**FAQ:**

**Q:** What is the background of the church?

**A:** The church was first started about 40 years ago, by a man named JPaul, and was set up in a building no bigger than a small one-story house. In a few years the church grew and required that they get a bigger building to accommodate the growth. The church itself has always been located in San Antonio, Texas and always on the south side of the city.

**Q:** Why did the leadership change?

**A:** The original owner and pastor decided that, not only was he was ready to retire, but also, he was getting tired of traveling so far and wanted to stay closer to home. He then began to slowly train the person he chose to take his place, Mark Valadez, and to distance himself from the church to get the members used to going to Mark instead of himself.

**Q:** Where there any frictions that were caused by the change in leadership and did the church lose any members because of it?

**A:** The church did lose some members. Mostly because they thought that Mark was too young to properly take over something they see as so important when there were older, more experienced members of the church. This in turn caused some frictions, as they tried to tell him what to do and how to do things, and when he refused, they grew even more upset.

**Q:** What is a typical worship like and how is it different from the previous leadership?

**A:** The typical worship is greeting the members and any visitors we may have, we then like to start by singing, having a small, short sermon to reflect on communion, prayer, more songs, and then the big sermon, before ending with a song or two. Typically, the service lasts about an hour and a half. The main differences from the previous leadership is how much we cut down on the service itself as it used to last more than two hours. The next biggest change came from the music itself, we switched from traditional, gospel music, to music with that was rock. We have a band, that plays, with a drummer, keyboardist, singer, bassist, and guitarist. This was something that the church didn’t have under previous leadership. We’ve found that a lot more people are willing to join in the singing and become more “alive” with this new music style.

**Q:** What traditions are important to this congregation? And have you changed any?

**A:** The church doesn’t really have any traditions. They used to go Christmas caroling every year during the Christmas holiday, but that stopped years before the new leadership took over. The only thing that I can say that I suppose would be a tradition would be the women’s and men’s retreat. They happen at different parts of the year and like the names suggest are only for women or men. It is a time that they come together and talk, learn, share food and companionship with their fellow ladies or men. They have their own sermons and music, take pictures and on the women’s side, they also chose to do little crafts. These are open to the whole community and is something that we are not planning on changing.

**Q:** What is a favorite part of the church that all, or at least most, members enjoy? And is it staying under the new leadership?

**A:** A part that we believe all members enjoy is the sense of community. We often have potlucks after the church service, or have members open their home for certain holidays, like New Years Eve and Thanksgiving. Recently, we had a Valentine’s Day dinner, with people coming and watching movies and talking and, of course, eating. This is also something that will stay under the new leadership as he wants to keep that sense of community among its members. Mark wants the members to feel like family.

**Q:** What do you believe is your biggest challenge?

**A:** The biggest challenge will be actually setting up all of the equipment needed to live stream and do podcast. While there is a member of the church that is willing to allow us use of her home in order to record the podcast, we still require the proper equipment to do so. This is the longest and, unfortunately, slowest part of our process to really getting started.

**Q:** How do you plan for the church services? How many people help with the church?

**A:** We have about, 3 people that help on the regular, though we do get more help from volunteers as events come up. Like with the Valentine’s Day dinner, we had several people volunteer to help set up and decorate, with others willing to cook the food. As far as planning the services go, the pastor handles the reading and research for whatever sermon he will be giving that week, while the music leader goes through the songs and picks ones that haven’t been done in a while, to keep people from getting bored. The music leader also sends the rest of the group the music list when done and sets up a day and time for practice that works with everyone’s schedule. With the new changes that will be coming, there will also be one more person added to the team, who’s job will be to focus on the social media side of things and the live streaming, as well editing the podcasts for Spotify.

**Q:** You plan to broadcast your service live, how will you accomplish this and what about copyrighted music?

**A:** We will broadcast the services using either OBS or SLOBS, both are streaming software. The services will be able to been seen on both YouTube and Twitch. And as we have our own band that plays the music, and we gain no profit though it, we will be covered by the fair use law.

**Q:** What measures are you putting in place for the live streaming? With the trolls out there, especially as many people are forced to stay home, how are you going to stop them from disturbing those that want to watch and focus on the service?

**A:** There are a few different measures that will be in place. First of all is that we will not have alerts so that trolls will not have access to leaving messages that will appear on screen. Second, we will have moderators that will be watching the chats and deleting/purging messages, as well as banning those as needed. And thirdly, if absolutely necessary we have the ability to not allow chats or comments and will enact it.

**Q:** While you’re focused on the city of San Antonio, as you will be live streaming, there is a chance that you will pick up viewers not only national, but globally as well. How do you plan on handling that?

**A:** We welcome everyone to watch and we’re happy to share the word of God with others. However, because we only have moderators that speak English, Spanish, and Japanese, we’re going to have to ask that people in chat only speak in those languages. A warning will be given first to those who type in another language in chat, afterward we may have to time them out or ban them as we will have no way of knowing what they’re saying. It’s not my first choice, but I also want to protect those that may speak the same language and one of the ones we can moderate as we don’t want anyone being harassed.

