

Special Events to Nazarene Churches

Local Church Special Events:

- All Church Meeting
- Board Meetings
- Special Offerings
- Revival

District Church Special Events:

- District Assembly
- Camp Meeting
- Retreats
- Ordination
- Improve Your Serve

General Church Special Events:

- General Assembly
- M_ [Evangelism] Conference
- General Board Meetings
- NYC

- * **Question: At this point, when trying to understand Nazarene identity, how would you describe it?**



Name:

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Session 1 on Nazarene Identity

Introductions:

- Share your name with the group and a reason as to your hope for this class.
- * Find a neighbor and discuss how “core values” affect your daily life.

The core values of the church of the Nazarene are: *Christian*, *Missional*, and *Holiness*. Before moving to the next section spend two minutes writing down some notes on what these values might mean to you:

Nazarene Roots

The denomination of the Church of the Nazarene was organized in Pilot Point, Texas in 1908 by the merger of Wesleyan-Holiness denominations and churches around the country. Association of Pentecostal Churches of America and Church of the Nazarene merged in 1907 in Chicago, but later formed the organizational structure and essential belief system that we have today when they merged with the Holiness Church of Christ in Texas.

Essential to this merger were the following traits:¹

1. Men and women worked together in ministry.
2. The new church stood shoulder to shoulder with the poor and broken.
3. The early Nazarenes were energized by a vision of worldwide ministry.
4. The Christian college was an essential ingredient of Wesleyan-Holiness church.
5. Vital piety was central to church life.
6. Entire sanctification was the doctrinal capstone.
7. Nazarenes share a commitment to righteous living.

* **Question: How might the core values (Christian, Missional, Holiness) have shown up in the roots of the church of the Nazarene?**

Structure

Here are three major ways that churches are organized:

1. **Episcopal:** In this model, bishops are elected or appointed for life. These leaders make basic decisions in local contexts like appointing pastors. Local church folk do not vote or elect their pastor.
2. **Congregational:** Often used by Baptist or independent churches. In this model, decision making is done by the local members or by the pastor with little to no oversight from outside the immediate context.
3. **Presbyterian:** This model might be considered a mix between the two. Local churches form groups that are then represented in larger decision making in regards to the denomination.

The Church of the Nazarene incorporates aspects of all three models and adapted the models according to our theology and context. There are three governing bodies that make up our denomination: 1) the General Church with elected leaders that organize and make decisions across the globe for our denomination, 2) the District Church which seeks representation from local churches on decision making and are often separated by state or region, and 3) the Local Church like GFCN. A major document called “The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene”, aka. The Manual, helps churches around the world become organized and work together.

* **Question: What pros or cons might exist when it comes to these models of church organization?**

¹ List of traits from *Our Church Your Home: An Introduction to Church Membership* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2013); 6-8.

Recent Years

From the perspective of Pastor Gary:

“We have seen our church move into the post modern world of church as we know it. It’s been a movement to reach our culture with differing thought processes and methods.”

From the perspective of congregants:

- “A season of anticipation. A church ready to grow just waiting on God’s timing.” - Berry Woodall
- “Be prepared to be loved to death... I always felt love before anything.” - Roxann Everhart
- “Within 2 weeks of our finding this Church (in 1977), [we felt overwhelming love]. There were several couples around [our age], and we just fell into the group with ease!!!” - Diane Herring
- “I have always felt so much love in the church.” - Shirley Pritchett
- “From the first Sunday we visited GFCN in July 2014, [we] felt very welcome... We knew this is where God led us to [find] our church home.” - Janet Galey
- * **Question: What’s something that you would love to see GFCN learn from it’s history? (Or, what’s something that you would love to see churches learn from church history?)**



Name:

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Session2: GFCN Then and Now

Introductions:

Complete the following survey by circling your preferred answer before discussing your answers with the group.

1. Churches should be more focused on getting people to heaven than anything else.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neither — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

2. Churches should direct their efforts towards compassion and social work more than getting people saved.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neither — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

3. Churches should build their future on past foundations.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neither — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

4. Tradition should be valued and carried on.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neither — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Back Then

GFCN was organized on January 6, 1946 in Chicopee Village with the name “First Church of the Nazarene.” Hugh Mincey, a business professional, had a passion for a Nazarene Church in the area. His home was the first the starting place of our church. As the church grew, it moved within walking distance onto Atlanta Hwy. purchasing a building for \$2000. The building resembled a house. The mission and focus of the church was established within a specific community. Worship was held in that building until 1956.

As leadership and culture shifted, in 1956 the church constructed a building at the intersection of Washington St. and Queen City Pkwy, less than a mile from downtown Gainesville. Services were in the basement for the first year while the sanctuary was being completed. At the building dedication in 1958, the church changed it’s name to Gainesville First Church of the Nazarene. By this time, the church has moved away from it’s house church look and was taking on a colonial brick and pillar look. Here, we have a city church, not a neighborhood church.

The church continued there until the 90’s when the current address was purchased in order to build a building that would allow the congregation room to grow. The current campus and building was dedicated in 1993. The new church was on a hill, reaching toward the heavens and had moved away from downtown with a view overlooking Gainesville and Lake Lanier.

