

exploring
church
membership

revised
April 2013

WELCOME TO EXPLORING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

This gathering is to present our vision for changing the world so you can decide if you would like to be a part. Church membership used to be about privileges and benefits to being a member of a church; but at Riverbluff Church we consider church membership to be a commitment to join us in our efforts to work with God in changing the world to glorify Him.

After we present our core values and beliefs, our mission and our methodology, you will determine whether to join us or not. It will be your call and we will respect your decision.

There are many fine churches in the Greater Charleston area so we don't expect everyone to commit to membership with Riverbluff Church. In fact we don't believe God has called everyone in the area to be part of Kingdom work through Riverbluff Church. Our goal is building the Kingdom of God, not building Riverbluff Church. If Riverbluff Church is not the church God intends for you, we will help you find a church fellowship more suited to your goals and mission.

So relax and take a few notes while we present Riverbluff Church for your consideration.

Thanks for coming.



SOME KAIROS** MOMENTS

1942 Midland Park Baptist is planted

1989 Hugo

1993 Adopted Purpose Driven Model

1996 Adopted Strategic Plan for Midland Park

1997 Dorchester Road Property Purchased

**2000 Decision to convert Midland Park facilities to
Ministry Center**

**2002 Moved To Dorchester Road location
*Became Riverbluff Church**

***Created Midland Park Community Ministries**

2009 MAP 2012

2010 Deeper and Greater

2012 Vision 2020

**Kairos Moment: A Kairos moment is when the Eternal God breaks into your circumstances with an event that gathers some loose ends of your life and knits them together in His hands. It is basically an entry into a learning experience, an opportunity to grow.

OUR VISION

Our Vision is to become
a _____ of Jesus
who live 3 dimensional lives
in relationship to _____ (UP);
in relationship with
_____ (IN);
and relationally engaging the
_____ world (OUT).

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to
Make disciples who
Make disciples
Who _____.

What are our Values?

* **THE** _____

The Gospel is the announcement of the Kingdom Of God which has entered history to change the world. The power of the Gospel sets us free from the power of sin and gives us the capacity to live changed lives now and forever in fellowship with God and one another. It is the act of God upon us, in us, and through us that changes the world.

Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18

* _____

The Gospel changes people from the inside out. God does a work in us through a collaborative process where He conforms us to Christ-likeness through our obedience and practice of the spiritual disciplines. As the character of Christ is formed in us, the fruit of the Spirit becomes more evident. Every relationship is affected as our life changes for the better and becomes what God intended for His children. Mark 4:26-29; John 6:63

* _____

God has placed Riverbluff in a strategic tri-county area that makes up Metropolitan Charleston. As the Gospel permeates every person and part of this city, the city is renewed and helped to become a better place for all to live. Every member of Riverbluff Church is an agent for good to Charleston. We will seek the welfare of this city to which God has called us and placed us. The light that shines the farthest shines brightest at home. Jeremiah 29:7; Luke 24:47

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The changed life produced by the Gospel is not merely for the value of a changed life, but for Kingdom purposes. We believe God has saved us and sent us to be His agents of change in the world. This will mean sharing the Gospel *and* serving others. In most cases, serving others will precede the sharing of the Gospel. As we serve, we will look for opportunities to share the Gospel; but whether we are able to share the Gospel or not, we will serve those outside the church family. Matthew 20:28 ; Ephesians. 2:10; Galatians 6:9

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We believe the Christian life is best done in relationships with other Christians for the purpose of growth, fellowship, accountability, ministry, and support. There are many ways to “do life” with other Christians, but we believe doing life alone is not in the best interest of the Kingdom or the individual Christian. Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Hebrews 10:24

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We believe Riverbluff Church is a Kingdom endeavor and therefore the growth of other churches in the Kingdom is part of our mission. We want to work for the health and growth of all Kingdom churches in the Charleston area as well as other churches in the Kingdom. We will pursue ways to help other Kingdom minded churches to become what God intended for them to become - outposts for World Redemption. 1 Corinthians 12:26; Matthew 16:18; 2 Corinthians 11:28

What are our Essential Beliefs?

