

The Lamplighter



Is Church Membership Important?

There are many reasons to commit to a local church. Here are a few of them, as well as tips for finding a congregation that's right for you.

Like many Christian kids, I was raised attending church. My family moved around a lot and never settled at one local church. In high school, I loved going to youth group, mainly because I enjoyed being around cool people and the concert-like worship. Around the same time, my family started attending a small church plant. There were no young people. The preacher wore a tie, and they sang old hymns.

You can imagine my frustration when my parents wanted to become members at that church. It was the exact opposite of what I thought church should be like. Despite my rebellious heart, that little church had a greater impact on me than I could have ever imagined.

Why? Because it was the first time I experienced church membership. Church membership, whether formal or informal, is when you're a committed part of a local congregation. But why is it important? Why do you need to be a member of a local church? I'm a millennial, and I pastor a church with many millennials. So, I've had to answer this question many times.

Why become a church member?

We love Jesus, but loving the church is much more difficult. Is there a good reason to commit yourself to it? Yes, there is. Church membership is not only biblical, but it provides many benefits for the Christian as well as the body of Christ.

1. Church membership is biblical.

Did you know that "church" is a Christian idea? You won't find the same concept in any other world religion. Other religions have temples, synagogues or mosques, but only Christianity has the church. In "Nine Marks of a Healthy Church," Mark Dever explained that in Christianity church is not defined as a building. He wrote, "According to the New Testament, the church is primarily a body of people who profess and give evidence that they have been saved by God's grace alone."

The church is the global body of Christ (1 Cor 12: 12-31). Consisting of believers from every corner of the globe, it's demonstrated in local congregations. Being a church member means that you become committed to one of these local expressions of Christ's body.





Sermon Topics:

Mar 05

AM *The Price*

Mth 16:25-27

PM *Putting God First*

Num 15:19-21

Mar 12

AM *The Transfiguration*

Mth 17:1-3

PM *Leading and Interceding*

Num 16:5-11

Mar 19

AM *The Fish Tax*

Mth 17:24-26

PM *Buds and Duds*

Num 17:1-5

Mar 26

AM *The Greatest*

Mth 18:1-3

PM *Trickle Down Giving*

Num 18:8-12

Sunday Morning Nursery:

Mar 05 Norma Stump, Donna Fleming, Grant & Sara Walker

Mar 12* Norma Stump, Eli Hancock, Patrick & Jill Hancock

Mar 19* Norma Stump, Abby Pankhurst, Pat & Jill Hancock

Mar 26 Norma Stump, Jessica Miller, Jill Hancock, Fran Wright

*adult volunteer needed

Greeter Schedule:

Mar 05 Nick Papanicolas, Billy Moore

Mar 12 Bob Gill, Scott Nupson

Mar 19 Darrell Linville, Dave Bode

Mar 26 Glenn Miller, Paul Dillon

Sunday Morning Security Team:

8:30 AM

SS & 11:00 AM

Mar 05 Norma Stump, Kevin Guiffre Melvin King, Patrick Hancock

Mar 12 Courtney Harbin, Marion Simpson Paul Miller, Robert Hicks

Mar 19 Dillon Edelen, Norma Stump Terry Mathews, Al Law

Mar 26 Kevin Guiffre, Courtney Harbin Betty Lou Moore, Bob Mathews

Children's Worship:

Mar 05 Stephanie Walton, Ruth Dillon, Adrielle Law

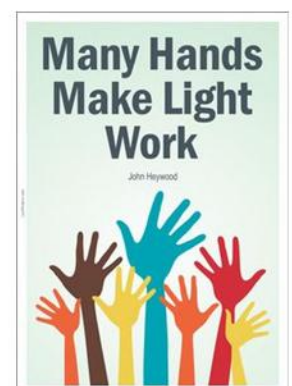
Mar 12 Jennifer Cooke, Jessica Miller, Camden Cooke

Mar 19 Ellen Nupson, Alison Bode, Laura Dillon

Mar 26 Hannah Pankhurst, Katie Lusk, Abby Pankhurst

Tellers for March:

Courtney Harbin
& Cecelia Stauffer



(Continued from page 1)

The first place we see this was when Jesus called His disciples in Mark 1:16-20. A particularly noteworthy attribute is that He called them in pairs. They are not just individual units but part of a community in discipleship with Jesus. In fact, we see this frequently across the Gospels. Jesus always called His disciples to himself and into a community with one another. So, when you become Jesus' disciple, you also join His community of followers and commit to fellowship with them.

