



Circle the Wagons
Part 5 – Join the Family
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today in our series, we're talking about joining the family and we're giving everyone online an opportunity to join as well. Here's why I'm excited about this for several reasons. There are a bunch of you who are signed up for Starting Point and obviously we had to cancel that. Starting Point is our membership class at Woodland Hills Family Church. We weren't able to do that because of the shutdown. So, today is the day for you to become a member, here in the room or at home.

If you are at home, you can go to "Church at Home," hit the "Join the Family" button and register. It's very important for you to know that when you see the word "register" on our website, absolutely never, ever, ever will we give your information to other people. We won't sell it. We won't give it. That is just for our us and for our records. You can download the Membership Covenant right now.

You received a Membership Covenant when you came in the room, and this is what they have online. At home, you can fill this out as we go through the message, you can wait until after the message today and download it. Do it online or some of you may want to download it and print it out and send it in by mail, and we're great with that. We're just grateful to be able to help those who have been wanting to become a member.

We're also grateful for the young adults in the room. There are a lot of young adults who have been at our church for 10 or 15 years and they came into the church through their parents. I'm excited, with a 15 and soon to be 17-year-old, that today is a day that they can become a member of the church. They can make that decision for themselves. So, young adults in the room, we hope that you receive this as well and take this message to heart and make your decision about church membership today.

For many of us, it's like starting over, starting again. If you've been through Starting Point and you've been a member of our church for a long time, this is going to be a great opportunity for all of us to be reminded of what we're called to, how we're called to live, and how we function as the body of church, as the family of God.

I'm also excited today for new believers, many that have placed faith in Jesus over the last couple of months. This is an opportunity for you to get... These are the purposes of our church, the essentials of our church, and then your commitment to our church.

Then, lastly, this is so important, and I'm grateful for 10:00; I shared this with our 8:00, and I'll share it again at noon with those coming this afternoon. Over half of our church is still not on campus. So, over half of our church is at home. What I love about talking about the purposes of the church, the essential of the church, and then your commitment to the church is that you can fulfill all of these even though you're not on campus because church membership is more than a day of the week, more than building, if we have learned anything and have lived out anything during this time. So, we're grateful for you and we hope that you take this step today as you connect.

I know many of you received gifts this week from the church. Again, just our way of reminding you that we are constantly thinking of you, care for you, and want you to know you are a part of our church family.

So, as we jump into this, I want to ask you a question. Why are you here today? Probably would have been an easier question to ask in February when we had 2,000 or 2,100 people on campus, now that we have about 900 people on campus each week. Why do you come to church? Just asking that question, some of you are going, "Great question. I'm out of here."

Some people attend church out of habit. It's just something they've always done and that kind of leads into another reason and that's tradition. You were drug to church as a child; it's almost part of your DNA, part of your family of origin to go to church. Others of you are here today or watching online because you're being pressured to. We see this with couples all the time. One spouse wants to go and the other spouse not so much, but they go along. Some people attend church out of guilt. People think that the church is important after they've done something they shouldn't have done, so they go to church to kind of make up for that.

But I would say this is true for the majority of people in here and the majority of people watching – our church family at home – you're here because you understand the value of being a part of the body of Christ. You understand the value of being a part of the family of God. This isn't just something you check off each week; this is a gathering here and online for us to come together, knowing who we are – the people of God – and identifying with the body. That's what I want for a lot of you. That identifying today, saying, "This is my church family. That crazy group of people are my people. I love that church."

We talk about identity all the time. I had a great run in with identity a couple of weeks ago. I was at Long Creek Marina down south of town. It's a self-serve gas pump and I was filling up the boat. A young couple on jet skis came flying into the stall next to me. I said hi to them and they sat there and talked for a little bit and then they went inside.

