

**GREATER HARVEST
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH**



**NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK
2011**

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For information on church facility rental, funeral services, christenings, prayer, hospital visits, any comments, questions, concerns, or other needs, please feel free to contact the church office.

If at any time you wish to meet with the pastor or pastoral staff for any reason, please contact the church office to schedule an appointment.

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our core values

As a family of believers, we are committed to:

- ⇒ Belief in Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation and personal relationship with God.
- ⇒ Remaining faithful worshippers in our weekly services and daily lives.
- ⇒ Using both biblical methods and current resources in reaching those outside of the family of faith. (Evangelism)
- ⇒ Building relationships that display the Love of God. (Fellowship)
- ⇒ Spiritually maturing those in our church family through the infallible word of God. (Teaching)
- ⇒ Belief in the Holy Spirit and His gifts, which empower the believer for ministry and to live a victorious life.
- ⇒ Encouraging believers to use their spiritual gifts and resources in sectors of the world such as business, education, entertainment, athletics, politics, and the arts, that God may be glorified.
- ⇒ Being sent and sending individuals to serve and share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout every part of the world. (Mission)
- ⇒ Serving the saved, unsaved, hurting, and broken. (Ministry)

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Welcome,

It gives me great joy to welcome you into God's Family. Your decision to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the most wonderful decision a person can ever make. Receiving Christ as your Savior means you have chosen to follow Him and to allow Him to direct your life. The Christian life is a new adventure every day, and you are to be obedient as Christ leads you through the opportunities and difficulties of life. This is only the beginning. You will find that your church will help you understand the Word of God better as you participate in the Sunday School and worship services.

God has promised eternal life to those who receive His Son. Eternal life does not just begin when you die; it begins the moment you receive Christ into your life. Eternal life means Heaven when you die and a New Quality of Life as you live. Christ, in John 10:10 call this the "Abundant Life". The joy of this abundant life is dependent upon your obedience to God and your willingness to submit to His will. God calls you to a life of faithfulness to Him and love for Him. Let me encourage you to put Christ First in your life. As you do, you will know the Joy of the Christian life.

We have prepared a New Members Program to assist your growth as a Christian. In the New members orientation you will get a brief look at our history. Where you've come from is important to know. The passing of every righteous man or woman, as a seed to bring forth fruit, means the passing of some tradition, some knowledge.... consequently the information is to be gathered for the benefit of future generations and it must be collected at once or the opportunity will be lost .

I encourage you participate in the courses, ask questions, read the Bible daily, pray continually, tell others about Jesus, and serve God in and outside the church. God *will* help you to help others. You *can* bring someone to Jesus Christ. Let God use the life you have now given to Him.

May the Lord God Bless you in your service to Him.

Sincerely from Your Pastor,
Rev. Eric Thomas

Church Choirs

The Choir is a critical part of our Worship Services at Greater Harvest and is enjoyed by all. The choir is comprised of faithful members with a desire to sing for the Lord and be available for Sunday services, weekday services, special events, funerals, and they are a vital support to the Pastor on church outings. There is a choir for everyone.

Radio Choir

- ◇ The Adult Choir: Rehearses on Thursday at 7:30pm

Young Adult Choir

- ◇ Youth Choir - Ranges in age from 13 to 20+ years old
Rehearses on Monday at 7:30pm

Mass Choir

- ◇ Comprises of the above choirs

Sylvia Boddie Choir

- ◇ Children's Choir - Ranges in Age from 2 to 12 years old. The children may sing with the Mass Choir on special occasions when announced and they commonly have a small concert on 5th Sunday or when otherwise announced.

Reunion Choir

- ◇ This choir consists of members and non-members who have sang in the choir at some length of time in the past and a Greater Harvest Family Reunion Service calls for this choir to be present for rehearsals for a reunion events

Concert/Recording Choir

- ◇ May Consist of all of the above choirs as determined by the Minister of Music

Minister of Music (appointed by Pastor)

The Minister of Music is a spirit-filled individual and leads the choir in worship, conducts rehearsals, and is also faithful to church events and outings. This individual supports the Pastor's vision and willingly follows church guidelines on music presented in the church.

