

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)



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Church FAQs:

1. What is the primary goal of ODBC?
 - To be a place where Christ brings freedom and wholeness through a relationship with Christ.
2. What denomination is ODBC?
 - We are an independent Baptist church. This means we are an evangelical church following Baptist Theology. We are Bible-based and externally focused on reaching others for Christ while supporting each other in a safe place under God's Grace. By being independent, we have no reporting authority or outside hierarchy and all financial contributions stay within ODBC (or our ministries). You can find out more about this in our Discover ODBC class.
3. What governance structure is in place at the church?
 - We have Pastors, Deacons, Administrative staff, and Trustees. We also have a finance committee that reports to the administration. The Deacons support the Pastoral staff in oversight of our ministries. All finances are approved by the church body by a vote in accordance with the church constitution (available from the church office). The Deacons are voted on by church members. When elected, Deacons serve for 3 yrs. They can serve 2 consecutive terms of 3 yrs and then must take a year off.
4. Are our Pastor's ordained ministers? Is this recognized by other churches?
 - Though not a requirement set forth by our church constitution, all our Pastors are ordained. Yes, this ordination is recognized by churches of like faith and practice.
5. How do I find out the history of ODBC?
 - The best way to learn about when our church was formed and how God has grown our church is to attend our Discover ODBC class.
6. How do I find out the Pastor's contact information?
 - Contact information is available in our weekly church bulletin and on the website under "Ministry Team." Please feel free to call the church office to speak with one of them or to set up an appointment (703-594-3300).

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7. How do I talk with a Pastor or a Deacon?

- While you will find our Pastors and Deacons to be very approachable, if you have something to discuss that requires their undivided attention we suggest you make an appointment. You can email the Pastor's directly or call the church office. You can make an appointment directly with Deacons to meet in person or over the phone. If you are wondering who your Deacon is, talk to your Connect Group leader or call the church office.

8. How can I request the support of a Pastor or a Deacon at an event?

- We encourage you to fill out a Pastor Response Card located inside the church bulletin (available during every service). Place the Pastor Response Card into the offering box.

9. How can I solicit the spiritual support of the church?

- We believe in the power of prayer and the power of God's people uniting in His name to lift one another up. Our primary avenue for community care for our church body is through our Connect Group communities. We also encourage you to share your prayer requests by submitting them for distribution on our church prayer chain email list. Send a prayer request or join the Prayer Chain via our website under the "Engage" tab. In addition to Connect Groups and the Prayer Chain, ODBC also offers other support services focused on freedom and wholeness through Christ. These are individual counseling and our Soul Restoration program.

10. Where do I find the beliefs, doctrine, or bylaws of ODBC?

- The church has a Constitution that explains our core beliefs, our governance structure, and our organization. All attendees of our Discover ODBC class receive a copy. The Constitution is also available by request through the church office.

11. What is the role of a Deacon? What do they do?

- The Deacons are Spirit-filled men elected to care for the temporal affairs of the church, (Acts 6) but may also be called upon for spiritual ministry and leadership as God so equips (Acts 6,8). As such, the Deacons serve under the Pastor(s) of the church for the congregation to provide the following:
 - Support the pastor(s) by providing counsel, prayer, and spirit-led ethical, moral and spiritual accountability. (1 Timothy 5:1, 19-20).
 - Promote the spiritual welfare of the church by aiding the pastor(s) in providing shepherding oversight of the congregation.
 - Assist the pastor(s) in executing membership discipline as prescribed by the constitution.
 - Provide recommendations to the church regarding all agenda items brought at duly-called business meetings.
 - Assist the pastor(s) in the administering of the ordinances.
 - Provide leadership and continuity in the event the pastoral staff is unavailable or the office of pastor is vacant.

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12. How are Deacons assigned to ministries and Connect Groups?

- Deacons are assigned to support ministries and Connect Groups through the prayerful and God-led consideration of the Pastors and Deacons. Because Deacons are assigned to represent you and serve you primarily via Connect Groups, we encourage you to join these important Groups in order to facilitate the meeting of your spiritual needs. However, if you have not “declared” a Connect Group or are not a member of any particular Connect Group, then upon church membership a Deacon will be assigned. Individuals may also request their name be added to Ministry Care lists based upon the ministries they are involved with or another connection to ODBC outside of Connect Groups.

