

*Malachi 4:2 - For you who revere my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.*

## Part 1: What is Sunrise Ministries?

*I Peter 2:9: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

*So tell me, what is Sunrise Ministries all about? What are its people like? Where do they come from, and what do they believe? Here are some basics:*

### We are Real People...

1. **We are part of God's eternal plan.** The Sunrise community believes that its story began, in a real sense, before God's creation of the world. As God created light out of darkness, he likewise unleashed his eternal love into the world; Sunrise Ministries exists today as an expression of this love.

*Ephesians 1:3-5: For God chose us in Jesus Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.*

2. **We are made in God's own image.** The members of the Sunrise community believe that God has created each person – male and female – in his own likeness. Along with great privilege and honor, this brings significant responsibility and accountability. Specifically, our being made in God's image mandates that we are agents of change and compassion on his behalf, sent into the world to renew and restore a fallen creation.

*Genesis 1:26-27: Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

3. **We are full participants in a timeless story.** The Sunrise community is a group of believers that stands in the same faith tradition as Noah and Paul, Esther and Ruth. As we strive to follow the examples of faith and righteousness that they have modeled, we join them as common participants in God's grand narrative.

*Hebrews 12:1: Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

4. **We were sent by Jesus Christ himself.** The Sunrise community, along with all other sincere communities of Christian faith, was powerfully activated in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, when God's Spirit awakened a new kingdom of hope and life in the world. Having been commissioned by Jesus, we are now committed to going forward into the world – to our families, our communities, and to the ends of the earth – to glorify God and share the good news of his love for all people.

*Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

5. **We are united in a common cause.** The members of the Sunrise community have come from all walks of life – from many races, contexts, cultures, and occupations – and have been caught up in a wonderful new vision of hope and

renewal for the church. While we celebrate the personal differences – and acknowledge the variety of beliefs – that make us unique, we work earnestly for the like-mindedness and unity that comes with new life in the Kingdom of God.

*Galatians 3:26-28: You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

6. **We've all got skeletons in the closet.** Like everyone else who lives in a broken world, the members of the Sunrise community have been scarred and wounded by the heartaches of life. We have felt the sting caused by cancers and addictions; we've been through the dark valleys of depression and divorce. Uniquely, many members of the Sunrise community have experienced the sharp pains that can be caused by negative church experiences.

*II Corinthians 4:8-9: We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*

7. **We're open to anybody.** Sunrise Ministries is a dynamic community of belief. Through our personal testimonies, our expressions of invitation, and other forms of outreach, we seek to welcome into our fellowship all who are seeking God's goodness and grace.

*Romans 15:7: Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

### Who are Facing Real Challenges...

1. **We're all struggling with something.** The Sunrise community understands that because of our mistakes and our brokenness, we are not living the full life that God intended for us. Some of our struggles are the results of our own misjudgements; others are burdens we bear because of forces outside our control. All, however, express our greatest tragedy: we have fallen short of God's standard.

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

2. **We're laying it on the line.** Sunrise Ministries is a community of transparency which recognizes that we all wrestle with the confusions and challenges of life. Sunrise exists not to mask or ignore them but to name them and overcome them through the power of God's grace and mercy.

*Galatians 6:2: Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

3. **We're wounded healers.** Sunrise Ministries strives to be a place where genuine, whole-person healing takes place. While we believe that the challenges before us are real, we reject the idea that they define who we are or that they dictate who we will become. Following the example of Jesus Christ, the great healer, we aim to both restore those who are broken and equip those for whom challenges lie ahead.

*James 5:14-16: Is any one of you sick? He or she should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him or her up. If he or she has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous one is powerful and effective.*

4. **We need a place to belong.** The Sunrise community recognizes that one of the most significant personal challenges facing people today is *loneliness*. Sunrise seeks to overcome the ache of personal detachment by cultivating an intentional spirit of acceptance, fellowship, and grace. In placing friendship and care before conformity and creed, we try to offer a setting in which people who have felt the emptiness of social isolation can truly belong.

*Hebrews 13:5-6: God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can any person do to me?"*

5. **We're doing our best to connect with God.** We believe that all people ache for God almost as much as God aches for us. Our worship services are intentionally designed to help worshippers connect more profoundly to the heart of God. We

believe that the standards for right worship established by Jesus offer us wide parameters for the use of creative expression (song, drama, multimedia, art, contemplation, etc.) and we will use any and all to facilitate a humble and heartfelt worship experience.

*John 4:23-24: A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.*

6. **We're not the only ones with needs.** We recognize that around the world, our brothers and sisters in Christ face great and profound challenges as well (lack of ministry resources, hunger, political oppression, religious persecution) and are committed to participate in the global mission project.

*Romans 10:13-15: All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?*

7. **We've got some rough edges that need work.** The members of Sunrise realize that sin, if left unchecked in our lives, homes, and communities, represents the most significant challenge of all. While we have illusions of moral perfection, we recognize that we must continue to battle against temptation and evil in order to live lives more befitting of Christ's church.

*Psalm 51:10-12: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation.*

## With the Help of a Real God

1. **Our God cares.** The Sunrise community believes that God is intimate and personal. Unlike many other of the world's religions which worship a Being that is disinterested with the happenings of the world, we understand God to be intimately involved in the lives of his children. We truly believe that God actively participates in all of the joys, challenges, and heartaches felt by those whom he loves.

*I Peter 5:7: Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

2. **Our God is Three-in-One.** The Sunrise community understands the one true God to be three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – living in a never-beginning, never-ending, community of love.

*II Corinthians 13:14: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

3. **Our God is perfect.** The Sunrise community recognizes that God is flawless in character and in deed. He is perfectly powerful, perfectly holy, perfectly loving, and perfectly just.

