

Membership Matters

South Ridge Church

Updated Winter 2021





We understand that looking for a church can be a difficult endeavor. A great deal of time can be spent trying to determine if a church will be right for you, and you may have several questions about the church.

Questions such as:

- “Why membership?”
- “What do they believe?”
- “What is the church’s vision?”
- “How do they practice their beliefs?”
- “Will we be able to serve in this church?”
- “Will our children be loved, accepted, and cared for?”

With this packet, we want to provide you with all of the information you need in order to make an informed decision about whether or not we are a church in which you can be committed. We are hopeful you will find answers to your most pressing questions.

South Ridge Board and Staff

Why Membership?

Membership is a common part of our culture today. Students become members of a Sorority or Fraternity. Others choose to become a member of a gym. But why become a member of South Ridge Church?

We believe there are at least three reasons for having formal membership:

First, we believe the Bible discusses the importance of membership. While the term “church member” is never used in the Bible, the New Testament clearly shows that people identified themselves with a local church and were challenged to become devoted participants.

Second, formal membership is very helpful to the pastors. By its very design, South Ridge Church enjoys the company of guests—people who aren’t yet committed to our vision and mission. We hope and pray that will always be the case. But at some point, it is important to identify those who consider themselves as part of the “flock” at SRC—the committed who can be counted on to fulfill the Great Commandment and Great Commission of Jesus Christ within our community.

Finally, experience shows that membership benefits the individual. In a culture where commitment is no longer highly valued, recognizable membership is an important step that moves each of us from the vague clouds of our good intentions into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to “step out of the stands” and publicly affirm our commitment to Christ and to a specific local body. In this sense, membership can be a significant defining moment in one’s lifelong discipleship journey.

Part 1: Our Story

In September of 2004, a small team of people from Chestnut Ridge Church in Morgantown, WV were sent out in faith, and with the full cooperation, support, and blessing of our local church, to begin a new work in Fairmont, WV under the servant leadership of Seth Broadhurst, a Commissioned Minister with Great Commission Churches. During the Fall of 2004, the plant team worshiped together on Sundays at the Fairfield Inn Marriot in White Hall, as well as in two Community Groups during the week. We used this time to pray, plan, and prepare for a public launch of South Ridge Church in February of 2005.

On February 6, 2005, we held our first service to the public at the YWCA in Pleasant Valley. In May of the same year, God provided us with the opportunity to rent the Marion Country Senior Citizens Center, formerly known as Trinity Assemblies of God. We met at the Senior Center for eight years, eventually needing two services on Sunday mornings.

On June 15, 2006, Seth Broadhurst was recognized as an elder/ pastor in Great Commission Churches. As the church grew, it became necessary to bring on additional staff to equip the church for the work that God was doing through us. Marcia Hockenberry became our first full-time Office Manager in the fall of 2006. Justin Wright was brought on as a Commissioned Minister in April of 2007, and the church hired Danelle Conaway soon after to be the Family Ministry Director. Justin Wright was recognized as an elder/ pastor in Great Commission Churches in June of 2011.

During the spring of 2008, the church embarked on a faith journey and capital stewardship campaign titled *Making Ripples* in order to purchase land and build our own church building. On April 29, 2008, we purchased eight acres of property down the road from the Senior Center. It was paid off on June 23, 2010. Site excavation began on the new church building November 23, 2011. Our first weekend services at the new building were held on May 26, 2013.

In November of 2013, Dean Brannen became the 3rd member of the pastoral staff, and in September 2016 it was announced that South Ridge Church would move forward in faith to become a multisite church, starting a second location in Bridgeport, WV with Dean as the pastor of the new location. Following this decision, the church embarked on another faith journey and two-year generosity campaign called *Second City*. We purchased a building in Bridgeport and launched our new location in February 2018. Since then, Patrick Ansline was recognized as a pastor. He primarily serves at the Bridgeport location.

South Ridge Church has enjoyed steady growth since February 6, 2005 and our vision continues today. This vision is to provide people with the opportunity to experience real life, real relationships, and real purpose through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. It is also our prayer that God would use us in the future to begin new local churches in other communities throughout the great state of West Virginia and beyond.

Note: For a listing of current staff, please see our website at www.southridgefairmont.com

Part 2: Our Vision

South Ridge Church exists to provide people with the opportunity to experience real life, real relationships, and real purpose through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

REAL LIFE

We strongly believe that everybody wants and needs real life and that real life is experienced exclusively through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we encourage people to take information about God (caught and taught) and turn it into intimacy with God.

“My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” (John 10:10b, NLT¹)

“And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.” (John 17:3)

REAL RELATIONSHIPS

We strongly believe that everybody wants and needs real relationships and that real relationships are experienced through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Love for God and others is the hallmark characteristic of Christian spiritual growth and maturity. Therefore, we encourage people to grow in real relationships with God and others that are motivated by love.

“‘And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” (John 13:35)

REAL PURPOSE

We strongly believe that everybody wants and needs real purpose and that real purpose is experienced through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Real purpose is how we put our knowing and growing to work. Therefore, we encourage people to pursue God-given opportunities that produce God-sized results by serving Him and others.