Service/Sermon/Communion FAQs

13. Why are announcements at the end of the service instead of the beginning?

- The primary focus of our service is to worship God. A series of announcement slides often run before the service starts, but when the music begins, we are focused on turning our hearts and minds toward worshipping God and receiving from Him. In an effort to not break up that time of worship, we wait until the end of the service and make our announcements then. This time also serves as a leadership transition time so that our volunteer leaders (and others) can use to ensure activities are appropriately set up for you to enjoy in the Connect Group hour that follows the service.

14. How is the offering taken?

- We believe that giving to God’s kingdom should be done with a cheerful heart. We do not believe in pressuring you into giving or asking you repeatedly for your financial contribution. For this reason, we do not pass an offering plate, but have wooden offering boxes located at each exit for your convenience to place the offering the Lord leads you to give as you exit the sanctuary. We also have the capability to receive your financial contributions through online giving at our website (www.ocbcLIFE.org). You will need to create a username and password and log in. The financial needs of ODBC are printed in the bulletin each week. Our programs are designed to give back and glorify God’s kingdom. And we have much kingdom work to do! Your offering will help us identify and serve the needs of people in need of hearing the truth of God’s grace, love, and desires for them. We do hope you will prayerfully consider what God’s desire is for you in supporting our ministry financially.

15. Does ODBC practice communion?

- Yes. Communion is held about once a quarter. We practice an open communion with wafers and juice as well as bread and juice elements. During a communion service, church leadership serves the communion elements at several stations in the sanctuary. At most communion services, both options of tearing a piece of bread from a loaf and dipping it into a chalice of grape juice as well as individual wafers and cups of juice are available. Take special note what the server says to you as you receive the elements. Their gentle reminder makes the observation of communion so personal and powerful.

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As you select your bread they say; “His body broken for you” and as you dip or select your cup, they say; “His blood shed for you.” Various ministries and small groups may also observe communion within their own small group community.

16. What elements does the church use for Communion?

- The Bible indicates that the elements used to symbolize Christ’s suffering are “bread” (Luke 22:19) and “the fruit of the vine” (Luke 22:18). In the spirit of the Last Supper, we commemorate the Lord’s Supper with unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice.

17. Why don’t we call Communion a sacrament?

- As we understand scripture, the Lord’s Supper is commemorative in nature. As such, it is a powerful means of drawing us close to God and fostering spiritual growth in our lives. It serves to publicly illustrate core spiritual realities that have the ability to transform our daily living. However, we do not believe that Communion in any way bestows saving grace or is related to our salvation experience.

18. Do I have to be a member to participate in communion?

- No. We understand from scripture that the only requisites for participating in the Lord’s Supper are salvation and a heart to walk with God. Each individual is instructed towards self-examination and confession before receiving communion.

19. Should I allow my children to participate in Communion?

- This is a decision to be made between you and your child. While the Bible spells out no age qualifications, it does state that the participant should be mature enough to be “discerning” (1Corinthians 11:29). That is, they should be able to judge their own attitudes and conduct, as well as understand the importance and significance of the ordinance. We would suggest that if your child has made a commitment to Christ, has followed Christ in believer’s baptism, and is seeking to walk with God, they may participate in Communion.

20. What kind of music is played on a regular basis?

- We strive for a blended worship service. However, our primary focus is on God’s message as it is laid on the heart of the pastor preaching that week. As a result, the music and visual effects utilized in the service are an attempt to align the message in a way that people can best experience God’s word. Because people have different “spiritual pathways”, we prefer to use a variety of methods to connect with as many people as possible.

21. What type of worship service(s) does ODBC offer?

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- Currently, we offer services at 9:45am and 6:00pm on Sunday. We believe that these services are relevant and appealing to the vast majority of our church body. Rest assured that one timeless and traditional component of any ODBC service is a focus on God's word as found in the Bible.

22. Why are there people “coming and going” during the service?

- Our Sunday morning service starts promptly at 9:45am. We ask that those that arrive before 9:45am move to the center of the pew in order to free up outside seats for those arriving late. Sometimes during the service, we have a drama or a Baptism. This requires people to move forward while others are speaking-- we ask for understanding. After the service is over and we move to the announcement time, volunteers and leaders may need to prepare something ahead of you and/or your children's arrival during the Connect Group and children's activities hour. As a result, they will move toward the rear of the sanctuary immediately after the service while announcements are being made--we ask for your understanding. Finally, sometimes there is a need for nursery workers during the service. If there is such a need, you will see a note displayed on the presentation screen. This requires people to move toward the nursery to fill these critical volunteer positions.

