

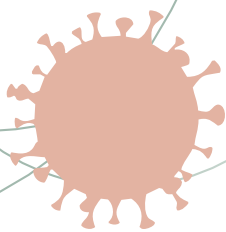
HIGH POINT

*your church's BEST
discipleship ALLY*



Ann Pang Part-time President's Assistant Sugar Land, TX	Rhonda Spriggs Director of Operations Houston, TX	Ellie Tow Part-time Special Projects Assistant Houston, TX	Mike Johnson Founder/President Sugar Land, TX	Matt McClure Adjunct Discipleship Coach Prairie City, IA	Darrell Delaney Board Director Allegan, MI	Identity Protected Adjunct Discipleship Coach In a Country of Persecution	Teri Watson Part-time Accounts Assistant Sugar Land, TX	Sunny Hyun Freelance Graphic Artist Rochester Hills, MI
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Tough Times Don't Last TOUGH TEAMS DO



*“Till
He returns
or calls me
home,
here in the
power of
Christ
I'll stand.”*

From the hymn
In Christ Alone
Keith Getty/Stuart Townend

2020 began with great hope and ended with unexpected blessings with lots of tough times in between.

The year opened with a growing momentum of more churches looking to Ascending Leaders to be their discipleship ally.

Then March hit, with the coronavirus scares and social distancing that left churches scrambling to adjust. Appointments were canceled or postponed. I had a sense that without some dramatic intervention we would have to seriously gut our staff team in order to survive.

We adjusted in these ways, survived and came out strong:

- The “Payroll Protection Program” loan covered 2.5 months of wages and sustained us through the summer.
- Client churches shifted their coaching plans because of the new reality, allowing

us to still help them successfully address their discipleship needs.

- Two churches took the REVEAL discipleship assessment during COVID-19, revealing dramatic improvement.
- A Spring DiscipleOn! Basics Tutorial led to a refined program for church leaders.
- The use of virtual technology helped us keep moving forward with the churches in discipleship co-labs.
- 2020 ended SUPERSIZED with a successful December donation drive, new contracts with large churches and the kickoff of a new discipleship co-lab for small churches.

We asked God for year-end results that could only be explained by His gracious provision. He answered in such a way that Ascending Leaders not only survived 2020 but grew dramatically stronger. Our team persevered to address the future discipleship needs of more churches!

COHORTS for Pastors & CO-LABS for Churches

Serve Evolving Discipleship Needs



DiscipleOn! BASICS COHORTS

Small, self-selected groups of five pastors set up mutually agreeable sessions to process concepts of doing congregational discipleship by the stages.

Church Discipleship CO-LABS

Churches, working intentionally together over 2 years, get higher value at lower cost*

*Scholarships are currently provided by the Artevel and Helm Foundations



Did You Know ...

Our DiscipleOn! Cohorts of pastors have met virtually by Zoom since 2016. We have been facilitating effective virtual gatherings for five years!

Aha! Moment

AL's work with virtual gatherings in our church discipleship co-labs demonstrated that churches can have a rich co-lab experience together despite the distance between them. We will make more use of virtual gatherings in the future to deal economically with issues of distance.



CUSTOM COACHING

An Additional AL Service to Individual Churches

Two Churches Showed Remarkable Discipleship Improvement



Houston, TX
2,000

Avg. Adults in Worship
Each Sunday



Solana Beach, CA
650

Avg. Adults in Worship
Each Sunday



Each church used the REVEAL Spiritual Vitality Assessment, guided by Ascending Leaders, to get a baseline score and then make strategic changes to improve discipleship. A few years later, through retaking the REVEAL assessment, they were able to see their substantial improvement.

You were so helpful. I cannot see how any church can understand their results and their critical next steps without the insightful leadership you provide.

Paula Taylor, Pastor of Discipleship
at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church



Over the last two years, each board nominee has said that their 15 minutes in their favorite chair each day listening to God, was formative for their calling for board leadership—thank you Ascending Leaders for helping us get there.

Judy Enns, Nomination Chair
at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church



Did You Know ...

Ascending Leaders provided listening sessions and surveys April-July to listen to pastors about what adaptations churches most needed. We also asked for their needs for intercession, which our staff prayed over weekly.

Senior Editor: Mike Johnson
Layout: Sunny Hyun
Editor: Judi Black
Reviewers: Rhonda Spriggs,
Ann Pang, Teri Watson,
Ellie Tow, Gina Johnson

To watch a video of Pastor Mike McClenahan of Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, Cally Parkinson of REVEAL and Mike Johnson of AL talking about this dramatic improvement go to www.vimeo.com/534625023

Truth: Stranger than Fiction

The Cares Act Cares About Church Discipleship:



Who Would Have Thought it Possible?

March 5, 2020

We heard of the Cares Act and its provision of forgivable small business loans even available to Christian nonprofits like AL.

April 5.....

AL's Director of Operations Rhonda Spriggs contacted our bank and submitted our application.

April 24

Our bank was not responding to Rhonda's communications. Meanwhile, the first PPP disbursed all the funds allocated.

April 26

Three Advisors each reached out to Mike to say AL must try an alternate route or run the risk of losing out.

April 27 9:00 a.m.

At a loss about what to do, Mike remembered J. Pat Hickman whom he heard talk a year earlier about Pat's bank's (Happy State Bank) people-first attitude. At 9:00 a.m. Mike e-mailed Pat, expecting no response. Pat replied to Mike 10 minutes later.

