

# Membership Matters

**New Song  
Community Church  
2026**

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## Welcome!

We are so glad to have you and excited that you are interested in New Song! We hope this material gives you not only the insight into our beliefs and practices that you seek but also a good sense of what we're all about.

With this packet we want to provide you with the information you need to make an informed decision about whether we are the church for you. We'll answer questions like:

- Why membership?
- What does the church believe?
- Beyond theology, what makes New Song “tick”?
- What is its vision?
- Will I/we be able to serve here?
- What is the church's structure?
- How is it led?
- What would I be committing to as a member?

Some of the folks reading this have been associated with New Song Community Church since its inception in 1988 as “Walnut Hills Community Church.” Others come from the other end of the spectrum, having only recently discovered us and know very little about us. Whether you identify with either perspective or land somewhere in the middle we know you have some degree of interest in making a membership commitment at New Song.

Should you have further questions or wish to discuss the material contained herein PLEASE don't hesitate to contact one of the pastors.\* They are eager to serve you.

New Song Board and Staff

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## 1. Why Membership?

Membership is a common part of our culture today. People become members of social media groups, political parties, gyms, and charitable organizations. But why become a member of a church? We think membership is a good idea for at least four reasons:

1. Though the term “church member” is never used in the Bible, we believe that inherent in the commitment the early Christians made is what is commonly understood today by the term, “membership.” The New Testament clearly shows that people identified themselves with a local church and were challenged to become devoted participants.
2. Membership greatly helps the pastors to care well for people. New Song regularly enjoys the company of guests, people who aren’t yet committed to our vision and mission. (We hope and pray that will always be the case.) But at some point, it is necessary to identify those who consider themselves “part of the flock,” the committed who have purposed to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Jesus Christ within the context of our New Song community.
3. Membership is important for the many ways it benefits the individual. In a culture where commitment is often shunned as a personal restriction and a burden to avoid, commitment to church membership is an important step that moves each of us from the vague clouds of our good intentions into the clear light of committed participation.

In describing the church, Scripture uses the word picture of a physical body with Christ as the head. As an individual “body part,” you not only are needed **by** the rest of the body (Are you eager to start doing without one of your body parts? We didn’t think so!) but **you need** the rest of the body for these as well as many other reasons:

- Because it will make your service for God more productive.
  - Because the “storms of life” will eventually come, and you will need support.
  - Because your enemy, The Evil One, is at work and you need help in resisting him.
  - Because parents, despite having primary responsibility in the raising of their children, need help in effectively raising the next generation to be serious followers of Christ.
4. A community in which the members are loving one another and serving according to each person’s individual area of strength is both a glory to Jesus Christ and a beacon in a dark world showing the way for people who are yet lost in that darkness.

## 2. Our Story

In 1988 Mike Keator\*, a church planter with a history of successful church plants with the Great Commission church movement, along with Su, his wife, and their children, moved to Columbus' east side to plant a new church.

With the help of an amazingly committed, sacrificial, and hard-working support team, some of whom are still part of New Song, Walnut Hills Community Church was launched, its name deriving from the Walnut Hills area east of I-270 and north of I-70.

The church met at Yorktown Middle School on Livingston Avenue for two years until funds were raised to purchase the property immediately east of our current location which, at that time, was a recreation center. Because the church's meeting location had changed, the name Walnut Hills became obsolete. "New Song" was chosen reflecting the joy of the Psalmist who wrote, "He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord."

From its very first days many did "see and fear and trust in the Lord" as people who hadn't yet met Christ were reached with the gospel and Christians who had been drifting spiritually "got on track" and began growing in the Lord.

In 1999 the church building and about half of the ground was sold to a catering business and a new structure was raised on what had been the western portion of that original plot. In September of 2000 New Song moved into its new building from where it has been conducting ministry and carrying on the vision of that original faith-filled team.

Uniting with the handful of original founders as well as with many others who have joined the church over the years is a new generation of members. Some of the children who, over the years, came through the ranks of the children's Sunday School and the Teen Ministry are now in the church as adults with families of their own, eager to help their kids find Christ and grow as His followers.

