IT Strategic Assessment Report

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# Executive Summary

Fire of God International Church, located in Louisville, KY, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to spiritual guidance, community support, and outreach programs for underserved individuals. Founded in 2020 by Pastor Komlan, the church provides religious services and various social initiatives, including employment assistance, housing resources, and counseling services. However, the church faces challenges in its IT infrastructure, with limited digital presence, minimal technological tools, and a lack of dedicated IT personnel. This assessment aims to evaluate the church's IT needs, analyze its alignment with strategic goals, and recommend solutions to improve technology adoption and operational efficiency.

# History and Purpose

## History of the Fire of God International Church

Fire of God International Church was established in September 2020 with a mission to serve as a spiritual sanctuary for believers and a resource hub for those in need. The church has steadily grown in its reach, impacting individuals and families through faith-based teachings and outreach programs. The congregation has expanded to offer not only worship services but also charitable initiatives, including food drives, educational resources, and family counseling.

The church's rapid growth has highlighted the need for a structured IT infrastructure to support operations, improve efficiency, and expand outreach. However, due to financial limitations, much of the church’s administration is still done manually, and technology is used only in limited capacities. This assessment aims to document existing IT resources and propose a roadmap for future technology integration.

## Purpose of the Fire of God International Church

The primary mission of Fire of God International Church is to provide spiritual guidance and social support. The church actively works to empower individuals by offering educational programs, mentorship, employment resources, and housing assistance. Through worship services, youth engagement, and charity drives, the church strengthens the spiritual and social well-being of the community.

Additionally, the church seeks to leverage technology to enhance engagement, streamline administrative processes, and expand its digital outreach. A comprehensive IT strategy will enable Fire of God International Church to fulfill its mission more effectively and provide sustainable long-term solutions for operational efficiency.

# Management and Business Processes.

## Community Outreach Programs

The church organizes several community engagement programs, including:

* **Annual Community Resource Drive:** Provides school supplies, clothing, and food to over 600 individuals.
* **Apprenticeship and Career Development Programs:** Helps youth and adults acquire job-related skills in carpentry, welding, tailoring, and more.
* **Food Distribution Program:** Assists low-income families with food supplies weekly.
* **Counseling Services:** Offers family, marital, and substance abuse counseling to help the community.

## Financial Management and Donations

Financial contributions are vital to sustaining the church's mission. However, the current donation system is not digitized, and most contributions are collected in person. Implementing an online donation platform would allow members to contribute remotely and increase financial transparency

## Administrative Governance and Leadership

The church is led by Pastor Komlan, with administrative responsibilities managed by Brother Edmon Savon. Decision-making is a collaborative effort among church leadership, volunteers, and the congregation. However, administrative processes lack technological support, leading to inefficiencies in scheduling, member communication, and financial management.

## Volunteer Engagement and Training

Volunteers play a vital role in church operations, from organizing events to assisting with community outreach. However, there is currently no structured training program in place. Implementing a volunteer training system would improve efficiency and ensure that all members are equipped to handle their responsibilities effectively.

## Event Planning and Coordination

Fire of God International Church regularly hosts events such as worship services, community aid programs, and fundraising efforts. However, the church currently lacks an automated system for event management, leading to inefficiencies in scheduling and coordination. A centralized event planning system would streamline operations and ensure seamless execution of church events.

# Current IT Environment

The current IT environment at Fire of God International Church is limited in terms of both hardware and software capabilities. The church primarily relies on outdated equipment and manual administrative processes, which create inefficiencies and hinder overall operational effectiveness. This section evaluates the hardware, software, IT skills of staff and volunteers, and financial investment in IT infrastructure.

## Hardware

Fire of God International Church has minimal hardware resources to support its daily activities. The existing hardware includes:

* **Two Desktop Computers:** Used for administrative tasks such as financial tracking, member registration, and documentation. These computers are slow due to outdated processors and limited memory capacity.
* **One Laptop:** Primarily used by church leaders for sermon preparation, PowerPoint presentations, and online research. The device is shared among multiple users, increasing wear and tear.
* **Two Televisions:** Used for displaying Bible verses, announcements, and church presentations during services.
* **One Printer:** A basic inkjet printer for printing church bulletins, financial statements, and other essential documents. Due to high ink costs, printing is done sparingly.
* **Basic Audio Equipment:** Includes microphones, speakers, and a mixer used for worship services. These devices are not integrated into a digital system, requiring manual setup for each service.
* **Networking Equipment:** A single Wi-Fi router provides internet access within the church premises, but the connection is weak in certain areas. The church does not have any networking switches or firewalls for enhanced security.

