

# WELCOME TO RABBIT CREEK CHURCH MEMBERSHIP CLASS

## Session One

I am glad that you have chosen to find out more about Rabbit Creek Church. This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to explain our church identity.

### THE AIM OF THIS CLASS IS TO:

- Communicate the importance of committing yourself to Christ and growing in Him.
- Communicate the purpose and identity of Rabbit Creek Church and offer you the opportunity to join this family of faith.

*So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.* Eph. 2:19 (NLT)

### Key Truths:

1. The church is a **family**.
2. God expects you to be **part** of a church family.

## WHAT UNITES RABBIT CREEK CHURCH?

### Three things:

- Salvation (What God has done for us)
- Statements (Why we exist as a church)
- Strategy (How we fulfill our purpose)

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### Salvation and Statements

- What it Means to be a Christian
- The Symbols of Salvation: Baptism and Communion
- Our Purpose Statement
- Our Faith Statement
- Our Lifestyle Statement

### Strategy

- Our History
- Our Worship Style
- Our Structure
- Our Lead Ministry Team
- Our Affiliation
- Our Membership
- Our Covenant

## **Salvation**

*So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ.*

Galatians 3:26-28 (NIV)

## What does it mean to be a Christian?

The most basic question a person can ask is, "What is the meaning of my life?"

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q: What is the Chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

### Why am I here?

1. God made me to **glorify** Him.

*I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.* Psalm 9:1-2 (NIV)

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

*If anyone speaks, they should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.* 1 Peter 4:11 (NIV)

*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.* Romans 11:36 (NIV)

2. God made me to **love** me!

*The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness..."* Jeremiah 31:3  
(NIV)

*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—*  
Ephesians 1:45 (NIV)

3. We were created in God's image to **enjoy** a personal relationship with Him. This makes us special!

*So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

Genesis 1:27-28 (NIV)

*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*  
1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV)

*Jesus said “. . . The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

John 10:10 (NIV)

See also Psalm 8.

## What is the problem?

We have a desire to **rebel** and ignore God's principles for living.  
"It's my life and I'll do what I please."

The Bible calls this attitude **sin**.

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*  
Isaiah 53:6 (NIV)

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*  
1 John 1:8 (NIV)

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*  
Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)

Sin breaks our close relationship with God.

*But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*  
Isaiah 59:2 (NIV)

*. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .*  
Romans 3:23 (NIV)

When people have problems they often try many ways of coping before turning to God.

*There is a way that appears to be right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death.*  
Proverbs 16:25 (NIV)



## What is the solution?

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6 (NIV)

God came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come and die. The Way is Jesus!

Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 6:23 (NIV)

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:8 (NIV)

*For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus . . .* 1 Timothy 2:5 (NIV)

God has already done His part to restore our relationship with Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us individually to accept what He has done for us.

## What does God invite me to do?

1. **Believe** that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose again.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 6:23 (NIV)

*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*

Acts 4:12 (NIV)

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:9 (NIV)

2. **Confess** that Jesus is Lord.

*That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Romans 10:9 (NIV)

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

John 1:12-13 (NIV)

### Prayer Example:

"Dear Jesus, thank You for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored You and gone my own way. I realize I need You in my life and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask You to forgive me. Thank You for dying on the cross for me. I want to follow and trust You. Please come into my life and make me a new person. I accept Your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow as a Christian."

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Romans 10:13 (NIV)

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

Matthew 7:21 (NIV)

## The Symbols of Salvation: Baptism and Communion

### Baptism:

Why should I be baptized?

1. To follow the example set by **Christ**.

*At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.* Mark 1:9 (NIV)

2. Because Christ **commands** it.

*“ . . . Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*  
Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

3. I demonstrate and celebrate that I am a **Christian**.

*Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.* Acts 18:8 (NIV)

## What does Baptism mean?

1. It illustrates Christ's **death** and resurrection.

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures . . .* 1 Corinthians 15:34 (NIV)

*. . . having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.* Colossians 2:12 (NIV)

2. It illustrates my **new life** as a Christian.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

*We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.* Romans 6:4 (NIV)

Baptism doesn't make you a believer, it shows that you already believe. Baptism does not "save" you. Christ does that as you place your faith in Him. Baptism is like a wedding ring. It is an outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.* Ephesians 2:89 (NIV)

## Why be baptized by immersion?

1. **Jesus** set the example.

*As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.*

Matthew 3:16 (NIV)

2. The **New Testament** Christians practiced baptism by immersion.
3. The word baptize means "to immerse in water."  
The Greek word "baptizo" means "to immerse or dip under water."
4. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection.

