



GROW TRACK

SESSION 01

GET CONNECTED

01

"I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL."

JOHN 10:10 NIV



OUR MISSION

RADIANT CHURCH EXISTS TO LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE INTO AN AUTHENTIC, LIFE-CHANGING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

GET CONNECTED

Today we will cover:

- The heart of Radiant Church
- How to get planted in your relationship with God
- The importance of your next steps

OUR STORY

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Radiant Church has a long and fantastic history. At the back of this booklet there is a brief overview of our journey through the decades. However, you are here because of what God is doing in your life now. We are so excited that you are here. We believe that just as God has been faithful with those who came before us, He will be faithful with those He is gathering together now. You are an important part of God's work here at Radiant Church.

Our mission is to love and lead people into an authentic, life changing relationship with Jesus. This means our church is supposed to do two things:

- 1. LOVE PEOPLE AUTHENTICALLY**
- 2. WALK TOGETHER AS WE FOLLOW JESUS**

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:19-20 NLT

We want everyone to know Jesus, not in a religious way, but in a personal, real time, interactive love relationship with God.

"When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God."

EPHESIANS 3:14-19

We want to grow together because life is better lived in circles than in rows.

“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.” **ROMANS 12:4-5 NIV**

We want everyone to live life at full speed. We want you to live with purpose and grow in spiritual and emotional maturity.

“Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”
EPHESIANS 4:15-16 NLT

WHY YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART

Our vision is to create a community of people living radiant lives throughout Eastern Iowa.

In order to do this, we strive to:

- LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH
- BE A VOICE OF HOPE
- BE KNOWN BY LOVE

We do not believe that the church is a gathering or a location. We say regularly, “We do not come to church, we are the church.” We want you to be a part of this movement that is living a radiant life. Whether you are in the Cedar Rapids area, or you live closer to Manchester, the way God loves you and works through you is a part of His plan to reach people with His love.

This does not mean you have to have your life together. In fact:

IT IS OK TO NOT BE OK

From the very beginning of time, God has given humanity a choice of whether or not they would live in relationship with Him. The problem is humanity has found it easier to create rules and develop religions rather than walk with God. At Radiant Church, we want you to walk with God in a growing relationship, not out of religious duty.

Here are the differences between the two journeys:

1. I can do more, or I can receive what has already been done

“You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.”

JOHN 5:39-40 NLT

2. I can try to earn God's approval, or I can receive God's love for me

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners... For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son” **ROMANS 5:8, 10 NLT**

3. I can obey out of duty, or I can obey out of delight

“If you love me, you will obey my commands.”

JOHN 14:15 NCV

Real Christianity is about a vibrant relationship not rules or a religion. This is why it is important for you to be planted in local church.

“But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the LORD's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God.” **PSALM 92:12-13**

DISCUSSION

Why do you think planting yourself in a church is so important instead of picking and choosing an a la carte approach?

DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

Our Discipleship Pathway:

- Know God
- Find Your People
- Experience Freedom
- Discover Purpose
- Make a Difference

KNOW GOD

"[I pray]... that you may know Him better [personally]."
EPHESIANS 1:17-18 NIV

We want to experience the real presence of God in real time every week. Our Sunday services are for people at all stages in their spiritual journey, but we are always focused on those who do not yet have a genuine relationship with God. We consider reaching people who do not know God personally to be one of our greatest responsibilities.

1. Celebration

We believe church should be enjoyable.

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" **PSALM 122:1 NKJV**

2. Inspiration

We believe church should be a place where people experience God's presence.

"But...when some unbelievers or ordinary people come in, they will be convinced of their sin by what they hear. They will be judged by all they hear, their secret thoughts will be brought into the open, and they will bow down and worship God, confessing, 'Truly God is here among you!'" **1 CORINTHIANS 14:24-25 GNT**

3. Preparation

We believe church should be a place where people learn how the Bible applies to their daily lives.

"So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." EPHESIANS 4:11-12 NIV

4. Salvation

We believe church should be a place where people can accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

**"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?"
ROMANS 10:13-14 NLT**

FIND YOUR PEOPLE

**"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."
HEBREWS 10:24-25 NIV**

Because God is consumed with relationships, so are we. We believe life change happens in circles rather than in rows. This is why we are a church of small groups. Our groups have a simple purpose: to bring people together relationally so we can grow as followers of Jesus. God created us to live in community with others, and it is only then we can experience the full life He intends for us.

Life Groups provide three things:

1. A place to connect with others.

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” JOHN 13:35 NLT

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Life Groups provide a place for you to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A place to support each other.

