

INSTRUCTIONS

For

APPLICANTS

**For Membership in the
Dunkard Brethren Church**

INSTRUCTIONS

The following collation of text material was taken from the Polity, revision of June 2025. The "Church Covenant" was especially formulated for the purpose here intended.

The text material under the heading "Private Instruction" is intended for use in bringing applicants for membership to a well-rounded knowledge of the doctrines and principles of the Dunkard Brethren Church. The material appearing under the heading "Public Instruction" is to be used during the public meeting which almost without exception precedes baptism for attestation by the applicant, for the shortening of that service. It is supposed that the one who will conduct the private instruction will satisfy himself that the applicant is thoroughly familiar with the doctrines and principles before presenting himself or herself before the public meeting.

April 2026

PRIVATE INSTRUCTIONS

Church Membership

The Church is composed of persons who covenant to be loyal to the principles of the Gospel, as understood by the Church.

By conviction of sin, conversion and confession of our sins, by faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as revealed to us by the Bible, and by trine-immersion baptism, we enter into covenant relationship with one another as one Body in Christ Jesus. Thus, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we mutually agree to walk together in Christian love, to strive together for the advancement of the Church in knowledge, holiness and prosperity, to promote spirituality, humility and peace, and to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines. We agree to cheerfully contribute of the means that God gives us for the building of churches, for supporting the ministry when needed, for missionary work, for supporting the poor, and for every other good work that tends to the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom on earth and for the good of its subjects.

We also engage to live truthful and exemplary lives before the world, to have private devotions in our families, and to religiously instruct and educate our children. We agree to labor for the physical and spiritual good of our neighbors and those with whom we associate, to be honest and upright in all of our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our conduct. We are to watch over each other in brotherly love, pray for each other and aid each other in sickness and distress, ever remembering the best of all rules, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

ARTICLE V - The Law of Pardon

- Sec.1. Faith, abstractly, is the assent of the mind to the supernatural origin of the Bible and to all of its revealed truth. Concretely, it is taking God at His Word and is manifested by humble obedience to it as prompted by the spirit of love. (Heb. 11:1, 6; Jude 1:3; Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:20, 22)
- Sec.2. Repentance is a cessation from sin with awareness and sorrow that sin is displeasing to God. Further, repentance is turning from the love and practice of sin to the love of truth and practical righteousness. (Isa. 1:16-17; Isa. 55: 7; 2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 14:15; 17:30)
- Sec.3. Confession is a voluntary renunciation of sin and the admission of truth and right. It includes faith in Jesus, vitalized by works of loving obedience. (Matt. 3:6; Matt.10:32; Phil.2:11; Jas. 5:16; Rom. 10:10)
- Sec.4. Baptism in purpose, along with faith, repentance and confession is for the remission of sins. (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:37; Tit. 3:5)
- Baptism in mode is immersion. In form we practice baptism by trine immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt 28:19; Mark 1:5, 8; Matt 3:6; Acts 8:38-39) Kneeling or bowing is the posture practiced in baptism as an expression of humility and surrender, symbolizing our identification with Christ in His death, as reflected in passages such as John 19:30 and Rom. 6:4-5.
- Sec.5. The “new birth” is a change made in the soul of man by which the choices, the affections and the desires of the heart are changed from a love of things, worldly and fleshly, to a love of things, spiritual and heavenly. This change is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God. (1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15; John 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Phil. 3:1-2)

ARTICLE VI - Church Ordinances

- Sec.1. Feet-washing is a New Testament ordinance, instituted by Jesus Christ, to be observed among God’s people until the return of the Master who instituted it and gave his own example of it. (John 13:1-17; 1 Tim. 5:10; Matt. 28:20)
- Sec.2. The Lord’s Supper, instituted by Jesus Christ on the night of His betrayal, is a full meal to be eaten by his people. The feet-washing and communion are also to be practiced until his return. (John 13:30; Luke 22:20; John 13:2-4; 1 Cor. 11:23-25)
- Sec.3. The Communion, instituted by Jesus Christ, consists in partaking of the bread

and the cup in a worthy manner, at the close of the day, in connection with, but following feet-washing and Lord's Supper. (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22-24; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:21-26)

