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The Free Church movement was birthed out of the Protestant Reformation of the 1500's

5 Reformation Solas- *Sola Christus, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura, Soli Deo Gloria*
 (In Christ Alone, By Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, to the Glory of God Alone)

- Martin Luther's re-discovery of the gospel- **Romans 1:16-17, Romans 3:23-26**
- Because all believers in Christ were justified equally by grace, Luther objected to the practice of calling priests "Father". **1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Romans 12:5-6**

"It is pure invention that pope, bishops, priests and monks are to be called the 'spiritual estate;' princes, lords, artisans, and farmers the 'temporal estate.' [On the contrary] . . . all Christians are truly of the 'spiritual estate,' and there is among them no difference at all but that of office." --**To Christian Nobility of the German Nation**

Core Values of Trinity Comm. Church: (Mission: to make disciples, who make disciples)

⇒ Walk with God- Worship & Prayer

⇒ Invest in One Another- Fellowship

⇒ Welcome His Word- Instruction

⇒ Share Christ's Message-
Evangelism

James 5:16 Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another	1 Thessalonians 5:11 Encourage one another and build one another up	John 13:34-35 Love one another, just as I have loved you
Colossians 3:13 Bearing with one another, forgiving each other	Galatians 6:1-2 Restore one another, bear one another's burdens	Galatians 5:12-13, Acts 2:45 In freedom serve one another; meet one another's needs
Romans 12:10 Honor one another	Romans 15:7 Accept one another	Romans 15:14 Instruct one another

Key Concept in the Reformation & church membership: The Priesthood of All Believers.

This concept does not mean that every Christian is entitled to preach, or that he can live by his own interpretation of Scripture. It means that every Christian is called to proclaim the gospel, to pray for others, and minister God's word one to one.

✧ 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10 (see also Exodus 19:4-6)

✧ Colossians 3:16-17

✧ Hebrews 10:19-22

✧ Romans 12:1-2

Membership in the local church

- Membership represents a commitment not only to God but to one another. By becoming a member you are expressing your desire to care for others, to grow alongside others, and your willingness to be held accountable to others. It is this “forbearing with one another” in love that can be the sweetest gift of church membership. (Ephesians 4:16)
- Membership gives you a voice in congregational decisions such as the annual budget, calling of a senior pastor, selection of new elders, affirmation of new members, and any changes to the church constitution & bylaws.
- Church Membership represents a willingness to accept the authority that God has invested in the local church—for our good. Our culture is very jaded, with numerous examples of the misuse of authority. However, the church can be a place where love, grace, and truth are lived out. (Hebrews 13:17)
- Membership in a church is about a common commitment to the mission of Christ. Jesus sent his disciples out two by two. We can accomplish more for Christ when our hearts are united together: learning, serving, praying, witnessing, and worshiping as a church body.

Examples of “membership” practices in the New Testament:

Matthew 18:15-17

In the case of personal disputes, if reconciliation is not reached by first talking one to one or bringing in other individuals, the matter is to go to the church (*ekklesia*). This shows that the synagogue/church had some system or count of membership, however informal.

1 Corinthians 5:3-13

In the case of a man who is committing sexual immorality and is unrepentant, the Corinthians are instructed to not associate with him and to cast him out of the church. This shows that he is to be separated from the regular “members” of the church.

1 Timothy 5:3-16

In this passage widows are to be taken care of by the church. Since the passage mentions a list of widows, it implies that the church had some sense of membership among the believers, and that a “regulars” list was kept.

Free Church Movement History in Sweden

- Prior to the 9th Century, most of the people in Sweden followed Norse pagan mythology
- The first Christian missionary sent to Sweden was St. Ansgar (801-865), a Benedictine monk and first archbishop of Hamburg. ([Britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com))
- Over the next 300 years, the land of Sweden gradually became Christian, with British and German missionaries working among the Swedes. In 1164 A.D., the first Swedish bishop was appointed by the Roman Catholic Church in Upsala.
- [1164-1523] The Roman Catholic Church had extensive economic control and influence in Sweden. At the same time, the countries of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark were united as one entity in the Kalmar Union from 1397-1523. It brought all three kingdoms under a single monarch, but with each country having its own laws.
- [1523] King Gustav Vasa captured Stockholm and was crowned king of Sweden. The King declared Sweden a Lutheran Nation in 1544. He ruled until 1560.
- [1520s-1540s] Key players in bringing the Protestant Reformation to Sweden: Laurentius Andreae, Olaus Petri, and his brother, Laurentius Petri. The three of them translated the Bible into Swedish, and it was published in 1541. Olaus Petri had studied in Wittenberg under Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon (1516-1518).
- [1500s-1600s] King Gustavus Adolphus solidified Lutheranism in Sweden.
- [Early 1700s] The movement known as Pietism which had begun in Germany and Europe made its way to Sweden. Pietism was based on the teachings of German Phillip Jakob Spener. Pietism emphasized personal Bible reading and prayer, moral living, a born-again experience, and gatherings in homes instead of official church services.
- [1726-1858] The government of Sweden issued the Conventicle Act, which prohibited citizens from gathering in religious services outside of the state sponsored church.
- [Late 1700s-Early 1800s] British and Scottish Bible Societies contributed to this revival movement by distributing Bible pamphlets and other pamphlets in Swedish. Because of the emphasis on personal Bible reading and prayer, these Swedish groups became known as a "Readers Movement", to the dissatisfaction of the state church.