Musicians

Responsible for faithfully providing music in all services and events held at Greater Harvest and on church outings. Musicians are qualified to play and handle instruments and willing to follow church regulations concerning music presented in the church.

Pastor's Cabinet *(appointed by pastor)*

Pastor's Cabinet is responsible for attending to the practical and spiritual needs of the Pastor and members.

Pastor's Birthday Committee

This committee oversees the planning and activities that will take place concerning Pastor's birthday. Fund-raising may be involved to present to the Pastor on behalf of the congregation. They also contribute to fund-raising efforts for other events in the church where needed.

Prayer Band

The individuals on this team are called and accountable for all the prayer needs of the church. They dedicate themselves to continual intercessory prayer on behalf of the church, leadership, members, and community.

Mother's Board

This group consists of elder women with knowledge of the Word of God and years of experience in the life of faith. They are available for individual prayer and counsel if needed and also assist in prayer for the pastor, church, and the community.

Seniors Ministry

This ministry integrates "Senior" members into the life of the church and community through planned activities, field trips, delivery of meals, and spiritual and natural needs where needed.

Singles Ministry

The Singles Ministry is designed to give single young adult men and women an avenue to embrace their "singleness" through relevant and relational Bible studies, fellowship, occasional planned activities and outings. This Ministry is based on the scripture **1 Corinthians 7:34—The unmarried cares for the things of the Lord resulting in holiness in both body and in spirit.**

Culinary Staff

This team of individuals are available for our mercy seat program, preparing and serving meals to the less fortunate, and for all events at the church that require catering services. This job requires food preparation, serving meals, kindness to people being serviced, and clean-up. Volunteers are welcome. See New Member Coordinator if you are interested.

Invitation for Discipleship

Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men

...Mark 1:17

We are delighted that you have become a member of our church. Being part of the church that Christ founded and an active member of a local church fellowship is both a wonderful privilege and an important responsibility. As a member of this congregation, we pray that you will faithfully participate in the ministries of the church through your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and your witness.

Our Purpose

The purpose of Greater Harvest is to exalt our savior and bring glory to God by worshipping the Lord in righteousness and holiness, by evangelizing to the lost at home and abroad, by edifying and equipping the saints through Bible-centered preaching and teaching, by engaging in ministry in the community and by dwelling together in warm, Christian fellowship.

Our Vision

With loyalty to Christ and His Word, we envision an increase in Followers of Christ through evangelism and through caring for those in need as God commanded. The primary goal of our missionary and evangelistic effort is not social betterment but spiritual regeneration — personal salvation.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We Believe the Holy Bible to be inspired of God, the infallible Word of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". (II Timothy 3:16)

- A. By the "Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which as originally written does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but is the Word of God and further more it is a revelation of God himself.
- B. By "Inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by Holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be. II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter

The Bible is the only God-given authority which man possesses; therefore, all doctrine, faith, hope, and all instruction for the church must be based upon, and harmonize with, the Bible. It is to be read and studied by all men everywhere, and can only be clearly understood by those who are anointed by the Holy Spirit (I John 2:27). "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20, 21).

We Believe...

In the one true and living God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

In the divine inspiration of the scriptures

In the Gospel of Jesus Christ

In Baptism & Lord's Supper

In the original apostolic plan of salvation

In living a life of holiness

In practicing genuine Christianity

In the local and universal church

In the return of Jesus Christ

Worship Arts Ministry

This ministry includes individuals of all ages and is coordinated by a group of talented, hardworking members. Worship arts includes, dance, pantomime, drama, poetry, singing, all of which is played out to send a powerful message about our struggles, our triumphs, our worship, our praise, and our life in Christ.

New Member Connections Committee

This is a ministry with the purpose to connect new members with established members to facilitate fellowship and to help new members become acclimated and integrated into the life of the church. They also are a point of contact of outreach to new members that may need follow-up and reconnection to the body of Christ.

Nurses Board

The nurses are available to meet the needs of our congregants who experience illness or injury and assist in determining severity of circumstances where paramedics may be required.

