



SOMA FAMILY OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES COVENANT

Soma means “body” and the members of each Soma congregation affirm that our deepest identity and belonging comes from our participation in the body of Christ through the blood of Jesus, the election of God the Father and the empowerment of the Spirit. This belonging transcends not only our local congregations, but extends past the borders of our movement and broader church subculture and covers all the redeemed of the Lord across the globe and across the ages.

To the extent that we live here in this time and place, we the members of this Soma Family of Neighborhood Churches have work to do, given to us by the King. The goal of this covenant is to provide clear expectations for the continuing relational and missional partnership between our congregations. This covenant expresses our commitment to mutual collaboration to see the multiplication and maturity of thriving churches across Indianapolis. This covenant reminds us of why Soma started and holds us accountable to pursue gospel-driven transformation in our churches, our city, our region and the world.

We covenant together because we recognize no one believer, no one congregation, and no one church family can accomplish that mission alone. We covenant together in the hopeful expectation that more churches, both new and long-existing, will join us in this mission, within and beyond the boundaries of this covenant.

THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE SOMA FAMILY OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES MAKE THE FOLLOWING MUTUAL COMMITMENTS:

- **To Hold to the Same Truth** - We recognize that a shared understanding of our faith in Jesus as expressed in the Bible is the bedrock of our fellowship. To that end, Soma churches agree to adopt a shared statement of faith to be included in each party’s bylaws.

That statement of faith, as well as the broader context of the Scriptures, means that Soma churches agree to keep practical theological unity by maintaining high-level principles

and procedures in areas required by the Bible such as: eldership (authority and qualifications) and deaconship (authority and qualifications).

- **To Hold to Unity in the Bond of Love** - Covenants and promises mean little if not built on a foundation of mutual love and care. Soma congregational members agree to maintain healthy relationships and respect for each other, and Soma church leaders agree to adopt a shared framework for proactively pursuing forgiveness and reconciliation when conflicts arise. Our shared understanding of relationship and membership then makes it natural for members in good standing to move between churches, to communicate care needs, and to uphold discipline standards for unrepentant members across congregations.

In the same spirit, if one part of our body suffers, every part suffers with it. Our churches will grow and change in their needs, and we mutually covenant to support our congregations. This means that Soma churches agree to provide ongoing support and resources such as finances, facility use, staffing, and other support structures as may otherwise be agreed upon from time to time.

- **To Hold to Working Together for the Great Commission** - Soma is a body with a mission given to it by Jesus Christ. Soma churches agree to provide energy, leadership, and resources toward both the planting of new churches and adoption of existing churches as agreed upon by representatives from the churches.

Soma churches adopt a common framework for ministry that allows us to accomplish more together than we ever could alone. This means Soma churches agree to a shared mission, vision, culture, and ministry philosophy. This results in (among other things): a common passion for racial reconciliation, diligent service to the community, relentless teaching of the Scriptures, and a pursuit for church membership and leadership reflective of the neighborhoods those churches worship in.

- **To Hold to Proper Order and Organization** - Paul encouraged the church in Corinth that everything should be done decently and in good order. The spirit of that exhortation carries forward in our commitment to legal and financial transparency. Soma churches agree to adopt and maintain bylaws, articles of incorporation, membership and employment policies that embody the spirit of the Statement of Faith and Strategic Framework.
- **To Hold to Corporate Worship Across Our Congregations** - As one family across the city, Soma congregations need to worship God and celebrate together. Soma churches agree to create time, planning, budget, and relational space for common gatherings for worship, prayer, leadership, and joint citywide ministry initiatives as decided upon annually by representatives from the churches.