



Inspiring Hope and New Dreams  
in Today's Church!



# *contact me*



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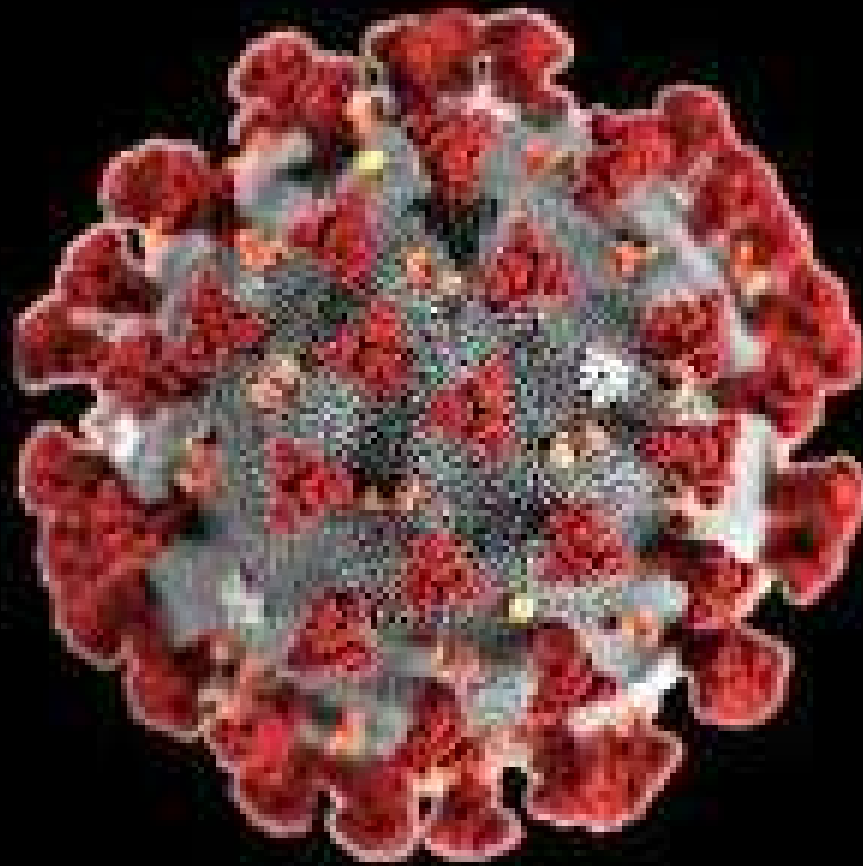


...to receive a copy of this PowerPoint, digital copies of the S.O.A.P. Journaling Form and Congregational Assessment Form, or to answer any questions about adapting this material for your congregation's use. I am happy to share any of this as my gift to the church.