Health Care and Family Issues Programs

Greater Harvest hosts various programs dedicated to supporting and improving the physical, mental, and spiritual health of individuals and families of the congregation and community. As needs and opportunities are identified, these programs will be advertised via various media within and outside of the church. Marriage Counseling is also included and appointment can be made through church office.

Transportation & Parking Services

This Ministry is also responsible for transportation needs to members to and from church services and other special events. Volunteer parking attendants assist drivers at services, especially where a large attendance is expected, in guiding drivers to appropriate and available parking areas. They also assist with security around the church grounds.

Service Ministry (HELPS)

This ministry provides an ongoing core group of volunteers to assist and serve in the various ministries as needed throughout the church. Such as assistance with funeral meals, wedding events support, maintenance of the church grounds and interior. This group typically responds if a call is announced where additional help may be needed.

Vacation Bible School

VBS is planned for one or two weeks each summer for members and friends. This intensive, fun-filled learning opportunity becomes a community activity, bringing in local children of families who are not active in the church. The experience is led by volunteers and requires many behind-the-scenes helpers. Volunteers can sign up when announcements for VBS begin.

Christian Education *(Various Classes as Announced)*

These classes are an extension of the weekly bible study (altar call) and Sunday School classes. They are typically geared toward a specific subject to further our knowledge of the bible or to prepare us for community outreach. Classes have include studies on Evangelism-reaching the lost , how to study the bible, in-depth studies on Genesis, and many more. Classes are announced and registration is required. Teachers are assigned by Pastor and their qualifications are noted under the Sunday School Teacher description. When these classes are not in session, regular attendance to weekly bible study is expected.

Evangelism

Opportunities exist to go out to the community with information about salvation to help bring people to Christ and establish better people and communities in and around our area. Evangelism courses will be announced and everyone is invited to attend. If you desire to work with the evangelistic team please see New Member Coordinator.

Missionary Group

Our missionaries are a group of individuals that are sent out to carry on the ministry of the church including helping our own parishioners and others in the community if needed. They are active with visitation of our sick members and offering any help that may be needed. They are also available to the Pastor when the need arises to carry out a specific mission designated by him.

Leadership Development *(currently headed by the Pastor)*

The purpose of Leadership Development is to identify, guide, and nurture the ministry of the people, seeking to connect the people with opportunities for ministry based on their spiritual gifts and talents. It is an effort that enhances the learner's capacity to lead oneself, other individuals, groups, and church auxiliaries.

Worship Services – Weekly**Sunday**

- 5:00 AM - Early Morning Prayer (until 6:00 am)
- 9:30 AM - Sunday School
- 9:30 AM - New Member Classes (when in session)
- 11:00 AM - Morning Worship Service
- 3:00 PM - Broadcast Service (Inspiration - 1390)
- 7:30 PM - Night Service (Live Web Streaming)
 - 1st Sunday Holy Communion
 - 2nd Sunday Young Adult Choir Musical
 - 3rd Sunday Radio Choir Musical
 - 4th Sunday Teaching, Prayer, and Healing Services
 - 5th Sunday Teaching, Prayer, and Healing Services

Monday

- 7:30 PM - Young Adult Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday

- 6:00 PM - Prayer Service
- 7:00 PM - Altar Call

Wednesday

- 6:30 PM - Sunday School Teachers Meeting
- Christian Education Classes -Will be announced

Thursday

- 7:30 PM - Radio Choir Rehearsal

Friday

- Tarry Service - Will be announced

Annual Worship Services

There are several special services throughout the year, including Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years' Eve (watch-meet), Church Anniversary, and Consecration Services.

The entire congregation is asked to participate faithfully in the above services.

