



May 2022

OUR MISSION:

To grow a loving community equipped to take the message of Jesus to our world.

Dear Church Family,

As we prepare to renew our pursuits of the biblical mandates of Worship, Grow, Serve, and Share in the coming days, it's good to think about how our church operates or what drives the Living Life Reformed Church. Carey Nieuwhof recently wrote a thought-provoking article on the topic of running a church which I want to share with you this month below. Our hope is to continue pursuing the healthy biblical way!

God's Love to you,
Mark

Something's driving your church. There are a variety of things that run a church...the challenge for many church leaders is no one is really quite clear on what that is. What drives your church is critical because it impacts everything you do. Ultimately, it directly impacts both your health and your growth as a congregation.

As I talk to leaders of churches of all sizes, I find different factors at work. As much as we'd all love to say Jesus runs the church, the reality is that church is a partnership. God seems to delight in human interaction, and while God is in control, we have a role. How we play that role can create health or dysfunction. Here are 4 bad ways churches are run and one good one.

1) A Person

Small churches are almost always run or controlled by a single person. That's rarely—if ever—healthy and almost always an impediment to growth. The usual candidate for this kind of church is a matriarch, patriarch, or the pastor. Matriarchs and patriarchs often emerge in a small church as the one person that effectively keeps the doors open and the lights on. Interestingly enough, the matriarch or patriarch doesn't even have to be on the board to exercise their control. It's just that everyone knows nothing gets done without the approval, blessing, or consent of X.

The commendable side of a matriarch or patriarch is that the church likely wouldn't still be in existence without them. They are deeply committed to seeing it exist. The challenges outweigh the benefits though for a number of reasons. First, the church is programmed to stay small...one person leadership naturally stunts growth. If you want to stunt your church's growth, let one person run everything.

Second, churches run by a single person are usually in preservation mode—the goal is to keep it going. Sometimes the single person who runs a church is the pastor. That's also a bad idea. It's the pastor's responsibility to lead the church, but not to run it. Again, scripture makes it clear the role of a church leader is to equip people to do the work of ministry, each operating in their area of gifting. Clergy who insist on doing everything deny people their ability, and the church ends up with a much smaller impact than if the pastor truly led. Leaders who insist on running everything end up with relatively little to run. Churches were never designed to be run by one person.

2. A Personality

Being run by a person and personality are two variations of a similar theme. Personality driven churches are usually bigger and actually more effective in reaching people than person-run churches. Usually in a personality-driven church, the personality of the senior leader functions like a magnet, attracting staff, volunteers, and new people to the church. The challenge is that both the growth engine and the loyalty in the church are to the senior leader. And that's the Achilles heel. The problem with a personality-driven church is that when you remove the central personality, the church falters. It can also distract people from following who they should be following--Jesus.

No personality should ever compete with the centrality of Christ in the church. God can use people to lead people (Moses and Paul were pretty imposing figures), but the goal of a leader should always be to point people to Christ. Personality-driven churches are only as strong as their leader. And that's an often-fatal flaw. When you remove the central personality from a personality-driven church, it withers.

3. An Agenda

Nobody likes a hidden agenda. Except people who have agendas. If you're not careful, an agenda other than the main mission of the church end up running the church. This happens when an influential leader (staff or otherwise) gets the church to focus on something minor until it becomes a defining characteristic of the church. The possibilities are endless. They include:

- Opposition to change (Nothing changes around here; everything stays the same)
- A theological sub point (How we do baptism becomes more important than why we do baptism)
- A political viewpoint (This is a Republican/Democrat only zone)
- A single, non-biblical issue (Our church is all about X)
- Churches that allow agendas to dominate usually only attract like-minded people who are more passionate about the cause in question than the Gospel itself.

4. Staying Alive

When only a small percentage of churches are actually growing and the church as a whole is lagging behind population growth, it's no surprise that many churches are battling simply to stay alive. Unfortunately, that can easily become the mission. When the mission is to merely keep a church alive, death is the most likely outcome. You effectively end up saying "Come join our church so we can keep our church open." That begs about 1000 questions. As soon as you start to maintain what you've built, rather than build something new, you know the end is near. When the mission is to merely keep a church alive, death is the most likely outcome.