In 2012, Jack Stockdale, a long-time pastor, US church planter, and foreign missionary moved back to the US after ten years of foreign service and became a New Song elder. In 2016 Ashley McGlone, one of the deacons, was ordained as an elder. In 2021 members Mike Spurlock and Phillip Gerth were ordained and together the four of them share the pastoral responsibilities in a relationship of mutual submission with Jesus Christ as head of His church. In 2025 Mike Spurlock stepped down from the role of elder for health reasons.

\*Mike Keator went on to plant other churches in the US and eventually to become a foreign missionary. He has been mightily used by the Lord to reach many souls with the gospel in India and in Nepal, having lived for a time in each of those countries.

*Is New Song the place for you?*

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his disciple, “The goal of our instruction is love.” Ultimately, all that we do at New Song is because of love – God’s immeasurable love for us in Jesus Christ, our love for Him, and the love He puts in our hearts for others. That’s why you’ll often hear it said among us that “We’re an ever-increasing circle of love in which there’s always room for one more.”

Ours is not a closed circle, but one wide open to you, should you have the desire to enter it. May you clearly discern God’s leading as you seek to follow the path He has marked out for you. (Hebrews 12:1)

### 3. Our Vision

**Our vision is to be an ever-increasing circle of love in which there’s always room for one more.**

That love begins with God, not with us. He has been and still is The Great Initiator, for “God demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) The love of God “has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5) “We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) God is both the source and the empowerment of love.

Jesus taught that the greatest and foremost commandment is love for God, to which He immediately added, “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” The church is the light of the world, Christ’s body on earth having been charged by Him to be the real-life demonstration of His love to one another as well as to a hurting and needy world. Our “circle” is first a place of love for God, then of love for others.

### 4. Our Mission

Because we, as believers, “are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,” (Ephesians 4:15) **our mission is to follow Christ in every aspect of life.**

Just as the birth of a baby is a wondrous event of great significance, a person’s spiritual rebirth is also marvelous and immensely significant. The normal course of things is growth and development, both for the baby as well as the person who has come to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Our mission at New Song is to help each member grow in Christ in every aspect of life for His word and the transforming power of His Spirit leave no segment of our lives unchanged.

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your **faith** supply **moral excellence**, and in moral excellence, **knowledge**, and in knowledge, **self-control**, and in self-control, **perseverance**, and in perseverance, **godliness**, and in godliness, **brotherly kindness**, and in brotherly kindness, **love**. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Based on 2 Peter 1, (above) we have identified ten “life categories” in which we hope each person will make progress. These comprise a metric which each individual can use to ask himself or herself, “In what area (or areas) is God actively at work in me that I might become ‘a partaker of the divine nature’ and the person He wants me to be?”

### FAITH

Through **faith** in Jesus Christ a person is forgiven, saved from God’s judgement, freed from condemnation, and given eternal life. Our understanding of what Christ did and how it affects us, our concept of God and His character, and our perception of His posture and attitude toward us in any given moment are all central to our growth. They affect all the other areas.

### FIDELITY

While the path to maturity and Christlikeness begins with faith, “right out of the gate,” the Holy Spirit instructs us that in our faith we are to “supply **moral excellence**.” Each of us possesses sexuality. It is not inherently dirty or shameful. The fallenness of the human race has resulted in gross misuse of this marvelous gift of God. Our culture is saturated with wrong ideas about sex. God wants us to think and act biblically about our sexuality and be people whose lives are characterized by fidelity.

### FORMATION

Once we have been “born-again” God’s Word has much to say about how we are to then grow or be “formed” as Christians and actually “take on the divine nature,” becoming more like Jesus. Gaining foundational **knowledge** of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, as well as understanding the specifics of the path to Christlikeness is crucial for every believer.

### FITNESS

God has entrusted our physical bodies to us to be used in His service. Though we will not live forever in these present bodies and though sickness and disease will be with us until Christ returns to redeem us from the curse, we can and should pay attention to our physical health and be in control of our appetites. God wants us to care for our bodies “exercising **self-control** in all things,” (1 Cor.9:25) because they are temples of His Holy Spirit.

