



# Membership

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Sevenoaks Alliance Church exists to  
know Jesus and to make Him known.

## Welcome

Thank you for investing this time with us as you explore your relationship with the Sevenoaks Alliance Church family. We are glad that you are here!

You may have heard us use 'church family' language regularly. That is because it best describes the close relational connectedness God intends for His people. We believe that the Scriptures teach that the church is not just *like a family*, but that *we are family*, an actual family of brothers and sisters made so by the shared blood of Jesus Christ.

Membership is about officially identifying as a part of the Sevenoaks family. It's about ***Belonging, Committing, Accountability, and Responsibility.***

In a culture where commitment is no longer highly valued, recognizable membership is an essential step that moves each of us into the place of committed participation. It presents the challenge to not be a spectator but to publicly affirm that the church can count on us to help fulfill the ministry of Knowing Jesus and making Him known that God has called us to partner in.

In our time together we will look at our vision, values, history, & beliefs; things that shape who we are and inform who we want to become. We will also give a glimpse into the heartbeat of the wider family of churches that we belong to. We say 'family of churches' because Sevenoaks Alliance Church is part of a denominational family named the Alliance Canada that is at work at home and around the world.

We believe God created you with several wonderful purposes in mind; one of them is to engage in community, mission, and ministry in and through the local church. We are glad that you have been led to this local family of believers and hope that you quickly feel that you belong. Our hope is that you leave with a better sense of what we are all about and how you can get involved!

## Vision

*We exist to know Jesus and to make Him known.* This is the heartbeat of all we do.

We want to be a people who are consumed with *knowing Jesus*, and not just *knowing about Jesus*. We want to know Him intimately, experientially, and cognitively in a way that transforms us and those around us. We do not simply desire to gather on Sundays for religious ceremony or duty, nor do we want to be a Christian country club. Imagine what would happen if every member of the family was growing in their intimate knowledge of Jesus! This Jesus-centered vision has become the grid through which we discern new ministry initiatives, and align existing ones.

We believe that we come to know Jesus more fully and deeply through prayer, worship, and interacting with the living Word of God in community with other believers.

Knowing Jesus is great for us, but it cannot just end there for us. There are people all around us who do not yet know the lavish love of God for them expressed in the person and work of Jesus. We want them to know the life in Christ that we have come to know. So we are committed to making Jesus known through gospel proclamation and demonstration in our local community and beyond.

We send each other out as individuals and in community throughout the week into our neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces. And we partner with local and global ministries who are on mission, serving, loving, and witnessing.

We breathe in Jesus, and we breathe out mission. In, out. ***Know Jesus and make Him known.***

## Values

*We believe that in order to build a culture where we know Jesus and make Him known, we need to be shaped by the following five values:*

### **Gospel**

The gospel is the good news that Jesus rescues us in our helplessness. Therefore, we are committed to centering our lives on this good news and sharing it with others.

### **Life**

When we encounter and embrace Jesus, we move from death to life. Therefore, we are committed to following Jesus into the abundant life He promised.

### **Family**

Jesus died and rose so that all who believe in Him are adopted into His family. Therefore, as God's children we are committed to being a family that loves one another sacrificially.

### **Dependence**

God is the creator and sustainer of everything and everyone. Therefore, we are committed to continually choosing dependence on God and not ourselves by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Mission**

Jesus came on a mission to seek and save the lost. Therefore, as His church, we are committed to making Jesus known to everyone, everywhere, all the time.

