

Becoming a member

What does it mean?



At Living Word Church

We hope you will find our community of believers to be committed and intense. We don't strive to be a "laid back" church even though some of us may have laid back personalities. We strive to be a passionate church.

Why passionate?

**The God of heaven has
intervened in our lives!**

A photograph of a diverse group of people holding hands in a circle, symbolizing unity and commitment. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue circle on the right side, which contains the text.

**Membership implies
commitment and
loyalty, so...**



**...we want to help you
learn about what you
are committing to.**

Learning Check

Question 1

Why does Living Word Church want you to take this mini-course?

- a. To make sure you are a good citizen.
- b. To see if you have a good work history.
- c. To find out if you are a strong reader.
- d. To help you learn about the fiery church you may commit to.

Learning Check

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Six Membership Topics

- The story.
- The beliefs.
- The distinctives.
- The ministries.
- The staff.
- The “Ask.”



1. The Story

Why should you care about our story?

We think that you would want to be assured that God had a special hand in starting and sustaining this church. The assurance is ample, and it is found in our story.

Why should you care about our story?

Living Word Church began in the 1970s, during a nationwide spiritual awakening that some people have called “The Jesus Revolution.”

But it also happened because of very local, personal, and specific events that were directed from above by the hand of God.

The Story

In 1970, Bob Mazur, a 32-year old local businessman, took a trip to Houston, TX to participate in a marksmanship contest. Someone tricked him into going to a small church. On the way in, he thought, “I would so like to know if God is real.”

Within an hour, the LORD would reveal Himself to Bob.

