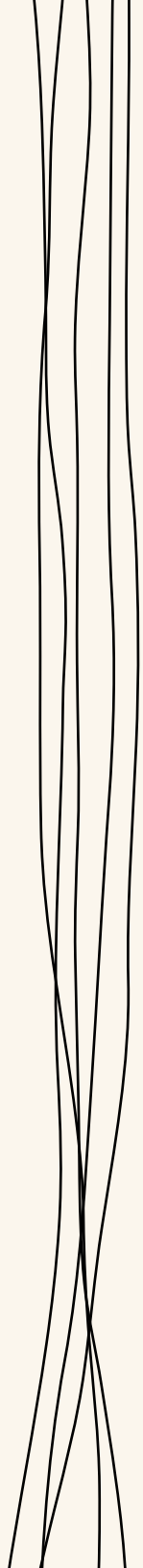


# **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

*What it means to be a member  
of Cornerstone Church*

**CORNERSTONE CHURCH**



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# INTRODUCTION

I'm so excited about what you're going to read in this booklet!

At Cornerstone, we believe that membership should be a meaningful way that we affirm our allegiance both to Jesus Christ and to one other. It's how we express our desire and commitment to join Jesus and each other in his mission right here in Simi Valley!

But in order to understand what it means to be a member at Cornerstone, it's helpful to differentiate it from other concepts of membership in our society. Let me give you an illustration: One night, I took my wife's minivan so that I could bring the kids with me to the grocery store. I hung my keys on the key rack and grabbed her keys on the way out the door. I quickly noticed a stark difference between her keys and mine: the membership tags. You know what I'm talking about, those tags that we put on our keychain so that stores can scan them, and we can earn points or get special discounts. My wife is a member at several stores and an athletic club.

As I walked to the vehicle, I perused each tag. There were round tags, rectangle tags, oval tags, and even a teardrop tag. Each one proudly identified my wife as a "member," with a barcode of her very own. In this form of membership, a member is someone who has certain rights or privileges within an organization, which they obtained by signing up, going through some sort of initiation, and perhaps paying a fee. The expectation of loyalty or service to the organization is pretty low because this kind of membership is basically about gaining advantages from the organization. I'm painting the issue with a broad brush, and I'm not saying that this idea of membership is a bad thing. But I am saying that being a member of a local church is very

different than being a member at the local supermarket. It is impossible to read the New Testament without seeing that the gospel calls Christians to a unity and solidarity with one another that are much bigger than simply affiliating with an organization or attending a weekend service. The gospel calls us to be 'all in,' to demonstrate a faithful commitment to Christ and to each other that shapes the way we live day in and day out. For the early church, the thought of engaging in the life of the church in any lesser way would have been considered foreign and illogical.

In this booklet, we've prayerfully and briefly attempted to communicate the New Testament idea of church "membership" in our contemporary context. To be a member of Jesus' Church, whether Cornerstone or any other local church, is to affirm an allegiance to join King Jesus and his people in this great endeavor of the gospel, the truly good news. As you read this booklet, I ask you to prayerfully consider if King Jesus is calling you to join Cornerstone on this amazing mission!