# Attitude Impacts Outcome

*Moving Beyond COVID-19 Fears  
to Greater Faith and  
Congregational Vitality*

# Who Could Have Imagined?





# COVID-19 CHURCH

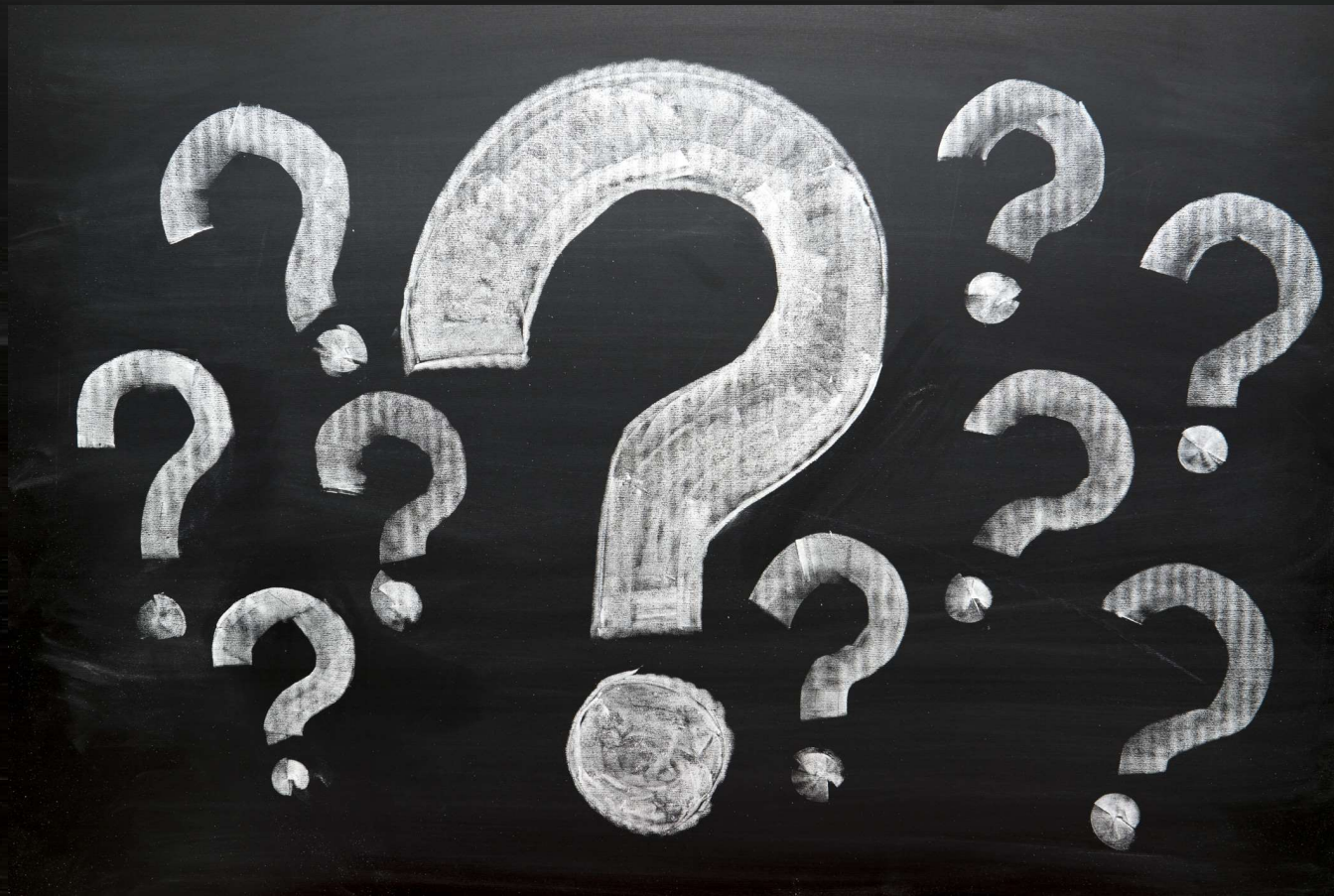
## Sunday Worship

Zoom & Facebook at 11am





# WHO CAN IMAGINE THE POST COVID-19 CHURCH?



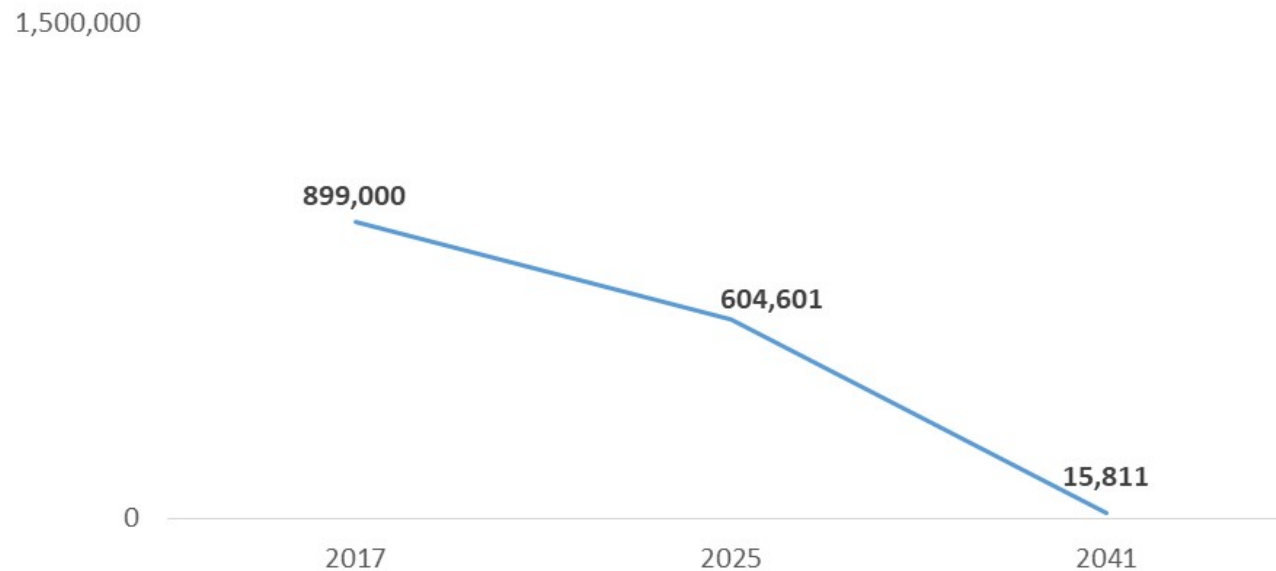
I Can't Predict the Future!





