



# The Pilot

**"JESUS, SAVIOR, PILOT ME  
OVER LIFE'S TEMPESTUOUS SEA ...  
CHART AND COMPASS COME FROM THEE:  
JESUS, SAVIOR, PILOT ME."**

Volume 1, No. 2

July 2015

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## From the Pastor:

This article appeared in Outreach Magazine. It fits, doesn't it? We have members on the membership list but they don't act like members nor do they want to be members for the right reasons. Can we change that attitude? Can we be more a part of the body of Christ?

### *Three Reasons for Church Membership*

By Ed Stetzer • June 23, 2015

Bring up church membership and watch people squirm.

It isn't that people in culture are against membership as an idea—Costco seems to be doing well.

Perhaps it is because church membership is not often defined well. It's one of those things that when misunderstood seems a bit like eating your spinach—"at least try it before you decide you don't like it." Makes you want to sign right up, doesn't it?

But in the New Testament, people in churches are recognized as being in some sort of community. It's just that the reality is how community is expressed in Scripture has fallen on hard times over the last couple of thousand years. Membership is often misunderstood, misapplied or not applied at all.

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## Quarterly Voters' meeting/ Open Forum

Our next meeting will be on Sunday, July 29 at 10:30 AM. There are a number of items that will be coming up. The Church Council has been working with the architect for the fellowship hall expansion. Many have seen the most recent blueprints. We are looking into the financing to go with what we have already banked for the project. We could conceivably start ground breaking in the spring 2016. We will discuss this further at the meeting. This addition would help to alleviate crowding when we have congregational gatherings and meals, remedy the lack of adequate cooling in the fellowship area, and provide larger kitchen area and storage space.

## Computerize church records

How many baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals have taken place at St. Paul since its beginning? Records are kept to show how God is caring for the church. It is a good way for those who need or want to know when their event took place at our church. Each pastor of the church has kept records in their own way. Looking at the past records, it would be nice to be able to computerize our records for easy access, continuity, and If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Pastor Strong (After July 23rd since he will be on vacation until then). You will need to have some knowledge of Microsoft Excel and inputting

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data. It is not too difficult to do. It can even be set up so that you can work from home. We will want to do this in two phases. Phase one will be to input and then phase two will be to proof the data. Since there are a lot of names, dates and numbers, it is very easy to misspell or key in a wrong number. Since these are records to be kept for the future of our church, we want to make sure they are accurate. Never hurts to double-check.

## Confirmation Pictures

In connection with church records, we would like to acquire pictures of those who have been confirmed at St. Paul since the start of the congregation. We have received some pictures and would welcome more. If you have group pictures or individual pictures of Confirmands, please scan and email to the church: church@stpaulgj.org. Or you may drop off the pictures at church and they will be scanned there and returned.

## Church History

When did St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church get started? Who are the pastors who have served over the years? What has been our involvement with starting other churches? Who were the founding fathers? Many questions.

## Church Pictorial Directory

The last photo directory by Lifetouch was in 2011. We have an opportunity to once again participate in a photo directory for our members. Since the last directory there have been changes in membership...

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Not only should we be members of the body, each of us should also be able to express the value of membership. Hopefully, then people will stop squirming when we bring up the topic, but instead passionately embrace the biblical nature of church membership.

some have gone to other churches and new members have joined.

No date has been set yet, but probably in the fall.

We can also invite non-members to have their family photos taken and they will receive a complementary 8x10 portrait. Non-member families would not be included in our directory. But what it does is brings non-members into our church building and they can get familiarized with our church and work.

Lifetouch will also be in Grand Junction in the fall for another church photo session and we will be able to schedule so that if any of our members cannot make it to our scheduled dates, perhaps they could schedule the photo shoot at the other church. We will also want to be able to include our shut in members as well as those in the armed forces who cannot be here and others who may be off to college out of town. The goal is to get as many of our members into the directory and help us to foster a Christian family and Christian fellowship and a feeling of Biblical membership.