Grace!  
Todd Nighswonger  
Lead Pastor

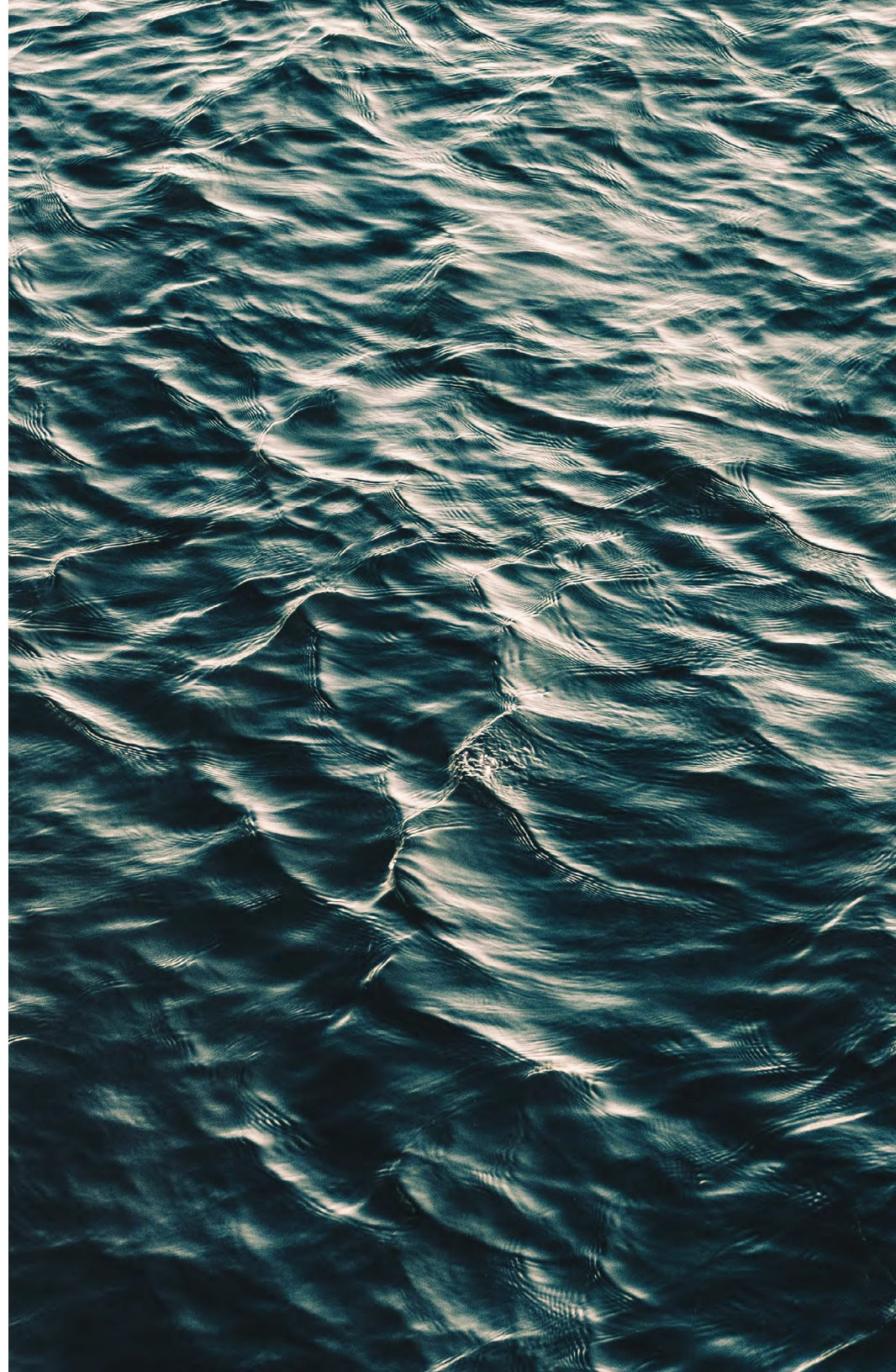
# MEMBERSHIP

## *Making Visible the Invisible*

Christians are those who respond to the gospel (Acts 11:26; Eph. 2:8-9) by trusting in Jesus Christ and turning from their rebellion against God (the Bible calls this repentance; see Acts 2:38; 3:19; 2 Pet. 3:9). When someone believes, they are placed into a relationship and union with Jesus and His church (Rom. 6:1-7). Being “in Christ” is an incredible place to be—so incredible that Christians for centuries have given him their allegiance, following him even at an extraordinary cost.

When one enters into this relationship with Christ, there isn't necessarily an immediate, visible sign that it has begun (John 3:1-21). God doesn't usually speak from heaven, nor do trumpets typically sound. This change is invisible to us because it is, first and foremost, a spiritual reality (John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:1-4; Eph. 1:13-14; Titus 3:5-6). While being spiritual, however, this doesn't make it any less real. Over time, a believer's new identity in Christ will be clearly seen as the Holy Spirit produces good works in their lives (John 3:8; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6; 1 Tim. 5:24-25; 2 Tim. 3:17).

The initial “good work” that Christ commands, and to which the Holy Spirit compels us, is baptism. This act of obedience signifies our invisible inclusion into Christ and his church through a visible act (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:11; 1 Pet. 3:21). Believer's baptism is the public profession of a spiritual reality, but the visible, tangible expression of invisible, spiritual realities doesn't stop there.



# A BIBLICAL PREMISE FOR MEMBERSHIP

As Christians, we are members of God's household and Christ's body, made up of all believers everywhere throughout all generations. This is often referred to as the "universal church." However, Paul never saw followers of Jesus solely in the broad context of the universal church alone. Rather, since we live in a particular place and time, we are called to function, participate, and minister in a specific local church. The universal church is invisible, but the local church is the place where it becomes visible.

One way that the Bible frequently describes the local church is with the metaphor of a body (Rom. 12:3-13; 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 4:1-16). Just like a healthy body requires that each member performs its part well, a healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well equipped to do the good works of service that God has prepared for them (Rom. 12:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-26; Eph. 2:10; 4:1-16; Col. 4:2-6). More specifically, in His sovereignty, God has placed us in Southern California, among the people of these towns and neighborhoods, at this time, for His purpose: to make the invisible church visible, and to call others to join us in trusting and following Jesus (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 17:26-27). This is the foundation of church membership.

