

A Review of 2020

OF GOD'S WORK IN DEL REY CHURCH

Table of Contents

Pastoral Reflection	1
AWANA	5
Community Groups	6
Del Rey Christian Children's Center	7
Facilities and Church Plant	8
Finance	9
Kids Church	11
Missions	12
Women's Ministry	14
Youth Group	15

Pastoral Reflections on 2020

by Pastor Matt Jones on behalf of all the Pastors

Greetings beloved saints of Del Rey Church,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. I pray this letter (and all of the DRC annual ministry reports) reaches you and is a comfort to us all as we reflect not on our circumstances in 2020, but rather on the faithfulness of our mighty and loving God throughout the year.

Like many of you, we joyfully rang in the New Year with cheers, sparklers, cider, and yummy food. Little did we know what 2020 would hold and how it would challenge our cheerfulness, holiness, and joy. Further, we did not realize and really we're still realizing how God has used the year to sanctify and discipline us as individuals and as a church. As well, it has shown us the power of being active in the local church and within a community of people who are faithful, prayerful, flexible, encouraging, gracious, and supportive. In the face of sickness, sin, departure, divisiveness, and tragic death in our community, not to mention the immense impacts of the global pandemic of COVID-19 and the aggressive socio-cultural forces in our nation this year with growing civil unrest and the inevitable polarizations of the presidential election, we found ourselves holding fast to our God, our unity in Him as Christians, and focusing on the commands of His word as we navigated the year.

While many Christians mirrored the world, falling into division and the ever-so common cancelling behavior of our day, Del Rey Church was truly blessed in 2020 with a strong core of saints committed to oneness and worship. Throughout the year, our pastors and staff received calls, emails, and notes of encouragement that regularly surfaced prayerfulness, wisdom, and love from the body of Christ in support of our leaders through rapidly changing health guidelines, a parade of edicts from state and local officials, and an endless litany of questions to things around what other churches were doing along with the tribalism that sadly divided the subculture of evangelicals around varying COVID responses of ecclesial celebrities. I want to personally thank our DRC pastors, staff, and leaders who braved well the storm of 2020. There was no way we could be ready for this and thankfully our God was not caught off guard—He carried us through the year.

On a personal note, as you all know, the elders gave me an extended leave from work to focus on the impending deadlines of my doctoral work in 2020. Just a few weeks into my leave, the pandemic really began to rage. I wanted to end my short-lived leave and dropout of school. Several times in the year I was emotionally drained and wanted to quit my Ph.D. and just get back to pastoral work, but our DRC elders and staff were steady in wanting to see me finish. Unfortunately, I didn't manage to finish in 2020. Inevitably the demands of things kept pulling me in, especially with losing 3 of our elders and other unforeseen factors that hit hard in 2020. As of last week, the Ph.D. exam committee has given me an extension and Lord willing my family and I can see this through for sake of the doors it opens for doing gospel work and extending our church's reach into networks serving the cause of Christ around the world. All of that said, I cannot imagine 2020 without the abovementioned faithful DRC core and the mature saints throughout the year who tried to fill in gaps at church to help, especially our team of men who preached in the pulpit in 2020 and the many brothers and sisters who did their best to reach out to others sharing God's love as we continue the Great Commission of our Lord.

As a body, while many churches in 2020 made decisions or were forced to close, by God's grace Del Rey Church was open throughout the year. We gave priority to the things He has commanded us to do in Scripture, so while we did not have some of our usual ministry "bells and whistles" or modern comforts we have grown accustomed to as a congregation we did carryout our biblical responsibilities in gathering, praying, loving, baptizing, having communion, reading Scripture, singing, studying sound doctrine, exercising church discipline, giving offering, and more in trust of God's work of making disciples and mobilizing His people for mission. Throughout the year, lost people were given the gospel. Many who otherwise would not have come, walked by and heard the message of Jesus because we were meeting outside. We witnessed baptism. We gathered regularly for communion. Saints were equipped with the word of God for life and witness. And while there was not our usual fancy kids program, every week the church provided catechism resources and our ministry team put together materials for blessing kids. Counseling was freely given. The poor were fed. The needy were helped. Outreach to the youth in our community continued. Our school remained open, serving families in need and sharing the gospel. As well, we managed to update our online resources as the need had substantially increased (perhaps a COVID blessing in disguise), including a new Spanish effort led by Marcelo Pinell. Sure we did not have extra things like retreats to the mountains, free coffee on Sundays, and kids programs, not to mention the use of our air-conditioned building, but we had everything we needed. God was so good to us, reminding us what is important and using the stress of 2020 to sanctify the hungry and humble by His grace and power.