“We know what real love is because Jesus gave up His life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.” 1 JOHN 3:16 NLT

When we do life together, our problems become smaller as God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Life Groups become a place where others don't just know your name but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

3. A place to grow together.

“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” 2 TIMOTHY 2:2 NLT

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Life Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you. The goal of each gathering is simple, ask each other two questions:

- **“What is God saying to you?”**
- **“What are you going to do about it?”**

Here are five practical things to know about Life Groups at Radiant Church:

1. Our groups are “free market.”

We want people to gather together based on things they enjoy and are important to them. Essentially, the things you are already doing in your life are the things that can make up your Life Group! From sports to lunch groups, parenting groups to student groups, Bible study groups to creative arts groups, our groups are as varied as we are.

2. There are three sessions every year.

Life flows in seasons, and we want to make it easy for you to be in the right Life Group for you in each season of your life. This is why we have groups start and stop three times a year.

FALL (Sept/Nov) – 13 weeks

WINTER (Jan/May) – 13-16 Weeks

SUMMER (June/Aug) – 8-10 Weeks

3. Everyone can join a group.

Our hope is for every person at Radiant Church to be connected in meaningful community through a Life Group. We have many Life Groups meeting weekly in homes in Eastern Iowa for people in every stage of life. With so many groups to choose from, we are confident there is a group which is a great fit for you. You can search groups by topic, location, day, and time in our online Life Groups directory at radiantchurch.live/life-groups. Once you find a few groups that interest you, contact the leaders to learn more and make plans to check them out in person.

4. Anyone can host or lead a group.

We make hosting a group simple because we all have something to offer others. Whether you have something you are passionate about, an experience you've had which can help others, or an area in which you are looking to grow, hosting a group is a great way to bring people together who share similar passions.

To learn more about becoming a Life Group host or leader, talk with our team and they will give you information about our Life Group Leadership Training. Even if you're not sure if you're ready to host a group, we invite you to participate in a training.

5. Your life will be changed through a Life Group.

We know God brings forgiveness, but healing happens in the context of relationships with others. As we learn to take off our masks we find healing and grow closer to Jesus. For this reason, we don't "GO TO A GROUP," instead, we gather with our friends to grow in our understanding of how to be God's people. Together,

"WE ARE THE CHURCH."

EXPERIENCE FREEDOM

"We have freedom now, because Christ made us free. So stand strong. Do not change and go back into the slavery of (your past)." **GALATIANS 5:1 NCV**

It is impossible to experience God's best for your life until you have dealt with your yesterdays. Our passion is help you live a life that isn't incumbered by guilt, shame, anxiety or anger. To help you experience freedom we have Freedom Groups. These are not counseling groups, nor are they recovery groups. This is a journey every person needs to embark on to experience the freedom only Jesus can provide.

Freedom Groups and Emotionally Healthy Spirituality groups gather weekly to discuss a specific Bible anchored curriculum, which is designed to equip you to live the victorious and abundant life Christ came to give you. Freedom Groups build on the foundation of your faith in Christ to help you embrace the truth of God's Word as it relates to your worldview, your past, your sin, your personal value to God, and your purpose in His Kingdom. A Freedom Group will help you remove every obstacle to intimacy with God and walk in true freedom.

Biblical Freedom means three basic things:

1. Free from doubt about God's love for you

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." **JOHN 8:32 NLT**

2. Free from anxiety

"It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life." **PHILIPPIANS 4:7 MSG**

3. Free from your past

"But now you are free from sin ... this brings you a life that is only for God, and this gives you life forever."
ROMANS 6:22 NCV

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality groups are for those who have walked with Jesus for a while but realize they are not going as deep with God as their heart truly desires. Together you are given the tools to dive under the surface in your life and allow God to shine His love in you.

DISCOVER PURPOSE

"God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well." **ROMANS 12:6 NLT**

GROW TRACK is our primary step in discovering your purpose. The second session is full of interactive assessments that will help you understand how God has equipped you.

After you finish both sessions, we will have a special orientation Sunday where you will get a hands on feel for being a part of TEAM RADIANT. Our orientation will introduce you to the various SERVE TEAMS and introduce you to the people who will help you grow and develop in your purpose.

The next ORIENTATION SUNDAY:

Make sure you register to attend so you can receive a special gift for joining the team.

"All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it." **1 CORINTHIANS 12:27 NLT**

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” **1 PETER 4:10 NLT**

We are created to make the radiant love of Jesus known to the world around us.

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”
MATTHEW 5:15-16 NLT

You can make a difference through your life when you:

1. Join a Serve Team at Radiant Church
2. Go on a global trip
3. Contribute to Kingdom Builders
4. Become involved with Love My City
5. Invite a friend to join you

“When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples... I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!”
JOHN 15:8, 11 NLT

DISCUSSION

We just discussed the Disciple Pathway (Know God, Find Your People, Experience Freedom, Discover Purpose, Make a Difference), which one stood out the most to you? Why?

