

A Ministry of EFC | 13885 El Camino Real, San Diego, CA 92130 | (858) 523-9768
www.harvestsd.com



Baptism & Membership Class

What We Believe

Based on the EFC General Assembly Statement of Faith
Last modified by Nick Hsieh on 6/29/13

We believe...

1. That the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, is the inspired, infallible Word of God, inerrant in its original autographs, and is the necessary and complete revelation of His will for the salvation of humanity, and is the ultimate authority for Christian faith and life. (Ps 119:60 etc., Jn 17:17, 2 Tim 3:16-17, 1 Pet 1:20-21)
2. In the one true and living God, eternally existing in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:18-19, Mark 12:29, 2 Cor 13:14, Eph 4:4-6)
3. That the triune God is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Ruler of Creation, but is prior to, and distinct from Creation. (Gen 1:1; Ps 8, 33:6; Isa 45:18; Jn 1:1-3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2; Rev 4:11)
4. That the first man, Adam, was created by God in His image, but fell from his original state by sinning against God, and hence incurred upon himself and all his posterity the guilt of sin, condemnation, and death; therefore, all humankind are in need of salvation, but are totally incapable of saving themselves. (Gen 1:26-28, 2:16-17, 3:1-13, 6:5; Ps 14:1-3, 51:5, 53:1-3; Jer 17:9; Jn 3:6, 6:63; Rom 3:9-18, 23; 6:23; 1 Cor 15:50)
5. That after the Fall, God, in His mercy and love, made provision for humanity's redemption through the establishment of the covenant of grace with His people by the promise and the actual giving of the Savior Jesus Christ, on whom to believe is justification and life. (Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14, Jer 31:31-34, Mic 5:3, 1 Cor 11:23-26)
6. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sent by the Father, begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary; that He lived a sinless and obedient life, suffered and died on the cross vicariously for the sins of His people who believe in Him; that God raised Him from the dead, exalted Him both as Lord and Christ, and gave Him the promise of the Holy Spirit for His Church. (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23; Jn 1:12-13; 14:19, 26; Lk 24:48-49; Acts 1:4-8, 2:33; Rom 5:6-19; Eph 1:13; 1 Cor 15:3-7; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 2:1-11; Col 2:11-14; Heb 4:15, 7:36; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5)

7. That people are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ in response to the Gospel preached, or otherwise presented, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that through Christ ransomed sinners become the children of God and heirs of eternal life. That Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity; through Christ and only through Him the believer has access to the Father. (Mk 10:45; Jn 1:12-13; Rom 5:2; Eph 2:8-9, 3:11-12; 1 Tim 2:5-7; Heb 4:16, 10:19-22; 1 Pet 1:17-19)
8. That every believer is a new creature in Christ, and is called to walk in the Spirit, to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness, and thereby manifest the fruit of the Spirit, being conformed to the image of Christ; and that good works are the fruit of the Christian life, and are not ways of justification. (Rom 6:1-23, 8:29; Gal 5:16-23; Eph 2:8-10; 2 Cor 5:17)
9. That God alone is the Lord of our conscience, and that the believers are free from the commands of people, which are contrary to, or in addition to the Scriptures in matters of faith and conduct. (Acts 15:28-29; Rom 14:4-12; Gal 4:8-10; Jas 4:11-12)
10. That the church, consisting of all true believers, being Christ's own and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is the Body of Christ, the invisible church; that the church is holy, universal and one in Christ; that the invisible church manifests itself in the visible church, the local congregations consisting of all who profess to believe in Christ and are baptized; that as the people of God and a kingdom of priests, the church is called to grow unto the stature of the fullness of Christ and to fulfill her missionary work through the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in worship, sacraments, fellowship, discipline, and services. (Matt 18:15-20; Rom 12:5-8; 1 Cor 5:4-5; 12:12-27; Eph 1:20-23, 4:3-10; Col 3:14-15; Heb 10:24-25)
11. In the priesthood of all believers, and the parity of the ministers and the laity. (Eph 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5-6; 1 Pet 2:4-5, 9)
12. That in the last day, as the consummation of redemption, Christ will come again personally and visibly to the earth, to judge the living and the dead; that there will be a bodily resurrection of the dead, of the believers through the Holy Spirit unto the inheritance of eternal life, and of the unbelievers unto condemnation; and that a new heaven and a new earth will be ushered in. (Jn 14:1-3; Rom 8:19-23, 11:25-27; 1 Cor 15:51-52; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23, 3:20; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 1:7-9; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Titus 2:11-14; Jude 6-7; Rev 20:1-3, 11-15)

What Is Baptism?