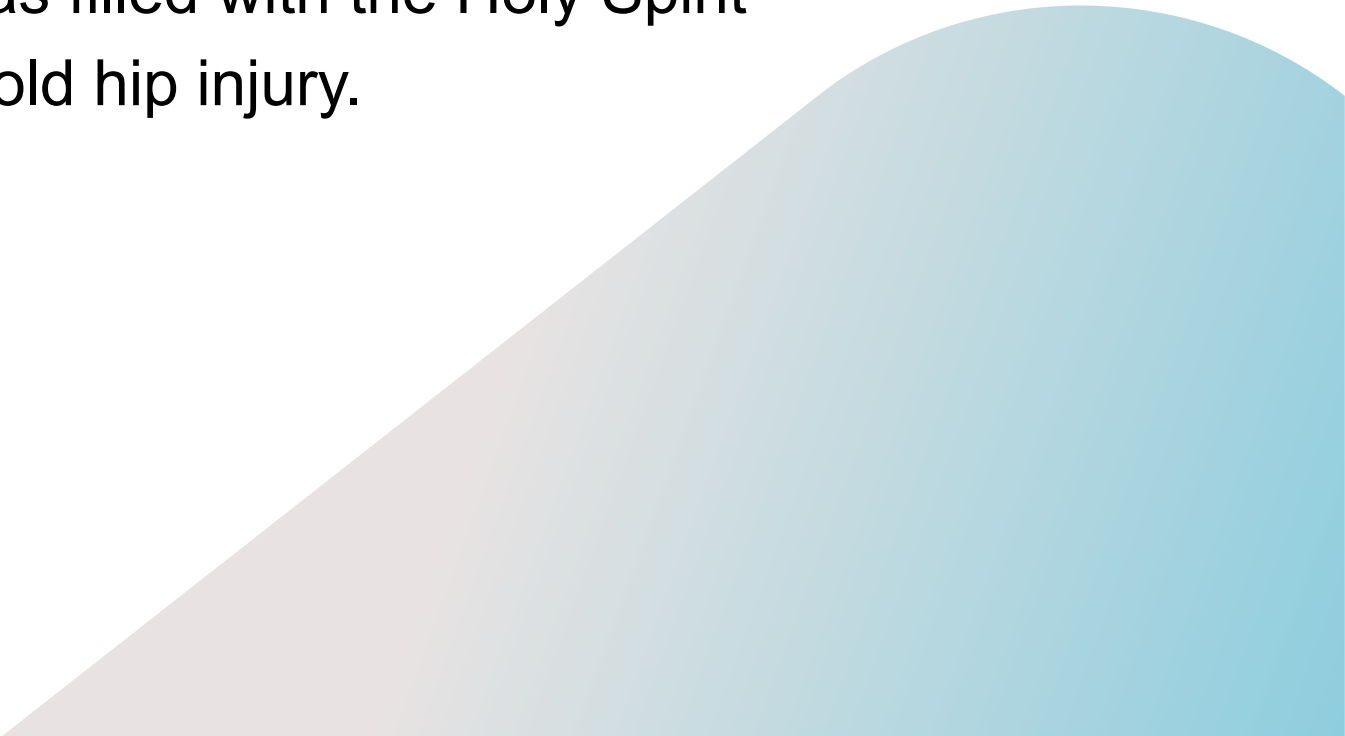


The Story

During the service, one person announced a message in a tongue that Bob couldn't understand. Another man interpreted that mysterious message in a way that pierced his heart with faith. The message was for "a visitor to the church from 1500 miles away." This visitor was "a sinner, who pretended to be a good family man but was actually very self-centered." Bob knew God was putting the finger on him. He ran to the front of the church in sorrow for his sins.

The Story

That night the LORD told Bob to return to the church the next day. When Bob did as he was told, he was suddenly flooded with joy instead of sorrow. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and healed of a serious 14-year-old hip injury.



The Story

Upon returning home to Syracuse, Bob shared about his experience with everyone and anyone. His wife's church was shaken. Healing services took place in venues all over central New York. With his wife Fanny (right) playing the organ, larger and larger gatherings came to their home, so people could receive salvation and experience the Holy Spirit like Bob and his family had.



The Story

Frustrated that he and Fanny could not find a church that allowed the Holy Spirit to move, Bob went to his knees, and received a consistent message from the LORD:

“I don’t want you to be a traveling evangelist. I want you to be a pastor. Start the Church of the Living Word, and leave your business.”



Learning Check

Question 2

Why would this mini-course tell you about a story that is more than fifty years old?

- a. To assure you that God has started and sustained Living Word Church.
- b. To clarify how the Living Word story is typical and ordinary.
- c. To show how Living Word Church was started by Chuck Smith of the Calvary Church denomination.
- d. To assure you that Bob Mazur was a Christian since he was a child.

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Learning Check

Question 3

Describe Bob Mazur's salvation story.

- a. The result of years of study.
- b. Sudden and miraculous.
- c. Private, quiet, and lacking visible changes.
- d. The result of many heartfelt conversations.

Learning Check

Question 3

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The Story

The Church of the Living Word started in 1972, in a ramshackle and forsaken building near the corner of Rt. 31 and Morgan Rd. Today the building is an auto mechanic shop.



The Story

Heartbroken that only twelve or thirteen people attended the first meeting, Pastor Mazur offered a desperate prayer to God,

“Oh, Lord, send those that nobody else wants!”

The church began to grow.



The Story

The church grew, and moved from one building to another.

White's Chapel on Cold Springs Rd in B'ville (right). An old Methodist church on Rt 57 in Phoenix, NY.



The Story

As people from many backgrounds turned from lives of reckless sin, they were baptized, filled with the Spirit, and began to live productive lives.



