



SOUTHPOINT
CHURCH

starting **POINT**



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Hello and welcome to The SouthPoint Church!

I am thrilled that you are considering taking your next step to join our church family. I pray that by doing so, your faith comes alive and your relationship with Christ continues to grow. Our hope for you as you read the following pages and attend the Starting Point Growth Track, that you find your purpose for which God has uniquely designed you, and you are energized by joining our mission to reach those who are far from God.

When SouthPoint Church began in 1965, Robert and Schaunell Herrin dreamed of the ways God could use a church in the South Augusta area to be a place where the lost and broken would find hope. Over the years we have seen countless lives changed and the fulfillment of that dream, to share the message of hope in Jesus with those who need to hear it.

What I am excited about today is that God is leading you to enter into this journey with us. I cannot begin to tell you how honored I am that you would consider being a part of our church family and partner with us on this mission.

May God bless you and bring you clarity as you prayerfully consider joining our church family. I sincerely pray that your faith will grow and that together we can continue to share the hope we have in Christ with those who are still far from Him.

Blessings,



Steve Norsworthy, Lead Pastor, SouthPoint Church of God, Inc.

“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

1 Corinthians 1:10

SouthPoint Church exists to help people take their next step towards God.

We believe, that all people have a place, all people have a purpose, and all people matter to God. If people matter to God then they should matter to us. That means that we will do whatever it takes to reach them with the message of hope in Jesus.

The tools we use to do this are our Sunday services, our Small Groups, and our Volunteer Teams. It is in these three environments that we accomplish our three main goals as a church - to Love God, Love People and Serve the World.

LOVE GOD

Statistics show that a person who is far from God is most likely to “try” church on a Sunday morning between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. Therefore, we pour all of our energy into creating experiences each weekend that are life-giving and inviting to these guests. From their first impression in the parking lot to the music and the sermon, we want guests to have an engaging experience that helps them be open to the work of Christ in their lives. That’s why **our weekend services are our primary tool for introducing people to the love of God.**

This means that we have 52 weekly opportunities each year to share the gospel in a compelling way in order to reach those people. We do this in a few different ways:

- *The language we use:* We want to speak in terms that most people will understand, especially if they are new to the faith. If we must use obscure Biblical words, we will be sure to explain them so that everyone can follow.

- *Creative elements*: We know that in order to communicate the gospel effectively, we have to speak in ways that a lot of different people understand. That's why we use alternative elements, like drama, video, or special music in our services to communicate Biblical truths.
- *Friendly & relaxed environment*: Guests often come to church with walls they've put up to keep God out. It might be because of a bad experience they've had with a Christian in the past, or a personal hurt or issue in their life. It could be anything. But when someone smiles and says hello, or offers them a cup of coffee, it gives them permission to start taking those walls down. When those walls come down, people are more open to God's work in their lives - and they enjoy themselves!
- *Fun*: We want our church to be a place that's attractive because we have fun and enjoy the life God has given us. So, we make our Baptism Celebration parties, we celebrate Super Bowl Sunday, we have funny elements in our services. We have fun.

As a part of our church family, our weekend services are your opportunity to partner with us to create an experience that is engaging and inviting to guests. Each week, we will make every effort to present the Gospel in a clear and compelling way. Here's where you come in - we don't know the people in your life who need to hear this message. So this is the deal we'll make with you: if you'll do what we can't do (invite your friends and family members who don't know Christ), we'll do our best to create a safe, open place where they can hear the message of Jesus.

LOVE PEOPLE

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Relationships matter greatly to us. A person's life can be changed in an instant, but sustained life-change happens best within the context of community. The Bible makes it clear that we are not designed to follow Christ alone. That's why we **facilitate relationship-building through Small Groups**. We believe that our church must become larger and

smaller at the same time. We are unapologetic about our drive to grow larger as a church. This is not to build our own egos, but to reach more people with the message of Christ. Yet at the same time, we want to create environments that help people connect in smaller groups in order to build great relationships.

Here are a few things to know about Small Groups:

- They range in size; some have a few people, some have a few dozen.
- They typically meet in homes, yet some meet onsite at the church.
- They meet on a semester basis, either January – May, June – July, or August – September. Some groups enjoy year round meetings with breaks during holidays.