OUR STORY

Our church started simple, as a few people began to gather in a garage in 1940 to pray for each other. One young person was struggling with back problems and God miraculously healed them. This encouraged those present to believe God would truly work through them, so they began to share their faith with others in the community. This encouraging, loving group of people built a small church building on Oakland Road. As they outgrew that location, they built another building on 42nd Street across from Kennedy High School. They kept focused on the mission God had for them and continued to reach out to their friends who found life in Jesus. As more people gathered, they had to find a larger space. In 1984 they built the church currently located on Blairs Ferry Road. During the 80's and 90's God worked through the people in incredible ways and thousands were impacted by the gospel message and touched personally by the love of Jesus.

Pastor Brian Pingel became the 12th lead pastor of the church in 2016. His passion has been to build on the rich history of this church and to keep us focused on one simple goal— to love & lead people into an authentic life changing relationship with Jesus. Radiant Church works hard to make a large church feel personal through life giving small groups, meaningful opportunities to serve others and Sunday services which are full of passion and joy. Even though we've had a rich history, we believe our best days are ahead of us.

One Church in Multiple Locations:

At Radiant Church we are not just a church in Eastern Iowa, we are a church which is for all those in Eastern Iowa. In 2022, the church body overwhelming chose to adopt the name Radiant Church (Previously CR First Assembly) as we opened a second location in Manchester. This happened while the church was recovering from over \$5 million dollars' worth of damage from the derecho that hit our area. We are driven by the belief that together we can create a movement where we help people live radiant lives. We invite you to see for yourself how exciting church can be when the focus is simple, and people are free to seek God with passion.

HOW DOES THE CHURCH WORK?

As you consider investing your heart, time, family, and finances into the life of a church, it is important for you to feel confident in church leadership. Our goal in sharing the details of Radiant Church's mechanics is that you will understand our church is structured to support the values of integrity, accountability, and spiritual authority presented in the Bible. Our church government consists of four groups of leaders:

1. Guided by our Pastors

The Pastoral team is led by Pastor Brian. This team oversees the day-to-day ministry and operations of the church. These staff pastors serve the congregation and are responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the church. They are not in place to do ministry, but to equip those who are a part of the church to do the work of the ministry & build God's church (**EPHESIANS 4:12**).

2. Protected by our Executive Elders

Our executive board is made up of members of the congregation, elected by the voting membership of Radiant Church. The Lead Pastor serves as the chair of this board which oversees and protects the mission of God's church. This group prays together and seeks to follow God's wisdom in how we utilize our resources to develop disciples and reach others for the Kingdom of God. They also appoint a board of TRUSTEES to manage the finances of the church to fulfill its mission. This group is made up of two Executive Elders and three additional members with expertise in financial management.

3. Strengthened by our Advisory Elders

The Council of Elders are pastors of respected congregations and ministries who love Radiant Church and are willing to provide spiritual protection and guidance to the church. They offer counsel to Pastor Brian and the Executive Elders. They may be called upon to help in accountability matters if requested to do so.

4. Run by our Serve Teams

The Bible says the leadership of the church is to equip the people of the church to do the work of the ministry. We are convinced we look the most like Jesus when we serve. Therefore, at Radiant Church we follow Jesus' example by not looking to be served but to serve. Every person has a place on a serve team. Our hope is you will find your place as you complete GROW TRACK.

If you would like a more detailed explanation of our history and operational structure you can visit this link:

OUR FINANCES

"Every Sunday each of you make an offering and put it in safekeeping. Be as generous as you can. When I get there, you'll have it ready, and I won't have to make a special appeal." 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-4 MSG

At Radiant Church, we recognize that giving generously of our income is the Biblical standard to show our trust for God.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." MALACHI 3:10 NIV

Many people love to give to God and as they do, they want to feel confident in the organization through which they give. At Radiant Church, we want people to understand they are giving to God through the church, not to the church. We openly share spiritual values which guide the financial practices of Radiant Church and are guided by transparent principles when it comes to our finances. Because of this we believe people can focus on what God is calling them to give, and trust He is leading our church to steward it well.

Giving is worship to Jesus and an expression of the relationship between the individual giver and the Lord. We do not consider your gifts as "income." They are an act of worship and are not considered to be a business transaction, but an expression of gratitude toward God.

