



MORNINGSTAR CHURCH MERGER **FAQ**

WHAT DOES A "MERGER" MEAN?

Morningstar Church will join Redeemer Church and become one church. We will become one congregation known as Redeemer Church. We will be guided by one vision, one ministry model, one budget. We will be led by one elder board of servant leaders with representation from each campus. Morningstar Church will take on the new name of Redeemer Church South and become a campus of Redeemer Church.

AFTER THE MERGER, WILL THE NEW CAMPUS OF REDEEMER CHURCH SOUTH (FORMERLY MORNINGSTAR CHURCH) EVER BECOME AUTONOMOUS AGAIN?

Yes, the new campus will eventually become autonomous, but it will be a process. The goal of the merger would be for both churches to become one church with two campuses under one vision, one budget, one leadership and one name until Redeemer Church South is healthy enough to become autonomous. Matt Joiner will serve as senior pastor of the Redeemer Church South (formerly Morningstar Church) campus and will represent the campus by sitting on the Redeemer Church elder board.

The elders of Redeemer Church plan to help the Redeemer Church South campus move to a place of health where they are ready to become autonomous. Once the church becomes autonomous, a new elder board will be selected for the new church to serve alongside Pastor Matt Joiner. The new church will also establish its own constitution and bylaws at that time.

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS "MERGER" AND WHY HAVE THE ELDERS RECOMMENDED THIS MERGER?

Simply put, we are better together than we could ever be apart. Both churches bring strengths to the table. Each church brings a commitment to the Word of God in our lives and the work of God in our communities. Both churches bring a heart for families and the next generation, while wanting to honor those who have made it possible for us to be where we are. Coming together as one church will bring synergy to the ministry - using the best of both congregations to launch us toward our one goal of Glorifying God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

There are several benefits for Morningstar Church in this merger. The greatest benefit is a committed senior pastor and proven leadership. We believe Redeemer Church's leadership, vision, implementation, systems, and structures will enhance and maximize the impact of Morningstar Church in the community of the greater Rockford area and around the world. An additional benefit we expect is a quick influx of trained and willing believers who have attended Redeemer Church to transition and be a part of the new campus.

There are also several benefits for Redeemer Church. We will be able to launch the new campus with a debt free facility and no lease. We will also gain around 100 new missional partners from Morningstar Church. The existing Morningstar budget combined with the "Expand our Reach" funds from Redeemer Church positions the campus financially to serve Pastor Matt's staffing and ministry needs. This allows us to focus on engaging the community and advance the gospel at a quicker pace. Finally, the campus of Morningstar is strategically placed in the area where the the elders have decided to launch. This location positions us to expand our reach in the greater Rockford area and is strategically placed where both campuses will be able to share a Counseling Center that will serve the Rockford community.

HOW WILL EACH CAMPUS WORK TOGETHER?

Each campus will have a dedicated senior pastor to lead, shepherd and work with a staff and lay leader team on that particular campus. Each campus will be assisted by a central support staff (such as HR, finance, communications, and facilities management) and be guided by one vision, one ministry model, one budget. **Redeemer Church and Redeemer Church South will be led, shepherded and protected by one pastoral team and elder board.**

Individuals at both churches will be encouraged to follow a pathway we call "The Path of Discipleship," highlighting the goals of converting to Christ, communing with God, committing to Redeemer Church, sharing our faith and reproducing disciples.

WHAT ARE SOME UNIQUE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN MORNINGSTAR CHURCH AND REDEEMER CHURCH?

Although some vernacular may differ, Morningstar Church and Redeemer Church are similar in four categories; Vision, Theological beliefs, Affiliation and Values.

VISION

Both churches have a vision to glorify God in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We both desire to see people come to Christ through salvation and to see the saints grow in discipleship.

THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

Both Redeemer Church and Morningstar Church have the same view on the inerrancy of scripture and have very compatible historic orthodox, evangelical, theological beliefs.

