

NEW BEGINNINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost – September 8th, 2024 (11:11 am)

CHURCH FAMILY

Psalm 133

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Acts 2:42-47

1 Peter 2:1-10

The Church is the congregation of saints (*Psalm 149:1*), in which the Gospel is rightly taught, and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: **One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc.** *Ephesians 4:5-6*. (*THE CHURCH - Article VII (Book of Concordia - CA - Lutheran Christian Confessions)*)

"What means belong a "CHURCH" - New Beginnings Lutheran Church"

So the church is a **FELLOWSHIP** with the top priority in fellowship being **HARMONY and UNITY**. (*Eph 4:3; Rom. 14:19*) Any attitude that causes disunity is SIN.

A good structure promotes unity and downplays differences. (*1 Co 11:17-18*). "Voting" tends to create disunity. At NBLC, we only vote on: 1) the Annual budget and legal trustees 2) the Purchase of land or buildings; 3) Calling the senior pastor and 4) Changes in the church constitution.

The church is a FAMILY (*1 Peter 3:8*). So, we operate based on relationships, not rules.

The church is a BODY. (*1 Co 12:27*). We are a body - not a business! We are an organism - not an organization! Therefore, we function based on Spiritual Gifts. (*Rom 12:4-6*). In an organization, "maintenance" becomes the focus. But in an organism, "ministry" is the focus. The people are the **ministers** (people who serve with spiritual gifts and talents) and the pastors are the **ad-ministers** (spiritual leaders who guide the ministers and serve them and the society).

OUR STRUCTURE

The church is a FLOCK. (Jesus' favourite description of the church – *(John 10:1-30; Matt. 26:31 and 25:33)*). Therefore, it is cared for and led by Shepherd. (*John 21:16-17*).

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders: 1) "POIMEN" – Pastor/Shepherd; 2) "PRESBUTEROS" – Elders; 3) "EPISCOPOS" – Oversees. (*Acts 20:17-18, 28; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Tim. 5:17.*)

OUR AFFILIATION

New Beginnings exists in three different shares of connection to the Lutheran church.

* **The Synod** – Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC) – approximately 298 churches across Canada.

* **The Central Region** – Lutheran Churches from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwest Ontario.

* **The Wascana Circuit** – 5 churches that are in the city of Regina.

Beyond this connection, we are in fellowship with other Lutheran bodies around the world.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF AFFILIATION WITH THE LCC?

1) It allows us to identify with other Christians around the world who are known for their commitment to the Bible.

2) It allows our church to participate in a larger missionary organization to impact the world.

3) It enables us to use resources we would otherwise be unable to afford or locate.

4) It gives us the opportunity to work together with a monetary support fund, which uses investments from members to support the mission and ministry of individual churches.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN MEMBER

The difference between "attenders" and "members" can be summed up in one word: COMMITMENT.

At New Beginnings we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit a membership for four reasons:

1) **A Biblical Reason: CHRIST IS COMMITTED TO THE CHURCH.** (*Eph. 5:25*)

2) **A Cultural Reason: IT IS AN ANTIDOTE TO OUR SOCIETY.** We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything... a job... a marriage... our country. This attitude

has even produced a generation of "church shoppers and hoppers". Commitment always builds character.

3) **A Practical Reason: IT DEFINES WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON.** Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family and allows us to faithfully care for and encourage them.

4) **A Personal Reason: IT PRODUCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH.** The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you're not committed to any church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED AS A MEMBER?

At New Beginnings we never ask our members to do more than the Bible teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do.

NBLC Covenant

Having received Christ as our Lord and Savior, been baptized, and agreeing with the statements and structure of this church (NBLC), we now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the church family. It means:

We Will Protect the Unity of our Church by acting in love toward other members, by refusing to gossip, and by following the leaders (*Romans 14:19; Romans 15:5; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29; Hebrews 13:17*).

We Will Share the Responsibility of our Church by praying for its health and growth, by inviting the unchurched to attend, and by warmly welcoming those who visit. (*1 Thess. 1:2; Luke 14:23; Rom 15:7*)

We Will Serve the Ministry of our Church by discovering our gifts and talents, by being equipped to serve by our pastors and leaders, and by developing a servant's heart (*1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 2:3-4, 7*).

We Will Support the Testimony of our Church by attending faithfully, living a Christian life, and giving regularly. Because this is good for me, for my family, good for the church family and for society.

"THE CHURCH IS NOT A CLUB FOR SAINTS BUT A HOSPITAL FOR SINNERS"
(*Anonymous*).

Do you remember why we begin our services at 11:11 am?

In biblical numerology, 11 is considered an imperfect number because it is between two perfect numbers 10 and 12. (12 tribes of Israel - 12 disciples of Jesus - Ten Commandments, etc...). 11:11 signifies a group of imperfect people standing before the perfect one to hear his holy word, praise, pray and celebrate the faith in communion with all other believers.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved”. (Acts 2:42-47)

May God bless us to remain firm on this path. In Jesus' name. Amen.