That commitment is a thread that runs throughout the entire New Testament. In Acts, Luke gave us the first description of Christians. The preeminent attributes were that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship" (Acts 2:42), [emphasis added]. In Hebrews, we find this exhortation: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some" (Hebrews 10:24-25) [emphasis added].

Obedying the call to discipleship includes church membership. The most fundamental duty of membership is regular fellowship with a local congregation.

2. Church membership is beneficial.

One of the most significant benefits of church membership is the experience of being a part of something larger than yourself. Whenever people join our church, they are thrilled because they know that they are not just there to be consumers but to be contributors. There is organized and corporate worship, teaching, sacraments and service to one another and the community. Another significant benefit is having accountability — because you've submitted yourself to the church leadership.

The \$5 OCC

Shoebbox

**Shopping
Sprees!**

**Theme for
March: All
Dressed Up**



T-shirts, pants & shorts, dresses & skirts, hats (any style: winter, baseball...), scarves, gloves, mittens, socks, shoes, flip flops, bandanas, sunglasses, rain ponchos, shoelaces, silly dress up: animal masks, superhero capes, princess tiaras



MARCH 12TH

A few church members gathered to thank Rosa Minehan for filling in as church secretary last year. If you see her, be sure to offer your appreciation!

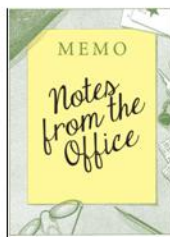


Women on Mission will meet 3/7 @ 9:45 AM. Sandy Jenke will be doing a missions presentation and we will be making bead dolls for the OCC boxes.

- 3/10-3/11: Ladies Conference in Annapolis, MD
- 3/26: Mission Day & Easter Egg Hunt
- 4/16 @ 6:30 PM: 'Messiah in the Passover' Sedar presentation by Chosen People Ministries

“God undertook the most dramatic rescue operation in cosmic history. He determined to save the human race from self-destruction, and He sent His Son Jesus Christ to salvage and redeem them. The work of man’s redemption was accomplished at the cross.”

– Billy Graham



Is there something you would like to see in the Lamplighter? Please let me know!

secretary@fbclaplata.org



Ladies of the Light Bible Study- Every Tuesday @ 10 AM

ROMEO's- March 7th @ 11:30 AM- Foster's Grille

Women on Mission- March 2nd @ 9:45 AM

Connect Bible Study- March 2nd & 16th @ 6 PM

Brotherhood Fellowship- March 4th @ 9 AM

Widow's Support Group- March 24th @ 12 PM

(Continued from p. 3)

Local churches are missionary organizations. We're partners in this great objective to spread the glory of God and to bring people to Jesus. That's a grand goal. Being a participant in that mission can bring rich meaning and fulfillment to your life, a fulfillment greater than "happiness." You'll experience the profound sense of purpose that comes from joining a cause greater than yourself because the church's mission is to bring the gospel of life into a world of death.

3. Church membership is all about love.

Finally, you should commit to a local congregation because church membership is fundamentally about love. One of the best parts of my role as a pastor is when I get to sit down and talk with our new members. Many of them are joining a church for the very first time, and they're often single. I love when I get to tell them that they are no longer alone but are part of a spiritual family.