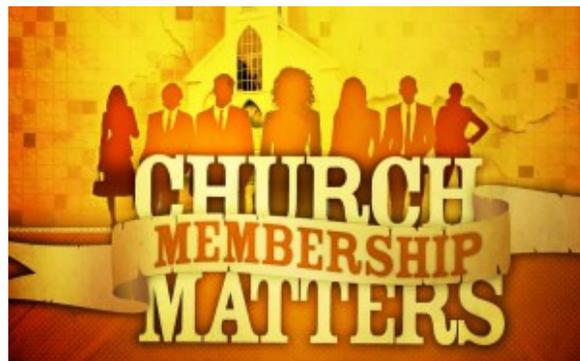
## Catechism Classes

I will be putting together the schedule for the upcoming Catechism class school year. Members of St. Paul in grades 7 and 8 are expected to attend the Catechism classes. We would also invite non-member students as well if there was a desire.

I am planning Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM.

If you have a son or daughter going into grades 7 or 8, please email to me that information so that I can contact everyone with more details.

~ Pastor Strong



The Pilot is a monthly newsletter of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church. Articles are to be submitted to the editor by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Pastor Strong serves as editor. The Pilot serves to inform St. Paul members of the events that are taking place in our congregation. Keeping the communication lines open is very important. Your comments are welcomed. St. Paul Web Page location is [www.stpaulgj.org](http://www.stpaulgj.org). You may e-mail at [pastorstrong@stpaulgj.org](mailto:pastorstrong@stpaulgj.org) or [church@stpaulgj.org](mailto:church@stpaulgj.org)

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### **Membership Reality**

The reality is we have often thought of membership like belonging to a select club, or like the old American Express commercial where “membership has its privileges.”

That is not the way the Bible refers to

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membership. In fact, in 1 Corinthians Paul doesn't say the church is *like* a body. He says the church *is* a

body. The phrase he uses to describe the individual connectedness is we are “members of the body.”

The word “member” in the Bible is more closely related to the medical word “member” than it is to the common cultural term. As an example, some of you who are reading may have lost a finger or toe in an accident. On that unfortunate day, you were dismembered. That's the actual technical terminology. A member of your body was separated from the body. That is a tragic thing. Yet today in Western culture, being separated from the body of believers is not tragic. It's almost normal. It is almost understood that Christians and churches should be separated. Lone Ranger Christians are common.

### **Biblical Membership**

Why then do we have membership? Because regardless of how the culture sees it or Christians misunderstand it, membership is not simply an opportunity to say, I'm a part of a club, but rather a scriptural expression of covenant connectedness to a church.

There are three things that help us understand why church membership is biblical and important.

#### **1. Membership Reflects What the Church Is.**

First, membership is a reflection of the organic community already existing in the body. Paul says we are a body. Can one part say to the other, “I'm not part of you”? No, it is already a part. But too often we live as if we are separated.

As a matter of fact, too many churches or Christian gatherings look like piles of dismembered body parts, not a body knit together as God's agent, his body, his kingdom, at work in the world. To reject the value of membership is to deny what God has already established in fact.

#### **2. The Bible Teaches Covenant Community.**

We find in Paul's letters to the church at Corinth that they were putting people out of the body. So Scripture teaches that we can be a part of the body, and we can be apart from the body. It is difficult to get around Scripture when it talks about being brought into the body and also being put out of it.

And yet for most churches there's no way to put somebody out because they're not even in. While there seems to be flexibility according to various bodies, there is no such thing in the New Testament as a church without some recognition of belonging—of membership in community.

#### **3. People Need Church Membership.**

Finally, we recognize biblical membership matters because people need it. People need membership commitment because they need to be connected to a Christian community. This is not just for the sake of the faith community, but also for the sake of the individual.

Individualist Christianity is a myth and a damaging pursuit. At the end of the day we're redeemed. We're placed in the body. The Bible specifically says he has redeemed us. He has transferred us, Colossians 1 says, from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the Son he loves. A kingdom has a king. The king has subjects and his kingdom has a community together where we function as God's people.

#### **Membership Matters**

God makes us a part of his larger family when we are born again. But then we should covenant in a local body and live in community with them, agreeing to live by certain established godly principles and standards.

Membership doesn't save us. But it enables us to grow and become spiritually mature in Christ.

*Three Reasons (Continued on page 2)*

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# St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Address Service Requested



Located on the corner of  
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Pastor's Cell: 612-709-4772  
Website: [www.stpaulgj.org](http://www.stpaulgj.org)  
Email: [church@stpaulgj.org](mailto:church@stpaulgj.org)

**Worship Services:**  
Sunday mornings 9:00 AM  
Fellowship: 10:00 AM  
Sunday School: 10:15 AM  
Bible Study: 10:30 AM

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