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:10)

¹ All passages from the New Living Translation (2007)

Our Vision for Spiritual Growth:

At South Ridge Church, we believe that Spiritual Growth may occur in people's lives in a variety of ways. For example, one may experience tremendous growth through practical teaching, while another may experience spiritual growth as they serve others. One may grow more through a pivotal life circumstance, and another through connecting relationally with others, or through private disciplines such as reading the Scriptures and prayer. Many will grow in all of the above! In short, we recognize the diversity of people, yet it's our hope that everybody will regularly grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

We believe you can experience Spiritual Growth
in *Real Life* in the following ways:

1. Trusting God and His Word. This is the beginning, middle and end of your potential growth.

“But I am trusting you, O LORD, saying, ‘You are my God.’” (Psalm 31:14)

“Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” (Proverbs 3:6)

2. Practicing private disciplines. Regular reading and study of the Scriptures, time in prayer, and worshiping God.

“Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.” (Joshua 1:8)

“Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” (John 14:21)

3. Applying Godly principles to grow in character, by following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these... But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:19-23)

“But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all

its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful." (Colossians 3:8-15)

4. Living out your identity in Christ, by believing you are who God says you are, even on your worst day. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Romans 8:1-2)

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death." (Romans 8:1-2)

*At South Ridge Church, we provide you the opportunity to grow in these ways
during our weekend services, where we equip you
to take information from the Bible and apply it in Real Life.*

We believe you can experience Spiritual Growth
in *Real Relationships* in the following ways:

1. Loving God and others.

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37)

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

2. Practicing Grace and Truth with others.

In John 4:1-26, Jesus meets with a Samaritan Woman and offers her tremendous grace and truth. We must do the same in the lives of others.

3. Experiencing healthy conflict and practicing forgiveness.

“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

“If another believer sins against you go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:15-20)

4. Encouraging one another to abide in Christ.

“But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin’s deception.” (Hebrews 3:13 HCSB)

“Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit.” (John 15:5b)

*At South Ridge Church, we provide you the opportunity to grow in these ways through
experiencing Real Relationships with others
in Community Groups, Life Groups, and Mentoring,
where we equip you to practice accountability, belonging, and care with others.*

We believe you can experience Spiritual Growth
in Real Purpose in the following ways:

1. Discovering your spiritual gifts and using them to serve others.

“In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you

leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.” (Romans 12:6-8)

“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help one another. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.” (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

2. Seeing where God is already at work and joining Him there.

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.” (Mark 8:34-35)

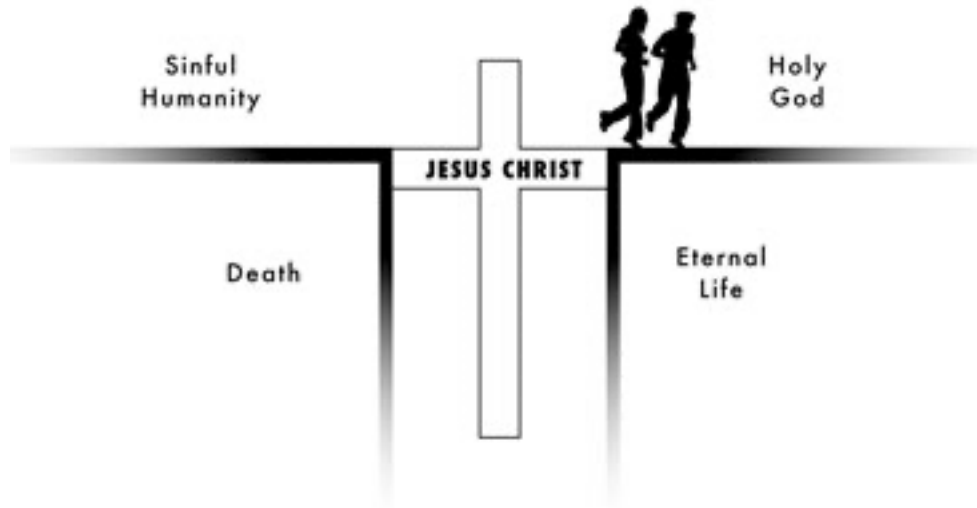
3. Making disciples of others, and regularly communicating your faith to others in both word and deed.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

At South Ridge Church, we provide you the opportunity to grow in these ways by selflessly serving others, pursuing God-given opportunities and experiencing Real Purpose.

Note: If you would like to talk with a pastor about how to practice spiritual disciplines such as reading/studying the Scriptures, how to better practice real relationships with others, or how to discover your spiritual gifts, please contact the church office at 304.363.0190.

Part 3: Understanding the Gospel



THE GOSPEL AND SALVATION

1. God **loves** you and created you to know Him personally.

God's Love

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

God's Plan

"And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth." (John 17:3)

2. Man is **sinful** and **separated** from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love.

Man is Sinful

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:23)

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Man is Separated

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

“...bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

3. The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

Jesus Christ is God's **only** provision for man's sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience God's love.

