



CHESTNUT
RIDGE
CHURCH

Getting to Know The Ridge

PARTNERSHIP



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A Brief History of Chestnut Ridge Church

1985 Humble beginnings

Tim Haring, Scott Rupley, Karen Marshall (Haring) and Elizabeth Marburger were sent to Morgantown from New Covenant Christian Church in Columbus, Ohio. Their purpose was to start a church near the West Virginia University campus. When they first came to Morgantown, they worked full-time jobs, and in their spare time, they encouraged college students to come into a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ and to grow in their Christian walk.

1985 West Virginia University (WVU) student organization formed

The strategy was to begin on campus and eventually branch out into the community. A student organization called *WVU Bible Studies* was formed and met regularly for Bible studies in homes, as well as a Sunday morning worship service on the campus. Eventually, some families began to join the ministry, and the student group began to evolve into a community church.

1988 The group moved into the daycare facility at the **Suncrest Cultural Center**, where the church met for 10 years and continued to grow.

1989 In December of 1989, Articles of Incorporation papers were filed at the courthouse and **Chestnut Ridge Church was officially born.**

1998 CRC built a **new church facility at 315 Point Marion Road**, which seated approximately 500 people.

1985



1988



1989



1998



- 2003** In 2003, CRC planted **River Ridge Church**, its first sister church in Charleston, WV, under the leadership of Matt Santen.
- 2005** In 2005, CRC planted **South Ridge Church**, its second sister church in Fairmont, WV, under the leadership of Seth Broadhurst.
- 2006** In November 2006, after outgrowing the facility on Point Marion Road, CRC moved into its **new facility in Cheat Lake**, allowing seating for just over 2,000 people.
- 2007** Chestnut Ridge Church was named one of the **most influential organizations in West Virginia** because of its size and impact on the community.
- 2008** In the Fall of 2008, **River Ridge Church began its second location in Teays Valley** and is now holding services each week in Charleston and Teays Valley. Even though they meet in two different locations in the valley, they are part of the same church.
- 2012** CRC implemented **Life Care environments** such as Financial Peace, Divorce Care, Grief Share, and Mercy Ministry, in addition to a mentoring program for couples.
- 2018** **South Ridge Church started its second location in Bridgeport, WV**, which uses new technology in the form of a video venue, broadcast from the Fairmont church location.
- 2019+** CRC plans to plant additional churches throughout the state of West Virginia, beginning with Wheeling, WV. Our network of churches is planning on expanding farther throughout the state.

The desire for the future is that the Lord would cause this church to grow so that additional churches may be started in accordance with the Great Commission of Christ:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20



Partnership at Chestnut Ridge Church

Why Partner With Us?

We refer to membership at Chestnut Ridge Church as a partnership. We do not just want you on a membership roll. The hope is you'll partner with us to accomplish God's will in this area and beyond. There are at least three reasons for partnership with Chestnut Ridge Church:

- 1. We believe the concept of partnership is biblical.** While the terms "church member" or "church partner" are never used in the New Testament, the concept is implicit throughout. Believers in the New Testament clearly identified themselves with a specific local church body and were challenged to become devoted participants.
- 2. Formal partnership is valuable** to the pastors and leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of leading. The Ridge, by its very design, attracts those who are uncommitted—seekers, observers, and guests. We hope and pray that will always be the case; but at some point, it is important to identify those who are really partnering with us at The Ridge—the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church. We view these as the committed "family members" who should receive priority in the allocation of finite church resources (as commanded in Galatians 6:10).
- 3. Experience shows that partnership benefits the individual.** In a culture where commitment is not always highly valued, becoming a partner is an important step that moves each of us out of the vague clouds of our good intentions into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to step out of the stands and publicly affirm a commitment to Christ and to a specific local body. In this sense, partnership can be a significant defining moment.

Becoming a Partner

Scripture is full of references to the once-for-all union with Christ and His body, which happens at the instant of our conversion (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22; 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13- 22). At that moment, we become positional members in the Church of Jesus Christ, based solely on His merit and grace. Positional membership is eternal and unchanging.

The Bible also urges positional members to continue growing by becoming participating partners in a specific local assembly (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:25-31, 14:12, 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Timothy 3:14-15). Obviously, you may be a participating partner of several different local bodies during the course of your lifetime, while maintaining a permanent positional membership in Christ's universal Church. We cannot see the invisible bond of positional membership, but we can identify those who are the participating partners here at The Ridge.

Three steps to becoming a partner:

- Complete the *Partnership Covenant* form
- Complete the *Getting to Know You* form
- A church staff member will contact you

Find all forms online at www.theridge.church/partnershipforms.

