

Welcome

I am so excited that you have decided to check out Wells Branch Community Church. Count-Me-In is where you will find out who we are, what we believe, and our deep desire for this community to experience the life-changing reality of Jesus Christ. God has done great things with this family of believers and it is my heart that you would lock arms with us in pushing back the darkness. Here you will find opportunities to reach out to those who are far from God, connect with other believers, and grow to be fully devoted followers of Christ.

Count-Me-In is taught by staff and volunteers committed to our family of believers. They will share their own personal experiences at WBCC and how they have been impacted by what we believe and by what we do. Our goal at Count-Me-In is to get to know who you are, find where you are on your spiritual journey, and help you take the next step. That might be joining the church, getting plugged into a community group, finding you a place to serve, or giving you more opportunities to check out life at WBCC.

As pastor of this church, I want to get to know you. Let's connect for lunch, dinner, or coffee and share our stories. Email me at chris@wellsbranchchurch.com and let's connect.

In Christ,

Chris Plekenpol
Lead Pastor WBCC

LIVE 
FOR
MORE

Goals of Class

- Share our purpose and core values and how we fulfill them
- Help you discover what it means to be a member
- Give you information about our church and its organization and views
- Answer your questions

Next Steps

- Find the next step for you spiritually
- Find your purpose through serving at WBCC
- Complete the membership process and become part of our family



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Essential Beliefs

Throughout the book you will see our **Essential Beliefs set apart by the symbol to the left**. These are our foundational beliefs. These are beliefs that we will fight for and will not change. We call these our closed handed issues. This means we are holding onto them and will not let go. There is very little room for differences of opinion on these issues. These are the things you must agree with to become a member of our church.

On the other hand, there are theological issues, strategy, and cultural preferences that we hold in an open hand. This means we are open to other views on these issues as long as they do not violate Scripture. We want to respond with grace and understanding on differences of opinion in these areas.

It has been said like this by many church leaders:

In essential beliefs we have unity. In non-essentials we have liberty, in all things we show charity.

The Church

What is a church?

Before we look at the history of our church, we have to understand what a church is. Most importantly, the church is a people, not a place. Wells Branch Community Church is not a particular place or building, it's the people that make up our church.

You can understand the church as a group of people in two ways. First is the universal church. The universal church is the community of all people from all times whose sins are forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by having personal faith in him. In order to be a member of the universal church you have to believe that Christ died on the cross for your sins and rose again according to the Scriptures.

Second is the local church. The "local church" refers to one of the various congregations of the universal church that gather for things like worship, fellowship, discipleship, teaching, evangelism, and prayer in a particular community.

Historically the church has been defined as the place where the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. The local church has the twofold mission of spreading the gospel to those far from God and making growing disciples. Jesus is the head of the church, both local and universal. Local church leadership submits to the authority of Jesus and consists of biblically qualified Christians who are equipping and encouraging others to follow them as they follow Jesus.

Our History

Our local church is part of a network of local churches called the Association of Hill Country Churches. So, even though our church is only 3 years old, our history actually begins in 1986. It was then that the first services of Hill Country Bible Church met with the goal of forming a local association of like-minded churches. In 1989 Tim Hawks came to Hill Country Bible Church as the lead pastor with the desire to build leaders who would represent God's word to the world. HCBC continued to grow and because they believed they were not called simply to expand a single location, the elders determined to follow the pattern of the New Testament church by planting strategically located churches that would reflect the cultural make up of that area.

2003: The elders developed a specific and compelling vision, that every man, woman, and child in Greater Austin would experience the life changing reality of Jesus Christ. They developed a church planting training center the next year to train, equip, and support church planters.

HCBC sent out a group of people to plant a church in Pflugerville. They planted HCBC Pflugerville. In following the vision of the association, HCBC planted Wells Branch Community Church.

Essential Beliefs about the Church



The Church is a unique organism composed of individuals who have placed their faith in Christ as Savior. The Church exists both in a universal aspect, as the Body of Christ, and in a local assembly of believers. The local church has the twofold purpose of the edification of believers and the evangelization of the lost. The two ordinances of the church are water baptism, and the Lord's Supper. (I Cor 12:13; Acts 2:1-4; I Thess 4:13-17; Col 4:16; Eph 4:7; Heb 13:17; Matt 28:19-20; I Cor 11:23-28)

2008: Todd and Cassi Wortham responded to God's call to start a church that would love people and change lives through authentic relationships with God. God connected them with Hill Country Bible Church Northwest, and Todd moved to Austin to be a Church Plant Pastor.

2009: God continued to work as Todd was interviewed by Hill Country Bible Church Pflugerville as a candidate for church planting. Todd's vision and gifting were affirmed as they brought Todd on as their Church Planter. Through prayer, research, and diligence God led Todd and the elders of HCBC Pflugerville to the Wells Branch neighborhood as the right location to plant a church.

God responded to the prayers of the church as nearly 30 people relocated from around the country to be a part of what God was doing in Wells Branch. These 30 people began to meet for prayer and planning to seek to impact their neighborhood with the message of the gospel.

