



REACH OUT
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WELCOME BOOKLET

River
Vineyard
Christian
Fellowship

OUR VISION - OUR VALUES - OUR
MOVEMENT

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ABOUT US

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Welcome friend.

We are so glad that you have picked up a copy of this booklet.

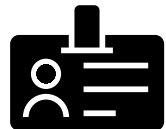
This booklet has been compiled to help newcomers become familiar with our church and the Vineyard movement which we are a part of.

In this booklet you will learn about our church, our vision and values and much more.

2. WHERE DOES OUR NAME COME FROM?

The reason why the word *Vineyard* is in our name is because we are a part of a movement called Vineyard-more on that later.

We are a Christian church based in Kirkwood, South Africa.



3. WHO ARE WE?

3.1 OUR STORY

River Vineyard was started over 30 years ago. Our original group gathered weekly and met in homes. They eventually began meeting in a public venue on Sundays.

River Vineyard has been connected to Fountain Vineyard Christian Fellowship (Port Elizabeth) for many years. Our church operated as a house church of Fountain Vineyard up until we appointed our first pastor. For many years, Fountain Vineyard supported us by sending preachers to come and speak at our meetings and teams to lead worship.

Chris Morley became our first pastor in 2003. Our church was recognized as a Vineyard church on the same day. Chris led River Vineyard for 15 years. Chris and his wife immigrated to England in 2018.

Adrian van der Merwe became our new pastor. He currently serves as our senior pastor. Adrian has a wife named Adele and they have two children. Adrian and Adele grew up in the Western Cape.



3.2 OUR VISION & MISSION

Our vision is “to reach out, to build up and to live out the Kingdom of God”.

Our mission is “to connect in meaningful fellowship, encounter Jesus and build His Kingdom.”



3.3 OUR VALUES



- Have an outward focus.
- Equip believers for the work of ministry.
- Reflect Christ in our daily lives.
- Build meaningful relationships with one other.
- Pursue the Presence of God.
- Prioritize growing our relationship with Jesus.
- Be inclusive of all people.
- Serve each other and our community.
- Encourage participation.
- Teach the Bible and make it applicable.
- Provide relief and assistance to the poor.
- Be a community of healing.
- Promote and encourage cooperation with churches & ministries.
- Engage in intimate and relevant worship.

4. LEADERSHIP



4.1 STRUCTURE

At present we are operating with a 2-tier leadership structure as follows:

Tier 1: Elders

Elders carry the ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true biblical course, that its members are being appropriately shepherded, that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching, and that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of competent and godly leaders.

Main functions: Doctrinal guardians, managers of the church, and shepherds of the flock.

The eldership team is led by the senior pastor.

Tier 2: Broader leadership team (Ministry leaders, Connect group leaders and others)

4.2 HOW WE RAISE ELDERS

1. The Holy Spirit ultimately selects elders in the local church. (**Acts 20:28**)
2. Elders should not serve because of external compulsion. (**1 Peter 5:2**)
3. Elders should have an internal compulsion given to them by God. (**1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Peter 5:2**)
4. Practically a prospective elder should:
 - Desire the role.
 - Be a faithful member.
 - Speak to the present elders.
 - Allow the elders to assess readiness unanimously.
 - Submit to a slow process of testing (**1 Timothy 3:10; 5:22**).
 - Then...If all elders agree that this person should become an elder the person is brought before the church and the person is commissioned publicly and prayerfully.
5. An elder's season of service is open ended. We rely on the Lord's leading.
6. Women in leadership: Leadership is a matter of gifting more than gender. We are therefore affirming of the gift regardless of gender. Women can lead too. Derek Morphew's book "Different but equal" is a fuller explanation as to why we do not hold the view that leadership is exclusively male.

4.3 LEADERSHIP & LEADERSHIP STYLE



We reject two common leadership styles...

A. Autocratic leadership

This sets the leaders over the people and provokes a parent-child authoritarianism. It is hugely restrictive in bringing people to personal maturity. Appearance and control are too much in focus.

B. Democratic leadership

This sets the people over the leader as a form of democracy and robs the church of prophetic, visionary leadership. The leader gets their mandate to lead from the people, who can block them at any point. It does highlight the servant role of the leader, but his/her boss is not the Lord.