The gas pump wasn't taking my credit card, so the lady said, "Ted, when you're done, you can just pay in here." I said, "Hey, no problem." So, I filled up and went in with my credit card. I walked in and there was this couple standing at the counter. They had four cases of beer in front of them. I walked in and these were the very first words I heard. "I'm going to need to see some ID. The young guy says, "Are you serious?" She goes, "Yeah, I'm sorry; you're right on the line." He goes "Oh, come on!" He starts scuffling with her. I went over, minding my own business and I put my credit card in to pay for the gas. He reaches in his wallet... I've never seen this done. He reached in his wallet and grabbed his Driver's

License and then leaned way back, showing his driver's license next to his face. She goes, "I can't see that." He goes, "Oh, come one, man!" He was giving her a hard time.

Now, I'm not making this up. He looked over at me and he said, "Can I use your license?" I was thinking, *There's no way I'm buying you four cases of beer; maybe one, but not four cases...* No, that's a joke for all of Baptist friends that are in here. It's just a joke! I didn't have any words. I'm rarely speechless, if you know me, rarely speechless. I looked at this guy like, *You want me to buy you four cases of beer?*

I looked at the lady and she looked at me like, *Are you gonna?* I'm not going to buy them beer. Could you imagine the amount of trouble I would... Gary Hazel, the Taney County Sheriff's Deputy, is going, *I hope he... Tell me he's not going to tell a story where he bought young people beer.*

I didn't say a word to them. I walked out. They walked out mad. They left, ticked off. They wouldn't speak to me. By the way, if that young couple is here today, I just want to say, as your pastor, I love you. I'll buy you a case of Coke or Dr. Pepper... Whenever I tell these stories, I forget we're a small town, so that's probably going to get out.

But listen, that license identifies your age. I use a passport or a TSA approved driver's license when I go to the airport. The passport identifies me as a citizen of the United States and allows me to travel. So, why is church membership a big deal? Why should I be concerned? We get pushback on this. "I don't need to sign my name to be a member." Listen, put the formal part of this aside for just a second. What undergirds this whole thing today, the desire in this whole thing is that you would identify with the body of Christ. That you wouldn't make statements like, "That's the church I attend" or "That's the church we go to," but you would say, "That is my church. Those people, I identify with them; I am with them and we are one in Christ." We don't agree on everything. We don't always get along, but that's also why it's called a family. We're a family.

So, today, we're going to look at the purposes of our church, the essentials of our church and then we're going to ask you to make a commitment to our church, if you're ready and in that moment.

Let's talk about the purposes. Have you ever had a day where at the end of the day, you're like, "That was as good day."? Anybody ever have a day like that? "That was a good day. I had good sleep the night before, I ate okay. Amy walked me and the dog right before sunset. Marriage is good. Relationships are good." But at the end of the day, you sit back and you go, "That was a good day. Everything seems to be in balance." We've all had days like that.

We've had the opposite of those days. We're like, "I didn't eat all that great. I should have poured a few of those chips in a bowl to take them in the family room, not bring the bag. I should have paused and spent more time with my kids." We've had those moments where we're like, "I wasn't in step there. I wasn't firing on all cylinders." You know what I'm talking about. Yeah.

When we talk about the purposes of the church, these aren't just the purposes of the church, they're the purposes of your life. When you're firing on all five of these cylinders, when you're pursuing all of

these in your life... Today, we're going to get these from the words of Jesus and then see it lived out in the first century church. We're going to see what Jesus tells us the five purposes are and then we're going to see how, in Acts 2: 42- 47, they lived them out.

Here are the purposes of our church:

Worshipping – loving the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, expressing love to God. This purpose is more than music, more than a day of the week, and it's more than a physical gathering place. Although it is music and it is a gathering and it's where we express our love to God corporately.

Fellowship – We've been studying fellowship for the last few weeks in this series. Fellowship is loving one another, believers in Christ Jesus. We love each other, we bear with one another, we forgive one another, we're expressing fellowship together. By the way, with all of these purposes, there's not one more important than the other. We are trying, in our daily lives, to live these out, all five, and keep them in balance within the church.