5. The Mission

The one good way to operate a church is simple: let the mission drive everything you do. As Rick Warren so helpfully pointed out 20 years ago, purpose or mission-driven churches are always the most effective. Why?

First, the mission is bigger than anyone and anything. The true mission of the church has lasted 2,000 years and will endure until Christ comes back. If that doesn't motivate you, nothing will. Second, the mission outlasts every leader. The church is far less affected by personality when the mission is bigger than any one personality. Finally—and most importantly—the true mission of the church resonates because, well, it's the true mission of the church. Enough said.

Mission Updates

Remember to get your Scrip Cards! For those of you not familiar with the Scrip program, everyone here has the opportunity to purchase gift cards from a huge variety of organizations at their face value and Living Life Reformed Church will get a percentage (which varies by the retailer) of that price which we put towards various missions. We have scrip cards to Cenex, Village Inn, Chilies, and Texas Roadhouse. Yes, that is right, no extra cost for something that you would be buying anyway (groceries, gas, department store items, etc.)! Members from the Great Commission Team will be at a table in the Fellowship Hall before and after Sunday morning worship with cards for purchase. All proceeds for May of 2022 will go to the Lincoln Crisis Pregnancy Center.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Jacee Carlow will graduate from Norris High School on Sunday, May 15th. She will be attending Iowa Western Community College. She will be majoring in Dental Hygiene. Over the summer she will be working at 402 Creamery and playing ball. She is the daughter of Brenda Brock and Cody Carlow.

Heather Riensche will graduate from Norris High School on Sunday, May 15th. She will attend UNL this fall to study Microbiology and will be working on a Change Maker Research Project in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Heather plans to get a summer job in Lincoln. She is the daughter of Tracy & Brad Riensche.

Ben Maendale will graduate from Norris High School on Sunday, May 15th. He will be attending Wayne State College. He will be majoring in Business. Over the summer he has a little bit of travel, a little bit of golf, and a lot of working at Scooters. He is the son of Mel & Jiggs Maendale.

COLLEGE GRADUATES

Krista (Riensche) Starr will graduate from Northwestern College in Orange City, IA on Saturday, May 14th. Krista is currently finishing her last course with Northwestern online. She will graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Ecology and a minor in Statistics. She is currently working full-time in an Animal Science Lab at UNL and is considering Graduate Studies at UNL this fall. She is the daughter of Tracy & Brad Riensche.

Noah Atterbury will be graduating from Iowa State in May. He will have earned a BS in Animal Ecology, Wildlife Option. He has taken a position with the Army Corps of Engineers as a park ranger at Saylorville Lake near Ankeny IA. He is the son of Kathy & Mark Atterbury.

Family Movie Night at LLRC

Sunday, May 15th

“Joseph” starts at 6 pm

A Theatrical Production by Sight and Sound Theatre

Movie for the Kids in the Youth Room

Free Admission-Popcorn and Beverage Provided



Consistory Notes – April 12, 2022

(The March meeting minutes, and April/May Church Calendar were approved by email prior to the meeting.)

Opening Prayer (Gary)

Dale Assink - Was not able to join us as planned because of severe weather in the Omaha area.

Celebration Gift (Mark): Celebrating 5 baptisms, several Professions of Faith, and increased attendance!

Devotions: Matthew 19:26: “And looking at them Jesus said, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”

How the Best Leaders Think #4--Think Possibilities, Not Problems. Train your mind to remember Problems are opportunities. Will this problem be an issue next week, month, or year? Conflict is not bad if handled well.

LLRC Mission Statement: **"To grow a loving community, equipped to take the message of Jesus to our world"**

Discipleship Pathway: **Worship→Grow→Serve→Share**

Worship (God)

- 1) Updates from the SLT Action Items & Worship Experience Team (Chad & Taylor)
 - a. Completing 3 main ideas (1) Coffee, (2) Announcements before worship, (3) Improve Guest welcome experience (New welcome card to be handed out and can be placed in a drop box), Take a coffee mug, take a card--should be ready for April 17th
- 2) Media Updates Relating to Worship (Robbie)
 - a. An anonymous donor gave a 86" TV for Fellowship hall used for announcements
 - b. Roku was donated for 4JC and Fire room. (Can play RightNow Media on the TV)
- 3) Giving and our Treasurer's Report (Taylor)
 - a. Taylor will send out the report via e-mail. (Later approved via e-mail).
- 4) Encouragements, Feedback, or Evaluation on **Worship?**
 - a. Coffee had a great start two weeks ago. Discussed what is the best way to start the Sunday Service? Have seen a gathering around the new Coffee bar. What is the best way to usher people into the worship center?
 - b. Sunday Greeting could involve others beyond the Elders. Who else could greet?