He Died in Our Place

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” (Romans 5:8)

He Rose From the Dead

“I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6)

4. He is the Only Way to God

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me’.” (John 14:6)

“There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation

(Christ speaking) “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” (Revelation 3:20)

Receiving Christ involves repentance. Repentance means changing our mind about sin and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. We make a faith decision to turn from sin and return to God. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.

You can receive Christ right now, through faith, in prayer.

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

"Jesus, I want to know you personally. I know that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I confess my sins to you. Thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins and rising from the grave to defeat sin and death. I ask that you be my Savior. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins and for providing me with abundant and eternal life."

Note: If you would like to talk with a pastor about accepting the gospel message, please contact the church office at 304/363.0190.

Part 4: What We Believe

STATEMENT OF FAITH

THE SCRIPTURE

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is unique in that every portion and every word was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was without error in the original manuscripts and has been passed down to us with great accuracy. It is the supreme and final authority in faith and life in this age.

GOD

There is but one God, everywhere present; infinite in power and knowledge; perfect in justice, goodness, and love; Creator of the universe; eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of whom possesses all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.

MAN

God created the first man and woman in His own image and appointed them to rule and care for the earth. They lived in perfect relationship with God and each other. God instituted marriage, which is the life-long union of one man and one woman and the foundation for bearing and raising children in a family.

THE FALL

The first man and woman doubted God's goodness and rebelled against Him. In judgment, God brought death into the world and creation fell from its state of perfection. Since then, all human beings are born with a corrupted nature and without spiritual life and are under the wrath of God because of their sin.

JESUS CHRIST

God the Father, by His own choice, for His own glory, and out of love for sinful men and women, sent his Son, Jesus, the Christ, into the world to reconcile sinners to Himself. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He was God in the flesh, both true God and true man. Jesus lived a sinless life and voluntarily suffered and died as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins, thus satisfying God's justice and declaring righteous all those who trust in Him alone.

THE RESURRECTION

Three days after His crucifixion, God raised Jesus from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He bodily ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, makes intercession for His own.

SALVATION

Men and women are freed from the penalty for their sins not as a result, in whole or in part, of their own works, goodness, or religious observances, but by the undeserved favor of God alone which was given through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God forgives and accepts all who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ, to convict men and women of their sins, and to impart new life to all who place their faith in Christ. He permanently indwells believers from the moment of spiritual birth, guides them into truth, and empowers them to live a life pleasing to God.

ASSURANCE

All who are born again of the Spirit can, through the sure promises of God, be fully assured that God will complete the work He has begun in them. They are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is God's deposit, guaranteeing their eternal inheritance. Good works are not the basis for acceptance by God, but as believers grow in doing good, they grow in their assurance that they are truly children of God and that they will be with the Lord when they die.

JESUS' FUTURE COMING

The Lord Jesus Christ will physically return to earth to reign in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment. The righteous will receive immortal bodies and be welcomed into eternal fellowship with God in a world where all things will be made new.

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus commanded that those who believe in Him are to be baptized in water as a declaration of faith and a symbol of new birth in Christ. He also instructed His followers to remember Him by partaking in the Lord's Supper, which reminds us of His death, resurrection, and future coming.

THE CHURCH

All true believers, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, rich or poor—people of all ages and races—make up the Church worldwide as God's family. They should gather together in

local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship, and teaching, in order to become conformed to the image of Christ and to become equipped to carry out the “Great Commission” that Christ gave His followers in Matthew 28:19-20.

CORE VALUES

GRACE OF GOD: God's grace through Jesus Christ is the basis and power, not only of our personal lives, but also of our ministry.

COMMITMENT TO GOD AND HIS WORD: Our aspiration is that our ministries will be marked by a wholehearted devotion to God, through prayer and by studying, obeying and teaching His Word.

GREAT COMMISSION: Our ultimate goal and mission is to reach the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to make disciples of all the nations.

LOCAL CHURCH: The local church is God's vehicle for accomplishing the Great Commission. The church is the place for winning people to Christ, building them to maturity, raising up leaders, and for preparing church planting teams to be sent out for the expansion of God's kingdom.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP: We place a priority upon raising up pastors and other leaders of Christ-like character within the local church.

LOVE AND UNITY: We desire our ministry to be marked by a Christ-like, selfless love, loyalty, and unity with fellow believers.

EVERY MEMBER A MINISTER: All Christians are empowered through the Holy Spirit to be workers in the church, not just the pastors. Therefore, we seek to equip and empower each member to utilize his/her spiritual gifts to serve others.

STRONG FAMILIES: Strong families are the foundation for strong churches. Therefore, we make it a priority to equip members and pastors in building their marriages and families.

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY:

LOVE ONE ANOTHER:

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of South Ridge Church.

- One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:28-31)

- Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)

MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY:

We believe God created the marriage relationship to be between one man and one woman, with the purpose of marriage to be a reflection of Christ’s relationship with His people. Similarly, we affirm sexual fulfillment only within the context of marriage. Therefore, in accordance with the Bible, we consider any sexual expression outside of or apart from the marriage covenant (including adultery, viewing pornography, practicing homosexuality, and other forms of fornication) to be against God’s design.