- Sec.4. The holy kiss is a divine ordinance to be kept and perpetuated in the Church. It is observed when we meet for worship, at Love Feasts in connection with feet-washing, between the supper and the communion, and on other occasions. (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor.16:20; 2 Cor.13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26-27; 1 Pet. 5:14)
- Sec.5. Veiling or covering their heads during praying or prophesying is God's design and the Biblical mandate for Christian women. An unadorned white net cap, opaque or semi-opaque veiling, covering the head, that would be readily recognizable as a headship covering meets the scriptural requirement. (1 Cor. 11:1-16) Covering just the bun or small area of the hair does not meet the scriptural requirements for a covering.
- Sec.6. We believe the anointing of the sick is an appointment of the Lord, and that it was intended to be perpetuated in His Church. At the request of an ill member, the Elders of the Church are contacted to do this work. "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (Jas. 5:14)

The scriptural specification is for the anointing to be performed by two Elders. In practice, the Church has permitted a Minister, or a Deacon to assist an Elder, when a second Elder is not available. (Jas. 5:14; Matt. 10:8)

ARTICLE VII – The Christian Day of Worship and Graces

- Sec.1. The First Day of the week is the Christian Sabbath and is to be kept as a day of rest and worship. (Matt. 28:1; Acts 20:7; John 20:1; Mark 16:2)
- Sec.2. Sanctification, righteousness, holiness and perfection are cardinal doctrines and graces of the New Testament and these are attained and experienced by Christians to the extent and degree that they, in loving obedience, manifest the fruits thereof. (John 17:17; Heb. 10:10; 1 John 3:7; Acts 10:35; 1 Thess. 4:7, 5:23)
- Sec.3. We believe that civil government is ordained of God for the care and protection of the good and for the punishment of those who do evil. (Rom 13:1-7) Kings and rulers should be prayed for, (1 Tim. 2:2), and honored and obeyed (Heb. 13:17), so far as their laws do not conflict with the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 5:29) As King of kings and Lord of lords, His laws are to be obeyed by the inhabitants of both heaven and earth. (Rev. 19:16)

Sec.4. We believe the Bible is God's Holy Word by which we understand the will and grace of God. To aid in Scripture memorization among our members and our children, to help avoid confusion and to promote sound doctrine in our services, the Authorized King James Version of the Bible shall be used in our Sunday School, Bible Study, and church services. Exceptions may be made where languages other than English are necessary.

ARTICLE VIII - Nonconformity and Nonresistance

Sec.1. Affiliation with the civil government in accepting duties of which any Gospel principle is violated, or one's Christian character is endangered, is incompatible with Bible teaching. (1 Pet. 3:9; 1 Thess. 5:22; Rom. 12:17-21) All members of the Dunkard Brethren Church are admonished to give heed to the example of humility and simplicity of life which Jesus left us in every feature of our daily lives. We advise all of our members not to take part in politics or political matters.

The Dunkard Brethren Church has not taken a stand against Social Security and leaves the matter to the individual regarding participation in the program.

Sec.2. We believe that the principle of non-resistance is clearly taught in the scriptures, and therefore has been accepted as a doctrine of the Church. In support of our position, we offer the following: Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6); His kingdom is not of the world and His servants do not fight (John 18:36); the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor. 10:4); we are to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44); overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21), and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us (Matt. 5:44). Learning the art of war and participating in carnal warfare or in any branch of the military establishment, at any time, is forbidden by the Scripture. The Boy and Girl Scout movements and other organizations requiring a uniform, or having any military features fall under the same condemnation. (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Gal. 5:19-22; Matt. 26:52)

Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church who enter any branch of the military service or work in the defense contracting industry cannot be retained as members without a change of occupation.

Sec.3. Participation in games, plays and performances, that are manifestly sinful is contrary to the Gospel and to a pure heart. This also applies to membership in labor unions which engage in un-Biblical activities. (1 Thess. 5:22; John 3:19; John 17:15; 1 Pet. 4:3-5.) Our members are not permitted to own or have television in their homes. In homes where one is a member and the other is not, the member will not be held responsible for having the television, provided he or she faithfully tells the church that they have no part in it. While there may be acceptable uses of the Video and related equipment, members are asked to conscientiously guard their homes from the detrimental spiritual effects of

commercial entertainment videos, in that they pose the same spiritual dangers as the movies and television.