**Challenges and Limitations:**

* Outdated computers struggle with basic tasks and lack security updates.
* No backup systems exist to store critical church data.
* Internet connectivity issues lead to frequent disruptions in online activities.
* The absence of a digital projection system limits dynamic content sharing during services.

## Software

The software infrastructure of Fire of God International Church is very basic and lacks any dedicated church management systems.

* **Microsoft Office Suite:** Used for creating documents, spreadsheets, and presentations.
* **Google Drive & Gmail:** Employed for file storage, communication, and collaboration. There is no structured cloud storage system for organizing church data.
* **Accounting Software:** None; financial records are manually tracked in Excel spreadsheets.
* **No Church Management Software (ChMS):** Membership data, attendance records, and volunteer schedules are maintained manually.
* **No Security Software:** There is no antivirus, firewall, or encryption software installed on any devices.

**Challenges and Limitations:**

* High risk of **data loss** due to the lack of automated backup solutions.
* Manual record-keeping increases the chance of **human error** and inefficiencies.
* No central system for **managing member engagement**, donations, or volunteer coordination.
* Lack of cybersecurity measures leaves the church vulnerable to data breaches.

## Staff IT Skills/Training

Currently, Fire of God International Church does not have a dedicated IT staff. The administrative team and volunteers manage IT tasks without formal training.

* **Administrative Staff:** Have basic proficiency in Microsoft Office but lack knowledge in IT security, data management, and troubleshooting.
* **Volunteers:** Some volunteers help with setting up audio systems and social media management, but there is no structured IT training program.
* **Church Leadership:** Church leaders rely on external assistance for complex IT tasks, such as website updates or troubleshooting hardware issues.

**Challenges and Limitations:**

* Lack of IT expertise results in **inefficient system management and frequent downtime**.
* Volunteers do not receive **consistent IT training**, leading to inconsistent practices.
* No dedicated personnel to handle **IT security and infrastructure maintenance**.
* IT troubleshooting is **reactive rather than proactive**, delaying problem resolution.

## IT Budgeting and Spending

The church operates on a limited budget, with IT spending being a low priority compared to other operational costs. Currently, IT-related expenses include:

* **Basic Internet Subscription:** $50 per month for church Wi-Fi.
* **Software Licensing Costs:** Minimal, as most software used is free or purchased one-time.
* **Hardware Maintenance:** Occasional repairs and replacements are funded through member donations.

**Challenges and Limitations:**

* No structured IT budget, leading to **inconsistent investments in technology**.
* Reliance on outdated hardware and software, making upgrades expensive.
* No financial allocation for **cybersecurity, cloud storage, or backup solutions**.
* Dependence on **donations for IT improvements**, limiting long-term planning.

**Conclusion on IT Environment**

The current IT environment at Fire of God International Church is **not optimized** to support the church’s growing operational needs. There is an **urgent need to modernize hardware, implement digital record-keeping, enhance security, and train staff and volunteers** in IT skills. A structured IT budget should be developed to ensure **consistent investments in technology upgrades**. Addressing these issues will significantly **enhance efficiency, security, and member engagement**, helping the church fulfill its mission more effectively.

# Envisioned IT Capabilities

Fire of God International Church has significant opportunities to improve its IT infrastructure to enhance operational efficiency, strengthen security, and expand its outreach. This section outlines the church leadership’s vision for technology improvements, the top technology challenges, and a roadmap for future IT development.

