

OUR CHURCH & FELLOWSHIP



AG—Our Church & Fellowship

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Springfield, Missouri 65802
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1-800-641-4310, or visit www.GospelPublishing.com
Printed in U.S.A.



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A Place for You

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in our church. We know that “first-time visits” are often intimidating. But it’s our hope you will feel at ease with us. Naturally, you may be wondering who we are and what we’re about. We trust this pamphlet will help answer many of your questions.

You may not realize it, but our church is made up of ordinary people. Nearly all of us have experienced God’s forgiveness and healing personally. Words cannot express the incredible peace and ultimate joy He has brought to our lives.

We believe that through Christ the church is the vital foundation for life and ministry. Not to be confused with a building or facility, the church is simply a network of people committed to sharing the message of Jesus (Matthew 16:18).

OUR CHURCH HAS 4 PURPOSES

First and foremost we are committed ...

to evangelism

We believe it’s our responsibility to introduce people to Christ who have never accepted Him. We know from experience that only God can take a troubled life and truly transform it into something new and beautiful. This is the reality of the gospel and our message to all.

Second, we are committed to providing an open environment ...

to worship God

and to fellowship with others who hold similar values and love for Christ. Christianity is not a solo act. The Lord designed each of us for relationships, both with Him and with others. To accomplish this, He has given each of us specific gifts and abilities to build and encourage each other in our worship to Him.

As a church we also desire ...

to disciple believers

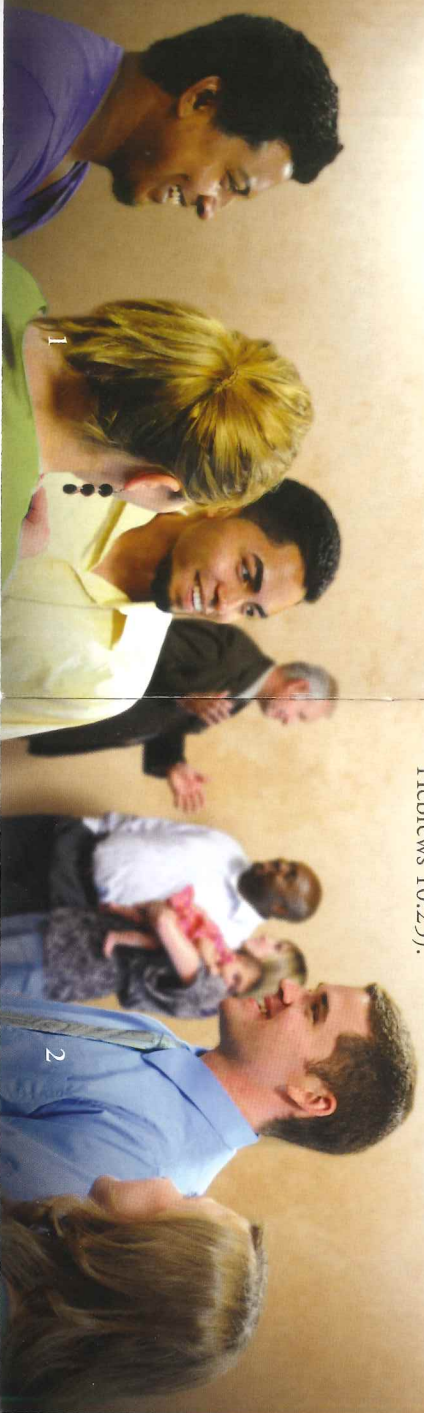
and help them grow in their faith. Jesus taught that whenever people accept God, they are spiritually “born again.” Like infants, each new Christian requires lots of love and spiritual nurturing in order to grow and mature into a lifelong follower of Christ.

Last, but equally important, we commit ourselves ...

to compassion

reaching out to others in need. Everyone experiences difficulties in life and has times of need. Endless challenges surround us each day with new opportunities to help others. With each response we are able to share hope and build a bridge to Christ.

As followers of Jesus, we submit ourselves to these purposes. (Acts 2:42–47; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:25).



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OUR BELIEFS

GOD LOVES US AND OFFERS SALVATION

We live in a fallen world as result of sin. Its destructive effects are seen and felt in nearly every corner of life. It erodes lives, destroys relationships, and separates people from God. Because of this, we all need to be set free from sin and made right with God.