Discipleship – This is becoming more like Jesus – expressing love to Jesus, loving one another in Jesus, growing more like Jesus. Growing in our faith, knowing what Jesus taught, how we live in accordance with the Bible.

Ministry – If fellowship is loving one another in Jesus, ministry is serving one another and serving others.

Evangelism – Sharing Jesus with our family, friends, co-workers. I have to tell you that as I've studied this week, it's been encouraging for me because you heard me say it early on when the shutdown took place, that nothing changed about these purposes during the shutdown. When we all went online and now, we're less than half back and over half still online, we were still living out these purposes.

I would tell you the joy it has been in this church for us to actually see these purposes spotlighted even more. To see us living them out with greater passion and desire and drive because of what Jesus is doing in each one of us. A good thing out of the shutdown, even though there is so much pain and difficulty that's come out of this and the death that has come out of this, is that we would take this moment and realize that the purposes of the church continued. What Jesus taught us, how he asked us to live, never skipped a beat.

We get worship from the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, and then we get all these purposes lived out in Acts 2:42- 47. Matthew 22 says, ***"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*** The first church did this. They were ***...praising God together.*** – Acts 2:42-47

Then you look at **discipleship** – ***"...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*** – Matthew 28:20. We are learning and growing together to be more like Jesus. The first church did this.

They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching... We saw early on what that looks like. We put this in our muscle memory so when life hits us, when seasons hit us, when different stages hit us, we are so devoted to the teachings of Jesus that it is just an automatic response for us. We're living it out because it is in us. They devoted themselves to this ***...and to fellowship.*** – Acts 2:42

Fellowship – *Love your neighbor as yourself* – Matthew 2:39. I love you; I'm not buying you four cases of beer. ***All the believers were together and had everything in common.*** – Acts 2:44 We read this also in Acts 4. They were doing life together. ***They broke bread in their homes...*** At the end of the message today, there will be an announcement for a pretty cool meet up this week on Wednesday. ***...and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*** – Acts 2:46

Ministry – Serving one another in love. Same thing – ***Love your neighbor as yourself*** – Matthew 2:39 They did this. ***They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.*** Acts 2:45 The giving and the generosity through this season has been overwhelming. If you want to go online now and hit the “give online” button, this is your opportunity to give. As you leave here today, you'll be able to give. Many of you know... And I'm giving you a thank you, passing it onto you from John Baltes at the Silver Dollar City Foundation.

You know Silver Dollar City has been closed for several months and that is what funds the Foundation and that is what funds Care for Kids. As I had the opportunity to sit on that board now for ten years, we started immediately looking at finances and things changing and resources coming in, making a commitment to the next school year. It was the Lord working through you. It was the Lord working through you that when we're able to hear about need in the community, we immediately decided not to scale back. There will be more need next year in the schools, not less. Let's not scale back our giving.

We usually give \$42,000.000 a year to Care for Kids, but as a church family this year, so far, we've given \$103,000.00. It's like ministry has increased to say let's not... And you know Travis Brawner said this early on. This isn't a time to hold back; it's a time to give. Don't tell your neighbor to come back tomorrow when you have it with you to give right now. We have seen relationships grow stronger through this season. We have seen giving and ministry to the community. We've ministered to our community more in the last couple of months than I would say we have in the last few years. Serving other people and giving to other people.

Evangelism – “*Go and make disciples of all nations*” – Matthew 28:19 ***And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*** – Acts 2: 47 We never sit around in our church thinking about church growth and how we can grow the church, how we can make the church bigger. We're constantly thinking about health. This is at the end of Acts 2: 42-47. If you live out the purposes that Jesus gives us, and make them your goal and your drive and your desire in your life and then in the life of this church, the Lord takes care of the addition, the Lord takes care of the multiplication. You be about what you're supposed to be doing with worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and evangelism and let the Lord add to our numbers, let the Lord grow the church.

