



# WE ARE THE LOCAL CHURCH, GR.

## WE SHORTEN IT TO TLC

Yes, we know what you're thinking,  
just like the 90s R&B group...

Awesome, right?!

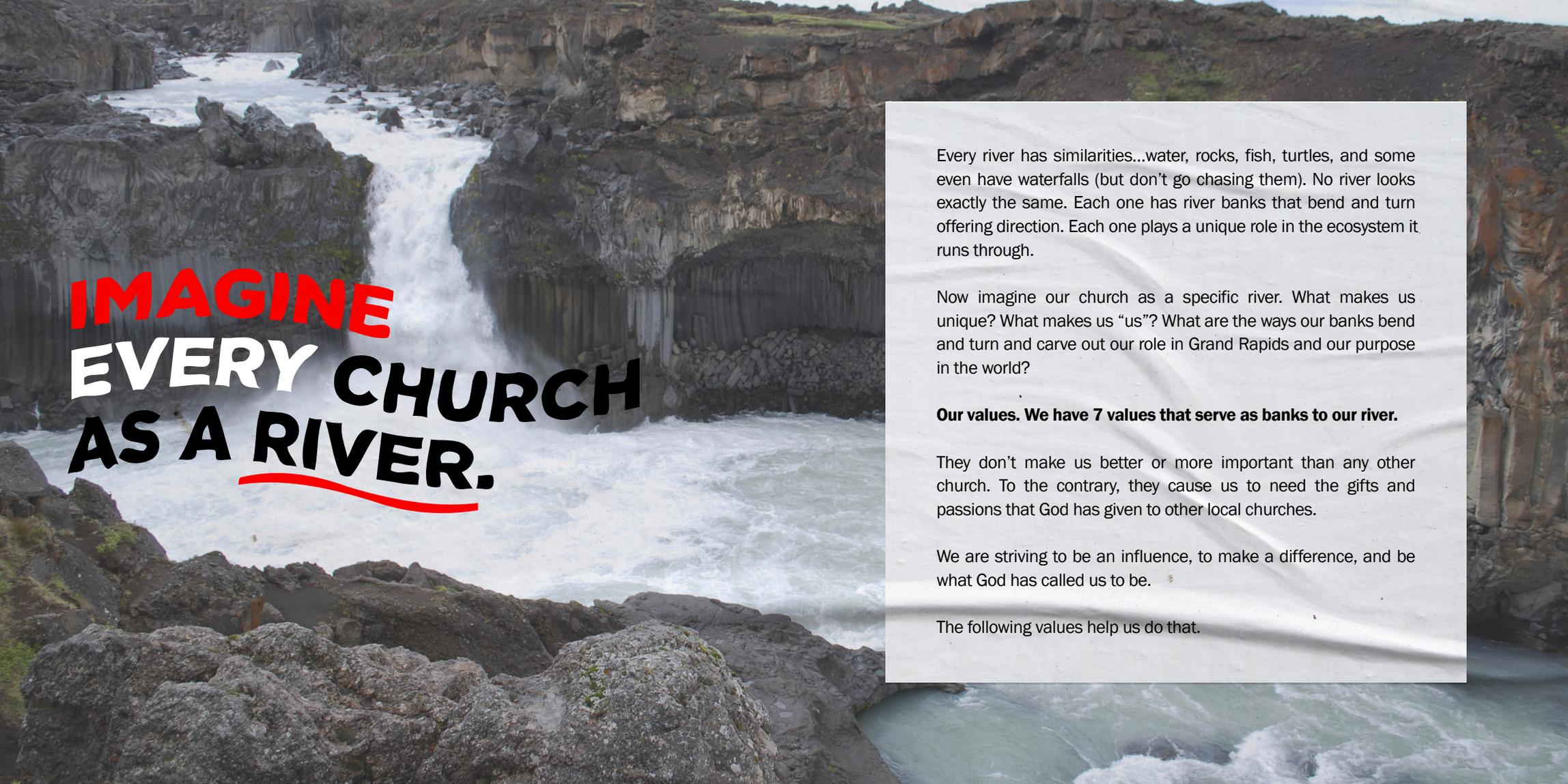


**Seriously though**, we're a gathering of people who love Jesus deeply and want to follow Him completely. We're not a building. We are a people in a place. We engage locally, serve wholly, and give selflessly so that others may know the life and hope that is in Jesus. We believe Jesus changes everything.