The good news is God loves each of us and wants to form a dynamic relationship with us. But sadly, our sins stand in the way. Yet God so loved us that He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for our sin. And because Christ loved us and was obedient to God the Father, He willingly offered up His own life, dying in our place. Today as a result of His sacrifice, each of us can receive forgiveness through Christ and be set free from spiritual death—the penalty for our sin. This process of being saved and cleansed from sin is what Jesus called “being born-again.” The Bible teaches that this gift of salvation brings eternal life. This is the central message of Christianity and the most important decision anyone can make (John 3:3,5,16,17; Romans 10:9,10; Titus 2:11).

OUR CORE BELIEFS

Our church embraces 16 truths as a statement of faith. Four of these are considered core beliefs.

1. **SALVATION** through Jesus Christ who provides the supreme sacrifice for sin (John 3:3, 16,17; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8,9).
2. **BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT** for empowered Spirit-filled living (Acts 1:8; 2:4,17, 18,38,39).

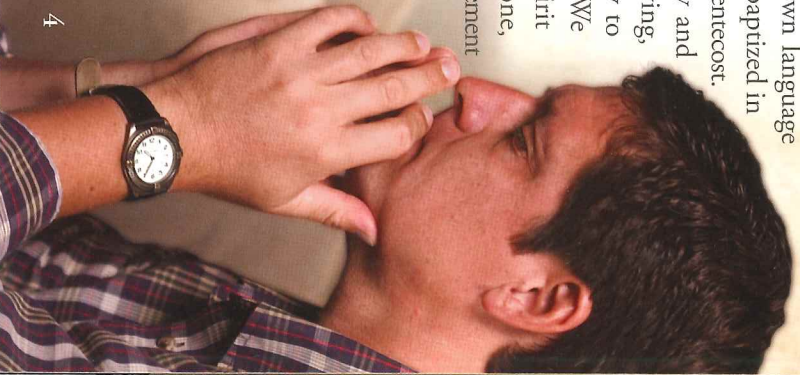
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3. **DIVINE HEALING** for the sick provided through Christ's atoning death and resurrection (James 5:14–16).

4. **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** when He returns for all who have accepted Him (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; 1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

POWER FOR LIVING

The teaching that distinguishes our church from many others is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We believe this infilling of the Spirit gives believers several benefits as indicated in the New Testament. These include power to witness and serve others; a fervent dedication to the work of God; an intense love for Christ, His Word, and others; and the bestowment of key spiritual gifts (Acts 1:4, 8; 8:15–17). Like the pattern recorded in the Bible, we believe whenever the Holy Spirit initially fills believers, they will speak in an unknown language like the 120 who were baptized in the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. This infilling brings joy and power for Christian living, and serves as a gateway to a fuller life in Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit baptism is for everyone, though it is not a requirement for salvation (Acts 2:4).



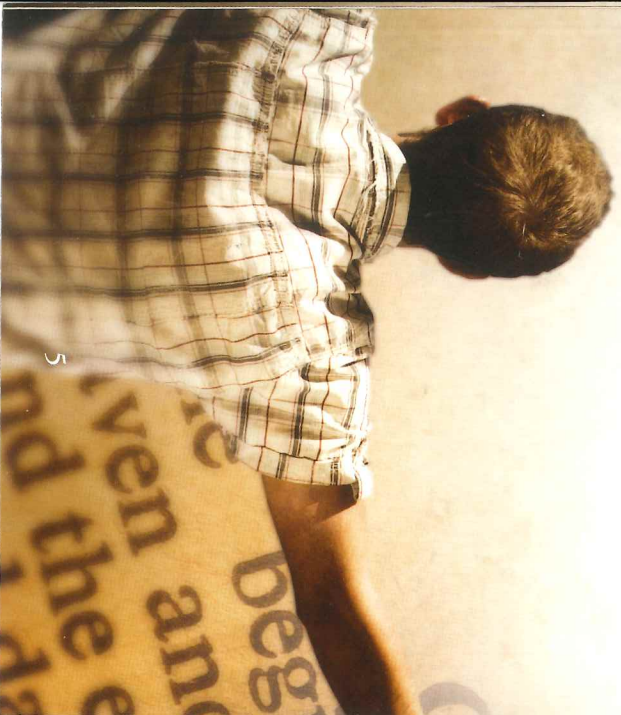
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OUR GUIDE FOR LIVING

THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible is the standard rule of faith for all Christians and is God's message for mankind. We believe its inspired words are timeless, providing a guide for all cultures and generations. Furthermore, we believe the Bible is without error, and is the only true, holy standard for measuring faith and conduct.