- “As the Scriptures say, ‘A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.” (Ephesians 5:31-32)
- “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” (Genesis 2:24)
- “The husband should fulfill his wife’s sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband’s needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife.
- Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer.” (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)
- “You must not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14)

GENDER:

Though He is gracious, God is also holy and we believe that God wonderfully and immutably created each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

- So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

RESPONDING TO GOD:

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

- Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. (Acts 3:19-21)
- If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)
- Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Note: If you would like a detailed listing of the Great Commission Churches Core Values or would like to talk with a pastor about any of our beliefs and values, please contact the church office at 304/363.0190.

Part 5: Christian Sacraments

I. BAPTISM

A. WHY BE BAPTIZED?

1. To follow the example set by *Jesus*.

“One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River.”
(Mark 1:9)

2. Because Christ commands it.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

3. It illustrates what happened to me when I placed my faith in Jesus. Essentially, it is an outward demonstration of an inward reality.

“Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” (Romans 6:3-4)

But—“When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.” (Titus 3:4-6)

B. WHY IMMERSION?

1. The word “baptize” means “to immerse, dip, dunk, or submerge”.

The Greek word *baptizo* means, “to immerse or dip under water”.

2. Because *Jesus* was baptized that way.

“After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water...” (Matthew 3:16)

3. Every example of baptism in the New Testament was done by immersion.

(Example)” ...and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...” (Acts 8:38-39).

4. It illustrates Christ’s death and resurrection.

“... Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

“Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” (Romans 6:3-4)

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

1. WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Water baptism is a way of saying publicly that Jesus Christ is now your Lord. You are stating that your life is under “new management”! It is the first step of commitment to Jesus Christ after receiving Him as your personal Savior. In ancient times, slaves were baptized into the name of the temple god to be a temple slave. When a person gets baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:48), he is saying that he is considering himself a lifetime servant of Jesus Christ.

2. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

All who have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

“Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day...”(Acts 2:41a)

3. WHEN SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as possible after accepting Christ as Savior. In Acts 16:33, the Philippian jailer was baptized quickly, sometime after midnight. Even Paul was baptized before he ate, having gone without food or water for three days (Acts 9:9,18,19). These and other examples show us that we should not put off getting baptized if we want to be obedient children of God.

4. WHAT ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM?

In the New Testament, baptism always involved individuals who had already made an independent decision to accept Christ (e.g. Acts 8:12, “both men and women”). However, at SRC parents have the opportunity to participate in a ceremony to dedicate their children to bring them up in the ways of the Lord.

5. IS BAPTISM A REQUIREMENT FOR SALVATION?

No. Baptism cannot save anyone (Ephesians 2:8,9). However, it is a requirement for being an obedient follower of Jesus Christ.

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

6. WHAT IF I HAVE NOT BEEN BAPTIZED?

Take some time to re-read the Bible passages listed above and then ask God what He wants you to do. At this point in the life of our church, baptisms are scheduled as needed.

II. THE LORD’S SUPPER OR COMMUNION

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth, but He did instruct them to remember His death, resurrection, and future return. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

A. What is the Lord’s Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

1. It is a *simple act*.

“On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread...”
(1 Corinthians 11:23)

2. It is a *reminder*.

“...and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.” (v.24)

3. It is a *symbol*.

“In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.” (v.25)

4. It is a *proclamation*.

“For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.” (v.26)

B. Who should take the Lord’s Supper?

Only those who are already believers.

“For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ you are eating and drinking God’s judgment upon yourself.” (1 Corinthians 11:29)

C. How do I prepare for the Lord’s Supper?

“So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.” (1 Corinthians 11:27-28)

By...

1. Self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:27).
2. Confessing my sins (1 John 1:9).
3. Recommitment (Romans 12:1).
4. Restoring relationships (Matthew 5:23-24).

D. When and how often should we observe the Lord’s Supper?

Jesus never said when believers should observe the Lord’s Supper, but the book of Acts records that the early church was devoted to the breaking of bread. Jesus instituted it at a dinner, and the early church broke bread from house to house. It seems to be an informal affair. Whenever Christians come together they can break bread with one another. At SRC, we believe that the Lord’s Supper can be celebrated both in the weekend service and in Group settings. Typically, we celebrate it once a month in our weekend services.

Part 6: Unity and Love

“In essentials, *unity*; in non-essentials, *liberty*; in all things, *charity (or love)*.”

~ St. Augustine, often quoted by John Wesley

South Ridge Church is a faith community made up of believers from many different Christian backgrounds and upbringings who have been brought together by God to fulfill a unified vision. In order to uphold our core value of unity and love, we live out our beliefs in various “jars”. The jars help us to major on what is major and minor on what is minor, while protecting the church from divisive issues. A brief description of these jars is below.

Jar 1: *Cardinal doctrines—The Gospel and what is essential for salvation.*

- Examples: man’s sin and spiritual depravity; deity of Christ; Jesus’ atonement on the cross; physical resurrection of Jesus Christ; salvation made possible by God’s grace and through faith alone in Jesus Christ, completely apart from human works.