Becoming a Christian & Understanding the Gospel

In order to fully understand what the Bible teaches about becoming a Christian, we need to understand some basic truths concerning God, people, Jesus Christ, and the decision we need to make.

What is God like?

1. He is holy.

"And one called to another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; His glory fills the whole earth.'" Isaiah 6:3

2. He is love.

"The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 John 4:8

What are people like?

A. We are all sinners.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

B. We are separated from God.

"But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God..." Isaiah 59:2a

Because God is holy and sinless and we are not, a relational gap exists between us. Our sin disqualifies us from spending an eternity with God in heaven. Thankfully, God, in his love, found a way to bridge the gap between us and Him. He sent His son Jesus Christ into the world.

Why is Jesus the answer?

A. He is the Lord (God).

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

"For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:9-11

B. He died for our sins.

"For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God..." 1 Peter 3:18

What should our response be?

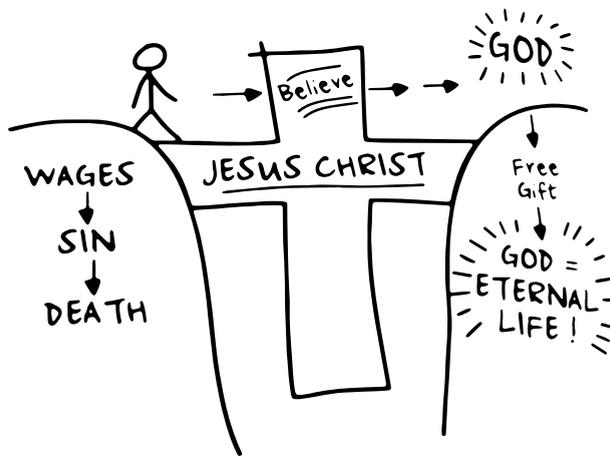
A. I must believe.

"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name." John 1:12

The Bridge Diagram

The Bridge Diagram illustrates the fact that our sin, like a chasm, comes between us and God. In addition, the wages or penalty for that sin is physical, spiritual and eternal death (Romans 6:23). Jesus died in our place and for our sin. He bridged the gap for us. When we place our faith or trust in Christ, our relationship with our creator is restored.



Put your trust in Jesus alone to be your Savior. Many do this by simply praying to God and expressing:

- That you are a sinner
- That the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only solution for your sin
- That you are placing your trust in Jesus Christ alone for God's forgiveness and the gift of eternal life

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

Below is a sample prayer you can pray:

"Dear God, I know I have sinned against you and I need a Savior. I believe you sent your only son Jesus Christ to come into this world to die in my place and for my sin and that he rose again from the dead, demonstrating that you accepted his payment on my behalf. Therefore, today I'd like to place my trust in Jesus Christ to be my Savior. I turn to him for the forgiveness of my sins. I'd like to claim the promise you gave in John 3:16, where you said whoever believes in him will receive the free gift of eternal life. I come to you in Jesus' name and because of what he did for me. Amen."

Understanding Baptism

At The Ridge, we believe baptism to be an important part of partnership in a local church. This section explains why one should be baptized, the meaning of baptism, why baptism should be by immersion and who should be baptized.

Why should I be baptized?

To follow the example set by Jesus

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John." Mark 1:9

"After Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water..." Matthew 3:16

Christ commanded us to be baptized

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you..." Matthew 28:19-20

To symbolize that I really am a believer

In the New Testament book of Acts, we see that people identified themselves as being new believers in Christ (Christians) by publicly identifying with Him in water of baptism.

"So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 people were added to them." Acts 2:41

"...Many of the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized." Acts 18:8

What is the meaning of baptism?

It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection.

When believers are placed under the water in baptism, they are affirming that they have placed their faith in Jesus Christ who died and was buried for them. When they come up out of the baptismal waters, they are confessing their faith in Christ who rose again from dead.

"...Christ died for our sins... He was buried... He was raised on the third day..." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Why be baptized by immersion?

The word baptize means, "to immerse, dip, submerge or place into."

Basically, the word means "to fully immerse." (A different Greek word would have been used if the idea of "sprinkling" were intended.)

Jesus was baptized that way.

"After Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water..." Matthew 3:16

Every baptism in the New Testament appears to have been by immersion.

*"...and both Philip and the eunuch **went down into** the water, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water..." Acts 8:38-39*

It best illustrates Christ's death and resurrection.

"For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

It illustrates a new life as a Christian.

"Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life." Romans 6:4

Who should be baptized?

All who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized. This is why baptism by immersion is often called believer's baptism.