Free Church Movement History in Sweden

-[Mid 1800's] Pietist revivals continued in Norway, led primarily by Hans Nelson Hauge, who was imprisoned multiple times between 1804-1814 for going against state rules on lay leadership of church services. The revivals in Sweden were led initially by English Wesleyan Pastor George Scott, and later by Carl Olaf Rosenius, editor of the *Pietisten*.

-Swedish believers found themselves at odds with the established state Lutheran church due to issues such as "living faith vs. dead orthodoxy"; priests who were not born again serving communion, problems with infant baptism compared to believer baptism, and the overall influence of the state over the structure of the church.

-Leaders such as Peter Paul Waldenstrom continued in the vein of Rosenius' teachings, and Waldenstrom is known as the father of the Swedish Mission Covenant

-[1850-1930] 1.25 million Swedes crossed the Atlantic to the United States and Canada, many of them Swedish Pietists who had been part of this revival movement.

-[Late 1800s- Early 1900s] Chicago, being the largest concentration of Scandinavian immigrants in the U.S., became home for Swedish immigrants, and many favored the ministry of D.L. Moody. They were known as "Free Mission Friends" because of their willingness to embrace other believers of like faith. Frederick Franson, a Free Church pastor from Nebraska, came to Chicago and learned from D.L. Moody's ministry.

-[1884] In the U.S., two different free-church bodies were formed into associations for the purpose of fellowship and ministry:

- The Swedish Evangelical Free Church Association in Boone, IA
- The Danish-Norwegian Evangelical Free Church Association in Boston, MA.

-[1950] The Norwegian-Danish and Swedish groups merged, forming what is today the EFCA (Evangelical Free Church of America). The Swedish Bible Institute of Chicago became what is now Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

-[2025] The EFCA celebrates its 75th anniversary in Des Moines, Iowa

-See the Appendix titled "Pietism and American Revivalism" by Dr. David Gustafson for more information on how Swedish immigrants contributed to the ministry of D.L. Moody and revivals in the late nineteenth century.

EFCA Statement of Faith-

The EFCA is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

1- God: We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

2- The Bible: We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

3- The Human Condition: We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

4- Jesus Christ: We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

5- The Work of Christ: We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

6- The Holy Spirit: We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

7- The Church: We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

8- Christian Living: We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

EFCA Statement of Faith (cont.)

9- Christ's Return: We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

10- Response and Eternal Destiny: We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Discussion & Questions on the Statement of Faith:

Major and Minors in the EFCA Movement**First Order (Major) Doctrines:**

- God the Creator – all knowing, all powerful, loving, just & righteous in all things.
- The Trinity- Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God, (One God in three persons)
- Deity and humanity of Christ; Sinlessness of Christ
- Bodily Resurrection of Christ
- The Virgin Birth
- Depravity- Sinfulness of All Human Beings
- The Substitutionary Atonement--Christ the only way of Salvation
- Inspiration, Inerrancy & Authority of the Bible
- Baptism and Communion to be observed by the Church
- The Return of Christ- personal, bodily, and glorious. Bodily Resurrection and Final Judgment
- Heaven and Hell. Hell is eternal conscious punishment

Second Order Doctrines: (Those the EFCA does not take a specific stand on)

- Age of the earth- (However, we reject macro-evolution and would not teach theistic evolution)
 - Baptism (infant or adult)- As a church we practice believer's baptism.
- Calvinism & Arminianism (Does God "choose us" in salvation or do we "choose"?)
- The Rapture- pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation?
 - The Millennium- premillennial, amillennial, or postmillennial?
 - Existence of Charismatic gifts (We are not Pentecostal or Charismatic in practice)
 - Method of serving Communion
 - Trichotomy vs. Dichotomy (Are human beings body, soul & spirit, or body & soul?)

