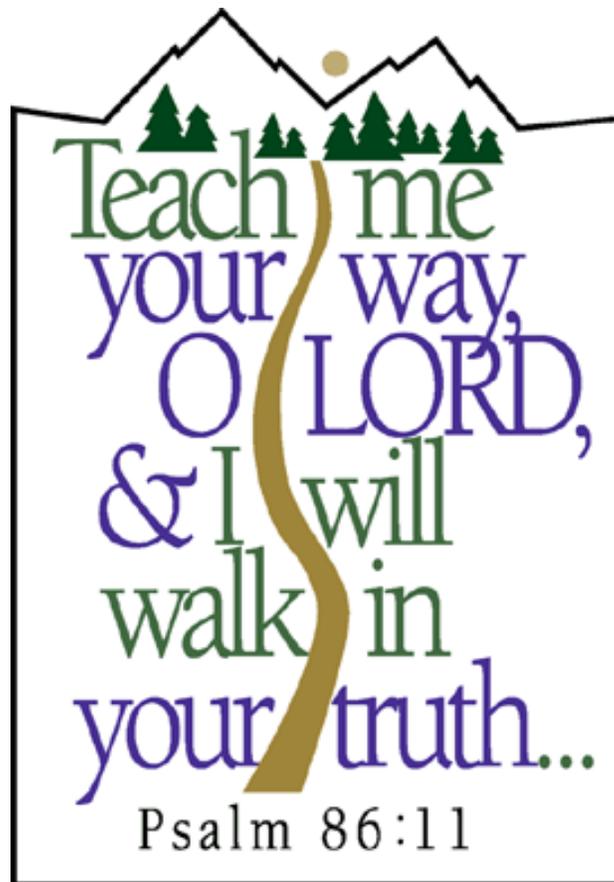


“Discovering the River”



Welcome!

We are excited that you have decided to find out more about the River of Life.
This basic course will provide an introduction to our church family.

*The goal of this course is...
to inform possible members what we believe and how we work
as a church. It is also to inform of basic Christian doctrine and to
discuss vision and stewardship.*

This class is intended to help you in your quest to “Discover the River!”
During this class we hope to answer the following questions:

What is a church?

What are the purposes of a church?

What are the requirements for membership?

What are the responsibilities of members?

What is the vision of the church?

How is the church organized?

How can I get involved in ministry?

So...let's get started!

The focus of this course...

What is a church family?

"...you are members of God's very own family...and you belong to God's household with every other Christian."

Ephesians 2:19 (LB)

1. **The church is God's family.**
2. **God expects you to be involved in His family.**
3. **A believer in Christ needs a Christian family.**
4. **God reveals His love to the world through His family.**

PART ONE: BECOMING A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
The old has gone, the new has come!"

2 Corinthians 5:17

1. God says everyone has sinned. (Romans 3:23)
2. Our sins condemn us to hell. (Romans 6:23)
3. Sin cannot be erased by good deeds. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. Paying the price for sin, Christ died. (Romans 5:8)
5. Everyone who trusts in Him has eternal life. (John 3:16)
6. Life that is eternal can never be lost. (1 John 5:13, Romans 8:38-39)

- a. Have you come to the place in your spiritual life that you know for certain that you have eternal life? Answer: _____
 - b. If you should die right now and God would say to you, "Why should I let you into heaven?" What would you say? Answer: _____
-



Pray this prayer... "Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you died in my place on the cross and rose again to give me eternal life. I know that I have sinned and I am sorry for my sins. Please forgive me. I open my life to you and ask you, Jesus, to come into my life and save me. I give you total control of my life and choose to walk with you from now on. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen."