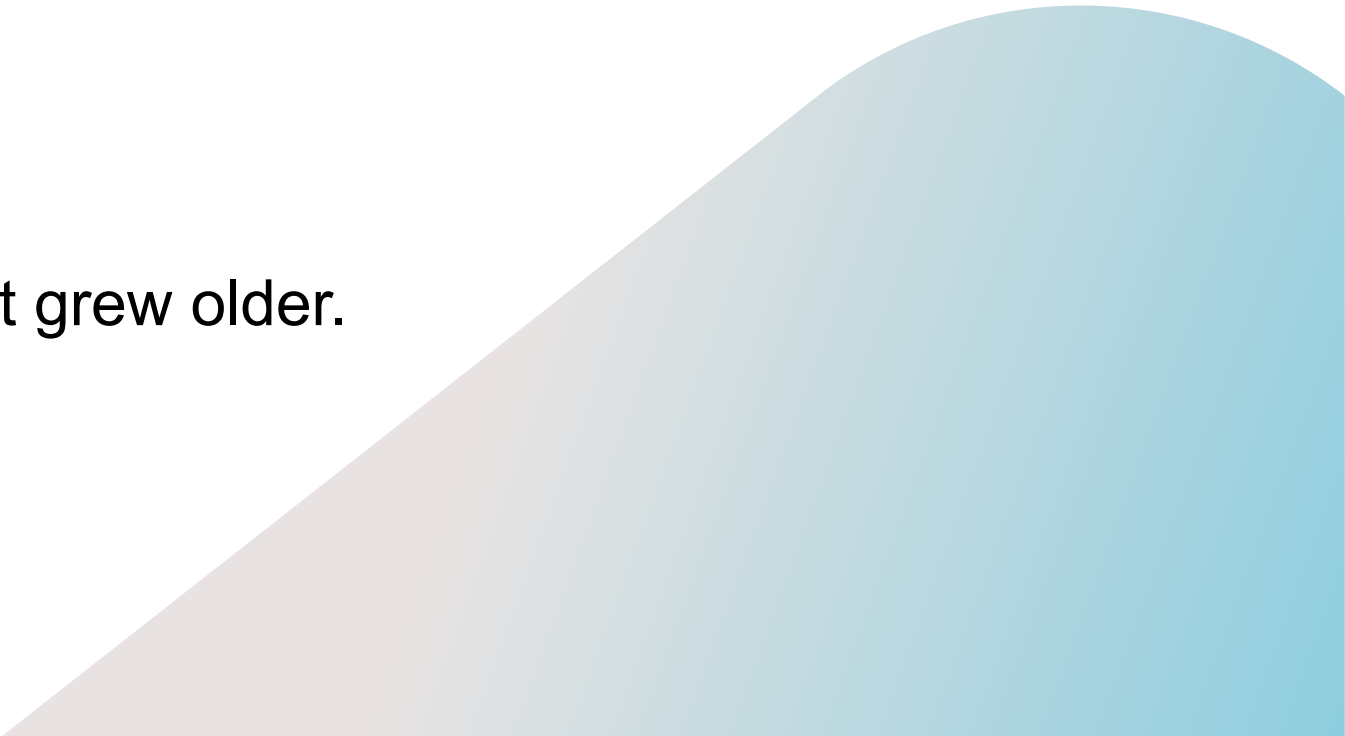
The Story



The church moved to 5963 Court St Rd in Syracuse in 1978, where it remained until moving to its current location in 2002.

The Story

The church grew in membership,
diversity,
talent,
resources, and
accomplishments as it grew older.



Learning Check

Question 4

Describe the pattern of growth in the history of Living Word Church.

- a. People joined because they didn't like their churches.
- b. People joined because they were saved from a reckless life of sin.
- c. People joined because they moved to up-and-coming neighborhoods.
- d. People joined because a Billy Graham Crusade came to Syracuse.

Learning Check

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Learning Check

Question 5

Which one of these does not describe the history of Living Word Church?

- a. Moving to larger and better facilities.
- b. Sinners were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- c. Bob Mazur needed to continue forward even though the church split in half.
- d. The church increased in diversity and talent.

Learning Check

Question 5

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The Story



In 1979 Living Word Church began its most demanding ministry project, Living Word Academy, a NYS-accredited pre-K through grade 12 school. The LORD overwhelmed us all by providing a perfect school building at a perfect location just a half mile down the road.

The Story

Even greater provision came in the form of volunteers. So many members of the church gave whatever they had – time, money, expertise, or sweat – to serve the church and its school.



The Story

A construction worker wearing a green hard hat and a red shirt is working on a wooden structure, possibly a roof or a large frame, against a clear blue sky. The worker is leaning over, focused on their task. The background is a solid, clear blue sky.

Not only did the LORD amaze our congregation by providing a home for Living Word Academy on the same street as our church. In time, He also provided for us to move the church itself to a consolidated campus where it is today.

Once again, the LORD moved our hearts by His Spirit. The church did more than half of the construction work on our current worship center, and provided all the finances without needing to go to a bank.

The Story

It should be clear that our story required millions of dollars over many years. Our financial story is as special as every other part. We have never taken a collection since 1972. We rarely preach sermons about money. People simply put their contributions into the small wooden boxes that are near the doors.



The Story

The LORD provides – that's a big part of our story. Buildings, yes. Money, yes. A beautiful 135-acre campground of our own in Williamstown, NY, yes. A community health center, yes. A residence for our church members as they age, yes.

But the greatest provision has been the work He has accomplished in the hearts of the people.



Learning Check

Question 6

How has the LORD provided for Living Word Church throughout its history?

- a. High-pressure fund drives.
- b. Surprising donations from a few rich people from out of town.
- c. A mysterious check that arrived in the mail just in time.
- d. The voluntary giving of money and work by many generous people.

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The Story

No wonder the words are prominently displayed on the wall behind our preachers:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts” (Zec. 4:6).

Another theme verse for our story is Psa. 127:1

“Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.”

The Story

To bring the story up-to-date, Pastor Bob Mazur stayed in his position until he went home to Christ in May of 2021. At that time, his long-time associate and one of the founders of Living Word Academy, Pastor Bryan Rocine took over as lead pastor.