Recognizing the dangers of the types of obscene material which are easily accessible through the Internet and other computer technology, members are admonished to heed the principles of Scripture which declare that believers should set no wicked thing before their eyes. This is especially applicable in the area of "making no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." All activities should ultimately serve to draw one into a closer relationship with Christ. (Ps. 101:3; 2 Tim. 2:22; Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:16-18)

Members do not buy or sell lottery tickets or take part in any form of gambling. Members should not attend theaters or dances. The Dunkard Brethren Church is conscientiously opposed to coeducational physical education by Junior High and High School students that violates the principles of modesty. (1 Pet. 2:11)

- Sec.4. Affiliation with secret societies or lodges is a violation of the Scriptures. We, The Dunkard Brethren Church, shall not take part in the Ecumenical Movement, the National Council of Churches or any similar organization. (John 3:19-21; 18:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22)
- Sec.5. Conforming to the harmful fashions of the world, including, but not limited to: wearing hats by Christian women and neckties, gold, rings and bracelets by either sex to adorn the body, is contrary to the scriptures and is a sign of a proud heart. (Rom. 12:2; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 Pet. 3:3-5; 1 John 2:15-17; Luke 16:15)
- Sec.6. Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church shall abstain from the use of intoxicating or addictive substances, such as narcotics, nicotine, marijuana, or alcoholic beverages (except as directed by a physician). Using, raising, manufacturing, buying or selling them by Christians is inconsistent with the Christian lifestyle and testimony. Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church who do so should be counseled in love and forbearance. If they manifest an unwilling or arbitrary spirit, they subject themselves to the discipline of the church, even to expulsion in extreme cases. We implore members to accept the advice and counsel of the church and abstain from all of the above. Since members are to be examples to the world (Rom. 14:20-21) indulgence in any of these activities disqualifies them for Church or Sunday School work or as delegates to District or General Conference.
- Sec.7. Instrumental music and accompaniment will not be used in the house of God. In keeping with our Anabaptist tradition and the apparent New Testament pattern of worship, we encourage the use and development of acapella singing in our congregational worship. (Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15; Col. 3:16.)

Sec.8.

1. Brother is forbidden to go to law with Brother. (1 Cor. 6:1-5)
2. Members should always consult the Church before going to law and should receive its approval before using the law.
3. Effort should be made to adjust collections of what is due without going to law. If reasonable efforts to adjust matters fail, the Church is at liberty to grant permission to use the law. Causing distress to those who owe should be avoided, especially if dependents are involved.
4. The creditor should not impose greater hardship on the debtor than he himself is under in the circumstances.

Sec.9. Our ethical calling in God's service demands honesty in all of our professional business activities. It is in harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures and of the Dunkard Brethren Church for its members to be involved in professions where truthfulness is allowed to be exercised. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Sec.10. Taking or subscribing to the civil oath, except by affirmation, is forbidden in the Scriptures. (Jas. 5:12; Matt. 5:34-37)

Sec.11. We, as the Dunkard Brethren Church, Inc., seek exemption from the 1983 Social Security Amendments affecting churches, inasmuch as these regulations of involuntary application and enforcements of Social Security are contrary to a sincerely held Biblical conviction that the government should not tax God or His Church. (Matt. 22: 17-21; Eph. 1:21-22; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18)

Sec.12. We oppose the practice of abortion, which is murder. (Matt. 19:18; 1 Pet. 4:15; 1 John 3:15; Exod. 20:13) We believe that human life, from conception, is a sacred creation of God. (Jer. 1:5) Therefore, we believe that non-spontaneous abortion violates the sanctity of human life, and the commandments of God. (Luke 1:15; Isa. 49:1)

Sec.13. The Dunkard Brethren Church is opposed to any homosexual practices and in order for such a person to be a member of the Dunkard Brethren Church, they must be regenerated, forsaking these practices, in accord with the scriptures. (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rom. 1:22-28; Gen. 19:1-14)

Dress and Adornment

- I. In prayerfully examining the scriptural basis for Christian attire, we find Jesus and the Apostles taught honesty and simplicity of life, including modesty in dress and

manners.

