



Hello,

My name is Greg Reed and I'm the lead pastor at Morning Star Church. Thank you for picking up the *Connecting In Community* membership seminar packet. I'm excited that you are interested in exploring what it means to be a member of this local church.

Membership at Morning Star Church is about commitment and accountability. There are also numerous benefits to membership:

1. It identifies you as a genuine believer (Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:5)
2. It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage you in your walk with Christ (Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25)
3. It gives you a place to discover and use your gifts in ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-27)
4. It places you under the spiritual protection of godly leaders (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28-29)

YOUR NEXT STEP: Watch the enclosed DVD (approx 50 min), complete the fill-in-the-blanks membership seminar pages, and then schedule a time to meet with one of the pastors prior to a public recognition of new members (usually takes place in the Spring and in the Fall).

Please contact me, Pastor Jeff Evans, or Pastor Ryan Ramsey if you have specific questions about church membership.

Pastor Greg

Welcome to Connecting In Community

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Morning Star Church. This seminar is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have prospective members from many different church backgrounds, this material is designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS:

"... You are a member of God's very own family ... and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Eph. 2:19 (LB)

KEY TRUTHS:

1. The church is a _____ .
2. God expects you to be a _____ of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is a _____ .

WHAT MAKES MORNING STAR A FAMILY?

- ◆ Our **salvation** (what God has done for us)
- ◆ Our **statements** (why we exist as a church)
- ◆ Our **strategy** (how we fulfill our mission of making disciples)
- ◆ Our **structure** (how we are organized to accomplish our mission)

OUR SALVATION

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." John 5:24

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to _____ and to ignore God's principles for living.

"Look out for #1 ... Do your own thing."

"If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it."

"It's my life and I'll do what I please."

The Bible calls this attitude _____ .

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way." Isaiah 53:6

"If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth." 1John 1:8

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

"All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal." Rom. 3:23

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives — marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before turning to God.

"There are ways that seem right to man, but they only end in death."
Pr. 16:24

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

“My mother was a Christian so ...”

“It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”

“I’ll give up all my bad habits.”

“I’ll work real hard and earn it.”

“I’ll be religious and go to church.”

WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?

Jesus Christ said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.”* John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The way is a person!

Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem because He loves us and wants us to know Him!

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6:23

“God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. **Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us!**

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

_____ that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong.” 1John 1:9

_____ that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose again on Easter, and is alive today.

“If your confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Rom. 10:9

_____ to accept God’s free gift of salvation. Don’t try to earn it.

“For it is by grace you are saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.” Eph. 2:8,9

“To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! - not a physical rebirth ... but from the will of God.”

John 1:12-13

You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow You from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian.”

“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

OUR STATEMENTS

“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought & purpose.” 1 Cor. 1:10

OUR PURPOSE

To make new disciples of Jesus Christ who rescue, train, and serve!

OUR CONVICTION

We must do whatever it takes to **rescue** men, women, boys, and girls who are spiritually separated from God; we must intentionally **train** every willing Christ follower to live and love the way Jesus did; and we must compel every person possible to **serve** in an ongoing, identifiable ministry that contributes to the church’s mission and vision.

OUR BUSINESS

Developing _____ of Jesus who increasingly desire to be like Him and who _____ their lives to _____ and _____ other disciples to obey all the Jesus commanded.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

OUR VISION

To see 400 unchurched people baptized during the next 10 years!

OUR PRIMARY EVANGELISTIC TARGET

Families with children ages birth—18 years that are uncommitted to Jesus Christ. Within a 10-mile radius of MSC:

- ▶▶ There are 87,154 people
- ▶▶ There are 19,148 married couples
- ▶▶ The average age is 37 with 62% under 45 years of age
- ▶▶ There are over 12,400 households with children birth –18
- ▶▶ Only 1/3 are strongly involved with their faith

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

In essential beliefs — we have unity

“There is one body and one Spirit ... there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all ...” Eph 4:4-6

1. The Triune God

In the name of God, we declare and confess before men that we believe in the only true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that these three are one--the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Spirit equal in essence or being with both; that this triune God created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same.

2. Jesus Christ, the Son

We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is very God and man; that He became flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary and was born of her; that He is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in Him accept the grace offered in Jesus; that this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and that He shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

3. The Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide

We believe in the Holy Spirit; that He is equal in being with the Father and the Son, and that He comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

4. The Church

We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life eternal.

5. The Holy Bible and Salvation

We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God as the only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

6. The Salvation Message

We also believe that what is contained in the God's Word — the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ — must be preached throughout the world.