# Here's What I Know...

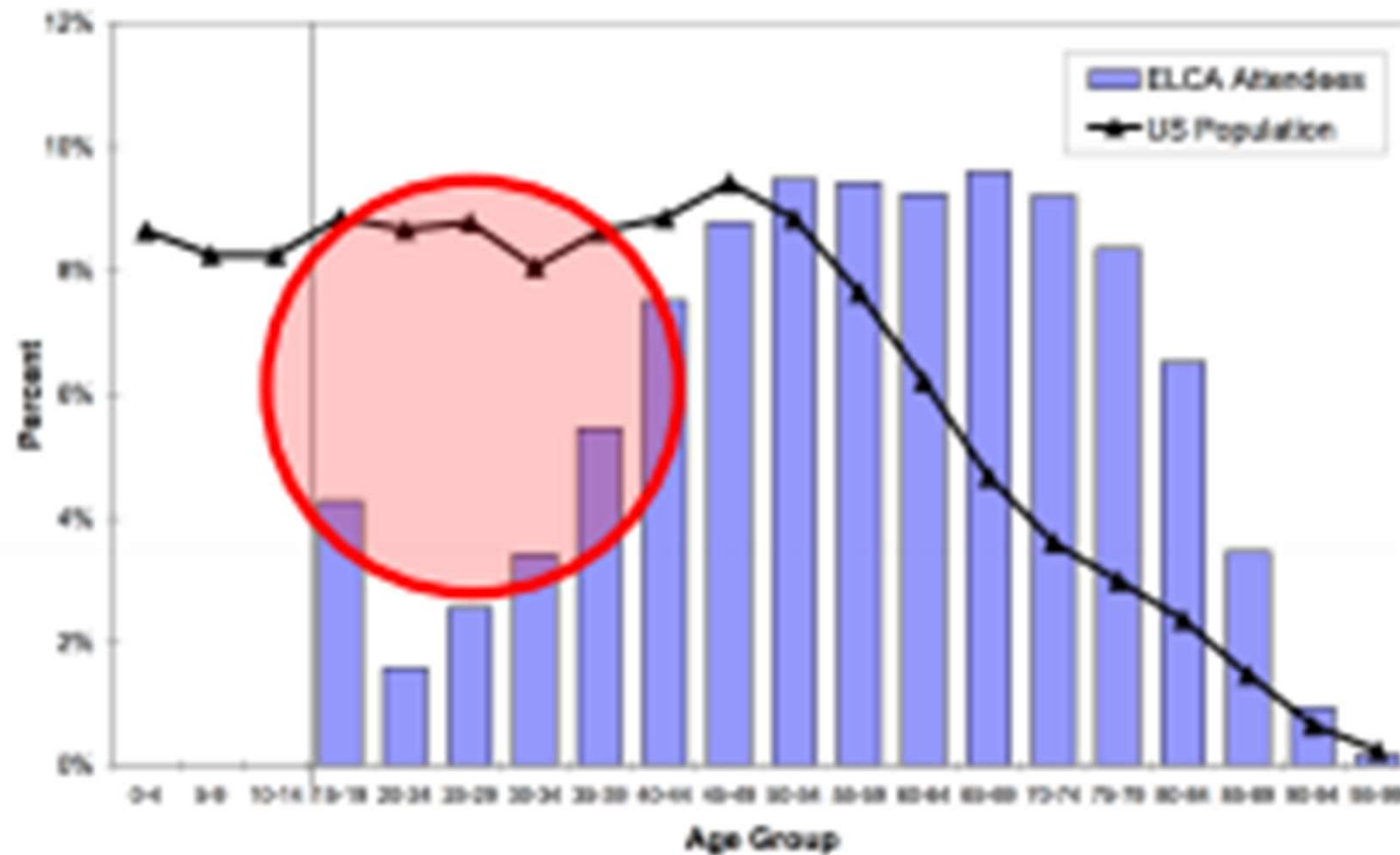
## Average Weekly Worship Attendance 2017-2041 Projections



Source: ELCA Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

### Comparing the 2008 Age of ELCA Attendees and the US Population

Medians for people age 15 to 99 are 56 for ELCA attendees and 59 for US population.



BEFORE COVID 19:

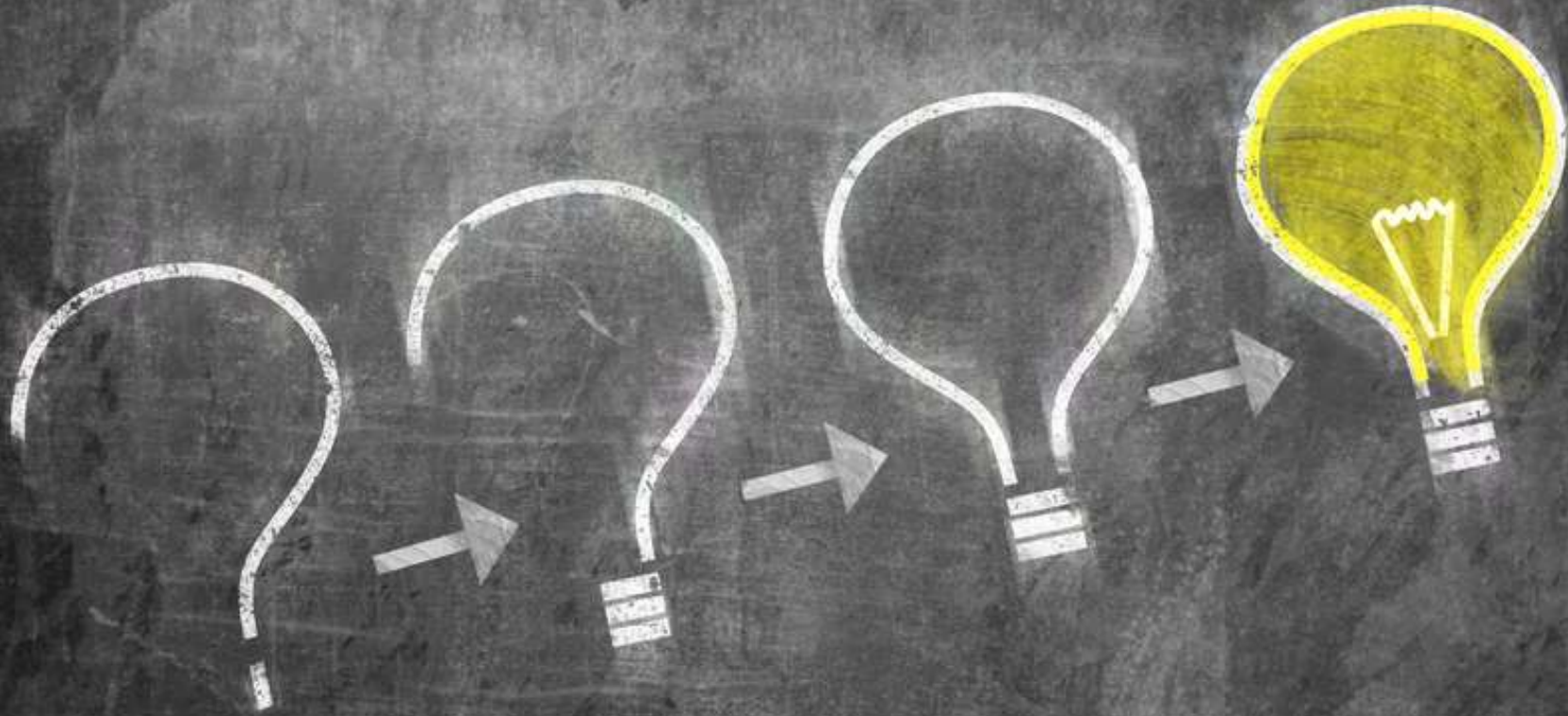
*80-90 % of ALL Congregations  
were Plateaued or Declining*

*Fear, Worry, and Anxiety were Common*

*Fears have gone VIRAL since March*



# POST COVID-19 CHURCH?



*God works for good in all things!*

Romans 8:28

Here's What I Know:

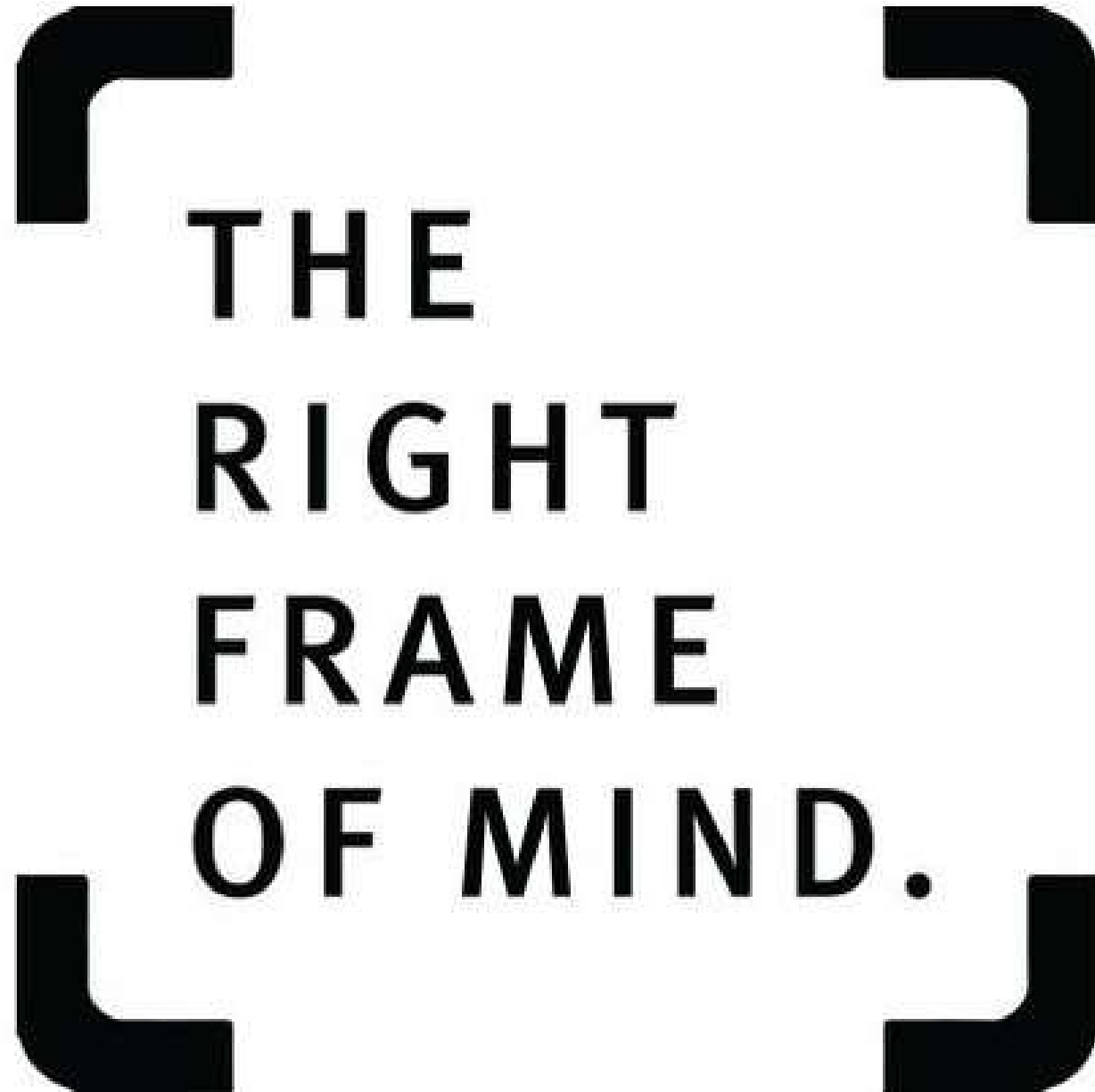
*Change is Coming  
and Churches need to Embrace It*