23. Why do the Pastor's invite people to come forward at the end of the service?

- It's important for our pastor(s) to provide time in the service for you to answer God's calling as He speaks to you. You may feel led to have quiet time at the altar or accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. During this time of invitation, the pastor(s) and Prayer Team members are also available to you for prayer support.

24. Is there a place where I can pray or have quiet time to rest with the Lord?

- Yes, the prayer room is always open before and after the worship service and periodically during the week (i.e., Wednesday nights). The prayer room is located in the corner of the church, in the front, and to the extreme right of the stage (when standing in the very rear of the sanctuary, looking at the stage, it is in the extreme right hand corner of the sanctuary).

Membership FAQs:

25. What are the requirements for joining the church?

- To join our church as a member, you must meet the following membership requirements:
 - **Salvation:** The most important relationship in anybody's life is their relationship with Christ. The greatest decision anyone can make is to accept Him as your personal Savior.
 - **Believer's Baptism:** This is a very special event in the life of the believer as you publicly demonstrate your desire to follow Christ and be identified with His church. However, in many churches, the method and the timing differ. We practice believer's baptism by immersion. In other words, we believe that one is

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baptized by immersion after he/she professes faith in Christ and this is a requirement for membership. If you are coming from a similar tradition as stated above, we do not ask you to be baptized again. If you are coming from a tradition that differs, we do ask that you be baptized. Note: If you were baptized in this manner by another church, you may transfer to ODBC with a letter.

- Declaration of Faith: As a believer, we ask that you share your testimony with a Pastor. You may do so by setting up a time with one of them.
- Note: It is also highly recommended that individuals attend our Discover ODBC class to familiarize themselves with ODBC. However, attending this class is not required for membership.

26. What is expected of members who join the church?

- According to the covenant of ODBC (pg 3): members should “feel willingly led by the Holy Spirit” to unite with the ODBC church family. In doing so, members commit themselves to God and to the other members to the following:
 - I will allow God to use my church
 - I will protect the unity of my church
 - I will share the responsibility of my church
 - I will serve the ministry of my church

For more information and corresponding scripture references, see our church covenant.

27. What is the membership process, step-by-step?

- Future members who have reviewed the purpose, mission, and beliefs of the church (customarily by attending the “Discover ODBC” class and reviewing the church constitution), should:
 - Fill out an intake form (available in the church office, or our Discover ODBC class). The intake form is a form that helps the staff to “Get to Know You.” Bring the form with you to your 1-on-1 meeting (below).
 - Someone will contact you to schedule a 1-on-1 meeting with a Pastor or Pastor appointed individual to discuss brief questions about your spiritual journey, Baptism, and your understanding of our doctrinal beliefs found in the church constitution. Couples may attend this meeting together.
 - With the Pastor’s (or Pastor appointed Individual’s) approval, you will be scheduled to stand in front of the church body following a Sunday morning worship service for membership approval and the seated members in the congregation will give their response thereby voting you into membership.
 - That’s it! You will then be a member of the ODBC church family. You’ll be added to the official church roster. This means we can send letters of transfer to other churches, include you on membership mailings, and count you as a “voting member” for constitutional purposes.

28. How important is it to join, really?

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- Membership in this church is a commitment to follow the commands of Christ as revealed in the Scripture and the purpose, mission, and beliefs of this church as set forth in the church constitution. Church membership is important for you because it allows you to declare a “church home.” Furthermore, formal leadership voluntary places you under the spiritual guidance and leadership of the pastor(s) and deacons. Membership is also important to the church, because active members are allowed to address grievances and discuss important church concerns and business concerns that can impact the larger church body with the Pastor(s) and Deacon(s). Our active membership “head count” is how ODBC secures financing and loan rates. It is also important for other administrative considerations and decisions we need to make as a church.

29. What happens in the church business meetings? Do I have to go?

- All are welcome to our church business meetings; however, only members are allowed to vote. In these important meetings, we discuss the budget, staffing, and other administrative issues concerning the church. Many of the final decisions rest with the voting church membership per the church’s constitution. In these meetings, the pastor(s) will also share what God is revealing in them. As a result, it’s important that members come to these important meetings, though attendance is usually not taken.

30. How do I find out the contact information for other church members and attendees?

- There is a church directory available at the Information Board in the lobby. You can also request a church directory from the church office.