June – God again provided for the church plant through providing the Wells Branch MUD Annex as a regular meeting place. This was an answer to prayer.

September – Wells Branch Community Church was commissioned and the first Sunday Worship service was held with 135 adults attending. Within a month the results of God moving were seen through baptisms.

2011: August – While serving in Joplin, MO in the tornado relief effort our founding pastor Todd Wortham went to be with the Lord after suffering a heart attack.

December – God continued to work by opening to door for us to meet at the Wells Branch Recreation Center for Sunday morning worship.

2012: February – God provided Chris Plekenpol as our new pastor to lead us on our mission to reach the people of Wells Branch with the life-changing message of the gospel of Jesus Christ

We praise God for the way He is changing lives through the ministry of Wells Branch Community Church. Many have come to faith in Christ and, as a family, we are growing in our walk with Him. We can only give all the credit and glory to the head of the church, Jesus Christ! We acknowledge God's hand on the ministry of WBCC. Since our passion is about people we have praised Him for the many changed lives and the many people who have trusted Christ for the forgiveness of sin. God has restored relationships, mended marriages, and turned selfishness into selflessness. The most exciting part of all is yet to come as He is still working amongst us to reach the neighborhood of Wells Branch and the surrounding communities with the life-changing reality of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel

The Gospel

The church consists of Christians, followers of Christ, who have responded to the message of the gospel that Jesus Christ died for their sins and rose again. The gospel is at the center of what makes us a church and what we do as a church. We want to clearly articulate what the gospel is so that we are all on the same page from the beginning.

There are many opinions on how a person becomes a Christian:

- My parents were Christians, so I am too.
- As long as you are sincere, it doesn't matter what you believe.
- I do more good things than bad.

These views are held by many people, but just because a lot of people think it is correct, does not make it so. We believe that the Bible is God's word to us and rely on it as the source of truth when it comes to the issue of eternity and salvation.

Essential Beliefs about the Bible



The Bible is the inspired Word of God. The human authors wrote under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the very words recorded in the original manuscripts are without error. The Bible is the complete and final authority for belief and behavior. (II Tim 3:16; II Peter 1:21; I Cor 2:13; John 17:17)

The gospel can be stated simply, Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day. But it is also complex. There is no end to the depth of understanding how the gospel applies to our lives. One needs a way to think about, talk about, and share the gospel with others. A good way to summarize the gospel is to biblically unpack the words God, Man, Christ, Response.

God

- God is the creator of all things (Gen 1:1).
- He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Rev 4:11, Rom 2:5-8).
- God is loving (1 John 4:7-8)
- God is holy (1 Peter 1:16)
- God is just (Gen 18:25)

Essential Beliefs About God



God is the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe. Although there is only one God, we believe he has eternally existed in three eternal and coequal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Mark 12:29; John 4:24; Matt 3:16-17, 28:19; II Cor 13:14)

Man

- All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Gen 1:26-28, Ps 51:5, Rom 3:23).
- From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Eph 2:1-3).

Essential Belief about Human Beings



Man was created in the image and likeness of God to glorify him. Through deliberate disobedience, we believe man fell from his sinless state and lost his fellowship with God and became subject to spiritual and physical death. We believe that through Adam's transgressions the entire human race has inherited a sinful bent, which is essentially evil and unable to please God. (Gen 1:26-27, 3:24; Rom 5:12; Eph 2:1-3)



Christ

- Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God's wrath in the place of all who would believe in him, and rose from the grave in order to give his people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Tim 2:5, Heb 7:26, Rom 3:21-26, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Cor 15:20-22).
- Jesus is our substitute who died in our place (Rom 5:8)

Essential Beliefs about Jesus Christ



Jesus Christ is the pre-existent and eternal Son of God who became man in order to reveal God and redeem man. We believe He was supernaturally conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We believe Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinful man, was buried, arose bodily from the tomb, ascended into Heaven where He ministers on the behalf of saints, and someday will come again for His own. (John 1:18, 8:58; Matt 1:23; Col 1:15-17; 1 Tim 1:15, 3:16)

Response

- God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom 10:9-10).
- We cannot earn salvation (Eph 2:8-9)
- We must receive the gift of salvation (Rom 10:9-10)

Essential Beliefs about Salvation



Salvation from the penalty and power of sin is provided only through the blood of Jesus Christ, which He shed on the cross when He died in our place. Salvation cannot be earned. It must be received as a free gift through personal faith in Jesus Christ. At the time of salvation, a person's sins are forgiven and he is declared righteous in the sight of God. This salvation is complete and all who have trusted Christ as Savior will never lose their salvation. (1 Peter 1:18-19; II Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Eph 4:32; Rom 5:1, 8:38-39)



Take a couple of minutes to go through this with those at your table. We want you to be prepared to share this with anyone that you meet.

*We are a family of believers committed to reaching people
with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ.*

The Gospel

Lord's Supper and Baptism

Throughout the history of the church, two ordinances have been practiced consistently, the Lord's Supper and baptism.