### FAITHFULNESS

The Christian life is not a sprint but a long-distance run. Knowledge of the Scriptures is essential, but we don’t really begin to grow until we start putting into practice what we are learning. **Perseverance** in spiritual disciplines like Bible reading, prayer, and fasting are important components to any individual’s growth in Christ.

## FAMILY

Because our most important human relationships are those within our family, **godliness** in this aspect of life is vital. God cares deeply about how we relate to our parents, our spouse, and our children. These fundamental relationships require care and cultivation, and God's word has much to say to us about them.

## FINANCES

"The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10) but money in and of itself is certainly not evil. God entrusts resources to us and wants us to learn to steward them wisely, rejecting the world's temporal value system, and adopting His eternal value system. A biblical understanding of money and wealth is necessary to **godliness** in this important area.

## FIELD

We don't distinguish between the sacred and the secular. God is as much a part of our lives in our Monday-through-Friday employment as He is our family life, our hobbies, and our lives while we are in the church building on Sunday. We encourage each member toward **godliness** in vocation and to develop individual skills and abilities in accordance with God's design so that each will flourish in their occupation and experience fruitfulness in their field.

## FELLOWSHIP

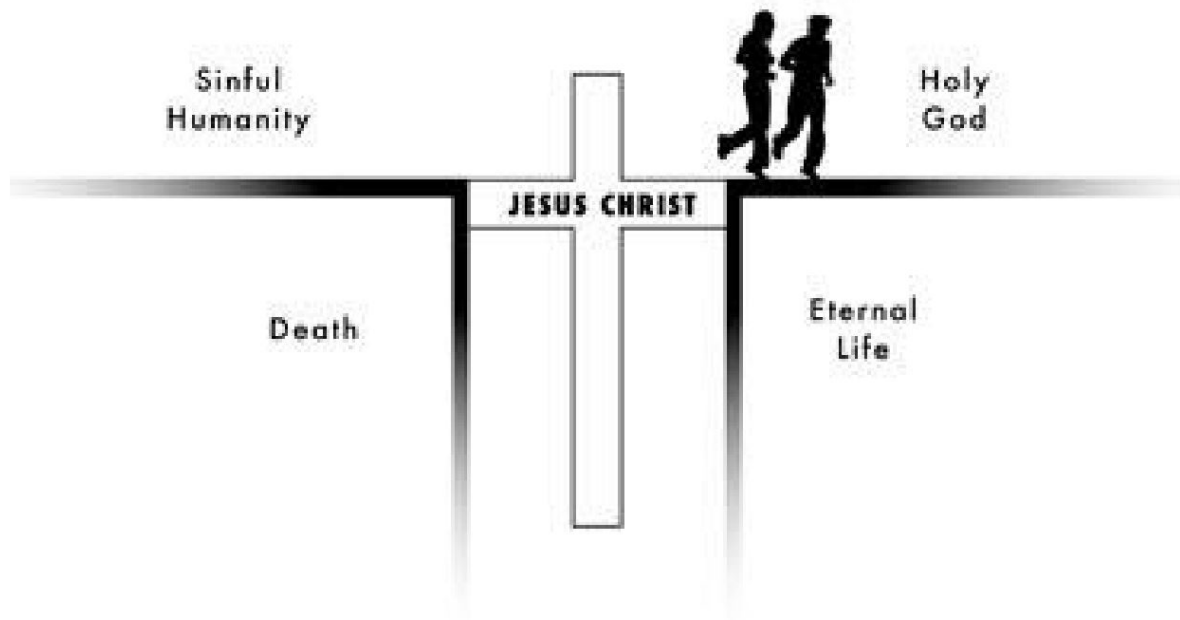
A key New Testament word picture which illustrates the church is a human body. Christ is our head and each of us has been placed as functioning parts in His body. The body needs each of us and each of us needs the rest of the body with all its various members. Loving our brothers and sisters in Christ is a way by which "all men will know that (we) are (Christ's) disciples." Learning to relate to one another in "**brotherly kindness**" is a high priority to all serious Christians.

