

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2021



Church in the Palms

love God. love others. live the love.

As we approach the end of our 86th year as a congregation, we celebrate that the gospel of Jesus Christ, the same gospel that led Rev. L.S. Mowery to start the church, continues to be the gospel we proclaim. Though our church family has expressed that mission with different words throughout the decades, we praise God that we are still inspiring people to

Love God . . . Love Others . . . Live The Love

As the people of our congregation embody this mission, we envision a future of

- . . . hundreds loving God,
 loving others,
 and living the love

- . . . partnering with thousands
 on God's mission
 to give our community life.

inspiring people to Love God

we worshipped God together

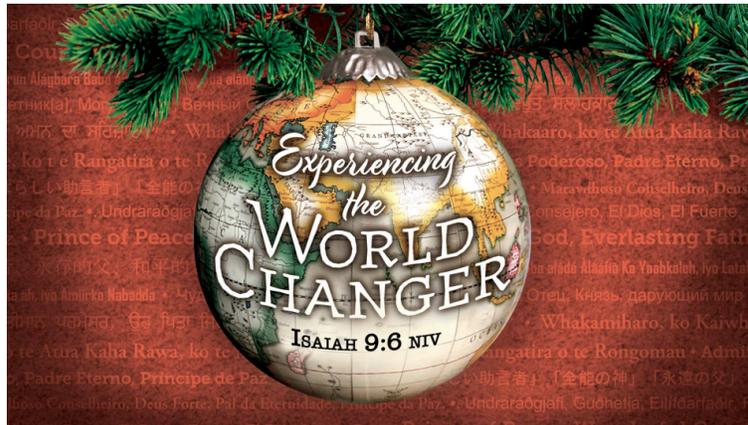
Our Leadership Team and Operations Team have guided our church through the second year of a global pandemic. We have taken on the significant challenge of prayerfully discerning how to physically gather people as the coronavirus has spread through our local community. At the same time, we have continued to utilize technology to make it possible for people to worship God in living rooms across the country.

Because of offering our worship services both in-person and online, our attendance has remained consistent throughout 2021. We have led an average of 112 people to worship our Lord Jesus each Sunday.

Unlike 2020, we gathered our congregation for worship every Sunday in 2021. And unlike many other congregations, including congregations who meet in our building, we have gathered people throughout the pandemic without a single known case of transmission of the coronavirus. Would you pause to thank God for this reality, and for the leaders who have dedicated themselves to the challenging work of creating a safe environment for us all?

The number of those who attended our services in-person ebbed and flowed with the changing transmission of the coronavirus. In January, the virus was at a high point of transmission locally, and gradually declined for the first quarter. During those months, a little less than 50 people were gathering together each week in-person. During the second quarter, as the virus headed to its low point of transmission in June, we welcomed an average of more than 70 people in-person each Sunday. As the rate of transmission began to climb in the 3rd quarter, we averaged less than 60 people in-person each Sunday. As I write this Annual Report, we have once again reached a low point of transmission, and this past Sunday we welcomed 88 people in-person (134 overall).

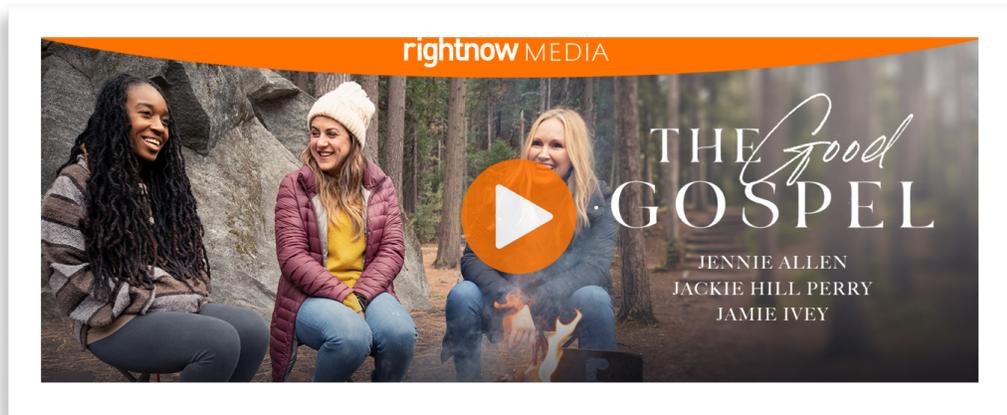
we received God's Truth



We finished 2020 by celebrating Jesus' birth through a series produced by our Church of God Movement: "Experiencing the World Changer."