Lord's Supper

We celebrate and remember what Christ has done for us through the Lord's Supper. Jesus instituted The Lord's Supper at the Passover meal just before his crucifixion. Jesus took the bread and the wine on the table and gave them special significance. He told his disciples that the bread would represent his body, which would be offered up on the cross as a sacrifice for sin. The cup, he told them, would represent his blood—the blood of the New Covenant. We observe the Lord's Supper once a month in our Sunday services.

The Lord's Supper is a memorial. We observe it to remember what Christ did for us on the cross (1 Cor 11:24). The bread represents the body of Christ, which was broken for us. The wine represents the blood of Christ, which was shed for us. It also serves as a reminder that Christ will come again. It is a reminder of future hope (1 Cor 11:26).

The Lord's Supper is for those who believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins (1 Cor 11:29).

Baptism

We also identify with Christ and celebrate changed lives through baptism. Baptism serves as a symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection that testifies to new life in Christ (Col 2:12, Rom 6:4).

Baptism is not required for membership at WBCC, but it is important. Jesus commanded it right before his ascension (Matt 28:19-20a). Therefore, baptism is an act of obedience once you have responded in faith in Christ.

Baptism also publicly identifies you with Christ. It is a person saying they are representing Christ to the world. They believe what he has done for them and are striving to live their lives in a way that represents Christ.

It's like a professional athlete becoming a member of a new team. They may be on the team, but until they put on the team jersey they cannot officially represent their new team on the field. While you may be on Team Jesus, when you get baptized you are saying, "It's official, I'm with Jesus."

We practice baptism by immersion because the Greek word "baptize" means to immerse in water. It was also the practice of believers in the New Testament (Acts 8:38). It also is the best symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ.

If you have not been baptized as a believer we encourage you to do so. We celebrate baptisms the last Sunday of each month. We hold a baptism class two weeks before the baptisms to explain the significance and symbolism of baptism as well as begin the life long journey of discipleship. If you would like to be baptized speak to one of the leaders of the class afterwards or email us at info@wellsbranchchurch.com.

Vision & Values

In one way all churches are the same. They are all called by God to share the gospel message and make disciples. However, they are all very different because they all are in a different context with different strategies. So while the goal of the global church is to make disciples the strategy and process to do it is very different.

Our purpose:

A family of believers committed to reaching people with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ.

Our identity:

A family of believers

- As a family we all follow one leader, Jesus Christ (Eph 1:22-23)
- As a family we take responsibility for each other's growth and well being (Rom 1:25; Gal 6:2,10)
- As a family, we organize around our common purpose, reaching people with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ.

As we see lives being changed by the gospel we strive to lead them to become disciples who are **REAL:**

Reproducing Other Disciples

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt 28:18-20)

This looks like: A believer modeling and multiplying the commitment to regularly read and prayerfully obey God's Word.

Esteeming God Above All

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. (Mark 12:30)

This looks like: A believer's passionate worship is reflected in Biblical stewardship of relationships and resources.

Announcing the Good News

He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46-47)

This looks like: A believer that is equipped and engaged in intentional evangelism.

Living for Others

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

This looks like: A believer that is sacrificially serving others in ministry.

Vision and Values

We make REAL disciples corporately through our Scatter, Gather, Grow (SGG) process.

Scatter believers around those far from God

The way we do this is by intentionally going out into our community and neighborhoods to interact with those around us. We seek to participate in all of the Wells Branch community events. We have our neighbors in need and benevolence program to help anyone in need. We encourage people to engage the people in their circle of influence in spiritual conversations that lead to sharing the gospel.

Gather those far from God around believers

For this we have young adult Bible studies, women's Bible studies, Life University classes, and our Sunday morning gathering. The goal in this stage is to get those far from God into a situation where they can comfortably interact with believers in order to get a glimpse of how Jesus can change your life.

A vital part of WBCC is community groups. Community groups are designed for anyone to participate in them to seek out answers to spiritual questions and grow

towards spiritual maturity. They are where we learn, grow, encourage, support, pray, and confess together as fellow followers of Christ.

Grow to be REAL Disciples

This step focuses on things that facilitate growth in believers. These things are discipleship, prayer, and leadership development. We want to provide opportunities for people to grow as deep as they desire in their walk with God.

Our SGG process helps to create opportunities to help people take the next steps on an individual level. We do this through building relationships and having conversations with those around us. In our conversations we seek to ask 3 questions:

- Who are you?
- Where are you at spiritually?
- How can I take the next step?