## FISHING

Jesus told the fisherman, Peter, "Do not fear. From now on you will be catching men." (Luke 5:10) God has placed each of us in particular social settings (among family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, fellow members of interest groups, etc.) as His ambassadors. We encourage and equip each member to be effective in his or her sphere of influence in the best and highest way of showing **love** which is introducing others to Christ.



## 5. Understanding the Gospel



1. God **loves** you and created you to know Him personally.

### God's Love

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

### God's Plan

"And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth." (John 17:3)

2. Man is **sinful** and **separated** from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love.

### Man is Sinful

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:23)

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, whether reflected in active rebellion against God or passive indifference toward Him, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

### Man is Separated

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

“...bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

### **3. The only way to bridge this gulf...**

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience God's love.

#### **He Died in the Place of Sinners**

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” (Romans 5:8)

#### **He Rose From the Dead**

“I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6)

### **4. He is the Only Way to God**

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me’.” (John 14:6)

“There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

#### **We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation**

(Christ speaking) “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” (Revelation 3:20)

Receiving Christ involves repentance. Repentance means changing our mind about sin and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. We make a faith decision to turn from sin and return to God. Simply to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.

You can receive Christ right now, through faith, which is often expressed through prayer.

God knows your heart and is not as concerned with your specific words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

*"Jesus, I want to know you personally. I believe in you. I readily admit that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I confess my sins to you. Thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins and for rising from the grave to defeat sin and death. You are Savior and King and I ask that you now come into my life to reign as both. Thank you for forgiving me and promising me abundant life on earth and eternal life in heaven."*

Note: If you would like to talk with a pastor about accepting Jesus Christ, please contact one of them. (Contact info is on page 1.)

## 6. Growing in Christ

For the Christian spiritual growth involves development both in relationship to God as well as in relationship to one another. We are committed to helping each member in both aspects.

One's relationship with God develops through hearing His word, whether in private time spent in Bible reading and reflection or during Sunday services (or in other meetings) as the elders proclaim and teach the word publicly, and then seeking to put that truth into practice.

One's relationship with other believers develops through understanding the special spiritual gifts God has given that individual and through seeking to use them in harmony with others. It is further developed as one learns the character of Christ and how to show love to others in real ways.

We encourage each person to "link up" both with someone who is a few steps ahead in their Christian life as well as with someone who is a few steps behind. We all grow through mentorship, both as mentor and mentee.

## 7. What We Believe

### **The Scripture**

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is unique in that every portion and every word was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was without error in the original manuscripts and has been passed down to us with great accuracy. It is the supreme and final authority in faith and life in this age.

**God**

There is but one God, everywhere present; infinite in power and knowledge; perfect in justice, goodness, and love; Creator of the universe; eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of whom possesses all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.

**Man**

God created the first man and woman in His own image and appointed them to rule and care for the earth. They lived in perfect relationship with God and each other. God instituted marriage, which is the life-long union of one man and one woman and the foundation for bearing and raising children in a family.

**The Fall**

The first man and woman doubted God's goodness and rebelled against Him. In judgment, God brought death into the world and creation fell from its state of perfection. Since then, all human beings are born with a corrupted nature and without spiritual life and are under the wrath of God because of their sin.

**Jesus Christ**

God the Father, by His own choice, for His own glory, and out of love for sinful human beings sent his Son, Jesus, the Christ, into the world to reconcile sinners to Himself. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He was God in the flesh, both true God and true man. Jesus lived a sinless life and voluntarily suffered and died as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins, thus satisfying God's justice and declaring righteous all those who trust in Him alone.

**The Resurrection**

Three days after His crucifixion, God raised Jesus from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He bodily ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, makes intercession for His own.

**Salvation**

Men and women are freed from the penalty for their sins not as a result, in whole or in part, of their own works, goodness, or religious observances, but by the undeserved favor of God alone which was given through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God forgives and accepts all who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation.

**The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ, to convict human beings of their sins, and to impart new life to all who place their faith in Christ. He permanently indwells believers from the moment of spiritual birth, guides them into truth, and empowers them to live a life pleasing to God.