The word “baptize” comes from the Greek word βαπτίζω (*baptizw*), which literally meant “to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge; to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one’s self, bathe; and to overwhelm.”¹ In the New Testament, the word most commonly refers to a ceremonial washing that is associated with identification with a group or teaching. During Jesus’ day, one of the rabbinical traditions that had developed was that a Gentile convert to Judaism needed to be baptized and offer sacrifice as a part of or testament to their conversion.² When the people came to hear John the Baptist preach the Kingdom of God, many repented and identified with John’s message through baptism (Matt 3:6-11; cf. Mark 1:5-8, Luke 3:7-16, John 1:25-26). Similarly, when Jesus instructed his followers to make disciples of all nations, he told them to do so “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19, ESV). The word “baptize” can also be used in reference to a metaphorical immersion or initiation into something, such as Jesus’ reference to his extremely painful journey to death by crucifixion in Matthew 10:38-39.

Christian Baptism is a baptism of water, and is a means of identifying with the community of Christians, and with Jesus Christ. It is an ordinance, meaning it was given by Jesus Christ to the church as a requirement or duty. It is also a sacrament, a word which comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, meaning “mystery.” It conveys the reality that baptism is a means of grace, meaning it is an activity “within the fellowship of the church that God uses to give more grace to Christians.”³ This does not mean that baptism saves a person or remits their sins. Only the grace of God given through faith in Jesus Christ’s person and substitutionary death on the cross can save a person from his or her sins. However, participation in the sacraments in obedience to Jesus Christ’s command serve as a means by which God often chooses to minister to believers to comfort them, to increase their sanctification, and to confirm and strengthen their faith.

Why Get Baptized?

¹ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), ed. Gerhard Kittel, G. Friedrich, G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), 1:529, 92.

² “Mikveh” (מִקְוֶה) is a ritual cleansing or baptism used in conversion to Judaism. Compare Ciel Rosen, “Baptism: Pagan or Jewish?,” *Jews for Jesus*, accessed 22 March 2012, http://jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/2_10/baptism.

³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 950.

There are a number of reasons to get baptized as a Christian.

The first and perhaps most important reason to get baptized as a Christian is obedience to Jesus' command. Jesus instructed his disciples to baptize new disciples of Jesus Christ in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). The first disciples of Jesus and Christians in the early church took this command seriously, closely tying baptism to conversion (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:48; 11:16; 16:14-15, 29-34; 18:8; 19:4-5). In the Scripture and the early church, an unbaptized Christian was unusual.

A second reason to get baptized is in order to identify with Jesus Christ. The act of baptism is closely associated with a change of identity—an identification with a group or teaching. Christian baptism, then, is a way of identifying with Jesus Christ and the Gospel of salvation from sin by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus. It is a means by which you publicly testify to your faith in Jesus Christ (Matt 10:32, Lk 12:8, Rom 10:9). This is more than a social identification, however. The New Testament repeatedly ties baptism closely to identification with Jesus in a spiritual sense. The Apostle Paul tell writes, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Rom 6:3-5, ESV; cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27).

A third reason for getting baptized as a Christian is to identify with the community of faith. The Apostle Paul, in explaining the unity in the body of believers despite a diversity of gifts, says, “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13, ESV. Cf. Eph 2:18, 4:4-6). As Ephesians 2:11-22, makes clear the Gospel not only reconciles us individually to God, but also reconciles us to each other. So also, baptism is not just an identification of the individual with Christ and God, but also with the community of faith to which God in Christ has also reconciled us.

These factors are not only *reasons* to be baptized, they are also the *significance* of Christian baptism. That is, getting baptized is more than just getting wet. It is also obedience, public and spiritual identification with Christ, and identification with the community of faith.

What Mode of Baptism?

While all Christians agree that believers should be baptized, there is some debate as to how to baptize people. The Bible does not make explicit the kind of baptism that Jesus prescribes, and so three major methods of baptism have been common since very early in church history. These are baptism by immersion, affusion, and aspersion.

Baptism by immersion refers to a mode of baptism in which a person is fully submerged under water and then brought up again. This mode of baptism was probably the most commonly practiced form of baptism in the early church and the post-apostolic church (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:4-5, 9-10; Acts 8:38-39).⁴ There is rich symbolism in this form of baptism, which recalls the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with which the believer is identifying. The Apostle Paul writes, “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4, ESV; cf. Rom 6:5, Col 2:12).

Baptism by affusion refers to the practice of baptizing by pouring water over the head. The rich symbolism here refers to “the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5-6, ESV). The image of pouring water is closely associated with the Holy Spirit in Scripture, and in particular with the baptism or indwelling of the Holy Spirit at conversion (Prov 1:23; Eze 39:29; Zech 12:10; Acts 2:33, 10:45). The Apostle Peter, in describing Apostles’ speaking in tongues at the indwelling of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, says, “this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy....’” (Acts 2:16-17, ESV; cf. Joel 2:28-32).