*1<sup>st</sup> Step: Exorcize the Viruses of Fear,  
Worry, and Anxiety That Will Block  
Your Congregation's Future Vitality*









**THE  
RIGHT  
FRAME  
OF MIND.**



Inspiring Hope and New Dreams  
in Today's Church!



**LET GO**

*of what's holding you back*

**TRUST GOD**

*to empower your dreams*

**RISE UP**

*to face the challenges*



# ***Living Word Lutheran Church - December 1995***



***\$50 & 50 Mostly Retired Members***

# ***Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church - Easter 1997***





***Purchased - April 2004***




# *Transformed - November 2005*



  
Spirit of JOY





O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord



*By the power at work within us,  
God is able to accomplish  
abundantly far more than  
all we can ask or imagine!*

*Ephesians 3:20*



# ***Burundi, Africa – 2007, 2008, 2009***







**samaritan**  
resource center

**ORLANDO FLORIDA**



# **DreamLeaders Initiative**

**Rooted and Grounded in Ephesians 3:20**

**Freed**  
& RENEWED  
in **Christ**  
500 YEARS OF GOD'S  
**GRACE** IN ACTION







Inspiring Hope and New Dreams  
in Today's Church!



***ENCOURAGED***

***INSPIRED***

***CHALLENGED***

*Encouraged*

**LET GO**

*of what's holding you back*



# Let Go!

*Fears, Worries, and Anxieties*



*Essential First Step!*




*Do not be afraid*

**for behold I bring you  
good tidings of  
great joy which will be  
to all people.**

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW

*Matthew 6:34*





**DO NOT BE ANXIOUS  
ABOUT ANYTHING.**

Philippians 4:16

CrossCards



# Attitude Influences Outcome!





# LET GO OF WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK

***Write down your fears, worries or anxieties.***

- Exposed to the light...they lose power and Satan loses his leverage with us
  - Exposed to others...we realize that we don't walk alone and are encouraged
- Vulnerable...we discover power beyond ourselves

## TABLE DISCUSSION

*As a result of COVID...share the fears, worries, and anxieties you may have about your congregation's future.*