SCATTER
Scatter believers
around those
far from God



GATHER
Gather those
far from God
around believers



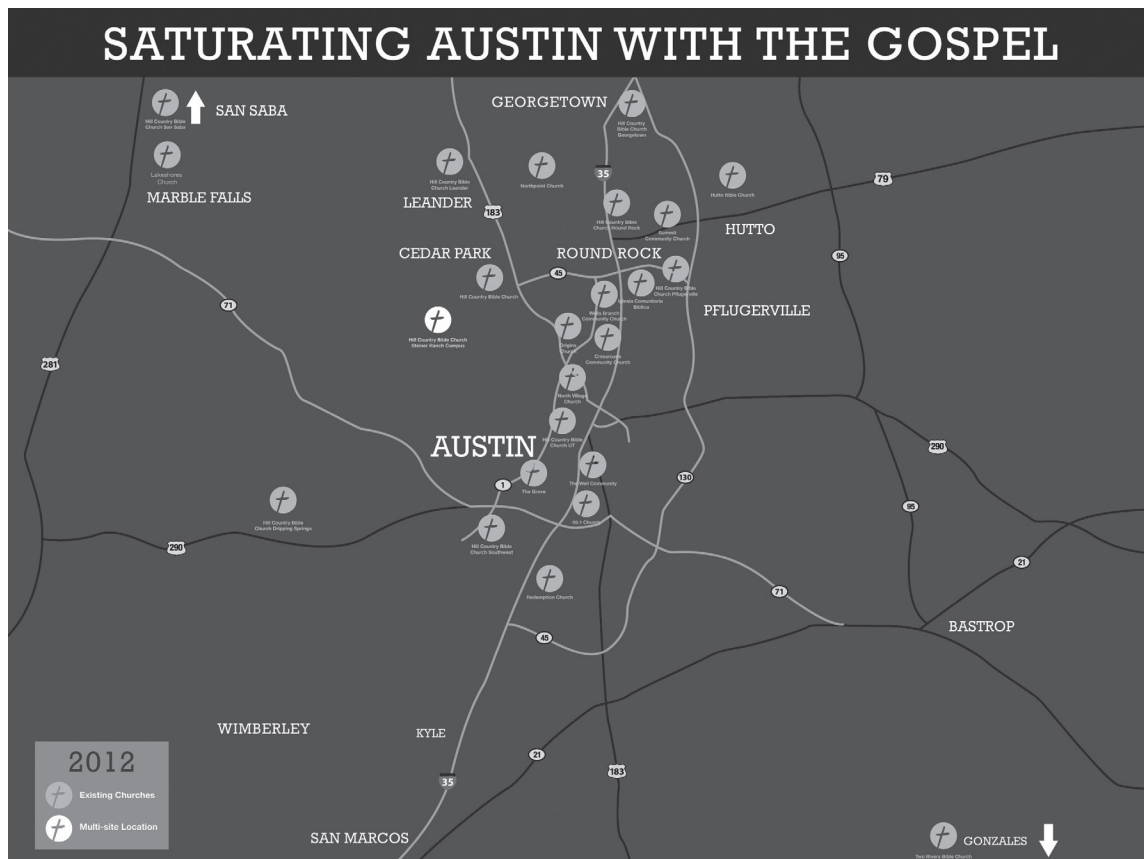
GROW
Grow believers
to be fully devoted
followers of Christ.



Our goal at WBCC is to reach 10% of the Wells Branch area with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ. We are also part of a larger network, called the Association of Hill Country Churches, that seeks to reach 10% of the greater Austin area with the gospel. There are currently 23 churches and church plants in the association, with more churches being planted every year.

We work towards accomplishing this goal by:

- Multiplying disciples
- Planting churches that are spiritually vibrant and strategically located
- Partnering with other like minded ministries



Membership

What is biblical membership?

Membership in a church can be a confusing thing. The church is not a club which begins with a point of common interest where membership is optional. It's not a service provider, which begins with a common need or desire and the customer has all the authority. Churches have all of this and more; we have a common interest in the message of Jesus and a common desire to serve our King with obedience. God calls us to be a part of local churches under his authority to grow to spiritual maturity.

We see in the early church that:

- They were tracking growth and the number of people who were a part of the church (Acts 2:37-47)
- They were electing leaders to address a specific problem (Acts 6:1-6)
- Paul addresses the people who were a part of the church in Rome by name, so they were aware of who was a church member (Rom 16:1-16)
- The people were asked to submit to their leaders, so a specific group of leaders or elders were responsible for the members of each local church. "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." (Heb 13:17)

- God's plan is that we would belong to a local church, for our own good, protection, and maturation. As you interact with others in your own local body, your own shortcomings and sin is exposed, it gives the opportunity to be lovingly confronted by brothers who are in the trenches with you, as well as a safe place to confess and repent. If it's a place you attend without joining, you might leave when your heart begins to be exposed by the Spirit, and the real work is beginning to happen (Heb 10:24-25).

In order to reflect the structure set forth in the early church and throughout the Bible we are an elder led church (Acts 14:23). Our elder board is comprised of up to seven elders including the Senior Pastor. Each elder serves a three year term, except for the Senior Pastor who serves continually.

All of our elders go through an identification and interview process to insure that they meet the biblical requirements for elders before they can serve as elders (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9).

Elders lead the church by setting the vision and strategy and making major decisions in the life of the church. Church members submit to the leadership and direction of the elders unless it is unbiblical (Heb 13:17).

The elders protect, feed, and lead the congregation in order to effectively equip the body of Christ for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-12). They do not do all the work, but organize, train, and equip others to serve the church by using their gifts and talents.