1. About God

There is one and only one living and true God. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

(Genesis 1:1,26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19-20)

2. About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God born of a virgin. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven's glory and will return again someday to reign as King of kings and Lord of Lords. (Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; Romans 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:14-15)

3. About The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character in born again believers. He comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through the Church. He seals the believer until final redemption. He enlightens and empowers the believer. (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18)

4. About the Bible

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us and will be the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions will be tried. The Bible is to be interpreted through Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalms 119:105, & 160)

5. About Human Beings

People are made in the image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme act of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

(Genesis 1:27; Psalms 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2)

6. About Salvation

Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. Only when we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus Christ in faith can we be saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6; 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; 10:9-10)

7. About Eternal Security

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the effort of Christians. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security. (John 10:27-29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

8. About Eternity

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is heaven. Heaven and hell are real places of eternal existence. (John 3:16; 14:2-3; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; Matthew 24:46)

9. About Family

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to Biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

10. About Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in the water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the Believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is a pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's supper. Members of Riverbluff Church have been baptized by full immersion. (Matthew 3:13, 16; Acts 2:38; Acts 12:8)

Regarding baptism, every orthodox denomination or church has a theology concerning baptism, and Riverbluff is no exception. We practice **Believer's Baptism** based on our conviction that a person must make a personal profession of faith before being baptized. We believe the person is then baptized after professing faith in Jesus. This means we do not baptize children until they are able to recognize the need to repent of sin, and trust Jesus for their relationship with God. We think God guards their souls until they are able to make this decision. The age at which a child can recognize sin and trust Jesus as Lord occurs differently for each child, and we rely on the parents to know when their child is ready. When a parent brings the child to be baptized, our Children's Director interviews both the child and the parent together.

If you are committing to membership with the Riverbluff Church family and come from a denomination that practices infant baptism followed by a later confirmation, we ask that you be baptized in the Baptist tradition to become part of our fellowship. While this may not seem that significant a distinction, we hold it very dear because of dark times in Christian history when many Baptists lost their lives maintaining this mode of baptism. We stand in that long tradition of 2 millennia. While we do not agree with churches or denominations who baptize (christen) infants, we consider them our brothers and sisters and co-laborers in building the Kingdom of God. If you made your profession of faith as a Believer in another denomination, and were baptized by full immersion after your profession of faith, you do not need to be baptized again to join Riverbluff.

For those who want special blessing after the birth of a child, we regularly have Parent-Child Dedication services where our Family Minister blesses and prays for each child. It is also a time of challenge for the parent(s) to commit to raise the child to know about Jesus and commit to Him at an appropriate age.

Concerning all of our Beliefs, we follow a centuries old practice:

In essential beliefs, we ask for _____.

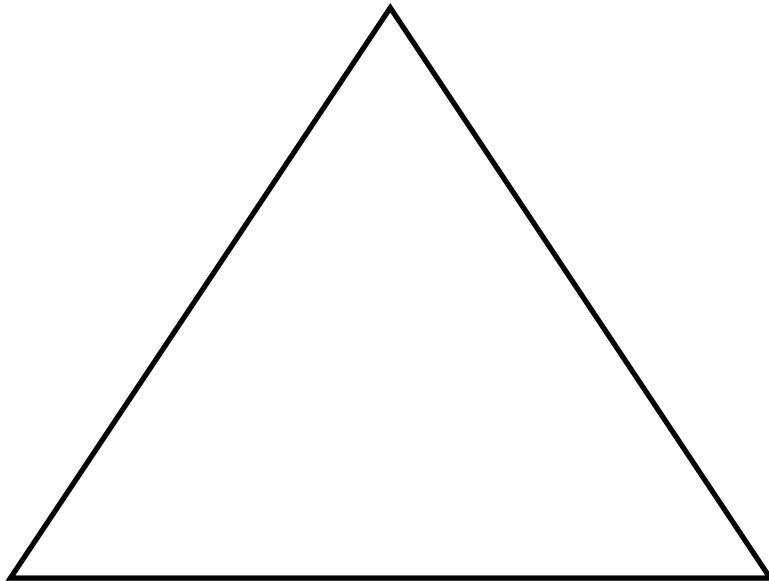
In non-essential beliefs, we ask for _____.

In all our beliefs, we ask for _____.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Up

Out



In

In 2020 every member of Riverbluff church will live _____:

- Fully aware of who he/she is in Christ (Identity).
- Continually adjusting his/her life to God's word in the Bible (Obedience).
- Daily Abiding with God allowing Him to produce in us a "fruitful" life
- Growing in his/her knowledge and love of God.
- Glorifying God with his/her lives.
- Living from the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Discipline (training) others to live the same way.

In 2020 every member of Riverbluff church will live _____:

- As a part of a deep and Biblical Missional Community with other members of Riverbluff Church. (Functioning more as family than as an organization.)
- Accountable to and with other members of the church.
- Practicing the "one another's" of the Bible with one another as a way of life.
- Studying and Applying the Bible in community.
- Meeting each others' needs in his/her group as much as possible.
- Regularly meeting with the whole RC Family for worship and celebration.
- Being Disciplined in a Disciple-making process.
- Discipling (training) others to live the same way.

In 2020 every member of Riverbluff church will live _____:

- Thinking of one's self as sent to minister to the world, functioning as a Kingdom Representative.
- Regularly engaging the hurting world outside the church providing ministry & witness.
- Committed to a group of others in a Missional Community to meet a specific need and witness to the love of God in Jesus.
- Committed to "doing life" with those who have the same passion/calling.
- Discipling (training) others to live the same way.

DISCIPLING OPPORTUNITIES



At the Riverbluff Campus:

- Membership Matters - next session begins
-
- Sunday morning classes for all age groups
 - Children's Discipling Groups—Sundays at 9:30 am & 11:00 am
 - Awana Bible Clubs for K5—5th grade children—Sundays at 5 pm
 - Student Discipling Groups—Sundays at 9:30 am
 - Sunday Evening classes— Spring and Fall Adult classes at 5 pm on various topics
 - Adult Classes are sometimes offered weeknights
 - Celebrate Recovery
 - Counseling Center

Off Campus (homes, businesses, restaurants, etc.)

- Small Groups
- LTGs (Life Transformation Group): Groups of three doing peer discipling
- Huddles: By invitation



SERVING OPPORTUNITIES (IN HOUSE)

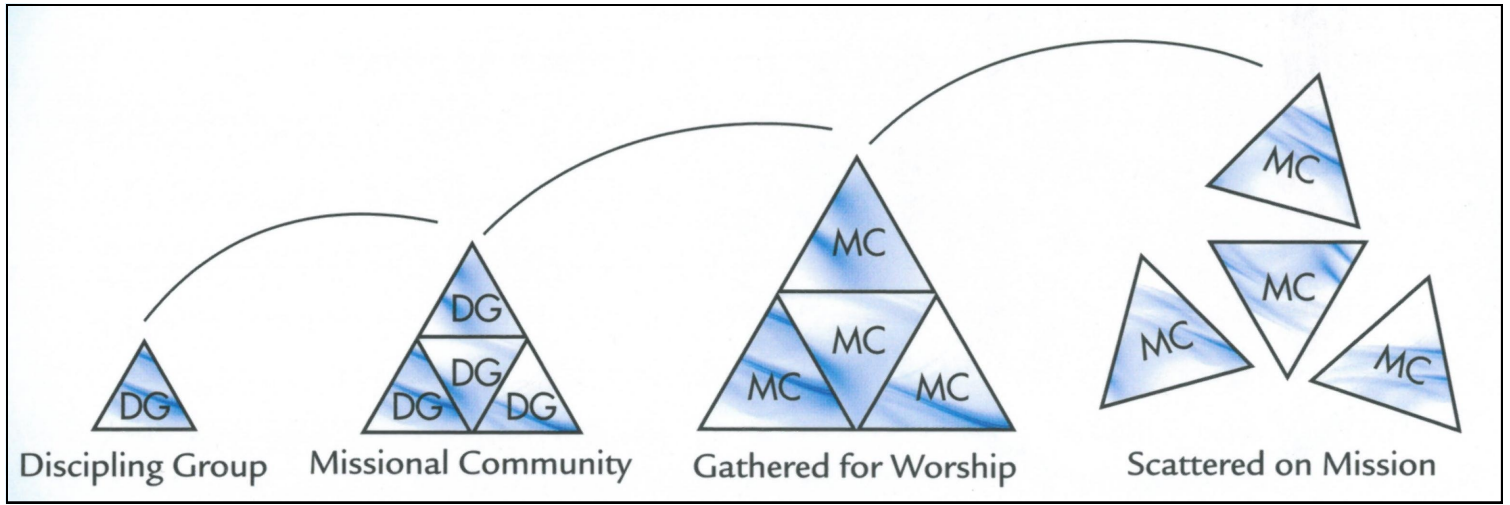
Information available in additional publication.



WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Adults & Students (6th-12th grade) Worship
Sundays at 9:30 am & 11:00 am
- Children's Worship
Sundays at 9:30 am and 11:00 am during adult worship
- Student led Worship (6th-12th grade)
Wednesdays at 6:30 pm in the Annex
- Young Adult (18-25) MOSAIC
Tuesdays at 7:45 pm in the Annex

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES



Missional Communities are 20-50 people who exist in Christian community, with a shared mission of reaching a neighborhood, a people group, or a network of relationships by incarnating the Gospel into that specific context through words and deeds.

What Missional Communities do is find a crack or crevice of society and incarnate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to that specific culture of people by creating an extended family on mission together.

A missional community group can be formed around various human needs. **The P.E.A.C.E. Plan** is helpful in determining where we might join or form a missional community to meet a local, national, or international need.

