



Thank you for considering membership in the Church at Ponce & Highland! Membership may seem old-fashioned in an era when people move all the time and you can join or follow with the click of a button.

Yet, there is something powerful about feeling like you belong somewhere and will always be cared for, especially when we're constantly pulled in a thousand directions. Belonging to a community frees us up to love more fiercely and follow Christ more devotedly.

Membership in the Church at Ponce at Highland consists of three commitments:

- **Commitment to community.** Of all communities, you choose this one – and in return, this community commits to you. We'd love to announce your membership and welcome you at the end of worship, but understand if you prefer not to stand up in front of the congregation.
- **Commitment to covenant.** Members commit to our church covenant, which is below. As you can see, it gives us a framework for life without being overly restrictive.
- **Commitment to cooperation.** Not all members join teams, committees, or become deacons. But all committee members and all deacons must be members.

Our church is a community of imperfect people that care for each other and the world. Members are the ones who guide, serve, and support the church and our neighborhood. In our Baptist tradition, members literally run the church!

We'd love to talk with you more and answer your questions! There is more information below and at www.churchatponceandhighland.org.

Sincerely,

Rev. Mimi Walker
Senior Pastor
The Church at Ponce & Highland



Church Covenant

We are a congregation open to all persons who are seeking to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who desire to pattern their lives after the life and teachings of Jesus. Recognizing that we are all “one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28) we affirm our equality in the family of God and in this congregation regardless of social status, education, race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability, position, or any other distinction.

We believe that we have been created by God to live in community and led by the Spirit to join with this congregation. Together we affirm, practice and celebrate these historic Baptist principles, including:

- The right and power of the local congregation to make its own decisions and to function in partnership with freely chosen affiliations. As such the local congregation owns its own property and has the power to ordain and call its own leaders.
- The priesthood of all believers, affirming that each individual is competent to make decisions in matters of faith in conversation with community.
- The separation of church and state while encouraging individual participation and a prophetic presence in the public arena.
- Being guided by scripture we affirm the freedom and responsibility of the local congregation to assist individuals in the ongoing interpretation of the Bible as led by the Holy Spirit.
- Openness to the ongoing revelation of God in the world.
- The observance of the ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and Believer’s Baptism.
- Commitment to the ongoing education of members and ministers in training.

As a member of this fellowship, I will seek to live out the following commitments:

- I will gather regularly with the church to worship God, share the message of God in Christ Jesus, and continually examine its implications for my life.
- I will study the Bible, meditate, and pray as I seek to more fully experience the presence and direction of God in my life.



- I will also be sensitive to God's message as it comes to me from history, the arts, nature, current events in the world, and other people.
- I will be responsible to God through the creative use of all my income and possessions. I will give regularly to the financial support of our church's ministry and missions endeavors.
- I will discover, and affirm the talents, skills and spiritual gifts God has given me and use them in God's service; and I will evoke, and celebrate those talents, skills and gifts God has given to others.
- I will seek to reconcile relationships and minister to spiritual, physical, and emotional needs, within this congregation and in the larger community, recognizing the freedom and dignity of personal convictions within the bonds of unity.



Ways to get involved

Many members merely want to make a commitment to belong to a community. If you would also like to get more involved, there are a number of ways to do so:

- **Teams are the church.** They provide opportunities to participate in the life of the congregation. Anyone is welcome to join these teams at any time, and one may serve on multiple teams and/or if they are on a standing committee.
- **Committees run the church.** In the Baptist tradition, the church is autonomous and not subject to any denomination, pastor, or outside authority. Committees – finance, personnel, property – handle church business. Committee terms are for 3 years, and committee members must be church members.
- **Deacons serve the church.** Deacons partner with the pastors and church ministry team to perform the pastoral ministry work of the church. Just as the pastor and other ministers are called by and are accountable to the church, so too are the deacons. Deacons must be members of the church and commit to serve for a three-year term. At the end of this service period, they must remain inactive for a minimum of one year.