This model leads to leadership burnout.

C. Visionary leadership

The leadership style we embrace in the Vineyard is visionary leadership. This model takes the good of the two previous styles with us.

In this model the visionary leadership walks ahead, declaring the mission and direction, releasing people to follow as they will. There is no pressure, manipulation, control, or hype. It's like a using a GPS. The leader types in the location and people are free to follow.

5. OUR GATHERINGS

46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:24-47)

In the early church the disciples gathered at the temple, and they also gathered in their homes.

We follow the same model.



Congregation: We gather every Sunday for worship, preaching, breaking of bread and fellowship. These gatherings help to keep us from becoming exclusive.

Connect groups: Our Connect groups are small groups of people who meet during the week in homes.

The purpose of Connect groups is to share life together and to be accountable in love and truth toward each other. This is the primary place to make friends in the church.

More info: <https://rivervcf.com/connect-groups/>

6. HOW ARE WE RELATED TO THE WIDER BODY OF CHRIST?

We regard ourselves as a local expression of the Body of Christ and seek to function in interdependent relationships with other churches. We work hard at developing meaningful friendships with other Christians and churches in our Valley and elsewhere.

We hold a vision of a united church in our area.



As a Kingdom people we appreciate the contributions of other churches and avoid comparisons. We have benefitted greatly by the ministries of various people whom the Lord has sent to us to build into our lives.

7. BAPTISM

We believe in baptism by full immersion of all believers. We do not baptize infants but only people old enough to understand repentance and the implications of making Jesus Saviour and Lord. Baptism follows repentance and new birth. (**Matthew 28:19; Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 10:47; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21**)



8. HOW ARE WE FINANCED?

Our church is financed through the tithes and offerings of our church members.

The money we receive is budgeted by the finance team and senior leaders according to the vision and values of the church, as well as the leading of the Lord.

We have a financial team led by our treasurer who is responsible for the financial oversight of our finances.

We have quarterly financial report backs in our Sunday services to keep the church informed about our finances.



8.1 WHAT IS TITHING?

The word tithe literally means tenth in Hebrew.

Therefore, a tithe is a portion (10%) of your income given to your local church.

Leviticus 27:30 (TLB) says, "A tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, is the Lord's, and is holy."

And Proverbs 3:9 (NIV) says, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops."

The Bible explains that tithing is an important part of faith for those who follow God and that your tithe should be money you set aside first.

You should make tithing a priority instead of an afterthought. You're giving your first fruits instead of your leftovers.

What's the Difference Between Tithes and Offerings?

Tithes and offerings are grouped together a lot, but they're not the same thing.

A tithe is a specific amount (10% of your income) that you give first, and an offering is anything extra that you give beyond that.

After you've tithed and paid all your bills and expenses for the month, you can use any extra money in your budget to give even more if you choose to do so! This is optional.

8.2 WHY SHOULD I TITHE?

- The Bible tells us that tithing is a way to show that we trust God with our lives and our finances. Tithing isn't for God's benefit. He doesn't need our money. Instead, tithing is meant for our benefit because sacrificing a portion of our income reminds us to rely on God to meet our needs. Plus it makes us more aware of the needs of others too.

- Tithing supporting the needs of pastors and the work of the local church- this is one of the main purposes of tithing. i.e. Levites (**Num 18:21-24, Deut 14:27, 1 Cor 9:7-12, 1 Tim 5:17-18**).
- Giving encourages a grateful and generous spirit and can help steer us away from being greedy or loving money too much.
- We are commanded to tithe. God calls us to give the first 10% of our income back to Him.
- Tithes belong to the Lord. We do not pay tithes; we return tithes to God (**Lev 27:30-33**).
- Tithing is an act of worship. (**Mat 6:21**)
- Jesus endorsed tithing. (**Matt 23:23**)
- Tithing affirms your belonging to this storehouse.

8.3 HOW ARE TITHES COLLECTED?

Your tithe should be given to your local church where you fellowship. (**Mal 3:10, Deut 12:5-19, Deut 14:23-25**)

8.4 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE YOUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS AT RIVER VINEYARD CF

EFT OR CASH

RCVF banking details:

Bank: Standard Bank

Branch: Port Elizabeth

Branch code: 051001

Account type: Cheque Account

Account number: 371333091

9. MEMBERSHIP

9.1 MEMBERSHIP DEFINITION



To be a church member simply means that an individual is identified with, is accountable to, and is a contributing participant to this local expression of the body of Christ.