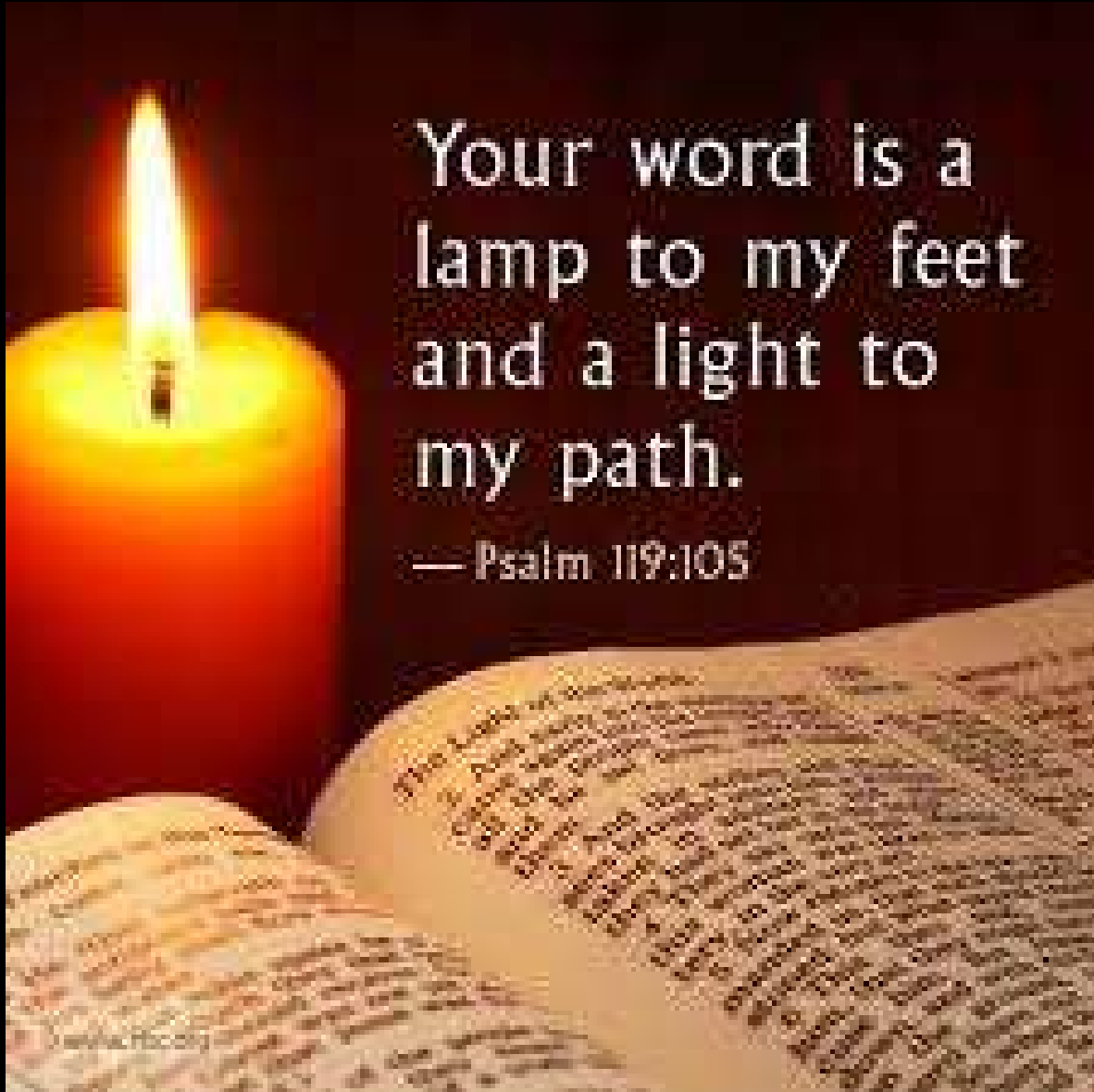
*Identify your table's top 3 fears.*

## Next Steps

*Create a summary of your table's top 3 fears to share with the council.*

*Your congregation council will create a process for the rest of the congregation to name their fears (via Bible studies / small or large groups / during worship, etc.)*



A lit candle with a bright yellow flame sits on the left side of the image. To its right is an open book with text on its pages. The background is dark, and the overall lighting is warm and soft, emanating from the candle. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Your word is a  
lamp to my feet  
and a light to  
my path.

— Psalm 119:105

# S.O.A.P. Bible Journaling

*Hebrews 12:1-3, Psalm 13, Isaiah 40:27-31*

**S: Scripture**

**O: Observation**

**A: Application**

**P: Prayer**

## Bible Journaling

**S** for Scripture: Take a moment to read the scripture to yourself twice and allow God to speak to you. When you're done, look for one verse that particularly spoke to you about this season in your congregation's life. Write it down:

**O** for Observation: What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture about this season in your congregation's life? Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and guide you. Paraphrase and write down this scripture in your own words here:

**A** for Application: Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your congregation. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your congregation's life. Write down how this scripture applies today:

**P** for Prayer: Think of a brief prayer inspired by this scripture verse. This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Write out the prayer here:

*When everyone at your table is finished, take turns sharing your journaling reflections with each other!*

# **Attitude Influences Outcome!**



***You Must Create a New and Right Spirit!***



# Stand Alone Resource Prepping the Soil



*Inspired*

**TRUST GOD**

*to empower your dreams*

*By the power at work within us,  
God is able to accomplish  
abundantly far more than  
all we can ask or imagine!*

*Ephesians 3:20*



*Release Your Burdens  
&  
Trust God's Ephesians 3:20  
and Resurrection Promises*

# **Capture People's Imagination**



# **And Ignite Kingdom Impact**

*“Dream Big Enough...  
that you will fail miserably...  
without God’s help!”*

Dr. Robert Schuller

# Think KINGDOM Impact!





*“Instead of asking God to bless  
all of your good ideas, ask God  
to align you with the things  
God wants to bless!”*

Pastor Dick Wills  
*Waking to God's Dream*



# TRUST GOD TO EMPOWER YOUR DREAMS

***Write down your hopes and dreams.***

- Naming...gives birth to new possibilities  
and generates momentum
- Hearing...stirs the creative spirit within us  
and inspires us to keep dreaming

## TABLE DISCUSSION

*Share some big dreams  
for YOUR congregation  
that God would want to bless.*

## Next Steps

*Create a list to share with your congregation council...and note if there is a common dream.*

*Your congregation council will then determine ways to invite the rest of the congregation to share their dreams.*