Then, we kicked off 2021 with a series on Psalm 23. Matt Chandler's video series served as the inspiration for this series, and our congregation had an opportunity to attend a LifeGroup to watch and discuss Chandler's teaching throughout the series.





On February 17th, we kicked off our Season of Spiritual Renewal with our Ash Wednesday Service. This season of repentance and commitment was guided by a series provided by Jamie Ivey, Jennie Allen, and Jackie Hill Perry: *The Good Gospel*. During this series centered in the book of Romans, our church family was invited to gather each week to watch and discuss a video by these speakers. Church family members were challenged to make specific commitments to grow in their relationship with God.

On Maundy Thursday, we celebrated a powerful Tenebrae service, lighting 15 candles in the shape of a cross in the Sanctuary. We read the story of Jesus' last day from John's gospel in 15 readings. After each reading, we extinguished one of the candles and sat in silence, contemplating the reading.

After celebrating Easter Sunday, we spent a month being encouraged to hear God's voice through a series based on Mark Batterson's book, *Whisper*.



After Sundays that celebrated Mothers and Students, we spent several weeks redefining who we are as a church, and who the people are that we can reach. We affirmed that our church family included people we didn't see in the chairs on Sunday morning, and that the people our church could reach included each person knowing by each person in our church family. We encouraged everyone to begin prayer-walking their street to pray for their neighbors.

For the summer months, we asked our Teaching Team to share messages based on what God was teaching them in their spiritual journey.

Then, from August through October, we devoted one week to each of the Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

We offered a reading plan so that each book of the Bible could be read in daily portions during the week prior to the message on that book. We also used resources provided by the Bible Project. Each Saturday our church family received a short video recap of each book, and each Sunday we distributed posters summarizing the video and the books.



Our last series of the year before heading into Advent was Awaken, a message series in conjunction with churches from all over South Florida. Each person in our church family was given the option of receiving daily prayer prompts. These text messages included results of research recently conducted in South Florida by Barna, as well as a way to pray about what had been learned from the research.



we heard God's Word through many voices

One of the trademarks of our congregation is our teaching team. As a member of most congregations, a person hears the same teacher communicating God's Word week after week. Not here at Church in the Palms! This year, our teaching team consisted of 5 people:

Shawn Allen, Jerry Barrantes, Don Imel, Evan Imel, and Adrian Marinelli.

inspiring people to Love Others

we continued the *Church of God* movement



Church in the Palms is proud to be a part of our Church of God (based in Anderson, Indiana) movement. We receive many blessings from the movement, and we had the privilege of extending blessings back to the movement in four ways.

First, we collected an offering to support missions through the Church of God's Christ's Birthday Observance.

Second, we collected an offering for a sister church, Community First Church of God, in Homeland, California. We sent a gift to help them rebuild their church building, which was burnt by an arson in 2016.

Thirdly, our church family collected a special offering to send to benefit the 35 Church of God churches in the southern part of Haiti, the region affected by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in August.

On a state level, we financially supported the Florida Church of God Ministries, and Pastor Shawn enjoyed fellowshiping with our state leader and other local pastors.



we were led to love God and others

Our church is led by two teams of leaders. Our Leadership Team leads the spiritual life of our congregation. Then, the human resources, our facility (the Community Life Center), and financial resources are all stewarded by our Operations Team.

We praise God for the men and women who asked us to follow them as they followed Christ in 2021:

Leadership Team

Shawn Allen

Carol Burt (resigned in August)

Doug Magaw

Penny Barrett

Evan Imel

Theresa Todd

Operations Team

Shawn Allen

Natalie Harper

Becky Magaw

Susan Eby

Megan Kolhagan

Kathryn Remini

At our Annual Meeting, our voting members will have the privilege of confirming two new members of the Leadership Team and two new members of the Operations Team. The proposed leaders for 2022 are:

Leadership Team 2021

Shawn Allen

Vinny Falconieri (if confirmed)

Adrian Marinelli (if confirmed)

Penny Barrett

Evan Imel

Theresa Todd

Operations Team 2021

Shawn Allen

Jim DeFelice (if confirmed)

Natalie Harper

Mike Collins (if confirmed)

Susan Eby

Kathryn Remini

Anna Daniels will serve the second year of her second term as the Secretary of the Corporation in 2022.