To recap, if you are a follower of Christ, then you are a member of the universal church, and your participation in the body of Christ is intended to play out within a specific local church. Just as baptism is a visible, tangible expression of your inclusion with Christ, we believe that local church membership is also best expressed in a visible, tangible way. This is why we describe membership at Cornerstone as a "covenant," which is a word with rich biblical significance.



A covenant is a *formalized relationship* based upon *promises of ongoing faithfulness* in pursuit of a *common mission*. Let's take a closer look at this definition:

- *A Formalized Relationship:* When God entered into a covenant relationship with people, it was always initiated in a visible, formal way (See Gen. 9:8-17; 15; Ex. 19-20; 24; Matt. 26:26-29). The covenant was enacted through some type of ceremony, so that all parties were aware of the commitment they were making to each other (like how a wedding ceremony formalizes the covenant relationship between a husband and wife).
- *Promises of Ongoing Faithfulness:* A covenant is not primarily about defining a relationship in the present. Rather, in a covenant, each member makes promises about how they will continue to be faithful to the relationship into the future (Gen. 12:2-3; 17:9-14; Ex. 6:6-8; 20:1-17).
- *A Common Mission:* Finally, the reason for all of the formality and promises is because a covenant is about more than just *being* in a relationship; it's about *accomplishing something* through the relationship. It's a partnership to work together toward some common goal (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5-6). In the new covenant, our mission is to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20).

Therefore, the purpose of membership at Cornerstone is nothing more (or less) than the commitment to live according to the relationship, promises, and mission of the new covenant within this particular local church. Rather than assuming that we are committed to each other, we seek to follow the examples we see in Scripture by making a visible, formal commitment to one another. In our culture, we typically formalize commitments by putting them in writing and signing our names to them, so we have adopted that familiar format for our membership process, as you will see in the following pages.





# OUR COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP

We ask all members at Cornerstone to commit to five affirmations, which together form the basis of our membership covenant:

- **MISSION STATEMENT**
- **DEFINITION OF DISCIPLE**
- **DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY**
- **SUMMARY DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**
- **RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS & MEMBERS**

In making these affirmations and calling members to commit to them, we are not seeking to “go beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6), but to clarify the commitments of the new covenant and how they apply to the life and witness of Cornerstone and our members.

# MISSION STATEMENT

**TO GIVE EVERY INDIVIDUAL AN ACCURATE  
PICTURE OF GOD BY HELPING THOSE  
WHO BELIEVE BECOME FULLY DEVOTED  
FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST.**

This mission is accomplished as every member of Cornerstone seeks to live a life of growing, obedient faith in Christ, in fellowship with one another (John 13:34-35; 17:20-23). In other words, membership is the commitment to *be a disciple and to make disciples* of others (Matt. 28:18-20) in partnership with the other members and elders of Cornerstone.

## DEFINITION OF "DISCIPLE"

The basic meaning of the word *disciple* is "student" or "learner." The way that Jesus taught his "students" was not by putting them in a classroom, but by calling them to follow him day in and day out. Their education took place in the context of everyday life. Jesus devoted much time to teaching his disciples, because his purpose was to help them understand who he was and what he had come to do so that they might *join him* in his mission. He called them to follow him so that they might become like him (Luke 6:40), and so that he might send them to make disciples of others (Matt. 28:19).

At Cornerstone, we define what it means to be a disciple in four ways:

### A "DISCIPLE" IS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS WHO IS:

- **LEARNING FROM JESUS**

We are engaged in being and making disciples of *Jesus*, not of ourselves or any other Christian teacher or personality (1 Cor. 1:12-13). We have much to learn from one another and from those who have gone before us, but our eyes are fixed on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2).

- **TRUSTING JESUS**

Our *faith in Jesus* (John 1:12; 3:16) leads to growing *faithfulness to Jesus* (Matt. 25:21, 23; John 8:31-32). Paul describes this dynamic as "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), *hearing* Jesus' words and *doing* what he says (Luke 6:46-49; James 1:22-25).

- **BECOMING LIKE JESUS**

The goal of discipleship is to become like Jesus (Luke 6:40; Rom. 8:29)! The Holy Spirit's work is to transform us into the image of Jesus as we behold his glory (2 Cor. 3:18). Our work is to "walk by the spirit," joining him in his work in our lives and in each others' lives (Gal. 5:16-6:1).

- **HELPING OTHERS DO THE SAME**

To *be a disciple* of Jesus is to be engaged in the mission to *make disciples* of Jesus (Matt. 28:19). Therefore, every true disciple is (or will be) a disciple-maker (2 Tim. 2:1-2; Col. 1:28-29).





# DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

In order to help people grow as disciples who make disciples, we seek to guide them along a pathway toward maturity. Like a map, the purpose of this pathway is to help people see where they are in the discipleship journey and especially where they are headed. The discipleship pathway has three main stages: *Connect*, *Commit*, and *Call*. These stages are linked by two transition points, in which we *invite* those who have connected to commit to *be disciples*, and as we *equip* those who have committed for their call to *make disciples*.

## THE DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY



If you are reading this, hopefully that means that you've had a chance to *connect* with Jesus, with other disciples who are following him, and with our local church (Cornerstone). If so, that's great! We would love to have you join us on our mission to be and make disciples! Now, the purpose of this booklet is to *invite* you to *commit* to Jesus through baptism (if you haven't already), and to commit to discipleship as a member of Cornerstone. If you still have questions about what this commitment entails, we would love to talk with you more to help you see if Cornerstone is the right place for you to commit.

For those who commit to membership at Cornerstone, our goal is to equip you for the call of making disciples. This equipping happens in three main ways: through *Scripture, Shared Life, and Service*. First, we want to equip you with a foundational understanding of *Scripture* and how it applies to your life. We believe there are four core components to this biblical foundation, which we call “Core 4”: (1) The Biblical Story, (2) Gospel Transformation, (3) Basic Doctrine, and (4) Mission/ Evangelism. This equipping is not a “one and done” thing, but something you will continue to build upon over the course of your time as a member of Cornerstone.

The second way we will equip you is through *Shared Life*. We believe that the best context for discipleship is in smaller groups of people who intentionally gather to foster a shared identity, to engage in biblical practices (prayer, reading Scripture, worship, the Lord’s Supper, etc.), to practice the “one another” commands of the New Testament, and to share significant moments together. These practices draw us closer to God and to one another.

The third way we will equip you is through *Service*: guiding you to opportunities to serve and care for others in Cornerstone, in our community, among the nations, and even including our enemies (Mark 10:42-45; Gal. 6:10; Matt 5:43-44). Serving is also the main way that your gifts and passions will come to the surface, so that you can develop them and others can affirm your effectiveness in these areas (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Pet. 4:8-11).

These rhythms of *Scripture, Shared Life* and *Service* shape everything we do as a church. However, the main way that we will seek to equip you to disciple others in these rhythms is through “Discipleship Communities.” Discipleship Communities are smaller groups of members, led by equipped leaders, who gather regularly for a span of about 2 years (4 semesters) to study “Core 4”, practice shared life, and serve together. The goal is that, within 2 years, every member who

faithfully participates in a Discipleship Community would be ready to begin discipling others (to some extent) through these same rhythms of *Scripture, Shared Life* and *Service*.

As your gifts and passions become more focused and developed, we want to help you embrace the *call* to make disciples of others, both within Cornerstone and in the other areas of your life (work, school, neighborhood, etc.). *Call* is not the finish line of the discipleship pathway; it is the stage where you are unleashed to guide others along the discipleship pathway, entrusting to others what has been entrusted to you (2 Tim. 2:2). In this way, the discipleship journey never ends in this life. We continue to walk with others along this pathway, in obedience to Jesus’s commission and in anticipation of his return (Matt. 28:18-20).



# SUMMARY DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

One of the most important responsibilities that local church elders bear is to “give instruction in sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9). “Sound doctrine” means teaching that is “healthy.” Just as eating healthy food contributes to your physical health, so healthy, accurate teaching from Scripture contributes to your spiritual health. Truly, learning and teaching sound doctrine is a life-long endeavor for all disciples. However, as you evaluate the commitment of membership at Cornerstone, we believe it is helpful to provide you with a *summary doctrinal statement* to give you a snapshot of the core biblical doctrines that guide the way our elders shepherd us as a church. The [\*full doctrinal statement\*](#), in which we identify certain doctrines as primary, secondary, or tertiary, is available on our website. If you have questions or concerns about any part of this summary statement, please let us know in your membership application.

## THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Word of God, the unique and special means of God revealing himself to humanity in written form. God the Holy Spirit moved in and through human authors to select the very words and to produce the entire text of Scripture. The Bible is free from error in the original documents, meaning that Scripture in the original documents does not affirm anything that is false. The Bible alone teaches a complete Christian worldview and is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks (Prov. 30:5-6; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