2

2. The Beliefs



LIVING WORD

CHURCH

Our Logo

We think a book and a flame represent our two foundational beliefs.

1. The Bible. A book, the Holy Bible, is God's perfect (not only) gift to mankind. We rely upon it in all matters of faith and practice. The Bible is our foundation.
2. The Holy Spirit. The flame represents the Spirit of God, who energizes the work of Christ in each believer's life.



LIVING WORD

CHURCH

Why Not a Cross

Jesus' crucifixion atones for our sins and stands at the center of all human history, taking place during the most important weekend the world has ever known. However...

...we do not found our beliefs on only the suffering and death of our Savior. For instance, His resurrection on Sunday morning completely changes the meaning of His death.

Our logo is a clue to who we are as a church: Focused on the whole Bible, rather than a part.

Living Word Church Mission Statement

Make disciples of Christ who follow through into heaven.

The word ***make*** implies individuals will be transformed by becoming disciples of Christ.

The word ***disciple*** means a follower and learner of Jesus. By definition, a disciple is a work in progress.

Who follow through into heaven, implies that disciples will experience discipleship for the rest of their lives.

Living Word Church Mission Statement

Make disciples of Christ who follow through into heaven.

This mission statement is supported by the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Core Values

- **Love of the LORD. Above all, controlling all.**
- **Love of the community.**
- **Working hard. Even when the reward is delayed.**
- **Self-motivation. To serve our mission from the heart.**
- **The miraculous. Expecting God to do the things only He can do.**
- **Living worship. To experience communion with the invisible God.**
- **Holiness. An inner and outer life that is reserved for the LORD rather than any competing interest.**

Learning Check

Question 7

Why doesn't Living Word have a cross at the front of the church?

- a. The crucifixion of Jesus did not really take place.
- b. The crucifixion of Jesus is not important.
- c. The suffering of Jesus does not represent the **whole** Bible message.
- d. Living Word does not want to be overly Biblical.

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Learning Check

Question 8

What is a key word in the Living Word mission statement?

- a. Cross.
- b. Disciple.
- c. Hell.
- d. Preaching.

Learning Check

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Statement of beliefs

The Bible

The Bible is the Word of God, written by men who were divinely inspired. In its original manuscripts it is infallible and complete. The Bible contains everlasting Good News that is as relevant today as the day it was written. The Bible tells of the Kingdom of God and how to enter it. Centrally, it contains the accurate historical record of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Statement of beliefs

Salvation

Sin, whether much or little, separates people from God and His kingdom. Any sin whatsoever renders us guilty before the Holy God. But God, in His love for us, offers the death of His Son Jesus Christ to satisfy the penalty against us. In other words, Jesus' death saves us from a guilty verdict before God. Salvation comes only to those who believe in Jesus Christ, turn away from their sinful ways, and follow Christ until death.

Statement of beliefs

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third part of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit gives a second birth, enabling the believer live free from the control of sin.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second act of God's grace following salvation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit will enable the recipient to speak in the gift of tongues of spiritual communion with God. The Holy Spirit may also grant any of the other eight gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Statement of beliefs

Obedience

Obedience to the commands of Jesus is bundled with faith and grace as the way of salvation. Obedience to Jesus is proof that someone has received salvation. Obedience often involves forfeiting something in this life for the promise of a greater reward in heaven. On the other hand, habitual disobedience can disinherit a person from the kingdom of God.

Statement of beliefs

Baptism

Baptism is one of a believer's early acts of obedience to Jesus. It is a personal decision for every Christian and a public declaration of commitment to Jesus Christ. Baptism symbolizes the washing away the old life and entering, clean and pure, into a new life. We perform baptisms as a complete immersion, in a baptismal built into the front of our meeting hall.

Statement of beliefs

Volunteering

We believe volunteering is a Christian duty. Most of our members volunteer in the church ministries and projects in some way. Volunteer work creates valuable opportunities for fellowship, growth, and it helps to create a sense of ownership. A valuable by-product of our volunteerism is that our church has a relatively small paid staff.

Learning Check

Question 9

Two topics might be a surprise when compared to many church “statements of belief.”
The two possible surprises are:

- a. Obedience and Volunteering.
- b. Holidays and the Sabbath.
- c. The Dead Sea Scrolls.
- d. The Submissiveness of Women.

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3. The Distinctives

What are the “distinctives”?

Many churches have the same beliefs, but two churches can still be very different. We think you want to know about some details that make Living Word Church different.