Jeff Kolhagan will serve the first year of his third 2-year term as the Treasurer of the Corporation in 2022 (if confirmed by the congregation).

we were served by a great staff

Evan Imel continued to serve as our Associate Pastor in 2021. Among other things, Evan served on our teaching team, helped shepherd our adults, helped us launch our new Explorers ministry (see below), led our Limitless Student Ministry and Sonshine Island Children's Ministry, and facilitated the technology used to execute and livestream our services.

We continue to be blessed by Linda Barnaby, our Property Manager, who goes above and beyond what she has been asked to do to maintain the building and relationships with each of our Community Life Center tenants. Linda oversees the tremendous work of Jerry Zuffuto, who has helps us keep our facility beautiful and functional.

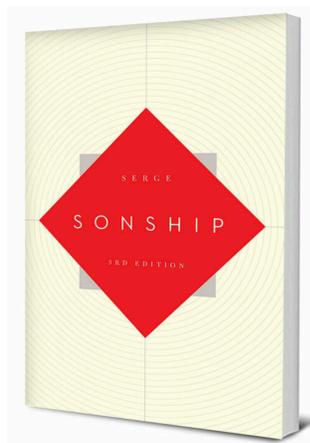
Luz Benitez, our Custodian, continues to serve our church with both excellence and a servant's heart.

While Dale Eby, our Financial Manager, does the important work of keeping our finances running smoothly, he contributes intangible blessings to the church and to the staff through his many years of pastoral experience. Dale also serves regularly on our Sunday morning tech team.

we studied God's Word together so we could live God's Word

As mentioned in other places in this impact report, our church family gathered together throughout the year to study God's Word. Some groups formed around topics related to our Sunday morning message series. At other times, groups studied other topics, like the Beatitudes.

Another group gathered for a study called Sonship, a 16-week study on how to live as a son or daughter of God. Focusing on how the gospel applies to the deepest struggles and areas of need in people's lives, it was truly transformational. This study included both members of Church in the Palms and others from the local community.



we prayed for each other

Throughout the year, members of our church family shared their prayer requests with our prayer team via email.

In May, on the National Day of Prayer, we offered an in-person and online prayer event. Participants were guided through an hour of prayer: praising God, confessing sin, praying for Christians who are persecuted, for Christians to be united, and for our church . . . for our nation, our state, and our county . . . for the military, the media, business, education, and families . . . for the sick, and for nations experiencing unrest.

Also in May, on Pentecost Sunday, we celebrated the Spirit of God by offering an opportunity for people to receive prayer at the conclusion of the service. We continued that practice every Sunday for the remainder of the year. People have received prayer for salvation, physical healing, spiritual renewal, and many other needs.

we are completing a year of “Give 1 in 2021”

To help us fund our 2021 Budget, each person in our congregation was asked to consider giving 1% more than what they had been giving the previous year. This has resulted in our church being on pace to fund 94% of the church’s anticipated budgeted giving, even in the midst of a pandemic.



**we inspired our young people
to Love God, Love Others, and Live the Love**



Sonshine Island has continued to thrive in 2021. For the first half of the year our volunteer team led by Pastor Evan created online content for our children to learn and grow at home. We also provided Bible Booklets during our in-person worship services that corresponded to our monthly lesson plans, as well as family devotionals to help families disciple their children at home.

In March, we reopened our Nursery to children (birth through 3 years old). Our volunteers stepped up to create a safe and friendly environment for our families and their children.

As Easter rolled around our team prepared 35 baskets full of plastic eggs, candy, and access to an online experience called “Easter Eggstravaganza!” Volunteers delivered these baskets to families from our church and community – who then were able to have egg hunts at home. After the hunt they were encouraged to watch a video online that led them through a gospel presentation activity!