On a personal note, 2020 was not just a reminder of priorities but also of God's power. As a teacher, I love using PowerPoint for my sermons. Being outside, I can't use it and it has been such a good reminder to me that it is not essential. The word of God is not limited by my lack of access to technology. More important than amplification, we have the Spirit of God to amplify His word in our hearts and He is working among us. I mentioned above not having our kids programming, which—as a father—I was reminded in 2020 thinking about my own responsibility to train my children and the temptation that exists for parents to rely on a kids program to do that for us. Just recently, one of my sons joined his first baseball team and I was reminded yet again that he won't learn the game if all I do is get him to practice. He needs his father to work with him in basic mechanics of baseball. Even more importantly, we need fathers and mothers in the home to disciple children and welcome in the orphaned. God has given us everything we need in His word to this end. I was reminded of God's power and resourcing each week as my children sat through the service without all the fun kids stuff and in the car ride home from the littlest to the oldest they had things to talk about concerning our Lord and His word. On the way to church, driving home after service, and throughout the week hearing their voices repeat the catechism and re-sing the songs from church that Sunday has been a steady reminder of God's power to use His truth to open hearts and have His way. As well, hearing stories from so many of you about the blessing of being outside, sitting together as a family, and seeing God work through our wiggly and wandering little ones reminding us that He is in control and filled with joy over the presence of children in worship (Matt 19:14, Lk.18:16, and Mk.10:14). All of that said, we are working right now on getting some kids programs going soon, so stayed tuned and as we transition let's remember these vital lessons and more from this experience of 2020.

While 2020 had its ups, for most it was perhaps a year marked more by downs. 2020 was certainly a rough year. When I say this at this very moment of writing, I do not have in mind the COVID pandemic, the economic impact brought on by governmental decision-making, nor the crazy politically divided year that our nation faced or the unnecessary divides of Christian leaders in the public over things. I actually have in mind the various sins that surfaced in the church through the year. Pastorally, those were some of the greatest downs of the year. Rather than reflecting abstractly on the year in our annual ministry letters, it is important to pause and examine our hearts before the Lord. A moment ago, I intentionally used the preposition 'through' and not 'in' ("through the year") because these sins were not the fault of 2020. As I said in sermons at the end of the year when I returned from leave, 2020 is like a tube of toothpaste in that what came out during the year when it was squeezed was already inside. By God's grace, some of what has come out the Lord has been using to draw us in repentance, faith, unity, and maturity. Sadly, not all of His divine exposure of hidden sin has produced fruit, at least not that we can see at the moment. In 2020 we had two very dark and twisted cases of active marital unfaithfulness, which resulted in painful public rebuke as the Bible commands us. We witnessed other marriages in crisis and relationships deeply impacted by personal issues that predate 2020. All of this said, we have

work to do in 2021. It is a work that we cannot do ourselves. It must come from the Lord, for He alone has the power to transform hearts and heal brokenness. On this note, let us be committed to fasting and prayer in 2021 and the unity of the saints. Let us rely on the power of the gospel to do the work that needs to be done.