We generally interpret God's Word literally, accepting its truths as recorded. From this perspective we believe God performed every miracle and supernatural work mentioned in Scripture. For example, we believe in the creation of the universe and man as stated in Genesis. We also believe that the Flood and the ark, the feeding of the 5,000, the parting of the Red Sea, and the many healings listed in the Bible all happened as recorded. Furthermore, we believe the events outlined in the final book, Revelation, will transpire in the near future.



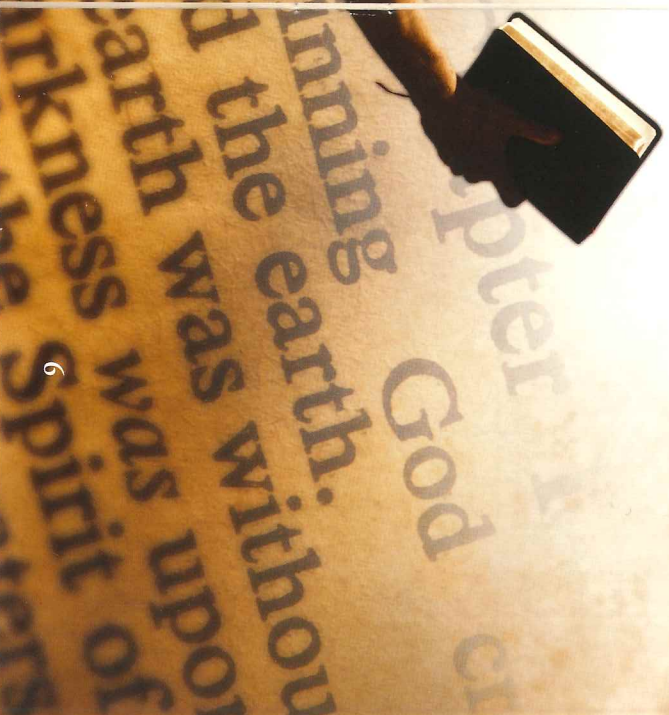
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OUR WORSHIP

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKSGIVING

Spirit-filled worship is a special blessing that we enjoy. We believe all Christians should give God praise, bringing glory and honor to Him. In our services people often pray and thank the Lord audibly during times of corporate prayer and thanksgiving. While some pray silently and express little outward emotion, others will respond aloud with raised hands, often communicating their love and affection through tears.

Raised hands are common in our worship, showing approval and pleasure for the things God is doing in our lives. To the believer it is an outward sign of praise and surrender to His will. These visible gestures are not for the benefit of others, but rather personal expressions of worship. Regardless of style, each sincere expression is welcome (Psalm 47:1; 134:2).



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OUR SERVICES

Singing, worship, and preaching are important...but without the presence of God they are meaningless. For this reason we are committed to creating an atmosphere where the Lord's presence is welcome and realized each time we meet. Though we schedule and plan each service, we quickly yield to any sovereign move of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to minister as needed.

SINGING & WORSHIP

Our Sunday morning service typically opens with worship. This includes singing and times of praise. Following or sometimes during the song service, the congregation will join in prayer. It is not unusual for individuals to pray aloud during these times (Psalm 30:4; 96:1-9; Ephesians 5:19,20).

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

At some point there will be corporate prayer when we pray for special individual needs within the congregation. Those who are hurting either physically or emotionally are often anointed with oil and prayed for at this time in the service (James 5:14-16).

