

WEEK 2

DIGGING DEEPER

Celebration Sunday

ECO Polity (Membership)

1.03 The Membership of a Congregation

1.0301 Baptism and Covenant Partnership

Through baptism an individual (infant, child, youth or adult) is joined to the Church universal, the body of Christ. The sacrament of baptism shall be approved for an individual, by a session, one time and all Christian baptisms will be recognized by ECO congregations. Through covenant partnership an individual is joined to the local congregation, and is able to be fully involved in its mission to the local community and the world.



1.0302 Openness to All

The congregation's fellowship shall be open to all who seek to explore spiritual life by participating in the fellowship of the risen Lord. The congregation shall be gracious in providing pastoral care to all who consider themselves a part of the congregation, in the hope that these spiritual friends might become members

of Christ's body. All who put their trust in Jesus Christ are welcomed to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

1.0303 Entry into Membership as Covenant Partners

After completing a meaningful preparation process as determined by the session, those who wish to embrace the congregation's covenantal expectations may become covenant partners by action of the session after hearing testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. For those not previously baptized, the Sacrament of Baptism is to be provided for these new covenant partners and offered to children under their care.

Individuals may testify to their faith in one of the following ways:

- a. Public profession of faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, after the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit yields personal faith in Christ.
- b. Reaffirmation of faith, for those previously professing faith publicly and already baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. If they are members or covenant partners of another congregation, this transfer of membership/ covenant partnership shall be communicated to the former congregation.

Polity1.0304 The Benefits of Covenantal Partnership

Becoming a covenant partner is important not only to the congregation but even more importantly for the covenant partner, as they are positioned to receive encouragement, support, and correction that the Lord promises to those who

share spiritual fellowship. In committing to the cause of a life lived in and through Jesus Christ, covenant partners grow in Christian community together to become more Christ-like. In Christian community, we realize the fullness of life together and life in Christ, and discover our unique place in a common mission and narrative of God's work. The covenant partner and the congregation are both blessed and become a great blessing as they covenant together, intentionally, in Christ's work.

1.0305 The Congregation's Expectations of Covenantal Partnership

Each covenant partner shall strive to be faithful to Christ by participating in the congregation's worship, fellowship, and service on an ongoing basis. Faithfulness in Christ as a covenant partner, involves a commitment to growth into spiritual maturity as a disciple of Christ and dedication of time and talents to the congregation's mission and ministry, in accordance to the gifts that God has bestowed upon him or her. Faithfulness also involves the stewardship of finances. As each covenant partner grows in the grace of giving, financial support of the congregation's mission and ministry should grow, along with tangible support for other ministries that advance God's Kingdom. Those who are invited to take significant leadership roles in the congregation should be spiritually mature, carefully selected, trained and/or mentored ordinarily be covenant partners for at least a year, and shall agree and adhere to the Essential Tenets of ECO.

1.04 Categories of Membership

The membership of a congregation of ECO includes baptized members and covenant partners.

1.0401 Baptized Member

A baptized member is a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism, but either has not yet made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior or has not become a covenant partner.

1.0402 Covenant Partner

A covenant partner is a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into the membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participates in the church's worship and work. Covenant partners are eligible to vote in congregational meetings.