

January 11, 2021

Dear Watermark Family,

It is with great hope for our future that we write to you today. As you have heard, Ken Nash is resigning as Lead Pastor from Watermark Wesleyan Church in order to best meet the needs of his family as they continue to navigate the complicated waters of raising a child with special needs. We, as a Board, have been so grateful that God saw fit to provide Watermark with Ken's leadership for the past five years. He has brought a new wave of ministry to Watermark as he worked toward a team approach to leadership and ministry, encouraged us all to find our own holy disturbances, continued our strategy of multi-site to reach the community of Springville, and encouraged us to discover wholeness in Jesus all while providing Gospel-centered, engaging, and thought-provoking messages declaring the Good News of Jesus. Ken has truly blessed our congregation and community, and his impact will have lasting effects on Watermark for years to come.

As we look to the future, I'd like to share a bit about the transitional plan and process. Along with Ken, the Board was involved in a long and sometimes difficult discernment process as it became more and more evident that he was being called back to Michigan. Once this became clear, the Board met with our District Superintendent and a consultant to prepare for his transition. Wanting to assess the needs of both the staff and the congregation, not only for transition planning but also for future planning as we solidify vision, mission, and values, we looked to NL Moore & Associates. Nancy Moore and her team have a long relationship with Watermark as they advised us through Greg McClain's transition. Her team helped us assess whether the church as a whole would benefit more from an internal or external candidate. The data we collected indicated that we are in a healthy position to consider an internal candidate. Knowing this, we wanted a candidate who would have a deep understanding of our unique church culture while caring for the needs of our staff, congregation, and region, especially during what has been an unsettling year worldwide.

While there are many capable candidates, Pastor Paul Gartley rose to the top of our list given his twenty year tenure at Watermark, his understanding of the team and church culture, giftedness to create and empower staff and lay leaders, vision for our future, relational and shepherding gifts, and most importantly, his unwavering focus to follow Jesus with integrity, humility, wisdom, and faithfulness. Pastor Paul will spend time in services at our McKinley campus the weekend of January 17 introducing himself and accepting the opportunity to candidate. We will follow this with a town hall-style meeting on Tuesday, January 19, for a Q&A at 6:30 pm (both in person at McKinley and via Zoom) with Paul, Ken, District Superintendent Joey Jennings and the Board. Following that meeting, Paul will deliver the message on January 24, during which he will share his heart for the vision of Watermark going forward. This will be followed by a congregational vote.

As a church Board, we are confident that above all, this is God's church, and it is always our prayer that His will be done. Watermark Wesleyan has decades of Kingdom building in our history, and we look forward to decades more of ministry as we love and serve our community.

God's peace be with you,

Kristen Farrell
Board Vice-Chair

FAQs

How does the Wesleyan church conduct the Pastoral Search process?

The process of selecting a pastor is a discernment process that involves the Board, the congregation, and the district superintendent. The local Board and the district superintendent consider potential candidates, interview them, and make a recommendation of one candidate to the congregation. Once the recommendation is made, the candidate is presented to the congregation for them to prayerfully consider. Then the members vote on whether to offer an initial call for that person to serve as their pastor. The initial call is for two years, with the congregation voting to renew the call every four years after that.

What is the purpose of the congregation considering only one candidate?

Even though there is a voting process involved in pastoral candidating, choosing a pastor for a church is different from an election. It is not a matter of preference between two individuals, but a way to determine the willingness of the church to accept the spiritual leadership of the candidate before them. This model also lessens the opportunity for divisiveness and helps the church reach consensus in a unified way. The candidate and the church are seeking God's will together through the spiritual discernment of the Body of Christ.

Who is on the Board?

The Local Board of Administration is comprised of lay leaders who are nominated to the position and elected by the congregation. Your current Board members are Mark Banks, Kristen Farrell (vice chair), John Lee, John Richmond, Cliff Stone, Ken Taylor, and Carrie Whitcher. The lead pastor serves as Chairperson of the Board. During times of pastoral transition, our District Superintendent, Dr. Joey Jennings meets with the Board as well.

What does the hiring process entail?

Taking into account the report received from NL Moore & Associates, the Board wrote a candidate profile and job description for the position. They believed that an internal candidate would be preferable in this season, and the report from Nancy Moore indicated that this would be advisable. They discussed with Pastor Ken possible internal candidates. After continued prayer and discernment, the Board requested an in-person interview with Paul Gartley. Paul completed a pre-interview questionnaire, and he and his wife, Holly, met with the Board for an extensive interview. After further discussion, the Board and the District Superintendent unanimously voted to recommend Paul. We are now presenting Paul Gartley to the congregation as a candidate for the position of Lead Pastor.

What is a candidating process?

Next week, January 17-24, there will be several opportunities for the congregation to learn more about Paul Gartley and ask questions about the process. There will be a town hall on Tuesday, January 19, and Paul will preach on Sunday, January 24. Congregants will then be invited to vote on the Board's recommendation either in person or online. Please note the town hall will have 33% in-person capacity; everyone else is welcome to attend via Zoom. A link will be sent out closer to the date.

Who gets to vote?

Everyone! We know that not all of our regular attenders are members of Watermark Wesleyan Church. While the official vote will be the vote of the members, everyone in the congregation will be given an opportunity to participate in the discernment process, and all votes will be recorded and taken into consideration.

How and when can I vote?

We will have several ways you can vote. Primarily, we encourage congregants to vote online via a link we will email out on January 19. The online vote will be open until 5 pm on January 24. We will also have paper ballots available at our campuses from January 19 through January 24. We will also mail out paper ballots to members who are unable to participate via email or in-person voting. (If you'd like to request a mail-in ballot, please call our office at 649-6335.) All paper ballots will be due back to the central office at McKinley by Monday, January 25, at noon. All votes will be anonymous.