Like seriously, everything.

**What exactly does that mean?**

Just creep through the next few pages to find out...



**IMAGINE**  
**EVERY CHURCH**  
**AS A RIVER.**

Every river has similarities...water, rocks, fish, turtles, and some even have waterfalls (but don't go chasing them). No river looks exactly the same. Each one has river banks that bend and turn offering direction. Each one plays a unique role in the ecosystem it runs through.

Now imagine our church as a specific river. What makes us unique? What makes us "us"? What are the ways our banks bend and turn and carve out our role in Grand Rapids and our purpose in the world?

**Our values. We have 7 values that serve as banks to our river.**

They don't make us better or more important than any other church. To the contrary, they cause us to need the gifts and passions that God has given to other local churches.

We are striving to be an influence, to make a difference, and be what God has called us to be.

The following values help us do that.

# AWE & WONDER



Ever see Shark Week? If not, put this down immediately and start watching it...just kidding.

For real though, Shark Week is pretty epic. There is something about watching a 20-foot, 5,000 lb. animal launch itself completely OUT OF THE WATER, pursuing its prey. Majestic. Powerful. Terrifying. Awe inspiring and wonderful. Can you imagine what it would be like to see this in person, or even crazier, to be in the same water?

We often come to church with the expectation that we're here to get or do something: to serve, to drink coffee, to show off a new outfit, to feel better, to sing songs, or to listen to a talk. Way too often we are missing the point. Church isn't about getting something. It's about

experiencing someone—the God of the universe who wants to meet us here. Experiencing His power and presence.

To miss the importance of this is like missing Shark Week, but way, way worse.

We don't come to church to do something, we come to church to be with Someone. Something special happens when we gather together in the name of Jesus to sing His praise and hear His word. He's diggin' on you and is uniquely and powerfully present when we gather. What we expect often becomes what others experience.

At TLC, we expect to experience the power and presence of Christ when we gather.



# OWNERS NOT RENTERS

There is a clear difference between owners and renters. If something is broken, renters call someone. Owners fix it. If something is dirty, renters leave it. Owners clean it. If something is wrong, renters ignore it. Owners take care of it. Get the picture?

Our culture has conditioned us to become consumers—to ask “what’s in it for me?” We tend to take this philosophy into our church engagement. We tend to think that the church exists to give us something to do on Sunday mornings besides sleep and that church should be convenient and meet all our needs.

At TLC, we believe church should not be a holding tank for spiritual spectators. If you get sick or hurt a hospital may put you on bed rest for a little while, but never for long periods of time. Bad things happen when we sit idle for months on end. We don’t want to sound like jerks, but we know life is so much better when we’re investors...not consumers, owners...not renters.

Together we own our health, growth, and mission. We invest what we have in order to see it take shape because we’re a community of owners.

If you have an idea, share it. If you see something wrong, help right it. We are owners.

And no, we don’t want no scrubs (see what we did there?)

**OWNERS**  
**NOT**  
**RENTERS**

# HEALTHY THINGS GROW

Ever see a healthy adult giraffe that's three feet tall?  
Didn't think so. Your friends ever see one? Nope.

Why? Because healthy things **grow**.

Our goal isn't to be a big church...or a small church...or even a medium church. Our goal is to be a **healthy** church. This is why the key word in this value isn't 'grow', it's 'healthy'.

We believe a key indicator of personal growth is an ever-growing relationship with Jesus.

We believe spiritual formation creates health, and health leads to growth. We cannot accomplish our mission without both.

HEALTHY  
THINGS  
GROW



# LONE WOLVES DIE



Our western society is filled with stories of individuals. We have great sounding, unbelievable, epic tales of rugged individuals who do it all and don't need help from anyone. But that's exactly what they are...epic tales.

Know what happens to lone wolves? They die. Even worse, they die alone.

Everybody needs a wolfpack. We aren't designed to do life alone. We are designed to do life in authentic community where we are truly known and loved. We are made in the image of a relational God who created us for relationship with Him and with one another.

Opening up and being vulnerable in community is intimidating, but that bravery leads to some of the best things in life.



# DIFFERENT IS BEAUTIFUL

Forest Gump was right, life is *like* a box of chocolates; you never know what you're gonna get. But life isn't *actually* a box of chocolates, 'cause, well, that would be boring. Seriously, if life was just chocolate you'd never know the pleasure of cheesecake, French toast made with banana bread and covered in peanut butter, roasted pecans, and real maple syrup...but we digress.