Over 18 years ago, I was part of a church split that split over evangelism. Part of it was me... It wasn't part of it, it was me. They split and said, “Hey, we need somebody who is going to speak directly to

seekers. We need someone who is going to speak to the lost.” Through this season, evangelism has shot up because churches... With everybody going online and millions of people watching services, those numbers have come right back down to where they were before the pandemic. It can drive a church. We don’t let one purpose drive a church.

Then about six or seven years after that, this church split over discipleship and not being strong enough in that. If worship is your priority in the church, you’ll expect the pastor to be a worship leader. If it’s fellowship, you’ll expect the pastor to be a chaplain. If it’s discipleship, you’ll expect the pastor to be a Bible teacher, using Greek and Hebrew. If it’s ministry, which is happening more and more in churches, if ministry is the priority of the church, you’ll want your pastor to be a social justice advocate. If it’s evangelism, you’re going to want an evangelist. But this is why we’re called the body of Christ. Because in the body, the parts are working together. I am grateful that I don’t have to be all things to all people at this church. I’m grateful that you don’t have to be all things to all people at this church. You are a part of this church. I am a part of this church, not the whole. And all God’s people said... Amen. That’s how we are to live these purposes out.

Next week, Alex Himaya will be back. I love bringing Alex in because he’s an evangelist and he is boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in a way that I don’t. I love hearing it from him. That’s what I love about how the body of Christ functions. We’re to live these purposes out, each one of us, but as God is doing his work in the church and using the church, we’re able to see everybody come together with their giftings, their talents and different personalities, and God brings it all together and we are the family of God. These are the purposes of the church

We also have the essentials of our church. These are what you would call our core beliefs. These core beliefs... In 18 years, we have never sat around in meetings and ask if we want to change what we think about something. The answer is no. These are essential beliefs:

Trinity – God the father, Jesus the Son, and The Holy Spirit. They have existed... They are co-eternal and co-equal. They are not three parts of God. They are not three Gods. They are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one, existing co-eternally and co-equally. ***For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.*** Jesus died and was buried. He rose again. He ascended to the Father and he sent the Holy Spirit. Alex talked about that two weeks ago at the Day of Pentecost. If you are a believer in Christ Jesus... He lived a sinless life, died for your sins. If you are a believer in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives within you. At the moment of your salvation, the Holy Spirit indwells you.

The Bible – We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It’s infallible, it’s without error, and it is sufficient. It has everything we need to live a godly life. It was written by human authors, but inspired by God. There are two testaments: The Old Testament and The New Testament, 66 books, over 40 authors, written over a period of about 1,400 years.

Human Beings – We spent a lot of time last week with the essentials on human beings. We believe man is made in the image of God. It gives us automatic, intrinsic value. In Genesis 3, we see that sin enters the picture. In Romans, we learn that as by one man, sin entered into the

world and death by sin, so death has passed upon all men. Human beings – all men, all women, born and unborn – are created in the image of God. It gives you automatic intrinsic value and worth. What's very important to understand in the essentials is sin did not remove the image of God in man. Sin marred the image of God in man. And that is why we need salvation.

Salvation – Man sinned against God, going our own way. There are many paths that lead to destruction and many of you are on that path right now, and you've not placed faith in Jesus. There are many ways that seem right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that he has been raised from the dead, you will be saved. Confess your sins before your father in heaven who sent Jesus to die for you and the Holy Spirit is that spotlight that is constantly shining on Jesus.

Eternal Security – We believe that your salvation is not because of human effort. Human effort can't bring you into a relationship with God and human effort can't keep you saved. We believe that is all the work of Jesus. He died for you. For by grace you are saved through faith that it's not of works so that man cannot boast about it. We do not put anything about your salvation in the human effort category.

