



State of the Church Address
Pastor Andy Lucas
6/29/2020

Greetings Emmaus Road Church! It's my privilege to share with you my 14th State of the Church address.

Church Life

COVID-19 has presented all of us with challenges, and caused all of our lives to change in an instant. I'm so proud of the way our leadership has responded to this health crisis with creativity, hard work, and a strong sense of responsibility to do our part in keeping our community safe. We've been meeting exclusively online since March 15th - that's 16 Sundays online and counting. Thank you for your engagement with the ministry of our church. During this time, our core identity and commitments have remained the same. We are still driven by our mission to present Christ as Savior, pursue Christ as King, and partner with Christ in service. We are still guided by our Defining Marks to teach, preach, and practice citizenship in God's kingdom, retell the story of Jesus through our worship, and pursue intergenerational ministry. These things remain the same. However, our strategies to accomplish these things have had to change quickly. I'm thankful to work with such a great staff in Grace and Daniel. They work very hard and I have leaned on them a lot in this season. Not only have they been a source of personal encouragement, they have also been a source of wonderful ideas for ministry during COVID.

I want to share some information with you coming out of our fiscal year that ended April 30th. And then spend some time looking at what is ahead this year.

When it comes to discerning the strength of our church, I like to look at indicators of church health and fruitfulness. Reflecting on the past year, I'm proud to say that Emmaus Road is a healthy and fruitful church.

Healthy churches are more outward focused than they are inward focused. I'm proud to say that of all the programs and opportunities we advertised to the church this past year, there were more focused on serving our community than anything else. After years of involvement with Faith Family Hospitality, our volunteer base continued to grow, which is a trend that is uncommon with any long-running ministry. Until COVID, we had a small group of people that faithfully shared the love of Christ with residents of Parkwood Estates through a monthly game night. This year, concluded our monthly ministry to the homeless that we called Renee's Hope. While we decided to explore other avenues of compassionate ministry in our city, we celebrate that Renee's Hope was one of our longest running ministries ever. Let me take this opportunity to thank Jeremy Bradney for his faithful leadership over Renee's Hope the past several years. Jeremy, your consistency and faithfulness to organize volunteers and make sure enough food was provided is a key reason the ministry was successful for so long. Thank you.

Healthy and fruitful churches know how to love one another well. As a pastor, I celebrate when I hear about life groups providing meals for group members after the birth of a child or a hospital visit. It is so good to hear about how the phone calls, text messages, or notes that provide encouragement. Whether it is zoom calls where we pray for one another or other tangible expressions of care and love, I'm happy to be part of a church that loves well. There is no limit to how well we can love one another, so let's continue to heed Jesus' words from John 13:35, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

Healthy and fruitful churches pursue the way of Jesus passionately. This year, we explored some really important truths together through sermons and life group discussions. We began the year with our series, "The Beautiful Gospel" where we learned the essence of the Good News is that God has become King in Christ and is making all things new; including us! I especially remember our series Greater Than. During this series we fused the sermon with visuals from Melissa Pape Art. This fusion of spoken and visual truth helped us remember that curiosity > certainty; we > me; and love > fear. Early 2020, before our lives were turned upside down, we explored the powerful story of Job. During that series we tackled the difficult question about how God runs the world, and learned that blame and shame are tools of the Enemy. In recent days, we've been reminded of the hope we have in Christ in the midst of uncertainty; explored the nature of biblical holiness; and have been reminded that there is no room for racial oppression in Jesus' Gospel.

All of these things, and much more, compel me to say that Emmaus Road Church is a healthy and fruitful church. Thank you again, for engaging with us in ministry. We could not do it without you.

Financial Update

Let me say a couple of things regarding the financial life of the church. The attached report was put together by our Treasurer, Crystal Van Kull, who does a phenomenal job! Countless hours are spent tracking the spending of the church and making sure everything is recorded properly and every dollar accounted for. If you get a chance, make sure to thank Crystal for her excellent work.

Overall, we had a pretty good year financially. We ended the year having spent about \$2,500 more than we brought in. Of course, we would rather that be the other way around, but over the course of a year this is within 1.5% of budget.

You'll notice that our overall cash in the bank decreased this year. This is because of some building maintenance that was completed. We repaired the mini-cupolas in the Welcome Center to address a leak, did some work on our parking lot, and installed a new drip line to our sprinkler system.

In addition to this necessary maintenance, we were able to pay down the debt from our sanctuary re-roof a few years ago. The remaining balance on that loan is now approximately \$23,000.

Thank you for your generosity and support this past year. The full report is attached for more information.

Looking at this year so far, COVID has impacted on our giving which has left us behind budget to this point. However, our expenses are also down because we aren't meeting in the building. We've taken steps to cut expenses in as many areas as possible. We applied for and received some government assistance in the form of a forgivable loan as part of the CARES Act. That has enabled us to be sure our staff is taken care of during this time. Thank you for your continued generosity. I want to reiterate, if you are in need, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

A Plan To Re-Gather

Looking ahead, there is still much that is uncertain because of COVID-19. However, Larimer County has done a great job of keeping case counts and hospitalizations down because of diligence in following precautions. Because of this, we can begin re-gathering safely with precautions in place. Here's the plan:

On July 12 & 19, the church sanctuary will be open for a "Watch Party." Those in attendance will participate in the same online worship experience we've been having, but with the added benefit of being with one another. Attendees will be encouraged to participate in all facets of the service while being led by the video played on the screens.

We've decided to take the approach in mid-July because it provides an opportunity to gather together for those that are ready and eager to do so, while also ensuring that everyone who calls Emmaus Road their church home has the same worship experience. It also buys us some time to prepare for streaming live services online. We've purchased necessary hardware and software to provide a quality live stream of our services and want to make sure that has arrived and is ready for those who choose to continue to worship from home. Our plan is to begin live and in-person worship services that are streamed online beginning July 26th.

It is so important for each of us to honor and respect the decision each family makes regarding worship. So I invite us to extend grace to one another as we all navigate this for the first time.

More detailed information will be coming out in our newsletter and social media regarding guidelines that will be in place for our gatherings, so watch those outlets in the days ahead.

We look forward to seeing you whether in person or online. May God strengthen His Church during this season and may we receive His grace as we move forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Lucas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Pastor Andy Lucas