The defining mark of a Christian is love for the fellowship of believers. Jesus said that when we love one another, we are showing the world the power of the gospel (John 17:23). The best place to see this love is in the local church. As members, we support one another. When someone is mourning, we mourn with them. If one rejoices, then we all rejoice. An individual's financial struggles, sickness or hardships are an opportunity for the church body to step up and set love into action.

We strive for love and unity with believers in the church because this brings glory to God.



Shampp, A. (2021, March 21). *Is Church Membership Important?*. www.boundless.org. <https://www.boundless.org/faith/church/is-church-membership-important/>

K i d s C o R n E r

AWANA GRAND PRIX™

The race was held on Saturday, February 4th in our fellowship hall. The kids enjoyed fierce competition & close races. Congratulations to everyone that went home with a prize!



Upcoming Mission Opportunities to Serve:

March 5th: Kicks off Annie Armstrong Offering and Week of Prayer- Pray for North American Missions and the offering will continue throughout the month

March 26th: Mission Day (after 11 AM service)-Join us to create crafts for OCC boxes (Easter Egg Hunt will be combined with this)

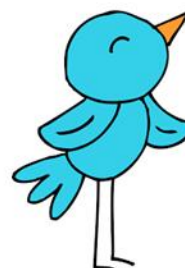
March 30th-April 2nd: Global OCC conference in Orlando Florida- Pray for safe travels and a successful conference

Upward Games Bake Sales: During all Upward Games- monies help offset OCC shipping costs- If you would like to donate bake goods for us to sell, please contact Jill Hancock or Jennifer Miller.

Look for Clearance items from Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, winter items, etc for **OCC boxes**

June 17th-23rd: Mission Trip to South Dakota

Spring
is
coming!



March's Bible Memory Verse



Revelation 21:5 NIV

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."



A seasonal reminder

Signs of spring remind us of God's promises.

Directions: Use the picture code and clues to complete Isaiah 61:11, NIV.

- plants grow here
- seeds are planted in this
- to coil and jump (also a season of the year)
- when watered, these make plants
- to expand and get bigger
- another word for seedling

For as the _____ makes the _____
come up and a _____ causes
_____ to _____, so the
Sovereign LORD will make righteousness
and praise _____ up before all nations.

ISAIAH 61:11, NIV

Answer: soil, sprout, garden, seeds, grow, spring

Nonfiction

The God Who Walks Beside Us by David Roper (NF 233)

When a Nation Forgets God by Erwin Lutzer (NF 234.4)

Children's Fiction

Veggie Tales: We Oughta Be in Pictures by Sharon Jehlen (CF JEH)

Audio

William Carey: Obligated to Go by Janet and Geoff Benge (Audio Books)

John Newton: Change of Heart by Janet and Geoff Benge (Audio Books)

Betty Greene: Wings to Serve by Janet and Geoff Benge (Audio Books)



Are You in an Offseason?

by Jennifer Miller

What does offseason mean to you? Could it be the long dark months of winter (of course Spring is coming!) or is it when your favorite sport is over for the year? Does it happen when work/life slows down after a big event? For an athlete, the offseason can be just as important as their busy season. In the offseason, training for the athlete is central. If the goal is to become the best version of themselves, then the offseason presents itself as a test. Is the athlete going to make the best use of the time or squander it by making foolish choices?

In the Book of Ephesians, Paul motivates the church to "redeem the time." "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light" — Ephesians 5:8. Since we have been given wisdom through knowing Jesus, we cannot afford to waste this wisdom. Why? Because the days are dark, and evil is still at large. Evil continues to wreak havoc. Darkness seems to be spreading like a ravaging storm. It feels overwhelming. How could any of us make a difference? Left to our own doing, we would continue to hear the lies and dabble in the shadows of our shame. However, through Jesus, God has given us the ultimate and final gift for walking in wisdom — the Holy Spirit.

God's Spirit awakens us from the dead and marks us as children of light. Here is where it all comes together: by trusting and surrendering to Jesus, we are given a Helper to be able to live the way God has called us to. Paul is urging his readers to let the Spirit change them more and more into the image of Jesus. Believers today share that same calling, to be transformed into the image of Jesus and learn how to embody wisdom and liberate the time from the darkness.