Baptism by aspersion refers to the practice of baptizing by sprinkling water on the head. The symbolism here refers to the Old Testament practice of ceremonial cleansing and setting apart of a person or object to God by sprinkling the blood of a sacrifice (Ex 29:21; Lev 4:5-6, 15-16, 5:8-9, 8:30, 14:7, 48-53; Num 8:7, 19:17-19). The author of Hebrews draws this parallel between the Old Testament sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice and the spiritual cleansing and forgiveness in Jesus Christ when he calls us to draw near to God through faith in

⁴ The Bible does not explicitly prescribe or even describe the method of baptism, however proponents of baptism by immersion point out that many verses refer to people going into a body of water such as a stream, river, or lake, and then coming up out of the water. They argue this would be unnecessary if the mode of baptism were sprinkling or pouring, though it doesn’t rule out those modes.

Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. “And since we have a great priest over the house of God [namely, Jesus Christ], let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:21-22, ESV; cf. Heb 9:11-14, 12:24; 1 Pet 1:2).

Harvest Evangelical Church of San Diego, following the tradition of our denomination, EFC (Evangelical Formosan Church), generally practices baptism by aspersion—sprinkling. Consequently, we do not have a baptismal font at our church, however, if you would prefer to be baptized by immersion, please let the pastor know and arrangements can be made for you to receive baptism at another location.

Who Should Get Baptized and When?

Jesus tied the instruction to be baptized with the making of disciples, indicating that all Christians should be baptized (Matt 28:19-20). The disciples in the early church followed this instruction, giving us the pattern of baptism immediately after conversion (Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 16:14-15, 19-34; 18:8; 19:4-5). The pattern seems to be that once you have understood the Gospel of grace, trusted in Jesus Christ alone for salvation from sins, and become a disciple of Jesus Christ, submitting to his Lordship in your life, you should be baptized in obedience to Jesus’ command. You should not wait until your life is more in order, or that you are “better” or “good enough,” as these conditions will not arrive until glorification at Jesus’ return. The baptism of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is known as credobaptism or believer’s baptism.

While all Christians practice believer’s baptism, some Christians also practice infant baptism. This practice, known as paedobaptism, stems from the belief that baptism is a sign of forgiveness and grace, in much the same way circumcision was a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Col 2:11-12). Belief about what effect it has on the recipient varies with different traditions—some believe it forgives sin and saves the infant, some believe the faith of the parents saves the infant and so baptize him or her as a believer, some believe it is a sign of inclusion in the family of faith in hope of future individual faith. This mode of baptism is justified on the grounds that the Bible portrays the baptism of households, and that such households surely included at least some infants (Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16). It is also justified on theological grounds, argued from the perspective that baptism is in parallel to circumcision as a sign of God’s covenant with his people, in this case the Covenant of Grace. However,

the Bible neither explicitly commands nor forbids the practice. Churches that practice infant baptism have the practice of Confirmation later in life, during which time a person can affirm his or her faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and affirm the major doctrines of the faith.

Harvest Evangelical Church of San Diego practices believer's baptism and not the baptism of infants. This raises the question of whether a person who was baptized as an infant should be baptized as an adult believer. Baptism into Jesus Christ and the community of faith can only happen once. Re-baptism should not be practiced. However, if a person has come to saving faith subsequent to baptism—regardless of whether it was as an infant or later in life—then their prior baptism was not a believer's baptism and was therefore not true Christian baptism. It is the belief of this church that such a person should be baptized. However, the church will respect the personal convictions of a person who views his or her prior baptism as a baptism into Jesus Christ and the community of faith. Please talk to the pastor if you have questions about your specific circumstance.

Preparing to Get Baptized

Baptism services at Harvest will generally be joint services with the English, Chinese, and Youth congregations. The service will start at 10:30 AM. You should expect the speaker and praise teams to use either primarily English or Mandarin, and for appropriate translation to be provided. After music praise and the sermon, those who are candidates for baptism will give a brief testimony of not more than 3-4 minutes each in their language of preference. Verbal translation will not be provided for testimonies.

Keep the following in mind for the baptismal service.

- This is a significant occasion. Invite your friends and family.
- You will be provided with a baptismal robe to wear over your clothes.
- Sit in the front row on the left side of the sanctuary (stage right).
- The pastor will call you up to be baptized, at which time you should walk up and stand in front of the altar with the baptismal basin.
- The pastor will ask a few questions to confirm your faith verbally and then he will baptize you, placing his hand in the water and then on your head.
- With his hand on your head, the pastor will pray for you.
- After you are baptized, return to your seat.
- After the baptism service, you will receive a certificate of baptism and a small gift on behalf of the church. Usually this will be a Bible. If you already have a Bible please let the pastor know and another appropriate gift will be selected for you.
- There is no official photographer, so if you would like pictures or video, be sure to have a friend or family member do it. Please ask whoever is taking photos to be discreet in taking photos or video and not interrupt the service or block the congregation's view of the service.

