

Greater Springfield

Community Church

**Membership
Handbook**

2024



Rev. Dr. Philip Craig, Senior Pastor

Welcome

We are delighted you chose to become a part of the Greater Springfield Community Church Family also known as GSCC.

We hope that the following information is helpful in creating an easier road map to your new walk, in a new church and around new people.

It is our sincere hope that you find what God has called you to do in this ministry. We are excited and anticipating that God is going to do some amazing things in your life from this point forward.

If you have a question about anything, never hesitate to contact us immediately. We at The Greater Springfield Community Church are here to help, serve and empower the people of God, to possess the promises of God.

GSCC Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Greater Springfield Community Church to transform lives and change communities by bringing the lost to Jesus, to empower the powerless, educate the uneducated and liberate the captive. We strive to grow in faith, making disciples and providing a holistic ministry to all believers through preaching, teaching, evangelism economic development and any other resource God provides to us to meet the challenges of the future and the needs of the people both within the congregation and the community abroad.

Vision Statement

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son of Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and know, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen - Matthew 28: 19-20

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

CONTACT US

Phone: (718) 527 – 0100

Email: info@gscnyc

Website: www.GSCC.nyc

Follow us on Social Media:

Facebook: @GreaterSpringfieldCommunityChurch

Youtube: @gscnyc

Instagram: @gscnyc

SERVICE TIMES

Sundays at **11:00 am** (in-person)

MINISTRIES

Discipleship - We have a number of classes and study groups year-round that you can become a part of. All information is listed on our website or call church office.

Men's Ministry – (see website for more information)

Women's Ministry – Call Church office for meeting times and upcoming events.

Youth Academy – Youth Career Jumpstart Program (External program held at the church – call church office for more information or visit www.youthcareerjumpstart.com)

Usher Ministry - Contact any usher or the church office how to join

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

MINISTERIAL TEAM

Rev. Dr. Phil Craig, Senior Pastor | pastor@gscn.ny

Rev. Mark Payne, Minister of Music and Worship | m.payne@gscn.ny

Rev. Barbara Seymour, Minister to Women and Care & Concern | b.seymour@gscn.ny

ADMINISTRATION

Lydia Turley, Church Clerk and Executive Administrator to the Pastor | L.turley@gscn.ny

Ericka Johnson, Community Engagement liaison to the Pastor | e.johnson@gscn.ny

CHURCH CONFERENCE

In January and June of every year the pastor will hold a semi-annual church conference inviting the entire membership of the Greater Springfield Community Church. We meet and discuss the work of the church. Here, each leader has an opportunity to read their reports where each member gets an idea of what has been accomplished and what is going on in the church as a whole.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Becoming a Christian is a growth process that goes on one's entire life span. Once a person has decided to become a Christian, he or she enters a journey that should mold them to think, feel and act more like Jesus. One becomes a Christian as they press their way in becoming more Christ like as they develop patterns of trust in God.

The first big step then, in becoming a Christian is to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and savior of your life, and to accept his plan as your blueprint by which you will live and serve. Christian living comes as the Christian grows and develops themselves to a systematic program of study, training and work. Becoming a Christian doesn't happen overnight, it is a growth process which is a lifelong commitment.

To be a Christian means to be identified with Jesus. This means that you must keep striving to bring your thinking and actions in conformity with the life and spirit and mind of Christ.

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

- **Christians are Continuously Tempted.** You must not think you will not be tempted since you become a Christian. Temptations will be increased and will be more severe. You have just enlisted in the Lord's army and will now need the Lord's armor. (Read Ephesians 6:11-18).
- **Christians Have Greater Joy.** No joy is taken from the person who becomes a Christian. In fact, to become a Christian place one in a position to have real joy, the happiest possible life. Jesus said to believers, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full*" (John 15:11).
- **Christians Have Larger Liberty.** It does not take away one's liberty to become a Christian. In fact, the Christian has larger liberty. He is no longer a slave to needless restrictions and endless prohibitions. We read, Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17). The Christian is delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21). The Christian has God's freedom, which means he can do anything but commit sin, and this He will not desire to do.
- **There are some Definite Do's as a Christian.** Keep yourselves in the love of God (Jude 21). There are some definite do's you will need to make as a Christian to follow certain lines of activities which will aid greatly in the Christian life:
 - **Love the Church.** "*Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it*" (Eph. 5:25). The fact that Christ loved the church is sufficient reason for us to love it and support it and give ourselves for it. Christ gave himself for the church daily during his earthly life by teaching, preaching and healing.
 - **Worship the Lord.** Worship and fellowship with God should be both private and public. Both are essential and fill different needs in life.
 - **Study the Word.** "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed" (2 Timothy 2:15).
 - **Serve the Lord.** Jesus said. "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:21). You must labor for the Lord or lose the influence of Christian life.
 - **Keep His Commandments.** Obedience is taught in all of the Bible and is absolutely necessary for success in the Christian life.
 - **Give Your Money.** "*God loveth a cheerful giver*" (2 Corinthians 9:7). "*Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all the increase*" (Proverbs 3:9).
 - **Live for Others.** "Love one another" (John 15:17).
 - **Be of Good Cheer.** Jesus says to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world (John 16:33).
 - **Keep Moving Forward.** "*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil 3:14).