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Pastor: Gary Schneider 724-747-0430, pastorgary@fbclaplata.org

Secretary: Amanda Hepner 301-934-9040, secretary@fbclaplata.org

OCC Spiritual Impact Story

Gatanabe works in a community in Africa (exact country withheld) and she works hard at a local school. Scraping together enough funds to provide for herself and her three children has always been difficult. She doesn't get paid much, and sometimes, not even on a regular basis. She longs to do more for her family. She is heartbroken every time her children have a need that she can't meet. For a while, the youngest daughter had been pleading with her for a bath towel. "Every day, she's asking me to buy her a towel", Gatanabe said. "She told me that she was praying to God: Please let my mother have a lot of money so she can buy me a towel."

But the young mother didn't have money to spare for a towel. Still, she trusted that God would provide for her daughter. "I know Jesus is my helper, when I pray, He answers," Gatanabe said. "I see changes in my life". Their prayers were answered in a most unexpected way—through the kindness of people they'd never met. During an Operation Christmas Child outreach event in her community, her daughter received a shoebox packed in Jesus' name. Gatanabe was amazed when her daughter came home and proudly showed her the towel that was inside her shoebox.

'It's a blessing', Gatanabe said. There were many gifts, but the towel was by far her favorite as it represented a tangible answer to a prayer from a little girl in a remote, impoverished village in Africa who trusted God. Gatanabe is excited about her daughter participating in The Greatest Journey and learning more about the Bible and God's love. She said that she hopes the discipling classes will encourage her daughter to continue attending church and growing in her faith!

--Spiritual Impact stories can be found on the Samaritan's Purse website and the quarterly Samaritan's Purse 'Prayer Point' booklet



Bob & Carol Gill would like to thank the church family for your prayers, cards & notes of support following the passing of Bob's brother, David Gill, Jr. They are also grateful to the church for donating Gideon Bibles in David's memory. Carol said, "We can't think of a better gift."

Weekly SUNDAY Schedule

8:30 am Early Worship
9:45 am Sunday School
11:00 am Morning Worship
5:30 pm AWANA (Sept. - May)

(Other special or non-weekly activities listed below.)

March 2023

Weekly WEDNESDAY Schedule

5:45 pm Orchestra rehearsal
6:30 pm Adult Bible Study/prayer meeting
6:30 pm RA's/GA's, Youth
7:30 pm Adult choir rehearsal







(Other special or non-weekly activities listed below.)



06 – Phuong Dinh
08 – Kevin Guiffre
09 - Sy Collins
12 – Louis Schneider
13 – Thelma McConkey
13 – Stephanie Miller
14 - Jennifer Cooke
15 - Jeffrey Grote
18 – Donna Duehring
18 - Pat Hall
19 – Patrick Guiffre
27 – Dean Irwin
30 - Ashleigh Grigsby



17 – Drew & Tara Havrilla
25 – Melvin & Janet King

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 WOM: 9:45 AM Connect: 6:00 PM	3	4 Brotherhood Fellowship: 9 AM
5 Israel Interest Meeting: 12:30 	6	7 Ladies of the Light: 10 AM ROMEO's: 11:30 AM--Foster's Grille Deacon Mtg: 7 PM	8	9	10 BCMD Women's Conf. (off campus) 	11
12 REMEMBER? Set Your Clocks Ahead! 	13	14 Ladies of the Light: 10 AM	15	16 Connect: 6 PM	17 	18
SAFE NIGHTS						
19	20 	21 Ladies of the Light: 10 AM Church Council Meeting: 7 PM	22	23	24 Widow's Group: 12 PM	25 UPWARD registration 8-4PM 
26 Mission Day & Egg Hunt: 12:30	27	28 Ladies of the Light: 10 AM	29	30	31	