### **Assurance**

All who are born again of the Spirit can, through the sure promises of God, be fully assured that God will complete the work He has begun in them. They are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is God's deposit, guaranteeing their eternal inheritance. Good works are not the basis for acceptance by God, but as believers grow in doing good, they grow in their assurance that they are truly children of God and that they will be with the Lord when they die.

### **Jesus' Future Coming**

The Lord Jesus Christ will physically return to earth to reign in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment. The righteous will receive immortal bodies and be welcomed into eternal fellowship with God in a world where all things will be made new.

### **Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Jesus commanded that those who believe in Him are to be baptized in water as a declaration of faith, a symbol of new birth in Christ, and an announcement concerning that person's entry into Christ's body. He also instructed His followers to remember Him by partaking in the Lord's Supper, which reminds us of His death, resurrection, and future coming as well as of our unity with others who partake of the same loaf and cup.

### **The Church**

All true believers, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, rich or poor—people of all ages and races—make up the Church worldwide as God's family. They should gather in local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship, and teaching, to become conformed to the image of Christ and to be equipped to carry out the "Great Commission" Christ gave His people (Matthew 28:19-20.)

## **8. Our Core Values**

Two churches can have virtually identical Statements of Faith and yet vary greatly in what is genuinely most important to each. Churches with similar theology can widely differ in what they emphasize and how they strive to live out their stated beliefs. Core values invariably "bleed through" and profoundly influence the way a church does ministry.

What about New Song? What makes us "tick"? What are those influencing values we hold dear which inform all we do?

## **NSCC CORE**

**NATIONS REACHED WITH THE GOSPEL:** Our ultimate goal and mission is to reach the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to make disciples of all the nations.

**SAVING AND SANCTIFYING GRACE OF GOD:** God's grace through Jesus Christ is the basis and power, not only of our personal lives, but also of our ministry.

**COMMITMENT TO GOD AND HIS WORD:** Our aspiration is that our lives and ministries will be marked by a wholehearted devotion to God, through prayer and by studying, obeying, and teaching His Word.

**CHURCH:** The local church is God's vehicle for accomplishing the Great Commission, for winning people to Christ, building them to maturity, developing leaders, and for preparing church planting teams to be sent out for the expansion of God's kingdom.

**CHURCH LEADERSHIP:** We place a priority upon raising up pastors and other leaders of Christ-like character within the local church.

**ONENESS.** We desire our ministry to be marked by Christ-like, selfless love, loyalty, and unity with fellow believers – the very things Jesus prayed for in His “High Priestly Prayer” of John 17.

**RAISING GODLY FAMILIES.** Strong families are the foundation for strong churches. Therefore, we make it a priority to equip members in building their marriages and families.

**EVERY MEMBER A MINISTER:** All Christians are empowered through the Holy Spirit to be workers in the kingdom, not just the pastors. Therefore, we seek to equip and empower each member to utilize his/her spiritual gifts to serve others.

## 9. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

God created the marriage relationship to be between one man and one woman, with the purpose of marriage being to reflect Christ's relationship with His people. Additionally, we affirm sexual fulfillment only within the context of marriage. Therefore, in accordance with the Bible, we consider any sexual expression outside of or apart from the marriage covenant (including fornication, adultery, viewing pornography, and practicing homosexual sex ) to be against God's design.

“As the Scriptures say, ‘A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.” (Ephesians 5:31-32)

“This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” (Genesis 2:24)

“The husband should fulfill his wife’s sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband’s needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer.” (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

“You must not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14)

“Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

You say, ‘I am allowed to do anything’—but not everything is good for you. And even though ‘I am allowed to do anything,’ I must not become a slave to anything. You say, ‘Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food.’ (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can’t say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.

Don’t you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don’t you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, “The two are united into one.” But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-20)

## 10. Structure

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

The nature of the church determines its structure.

1. The church is a fellowship.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship...”(Acts 2:42)

Essential in a fellowship is unity and peace.

“Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Implication: A good structure promotes unity and downplays division.

“For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it.”  
(1 Corinthians 11:17-18)

2. The church is a family.

“Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters, be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.” (1 Peter 3:8)

Therefore, we operate on the basis of relationships, NOT rules.

“Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters.”  
(1 Timothy 5:1-2)

3. The church is a body.

We function on the basis of spiritual gifts NOT offices. We have a simple structure so we can maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

The people are the ministers.



The pastors are the administrators.

4. The church is a flock. (John 10:1-30, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 25:33)

Therefore, it is cared for and led by shepherds.

“Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” ... ‘Then feed my sheep.’” (John 21:16-17)

Three different Greek words are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders:

- POIMEN: Pastor
- PRESBUTEROS: Elder
- EPISCOPOS: Bishop or Overseer

“And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches....Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.” (1 Peter 5:1-2)

“So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.” (Acts 20:28)

## 11. How New Song is Led

In the Bible, God has given a specific plan for leadership. Obviously, the head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). At New Song, we strive to follow a structure of leadership which will not detract from Jesus occupying this position.

At the same time, Scripture gives clear leadership responsibility to certain members of the body. While these leaders are of no greater value in the sight of God, and while we recognize that every Christian has gifts with which they should minister in the body, at the same time the elders or pastoral leaders are held accountable by God for the direction and well-being of the church. (Hebrews 13:17).

Those responsible for leadership in the church are called elders (Acts 20:17), pastors or shepherds - Acts 20:28), bishops (Acts 20:28 Gk.) and overseers (Acts 20:28). While any of these terms are appropriate since they refer to the same persons doing the same job, at New Song we use the words “pastor” and “elder” interchangeably.

The role of a pastor is to lead the church, care for its members, pray on their behalf, instruct them and be an example of Christian living. The pastors at New Song are deeply committed to the spiritual growth of each of its members and the spreading of the gospel.

In the New Testament, men were appointed as elders based on their spiritual maturity and character (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9). At New Song, the final decision on appointment of an elder will depend on whether he meets these standards as determined by the existing elders who will seek the counsel of the congregation. The existing elders may also seek the counsel of elders of other churches. In addition, an elder must exhibit a genuine humility, a desire for spiritual excellence, a sincere love for people, and the basic skills necessary to carry out leadership responsibilities.

We do not believe a pastor must receive a full-time salary. However, normally, he would, and it is the desire of the church to enable its leaders to have all the time necessary to build the church. Scripture teaches that those who work hard at preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy—in context, this is usually understood to relate to financial compensation).

As necessary, deacons will also be chosen to serve the church, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit pastors from performing their Biblical responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:8-12; Acts 6).

In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:17). As such, Scripture indicates that final authority and responsibility as to church doctrine, policy, and procedures rest with the pastors. However, the pastors desire and need the thoughtful and prayerful input of each member.

## Biblical Role of the Pastors

What can you expect from your pastors?

1. The pastors are committed to leading by example.
2. The pastors are committed to feeding (teaching), leading, and equipping the church.
3. The pastors are committed to refuting wrong doctrine.
4. The pastors are committed to managing the church of God.
5. The pastors are committed to praying for the church and especially for the sick who call for them.

## 12. Governance

New Song's board is presently made up of the three elders and three others. It represents the church legally in the eyes of the state. The board's responsibilities include setting the annual budget and managing legal filings such as property tax and payroll.

## 13. Financial Stewardship

### Our Pledge

1. Each year the budget is prepared and approved by the entire Board of Trustees.
2. We will publish an annual financial statement which is made available to the church. A more detailed statement is available to members upon request.
3. When donations are counted, it is our policy to always have a minimum of 2 unrelated people present with the money at all times.
4. We will do our best to help with genuine financial needs within the church. The procedure to receive such help is to notify one of the pastors of your or another's need. Where there is repeated financial need, financial accountability and counseling will be required.

## 14. #MeToo and "Love Listens"

2018 may long be remembered as the year of #MeToo. Hundreds of headlines throughout the year reminded us that women in the arts, entertainment, media, sports, corporate and industrial America, as well as in various religious communities were finding their voice and would no longer stay silent about sexual abuse at the hands of those in power.

Sadly, the church of Jesus is also a place where power can be abused, deeply injuring vulnerable people. For this reason, we have implemented "Love Listens."