Jar 2: *Basic teachings of the Christian faith.*

- Examples: The Second Coming; heaven and hell; believers’ resurrection, marriage as a one-flesh relationship between one man and one woman

Jar 3: *Convictions and practices in a church or group of churches.*

- Examples: Church governance; only male elder/ pastors; assurance/ eternal security; role of charismatic/ sign gifts in the church today; believer versus infant baptism

Jar 4: *Personal beliefs or convictions on various doctrines.*

- Examples: timing of the rapture, millennial viewpoints, different viewpoints of election

Jar 5: *Divisive issues that the Bible spends little to no time talking about so we don’t either.*

- Examples: party politics, moderation/ social consumption of alcoholic beverages, coffee in the sanctuary, choice of Christian Bible translation, hymns vs. contemporary music, etc.

While we strongly encourage people to study and discuss Scripture and form personal convictions as the Spirit leads, we will not allow items in jars 4 or 5 to divide our church. In fact, we will rarely bring them up unless it is to make the point that we rarely to never talk about them *on purpose*. Majoring on the majors means we devote most, if not all, of our attention to jars 1-3 in that order!

MAINTAINING UNITY AND LOVE

To quote author and pastor, John Ortberg, “Everybody’s Normal Until You Get to Know Them.” That is so true. God has made each one of us unique. At South Ridge we appreciate

that. We have different personalities, passions, gifts, talents, and experiences. This creates a beautiful diversity in the church and shows off God's creativity in bringing us together as a local body (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12). It provides the church with the people resources to do the work of ministry that God determined in advance to do through us (Ephesians 2:10) as well as an opportunity to practice a Christ-like love with one another (1 Corinthians 13).

In order to fulfill our God-given purpose as individuals and as a local church we must maintain a spirit of unity and love. Therefore, we commit to persevere through conflict and practice forgiveness. In our inadequacies, we depend on God's grace to live out passages of Scripture like Romans 12:9-21, which the ESV translation of the Bible summarizes with the heading, "Marks of a True Christian". We also commit to love one another, honor one another, be kind to one another, serve one another, and to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Furthermore, when a member of the local church is struggling with sin in an area of their life we view it as our responsibility to love them and help them with it in an understanding way (Matthew 7:1-5, Galatians 6:1). Therefore, we also practice being accountable to one another.

ACCOUNTABILITY

According to the Scriptures, members of South Ridge Church have a responsibility to protect one another from areas of ongoing sin. Though we are ultimately accountable to God (Romans 14:12, 1 John 1:8-10), we are also accountable to one another (James 5:16, 19-20; Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 10:24-25). Therefore, accountability is an understandable requirement to account for one's conduct to both God and the local church. Accountability generally takes place in Group settings and mentoring relationships. It is viewed as one way that we can practice loving God and loving one another.

CHURCH JUDGMENT

On occasion, a unique situation will arise which will require church judgment. According to the Bible, church judgment is a form of discipline applied to members of the local church who are making decisions that are radically out of step with God's will and the marks of a true Christian. Their decisions have resulted in, or could result in, harm to the witness of the individual and the local church.

It is important to note that church judgment is the last step in an attempt to bring an unrepentant member back into fellowship with the church. Many other steps would be taken before church judgment is exercised. If church judgment is exercised by the church, the individual being disciplined would be removed from church membership until repentance has taken place. In every case, church judgment is an act of love aimed at the full reconciliation of the church member to God and the local church.

Typically, there are only three situations that would result in church judgment:

Situation #1—An unresolved offense between two members of the church.

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:15-20)

According to this passage, church judgment is exercised when an individual member commits a sin against another individual member and, after it is brought to their attention in several different ways, they remain unrepentant.

What is the first step in confronting someone who sins against you?

According to verse 15, it is to go to the one who has offended you in private. How seldom this is done. We are so quick to go to anyone and everyone else and tell them about somebody else’s faults rather than go to the source of the problem—to the only person who can do something about it.

The goal of this first step is not to humiliate or judge or get back at the person that has wronged us, but rather to win the person back to righteousness and restore the relationship.

Note: Wise reprovers will first examine their own hearts and motives before confronting others (Matthew 7:1-5).

What is the second step in confronting someone who sins against you?

If the issue is resolved in private the issue is settled. This is often the case at SRC and we praise God for that! But, if the issue remains unresolved, then the offended individual is commanded to take two or three witnesses to confront the offender again. The worst thing that could happen at this point is to just drop the issue because then no real reconciliation has occurred.

The purpose of the witnesses is to investigate the issue and confirm what actually happened. This way everybody has a clear understanding about the nature of the offense

and can discern how legitimate it is. They can also help to facilitate restitution and reconciliation between the two church members if the offender repents. Finally, the witnesses can confirm that repentance did not take place if that is the case.

What is the third step in confronting someone who sins against you?

If repentance and reconciliation has not taken place yet, then at this point the issue needs to be taken to the church. At South Ridge, Community Groups and Service Teams often serve as “the church” in these cases, along with oversight from the pastors. At this point, church officials will ask questions such as: Was the alleged sin truly a sin? What Scriptures were violated? Can the alleged sin be confirmed by two or three witnesses? Did the offended person walk through the first two steps appropriately? If so, were the offenses clearly presented with a clear presentation of the Scriptures that were violated? Did the offender fail to respond to the offended?

