

The Koinonia

July 2008

Volume 2, Issue 7

Coming Events

July 2008

July 4

Picnic at Pastor's home,
4:00

July 6

Arden Courts, 2:00

July 7

Session Meeting, 6:00

July 14 - 18

Vacation Bible School

July 27

Psalm Sing & Lunch

August 2008

August 2

Church Work Day

August 3

Arden Courts, 2:00

August 4

Session Meeting, 6:00

August 31

Psalm Sing & Lunch

Over the years I have fielded the question, "Why should I join a church?" a number of times. For this reason I believe this article by Dr. Leithart is quite relevant. Maybe this question is yours even though you are a member of a church. Possibly you have friends or family members who have asked you why they, as those who claim to know Christ, should join a church. This article gives a brief overview of why membership in a local church is not only important but a biblical necessity. I hope that it will help answer your own questions as well as questions posed to you by others.

--Pastor

Why Should I Join A Church?

--Rev. Peter J. Leithart

The Church is not in good shape. Nearly every week we hear about another prominent Christian leader who has fallen into scandalous sin. Many shepherds feed their flocks a diet of baby food, if not outright poison. Few Churches celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly, and few Christians appreciate its importance.

In the face of these facts, we can ask the question in the title of this essay with great urgency. Does God really require that I join a local Church? Do I really need to take formal vows of Church membership?

We believe that the answer to both questions is, Yes. Membership in a local congregation of Christ's Church is not an option. Christians should join a local Church, and their effectiveness as Christians suffers if they do not. The following are biblical reasons for joining a local congregation.

God commands us to meet together to worship before Him.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to meet at the sanctuary three times a year to celebrate feasts

(Ex. 23:14; Deuteronomy 16:16). In addition, they met every Sabbath in a "holy convocation" (Lev. 23:3). In the New Testament, God's people are again commanded to assemble to worship their Lord (Heb. 10:25). There are no solitary Christians in the Bible; God always calls those He loves into a community.

God commands us to submit to the authority of His representatives, the elders of a local Church.

The apostles set up an organized government for the Church. The community of God's people is an organized community. Paul instructed Titus to appoint elders in each city (Tit. 1:5). Throughout the book of Acts, we find references to these rulers of local Churches (Acts 11:30; 15:2ff.; 16:4; 20:17ff.) Hebrews 13:17

instructs us to obey the leaders who keep watch over our souls. Clearly, this verse refers to the elders of a local Church. If God wants us to submit to the authority of a local Church government, He surely wants us to join a local Church. Otherwise, who keeps watch for our souls? Who warns us when we stumble?



In the Lord's Supper, we share in the body and blood of Christ.

We have no life in ourselves. Christ is our life (Col. 3:4). Whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life, and will be raised, because His flesh is true food and His blood is true drink. By eating the flesh and blood of Christ we abide in Him, and He abides in us (John 6:52-56). The bread we break and the cup we drink at the Lord's Table is a sharing in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). Faithful participation in the Lord's Supper is the source of our life. Moreover, when the Church eats the one bread, it shows itself to be one Body. Just as full citizenship in Israel was marked by participation in the Passover, so citizenship in the One

--continued page 2

Sunday School Fall 2008

Next fall we will begin a curriculum in our graded Sunday School classes that will be beneficial to both teachers and students. The nature of this curriculum is to take our children through all sixty-six books of the Bible throughout their graded Sunday School years, giving them a grasp on the big picture of the Scriptures as well as understanding each book. The curriculum is well laid out and ready made for a teacher to step in and teach it.

John Super is assisting in the organization of our Sunday School for the fall. If you are interested in teaching and want to see a little more of what we are planning to do, please contact him.

--Why Should I Join A Church continued

Church is marked by participation in the Lord's Supper.

The Church, through its leaders, has power to admit people to and to exclude them from the Lord's Supper.

This is shown in the fact that the most serious Church censure is ex-communication, that is, exclusion from communion at the Table of the Lord. Jesus gave the apostles stewardship of the keys of the Kingdom (Mt. 16:13-20; 18:15-20). This power was granted to the Church, and is exercised in Christ's name and in His place by the courts of elders of the Church (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 6:1-4). In order to eat from the Table, one must be admitted by the elders.

The Church is a covenant community.

When Peter described the Church in his first epistle, he quoted several phrases from the Old Testament, all of which describe the covenant relationship between God and His people (1 Pet. 2:9-10). Just as Israel became God's people through the covenant at Sinai (Dt. 5:2-3), so also the Church was constituted God's covenant people by the covenant sealed with blood on Calvary.

Admission to the covenant community is by vow.

In the Old Covenant, Israelites were admitted to the privileges of the covenant by circumcision, and in the New Covenant, admission to the Church is by baptism. Both circumcision and baptism are, among other things, vows of allegiance to God and to His people (e.g., Acts 8:37). Many people today, however, do not remain in the Church in which they were baptized, and some go for years without being a member of any Church. It is appropriate, therefore, when one attaches himself to a new local body, to reaffirm publicly the vows taken in baptism.

Finally, to show that this view of the importance of Church membership is the historical Reformed and Presbyterian view, let me end with two quotations:

From the Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV.22:

"The visible church . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

From John Calvin, Institutes IV.1.4:

". . . because it is now our intention to discuss the visible church, let us learn even from the simple title 'mother' how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her [i.e., the Church]. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless

she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like angels. Our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives" [emphasis added].

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We should strive, then, not only to make sure that our names are enrolled in heaven, but also to have them inscribed on the gates of the earthly Zion (Heb. 12:23). †

Taken from Biblical Horizons, no. 12, April 1990.

www.biblicalhorizons.com

Used with permission.

Happy Birthday

Anita Bartles
July 4

Dan Martin
July 4

Andrew Weeks
July 6

Susan Smith
July 9

Janet Atkins
July 12

Brittnee Holbrook
July 15

Lance Harris
July 17

Greg Lee
July 17

Diane Morton
July 22

Catherine Thibaudeau
July 28

Eddie McKinney
July 29

Shepherding Groups

Martin Group

McClurkin Family
Harris Family
John Melton
Ted Thomas Family
Bold Family
Martini Family

Carswell Group

Mitchell Family
McKinney Family
Bartles Family
Poston Family
Brooks Family
Dick Family
Dan Martin
Stephen Martin
Sumner Family

Melton Group

Clark Family
Holbrook Family
Super Family
Dielman Family
Hall Family
Anderson Family
Mark Franklin

Morton Group

Atkins Family
Thibaudeau Family
Arica Cerro
Shelburne Family
Weeks Family
Ben Allen Family
Greg Lee

Happy Anniversary

Lance & Patty Harris
July 20

John & Lynda Weeks
July 21

Ken & Janet Atkins
July 23

The Koinonia is the monthly newsletter of Community Presbyterian Church. Any announcements or church group photos should be submitted by the 20th of each month.

Peru Mission

Rev. Wes Baker will be the guest speaker at our Fall Feast in October. He and his family are from New Braunfels, TX but live and work in Trujillo, Peru. He teaches in the seminary, mentors ministerial candidates and church planters, and is assistant editor of publications. Wes is an ordained Teaching Elder in the PCA.

The Bakers have just returned to the United States for Home Missionary Assignment. Pray for their family's stamina (spiritually, emotionally, and physically) while they travel and share with churches around the country about the work in Peru.



The Baker Family

Information and picture taken from the Baker family blog and from the Peru Mission website (<http://www.perumission.org>)

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

13902 Factory Lane, Louisville, KY 40245

Phone: (502) 241-6600

www.communitypca.org