Benefits and Expectations

- Benefits to being a member:
 - Identifies you as a partner with a group of committed believers
 - Exemplifies a commitment to God, to your own spiritual walk, and to others
 - Provides a place to invest your time, talents, and finances to further God's kingdom
 - Encourages unity in the body of Christ
 - Encourages greater accountability with the body
 - Places you under the care and leadership of pastors and elders
- Voting on these major issues: the appointment of new elders; the hiring and firing of the Senior Pastor; and the purchase of real property
- What you can expect from the leadership at WBCC:
 - We commit ourselves to lovingly caring for you and seeking your growth in Christ (Heb 13:17; 1 Thess 5:12)
 - We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the Scriptures (Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17-18)
 - We commit that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28)
 - We commit to helping you in times of need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 2:14-17)
 - We covenant that your elders and leaders will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim 3:1-13, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14)
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31)
- We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1)
- We covenant to help you become equipped to serve Christ (Eph 4:11-13)
- We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5)
- We covenant to set an example and join in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12)
- What WBCC expects from members:
 - Pray for WBCC
 - Participate in worship and community groups
 - Submit to leadership
 - Practice church discipline and restoration
 - Participate in financial support through regular giving
 - Use your gifts in service
 - Live a life that consistently honors Jesus

Membership Covenant

I am a Christian who has been saved by my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ. I have accepted His gift of salvation bought by his death on the cross, the penalty for my sins, and His resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (John 3:16-18; Rom 3:23-26)

I have read and understood the Wells Branch Community Church doctrinal statement and agree to not be divisive to its teaching. I also 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)

I will endeavor to maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular personal Bible reading, prayer, and practice of the other spiritual disciplines. My commitment to follow Jesus will be evident through my regular participation in the Sunday worship services, my willingness to serve where needed, and my involvement in fellowship with other members of the church body through a community group (Psalms 199:97; 105:1-2; Acts 2:42-47; Heb 10:23-25)

I strive to properly manage the resources God has given me, including my time, body, spiritual gifts and talents, attitudes, finances and possessions (Prov 3:9-10; Rom 12:1-2; Eph 4:1-16; 5:15-18; Gal 5:22-26). This includes regular giving and service to the local church that is sacrificial, cheerful, active, and voluntary (Rom 12:1-8; 2 Cor 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

I covenant to be self disciplined, to follow the biblical procedures of church discipline regarding my brothers and sisters in Christ, and submit myself to church discipline if the need should ever arise (Matt 18:15-17)

I commit myself to the WBCC church family and agree to aid in fulfilling its missional purpose to reach people with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ in Wells Branch and the surrounding area by being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only, serving Jesus in every area of my life.

God enabling me, I will strive to consider my commitment to this Membership Covenant on a yearly basis. I understand that it is an evaluative tool, as well as an affirmation of my continuing conviction and purpose. My responsibility will be to notify the Wells Branch leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Wells Branch Community Church.

Once a year there will a member evaluation to hold members accountable to their commitment to join Wells Branch Community Church in their efforts to follow Jesus and his mission.



Your Next Steps

Meet us next week at 9 am at

to learn about our community groups and ministries.

Complete the membership application and sign the covenant and turn in to a staff member or elder.

Join a community group

Discover your place to serve

Reach people with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ

**LIVE
FOR
MORE**



Resources

Ministries at WBCC



SCATTER



GATHER



GROW

Youth - reaching youth and their parents with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ

Women - reaching women with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ

Young Adults - connecting young adults to Jesus, His church, and His mission

WB Kids - partnering with parents to touch the hearts of children with the life changing reality of Jesus Christ

Community Groups - Connecting relationally, growing spiritually, reaching people with the gospel

Missions - reaching unengaged and unreached people around the world

- Outreach
- Overseas

SUPPORT:

Facilities - preparing environments for gospel proclamation

Ushers/Greeters - welcoming people and helping them find their way

Assimilation - helping people take the next step

Community Care - using God's resources to meet the needs of the community

- Neighbors in Need
- Benevolence

Leadership Development - building leaders to produce a gospel movement

Worship - facilitating gospel centered worship

Creative - visually and audibly communicating the message of the gospel

Prayer - Promoting a posture of prayer in the lives of people

Hospitality - Creating a welcoming environment

WBCC Staff

Chris Plekenpol – Lead Pastor
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Ben Overby – Executive Pastor
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Elders

Chris Plekenpol (Perpetual)

Tony Molleur (2013 -2016)

Robert Sas (2013 -2016)

Holland Greig (2013 -2016)

Casey Decker (2013 -2016)

Contact info:

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Services & Office

Sunday Services

8:45 and 10:30 a.m.
3000 Shoreline Dr

Offices

Live For More Center
14735 Bratton Ln

This We Believe

The Bible

We believe that the books of the Old and New Testament, comprising the Holy Bible, are the inspired Word of God. We believe that the Holy Spirit supervised the writers of the Scriptures in what they wrote so that, using their own peculiar personalities, the very words recorded in the original manuscripts are the inerrant revelation of God. We believe the Bible not only contains the Word of God but actually is God's Word and, therefore, is the complete and final authority for belief and behavior. We believe that this inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of Scripture: historically, poetically, doctrinally and prophetically (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:21, 1 Cor. 2:13, John 17:17).

