

Pastor Glorifies Jesus as Assemblies of God Church Goes Up in Flames

New Life Assembly of God Pastor David Land had just arrived at his church in Mesa, Arizona, Thursday morning, June 19, when he noticed smoke coming from a vent. Quickly evacuating the church with his wife, granddaughter and the custodian, the four made it safely to the parking lot and called 911, as smoke began seeping through the rooftop.

The two-alarm fire drew more than 100 firefighters from stations in Mesa, Gilbert and Tempe and received heavy media coverage, including a local news helicopter team, which provided spectacular views of the estimated 20-foot flames shooting up from the church roof.

Pastor Land, who's led New Life AG for the past 14 years, expressed his relief that no one, including firefighters, was injured in the fire, but the loss was significant.

Land says that the recently completed administration wing of the church was a total loss.

"The roof caved in and the two A/C units [previously on the roof] are now inside," Land says. "The sanctuary has extensive water and smoke damage along with some fire and structural damage. The rest of the building is okay on the outside, but the inside of the entire building is a total loss."

Land says the cause of the fire has not yet been determined and the insurance adjustor is still evaluating the loss, though he has expressed concern that the church's content coverage won't be adequate to cover all the contents lost in the blaze. In addition, the entire building has now been completely sealed off, so no part of the building can be used

by the church.

However, Land is deeply appreciative for Church On The Journey (AG) in Mesa (led by Pastor Darren Nibbelink), which has opened its gym for Land and New Life AG's 90-member congregation to use as a temporary home. Land is also thankful for an answer to prayer, as it now appears the information on the church's computer hard drives will be able to be recovered.

"With God's help, we're going to be better in the end," Land says.

Land also recognizes the silver lining that the fire has created for the church—giving the community the opportunity to see the church respond in crisis. Local media has provided extensive coverage of the fire and, in turn, given exposure to the church, with two news crews even attending the Sunday morning service at the gym.

"The interviews have given me the opportunity to glorify Jesus," Land says. "There have been many comments from people, who have watched the news, on how much they appreciated the attitude and the focus on God's glory. I have also been overwhelmed at the support from people all over the country who I don't even know, but they have reached out with their prayers and love, as well as many who have asked how they can help and contribute."

At this point, Land and New Life AG have to patiently wait for others to finish their work before they can begin to rebuild what was lost. Land says he will post updates on New Life's progress on his Facebook page.

"Thank you to all who have shared your thoughts and prayers with us," Land said in one of his recent Facebook posts. "Your friendship now is more precious than my words can tell. I wish I could give each and everyone a big hug. When we get to Heaven, plan on it."

To see news videos covering the fire, click [here](#) and [here](#).