7. The Christian Ordinances

We believe that the ordinances, namely baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practiced by every local church; and that it is vitally important that every believer practices them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. Also, the example of washing feet is left to the judgment of every one to practice or not.

In non-essential beliefs — we have liberty

“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters ... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls ... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God ... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.” (Rom. 14:1,4,12,22)

In all our beliefs — we show charity (or love)

“... If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains but have no love, I amount to nothing at all.” (1 Cor 13:2 Ph)

OUR CORE CHURCH VALUES

CORE VALUES are sometimes called guiding principles or ministry philosophy. They act as an internal guidance system, as ministry-anchoring convictions. They describe the way decisions get made, people are treated, ministries are planned and executed.

- ☞ We value loving and accepting relationships
- ☞ We value worship that stirs the mind, will, and emotions
- ☞ We value those who are not-yet-saved
- ☞ We value the Bible as God’s instructions for how to live a successful and meaningful life
- ☞ We value small groups in which life-change most optimally takes place
- ☞ We value a unified community of servants with men and women stewarding their spiritual gifts
- ☞ We value anointed teaching that is the catalyst for Christ-like behavior
- ☞ We value a simple organizational structure led by men and women with leadership gifts

- ☞ We value being culturally relevant (initiating and implementing planned change) while remaining doctrinally pure
- ☞ We value excellence that honors God and inspires people
- ☞ We value building healthy families
- ☞ We value involvement in the community and in the world as a demonstration of God's love

Statement on Baptism

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus commands His followers to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...” Baptism is the means by which disciples of Christ are identified. And because Christ Himself commanded it, Christ followers willingly submit to it.

In passages such as Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47-48 it is evident that the act of baptism came after an individual’s decision to trust Christ for salvation. It was an outward sign of something that had occurred in the person’s life. Baptism can’t give a person anything, spiritually speaking. It can only signify something that has already happened. Baptism symbolizes the spiritual cleansing through divine forgiveness and newness of life experienced by believers by virtue of their identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. Going under the water pictures Christ’s death. Coming out of the water illustrates His resurrection.

Regarding those who were baptized as infants ... In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them, prayed for them and told His disciples to welcome them. But He *did not* baptize them and He *did not tell anyone else* to baptize them. Baptism is appropriate only for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation. If you were baptized as a child, it was no doubt the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Baptism as a believer in no way repudiates the baptism you received as a child.

Statement on Giving

In Old Testament times, God’s people were required to contribute at least a tenth of their income to God’s work (*the tithe*). Although the New Testament is not explicit about the continued validity of the standard, it may be assumed that it endorses the practice of tithing as a minimum guideline or a starting point for Christian giving. Obviously, the New Testament lays demands upon believers that exceed the giving of the tithe.

According to the New Testament, the totality of one’s possessions belongs to God—not just the tithe. The New Testament allows Christians to keep the portion of their income necessary to provide for them and their dependents so that they do not become a burden on society. The implications of the New Testament principle of total disposition reduces tithing to a beginner’s exercise, a minimum reference that is to be increased in proportion to one’s income and one’s growth in Christ.

Name that Candy

The following is a list of nine candies in disguise. See how many of them you can name. I've done the first and the last ones for you!

1. A Trio of Pals: 3 MUSKETEERS
2. Elmer Fudd's Clever Pranks _____
3. Young Coin Makers _____
4. Feminine Pronouns _____
5. Collision with a Scottish Loch Ness Monster _____
6. The Day a Worker Likes Best _____
7. Our Galaxy _____
8. Toe Attendance _____
9. A Funny Laugh: SNICKERS (or CHUCKLES)

OUR STRATEGY

PHASE	GOAL	CHARACTERISTICS	SMALL GROUP METHODS	AVERAGE DURATION
RESCUE	To build relationships with unbelievers, lovingly leading them to accept God's free gift of salvation and teaching them some basic truths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baptized Taking first steps as a new Christian 	Discovery Group Next-Step Group Small groups of 7-17 people that meet together weekly for 60-90 minutes; two semesters each year (Sept-Dec and Feb-May)	4-6 weeks 2-3 months
Worship Celebration				
TRAIN	To DEVELOP the basic characteristics of an apprentice of Jesus Christ and then to be DEPLOYED into making new disciples of Jesus Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walks with God Lives the Word Contributes to the Work Impacts the World 	Apprentice Group Small groups of 7-17 people that meet together weekly for 60-90 minutes; two semesters each year (Sept-Dec and Feb-May)	Development 5 training modules (13 weeks for each module)
				Deployment Sent out to make disciples; continued spiritual training
Adult Bible Fellowship				
SERVE	To SERVE as a lifestyle by intentionally RESCUING and TRAINING others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loves God and loves people Focused on spiritual reproduction 	Ministry Community Ongoing accountability through classes, small groups, seminars, short-term mission trips	A LIFE-TIME of practicing what Jesus said

OUR STRUCTURE

We are a part of the United Brethren in Christ denomination consisting of approximately 200 churches and other ministries in the U.S. It also oversees churches in Haiti and India. We are part of an international United Brethren fellowship which includes work in 15 countries (the denominational website is www.ub.org). Our U. S. headquarters and church-owned Huntington University are located in Huntington, Ind.