"So those who accepted his message were baptized..." Acts 2:41

"Then even Simon himself believed. And after he was baptized, he went around constantly with Philip and was astounded as he observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed." Acts 8:13

"But when they believed Philip, as he preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized." Acts 8:12

Baptism doesn't make a person a Christian—it is a step of obedience that illustrates a believer's faith. Baptism does not save you—only your faith in Christ does. Baptism is like a wedding ring—it is the outward symbol of the decision you made in your heart to say, "yes" to Jesus.

"For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

What about infant baptism?

Some churches practice infant baptism for children. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. This is different from believer's baptism. The baptism that Jesus referred to is for those who are old enough to believe.

At The Ridge we wait until people are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

We do not practice infant baptism; however, we do periodically provide an opportunity for parents to dedicate their children to the Lord. The baby dedication ceremony allows parents to bring their children before the Lord and the church family for a prayer of blessing and dedication. The ceremony also gives parents the opportunity to make a covenant before God and the congregation that they will raise their child to know God.

Understanding the Way Faith Grows

How do we grow spiritually and in our relationship with God? Ultimately, we believe God helps us grow, but there are some practical things we can do to see significant spiritual progress take place in our lives.

Here are five faith catalysts God can use to help us grow in our faith. Each looks different to us in our various life stages, but each will play a role in our spiritual maturity.

1. Practical Teaching

Practical teaching is teaching which moves people to action; this is one of the primary things God uses to grow our faith.

From Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24, 26), we discover that hearing and learning are not enough.

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. ... But everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand." Matthew 7:24, 26

The value and greatest growth in our faith is in the application of what we've heard and learned. It's not just about knowing—it's about doing. In the end, it is obedience which makes all the difference. Without application, knowledge means little.

When our acts of faith intersect with God's faithfulness, our faith grows.

2. Private Disciplines

Personal spiritual disciplines introduce a sense of intimacy and accountability to our faith. Private spiritual disciplines tune our hearts to the heart of God and underscore personal accountability to our Heavenly Father. One of the most important choices in our life is to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Developing private spiritual disciplines—quiet time, study, devotions, prayer, thanksgiving, giving, fasting, confession, etc.—can move us forward and help us to grow in our relationship with God.

In Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, He mentions giving, praying and fasting as devotional components to be done in private (Matthew 6).

God leverages systematic prayer and generosity to grow our confidence in him. He responds to our private acts of righteousness.

3. Personal Ministry

One of the ways God grows our faith is through personal ministry. God has gifted each of us in many ways; but oftentimes, we feel inadequate. If you have ever volunteered to do something for which you have felt inadequate, then you already know what an experience like that can do for your faith.

The Bible is full of illustrations of God calling and prodding people into service in spite of their overwhelming sense of inadequacy. In these instances, their faith got bigger: Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Saul/Paul, the disciples.

When we are willing to make what we have available to God, amazing things happen. We often experience Emmanuel—God with us—through our obedience. Jesus might be saying to us, “Just bring me what you have, and I’ll work with that. Bring me your limited education, your lack of experience, your fear, your insecurity, and watch what I can do.”

In the relationship between our faith and our service to others, we grow when we serve others. Ministry forces us to be consciously dependent on God, and thus, our faith is strengthened.

4. Providential Relationships

If you are like most people, you can't tell your life story without referencing people who played a significant role in your life along the way. The same is true of your faith story. Eventually, you begin to realize there are people, or encounters, that you view as divine appointments or happenings.

Providential relationships play a role in the development of our faith in two specific ways:

- A. We grow when we've heard from God through someone else
- B. We grow when we've seen God working through someone else

While it's beyond our ability to manufacture any type of relationship, including one characterized as providential, we can participate in and help to create environments that are conducive to the development of these types of relationships.

Many of the environments in which you are participating or leading are less about teaching in “rows” and more about conversational “circles.” The more relational opportunities we can help to provide in our environments, the more likely providential relationships can happen.

5. Pivotal Circumstances

Pivotal circumstances play a huge role in the development of our confidence in God. They test, and therefore potentially strengthen, our confidence in God. Life is full of surprises—some good, some not so good. Each unexpected event that comes our way is actually a divine opportunity to know God more.

When we are able to find God in the midst of life's pivotal circumstances, our faith is strengthened. When we help others recognize God in the midst of their life circumstances, their faith is strengthened.

There are two main factors which determine how we interpret events and circumstances in our lives:

- A. Our worldview (Do we see God's sovereignty in our lives?)
- B. Who we are doing life with at the time (Do we have people in our lives willing to speak truth to us to remind us of God's faithfulness?)

What We Believe

Statement of Faith

In essential beliefs, we have unity.

"There is one body and one Spirit... one hope... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..."
Ephesians 4:4-6

In non-essential beliefs, we have liberty.

"Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.... Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God... The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves..." Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22 (NASB)

In our beliefs, we display love.