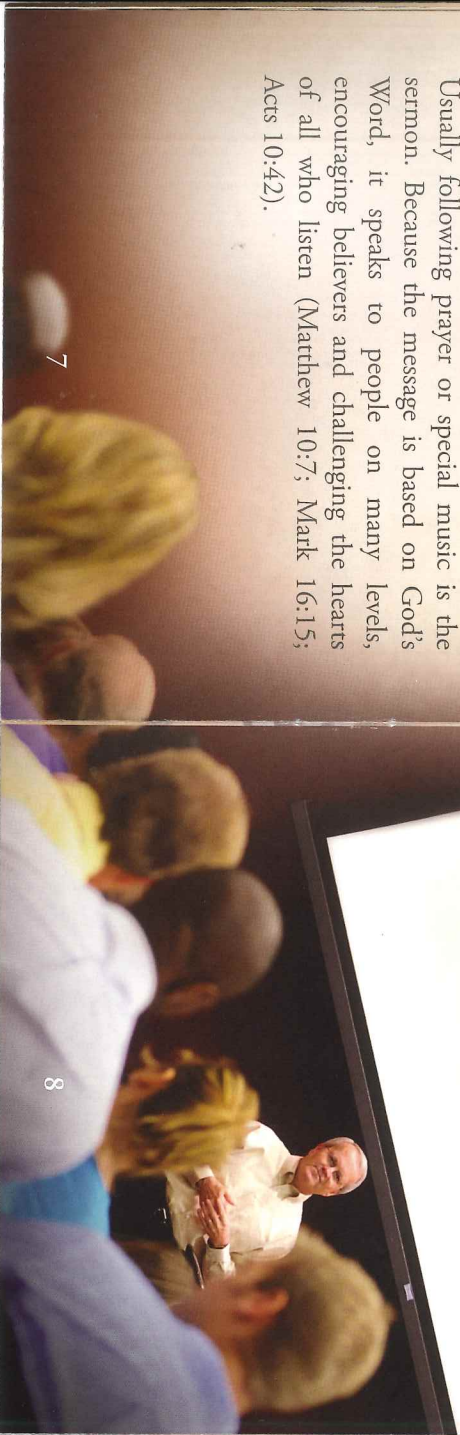
THE MESSAGE

Usually following prayer or special music is the sermon. Because the message is based on God's Word, it speaks to people on many levels, encouraging believers and challenging the hearts of all who listen (Marthew 10:7; Mark 16:15; Acts 10:42).

A TIME OF COMMITMENT

After the sermon, the pastor or speaker typically closes with an invitation for those who need forgiveness to come forward and accept Christ as Savior. Others come to pray about personal needs and concerns in their lives. Deep emotion and excitement may or may not be demonstrated at the altars, but everyone who calls on the Lord in faith receives something special (Psalm 25:16-18; 34:17-19; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 4:23).

*Let us not give up meeting
together, as some are in the
habit of doing, but let us encourage
one another—and all the more as
see the Day approaching.*
-Hebrews 10:25



A TIME TO REMEMBER

At various times within the flow of our services we observe Holy Communion and water baptism. These are practices Jesus instructed His disciples to follow.

COMMUNION

Communion is observed regularly in our church. This observance of the Lord's Supper is open to all who have accepted Jesus as Savior, both member and visitor alike. This solemn commemoration reflects on the loving sacrifice of Jesus, remembering His suffering, His death, and His glorious resurrection. When receiving communion, partakers are asked to prayerfully examine their own lives, making sure they are spiritually right with God. They are then given bread signifying His broken body, and juice as a symbol of His shed blood. Communion serves as a worshipful reminder of the great price Jesus paid for our salvation and encourages deeper devotion to Christ (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).



OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND FELLOWSHIP

DISCIPLESHIP

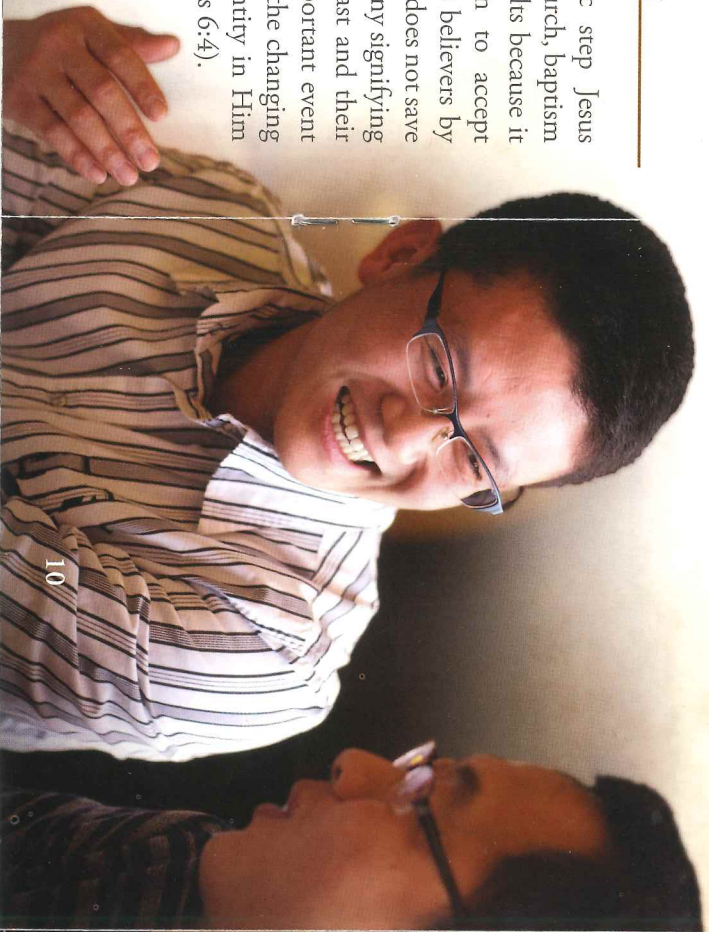
Our church provides opportunities for spiritual growth and fellowship. These groups are designed to teach the Bible and strengthen believers. The smaller informal environment of Sunday School and small groups give opportunities for learners to ask questions, share comments, pray for each other and build friendships in ways beyond those provided in the typical worship settings.

