

Writing a Brief Testimony of Your Faith in Christ for Church Membership

The Reason We'd Like You to Do This

Jesus puts a question to Peter in Matthew 16:15 – “But who do you say that I am?” When Matthew includes this in his Gospel, he poses that same question to everyone who reads it. Who do you say that Jesus is? This is the most important question in life. Nothing else begins to rival it. Our answer to this question is instrumental in our salvation: with the mouth we confess and are saved (Rom. 10:10).

The most significant aspect of the process of joining Bethel Presbyterian Church is your answer to this same question: Who do you say that Jesus is? This gets to the core of who we are. The elders at Bethel would like to know how you answer Jesus' question, how you came to this answer, and how this has impacted your day-to-day life.

It can be a challenge to give such an answer spontaneously and under pressure. How often do we replay conversations over in our head and wish we had added something else or said something different? Hence, there is great benefit in writing down important communications ahead of time. We are hopeful that this exercise will be a great help to you, as you pause to think about the marvelous work God has done in your life.

Writing down your testimony will allow you to have time to put into words what you want to say more carefully. And you will hopefully find that once you have done so, then giving a spontaneous answer will be easier. Being able to articulate your testimony is important not just for professing your faith publicly before the church when you join it, but also when you publicly profess your faith before the world as you witness to Jesus.

What Exactly is a Testimony?

At the most basic level, a testimony is your answer to this question: Who do you say that Jesus is? There is an objectivity to a Christian testimony, which, on one level, makes them all essentially the same. He is the Christ. This is what we confess before the world. Of course, Christians can differ greatly in their understanding of all that it means for Jesus to be the Christ. So, your testimony needs to include a bit more explanation of what you mean when you say that Jesus is the Christ.

But our testimony as Christians is a witness not only to what we believe about Jesus; it is also a witness to how we came to that belief and how that belief has impacted our life. Everyone's story of their journey of faith in Christ will look a bit different. Some have dramatic stories of conversion. Others have testimonies of a faith that grew up naturally from being born into a Christian home and the covenant of grace. And of course, there is a great variety in the stories of how one's faith has grown and the challenges it has faced over time.

Despite such diversity, there still should be a single focus to all Christian testimonies and that is to glorify God for the mercy he has shown to you in his Son. Every testimony should

magnify the Triune God and what it means to belong to him in body and in soul, in life and in death.

Questions to Think about as You Write

Sometimes it can be hard to think about what to write in a testimony. Here are some questions to help you in that process. These are not meant to restrict you but to help stimulate your thought processes and writing.

- What do you believe about Jesus and who he is?
- When did you first learn about the Gospel?
- How have you come to see your sin and your need for a Savior?
- If someone were to ask you why you believe you will go to heaven when you die, what would you say?
- When were you baptized and what does your baptism mean to you?
- What major challenges has your faith faced and overcome?
- In what significant ways has your faith grown in your life?

Please make your testimony somewhere between 700-2000 words, compose it in a Word document, and email to Linda Burke (linda.burke@bethelopc.org) and Shari Czerwinski (shari.czerwinski@bethelopc.org). *Please note that this written testimony needs to be submitted to the office **at least 3 days prior** to interview with elders.