Prior to getting baptized, you will be given the opportunity to share your testimony. Please draft a copy of your testimony for publication in a testimony booklet along with the testimonies of those who are getting baptized. Your verbal testimony will need to be short (approximately 3-4 minutes), but you are welcome to provide a more detailed testimony in written form for the testimony booklet if you would like. Your testimony should include the following:

- Your life before God.
- How you came to faith (including your understanding of the gospel).
- How your life has changed since becoming a Christian.

When sharing your testimony verbally, please remember “the ABC’s of sharing.” Your sharing should be Audible (loud enough and clearly enunciated), Brief (keep your testimony to about 3 minutes), and Christ-centered (see the guidelines above).

Please draft an outline for your verbal testimony and your written testimony before the baptism service so that the pastor can review it with you and provide you with any guidance or feedback. A translation of your written testimony will also be provided for those who do not understand your preferred language. As noted above, there will be no verbal translation for testimonies. If you need assistance in drafting your testimony, don’t hesitate to ask for help from other mature Christians who have been baptized, from a deacon or elder, or from a pastor.

You should draft your testimony by _____.

During the baptism service, you will be asked three questions.

1. Do you truly trust in Jesus Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice for your redemption, confess and repent of your sins, and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?
2. Do you affirm the Apostle’s Creed as your statement of faith?
3. Do you commit to being a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, relying on his grace, serving him diligently, and following him faithfully throughout your life?

You need to be able to answer in the affirmative to all three questions in order to receive baptism. Therefore, please give prayerful consideration to these questions in advance, and notify your pastor as soon as possible if you have any questions or reservations. A copy of the Apostle’s Creed is included below.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

If you have any questions about baptism, the baptism service, or any material in this booklet, please ask the pastor. Thank you. God bless.

What Is Membership?

Membership is a formal expression of a spiritual reality, that as those who are redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ, we have become members of his body, and consequently members of one another (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 4:1-6, 25; etc.). Official membership serves as a means of expressing that spiritual reality formally.

Membership is also an expression of willingness to fulfill the expectations of submission to authority (Heb 13:17; 1 Thess 5:12-13) and servant leadership (Acts 20:28-30, 1 Pet 5:1-4). Christians are called to submit to the authority, teaching, and discipline of those who are placed in positions of leadership and authority over them in the church. Official church membership is a means by which Christians can acknowledge this reality and commit themselves to submitting to the church's authority. Membership also commits those who end up in positions of authority to the principles of servant leadership in Scripture. Those who are placed in positions of leadership in the church are accountable to God for the members over whom they have charge, to teach sound doctrine, defend against error, and serve in love and integrity.

Membership is a component of the local church's witness to the world of what it means to be a church (e.g., Acts 2:42-47, 5:1-11). The church should and will necessarily welcome and include of people who are at various stages of faith—from unbelief to devoted and mature disciple. An official membership allows the church to define to the world who should be looked upon as components of its witness. Those would be the people who have both confessed faith in Jesus Christ, as well as submitted to the authority of the church, and so their conduct can legitimately be said to reflect on the church.

Membership is like an official marriage—formal expression of an inward reality, an expression of commitment, & part of public witness. At Harvest, one of the ways we seek to express the value of official membership is by granting voting rights to official members, so they can participate in decisions of the church. Another way is by requiring all fellowship and ministry leaders to be official members.

A Brief History of the Evangelical Formosan Church (EFC) & Harvest Evangelical Church of San Diego (HECSD)

The Evangelical Formosan Church (EFC) denomination started with the founding of a small Taiwanese-speaking church in Alhambra, CA in 1970. Between 1979 and 1982, four additional EFC churches and the EFC General

Assembly were founded. The establishment of other EFC churches and organizations have followed:

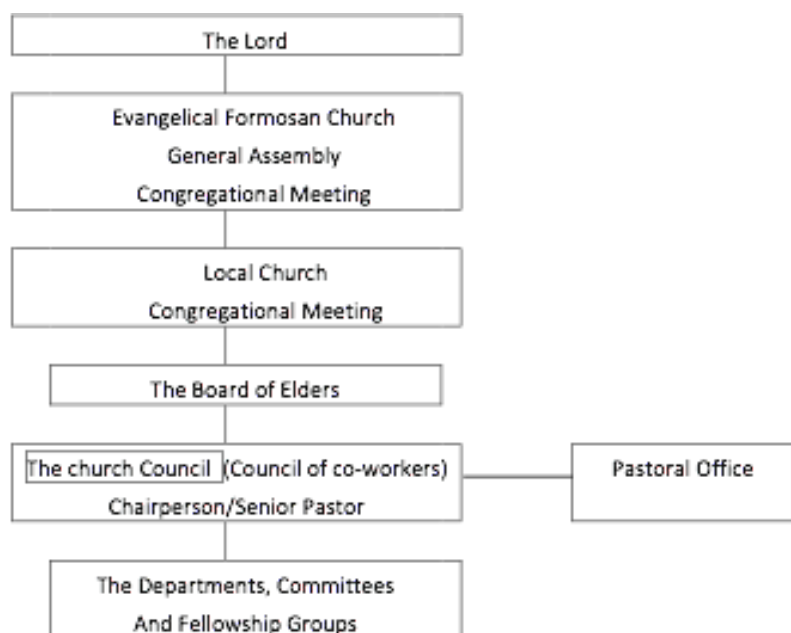
- 1989 - Logos Evangelical Seminary
- 1991 - EFC Communication Center
- 1995 - Global Life Enrichment Center
- 1988 - Prayer Garden & Retreat Center
- 2006 - Taiwan Missions Center

EFC San Diego was founded 1989 in the home of Elder Chijen Lin. The English Ministry (Harvest San Diego) was established several years later, in 1992. In 1990 the church was moved to Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, and again in 1993 to Santa Fe Christian School. The land for the current church building was purchased in 1998, and the building completed and occupied in 2010. As an outgrowth of the intentional effort to foster unity across congregations, the church officially adopted its current name, Harvest Evangelical Church of San Diego, in 2011.

Senior Pastor Danny Chu has been on staff since September 2013. The Youth Pastor, Louis Kiang, joined the staff in June 2013.

EFC Bylaws & Organization

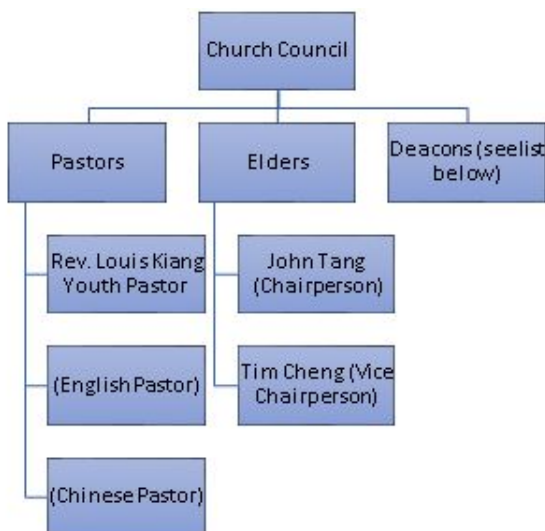
The bylaws are established to formally express our organizational relationship to each other and for legal accountability. You should know how the organization you are joining is run. This booklet will only cover a few of the bylaws related directly to organizational structure, leadership qualifications and responsibilities, membership qualifications and responsibilities, congregational meetings, church discipline, and bylaw amendments. You can find the full EFC Bylaws online at <http://efcga.org/Resources/Forms.aspx?TID=2>.



EFC Denomination Organizational Structure

HECSD Organizational Structure

HECSD is one church that consists of a Chinese Ministry, English Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Children's Ministry. The Church Council oversees all church ministries and functions and is comprised of the pastors, elders and deacons.



2017 Deacons:

Finance - Steven Xu (also treasurer)

Fellowship - Rebecca Wu

General Affairs - Songqing Na (also secretary)