*It is our desire to see these five values embodied in the life of each ministry of the church --shaping them, informing them, and 'putting legs' to our vision. We also want to see each member of the church living a life that embodies these values.*

## Pastors

Our family is led by the following pastors who have been tasked with "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

**Jamie Fox**, Lead Pastor

[jfox@sevenoaks.org](mailto:jfox@sevenoaks.org)

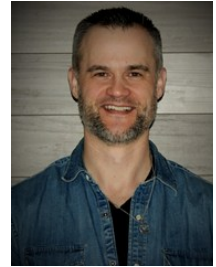
Jamie provides overall leadership and vision to the church. He works with the pastors, staff, elders, and ministry teams to guide the church ministries and align them with our vision. He also is the primary preacher and teacher for our Sunday gatherings. He was born in Northampton, England. He married Renee in 2002 after meeting at YWAM, and they have two sons (Caleb and Owen). He has a B.A. in Business Studies from the University of Northampton, an M.A. in Theological Studies from Regent College, and is ordained with the C&MA.



**Matthew Carter**, Music and Arts Pastor

*mcarter@sevenoaks.org*

Matthew provides leadership to those involved in the music and arts ministries of the church. He oversees the music in our Sunday gatherings, and equips others to lead. He builds worship teams, and shepherds them. He also connects creative people to opportunities to serve in areas of their giftedness. He was born in Grand Forks, BC, but moved to Revelstoke when he was in elementary school. He met Renee in Revelstoke, and they were married in 1993. They have four kids (Austin, Juliana, Everet, and Madeline). He has a B.A. in Religious Studies from Ambrose University and is ordained with the C&MA.



**Zach Meisenheimer**, Youth and Young Adults Pastor

*zmeisenheimer@sevenoaks.org*

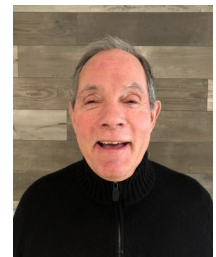
Zach provides spiritual leadership to our students in middle school, high school, and to our young adults. He trains and equips others to make disciples who make disciples. He was born in Sudbury, ON, but attended college in Regina, and has been living in the Lower Mainland since 2003. He and his wife Cheryl were married in 2002 and have two kids (Kirk and Elizabeth). He has a B.A. in Religion from Canadian Bible College and is ordained with the C&MA.



**Jack Campbell**, Seniors Pastor

*jcampbell@sevenoaks.org*

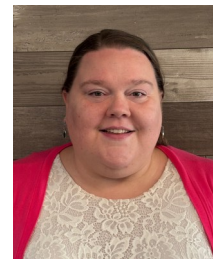
Jack visits seniors in hospitals and care homes, walks with them in various stages of loss of abilities and walks with families through grief when loved ones die. He provides leadership to the monthly Good Friends gatherings, and leads the ALPHA outreach ministry. He and Lynn were married in Sevenoaks Church and have 3 married daughters (Lindsay, Erynn and Amy) who have given them 10 grandkids. He has an M.A. in Intercultural Ministries from Ambrose Seminary and is ordained with the C&MA.



**Carmen Fischer**, Children's Pastor

*cfischer@sevenoaks.org*

Carmen provides spiritual leadership to our Children's Ministry. She works with volunteers and families to provide a spiritual foundation for our kids to know and love Jesus. She was born here in BC but has lived and ministered in both Alberta and Manitoba. She holds a B.A. in History from King's University and a M.A. in Leadership and Ministry from Ambrose Seminary and is licensed with the C&MA.



## ***History of Sevenoaks Alliance Church***

In the late 1940's, Chilliwack Alliance Church sponsored a radio program heard around the Fraser Valley. This led to Rev. Alf Orthner conducting several Sunday afternoon Radio Rallies in the Phillip Sheffield High School auditorium that were attended by up to 700 people. Soon after, several Abbotsford families began gathering in a home for prayer meetings with the hope of starting an Alliance church in Abbotsford.

Providentially, around the same time, a young Bible School student from the Alliance school in Regina was available for ministry. John Thomson travelled from Vancouver twice a week throughout the summer of 1948 to conduct the home-based prayer meetings and a Sunday service.

By mid-August, the group had reached the capacity of the home that they met in, so they sought out a larger

gathering space. As the Eagles Hall was available, they started to host their Sunday services there. Soon after, the Thomsons returned to Bible School, and the church welcomed its first full-time pastor, Rev. Clement Dreger, in September of 1948. They called themselves the Abbotsford Alliance.