Becoming a church member means there are certain commitments that are made, responsibilities that are embraced, and relationships that are acknowledged.

Membership in a local church, therefore, is the way in which the individual is known to be intentionally committed to every other member of the congregation, and the congregation is known to be committed to the individual. Church membership means, "I now put myself under the care of the Elders and I invite them to hold me accountable as a constituent member of this body."

9.2 THE EXERCISES OF MEMBERSHIP

To be a member means:

- **Participation:** I participate in the life of the church and commit to being a functioning member of the Body.
- **Serving:** I serve others with love through healthy, caring relationships.
- **Commitment:** I express and live out commitment to one another and to the leadership of RV.
- **Submission:** I submit to the leadership in this church which means that I respect them, support them, and serve with them.
- **Gifts:** I commit to the discovery, development, and deployment of my gifts in ministries and missions.
- **Attendance:** I attend our gatherings on a regular basis. E.g., Sunday services and connect groups.
- **Connecting:** I extend myself in developing and nurturing friendships with others in and around this fellowship.
- **Giving:** I participate in the financial fellowship of this church through tithes and offerings.

9.3 HOW DOES ONE BECOME A MEMBER OF RIVER VINEYARD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?

1. Welcoming You are welcomed as a visitor.

- You receive a welcome packet at our Sunday service.
- After filling out a visitor's card, there is some introductory follow up.

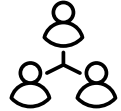
2. Informing

- You receive this booklet.
- You are invited to meet with the pastor or one of the leaders.

- Usually involves information sharing with time for questions and answers.
- You indicate your desire to explore membership.

3. Commitment

- You are invited to be introduced to the Church and publicly acknowledge your commitment to the sense of calling to River Vineyard.
- You say yes to the exercises of membership.
- You are received and celebrated prayerfully. This usually happens on a commitment Sunday.



10. JOIN A TEAM

We encourage all of church members to come and be a part of the life of the church.

Every one of us has God given gifts and talents which we can utilize to serve others and build up the body of Christ.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

“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).

We have amazing ministries at River Vineyard which you can get involved in. Read below...

- **Prayer:** Our men meet for prayer on Friday mornings. We also have a monthly prayer meeting. We regularly pray on our prayer WhatsApp group.
- **Men’s and lady’s ministry:** Help organize men’s and lady’s events and get together.
- **Children’s ministry:** Volunteer to serve in our kid’s church. Help teach lessons or assist.

- **Youth:** Connect with our teens and organize events.
- **Worship:** Help lead worship at our Sunday services.
- **AV:** Be trained to run our audio/visual during our Sunday services.
- **Events:** Help organize events and socials.
- **Maintenance:** Volunteer to help maintain our church venue.
- **Outreach:** Join our outreach team as they go out to share the gospel.
- **Financial assistance:** Teach people to manage their money and get out of debt.
- **Preaching:** Be trained to preach the Word of God.
- **Counselling:** Receive training to become a counsellor.
- **Connect group leaders:** Lead or host a connect group in your area.
- **Hospitality:** Serve tea and coffee at our Sunday services and assist with events.
- **Mercy:** Give to support the needy or offer to assist the poor in getting out of poverty.

Contact us if you are interested in serving in any of these ministries.

More info: <https://rivervcf.com/ministries/>

11. WHAT ARE OUR BELIEFS?

We subscribe to the basic historical Christian creeds and accept the Word as our basis for doctrine and life.

WE BELIEVE that God is the Eternal King. He is an infinite, unchangeable Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, goodness, justice, power and love. From all eternity He exists as the One Living and True God in three persons of one substance, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory.

WE BELIEVE that God's Kingdom is everlasting. From His throne, through His Son, His eternal Word, God created, upholds and governs all that exists: the heavenly places, the angelic hosts, the universe, the earth, every living thing and mankind. God created all things very good.

WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally a great, good angel, rebelled against God, taking a host of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and, as a usurper of God's rule established a counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth.