In 2021 I pray the Lord will grow us first in depth and then in width. I pray the Spirit will do deep work within us all to mature our faith and stir a joyful fire in our hearts for sharing the gospel. In terms of width, in 2020 we lost over a hundred people from our congregation who have moved out of the area or decided to leave. On this note, I would be remiss not to mention our deep love for the Jernigans who moved out of state to be closer to their grandkids and my deepest thanks for our elders who moved in 2020. Thank you to the Bill Fischer family for your years of faithful service. If I may especially highlight, Pastor Dave and his wife Cindy, who I have had the joy of serving with for over two decades. And I would say more about you-know-who, but his mission we're keeping offline. To this end, pray for DRC that the Spirit will raise up more shepherds (Acts 20:28) and continue to provide for all of our essentials needs for mission. That said, on a final note of praise (I will share more specifics about this in our meeting), but the Lord heard our prayers and provided substantially for our church's budget cuts. Without really doing anything on our own besides prayer, God generously provided reminding us that He is pleased and guiding us in this new year. All of that to say, TO GOD BE THE GLORY. Let us draw to Him, confess our sin, and carry on in mission. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

In Christ,

Pastor Matt Jones

AWANA

Brian Criscuolo
brian@delreychurch.com

AWANA is a Bible club/program that more than 12,000 churches in our country and over 10,000 churches in 109 other countries participate in. The program traditionally runs from September through May on Friday Nights (6:30-8:30 PM) for children in Pre-K through 6th grade. This night is all about helping families in our church and community as they raise their children to know, love, and enjoy God.

Because of Covid19, we had to figure out how to engage in this ministry differently during the 2020-21 club year than we've done in the past. For the time being, we have transitioned to at home small groups and virtual online groups. While this does not replace being together in person, I am still extremely grateful for the flexibility of our families who are continuing to engage in this program, and we pray and long for the day we can participate in person all together once again.

We want to thank God for the following in our 2020-21 club year:

- For the families and kids engaging in the program. Although we have transitioned to a different format, we still have roughly 20 families and 45 kids participating this club year.
- For the new friendships that have been fostered in both kids and parents as an outworking of our need to transition to a small group setting.
- For the gift of technology that has allowed families to engage virtually in this program.
- For the families who have been serving and sacrificing to host and lead AWANA small groups and virtual groups.
- For the reports I get from parents telling me how much fun their children are having in their small groups as they make friends and memorize God's Word together.

As we look to the future, please be praying for the next club year that begins in September 2021. Pray that we will be back to meeting in person on the DRC campus. Pray for volunteers without which our club would not be possible. Prayerfully consider volunteering yourself as a way to serve your local church. Above all, pray that God's Word would penetrate the hearts of these children so many would come to saving faith in Jesus.

If your child/children will be between the ages of 3 years old and 6th grade in September 2021, consider signing them up for this amazing Bible based club.

Thank you!

Community Groups

Pastor Tony Shen
tony@delreychurch.com

Community Groups is one of the three main ministries of Del Rey Church, along with Sunday worship service and the Del Rey Bible Institute. Small groups of us meet weekly to study God's word, pray, encourage and support one another, and fulfill the mission God has given us: to preach the gospel to the lost – our loved ones, our neighbors, our coworkers, and our friends – and make disciples who believe in and follow Christ.

In 2020, our Community Groups were impacted by moving and the pandemic. Pastor Dave and Cindy retired and moved. Pastor Bill and Mandy moved to Utah, Tim and Bailey Paone moved to Texas, and their groups have disbanded. Shannon and Maria Begeman and David and Amanda Cacciotti did not move, but their members did or stopped attending church. So they formed a new group together!

It is not easy to replace Community Group leaders, let alone pastors and their wives. That's why it's so important to follow the biblical examples of the Lord and the apostles to disciple others so they can take up the work of ministry when we are no longer able to. A 2020 highlight, then, is that Bruce Blouse trained to be Pastor Dave's successor as leader, and John and Tone Sarian have been hosting the group at their home.

The church's six Community Groups have coped with COVID in various ways, but all with the intention of maintaining fellowship and learning and growing together. Most groups, after a period of Zoom meetings, have been meeting in person, either indoors or outdoors. Other groups have been exclusively on Zoom or doing a mixture of Zoom and in-person meeting as the weather allows.

It is good for the Community Group leaders to have the autonomy to take different approaches with their groups. The topics also vary, from discussing that week's sermon to reading books, watching video series, and simply sharing meals together. We also want to emphasize the missional purpose of our groups: to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the lost in our lives and to lead them to Christ. While we are doing that, we share our efforts with others in our Community Group. We pray for one another that God would be merciful to the lost and save them by His grace through their faith in the gospel that we speak to them.