## Leadership’s Vision

The church leadership recognizes the potential of technology to **improve engagement, streamline operations, and enhance communication** with the congregation. The key goals include:

1. **Implementing a Church Management System (ChMS):**
   * A centralized database to manage member information, attendance, volunteer schedules, and financial records.
   * Reducing reliance on manual data entry and improving reporting capabilities.
2. **Expanding Digital Donations & Financial Management:**
   * Integrating online giving platforms such as Tithe.ly, Givelify, or PayPal to increase donations.
   * Enhancing transparency through real-time financial tracking and reporting.
3. **Enhancing Online Presence & Engagement:**
   * Developing a professional church website with online sermon access, donation capabilities, and a member portal.
   * Strengthening social media outreach on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.
4. **Implementing Cybersecurity Measures:**
   * Securing sensitive church data with encryption and multi-factor authentication.
   * Implementing firewalls, antivirus software, and data backup solutions.
5. **Improving IT Training & Digital Literacy:**
   * Providing structured training for staff and volunteers on IT systems, cybersecurity awareness, and live streaming tools.
   * Establishing a help desk or IT support structure within the church.

## Top 10 Technology Issues

Despite the church’s vision, several IT-related challenges must be addressed to ensure successful implementation.

1. **Lack of Dedicated IT Personnel:**
   * No dedicated IT team to oversee technology adoption and infrastructure maintenance.
   * Reliance on volunteers with limited IT expertise.
2. **Minimal Online Presence & Engagement:**
   * No church website or mobile app for member engagement.
   * Limited social media activity, reducing outreach potential.
3. **No Digital Donation System:**
   * Members can only donate in person, limiting financial contributions.
   * No financial tracking system to monitor donations and expenditures.
4. **Outdated & Insecure Hardware:**
   * Computers and networking equipment are outdated and lack necessary security updates.
   * No dedicated storage solution for important church documents.
5. **Lack of Cybersecurity Measures:**
   * No firewalls, data encryption, or antivirus software in place.
   * Risk of data breaches and loss of sensitive member information.
6. **Manual Administrative Processes:**
   * Membership tracking, event planning, and financial management are conducted manually.
   * Inefficient processes leading to data inconsistencies and errors.
7. **No Live Streaming or Digital Worship Services:**
   * The church does not currently offer remote worship services or sermon recordings.
   * Limited capability to engage with members who cannot attend in person.
8. **Limited IT Training & Digital Literacy:**
   * Staff and volunteers lack training on IT tools and security best practices.
   * No structured IT education program in place.
9. **Poor Internet & Network Infrastructure:**
   * Weak Wi-Fi signals and slow internet connectivity.
   * No network segmentation or secure guest Wi-Fi access.
10. **No Long-Term IT Strategy or Budget:**

* IT improvements are not planned in advance.
* Lack of allocated budget for IT development and maintenance.

Addressing these challenges requires a **phased IT development plan** that aligns with the church’s mission and financial capabilities. The church must prioritize investments in **digital engagement, cybersecurity, IT training, and infrastructure improvements** to meet its long-term objectives.

In the next section, specific recommendations will be outlined to close the gaps in IT capabilities and move toward a more digitally empowered church community.

# Closing the Gap

## Recommendation 1: Implementing a Church Management System

A **Church Management System (ChMS)** is essential for improving administrative efficiency, enhancing member engagement, and automating key tasks such as event planning, communication, and financial tracking.

**Key Features of ChMS Implementation:**

* **Member Database:** A centralized repository for tracking membership, attendance, and engagement.
* **Event Scheduling:** An integrated calendar system to manage worship services, fundraisers, and community programs.
* **Volunteer Coordination:** A system to assign, track, and manage volunteers effectively.
* **Automated Communications:** SMS and email reminders for upcoming events, donation drives, and church updates.

**Implementation Plan:**

1. Research and select a cloud-based ChMS tailored for small-to-medium churches.
2. Migrate existing member data into the new system.
3. Train administrative staff and volunteers on system usage.
4. Monitor performance and adjust configurations as needed.

**Challenges & Mitigation:**

* **Cost Constraints:** Opt for a ChMS with flexible pricing or nonprofit discounts.
* **Adoption Resistance:** Provide training sessions and demonstrate long-term benefits.
* **Data Migration Risks:** Conduct backups and implement phased rollouts.

## Recommendation 2: Enhancing Digital Donations and Financial Transparency

Currently, Fire of God International Church collects donations primarily in person, which limits the church’s ability to receive contributions from remote members. Implementing a **digital giving platform** would enable seamless online donations.