GENEROSITY JOURNEY

We respond to God's love with irrational generosity. Because God has given us everything, we count it a privilege to be generous to others with our time, our talents, and our treasures. Giving is one of the central themes in the Bible. Jesus talked more about this subject than Heaven, Hell, or prayer. To understand what it means to be a Christ-follower, we must also understand what it means to go on a Generosity Journey together.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." ACTS 20:25 NLT

God's very nature is to give and the more we become like Jesus the more generous we become with our time, talent and treasures. God's heart is for every Christ follower to live a life of generosity. As we reflect on God's heart by growing in our generosity, we also help advance His Kingdom here on earth. When we live a generous life it:

1. Breaks greed off our life
2. Helps us establish the right priorities
3. Keeps our heart focused on Jesus

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." MATTHEW 6:21 NIV

We know each of us must learn to trust God with our finances and this may be new to you. We encourage you to take a step towards trusting God and see how He will be faithful to you. Then take another step. We have learned you cannot out give God.

Initial Giver

Everyone can impact our community through participating in God's work. This is someone who is taking the first steps towards worshiping and growing through giving.

Consistent Giver

God wants us to move beyond our impulses and be intentional with our worship. This is someone who is determined to cheerfully give consistently.

Trusting Giver

God has called us to trust Him as the source of all we need. This is someone who has seen the blessing that comes with giving to God the first 10% of their income. They have learned God can do more with 90% than we can with 100%.

Fearless Giver

Ultimately God wants us to make generosity a lifestyle. This is someone who asks God how much He wants them to keep and gives the rest away to build His Kingdom. To live fearlessly is the greatest adventure.

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

In the Bible the storehouse was the temple or church. This is where the priest oversaw the distribution of the tithe. Today, the storehouse is the local church where we worship. When we give our tithe, we are providing for God's house so, together, we can continue to see more changed lives.

When we give, we are communicating to God He is first in our life, and our trust is no longer in ourselves, but rather, we trust Him to provide for all our needs. When we trust God with our finances, we commit to being spiritual contributors, not spiritual consumers. When you give through Radiant Church, you are making an eternal difference in people's lives.

KINGDOM BUILDERS

Kingdom Builders is our funding process for building the Kingdom of God. This is for projects and partnerships that are over and above the Lord's Tithe. Each year we invest in the following:

- Local Church Expansion – We invest in ministries in Eastern Iowa
- Global Partners – We invest in missionary partners globally
- Global Projects – We invest in major projects around the world
- Next Gen – We encourage our youth to give and we invest in camps and Christian schools

HOW TO BECOME A MINISTRY PARTNER

Becoming a member at Radiant Church is saying you are a ministry partner. This means you are so committed to the mission you are willing to lay aside your personal needs to help others discover an authentic, life changing relationship with Jesus. When you become a ministry partner, you are saying:

- I will be a spiritual producer and help carry the weight of this church as we work together to reach the lost.
- I will regularly share my faith story with those in my life.
- I will support the mission of my church, my pastors and church leadership in prayer.
- I will protect the unity of my church by refusing to gossip and to love other believers wholeheartedly.
- I will live out the mission of the church by attending Sunday morning celebrations, participating in a Life Group, and attending Vision Nights.
- I will support my church with tithes and offerings.
- I will serve in a ministry area and actively use my God-given gifts to make a difference in the lives of others.
- I will grow in my faith, continuing to understand, accept and adhere to the church's statements of faith.

To become a ministry partner:

Complete GROW TRACK

Attend the monthly ORIENTATION SESSION

Become a part of a SERVE TEAM

Begin the GENEROSITY JOURNEY

Complete ONLINE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Radiant Church is affiliated with the Assemblies of God (AG)

The Assemblies of God was founded in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas with 300 people at the founding convention. Today, there are 13,017 AG churches in the U.S. with over 3 million members and adherents. There are more than 69 million AG members worldwide, making the Assemblies of God the world's largest Pentecostal denomination. The Assemblies of God values the Bible as the Word of God, the gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and has always been marked by a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the Gospel around the world. www.ag.org

NEXT STEPS

1. **Become a member/ministry partner of Radiant Church**

Membership at Radiant Church is not about adding your name to a roster; it's about connecting with the people and the vision of the church. We would love for you to be an active part of what God is doing through Radiant Church.

2. **Join a Life Group**

Browse our online Life Groups directory at radiantchurch.live/life-groups. Once you find a few groups that interest you, contact the leaders to learn more and make plans to check them out in person.

3. **Invite someone to attend church with you.**

One of the greatest joys in life happens when you see a friend come to know Jesus personally. Share your story and invite someone to join you at church and take them out for lunch afterwards.

4. **Be a part of a Freedom Group**

Freedom Groups are offered during our Fall and Winter session. Visit radiantchurch.live/life-groups for more specific details and to register for this life transforming journey.

5. **Start your Generosity Journey**

If you need additional support with your finances, we offer Financial Peace University during the year. This program has helped countless people get out of debt and increase their capacity to be generous.

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I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

Ephesians 1:17-18 NLT