Issues of Practice where our church balances freedom and accountability:

- Some abstain from alcohol; others feel permission to drink alcohol.
- Different entertainment choices
- Health, Diet, and Medical choices
- Political affiliation and participation
- Types of Educational for our children
- Kinds of counseling and psychological/psychiatric/medical help for Christians

Specific Teachings of Trinity Community Church

One of the strengths of the EFCA is that we try to keep the gospel the main thing. That is, we all agree to the same Statement of Faith, but secondary doctrines may vary from person to person. Here are some examples of our church's position on several issues:

- **We are complementarian.** This means that the office of elder or pastor is restricted to men, according to our understanding of God's word. There are different ways women can serve in the church, which may include teaching, however our practice is that women should not be in roles where there is an implied "elder or pastor authority."

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- **We are not Calvinist nor Arminian.** We do not hold specifically to the Westminster Confession as many other churches do, but we teach from a broadly Reformed perspective. Many in our church have differing views on the question of Election, Predestination, and Free Will. We believe that God's sovereignty is compatible with human responsibility and choices.
 - **We recognize God is the only creator, and we teach the doctrine of creation ex nihilo.** Human beings differ vastly from the rest of the animal kingdom. We do not teach a specific age of the earth. Those in our church hold differing views on the creationism, age of the earth, and aspects of evolution, or theistic evolution. As a church, we do not teach evolution or theistic evolution, since we see those as incompatible with the biblical record.
 - **We believe that God created only two genders and that human sexuality is only permitted in the context of marriage between one man and one woman for life.** There are many people who have struggles in this area, but we are called to uphold God's word as well as treat all people with dignity, kindness, and love.
 - **While social and political concerns may reflect certain valuable truths, those are secondary to the gospel.** God desires His church to function under the authority of Christ and his word. All people are unique image-bearers of our creator. The beauty of ethnic diversity in the church now is a preview of the church worshiping in the fullness of God's kingdom (Revelation 7:9).
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Core Values at Trinity

Walking with Christ: Worship & Prayer- Jesus' invitation is "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) As we experience Christ for who He is, the Lord of glory, we are in awe and humbled (Isaiah 6). We view coming to Sunday worship as the "crescendo" of a week of worshiping God and praying daily in our own lives, not just as a spiritual "shot in the arm" that will help us make it to the next Sunday. When we gather for prayer and worship in any setting, we expect God to hear us, and as a loving Father, answer us with good things when we call upon Him. (*James 5:16, Psalm 88:1, Psalm 95:6-7, Psalm 103:1-3*)

Welcoming God's Word: We believe that the foundation of a healthy church is the consistent teaching and preaching of God's inerrant Word. When we commit to a local church, we commit to welcoming God's word into our hearts so that we can grow and change by the Holy Spirit. Disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, reflection/meditation, as well as Sunday worship, help us know Christ more and more throughout our lives. God's Word is the primary means by which God transforms our hearts. We believe that every Christian must have a hunger and respect for God's word so that his daily decisions are based on eternal truths, not on the changing winds of cultural opinion. (*2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 119:105, Psalm 19:7-8*)

Core Values at Trinity (cont.)

Fellowship-Investing in One Another: We believe that God calls every Christian to grow in the context of a redemptive community. It is in the smaller context that hearts are opened, burdens are shared, and prayer and accountability take place. When individuals remove themselves from consistent fellowship, the individual, family, and the church all suffer. Making a commitment to a church means making a commitment to a group of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ for a season of time.

(James 5:16, 1 Thess. 5:11, Colossians 3:13, Galatians 6:1-2, John 13:34-35, Acts 2:45)

Evangelism- Sharing Christ's Message: We believe that God has given each Christian spiritual gifts and natural abilities for the purpose of building up the church and/or serving in the world. To not exercise these gifts and abilities is to disobey God. We are called to be salt and light in the Raleigh area. Every Christian is called to use his or her gifts because God has designed the church so that we need the unique gifts and personality of each individual. We oppose the current cultural mentality that treats the church as a cruise ship with various "entertainment" options, or the attitude that Christians can come to church as "spectators" *(Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Cor. 12:7, 12-27; Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:15-1)*

Our History and Polity:

Trinity Community Church began in 1994 when Reverend Ken Aune and his family moved from Hastings, NE to Cary, NC. Ken was called by God to plant a church in the Raleigh area. Trinity began meeting in the Crossroads Mall, renting space in what was at the time, a day care facility. Over the years Trinity has had several locations. At one time Trinity purchased land in Apex, but in God's plan, building on that property did not materialize. After regrouping, Trinity came to its current location on Old Apex Rd. in 2008. Pastor Ken Aune retired from full time ministry in April 2017, after serving Trinity for 23 years. Reverend Jim Folk was called as pastor in July 2017.