If all these questions are answered affirmatively and the offender does not repent then Matthew 18:17 commands us, “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” What this means in context is that they are to be removed from membership of the local church until they are repentant of the offense against the individual.

At South Ridge Church, we recommend that these three steps be taken whenever there is a conflict between two individuals in the church. In our experience, rarely will the issue get beyond step #1 because often repentance and reconciliation do take place between the individuals and unity and love within the church was upheld. It should also be noted that often this leads to a better relationship moving forward between the two individuals—all because they obeyed the Scriptures!

Situation #2—Flagrant, ongoing, unrepentant sin

“I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don’t do. I am told that a man in your church is living in sin with his stepmother. You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship.

Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church. I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.

Your boasting about this is terrible. Don’t you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old “yeast” by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. So

let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread of sincerity and truth.

When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.

It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, 'You must remove the evil person from among you.'" (1 Corinthians 5)

This passage differs from the situation described in Matthew 18. Now we are looking at sins in the lives of individual church members that need dealt with regardless of the impact they have on other church members' lives. According to the Apostle Paul, the sins mentioned in this passage are so damaging to the reputation and moral fiber of the local church that they must be judged even if no offended person comes forward to initiate an accusation.

There are two reasons for this:

The first reason for removing the individual from local church membership, according to Paul, was so that his sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord (v. 5). His behavior was so contrary to the will and desire of God that Paul appears to question his faith.

Galatians 5:19-21 reads, "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God."

The purpose of church judgment, then, was to bring the individual to repentance so that he would ultimately be saved. In the case of this man, the course of church judgment worked as it should. The local church carried out Paul's instruction and the man repented of his sin. In 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, Paul acknowledges the man's repentance and instructs the church to "forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed with excessive sorrow."

The second reason for removing the individual from local church membership was to protect the church from the invasive nature of sin. The Apostle Paul knew that local church members are easily influenced by one another and was concerned for the spiritual welfare of the local church as a whole. He knew that "a little yeast (sin) works through the whole batch of dough." He was ultimately concerned that the moral resolve of the church

membership would be weakened if the flagrant, ongoing, unrepentant sin was permitted to continue in the church.

Once again, it is important to note that the goal of removal from church membership is to reconcile an individual to God and to the local church. If a person repents of their flagrant, ongoing sin then they are once again eligible for local church membership. The church is to “forgive and comfort” and “reaffirm their love” for the individual.

Situation #3—Continuous divisive activity

“Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These things are useless and a waste of time. If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them.” (Titus 3:9-11)

The application of this passage is self-explanatory and at South Ridge Church it is because of this passage that we live by the “jars” previously discussed. Feel free to review those again to see how they may help us to “avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels.”

Part 7: Structure and Governance

HOW OUR CHURCH IS STRUCTURED

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

The nature of the church determines its structure.

1. The church is a *fellowship*.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship...” (Acts 2:42)

A top priority in a fellowship is *unity and peace*.

“Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Implication: A good structure promotes *unity* and downplays *division*.

“For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it.” (1 Corinthians 11:17-18)

2. The church is a *family*.

“Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters, be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.” (1 Peter 3:8)

Therefore, we operate on the basis of *relationships* NOT *rules*.

“Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters.” (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

3. The church is a *body*.

We function on the basis of *spiritual gifts* NOT *offices*. We have a simple structure so we can maximize *ministry* and minimize *maintenance*.

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

The people are the *ministers*.

The pastors are the *administrators*.

4. The church is a *flock*. (John 10:1-30, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 25:33)

Therefore, it is cared for and led by *shepherds*.

“Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.”... ‘Then feed my sheep.’”(John 21:16-17)

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the *same* church leaders.

* POIMEN: Pastor

* PRESBUTEROS: Elder

* EPISCOPOS: Bishop or Overseer

“And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches... Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.” (1 Peter 5:1-2)

“So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.” (Acts 20:28)

HOW OUR CHURCH IS LED

In the Bible, God has given a specific plan for leadership. Obviously, the head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). At SRC, we strive to follow a structure of leadership which will not detract from Jesus occupying this position.

At the same time, Scripture gives clear leadership responsibility to certain members of the body. While these leaders are of no greater value in the sight of God, and while we recognize that every Christian has gifts with which they should minister in the body, at the same time the pastoral leaders are held accountable by God for the direction and well-being of the church (Hebrews 13:17).

Those responsible for leadership in the church are called elders (Acts 20:17), pastors (or shepherds - Acts 20:28), bishops (Acts 20:28 Gk.) and overseers (Acts 20:28). While any of these names are appropriate since they refer to the same persons doing the same job, at SRC we usually go by the title of “pastor.”

The role of a pastor is to lead the church, care for its members, pray on their behalf, instruct them and be an example of Christian living. The pastors at SRC are deeply committed to the spiritual growth of each of its members and the spreading of the gospel.

In the New Testament, men were appointed as pastors based on their spiritual maturity and character (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9). At SRC, the final decision on appointment of a pastor will rest with their ability to meet these standards and with the approval of the local church. In addition, a pastor must exhibit a genuine humility, a desire for spiritual excellence, a sincere love for people, and the basic skills necessary to carry out leadership responsibilities.