In 2021, I look forward to new group leaders finishing their training and launching one or two new groups. If you would like to know more about hosting and leading a Community Group, please contact me. The more the merrier – literally!

Del Rey Christian Children's Center (DRCCC)

Clara Morales
clara@delreychurch.com

Del Rey Christian Children's Center (DRCCC) serves as a preschool and daycare. We serve families with children zero to five. DRCCC offers a full range of programs for children including age-specific curriculums for Infants, Toddlers, Two- and Three-Year-Olds, and Pre-Kindergarten children. DRCCC encourages the development of the whole child in ways that enable children to be more mature persons and to feel secure in the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

DRCCC is on mission exposing the gospel to the families we serve. We serve a diverse group of families from the surrounding cities of Playa Del Rey, such as Inglewood, Hawthorne, Culver City, Marina Del Rey and Playa Vista. We have truly been covered by God's grace while doing business in this city. God's faithfulness has been evident in 2020. DRCCC remained open during the pandemic. As a school we were able to provide jobs for the staff and provide a safe environment for children. The CDC, Public Health and Community Care Licensing requirements changed on a weekly basis, and we handled each request accordingly. We cannot stop praising God for His tender mercies. DRCCC remained open to serve the families we care for during the pandemic.

Below are some other important notes and things to be praying for:

- The Lord continues to bless our school with an amazing staff. We furloughed 3 teachers due to the pandemic. We called all 3 back once we were able to increase enrollment. Only 1 teacher returned. One teacher moved and the other teacher had to stay home to homeschool her 3 boys via Zoom. Please continue to pray for DRCCC teachers: Nancy, Karla, Margarita, Desi. We were able to hire 1 teacher, Teacher Elaine. She is AWESOME!
- In the midst of the pandemic, we received a telephone call from Community Care Licensing. Due to COVID-19 the Public Health Department required additional safety regulations. I was asked to show the analyst via telephone what we were doing to keep the children safe and prove we were adhering to Public Health Department. Praise God we were able to provide all the required proof and show that we met their requirements (too many to mention!).
- DRCCC families are great and very supportive. Please continue to pray for enrollment to increase this coming school year. Our enrollment is lower than expected due to families leaving during the pandemic.
- Please continue to pray for the preschool ministry. Our hope and prayer are for DRCCC families to continue to be part of our community post-graduation.

Facilities and Church Plant

Mike Dolan
mike@delreychurch.com

Hello Church!

To say 2020 was a challenging year would be an understatement. The pandemic interrupted a number of plans we had, but it is ok, God has a plan, and that's what we strive for! We started the year with a number of projects happening; repaired all of our sprinkler system, installed a new security gate and had a few other big projects on the docket, but then..... COVID-19.

Our plans and ideas were put on hold as we shifted our focus to managing the pandemic and how we can keep doing what we do. My focus and efforts were placed into keeping our church and preschool open. We took a number of steps in order to help protect our staff, our church body, our school families and keeping our facilities sanitized and functioning. We implemented a number of safeguards and watched as regulations changed weekly and sometimes daily, but God saw us through, and we had no cases of transmission on campus.

We restarted gathering in June and had a pretty good process going, but then in July we were asked not meet inside anymore and so we began to meet outside. That brought on a number of challenges, but at least we were seeing our church family again! We continued through the fall and then in November of 2020 we recruited James Sims and Brian Hawkins to investigate what we would need to do in order to livestream our service from the green(ish)belt. By the end of 2020 we had a very effective and valuable solution to yet another hurdle that this pandemic has caused.

As we enter into 2021, we have mapped out our plans and hope to see some of these things accomplished, especially in light of how God has blessed us financially even during the pandemic. Here are the items we plan to attend too in 2021!

- Feb/Mar-Kitchen remodel at Bodger house (this is very in-depth; feel free to ask me details)
- March-Bathroom remodel at Dunbarton House (I will be doing this to keep cost low)
- Mar/Apr- Upgrade indoor streaming system with updated the that's on par with outdoor quality
- June/July- Prepare 83rd property to be rented out for August (Our current tenants move out June 2021)
- July- Re-Carpet in church and school (both need it, do it during our schools summer break)
- 2021-Draw up plans for preschool play yard (we have a donor who wants to help do this)
- Start getting estimates to redo our parking lot for 2022 Christmas time job

These are ambitious goals, but we have the resources and hopefully we will see most, if not all of these plans realized this year. I want to say thank you to my brothers and sisters at DRC as you have continued to be faithful in what God has called us to! Your faithfulness to giving what God has called you to is allowing us to take ground and steward resources He provides through your hands. It is a privilege to serve our Lord along with you all!