# S.O.A.P. Bible Journaling

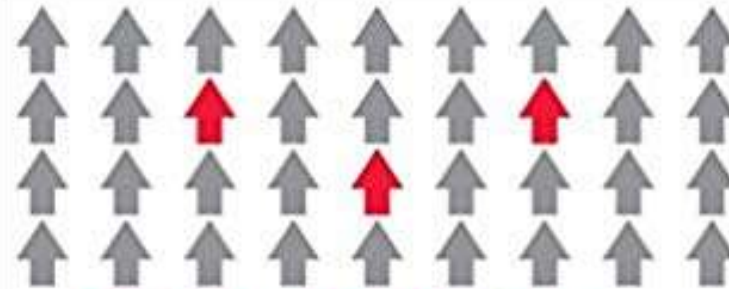
*Ephesians 3:16-21*

**S: Scripture**

**O: Observation**

**A: Application**

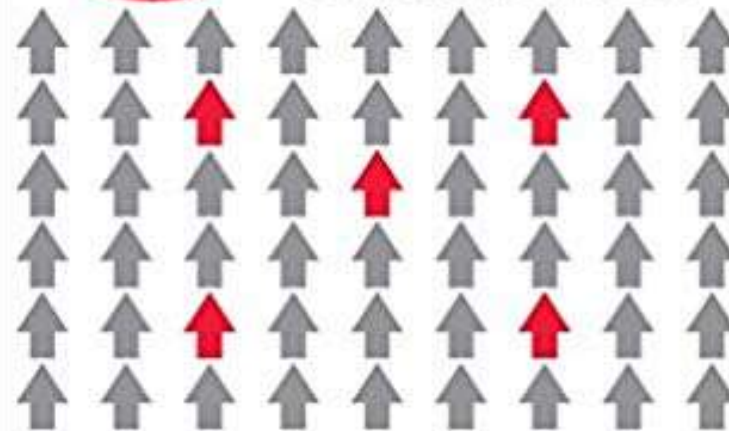
**P: Prayer**



Matt Miofsky  
& Jason Byassee

*Foreword by Jacob Armstrong*

# VIRTUES OF RAPIDLY GROWING CHURCHES



# **The Single Greatest Game-Changing Decision a Church Leadership Team Can Make!**

**Act as if you believe the Holy Spirit is  
up to something in your church!**

*In small towns and big cities, in wealthy churches and poor ones. In multisite megachurches and in rural four-point charges. Miracles are happening. Here is the difference: some churches and leaders live, work and act like they believe this, and others don't. This distinction makes all the difference.*

*Talk to any of the pastors we interviewed, and you will instantly see that before there was any evidence that a church would work, these pastors believed that God was up to something, that God was going to do something significant. They were determined to be a part of it.*

**Acting as if the Spirit is moving  
changes everything.**

**[www.cokesbury.com/Eight-Virtues-of-Rapidly-Growing-Churches-1](http://www.cokesbury.com/Eight-Virtues-of-Rapidly-Growing-Churches-1)**



*Challenged*

**RISE UP**

***to face the challenges***

# Stirring the Pot...



# ...Meddling!

**The State of the Church:**  
*Are We On The Right Path?*  
**An Assessment Tool**



# Autopsy of a Deceased Church



**12 WAYS TO KEEP YOURS ALIVE**

Thom S. Rainer

Read by Maurice England

# **10 Paths of Decline**

**Slow Erosion**

**Past is Our Hero**

**Refusing to Look Like Our Community**

**Budget Moves Inwardly**

**The Great Commission Becomes The Great Omission**

**Being a Preference-Driven Church**

**Pastoral Tenures Decreasing**

**Rarely Praying Together**

**No Clear Purpose**

**Obsessing Over Facilities**

## Congregational Self-Assessment

### Paths of Decline

Use the following list and identify which, if any, of these paths your congregation is on and how far along the path it is:

*Slow Erosion (we are on a slow path of decline)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Our Past is Our Hero (we long for a return to the good old days)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Our Church Refuses to Look Like Our Community (our community is diverse, but we aren't)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Our Budget Has Moved Inward (much of our budget goes toward caring for ourselves and our property)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*The Great Commission Has Become Our Great Omission (we don't invest much in making disciples)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*We Are a Preference-Driven Church (we mostly do what we want not what others need or what God wants)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Pastoral Tenures Have Decreased (our pastors don't stay as long as they used to)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Our Church Rarely Prays Together (outside of formal prayers in worship we don't gather just to pray)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Our Church Has No Clear Purpose (we aren't very clear about our mission)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

*Our Church Obsesses Over Our Facilities (taking care of our facilities is a top priority and funding focus)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Not on This Path at All      \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly on This Path      \_\_\_\_\_ Well Down The Road      \_\_\_\_\_ Crossing the "It is Finished" Line

These paths are further described in *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* by Thom S. Rainer.



# RISE UP TO FACE THE CHALLENGES

*Identify the paths of decline you're on and the changes you need to make to realize greater Kingdom impact.*

- Helps you understand the challenges you face
- Prompts you to start developing strategies
  - Reminds you that sacrifice is needed

## TABLE DISCUSSION

*Are You On Any Paths of Decline?*

Review the paths of decline slide  
and identify any paths your congregation  
may be on or headed toward.



