

Communicant membership vow #1

Last weeks: Proto-Presbyterians → Presbyterians (1560) → American Presbyterians (1789) →

Orthodox Presbyterians (straight teaching via elders) (1936) → Grace OPC (1971)

This week: Communicant membership vow #1 → **Next weeks:** Vows 2–5

Further reading and source material

- *OPC Book of Church Order* pp. 164–165
- *A Communicant Church Membership Course* by George W. Marston
- *The Gospel and the OPC* by Jeremiah Montgomery

*“I refuse to join any club
that would have me as a member.”
—Groucho Marx*

Communicant church membership process

Review → Interview → Take vows publicly (profession of faith)

Why should we even have church membership?

Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:12–13; Hebrews 13:17; the epistles of the New Testament;
and the seven churches of Revelation 2–3

Communicant membership vows 1–5: A quick summary

1. God’s revelation

*Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation
to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?*

2 Peter 1:16–21 2 Timothy 3:16–17 Luke 24:25–32

2. God’s revelation of himself

*Do you believe in one living and true God, in whom eternally there are three distinct persons—God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Holy Spirit—who are the same in being and equal in power and glory, and that Jesus Christ is God the Son,
come in the flesh?*

John 14:6 Acts 4:12 Matthew 28:18–20

3. God’s revelation of good news

*Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, that you repent of your sin,
and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?*

Romans 3:23 Matthew 22:37–40 Romans 6:23

4. God’s revelation of his King

*Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord, and do you promise that, in reliance on the grace of God,
you will serve him with all that is in you, forsake the world, resist the devil, put to death your sinful deeds and desires, and
lead a godly life?*

John 14:15 Matthew 10:38–39 Luke 14:33

5. God’s revelation of his kingdom

*Do you promise to participate faithfully in this church’s worship and service, to submit in the Lord to its government, and to
heed its discipline, even in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life?*

Matthew 18:15–20 1 Peter 5:1–4 Hebrews 13:17

Deep dive into vow #1

Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

Do you believe... Everyone believes something... Everyone is “religious”

WSC 2: “The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.” = The canon of Scripture (Greek *kanon* means “straight rod used as a rule”). Michael J. Kruger is a helpful scholar on the topic of the canon.

Old Testament: Luke 24:36–49, especially Luke 24:44 and the way the OT is used throughout the NT (e.g. Matt. 19:4)

New Testament: 1 Timothy 5:18 use of Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 as “Scripture”, see also 2 Peter 3:14–18

“Jesus saw Himself as the key to Scripture, and the Scripture as the key to Himself.” —J. I. Packer

The inspired, inerrant, preserved, authoritative, and exclusive Scripture

- Inspired
 - English “inspire” comes from Latin *inspirare* (to breathe). 2 Timothy 3:16–17 says “all Scripture is breathed out by God,” (v. 16). The Greek behind “breathed out by God” is a single word (*theopneustos*) made from a combination of *theos* (God) and *pneō* (to blow).
 - See also 1 Thessalonians 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:16–21
 - “Thus says the Lord” “The Word of the Lord came...”
- Inerrant
 - Psalm 19:7–9, Titus 1:2, Hebrews 11
- Preserved
 - Matthew 5:17–18
- Authoritative
 - WCF 1.6 “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.”
 - Mark 12:18–27 and Exodus 3:1–12
 - 2 Timothy 1:13
 - 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- Exclusive
 - John 14:6
 - Acts 4:12
 - Galatians 1:6–8
 - Salvation accomplished: Matthew 1:21
 - Salvation applied: Ephesians 2:8–10

“Salvation, the salvation of men, is the final purpose of the whole Bible.” —S. Barton Babbage

Ad Fontes! Sola Scriptura! **