The Requirements of Membership

- ⇒ Faith and Confession in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.
- ⇒ Agreeing with and following faithfully the purpose, goals, and doctrines of the church
- ⇒ To serve in an auxiliary of the church
- ⇒ Reasonable participation in church Bible Study Services, i.e. Sunday School, weekday Altar Call Service, etc.
- ⇒ Completion of the New Members Classes

Expectations of Members

All members are expected to obey the moral precepts and principles taught in the Word of God and to support the church through attendance, giving, prayer, and faithful service. **

⇒ **To Protect the Unity of our Church**

- ...by acting in love toward other members
- ...by refusing to gossip
- ...by following the spiritual leaders

⇒ **To Share the Responsibility of your Church**

- ...by praying for its growth
- ...by inviting the “unchurched” to attend
- ...by warmly welcoming those who visit

⇒ **To Serve the Ministry of your Church**

- ...by discovering your spiritual gifts & talents
- ...by being equipped to serve
- ...by developing a servant’s heart

⇒ **To Support the Testimony of your Church**

- ...by attending faithfully
- ...by living a godly life
- ...by giving regularly

** This is further discussed in New Member Orientation

Sunday School

9:30am

Sunday School is open to all. There are various classes taking place during this time and the Sunday School Superintendent or New Member coordinator can direct you to the class best for you. Sunday School is designed to provide members with a deeper study of the Word to enhance our spiritual lives.

Sunday School Teacher

(appointed by Pastor or Sunday School Superintendent)

Sunday School teachers are spirit-filled individuals and they are selected primarily based on their character, faithfulness to Sunday School, faithfulness to weekly bible study and various church programs, and they must have the ability to teach the Bible and be doers of the Word. They are expected to support the Pastor in his vision and obey the ordinances of the church, and to have love, respect, and patience toward everyone. This description would also apply to all teachers of Greater Harvest.

Young Adult Women Sunday School

The challenging task of this ministry is to excite and nurture the young women in expanding their knowledge of and commitment to Christian living . It creates a unique environment that provides biblical and spiritual tools that help young ladies ages 12 to 19 preserve their integrity , virtue, and it aims to enrich and enhance the lives of every participant.

Young Adult Men Sunday School

Through teaching , young men are led to living a Christian life by the Word of God. Needs and counsel can be met immediately and opportunities to ask questions are welcome.

Children’s Church (Sunday School)

The primary task of this ministry is to help children on their journey of learning about God and the love of Jesus and to be disciples of Jesus Christ . Children’s Church offers a fun, energetic, and exciting worship experience for preschoolers and children, pre-Kindergarten to 7th Grade. Children participate in praise, worship, rotation through age appropriate/interactive Bible study, music, arts, and crafts.

Building Committee

Responsible in collaboration with the pastor for over seeing all property of the church and maintaining it in a safe, appealing, and functional state, complying with all applicable codes and providing appropriate and welcoming environments for the worship and ministries of this church. The Building Committee is responsible for studying and articulating the needs of the church and community, describing space needed to carry out current and future programs and ministries of the church, making recommendations to the Trustees, and shepherding any renovation and/or building project agreed upon, complying with disciplinary requirements.

Usher Board

The Usher Ministry is the standing backbone of endless successful services. This group of dedicated men, women, young adults, and children serve during all worship services, special ministry programs, church events and church outings with both pride and excellence. This ministry maintains an orderly service by warmly greeting, seating, and helping to guide members and visitors as needed.

Hospitality Team

This group work alongside the usher Board and is a team of dedicated individuals responsible for providing a genuinely heartfelt welcome to all visitors -- from "the sidewalk to the sanctuary." This ministry aids in making everyone feel comfortable with a helping hand and a warm smile and are capable of providing information and directions concerning the church and they also help to facilitate the use of the church on special occasions.

Multi- Media & Technical Support Team

This ministry provides different methods of conveying information to the public internally and externally. They provide technical support for church services and special events including the operation of sound, light, photography, and video. The announcers staff is also a branch of this team that assist to provide important information to the congregation and our Broadcast listeners. The media team also provide graphic design support such as programs, flyers, announcements, calendars, etc.