MINISTRY GROUPS

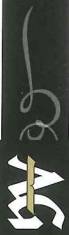
We also offer unique ministries and opportunities for involvement based on age and interest. We have groups for men, women, youth, and children to name a few. These ministries meet the specific needs of individuals and offer them opportunities to reach out to others.

WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is another symbolic step Jesus commanded of new believers. In our church, baptism is reserved for older children and adults because it always follows a conscious decision to accept Christ's offer of salvation. We baptize believers by immersing them in water. This process does not save a person, but serves as a public testimony signifying the death of the individual's sinful past and their new birth in Jesus Christ. It's an important event in the life of the believer, confirming the changing power of Jesus Christ and a new identity in Him (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:4).



Part of a Great FELLOWSHIP



Our church is affiliated with the Assemblies of God, a fellowship of churches that spans the nation. Beyond the needs of our community, we are involved in a large global missions endeavor designed to reach the whole world with the gospel.

OUR MISSIONS OUTREACH

Here in the United States, our Fellowship ministers to thousands of people beyond the reach of our church through Assemblies of God U.S. Missions. Many of these ministries are among the most creative and resourceful in the world. A few of these include ministries to specific language groups, military personnel, prisoners, and those with disabilities. In order to reach young people, our Fellowship directs ministries to college students through Chi Alpha and reaches others who are caught in the web of substance abuse.

Outside our borders, the church reaches out to literally millions of people through Assemblies of God World Missions. Our Fellowship now ministers in over 200 countries through the work of approximately 2,700 missionaries and associates. Though the churches in those countries are established as sovereign and indigenous works, they are helped and supported through our missions efforts. Today over 63 million people around the world are touched by the ministries and teachings of the Assemblies of God.

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OUR PLACE IN CHRISTIAN CIRCLES

You may be wondering where our church and Fellowship fit in the larger picture of Christianity, or about our affiliations with other national and global religious organizations. Several descriptions help define us ...

TRINITARIAN PROTESTANTS

Like most Christian groups we believe in one God who exists in three persons—the Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit. We believe all three are alive and active today. We also believe this God of three persons is the “one and only true God” (Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21,22; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

As a result of Christ’s death and resurrection, we believe everyone can have direct fellowship with God through His Son Jesus without any human intermediaries. This provides a personal and meaningful relationship with Him. While we are less formal in our worship to God than many Protestant denominations, we are very similar in faith, with the exception of our Pentecostal doctrine (Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 6:20; 7:26–28).



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EVANGELICAL

We are notably classified as Evangelical. The church is distinguished as such because it places high priority on the inspiration of Scripture and its mission to win others and bring people into a saving knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ.



PENTECOSTAL

The most definitive identification of our church is Pentecostal—one where the fullness of the Holy Spirit is welcomed, nurtured, and taught. This includes speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Other manifestations of the Holy Spirit embraced by the church include messages in tongues with interpretations, prophecies, word of knowledge, and the complete offering of the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit as indicated in the Bible. Among Pentecostal churches, our Fellowship, the Assemblies of God, is the largest worldwide with over 63 million constituents.

AFFILIATIONS

The Assemblies of God is a member of four national and international Christian organizations. These include the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA), the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF), and the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF). The church's leadership also participates in many subgroups of these organizations. The Assemblies of God is not affiliated with either the World Council of Churches or the National Council of Churches.

