



## Vision Partner Packet

*“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1–2*

As Christians, we are members of God’s household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for them to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). The River Church holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to our society and culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26–27).

*“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.” Romans 12:3–8*

Being a member of The River Church is about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way we collaborate in loving God, fellow Christians, and non-believers. Members who enter into a partnership with the local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, church leadership is committed to assist members first and foremost: to love and lead; provide counsel and aid; and teach, guide and pray for them.

*“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:8–10*

We have Vision Partners because the Word of God tells us, *“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and also those that are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*

We believe the Holy Spirit leads God’s people to a local church body and plants them there. Church membership, therefore, is a supernatural work of the Spirit. That means vision partnership is just officially recognizing before the congregation what the Holy Spirit has already done. 1 Cor 12:18

## Church Government

*“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17*

The River Church operates under a five-fold government (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers), elders who lead the church, and ministers (deacons) who lead individual ministries; all of which raise up disciples.

Our pastoral leadership is made up of Elders who have been chosen to lead (preach, teach, counsel) the church because of certain biblical qualities they display in their personal lives that include servanthood, integrity, love for people, and maturity in the things of God, etc. They are also required to hold theological degrees or have experience that would be

equal to it. This board of elders, which currently numbers eight people, makes all major decisions on behalf of The River Church by unanimous decisions alone.

## Who We Are and What We Believe

The River Church is a non-denominational, self-governing, local church established after the pattern of the Bible. The River Church was founded in 2009 and called to raise strong families and individuals who will take the good news of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. We desire to see many **Experience** the powerful presence of God, be **Ignited** by His fire, and be **Transformed** as we take a newly found passion to others.

**We believe** that the Bible is the very Word of God, infallible, inerrant and our only guide on matters of faith and practice. We encourage our members to practice daily Bible reading and study to live a life of victory and to help guide families, marriages and relationships.

**We believe** in the church, “the called out ones,” which is made up of men and women world-wide who have believed in the gospel and been born again. We believe that believers should gather on a weekly basis to form a community of love and brotherhood, and grow by the teaching and preaching of God's Word.

**We believe** Jesus Christ was the sacrifice God planned from the foundation of the world for the sin of the human race. By shedding His blood and dying on the cross, Jesus made provision for the salvation of all people.

**We believe** the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in every believer at the moment of salvation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is distinct from salvation, releasing the power of the Holy Spirit through faith. Consistent with biblical accounts, believers should anticipate Spirit-baptism to be accompanied by speaking in tongues and other biblical manifestations.

**We believe** every Christian should walk and abide in daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit and experience continual renewing of God's power to live a Spirit-filled life in attitudes, thoughts, speech, and conduct.

**We believe** in baptism subsequent to salvation as a sign of the new life which has been found in Jesus. Communion was given for us to remember the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and foot washing is a sign of servanthood and the connection we find in the Body of Christ.

**We believe** our calling as the church and individual believers is to preach and live out the Gospel in our everyday life. This Great Commission commands us to carry the gospel message to the world – to every nation, culture and language.

\* Our complete statement of faith can be found on the church website at [www.theriverchurchnw.com/we-believe](http://www.theriverchurchnw.com/we-believe) or at the Information Center in the church lobby.

## Vision Statement

The River Church has been called by God to be a center of revival and reformation to our city and the nations. Our mission is to reach the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom through every means possible including, but not limited to, television, internet, conferences, and missionary trips. We desire to equip and commission men and women to go and make disciples expanding the Kingdom of God on earth. Through Evangelism, Discipleship, and Sending, many are saved, healed and delivered through those living a lifestyle that demonstrates the power of God. After reaching people, our heart is to disciple individuals and families so they can have a firm foundation and develop a deeply rooted faith in God. Then, we want to send these fearless, bold leaders to go do the same. Our mandate is to lift, heal, deliver and ignite every believer so they can live out their God given destiny and purpose. \* To read our complete vision statement, please visit our website at [www.theriverchurchnw.com](http://www.theriverchurchnw.com).

### Our Desire is to:

- Be a church empowered and led by the Holy Spirit.
- Discover life-changing truths from God's Word that bring divine order to our lives.
- Cultivate an atmosphere of heaven through encounters with God.
- Seek the face of God through continual prayer and radical worship.
- Know our identity as sons and daughters, and be released into our destiny by extending the Kingdom of God.
- Serve the Lord with the highest integrity in a culture of honor and respect.
- Love unconditionally and encourage the body in their walk with God.

## Membership FAQ's

**What is a vision partner?** Vision partnership is a promise we make to one another. It is service done purely out of love that makes itself accountable to the input and/or correction that might come while in partnership with a local church. Most of all, vision partners agree and help push the stated mission of the church forward; desire to see others touched by the love of Christ; and participate in church activities and weekly services.