Heaven and Hell – Heaven and hell are real places and you will spend eternity in either heaven or hell. If you place faith in Jesus, heaven is your home for all of eternity. If you reject Jesus, hell is where you spend eternity.

In all of these beliefs... Now I want you to mark your calendars. On July 15, Wednesday night, Travis Brawner is going to do a livestream from this stage. You are welcome to attend in the room. He is going to do an essentials class. He's going to drill down deep on all of these. He's going to record it as well. Obviously, it's on livestream so that people can go back. It's going to be a class that we want to offer people during this time where so many are staying at home. But on July 15, make a plan on either being here in the room or watching online or watching on demand after that. But in our essential beliefs... This is important. This is where we have unity. You know our last two worship songs this morning were clearly proclaiming essential beliefs and using the words "I believe."

In our non-essential beliefs, we have liberty. I would love to give you a list on non-essential beliefs, but it's too long. What's in non-essential beliefs? Worship styles, wine, yoga, dress code. At the church I grew up in, it was movies and card playing. There are so many non-essential beliefs. Do you know what is a new non-essential belief? It's called a mask. Follower of Jesus Christ, may our churches not be splitting over PPE. Please. Pastors were talking this week, going, "Ted, can you believe the division in the church over masks and over social distancing and over...? I think we can honor all decisions being made. We have liberty. We have freedom in our non-essential beliefs. But in all of our beliefs, we show love. We honor one another, we care for one another.

1 Corinthians 8 is the number one passage that comes to mind over the issue of eating meat sacrificed in the marketplace. Paul makes the comment. I'll tell you what he says. To me, it's non-essential. I'm not going to get into the conversation, but it's all of Chapter 8 of 1 Corinthians 8. He says, "I'm not going to

get into, but I'll tell you what. If it's going to hurt somebody, if it's going to hurt a brother in Christ, I'll give it up altogether." Why? It's because love was so important. And that's what he's saying. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. In all of our beliefs, we shall love.

So, around here, with our beliefs and how they are formed and how they take our church down the road, we use this illustration of the US Bus. Driving the bus at our church is **scripture**. Next to it in the passenger seat, we put **tradition**. This is what the church fathers say about it, what denominational leaders say about it. It's not in the driver's seat, but it is in the passenger seat and has an influence on how we understand scripture.

In the middle row, we have reason – the mind's ability to process things logically. We were discussing it after the first service. Some people would put reason and tradition together; they should maybe be together in the passenger seat. I like that thought, but when I'm preparing for a message and preparing an outline, I use the skills I was given in seminary to work through a passage or to work through a sermon. But after I'm done, I always go back to tradition to make sure I'm not saying anything new or creative that's like, *oh I came up with something brand new*. I want to go back. I type certain names into Google to make sure what they say about it. I want to make sure that we're on the same page. That's the value of tradition. If you grew up in a catholic church, you know scripture and tradition tend to be on the same level. It's what the Bible says or whatever the Pope says about it. Here, we say scripture is driving the bus.

And then in the same row with reason, we have experience. We say around here that your story has value. No one can argue your story. But your story can't be my authority. Just because it happened to you is not a guarantee that it will happen to me. Just because God did it for you, it doesn't mean God will do it for me. We know that scripture is in the driver's seat and then emotion is in the back seat. Ryan Pannell says emotions are like our children; we listen to them, we value them, they're in the bus, they have an influence on stuff, but we don't allow them to make major decisions for our family, so keep them in the back of the bus.

I'm going to circle back around to a couple things. Last week was a very heavy message at our church. I was kind of shaking my head a little bit last week. People were wondering, with what I taught last Sunday, if I was changing what I believe about marriage. I'm trying to figure out where you would get that because with scripture in the driver's seat...

Adam Donyes and I have been talking about it a lot this week and wordsmithing points together. You know words are very important. If you have the wrong word in the wrong place these days, you're going to get into big trouble. There is zero grace right now for words spoken or things done especially online. But Adam and I were talking, and I was trying to figure out what I would have said last week that would have led some people to believe I'm changing what I believe about marriage.

