

SERVICE FOR MEMBERSHIP AND BAPTISM

Sunday, July 24, 2022, 12:30pm, Sanctuary

Welcome everyone! While believers in Jesus may experience their membership in the body of Christ in spontaneous and unstructured gatherings, we believe the Lord's purposes are best fulfilled when believers covenant or pledge to fulfill the Bible's teaching about membership in a particular congregation such as our own! These covenantal relationships provide the real-life context for the Holy Spirit's ongoing transformation of believers into spiritual maturity. (adapted from our denomination - ECO Constitution and Polity)

On behalf of the Session it is my privilege to introduce our new members, covenant partners, who have met with the Session and expressed their desire to be received into membership - Leo, Camilla, Al, Kelsey and Morgan are being received today by their public profession of faith in Jesus. Leo, Camilla, and Al are being baptized. Kelsey and Morgan have been previously baptized as covenant children. All of these brothers and sisters have participated in our membership classes, and the Session has happily heard all of their confessions of faith in Jesus Christ, and we're glad to welcome them. As we baptize Leo, Camilla, and Al, remember that in baptism God is claiming us, and sealing us and showing that we belong to Him. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus commanded that all who believe in Him should be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In baptism God frees us from the punishment of sin and death. He unites us with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. By water and the Holy Spirit, we are made members of His church, His body, and we are joined to His ministry in all the world. Remember with joy your own baptism, as we celebrate this sacrament.

Pastor (Directed at the congregation):

*Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture these brothers and sisters by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of His church? Do you? **We Do!***

Questions for new members:

*Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? Do you? **I do***

*Do you turn to Jesus Christ, receiving and accepting Him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in His grace and love? Do you? **I do***

*Will you strive to be Jesus Christ's faithful disciple, obeying His word and showing His love? Will you? **I will***

*Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study and service, and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Will you? **I will***

(Each person kneels at baptism rail and receives baptism)

Prayer: Lord uphold _____ by your Holy Spirit. Give him/her the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in Your presence, both now and forever. Amen

God has made you, dear brothers and sisters, members of His household to share with us in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

To the congregation: *Let us welcome them!*

SONG *To God be the Glory*

Just as Morgan and Kelsey were baptized- many years ago! – as their parents responded to God’s covenant of grace revealed to Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and were raised and nurtured as children of the covenant, so the practice of our fellowship continues as we baptize these children *today* who have been presented by their parents who are seeking the baptism of the children. As Peter tells families in Acts 2:39 *The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom our God will call.* And as you have in the witness of Scripture, the practice of household baptism, just as Paul told the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:30 – *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved – you and your whole household ... and that very night he and all his family were baptized.*

These families coming before us today have also met with the Session seeking the covenant baptism of their children. Today they are making their public pledge to raise and nurture their children as followers of Jesus Christ. With Christ in their lives, the working of the Holy Spirit, and with your support and prayer, the hope is that these children will grow to one day make their own personal and public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Today those families in our fellowship are

Chris and Eva Xi with Ivan and Eden
Stephen and Shine Ma with Emily and Eason
Leishun and XiaoYu Cao with Wesley
Leo and Ping Zhang with Lucas

Each to each family is asked:

*-Do you acknowledge your child’s need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit? **We do!***

*-Relying on God’s grace do you promise through prayer and example, to dedicate, support, nurture, and encourage _____ to be a faithful Christian? **We do!***

*-Do you depend upon the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ for his/her salvation as you do for your very own? **We do!***

(After the parents have answered the questions, the congregation is asked to stand and answer)

Question to the congregation:

*Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Ivan, Eden, Emily, Eason, Wesley, and Lucas by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to become faithful members of His church? Do you? **WE DO!***

SONG *This Is the Day the Lord Has Made*

Please join us for refreshments and welcoming our new members in the Social Hall!