



Membership Commitment

Welcome. This event will help you understand some basics about The Church at Argyle, some of our history, what we believe, how we are lead, how we make decisions, and what we ask of you as a member.

Members of The Church at Argyle –

- Are committed Christ-followers
- Have placed their faith in Jesus as their Savior
- Have been baptized, by immersion, after their conversion
- Have attended our Membership Commitment event
- Agreed to abide by the Membership Commitment

We always welcome your questions or comments. You may –

- Speak to one of the Staff after worship
- Call us at the office weekdays at 904-777-1238
- Email us at info@iargyle.com
- Arrange an appointment to visit us in the office, or in your home
- Find extensive information at our web site, iargyle.com

We are providing a copy of *I Am a Church Member*, by Dr. Thom S. Rainer. It contains very important and useful information about church membership. Prayerfully read it – it will make you a better and more productive member.

Why should I commit to the church, and be a member? Why is membership important?

There are several reasons.

- Biblically, Ephesians 5:25 tells us, “...*Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her...*” That means God Himself thinks the church is pretty important.
- Culturally, there are very few things people are willing to commit to in today’s society. By making this commitment, we are saying to the people around us, “This is important, and I want to be part of it.”
- Practically, it tells our leadership who we can count on.
- Personally, it helps produce spiritual growth. The New Testament places major emphasis on Christians being accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to a church family.

What do you expect of me as a member?

At Argyle we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches – what the Bible expects every Christian to do. Specific responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Commitment. See page 8.

What do I get by being a member?

- Practically – only members can vote, or hold certain leadership positions, such as being an elder, deacon, committee member, or similar position of senior leadership.
- Spiritually – it helps you remember, and tells everyone around you, what you believe is important and worthy of your commitment.

What exactly is a church, anyway?

A “church” is a group of baptized Christ-followers who meet together for worship, prayer, and hearing a message inspired by God and His scripture. They teach and encourage each other, spread the Good News about Jesus to those who have not heard it, and in all things, try to behave as Jesus would.

Tell me some of the story about The Church at Argyle.

The Argyle Chapel, sponsored by First Baptist Church of Orange Park, started meeting in 1982. Also in 1982, Cross Roads Baptist Church, a small startup sponsored by Lake Forest Baptist Church, called Ken Dyal as Pastor. In January 1983, these two groups decided to merge, and began meeting as a mission church on Sunday afternoons at FBC of Orange Park. Construction began at this time on the original structure on our current property, what we now call Building C. The first service in the new building was held on Easter Sunday, 1984.

The church prospered, and became an independent, chartered church in March, 1985, then named First Baptist Church of Argyle. The church continued to grow, and built additional structures; Building B in 1987, and Building A in 1996.

Programmatically, we were a traditional Southern Baptist Church, but beginning in 1995 Pastor Ken was lead to point the church in a different direction. He believed God was calling us to reach out to the whole community around us, to actively seek non-believers, and to appeal to lost people, not just church people. This was a difficult change for some, and during this transition period a large number of people left the fellowship. However, more came than left, and the church grew.

Part of this transition included changing the name in 2001. This was done to eliminate misconceptions commonly held about our denomination by many unchurched in the community.

In April 2010, Pastor Ken passed away following complications of heart surgery. The church called Rick Painter, who had served in various capacities since 1994, to be Senior Pastor.

Baptist? I thought Argyle was non-denominational.

The Church at Argyle is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Florida Baptist Convention, and the Jacksonville Baptist Association. In our doctrines and beliefs, we agree with the *Baptist Faith and Message, adopted 2000*.

The Church at Argyle isn't independent?

We are independent. Neither the national Convention, the state Convention nor the local Association exercise any control over us. We own our own property, hire and fire our own staff, and determine our own ministries. We voluntarily associate with these organizations for mutual benefit, and to multiply our efforts toward common causes, such as mission support. Through the SBC Cooperative Program, we support the largest Christian mission-sending effort in the world, in both North America and abroad.

What are the basic beliefs of the church?

Our Mission

To lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our Vision

To be a people encouraged and equipped on Sunday to make a difference in our community all week.

Our Strategy

To create steps and environments where people are encouraged and equipped to increase intimacy with God, genuine community with each other, and a servant's heart for the world around us.

About the Scriptures

We believe the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the inspired Word of God and that men were moved by the Spirit of God to write the very words of Scripture. Therefore, we believe the Bible is without error. We believe that the Bible is the sole authority for our faith, and that all we need to know about God's redemptive plan for humanity is contained in it.

About God

We believe in one God who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ is the second member of the Trinity (the Son of God) who became flesh to reveal God to man and to become the Savior of the lost world.

About Mankind

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him but became alienated in that relationship through sinful disobedience. As a result, man is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through his own effort alone.

About Salvation

We believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, salvation occurs only when people place their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as sufficient payment for their sin.

About the Christian Life

We believe that every Christian should live for Christ and not for himself. By obedience to the Word of God and daily yielding to the Spirit of God, every believer should mature and be conformed to the image of Christ.

About the Church

We believe that the church is the body of Jesus Christ, of which He is the head. The members of the church are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to the lost world, and faithfully work to bring the Kingdom of God to all of humanity.

Tell me what Argyle teaches about baptism.

Baptism is our public identification with Jesus Christ as our Savior, and with other Christians. Jesus instructed us to be baptized, so it is an important act of obedience. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it shows the world our submission to God and our identification with Jesus as Lord.