The scriptures refer to dress and adornment in the following ways:

- a. Jesus condemned anxious thought for raiment in Matt. 6:25-33; Luke 12:22-31.
 - b. By direct teachings as stated in 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5.
 - c. The general teachings on nonconformity to the world which apply to dress are Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 1:14-15; 1 John 2: 15-17.
- II. Study shows that both the early Church and the early Brethren taught strongly and uniformly against extravagance in dress and taught consistently in favor of scriptural plainness.
- III. The Minutes of Conference show that the Church has, throughout Her entire history, stood firmly against the fashions of the age and extravagance in all manner of living. It has taught faithfully the principles of simplicity of life and personal appearance. Furthermore, the Conference has, periodically, adapted means and methods with the view of maintaining scriptural simplicity in dress in the Church body.

The scripture teaches the concept of plain and modest dress as an obligation. It does so with few rules and methods of application. The scriptural teachings oppose the plaiting of the hair and the wearing of jewelry and costly clothing and promote plainness and simplicity in dress and adornment. We believe that a form that agrees with the spirit of these teachings is helpful in maintaining these principles. Therefore, based upon former Church General Conference decisions we submit the following restatements:

1. The brethren are to wear plain clothing and the standing collar coat.
2. The brethren are to wear their hair and beards in a simple and scriptural manner. (1 Cor. 11:14)
3. The sisters are to attire themselves in modest garments, free from ornaments and unnecessary decorations and the hair is to be worn in a becoming Christian manner.
4. The veiling is to be worn in times of praying or prophesying. (1 Cor. 11:1-16) The unadorned white net cap, opaque or semi-opaque veiling that would be readily recognizable as a headship covering meets the requirement of the scriptural teaching on the subject.

5. Gold for ornamentation and jewelry of all kinds shall not be worn.
6. No brother will be installed into office as Minister or Deacon who will not pledge himself to observe and teach the order of dress.
7. No brother or sister may serve as a delegate to District Meeting who does not observe the order of dress. No brother shall serve on a discipline committee who does not observe the order of dress.
8. It is the duty of the official body of the church to faithfully and intelligently teach the simple Christian life in manner of dress. Presiding Elders are required to teach and to see that the simple life in general is taught and observed in their respective congregations.
9. All members are urged, in the bond of brotherly love and Christian fellowship, to teach and exemplify the order of the church in dress as a suitable application of "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Pet. 3:4)

The above is interpreted to forbid cutting the hair and wearing short and sleeveless dresses. In order to provide adequate modesty, the length of the sister's dress should be at least mid calf or longer.

ARTICLE IX - Powers and Functions

- Sec.1. The church is of Divine origin and is a Theocratic Democracy. It is necessary for evangelizing, Christianizing, and ultimately saving the people of the world. (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-13; Acts 2:41, 47)
- Sec.2. The authority of the church over the individual, in the application of scriptural principles, as understood by the Church, is Biblically based. (Matt. 16:19; 18:17-18; John 20:23; 2 Thess. 3:6)
- Sec.3. The duty of the church to materially support the ministry, as appropriate, is recognized. The plural, non-salaried ministry is supported by the scriptures and has been the practice of the Brethren for over 300 years. (1 Cor. 9:7-14; John 10:12-13)
- Sec.4. Sisters are encouraged to participate in congregational life in various ways, but a female official in the Church or a female in the preaching ministry is without Scriptural authority. (Luke 8:3; Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 14:31; Rom. 16:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:11-12)

ARTICLE X – Marriage

Sec.1. The marriage relation is of Divine appointment, being instituted by God, confirmed by Christ and taught by his Apostles. The love and wisdom of our Heavenly Father was strikingly displayed in His plan of placing the inhabitants of the earth into families. The constitution of the man and woman and their mutual dependance upon each other, as our Savior clearly showed, was designed and appointed from the beginning. This illustrates the sacredness of the marriage relationship. Established in Eden, it has been perpetuated throughout time, by which God has sought to promote the welfare of the human race. Historical examples, both positive and negative, have accumulated which prove that the highest interests of humanity center in marriage and the family. Marriage is an institution of sacred importance, therefore, it should be entered into with an understanding of all the sacred obligations belonging to it.