"Above all, put on love—the perfect bond of unity." Colossians 3:14

Essential Beliefs

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as 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 in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily. (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1)

Salvation

Men and women are freed from the penalty for their sins not as a result, in whole or in part, of their own works, goodness or religious ceremony, but by the undeserved favor of God alone. God declares righteous all who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10, 13)

Assurance

All who are born again of the Spirit can be fully assured of eternal life from the very moment they put their faith in Christ. This assurance is not based upon any kind of human merit, but upon the fact of God's election, upon Christ's complete payment for sins and upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is the deposit guaranteeing their inheritance. (John 10:27-29; 1 John 5:13; Ephesians 1:3-5, 13)

The Resurrection of the Dead

At physical death, the believer enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his or her own body to everlasting glory and blessing. At physical death, the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his or her body to everlasting suffering, judgment and condemnation. (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 50-58; Revelation 21:1-5; Philipians 1:21-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:11-15)

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Jesus Christ has instructed those who believe in Him to be baptized in water as a symbol of their new birth in Christ. Baptism should be by immersion and is only for those who have personally believed in Christ. The Lord also instituted the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of His suffering, death and resurrection. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper have any merit in helping a person obtain eternal life. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41, 8:38-39; Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30*)

The Church

All true believers make up the church worldwide and should assemble together locally—for worship, prayer, fellowship, and teaching—to become conformed to the image of Christ and to become equipped to carry out the Great Commission that Christ gave His followers in Matthew 28:18-20. (*Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:41-47; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:24-25*)

The Bible

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible—the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. It was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and was written without error in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in faith and life in every age. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*)

God

There is but one God, infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness and love, the Creator of the universe, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each of whom possesses all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality. (*Genesis 1:1,26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 147:5; Proverbs 15:3; James 1:13; Matthew 28:18; John 10:30; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:3; John 14:16; Acts 5:3-4*)

Humanity

God created humanity in His own image, and man, as he was originally created, was innocent before God. Humanity chose to sin by disobeying God, and therefore, was alienated from his Creator and came under divine condemnation. Thus, all human beings are born with a corrupted nature and without spiritual life, and are totally incapable of pleasing God in and of themselves. (*Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1,8-9; Titus 3:5*)

Jesus Christ

God the Father, by His own choice and out of love for sinful men and women, sent Jesus Christ into the world to reconcile sinners to Himself. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He is God in the flesh, both true God and true man. (*John 3:16, 10:30; Romans 5:8; Matthew 1:18; John 1:1,10-13*)

Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and voluntarily suffered and died as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins, thus satisfying God's justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He bodily ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, makes intercession for His own. He will return to earth—personally, visibly, and bodily—to judge all men and establish His kingdom. (*Isaiah 53:5-6; Mark 10:45; John 14:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 15:2-4; 1 Peter 3:18; Acts 1:9-11; Philipians 2:9-11*)

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We want to start by acknowledging the reality that this topic has been very polarizing, controversial, and a source of division among many. People on opposite sides of the issue have responded in hurtful and offensive ways, which do not lead to healing and harmony. Also, because of its multi-layered and complicated nature, we ask those of you reading to do so with humility, open hearts, and a desire to understand, not just be understood.

It's only with a posture of extreme love that we can bring healing to hearts that have been hurt. For our friends in the LGBT+ community, we want you to know that we are heartbroken by the reality that the global church's posture towards the LGBT+ community has not consistently reflected the command of Jesus for Christians to love all people. Our desire at Chestnut Ridge Church is to be a community marked by our love and hospitality towards everyone, regardless of one's theological and political views, ethnicity, race, sexual preferences and/or gender. We are committed to you—to listen to you and walk with you, regardless of any differences we may have. We welcome you into our community of faith and invite you to grow with us toward knowing Jesus more and more.

It's also important to know that we approach this subject from a very personal point of view. Many in our staff, leadership core, and church have loved ones, friends, neighbors, and co-workers who identify themselves as part of the LGBT+ community. Therefore, this conversation deeply matters to us. Though it has always been our preference to address this topic in a relational way, we also thought it would be important and respectful to lay out our position on sexuality and gender for anyone who is exploring our community. We consider ourselves to humbly hold the position of a welcoming, but

non-affirming church, meaning we welcome, love and care for the LGBT+ community while continuing to hold the biblical Christian view of sex and marriage between one man and one woman. Therefore, biblically legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely between one man and one woman in a monogamous covenantal marriage. Hence, any sexual relations outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as *porneia* or *sexually immorality*) including but not limited to, adultery, polygamy, polyamorous, premarital sex, and same-sex activity are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, the creation, distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with biblical teachings.