31. Once I join, what do I do next?

- Once you join, we encourage you to plug into the various ministries and Connect Groups that we have to offer that most align with your spiritual gifts. We do not desire that anyone become over-committed or find them self over-serving. You ALWAYS have the freedom to say no. Find a ministry that really resonates with your gifting and pour your energy into it. When we’re operating from our giftedness, our service is joyful and without burden. It’s also our desire to help you connect, grow, and serve God and others wherever you are in your spiritual journey!

Connect Group FAQs:

32. What is the Discover ODBC Class?

- Discover ODBC is 2-week structured format followed by a group discussion format. The class is designed to help you: a) discover our foundations (our history, our staff); b) discover our vision; and c) discover our beliefs (our constitution, spiritual gifts).
- We recommend all visitors and new members attend Discover ODBC at least one time (though you can attend more if you wish). Anyone wishing to connect or reconnect with ODBC should also attend the Discover ODBC class. It is set up for you to attend as many times as you wish to gain new information about current church events, discuss connecting, growing, and giving, as well as staying up-to-date on current volunteer openings, etc.

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33. Why do we have Connect Groups instead of Sunday school for the adults?

- Adult Sunday school classes are something we may consider at a later date; however, many people have commented that they get more out of their Connect Group as a small tight-knit (and fun!) group. Connect Groups provide opportunities for reflection, discussion, prayer, and fellowship. Equally as important, the Connect Group forum provides the regular opportunity for supporting your spiritual journey. We not only use the Connect Groups to assign deacons, but we also rely on Connect Groups to provide pastoral care. Being in a small group setting allows you to "connect with the message" on a personal level while "connecting with one another." In this way, the Connect Groups provide you with a community of believers that can help you, support your spiritual walk, and provide a "family-like" support network and spiritual network. Our LifeTrack Discipleship courses (typically on Sunday nights) provide additional opportunities for Biblical information and connection.

34. How do I declare my intention to join a specific Connect Group?

- You may visit any Connect Group you wish. We understand that finding a Connect Group that fits your personal style, spiritual walk, and personality may require some time. We encourage you to try out several Connect Groups until you find one that is a great fit. It might be the first one you try or the fourth one, but stick with it! Seek God's direction for which group would best suit you on your journey with Him. When you have decided to stay in one Connect Group, you will need to tell the Connect Group leader that you "wish to join the Connect Group" or "be added to the Connect Group roster." The Connect Group leader will then add you to his/her roster.

35. What happens (specifically) in Connect Groups?

- In Connect Groups, announcements are made, introductions occur, and your personal needs are better understood. The group will use a guided discussion format to share and dialogue about the message from the sermon. Each Connect Group leader serves as a "shepherd" by helping you understand where you are in your spiritual journey and prayerfully recommending options for your consideration (if you wish).

36. What happens if I go to a Connect Group, then stop, and then want to come back?

- Connect Groups should be warm and inviting. The environment is not designed to make you feel pressured or uncomfortable. Therefore, reconnecting should be simple and straightforward—just start going to the group again. If you wish to visit other groups you may.

Volunteer to Serve FAQs:

37. Do I have to be a member to volunteer to serve?

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- To serve as a leader in the church (i.e. Connect Group Leaders, Deacons, Children's Lead Teachers, Youth Leaders, various church committees) you must be a member or progressing towards membership.
- Anyone desiring to serve in the Children's Ministry will be asked to complete a Volunteer Information Sheet and give permission for ODBC to obtain a background check. See question 40 for more information on the background check. The information collected will be reviewed and we will check references to ensure the safety of the children and ODBC.
- To serve in a Lead teaching position within the Children's Ministry, individuals must be regularly involved with ODBC for 6 months prior to their application and be a member of the church (or are actively pursuing membership). This is so the church leadership team can have enough time to assess whether the individual has the gifts and character traits that will enable him or her to safely and effectively work with our children.
- Volunteers may also serve as assistants to a lead teacher. This position does not require membership (but it does require a background check, see question 40). Jr. and Sr. High youth (grades 6th through 12th) may serve in the Children's Ministries under the direct supervision of a leader. On occasion 5th grade students may serve in the pre-school or kindergarten classes.
- Volunteering in any other capacity (outside of leadership) does not require you to be a member.