Church Government-

- ☉ Trinity Community Church uses congregational government, led by the elders. That is, members of the church vote on the major items such as the annual budget, any purchase or sale of property, changes to the by-laws or statement of faith, approval of elders, approval of new members, and any other items called for at a special business meeting. The rest of the decisions are delegated to the elders, pastor, and other ministries leaders and teams.

Our History and Polity (cont.)

☉ How is the leadership selected?

Elders- New elders must be current members of the church and are selected by asking members of the congregation to nominate men they feel are qualified to be elders. Nominated men must take an eldership preparation course and be

interviewed and recommended by the current elder board. The current elders then bring any new elder candidates to the congregation. The new elder candidates are voted on by the congregation and need a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote.

Deacons- The elders have the authority to appoint deacons- who also must be members of the church- to various ministries, based on the needs of the church. The Deacons are affirmed by the congregational members.

Directors/ Coordinators/ Ministry Teams- Other directors and teams are appointed by the elders to lead various ministries. Those directors are encouraged to recruit and train others for those ministries.

Part-Time Staff- The elders have authority to hire part-time staff to fulfill various needs. Currently we have a part-time worship leader and a ministry assistant.

Giving, Tithes & Offerings-

We rarely take an offering during the service, although we will take up special offerings from time to time. We ask that you place your offering in the offering box at the back of the sanctuary. There are several funds you can give to:

☉ General Fund- for general expenses: mortgage, utilities, salaries, insurance, facilities, ministry supplies and curriculum, audio & video equipment.

☉ Designated Funds- (These are funds you need to specifically indicate)

- **Missions-** Designated money for the missionaries we regularly support. Sometimes we will take special offerings for a mission organization.
- **Benevolence-** money designated for families with immediate financial needs. This fund is distributed at the discretion of the pastors and elders.
- **Uganda Fund-** money to sponsor children's schooling in Mukono, Uganda.

Our History and Polity (cont.)

☉ Guidelines for Giving-

- Everything we have belongs to God (time, talent, treasures)
- Give cheerfully, not under reluctantly (2 Cor. 9:7)
- God expects us to be generous (Mark 12:41-44)
- Perspective on storing up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21)
- Tithing (giving 10%) is not required under the New Covenant, but personally, I think it is a good goal for Christians. (Pastor Jim)

Ministries of Trinity Community Church-

- Greeters- (Joe Folk, coordinator) This team is responsible for greeting guests on Sunday morning.
- Worship Team & Tech Ministry (Daniel Hagan- worship leader, JJ Swick- audio & tech) singing, worship, praise band, and working with technology equipment on Sunday Morning.
- Missions Team- (Florence Fidelino & Joan Lovekin, coordinators.) The missions team communicates with and prays for our supported missionaries, as well as screens missionaries who are seeking funds.
- Adult Sunday School- (Pastor & Elders) The adult class on Sunday morning usually studies a book of the Bible or a particular topic.
- Youth- Student Leaders (Steve MacDermut) Our middle school and high school students meet for class on Sunday morning and at other times.
- Children's Classes- (Emily Folk) may vary depending on how many children are in the church at one time. Volunteers need to fill out an application and background check to work in any Children or Youth ministry.
- Nursery- Nursery Care is provided for infants up through age 4 during the Worship Service. Volunteers need to fill out an application and background check to work in any Children or Youth ministry.
- Women's Ministry- (Susie Folk) Women group meet for prayer and/or Bible study on the first and third Wednesday of the month.
- Men's Prayer- (Jim Marshall) Once a month on the third Friday, men from the church gather to pray and eat breakfast together at a local restaurant.

Our History and Polity (cont.)

- Facilities Deacon and Beautification Team- (Ken Aune) Regular maintenance and repairs are often done by volunteers. If you have willing hands and basic skills, this may be a place for you to serve.
- Friends, Food and Faith (F3)- Initiated from time to time, this is an opportunity for people in the church to have several meals in one another's homes. The groups change each season so that people get to know one another.
- Fellowship Meals- Once a month we do a potluck meal at the church after Sunday worship. These are great opportunities to get to know others at Trinity.