## Who should be baptized?

Every person who has **believed** in Christ.

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.* Acts 2:41 (NIV)

*Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.*  
Acts 8:13 (NIV)

*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.* Acts 8:12 (NIV)

At Rabbit Creek Church, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of salvation and baptism before we baptize them.

At Rabbit Creek Church, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated.

## **When Should I be Baptized?**

As soon as you have believed!

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41 (NIV)*

*Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" Acts 8:35-36 (NIV)*

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait till you are "perfect," you'll never feel "good enough!"

Confession of Faith

“Jesus is Lord.”

Romans 10:9 (NIV)

## Communion (Lord's Supper)

Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His death and resurrection. The most visible reminder that we have of His death is the Lord's Supper. It is an ordinance that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

What is the Lord's Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

1. It is an act of **remembrance**.  
*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 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."*  
1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (NIV)
2. It is an act of **proclamation**.  
*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* 1 Corinthians 11:26 (NIV)
3. Lord's Supper / Eucharist / Communion  
↓ ↓ ↓  
"Lord's" "Give Thanks" "Participation"

Who should take the Lord's Supper?

Those who are already **followers of Christ**. (Mark 14:22-26)

At Rabbit Creek Church, we practice what is called **open** Communion.

How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

*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. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.* 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 (NIV)

## How can I get involved? “Everyday, Ordinary Life”

Show up:

- Go on **Mission**
- **Pray**
- **Volunteer** (Student’s, Children’s, Worship Team, Greeters, Etc.)
- Join a **Small Group**

## Statements

### The Rabbit Creek Church Statements

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV)

## Our Purpose Statement

Equipping people to live their everyday life for Christ.

### Our Guiding Verses

*So, here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

Romans 12:1-2 (MSG)

### The Great Commandment

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)

### The Great Commission

*Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

## Our Faith Statement What We Believe

- It starts and ends with love. (1 Corinthians 13)
- In essential beliefs, we have **unity**.

*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV)

- In non-essential beliefs, we have **liberty**.  
*Accept him whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.*

*Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*

*So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.*

*So, whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.*

Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22 (NIV)

## The Essentials We Believe

### 1. About God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22

1 Peter 1:2

Psalm 90:2

2 Corinthians 13:14

Matthew 28:19

### 2. About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead on the third day to demonstrate his power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23

Romans 1:3, 4

Isaiah 9:6

Acts 1:9-11

John 1:1-5; 14:10-30

1 Timothy 6:14, 15

Hebrews 4:14, 15

Titus 2:13

1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

### 3. About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make us aware of our need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Ephesians 1:13

John 16:7-13; 14:16-17

Galatians 5:25

Acts 1:8

Ephesians 5:18

1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16

4. About the Bible

The Bible is God's word. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error, for its matter. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16

Psalm 119:105, 12:6

2 Peter 1:20, 21

Proverbs 30:5

2 Timothy 1:13

5. About Humankind

All people are made in the spiritual image of God to be like Him in character. They are the supreme object of God's creation. Because of our sin, we have separated ourselves from God and live with the disposition to sin.

Genesis 1:27

Romans 3:23

Psalm 8:3-6

Isaiah 59:1,2

Isaiah 53:6a

6. About Salvation

Salvation is a gift from God. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can we be saved from sin's penalty. Living in salvation begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ by faith and turns from sin in sincere repentance.

Romans 6:23

Ephesians 2:8,9

John 14:6; 1:12

Titus 3:5

Galatians 3:26

Romans 5:1



## Our Lifestyle Statement

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on what the Bible teaches, we follow seven practices:

Bible as our sole authority

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

Since God's Word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority, we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is "What does the Bible say?" We teach the importance of daily Bible reading, Bible study, and Bible memorization. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

Autonomy of each local church

*Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.*

Colossians 1:18 (NLT)

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe every local church should be self-governing and independent from any denominational control.

Priesthood of every believer

*He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. Revelation 1:6 (NLT)*

*You are royal priests a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*

1 Peter 2:9b-c (NLT)

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to "full time" Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading.

### Tithing/Giving

*One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy.*

Leviticus 27:30 (NLT)

At Rabbit Creek Church, we practice tithing for the support of Christ's Body, the church, as God commands. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the biblical standard of giving.

See also: reverse of page

### Believer's Baptism

*We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Romans 6:4 (NIV)

We practice baptism by immersion -- the way Jesus was baptized, and the way the Bible commands.

### Spirit-led living

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5 (NIV)

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God's power within us. So, we seek to practice a daily dependence on God's Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

See also: Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 5:18

### Telling others about Christ

*. . . you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.*

1 Peter 3:15(NLT)

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with others.  
We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.