In terms of gender, we understand the Scriptures to teach that God created humans in His image to reflect Himself to the world—male and female. Each one is distinctly and uniquely designed to carry out God's love to the world. We believe altering one's biological design pushes a person further away from God's intent for them and the abundant life God designed them to live. Chestnut Ridge Church is committed to responding consistently to all forms of sexual immorality and relations outside of marriage in a manner that's gracious, appropriate, loving and helpful to individuals who desire to follow Jesus in our community.

We understand that the biblical teaching on this topic can be seen by many as outdated and lacking compassion. However, the driving force behind our tight grip on biblical teaching is that we believe and have seen that even when we don't understand God's ways, obeying His guidelines will lead us into the most fulfilling and meaningful life—which is our desire for all people. Though our conviction is as stated, we also believe that the sin is in the action, not the attraction. Many of our human attractions, urges, and feelings have to be directed or controlled for them to lead us into health, instead of brokenness. This applies to the heterosexual person's desire for other partners who are not their spouse, as much as for those with homosexual desires.

Lastly, more than helping you understand us, we want to get to know you. Our staff and leaders are available and open to having healthy conversations regarding sexuality and gender. Our primary goal is to help people enter into a life-giving and intimate relationship with their Creator. As we each grow to love God more, we are confident that He will make us more and more like Jesus and lead us into the most fulfilling life.

*"I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance."
- Jesus (John 10:10)*

Chestnut Ridge Church

Distinctives

Why We Do What We Do at The Ridge

The Great Commandments:

"He [Jesus] said to him, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.'" Matthew 22:37-40

The Great Commission:

"Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20

Our Vision

Our vision is to be an inviting church that leads people into a growing relationship with God and others.

We desire to reach those who are close to God, but also for those who are far from Him, curious about Him, or willing to take a next step toward Him.

Although the United States was once rich in Christian culture and Judeo-Christian values, more and more people are becoming unchurched or de-churched. In some circles, these are known as the "nones" and the "dones." We can look around us and see cultural indicators that society is heading in a direction away from faith and the church.

To change this reality, we—Chestnut Ridge Church—have determined to look at church differently. We want to be a church for everyone, no matter where they are in their spiritual journey. We especially want to be a church willing to invite the "nones" and "dones," and to be welcoming to them, too.

This is how we help people get closer to God: when we know the context of our culture, we meet people where they are at within it, walk forward with them in real relationships, and engage them to take their next step. Their journey of faith becomes real, our evangelism will be relational, and the message of the Gospel will change their lives. To do this, we must each be willing to invite others to join us, and we must be inviting in the way in which we accomplish this.

When we become more like Jesus in our desire to lead people into a growing relationship with God and others, the more we will impact our city, our region, our state and our world.

Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 15:19; Acts 17:16-33; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Our Strategy

Our strategy is to create environments where people are encouraged and equipped to pursue three vital relationships:

- **Intimacy with God**
- **Community with those who are already believers**
- **Influence with those who are not yet believers**

We feel our job at Chestnut Ridge Church is to create environments where God can work. We cannot change lives; that's God's job. However, we can create environments where God can work. At The Ridge, we have three primary types of environments: **guest, friend** and **family**.

Guest environments are for everyone at The Ridge: those who are close to God and those who are far from God. The goal with guest environments is that people would enjoy themselves and want to return.

These are some of the guest environments:

- Weekend service/gathering
- Concerts/events
- Conferences
- Night of Worship
- Starting Point Orientation

Friend environments are designed for people to connect, develop friendships, and to meet others at the Ridge.

Some of our friend environments include:

- Next
- Single Series (for single adults)
- Couples Connect
- Marriage Works
- Encounter (CRC Campus)
- Ridge Kids gatherings (for infants through elementary school)
- Ridge Students gatherings (for middle & high school students)
- Short-Term Groups—men's, women's, couples,
- Beyond Teams—group volunteer opportunities

Family environments are where people do life together. The goal for family environments is for people to experience community with one another.

Some of the family environments include:

- Community Groups—men's, women's, couples
- Support Groups
- Ridge Kids small groups
- Ridge Students small groups

Core Organizational Values

Biblical Authority

God has spoken to us through the Bible, and we recognize it as the final authority over our lives. We believe God's truth is timeless, and it applies to us today. We do not allow culturally accepted mores to supersede God's Word. We seek God's heart through what He has written in the Bible, and as we get to know God better we get to know His Word. We also believe that as we submit ourselves to God's Word, we will experience maximum freedom, not bondage.

Relevant Environments

Every setting should be designed to effectively connect with its target audience. Both the audience and the culture have to be considered as we attempt to "build bridges" and "turn on lights" for people. We cannot assume that what worked yesterday will work today. Our methods and mediums of communication must be relevant. We must ask questions such as: who is our target audience, what does the audience need, and, what is the best way to communicate with the audience?