PART TWO: THE TWO CHURCH ORDINANCES/SYMBOLS

Baptism

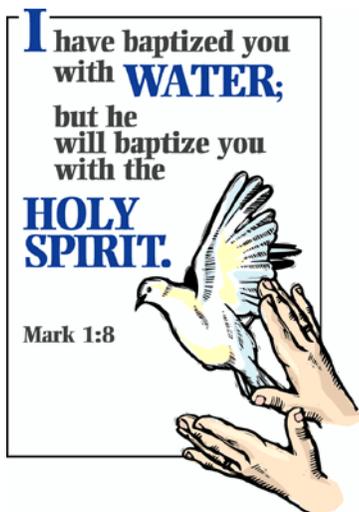
- *Why should I be baptized?*

1. **Jesus set the example to follow.**

"At the time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." Mark 1:9

2. **Jesus commanded his followers to be baptized.**

"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." Matthew 28:19-20a



- *What is the meaning of baptism?*

1. **It identifies me with Christ in His death and resurrection.**

"...having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead." Colossians 2:12

2. **It announces my new life as a Christian.**

"By our baptism, then, we were buried with Him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life." Romans 6:4

3. **It declares my obedience to Christ.**

"If you love me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15

- *What is the method of baptism?*

1. **Jesus was baptized by immersion.**

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water..." Matthew 3:16

2. **The New Testament believers were baptized by immersion.** Acts 8:38-39

3. **The word "baptize" means to immerse in water.**

Key: *The reason for immersion is that it clearly describes burial and resurrection.*

The Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

It's a simple, important act, not a ceremony.

We observe the Lord's Supper approximately 4 times a year.

Jesus said, "...do this in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:24b



PART THREE: STATEMENTS OF FAITH

*"...Let there be real harmony
so that there won't be splits in the church.
I plead with you to be of one mind,
united in thought and purpose." 1 Cor. 1:10*

**Key point: "In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity."
This is a great motto for the River of Life!**

The essentials we believe about...



God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Gen. 1:1, 26, 27, 3:22 Ps. 90:2 Matt. 28:19
1 Peter 1:2 2 Corinthians 13:14

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. He was born of a virgin. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all 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 earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matt. 1:22-23 Isaiah 9:6 John 1:1-5, 14:10-30 Hebrews 4:14-15 1 Tim. 6:14-15

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance of doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift(s) when they are saved. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Cor. 3:17 John 16:7-13, 14:16-17 Acts 1:8 Ephesians 1:13



Bible

The Bible is God's Word to us. Human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote it. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 3:16 Psalms 119:105, 160, 12:6



The Church

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe every local church should be self-governing and independent from any denominational control.

Our fellowship currently functions under the spiritual leadership of two Elders. We feel that the leading of the Holy Spirit has assembled these men. As the Spirit leads in the future, this group will grow in number. The main function of the Elders here at the River is to pray and spiritually lead this congregation as we seek to fulfill our five purposes.

This group of men has been appointed according to the directives and qualifications of eldership as stated in the books of Titus and 1st Timothy. They typically meet at least once a month. Please pray for these men and their families on a regular basis.

The four Elders of the River of Life Fellowship are:

Lucky Ashida

Jeb Brown

Gary Hall

Glenn Rumrill

Our church also has four Deacons at the present time. The Deacons are servants of the church. They are committed to serving in the areas that God has gifted them to benefit the body. These areas may include benevolence fund, building planning, program planning, visitation, etc. They also help with communion and other congregational service needs. Please pray for these men and their families as well.

Our four Deacons of the River of Life Fellowship are:

Dude Buford

Jason Crouch

Dick Sharon

Greg Wise

Marriage, Gender & Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male and female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, according to Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

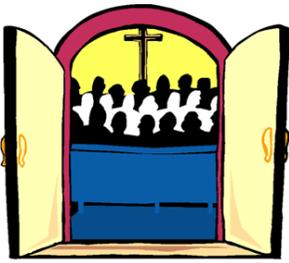
We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the River of Life as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the River of Life's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the River of Life Fellowship in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by the statement on marriage, gender and sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). 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 the River of Life Fellowship.

"THEREFORE
a man
SHALL LEAVE
HIS FATHER AND
HIS MOTHER AND
HOLD FAST TO
his wife,
AND THEY SHALL
BECOME ONE FLESH."

