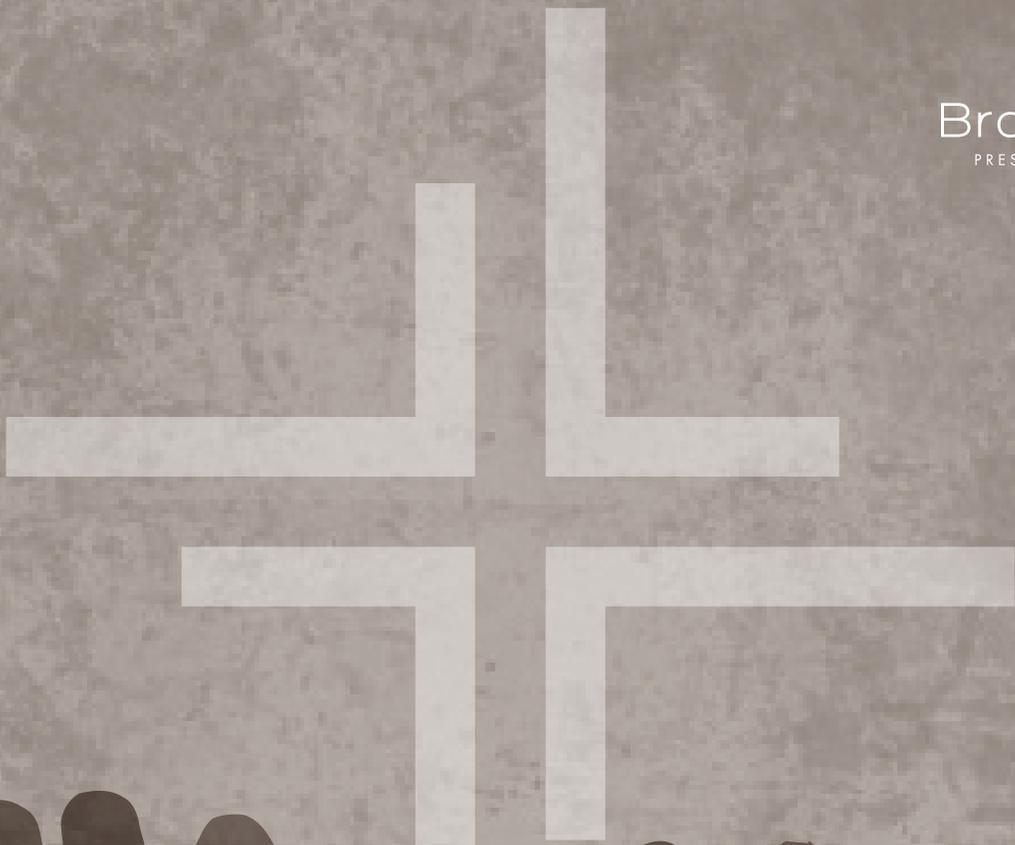




Brookhaven  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Brookhaven

MEMBERSHIP  
CLASS

Class Two

# CHECKLIST

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## READING

### Class 1

- Why Church Matters

### Class 2

- Westminster Confession of Faith (our church's constitution)
- The Apostles Creed
- BPC Ministry Plan
- BPC Budget

## WRITING

- Complete Application

## OTHER

- Attendance for 6 months
- Elder interview
- 2 member references

## MEMBERSHIP VOWS

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These are the vows you will take in order to become a member of BPC.

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure, and without hope save in his sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

## CLASS 2 OVERVIEW

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### PART **01**

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#### Ecclesiology

*Pages 4-11*

- A. The Problem of American Christianity
  - History
  - Upsides & Downsides
- B. The Solution
  - For Denominations
    - BPC Government Structure (Polity)
  - For Individuals
    - Benefits & Responsibilities
    - Healthy Leaving
    - Church Discipline

### PART **02**

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#### BPC Theological Distinctives

*Pages 12-13*

- A. Theological Distinctives

# PART 01 Ecclesiology

The study of the church or “Why is membership so important?”

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“Jack and Grace met through a mutual friend. From day one they seemed to be the perfect match. Grace was everything Jack had always wanted. She was beautiful, outgoing, and caring—always there when Jack needed her.

For the first five months they were inseparable. Jack could hardly think of anything but Grace. He didn’t need to look further, he told friends. “She’s the one.”

Now almost three years have passed. Jack still enjoys the comfort and familiarity of being with Grace, but the spark is gone. Grace’s flaws seem more obvious. He’s not sure he finds her as attractive as he once did. And he’s beginning to resent all the time she wants to spend with him.

One night, when she asks if they can define the nature of their relationship, Jack blows up. “We’re together, aren’t we?” he asked angrily. “Why isn’t that enough for you?”

Obviously, Jack isn’t ready for commitment. And it’s unclear if he ever will be...

Have you ever been in a relationship like this? I’m writing this book because I believe God has something better for you. He wants you in a relationship defined by both passion and commitment. But before you can take hold of this wonderful plan, you need to know something about this couple. There are millions of Jacks walking around today. And Grace isn’t a girl. Grace is a church.”

-from Why Church Matters by Josh Harris

# The Problem of American Christianity

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## 1. A Little American Church History

The story of American Christianity is the story of the application of the principle of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, with all the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that entails.

Lorenzo Dow: “If all men are ‘born equal,’ and endowed with unalienable rights by their creator, in the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—then there can be no just reason, as a cause, why he may or should not think, and judge, and act for himself in matters of religion, opinion, and private judgment.”

Joseph Smith: “Let us be republicans indeed. Many are republicans as to government, and yet are but half republicans, being in matters of religion still bound to a catechism, creed, covenant, or a superstitious priest. Venture to be as independent in things of religion, as those which respect the government in which you live.”

“The American Revolution is the most crucial event in American history...Above all, [it] dramatically expanded the circle of people who considered themselves capable of thinking for themselves about issues of freedom, equality, sovereignty, and representation. Respect for authority, tradition, station, and education eroded...In time, public opinion came to assume normative significance, and leaders, could not survive who would not, to use Patrick Henry’s phrase, ‘bow with utmost deference to the majesty of the people’...The [American Revolution] left as indelible an imprint upon the structures of American Christianity as it did upon those of American political life.”

“The rise of evangelical Christianity in the early republic is, in some measure, a story of the success of common people in shaping the culture after their own priorities rather than the priorities outlined by gentlemen such as the framers of the Constitution...Leaders without formal training (Barton Stone, the Christian; William Miller, the Adventist; Francis Asbury, the Methodist; John Leland, the Baptist; Richard Allen, the African Methodist Episcopal; and Joseph Smith, the Latter-Day Saint) went outside normal denominational frameworks to develop large followings by the democratic art of persuasion.

In 1776, John Adams posed the question that would preoccupy his generation of Americans and the next. ‘It is certain, in theory,’ he mused, ‘that the only moral foundation of government is, the consent of the people. But to what extent shall we carry this principle?’

-from The Democratization of American Christianity by Nathan Hatch

## 2. Virtues of Democratization

1. Ordinary Christians are not forced to put up with \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Personal \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of American Christianity

“For all this fragmentation, one could not have designed a system more capable of Christianizing a people in all of its social, geographic, and ethnic diversity. The collective dynamism of these groups is related to the degree of pluralism and dissent that they represent and to their ability to communicate with a variety of persons high and low, rich and poor, urban and rural, slave and free.” –Hatch

### 3. Vices of Democratization

1. The Christian church in America, though \_\_\_\_\_, may be a pop-version that is weaker in \_\_\_\_\_ than historic Christianity.

“America’s problem isn’t too much religion, or too little of it. It’s bad religion: the slow-motion collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities in its place.” -Douthat, Bad Religion

2. American Christians have a tendency to see themselves as \_\_\_\_\_ over the church (and therefore God), rather than vice-versa.

Therefore, the problem with American Christianity is the lack of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ within and to the church.

## The Solution

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### What is the Solution?

The biblical solution to this problem for churches and individuals alike is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:31

“Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution.” 1 Peter 2:13

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good.” Romans 13:1-4

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning.” Hebrews 13:17

How does submission to authority minimize and alleviate the problems of democratic Christianity?

Theologically, why is submission to authority so important?

### 1. Submission to Authority for Churches

Submission to authority for churches entails submission to a \_\_\_\_\_.

Submission to a denomination provides \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(In theory), accountability through a \_\_\_\_\_ ensures proper observance of the \_\_\_\_\_ of a true church, which are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. BPC's Authority Structure (also known as church polity)

The 3 types of church government are:

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

BPC is \_\_\_\_\_ in its authority structure.

Disputes within the church are to be handled according to \_\_\_\_\_.

If a pastor does not respond to \_\_\_\_\_, his higher authority is \_\_\_\_\_.

## 3. Submission to Authority for Individuals

Membership in a church entails \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

“Joining a church should be more like getting married for life and less like getting a new car every few years.” -Burk Parsons

Dominant metaphors for the church in Scripture:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 5)

\_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 12)

\_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 3)

“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.”  
-Westminster Confession of Faith 25:2

Your commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ is a reflection of your commitment to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 4. Benefits and Responsibilities of Church Membership

Benefits:

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Responsibilities:

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“If anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch over yourself lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1-2

“And let us consider how to stir up one another up to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.” Hebrews 10:24-25

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Romans 12:4-6

“God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:25

“Let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.” Ephesians 4:25

“Love one another.” John 13:34

“Serve one another.” Galatians 5:13

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

“Encourage one another and build one another up.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:10-11

“Do not grumble against one another.” James 5:9

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another.” James 5:16

## 5. Healthy Parting

The responsibility of church membership is not to be taken lightly. You will be an integral part of the Kingdom of God in this church. Nevertheless, we recognize that there may come a time when God might be calling you to be a minister in a different context and place. If that becomes an eventuality, continuing to seek the peace and purity of the church is still your responsibility. In order to leave the church well:

\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.

Seek counsel and \_\_\_\_\_ the church in your \_\_\_\_\_.

## 6. Church Discipline

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” -Matthew 18:15-20

The purposes of church discipline are:

The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of disobedient sinners.

Proper church discipline prevents \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It therefore preserves the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.

The state holds the power of the \_\_\_\_\_, while the church holds the power of the \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, the steps of church discipline are:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ (authoritative speaking)
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

The polity of our church is recorded in the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

# PART 02 BPC Theological Distinctives

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## A. Brief History of the PCA

## B. Theologically Orthodox

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

## C. Theologically Reformed

The Five \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ Branch

Reformed theology places more emphasis on the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Arminian theology places more emphasis on the \_\_\_\_\_ of people.

This emphasis is due to what we see as a profound biblical commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

For more information, come to the summer theology class.

**D. Baptism and the sacraments**

We are \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ as opposed to \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_.

(for more information on this, come to the baptism class.)

You have to be a member of the church to have your \_\_\_\_\_.

The Constitution of our church is contained in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you have to believe all these things to be a member of our church?



Brookhaven  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Application for Church Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Means of Membership:  Profession of Faith  Reaffirmation of Faith  Transfer of Faith\* from membership in another church

(\*If Transfer of Faith please list church name & city \_\_\_\_\_)

How long have you been in Atlanta? \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Names & Ages. Have they been baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptized? If yes, when and where? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you attended BPC? \_\_\_\_\_

What is attractive to you about BPC? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to be a member of BPC? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you envision your involvement in BPC? \_\_\_\_\_

What churches have you been a member of in the past? What kind of involvement did you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been under church discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live now? Is it in or near Brookhaven? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the chief end of mankind? \_\_\_\_\_

How has God been working in your life in the past 6 months to a year? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your long term life plans and goals, e.g. job, location, etc? \_\_\_\_\_

Write out the message of Christianity in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

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How does God's grace through Jesus change you? Write out your experience of how you became a Christian or how you have experienced God's grace in your life. \_\_\_\_\_

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Our desire is to be a church that is very relational and knows one another well. Additionally, we hope that you have had an opportunity to get to know people at the church prior to committing to membership. For that reason, we request that you provide the names of two regular attenders or members of BPC who can affirm your spiritual status and growth in Christ.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or email: \_\_\_\_\_