

## OUR MISSION

“To lead people to Christ and build them into a worshipping community”

## OUR CORE VALUES

We believe:

1. People are transformed by the power of God’s Word. *Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 1:16*
2. Lost people matter to God and therefore ought to matter to the Church. *Luke 15*
3. We must be culturally relevant whilst remaining doctrinally pure. *1 Corinthians 9:19-23*
4. Church is about helping people live the Christian life in an authentic and practical way. *Romans 12; James 1:22-27*
5. The Church should operate as a unified community of servants with men and women using their spiritual gifts. *1 Peter 4:10-11; Galatians 3:28*
6. Churches should be led by men and women with leadership gifts. *Romans 12:8; 1 Peter 5:1-3*
7. Spiritual growth and Christian community happen best in small groups. *Acts 2:42-47; Luke 6:12-13*
8. Excellence honours God and inspires people. *Matthew 5:41, Jeremiah 12:5*
9. The Church should be a place of love, acceptance and forgiveness. *1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 4:32*
10. Full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every Christian. *Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:15*

## OUR DISTINCTIVES

There are many different types and styles of church in our world today. All Christian churches share a common mission and key points of theology, but from that point on, diversity is the order of the day. The following list of Distinctives is our attempt to describe what we believe is God’s unique thumbprint upon our church.

### We are to be a Large Church

This particular Distinctive has been held in the heart of the leadership from day one. When there were only thirteen gathering in a little hall in the outer suburbs there was an overwhelming impression that our church would become a large, multi-faceted church that would impact our city, nation and world. There is a strong awareness today, amongst all those who call our church their home, that we have built a platform, a foundation, where the fulfilling of this Distinctive will be seen and experienced, increasingly so, in the years to come.

### We are to be a Charismatic Church

Charismatic, in the sense that we fully expect the Holy Spirit to equip and empower us as we go about the work of Christian ministry - reaching people for Christ and making disciples. We believe and embrace the many gifts of the Holy Spirit but are careful to ensure that our primary focus is to reach out to others, rather than becoming a holy huddle. Charismatic theology can become both selfish and self-defeating when it is divorced from practical Christian living, service and evangelism.

### We are to be a Contemporary Church

The word contemporary simply means that we are relevant to our culture. We believe the church should communicate in a way that will reach both the saint and sinner. For this to happen, the truths of applied Christianity should not be lost in the haze of theological jargon and religious form. This particular distinctive is incredibly refreshing to many who are seeking God and yet have been turned off by the bureaucracy and rigidity that is found in many forms of Christianity. Many, in fact, refer to us as the “Church for people who don’t like Church.”

### We are to be an Intelligent Church

We have strived over the years to present Christianity in an intelligent and thought-provoking way. The Christian faith is a reasonable faith and the heart cannot delight in what the mind rejects as false. We therefore encourage thinking people to ask the hard questions, to check things out, and then to follow Christ with clear-headed intention and hearts full of faith.

### We are to be a Church that Communicates Globally

We feel very strongly that what God is doing amongst us must be taken and communicated to as wide an audience as possible. Our investments into television programmes, missions outreach, the Riverview Children’s Foundation and hundreds of other local and international churches are all expressions of this distinctive. We firmly believe that the creativity and intelligibility that God has graced us with will have an increasing impact in thousands of lives around the world.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

### We Believe...

That the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God. In them we discover God’s plan for humanity, culminating in the wonders of the cross, resurrection and the birth of the Church. The Bible serves as an owner’s manual - it is the authority for Christian faith and lifestyle.

In one God, creator of all things, who is infinitely perfect and eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and is now at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

That all people were created in the image of God but fell into sin and are therefore far from God. It is only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit that salvation and spiritual life can be obtained. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provides the grounds for justification and salvation.

That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ. During this age He indwells, guides, instructs and empowers those who believe for Godly living and service. Every believer should be continually filled with the Holy Spirit thus being empowered to be witnesses to the truth of the Gospel.

That healing of the body is part of the blessings of both the Old and New Covenant and that God has provided many different ways through which healing can be received. We are to have compassion with the sick and trust with them that God’s healing presence will touch their lives.

That there is one true Church universal, comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. That this body of believers gather themselves together for worship, prayer, teaching of the Word of God, fellowship, service, and the observance of Baptism and Communion. The local Church, under the watch and care of the Elders and other leaders, must work together in love and unity to fulfil its mission and glorify Christ.