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Dolan

Finance

The purpose of the finance ministry is to steward the monetary, real estate, and other resources that God has given the church. The Lord provides generously through His providence and through the people of His church giving cheerfully and sacrificially. Our responsibility is to use the money wisely to meet the needs of the church, both now and in the future, for generations to come if the Lord tarries.

Pastor Tony Shen, Church Board Treasurer
tony@delreychurch.com

Hallelujah! Praise God for His generous provision in 2020! Financially, we received several pieces of good news after approving the 2021 budget at our last meeting:

- Generous givers gave a huge amount of money at the end of 2020. As a result, we ended 2020 with offerings of nearly \$770,000 and net income of over \$170,000.
- One of our former employees received good news that he would be starting employment at his new endeavor sooner than expected. While we are sad to see him and his family go, the financial good news is that we can re-allocate the compensation we budgeted for him.
- Our rental property income is not subject to Unrelated Business Income tax, so that budgeted expense is lower. On the other hand, we have more accurately allocated housing expenses, so overall those have increased.

Therefore, the church board proposes this revised 2021 budget and the use of funds for your prayerful consideration. Personally, I feel a little sheepish that the Lord, um, blessed us with an overflow of financial abundance after we planned for a much smaller church with what I thought was a wise and conservative fiscal policy. It is literally wonderful when God works in this way! May He continue to work in 2021 and beyond. This is what we plan for using funds:

- **2020 surplus:** Surplus is allocated to funds for future spending. First, we propose to return to the Building Fund monies that the Investment Committee was approved to upgrade the 83rd St. house. Second, we have allocated appropriate funds to make much needed repairs and upgrades at the Dunbarton and Bodger houses. The Dunbarton house requires a renovated bathroom because of mold infestation. The Bodger house, after 5 years of church ownership and our ministry family vacating, needs quite a few repairs and upgrades, including a main drain line, kitchen, appliances, flooring, and paint. This will add to the house's value as well as prepare it for the next occupants, which we anticipate will also be a ministry family. The remainder of the surplus will be held in funds for future ministry purposes, including those described by Mike in the Facilities and Church Plant update.

- **2021 budget:** With the aforementioned employee leaving, we are partially able to restore the salary cuts that we approved in the original budget. We also identified a few thousand dollars in some other areas to restore the remainder of the salaries. Some of you gave us feedback after the budget vote that cutting employee compensation instead of other areas essentially prioritizes stuff over people, which is wrong. We who are employees appreciate you standing up for us in that. With some additional adjustments, we also propose to increase Ryan's salary and increase Brian's salary by redistributing some of his non-salary compensation.

As always, as the Apostle Paul describes in Philippians 4, in every circumstance, whether in prosperity or with humble means, whether in having abundance or suffering need, we ask that you prayerfully consider your giving, along with your serving and helping other members of the body. We thank the Lord for His generous provision through you, the church.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Tony on behalf of the elders

Kids Church

Erika Jones

erikal@delreychurch.com

Kids Church supports the disciple-making mission of the church by partnering with parents and encouraging family discipleship. The purpose of Kids Church is to give families a discipleship framework with catechism and Bible study. Our Sunday morning program aims to reinforce and model this training in an engaging, safe, classroom setting where kids enjoy worshiping the Lord through song, Scripture and catechism while building community with friends.

It is a joy to minister to the youngest members of our body through scripture, praise and play. Between two services, Kids Church had 120 to 140 children each week, from January to March, which is the most children DRC has had in attendance in decades. When the regional stay-at-home orders were mandated due to the pandemic, we adapted to providing a weekly online packet to make curriculum and discipleship materials available to families. We pray God gives us a passion and desire to utilize these resources and lead our children well.

- **Home Discipleship Packet:** Online discipleship packets are made available on the website with bible survey material, catechism resources, coloring pages, and crafts for families to utilize in their home study. <https://www.delreychurch.com/blog/post/home-discipleship>
- **Catechism Resources:** Landon Pietrini has written songs to help the church memorize the New City Catechism. Thank you, Landon, this is an amazing resource! We have created activity sheets and songs to encourage families to catechize their children. You can find songs and our activity sheets on the church website for personal use. <https://www.delreychurch.com/blog/post/catechism>
- **Bible Survey Resources:** Generations of Grace, our K-8th grade curriculum, is a 3-year study that goes through the storyline of the Bible. In 2020, we completed Year 2 of our Bible survey, which completed the history of the Old Testament. You can order hardcopies of materials to study at home during the week. <https://generationsofgrace.com/collections/year-3>
- **Join Us:** Please prayerfully consider your role on the Kids Church team in the coming year. Whether you assist each week or only serve during the summer, there is a place for you in Kids Church. We need people to help set out snack, supervise on the playground, sweep and tidy up after class, lead worship, play trains with toddlers, prepare crafts, and chat with kids about gospel truths. There are so many opportunities to serve, and we ask that you prayerfully consider joining the team.

To God be the glory,

Erika Jones

Missions

Brian Criscuolo
brian@delreychurch.com

As a church, we desire to obey Christ's command to see distinct people groups of the world reached with the gospel. We do this by financially supporting missionaries, praying for our missionaries, seeking to send missionaries, and providing opportunities for DRC members to be involved in cross cultural foreign missions work through short term trips.

Financial Support: In 2020, DRC voted to increase support for three of our missionaries; Rob Linder, Eric Zeller, and Tuvya Zaretsky (see 2020 budget for more details). **Short Term Trips:** Because of the pandemic we were unable to engage in any cross-cultural work through short term mission trips.

Notable Missionary Updates in 2020:

Stromberg: Matt and Becca left Tanzania and turned over their ministries to local national partners at the end of 2019. Early in 2020 they began praying and considering where God might see them go next. They eventually decided to connect with a team working in Birmingham, UK, where they will once again pursue planting a church among the South Asian (Muslim and Hindu) community of the city. They are currently waiting for visa applications to be processed so they can depart for the field, but due to Covid19 restrictions things have been moving much slower.

Things you can be praying for:

- That they will be able to get to Birmingham soon.
- For team unity once they join their new team in Birmingham.
- That the Holy Spirit will begin to work in Muslim and Hindu hearts in Birmingham now, to soften hearts to the gospel, so that a South Asian church can be planted.

L_____: When the L_____s first departed for their country, there were 3 things at the top of their to do list that were vital to be able to remain in the country long term, and to eventually see a church planted among an unreached people group: 1) Language acquisition; 2) Identifying an unreached people group; 3) Identifying a business to help reach that people group. Praise be to God, in 2020, having continued to make headway in language acquisition, they also identified an unreached people group, identified a business that would help them reach that people group, wrote a business plan for implementing that business, and fundraised or had pledged 100% of the funds necessary to start that business.

Things you can be praying for:

- That all the pledged funds for the business would come in.
- That their needs would continue to be met while they are back in the states until further notice.

- That they would be diligent and wise with their time in the states.
- That they would be able to get back to their country quickly and continue their work.

Zaretsky: For over 16 years Tuvya has studied the spiritual challenges faced by Jewish-Gentile couples. The Jewish intermarriage rate in America has been above 54% since 2001, and around 72% currently among Jewish millennials. Mixed-couple Jewish partners are being exposed to new spiritual truth through their Gentile partners. They are often seeking resources to understand their cultural differences and ways to have spiritual harmony. Social research has shown that the cross-cultural challenges in their population leads to marital dissatisfaction and divorce in over 75% of the cases. Because of this, for many years now, Tuvya has spoken of a God given passion to serve these Jewish-Gentile couples as an avenue for appropriate gospel engagement. However, figuring out how to engage these Jewish-Gentile couples was no small task. Tuvya has worked faithfully and tirelessly for many years to figure out the best way to offer them support. And so it was with great excitement that I, and many others, read his December 2020 update with a live link to www.JewishGentileCouples.com. This website is where free resource, podcasts and a contact point are offered to Jewish-Gentile couples toward helping them find spiritual harmony. His approach is to first, help couples understand their cross-cultural differences and challenges, and then once a safe basis for conversation is established, move them toward discussions of spiritual matters from a theological perspective with biblical support. The ultimate aim is that many will come to saving faith in Messiah Jesus. As Tuvya put it, "I think this may be the most important contribution I've made up until now and for the future of the Lord's work among Jewish people."

Things you can be praying for:

- Salvation for the Jewish and Gentile contacts they are meeting with.
- Opportunities to train their international staff for this specialized ministry.
- A clear vision about how to collaborate this ministry with their Young Adult Ministry to Jewish Gen. Z-ers.

Ducote: Praise be to God, after many years of prayer, planning, and perseverance, Marlon and Ximena were officially sent out by Del Rey Church as missionaries. They are currently receiving pre-field training and if God wills it their family will move overseas in April 2021.

Things you can be praying for:

- That they are built up spiritually and filled by the Lord for the task ahead in their remaining time in training.
- That they are protected from spiritual oppression that would wage war against their marriage and children.
- For their travels, logistics, tickets, visas, and safety as they plan for an early April departure overseas.

Thank you!

Women's Ministry

Erika Jones

erika@delreychurch.com

The Women's Ministry at Del Rey Church is dedicated to discipleship for the glory of God. Our desire is to encourage one another to worship our Lord and emulate the woman described in Titus 2, beginning in our homes, our workplaces, our community, and within the church, as we set a godly example and encourage women to pursue holiness.

It is our goal to equip and support women at Del Rey Church to live fully committed lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. We seek to do so through intentionally building relationships and by participation in an annual Women's Summit and semi-annual Women's Series. Ironically the 2020 calendar for women's events was the most organized we've ever had, and yet our year had unexpected twists and turns. We adapted our Bible study series to an online format and 80 women registered in the spring and 60 in the fall--we sustained the highest attendance for a series we ever had. While the virtual format wasn't ideal, God did use it to keep us connected and studying Scripture together.

Below is a recap of 2020 which highlights the accomplishments and ways in which God is at work:

- **Women's Summit:** Our summit, Trustworthy, was prayerfully planned to focus our hearts on God's character as the source of our trust. Because God is trustworthy, we can place our hope and trust in Him. Ultimately our summit, scheduled for April 2020, was cancelled, which was disappointing, but it seemed God chose a different way to teach us that He is trustworthy in all circumstances.
- **Philippians:** To create a virtual format, we made the Philippians lectures of Dr. Lynn Cohick available online for our ladies to watch in advance and then we met on Monday nights to reflect and discuss what we were learning from scripture. The Philippians series has 16 sessions, which was great! We studied through the first eight sessions in the spring and concluded in the fall with the final eight weeks. On September 28th we had the privilege of hosting Dr. Cohick for a special Q&A discussion. It was so edifying to have her join us and share what God has taught her personally through her study of Philippians. Studying Philippians was so timely and encouraging.
- **Gratitude:** A special thank you to James Sims for converting the Philippians lectures to a streaming format to make this study possible. And to our ministry assistant, Gabriella Thalín, for keeping us organized with weekly emails, links, Zoom info, and breakout rooms. We appreciate the women who encouraged discipleship by facilitating discussion groups and supporting the women in their community groups: Cindy Schlothauer, Jenni Shen, Ximena Ducote, Mandy Fischer, Lizzie Robins, Kristin Constantine, Katrina Holland, Jenna Sims, Brina Suttle, Maria Begeman, Leah Criscuolo, Natalie Leveck, and Bailey Paone.

Youth Group

Ryan Richards

Ryan@delreychurch.com

Youth Group at Del Rey Church seeks to supplement and add a component to a student's discipleship in a format that they would not receive at home. Youth Group is a social, educational, and personal ministry that gives them an opportunity to grow and explore the Christian faith in the context of their peers. Students who are in junior high school (6th-8th grade) through high school (9th-12th grade) go deeper into the Scriptures than in Kids Church or AWANA. As students of this age become more independent thinkers, we want them to embrace a faith of their own, ask difficult questions, and become more intentional and independently functional disciples of Christ. Youth Group also provides a platform for parents to continue to disciple their children through the curriculum and books that we study throughout the year.

