



PASTOR'S REPORT

To our church family,

I've been thinking a lot about what it means to be the church. The last few years have tested us to the core. There are some things that are fundamental to our understanding and are in fact, embodied in our church's vision and mission statement of "Loving God, Loving People, and Making a Difference!" I could unpack this and explain each part specifically, but the meaning is self-evident, and it works well to evaluate our own lives and our activities as a church.

We cannot do what each of us is not doing. If we want to get a passing grade, then each of us needs to answer the question more personally. Do you love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength? Do you love others as yourself? Are you making a difference? Being able to answer these questions in the affirmative will get us much closer to God's purpose for our lives and our church. Amen.

Like many churches, we have found it challenging to navigate this most recent season of uncertainty. Despite inconsistencies in meeting together, we have been able to reach out in real and significant ways. Our online presence continues to draw people through our website, social media, live streaming services, and email marketing. We provide weekly communication and offer ways to connect, pray, and be encouraged.

Sunday mornings have seen some unique challenges, but we stay true to our billing by offering music and a message that points people to Christ each week and helps to keep our eyes on Him, challenge us in our relationships, and draw us closer to God. Even those who haven't been able to attend in person have benefited.

We added a wonderful opportunity for fellowship on Thursday nights. A meal and conversation intentionally provide a space to break bread together and to have interactions with real people, to be encouraged in the Word of God, and to pray for one another. In all these opportunities we are "not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). This is so important, and I trust you are making every effort to take advantage of these weekly opportunities to gather as an expression of the body of Christ, His Church.

We were also able to provide tangible outreach in 2021. We picked up several new missionaries, increasing our monthly missionary commitment, though we have also made several one-time gifts to a variety of other ministries. We are represented in Turkey, Tanzania (soon to be Nepal), Sweden, and internationally through Youth with a Mission. Our church was also able to connect with the women's Adult Challenge in Twin Falls, providing them with new bunk beds, mattresses, and linens. This was a true team effort, though several individuals did a lot of the heavy lifting. You know who you are! There were lots of individual benevolence needs met this past year as well, including gas cards over the Christmas season.

Additionally, even with a downturn in giving this past year, we were able to put a new roof on the parsonage. A good roof with a proper application of underlayment, including ice and water shield are so important living in the mountains. The old shingles were showing lots of wear and we had been patching the roof for several years. Each winter brought new concerns of leaks and damage to the roof underneath. High winds meant the loss of more shingles. This project was long overdue. We worked with churches in our network and had a crew come in that did the work for much less than we were quoted on the project even before the price of shingles shot up this past year. We saved thousands of dollars! Not only were the shingles replaced, but we also had vents installed. We are so pleased with how it turned out. The "burnt sienna" color of the shingles adds to the overall look of the house. This was a valuable and much needed stewardship project that is an investment in the future.

My prayer continues to be that God would give you breakthroughs before the breakthrough. In other words, there are breakthroughs each of us uniquely need to experience in our lives before we will see a breakthrough in the lives of others, our church, and our community. We need to press in to God and believe Him for this. We sang a refrain of a song for the entire month of January at the beginning of this year which included the line, "I'm going to see a victory... for the battle belongs to the Lord." I felt impressed to sing this song every Sunday to help us remember that sometimes victories come from doing the right thing for a long time. In other words, we must be faithful in well doing, if we ever expect to see a harvest (Galatians 6:9). Do not grow weary in doing good!

We are thankful for each of you. It is no accident or coincidence that you are living in this place right now. God has determined your appointed times in history and the places of your dwelling (Acts 17:26). Think about it! God has strategically located you in the Wood River Valley for such as time as this. Let us seek the Lord while He may be found. Point people to Jesus every day in everything you do. Time is short! Make the most of every opportunity.

We are with you heart and soul,

Pastor Konrad and Sarahlee