## RIVERVIEW INTANGIBLES

It is vitally important that people who serve at Riverview do so with a firm understanding of the beliefs and values of the Church. The following 6 intangibles are an explanation of “how” we do ministry; how we act in our Volunteer Service and our attitudes towards one another.

### 1. We are NEITHER left NOR right politically

Our intention is to do our best to seek and present a Biblical position on all issues. Sometimes this will align us with left wing political ideologies, other times with right wing theories and sometimes down the middle. We do not place our direct support as a Church behind any specific party, organisation or ideology and welcome people who hold a diverse range of political preferences.

We also follow the Biblical exhortation to honour those in leadership regardless of political alignment. We may not agree with all their policies, but we still honour them as leaders.

### 2. We seek to persuade NOT demand

We recognise that people do not healthily commit to being a part of a group that they have not first understood (values, beliefs, requirements) before adopting it as their own. This is a process that honours people and provides them with time and opportunity to choose their involvement. Consequently, we believe that we encourage people rather than demand their involvement in Volunteer Service. We recognise that people are moving along their Discipleship Journey and at some point, motivated either by a desire for connection and/or expression of spiritual growth, take up the challenge to serve the church community.

### 3. We love BOTH the sacred and the secular

We believe that the world and all that is in it belongs to God but that some of what exists has been corrupted. Therefore, it is the corruption, use of, or attitude towards things that defines them as sacred or secular. We believe that both the sacred and the secular can be honouring towards God.

For example scriptural rituals can become legalistic and a “form or godliness” only (2 Tim. 3:5). But with a pure heart, they are expressions of praise and commitment to God. A building that houses a church does not need to have stained glass windows and a cross on the platform, but when it does it can be beautiful and God honouring. For many years the historical church was opposed to musical instruments other than an organ being played within the church but we love a diverse range, from drums and electric guitars to the violin and grand piano. In short, Riverview will be seen singing hymns and secular songs, promoting religious seasonal events (Christmas and Easter) as well as fashion parades, displaying modern art as visual worship, and using people’s stories as well as biblical examples from scripture for teaching and training. As such, we recognise and embrace both what could be termed sacred and secular as ultimately belonging to God and therefore able to be used for His glory, and to communicate the gospel.

### 4. We are NOT too opinionated

We believe that one of the hallmarks of spiritual maturity is the recognition that we don’t understand everything or have all the answers. We recognise that the world is not black and white, but many shades of grey. This can make us feel uncomfortable, but paradoxes exist, and scripture does not contain clear teaching on all of the issues that emerge in our personal, community or broader worlds. Because of this we recognise that there are as many opinions as there are people. So whilst we hold true to our convictions, we are not dogmatic but rather tolerate a diverse range of opinions. At all times we seek to maintain an attitude of humility and teachability to scripture and those around us.

## 5. We are NOT hierarchical

We need structure in order to ensure efficient operation of the ministries of Riverview, and provide clear lines of management. However, we do not use position or titles to lord it over others or seek our own agenda. We recognise that being a leader or pastor is a function and calling, not a title, the role of which is to serve the Body. For this reason ministry team members are not addressed by their titles, just as members of the congregation are not addressed according to their social or occupational standings. We are also committed to maintaining the spirit of “team” in all we do - valuing and recognising contributions from a wide range of people across all levels of the church. Some are called to lead and we need these people to assume their role; at the same time, we need Volunteers to serve faithfully and wholeheartedly, supporting their leaders in prayer and deed. It is not about position, but about finding our place and our calling to enable His kingdom to come.

## 6. We do NOT take ourselves too seriously

We recognise the importance of working hard and being faithful in doing God’s work. We accept that we each have responsibilities, both personal and public that require us to be responsible and sober minded. However, we also believe that God has given us a life to live and enjoy - it is God’s best to have fun along the way. This comes through friendships, laughter, understanding how we are wired and doing things which connect with that, discovering our passions, particularly those consistent with God’s purpose and giftings for our lives, and along the way, laughing at our mistakes! No matter how hard we try, we will make mistakes and when we are seeking to take up an extraordinary life then the likelihood perhaps increases! So don’t let this stop you; when you fall down, get up, shake yourself off, apologise where necessary and keep going. Winston Churchill once said, “Success is going from one failure to the next without losing enthusiasm.” May we live out of the possibilities life holds and enjoy the journey as we move closer to God and serve Him without limit or reservation.