**Proposed Digital Giving Solutions:**

* **Online Donation Portals:** Platforms such as PayPal, Tithe.ly, and Givelify.
* **Text-to-Give:** Allows members to donate via SMS.
* **Recurring Giving:** Enables automatic monthly contributions.
* **Financial Reporting Dashboard:** Provides real-time donation tracking and analytics.

**Implementation Plan:**

1. Select and integrate an online donation system into the church website.
2. Educate members about the digital giving process through workshops and social media.
3. Establish financial transparency by sharing periodic donation reports.
4. Monitor trends and optimize donation strategies over time.

**Challenges & Mitigation:**

* **Member Hesitancy:** Highlight security measures and convenience of digital giving.
* **Technical Barriers:** Offer hands-on guidance and FAQs for members unfamiliar with online payments.
* **Transaction Fees:** Choose platforms with low processing fees to maximize donations.

## Recommendation 3: Improving IT Security and Infrastructure

With an increasing reliance on technology, the church must implement **robust cybersecurity measures** to protect sensitive data.

**Key Security Enhancements:**

* **Firewalls and Antivirus Software:** Safeguards church systems from cyber threats.
* **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):** Adds an extra layer of protection for digital accounts.
* **Regular Data Backups:** Ensures quick recovery in case of system failures.
* **Secure Wi-Fi Networks:** Implements password-protected and encrypted connections.

**Implementation Plan:**

1. Conduct an IT security audit to identify vulnerabilities.
2. Implement security policies and train staff on best practices.
3. Install endpoint protection software and enable MFA on all admin accounts.
4. Establish a regular backup schedule for critical church data.

**Challenges & Mitigation:**

* **Budget Constraints:** Utilize free security tools where possible and seek IT donations.
* **Lack of IT Expertise:** Partner with cybersecurity professionals or local universities for support.
* **User Compliance:** Regularly educate staff and members on security awareness.

## Recommendation 4: Developing an Online Presence and Live Streaming Capabilities

Expanding digital outreach is crucial for increasing church engagement beyond physical attendance. Implementing a **website and live streaming setup** can help reach a wider audience.

**Proposed Online Presence Enhancements:**

* **Website Development:** A modern website with sermon archives, event updates, and donation options.
* **Social Media Strategy:** Active engagement on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.
* **Live Streaming Setup:** Broadcasting services on YouTube and Facebook Live.
* **Podcasting & Online Devotionals:** Providing faith-based digital content.

**Implementation Plan:**

1. Design and launch an SEO-optimized church website.
2. Develop a content calendar for social media outreach.
3. Set up live streaming with affordable equipment (e.g., webcams, microphones, OBS software).
4. Track online engagement metrics to measure effectiveness.

**Challenges & Mitigation:**

* **Technical Learning Curve:** Provide training for staff managing digital platforms.
* **Content Creation Load:** Delegate tasks to volunteers passionate about media production.
* **Budget for Equipment:** Seek sponsorships or second-hand gear donations.

## Recommendation 5: Establishing IT Training Programs for Staff and Volunteers

Investing in **IT literacy training** ensures that church staff and volunteers can effectively utilize new digital tools.

**Training Program Components:**

* **Basic IT Skills:** Using office software, email communication, and cloud storage.
* **Cybersecurity Awareness:** Recognizing phishing attacks and securing personal data.
* **Website and Social Media Management:** Updating content and monitoring engagement.
* **Live Streaming Operation:** Running church broadcasts smoothly.

**Implementation Plan:**

1. Identify training needs through staff and volunteer surveys.
2. Develop online and in-person training modules.
3. Conduct periodic refresher courses.
4. Evaluate effectiveness and refine training materials.

**Challenges & Mitigation:**

* **Limited Availability:** Offer flexible self-paced learning modules.
* **Knowledge Retention:** Provide step-by-step guides and recorded training sessions.
* **Lack of Trainers:** Seek collaboration with local IT professionals or institutions.

# Conclusions

The Fire of God International Church stands at a pivotal moment where embracing technological advancements can significantly improve its operational efficiency, outreach efforts, and long-term sustainability. By addressing the major IT gaps and implementing strategic upgrades, the church can enhance its administrative processes, provide a better experience for its congregation, and expand its reach beyond physical attendance.