PROMOTE _____

EQUIP _____

A _____ **THE POOR**

C _____ **FOR THE SICK**

E _____ **THE NEXT GENERATION**

We also encourage each member to live a personal missional life by relating to people who do not know Jesus using the **B.L.E.S.S.** method:

BEGIN with Prayer: We will pray for the people or place to which we are sent.

LISTEN: We will listen to the people or place to which we are sent.

EAT: We will share meals with those to whom we are sent.

SERVE: We will respond to the needs we discover among those to whom we are sent.

STORY: We will share the story of Jesus and what He is doing in our lives with those to whom we are sent.

WHAT IS OUR INTERNAL STRUCTURE?

- Riverbluff Church is a congregationally governed church with a slight variation. The congregation nominates men to be deacons based on their servant heart and lifestyle. The Elder Team examines these nominations and presents the candidates who qualify to the entire Deacon Team for approval. The Elder Team is chosen from the Deacon Team and functions much like the overseers found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, guided by the Scriptures and the by-laws of the church. The Lead Pastor is leader of the Elder Team, but his vote does not count any more than any other Elder. Our philosophy is that the pastor is first among equals. The Elders determine Elder rotation and other internal matters.
- The staff is under the supervision of the Lead Pastor and his designates.
- The Bible is the primary authority for all matters. In order to meet legal requirements, we operate from a set of by-laws** adopted by the church.
- Our decision making is at the leadership level except in selecting or removing a senior pastor, affirming a budget, and the purchase or sale of major assets. Riverbluff holds a quarterly Family Meeting to talk about the work the Lord is doing in and through Riverbluff. If any church business requiring congregational vote is needed, it will be during a family meeting or a called meeting.
- The Pastoral Team and Other Church Leaders are:

Curt Bradford	Lead Pastor
Joe Still	Executive Pastor
Terry Feil	Family Ministries Pastor
Matt Tyler	Missional Living Director
Don Stewart	Financial Director
Cindy Schirle	Director of Discipleship Counseling Center
Melinda Welch	Worship Director
Susan Thomas	Office Manager
Gary Weiss	Facilities Manager
Michell Witman	Children’s Director
Lynne Kight	Office—The City & Reception
Joshua Gale	Director of Communications
Vicki Altman	Office—Financial Assistant
Linda Dubrow	Facilities Team

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Riverbluff operates on an annual budget primarily based on the previous year's giving. Each Ministry Team Leader submits a budget request for the year which is reviewed by the Finance Director and the Elders. If approved, it is presented to the congregation for approval indicating support of the budget. During the year, each Ministry Team leader is responsible for the stewardship of the budget they had approved.

Giving to Riverbluff may be done using the envelopes in the seatback or through online giving. The Financial Office Assistant will see that those wishing annual reports of their giving receive such reports for tax purposes or simply a record of one's own stewardship.

CARE

The care of members is assigned to three Lay Pastors who supervise members of the Deacon Team in caring for the needs of Riverbluff members not in a discipling group.

What will it cost to be a part of Riverbluff Church?

All members of Riverbluff have entered into a covenant relationship with one another which means that membership is a covenant commitment between two parties and God. Our covenant is based on our understanding of Scripture.

Q & A



RIVERBLUFF MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

1. I WILL PROTECT THE _____ OF MY CHURCH.

- By acting in love toward other members
 - By refusing to gossip
 - By following the leaders

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." **Romans 15:19**

"Live in harmony with each other- each with the attitude of Christ toward each other." **Romans 15:5 (LB)**

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." **1 Peter 1:22**

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..."
Ephesians 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you."
Hebrews 13:17

2. I WILL SHARE THE _____ OF MY CHURCH.

- By praying for its growth
- By inviting the unchurched to attend
- By warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church...we always thank God for you constantly."
1 Thessalonians 1:2

"Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that my house will be full."
Luke 14:23 (LB)

"So warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you..."
Romans 15:3

3. I WILL SERVE THE _____ OF MY CHURCH.

- By discovering my gifts and talents
- By being equipped to serve
- By developing a servant's heart

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..."

1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)

"God gave some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the Body of Christ may be built up..."

Ephesians 4:11-12

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ... who took on the very nature of a servant..." **Philippians 2:3-4,7**

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE _____ OF MY CHURCH.

- By attending faithfully
- By living a godly life
- By giving regularly

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together... but let us encourage one another."

Hebrews 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the Gospel of Christ."

Philippians 1:27 (Ph)

"Each one of you, on the first day of the week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering."

1 Corinthians 16:2

"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's and it is holy."

Leviticus 27:30

PERSONAL NOTES

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5421 Riverbluff Parkway
North Charleston, SC 29420
843.CONNECT (843.266.6328) (*phone*)
843.266.0573 (*fax*)
www.riverbluff.org