AFFILIATIONS

Redeemer Church and Morningstar Church are independent, autonomous churches that both choose to affiliate with Southern Baptists on issues of doctrine, church planting and local and global missions. Both own their own property, choose their own leaders, and determine their own vision and values, and distribution of our assets. As one church, both campuses plan to continue that affiliation after the merger as one church.

VALUES

Both churches value proclaiming the Word of God without apology, lifting high the name of Jesus through worship, believing firmly in the power of prayer, and sharing the good news of Jesus with boldness.

WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

Morningstar Church will notice some changes after the merger. Morningstar Church will adopt Redeemer Church's ministry names, structures and systems. For example, Redeemer Church calls their members "Missional Partners" instead of members. We believe this better exemplifies what it means to be a part of the family of God; being a partner to the rest of the body while on mission for God. We will also use Redeemer Church's staff titles so that leaders who perform the same roles on different campuses can be easily identified.

Redeemer Church has been very successful at reaching new families, both church and unchurched, so one of the biggest changes Morningstar Church will notice is the addition of new people. Redeemer Church South (formerly Morningstar Church) will also experience new ministries that Redeemer Church has developed over the years to help all people progress through the path of discipleship including family, men's, women's, hospitality, parenting and counseling ministries.

HOW WILL SERVICES BE DONE?

The Sunday service will be live in person with an onsite pastor at both Redeemer Church campuses. Pastor John Dirkse will be preaching at the Redeemer Church location in Loves Park and Pastor Matt Joiner will be preaching live at the Redeemer Church South Location. In the beginning months of the merger, both Pastor John and Pastor Matt will share preaching times in order to bring unity and synergy to both campuses.

Redeemer Church's worship style is decidedly contemporary. However, we understand that the makeup of Redeemer Church lends itself to that style. We recognize the need to consider the makeup of the Redeemer Church South campus and plan to be sensitive to the preference of the significant number of long-term Morningstar Church members who prefer a traditional style. The campus will move to a more contemporary worship style over time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MORNINGSTAR CHURCH'S MEMBERSHIP?

Redeemer Church's requirements for Missional Partnership (membership) are as follows: (1) Believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, (2) Baptized by immersion after salvation, (3) Attend Consider Redeemer Class, (4) Interview with an Elder, (5) Sign the Redeemer Missional Partner Covenant approved by the elder board.

The expectations of each Missional Partner are as follows: (1) regular Sunday service attendance, (2) active in a small group at Redeemer Church, (3) serving in a ministry, (4) giving faithfully to the Lord through Redeemer Church.

These requirements and expectations are similar to Morningstar Church. They convey a great expectation that members will actively participate in the body life of the church. Redeemer Church places great value on its Missional Partners knowing and living the vision, mission, and methods of the ministry.

Redeemer Church plans to allow all current Morningstar Church Members "in good standing" be "grandfathered" into the Missional Partnership at Redeemer Church. "Grandfathered" Missional Partners will be encouraged to attend a special Missional Partner class taught by the Senior Pastor, Matt Joiner. This will help membership clearly understand how Redeemer Church sees its members living out the vision, mission, and methods of the ministry. Morningstar Church Members will also need to sign the Redeemer Missional Partner Covenant before becoming official Redeemer Church Missional Partners.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MORNINGSTAR CHURCH'S BUILDING/CAMPUS?

Redeemer Church's plan is to maximize the use of the Redeemer Church South (formerly Morningstar Church) campus for greater kingdom impact in the Rockford area. You will see facility improvements as we begin to catch up on delayed maintenance and needed upgrades. Redeemer Church will not sell any property or building(s) of Redeemer Church South while still a campus of Redeemer Church. Once the church becomes autonomous, its new board can make all decisions on the sale or purchase of assets.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO EXISTING LEADERSHIP (ELDERS, STAFF, ETC.)?

