faith I am now holding onto You alone for my salvation, I accept your free gift of eternal life, and I accept your invitation to follow you in every area of my life.”

PERSPECTIVE: *Intimacy with God through Prayer*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 2

- How do you personally understand what it means to have a relationship with Jesus?
- In the context of your life, where do you place the importance of your relationship with Christ?
- What do you love about prayer? What do you not like about prayer?

NEXT STEPS (optional):

- Learn more about Jesus. Set a goal that's between you and God on how often you'd like to be in worship here at BAC.
- Attend a Bible Study like *Women's Monday Night Bible Study* or Sunday's *In the Word*. (Visit belair.org/classes)
- Learn more about prayer (Ask for prayer this week or subscribe to the Weekly Prayer Guide at belair.org/care, or consider joining the prayer team).

A CHURCH
CONCEIVED IN TRADITION

Session 3

OUR BELIEFS

Following is a brief summary of essential doctrines upheld by Bel Air Church.

We believe that there is one true and magnificent God who exists eternally in relationship as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Since the fullness of God dwells in Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, we can get the most accurate understanding of the nature and character of God through listening to and looking at the Son of God throughout eternity. *As a result, it is Jesus who defines all reality for us.*

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is the final authority of Christian faith and practice, teaching and living. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can the Bible be understood. Through the Bible, we are able to encounter and experience Jesus Christ who holds all things together by the power of His word. In the Bible we discover the life that God designed and desires for us now into eternity. *As a result, we stand under the authority of God's Word for what we believe and how we live.*

We believe that God, infinite in being and eternal in perfection, created all things out of nothing through Jesus, by Jesus, and for Jesus. *As a result, we are called to care for and cultivate the earth for the flourishing of others as God intends.*

We believe that Jesus is both fully human and fully God. Jesus is the eternal radiance of God's glory, full of grace and truth and the very Word of God. Jesus is not one of many ways to God, He is the only Way who meets us on our way and invites us to experience a redeemed and reconciled relationship with God not through works but through faith. The Son of God was active long before the Incarnation as the Living Word of God and in the same way, has continued to be active since His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension where He currently sits at the right hand of God, interceding on our behalf before returning to earth as King where He will eternally establish his rule and reign in the new heavens and new earth with his people. *As a result, we give our lives to follow Jesus every day and everywhere with everyone.*

We believe that the Holy Spirit has existed eternally and enables believers to obey Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and frees them from the power of sin through sanctification. The Spirit dwells in, gifts, and equips believers to serve Christ and His church and to bear witness to the world. The Spirit illuminates our minds to understand the Word of God and is our Advocate and Counselor. *As a result, we make room for the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

We believe that God's design and desire was to create humanity in perfect relationship with each other and God. However, with our freedom we forgot who God is and who God created us to be. As a result, we wrap our hearts around everything and anything but God, leaving us restless and separated from God. Through repentance and personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, our sins are forgiven, our wretchedness is exchanged for Christ's righteousness, we are reborn by the Holy Spirit, and we are reminded of our identity and mission. We are sent out to be agents of reconciliation, embracing especially those on the margins of society in humility, service, and love. *As a result, we know that God loves us as we are, and yet loves us too much to leave us where we are.*

We believe that the Church is built around the reality of who Jesus is. Every member of the body of Christ is indispensable and though every member functions differently, every member has a function in the Body as they are gifted by the Spirit. To bear God's image most fully is to do so in Christian community, submitting to one another in love as God first loves us. The task of the one, holy, Christian, and apostolic Church is to make manifest Jesus in a world that is longing for peace, hope, justice, reconciliation, grace, truth, and meaning. *As a result, we don't just go to church, we are the church that embodies hospitality, courage, health, community, and impact every day and everywhere with everyone as we follow Jesus. **We are the Church at Work.***

REFORMED CONFESSIONS

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consists of two volumes. Part I of the Constitution is The Book of Confessions, which contains the official texts of the confessional documents. Part II of the Constitution, the Book of Order, is published separately and consists of three sections: Form of Government, Directory for Worship, and Rules of Discipline. (Visit https://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/boc2016.pdf)

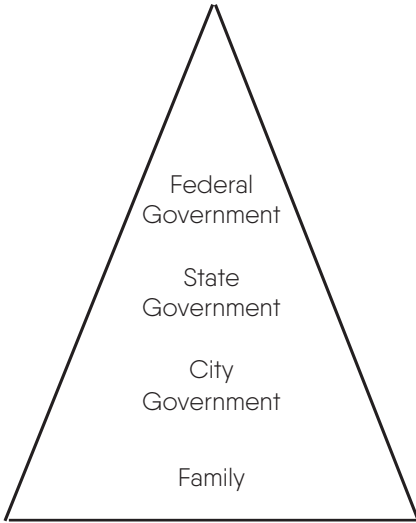
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in The Book of Confessions. In these confessional statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes and what it resolves to do.

Every generation must discern and declare what it means in our time to worship and follow Jesus Christ as Lord. Belief, in other words, involves more than simply repeating certain statements—it means we express the truth of our faith in meaningful actions.

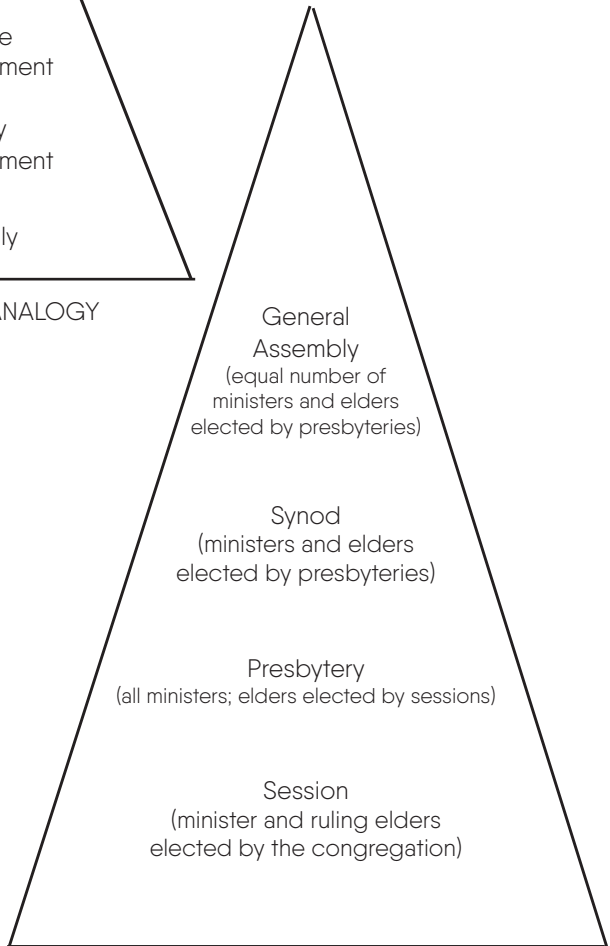
Date	Name	Occasion	Key Issues
4th Century	The Nicene Creed	The Emperor Constantine, having made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, wanted doctrinal agreement to strengthen the power of the church as a cohesive element for the Empire.	This short creed is concerned with the doctrines of Christ and the Trinity.
5th Century	The Apostles' Creed	This creed is based on a baptismal creed used in Rome at the end of the second century and reflects doctrines current at least by the end of the first century. It was affirmed by those seeking membership in the church through baptism, and later it was used more widely by the church.	A brief general statement of Christian belief based on a trinitarian outline.
1560	The Scots Confession	This creed was written in the crucial and confusing time when Presbyterians asserted their faith and held their first General Assembly in Scotland. Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic, ruled the land while Elizabeth of England gave support to the Scottish Protestants. John Knox had just returned from his exile in Geneva and was a major contributor to the confession.	The Presbyterian Church in Scotland held to the Apostles' Creed but devised this fuller explanation of the church's belief. It sought to clarify points it felt the Roman Catholic Church had obscured or confused.
1563	The Heidelberg Catechism	The area around Heidelberg, Germany, had both Lutheran and Reformed influences, as well as a considerable Catholic population. Frederick III ordered the writing of this catechism in order to have a definitive doctrinal statement to settle the unrest in his kingdom. The two men he asked to write this statement had been influenced by the Swiss Reformation, and they produced a strong Reformed confession.	The catechism is divided into three sections: Of Man's Misery, Of Man's Redemption, and Thankfulness.
1566	The Second Helvetic Confession	The Heidelberg Catechism, with its strong Reformed emphasis, increased theological tension. Frederick III found it necessary to justify that statement. He asked Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's son-in-law and successor, to provide him with an exposition of the faith. Bullinger sent him this statement, which had been written five years earlier as a personal confession. It was also ratified by the Reformed Churches in Switzerland.	This rather long statement is moderate in tone and emphasizes Christian experience. Like the Scots Confession, it gives considerable emphasis to the church.

Date	Name	Occasion	Key Issues
1729	The Shorter Catechism The Larger Catechism	Adopted in 1647 by the Scottish General Assembly, the Westminster Standards then came to New England with the Puritans and to the Middle Atlantic states with the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. In 1729, the standards were adopted as the confessional position of the newly organized Presbyterian Synod of the colonies. The Larger was designed for public exposition from the pulpit. The Shorter was written for the education of children.	The truth and authority of Scripture are emphasized. The standards had important implications for political thought and practice.
1934	The Barmen Declaration	The Theological Declaration of Barmen was written by a group of church leaders in Germany to help Christians withstand the challenges of the Nazi party and of the so-called "German Christians," a popular movement that saw no conflict between Christian values and Hitler's National Socialism.	This declaration was written to the Evangelical Congregations and Christians in Germany and addressed the sin of idolatry and the lordship of Christ.
1958	The Westminster Confession of Faith	Adopted by the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1958.	Affirms God's work from the beginning of creation to last judgment. God's people are to understand and bring their lives into accord with God's wondrous ways and magnificent will.
1967	The Confession of 1967	The turbulent decade of the 1960s challenged churches everywhere to restate their faith. While the Second Vatican Council was reformulating Roman Catholic thought and practice, Presbyterians were developing the Confession of 1967.	The Confession of 1967 emphasized reconciliation in society and the equality of all persons.
1983	The Brief Statement of Faith	In 1983, the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.) was formed by the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Integral to reunion was the preparation of a brief statement of faith. While recognizing realities of diversity and disagreement in both the church and the world, members of the drafting committee sought to articulate Presbyterians' common identity.	The essential tenets of the faith, Jesus Christ's ministry, human equality and language about God were some of the key issues addressed in this statement.
2016	Confession of Belhar	In 1986, the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa spoke into the racial stratification of apartheid.	Unity, Claims that individual, racial, and social segregation is sin which always leads to enmity and hatred.

OUR GOVERNMENT



A BROAD ANALOGY



Bel Air Church is within the Pacific Presbytery and the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii.

PERSPECTIVE: *Community/Life Groups*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 3

- Is being in a Life Group a new concept for you? Are you in a Life Group now? If not, will you consider joining one during Lent? (Your table facilitator can help you get connected.)
- From today's teaching, are there any core beliefs or doctrines that you find confusing or challenging?
- Take a look at the dates of the Confessions of the church contained in your booklet. What do you know about these times in history? Why do you think the church felt it essential to speak into these times? How would you identify such a necessity in our own times?

NEXT STEPS (required for membership)

- Listen to the "Church Government" and "Confessions of the Church" podcasts at belair.org/classes
- Write out your testimony to your faith in Jesus Christ. Pray about whom God might want you to share it with. Write down any names that God brings to your mind. Ask God to create a time when you can share your faith. NOTE: You will be asked to share your testimony on Session 8 with members of your small group. If you're not sure where to begin, try using these 4 prompts:
 - Where I was spiritually before meeting Jesus.
 - How I met Jesus Christ and what He means to me.
 - How my life has changed since meeting Jesus Christ.
 - Where I think God is touching my life right now (or where I wish God would touch my life right now).
- If you need any help with this, ask your group Facilitator or Pastor Kim

A CHURCH CALLED
TO OUR FUTURE

Session 4

A PARTICULAR MISSION

Bel Air Church is a family of faith, growing together, as we live out a particular call on our lives to:

Follow Jesus Every Day and Everywhere with Everyone.

To follow Jesus is to respond to His invitation to be led beyond merely existing to actually thriving, as He transforms us into the people that He designed and desires for us to be.

This is more than just a Sunday sort of thing. Every day is a gift from God that is brimming with possibilities as we step out in faith to follow Jesus.

This is beyond just what happens on our beautiful campus. Everywhere is the setting where we can encounter God and experience the adventure of faithfully following Jesus in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces, and wherever we might go.

This is including more than just those we get along with. Everyone is the recipient of God's grace and truth that flow through us as we courageously follow Jesus.

A GOD-SIZED VISION

As we give our lives in service to Jesus who gave His life for us, it is our longing, our vision, that one day:

Every Person, Every Neighborhood, Every City will be
Revived and Renewed by Jesus,
so that we may be a church at work.

We believe that every person we meet is someone who is made in the image of God and that God desires for them to experience the fullness of all that He created for them to enjoy. We see our role as faithful ambassadors and witnesses for Christ.

We believe that every neighborhood can and should be transformed by the power of the Gospel.

We see our role as members of Bel Air Church as stewards of the incredible resources of our physical campus and of the extension of our ministry around the world through digital environments. We are not guests, but hosts – inviting, welcoming, and weaving into our community those whom God calls to Bel Air Church and to Himself.

We believe it is only Jesus who can revive and renew people, neighborhoods, and cities. It is Jesus who is currently making things alive, breathing God’s Spirit into all who receive Him. It is Jesus who is currently making all things new, eternally transforming everything in us and around us for His glory.

OUR MISSION Follow Jesus Every Day and Everywhere with Everyone – So that Every Person, Every Neighborhood, and Every City will be Revived and Renewed by Jesus.

OUR VISION Our vision is to be the Church at Work, purposefully working to bring Jesus into our daily lives where we live, play, worship, learn, work and grow, with the people we encounter along the way.

OUR VALUES Everything we do should be guided by and exhibiting our five core values of: Hospitality, Courage, Health, Community, and Impact.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHURCH

In the Bible, the difference between Jerusalem and Bethany is significant. Jerusalem, where the Temple was located, was the center of religious life for the Jewish people. Here, to vastly oversimplify it, paid staff “did religion” for those who came seeking to be reconciled to God. A person paid a price, bought a bird or animal to sacrifice, gave it to the priest, and he did that work for them. Their hands didn’t get dirty.

It didn’t take much time out of one’s day. And a person could decide how much they wanted to spend. In the last week of his life, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem every day to challenge the “white-washed tomb” of this religiosity.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

(Matthew 23: 27–28)

In contrast, Bethany was the place that Jesus stayed with his friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, during the last week of his life. This was a home for Him where He was treated like family. Here, His needs were met and their faith was an outpouring of love for Him.

Early in his ministry at BAC, Pastor Drew asked our congregation if we wanted to be a “Jerusalem” sort of church or a “Bethany” type of church. Bel Air Church overwhelmingly responded that we want God to grow us to be a “Bethany” kind of church. Will you join us in this prayerful hope?

Here’s how Pastor Drew shared his vision for being a “Bethany” type of church:

“Bel Air, I see a church that is a modern day Bethany. A family of faith where Jesus finds himself most at home. A place where all are welcome, where freedom is found, where Jesus is adored, and where there is anticipation for what God will do through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bel Air, I see a church that is a catalyst for the revival and renewal of people, neighborhoods, and cities as we live with an urgency to join God in His Kingdom work.

Bel Air, I see a church that awakens to HOSPITALITY, where welcome is a way of life that invites strangers to feel like family, where we are known not for who we voted for, what kind of car we drive, or what cause we are for, but rather we are known for our love for one another no matter how different we are from one another.

Bel Air, I see a church that awakens to COURAGE, where the cost of following Jesus is worth the price you pay to be defined as one who is sold out for Jesus, where people are willing to give up their comfort, their wants, their plans, their very lives so that they can experience the vibrancy that only comes from being completely abandoned to Christ, where worship is the free and whole-life response to Jesus' simple yet dangerous invitation: "Follow me."

Bel Air, I see a church that embodies HEALTH, where thriving isn't just an aspiration but a tangible reality that saturates every relationship and resource among us. Where self-worth is restored, where families are strengthened, where marriages are made whole, and where our movement through this life is always mindful as stewards of all that God has given us. Where wellness is experienced relationally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, and financially,

Bel Air, I see a church that embodies COMMUNITY, where relational roots go down deep and wide so that even the greatest storms of life can't destroy our bonds. Where people know each other and are known by others in such significant ways, where generations are knit together unlike anywhere else. Where the young and old re-ignite each other's passion, and purpose, and energy and where wealth is built and leveraged in relational capital that will never fail.

Bel Air, I see a church that is lit with dynamic IMPACT, where the work that God is doing in us is multiplied through us to everyone we meet. Where the very fabric and foundation of society is altered because of our influence on this campus, in this city, and around the globe in ways never imagined. Where waves of compassion, and generosity, and grace, and truth, and love crash against the broken systems and strongholds of this world.

Bel Air, I see that church. It is you and I, empowered by the Holy Spirit and giving all glory and praise and honor to our Almighty God as we follow Jesus every day, and everywhere with everyone."

PERSPECTIVE: *Kids & Students*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 4

- What about the call to “Follow Jesus every day and everywhere with everyone” excites you the most? How do you personally hope to live this out?
- What about being a “Bethany Church” resonates with you? What is challenging to you?
- What do you see is the impact of Bel Air’s commitment to Kids and Students?

NEXT STEPS (optional):

- Write down what your personal Next Step after this class might be. What would you most like to do next. Is it a Life Group? Is it in serving in new and innovative ways? Please consider emailing your thoughts to Pastor Kim at kim.dorr@belair.org. We’d love to hear from you on this!

A DIFFERENT KIND
OF CHURCH:
LIVING OUT OUR VALUES

Session 5

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHURCH

Being a “Bethany” kind of church is dependent on you. In order for us to become a Bethany church, where Jesus feels most at home, we prayerfully ask God to help us embody these CORE VALUES:

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is demonstrating love toward people who are different than you. As we embody a life of hospitality, people feel at home among us.

COURAGE

Courage is living as a follower of Jesus regardless of how vulnerable that makes us. As we embody a life of courage, through our brokenness others will see the power of God at work in our lives.

HEALTH

Health is choosing to thrive in every area of your life. As we embody a life of health, our emotional, relational, financial, physical, and spiritual well-being will be transformed regardless of our circumstances.

COMMUNITY

Community is desiring so much more than just being in proximity with others. As we embody a life of community, our identity in Christ unifies us as we follow Jesus alongside one another.

IMPACT

Impact is multiplying what God is doing in and through you. As we embody a life of impact, we will be inviting, empowering, and releasing others to follow Jesus as well.

A JOURNEY OF FELLOWSHIP INTO COMMUNITY: FROM ANONYMOUS TO EMPOWERED

One of the primary roles of BAC staff is to help shepherd people from *anonymous spectators to empowered participants* within the Bel Air Church family. There are many thresholds that can be crossed on this journey of fellowship into community and they can be described from the staff's perspective as follows:

Anonymous | Receives the ministry of Bel Air but is unknown to anyone on staff. Another person in the congregation might know them, but we consider them anonymous from the staff's perspective.

Identified | Known by name by at least one person on staff who has the ability to contact them if needed.

Connected | Feels like they belong to Bel Air. They can feel this sense of belonging through participation in a program, class, small group, or a worship service.

Known | In relationship with others enough to be encouraged, challenged, and prayed for in a personal way. This is more than just being in proximity with others.

Owners | Feels the responsibility for the mission of Bel Air and acts in such a way to help move it forward. Helps provides solutions for problems as they arise.

Empowered | Fully functioning within their gifts, abilities, and even weaknesses to enhance Bel Air as an indispensable part of the whole. This is ultimately the goal for everyone within the Bel Air family.

Data shows that the more a person feels he or she contributes to the mission of their church, the more they experience the benefits of being part of their faith community. Here at BAC, we believe every single person makes a unique and significant contribution to our community that no one else can make.

Where are you on this spectrum? Are you ready to cross a threshold, take a next step, and come into deeper and more fulfilling relationships here? We're ready if you are!

PERSPECTIVE: *Outreach*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 5

- When you consider the values of hospitality, courage, health, community and impact as a member of BAC, which one comes most naturally to you? Which one is most challenging? How do you think you can grow in both?
- How is God helping you see these values lived out in our midst? In what ways are you being called to contribute to our growth as a church in one of more of these values?
- What about the missional engagement strategy of Outreach do you find compelling.

NEXT STEPS (Optional):

Go to belair.org/outreach and consider ways you can get missionally engaged through BAC.

Do you have your own Study Bible? If not, consider getting one in which you can make your own notes and journal what God personally says to you through His Word.

Have you found a great podcast that teaches through the Bible? Let us know which one is your favorite so we can create a "Best" list for everyone in class to share.

Be in prayer about joining BAC as a member.

How is your Spiritual Journey Report coming? Keep working on it!

Catch up on videos and recordings of any class content you've missed. (Visit belair.org/connect) or (Email melissa.sique@belair.org)

A DIFFERENT KIND
OF MEMBERSHIP:
GIVING BACK &
GROWING TOGETHER

Session 6

THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP

Jesus Christ is committed to the church | “...Christ loved the church, and He gave His life for it” (Ephesians 5:25). There is nothing like the local church in the power to transform lives and positively impact the world. The church is the bride of Christ, His glory and tribute. God’s intention is not just that the church should survive; He intends that it will prevail—indeed, the gates of hell will not stand against it. When Christ returns, it is for the sake of His joyous reunion with His Church.

It is counter-cultural | We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything – a job, a marriage, a city. This attitude shows up among Christians, too, sometimes in the form of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Being a committed member of a church swims against this consumerist current. Bel Air is not a religious store, or a service agency. We are the church, all of us together, as a congregation. Christ calls us to give our unique talents, strengths, and abilities to building up the church.

It defines who can be counted on | Every team must have a roster. Membership identifies our church family and who we can expect to stand beside us for the sake of the gospel. When life gets rough, or when you are in the thick of the battle, it is good to know who is with you.

It encourages spiritual growth | You will not find any “lone ranger” Christians in the Bible. Instead, the call to follow Christ is a call to be part of His community of disciples. We all need encouragement and accountability to grow spiritually. If you are not committed to any specific church family, then you are not where Christ wants you to be.

It is biblically faithful | Membership is part of what identifies you as a genuine follower of Christ (Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:5). It provides you with the spiritual family that God ordains to nurture you in your walk with Christ (Galatians 6:1–2; Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 Corinthians 12:26–27). It provides you with the accountability you need to grow, in obedience to Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; Ephesians 5:21). It places you under the spiritual protection of Godly leaders (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28–29; 1 Peter 5:5), and gives you places to discover and use the gifts the Lord has given you for ministry.

Membership in a local church is the tangible context in which you live out your place in the global and historical *Church*. It’s impossible to practice the “one-anothers” of Scripture unless you are a participating member of a local church family.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership is a word that is used in many different ways throughout our society. You can be a member of so many different things it can be hard to keep track of: rewards clubs at grocery stores, clothing stores, websites, restaurants, coffee shops, country clubs...the list goes on and on and your email inbox can fill up quickly from all your “member deals.”

However, at church, it's an altogether different kind of membership. In many ways, how you approach membership at Bel Air makes all the difference in the world. In many ways it can be described by comparing the differences between a vending machine and a refrigerator.

A vending machine God? | Ask yourself how you pray... how much of your prayer is centered around wanting to get something from God? Is your relationship with God determined by the rise and fall of how quickly and abundantly you get what you want and need?

A vending machine church? | Your view of God will probably determine your view of church. Is what you put in measured by what you expect to get out of it?

Vending Machine

- Owned and Operated by professionals
- Used by consumers
- You only put in the exact amount in exchange for what you want
- When consumers can't find what they want, they go to another vending machine
- If the vending machine doesn't function the way you want it to, you might attack it

Refrigerator

- Owned and Operated by the family
- Used by the family
- You put in what the family needs
- When family members can't find what they need, they invest in stocking the fridge
- If the refrigerator doesn't function the way you want it to, you repair it

At BAC, our view of membership is not based on a vending machine but on a refrigerator. With an “owned and operated” view of membership, you are saying, “this is my church, these are my people, this is my campus, this is my blessing to enjoy, and my challenge to be a part of the solution.” Are you focused on what you are going to put in rather than what you want to take out?

WHO'S STOCKING THE FRIDGE?

Not everyone who participates in the worship and activities at Bel Air is a member. We welcome everyone who is sincerely seeking to know God. Bel Air is a place to learn what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

While regular, casual, and even one-time visitors to our worship services are always welcome and contribute to our community, only members can serve in leadership roles.

The congregation relies on pastors and staff to plan and execute worship services; to identify and support lay leaders; to work with lay leaders to design and implement programs; and to manage the day-to-day business affairs of the church.

Pastors | Pastors are ordained by the Presbytery. They have the special responsibility of proclaiming the Word of God through preaching and teaching, and by administering the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

Elders | Elders are chosen by the people. Together with Pastors, they exercise leadership, government, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of this church.

Deacons | Deacons are chosen by the people. The office of Deacon is one of sympathy, caring, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ.

Hired Staff | The primary purpose of our hired staff is to facilitate programs, and to equip members of the congregation so they can fulfill their ministry in the mission of Christ.

Members | Being a member means you have the right and responsibility to influence key decisions of the church, including the selection of elders, deacons, and pastors.

From time to time, meetings or discussions are held for members only. These are usually called to inform the church members of a major concern, or to garner input and wisdom from our members.

Our ministry and mission depends on our members. We encourage all members to regularly review the integrity in which they are involved in the ministry of the church, and to consider ways in which their participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful through their gifts of time, talent and treasure.

PERSPECTIVE: *Giving Back, Serving at BAC*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 6

- In a Christian context, what does “giving back” mean to you? What do you find challenging about this call as we follow Jesus? When you place any fears or anxieties in this context in Jesus’ hands, does it change anything for you? How?
- What excites you about serving at BAC? What challenges you?

NEXT STEPS (optional):

- Consider what gifts and talents God has uniquely given to you to contribute to the Body of Christ. Write down what God brings to your mind.
- Look into all the ways you can serve at BAC (Kids & Youth, Hospitality, Kitchen, Music, etc.) in light of your passions and gifts.
- Take a *Spiritual Gift Inventory Assessment* at <https://www.freeshapetest.com>
- Schedule Coffee with a Connector to learn more about where God might be asking you to serve at BAC. Email Melissa @ melissa.sique@belair.org
- Make a commitment to serving at BAC. See page 41. Required next step.

WHERE I WANT TO BE FED AND FEED OTHERS:

Name _____

I want to be fed (take something out of the fridge):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Groups | <input type="checkbox"/> EQUIP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Ministries (i. e. Mothers & Others, Bel Air Women, Career-Focused Women, Monday Night Bible Study) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study & Classes (i. e. In the Word, Bethel) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Ministry (i. e. Monthly Breakfast, Retreats, Work Days, Events) | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring Ministries (Celebrate Recovery, Stephen Ministers, Grief Share) |

Visit belair.org/classes for more information.

I want to feed others (put something in the fridge):

Kids & Students

- Kids' Sunday School (Nursery–5th grade)
- Students (6–12th grade)
- Kids' Safety Team

Worship Services

- Chancel Choir (9am)
- Orchestral
- Instrumentalists
- Worship Team
- Prayer Team

Discipleship

- Life Groups Leader/Host
- EQUIP Facilitator

Outreach

- Global Projects
- Local Projects

Welcome and Hospitality

- New Member Welcome Team
- Hospitality Team: Greeter, Usher, Welcome Center
- Parable Coffee Lab
- Kitchen & Food Prep
- Parking Team
- Special Events
- Office Help
- Event Decorating
- Medical Response Team

Digital Production

- Photography/Videography
- Live Production

- Need Help Deciding

Visit belair.org/volunteer for more information.

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES:
GIVING, TITHING &
STEWARDSHIP

Session 7

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
(Matthew 6:21)

Have you considered the order in which Jesus places words in this sentence? Rather than saying, our heart influences the things we invest in, he says our investments influence our heart. He's making the point that toward whatever we invest our attention, our time, our energy, and our finances, our heart will follow suit.

Knowing this truth, God provides wisdom, encouragement and even commandments for us to thrive as God intends.

In fact, the first mention of blessing related to “Kingdom investment” is detailed in Genesis 14: 20 when, after the High Priest and King, Melchizedek, blesses Abram (not yet called Abraham,) Abram gives him “one tenth of everything.” This concept of investing in what God is doing is followed later in Genesis when Jacob (whose name is later changed to Israel) prays, *“If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you”* (Genesis 28:20–22).

This “tenth” is also known as a “tithe.” Perhaps you have heard this word used before but didn’t know what it meant or where it came from or perhaps you were taught at a young age the significance of “tithing.”

Many Christians follow this pattern of giving “a tenth” of their income to God, specifically towards what God is doing through their local church. When giving to God’s Kingdom purposes, through the Holy Spirit, our hearts begin to gravitate toward things that really matter. What begins as a step of obedience turns into joyful enthusiasm as you invest in things that have eternal value.

Some have argued that the tithe applied only to ancient Israel and not to Christians, which frees us to give whatever we feel like giving. However, the precedents set by Abram and Jacob in the book of Genesis occurred hundreds of years before the establishment of Israel’s Mosaic Law. Rather than being freed from the Law of Moses, we find we’re actually more deeply bound in principle by these first “covenant-keepers” who worshiped God.

Actually, in the New Testament, we find the earliest Christians—who were not under the Law—giving far beyond a tenth. *“And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”* (Acts 2:44–45). And, of course, Jesus had a heart for the widow who gave all she had: *“He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.’”* (Luke 21: 1–4)

Jesus says it this way in Matthew 6:19–21, *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

One of the only places in Scripture that God invites us to test Him are in the biblical principles of tithing and giving, *“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.”* Malachi 3:10

We’d like to ask you, as you consider membership at Bel Air Church, to pray about your financial investment in God’s work through our ministry.

Jesus knows that the center of a thriving life is defined by a heart that cares about and invests in eternal things first. We are committed to your thriving here at BAC through a commitment to all Biblical principles.

PERSPECTIVE: *Peak Discipleship*

BREAK-OUT GROUP SESSION 7

- How do you think spiritual maturity is related to the discipline of giving?
- Is it easy for you to trust God? Why or why not? How have you grown in your ability to trust God?
- How is your discipleship journey related to following Jesus every day and everywhere with everyone?

NEXT STEPS (optional unless noted as required):

- Consider how God has blessed you financially and pray about what God would ask you to give to the ministry of BAC. (Note, this is often a percentage rather than a specific amount.) Ask God to confirm what He is saying to you. This is often a declaration of what you hope to do in obedience to God's leading and His provision.
- Consider making a financial commitment to the ministry of BAC, known only to yourself and God. (If you want to put it in writing, we can provide you with a pledge card.)
- Consider forming or joining an Equip Group as the next step in your Peak Discipleship journey
- (Required) In Preparation for next week, PLEASE READ AHEAD and prepare to...

SHARE YOUR STORY

Session 8

YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Write a description about where you are in your Christian walk; write about the stages in your pilgrimage and how you got to where you are.

You will be reading your report aloud to your group (this report is yours and will not be collected or turned in).

It is to be personal (do not rehearse the Apostle's Creed or the Westminster Confession). Use the first person, singular.

It is understood that the group members will accept you as you are – period, regardless of your theology or lack of it.

If you are truly open to the Holy Spirit, your autobiography will be constantly changing – a month from now it will not read the same.

We suggest that you start collecting your thoughts early, and that you do not wait until the last minute to write about yourself.

As you prepare, consider using these 4 prompts to organize your thoughts (*remember, it's all about Jesus!*):

1. Where I was spiritually before meeting Jesus.
2. How I met Jesus Christ and what He means to me.
3. How my life has changed since meeting Jesus Christ.
4. Where I think God is touching my life right now (or where I wish God would touch my life right now).

SHARING YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

(ELDERS WILL BE SITTING IN)

1. The Elder who has joined you will briefly share one important aspect or theme of their own Spiritual Journey so that you can get to know him or her a bit. ("Why has an elder joined you," you may be wondering? First and foremost, we think it's important that every member of our congregation know at least one person in leadership who is not a pastor. This is the best way to introduce you to an Elder of the church. Secondly, for those being received in membership, our polity asks that an Elder of the church hear the story of each person joining, listening specifically for the congregant to speak of his or her personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior.) Our Elders are fun, amazing people! We hope you enjoy getting to know the one who is with you!
2. Go around the group, giving time to each person in your group to share his or her Spiritual Journey. It does NOT have to be memorized! It can be read from your paper. (Reading it from what you have prepared is very helpful as it helps us with our time constraints.) Please share from your heart.
3. If you have any remaining time, share one prayer request for how others in your group can continue to be in prayer for you OR share one prayer request you have for Bel Air Church.
4. Don't forget to get contact info of those in your group if you'd like to stay in touch after the class ends. (There's a blank page provided on pg. 55 for this info.)

NEXT STEPS (optional unless required for membership):

- o Make a decision about joining BAC as a member. If you want to be a member, congratulations! You have just completed the New Members process! If this doesn't feel like the right time for you, congratulations to you also! You've just invested a significant amount of time in getting to know BAC and yourself better. We believe this investment will return to you with blessing. Either way, we are delighted that BAC continues to be your church.
- o (Required) Fill out new member paperwork (pages 51–54) and email to melissa.sique@belair.org before you leave today.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS {FOR PUBLIC AFFIRMATION}

You should take the following questions very seriously if you are making the decision to become a member of BAC.

1. Who is your only Lord and Savior?
(together answer: "Jesus Christ")
2. Is it your intention to trust Him and become His disciple?
(together answer: "It is")
3. Will you be a faithful member of this church, serving with your time, treasure and talent, abiding by its polity, and joyfully joining in its worship?
(together answer: "We will!")

On the Sunday in which you will be received in worship as a New Member of our congregation, you will be asked to answer these, together with others who completed the Discover BAC class and made this decision, as a public declaration of your faith and intention to participate in the mission, vision, values and community life of BAC.

If you cannot answer in the affirmative or are not sure of your answers to these questions, please make an appointment with one of the Pastors on staff to discuss before you take the next step of membership.

It may be that you are still exploring the reality of Jesus and what that means to you. That is OK! God's timing is perfect and we support and encourage you to listen to God's Spirit directing you. It also may be that you are expressing your faith in Jesus in images or words that are different than those we've used. This may be one of the first ways that you will help BAC grow as we understand and appreciate your personal experience of Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THIS PAGE

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION {BEL AIR CHURCH}

This is a permanent record for church files.

<i>office use only</i>				
FILE NO.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
CT	RF	PFB	PF	

Membership Class: start month ____ Year 20 ____

Legal Name _____
(last) (complete first) (complete middle)

First Name You Prefer (if different than above) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Cluster # _____

Maiden Name _____ Spouse's First Name _____

Home Phone _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Email _____

Date of Birth ____/____/____ Age _____ Sex M F
mo day yr

Place of Birth _____
(city) (state)

Marital Status
Single Married Widow/Widower Divorced

Occupation _____ Position _____

Company _____

Your Father's Name _____

Your Mother's Name _____

CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THIS PAGE

Names of Children:

Date & Place of Birth

Date & Place of Baptism

CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THIS PAGE

MODE OF RECEPTION {INTO BEL AIR CHURCH}

As indicated on this form, there are three ways to be received into the membership of this church. This form is designed to help us know which way those approved by Session for membership are to be received. Although it is conceivable that some may have been Christians for some time without ever having joined a church, this "Mode of Reception" form is based on the assumption that the logical way of publicly confessing one's faith in Christ is through joining a church. If this is kept in mind, it will make clear what these three "modes" are.

YOUR NAME _____ DATE _____

(If married, spouse's first name _____)

I will be joining Bel Air Church by one of the following three modes (please check one and fill in the information requested):

- 1) CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER: Prior to my involvement in BAC, I was an active member within the last 12 months in the church I mention here with and I wish to have you write for or my Certificate of Transfer.

My full name as my last church carried it: _____

Where to write for my Certificate of Transfer:

Name of Church _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip

- 2) REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH: I once publicly confessed my faith and joined a church, but at present I am inactive in the last church I joined. Now I want to reaffirm what I once affirmed regarding my faith in Christ and my desire to be a part of the fellowship of a church.

Last Church _____

City, State _____

- 3) PROFESSION OF FAITH: I have never publicly confessed my faith in Jesus Christ through joining a church and wish to do so now. (Please check one of the following regarding baptism):

_____ I was baptized (as an infant or at some other time in a Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox church), but I have never been "confirmed" or publicly confessed my faith by joining a church

CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THIS PAGE

HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED?

Y N

If NO, please fill out this portion

_____ I have never been baptized in any Christian church (Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant) and therefore, in obedience to Jesus Christ's command following his example, I NOW WISH TO BE BAPTIZED. Here is my information for my baptism certificate:

_____ Your date of birth

_____ Father's full name

_____ Your place of birth

_____ Mother's full name, including maiden name

4) NOT JOINING THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME: I will not be joining Bel Air Church at this time.

_____ Please keep me on the prospective new members mailing list for future information about new members classes.

_____ Please take me off the prospective new members mailing list.

_____ Please contact me when the next new members class is received so that I too can become a new member. (This option is only available one year from when each person has finished the New Members Class.)

Are you an ordained Deacon in the Presbyterian Church? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, name of church where ordained: _____

Date of Ordination _____

Are you an ordained Elder in the Presbyterian Church? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, name of church where ordained: _____

Date of Ordination _____

*If there are any unusual circumstances to relate or comments regarding your baptism or previous church membership, please provide that information in the following space. Thank you!

ETHNICITY

I consider myself to be:

____ Asian ____ African American ____ Caucasian ____ Hispanic
____ Native American ____ Other

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

You're not here by accident. Jesus loves you, and He wants you to have a personal relationship with Him. There is just one thing that separates you, all of us, from God – sin. If you're human, it's part of you.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

The first thing to do in becoming a Christian is to agree with God about this sin-nature that effects every human being. Yes, the world has "good" people and "bad" people in it, but scripture teaches that there are no *sinless* people. Sin is what separates us from a perfectly just and holy God.

Agreeing with God about who we are, and our sin-nature, brings us into a posture of humility in which we **REPENT** and understand that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves from our own nature. For this, we must rely entirely on God's mercy toward us.

Next, we must simply **BELIEVE** the Good News of Jesus Christ: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

We don't have to, nor could we, perform enough good works to make God love us or to make us righteous. God's eternal posture toward us is LOVE and GRACE through Jesus Christ.

"God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

RECEIVE in faith that Jesus, through His self-sacrifice for you on the cross, brings you back into the relationship of love that God intends for you to have with Him.

Scripture teaches, *"If you **CONFESS** with your lips that Jesus is Lord and **BELIEVE** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be **SAVED**."* (Romans 10: 9)

In Acts 2:38-39, the Apostle Peter declares:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

REPENT. BELIEVE. CONFESS. RECEIVE. This is how you begin to walk with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

MEANING OF THE SACRAMENTS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BAPTIZED?

There are many meanings to the sacrament of baptism.

Baptism is universally regarded among Christians as the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ. It is the sacrament of entry into the communion of the Church. In baptism we participate in Jesus' death and resurrection. In the vows spoken and declarations of faith made, we die to what separates us from God and are raised to newness of life in Christ.

The water of baptism symbolizes the biblical waters of Creation, of the Flood, and of the Exodus from Egypt. It links us to the goodness of God's creation, and to the grace of God expressed in covenants with Noah and Israel. In His ministry, Jesus offered the gift of living water. Baptism is therefore also the sign and seal of God's grace and the new covenant in Christ.

For Israel in the Old Testament, the sign and symbol of inclusion in God's covenant people was circumcision. Baptism in the New Testament is the sign and symbol of inclusion in the Church. As an identifying mark, baptism signifies the faithfulness of God, the washing away of sin, the new birth by the Spirit, putting on the fresh garment of Christ, being sealed as God's own child by the Holy Spirit, adoption into God's family, and the resurrection of Christ.

The body of Christ is one, and Baptism is the bond of unity in Christ. As they are united with Christ through faith, the people of God are united with each other and with the church of every time and place through the sacrament of baptism.

God's faithfulness signified in Baptism is constant and sure, even when human faithfulness to God is not. Baptism is received only once for Baptism signifies the beginning of life in Christ, not its completion. God's faithfulness needs no renewal. Human faithfulness to God needs repeated renewal. Baptism calls for decision at every stage of life.

Bel Air Church recognizes and practices all modes of baptism: by sprinkling, the pouring of water, and by full immersion. Baptism is offered several times a year to adults on profession of their faith in Christ, and to the children of believing parents as a sign of their inclusion in the covenant of grace.

MEANING OF THE SACRAMENTS (cont'd.)

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF COMMUNION?

The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of eating and drinking in communion with the crucified and risen Christ. The Apostle Paul delivered to the Church the tradition he had received from the risen Lord, who commanded that his followers share the bread and cup as a remembrance and a showing forth of his death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:23–26). The New Testament describes the meal as a participation in Christ and with one another in the expectation of the Kingdom of God and as a foretaste of the messianic banquet. In Communion, we celebrate this meal in the real presence of Christ with thanksgiving, remembering the ongoing grace of God through the suffering Christ endured and His triumph over death.

The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have put their faith in Christ, remembering that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. In preparing to receive Christ in this Sacrament, the believer is to confess sin and brokenness, to seek reconciliation with God and neighbor, and to trust in Jesus Christ for cleansing and renewal. Even one who doubts or whose trust is wavering may come to the Table in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Christ Jesus.

OUR SMALL GROUP COMMITMENTS

In order to make the most of our group time and to help create a space where God can speak to and through us, there are some common understandings we should have together as a group.

I will help my small group be a healthy and life-giving experience for everyone by keeping these commitments:

1. **Participation:** These groups are all about the importance of “one another” in our lives as followers of Christ. I will attend and participate in my small group because it gives me a chance to put Scripture and sermons into practice, and because my group wouldn't be the same without my voice!
2. **Safety:** I will help ensure that our small group is a confidential and safe place to share openly and honestly. What's said in the group stays in the group unless I have been given explicit permission to share it with others.
3. **Self-awareness:** With the understanding that different people communicate differently, I will take care not to dominate the conversation so that everyone has a chance to share.
4. **Respect:** Because our time together is so short, I understand that this is not the place for theological or political debates. I will be respectful of other's viewpoints when they differ from my own.
5. **Authenticity:** The group will function best when people are authentic about where they're at, and I will help foster an environment of openness and honesty by being open and honest myself.

May God bless your conversations and your group's time together!

OUR MISSION AND VISION

TO FOLLOW JESUS EVERY DAY AND EVERYWHERE
WITH EVERYONE, SO THAT...
EVERY PERSON, EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD, AND EVERY
CITY WILL BE REVIVED AND RENEWED BY JESUS.

OUR PASTORAL STAFF



REV. DR. DREW SAMS
SENIOR PASTOR & HEAD OF STAFF



REV. KIM DORR-TILLEY
EXECUTIVE PASTOR



REV. MIKE MORGAN
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP
AND CARING MINISTRIES

16221 MULHOLLAND DR. | L.A., CA 90049
BELAIR.ORG | 818.788.4200