Authentic Community

Spiritual growth, care, a sense of belonging and accountability occur best with relationally—connected believers. People grow best within community. Therefore, we will focus on small groups where people can experience open, authentic and spiritually-meaningful relationships.

Intimacy with God

God desires an intimate relationship with each one of us. Our goal is to help people fall in love with God. We love Him because He first loved us! We want to focus on intimacy with Him rather than on adherence to rules or rote religious observances. A relationship with God requires time, effort, and openness.

Relational Evangelism

We feel that in our culture, God's message of forgiveness through Christ is most effectively conveyed within the context of personal relationships. As we build relationships with others, we will earn the right to speak spiritual truth into their lives. The church will partner with its members to reach their family and friends for Christ.

Strategic Service

We believe that God has a specific calling for Chestnut Ridge Church. In order to maximize our impact, we believe we have to be strategic in how we use the financial and volunteer resources God has provided to us. We will challenge people to join with us in using their spiritual gifts to help carry out the strategy of the church.

Intentional Apprenticing

We are responsible to pass along to others the knowledge, skills, and opportunities that have been entrusted to us. Therefore, we would like each person who serves to be apprenticing someone else who could do what they are doing. The core value of intentional apprenticing suggests that people think not only in terms of multiplication, but replacing yourself.

We do all this so that are able to be an inviting church that leads people into a growing relationship with God and others.

How We Engage As Partners

Four verbs describe what it means to be fully engaged at The Ridge: **connect**, **serve**, **give** and **invite**.

Connect

We believe change takes place best within the context of community. We are a part of a spiritual family. By virtue of the relationship we have with God, our Father, we are brothers and sisters of another in Christ. This is the one family which is eternal. When we put our faith in Christ, we become a part of a new family as children of God.

1. When we connect with one another, we grow. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

"He was in the world, and the world was created through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God." John 1:10-13

Spiritual maturity has more to do with relationships than it does with our Biblical knowledge or how long one has been a Christian—it has everything to do with our connectedness to Christ and with His people.

It involves having:

- Unity in the faith
- Knowledge of the Son
- The character of Christ

2. When we connect with one another, we have an opportunity to learn from spiritual leaders and other believers, as we come to understand God's Word and apply it to our lives.

"And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ..." Ephesians 4:11-12

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

3. When we connect with one another, we receive support from other believers who can help us in our spiritual journey. We are not meant to do this alone.

Other believers employ their ability, talents, and gifts—given to them by God—to help strengthen us.

"From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part." Ephesians 4:16

Other believers can also encourage us in our faith.

"And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Hebrews 10:24-25

4. When we connect with one another, we can experience intimacy with Christ, Himself.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them." Matthew 18:20

"I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in the inner man through His Spirit, and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:16-19

Serve

Why serve in the church?

"For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

"There are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different activities, but the same God activates each gift in each person." 1 Corinthians 12:5-6

Read Ephesians 4:11-13, 16 and Romans 12:1, 4-5

1. God created each of us for ministry.

2. God gives us spiritual gifts so that we may serve one another.

"Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God." 1 Peter 4:10

"And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ..." Ephesians 4:11-12

3. God commands each of us to serve.

"Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these." Mark 12:30-31

4. The Body of Christ needs each of us.

"So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it." 1 Corinthians 12:26-27

How do I activate my ministry?

Discover your unique SHAPE

"I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know this very well. ...all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began." Psalm 139:14, 16b

1. You were shaped for a purpose
2. You are unique
3. You are wonderfully complex

SHAPE stands for **S**piritual gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality, and **E**xperiences.

Spiritual Gifts: What am I gifted to do?

"Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:4

Definition of Spiritual Gift: The special ability, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer at their conversion, to be used to minister to others and therefore build up the Body of Christ.

Please use this link to take the Spiritual Gifts Survey on our website:
theridge.church/spiritualgifts

Heart: What do I love to do?

"As water reflects the face, so the heart reflects the person." Proverbs 27:19

- God has given each of us a unique emotional heartbeat that races when we encounter activities, subjects, or circumstances that interest us. We instinctively feel deeply about some things and not about others.
- God had a purpose in giving you your inborn interest.

"For God has put it into their hearts to carry out His plan by having one purpose..." Revelation 17:17

- Spend some time finishing the statement, "I love to..."

Abilities: What natural talents and skills do I have?

"And there are different activities, but the same God activates each gift in each person." 1 Corinthians 12:6

Spend some time writing down a list of things you know are your talents or skills.

Personality: Where does my personality best suit me to serve?

"I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14

How do I see myself?