38. How do I use my spiritual gifts to help the needs of the church?

- The first step is to know what your spiritual gifts are. If you don't know what your spiritual gifts are, you may want to take a spiritual gifts inventory (can be found online) or attend a Discover ODBC class. Periodically, our Sunday night LifeTrack Adult Discipleship offers a class, "Network", to help you more fully understand your gifts. As God leads, you may want to review the various ministry needs within the church and determine where the best fit is for you to serve. You may consider talking to someone who is volunteering in a similar position and/or discuss your interest with the ministry leader. *Most importantly, prayerfully consider where God may be leading you to serve.* You may find that God is calling you to serve in a capacity where you have no experience or feel you have no spiritual gift and that is okay. Take God's lead on this and feel free to talk to your Connect Group Leader, a Deacon, or one of the Pastors.

39. What are the volunteer commitments for each volunteer position? Who coordinates volunteer openings?

- Volunteer commitments vary. Your commitment can be as little as once a month, once a week, or on a monthly or weekly rotation for regularly occurring activities. You may also volunteer for special events. Volunteer coordination is typically the role of the ministry leader or leadership team. Please refer to the list of contacts for the ministry in which you are interested in serving in. Some of the ministries also have brochures that list information for those interested in serving. These brochures and contact names are available on the Information Board in the church lobby.

40. What volunteer positions require a background check and why? What gets checked?

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- Background checks are required for all of our Children's Ministry volunteers (this includes leaders as well as volunteers). The information obtained from a background check may include driving history (including any traffic citations), a social security number verification, present and former addresses, criminal and civil history/records, and the state sex offender records. You are entitled to a complete copy of any background information report of which you are the subject of by requesting a copy from ODBC. Background checks are required to ensure the safety of our children as well as to comply with our insurance policy.

41. How do I sign up to volunteer to serve?

- You may contact the ministry director or leader via phone or email; you may complete a Volunteer Interest/Information Sheet (available at the Information Board) and drop it in the offering box; or you may talk to another volunteer who can direct you to the right person.

Ministry FAQs:

42. How do I find out what enrichment and/or support ministries are available to me, my children, and/or my family?

- Sign up to receive the ODBC mid-week newsletter via the website under the "Engage" tab; check out the ministry tables around the outer hallways; catch the announcements before and after worship service; check out the Information Board in the lobby by the church office; talk to a greeter/usher; stop by the Welcome Center; talk to or send an email to a ministry leader; or call the church.

43. How do I find out what weekly events, monthly events, or yearly events occur at church?

- Activities are typically listed in the church bulletin and on the ODBC website calendar. This information is also typically in the Discover ODBC packet.

44. How does the electronic Prayer Chain Request work and who does the "Prayer Chain" go to?

- People may share a prayer request via the ODBC website or by calling the church office. You may elect to have your prayer request shared with the pastors only, pastors and staff only, the entire prayer chain, or not shared at all other than by the person receiving the request. The prayer chain is an email that only goes out to individuals who "opt-in" to serve in this ministry. Therefore, the recipients are usually gifted with prayer and ones who will genuinely lift up your concern before the Lord. Although confidentiality is expected, there is no screening process for those interested in receiving prayer chain requests.

45. How are Missionaries supported?

- Missionaries are supported out of the general fund of the church through the regular giving of God's people. We support approximately 40 missionaries and organizations

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worldwide, including a crisis pregnancy center, prison ministry, and Christian camp. Designated mission giving is allocated to the missionary of the month (as published in the bulletin) towards special projects. The church has been active with short term mission trips, sending teams to Brazil, Jamaica, Bali, and the Gulf Coast (through Samaritan's Purse).

46. When do missionaries visit?

- Missionaries present their work at our annual missions conference (October) and quarterly at regularly scheduled services.

47. How are missionaries appointed?

- Missionaries and ministries that agree with the vision and philosophy of ODBC are nominated by the mission committee, reviewed by the deacon board and approved by the congregation at the quarterly church business meetings.

48. What countries is the ministry of ODBC currently affecting?

- ODBC missions is currently involved in Australia, Bali Indonesia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Paraguay, Philippines, Scotland, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, United States, Togo West Africa, and Zambia.

Communication FAQs

49. Is there a calendar with every event on it?

- The most up-to-date calendar is located on our website at www.ocbcLIFE.org (click on "Explore" tab then on "Calendar"). Also check the Sunday bulletin (available during any worship service).

50. Are there other ways to hear the sermon if I cannot attend?

- Yes, CD's are available (generally the following Sunday) through the Book Table for a suggested donation of \$1. You can also listen through our website (www.ocbcLIFE.org) by clicking "Listen Now" on the home page.

51. Is ODBC on facebook?

- Yes, we have a group on facebook called "odbcLIFE".