SERVE THE WORLD

Finally, we are passionate about creating opportunities for you to put your faith in action. We believe that God has uniquely designed each member of our church family for a specific purpose in ministry. We want to help you find that purpose and **serve the world by being a part of our ministry teams.** The Bible speaks to this.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace...” 1 Peter 4:10

Any and all ministry we do happens only because of the passion and talent of the people who volunteer here. Our staff’s job is to equip you and release you to do ministry. Because we believe each of us has God-given gifts and abilities, we put a lot of effort into helping you find the specific ministry for which you were designed.

To help you connect, we offer starting point classes mostly during Sunday mornings where we help you find your fit on a ministry team. We don’t try to fill roles on our teams because we just need to fill roles; our goal is to create opportunities for you to serve in your unique passions and gifting.

“Watch your life and your doctrine closely. Continue in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

1 Timothy 4:16

We take a unique approach to discussing beliefs. Instead of making a long list of things we do or do not believe, we want to begin by framing how we choose to talk about beliefs.

In our **essential beliefs**, we have unity. We have **four essential beliefs**. These four things are central to everything we do as a church. While everyone is absolutely welcome at The SouthPoint Church, a person who does not share these four beliefs will likely not feel comfortable enough here to really be a part of our mission. Unity around these four things is absolutely critical for us.

In our non-essential beliefs, we have diversity. With so many people coming through our doors each week, it's inevitable that there will be beliefs we differ on. People who have different backgrounds or experiences may believe differently about some non-essential things. We welcome this diversity, and we will not fight over things that we do not believe are essential to our salvation.

One example of a **non-essential** belief for us would be the way we practice Baptism. We believe that Baptism is the public expression of our faith. That once a person has made Christ the leader of their life, they should follow Jesus' example from scripture and be publicly baptized, making it known to their church family that they are a follower of Jesus. Because it's the principle that matters here, we won't get hung up on the practice. We practice baptism by immersion - meaning we dunk you completely in the water and bring you back up. Many traditions practice Baptism by sprinkling or pouring water over a person's head. We often have people who ask to be baptized this way for various reasons, and we will gladly make accommodations for them. We are much less concerned with how a person is baptized than we are about the fact that they publicly proclaim their faith in Jesus.

In **all** of our beliefs, we show charity. No matter what we agree or disagree on, we are always going to show kindness. It's that simple.

Understanding all of that, here are our **four essential beliefs**:

1. The Bible is the Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16)

We believe that from the beginning to the end, from Genesis to Revelation, every word is divinely inspired by God. All of our daily decisions, both personally and as a church, are directed by the words in Scripture.

Because we believe this, we take it one step further. Each year we read through the Bible together as a church. You can join us anytime - the daily readings are always listed at www.southpoint.life.

2. Jesus is the Son of God. (John 14:6)

Jesus is the reason for everything we do. We believe that Jesus was born from a virgin, lived a perfect life on Earth, died on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins, and rose from the dead after three days. We fashion our lives after the life He lived, and we put our faith in his promise to return.

3. You must be born again. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Matthew 16:25)

The Bible says that in Christ, we are new creations. Being "born again" means that a person has accepted the gift of grace that Christ gave when He died on the cross, and has made Jesus the Lord and leader of his or her life. When we do this, the Bible says that we will spend eternity with God in Heaven. Christ isn't one of many ways to God, He is the only way to God. When we accept His gift, we must surrender our lives to Him as our Savior and reshape our lives around Him as our Leader and Lord.

4. Believers can and should be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

After Jesus rose from the dead and left the Earth, He sent the Holy Spirit to us. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who gives us power to live lives focused on Jesus. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we can and should invite the Holy Spirit to be a part of our lives. He enables us to live out God's plan for us.

Above all, we feel that unity around these four things enables us to fulfill the mission God has given to us. If you are uncomfortable with these four essentials, you may find it difficult to fully get behind our mission, since we build all of our ministries on the foundation of these four things. However, you are more than welcome to continue to attend SouthPoint Church. We still very much want to get to know you and help you grow in your faith.

If you read these four essentials and you're completely on board, then we think you'll find it easy and life-giving to be a part of our church family and totally join our mission. We are honored to help you find your purpose and put your faith in action.

“For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace... Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

1 Corinthians 14:33, 40

The structure of our church is like scaffolding around which we build our ministry. It provides guidance and guardrails that enable all of us to do ministry to the best of our ability and accomplish our mission to reach those who are far from God.

Because our structure is so critical to the ministry we do, we care very much about it and about how we manage it. We have a simple structure that allows us to **minimize drama** while **maximizing ministry**.

Our top priority is unity. We know that without being unified under Christ and the desire to share His message of grace and hope, we cannot succeed. A good church structure promotes unity like this, and downplays division. We believe that our structure does just this.