Our local church was formed in 1944 when Pastor Luke Martin was assigned as pastor of Fairlawn United Brethren church (corner of Foster & Waugh streets in Kokomo — currently the Salvation Army headquarters). In 1974 we relocated to our present 32,000 square foot facility on 27 acres and changed our name to Morning Star House of the Lord (later shortened to Morning Star Church).

Pastor Martin served as senior pastor until 1980. Logan Sparling was the interim pastor for 18 months until Marvin Price was assigned as senior pastor in 1981. After nine years, he was assigned to a United Brethren church in Ohio. Greg Reed then became senior pastor in June of 1990, having served as an associate pastor since August 1978. Beginning January 1, 1999, Jeff Evans became a full-time staff member. Jeff directs our student ministries (birth - high school). In March, 2010, we hired Ryan Ramsey as our worship arts pastor.

Unchurched Community

Congregation

Operations and Vision Team

Bishop & Cluster Groups

United Brethren Denomination

Foundation: Jesus Christ

Current Operations & Vision Team

Debbie Cowell

Scott Edwards

Jeff Evans

Kim Horner

Jerry Long

Ryan Ramsey

Greg Reed

Sally Ripley

What It Means To Be A Member

The difference between “attenders” and “members” can be summed up in one word: _____ .

At Morning Star we recognize the need for formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for 3 reasons:

☀ **A biblical reason: Christ committed to the church**

“... Christ loved the church, and He gave his life for it.” (Eph. 5:25)

☀ **A practical reason: It defines who can be counted on.**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

☀ **A personal reason: It produces spiritual growth.**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you're not committed to any specific church family. Membership at Morning Star is ***more about growing than joining!***

The CONNECTION

A Community Activity Center

Located behind
Morning Star Church
765.452.1622

www.msconnection.org



The CONNECTION is the Community Activity Center at Morning Star Church. In 1999, church leadership began to brainstorm new ways to reach and serve our community. The idea of an activity center with youth space, game room, ping pong and pool tables, internet café, banquet space, meeting rooms, commercial kitchen, and high school size gymnasium with a hardwood court took shape. This building became a reality in the fall of 2006. Other amenities include sound and projection capabilities, soda fountain and cappuccino machine, and a walking track.

This activity center is available to anyone in the community for wedding receptions, open houses, business meetings, parties, showers, and family reunions. Usage fees are charged to offset operating expenses. People who regularly attend MSC are welcome to use the facility for half of the normal usage fees.

For more information, please call (765.452.1622) or e-mail (theconnection@MorningStarKokomo.com).

What Is Expected Of Me As A Member?

At Morning Star we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. Those responsibilities are as follows:

① I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- ... By acting in love toward other members
- ... By refusing to gossip
- ... By following the leaders
- ... By passionately pursuing our common purpose

② I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- ... By praying for its growth
- ... By inviting unchurched family & friends to attend
- ... By warmly welcoming those who visit
- ... By regular financial giving
- ... By attending faithfully

③ I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- ... By discovering my S.H.A.P.E
- ... By being equipped to serve
- ... By developing a servant's heart

④ I WILL SUPPORT THE STRATEGY OF MY CHURCH

- ... By doing whatever it takes to **rescue** those who are separated from God
- ... By intentionally being **trained** as an apprentice of Jesus Christ who can **train** other Christ followers
- ... By **servicing** in an ongoing, identifiable ministry that contributes to the church's mission and vision

The Morning Star Church Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Morning Star's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Morning Star church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY 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." Rom. 15:19 (Ph)

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

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Eph. 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." Heb. 13:17

2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY 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 and pray for you constantly." I Thess. 1:2

"The Master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full.'" Luke 14:23 (NCV)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Rom. 15:7 (LB)

3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY 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 ..." I 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..." Eph. 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..." Phil. 2:3-4,7

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY 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."
Heb. 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ."
Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." I Cor. 16:2

"A tenth of all your produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Lev. 27:30

Welcome to **CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY**



Morning Star Church
2900 E. Markland Ave • Kokomo, IN 46901 • 765.452.7166
www.MorningStarKokomo.com

Revised July 2010

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Name: _____ Date: _____