What are the “distinctives”?

Vibrant Worship.

The prayer, praise, and worship at Living Word is personal and spontaneous. One will often hear or see shouting, crying, hand raising, kneeling, leaping, bowing, and many other actions by someone in the room. We believe today’s worshippers should do the same worship behaviors we see in the Bible.

What are the “distinctives”?

Bearing Fruit.

We stress participation in the kingdom of God through service and leading others into the kingdom of God.



What are the “distinctives”?

Friendship

In most cases the best friends of Living Word members are other Living Word members. We did not start as good friends. In fact, we started as unlikely friends and grew into our friendships with Christ as the foundation. We encourage this pattern for all members of Living Word Church.

Learning Check

Question 10

What is the best description of the distinctive feel of Living Word Church?

- a. People are encouraged to participate in a relationship with God and each other.
- b. People are spectators of a quiet and private service.
- c. Outward demonstrations of religious emotion are discouraged.
- d. People are encouraged to leave each other alone.

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What are the “distinctives”?

A Holiness Standard

We believe God has given the church leaders of every time and place the mandate to make standards of behavior that are appropriate for the followers of Christ. The next few slides will outline some of our holiness standards.

What are the “distinctives”?

Men and Women

Individuals on our staff will not meet behind closed doors with an individual of the opposite sex. We encourage all other members to follow this same standard.

We believe in the ministry of the “laying on of hands” but only in a very public and respectful way.

“Romance” should be several notches down on the list of reasons for coming to Living Word Church.

What are the “distinctives”?

Culture Consumption

We feel the call of Jesus and other New Testament writers to be “**in** the world” but not “**of** the world.” To avoid sensuous and godless conditioning by our environment, we carefully monitor our intake of popular values, music, literature, movies, fashion, and language. We don’t want popular 21st century American culture to dull our sensitive consciences.

What are the “distinctives”?

Clothing

We recommend clothing be modest, respectful, and appropriate for the activity. It should also celebrate gender differences.



More details are available by scanning the Code at the left.

What are the “distinctives”?

Alcohol

We are a dry church. We do not want to become legal experts on whether the Bible condemns all drinking of alcohol. We do want to support those members of our congregation who came from a life of alcoholism. We do have a message for our community, especially those whose lives have been destroyed through alcohol: We do not need alcohol. Why risk its use?

What are the “distinctives”?

Divorce

We desire to serve well our divorced members, and we have many of them. That said, we will not officiate at or host the weddings of previously divorced people. We simply don't want to hold a sort of family court to determine who is justified in having divorced their previous spouse and who is not.

Learning Check

Question 11

Which one best describes the values or culture of Living Word Church?

- a. Constantly changing to keep up with modern times.
- b. Emphasizing an entertaining church experience.
- c. Making all cultural expression feel affirmed and accepted.
- d. Emphasis on being “in the world” but not “of the world.”

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4. The Ministries

Schedule of Services

The Schedule of Church Services:

Church: Sunday morning at 10 at Living Word Worship Center.

Prayer: Sunday night at 7:30 at Living Word Worship Center.

Church: Wednesday night at 7:30 at Living Word Worship Center.

Home Fellowship: Friday evening at 30 locations around Central New York. See the welcome desk to find your Home Fellowship.

Church Services

Our church services are Spirit-led, rather than programmed or choreographed like a performance. We are not putting on a show. We are seeking God.

A Sunday morning and a Wednesday evening services both usually feature praise, worship, prayer, and a message from the Bible.

Our Sunday evening prayer service usually includes praise and worship, brief guidance or encouragement from the Bible, a time of personal prayer, and a time of corporate prayer for specific petitions.

Home Fellowships

Home Fellowships are about 30 small group meetings that most often take place in the homes of trained leaders on Friday evening. They are supervised by church elders and follow a curriculum designed by our church. Home Fellowships include discussion, Bible study, prayer, and praise.

You can find one that suits you by going to the welcome desk.

Learning Check

Question 12

How does the Living Word schedule of services fit the church mission statement, “Make disciples of Christ who follow through into heaven”?

- a. Every church service is exactly the same, so the lessons are repeated.
- b. Services are carefully scripted to insure an entertaining service.
- c. There are many services each week to give ample opportunity to grow.
- d. Services are strictly controlled to help people stay private.

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Sunday School

Sunday School is provided each Sunday morning for pre-K to 6th grade from 9:00-9:45 at Living Word Academy.

Age 3 Sunday School is provided during the Sunday church service, which begins at 10:00am.

