

7-17-22

*This pastor decided to skip church one Sunday morning and go play golf. He told his assistant that he wasn't feeling well. He drove to a golf course in another city, so nobody would know him. He teed off on the first hole. A huge gust of wind caught his ball, carried it an extra hundred yards and dropped it right in the hole, for a 450 yard hole in one. An angel looked at God and said "What'd you do that for?" God smiled and said "Who's he going to tell?"*

Pray

What a great weekend here at First Church. Last night's parking lot jam, brought 71 people to our church. I'm a big fan of interdenominational sharing and during the concert, I asked people to share the different churches in attendance. I quit counting at 7 and I think many people were surprised. Jim D. also indicated that some of our neighbors came.

I'd like to say a special thank you for this tremendous outreach to our neighbors. As Christians, it's important to see that people from different churches can enjoy each other's company. I do believe it brings tremendous joy to Christ and Jesus wants His children to be Unified and willing to be friends.

Earlier this week, I met with Jeanine and Brett to discuss their church membership. It helped them with understanding how much the church would like for them to become members. We had a great time talking about how much the church means to all of us. (Invite Jeanine and Brett to come forward)

Jeanine and Brett have some very special talents. These gifts will be very helpful for bringing Christ to the lost. When we use our gifts and talents for the Glory of God, great things happen. One gift that I learned about Jeanine is that she's a great writer. For years, she's been writing and has a collection of letters.

Last night she handed me a note that she wrote to God. One of Brett's gifts is photography. He volunteered to come last night and he captured the event on film. These pictures will be used in our website and they'll provide some really nice memories for all of us.

It reminds me of 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27. Verse 12 starts by saying, **12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by [e] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.** 15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, **25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**

In the denominations website, in section 300 of the discipline, there are 8 questions that pertain to membership. 7 questions are for those who would like to become new members and one is directed towards the congregation.

When I met with Jeanine and Brett, I asked them these questions and reviewed their meanings. I'm going to ask them these same 7 questions today. After they have a chance to answer, I'll be asking the church the 8th question.

### **300.1.1. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS**

Dear Friends in Christ: By presenting yourself (selves) before us today you are giving a public testimony that you are professing personal faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. We rejoice with you that by this outward act you show that you have repented of your sins and trusted in Him for forgiveness of sin, newness of life, and hope for eternity. The moment you personally received Christ you became (a) member(s) of the Body of Christ, the church universal (Ephesians 2). Now you are presenting yourself (selves) before the Lord of the church, and us as members of this congregation, in order

to become fellow- member(s) of this body of believers. We are strengthened by hearing your public declaration of this purpose. We believe you also will be strengthened as you affirmatively answer the questions that follow:

1. We are a congregation affiliated with the Evangelical Congregational Church. We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Do you believe this and that only in these Divine writings of the bible, do we find the Christian message of salvation? If so, please answer: “YES, I DO BELIEVE THIS.”
2. You have heard the scriptural teachings regarding your need of the saving acts of Jesus Christ: His perfect life, His sacrificial death, and His defeat of death by His resurrection. By presenting yourself (selves) today in this place you are professing personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Is this your profession? If so, please answer: “YES, I HAVE PUT MY TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD.”
3. When the Lord gave the church her commission, He said we should “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). A disciple is one who is seeking to pattern his/her life on his/her Savior’s. Are you sincerely seeking to be a disciple, and live as Jesus would have you live? If so, answer: “I AM DETERMINED, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST.”
4. The Christian is called upon to give expression of his/her gratitude for the blessings of God by returning his/her entire life to the Lord for His use. Will you therefore seek to accept faithfully the responsibility to use the gifts God has given you? If so, answer: “YES, I WILL.”
5. The Bible itself, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit, is our standard of Christian life and practice, and the denomination’s *Discipline* seeks to be a faithful interpretation of scriptural standards of the Christian life. Are you willing to seek and to live by the teachings of the Bible as the Spirit guides you, and will you seek to contribute to the harmony of the local church by following the *Discipline*? If so, answer: “I WILL, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.”
6. Will you seek to be faithful by attendance, and participate in public worship, fellowship, study, and service opportunities of this congregation? If so, answer: “YES, I WILL, AS GOD ENABLES ME.”
7. Have you been baptized? If so, answer: “YES.”
8. To members of this congregation: Do you welcome these believers into our fellowship and care? If so, answer: “WE DO.”

Pray

Hebrews 13:3

**13 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. 2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. 3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.** What do you think about when you hear Angels? I think about God, heaven and about the things in heaven. It makes me think about all the beauty and splendor. It makes me think about Revelations 21 says this: **21 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. **4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” 5** He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”

## In Revelations 21 it says about The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb

**10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. **11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16** The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia<sup>[c]</sup> in length, and as wide and high as it is long. **17** The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits<sup>[d]</sup> thick.<sup>[e]</sup>**18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.[f]****21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.**

Picturing heaven and hearing how John spoke with angels should make us rejoice.

Today, we're partaking in the Lord's supper. It's only through the sacrifice of Christ that we'll be able to see Heaven or to experience Angels like John did. Heaven is **only** for the believer. Anyone who by "Faith" believes that Jesus died for their sins needs to partake in communion.

In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus tell us why we should break bread and drink the blood. **Matthew 26:26** While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "**Take and eat; this is my body.**" **27** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "**Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the[b] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**" **29** I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Mark 14: **22** While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "**Take it; this is my body.**" **23** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. **24 "This is my blood of the[c] covenant, which is poured out for many,"** he said this to His believers.

I really like how Luke writes about the Lord's supper. In Luke 22: **14** When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. **15** And he said to them, "**I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.**" **17** After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "**Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.**" **19** And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**" **20** In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.[a]**" **21** But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. **22** The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!" **23** They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. **24** A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. **25** Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. **26** But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. **27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

"Wow", How blessed are we? Jesus came to serve us so we can be with Him in heaven.

Even in **I Corinthians 11:23–25 Paul writes:** The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,**24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "**This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.**"**25** In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.**" **26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27** So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. **29** For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Generation after generation after generation teaches this same doctrine. His body and His blood was shed for our sin and presents us pure to God. Sin is what separates us from God and in John 3:16 we know **16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**