- * **Question: What strikes you or stands out to you on reflecting over the last 73 years of the Church of the Nazarene in Gainesville?**

Influential Leaders

Pastors:

Rev. Hugh R. Mincey (‘46-’49); Rev. Dorance Nichols (‘48-’49); Rev. Fletcher Digby, Jr. (‘49-’57); Rev. Paul Barnes (‘57-’59); Rev. Hugh R. Mincey (‘59-’62); Rev. Terry Soles (‘62-’73); Rev. Robert E. Maner (‘73-’75); Rev. Ray D. Moore (‘75-’78); Rev. Howard Porter, Jr. (‘78-’83); Rev. Gary J. Gulley (‘83-’89); Rev. Thomas E. Rash (‘89-’93); Rev. Lon Heighton (‘94-’01); Rev. WE McCumber (‘01-’02); Rev. Jason Day (‘02-’04); Rev. W.E. McCumber (‘04-’10); Rev. Don Moore (‘10-’11); Rev. Gary Huff (‘11-Current)

Other Influential Leaders:

Newton and Rose Boleman; Lisbon and Elizabeth James; Gene and Martha Brooks; Carmen and Kay (Umeyo) Johnson; John and Joyce Whimire; Topsy Bryant; Dot Irwin; Jim Payne; and so many others!

- * **Question: How have people in your past affected your place in God’s story and family?**
- * **Question: What’s are some ways that you remember someone’s legacy in a meaningful way?**

Plan

Paragraph

* **Question:**



Name:

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Session 3: GFCN for the Future

Introductions:

Grab an index card and answer the following questions.

1. How do you connect to your family?
2. How do you connect to your friends?
3. How do you connect to a significant other?
4. How do you connect to your co-workers?
5. How do you connect to people dissimilar to you?
6. How do you connect to God?

Connect to God

Content

* **Question:**

Connect to Neighbor

Content

* **Question:**

Sin and Atonement: Articles 5-6

5. Sin, Original and Personal

We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin.

***See *Articles of Faith* for full statement on Sin.

6. Atonement

We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His death on the Cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this Atonement is the only ground of salvation, and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. The Atonement is graciously efficacious for the salvation of those incapable of moral responsibility and for the children in innocency but is efficacious for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and believe.

* **Question:**

From what you see in society, do we live in a sinful world?

How do you define sin?

How do you define atonement?

How might people practice or participate in atonement?



MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Session 4: Nazarene Beliefs

Grab a marker board and do a word study on the word "beliefs." *Use the space below for your own notes.*

God: Articles 1-3

1. The Triune God

We believe in one eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe; that He only is God, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose. The God who is holy love and light is Triune in essential being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one Person very God and very man, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He truly arose from the dead and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven and is there engaged in intercession for us.

3. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.

* **Question:**

Think about each person of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How do they work together in your life?

Scripture: Article 4

4. The Holy Scriptures

We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

* **Question:**

Make a list of all the ways that God speaks to us, human beings.

Why might it be necessary to be specific about what qualifies as scripture?

The End

15. Second Coming of Christ: We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again; that we who are alive at His coming shall not precede them that are asleep in Christ Jesus; but that, if we are abiding in Him, we shall be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air, so that we shall ever be with the Lord.

16. Resurrection, Judgement, Destiny: We believe in the resurrection of the dead, that the bodies both of the just and of the unjust shall be raised to life and united with their spirits — “they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

16.1. We believe in future judgment in which every person shall appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life.

16.2. We believe that glorious and everlasting life is assured to all who savingly believe in, and obediently follow, Jesus Christ our Lord; and that the finally impenitent shall suffer eternally in hell.

* **Question:**

How do the final statements of faith help to identify what it means to be a Christian?

* **Key words:**

* **Telos**

* **Eschatology**



MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Session 5: Nazarene Beliefs

Grace and Holiness: Articles 7-10

7. Prevenient Grace:

See attachment.

8. Repentance:

See attachment.

9: Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption:

See attachment.

10. Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification:

See attachment.

* **Question:**

How might God speak to someone who is not a Christian?

What is the difference, if any, between grace and holiness?

The Church

11. The Church: We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ, holy living, and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to share in the redemptive and reconciling ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit. The Church fulfills its mission by making disciples through evangelism, education, showing compassion, working for justice, and bearing witness to the kingdom of God.

The Church is a historical reality that organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms, exists both as local congregations and as a universal body, and also sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* **Question:**

What difference does the church make in the world?

The Sacraments and Healing

12. Baptism: We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement [of Jesus Christ, to be administered to believers and declarative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness.

Baptism being a symbol of the new covenant, young children may be baptized, upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training.

13. Baptism Continued: Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant.] and incorporation into the Body of Christ. Baptism is a means of grace proclaiming faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. It is to be administered to believers indicating their full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness. As participants in the new covenant, young children and the morally innocent may be baptized upon request of parents or guardians. The church shall give assurance of Christian training. Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

14. The Lord's Supper: We believe that the [Memorial and Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is essentially a New Testament sacrament, declarative of His sacrificial death, through the merits of which believers have life and salvation and promise of all spiritual blessings in Christ. It is distinctively for those who are prepared for reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it they show forth the Lord's death till He come again. It being the Communion feast, only those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints should be called to participate therein.] Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a sacrament, proclaiming His life, sufferings, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the hope of His coming again. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. All are invited to participate by faith in Christ and be renewed in life, salvation, and in unity as the Church. All are to come in reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it show forth the Lord's death until He comes. Those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints are invited by Christ to participate as often as possible.

Divine Healing: We believe in the [Bible] *biblical* doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe God heals through the means of medical science.

* **Question:**

How, or why, are sacraments important for faith?

Who decides what a sacrament is?