**Next @ 1st Resources**

**Session 1 Questions and Content**

What is the mission of the Ravenna First Church of God?

What two passages in Matthew’s gospel are the foundation of our mission?

Where are we called to make disciples?

How do we define a disciple?

Is this mission for every believer or only a special small group of people?

Who are we called to love Always?

What is the vision of the Ravenna First Church of God?

Who is responsible for lasting transformation?

What are the three things about Jesus we are called to share?

What are the five core values of our congregation?

Which value most resonates with you and why?

**Session 2 Questions & Content**

What are a few reasons to know church leaders and where they serve?

What are the two primary leadership teams of the Ravenna First Church of God?

What team has oversight of the properties and finances of the church?

What team oversees the ministries and policies of the church?

How many regular business meetings do we hold each year?

What items do the congregation vote on each year?

What are the age and attendance requirements for voting?

What online resources do we use to help people stay connected to the church and updated about ministry?

**Action Steps**

1. Be sure to share your contact info with us. We want to help you stay in the loop.
2. Follow us on Instagram and our Facebook page
3. Search for our Facebook group and ask to join
4. Bookmark our church website & Subscribe to our YouTube channel

**Staff, Boards & Committees**

**Pastor Tod Huston**

sr. pastor

**Pastor Athena Edwards**

director of student & family ministry

**Benevolence**

Carolyn Curry, chair

Rance Robenstine, Jean Davis

Pam Luli, Charlene Hurley

Diane Kehner, Chris & Iantha Karson

Saunie Eskridge

**Ordinance**

Melissa Underwood, Chair

Dan Underwood

Tom & Renee Noland

Joe & Mandee Scott

Greg & Robin Rich

**Christian Education**

Pastor Athena Edwards, chair

Pam Luli, asst. CE director

Kelly Jackson, nursery

Jaime Phillips, children

Josh Davis, at-large

Holly Shannon, at-large

**Council**

Pastor Tod Huston, chair

Billie White, vice chair

Pastor Athena Edwards

Cassie Bergman, Rance Robenstine

Melissa Underwood, George Reese

Joe Scott, Larry Nething, Mark Miller

Robin Rich, secretary

Renee Noland, treasurer

**Trustees**

Larry Nething, chair

Jeff Whitely, Jim Smith, Mark Bowen

Dan Underwood

Renee Noland, treasurer

Robin Rich, secretary

**Session 4 Content**

Our congregation has been in existence here in Ravenna for over 100 years. The name “Church of God” is a common name connected to many churches. What distinguishes our congregation from other Churches of God? Our local congregation is part of a larger organization formerly known as the Church of God, reformation movement. All Church of God congregations in our movement hold to a set of shared beliefs or doctrinal truths. Here is what we believe…

**About God**

We believe in God who created all things visible and invisible, and out of chaos created order. Though difficult for the human mind to fully comprehend, our one God expresses himself in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity serves a unique role to bring God glory and accomplish his purposes in the world.

We believe God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born to Mary who was a virgin and lived a sinless life on earth as both fully human and fully divine. We believe the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth, convicts us of sin, leads us to and incorporates us into Christ, and empowers us for Christian witness. **Genesis 1, John 1:1-14, John 16:5-16**

**About Humanity**

We believe all have sinned, fallen short of the glory of God and are in need of a Savior. We believe through his life, death, and resurrection Jesus Christ is the only sufficient atonement for our sins. Therefore, it is only through Jesus Christ that we can experience eternal life. **Romans 3:23, John 14:6, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8**

**About Salvation**

We believe God’s work of salvation is by grace and not by our merits. We believe we receive this salvation when by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit we respond in faith by repenting of our sin and believing in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We believe that God has given every person the capacity to respond in faith, but not every person will choose to respond in faith.  We believe that faith in Christ is not a momentary event but an ongoing reality that allows us to walk securely in our salvation. **Eph. 2:8-9, Acts 2:36-39, Romans 10:9-10, 1 Cor. 15:1-2, Col. 1:21-23, Romans 11:17-21**

**Jesus is Lord**.

The singularity, the exclusivity, the divinity of the one Lord Jesus is central to who we are. He is the Bread of Life. The Water of Life. The Lamb of God. The Way, the Truth, and the Life. The one Mediator between God and humankind. The Lord of lords, the King of kings. The Son of Man. The Son of God. The Word become Flesh. The Name at which every knee shall bow. Jesus is the subject (Acts 2:36).