Worship/IT - Howard King

English - Jonathan Chan

Children's - Shibing Deng

AMD - Jimmy Hsieh

Caring - Alan Liu

Kitchen - Picheng Lin

Missions - Kevin Chen

College - Jerry Cao

Outreach - Liya Ren

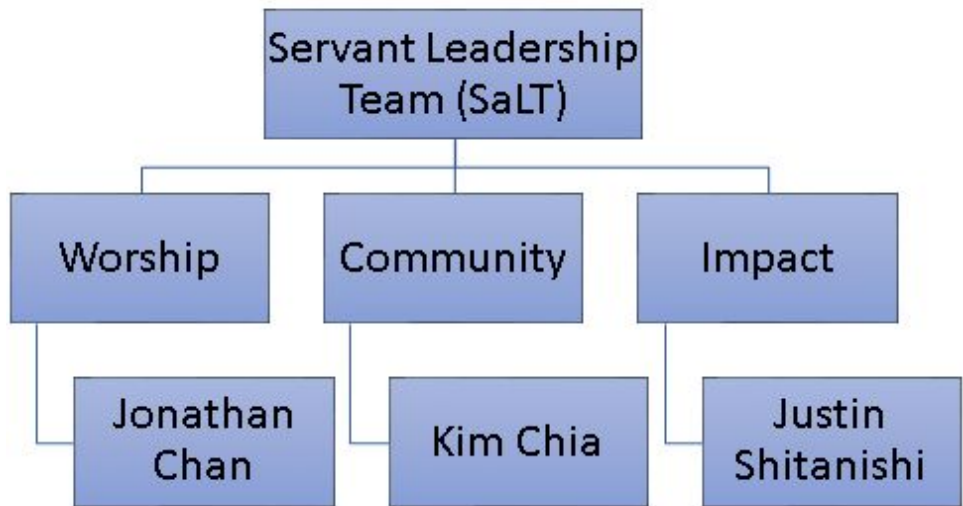
CE - Donqiang Zheng

Volunteer Pastors:

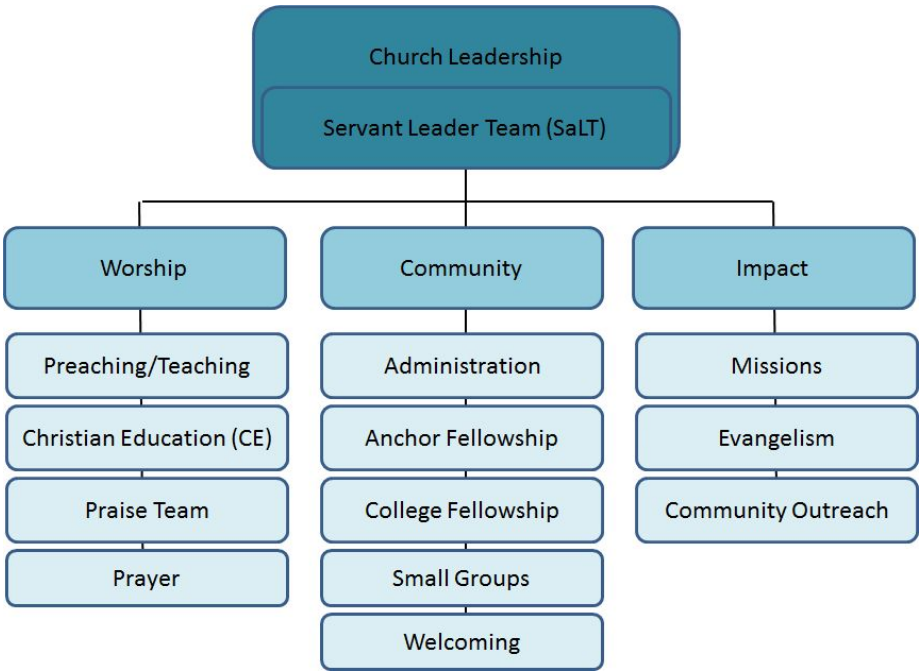
Pastor Mu Ling Lin (Chinese Congregation)

Pastor John You (Chinese Congregation)

The English Ministry leadership is called the SaLT or Servant Leader Team. The ministries within the English congregation are divided into 3 main areas or Streams: Worship, Impact, and Community.



Ministries within each Stream:



Leadership Qualifications & Responsibilities

Qualifications for Elders

- Must have a solid Christian witness (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 3:1-7, 1 Pet 5:1-3)
- Must have been an active member of HECSD for at least three years and, either served at least one term as an Deacon at HECSD, or served as an Elder or Deacon at another Christian church for at least three years
- May serve up to two consecutive 3-year terms and then must take a minimum 1-year break before qualifying to serve again

Duties of Elders

- Ultimate responsibility for church property
- Care and oversight of church members
- Investigation and implementation of matters of church discipline
- Long-term planning and direction

- Approval and accountability of church leaders (fellowships, committees, etc.)
- Nomination and accountability of pastoral staff

Qualifications for Deacons

- Must be a person of good reputation, active in witnessing to Jesus Christ, and following the teachings of the Scripture (cf. 1 Tim 3:8-13)
- Must have been an active member of HECSD for at least one year, and have been a baptized believer for at least two years
- May serve up to three consecutive 2-year terms then must take a minimum 1-year break before qualifying to serve again

Duties of Deacons

- Plan and execute general church business
- Examine and call non-pastoral church staff
- Review and approve creation of church departments as appropriate
- Review and adopt an annual church budget
- Engage in evangelism, missions, education, and caring ministries

Membership Qualifications & Responsibilities

Membership Qualifications

A person may become a member of by one of two routes: Either he or she may be a believer baptized or confirmed at HECSD, or he or she may be a believer baptized member of another church transferring membership to HECSD.