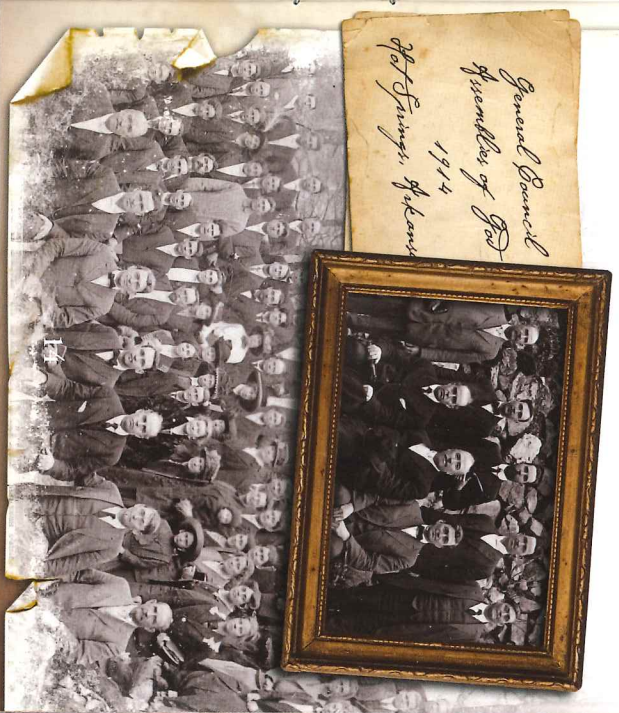
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR FELLOWSHIP

Like any group, people want to know our origins—where we came from, and how we began.

REVIVALS IMPACT WORLD

Our Fellowship, the Assemblies of God, grew out of the Pentecostal revival, which began in the early 1900s in places such as Topeka, Kansas, and the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California. During times of prayer and Bible study, believers were baptized in the Spirit like the 120 followers described in the Book of Acts. Accompanied by speaking in tongues, their experience aligned with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Acts 2). Soon participants in the Movement were called “Pentecostals.” Through the power of the Holy Spirit, these believers received strength to live holy lives and boldness to share their faith with others. The Pentecostal Movement has grown from a handful of Bible school students in Topeka, Kansas, to an estimated 600 million Spirit-filled believers in the world today.



THE NEED TO UNITE

Many participants who were baptized in the Holy Spirit during revivals and camp meetings in the early 1900s were not welcomed back to their former churches. These believers started many local churches and soon considered banding together for the purpose of fellowship and doctrinal unity. Other concerns included facilitating missionaries, chartering churches, and forming a Bible training school.

A NEW FELLOWSHIP IS FORMED

Some 300 Pentecostals met at an opera house in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in April 1914, and agreed to form a new fellowship of loosely-knit independent churches. These churches were left with the needed autonomy to develop and govern their own local ministries, yet they were united in their message and efforts to reach the world for Christ. So began the General Council of the Assemblies of God—a cooperative Fellowship. Since the beginning, the organization has operated from the grass roots, allowing the local church to choose and develop ministries and facilities best suited for its needs.



OUR STRUCTURE AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Every church needs accountability, and our church is no different. As part of the Assemblies of God, we follow a biblical framework for organization and church government.

CHRIST THE HEAD

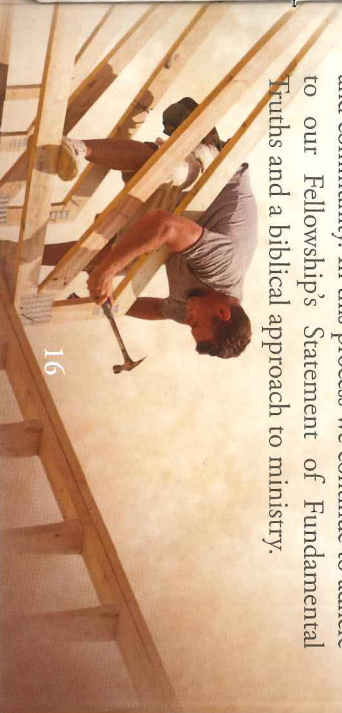
In our Fellowship, Christ is recognized as the head of the Church. He is supreme; and His life is the pattern for all ministry and conduct of the Church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

ELECTED LEADERSHIP

Our pastor is elected locally by our congregation, and leads through preaching and teaching of the Word, as well as by example. Our pastor is also responsible for much of the public ministry and day-to-day functions of the church. We also elect a board of deacons to assist the pastor in spiritual matters and to help conduct the business operation of our church (Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