**About the Scriptures**

We are a people of the Bible—the Old and New Testaments, supernaturally inspired, preserved across time, cultures, and continents. We believe all scripture is God’s authoritative Word for the Christian life, that it is useful for reproof and instruction, for training in righteousness. The Scripture is our backstop, the ultimate field of inquiry and judgment, the measure of conduct, faith, and practice. Whatever the question, whatever the test, whatever comes before us, in the end, it is the Scripture that informs and defines us. All other sources of knowledge ultimately fall short. (**2 Tim 3:14–17**).

**About the Christian Life**

We believe God calls us to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God for the sake of God’s mission in the world. We believe the life of holiness is a wholehearted love for God and neighbor and not a legalistic list of “do’s and don’ts.” We believe it is only through the power of God and the indwelling of His Holy Spirit that we can love God and neighbor in this way. We believe when we fail, God is always willing to forgive and restore. **Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:22-26**

**Holiness.** The Person, the work, and the power of the Holy Spirit is fundamental to who we are as a people. We unabashedly own the truth that the Spirit can transform us, possess us, equip us, and empower us. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that sanctifies us, makes us holy, sets us apart for sacred service, and seals us for eternity’s sake. It is the Spirit that convicts us of sin and enables us to overcome sin. It is the Holy Spirit that can breathe supernatural gifts into us, for Jesus’ sake. He is the Comforter promised by Jesus and the witness of our redemption (**Gal 5:22–23**).

**About the Church**

We believe God calls all people to respond in faith to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and through faith in Him become members of God’s one church.  We believe each local congregation is a visible expression of this one body of Christ and that it is God’s will for every believer to be a committed member (participant) of a local congregation.  **Acts 2:47, John 17:20-23**

**About the Kingdom of God**

We believe the Kingdom of God is both a present reality as well as a future hope. We believe Jesus lived and proclaimed the present reign of God. We believe God comes alongside the vulnerable and oppressed and stands against every form of evil and calls us as citizens of His Kingdom to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. We anticipate the future consummation of the reign of God at the time of the one and only return of our Lord.  **Luke 17:20-21, Matthew 25:34-46**

**Kingdom of God.** The rule and reign of God is a present reality to be embraced and experienced today. His kingdom is not of this world, and will therefore never be about earthly politics. As children of God, the spiritual riches of the King of kings are ours to claim and steward as we preach the good news of the kingdom to the world (Luke 17:20–21)

**About Ministry**

We believe God calls every follower of Jesus to minister within the Body of Christ according to the spiritual gifts He has given them. We believe God distributes the gifts within the Body as He determines, and He does so without regard to race or gender. Therefore, no limitations are placed on leadership and ministry in the church based on race or gender. God has poured out his Spirit on all people, and both sons and daughters will prophesy—and teach, and shepherd the flock. In Christ, in the kingdom of God, that which once divided us—Jew, Gentile; slave, free; male, female—no longer separate. From the earliest days of the Church of God movement, we’ve celebrated the ministry leadership of outstanding women clergy and continue to do so (Acts 2:17; Gal 3:28).**1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4, 1 Peter 4:10-11**

**About Giving**

We believe that “growing in the grace of giving” is not the product of guilt or coercion. Rather, it flows from a heart that has truly been transformed by the gospel. By giving, we become a part of God’s mission to redeem and restore the world, and God wants His people to give with hearts that are filled with gratitude and joy that they are able to be generous like the God is. **2 Cor. 8:7, 9:6-15**

**About the Ordinances**

We believe baptism is for believers who have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We baptize believers by immersion as an outward sign of death to sin and resurrection to a new life in Christ.  We celebrate the Lord’s Supper as participation in and proclamation of the death and resurrection of our Lord until he comes. Anyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ is invited to participate.

While we do not believe that foot washing is given equal status to baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament, we believe it is a beautiful reminder of the servant lifestyle to which Christ has called His followers, and we practice it as the Spirit leads us.  **Acts 16:25-34, Romans 6, 1 Cor. 11:23, John 13:1-17**

**About the Return of Christ**

We believe Christ will come again at a time of God’s appointing and He will come in judgment. Those who are in Christ will dwell with God forever in heaven, and those who are not in Christ will be separated from God forever in hell. We believe the period between Christ’s first coming and His second coming constitute the “last days.”  Therefore, we are living in the last days, just as the first century Christians were. And just as they lived in the expectation of the imminent return of Christ, so should we.  **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Matthew 25:31-46, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20**