The Trinity

We believe that there is one and only one true and living God, an infinite Spirit who is the Maker and Supreme Ruler of the universe. We believe the Scriptures reveal Him to be holy, sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, immutable and full of love, justice, goodness, mercy and truth. Although there is only one God, we believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and coequal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe these members of the Trinity are the same in substance, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, but are distinct in subsistence, executing different but harmonious functions (Mark 12:29, John 4:24, Matt. 3:16-17, Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14).

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the pre-existent and eternal Son of God who became man in order to reveal God and redeem man. We believe He was supernaturally conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In His person, we believe the Lord Jesus combined forever full and undiminished

deity with true and perfect humanity to become the God-man. We believe Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinful man, was buried, arose bodily from the tomb, ascended into Heaven where He ministers on the behalf of saints, and someday will come again for His own (John 1:18, 8:58, Matt. 1:23, Col. 1:15-17, 1 Tim. 1:15, 3:16).

Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, fully equal with God the Father and God the Son. Although He is of the exact same essence, we believe He is a personality distinct from the other members of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit, we believe, has an active ministry to the world in general which includes the restraining of evil, convicting of the unsaved and bestowing of God's goodness on all mankind. We also believe He has a ministry to every Christian which consists of regenerating, sealing, indwelling, baptizing into the Body of Christ, and the giving of spiritual gifts. We believe some of these gifts such as apostleship and prophesying new revelation through scripture have completed their function and thus are not for the Body of Christ today. Nor do we believe that speaking in tongues or healing services are a part of Corporate worship. Other ministries to obedient Christians include filling, assuring, teaching, guiding and comforting (Acts 5:3-4, 2 Thes. 2:3-9, John 16:7-11, Matt. 5:45, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 1:13, 1 Cor. 6:19, 12:13, Eph. 3:20, 1 Cor. 14, James 5:14, Eph. 5:18, Rom. 8:16, 14, John 16:13, 7).

Angelic Beings

We believe that God created an order of spirit beings known as angels before the formation of the world for the purpose of worshipping and serving Him. We believe angels possess individual personalities and are intelligent, powerful, and inferior to God but superior to man. Lucifer, we believe, was one of the highest in rank of all the angelic beings in eternity past, but he sinned through pride and rebelled against

God, thereby becoming Satan. We believe the Devil's proclaimed purpose is to oppose the plan of God and to promote his own evil program by deceiving and attacking men. In carrying out his work, we believe Satan is aided by other fallen angels known as demons or evil spirits. We believe these demons can influence, tempt, and control all men and even "possess" unbelievers. We believe there are unfallen angels, known as elect or holy angels, who carry out the will of God by ministering to men (Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:6, 2 Pet. 2:11, Isa. 14:12-15, 1 Pet. 5:8, Eph 6:12, Heb. 1:14).

Creation

We believe that the Triune God, according to His sovereign will and for His own glory, created the heavens and the earth without the use of pre-existent material. All living things, we believe, came into being by a direct creative act of God and not by an evolutionary or random process, and thus have an existence distinct from Him and yet always dependent on Him (Gen. 2:4, Prov. 16:4, Acts 17:24, Col. 1:16-17).

Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God in a state of innocence. Through deliberate disobedience, we believe man fell from his sinless state and as a consequence lost his fellowship with God and became subject to spiritual and physical death. We believe that through Adam's transgressions the entire human race has inherited a corrupt nature which is essentially evil and unable to please God (Gen. 1:26-27, 3:24, Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:1-3).

Sin

We believe that sin is anything contrary to the character of God. Every man, we believe, is alienated from God because of his depraved nature as well as personal acts of sin. We believe that each person born into the world is separated from God and completely incapable of meriting salvation and avoiding the

judgment of God. The sin nature, we believe, is never eradicated, even for those who are born into the family of God, but it remains until the end of life. However, we believe God has made provision for forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ and victory over sin through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 3:10, 23, 6:23, Eph. 4:18, 1 John 1:8-10, Gal. 5:16-17).

Salvation

We believe that salvation from the penalty and power of sin is provided only through the blood of Jesus Christ which He shed on the cross when He was made sin for us and died in our place. There is nothing man can do, we believe, to attain this salvation through good works, moral achievement or religious status. We believe the one and only condition for salvation is personal faith in Jesus Christ as one's own substitute for and Savior from sin. At the time of salvation, we believe a person is spiritually regenerated, his sins are forgiven, God's righteousness is imputed to him, and he is declared righteous in the sight of God. This salvation, we believe, is complete and a present possession of all believers which remains theirs forever. All who have trusted Christ as Savior are kept secure and will never lose their salvation (1 Pet. 1:18-19, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:24, Eph 2:8-9, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 4:32, Rom. 5:1, Rom. 8:38-39).

