

Tyler Smiley affirmed as Lakewood's senior associate pastor



(Gainesville) A grateful, thankful and humbled Tyler H. Smiley was affirmed as senior associate pastor at Gainesville's Lakewood Baptist Church. Sunday, October 27, in conference, the congregation voted unanimously to support the creation of the new position and to name Smiley to that role. He will assume Senior Pastor responsibilities in the next few years.

His recommendation was vetted for eight months by a 7-member team, affirmed by the deacon leadership panel of 13 and by the 77-member deacon team. Each reached a unanimous consensus to recommend him to the church fellowship.

Smiley, 32, graduated from North Hall High '05, North Georgia College & State University '10 earning summa cum laude honors. On an academic scholarship, he earned a master's of Divinity degree from Denver Theological Seminary '13. He earned a second master's of theology from Midwestern Seminary and is a Ph. D. candidate at Midwestern in May, 2020.

His professional ministerial experience includes a pastoral internship and interim youth pastor at Journey Church in Centennial, Colorado. He later served as interim pastor of Logos Central Chapel Church in Denver.

For the past six years, he has served as associate missions pastor at Lakewood, helping to direct and coordinate the church's local, national and global mission work which encompasses thirty percent of the church's annual budget.

Under his leadership, the church's "Planting Network Ministry," COR 3:6, partnered with 32 churches across North and Central America.

An accomplished teaching pastor, author and podcaster, Smiley is married to Catie Coker Smiley and is the dad to Andrew (6), Matthew (4) and Peter (1). He and his family live in Gainesville.

Smiley's affirmation will begin a 2-3 year transition for the senior associate pastor to succeed Lakewood's senior pastor, Dr. Tom Smiley, who came to the church in 1990.

"It's a new and exciting day in our 63-year-old church," said Mark Brown, deacon ministry team leader. "Our staff, deacons and congregation will be working with Tyler to ensure a seamless transition for all our vast ministries. Tyler is a humble, wise and a thoughtful church man. He's intelligent, calm, organized, hard-working and well-spoken. He loves people and desires everyone to come to know the saving grace found only in Jesus Christ. We have an overriding peace knowing Tyler is the man God provided," he said.

Lakewood's senior pastor, Dr. Tom Smiley, offered his reflection. "This day has been coming for me since 1990. Our bylaws state, "pastoral transition is a certainty; how and when is up to the church. Today we affirm a new direction and celebrate what God has done and focus on what God is going to do. But, no 'goodbyes;' we have much to do in the coming years joining God where He is working locally, nationally and globally."