

## **CHILDREN AND COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP**

### **The Practice of Crossroads Presbyterian Church**

Jesus taught his disciples that they were to *Go and make disciples of all the nations*. We recognize that our first responsibility in going forth to make disciples is to make disciples of our own children. We long to see the children God has given to us publicly confess Jesus and go on to live a life of meaningful service for Him.

We know that the discipleship of our children must happen in the daily lives of their homes as well as the continuing commitment of the church family to their spiritual nurture. Nevertheless, there are also some specific measures that we believe will support this discipleship. The following are the procedures that will ordinarily be followed by the Session of Crossroads:

1. We encourage parents to bring their young children for baptism as a testimony of faith in God's saving grace for their children. This is also a time for the church to testify to its commitment to support the parents in the Christian nurture of their children. These children are received as **non-communicant members** of the church. Because these children are members of the church, at least one of the parents must also be a member.

2. A **communicant member** (one who takes communion) is a person who has not only been baptized but who also publicly confesses Jesus Christ as Lord. Parents who feel their children are ready to make such a confession for themselves should encourage their children to contact the elders (ordinarily their shepherding elder) about a time to interview the children. There is no minimum age for such a confession, although there needs to be discernment about coming so early that the children have no real understanding of what they profess. After the interview the children may be received into the church as **communicant members**.

3. At an age when greater understanding is possible, ordinarily 11 or 12 (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade), a class will be offered to all the children of the church as a part of the Sunday School.

- Those who are already communicant members will attend as a fulfillment of the confession they made when younger.
- Those who are non-communicant members will attend so that they will understand what it means to confess faith and to become communicant members.
- Older children should take the *Exploring Crossroads* class, when it is offered.
- Children and youth whose parents who are not members of Crossroads will be welcome to participate in the class, and to join as communicant members if they desire to confess Christ to the elders.

Crossroads Presbyterian Church policy statement on “Children and Communicant Membership” Adopted by the Session on October 3, 2006.

4. There are instances of parents who do not choose to have their children baptized as infants. We respect the fact that there are honest differences on this matter. Such parents are welcome to join Crossroads, and to encourage their children to pursue communicant membership when they feel it is appropriate. At whatever point these children become communicant members their joining the church will include baptism.