WE BELIEVE that God created mankind in His image, male and female, for relationship with Himself and to govern the earth. Under the temptation of Satan, our original parents fell from grace, bringing sin, sickness and God's judgement of death to the earth. Through the fall, Satan and his demonic hosts gained access to God's good creation. Creation now experiences the consequences and effects of Adam's original sin. Human beings are born in sin, subject to God's judgement of death and captive to Satan's kingdom of darkness.

WE BELIEVE that God did not abandon His rule over the earth which He continues to uphold by His providence. In order to bring redemption, God established covenants which revealed His grace to sinful people. In the covenant with Abraham, God bound Himself to His people Israel, promising to deliver them from bondage to sin and Satan and to bless all the nations through them.

WE BELIEVE that as King, God later redeemed His people by His mighty acts from bondage in Egypt and established His covenant through Moses, revealing His perfect will and our obligation to fulfill it. The law's purpose is to order our fallen race and to make us conscious of our moral responsibility. By the work of God's Spirit, it convicts us of our sin and God's righteous judgement against us and brings us to Christ alone for salvation.

WE BELIEVE that when Israel rejected God's rule over her as King, God established the monarchy in Israel and made an unconditional covenant with David, promising that his heir would restore God's kingdom reign over His people as Messiah forever.

WE BELIEVE that in the fullness of time, God honoured His covenants with Israel and His prophetic promises of salvation by sending His only Son, Jesus, into the world. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, as fully God and fully man in one person, He is humanity as God intended us to be. Jesus was anointed as God's Messiah and empowered by the Holy Spirit, inaugurating God's kingdom reign on earth, overpowering the reign of Satan by resisting temptation, preaching the good news of salvation, healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Gathering His disciples, He reconstituted God's people as His Church to be the instrument of His kingdom. After dying for the sins of the world, Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day, fulfilling the covenant of blessing given to Abraham. In His sinless, perfect life Jesus met the demands of the law and in His atoning death on the cross He took God's judgement for sin which we deserve as law-breakers. By His death on the cross He also disarmed the demonic powers. The covenant with David was fulfilled in Jesus' birth from David's house, His Messianic ministry, His glorious resurrection from the dead, His ascent into heaven and His present rule at the right hand of the Father. As God's Son and David's heir, He is the eternal Messiah-King, advancing God's reign throughout every generation and throughout the whole earth today.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church at Pentecost in power, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ and releasing the gifts of the Spirit to them. The Spirit brings the permanent indwelling presence of God to us for spiritual worship, personal sanctification, building up the Church, gifting us for ministry, and driving back the kingdom of Satan by evangelisation of the world through proclaiming the word of Jesus and doing the works of Jesus.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe in the filling or empowering of the Holy Spirit, often a conscious experience, for ministry today. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit and in the exercise of all the biblical gifts of the Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Spirit, for heading, and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and serve the Church.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Holy Scripture so then the Bible is without error in the original manuscripts.

We receive the sixty six books of the Old and New Testaments as our final, absolute authority, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

WE BELIEVE that the whole world is under the domination of Satan and that all people are sinners by nature and choice. All people therefore are under God's just judgement. Through the preaching of the Good News of Jesus and the Kingdom God and the work of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates, justifies, adopts and sanctifies through Jesus by the Spirit all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. By this they are released from Satan's domain and enter into God's kingdom reign.

WE BELIEVE in the one, holy, universal Church. All who repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and form the living Body of Christ, of which He is the head and of which we are all members.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are available to all believers.

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom has come in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to come in the ministry of the Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible and triumphant appearing of Christ – His return to the earth as King. After Christ returns to reign, He will bring about the final defeat of Satan and all of his minions and works, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgement and the eternal blessing of the righteous and eternal conscious punishment of the wicked. Finally, God will be all in all and His kingdom, His rule and reign, will be fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, recreated by His mighty power, in which righteousness dwells and in which He will forever be worshipped.

THE MOVEMENT

12.1 THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

Kenn Gulliksen was one of many thousands of young people who came to faith in Jesus Christ in California during what Time magazine called “The Jesus Revolution”, or “Jesus People Revival”, in the late 1960’s.