Grow (In Community)

- 1) Updates from the SLT Action Items and the Discipleship/Education Team (Ron & Dean)
 - a. Small Groups going well.
 - b. VBS - Hawaiian theme – June 27, 28, and 29.
 - c. Children's Church is busy! Had a high of 32 kids.
 - d. How can we handle the Summer Children's Church? Signup sheet to participate in Children's Church.
 - e. Current videos are very good and capture a wide age range.
- 2) Youth Update (Robbie)
 - a. 4JC Meeting thru April, Gary and Mark Atterbury helping supply meals. Last day May 4th
 - b. Signing Middle School students up for Power Connection
 - c. Mentoring class 8-week course is complete. Celebrated professions of faith on Easter Sunday
 - d. Morgan and Jeremiah Bartek Baptisms
 - e. Robbie is working with Chet to organize events
- 3) Encouragements, Feedback, or Evaluation on **Grow?**

Continued.....

Continued Consistory Minutes for April 12, 2022

Serve (The Body)

- 1) Updates from SLT Action Items (Ron)
 - a. Working on a program together for evaluation of someone's Spiritual gifts and be able to guide them to where might be the best place to serve the church community.
- 2) Updates from the Building & Grounds Team (Luke & Kendall)
 - a. Clean up day went well
 - b. Retaining wall west of the church, getting quotes to install a retaining wall. Village of Firth has asked to address the water runoff on the Westside into the street
 - c. Kendall has a Mowing list
- 3) Updates from the Congregational Care Team (Doug & Shawn)
 - a. Discussed several in our church family that were in need of prayer
- 4) Encouragements, Feedback, or Evaluation on **Serve?**

Share (With Our World)

- 1) Updates from the SLT Action Items (Robbie)
 - a. Future Planning discussion
- 2) Updates from the Outreach Team (Andy & Brandon)
 - a. Movie--Sight and Sound presentation of "Jesus" went well
 - b. Chad--thanks for the Candy for Movie night, Thanks Mark and Robbie for helping clean up
 - c. Been able to complete the movie night without using any money thanks to all that helped
 - d. May 15th "Joseph" will be the next movie. Then a few months break.
 - e. Celebrate – the Branson trip filled up after one of the movie nights.
- 3) Updates from the Great Commission Team (Gary & Dave)
 - a. Great to get an update from Brianna Petersen
- 4) Encouragements, Feedback, or Evaluation on **Share?**

Other Items

- 1) Maundy Thursday Plans and Readings
 - a. Assistance for Maundy Thursday--Elders Communion
 - b. 5 Readers for Thursday Service
- 2) Reset Weekend for Consistory and SLT—Friday June 3rd (6-9pm) – Saturday June 4th (9am-3pm) --Questions??
 - a. Consistory setting the tone or vision for our new projects and planning new, one-year projects in the areas of Worship, Grow, Serve, and Share
- 3) Next meeting—May 10th at 7:00 pm Devotions: *Think Inspiration, Not Motivation*
- 4) Snacks – Luke Sieck (May--Robbie)
- 5) Motion to Adjourn and Closing Circle of Prayer
- 6) Parsonage Fence – Needs repair--\$1500 - \$2000

SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS

Worship Greeter: Kendall, Dean,
Doug
Deacons: Luke, Brandon, Shawn,
Dave

May 1:

Coffee: Jody & Scott Null
Power Point: Beth Olson
Sound Tech: Taylor TeKolste

May 8: Mother's Day!!