**Repent**



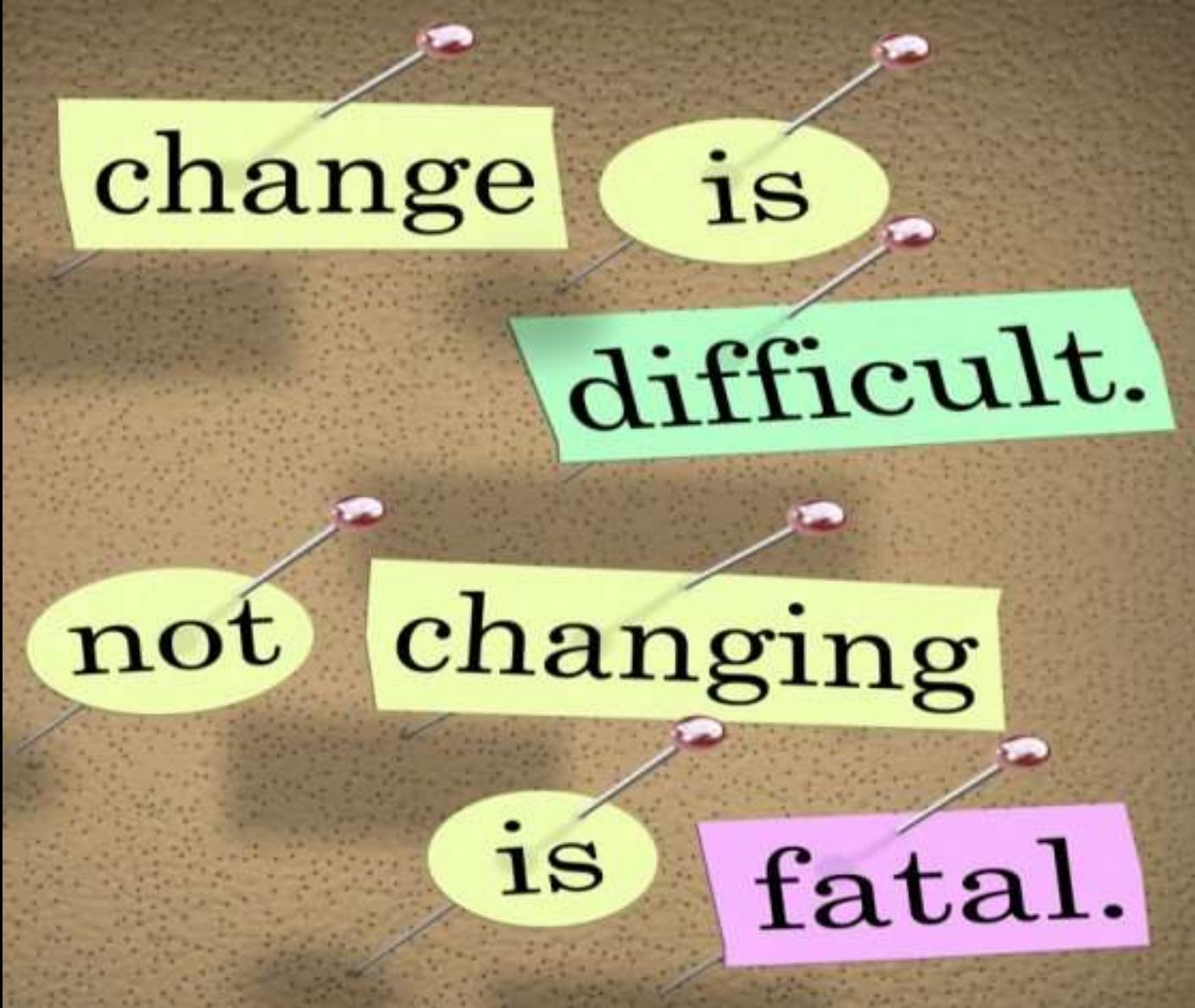
## TABLE DISCUSSION

*Name some things that need to change in your congregation to better align with God's will and realize greater Kingdom impact.*

*Is there a consensus #1?*

Change?  
Change!





change

is

difficult.

not

changing

is

fatal.

## Next Steps

*Create a list of paths of decline you may be on and any changes your table thinks are needed to share with your council.*

*Your congregation council will then determine ways to invite the rest of the congregation into the conversation.*



# S.O.A.P. Bible Journaling

*Romans 12:1-5, 9-18 or Philippians 4:1-13*

**S: Scripture**

**O: Observation**

**A: Application**

**P: Prayer**

*Remember*

Change is mandatory for  
extraordinary results.



Resistance WILL Happen!

# Not My Will



# But God's Be Done!

# It's Not About You!



*Let each of you look not to your own interests,  
but to the interests of others.*

Philippians 2:4



# Leave a Legacy For Your Grandkids!



**Focus More on God's Abundance  
Than On Your Limited Resources!**





# Be Adaptable and Resilient!



**LET GO...***of what's holding you back*



**Trust God...** *to empower your dreams!*





**Rise Up...***to face the challenges!*



# Expect God To Surprise You!





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[www.careynieuwhof.com](http://www.careynieuwhof.com)

*Lord, God, you have called us as your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN*





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