In September we were so excited to officially reopen all of our Sonshine Island classes! We welcomed back our 1st–5th graders and our Preschool and Kindergarteners. Our team of nearly 25 people were trained and equipped to begin leading our children every Sunday to learn about Jesus and his love for them. Since resuming in-person we have taught Choose Your Own Adventure – a four week study on the Psalms and Proverbs, Big and Small – a look at the book of Job, and Plate It – a series on the Prophets of the Old Testament. We’ve averaged over 13 children in our program and have welcomed 7 first timers in just 3 months!



Our Limitless Students have been challenged and encouraged to grow and walk with the Lord throughout 2021. We've met every Thursday night to connect, learn, laugh and pray. This year we spent time going through the Alpha Youth program, asked tough questions in our Ask Me Anything series, looked at the "No-namers" in the Bible (those people who met Jesus who we know so very little about), and explored how we're to navigate the Grey Areas of life while staying faithful to God.

In May we partnered with Youth For Christ and our very own Jim DeFelice to have an archery tag event in our back field. Our teens and teens from the community gathered to play archery tag and hear a Gospel message. We also celebrated our graduating seniors Amanda DeFelice, Isabella Moreno, and Jordan Casillas.

We would like to thank our Shareholders, who gave above and beyond their offerings to the church to help fund our entire ministry in 2021. We're thankful for each and every person who supports our students through finances, volunteering, or prayer.

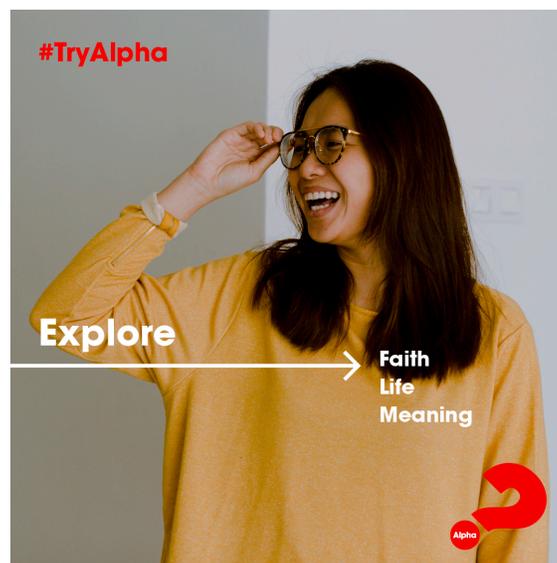
inspiring people to Live the Love

we shared the good news

We continued to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ - that each person created in the image of God has fallen short of loving Him with their whole heart and life - that while our sin was still separating us from God, He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life of obedience - that Jesus gave his life so that He could give us salvation - that God raised Him from the dead in victory, a victory we can participate in - that we can live an abundant life here on earth as we follow Jesus and love our neighbor as our self - that we can be God's ambassadors, reconciling the world to Him - that one day Jesus will return to reign as King forever - that we can experience life forever in His kingdom!

On the evening of Super Bowl Sunday, we offered an opportunity for our church family to hear Super Bowl champions Ben Watson and Tony Dungie share the gospel.

In April we offered a dynamic evangelistic course called Alpha. About a dozen people connected over Zoom to watch engaging videos about the Christian faith, and then discuss how the truth presented in the videos intersected with their life.



we shared Jesus' love through gifts

Every Saturday we hosted CROS ministries as they distributed food to our community through a mobile food pantry.

We helped the city of Greenacres clean up a section of Jog Rd.

We regularly welcomed guests from the community who stopped by the church or called the church, discerning the best ways to respond to their request for assistance.

For Mother's Day, we set out to bless 400 mothers! We encouraged everyone in our church family to find 5 women in their lives who they could bless with a bag filled with a Devotional book, some chocolates, and a special gift from the church.



For Father's Day, we provided everyone in our church family a \$10 restaurant gift card to give to a man they knew, honoring them for Father's Day.

Later in the year we formed a partnership with 4Kids through an initiative called Care Portal. As social workers who work with troubled families in our area discover practical needs these families have, they post the needs on an online portal. Representatives from our church receive notification of those needs, and then choose which of those needs we can meet. Not only can physical needs be met, but we can form relationships with those in need. We have completed our first two projects with Care Portal.