*Deuteronomy 32:3-4: I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

4. **Our God was one of us.** We believe that, in order to reveal himself personally, God became flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In his life and ministry, Jesus proclaimed and modeled life within God's new kingdom of hope and justice. And through his death, resurrection, and ascension, he destroyed the sin-barrier that separated God from his people, making possible the salvation of all who would trust in him.

*II Corinthians 5:21: God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

5. **Our God has given us his Word.** The Sunrise community believes that God has revealed himself uniquely and finally in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. We believe that the Bible is trustworthy, relevant, and unailing in all that it intends to teach.

*2 Timothy 3:15-17: You have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

6. **Our God is close to us in special celebrations.** The Sunrise community believes that God's Spirit is felt with special intensity in the waters of baptism and in the shared fellowship of the Lord's Supper. We are committed to celebrating these moments reverently and regularly.

*1 Corinthians 11:23-26: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

*Matthew 28:19: Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

7. **Our God's got big plans.** The Sunrise community recognizes that God's plan for this world is far greater and more wonderful than we can presently understand. We humbly acknowledge that our role – while significant and meaningful – is but a small part of God's universal story of creation and redemption. At the same time, we live expectantly, anticipating that soon, God's plan will be culminated and his final victory won.

*Isaiah 55:9: As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (declares the Lord).*

## Part 2 – What is the Purpose of Sunrise Ministries?

*Isaiah 6:8: Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

*What is Sunrise trying to accomplish? What are its goals and aims? In short for, the mission of Sunrise Ministries is to unleash the power of God's good news into our world. While this mission goes forward in many different ways, Sunrise is especially dedicated to creatively communicating the gospel through seven core mission-expressions:*

1. **Sunrise is committed to bringing healing to those with spiritual and physical needs.** By creating opportunities for transparency, vulnerability, and renewal, Sunrise is dedicated to fostering forgiveness and new hope among those who have been harmed by past experiences. To those who are under-resourced, medically challenged, victimized by injustice, or otherwise needful, Sunrise serves with compassion and generosity.
2. **Sunrise is committed to bringing men and women into closer intimacy with Jesus Christ.** Aware that genuine expressions of love and care can flow only from hearts that are rightly tuned to God's, the Sunrise community works to foster dedicated personal relationships between its members and its Lord.
3. **Sunrise is committed to relevant teaching.** Through careful and inspiring preaching, applicable seminars, and instructive small group sessions, Sunrise aims to faithfully represent the central truths of Scripture and life in God's kingdom.
4. **Sunrise is committed to equipping its members for service.** By emphasizing spiritual gifts and by providing the practical tools necessary for ministry, Sunrise intends to send its members out with the courage and ability to be blessings to those they encounter.
5. **Sunrise is committed to representing a distinctively Christ-centered worldview.** Rejecting the moral relativism, rampant consumerism, and generally self-centered mentality so definitive of the secular world, Sunrise seeks to offer a better, more satisfying perspective on life in this world, a perspective based on the model of sacrifice and commitment set by Jesus Christ.

6. **Sunrise is committed to oppose those who undermine God's plan for the world.** Unashamed to speak with a prophetic voice, Sunrise will actively challenge unrestrained sin, unfaithful lifestyles, and all other forces which work against God's redemptive activity.

7. **Sunrise is committed to bringing joy to the world.** Though the personal and social landscapes around us often appear bleak, Sunrise is dedicated to presenting a hopeful and optimistic perspective – based on the limitless joy of life in Christ – to the communities and families that we meet.

## Part 3: What does Sunrise Ministries' Picture of the Future Look Like?

*Philippians 3:12: Not that I have already attained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Jesus Christ took hold of me.*

*So where is Sunrise headed? In truth, only God himself knows for sure. But as the Sunrise community looks toward the future of its ministry, it hopes to follow these seven trajectories:*

1. **Sunrise envisions itself growing in size and in spiritual maturity.** By freely inviting those who are unchurched and by encouraging those who are already members of our community to more Christ-honoring commitments, Sunrise aspires to expand the scope of God's influence in our world.
2. **Sunrise envisions itself as a seven-day-a-week ministry center.** By offering clean, safe facilities and helpful services that positively impact its community (child care services, support groups, etc.) Sunrise hopes to serve the surrounding region every day of the week.
3. **Sunrise envisions the formation of significant partnerships with like-minded Christian communities.** In joining with other congregations (be they local, regional, or global partners) whose goals are similar to those held by our own, Sunrise will be better able to share ideas, strategies, and resources that can mutually enhance our ability to serve our respective communities.
4. **Sunrise envisions itself remaining culturally relevant.** By closely observing the contours of our ever-changing culture, Sunrise aims to keep our worship, teaching, and broader missional efforts congruent with the needs and desires of future seekers.
5. **Sunrise envisions the addition of new and unique perspectives to its fellowship.** Through intentionally tuning our ears to the voices of children, guests, new believers, and those of different cultural contexts, Sunrise intends to maintain a fresh and well-rounded perspective on God's love for all members of society.
6. **Sunrise envisions itself serving many more Krispy Kreme donuts.** In always being willing to try new things, to doing things differently, and in maintaining its central themes of acceptance, transparency, and joy, Sunrise hopes to be the sort of community which people look forward to attending.
7. **Sunrise envisions its future ministry in a humble and prayerful spirit.** We have big ideas, we have high hopes, but it is God's plan for us that will prevail. We commit to fervently measuring our efforts and hopes and goals against his greater design by fervently communicating in prayer with the One who has called us all out of darkness into his wonderful light.

*II Samuel 22:29: You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord turns my darkness into light.*