The congregation then sought a more permanent home, and began its first building project on Alliance Street in 1950. The space was modified over the next 20 years to fit their needs.

In 1970 God used the ministry of some travelling evangelists to bring revival and renewal to the Abbotsford Alliance, and to the surrounding community. People were coming to faith, and their space was no longer sufficient. They began to pray about the future.

In 1971 they exercised their faith and were led to purchase land at 2575 Gladwin Road (our current location), which was on the outskirts of town. They began that same year to construct facilities to suit their growing needs, which they were forced to expand in 1979.

It was a time of rapid growth and expansion, during which they decided to change their name from Abbotsford Alliance to Sevenoaks Alliance Church. With varying degrees of help from Sevenoaks, Alliance churches were planted in the surrounding communities of Mission, Langley, Aldergrove, and Clearbrook. Senior citizens were also cared for as the church constructed the Sevenoaks Alliance Manor in 1978 to provide affordable housing to those in need.

In the early 1980's they prayerfully discerned that a larger gathering space could facilitate further growth. The current Worship Centre was completed in 1983. For many years after the completion of the Worship Centre, the church was known for its size, innovation, support of world missions, special events, and great music. But the growth trend could not last forever.

They faced some challenges in the early 2000's that have been difficult to recover from. People left. Excitement waned. Focus was lost. Discouragement crept in.

But through the faithfulness of God, through the healing of His Spirit, and through renewed vision and fervor, we believe that the best is yet to come. Hope has returned. We are no longer mourning the loss of the 'good old days', we are looking ahead and pressing in to what God has for us.

We want to know Jesus and to make Him known. Interestingly enough, this connection between Jesus and His mission are what connect us to our denominational roots, as we will now explore.

## ***History of the Christian & Missionary Alliance***

The Christian and Missionary Alliance is a movement of churches founded by A.B. Simpson in 1887.

Simpson was born on the East Coast of Canada in 1843. In 1873, Simpson left Canada to pastor a church in Louisville, Kentucky, and later a church in New York City. His desire to minister to the floods of immigrants pouring into New York City met with great opposition from the leadership of his church. In 1881, he set off on his own and started the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City where the poor, homeless, sick, displaced and neglected people would be welcome.

This ministry to the neglected peoples of New York caused him to be burdened for those neglected groups around the world. Not long after, the Christian and Missionary Alliance was born out of Simpson's dual passions; that people would know and experience Jesus Christ, and missions. An alliance of people from all denominational backgrounds with the same vision of reaching out locally and globally, accepting all people no matter their station in life with the transforming message of Jesus Christ.

*For a longer history of the C&MA in Canada, and more on the work we are involved in around the world, please see [www.cmacan.org](http://www.cmacan.org)*

## ***Statement of Faith***

Sevenoaks subscribes to the following Statement of Faith which is the Statement of Faith of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada as amended from time to time. These common beliefs unite us.