Those qualifying for membership through baptism become members upon baptism at HECSD, after completion of Membership and Baptism classes, submitting a Baptism Application, and with the approval of the Council. Those qualifying through membership transferral must attend a Membership Class, submit a Membership Application, and receive approval of the Council.

Membership Responsibilities

- Lead a life of growth in Christian faith and maturity
- Cultivate true and sincere love and fellowship with other members, and esteem those in leadership in accordance with Scripture

- Contribute to the life and activities of the church with time, talents, and tithing
- Attend Congregational Meetings
- Submit to the bylaws and regulations of the church

Types of Membership

There are two “levels” of membership available at HECSD—**Full** and **Associate Membership**. Full Members have all of the qualifications and responsibilities described for members, and have no membership with other churches. Associate Members are similar to Full Members, but are able to retain membership at another church, and therefore do not have voting rights and are not eligible to serve as Deacons or Elders at HECSD. However, Associate Members do have the right to serve in other leadership positions, such as small group leaders, fellowship leaders, or ministry leaders—all of which require official membership as a qualification to serve.

There are also different types of membership statuses that reflect the degree of active involvement a member may have in Harvest in a given season of life. **Active Members** are members in good standing who attend services at least seven times per quarter. Full Active Members are granted voting privileges three months after their initial membership. **Underage Active Members** are those granted Full or Associate membership but who are under age 18. They are not permitted to vote. **Inactive Members** are those who don’t attend service at least seven times per quarter, or who have been granted leave, extenuating circumstances excepted. **Volunteer** status is assigned to those who are members in good standing who travel or move away but wish to retain membership at HECSD.

Congregational Meetings

HECSD follows a an elder-led / congregational hybrid polity. Congregational meetings serve as forums to announce annual reports of the Church Council and various church ministries, convey pastoral vision for the church, appoint financial auditors, review and confirm the budget (by vote), confirm pastors, elders, and deacons (by vote), and pass resolutions on other issues (by vote).

Church Discipline

Members, Deacons, Elders, and Ministers shall be disciplined if they violate the teachings of the Scriptures, the Affirmation of Faith, or the By-laws and Regulations of the Church. Discipline of Members, Deacons, and Elders is implemented by the Elders. Discipline of Ministers is implemented by the EFC General Assembly. Grievances should be dealt with in accordance to Matthew 18:15-20 and submitted to the church authority in writing.

The goal of disciplinary action is restoration, and church authorities will enjoin the violator to repent before taking disciplinary action. Grievances that cannot be resolved locally may be referred to the EFC General Assembly. Discipline may take the form of withholding Communion, revoking membership, and suspension or termination of fellowship (and/or employment). Offenders may submit one written appeal to the disciplinary authority within 2 weeks of disciplinary action (resolution on appeal is final).

Bylaw Amendment Process

Proposals for EFC Bylaw amendments may be made directly by members (via petition signed by two-fifths of a local church's active members), a church council, any General Assembly department, or any EFC subsidiary organization. Written proposals are submitted to the General Assembly Executive Board, which will reject it, or accept it by two-thirds vote. Accepted proposals are submitted to the EFC churches for review prior to the end of the same calendar year. Accepted proposals are voted on by the General Assembly Meeting, with those approved by two-thirds majority vote becoming effective immediately.

Next Steps

If you are qualified to be a member, and you are committed to Harvest, you should become a member. Membership demonstrates your commitment, and opens opportunities for you to serve and lead. If you are not qualified because you are not baptized or confirmed, you should get baptized. Talk to a pastor about baptism class and the next baptism service. If you are qualified, are committed to Harvest, but have a reason for not wanting to become a member, please talk to a pastor about it.

Download Membership Application and Baptism Applications:

harvestsd.com/forms. Submit the completed membership application and covenant form to the English deacon.

Growing in Faith

Trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation, and even getting baptized and becoming a member of a church, are just beginnings in your relationship with God. We are exhorted to grow in spiritual maturity both as individuals and as a community of faith (Eph 4:1-16, Col 1:28, 1 Pet 1:1-3, 2 Pet 1:3-15, etc.). Although it is ultimately God's grace that grants us spiritual growth, there are several things we can do to put ourselves in a posture to receive that grace and welcome that growth. These include:

Worship – Our goal in the Christian faith is not ultimately just to get to Heaven or to be blessed in life. It is to love and glorify God. We want to do this with all of our lives—everything we do should be worship to God (Rom 6:13, 12:1; 1 Cor 10:31; Phil 2:11; Col 3:23-24). One way to worship God is together with the community on Sunday mornings when we gather to sing praises and hear God's Word preached.

