

Becoming A Member

To us, membership is much more than a formality or a means of keeping records. By receiving people into membership, we are affirming as a church that we have not only heard them say they know Christ, but have also seen evidence of His saving work in their lives. Before we can welcome you into membership, we must be confident that your profession of faith in Christ is credible and that you have been baptized.

What do you mean by saying my profession of faith must be “credible”?

We mean first of all that your profession of faith in Christ must be based on biblical truth. There are many people who would say that they believe in Jesus, yet biblically they could not be considered Christians. They may have a false understanding of who Jesus is, or they may misunderstand the nature of saving faith in Him. Before we can welcome a person into membership, we seek to confirm that your understanding of these things is according to God’s Word.

Secondly, in order for a profession of faith to be credible, it must be characterized by repentance: an eagerness to turn from sin and live in obedience to the commands of Christ. We know that no one will live the Christian life perfectly, but the Bible tells us that a person who claims to be a Christian, yet does not obey Christ, “is a liar and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

We need to get to know you for a time before we can see that your profession of faith is credible in these two ways. We haven’t set any particular timeframe for membership. We simply want to be careful, prayerful, and reasonable, considering each prospective member as an individual.

What type of baptism do you require?

We practice and ordinarily require baptism by immersion upon a credible confession of faith in Jesus Christ. We believe this best reflects the pattern and meaning of baptism presented in the New Testament: identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and public entrance into the covenant community.

We recognize that faithful Christian churches differ on the proper subjects and mode of baptism. While we do not practice infant baptism or baptism by sprinkling or pouring, we seek to speak charitably of brothers and sisters who hold those convictions. For purposes of baptism and membership in our church, we ask those who have not been baptized as believers by immersion to receive baptism in this manner.

The elders will also consider the circumstances of an applicant’s baptism, including whether it was administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and in connection with a credible profession of the Christian faith. This is not intended to make unnecessary judgments about other churches, but to ensure that those received into membership have received Christian baptism and affirm the essential truths of the gospel.

What else is involved in becoming a member?

We do not have a membership class. Instead, we ask that you get to know us and learn what will be expected of you as a member by reading our church's foundational documents:

1. Our statement of faith, the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith
2. Our church constitution (and the church covenant contained in it)
3. Restoring Those Who Fall (our statement regarding church discipline)

We also ordinarily ask you to complete the course "Fundamentals of the Faith," and discuss it with our elders.

Please read the documents listed above before completing the Petition for Membership below. We do not expect every member to understand or agree with every conviction expressed in our statement of faith and governing documents.

We do, however, believe that certain doctrines are essential to the Christian faith and that members should understand the convictions, practices, and expectations of this church. Those joining Calvary should be willing to pursue the peace, unity, and purity of the church, while maintaining a humble and teachable spirit as we seek together to grow in our understanding and obedience to Scripture.

Once you believe the Lord is leading you to pursue membership at Calvary, please complete and submit the Petition for Membership. The information you provide will help the elders become acquainted with you, understand your profession of faith, and serve you more faithfully. Personal information shared in the petition will be treated confidentially and shared only among the elders as needed for the membership process.

After the elders have reviewed your petition, you will meet with at least two elders. This conversation gives you an opportunity to ask questions about the church's doctrine, practices, and expectations, and it allows the elders to discuss your petition with you personally.

When one of our elders has reviewed your Petition for Membership, gotten to know you personally, and received any necessary input from others who know you well, he will present your petition to the elders of Calvary. With the agreement of all the elders, you will be presented to the members of Calvary. After sharing your personal testimony, you will be asked to make a verbal confession of faith and commitment to membership by answering the questions in Confession and Commitment. Then, when you have signed our membership agreement, you will be a member of Calvary.

Calvary Baptist Church Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthdate: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Check all that apply: ☐ single ☐ widow(er) ☐ divorced ☐ married

Occupation: _____

1. Are you trusting in the Jesus Christ as your only Savior from sin and death?
2. Are you submitted to Jesus Christ as the Master of your life?
3. How long have you known Him as your Savior?
4. Do your authorities (husband / parents) approve of your desire to join Calvary?
5. Have you been baptized by immersion since you were saved?
6. Have you read and are you in agreement with the statement of faith and constitution of our church?
7. Do you understand that membership at Calvary Baptist Church involves a primary commitment to this local body, including regular participation and service, and that you are expected to relinquish your membership in any other local church?
8. Which ministries are you interested in becoming involved with in our church?

Please list the last three churches you have attended:

Petition for Membership

I desire to be considered for membership at Calvary Baptist Church of Lafayette, Tennessee. I have read the *Church Covenant* and believe it accurately reflects Christ's calling for his people. I understand that, as a member of Calvary, I am expected to pursue the commitments expressed in that covenant.

I have also had the opportunity to review the *1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith*, which expresses the church's doctrinal commitments. While I may not fully understand or agree with every point, I am generally aligned with its teaching and am willing to pursue the peace, unity, and purity of the church with a humble and teachable spirit.

I know that no local church will ever be perfect, but I believe Calvary Baptist is a true church, organized and governed according to the commands and example of the New Testament, and in obedience to Christ its Head.

I have read *Becoming a Member* and understand that submitting this petition begins the membership process; it does not guarantee acceptance into membership. I affirm that the information and responses provided in this petition (and in related conversations with the elders) are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Your signature: _____

Date: _____