

## **Candlelight Christian Fellowship Voluntary Membership**

### **At-Large Members**

Being a member of the church is a declaration of commitment. It is a commitment to the beliefs, vision, direction, leadership and to the other members of the fellowship. As a member, you are declaring agreement with, dedication to, and active participation in the ministry life of the local church.

It has long been our belief that the New Testament demonstrates the model for “church membership:” Those who are born again believers and who participate in the local church are members. Therefore, we as Christians are “members of the body of Christ.” However, with a continuing decline in moral values, and a failure to provide accountability—both here at Candlelight and with other churches in the community and country—we chose to develop a voluntary membership for those who “attend” Candlelight in person or online. Furthermore, with participants as members, we are better equipped to serve the body and provide networking, follow-up and assess needs in the church family.

Although the term “church member” is not specifically used in the Biblical text, it is the position of Candlelight Christian Fellowship that the idea of recognized membership is not a contradiction to the Biblical model. Believers are certainly called to participate in the life of a local church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 4:7-16). It is here that the various gifts we exercise are used to assist growth and maturity in Christ (1 Corinthians 12). Membership is a concept which upholds the importance of the body of Christ and helps to guard against the tendencies of independence and disunity the Bible warns against. By becoming a “member” of Candlelight Christian Fellowship, you are declaring your commitment to Christ, and to our ministry leadership. It is a declaration of intent to use your gifts for the edification of those who are part of the Candlelight Family and to maintain the bond of unity with the fellowship while awaiting the Lord’s return.

“Membership” at Candlelight will serve us all because it allows us to know those who are committed to our ministry goals and those who share our vision to make devoted followers of Christ. We depend on our members to help shape the ministries we offer and provide insight and assistance in fulfilling our mission. As members of the church, together we will share a greater awareness of each other’s gifts and talents as well as needs or weaknesses. This will help us shape our ministries in a way that best edifies you and the other members of the congregation. It also helps us know whom we can depend on in fulfilling the long-term goals of the ministry. Because we are dedicated to you, it is vital that we maintain a membership database and an updated contact/ mailing list for communications and accountability in this growing family of people. Our goal is to do our very best to serve you all in Jesus’ name with excellence and love.

Those of you who desire to be added to the at-large “Friends of Candlelight” roster should be comfortable with a few fundamental attributes. Those would include: 1) a lifestyle befitting the Christian, 2) a willingness to regularly view the Candlelight services via our online platforms, 3) support the gatherings of the fellowship when possible, 4) a commitment to financially support the fellowship, and 5) a desire to maintain accountability with the church—in life and conduct.

Being an at-large member will not bind or otherwise restrict you, obligate you, or enforce upon you anything not already embraced by being a member of body of Christ.

### **“Friends of Candlelight” Membership**

We recognize many people who follow Candlelight’s doctrines and faithfully watch our services online consider Candlelight’s Senior Pastor as their pastor. Inasmuch as we encourage all Christians to heed the warning recorded in Hebrew whereby believers are commanded “not [to forsake] the assembling of [themselves] together, as is the manner of some, but [should be] exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25), unfortunately, many live in rural areas, or where there is no doctrinally/practically sound church available. Therefore, Candlelight has become for them the only church to which they’re connected.

For these individuals, we are happy to adopt them into the “Friends of Candlelight” membership with the understanding that they keep contact with us by email, letter, or phone call as Candlelight’s leadership deems necessary. An individual must be 18 or older to be a member. Each individual who wishes to be a “Friend of Candlelight” Member will need to contact [Kent@candlelight.org](mailto:Kent@candlelight.org), read through and agree with the doctrine, philosophy, and mission statement found on the Candlelight website.

Each “Friend of Candlelight” household should also show a record of faithful financial support to Candlelight for a minimum of two months and continuing for as long as they desire to be a “Friend of Candlelight” Member.

The “Friend of Candlelight” membership will not include voting privileges. However, benevolence benefits for the “Friends of Candlelight” member will be decided upon by the Elder Board on a case-by-case basis with or without subjection to the regular protocols found for local Candlelight members. Facility use (if requested) is subject to Elder approval and Candlelight mission compatibility.

At-large members of the Body of Christ who wish to be “Friends of Candlelight” Members must be 1) willingly accountable to the leadership of Candlelight, 2) willing to receive encouragement, exhortation, discipline/removal from at-large membership if or when necessary, 3) make every effort to engage with other believers and/or serve in a local church family when possible.

### **Discontinuance or Revocation**

Current Candlelight By-Laws (Article I. Section 4. Subsection 2a) discontinues membership for those with “Non-Attendance for a period of 183 days or more.” “Friends of Candlelight” Members will be subject to the same standards as measured by communications and/or financial support. (Please note, all on-line at-large services offered are not subject to membership. We desire to serve all—free of charge or obligation.)