**Q:** How will you deal with people that watch that are of other religions?

**A:** Again, we welcome everyone to watch, whether they’re looking to see if another religion has answers they feel they aren’t getting from their current one or if they’re just curious. All we ask is that they are respectful.

**Q:** How or will you be answering questions from the viewers?

**A:** As of right now, depending on the question, it will be answered by the moderators. Any questions that can not be answered will be documented by them as well and will be answered in the weekly podcasts.

**Q:** Do you really believe going “digital” will help save the church and bring in new members?

**A:** Short answer, yes, we believe that it will. The long answer is that everyone runs on a different schedule, dayshifts, afternoon, evenings. Some have Sundays off, some don’t. Going digital will allow those that may not have time or the traditional schedule to be able to watch and/or listen from wherever they are, work, home, or driving (in the case of the podcast). Having these options will allow people to choose what works best for them.

**Q:** Out of all the Christian churches out there, why should anyone try this church specifically? What makes you so different than others out there?

**A:** We believe that it is the sense of family that we bring to our church. We don’t want or expect members to tithe or give their time. We’ve had members that have come from other churches tell us that it felt like they were always expected to give money and if the didn’t they were shunned. We’ve also had member who have left in the past, only to return some time after, because they didn’t find the same sense of community. Something that also makes us unique is the free services we give out to the community, not just our members or people who are thinking about being members.

**Q:** To follow up with, why non-denominational Christianity? Why not Baptist or Catholic, or even Wicca?

**A:** We, like I assume many other religions believe, that the bible we use is the only word of God, there is nothing else, no supplemental side reading required. We don’t have saints or praise Mary like some do. We don’t have multiple gods or goddess to praise either. We will always respect others’ perspective and their religions. We just have to say bluntly that it is not for us and we believe in the bible being the only truth. This is the message we want to spread to others, love and tolerance is important, but so is knowing the true word of God.

**Q:** You talked about the free services you offer, such as the counseling. Many churches have offered “counseling” and it’s a lot of faith-based healing or “read the bible” is yours any different and how?

**A:** That’s a fair question. We have a trained psychologist as a member of our staff who has kindly offered her services during her free time to help anyone who needs it. Much like regular psychologists, we ask that people schedule a time with her so as not to interfere with her own working schedule or plans that she may have already made. And, of course, to keep people from coming at the same time and overwhelming her.

**Q:** Has the church had any drama and/or push back over any of the church’s changes?

**A:** To be honest, there has been a little bit of push back, mainly from those who do not fully understand what we are trying accomplish or that don’t fully understand social media. Many of the church members we currently have, have no idea what live streaming is and when explained, most were willing to try it. The ones that weren’t were more worried on how people online would react and to them being on camera. We were able to put their thoughts to rest as the camera will not focus on anyone not willing to be on it. The primary focus is to focus on the music and the sermon, not the members themselves.

**Q:** What are your thoughts on spirituality vs. religion?

**A:** We believe that the two could be interconnected if done right. Some people practice meditation or yoga as spiritual work. They find that sense of balance and peace when they have to be alone and that’s fine. But religion is also important as this is what will bring you closer to God, allow you to learn God’s words. There are many people out there that may practice one but not the other. When it comes to just practicing spirituality, it’s not enough; they may find peace for a time, but they’re going to miss that connection to God.

**Q:** Why do you believe more millennials are staying away from religion and just going spiritual, or going to nothing at all?

**A:** We believe it is because of a few different reasons, they might be looking for something more, that sense of community. It could also be the fact that they simply don’t have time, millennials are always on the go and there is something, usually work, that they have to take care of. So, they look for something quick, or something that can give them some peace that they can do at work or at home, to give themselves a break. Or maybe they don’t even have time to do that much, so they find it easier to just say, forget it, I have other things to be doing and worrying about.

**Q:** How did you choose the group that you’re focused on reaching, in this case millennials?

**A:** As the leadership is a millennial himself, he felt that he could resonate best with other millennials. He understands more of what millennials are looking for and what they define as community. Many millennials are also very understanding of what he is trying to accomplish and also understand that it’s not going to be smooth sailing from the get go, but are willing to wait and/or offer opinions. That additional help could be what makes or breaks the system.

**Q:** You mention that you’re focusing on millennials. Does that mean that your saying other generations aren’t important to reach out to?

**A:** We are in no way saying that. As stated before, Mark is a millennial himself, and finds it easier to connect with other millennials. They understand a lot of what he is trying to accomplish with the church and has seen a lot less push back with them than any other group. But that does not mean we’re not willing and able to open the church to everyone, we are also willing to take whatever time it takes to explain and break everything down to those that don’t understand it. We are encouraging others to give the new practice a try before deciding anything. In fact, we highly encourage the older generations to give the live streaming or podcasts a try, those that may have trouble traveling because of their age, could find it highly useful; and we’re willing to travel to them to help them understand better and give them an example of how to use the platforms.