New Member's Orientation

- The Church and It's Purpose
 - What we believe
 - Our Purpose Statement
- The Symbols of Salvation
- The Great Commandment
 - Our Structure
- Membership Requirements
 - Member Expectations
 - Benefits of Membership
 - Church Auxiliaries
- The Great Commission
 - Strategy for Outreach
 - Our Vision

**Course 1****Salvation & Repentance**

- Your Need for Salvation
- The Necessity of Repentance

**Course 2****Christian Living & The Holyghost**

- Living Appropriately as a Christian
 - The Holyghost our Keeper

**Course 3****Christian Experience**

- The Afflictions of the Righteous
 - God is our Deliverer

**Course 4****Prayer and Fellowship**

- Our Communication to God
- Our Communication to each other

**Course 5****Faith and Endurance**

- Fighting the Good Fight
- Sticking to the Course

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

The Pastor is an ex-officio member of every organization & committee of the church.

(An ex officio member is a member of a body (a board, committee, council, etc.) who is part of it by virtue of holding another office.)

All ministries, departments, organizations, classes, and groups are subservient parts of the church and shall under no circumstances be considered as separate and apart from the church or as operating independently of its pastor and church guidelines.

In order to meet the needs of the congregation adequately, the pastor is at liberty to fill positions, salaried and unsalaried with members who are equipped for the task and meet the spiritual qualifications set forth in the bible. These positions may include, assistant pastor, associate ministers, children's and youth pastor, trustees, deacons, teachers, music ministers, church secretaries, and all leadership positions.

Women's Ministry

Open to all women of the church, this group is a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as a whole person through Jesus Christ, to develop a supportive fellowship, and to expand the concepts of mission through participation in the ministries of the church. This ministry is committed to building the entire woman and enhancing the quality of life utilizing Biblical principles. It is committed to equip, empower, and enrich women to become productive and progressive members in the world around them. This ministry is based upon building up women that emphasizes the characteristics of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31.

Men's Ministry

Open to all men of the church, this ministry is dedicated to building men spiritually and involving men in the total ministry of the church. Men are encouraged to study God's Word, seek His purpose for their lives, fellowship, and have Godly fellowship with other Christian men.

Associate Ministers (appointed by Pastor)

Associate Ministers are spirit-filled individuals who share the heart of the Pastor and serve as an extension of the Pastor in helping to shepherd the people entrusted to the Greater Harvest Church family. This group may also include evangelists, ministers in training, licensed teachers, etc. Associate ministers are required to complete New Members Program and additional ministerial training as dictated by the Pastor.

Deacons (appointed by Pastor)

"Deacons are *servants* of the church. Deacons are spirit-filled individuals and are required to meet the scriptural qualifications of the office set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Tim 3:8-13.

Responsibilities include— Serving communion and assist with preparations of Baptismal Services. Internal security for safety of church property and it's members and guests. All Deacons are expected to be faithful to meetings that are called by the Pastor or the Chairman. They are directly accountable to the Pastor and shall assist the pastor in carrying on the work of the church. They are to be an example in spirit, love, devotion and loyalty to the pastor and the church. They support the pastor in many of his responsibilities in order to better meet the needs of the church including, benevolence, care of property, and visitation if needed.

Deaconess

Deaconess are spirit-filled women who are married to an active Deacon.

Responsibilities include— Preparation & clean up of Holy Communion which occurs every first Sunday. They also prepare for Baptismal Service of new converts and assist with clean up afterward. They are active in the discipleship and evangelism ministries of the church and shall assist in the ordinances of the church.

Trustees (appointed by Pastor)

Oversee acquisition and expenditure of monies to carry out the vision and purpose of the church. They shall receive, and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church. They shall submit reports both quarterly and annually and shall provide a record of giving to individual members who so desire at the end of each year. Keep an accurate record of all offerings and expenditures, and shall without special order pay all expenditures authorized by the church budget. A report of such shall be given at least quarterly as well as a yearly report at the annual business meeting. They shall act as the legal agents of the church. They are the guardians of the church's legal papers and valuables. The trustees are the officers of this corporation in legal matters; they shall audit or arrange for an audit of the church finances as needed, and maintain the church insurance.

Administrative/Personal Assistants (appointed by Pastor)

The Administrative Asst. oversees the daily office work of the church and performs everyday tasks required to keep the church running efficiently. Pastor's Personal Assistant maintains his scheduled functions and meetings both internally and externally.