- Introverted or Extroverted
- Self-controlled or Self-expressive
- Routine or Variety
- Cooperative or Competitive

Experiences: What spiritual, painful, educational, and ministry experiences have I had?

"He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Corinthians 1:4

What life experiences have you had that have shaped who you are and may be preparing you for your ministry?

Give

Churches often talk about giving tithes. In the Old Testament, God's people were required to give a tithe of the increase in their crops and flocks. Although we are no longer under the Old Testament Law, we believe that Old Testament tithing provides a model for New Testament giving. While tithing may not be possible for all at this time, each member should commit himself to give regularly of his earnings while working toward the ability to tithe. Many members will excel in generosity and give beyond their tithe.

"Don't you know that those who perform the temple services eat the food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the offerings of the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel." 1 Corinthians 9:13-14

Here are some principles related to tithing:

1. Tithing provides an opportunity to trust God.

It takes faith to believe God will take care of us if we put Him first in the area of our finances.

"...Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this way,' says the Lord of Hosts. 'See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not ruin the produce of your land and your vine in your field will not fail to produce fruit,' says the Lord of Hosts." Malachi 3:10,11

"And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8

2. Tithing provides an opportunity to give back to God for all that He has given to us.

"How can I repay the Lord for all the good He has done for me?" Psalm 116:12

"Everyone must appear with a gift suited to his means, according to the blessing the Lord your God has given you." Deuteronomy 16:17

3. Tithing reminds us that ultimately everything comes from God.

"...but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant He swore to your fathers, as it is today." Deuteronomy 8:18

"Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy." 1 Timothy 6:17

4. Tithing is a way to support the ministry God is doing in the world.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you." Matthew 6:33

Question to ask yourself: is what I am doing with what I have storing up gifts in heaven?

Here are some additional verses we should consider when giving:

"Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

"Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6

Invite

We want to be an inviting church that leads people into a growing relationship with God and others.

Jesus invites; therefore, we should invite.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

The Problem

As we develop relationships with other Christians, our circle of influence with unbelievers tends to decrease. Therefore, we must be intentional about developing relationships with those outside the faith, and we should all ask ourselves, "What is my strategy for reaching people for Christ?"

The average Christian faces two problems when it comes to evangelism:

- Fear—"This might risk my relationship with my friend," or "I'm not sure how this is going to turn out."
- Ignorance—"They will ask me something that I will not know how to answer."

The Solution

Invest and Invite

- Our role as Chestnut Ridge Church is to create relevant environments where your friends will hear a clear, creative and compelling gospel presentation.
- Your role as a partner of Chestnut Ridge Church is to invest in relationships and invite your friends and relatives to The Ridge environments.

Partner with the church in your evangelism strategy.

One of our seven core values is relational evangelism.

We feel that in our culture, God's message of forgiveness through Christ is most effectively conveyed within the context of personal relationships. As we build relationships with others, we will earn the right to speak spiritual truth into their lives. The church's commitment is to partner with its members to reach their family and friends for Christ. Why is this effective? It is sometimes easier and more natural to have a come-and-see approach to evangelism.

"Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'" "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip." John 1:44-46

We want to create an inviting church where guests will experience appealing environments, engaging presentations and helpful content—a place where the church won't be boring! When people are seeking spiritual answers to questions they have, they tend to show up to church on Sunday. It is a great solution to have a place to bring your unchurched friends.

We should care about the spiritual welfare of others.

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Matthew 9:36-38

How the Church is Led

Board of Trustees

The church is governed by a Board of Trustees, which meets regularly to provide direction and accountability to the pastoral staff. The Board of Trustees is responsible to establish the purposes and core values of the church and to institute executive limitations on the pastoral staff. They are also responsible to approve the annual budget. The current board members are:

Dr. Bill Post (Chairman) Pastor Tim Haring Jason Bolen Chad Griffith Rick Kraich
Doug Kramer Terry McMillen Tom Rubenstein Mark Spruill

Pastors

In the Scripture, God has given a specific plan for leadership. Obviously, the head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). At The Ridge, we strive to follow a structure of leadership which will not detract from Jesus occupying this position.

At the same time, Scripture gives clear leadership responsibility to certain members of the body. While these leaders are of no greater value in the sight of God, and while we recognize that every Christian has gifts with which they should minister in the body, at the same time the pastoral leaders are held accountable by God for the direction and well-being of the church (Hebrews 13:17).

Those responsible for leadership in the church are called elders (Acts 20:17), pastors (or shepherds—Acts 20:28), bishops (Acts 20:28 Gk.) and overseers (Acts 20:28). While any of these names are appropriate since they refer to the same persons doing the same job, at The Ridge we usually go by the name of “pastor.”