**Why does The River Church have vision partners?** The River Church is a local church. The Bible uses the metaphor of a body to describe the church: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). This is a beautiful illustration of how we are each created to serve a different function. We need everyone to function in order to be a healthy body; as each separate part finds purpose and unity under Jesus, "the head of the body, the church." This encourages a community and culture of trust and honor because we are all accountable to the Word of God, one another and the leading of the Holy Spirit. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18). Each member of the body of Christ was created with unique gifts, talents and character, and is, therefore, an invaluable part of the church family.

**What's the difference between a vision partner and someone who visits The River Church regularly?** We make a distinction between "members" and "guests." A guest remains partially separated from our church family, as a guest is technically separated from the maturity, accountability, protection and care that comes with being an active part of the local church. Members, on the other hand, have expressed their desire to partner with the vision of a local church as led by the Holy Spirit; they participate by sacrificing time, talent, and treasure; commit to the care and community of fellow members; and recognize the leadership God has established to lead the congregation. Believers who only consume rather than contribute to a local church do a disservice to Jesus' body (the church). In short, the difference between a member and a non-member is that members take an active part in furthering the mission and vision of The River Church. We believe that members will receive more blessing and fulfillment than someone who does not fully commit to the church body.

**Why should I become a vision partner?** "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:5). We are a family and we care for each other, pray for each other, and serve together. Our desire is that love, prayer and ministry be provided to all the broken and needy that walk through our doors. However, the Bible requires that we take care of our family first (Eph. 2:19, Gal. 6:10). That means there is a greater level of pastoral support, protection, accountability, and opportunities to grow and serve for those officially partnering with the vision of the church.

**What are the benefits of becoming a vision partner?** When membership is defined it promotes clarity of purpose and spiritual oneness within our church family. Scripture calls us as a body, a family, and a household; being a Christian is not a solo effort. Jesus works through the church (Eph. 2:10) and we, the church, are Jesus' body (1 Cor. 12:27). Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing (John 15). This coming together gives us a bigger sphere of influence; it provides support and leadership that is vital for the body to be healthy and to work properly. Also, as believers we enjoy the guidance that His Word provides, and when sin comes between us we enjoy the reconciliation Jesus' blood provides.

**How do I formalize my vision partnership?** Make sure the Holy Spirit is planting you at The River Church. To formalize your vision partnership: 1. Attend a Vision Partner meeting. If outside the set renewal period, please speak with one of our lead pastors. 2. Come into agreement with the mission and purpose of The River Church. 3. Read and agree with the statement of faith. 4. Complete a Vision Partner Contact Information form located on the last page of this packet and submit it to The River Church office. The contact information will be exclusively used for a church membership directory.

**Do members have to be "born again" or baptized?** The River Church requires all of its members to believe in the Gospel and to profess a salvation experience. Becoming a vision partner is a work of the Holy Spirit and a decision made to further commit to your local church. Your covenant with a church family has to do with purpose, vision, growth and maturity, as we all "submit to one another in the fear of God" and as we work together to bring God's kingdom to the earth. We do not require Believers to be baptized before committing to the church. However, if you would like to be baptized, we would be happy to set a time for those who desire to do so.

## Expectations and Statement of Faith for Vision Partners

### How leadership supports its members:

- ✓ We covenant that your pastors and elders will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1–13; 5:17–22; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:1–4).
- ✓ We commit to seek God’s will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1–5).
- ✓ We commit to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11–13), and praying for you regularly and when you may be sick (James 5:14).
- ✓ We agree to provide teaching and counsel from the whole counsel of Scripture (Acts 20:27–28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17–18).
- ✓ We agree to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28–31).
- ✓ We agree to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15–20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
- ✓ We commit to set an example and join you in fulfilling the calling of the believer (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

### What is expected of our vision partners:

#### Vision Partners:

- ✓ Agree that Scripture is the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16–17).
- ✓ Agree to maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. A relationship with the Lord Jesus will be evident through participation in the life of The River Church (Ps. 105:1–2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42–47; Heb. 10:23–25).
- ✓ Agree to steward the resources God has given, including time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9–10; Gal. 5:22–26). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in a community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1–8; 1 Peter 4:10–11).
- ✓ Agree to function as an active member in only one church family (Heb. 13:17).
- ✓ Agree to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit and to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in relationships with church leadership, and brothers and sisters in Christ, if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15–17; Gal. 6:1–5, 8; Heb. 12:5–11).
- ✓ Agree, by God’s grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); to practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in marriage (one man + one woman) by refraining from practices such as cohabitation, homosexuality, pornography, and fornication (Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12–14; 1 Cor. 6:9–19; Heb. 13:4); and to refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (1 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19–21). If sin arises in such a manner, vision partners should seek help to put sin to death (Rom. 8:13; 1 John 1:6–10).
- ✓ I have read and understood The River Church “We Believe” and “Vision Partner” statements and will support them. I also understand the importance of working with church leadership and will join them in diligently working to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1–3; Heb. 13:7, 17).