GENESIS 2:24



Congregational MEETING

Decision Making

The River of Life has an annual VISION/PROGRESS meeting which generally occurs during the month of January or February. During this meeting, the Elders and Deacons present financial status of the church, discuss future vision and direction of the church. Here at the River, we feel that the traditional method of congregational voting can many times lead to division. Therefore, as we present measures and then occasionally ask for a show of hands, we do this in order to get a feel for where God is working in the congregation. We will then commit that position to prayer and discussion. In the end, the Elders will take full responsibility for the direction of the church.

James 3:1 Acts 14:23; 15:25; 20: 17-28 Ephesians 4:11 Philippians 1:1 Proverbs 11:14

Priesthood of Every Believer

"He loves us, and by His death He has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priest to serve His God." Revelations 1:5b and 6a

Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading. The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to "full time" Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation.

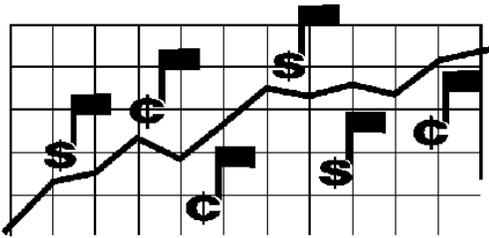
Tithing/Giving Back to God

"A tithe of everything from the land...belongs to the Lord:
it is Holy to the Lord." Lev. 27:30

At the River of Life, we practice tithing for the support of Christ's Body, the church, as God commands. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the Biblical standard of giving.

We use approximately 10% of the offering to give towards mission's projects all around the world. Currently we support the following works: Don & Julie Flower (New Tribes Mission, USA); Brandon Booth (Worldview Academy, USA); Brad Frye (Christian Veterinary Mission, USA); New Faith Family Children's Home (Kid's International Ministries, Philippines); Arkansas Valley Pregnancy Center (La Junta, CO); Ryan & Lisa Worley (New Tribes Mission, Mexico); Seth & Darla Curtis (Faith Global Ministries, Democratic Republic of Congo); Dave & Michele Clinton (First Love International Ministries, Philippines); Last Bell Ministries (Ukraine); Emmanuel & Virginia Bozzi (Society for Europe's Evangelization, France); Garrett Schlegel (Navigators, Oregon State University); Imli & Sarah Jamir (India) and John Shrift (Brazil).





Financial NOTES

All tithes and offerings are collected and deposited on a weekly basis. All contributions that are made by check or otherwise designated are credited in the givers name. At the end of each calendar year, giving statements are dispersed to all that gave during the previous year. All weekly and yearly giving records are held strictly confidential.

Spirit Led Living

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

We believe that the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God’s power within us. So we seek to practice a daily dependence on God’s Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

Telling Others About Christ

“...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” 1 Peter 3:15

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those God brings us into contact with. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.

“Come ye after me,
and I will make you to
become fishers of men.”

M a r k 1 : 1 7



PART FOUR: THE VISION OF THE RIVER

Church History:

- The River of Life Fellowship was started as a small group of believers who felt a need to build a contemporary, caring ministry in the Ordway area.
- The first service was held December 1, 1996, with 25 people present.
- The advertised “Grand Opening” was held December 22, 1996 with 77 people in attendance.
- God blessed us to build the new building located at 411 E. 9th Street debt free!!! Our first service was held on May 22, 2005 and the building was officially dedicated on July 31, 2005.
- Dirt started moving for phase 2 of our building plan on August 3, 2009. It includes Sunday School classrooms, offices, a big fellowship room and a kitchen. Phase 2 was also completed debt free!

The purpose that drives the River is based on two Scriptures:

The Great Commandment:

“Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul...and mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

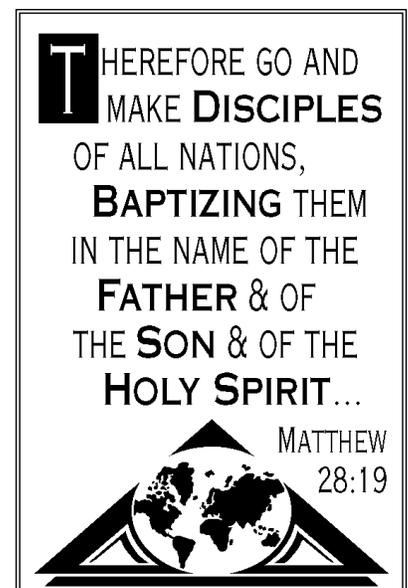
Matthew 22:37-40

- To “Love God with all your heart” is *worship*.
- To “Love your neighbor as yourself” is *ministry*.