We do not believe a pastor must receive a full-time salary. However, normally, he would, and it is the desire of the church to enable its leaders to have all the time necessary to build the church. Scripture teaches that those who work hard at teaching are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy—in context, this is usually understood to relate to financial compensation).

As necessary, deacons will also be appointed to serve the church, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit pastors from performing their Biblical responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:8-12; Acts 6).

In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:17). As such, Scripture indicates that final authority and responsibility as to church doctrine, policy and procedures rest with the pastors. However, the pastors desire and need the thoughtful and prayerful input of each member.

BIBLICAL ROLE OF THE PASTORS

What can you expect from your pastors?

1. The pastors are committed to leading by *example*.
2. The pastors are committed to *feeding* (teaching) and *leading* (equipping) the church.
3. The pastors are committed to *refuting* wrong doctrine.
5. The pastors are committed to *managing* the church of God.
6. The pastors are committed to *praying* for the sick.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PASTOR

(1 Timothy 3:2-7 & Titus 1:9)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Above Reproach | 10. Uncontentious |
| 2. Husband of One Wife | 11. Free From the Love of Money |
| 3. Temperate | 12. Manage Own Household |
| 4. Prudent | 13. Not a New Convert |
| 5. Respectable | 14. Good Reputation with Outsiders |
| 6. Hospitable | 15. Not Self-Willed |
| 7. Able to Teach | 16. Not Quick Tempered |
| 8. Not addicted to Wine | 17. Loves What Is Good |
| 9. Not Pugnacious | 18. Just |
| | 19. Devout |

20. Holding Fast the Faithful Word

THE ROAD TO LEADERSHIP

PASTORS

Pastoral leadership is a good thing to aspire to, and at SRC it is available to all men. At SRC there is a distinct road to follow to become a pastor. The first step involves a total commitment to Christ evidenced by a loving, serving life-style toward others. Through this commitment, God will be developing the character qualifications necessary for effective leadership. As character is developed, he will have opportunity to be entrusted with responsibilities in the church, and as faithfulness is demonstrated, greater responsibilities will be given. During this time such men will be involved in personal training in the Bible, counseling and leadership and managerial skills offered by the existing pastoral team via a leadership program.

During the training it will become evident to all which men are qualified for the pastorate. These men will then be approached and asked to prayerfully and thoughtfully consider joining the pastoral team, which usually will involve leaving their present occupation and becoming employed full-time by the church. They would be asked to self-examine their lives in light of biblical qualifications for leadership. If they feel before God that they are needed and qualified, their names would be submitted to the membership for affirmation. Each church member will have the opportunity to bring forth any evidence that may disqualify the person for biblical leadership. If a legitimate reason comes up, the process would be halted until all is resolved. When the existing pastor(s) feel all qualifications are met, an ordination meeting would be called, Great Commission Churches will be consulted, and he would be ordained as a pastor of SRC.

DEACONS

At this point in time, there are no formally recognized deacons or deaconesses. However, many of our men and women hold positions of leadership that have the responsibilities of deacons and we are grateful to God for their service.

Note: South Ridge Church is full of volunteer Community Group leaders and other ministry leaders who use their abilities and gifts to teach and equip others to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ. We ask that all filling such a role be members of SRC.

PLURALITY GOVERNANCE

South Ridge Church is governed by a plurality of Pastor/ Elders, and in some cases, Commissioned Ministers and Deacons, in what is known as the Policy Board-Governance Model. The Board leads the church by setting its course. Once the Board of the church sets the policy and course, the pastors, staff, and membership are equipped and empowered to carry out the work of ministry.

Part 8: Financial Stewardship

OUR PLEDGE

1. Each year the budget is prepared and approved by the entire Board of Trustees.
2. We will publish an annual financial statement which is made available to the church. A more detailed statement is available to members upon request.
3. When donations are counted, it is our policy to always have a minimum of 2 unrelated people present with the money at all times.
4. We will do our best to help with genuine financial needs within the church. The procedure to receive such help is to notify one of the pastors of your need or another's need. Where there is repeated financial need, financial accountability and counseling will be required.

GIVING TO GOD

What the Old Testament teaches about giving tithes and offerings to God:

What is tithing?

- "Tithe" means one tenth

What is the difference between a tithe and an offering?

- A tithe is giving 10% of my income.
- An offering is anything I give above or below my tithe.

SIX TRUTHS ABOUT TITHING:

1. All of our money belongs to God. He asks for a minimum of 10% back.

*"One tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy."
(Leviticus 27:30)*

2. God has connected refusing to tithe with *stealing from him!*

"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!

"But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?'"

"You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD

of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in!" (Malachi 3:8-10)

3. Tithing gives God a chance to prove he is God and wants to *bless* you!

"Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies." (Malachi 3:11)

4. New Testament giving is marked by *sacrifice* and *generosity*.

"Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop." (2 Corinthians 9:6)

5. New Testament giving is marked by *cheerfulness* and *willingness*.

"You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

6. We have an obligation to give to those who provide for our *spiritual development*.

"Don't you realize that those who work in the temple get their meals from the offerings brought to the temple? And those who serve at the altar get a share of the sacrificial offerings. In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it." (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)

PART 9: OUR AFFILIATES

GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES

South Ridge Church is affiliated with Great Commission Churches (GCC), a US based fellowship of churches and ministries united with churches throughout the world around shared values, a common history and especially the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. GCC promotes conferences and mission opportunities and offers accountability and mediation services for member churches. Great Commission Churches is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. For more information about Great Commission Churches log on to www.gccweb.org.