IMPORTANT VALUE:

New ministries begin at Trinity Community by someone expressing a burden and a passion to see a need met. If you have a desire to start a new ministry, please talk to Pastor Jim and share your heart with the elders. We would love to talk with you about the needs that you see and how you might direct your gifts. (1 Corinthians 12)

Church Staff & Volunteers:

Jim Folk- Lead Pastor 919-338-4017 (jfolk@trinitycary.com)
Daniel Hagan- Worship Leader 919-451-1742 (wolfpackfan12@gmail.com)
Estefany Rivera Sanchez- Ministry Assistant (office@trinitycary.com)
Jeff McSwain- Elder 919-414-7535
Steve MacDermut- Elder 919-830-8472
(Email all the elders at elders@trytrinity.org)

Questions I have about Trinity Community Church:

Membership Process at Trinity Community Church-

- Be faithful in worship and service to the church
- Take the membership class
- Write up your testimony: how you came to faith in Christ and what it means to be a Christian
- Have a “get to know you” interview with the elders
- Commit to the TCC membership covenant
- Be recommended and voted into membership at a congregational meeting.

Membership Interview Questions:

The membership process meets several objectives:

- To make sure that you know and are comfortable submitting to the EFCA statement of faith, the mission and core values of the church, and our church membership covenant.
- To give you an opportunity to share your personal journey as a Christian.
- To ask questions about the church and share any questions or concerns you have with the elders.

1. Briefly tell us how you came to know Christ personally. If God asked you, “Why should I let you into my kingdom?” what would you say?

2. How would you describe your relationship with the Lord at this stage in your life? Is there a “next step” in your walk with the Lord that you feel you need?

- How would you describe your maturity in Christ using the following growth scale:

Infant-----child/adolescent-----adult-----parent/grandparent

3. Describe your involvement in your family, work, or community/civic organizations. How do you see your involvement in the community overlapping with church involvement?

- Do you hold any memberships in community organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, etc. (Please read carefully our church policy and the EFCA’s statement on Church Membership and Masonic Orders)

4. What are your passions, talents, and gifts? What types of ministries get you excited about following Christ? How do you see yourself serving in a ministry at Trinity Community Church?

Membership Interview Questions (cont.)

5. One of the strengths of EFCA churches is that they “major on the majors and minor on the minors” in terms of doctrine. Are there any aspects of the doctrine or teaching of our church that you have questions about?
6. Have you read the Church Membership Covenant? Do you have any questions about it?
7. Have you ever been baptized? If not, do you have a desire to be baptized as a step of obedience to Christ? What is keeping you from being baptized as an adult?

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

1. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5,6).
2. Break your testimony into approximately equal thirds:
 - Your life before your decision to receive Christ. If you became a Christian as a young child, emphasize your decision to make Christ Lord of your life.
 - The decision itself: how did it occur, what thoughts were going through your mind, what were the circumstances, was any verse of Scripture speaking to you, etc.
 - The practical impacts which the decision has had on your life, your family, job, attitude, personality, relationships in general, etc. Share a verse that has great meaning for you now. Emphasize this point if you became a Christian as a small child.
3. Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion. For example, “I’ve always wanted to live life to the fullest. . . .” Include relevant, thought-provoking secular facts, experiences, and details to arouse interest.
4. Present your testimony in such a way that others can feel with you in past and present experiences, but avoid the tendency to dwell on the past. Express clearly your present experiences of walking with Christ and the joy of the Christian life.
5. Use at least one, or at the most two, Scripture verses.
6. This testimony will be a “practice session” for a future opportunity to share your testimony with a non-Christian. Work at including facts which would help a non-Christian know the basic facts of the gospel:
 - Recognition of sin and the inability to reach God by one’s own effort
 - Genuine repentance--true remorse, turning away from past sin
 - Recognition that Jesus Christ died for each person’s sin and thus made a way to God
 - That Christ needs to be invited to enter one’s life as Savior and Lord.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A PERSONAL TESTIMONY (cont.)

7. Enjoy working on your testimony! As you're writing your testimony, give God praise and thank Him often for what He has already done in your life, what He is currently doing, and what He will do in the future.
8. When sharing a personal testimony it is best to avoid:
- mentioning church denominations, especially in a derogatory way, or speaking critically or negatively about any other individual or group.
 - giving the impression that the Christian life is "a bed of roses." Let it be known that while there are difficulties, the Lord is the One who is with us.
9. Share it with loving enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

TESTIMONY / BAPTISM WORKSHEET

Note: For baptisms, please include "Why I desire to be baptized today..."

Introductory Sentence:

Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way:

How I encountered Christ:

After I received Christ these changes began:

What Christ means to me in my everyday life:

Concluding Statement:

What about Baptism at Trinity Community Church?

WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

Baptism is a physical reminder and an outward symbol of the salvation that a person has received by faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is not a means of salvation, rather it is an expression of the personal forgiveness and eternal life granted by God through Christ. The moment someone trusts in Christ, their old self has been crucified and they begin a new life with God (John 5:24). Being immersed under water and coming up again is a vivid picture of how each believer has been identified with Christ's death and resurrection.

The apostle Paul says in Colossians 2:12, "having been buried with him through baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead." Since baptism is such a strong reminder of our identification with Christ, we believe it is an important step in a believer's life of obedience to Christ. Jesus commanded his followers to baptize others after becoming his disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). However, at Trinity Community Church we do not require baptism as a prerequisite for membership in the church.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

The common pattern in the New Testament was for individuals to be baptized after they had repented and made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. After the apostle Peter shares the gospel message in Acts chapter two the text says, "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Also in Acts chapter eight we find, "But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Because of these and other examples, we believe that individuals who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized.

Some churches baptize infants, which explains why they would choose sprinkling as an alternative method rather than immersion. The reasons for baptizing infants vary among Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches. While we allow for the freedom of conscience for those who believe infants should be baptized, there are no clear examples of infant baptisms in the New Testament (other than household baptisms, in which we do not know ages of members in the household).

Because we believe that baptism is not a means of salvation, but rather a public sign of a changed life and one's commitment to Christ, at Trinity we prefer to baptize only those who have made a decision to follow Jesus and who are old enough to understand that decision. For infants we practice child dedication. In this dedication we ask for the Lord's blessing on the child's life, and we emphasize the responsibility of the parents and the congregation to bring the child up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

What about Baptism at Trinity Community Church?

HOW SHOULD BAPTISM BE PERFORMED?

The Greek word used in the New Testament is *baptizo*, which literally means “to immerse”. Mark 1:5 describes people being baptized by John “in the river Jordan.” It is clear from this and other passages that baptism was practiced by full immersion into water, and also in a public place. Therefore, at Trinity Community Church we practice baptism by immersion (unless someone is physically unable), and we sometimes conduct baptisms outdoors, where individuals can proclaim their allegiance to Jesus in public.

HOW DO I RESPOND?

Baptism is a great blessing to the family of God and to the person being baptized. It is a time to praise God for his grace in salvation and to affirm Christians in their faith. If you have made a faith-commitment to Jesus then you should consider being baptized. Prior to being baptized, we ask that individuals write out their testimony of coming to faith in Christ and meet with the Pastor or one of the elders. If you desire to be baptized, please contact the church office (919-858-8848) or the Pastor (pastor@trytrinity.org).

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON BAPTISM

The EFCA statement of faith specifies that baptism is not a means of salvation, but when observed in genuine faith, it confirms and nourishes the believer. (see Article VII, EFCA Stmt. Of Faith)

Roman Catholic View: Roman Catholic churches baptize infants because in their teaching the sacrament of baptism is a “means of grace” and is necessary for salvation. In this view the act of baptism causes regeneration, and is independent of whether or not the recipient has genuine faith. “Baptism is that sacrament in which man being washed with water in the name of the Three Divine Persons is spiritually reborn.” --Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma

Protestant-Reformed View (Infant Baptism, or Paedo-baptist view): Protestant churches such as Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal and Presbyterian baptize infants as a sign and seal of the new covenant referred to in Colossians 2:11-12. (They argue that infant baptism—baptizing the children of Christian parents—is a sign of the new covenant and is parallel to circumcision as the sign of the old covenant). “It is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace illustrating what Christ has done for his people and sealing salvation to the same. Therefore, covenant children of believing parents as well as unbaptized adult converts should be baptized.” --R Scott Clark, A Contemporary Reformed Defense of Infant Baptism

Adult or Believer’s Baptism View: Baptist churches and many other churches practice adult baptism, or believer’s baptism. This view simply says that baptism is for people who have made a profession of faith and a decision to follow Christ. They would point to the example in Acts 2:38-39 of people being baptized after they received the gospel message in faith.

What about Baptism at Trinity Community Church?