In 1974, after working as an assistant pastor at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California and planting a church called Jesus Chapel in El Paso, Texas, Kenn and his wife Joannie moved to Los Angeles to begin a ministry that had been on their hearts for several years. Starting as a small Bible study, the fellowship quickly grew into a church. God prophetically gave the name “Vineyard” to those who initially gathered together. In the next few years literally thousands received Jesus Christ through the ministries of the church. Several couples went out and began other Vineyards in California: quickly growing churches with priorities of worship, relationship, healing, training and giving.

John Wimber became a part of the fledgling group of new churches, and by 1981 it soon became obvious that God had called John to pastor the pastors, and to train and encourage men and women to pursue what God had given them. As a result, the people called the Vineyard have reached out to bless and encourage churches all over the world, as well as planting churches. The Vineyard has extensive and fruitful relationships with most Christian denominations and pastors in the USA, many denominations, notably the Church of England in the UK, Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, Latin America, and the South Pacific. Many of these relationships developed through the personal ministry of John Wimber, others through various local Vineyard churches and leaders.

In 1982, John Wimber visited South Africa for the third time, having received a clear word from the Lord to facilitate the planting of a church in Johannesburg.

The Parkview VCF was planted in October 1982, and since then the movement in South Africa has grown to about 50 churches and church plants in progress, which are connected through a formal body called the Association of Vineyard Churches, which was “released” as an autonomous body in the international movement in April 1997.

Vineyard churches are self-governing, but overseen and encouraged on a voluntary basis by experienced pastors. The Association of Vineyard Churches in each nation is led by a National Director. Each area is overseen by an Area Pastoral Coordinator (APC), and a Region is overseen by a Regional Overseer (R.O.). The Board of AVC (SA) is also responsible for the oversight of missions activities in the 22 African nations in which we are currently involved. In 2017 there were an estimated 2400 Vineyard churches world wide in more than 90 countries, of which 12 have been “released” as autonomous movements.

Our international Vineyard family in all these nations is connected through a high priority for relationship, mutual support, and shared values. Our National Directors work together through what is called the Vineyard International Executive (VIE). John and Eleanor Mumford of the UK serve as Coordinators for VIE, and provide support to the shared leadership and decision-making of our growing group of national leaders who lead the “released” nations or groups in the Vineyard family. God however, has shown us not to seek to build the Vineyard, but instead to seek His Kingdom and let Him build His Church, to bless what He is blessing, to love what He loves, and to give ourselves away freely. We want to be like Jesus in both His character and ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our plan is to seek God and to co-operate with Him as He reveals Himself in the process.

12.2 VINEYARD DISTINCTIVES



While there is a unique identity in every local Vineyard church, and healthy diversity of style, missional focus and way of pursuing mission, there are distinctives present in every one of our churches, like the strands of DNA that make Vineyard churches into a family.

We use the expression: “Vineyard is not something you join – it’s something you discover you are.” The distinctives that will be common among us include:

- The Bible being taught as the Word of God with application to daily life.
- A focus on and ongoing ministry to the poor, including materially poor, homeless, widows, orphans and divorced people.
- A strong outward focus and relevant forms of evangelism being pursued, by presence, proclamation, power and persuasion.
- A strong emphasis on healing in all forms, with focus on inviting God’s power, signs and wonders without hype or manipulation.
- Small group life for the development of close fellowship, spiritual growth, discipleship and mutual care.
- Effective training and equipping of every member of the church to do works of ministry.
- Involvement and interaction with other churches to express and further inter-church unity.
- Intimate, real and relevant worship through the use of contemporary worship songs, giving and the sacraments.
- The encouragement and exercising of spiritual gifts when we are gathered and in the marketplaces of our lives when we are not.
- Engagement in missions, domestic & foreign, especially in the form of Church Planting

For more information about the Vineyard visit the Vineyard SA website and Vineyard USA website:

<https://www.vineyardsa.org.za/>

<https://vineyardusa.org/about/core-values-beliefs/>



12.3 OUR GLOBAL FAMILY

Vineyard SA is part of a global family of 2400+ kingdom-minded Vineyard churches whose numbers are growing every day. There are Vineyards in 95 countries – and we are releasing new national associations all the time.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MI2IGNDpxg4&t=2s>

LET'S TALK!

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