Leadership Seminar

Once a month (except for summer) there is an open meeting concerning the topic of leadership at Living Word Church. Even though the seminar is largely focused on leading a home fellowship, many attend who aspire to future leadership in the church.



Deacons

We currently have nearly twenty deacons who each oversees a particular ministry in the church. In the Bible, the word *deacon* means “servant.” The ministries deacons oversee include:

- Music
- Food Pantry
- Church Food Service
- LWA and Camp Food service
- Church nursery
- Sunday School
- Living Word Academy
- Broadcasting
- Facilities Management
- Security
- Events
- IT
- Church Camp
- Charitable support of members
- Overseas missions

Learning Check

Question 13

Various ministries in Living Word Church serve the members, and also provide

- a. Leadership opportunities.
- b. Academic credit opportunities.
- c. Employment opportunities.
- d. A way to connect to the people without connecting to the church.

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The “State of the Church” Meeting

In January of each year the Deacons, Elders, and Trustees give a report to the congregation on the progress, expenditures, and needs for each ministry.

Here is a bit more information about some of our ministries...



Living Word Academy

The goal of the Academy is to “win” the students to Christ and give them the spiritual foundation they need to serve Christ as an adult.

Though secondary in importance, our program is also designed to prepare our students for college and/or the working world. Our students have gone on to careers in every field at high levels of accomplishment.

We do our best to keep tuition as affordable as possible, so the Academy is heavily supported by a scholarship fund, the church treasury, and volunteer laborers from the congregation.

Christian Health Service of Syracuse

Christian Health is a not-for-profit community health center, founded and supported by Living Word Church. Through Christian Health, underserved patients can have their own primary care provider who knows and takes care of them.

Such a health center would not be financially possible without the support of the church and the many volunteers who come from many area churches.

Christian Health has achieved prestigious recognition as a Patient-Centered Medical Home.

The Table and The Closet

The Table is our food pantry. The Closet is our clothing give-away. Both are manned and financially supported by Living Word Church.

These ministries operate every two or three weeks and serve from 350 to more than 600 clients at each event.

Our biggest event of the year is just before Thanksgiving, when the church spends about \$25,000, so our less fortunate neighbors can have a nice holiday.

Living Word Camp

Church members of all ages enjoy the summer months in a Christ-centered environment. The Lord has blessed us with 135 acres of woods, fields, and waterfront, near Parish, NY, where we play sports, fish, swim, hike, camp, and fellowship together.

Through the summer months camp is a site for programs, such as elementary school day camp, swimming lessons, athletic tournaments, and church services.