We believe marriage is appointed by God to be a lifelong covenant of love between one man and one woman. Diligent effort must be made to build and maintain that marriage in a Christian manner. If problems arise, an attempt for reconciliation and restoration of the marriage is always our obligation in this sacred relationship. (Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Sec.2. Weddings shall be conducted in such a manner that the principles of simplicity, humility, and sobriety are not violated, keeping in mind that a wedding is a spiritual event, not merely social in nature.

Sec.3. Divorce on the part of Christians, except for the cause of fornication is forbidden in the Scripture. (Matt.5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; I Cor 7:11)

If a man or a woman marries a second time while the first companion lives, or if he or she marries a divorced person, they will not be received or held in Church fellowship unless they live in separate residences and are celibate and not in the marriage relationship.

If a man and woman have been legally and scripturally married and then separate and divorce, they can be held in full fellowship if they become reconciled and remarried. This is conditional on the basis that neither party has been involved in any other marriage with another person. Repentance and renewal of their vows to the church is required.

Sec.4. Because of the sacredness of serving as an Official in the church (1 Tim. 3:1- 16; Titus 1:6-7), no brother who has been divorced or who marries a divorced woman shall be placed in official position as a Deacon, Minister or Elder.

Sec. 5. Dunkard Brethren Ministers and Elders shall perform marriages or ceremonies

only between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman.

Church Covenant

The Elder or Minister in charge presents the Church's position on non-resistance, not being involved in secret societies, not going to law against another, not swearing an oath, nonconformity in dress, not engaging in divorce, and not participating in amusement that compromises holiness. The Elder or Minister in charge then asks the applicant for membership the following, "Are you willing to conform to the teaching of the scripture as understood by the church?" Answer: "I am." Then Matt. 18:10-22 is read, followed by, "Are you willing to be governed by this scripture in the adjustment of difficulties that may arise?" Answer: "I am."

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Church Membership

The Church is composed of persons who covenant to be loyal to the principles of the Gospel, as understood by the Church.

By conviction of sin, conversion and confession of our sins, by faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as revealed to us by the Bible, and by trine-immersion baptism, we enter into covenant relationship with one another as one Body in Christ Jesus. Thus, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we mutually agree to walk together in Christian love, to strive together for the advancement of the Church in knowledge, holiness and prosperity, to promote spirituality, humility and peace, and to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines. We agree to cheerfully contribute of the means that God gives us for the building of churches, for supporting the ministry when needed, for missionary work, for supporting the poor, and for every other good work that tends to the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom on earth and for the good of its subjects.

We also engage to live truthful and exemplary lives before the world, to have private devotions in our families, and to religiously instruct and educate our children. We agree to labor for the physical and spiritual good of our neighbors and those with whom we associate, to be honest and upright in all of our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our conduct. We are to watch over each other in brotherly love, pray for each other and aid each other in sickness and distress, ever remembering the best of all rules, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Baptism

Baptism is administered in water. When the applicant enters into baptism sincerely, having a good conscience toward God, it is followed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Being born of water and of the Spirit brings about the entrance into the Kingdom of God here on earth.

CHURCH COVENANT

Our members do not participate in the armed service of the kingdoms of this world. They are not permitted to join or belong to any secret order or society nor are they to go to law brother with brother. Members affirm instead of taking an oath in signing or acknowledging legalized documents. Profane swearing is forbidden by the New Testament Scriptures. Our members are not allowed to obtain a divorce on other than scriptural grounds; they may not remarry while the former companion is living, nor marry a divorced person. The position of the Church is that we abstain from the use of narcotics, including tobacco, and from beverages containing alcohol.

We do not conform to the fashions of the world in dress, nor in the adorning of the body with jewelry, excessive cosmetics, and the like. The ornament of a Christian is a meek and quiet spirit. We likewise refrain from participation in games, plays and performances that are manifestly sinful nor are we permitted to have television.

“Are you willing to conform to the teaching of the scripture as understood by the church?” Answer: “I am.” Then Matt. 18:10-22 is read, followed by, “Are you willing to be governed by this scripture in the adjustment of difficulties that may arise?” Answer: “I am.”

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the LORD that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:14-15.