The Church

We believe that the Church is a unique organism composed of individuals who have placed their faith in Christ as Savior. The Church began, we believe, on the day of Pentecost and will continue its distinct purpose until the Rapture. We believe that the Church exists in both a universal aspect, as the Body of Christ, and in a local assembly of believers. The local church, we believe, has the twofold purpose of the edification of believers and the evangelization of the lost. The two ordinances of the church are water baptism, which we practice by immersion, and the Lord's Supper, which

This We Believe

we believe to be a memorial of Christ's death and is open to all believers (1 Cor. 12:13, Acts 2:1-4, 1 Thes. 4:13-17, Col. 4:16, Eph. 4:7, Heb. 13:17, Matt. 28:19-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-28).

Dispensations*

We believe that God administers His purpose in the world through man under varying dispensations or stewardships, such as the period of Mosaic law, the present age of grace, and the future millennial kingdom. We believe that these dispensations span the entire history of mankind but that dispensations are not different ways of salvation. Rather, they are ways of life which test the obedience of man to God's revealed will during a particular time. We believe that it is necessary to observe the dispensational distinction in order to properly understand the teaching of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 10:32, Eph. 1:10, 3:2, Gal. 4:2, Luke 12:42, Heb. 12:22-23).

Future Things*

We believe that the next event in God's prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the Church when living and dead Christians will be caught up to meet the Lord and receive rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Following the Rapture, we believe a seven year period of Tribulation will commence upon the earth at which time God's wrath will be poured out on mankind. We believe God's millennial kingdom will be ushered in by Jesus Christ when He returns to the earth in power and glory to rule sovereignly over the world for a thousand years. The unsaved dead of all ages, we believe, will be raised after the millennium to face the judgment of the Great White Throne and will be cast into the lake of fire where there will be eternal punishment. We believe the redeemed of all ages will exist in an eternal state of joy and bliss in the new heavens and new earth where they will worship and serve God forever (John 14:3, Heb. 10:37, 2 Cor. 5:10, Matt. 24:21-31, Rev. 20-22).

**Strict agreement with these doctrines is not required for membership at WBCC; however, we affirm these beliefs as taught in Scripture and have established them as the official positions of our Church.*



Principles & Practices

This document contains the operating guidelines for Wells Branch Community Church. It is intended to be a dynamic document and will likely be revised as the church grows and takes on a greater scope of ministry. Revisions will be made according to section V. below.

I. GOVERNMENT:

Scripture provides general principles which serve as guidelines for church leadership. These guidelines have been followed in formulating a philosophy of government for Wells Branch Community Church as follows: (Acts 6:3, 14:23, Col. 1:18, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, Heb. 13:7, 17).

A. Christ (Col. 1:18)

Christ is the true source of all the Church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the Body, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 10:31).

Christ has provided His thoughts and His direction for the Body in the Word. The Bible reflects and contains His mind, His commands, His counsel, and His purpose for every believer (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

The Body is to conform to His Word, thus carrying out His will to His glory. That is the Body's reason for being (Col. 3:15-17).

B. Elders

Wells Branch Community Church has chosen to be an elder led church. The elders, as overseers of the local church, are responsible for the spiritual health of the Body. They are to glorify Christ by serving the Body according to the biblical principles of love and care. In practice, the elders establish the guidelines and policies for conducting services, programs, and the general conduct of church business. They are to lead by precept and example, realizing they are accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ for their efforts (Heb. 13:17, Acts 20:24,28).

1. Qualifications

The qualifications for an elder are set forth in the scriptural passages 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:1-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. He is to be self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, not a recent convert. He has a good reputation with outsiders, is not overbearing or quick-tempered, loves what is good, is upright, holy, disciplined, above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, respectable, not given to drunkenness, manages his own family well, sees that his children obey him, does not pursue dishonest gain, and keeps hold of deep truths. An elder demonstrates through leadership a commitment to the purposes, vision and the core values of the church.

2. Selection

Any man who aspires to the office of elder is first approved by a vote of the elders, then a vote of the membership assembled at a duly called congregational meeting.

3. Number and Term

There will be a maximum of seven elders at any time. Each man will serve for a three-year term. Upon conclusion of his term, he must function in a non-elder role for at least one year before becoming eligible for eldership again. A man filling an unexpired term of two years or less may be eligible to waive this one year at the end of his term and serve an additional term subject to the above prescribed selection process. The Senior Pastor serves as a perpetual elder and is one of the seven. The elders shall annually select a chairman to direct elder and congregational meetings. In the absence of the chairman, the elders will select an interim chairman.

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4. Replacement

A vacancy created by departing elder may be filled in accordance with B.2 above. The new elder will complete the departing elder's term.

5. Dismissal

The dismissal of an elder because he is not fulfilling the responsibilities and/or qualifications of an elder is the responsibility of the other elders, and is accomplished by a vote of these elders. The exception is the Senior Pastor whose dismissal is covered in III B., below.

C. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation. In this unique position he provides for the equipping of the saints through a regular ministry of preaching, training, and encouraging the congregation as a whole. His goal is to mature the saints through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word, stressing both the understanding and application of divine truths and principles. He provides vital input on planning, ministry challenges, and biblical guidance to the elders during the decision making process. He is often the primary agent in the implementation of the various programs and ministries undertaken by the church. He is accountable to the elders for the discharge of his ministry. He is also responsible for the management of the church office and supervision of all staff (1 Tim. 4:11-13, 15, 16; Eph. 4:11, 12; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17, 4:2-4; Matt. 5:13).

D. Deacons

At the discretion of the elders, deacons may be appointed to assist the elders in the discharge of the church ministry. They are delegated the authority for the execution of ministry. Each deacon is appointed annually by the elders

for a specific area of service. Deacons must be members of Wells Branch Community Church and exhibit qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

E. Staff

1. Definition

Staff members are defined as paid employees of the church, whether full or part-time.

2. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor will be recruited and hired by the elders with the approval of the voting membership. His salary and benefits will be established by the elders and reviewed annually.

3. Church Staff (other than Senior Pastor)

The Senior Pastor is the manager of the church staff. With the approval of the elders, the Senior Pastor may delegate responsibilities within the staff for the purpose of carrying out his responsibilities.

The Senior Pastor is responsible for the recruitment and management of all staff. Their salaries and benefits are established by the elders upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor. Final offers of employment or termination require mutual agreement between the Senior Pastor and the elders. However, the hiring and termination of non-pastoral staff is at the discretion of the Senior Pastor within the constraints of the approved budget. Except for the Senior Pastor, staff members will not be eligible for elder nomination.

4. Performance Review

The performance of staff members will be reviewed on at least an annual basis. The Senior Pastor is responsible for church staff reviews. The elders review the Senior Pastor.

II. MEMBERSHIP

A. Qualifications

Membership in Wells Branch Community Church is open to all who testify to two elders, an elder and a pastor, or an elder and a deacon of their salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and agree with both the Purpose and Doctrinal Statements. Associate membership is available for those under eighteen years of age who testify to two elders, an elder and a pastor, or an elder and a deacon of their salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Associate membership does not include the right to vote. Elders, pastors and deacons must be members of Wells Branch Community Church.

B. Expectations

Members of Wells Branch Community Church are expected to support their church by participation in worship, instruction and giving of their time, talents, and treasures to the accomplishment of the purposes of the church. Members should take seriously the Great Commission and the admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ to love one another (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 9:7, Heb. 10:25, John 13:35).

C. Term

The term of membership is permanent unless one of the following occurs:

1. The member is not in attendance at regular services for a period of six months.
2. The member asks to be dropped from the membership roll.
3. The member is dismissed due to action, behavior, or speaking in opposition to the Purpose or Doctrinal Statements of Wells Branch Community Church (*see Dismissal section*).

D. Dismissal

The dismissal process for any member of Wells Branch Community Church must follow the pattern established by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:15-17. If the member refuses to repent and seek restoration of fellowship, as determined by the elders, that person's membership is terminated.

E. Reinstatement

A former member in good standing can be reinstated to membership following an interview with at least two elders and a one-month period of regular attendance.

A dismissed member will be reinstated by repenting and seeking restored fellowship with the elders and then if deemed appropriate by the elders with the church assembled.

III. VOTING

A. Elders

Voting within the eldership is preferably unanimous, but knowing the frailty of mankind, a simple majority will suffice. Exceptions are voting on major indebtedness, the purchase or long term leases of real or other property, and the selection or dismissal of elders and amendments to this document. These exceptions shall be approved with no more than one dissenting elder vote.

B. Members

Voting by the membership is required for the following: The purchase of real property, calling or terminating a Senior Pastor, the appointment of elders, lease agreements of over 60 months and amendments to this document. A two-thirds majority vote of those present and eligible to vote is required for approval of the above-mentioned items.

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IV. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

A. Annual Meeting

In order to effectively communicate major issues and decisions, an annual congregational meeting will be scheduled in January.

B. Agenda

An Agenda will be prepared and distributed to the congregation the Sunday prior to that meeting date. Agenda items submitted by a voting member(s) will be placed on the Agenda at the discretion of the elders. Agendas for meetings called by the voting members will be part of the petition calling the meeting. In case of emergencies, the requirement for distribution of Agendas may be waived.

C. Special Meetings

A congregational meeting may be called by petition of 10% of the voting membership of the Church. Special meetings may be called by the elders as required.

D. Announcement

Except in extreme emergencies, congregational meetings will be announced in the church bulletin two Sundays in advance of the meeting date.

E. Quorum

The voting members present at a duly called congregational meeting will constitute a quorum.

F. Attendance

Congregational meetings are generally open to regular attenders and members alike, however voting is limited to members 18 years of age or older.

V. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS TO THESE PRACTICES

Amendments and revisions to these Practices must be presented to the congregation at least one week prior to a congregational meeting and approved by a vote in accordance to paragraph 3B.