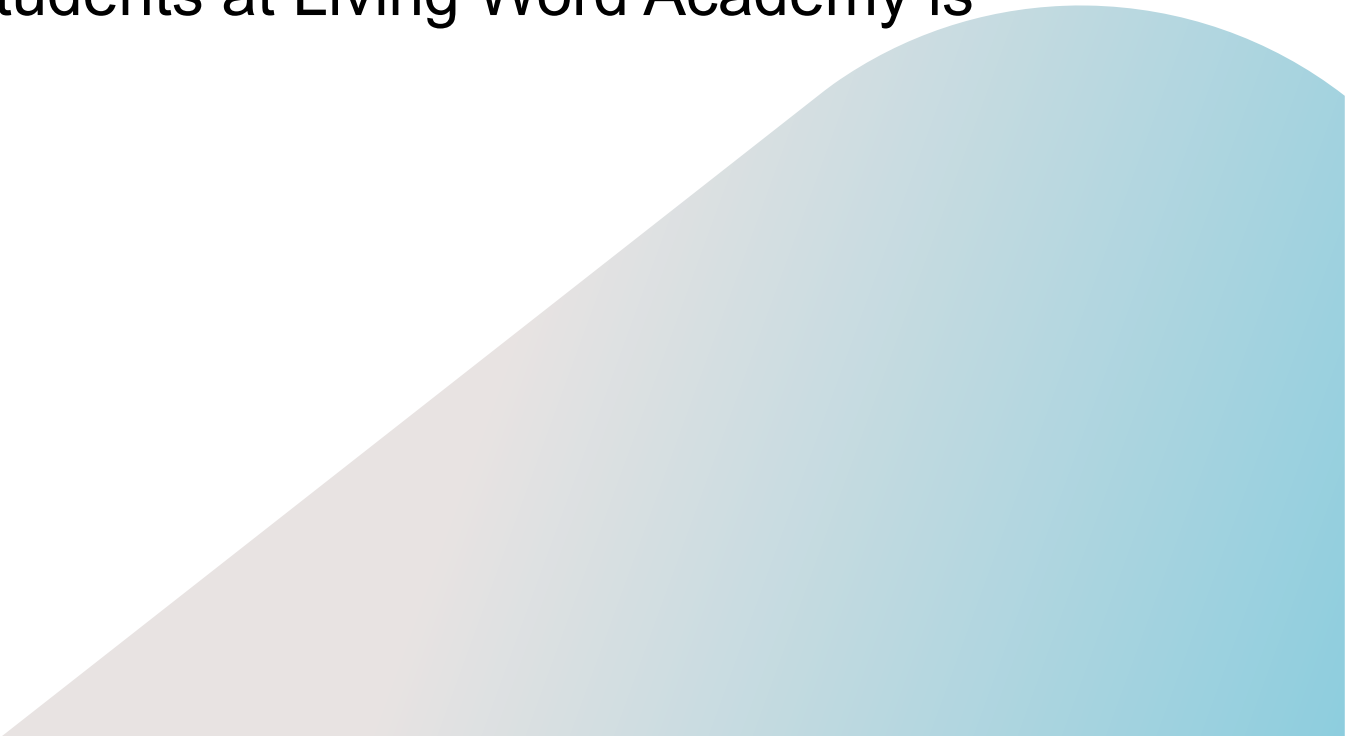
Living Word Residence

Our residence center offers affordable, modern apartments, mainly for older church members. Besides being safe and comfortable, on-campus housing means easy travel to and from church. Some residents are longtime friends, but many new friendships have grown during the frequent multi-generational group activities and meals in the common dining and living room areas.

Living Word Store

Volunteers run a bookstore and school supply store off the church lobby.

Bibles, study helps, and other edifying books are available at a deep discount. Everything needed for students at Living Word Academy is available except uniforms.



Learning Check

Question 14

At Living Word Academy, what is a greater priority than academic success?

- a. Athletic teams.
- b. The students having close friends.
- c. Children learning to accept their personal academic level.
- d. Each child embracing Christ as their own LORD.

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Learning Check

Question 15

Supporting Living Word ministries, like Living Word Academy and Christian Health Service of Syracuse, The Table, and The Closet require

- a. Hefty support from financial donors.
- b. Many facilities and volunteers.
- c. A vast paid church staff.
- d. The involvement of outside corporations.

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Events

- **Baptism** is for ages 12 and up and will be performed periodically.
- **Communion** is typically held during the first Sunday morning service of the month.
- A church member can have a **wedding banquet** at the church for a small user fee and the cost of the food. The church kitchen staff will lovingly cook and serve the meal for free.
- **Funerals**, memorial services, and burials will be held for church members at no charge.
- **Dedications of children** will be held at the parents' request.

Blessings

Church members will not only be able to have weddings and funerals in the church. Other blessings are members-only benefits, such as:

- Member tuition-rate for Living Word Academy
- Residence at the Living Word Residence as openings permit.
- Trailer placement at Living Word Camp.

Overseas Outreach

Our heart for those in need extends beyond Central New York. For over twenty years we have supported children's homes in India. Our monthly support provides all the food, housing, care, and education for around 80 children, along with a full-time staff. We have since added support for Gospel programs in Myanmar and Honduras.

Learning Check

Question 16

We have learned that Living Word members often give a lot. But we have also learned that they may receive

- a. Free or very inexpensive services, like wedding banquets and funerals.
- b. A group health insurance policy.
- c. Free entry into the bingo nights.
- d. Weddings for extended family members, even same-sex marriages.

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5

5. Staff

Pastors:

Lead Pastor – Bryan Rocine (brocine@livingword.live)

Pastor – Ben Connor (bconnor@livingword.live)

The Board of Elders:

The pastors, plus

Garry Maderi (gmaderi@livingword.live)

Tony Gray (tgray@livingword.live)

Don Cullen (dcullen@livingword.live)

Trustees:

Terry Virag

David Mazur

Deacons by Ministry

- John Laurin (Music)
- Amelia Weimar (Assist. Music)
- Mike and Auddie Mastroleo (Food Pantry)
- Tiffany Paddock (LWA and Camp Food service)
- Janis Bernard (Church nursery)
- Jennifer Dean (Sunday School)
- Isaiah Rocine (LWA)
- Micah Shippee (Broadcasting)
- Scott LaBarge (Facilities)
- Reuben Connor (Security)
- Frank Babiarz (Church Food Service)
- Jim Hockenbery (Events)
- Joanne Walsh (Assist. Events)
- Stan Bray (IT)
- Dan Plewak (Camp)
- David Keim (Charitable Giving)
- Breck Sleight (Overseas Missions)

Learning Check

Question 17

The staff list implies

- a. New members will have almost no chance to break into leadership positions.
- b. The church staff are mostly relatives.
- c. Living Word is desperate to find more dedicated leaders.
- d. The leadership in the church is spread out and diverse.