Traditionally, there are two types of churches - “staff-led” and “congregation-led.” In a congregation-led church, the entire congregation weighs in on every single decision through voting. In a staff-led church, the church staff makes the daily decisions that are necessary for ministry, and are protected by various layers of accountability.

SouthPoint Church is a staff-led church. This means that our church staff, and many key volunteers, make daily ministry decisions, and we do not hold votes. The primary reason for this is because voting tends to do 2 things:

1. Slow down progress.

When you have to bring together the entire church to weigh in on all decisions, it makes the decision-making process painfully slow. When the leaders of the church are empowered to make decisions, it frees the church up to respond to opportunities that God provides in a timely manner.

2. *Create losers.*

In any vote, there are winners and losers. Someone will always walk away disappointed, and a division is always drawn. This type of process tends to promote politics and power plays, and we do not believe that is God's plan for His church.

In light of those things, our church staff and volunteer leaders are here to lead by creating opportunities that equip and release you to do ministry. We believe that that is the role of church leaders, and our team is dedicated to that belief.

A question we get often at this point is, "Great, I don't want a church full of losers! But, how do you stay accountable without voting?" That's a great question.

The government of the SouthPoint Church is made up of multiple layers of accountability. Here's the basic outline:

- The **Ministry Team.**

This team is composed of the church staff, along with key volunteers, and is led by the Lead Pastor, Steve Norsworthy. They oversee the day-to-day ministry and operations of the church. The Ministry Team serves those who attend the church by creating opportunities for people to grow spiritually, and do ministry.

We spend 40- 50% of our budget on staffing, which is below the national average for churches at around 61%.

- The **Pastor's Council**

This group is appointed by the Lead Pastor and the existing board members. The council oversee the spiritual direction of the church, offer counsel on major decisions, approve the annual budgets, and uphold the integrity of the mission and vision of SouthPoint.

We typically have between 5-7 people on this board. They meet once each month to give counsel on big decisions and approve any debt or major

spending. One of their most important roles is to protect the unity of the church, and in the event that we would ever need to replace our Lead Pastor, they would do so. This board will at times vote on the basis of Roberts Rule if there is an obvious split opinion on a major matter.

- The **Stewardship Committee.**

This group is composed of two council persons, the Executive Pastor, the Director of Finance or an Administrator. They provide counsel on the major financial commitments of the church, and they set the budget each year. The members of this committee have strong backgrounds and years of experience in finance. They meet quarterly, and see all expenses, from staff to stamps, weekly.

- The **Church of God.**

The Church of God is our denominational affiliation, based out of Cleveland, TN. There are more than 7 million members of this organization worldwide, in over 180 countries. While we look a lot different than many other Church of God churches, which tend to be more traditional, we value our relationship with them and take every opportunity we can to aid pastors who share our desire to reach those who are far from God.

The Church of God also provides an additional layer of accountability for our Lead Pastor. Much like the Methodist movement, he is under the leadership of overseers at the district, state and national level. They provide relational support for him, as well as protect the integrity of his theology and doctrine.

“We hope that your faith will grow and that our work among you will be greatly enlarged.” -

2 Corinthians 10:15

At The SouthPoint Church, a member is someone who partners with us in **creating, serving, volunteering, leading and funding** our environments. Membership here requires more than simply putting your name on a list. At the SouthPoint Church, membership is synonymous with involvement. We believe membership matters.

As we said in the beginning, our church family is a team with a common belief that people matter to God, and if they matter to God they should matter to us. Every person plays a critical role in our mission to reach those who are far from God.

Our hope for you, just like 2 Corinthians says, is that your faith will grow. We know that there are a few things you must do in order to make that happen, and we are committed to walking with you on that journey. That leads us to the two main steps we want every one of our church members to take:

Join a group.

We believe you cannot live a Christ-like life on an island. God created us with a basic need for relationships, and we all know that those we are closest to influence us the most. That's why we want to help you connect with people who are chasing after God and are letting Him lead their life. Our **SouthPoint Groups** are where you can do that. You can take this step any Sunday by stopping by the Information Center, or at southpoint.life

Join a team.

We also know that our belief in God is only as effective as the action we put behind it. Our church is on a mission to reach others who need Jesus, and our ministry teams are how we do that. We need you. Not only that, but we know that when you are living out your faith by serving in ministry, you experience an incomparable fulfillment that brings your relationship with Christ to life. When you attend our **Starting Point Classes**, we will help you identify your perfect fit on a ministry team, and start serving.