“Baptism signifies one’s union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:3-5), and the individual being baptized and the church performing the baptism are both declaring that another sinner has been forgiven of his sins and hid in Christ, having been ripped from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col 1:13-14)” --Robert E. Sagers, The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Other views: Some denominations and churches view baptism as necessary for salvation (Church of Christ), others baptize in the name of Jesus only (‘Oneness’ Pentecostalism), and some baptize infants with three immersions to symbolize the Trinity (Orthodox Churches).

Why does it matter to me? We want to make sure you understand that baptism is not what saves you. Only Jesus saves us through faith alone. The EFCA does not stipulate a certain method of baptism, but the vast majority of EFCA churches- including ours- practice adult, or believer’s baptism. However, as an individual church, and in distinction from Baptist churches, Trinity Community Church does not require baptism for membership. We encourage you to consider baptism if you have trusted in Christ for salvation and are committed to following Him.

Spiritual Gifts / Involvement in the Church

It is important that every Christian be involved in serving God in some significant manner. In order to do this, God has given each believer at least one spiritual gift. Each person also has natural abilities, personality traits, and special inclinations which give focus to this gift (or gifts). In addition, serving God well includes having a proper attitude, such as the following:

“Everything I have has been given to me by God. It is not my own, but loaned to me for my time on this earth. I am responsible for how I use it.”

With this attitude and with the resources God has given, every believer should have a place of significant ministry within the local church. A ministry or place of service is significant when there is a sense of fulfillment and joy in serving God, regardless of the ministry’s perceived importance in other people’s estimation.

To help determine our place of service, it is important to do an inventory of our abilities, personality, inclinations, etc. Considering all the elements together will assist us in finding our best areas of service.

- Natural Abilities are those tendencies an individual can develop through experience and training. What are some of your abilities which God could use in service for Him?
- Personality- Each person possesses certain personality and temperament traits which should be considered when choosing a place of ministry. What are some of your positive traits which could help you determine where to serve?

Spiritual Gifts / Involvement in the Church

- Special Inclinations- People usually have an inner compulsion to do something good.
- What things do you naturally enjoy doing which God could use in service for Him?

Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gift is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit to every believer for the purpose of serving God in a unique manner. Spiritual gifts are not Christ-like characteristics such as the "fruit of the Spirit": love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23) All Christians should exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit.

Rather, spiritual gifts are special God-given abilities for service. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift and should use it to help others. The gifts listed in the Bible are found in Romans 12:6- 8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11; and I Peter 4:10-11. The following is a brief definition of some of the gifts. After reading through the definitions, check the one(s) which may be the gift(s) God has given you.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

- ☐ Service: the special ability to identify unmet needs and be involved in meeting those needs. Teaching: the ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the Word of God.
- ☐ Prophecy: the special ability to explain and apply the Scriptures for edification and correction in a public setting.
- ☐ Leadership: the special ability to effectively set and pursue biblical goals, motivate others to do God's work, and coordinate and oversee a project to completion.
- ☐ Administration: the special ability to oversee projects, understand and implement goals, and execute effective plans to accomplish what needs to be done.
- ☐ Exhortation (or encouragement): the special ability to give words of comfort, consolation, counsel and encouragement to others in such a way that they feel helped.
- ☐ Shepherding: the special ability to care for the spiritual needs of a group of people and to oversee their growth in Christ.
- ☐ Giving: the special ability to earn money, to manage it effectively, and to give wisely, liberally and cheerfully to the Lord's work.
- ☐ Helps: the special ability to assist others so that their ministries and gifts will be more effective.
- ☐ Mercy: the unique quality of having deep empathy for individuals who are suffering and of being involved in alleviating the suffering in a spirit of compassion and love.
- ☐ Hospitality: the special love for people, providing an open home for those in need of food, lodging, and/or fellowship.
- ☐ Evangelism: the special ability to effectively present the gospel and lead people to salvation in Christ.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

- ☐ Knowledge: the special ability to think analytically and objectively in mastering the contents of the Scriptures.
- ☐ Discernment: the unique ability to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil, the Spirit of God, and demonic influences.
- ☐ Faith: the unusual ability to trust in the promises and the power of God and to see results in acting upon this trust.
- ☐ Wisdom: the unusual ability to apply scriptural principles to complex issues or situations.

Note: There are many fine courses which can be taken to understand the various aspects of spiritual gifts. Your church may have a class of this nature or have "inventories" which can be taken to further assist in identifying spiritual gifts.

Christian Service Inventory

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

How would you like to serve?