We also joined some partner organizations for a hospital prayer ministry in October. Each participating church created a snack bag for hospital workers and visitors, with each bag having a prayer card attached to it. We were assigned Wellington Regional, and as we gave out all of our snacks and prayer cards, we confirmed that hospitals are such an important place for Christians to be present for ministry.



This year we are once again collecting shoeboxes for children all around the world through Operation Christmas Child.



we shared Jesus' love through pastoral counseling

This year we were asked by an organization named Gloop to be part of launching a new ministry. Donors provided funding for Gloop to facilitate an online advertising campaign to people who are hurting. As people, referred to in this ministry as "Explorers," saw and responded to the ads, they filled out a short form. That form was sent to our church so that we could reach out to them. We have received more than 100 contacts since this ministry began in July. We have been connected to people going through deep struggles, and we've offered counsel and love. Several of the contacts have attended our worship services, and one has become a part of one of our weekly Bible Studies.

Pastor Shawn also extended pastoral counseling to members of our church family and our community.

we continue to provide a home for churches and ministries

Our facility, the Community Life Center, is used by so many people throughout the week! 9 churches and ministries, including a Christian preschool, use the facility God has given us. People worship God here, pray together, preach the gospel, welcome guests, host conferences, baptize new believers, minister to teen moms and other students, teach children God's Word, and much more.

we supported our Pastor as he earned his doctoral degree

This year I completed my Ph.D. in Practical Theology. The picture below tells the story of my academic adventure. Before coming to Church in the Palms, I began my studies with Dr. Bryan Froehle (pictured on right) at St. Thomas University in Miami. After enjoying an incredible experience studying with 31 professors and students from 12 countries, St. Thomas decided to close down their theology department.

Dr. Jon Grenz (pictured on left), the Dean of the School of Ministry at Palm Beach Atlantic University, led the University to hire Dr. Froehle and to set up a fully-accredited Ph.D. program that mirrored the program St. Thomas had been offering. So I am honored to be the first person to receive a Ph.D. in Practical Theology from Palm Beach Atlantic University, the school I have served as an Adjunct Professor for several years.



Bragging on Our Church Family

Like many churches across our country and world, our church stands at a critical crossroads. We have journeyed through an incredibly difficult season of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. During this season, a few members of our church family have transitioned to other churches. Others have participated in our church online. Though we have tried to create a good experience for our online community, some who worship online don't feel as connected to our church family as they did. For those who have continued to gather in-person, some have said it has been discouraging to not see everyone in their church family on a regular basis.

However, in the midst of this trial, this entire Annual Impact Report celebrates the reality that God has still been moving! There are so many individual stories I could share about how God has been working in and through the people of our church. Here are a few . . .

One long-time member and leader at our church recently volunteered for the first time as a teacher in Sonshine Island. Pastor Evan was so delighted to see how great he was working with the children!

One couple who recently moved from the north visited our church in the beginning of the year, and immediately wanted to get involved. Both are now serving regularly in key volunteer positions on Sunday mornings, and are now voting members.

One long-time member on her own initiative often calls people in the church she hasn't seen to let them know they are missed.

One woman was hired for a new job, and decided to give her entire first paycheck to the church as an act of thanksgiving to God!

One long-time member cared enough about one of our older members to creatively think of a perfect ministry that person could offer to the church.

One couple raising an infant watched our services online several times before joining us in-person for the first time. They are now regular attenders, and plan to dedicate their child to the Lord soon.

One long-time member has started using her time to write birthday cards to everyone in the church.

A retired pastor who recently started attending has already found two ways to serve our church family.

One long-time member regularly responds to requests to volunteer his time to complete whatever projects the church needs.

One man who experienced life change while in prison immediately began tithing as soon as he was released and began working his first job.

One long-time member regularly offers his time to help transport items from one place to another for people in need.

One woman who we met through the Explorers campaign has become an active part of our Sonship Bible Study, even bringing a friend to join us.

After months of a situation a family couldn't figure out, one man used his life experiences to solve a major problem for that family.

One long-time member offers the services of his business to the church at no charge.

I could go on, but you get the point: God is moving. Let's continue to join Him on His mission!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shawn Allen
Senior Pastor, *Church in the Palms*