SOVEREIGN MINISTRY

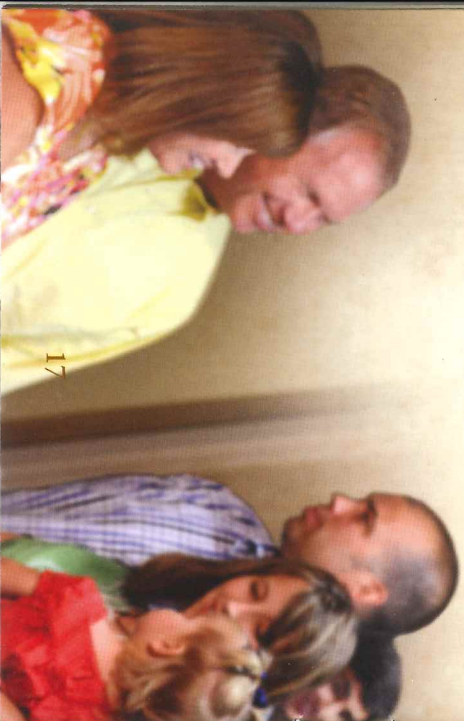
Our church, like others in our Fellowship, is designed to be autonomous. In reaching the point of being self-supporting and self-governing, we build, purchase and hold title to our own property, and develop ministries locally that best serve our church and community. In this process we continue to adhere to our Fellowship's Statement of Fundamental Truths and a biblical approach to ministry.



LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We operate our ministries under both a district and national structure. There are 61 districts in our Fellowship that basically follow state boundaries or are set according to specific language groups. The districts oversee ministries such as camps and outreaches, as well as provide ministry opportunities and avenues of fellowship for ministers and constituents. Districts also recommend ministers for national credentialing. Districts are authorized to lead, solving matters of leadership, direction, or conflict when needed. They operate as a type of regional leadership between the local church and the national Fellowship.

The official name of our Fellowship is The General Council of the Assemblies of God. In keeping with the original intention of the founding body, the national church is considered a cooperative fellowship instead of a denomination. As a result, our national office exists primarily as a service organization—developing educational curriculum, organizing missions programs, credentialing ministers, overseeing the Fellowship's colleges and seminary, coordinating communication channels, and providing leadership for many national programs and ministries (Matthew 9:35; 20:25–28; John 13:1–17; Acts 16:4,5; Hebrews 13:17).



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A PLACE FOR YOU

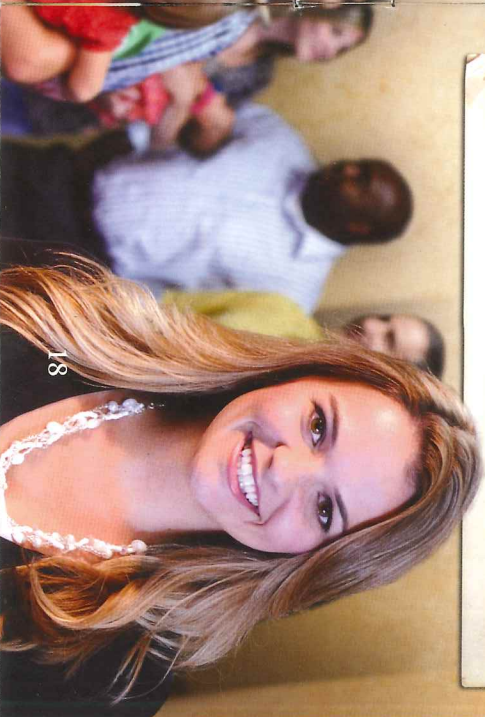
Some have suggested that finding the right church is a lot like searching for a new home. But the truth is, it's so much more—it's like finding your family! It's not about real estate, it's about being loved and accepted and being able to relax and worship God together. It's like finally being home and unwinding with the ones you love... the ones who love you!



So whether you're searching for answers to life, needing a place to grow in your faith, or just looking to make new friends, we understand where you're coming from. Each of us has been there and want to include you.

Through our church we've discovered serving God and living a life filled with His Spirit is the ultimate joy that brings peace and fulfillment. And not just for now, but for all eternity.

If you're looking for a church family to call home, we want to connect and be that for you. You're always welcome. No invitation is ever needed. So why not start by experiencing the presence of God with us this Sunday as we worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). You'll be glad you did!



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