Then we both said, "The closer you stick to scripture..." I believe as the days and the weeks and the months go on, the closer you get to scripture and really trying to understand what God is telling us in his Word and wanting to live this out, the harder it's going to be for people to figure out where you stand

politically. You understand the Republican or Democratic platform is not in the driver's seat. It's scripture, what we say and how we say it and how we lead and what we believe.

This week, I was super proud of J.D. Greear of the Southern Baptist Convention. He made a very strong statement on Black Lives Matter in the southern Baptist Convention, and people are losing their minds. Do you know why? It's because too many of our friends have tradition in the driver's seat, when scripture needs to be in the driver's seat and tradition needs to be left in the passenger seat.

I can promise you, nothing has changed... I didn't share anything last week I haven't believed my entire adult life. I haven't changed one thing about what I believe on marriage. Why? Because my desire is... It's why we're elder led, not committee lead, not pastor lead, not congregationally lead; we are elder led because if I say something that is just like, "Okay no bring it back to center, Ted, these are our essential beliefs."

In 2 Timothy, we read about scripture. I want to give you the value of why you should have scripture in the driver's seat for you. ***16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.*** His word is alive and active

Hebrews 4:21 tells us, ***For the word of God is alive and active.*** It guides us, it leads us in godly living.

Psalms 119: 105 tells us, ***Your word is lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*** It should be what is directing me and guiding me, not all the other voices that we hear coming at us.

In Isaiah 40, we read, ***...the word of our God endures forever.***

Those are our purposes and those are our essentials. So, now let's talk about your commitment to this church. If you're ready, many of you can grab this on your way out and fill it out. The next part of the message is all on here, but this is speaking of your commitment. Are you ready to identify with this body of believers? If you don't have one, I see someone back there that can hand you one on a tray.

Here's the commitment. It's four parts.

1. I will protect the unity of my church

...**By acting in love toward other members** when social distancing starts to ease up a little bit, but I'm going to act in love toward approaching people.

...**By refusing to gossip.** In some churches, that's called prayer requests. But we're refusing to gossip. We follow Matthew closely that if you have an issue with someone, you don't take it to another person, you take it directly to that person. And if that doesn't work, you take someone. If someone is in sin, you take somebody with you, but it doesn't start with announcing it to everybody you know. We refrain from gossip

...**By following the leaders.** Hebrews 13: 17 says, ***17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.***

In the days in which we live, there are two things that are coming at the church. You have mobility in this culture that, 100 years ago, we did have. You typically left home, and you stayed close in town or even on your parents' farm or property they build you a little house on a corner of the property. But now, people are moving with jobs, retirement, there is a lot more mobility in our culture. You put that with this idea of radical, American individualism like *I'm it, I'm in charge, nobody tell me what to do*. I'm seeing some nods. You don't want to admit it, so let me do it for you.

Radical, American independence with mobility has created what we call a floating Christian. *I'm going to go to this church over here to get that need met. And then I'm going to go over here to this church to get that need met. And then I'm going to go over here to get that need met.* This has nothing to do with competition, but has everything to do with commitment. Plug into a church. For those watching online... I have fiends that are watching right now. I can't encourage you enough to become a member of a local church in your community so you can go all in with your church and with your community. Even if you can't go back to a physical gathering yet that you would start watching online a church that you will plug into and you will give everything to. Committing to the local church. Follow the leaders. Put yourself under spiritual authority.

For those of you who are considering getting married, you want your fiancé to sign this covenant. You do. You want the person you're marrying under spiritual authority so that if the wheels start to fall off the bus for you, you can have someone speaking truth into your life. And if you're marrying someone who doesn't want authority over them, you're going to have a very difficult time in marriage. Ask the counselors in the room. Take a moment. Can you check all those boxes? If you can, let's move on to the second part.