## THE TRINITY

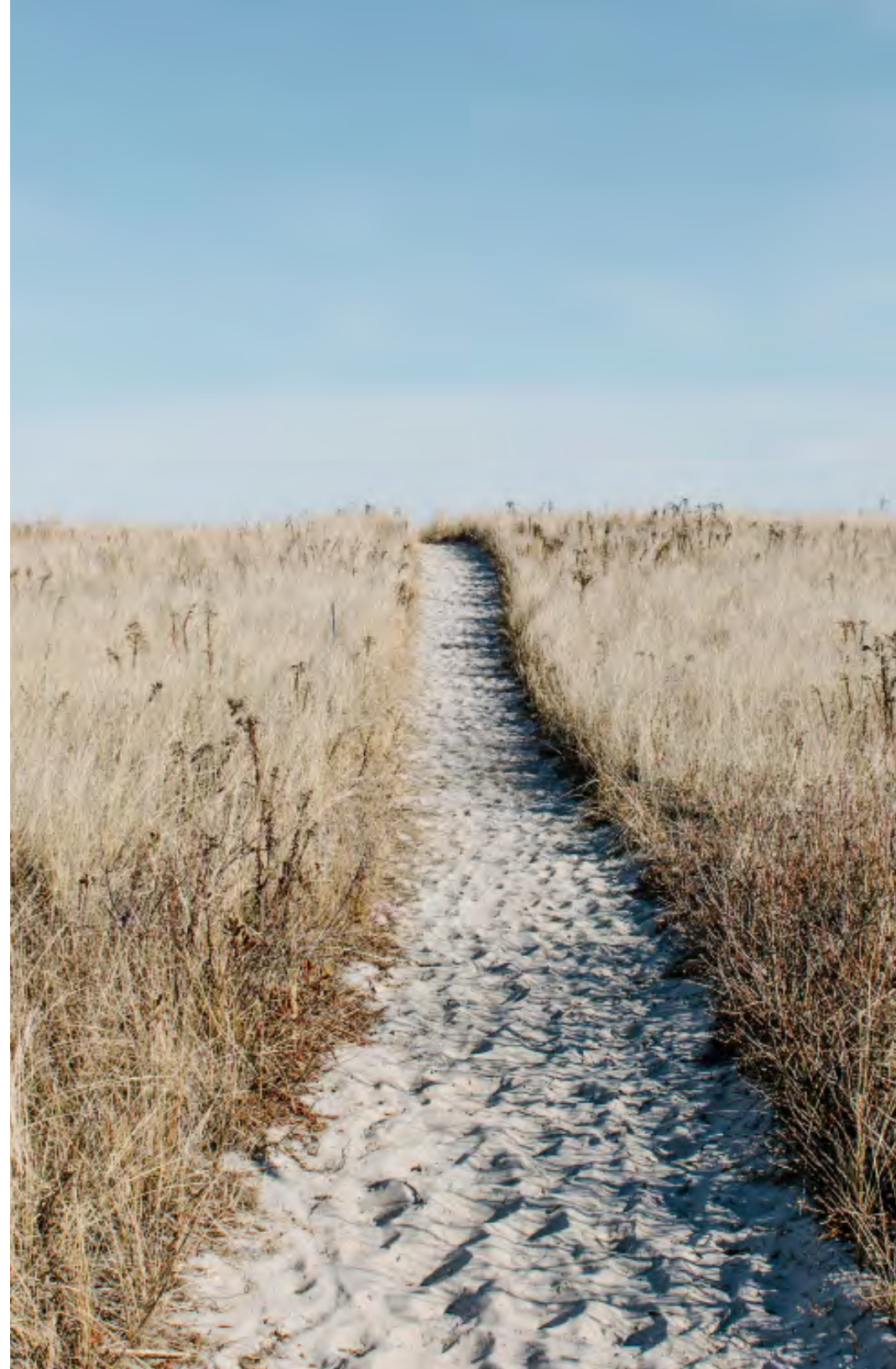
There is only one God, eternally self-existent in three co-equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Sharing in infinite wis-

dom, holiness, justice, goodness, love and truth, the triune God is the almighty Source of all that exists, sovereignly sustaining and ruling over all creation for his glory (Gen. 1:1-2; Ex. 34:6-7; Deut. 6:4; 1 Chron. 29:10-13; Matt. 28:19; John 10:30-33; 15:26; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 8:9; 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Col. 1:15; 2:9; Heb. 1:2-3).

*God the Father* is the Designer of the all-encompassing plan for his creation. Out of love and grace, he chose from eternity to redeem and adopt a people for himself, for which purpose he sent the Son and the Spirit into the world (Ps. 33:8-11; John 6:37, 39; 15:26; 16:5-8; 17:2, 6; Acts 2:32-33; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:4-6, 11).

*God the Son* has existed eternally in the form of God. All things were made and are sustained by him. At the incarnation, he took the form of a servant and became the God-man, Jesus Christ – the only flawless human Image of God. He was virgin-born and without sin. He died a vicarious and atoning death to redeem his people. He was bodily resurrected in victory over sin and death, ascended to the right hand of the Father, intercedes for his people, and will return in power and glory to consummate his kingdom (John 1:1-14; Acts 1:11; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 1:15; 2:9; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Heb. 4:15; 9:26-28; 1 Pet. 2:22).

*God the Holy Spirit* has existed eternally in the form of God. He has had a vital role throughout the biblical story, beginning with creation and empowering certain people during the Old Testament era. He inspired the authors of the Bible. He empowered the ministry of Jesus. After the ascension of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon God's people in order to witness powerfully of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and King. He works in God's people by regenerating, illuminating and transforming them into the image of Christ (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 14; Acts 1:8; 5:3-5; 10:38; Rom. 8:1-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-16; Gal. 5:16-25; Titus 3:5-6; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).



## **CREATION**

The triune God of the Bible created everything out of nothing by the power of his Word. God created the universe with design and intentionality and placed creation under the stewarding care of humanity. All things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual, were created by him and for him (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 8:6-8; 33:6, 9; 104:24; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 4:11).

## **CREATED SPIRITUAL BEINGS**

The spiritual realm is inhabited by spiritual beings who have been created by God. Some of these beings (including angels and cherubim) serve God, while others (including Satan and demons) are in rebellion against him. These spiritual beings are distinct from both God and humanity, and they possess moral judgment, high intelligence, and great wisdom (Ps. 8:4-5; 103:20-21; 148:1-5; Col. 1:16; 2 Pet. 2:4).

Angels are God's servants, ministering as God directs them. The word angel comes from the Greek word meaning "messenger." Accordingly, angels most often function in the biblical story as messengers from God to humans, communicating with and assisting them in various ways. (1 Kings 19:4-8; Ps. 91:11-12; Luke 1:11-20, 26-38; 2:8-15; Acts 10:1-8; 12:6-11; Heb. 1:3-14).

Satan is a real being who was created by God and is under God's authority. However, he rebelled against God and led other spiritual beings and humans to join him, bringing both them and himself under God's judgment. He first appears as a serpent in Genesis 3. Satan has been given limited authority over unredeemed humanity for a time, but he has been decisively defeated by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The final destination of Satan and his demons is the Lake of Fire which has been prepared for them (Matt. 25:41; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-2; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; 5:19; Rev. 20:2).

## **HUMANITY**

Humans were created both male and female in God's image, to know him and make him known in and over all creation. When the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, chose to rebel against God's good rule, this sin brought about spiritual and physical death and corruption to all creation. Humanity became enslaved to sin and sinful desires. This helpless, hopeless, shameful condition darkens and distorts every aspect of our relationships to God and each other, perverting worship and service to God, marriage and family, and de-humanizing fellow humans based on class, race, gender, age, or level of physical or intellectual development. Thankfully, our triune God took the initiative to correct all that has gone wrong. The Father sent the Son into the world, in the power of the Spirit, with the intent to ultimately restore humanity and all creation. This is the heart of the gospel message (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:16-18; 3:3-19; 6:5; Rom. 1:18-32; 5:6-10; Eph. 2:12; 4:17-19; Titus 3:3).

## **SALVATION**

The gospel message that God is redeeming all creation through Jesus Christ must be proclaimed so that people will be called out of darkness into his light. They must be born again by the Spirit, turning in faith and repentance to Christ as the only way of salvation. Those united with Christ are declared righteous (justified), delivered from the guilt, shame and penalty of sin, freed from slavery to sin, and given eternal life. They are made holy by the Holy Spirit, who progressively transforms them into Christ's image (sanctified). When Christ returns, true Christians will be fully restored from the effects of sin (glorified). Salvation is of the Lord, guaranteeing the eventual triumphant outcome (Mark 1:14-15; John 3:3-8, 16-21; 8:12; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:21-26; 6:1-23; 8:10-23, 28-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-21; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:15-23; 1 Thess. 5:23-24).

## THE CHURCH

The church is the body of Christ and the dwelling place for God by the Spirit, comprised of all humanity who have come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. The universal church is expressed in various times and places through local churches. The mission of the church is to make disciples of all nations. The church is built up as each member draws near to God in worship and praise and seeks to live in obedience to the “one another” commands of the New Testament (e.g., John 13:34; Eph. 5:18-21; Col. 3:12-13; Heb. 10:24-25; etc.). Cornerstone practices two sacraments as given in the New Testament: believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Elders and deacons are the two primary leadership offices given for leading, serving, and protecting the local church (Ps. 95:6-7; Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:18-22; 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

## LAST THINGS

The ascension of Jesus Christ inaugurated his kingdom and the “last days,” and he sent the Spirit to empower the process of gathering his people from all nations. The promise of new creation has already begun to be fulfilled in his people, though not yet in its fullness. Jesus Christ currently reigns as head of his body, the church. The full consummation of the Kingdom of God awaits Jesus’ bodily, visible return to earth, when he will reign over all creation in power and glory. Upon his return, all the dead will be raised bodily, and all humanity will face him as judge. His believing people will share in his reign and glory forever, but unbelievers will experience just punishment for their rebellion in the Lake of Fire forever. Following this final judgment, the promise of new creation will be fully realized in the new heavens and new earth, freed from sin, death, and all of its effects, where God’s people will live with him in righteousness and peace forever (Matt. 25; John 6:40; Acts 2:17-36; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 1:17-22; 2 Pet. 3:9-13; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1-10, 22-27).



# RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS & MEMBERS

The Bible expresses the commitments of the new covenant in three main ways. First, there is the expectation that each individual believer will maintain an ongoing relationship with God and with the congregation of believers with which he or she typically associates (Heb. 10:19-25). In other words, the individual Christian does not live out the life of faith alone, but as part of a family (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 John 3:1-2), a body (Rom. 12:4ff; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12ff), a flock (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:2-3), a Kingdom (Dan. 2:44; Col. 1:13), and a temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-20; Heb. 10:21; 1 Pet. 2:5). Each of these metaphors highlights a different perspective of what this group looks and acts like.

Second, within each local church, believers are called to demonstrate a mutual commitment to one another through exercising their spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-28; Eph. 4:11), practicing the “one anothers” (John 13:34; Rom. 12:10; Heb. 10:24-25; & almost 30 other passages), celebrating the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; 1 Cor. 11:17-34), and practicing church discipline and restoration when necessary (Matt. 7:1-5; 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; Gal. 6:1). This commitment requires ongoing, growing, mutually accountable relationships between believers.

Last, the New Testament delineates the responsibilities of leaders to the believers they serve (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 3:10, 23; Heb. 13:17; James 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; see also 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) and the responsibilities of believers to those who lead them (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:5). These passages express the required stewardship of leaders and the willingness of members to follow their leaders, all for the purpose of fulfilling the mission of making disciples that Jesus entrusted to us (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-16).

Working from this biblical basis, below is a list of the responsibilities of Cornerstone’s leaders to its members, and the responsibilities of Cornerstone’s members to their leaders and to one another. All leaders and members must understand, agree with, and commit to upholding these responsibilities to the best of their abilities, and in reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORNERSTONE'S LEADERS TO ITS MEMBERS

Based upon the truths of Scripture, as laid out in the New Covenant, we covenant, by the help of the Holy Spirit:

- That your elders and deacons, as servant-leaders, will lead and serve as expressed in the Scriptures. They will be appointed as servant-leaders, not because they are perfect, but because the gospel has done an obvious transformative work in their lives that is worthy to be modeled. They are people who live with a growing sense of their need for Christ that has obvious fruit in all areas of their lives (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- To seek God’s will for our church as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit. This is Jesus Christ’s church, and the leaders of Cornerstone are stewards of this blood-bought group of people who will give an account for their work (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 3:10-17; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).
- To care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Jesus Christ by equipping you to join Jesus through this local body for the Great Commission and making disciples (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Eph. 4:11-13), and in praying for you



regularly, including when you are downtrodden and sick (1 Sam. 12:23; Rom. 1:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:4; James 5:14).

- To provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture—not that we will teach you every verse of the Bible, but we will teach you honestly and faithfully from the whole of God’s revelation, leaving nothing out that is of primary importance. Our desire is to never avoid any sections, regardless of difficulty, but to help you grasp the whole counsel of God so that you might become better equipped to read your Bible intelligently and comprehensively for yourself, and put what you learn into practice (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Titus 1:9; James 1:22-25).
- To be on guard against false teachers and to correct false teaching where it may arise (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 1:9).
- To graciously exercise church discipline of our members and leaders when necessary, including removing an unrepentant member from fellowship at Cornerstone, with the ultimate goal of seeking their repentance and restoration (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Titus 3:10-11).



# RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS TO CORNERSTONE CHURCH

Based upon the truths of Scripture, as laid out in the New Covenant, you covenant, by the help of the Holy Spirit:

- That you have read Cornerstone's Summary Doctrinal Statement, and will seek to carefully understand it, weighing it against God's authoritative Word (Acts 17:11).
  - We believe that some doctrines are *primary*, meaning that they are recognized as essential beliefs or practices within orthodox Christianity and are applicable to all churches that proclaim Christ (e.g., the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Jesus, etc.).
  - Other doctrines are *secondary*, meaning that they are understood and accepted differently within orthodox Christianity (e.g., those who should be baptized, views on the millennium, etc.). On secondary matters, our doctrinal statement identifies the position that shapes and defines Cornerstone's belief and practice, while acknowledging that other believers and churches hold different biblically-based convictions.
  - Still, other doctrines may be described as *tertiary*, because they more loosely shape the life and practice of a local church (e.g., modes of baptism, views on the rapture, etc.). On tertiary matters, a breadth of opinion and practice may be maintained within a local church without compromising primary doctrines.
  - As a member of Cornerstone, you are committing to maintain unity on primary doctrinal matters, to be gracious and submissive to the elders on

secondary doctrinal matters, and to maintain an attitude of humility by welcoming a diversity of opinions on tertiary doctrinal matters (To see which doctrinal matters we see as primary, secondary or tertiary, please consult Cornerstone's full Doctrinal Statement).

- That you understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17), submitting to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- That you will commit yourself to the Great Commission by being and making disciples of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8). At Cornerstone, this means that you will commit to our discipleship definition and pathway, that you will commit to be equipped to make disciples through Core 4 and service, and that you will encourage others to do the same.
- That you will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines (Ps. 105:1-4; Ps. 119:97; Eph. 6:18; 2 Pet. 1:3)
- That you will maintain a close relationship with this church through participating in worship services, the Lord's Supper, the church body, making disciples, service, and seeking to live a life that honors Jesus (Mark 10:42-45; Acts 2:42-47; Eph. 4:1-2; Heb. 10:23-25).
  - This includes engaging in regular, reciprocal communication with the leaders and members of Cornerstone: Both by paying attention to our communication to you (during services, as well as in writing, email, website, etc.), and by communicating with us (verbally, responding to emails, etc.), for the sake of unity and to maintain a heart of transparency as we listen to, care for, and serve one another.

- This also includes regular participation in quarterly all-member dinners, as you are able. These dinners provide time to build relationships with each other by sharing a meal, taking the Lord's Supper, giving church updates, and celebrating what the Lord has done and is doing in the life of Cornerstone.
- Because we believe membership is an active, mutual commitment to be disciples and make disciples, we do not practice "inactive" membership. Therefore, if you neither participate in our church body nor communicate with us for a prolonged period of time (six months or longer), we will attempt to reestablish communication with you, using the most recent contact information that you provided to us. However, if these attempts are unsuccessful, we will communicate with you one more time in writing, letting you know that we are removing you from membership at Cornerstone and welcoming you to reach out to us, should you desire to re-engage in membership at Cornerstone in the future.
- That you will steward the resources God has given you, including your time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes the regular giving of your service and financial resources, and participation in growing, living, and displaying, both locally and globally, that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).
- That you will commit to Cornerstone Church as your local body while a member of this congregation, and not function simultaneously as a member in another church family (Heb. 13:17).
- By God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved you from your sin that you might live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17). You will refrain from sinful behavior as the Bible, church leaders, and your

conscience dictate (1 Cor. 8:7, 12; 10:31-33; Titus 1:9; 2:1; Gal. 5:19-21). Should you sin in such a manner, you agree to confess your sins to Christian brothers or sisters (James 5:16), seeking help to put your sin to death and grow in righteousness (Rom. 8:13; Eph. 4:17-24; Col. 3:5-11; 1 John 1:6-10).

- That you will submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to lovingly exercise biblical processes for church discipline in your relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Titus 3:10-11; Heb. 3:12-14; 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 3:19).
- If at any point you wish to withdraw yourself from membership at Cornerstone (e.g., you move out of the local area or desire to pursue membership at another local church), you commit to notify the elders, explaining your reasons for withdrawing, and giving us the opportunity to address any concerns with you (including ways that we can grow as leaders).
- Finally, we believe that the responsibilities listed above are both biblical and healthy for all members of Cornerstone. However, we also acknowledge that each person has different abilities and capacities, and some experience significant physical or mental disabilities. Jesus spoke of entrusting responsibility to his servants "each according to his ability" (Matt. 25:15), and Paul said that the parts of the body that "seem to be weaker" are actually "indispensable" and have been given "greater honor" by God (1 Cor. 12:22-25). Therefore, we do not intend for these responsibilities to present an insurmountable obstacle to a believer with

disabilities who desires to join in membership at Cornerstone. On the contrary, we would love for believers with disabilities to pursue membership, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these responsibilities with them (and their loved ones), so that we might know how best to consider them, honor them, and engage them as indispensable disciples—and disciple-makers—in our church body.





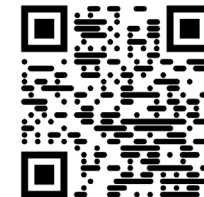
# CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet! We hope it has given you a chance to understand our heart for why we believe that the commitment of membership to this local church is so important to our mission to *be* and *make* disciples of Jesus Christ.

If you are ready to move forward with this commitment, the next step is to complete a [membership application](#). After you submit your application, one of our elders will reach out to you to set up a time to meet! This is a casual time to connect (usually over a meal) and address any questions that you or we may have. At the end of the meeting, the elder will let you know if you are approved for membership or if there are any additional questions or concerns that need to be addressed before moving forward.

To fill out the application and for more information on the process of becoming a member, you can **scan the QR code** below or visit [cornerstonesimi.com/membership](https://cornerstonesimi.com/membership).

## MEMBERSHIP WEBPAGE



**SCAN ME**

If you have any questions or concerns, we invite you to email us at [info@cornerstonesimi.com](mailto:info@cornerstonesimi.com).

\*A note — the Membership Application needs to be completed by each person who desires to be a member. For example, if a husband and wife both desire to be members, they must each complete their own application.