Like every other ministry, it was challenging to adapt last year. We had to adapt students to COVID-19 regulations from the government. Thankfully, students are so adaptable that they go with the flow. We followed the same guidelines as public education, and therefore met the majority of the year via ZOOM, until September when faith-based groups like ours were allowed to meet in cohort settings. We re-gathered our group in September where we were able to begin a new normal with small group study times. We continue to meet in small groups until more restrictions are lifted.

Below are some of the highlights, accomplishments and ways in which God is at work:

- **Students served:** We have had a steady number of students come to our group, usually between 20-30 students which is a huge praise. The Zoom groups were a challenge, because students desperately need social interaction, but a big highlight is that we made it fun, and the students took it in stride. We were able to get creative with games and other virtual activities.
- **In-person meetings:** When we started meeting together in person, more students joined our group. Many students in the area and their parents were looking for a social activity to participate in, and Youth Group was a great option as a faith-based activity under lighter restrictions. Praise God, we have added a few more girls to the group who are very sweet, kind, and interested in learning!
- **Salvation:** The first God thing that comes to mind is God working in marvelous ways in our former students. Youth Group is one of those ministries that you rarely see the fruit of your labor. But God chose fit to save one of our former students, who is now being disciplined through the local church. Praise God! This is how we desire all students would grow. We pray that God

would save them at a young age, that he would impart a personal faith conviction in their hearts, and in turn make them functioning disciples of Christ in our church.

- **Developing thinkers:** It is definitely a God thing that he guards students and young people from the anxiety and panic that the world is facing. It is so amazing to watch these kids observe the crazy world they live in, and make critical, and informative decisions on the good and evil that is taking place in the world. It is great to watch them grow into independent thinkers, and make contributions in group settings about the things that are going on. This is a good sign of maturity and a step in the positive direction as these students think about their faith.
- **Praise for volunteers:** If 2020 has hit anyone hard, it's been the volunteers of our group. I am so thankful for their service, ministry, and flexibility in our group. I praise Brina, Shannon, Allen, and Jordan for their love and commitment throughout the year. They have always been committed to being there and making the most of our time together. I think the boys had a blast when we did Zoom, while the girls flourished more in person. I just can't say enough about the youth leaders - they hold full time jobs, and many of those vocations are not easy ones, or are full time students in challenging programs, and yet they still commit their time and energy, sacrificing their evenings for the youth.
- **Consistency:** That's a huge accomplishment. It is wonderful to see the students at Youth Group come nearly every week. It is a blessing to know that what we are teaching, and the ways in which we are connecting is received every week by our faithful students, and might I add faithful parents who bring their kids. Consistency is super helpful because we are able to talk to the students on a weekly basis about things they are struggling with and questions they have, and it is always very positive to take note of those things and be able to follow up and pray together on a weekly basis.
- **Hard things:** This whole year was a hard one, no surprise, but as we say in the military - Adapt and Overcome, and that's what we set out to do. It was also hard to go all year without doing a lot of youth extracurricular activities like conferences, youth camp, and other activities throughout the year that offer a nice break to our ordinary weekly routine.
- **Call to action:** We need more leaders. I would like to give our youth leaders more of a break, since their job is quite sacrificial being on Tuesday nights. It would be nice to have a rotating group of leaders so that the students who are nearly adults can make contact and connections with other adults in our church, and not feel as much as strangers at church on Sunday or other times where their paths cross. If you have a heart for teenagers, or wish that God would help you grow in that area, please consider volunteering in our Youth Group on Tuesday nights from 6:30-9:00pm. We would like at least a year commitment, and usually the calendar year (Jan-Dec) or school year (Sep-Aug) works best.

Lastly, we have a few students that are REALLY struggling to get by. Some of our students have experienced huge losses that many adults have yet experienced. Please pray for these students, and if you have the heart to intentionally invest in the life of a student who is really trying to find their way in life, please contact me!