God has given us a wide variety of gifts and abilities to be used in the life of the church. Please let us know the areas of service that interest you and/or you have experience in. Checking a box helps the church speak with you about the opportunities that match your interests and gifts.

Worship & Sunday Services

- ☐ Worship Team (Vocal)
- ☐ Instrumental Music
- ☐ Audio / Sound
- ☐ Computer & Projections
- ☐ Usher
- ☐ Communion Preparation
- ☐ Choir
- ☐ Special Music / Soloist

Hospitality & Fellowship

- ☐ Greeter
- ☐ Hospitality Team
- ☐ Fellowship Events
- ☐ Refreshments / Meals
- ☐ Women's Ministry
- ☐ Men's Ministry
- ☐ Prayer Ministry

Christian Service Inventory
Administration & Operations

- ☐ Administrative Support
- ☐ Church Newsletter / Bulletin
- ☐ Publicity, Graphics & Social Media
- ☐ Website / Technology Support
- ☐ Finance Team
- ☐ Buildings & Grounds
- ☐ Beautification Team
- ☐ Archives / History

Care & Support Ministries

- ☐ Counseling / Encouragement
- ☐ Grief Support
- ☐ Divorce Recovery
- ☐ Addiction Recovery Support
- ☐ Financial Guidance
- ☐ Prayer & Care Ministry

Outreach & Community Care

- ☐ Evangelism
- ☐ Visitation
- ☐ Follow-Up Ministry
- ☐ Home Bible Studies
- ☐ Nursing Home Ministry
- ☐ Transportation Ministry
- ☐ Missions / Mission Trips
- ☐ Hospital Visitation
- ☐ Benevolence Ministry
- ☐ Home Repair / Practical Assistance

Leadership & Oversight

- ☐ Elder
- ☐ Deacon
- ☐ Deaconess
- ☐ Committee Leadership
- ☐ Other Leadership Opportunities

My top three ministry interests are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Skills, experience, hobbies, or professional expertise I would be willing to share:

Anything else you'd like us to know?

Membership Application**Trinity Community Church- EFCA Cary, North Carolina**

Having received Christ as my personal Savior and Lord, and desiring to be active and support the ministries of this church, I hereby apply for membership.

Today's Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Occupation _____

Date of Birth _____

Employer _____

Phone _____

Marital Status:

Email _____

- ☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Divorced
☐ Remarried
☐ Widowed

Members of immediate family: (relationship and age)

How did you come to faith in Christ as your Savior? (Use an additional sheet if needed.)

What scriptures give you assurance of your salvation?

Have you been baptized? _____ When? _____

If not, do you wish to be? _____

Do you presently hold membership in another church? _____

*For Office Use**Interviewed for Membership _____ Recommended for Membership _____**Pastor & Elder Signatures _____*

Trinity Community Church-EFCA**Membership Covenant**

I commit myself to this covenant as a fellow believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and a member of Trinity Community Church in Cary NC.

- *To live daily to please the Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Cor. 6:10, 19-20; Romans 6:13, Col. 3:1-17).*
- *To seek the Lord in regular personal prayer, worship, Bible reading, and confession (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Col. 4:2, 1 Pet. 4:7, 1 Thess. 5:17, Psalm 119:9-11, Hebrews 10:25).*
- *To be supportive of the leadership, people, and ministries of the church (1 Pet. 4:8, Acts 2:42-47)*
- *To hold the non-essentials of the faith with a spirit of charity, and allow others Christian liberty on issues the Bible does not make absolute. (Romans 14:1-5)*
- *To pray on a regular basis for the needs of fellow believers, for the leaders and ministries of the church, for the salvation of family and friends, and for the building of God's kingdom. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*
- *To be accountable to the other members and leadership of this church for any sins or conflicts which may need correction, and when required, submit to appropriate discipline by the elders. (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, Matthew 18:15-17)*
- *To support the church through joyful, generous, and proportionate giving of tithes or offerings (2 Corinthians 9:7, Malachi 3:8-10)*
- *To use my God-given gifts for the building-up of the church, to participate faithfully-as much as possible-in worship and prayer services, and in the process of congregational government. (1 Corinthians 12:7, 1 Peter 2:9).*

I have read and understand the church Statement of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws. I acknowledge the Statement of Faith and pledge not to contradict it. I will endeavor to fulfill the responsibilities of this covenant and will abide by the by-laws and constitution of the church. (If you have any reservation about the Statement of Faith, please explain below)

Signature: _____

Date: _____