The role of a pastor is to lead the church, care for its members, pray for them, teach or instruct, and be an example of Christian living. The pastors at The Ridge are deeply committed to the spiritual growth of each of its members and the spreading of the gospel throughout our community.

In the New Testament, men were appointed as pastors based on their spiritual maturity and character (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9).

“An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher, not addicted to wine, not a bully but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy—one who manages his own household competently, having his children under control with all dignity. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God's church?) He must not be a new convert, or he might become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Furthermore, he must have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he does not fall into disgrace and the Devil's trap.” 1 Timothy 3:2-7

At The Ridge, the final decision on appointment of a pastor will rest with their ability to meet these standards and with the approval of the Board, the congregation and a representative of the Great Commission Association of Churches. In addition, a pastor must exhibit a genuine humility, a desire for spiritual excellence, a sincere love for people, and the basic skills necessary to carry out leadership responsibilities.

We do not believe a pastor must receive a full-time salary. However, normally, he would, and it is the desire of the church to enable its leaders to have all the time necessary to build the church. Scripture teaches that those who work hard at leading and teaching are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17).

As necessary, deacons will also be appointed to serve the church, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit pastors from performing their Biblical responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:8-12).

In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to respect their leadership (Hebrews 13:17). As such, scripture indicates that final authority and responsibility as to church doctrine, policy and procedures rest with the pastor. However, the pastor does desire and need the thoughtful and prayerful input of each member.

Financial Policies

Our pledge of financial accountability:

1. Each year, a budget, as prepared by the staff or finance committee, must be approved by the Board of Trustees.
2. We will publish an annual financial statement to be given to each member. A more detailed statement is available to members upon request.
3. We will do our best to help with genuine financial needs within the church. The procedure to receive such help is to notify one of the pastors or a Board member concerning a need. Where there is repeated financial need, financial accountability and counseling may be required.
4. Periodically, we will teach on giving, conduct fund drives for the local church needs or needs in the Morgantown area, or conduct national and international missions' fund drives.
5. A Certified Public Accountant will conduct an annual outside review of the church's finances.

Removal from Partnership

A partner may be removed from membership with Chestnut Ridge Church for any of the following reasons:

1. Personally requesting his/her removal from membership
2. Becoming a member of another church
3. Moving away
4. Death
5. Being under church discipline

(Matthew 18:15-17, Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 5:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:12-14, Titus 3:10)

Affiliations

Chestnut Ridge Church is a member of Great Commission Churches—a US-based fellowship of independent churches designed to equip, unite and provide accountability to churches and ministries that have a desire to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Ridge Church Plants

River Ridge Church

Charleston, WV

River Ridge Church—Teays Valley

Hurricane, WV

South Ridge Church

Fairmont, WV

South Ridge Church

Bridgeport, WV

Affiliated Churches

Iglesia Gran Comisión

La Ceiba, Honduras

Iglesia Gran Comisión

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Strategic Partners

Chestnut Ridge Church is proud to have the opportunity to partner with these incredible organizations as they serve our community, state and world.

Christian Help is a non-denominational, non-profit organization in Morgantown, working to improve the lives of those in need.

Jobs for Life is a personal development course, using timeless, biblical principles, for those who are unemployed or underemployed. Through training, individuals develop desirable characteristics that will help them in the workforce.

Trinity Christian School is an interdenominational institution committed to providing a Christ-centered environment where each student is nurtured to excel academically, socially, physically, and spiritually.

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) serves the mothers in our community by providing a place where they can connect with other mothers, find encouragement, and be equipped to become better mothers.

Chestnut Mountain Ranch provides a Christ-centered school and home for boys in crisis and in need of hope and healing. Partnering with their families, they pursue family restoration and reunification.

Libera is for every woman who wants to be free. Freedom is often thought of as a physical, external thing, but freedom is something we can lack internally in many different ways. Libera is about transformation and hope—empowering West Virginia women and teens to live in freedom.

Compassion International is a child-advocacy ministry that pairs compassionate people with those who are suffering from poverty. The ministry releases children from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty through Christ-centered, child-focused, and church-based development, education and sponsorships.

Samaritan's Purse is a nondenominational, evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. It helps by meeting the needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease, and famine, with the purpose of sharing God's love through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Operation Christmas Child (OCC) is a project of Samaritan's Purse, and carries a mission to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. Together with the local church, OCC shares the good news of Jesus Christ by collecting and delivering millions of gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 150 countries and territories.

Daughter of the King's mission is to encourage, empower, and equip all people to live for God and to be productive for His Kingdom.

Missions

Chestnut Ridge Church sponsors team mission trips to share the message of the gospel, assist in caring for the needs of others, and to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus.