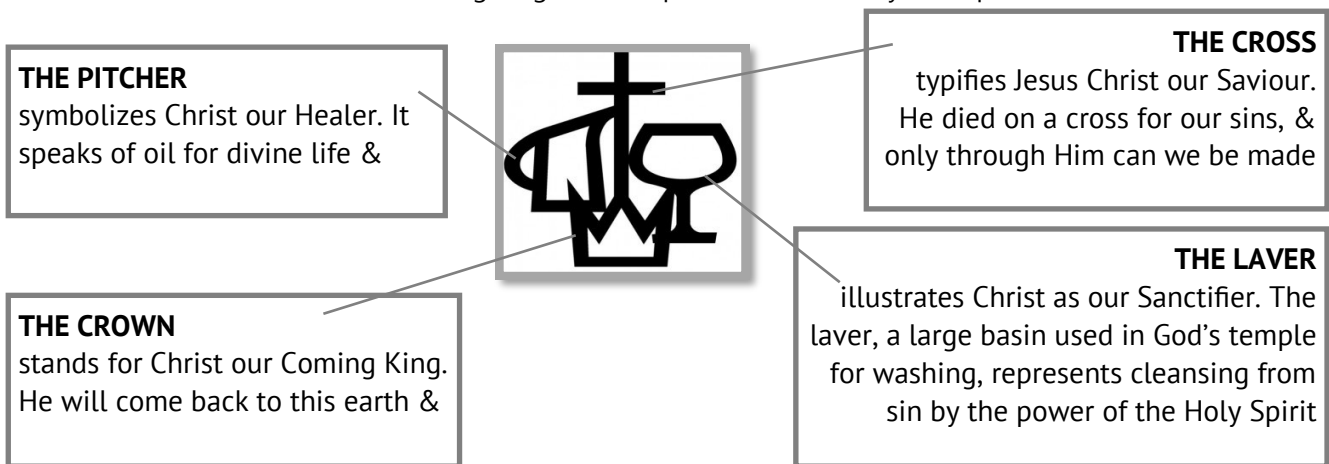
1. There is one God,<sup>1</sup> who is infinitely perfect,<sup>2</sup> existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>
2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.<sup>4</sup> He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.<sup>5</sup> He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.<sup>7</sup> He will come again to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace.<sup>8</sup>
3. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, sent to indwell,<sup>9</sup> guide, teach and empower the believer, and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.<sup>10</sup>
4. The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of people. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.<sup>11</sup>
5. Humankind, originally created in the image and likeness of God,<sup>12</sup> fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All people are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> The destiny of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment, but that of the believer is everlasting joy and bliss.<sup>14</sup>
6. Salvation has been provided only through Jesus Christ. Those who repent and believe in Him are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit and are thereby regenerated (born again), justified, sanctified and granted the gift of eternal life as adopted children of God.<sup>15</sup>
7. It is the will of God that in union with Christ each believer should be sanctified thoroughly<sup>16</sup> thereby being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to God, receiving power for holy living and sacrificial and effective service toward the completion of Christ's commission.<sup>17</sup> This is accomplished through being filled with the Holy Spirit which is both a distinct event and progressive experience in the life of the believer.<sup>18</sup>
8. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil as taught in the Scriptures are privileges for the Church in this present age.<sup>19</sup>
9. The universal Church, of which Christ is the Head, consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by Christ to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.<sup>20</sup> The local church, the visible expression of the universal Church, is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together to worship God, to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to pray, to be edified through the Word of God, to fellowship, and to testify in word and deed to the good news of salvation both locally and globally. The local church enters into relationships with other like-minded churches for accountability, encouragement and mission.<sup>21</sup>
10. There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life,<sup>22</sup> for the latter, a resurrection unto judgment.<sup>23</sup>
11. The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal and visible.<sup>24</sup> As the believer's blessed hope, this vital truth is an incentive for holy living and sacrificial service toward the completion of Christ's commission.<sup>25</sup>

1 Isa. 44:6-45:5-6  
 2 Matt. 5:48; Deut. 32:4  
 3 Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19  
 4 Phil. 2:6-11; Heb. 2:14-18; Col. 2:9  
 5 Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35  
 6 1 Cor. 15:3-5; 1 John 2:2; Acts 13:39  
 7 Heb. 4:14-15; 9:24-28  
 8 Matt. 25:31-34; Acts 1:11  
 9 John 14:16-17  
 10 John 16:7-11; 1 Cor. 2:10-12  
 11 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21  
 12 Gen. 1:27  
 13 Rom. 8:8; 1 John 2:2