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

THE COMMISSION AT GREATER SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Greater Springfield Community Church is committed to the Great Commission mentioned in Matthew 28: 19-20 where the Lord said “Go and *make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them* to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” If the church fails to do these things it has forsaken its divine commission. To effectively carry out this divine commission Greater Springfield Community Church has organized itself around the following major concerns represented by the following commissions:

1. *The Commission of Membership and Evangelism.* Whose major function is to lead the church as a whole in getting people to fall in love with Christ and the Church, and be serviceable to both. Bringing new recruits into the Fellowship is its major task. Reclaiming backsliders and stirring up the careless and unconcerned members are also numbered among its task.
2. *The Commission on Christian Education.* The work of this commission is that of helping to qualify every member so as to lead and guide each into coming active first-class Christians, and active first-class citizens. Christian education reinforces everything the church does in that it seeks to inform the members concerning their obligations to God, and helps them to understand what this means. This commission is responsible for seeing that each member has many opportunities for being taught, and for the systematic growth and development of his Christian character.

Christian education means that The Greater Springfield Community Church is an educational institution, interested in deepening the faith and understanding of every member. This it does through our worship services, study groups, discipleship classes, meetings, bible study and in other ways where empowerment, faith and hope is being taught.

1. *The Commission on Christian Social Relations.* The Greater Springfield Community Church has always recognized that Christians cannot be effective servants of God unless they become a part of the community and world in which they live. We cannot isolate ourselves within the four walls of our church building and ignore what is happening in the local community or the world community and still be Christians.

Christians should be working to bring in the kingdom of God, the beloved community. This commission is responsible for keeping the congregation mindful of these things. It should lead the members to participate in whatever is designed to make the community a better place for every citizen.

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

This commission should lead the congregation in being concerned about temperance, health, education, world peace, race relations, political and economic affairs and every issue which is related to the creation and maintenance of a good social order.

1. *The Commission of Public Relations.* This commission is responsible for gathering and circulating information about our church which will be of public interest. Its function is to keep the church in the media with information about its programs, projects and personalities.
2. *The Commission on Stewardship and Finance.* This commission is directly under the supervision of the Official Board and gets its orders and directions from the Board. After the Official Board approves and adopts the budget for the year, the Commission on Stewardship and Finance organizes every member canvass through which every member is urged to pledge to the budget accordingly to his ability. Scripture encourages Christian giving. Leviticus 27:30 (TLB) says, "A tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, is the Lord's, and is holy." And Proverbs 3:9 (NIV) says, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."

This commission is responsible for making suggestions which will insure the church that every phase of its program for the year will be adequately under-girded financially. The commission reports monthly to the Official Board and is kept accurately informed by the board concerning every detail of the financial condition of the church.

WHAT WE BELIEVE...

ABOUT GOD

We believe God is the ALPHA and OMEGA, the Beginning and End, all knowing and the creator of the universe. We believe in one God who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord who conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, died and buried. On the third day he arose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the God the Father Almighty. From there He shall return to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the universal Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body of Christ and everlasting life. Amen.

ABOUT JESUS

We believe Jesus the Christ is the Son of God. Jesus became flesh to reveal God to humanity and to become the Savior of the lost world. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of entire humanity by dying on the cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over death, sin and the grave. He ascended to heaven and will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Romans 1:3, 4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third component of the trinity along with the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is present in the world as our comforter and to make people aware of their need for Jesus the Christ. The spirit also dwells in every Christ-follower from the moment of salvation. He provides Christ-Followers with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians, we seek to live under the leadership of the Holy Spirit each day.

2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” – 1 Corinthians 12:27

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

ABOUT THE CHURCH

The Christian Church is a community of people who believe in God and who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

We who make up the Christian Church believe that God, through Jesus Christ can transform individuals in such a way to want them to be like, think like, and act like Jesus in every area of their lives.

We also believe that there is a divine power, referred to as the Holy Spirit, which enables the willing person to become a true and effective servant of God.

Jesus Christ is the spiritual head of the Christian Church. The Greater Springfield Community Church (GSCC) of which you are a member represent an organized group of Christian believers who are studying, learning, growing, serving, and further developing themselves into effective Christian servants. This is a part of what it means to be a Christian.

We join the church in order that through participation we may grow in spiritual understanding and character and become better able to more effectively serve both God and man.

ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God for all people. Written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Triune God. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without error.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5

ABOUT SALVATION

We believe that salvation is a gift from God to man. Man can never make up for his sin by self-improvement or good works, rather the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, God freely offers salvation to those who place their faith on the death and resurrection of Christ as sufficient payment for their sin.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

ABOUT HUMANITY

We believe that all people were created in the image of God to have a right relationship with Him but became alienated and separated from God in that relationship through sinful disobedience. As a result, people are incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through their own efforts. We are only saved by grace.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1, 2

ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS

A traditional definition for sacrament is that it is “an outward and visible symbol of an inward and spiritual grace.”