Coffee: Claudette & Allen Docter
Power Point: Avyn Olson
Sound Tech: Robbie Morrison

May 15:

Coffee: Marge & Allen Klein
Power Point: Tammy Goering
Sound Tech: Randy Sieck

May 22:

Coffee: Linda D & Pearl W
Power Point: Jenn Childers
Sound Tech: Keith TenHulzen

May 29: Memorial Day Weekend

Coffee: Dani & Luke Rasser
Power Point: Jenn Childers
Sound Tech: Keith TenHulzen

Thank you for your service!

ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Steve & Jenn Childers (20)
- 14 Matt & Nicole Weber (18)
- 22 Kim & Jeff Spencer (29)
- 25 Jon & Jen Critser (19)
Doug & Tammy Goering (30)

Continued Consistory Minutes for April 12, 2022

Elder's Meeting

- 1) Discussed the Spiritual Life of the Congregation
- 2) Approval of Baptism for Morgan Bartek and Jeremiah Bartek
- 3) Made plans for the Maundy Thursday service together.

Deacon's Meeting

- 1) Landscaping project for Retaining wall West Parking area. (May Street)
- 2) Luke or Kendall set up Outdoor solutions a TAX-EXEMPT account
- 3) Sign up for a couple of weekends to build retaining wall-- June timeframe.
- 4) Materials quote \$7950.50 (Good for April/May)
- 5) Parsonage Fence – Needs repair--\$1500 - \$2000

Church Items Use

It's time for graduation parties! There are a limited number of tables & chairs available for use for our church family. If you need to borrow some for your event, please contact Beth so we can keep track of our inventory. Please check before using any equipment!!

Mary & Martha Circle

Wednesday,

May 11
1:30 pm

Lesson: Marge
Helmink

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Mary Jean TeKolste
- 3 Brad Bartek
Cheryl Gouldin
- 4 Allan Docter
- 6 Joyce Hietbrink
- 10 Angie Dunse
- 12 Doug Nieveen
- 13 Robert Morrison
- 14 Ashton Henderson
- 15 Deb Docter
- 17 Joshua Gottwald
- 19 Morgan Bartek
- 23 Everson Walvoord
- 25 Dan Rice
Lloyd Prange
- 28 Madeline Starr
- 29 Audra Lefferdink
- 30 Grant Gouldin
Chris Hilkemann
- 31 Lynn Gana

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesdays 6:30 pm Prayer Gathering
Fridays 6:00am Friday Men @ Homestead

Sun, May 8 Mother's Day!!
7:00pm Afterglow
Mon, May 9, 1:30 pm "IF" Meeting
Tues, May 10, 7:00 pm Consistory Meeting
Wed, May 11, 1:30 pm Mary & Martha Circle
Sun, May 15, 9:30 am Senior Recognition at Church
7:00 pm Movie at LLRC
Wed, May 18 Last Day of School at Norris
Mon, May 30 Memorial Day (Church office closed)

Firth Mom's Group meets on Saturdays at 3:00 pm at the Living Life Reformed Church gym two times each month. On Facebook, you can search Firth mom's Group where we post the dates we meet during the month. All you need to do is click on "Join" and we will approve your request. Any mom is welcome to come.

Vacation Bible School at LLRC June 27 to June 29

This year we are partnering with Firth Bible Church for VBS at LLRC. VBS will be held in the evening from 5 to 8:30 pm with a meal. If you are interested in teaching, helping a teacher, or helping with the event, please email Beth Sieck at church@livinglifereformed.org.

Please register your child by the QR code below as soon as you can to help us with our planning!



We welcome 3 & 4-year-olds, but they need to be potty trained prior to registration. VBS is for students in grades Pre-K to 5th grade (at the end of this past school year 2021-2022).

If you have any questions regarding the VBS, please call the church office at 402-791-5800, Monday through Friday 9 to 12 pm. Also, you can email Beth at church@livinglifereformed.org. We hope to see your kids at this fun event!

Living Life Reformed Church
603 Russell, Box 295
Firth, NE 68358



Sunday Morning

9:30-10:30am:
Worship Service

Livestream on YouTube

To Contact Us:

Church Office Hours:
9:00am-12:00pm

Mark Starr:
320-262-9952
mark@livinglifereformed.org

Robbie Morrison:
402-304-8399
Robbie.morrison@livinglifereformed.org



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