Implementing a structured **Church Management System (ChMS)** will help streamline membership tracking, volunteer coordination, and financial reporting, allowing church leaders to focus on their mission rather than administrative burdens. Expanding digital donations will not only make giving more convenient for members but also improve financial transparency and sustainability. Strengthening **cybersecurity measures** will protect sensitive church and member data, ensuring compliance with modern security best practices. Furthermore, **enhancing the church’s online presence** through a website, live streaming, and social media engagement will enable it to reach a broader audience and stay connected with remote members.

One of the most crucial steps in this transformation is providing **IT training for staff and volunteers** to ensure the proper use and maintenance of newly implemented technologies. Training programs will empower church leaders and members with the digital skills necessary to navigate emerging technologies, reducing dependency on external IT support. Additionally, the development of a dedicated **IT budget** and long-term strategy will ensure that these improvements are sustainable and aligned with the church’s broader mission and vision.

By prioritizing IT advancements, the Fire of God International Church can modernize its operations, improve communication, and ensure that it continues to grow and serve its congregation effectively in the digital age. The recommendations outlined in this assessment provide a roadmap for achieving these goals, positioning the church for continued success and enhanced community impact.

# Appendices

## Basis of Analysis

This analysis integrates strategic IT theories and models, assessing the church’s needs against best practices in nonprofit technology management. Models such as **COBIT (Control Objectives for Information and Related Technologies)** and **ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library)** provide guidance on aligning IT strategy with church goals. The analysis considers cybersecurity principles from **NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology)** and **cloud computing best practices** to ensure efficient IT resource management.

## Technology Inventory

**Hardware**

* 2 desktop computers used for administrative tasks
* 1 laptop used for sermon preparations and presentations
* 2 televisions for displaying worship materials
* 1 printer for office use
* Basic audio equipment (microphones, speakers, mixer) for worship services
* Wireless router for limited internet connectivity

**Software**

* No dedicated church management software in use
* Microsoft Office Suite for document processing
* Basic email services via Gmail
* No accounting or financial management software
* Limited security software (basic antivirus protection)

**IT Infrastructure**

* No dedicated servers or cloud storage solutions
* Manual data entry and record-keeping using spreadsheets
* No automated backup systems for important church data

## Top 10 Technology Issues

1. **Lack of IT Personnel** – No dedicated IT staff or volunteers with formal IT training.
2. **Minimal Online Presence** – The church has a Facebook page but no website or mobile app.
3. **No Digital Donation Platform** – Donations are collected in person, limiting fundraising potential.
4. **Limited Cybersecurity Measures** – No firewall, limited antivirus protection, and no encrypted data storage.
5. **Lack of Digital Records Management** – All records are stored in physical files or spreadsheets, increasing the risk of data loss.
6. **No Live Streaming Capabilities** – Unable to broadcast services online, limiting outreach to remote members.
7. **Insufficient IT Budget** – No formal IT budget allocation for hardware and software upgrades.
8. **Outdated Hardware** – Current equipment is old and lacks processing power for modern applications.
9. **No Staff IT Training** – Volunteers and staff lack training on software, security practices, and digital tools.
10. **No Centralized Communication System** – Communication between staff and members is done informally, often through personal emails and messaging apps.

## Strategic Planning/Visioning Documents

Currently, there are no formal IT strategic planning documents. The leadership of the church has expressed a desire to improve technology but has not yet developed a structured roadmap. A proposed IT vision includes:

* Implementing a website for church announcements and digital sermon access.
* Acquiring a church management system to streamline administrative tasks.
* Setting up a live streaming platform for remote worship services.
* Enhancing data security through cloud storage and encrypted backups.

## IT Budget/Spending Documents

Due to financial constraints, the church does not currently allocate a specific budget for IT expenses. Most technology costs are covered through **donations** or **ad-hoc fundraising efforts**. Estimated expenses for proposed IT improvements include:

* **Website development**: $500–$1,000 (one-time cost)
* **Church management software**: $30–$100/month
* **New hardware (laptop, router, security software)**: $2,000–$3,000
* **Live streaming equipment**: $1,500–$2,500
* **Cloud storage subscription**: $10–$20/month

By structuring an **annual IT budget**, the church can prioritize necessary improvements while maintaining financial stability.