Learning Check

Question 17

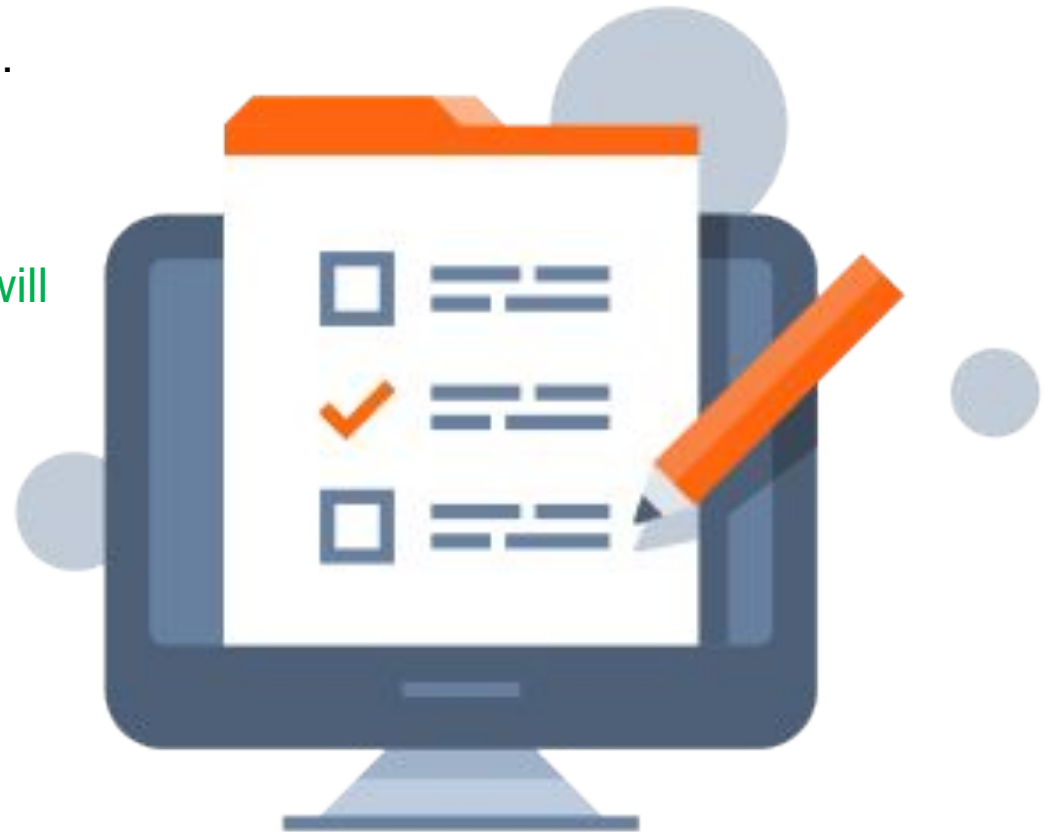
The staff list implies

- a. New members will have almost no chance to break into leadership positions.
- b. The church staff are mostly relatives.
- c. Living Word is desperate to find more dedicated leaders.
- d. The leadership in the church is spread out and diverse.

Learning Check

There were seventeen “Learning Check” questions.
Did you get them all right?

If not, don't worry. If you become a member of the church, a lot of the information in this mini-course will become second nature to you.



6. “The Ask”

**To become a member of Living Word
Church,**

to enjoy its privileges,

**and to put yourself on the path to
greater church involvement,**

we ask...

We ask (please fill out the “Affirmation”):

- Do you confess the Lordship of Jesus and believe in your heart that God resurrected Jesus bodily?
- Do you affirm the belief statement of Living Word Church? (see above or <https://www.livingword.live/about-us>)?
- Do you intend, by God’s grace, to live righteously, according to the standards of the Bible?
- Do you plan on attending Living Word Church frequently (several times per month)?
- Do you plan to regularly donate a portion of your income to Living Word Church?

Are you a new Christian?

We invite you to join our “New Believer’s Class,” which is held each Sunday morning before the church service.