

GRACE CHURCH WILLIAMSBURG MEMBERSHIP

Introduction:

At Grace Church Williamsburg (GCW), we want to honor God and truth in all we do. As pastors, we also desire to be faithful stewards and servants in our ministries. To that end, we have developed the following process to help us better manage your request for membership in our congregation. Deciding on a church home/family is a sobering reality. Our prayer is that this process will give you and our elders (pastors) the very best opportunity to make informed, godly decisions about this important step in your life.

Purpose:

In fulfilling our goal to honor the Lord, we seek to do God's business God's way. This application and the membership process are simply tools used by our elders to better ascertain your spiritual condition and readiness for church membership. There are several reasons why our elders need to assess this with you:

1) They are responsible for members' souls as they provide watch-care over God's people knowing that elders are answerable to God for their work (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-5). It is a matter of integrity and faithfulness for our **elders**.

2) The Lord calls Christians to spiritual unity, like-mindedness, and peace with one another (Eph. 4; Col. 3:12-17; 1 Thess. 5:12-15). Church membership officially involves individuals in a corporately shared commitment of loving and serving one another. It is a matter of integrity and faithfulness for the **congregation**.

3) Your personal investment in the shared ministries of GCW will stand to impact you, your family, and the congregation. Prudence and care demand that our pastors guide prospective members in performing their due diligence before this "marriage" takes place. It is a matter of integrity and faithfulness for **you**.

Procedure:

First, read provided copy of *Life in the Father's House*.

Second, complete the application included in this packet. (Each prospective member will need to fill out an application)

Third, return the completed application(s) to one of the elders.

Fourth, the elders will review your application and schedule an appointment to talk with you about your testimony and to discuss any issues or questions they (or you) might have concerning doctrine, ministry, and membership responsibilities.

If going through a process like this is unfamiliar to you, please keep in mind that the pastors are praying for you, and that the interview is a friendly way for us to discuss, on the front end, what your membership involves. We won't quiz you or try to trip you up with hard questions. Relax. We are so excited about the Lord bringing you to Grace Church. We are looking forward to our time with you.

Fifth, when you are received by the elders, they will recommend on a Sunday morning that the church officially receive you for membership.

May the Lord guide us all through this process as we trust His will to be done for our good and for His glory.

**GRACE CHURCH WILLIAMSBURG (GCW)
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: (please print) Last _____ First _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: (____) ____ - _____ Date of Application _____

Have you read the Statement of Faith for GCW (available on website)? _____

Do you agree with the statement completely? _____ If not, please briefly indicate your disagreement(s) and/or area(s) of concern so that our pastors can discuss this with you at the interview/meeting. _____

Have you read GCW's Affirmation of Commitment (attached)? _____

This document is a statement of a member's commitment to the people of GCW, to the teaching and leadership of the pastors, and to the overall philosophy and direction of the church. Are you prepared to make this commitment? _____

Please list your current or most recent church membership:

Church _____ City/State _____

Are you currently under church discipline by another church? _____ If yes, please explain the details on a separate sheet of paper.

Have you been baptized by immersion since your salvation? _____ If not, are you willing to be baptized? _____

What ministry interests or involvement have you had and what ministries are you currently interested in? _____

Please write or type out your testimony of salvation. This will serve as a guide for you and help you organize your thoughts for the elder interview (see attached guide).

Signature: _____

AFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT TO GRACE CHURCH WILLIAMSBURG

I _____, do solemnly, joyfully, and willfully affirm my commitment to walk in Christian love, humility, faithfulness, and true righteousness as a member of Grace Church Williamsburg (GCW).

I commit to personally involve myself in the mutual care of the members of GCW and to its mission using my time, gifts, abilities, monies, prayers, and all my resources as God guides me and as opportunities are opened to me. I affirm that my standard for involving myself in the life and work of GCW is reflected in, but not limited to, biblical passages such as Romans 12, Ephesians 4-5, Philippians 2, Colossians 3, and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22.

I commit to teach the Bible to those in my care, to live out what I teach and understand concerning God's truth by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to seek the salvation of those in my care and within my influence in order that God would be glorified, and souls would be saved.

Finally, I commit to place myself under the watch-care and authority of the elders of GCW, and to be accountable to them in matters of my beliefs and my behavior commensurate with their teaching and leading of Grace Church Williamsburg. I will further endeavor, by the grace of God, to remain teachable, submissive, and humble toward the leadership of GCW to promote unity among the body, and joy among the leaders (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17).

Committing member signature

Printed name

Date: _____

HOW TO PREPARE A TESTIMONY

1. Remember the purpose of a personal testimony—to exalt Christ.
2. Keep your testimony to three minutes or less (one side of 8 ½ x 11, single spaced).
3. When sharing regarding your life before Christ you want to **avoid** these things:
 - a. Do not mention specific details about your sinful past behavior. You are not emphasizing the situations and actions of your sinful past, but God helping you see your need for His forgiveness for your sins against Him. Be general, and use statements like, “I lived for myself and pursued my own ideas of right/wrong.”
 - b. Do not mention denominations, other churches or church organizations, or individuals by name. We are not highlighting others’ shortcomings.
 - c. Do not slander a member of your family, mention by name friends you sinned with, or speak in a negative way about your spouse. Your testimony is not about others, but it is about how God has worked in your life to save you from sin.
4. When relating how you came to Christ, you will want to include these things:
 - a. Be specific about how you put your faith in Christ as Savior and what it means. You are testifying to God’s forgiveness of your sins through His gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. When others leave, they should be able to trust Jesus as Savior based on your words and example.
 - b. God’s Word does the work in the heart, so use the Bible and share Scripture relating to how you became a Christian. Remember, “... faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” (Rom. 10:17). God said, “So will My word be which goes forth from my mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” (Is. 55:11). For example: John 3:36; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:23 and 6:23, 10:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:13-14.
 - c. When relating the changes which took place after receiving Christ, attribute those changes to Jesus. For example, “Jesus changed my attitude toward...,” “Jesus began to help me with my problems...,” NOT “I...and then I...”
 - d. We encourage you to write out your testimony word for word (one side of 8 ½ x 11, single spaced). Edit and rewrite until it is an effective tool for sharing Christ. We will ask you to share this with us when we meet with you. Please feel free to read it to us.

(“How to Prepare a Testimony” adapted from materials provided by The Master’s Seminary)