

To our dear Church family at FBC Long Prairie,

It is with heartfelt love and appreciation that I write this letter to inform our beloved Church family that my time serving at FBC is coming to an end. After the end of this school year, I will be entering a new season of ministry as a Pastoral Resident to pursue pastoral training and the completion of my seminary degree. Kelsey and I have come to this decision out of the commitment to follow the Lord's leading and to serve His kingdom.

We do so with unity, peace, and joy. We are truly excited to follow His leading in joyful obedience. Yet we grieve to say goodbye to our dear Church family at First Baptist Church.

It is my hope that this letter will give you an understanding of how God is leading our family and provide helpful details in this process. Most of all, I hope that after reading this letter, our hearts are united in the grateful worship of our faithful heavenly Father, trusting his good provision for our family and His Church.

The Details

After prayer, seeking wise counsel, and the clear conviction of the Spirit, I have accepted the position of Pastoral Resident at River City Church in Minneapolis, MN. I will be able to continue serving her at FBC until the end of the school year, at which point my time as Student Ministry Pastor will officially come to an end. This year's Baccalaureat will be the final event that I lead, with a Goodbye Sunday happening at the end of May. We are prayerfully planning a move down to the Twin Cities in June. The residency is designed to be two to three years as I train under the Pastoral team at River City Church and complete my M.Div. through Moody Theological Seminary.

Why?

Over the past two years, God has kindled in me a deep desire to serve His kingdom as a Senior Pastor within His local Church. In pursuit of this calling, God has led us to first enter a season of being intentionally trained and equipped for this role. God's faithfulness and providence has been made apartment through the mutual fit of my need for training with River City's value to "Raise and Release" gospel influencers. It is our hope and prayer that at the end of this residency, I will be qualified and well equipped for God's call in Pastoral ministry, wherever that call may be.

How?

As God has kindled this calling in my heart, Kelsey and I have been attentively seeking God's wisdom. He has been gracious to give us unity as He has stirred our hearts toward some sort of new season. From the beginning, it has been our heart's commitment to be obedient to His leading (though we had little clarity on what it would require of us). This past December, the

answer started to become clear as we felt confident that God was asking us to walk toward the “door” of this Pastoral Residency at RCC. I had an initial meeting with Pastor Jeremy (Senior Pastor of RCC) to ask him no less than twenty-five questions about the position and the goal of a residency at River City. The Lord continued to lead us toward this opportunity.

At the end of January, we committed to enter into an intentional “discernment process” with RCC throughout the month of February. At the beginning of February I invited the Deacons here at FBC into the process for prayer, counsel, and support. I have been so blessed to have them by our side. Their selfless support has meant more to me than I am able to express here. At the end of the month River City officially offered the position, and with God’s provision of peace, unity, and joy, Kelsey and I accepted.

At our Deacon meeting in March, I communicated this news to the Deacons and asked for their blessing to share the news with you all on Sunday, March 8.

What Now?

Kelsey and I feel great excitement, deep grief, and in all things overwhelming gratitude. We could not be more excited to run toward God’s call for our family, nor more grieved to say goodbye to our beloved Church Family here in Long Prairie. We invite you all to join us in celebrating what God is doing in our lives and in His kingdom. We invite you to share with us in the grief of saying goodbye (though this is still months away).

We ask that you honor the Lord’s call of His people by resisting any temptation to speculate further or engage in lengthy/unhealthy conversation about this announcement. Instead, let us engage in the joy and grief together, and praise our good God to the fullest for His faithfulness and provision. As you have additional questions about how God is leading our family, please come ask. We are excited to share.

A Note of Gratitude

We are so thankful that God’s will allowed us to plant such deep roots here in Long Prairie in the foundational years of our young family. We have been here since our family’s very beginning. Kelsey and I were married in the FBC sanctuary on September 1 of 2018. We brought home all four of our boys from the hospital down the road to our house around the block. And we have cherished the opportunity to serve this Church family over the past eight years. You have loved us, cared for us, and been God’s means of grace to help shepherd our family to this point. Now, we ask for your blessing and support as you send us into this next season of kingdom ministry.

With deep love and affection,

Jackson Standafer (Kelsey, Daniel, MacGregor, Louis, and Christopher)