In the Christian tradition only two sacraments are considered to be ordained by Christ in the Gospels (Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-28). To be a sacrament a rite must have been established by Jesus and participated in by Jesus himself. It must also be a means of strengthening a relationship with God and a commitment to continue the redemptive ministry of Jesus.

ABOUT BAPTISM

We believe baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and is the public declaration that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Baptism is a symbolic, but powerful demonstration to the world that you are a Christ-follower. While baptism is not required for salvation, it is a biblical command and demonstrates your love and obedience to Christ.

Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41; Ephesians 2: 8-9; Matthew 28:19-20

ABOUT COMMUNION

We believe Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, is an ordinance given to all Christ-followers by Jesus Christ to remember his sacrifice for us and to symbolize the new covenant. The elements of bread and wine or juice are symbols of Christ’s broken body and shed blood. Communion is not a means of salvation. Rather, it is a statement of a Christ-follower’s faith in the atoning work of the cross.

Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Christian Terminology

- 1. Atonement:** The reconciliation of humanity with God through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, providing forgiveness of sins.
Scripture: "In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Ephesians 1:7)
- 2. Believe:** To accept, trust, and have faith in the teachings, promises, and person of Jesus Christ for salvation.
Scripture: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
- 3. Confess:** Acknowledge and admit one's sins to God, seeking forgiveness and cleansing through Christ.
Scripture: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)
- 4. Condemnation:** The state of being judged guilty and deserving of punishment, which is replaced by believers' justification through faith in Christ.
Scripture: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)
- 5. Edification:** The process of spiritual and moral growth, building up individuals and the Christian community through teaching and encouragement.
Scripture: "But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging, and comfort." (1 Corinthians 14:3)
- 6. Forgiveness:** The act of pardoning sins and offenses, granted by God through Christ's sacrifice, and extended to believers as they forgive others.
Scripture: "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13)
- 7. Glorification:** The final stage of salvation when believers are transformed into the likeness of Christ and enjoy eternal fellowship with God.
Scripture: "And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." (Romans 8:30)
- 8. Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love, freely given to humanity, especially in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
Scripture: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

9. **Holy:** Set apart and morally pure; God's holiness is absolute, and believers are called to live holy lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Scripture: "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do." (1 Peter 1:15)
10. **Intercede:** To mediate or intervene on behalf of others, often in prayer, as Jesus intercedes for believers before God.
Scripture: "Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." (Romans 8:34)
11. **Justification:** The act of God declaring a sinner righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, based on His atoning work.
Scripture: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)
12. **Mercy:** Compassionate and undeserved kindness or forgiveness, particularly shown by God toward sinners.
Scripture: "The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love." (Psalm 145:8)
13. **Predestined:** God's foreordaining or choosing of individuals for salvation before the foundation of the world.
Scripture: "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight." (Ephesians 1:4)
14. **Reconciled:** The restoration of a relationship between God and humanity through Christ's sacrifice, overcoming the separation caused by sin.
Scripture: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18)
15. **Redemption:** The act of buying back or freeing someone from bondage; in Christianity, it refers to Christ's payment for humanity's sins.
Scripture: "In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Ephesians 1:7)
16. **Repentance:** Genuine remorse for one's sins, accompanied by a turning away from sin and a turning towards God.
Scripture: "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

17. **Resurrection:** The rising to life again, particularly Jesus Christ's triumph over death, offering believers the hope of eternal life.
Scripture: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.'" (John 11:25)
18. **Righteous:** Morally upright and in conformity with God's standards; believers are declared righteous through faith in Christ.
Scripture: "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." (Romans 3:22)
19. **Sacrifice:** A voluntary offering made to God, often involving the giving up of something valuable; Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate sacrifice for sin.
Scripture: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:2)
20. **Salvation:** The deliverance from sin and its consequences through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
Scripture: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)
21. **Sanctification:** The ongoing process of being set apart for God's purposes and transformed into Christ's likeness.
Scripture: "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
22. **Transgression (Sin):** Violation of God's law or will, leading to separation from God; forgiveness is found through repentance and faith in Christ.
Scripture: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)
23. **Trespass:** Wrongful actions or offenses committed against God or others; forgiveness is sought through confession and repentance.
Scripture: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matthew 6:12)
24. **Triune God:** The understanding of God as three persons in one essence—Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit—each fully and equally God, existing in perfect unity.
Scripture: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

GSCC Members Handbook 2024

Created for Service

In service to the Lord, we stand,
Builders of His kingdom, hand in hand.

A fellowship of hearts ablaze,
Guided by His love, in awe and praise.

With open hearts, we humbly yield,
To cultivate faith's sacred field.

Sowing seeds of kindness, grace,
In every step, seeking His face.

United in purpose, a family divine,
A tapestry of faith, where souls align.

Each member a brick, a cornerstone,
In God's temple of love, together we're known.

Through valleys low and mountains high,
We lift our voices, reach for the sky.

In service to the Lord, we find our place,
Building His kingdom with joy and grace.

New members join this sacred quest,
With hearts aflame, in hope, we rest.

For in unity and love, we find,
The strength to serve, with purpose aligned.

-Rev. Dr. Philip Craig