2. I will share the responsibility of my church

...by praying for its growth Pray for us that we'll continue to stay healthy, we'll keep these five purposes and the essentials of our church in the forefront, moving us forward

...by inviting the unchurched to attend You already do that. We don't have billboards up over town. You invite your friends and family to see what God is doing here.

...by warmly welcoming those who visit from six feet away. That's especially today. Can you share in that responsibility? Take a moment to see if you can check each one of those boxes. If you can, here's the third part.

3. I will share the ministry of my church

This is why a floating Christian doesn't work. To just go and get your needs met in all different places... No, commit so you can give back, so you can serve,

...by discovering my gifts and talents

...by being equipped to serve by the leaders of this church

...by developing a servant's heart. We're coming into a new season in the life of this church and we don't know what the next year holds or what it's going to look like, but we need people saying, "Hey, I'm here and I'm ready to serve." There's plenty you can do at home as well. We need prayer warriors during this time. You continue to give, you continue to pray. There's plenty you'll be able to do as the days and weeks and months go along that you'll be able to serve in this community even though you

may not be able to meet in a space like this. Are you prepared to serve the ministries of this church? Take a moment. Can you check each one of those boxes?

4. I will support the testimony of my church

...by attending faithfully. Right now we're saying church at home, but the day is coming, and I know some of you are very comfortable at home. We're going to be encouraging you to regather. Whether that's after there is treatment or a vaccine or whatever the case may be, we're going to be challenging people again that online is not going to be the primary in the years to come. It's still about gathering together in a room. For now, for you, faithful attendance means you're part of this, you're watching this, you're engaged, you're participating in what God is doing in our church.

...by living a godly life. For those of you who are living your own life, your own way, and you don't want to change, this is not the time or day for you to sign this covenant. I'd encourage you to meet with one of our care pastors in the prayer room after this or out back. Out back? That didn't sound real good. Out front. Will take care of it real quick if you want to meet out back. We will get that sin out of your life in a hurry. See, I love that this church knows my words get mixed up every now and then and we can move on. Do you choose to take scripture in the driver's seat and make this the priority of your life, choosing to live a godly life?

...by giving regularly. You can do that online now and in just about a minute or two, you can do that as you exit here, over in the Chapel, in the Cabin, or outside. Again, your faithfulness in giving, your generosity in giving has been a source of great joy for me over the last couple of months to be able to support and help in a time where I know the need is going to start to increase into August. So, take a second. Can you check all of these boxes?

As we close, if you're ready to take the step... You were handed this on the way in. They will be available for you as you leave. I see them out there. You can fill this out. You can mail it in, you can fill it out online. Again, I want to state it. Everybody is telling me to make sure I say this clearly. Never will we give this information to anybody. This information is for us, and to know who is saying, "I'm identifying with the family at Woodland Hills Family Church. I want to be a part of this church family. I want to be a part of what God is doing at Woodland Hills." And it's your opportunity to become a member.

My young adult friends from high school on up, years ago, we got research statistics that were kind of faulty that said when people leave home, they leave the church. Well, the reason that research was kind of amended is because you would leave home and go to college and you wouldn't join a church in the town your college was in. You were technically still under your parents covering at your former church. So, those young people who were still following the Lord and still pursuing a relationship with Christ were not counted just because they didn't join a church. I really want to encourage you. Let's change something in your generation. Let's end the floating Christian idea and let's find commitment to the body of Christ.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for the purposes that you gave us, for the essentials we want to live by, and then our commitment to your bride and to the body of Christ. May we be committed in all that we do. I want to go all in, serving this body. I pray others have that same desire. I want to go all in, identifying with this body. I hope others feel the same.

Continue to use this church in this community. May we continue to reach people, reach out to people. For those who are far from you, may that be part of our heartbeat that during this time, as they are looking for answers, that they find the answers in Jesus here at Woodland Hills Family Church.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen