

## REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH OF KANSAS CITY CHURCH COVENANT

1. By the grace of God we have been led to repent of our sin and believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We have confessed our faith and been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Now, therefore, in the presence of God and by His grace, we joyfully and solemnly enter into a holy covenant with the members of Reformed Baptist Church of Kansas City.
2. We engage to walk together in Christian love through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Unless providentially hindered, we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but faithfully attend the church's meetings for worship, prayer, study, and fellowship, and will use our spiritual gifts for the common good.
4. We pledge to faithfully participate in the ordinances of the church, and endeavor after unity of mind in doctrine. We will both submit to the church's discipline upon ourselves and lovingly assume our responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture.
5. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to this church for its general ministry and expenses, the relief of the poor, the cause of reformation and revival, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.
6. We will strive by God's grace and power to live as Christ in the world; and denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we will seek to fulfill our calling to lead a holy life and to be salt and light.
7. We will be just and honest in our dealings and faithful in our responsibilities and commitments.
8. We will abide by the standards of sexual purity, ethical integrity, and spiritual fidelity as taught in the Bible.
9. We will reject all heretical beliefs and practices, using Scripture as our final authority.
10. We purpose to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer, to help one another in sickness and distress, and to cultivate Christian compassion and courtesy.
11. Believing that the pursuit of peace with others and personal holiness accompany true faith in Christ, we will be slow to take offense, always eager to seek the reconciliation Christ commands, and will work to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
12. We resolve to practice personal and family worship, to train our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and to seek the salvation of our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, and of all the world.
13. We promise that if, in the providence of God, we leave this church we will diligently seek to unite with another church where we can continue to carry out the spirit and principles of God's Word.

### A Helpful Grouping of the Covenant's 13 Articles into 7 Categories

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| Articles 1,2   | Requirements for Membership                   |
| Articles 3,4,5 | Requirements of Activities Within the Church  |
| Articles 6,7   | Requirements of Activities Outside the Church |
| Articles 8,9   | Requirements of Purity Within the Church      |
| Articles 10,11 | Requirements of Relations Within the Church   |
| Article 12     | Requirements of the Church at Home            |
| Article 13     | Requirement of Church Membership              |

### Confessing the RBCKC Church Covenant: Part 2 (Articles 3-5)

**The first two articles of RBCKC's covenant emphasize requirements for membership** in Christ's New Covenant church. Only those who have been born-again by the Spirit of God applying the work of the Son of God may be received into the church of God (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Acts 2:38-47; Jer. 31:31-34). And with this new life they will repent of sin, believe in Christ, confess their faith, be baptized in the name of their Triune God, and look to join a local church (Acts 2:38-47; Eph. 2:1-10; Tit. 2:12-14; 3:3-7; 2 Tim. 2:25). Changed and empowered by the love of Christ and the Spirit of Christ, such believers will "joyfully and solemnly enter into a holy covenant with the members of [RBCKC]" and "engage to walk together in Christian love through the power of the Holy Spirit".

**The covenant's next three articles deal with requirements of activities in the church**—the necessary biblical commitments of *assembling*, *participating*, and *contributing*.

**Assembling together** is not only commanded, but has been greatly desired and pursued by Christ's people from the beginning (Heb. 10:19-25; Acts 2:40-47; 4:31-35). *Corporate* worship, prayer, study, and fellowship is greater than *private*. God uniquely builds each local temple of Christ from living stones specially fitted with varied but valued strengths and weaknesses for the Christlikeness of the body and the individual member (1 Pet. 2:4-10; Rom. 12). The Spirit equips each member with spiritual gifts to lovingly, unselfishly, and humbly use for the good of others and the health of the church (1 Cor. 12). If members are absent from church gatherings, the church suffers from the resulting dysfunction, the attending members suffer due to missing gifts, and the absent member suffers due to removal from the ministry and grace Christ provides only in His local body. Thus, the **third article** is a pledge of two related responsibilities and privileges: to *faithfully attend* the church's official meetings and to purposely *use spiritual gifts* for the common good.

At RBCKC, the number of official church assemblies is limited to better emphasize and enable faithful attendance to the meetings that *are* held. By nature, Lord's Day Sabbath participation in worship, study, and lunch is expected. For other meetings, sincere effort should be given to the prioritization of and preparation for participation, for the good of the church, the individual, and the individual's family. For Wednesday assemblies, for example, the expectation, except for providentially rare cases, is for at least one family member to attend weekly, and all should usually be able to attend at least once per month.

**Participation** in the church *ordinances*, unity of church *doctrine*, and church *discipline* is pledged in the **fourth article**. Christ instituted the *ordinances* of the Lord's Supper and baptism to be overseen by and cherished in the local church (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). *Unity* in mind of *doctrine* is to be humbly pursued with the mind of Christ (Phil. 1:27-2:5) according to the Word of Christ and for the peace and purity of the body of Christ (Col. 3:12-17)—with faithful assembling as key to such unity. Biblical, loving *church discipline* is a must for a church and her members, as submission to and assuming responsibility for church discipline is necessary for the purity and integrity of the individual members and the church as a whole (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1; Jam. 5:19-20). The church's ordinances and discipline are foundational for her unity of mind in doctrine.

**Contributing financially** is the required activity pledged in the covenant's **fifth article**. As articles 3 and 4 pledge physical and spiritual support to the local church, this article reflects the biblical command to financially support the local church. From the expenses of pastoral, evangelistic, and associational support to operational expenses ranging from facility care, benevolence, and advertising, financial contribution from all members is crucial for the life of the church (1 Cor. 9:8-14; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:17). The Scripture exhorts cheerful stewardship and giving, with the baseline ten percent tithe as a biblical reference point. As with physical and spiritual contributions, the worth and importance of Christ's church deserves cheerful financial contributions for her needs.

## **RBCKC Church Covenant Reading in Worship, Article 5**

*5. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to this church  
for its general ministry and expenses,  
the relief of the poor,  
the cause of reformation and revival,  
and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.*

We will be reading from our Church Covenant in worship now. This is a helpful way for us to summarize biblical teaching on the membership of and function of the church. It is further helpful to be reminded of our commitments to one another, and to think upon that which we will recommit ourselves to in the coming weeks. This is not bare theological conjecture but a living doctrine which has immediate and incredibly important implications for our lives and the life of the church. This is important.

We will be reading from article five of the Covenant which can be found in your copy of the bulletin. In this article I think we can continue to see the helpful themes of responsibility and privilege.

In article three we had the responsibility and privilege of assembling ourselves together, our participation in the Sabbath and the benefits of that day, and the exercising of our gifts one to another.

In article four we had the responsibility and privilege of church discipline: to be involved in and receive the benefits from formative teaching and discipline, but also the responsibility and privilege of being involved in and receiving corrective discipline.

In article five we now see the responsibility and privilege of financial contribution.

Article five begins with the manner in which we are to do so. We ought to contribute “cheerfully and regularly.” It is to be a joyful thing to be parted with our money. Now that sounds odd, for that is usually not the case. Who here is usually happy to part with their money?

However, we may be more apt and more pleased to part with our money if it is gaining something of value. And in this case, as we proceed in article five, we will see this is for the attaining of something of eternal value. Further, it is both a command of God to contribute and an act of worship to contribute—both of which are immense causes of joy.

This contribution is to be “to this church”—the church you are a member of—as the context of New Covenant giving indicates. We see this in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, which says, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you are to do as well. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save as he may prosper, so that no collections need to be made when I come.” There we see the believers giving in the context of their own church, and giving regularly.

Also, we read in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, “Now I say this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously. Each one must do just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” There we see the aspect of cheerfulness in giving—it is to be done with a generous and cheerful heart.

And what exactly is the result of our giving? With our duty to give responsibly filled, what blessing does this privilege afford (for it is a privilege to participate in tithing)? What is the ROI (Return on Investment)? Its return or value is eternal—and you don’t often see that.

Article five states that at the base of the matter the money contributes to the “general ministry and expenses” of the local church. This includes things like providing for the pastor or paying the rent so we have a building to meet in. So you, in the responsible fulfillment of your duties, receive the privileged blessing of hearing the Word of God from a man who works hard at preaching and teaching.

The Scriptures teach of the responsibility of a church to provide for her pastors. In 1 Timothy 5:17 we read, “The elders who lead well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.” And we find in 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, “Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.”

So it is your responsibility to give but it is also your privilege to give, for by the giving, in part, the Word of God is preached, the saints are ministered to, and so on. And you get to be a part of that. You partake in it by giving.

Likewise, this pans out in the remaining scenarios which are functions of the church in which financial contribution are not only helpful but needful: “the relief of the poor, the cause of reformation and revival, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.”

Yes, all this is the return on your investment: the weight of eternal glory in the proclamation of the gospel, the care of less fortunate, and the building up of the church in the truth. And it is all for your regular cheerful contribution. And this reflects the charge of our Lord to us about our life and priorities: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.” (Matthew 6:33)