Regionally, South Ridge Church partners with other GCC member churches in the state including Chestnut Ridge Church in Morgantown, WV and River Ridge Church in Charleston and Teays Valley, WV.

Appendix I: Assurance of Salvation

Note: If you have any questions about the assurance your salvation, please take the opportunity to complete the following information.

Name: _____

1. If you have become a believer, and God has started a work in you, of what can you be confidently assured? (Philippians 1:6)

2. According to Romans 8:35-39, which one of the following can separate you from the love and salvation of God?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> unbelievers | <input type="checkbox"/> difficult circumstances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> death | <input type="checkbox"/> persecution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the devil and demons | <input type="checkbox"/> myself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> no one and nothing | |

3. If you have been born again, what does the Father promise about the inheritance you are to receive in Heaven? (1Peter 1:3,4)
4. Romans 6:23 says that eternal life is a free gift of God. According to Romans 11:29, what is true about this gift?
5. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:9, God has determined two things about a true believer:
 - a. What will he never experience from God?
 - b. What is he destined for?

6. In 1 John 5:9-13, the Father gives us His witness (sworn statement of truth).
Read this passage and answer the following questions.

a. What is the requirement for having true life from God? (verse 12)

b. How long will this life last?

☐ Until you commit a “mortal sin”

☐ 30 years

☐ Until you stop believing

☐ For eternity

☐ Until you “fall from grace”

☐ Until you sin too much

c. How sure can you be of your salvation?

☐ Wait and find out

☐ Remain in doubt

☐ Hope

☐ Know absolutely

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Beginning with Christ, pg 26-28

South Ridge Church Membership Covenant:

Please complete the following information to become a member of South Ridge Church. Completed forms may be turned in to the Information Table in SRC Lobby, or may be mailed to South Ridge Church, 1659 Fairmont Avenue, Fairmont, WV 26554.

Name (printed)

Date

By God's grace:

- I have placed my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior.
- I affirm South Ridge Church's statement of faith.
- I value South Ridge Church's core values.
- I will pursue South Ridge Church's vision by regularly attending Weekend services and by growing in my relationship with God by loving and serving him and others, both inside and outside of the local church.
- I will take primary responsibility for my spiritual growth by obeying the Lord in baptism, developing private disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer, and by living out my Christian life within the context of the local church community.
- I will voluntarily place myself under the authority of Jesus Christ, as well as those who govern the church.
- I will pursue love and unity with other members of the church, with the larger Christian community, and I will strive to maintain a good name with people who are not Christians.
- I will financially support the ministry of South Ridge Church willingly, cheerfully, generously, and sacrificially.
- As a Christian, I recognize I am only able to accomplish these things with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Signature: _____

**DATE: THIS MEMBERSHIP COVENANT WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT
THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021.**

Getting to Know You

If you are a new member of South Ridge Church or have never completed this, please take some time to let us know more about you. Please attach this information to your completed Membership Covenant. A pastor may follow-up in order to meet you and answer any questions you may have about South Ridge Church.

1. My name is _____ Date: _____

2. I live at _____

3. My phone number is:

Cell: _____ Carrier? _____

Home: _____

My Email is _____@_____._____

Secondary email (if any) _____@_____._____

Preferred mode of communication:

_____ cell phone _____ home phone _____ email

4. I am _____ Single _____ Married _____ Separated _____ Divorced

_____ Widowed _____ Looking

Anniversary Date, if married: ____/____/____

5. My occupation is _____

6. My birthday is ____/____/____

7. These are the names and birthdates of my children:

8. I learned about South Ridge through: ____ friends ____ drove by ____ internet ____ neighbors ____ work ____ mailer ____ other (please explain) _____

9. How long have you been attending South Ridge Church? _____

10. What I like about South Ridge Church is...

11. My church background is:

The last church I attended was: _____ in
_____ (city & state)

12. My hobbies are:

13. I am familiar with SRC Community Groups:

____ not at all ____ much ____ some

_____ I am currently in a Community Group

_____ I am interested in joining a Community Group

14. In which ministry are you currently serving? _____

I would be interested in serving in the following areas:

____ Front Door Ministries

(Greeters, Ushers, Next Table, Parking, Hospitality, Cleaning)

____ Worship Team

____ Family Ministry

____ Prayer Team

____ Outreach Service Teams

____ Volunteer Office Help

____ Student Ministry

____ Audio/Visual

____ Other _____

15. Do you have any special talents?

16. In your understanding, how does one become a Christian?

17. If you are a Christian, how and when did you become one?

18. Have you been baptized? When?

Would you be interested in being baptized?

_____ Yes _____ No

_____ Not sure, but I would be interested in talking to a
pastor about baptism

19. Questions I'd really like answered about South Ridge Church and/or Membership?