Though at New Song we view the pastor/elder as a servant-leader, we acknowledge that his is a position of authority and "power." Therefore, we have created a structure whereby a female member who feels she has been wronged sexually by a church leader (not necessarily physically but perhaps psychologically by intimidation or insinuation/innuendo) has the opportunity to confide in mature women who will be able to help her move forward with her concern or claim.

"Love Listens" is an advocate ministry (consisting of two female church members) designed not only to make it as comfortable as possible for women to come forward but also for the Board to move forward as quickly as possible to confront a leader who is perhaps abusing his power thereby protecting other potential victims. The requirements for service in the ministry are that each woman

- Be invited into the ministry by the Board of Trustees
- Possess the requisite spiritual maturity to listen to and minister effectively to women who come forward as well as bring concerns directly to the Board of Trustees

- Not be married to a pastor/elder

Our Love Listens Advocates for 2026 are Pam Ianni (740-963-0030) and Edna Marshall (314-369-5108).

## 15. Our Affiliation

Though not part of a denomination, New Song is a member of the Ohio Regional Church Network. ORCN was birthed in 2023 from the collective efforts of New Song's elders along with those of four other churches in Central Ohio when our former association of churches dissolved. Sharing a common history, each of our churches desired to maintain a relational network for mutual encouragement, accountability, and missional collaboration. New Song intentionally engages with these other churches for mission and for seeking a practical accountability. They are: Awaken Church, Columbus, (Near OSU campus), Darby Creek Church, Galloway, Grace Point Community Church, Lewis Center, and Linworth Road Church, Northwest Columbus. (<https://ohioregionalchurchnetwork.com/>)

## 16. Relational Commitments

In 2025 the elders of New Song Community Church recognized the need for formal church guidelines for addressing conflict within the flock. After seeking counsel and reviewing multiple resources, the elders decided to adopt the included **Relational Commitments** appendix document (with minor adjustments for the context of our local church) provided by the ministry Relational Wisdom ([rw360.org](http://rw360.org)). This ministry dates back to 1980 and is *a leading global provider of training that equips people to build relationships and reduce conflict in ways that reflect the wisdom, love, justice and peace that is offered to us through Jesus Christ*. The congregational, pastoral, and legal commitments provided by these ministry experts are designed to help our church establish clear biblical guidelines for relational policies that honor God and promote peace and unity within our fellowship. This document is now included as part of New Song's membership agreement. We believe these commitments will serve New Song well in the present and for many years to come.

The elders have adopted these **Relational Commitments** that set forth our church's commitments on relational issues such as peacemaking and reconciliation, marriage and divorce, protecting our children from abuse, biblical counseling and confidentiality, and accountability and church discipline. Members will be required to affirm these commitments when joining the church, and our leaders will apply these commitments as they minister to and shepherd our congregation.

## New Song Community Church

### Membership Covenant

Please complete the following information to become a member of New Song Community Church. Completed forms may be turned in to the Welcome Table in the lobby, emailed to office@newsong.family, or mailed to NSCC, 13873 National Rd. SW; Reynoldsburg, OH 43068.

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Name (printed)

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Date

By God's grace:

- I have repented and believed in Jesus Christ.
- I affirm New Song Community Church's statement of faith.
- I value New Song Community Church's core values.
- I will pursue New Song Community Church's vision by regularly attending services and by growing in my relationship with God by loving and serving Him and others, both inside and outside of the local church.
- I will take primary responsibility for my spiritual growth by obeying the Lord in baptism, developing private disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer, and by living out my Christian life within the context of the local church community.
- I acknowledge the role of the elders in my life as a spiritual authority under Jesus Christ, understanding that they keep watch over my soul and will someday give an account to God for their role in shepherding me.
- I will pursue love and unity with other members of the church, with the larger Christian community, and I will strive to maintain a good name with people who are not Christians.
- I will financially support the ministries of New Song Community Church willingly, cheerfully, generously, and sacrificially.
- As a Christian, I recognize I am only able to accomplish these things with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Finally, I acknowledge that I have received and read the Relational Commitments of this church, and I hereby covenant and agree to support and submit to them.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS MEMBERSHIP COVENANT WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2027.