14 Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thes. 1:7-10  
 15 Titus 3:5-7; Acts 2:38; John 1:12; 1 Cor. 6:11  
 16 1 Thes. 5:23  
 17 Acts 1:8  
 18 Rom. 12:1-2; Gal 5:16-25  
 19 Matt. 8:16-17; James 5:13-16  
 20 Eph. 3:6-12; 1:22-23  
 21 Acts 2:41-47; Heb. 10:25; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 11:19-30; 15  
 22 1 Cor. 15:20-23  
 23 2 Thes. 1:7-10  
 24 1 Thes. 4:13-17  
 25 1 Cor. 1:7; Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 24:14; 28:18-20

## The Fourfold Gospel

The term 'fourfold gospel' describes the historic emphasis of the C&MA on the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer & Coming King. These aspects of His ministry are represented in the official



## What Membership Means

To become a member of SAC is to make a commitment to all of us as a church family. Church membership is a public way of expressing an inner commitment to God and God's work in and through one local church.

Membership says: 'I believe Jesus led me to this church family and I'm ready to commit to it and to act as one who belongs.'

Because it flows from mutual commitment, church membership entails some mutual expectations:

1. Church members can expect that their leaders (specifically the pastoral team and the Board of Elders) will provide spiritual leadership, that is, that they will listen prayerfully to the Lord who speaks by Word (Bible) and Spirit to direct His Church. They rightfully expect that preaching, teaching and church ministries will be Bible-based and Holy Spirit-dependent.
2. Members can expect that their pastoral leaders encourage and equip them for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12), helping them to identify spiritual gifts and giving them opportunity to exercise them and to grow into them.
3. They have a right to expect that godly leaders will challenge them, in a spirit of humility, if it appears that in belief or behaviour they are departing from authentic Christian faith. Also, any member who may develop a concern about one of our pastors, our direction, pulpit teaching, etc. is encouraged to share that concern



with one of our church elders (contact information available from the church office at 604.853.0757). If a conversation with an elder does not resolve the concern, it can be brought to the Board of Elders as a whole at its monthly meeting.

4. And all of us rightfully expect that members will be enthusiastic and consistent participants in the life of our church family both inside the walls of our building and outside. We expect that each member be involved in serving one another in love (Matthew 20:28) in one capacity or another based on ministry giftedness. We are not spectators in a show; we are members of a body and participants in a mission.
5. Members expect one another to express their commitment to the Lord and to SAC through regular, systematic financial stewardship. As stewards (managers) of God's resources that He has entrusted to us, we want to give some of our money to God through the church for God's work in the world.
6. Finally, members expect one another to participate in the church's decision-making. At least once a year at our Annual General Meeting (usually in April), our members meet to review the previous year's ministry, elect elders and other leaders, adopt budgets, and face other challenges and opportunities together.

## ***Biblical Stewardship***

The term 'stewardship' might not be widely used and understood in our day but it has a rich biblical meaning. In New Testament times, many wealthy households were managed by a servant, almost exclusively male, called a 'steward'. On behalf of the family patriarch (head), the steward managed the household's resources and business interests.

The steward was very aware that the resources under his management did not belong to him. He stocked the kitchen, managed other servants, completed business and financial transactions, etc. all on behalf of the owner, and regularly gave a detailed account of his management, his *stewardship*, to the owner.

The New Testament picks up on this aspect of the contemporary culture and develops a 'theology of stewardship':

1. God owns it all. Yes, all of it! As Creator and Sustainer of all things, He owns the cosmos, --the world-- its resources, our very lives and bodies, our capacities, gifts, assets, and so on. Even as we may work very hard to 'get ahead', it is God who gives us our lives, our gifts and aptitudes and strengths, and our next breath. It all ultimately comes from Him (Psalm 24:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19).
2. We are His stewards. We are managers of those things that are under our control and influence on God's behalf. We will one day give an account of our management, our stewardship, to God. *So, we want to be faithful managers.*
3. Our identity as stewards (managers on God's behalf) is one way the Lord wants us to view the totality of our lives. We are to look at every dimension of life through special lenses, through our special 'stewardship glasses'. We are called by God to be faithful stewards of money, possessions, bodies and capabilities, sexuality, gifts and competencies, opportunities, and so on (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 4:2). Therefore, we want to be diligent in using all that God has loaned us to manage for His eternal purposes.
4. Systematic financial stewardship by giving money to God's work is one aspect of this lifestyle of faithful stewardship. It is a habit that pleases God. It is also a mark of growing spiritual maturity. One way that mature believers regularly participate in the work of God in the world is by giving some of their money to God through their church (2 Corinthians 8, 9).
5. The New Testament focus is less on tithing (giving God exactly 10% of one's income) than it is on responding to God's generosity with our finances. We believe giving should be:



- **Systematic:** regular and consistent giving.
- **Significant:** relative to our income and our means, our giving should be significant and substantial, not a mere token. For some, 10% is a good starting place; for others who are just starting down the road of financial stewardship, setting a goal of being consistent at giving 3% or 5% to God and increasing that as faith grows is better than being intimidated by the tithe (10%) concept and giving irregularly or nothing at all.
- **Sacrificial:** at times, God's Spirit may call us to an act or a period of special, sacrificial giving, giving that requires us to sacrifice in other areas of our expenditures. For some, this is real faith-building territory, as God meets their needs in unexpected ways as they sacrifice for Him.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### ***Q. I was baptized as an infant. Do I need to be baptized again in order to be a member?***

A. Alliance Canada holds a belief that believer's baptism by immersion should be taught and practiced in Alliance churches. Nevertheless, the denomination has added the following provision: *"while affirming the above (believer's baptism by immersion) as normative, the Board of Elders of the local church may discern on a case-by-case basis whether to extend membership to individuals who were baptized as infants and who now present a credible testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before members of the Board."* So, we encourage individuals to participate in the ordinance of baptism by immersion in order to become members, but if someone has already been baptized as an infant, and has a credible statement of faith, they may discuss this with the Lead Pastor and, by extension, the board of elders, should they not wish to be baptized again.

### ***Q. Does financial stewardship mean tithing? Must I tithe in order to be a member?***

A. See the sections titled *What Membership Means* and *Biblical Stewardship* for more help on this one. The short answer: tithing is not a rule for membership but regular financial stewardship (systematic giving to God through SAC) is an expectation for members.

### ***Q. Why membership in the first place?***

A. Because spiritual realities always have their 'physical' side that helps make them more concrete and helps us hold ourselves accountable to them. Jesus commanded that our inner commitment to Him in mind and heart have a visible expression by being publicly baptized. The apostle John said that our heart-felt love for others should express itself by helping meet their needs for food and clothing; for that love to remain just an inner emotion was inadequate and even hypocritical in light of the other's real need. Likewise, church membership is an outward, 'physical', concrete way of expressing my membership in the Body of Christ and it helps me hold myself accountable to Jesus' work in one particular church family where He has planted me. Church membership is a way to demonstrate and make practical my participation in the Body of Christ.

### ***Q. Can I transfer my membership from another church?***

A. We do not accept membership transfers. Our bylaws state that "to become an Active Member of the church, an individual must participate in the church's application and orientation process" (2.4). The application and orientation process that everyone must follow is outlined below.

### ***Q. Is it ever appropriate not to pursue membership here at SAC?***

A. If you are running away from something unresolved at your previous church (e.g., a conflict, a church discipline proceeding, etc.), we would like to discuss with you how the Lord might want you best to handle that situation. Membership here might be premature.

## ***Membership Process***

1. Give your life over to the Lord Jesus Christ and then confess your faith in Him by being baptized in water (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. Attend and participate in a membership class at Sevenoaks Alliance Church.
3. Complete the Membership Application, return it to the church office where it will be reviewed by a pastor.
4. A church elder will contact you to hear the story of how you came to faith in Christ and came to be part of SAC.
5. Upon approval, we will publicly welcome you to our membership during a Sunday morning service and pray for you as a new member of our church.
6. Prayerfully seek out places to connect with others (e.g. a Gospel Community) and to serve others in some form of ministry. Our pastors are always available to help you with this.