The point we were trying to make is that the beauty of life is found in the diversity of life. Without it, life is un-pretty. This is true of the church as well.

The Kingdom of Heaven will be full of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. We believe that the more types, traditions, backgrounds, ethnicities, and abilities that represent our community, the better we reflect the Kingdom of God to others. We can't be as diverse as heaven, but we can desire it, and where possible, be intentional about seeking it.

We are stronger, better, and more beautiful because of our diversity.  
Different is Beautiful.

DIFF<sup>3</sup>RENT  
IS  
BEAU<sup>7</sup>IFUL

# WOULD SHE WEEP?

Who is “she” and why is she weeping, you ask? Well, “she” is beautiful and flawed and wonderful and she’s all of us who live here, metro Grand Rapids, our city.

We want to love and serve our city so well that she would mourn if we were gone.

The Bible says Jesus became flesh. In other words, He moved into the neighborhood where He was needed. Yes, He preached awesome sermons and did some other really cool things. But Jesus repeatedly stopped what He was doing to care for the sick, feed those who were hungry, and spend His strength on others. He wasn’t afraid to say the hard but healing words,

love the hard but hurting ones, and do the hard but helpful things. As followers of Jesus, we are called to do the same. We must be His hands and feet in order that His message is heard and His love is experienced in a tangible way.

As a local expression of the universal Church, we are called to actively participate in the mission of God. Because of this, we pursue opportunities to holistically care for the needs of our city and our world.

We want to love and serve Grand Rapids so well that she would Nicholas Sparks ugly cry if we up and vanished.





**THIS IS  
A BABY  
AARDVARK**



A close-up photograph of the rear quarter panel of a silver car. The car's body is highly reflective, showing distorted, wavy patterns of light and color. The taillight is visible, featuring a grid of red and yellow lenses. The overall lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

**WE  
CREATE  
THE  
FUTURE**

# **WE CREATE THE FUTURE**

This sounds dramatic. We know.

But here's the deal. We love and serve a God who created and crafted the entire universe, yes, even baby aardvarks. When He created humans, He gave us the ongoing job of creating civilization, which is crazy sexy cool. Read Genesis 1 this idea is literally our job description.

The church exists to reflect this. Not baby aardvarks but the whole universe creating thing. The church was at one point the epicenter of creativity and influence. We want to help run that back. We do that through creating and investing in leaders to send out.

God measures His Church not by how many we seat, but by how many we *send*.

We are much more interested in being a church that focuses on multiplying for the benefit of the Kingdom of Jesus than adding for the benefit of the kingdom of TLC. Multiplication beats out addition every time. We want to be a disciple-making church that plants disciple-making churches that plant other disciple-making churches that plant...you get the point.

We develop culture creating leaders to send to culture creating cities to create better futures.



WE ARE A **MULTIPLYING** CHURCH

HELPING THE **NEXT GENERATION**

FALL IN LOVE WITH **JESUS**

TO CREATE BETTER **FUTURES**



We are in love with Jesus.

We believe that Jesus  
changes everything.

We want to live his life and message of  
hope into the city of Grand Rapids.

To be a place of healing for the  
lost, hurt, and broken.

To awaken those who are far from God  
into a life-giving reality.

To invite those with a stale faith in  
Jesus to a vivid and bright purpose.

We are for the city.

Metro GR is diverse, alive, and  
brimming with hope.

And yet everyday people wake up  
feeling lonely, isolated, looking for life,  
and without a sense of purpose.

So many of us need to step into a  
better story where God is at work,  
restoring what is broken and bringing  
change to the world around us.

Our heart beats for people to see  
themselves in the story of God and to  
experience that change.

To fall in love with Jesus.

**THANKS FOR HANGING WITH US AND  
READING THROUGH THIS!**

Did you find all 6 TLC song references?

CHECK US OUT ON ALL THE SOCIALS AND OUR WEBSITE

**localchurchgr.org**



**@localchurchgr**

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**We want to be as helpful as we can in  
getting you connected here. Get in touch  
with us if you have any questions or want  
to talk to someone from TLC.**

Email **info@localgr.org**.



THE LOCAL CHURCH

Grand Rapids