The Great Commission:

“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.” Matthew 28:19-20a

- To “go and make disciples” is *evangelism*.
- To “baptize” signifies *fellowship*, identification with the body of Christ.
- To “teach them all things” is *discipleship*.



The River Strategy

"I have been all things to all sorts of people that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do all of this for the sake of the Good News."

1 Corinthians 9:22-23

- Worship helps you focus on God. It prepares you spiritually and emotionally for the week ahead.
- Ministry helps you find and develop your spiritual gifts and use them in serving others.
- Evangelism helps you fulfill your mission of reaching your friends and family for Christ.
- Fellowship helps you face life's problems by providing the support and encouragement of other Christians.
- Discipleship helps you fortify your faith by learning the truth of God's Word and applying Biblical principles to your lifestyle.



Our Purpose

Our purpose is spelled out in our name...

Raise our voices in worship to the Lord

Involve ourselves in serving others

Value lost souls by telling others about Jesus

Embrace each other in warm fellowship

Reflect Christ-like living as we disciple others

Every member a minister.....Every member a task.....Every task a ministry

The Benefits of Membership

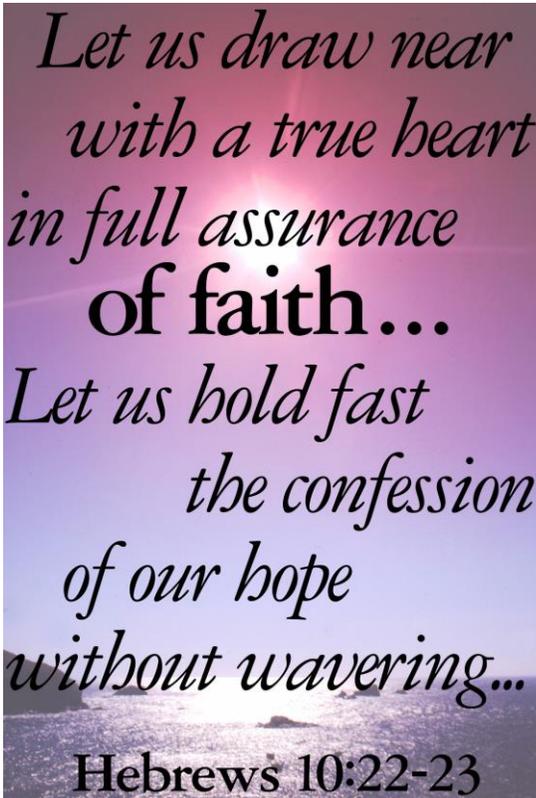
1. It identifies a person as a genuine believer. (Ephesians 2:19, Romans 12:5)
2. It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage them in their walk with Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2, Hebrews 10:24-25)
3. It gives them a place to discover and use their gifts in ministry. (1 Corinthians 12:4-27)
4. It places them under the spiritual protection of godly leaders. (Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28-29)
5. It gives them the accountability they need to grow. (Ephesians 5:21)

Is the Vision of the River For You?

It will take hard work, dedication and much prayer. We need Christians who are willing to put their faith in motion, and take that next step. We are not content to merely add members, but we need people who are willing to actively fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission!

The book of James tells us to “be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only.” The world is filled with many hearers, but few that are willing to “do.”

Well, that’s all folks! The rest is up to you and the Lord. Pray for and follow His direction concerning your membership here at the River. However, if you feel that the River is not for you at this time, we support your decision and pray that you will follow the Lord’s direction in your life concerning a church home. If you feel His leading in our direction, and you can agree with the membership covenant...super!



*Let us draw near
with a true heart
in full assurance
of faith...
Let us hold fast
the confession
of our hope
without wavering...
Hebrews 10:22-23*