Prayer – Praying is an expression of dependence on the Lord, as we acknowledge our need for him in the circumstances of life. The death of Jesus Christ not only paid the penalty of our sins, it also opened the way for us to approach God with courage instead of fear, and expect to be answered in grace. We're told that we can petition God with our anxieties, knowing that God cares for us—and this is actually a means of humbly depending on God (1 Pet 5:6-7). If you are trusting in Christ for salvation, God hears your prayers.

Bible Study – The Bible is God's Word to us. In it we encounter him and find his self-revelation. Because it reveals the heart of God to us, it is authoritative for our lives and faith. It is important that we read the Bible for what it has to say, and seek to know God through it. Regular careful reading of the Bible with an intent to know God and do as he says is vital to any Christian's growth in spiritual maturity, and in relationship and discipleship with God. If you have never read the Bible systematically before, consider picking a book of the Bible—the Gospel of John is a great one to start with—and read it through from start to finish, at least a whole chapter at a time. Talk to a pastor or church member if you'd like help finding a good Bible reading plan.

Being in Community – We are not meant to live the Christian life alone. Rather, we are called to be a community—a body—together with others who believe in Christ. It is only in community that we can practice the “one another” commands—love one another, build up one another, serve one another, etc. (for example Jn 13:14, Rom 12:10, Gal 6:2, Col 3:12-13, etc.). The author of Hebrews tells us to not neglect gathering together regularly, but instead to take advantage of the opportunities we have to encourage each other to be faithful to

sound doctrine, and to spur each other on toward love and good deeds as we look forward to Christ's return together (Heb 10:23-25). See the section on "How to Get Plugged-In" below for a list of ways you can be in community at Harvest.

Sharing Your Faith – An important part of the Christian faith is being witness to Jesus Christ where he has placed us. We want to share with others the good news of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. You don't need to be an expert in apologetics and theology before you can share the gospel with others and testify to its power through telling others what God has done in your life. Who is someone you want to tell about Jesus Christ? Pray that God will give you an opportunity to share with him or her, and grant you courage and boldness to share at the first opportunity. As you share with others, you will discover your own faith growing as you see the relevance of God's Word and the effects of God's work in the lives of others. From time to time Harvest offers Christian Education classes on how to engage the culture and people in the world with the gospel, as well as how to do evangelism. If you would be interested in these classes, please let a member of SaLT or pastoral staff know. Others—perhaps those in your small group—who are more experienced in sharing their faith may also be of help in encouraging and equipping you to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

How to Get Plugged-In

We encourage you to get plugged into community at Harvest. It's our intention to help people move from being Curious about Jesus, to being Convinced of his being our only God and Savior, to being Committed to serving him and his people, to being Commissioned to lead others in their spiritual growth. There are a number of ways that you can be engaged with Harvest community and build relationships with people. Talk to a staff member or existing member of Harvest for more information about when and where to participate in these opportunities. These include:

Large Group – In addition to worship service on Sunday mornings, we get together on Thursday evenings for post-college adults, and Friday evenings for college students and youth, for large group fellowship. This is a time to sing praises to God, connect with people, discuss relevant issues in the Christian life, and foster Christ-centered relationships.

Small Group – Small groups are a setting in which we strive to foster an environment where it's safe to be vulnerable and authentic, where we can share genuine needs and expect to be protected, prayed-for, and pointed to Jesus Christ and the gospel. We study the Bible together and talk about relevant issues to the Christian life. Small groups are more than just support groups or hangouts.

They are meant to foster transformation as we strive to encourage and enable each other to live out the gospel in every facet and season of life.

Discipleship – We are all striving to be disciples of Jesus Christ. God often ministers grace and truth to help us grow through mentorship and guidance from someone else. At the same time, God uses us to encourage and refresh others, as well as to invest-in and challenge particularly those who are younger in the faith. You are encouraged to be in Paul-Timothy-and-Barnabas (PTB) relationships. A Paul is someone investing in you to foster spiritual growth. A Timothy is someone in whom you are investing. And a Barnabas is someone who is at a similar stage of faith whom you can encourage and by whom you are encouraged. More than having PTB relationships, though, you want to strive to *be* a Paul-Timothy-Barnabas type person—someone who is actively seeking to be in authentic, Christ-centered relationships that spur growth in discipleship.

Service – Everyone has abilities that God has given for the building-up of the community. Whether that's a skill, a personality trait, or a resource, we are meant to be a gift to the church and a blessing to the world. Church is not meant to be a spectator sport, but a participatory community. You are encouraged to determine how you are gifted to be a gift, and engage in serving. If you need help determining what opportunities to serve are available to you, or discerning what you might be effective at, feel free to talk with a pastor or leader. One of the best ways to determine what areas or ways you would enjoy and be good at serving is to try several things and see what ministries God blesses through you.