

CONNECTED TO CHRIST

Why Membership Matters

New Group Study
Wednesdays, June 29 – July 27, 2022
Noon | Online

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PREFACE & OPENING PRAYER

PREFACE: This study is geared especially to people who may have been raised in the church and might still consider themselves Christians but who do not view official membership in a congregation or regular participation in worship as important.

For active church members, it also serves as a good refresher or general explanation of what congregations are and do.

The book can give regular churchgoers a clearer understanding of what they already experience at church and help them communicate the importance of it to their loved ones who are questioning their need for church.

OPENING PRAYER

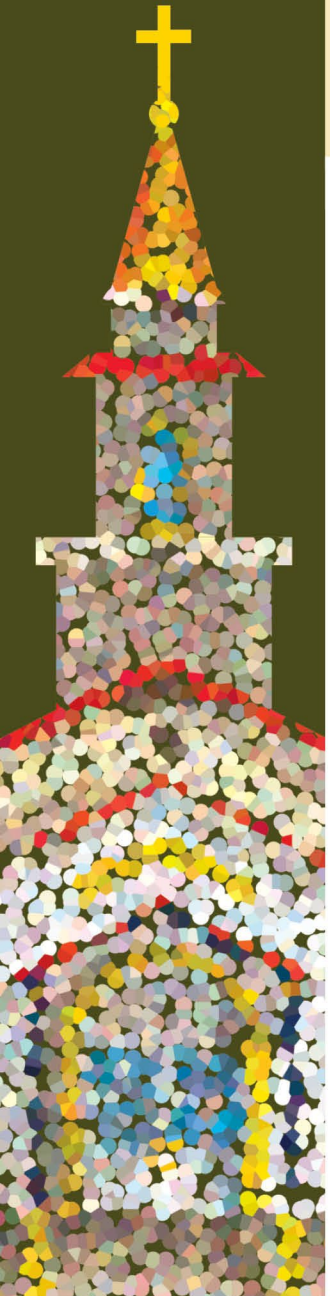


CHAPTER 4: TRUST, BUT VERIFY

When we need services we can't provide for ourselves, we have no choice but to trust someone who knows how to fix a car or read an x-ray or whatever it is.

But we also have to make sure that person is trustworthy.

We look for a mechanic or a doctor who has a good reputation for honesty and competence.



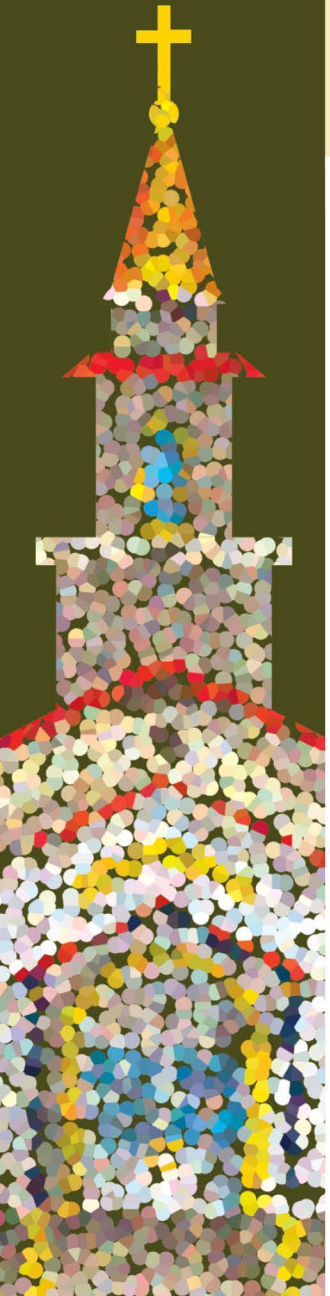
CHAPTER 4: “TRUST, BUT VERIFY”

Pastors have an especially important role to play in our lives, since they claim to stand in for God, they deal with eternal things, and they often quite rightfully know people's most intimate and embarrassing secrets.

Therefore, they must live up to an especially high standard of trustworthiness both in terms of what they teach in God's name and in how they conduct their lives.

In this session, we will discuss the concepts in ...

Chapter 4: “TRUST, BUT VERIFY”



INSTALLATION OF A PASTOR: The Strength and Promise in the Office of the Holy Ministry

P In the presence of this *[congregation/assembly]* and before our Lord God to whom you must give an account now and at the Last Day, **I now ask you:**

Do you acknowledge that the Lord has called you through His Church into the ministry of Word and Sacrament?

R *I do.*

P **Do you believe and confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**

R *Yes, I believe and confess the canonical Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.*

P **Do you believe and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn?**

R *Yes, I believe and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds because they are in accord with the Word of God. I also reject all the errors they condemn.*

Q Do you confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? And do you confess that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord—as these are contained in the Book of Concord—are also in agreement with this one scriptural faith?

A Yes, I make these Confessions my own because they are in accord with the Word of God.

Q Do you promise that you will perform the duties of your office in accordance with these Confessions, and that all your preaching and teaching and your administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with Holy Scripture and with these Confessions?

A Yes, I promise, with the help of God.

Q Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine, will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you? Will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying, and will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry centered in the Gospel? Will you admonish and encourage the people to a lively confidence in Christ and in holy living?

A Yes, I will, with the help of God.

Q Finally, will you honor and adorn the Office of the Holy Ministry with a holy life? Will you be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture and the Confessions? And will you be constant in prayer for those under your pastoral care?

A I will, the Lord helping me through the power and grace of His Holy Spirit.

Chapter 4 Discussion

- **If you are a church member, what promises did your pastor make before God and the congregation when he became your pastor?**
- **How would you know if he was keeping those promises?**
- **Would it matter to you?**

Chapter 4 Discussion (Continued)

- **What expectations for virtuous conduct do people quite rightly place upon pastors?**
- **What expectations do they sometimes unfairly place upon pastors?**

- **Why is it important that the congregation not "hire" or "fire" the pastor, but that every one understand the pastor has been placed there by God working through the congregation?**

Chapter 4 Discussion (Continued)

Think back to your favorite pastor if you have one...

- **What personal traits do you look for in a pastor?**
- **What do you think makes a pastor popular or unpopular?**
- **Do those things align with what the pastor is there to do and be?**

Chapter 4 Discussion (Continued)

- **How should a Christian deal with things about his or her own congregation that are not going well, say, complaints about ...**
 - **the church services or**
 - **the pastor/staff or**
 - **the facilities?**

Chapter 3 Closing Thoughts

You, your fellow church members,
and your pastor(s) all share a
CONFESSION OF FAITH.

You **TRUST** one another to uphold it,
BUT you should also **VERIFY**
that everything your pastor and
congregation proclaim and do
aligns with that
CONFESSION OF FAITH

For Next Session...

We will get a little deeper into some new questions at our next session...

If you have not already done so, read the Book...

Chapter 5: RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Also... be thinking about what you want for the NEXT 6 week Study...

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer

- Recording is turned off
- Any SPECIFIC Requests for prayer?