Morningstar Church's Elder board will be replaced by one central Redeemer Church Elder board (All who are qualified men according to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). The board of Elders includes both senior pastors of each campus (John Dirkse and Matt Joiner) and a number of existing lay elders of Redeemer Church. Redeemer Church plans to send one or two lay elders to the new location for representation and support to the senior pastor of that campus. Local campus leadership will be led primarily by the campus senior pastor, his staff and the Redeemer Church Elder Board. The Redeemer Church Elder board will give financial and spiritual oversight to both campuses. All existing staff will be retained unless they choose to leave rather than abide by new leadership requirements and expectations.

WHAT IS THE FINANCIAL STATUS OF BOTH CHURCHES?

Similar to most growing churches, Redeemer Church financed a new addition in 2016 to support growth. However, the portion of its income used for debt service is only 9%. This is well under the limits recommended by church lending literature, which recommend debt to income ratio be around 30%. Redeemer Church's lenders are happy with Redeemer Church's status, the loan is current, no payments have ever been missed, and Redeemer Church's annual income is growing year by year.

Morningstar Church has no debt. With the merger, we are sure there will be monies that will have to be invested to update the facilities. The elder board and leaders of Redeemer Church have raised over \$250,000.00 for our church plant endeavor that will go directly towards the operating budget of Redeemer Church South campus (formerly Morningstar Church) in order to accommodate future growth.

Although finances should always be a consideration in any union, the true motivation for this union is kingdom and community impact, bringing the strengths of both ministries under one leadership.

WHAT WILL THE VOTING PROCESS LOOK LIKE AT MORNINGSTAR CHURCH?

Morningstar Church will have a vote by their members, by ballot, on the target date of August 28, 2022. They will be voting to merge with Redeemer Church and become a Redeemer Church campus guided by one vision, one ministry model, one budget, and led by one Elder board.

WHAT VOTE IS REQUIRED TO APPROVE THE MERGER?

Morningstar Church's bylaws require a minimum of 75% in favor for a vote to pass.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MORNINGSTAR CHURCH IF THE VOTE PASSES?

Although the legal details remain to be worked out, the church would donate the Morningstar Church assets and liabilities to Redeemer Church as provided for Morningstar Church's Articles of Incorporation. They would begin operating as the South Campus of Redeemer Church as one body joined together under Redeemer Church's Constitution and bylaws. At the appropriate time, Morningstar Church's nonprofit 501c(3) corporate shell will be dissolved. This process will make us one church with one vision operating in multiple locations.

This process will take some time to complete. The Elders of both Redeemer Church and Morningstar Church will work together on a timeline for this transition, between the approved vote on the target date of August 28 and when we actually start operating fully as one church,

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE VOTE DOES NOT PASS?

Redeemer Church will continue its plan to find a location in central/south Rockford area and plant a church campus with Pastor Matt Joiner as its Senior Pastor.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

We suggest the following timeline:

- June 19: Morningstar Church Elders made the merger recommendation to the Morningstar Church body in the worship service
- June 19: Redeemer Church made the announcement of a potential merger with Morningstar Church pending Morningstar Church's vote of approval to its body.
- June 19 - August 28: Morningstar Church host a number of Q&A member meetings with Morningstar Church Elders and Pastor Matt Joiner to answer questions and dream the possibilities of our future.
- August 28: This is a target date for Morningstar Church to take a congregational vote. If the church needs more time, a further date will be considered.
- September 4: Morningstar Church host a Celebration service commemorating the years of ministry God has given them as a church and praying over the new pastor, Matt Joiner and his family.
- September 4 - March 5: The Elders and Pastors plan how to prepare for the full launch of Redeemer Church South Campus in March 2023. More details will be shared on the transition time if/when Morningstar Church votes in favor of a merger with Redeemer Church.
- March 5, 2023: The target date for Pastor Matt Joiner to be preaching full time at the Sunday Morning services

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

First and foremost, as Redeemer Church and Morningstar Church, we ask that you do the following:

- Celebrate the wonderful opportunity God has presented to our churches!
- Pray for our leadership and staff as they work out the details of a possible merger.
- Seek God's will for the future and your part in the exciting days ahead.