Once saved, we are ready to be, and ought to be, baptized. Married couples show the world their love and commitment to each other by wearing symbolic rings. Christians show love and commitment to our Lord through the symbol of baptism.

Baptism is an English approximation of a Greek word that means *dip, immerse, sink, or wash*. For this reason, and from both the Biblical and early church descriptions and accounts of baptism, we believe that the proper way to baptize is to immerse completely under the water. We accept as valid a baptism performed, after your salvation, by another church of similar belief and practice. Talk to us about it.

Some denominations and churches baptize infants or small children, and this is their right. However, we understand that the Bible teaches that baptism is for professing, born-again believers. Small children cannot understand their sinfulness and need for conversion, nor understand the nature of the gift of salvation offered through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Each person stands personally accountable to God, and must come to salvation through their own faith, by their own response to the Holy Spirit. It is not something parents or anyone else can do for their children – they must receive it for themselves.

Children each reach an age when they come to this understanding, and can receive the gift of salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit working in their lives. They can then be baptized.

What about the baptism video you do? Is it important?

We think it is very important. It allows you to –

- Introduce yourself to other members in the Body of Christ at Argyle
- Have the opportunity to share what God is doing in your life
- Encourage others who are in the process of deciding about accepting salvation and being baptized themselves

What about the Lord's Supper, or Communion?

We believe the Lord's Supper is something Jesus commanded us to do, along with being baptized. We refer to these two things (baptism and the Lord's Supper) as Ordinances. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic reminder of His sacrifice, and His promises to us.

We share the Lord's Supper several times each year during worship gatherings, usually on the first Sunday of each month. In addition, LifeGroups and other ministry groups also celebrate the Lord's Supper.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is open to any born-again, scripturally baptized believer. We ask that those who do not fit that qualification abstain from participating.

How is the church organized? How is it lead?

We believe that the Bible describes church leadership being vested in a small group of qualified men, variously and interchangeably referred to by the Greek words for elder, shepherd, or overseer. Our overall leadership is in the hands of a group of seven elders, led by the Senior Pastor. They are responsible for setting church policy and direction, defining ministries and ministry environments, spiritual development, leadership development, advice and counsel to the church's ministerial staff, and church discipline.

Currently serving as elders are Senior Pastor Rick Painter, Ministry Pastor & Administrator Hal Hunter, Youth Pastor David Bass, Middle School Pastor Justin Kennedy, Phil Massicotte, Wade Collier, and Tony Morales.

Ministry leadership and service to the church body is vested in our deacons, who are qualified members selected for their demonstrated faithfulness and commitment.

The church is not only a spiritual body; it also is a legal entity that has to do business in the world around us. We are a Florida not-for-profit corporation. Our business and legal affairs are carried out by our Staff under supervision of a Board of Directors. Current corporate officers and directors include Rick Painter, President; Kim Bass; Treasurer; Hal Hunter, Secretary; Tommy Gower; and Karen Shackelford.

We have a business meeting each year in January, to receive and adopt the annual budget. Meetings can be held at other times if needed. Meeting, and approval by the membership through voting, are required to –

- Call or dismiss the Senior Pastor
- Buy or sell real property
- Incur debt greater than \$25,000
- Ratify the call and selection of elders
- Amend the Constitution or By-Laws

OK. I'm ready to sign up. How do I become a member?

There are four things we require of members –

- You must be a born-again Christ-follower
- You must have been scripturally baptized (fully immersed after salvation)
- You must have participated in a Membership Commitment event
- You must sign the Membership Commitment Agreement

What is the Membership Commitment Agreement?

The Church at Argyle's Membership Commitment

As a member of The Church at Argyle

I will be a functioning church member

I will be a unifying church member

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires

I will pray for my church leaders

I will lead my family to be healthy church members

I will treasure church membership as a gift

I will protect the unity of The Church at Argyle

I will act in love toward other members

I will refuse to gossip, and discourage others from gossiping

I will cheerfully follow the leaders of the church

I will share the responsibility for the ministry of The Church at Argyle

I will pray for its growth

I will invite others, including the unchurched, to visit our worship gatherings

I will warmly welcome all with whom I come in contact

I will serve the ministry of The Church at Argyle

I will discover my spiritual gifts and natural talents

I will equip myself to serve with my Pastors and other leaders

I will pray to develop a servant's heart

I will support the work and public image of The Church at Argyle

I will attend faithfully

I will live a Godly life, and show the world what a Christ-follower looks like

I will cheerfully contribute to support the ministry of The Church at Argyle, according to Biblical principles

There are four requirements for membership in The Church at Argyle. You must fulfill all four before you can be a member of our church.

If you desire to become a member at this time, circle your response to each of these four questions, sign the form, and print your information in the space below. Leave the completed form with one of the Staff members conducting the event.

If you answer any question “No” or “Undecided” or “Pending” please see one of the Staff members conducting the event, and chat with us before you leave.

1. Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ and trusted Him for salvation?
Yes No Undecided

2. Have you been baptized by immersion (under the water) after your conversion?
Yes No Pending

3. Have you completed the Argyle Membership Commitment Event?
Yes No Pending

4. Will you abide by the Argyle Membership Commitment?
Yes No

Signature _____ Date _____

Please supply some information for our records – **please print**. One sheet per person.

Mr Mrs Miss Ms _____ (Full legal name please)

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Date of birth _____ (Members must be 18)

Telephone (home) _____

Telephone (cell) _____

Email address _____

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By my signature on the reverse, I agree to abide by this Membership Commitment.