Teams

Teams provide opportunities to participate in the life of the congregation. Anyone is welcome to join these teams at any time, and one may serve on multiple teams and/or if they are on a standing committee.

If you would like to volunteer for a team please email Pastor Colin at colin.holtz@dhbc.org.

Local and Global Missions Team: Help make God's dream for the world a reality. Volunteer to serve our local people experiencing homelessness; help the Mayan Intercultural Seminary in Chiapas, Mexico educate, connect and protect indigenous communities; and support the growth of cooperative businesses in Chiapas and here in Atlanta.

Hospitality Team: Provide opportunities for intergenerational interaction within our congregation for the purpose of fostering rich, nurturing relationships that promote family connections.

Choir: Love to sing or play music? Join the choir, participate in choral concerts, or find other ways to bring your gifts to the church.



Committees

In the Baptist tradition, the church is autonomous and not subject to any denomination, pastor, or outside authority. Committees handle church business. Committee terms are for 3 years, and committee members must be church members.

There are three standing committees:

The Finance Committee is responsible for planning the annual operating budget, initiating the church-wide Stewardship Emphasis each year and overseeing the use funds from the endowment investments. Additionally, the Finance Committee meets monthly to review a Financial Report provided by the church book keepers..

The Personnel Committee is responsible, working with the Pastor, for hiring any new Ministry Team (Staff) members. In some cases, the Personnel Committee will function as a Search Committee, depending on the position. The Personnel Committee also conducts an annual review of the performance of each Ministry Team member and makes recommendations to the Finance Committee during the budget preparation period regarding compensation. The Personnel Committee can also function as a consulting body for Pastor and other Ministry Team leaders when necessary.

The Trustees are the group within the church most directly responsible for decisions related to the maintenance, repair and general operation of the physical plant and related properties, such as the parking lot, grounds, and vehicles. The Trustees also function as the official legal representatives of the church, with the Chair of the Trustees as the designated signatory for legal documents and contracts.



Deacons

Deacons at The Church at Ponce & Highland partner with the pastors and church ministry team to perform the pastoral ministry work of the church. Election and ordination as a deacon is not just an “honor,” but a call from God. Just as the pastor and other ministers are called by and are accountable to the church, so too are the deacons.

To serve effectively in the ministry work of C@P&H, deacons should be persons who demonstrate the following:

- Ability to work well with people
- Willingness to serve
- Spiritual maturity

Acts 6:1-7 is a Biblical text that describes the origin and purpose of the office of deacon. In the fall of each year, the church body is asked to participate in the deacon nominating process by suggesting names of individuals believed to be good candidates for service as deacons.

This list of expectations should prove helpful for individuals considering answering the call to service as a deacon.

1. In support of the C@P&H pastors and other ministry team members, deacons sometimes serve as lay ministers to the congregation. This ministry service may take the form of providing intermittent assistance at “point of need” to the church family (for example, giving someone a ride to a job interview, picking up medicine from the pharmacy, or helping to rearrange furniture in a home). Work in this ministry effort may take more of a long-term approach (for example visiting a person who is no longer physically able to come to church, keeping that person in prayer and making the church body aware of his/her needs as they arise). In this way, deacons truly support the ministry work of our professional ministry team.
2. Deacons participate in planning and implementation of ministry efforts through involvement in regular meetings and other planning sessions.



3. Deacons participate in church life as church members, including supporting the church through prayer, tithes and offerings, and involvement in efforts of the church.
4. Deacons participate and are involved in worship services. Examples of this involvement include: collecting the offering each Sunday (per a schedule), speaking the offertory prayer, assisting in straightening up the Sanctuary following Sunday worship services, preparation and service of the elements for the Lord's supper and clean-up afterwards.
5. Deacons commit to serve for a three-year term. At the end of this service period, they must remain inactive for a minimum of one year. Inactive deacons or persons who have not yet been ordained may be nominated to serve as a deacon.