April 27 9:30 a.m.

Jeanine Werberig of Happy State Bank began working with Rhonda to complete a new loan application.

April 27 6:00 p.m.

Jeanine informed Rhonda and Mike the Small Business Administration had approved AL's application!



Jeanine Werberig
Vice President of Commercial/
Nonprofit Lending



J. Pat Hickman,
Chairman of the Board



Did You Know ...

Qualifying for the PPP loan allowed AL to move forward with minimal reductions in ministry hours and no financial disruption to our mission throughout 2020.

January 7, 2021 FORGIVEN!

Our PPP loan was forgiven in full because AL used the funds appropriately to sustain our staff payroll through the summer of 2020.

2020
Year-End Donations ...
 ... were a
SUPERSIZED
vote of
confidence
in our
mission



GOD did it through YOU!



Thank you!



NOW We Need...

... New or Increased Monthly or Quarterly Donors to Help us Sustain Ministry Throughout This Year

A generous donor is

MATCHING
dollar-for-dollar

every new or increased monthly or quarterly "Sustaining" donation pledged and given June-November 2021*

Is God calling you to a sustaining rhythm of support?

- Monthly June-November
- OR Quarterly in June & September

JOIN

our *Sustaining Donors* at any amount between \$10 & \$2,000/month OR /quarter

DOUBLE YOUR SUPPORT!

For more info go to our website
 * Up to max of \$2,000/month total

Did You Know ...

In a study of over 1,000 Christian non-profits, Ascending Leaders was one of the **26%** who experienced an increase of over 10% in donations from the year before, even though the study also shows it is **HARDER** to raise funds for small organizations that are focused on discipleship/leadership development.



UP for the Worthy Challenge

FOUR NEW MEMBERS Strengthened our Board of Directors

Rev. Dr. Mike Johnson
President, Ascending Leaders
Sugar Land, TX



2020 Board

Rev. Darrell Delaney
Pastor of the Square Campus of Madison
Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI



Dr. Judy Enns
Former HR Firm Owner
Solana Beach, CA



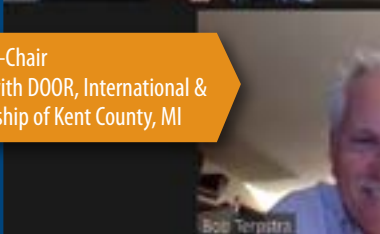
Mr. Rick Fopma, Chair
Owner of Richfield View, Inc.
Lynnville, IA



Ms. Teresa Rossy
Director of Connections at
Chapelwood UMC in Houston, TX



Mr. Bob Terpstra, Vice-Chair
Director of Operations with DOOR, International &
Trustee for Gaines Township of Kent County, MI

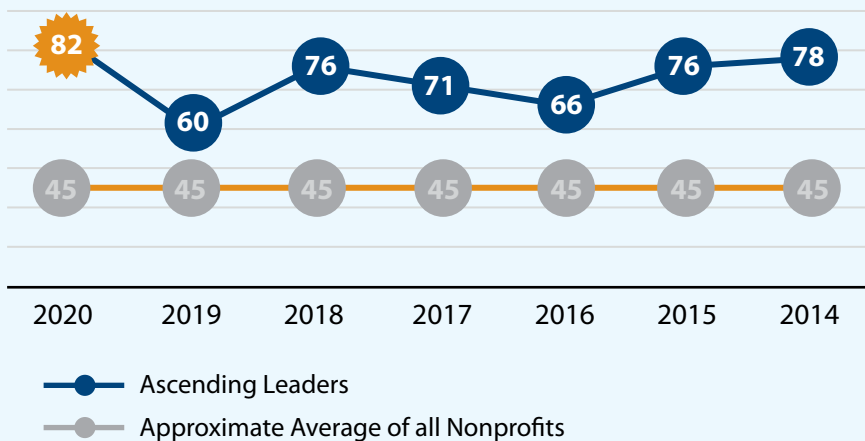


Dr. Steve Wilke
Director of the Institute for Discipleship
Winfield, KS

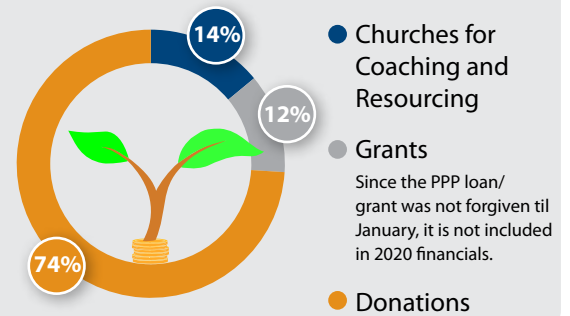


Our Loyal Donors are WAY ABOVE AVERAGE!

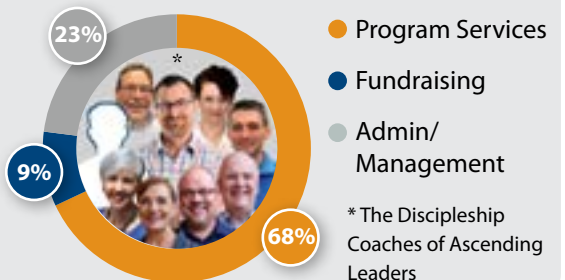
Percentage of Donors Returning from the Previous Year



2020 Funding Sources



Costs of 2020 Ministry



Transparency is important:
visit ascendingleaders.org/transparency
to see our 2020 review and recommendations.

