

SENIOR PASTOR TRANSITION RECOMMENDATION



October 27, 2019 • 6:00 PM



Dr. Tom Smiley, Senior Pastor • 2235 Thompson Bridge Road, Gainesville, GA 30501
LakewoodLife.org • (770) 532-6307

Senior Pastor Transition Recommendation

October 27, 2019

Lakewood Baptist Church

Dear Church Family and Friends,

On behalf of the **Senior Pastor Transition Team**, the **Deacon Ministry Leadership Council** and the **Active Deacon Ministry**, we look forward to the Resident Membership of Lakewood Baptist Church affirming the direction we clearly believe God ordained.

A special called business conference for this purpose is scheduled for October 27th at 6:00 pm in the Chapel.

October 27, 2019 will be a monumental day in the history of Lakewood Baptist Church. We will set in motion a Senior Pastor transition plan that God will use to continue the significant ministry of Lakewood.

Since 1956, Lakewood has had many moments of seeing God's hand at work. As we move toward October 27, we see God's ever-present hand at work.

From a small band of visionary Christ-followers who established a "new church," Lakewood has developed into an expansive ministry. However, it is not the **past** or even the **present** that brings our greatest joy; rather, it is the anticipation of what God is going to do in coming decades to develop and mature the ministry of Lakewood.

Respectfully,

Mark Brown, 2019-2020 Deacon Minister Ministry Team Leader

Jimmy Lee, 2019-2020 Deacon Minister Assistant Ministry Team Leader

SPECIAL CALLED CHURCH CONFERENCE AND NIGHT OF WORSHIP

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27
6:00 PM • THE CHAPEL

CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED BY RESERVATION.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Mark Brown & Jimmy Lee will be available to offer additional information in the Prayer Room, Room 200 (above the Chapel), on the following dates:

Sunday, October 20 & 27

8:30-9:15 AM

10:30-11:00 AM

12:15-12:45 PM

Wednesday, October 16 & 23

5:30-6:15 PM

7:30-8:15 PM

Here is how we got to Sunday, October 27, 2019:

Our Process:

Our Lakewood leadership and congregation had the foresight in 2017 to become intentional regarding what is inevitable: senior pastor transition. As Dr. Smiley recently said in one of the Eden to Exile messages, “Moses was dead; not God.”

Jeremiah 3:15 says, “Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.”

For a third time since 1990, Donnie Hunt and Dr. Smiley were tasked by our leadership to review and revise our Bylaws seeking to keep them relevant for our ministry in order for us to grow and march toward future ministry. One of the several Bylaw revisions that Donnie and Dr. Smiley brought to the Deacon Ministers addressed Senior Pastor Transition.

Donnie wrote during the bylaw revision process:

Pastoral transition is a certainty; how and when is up to the church. Short-term pastorates were not common in the New Testament. Rather, church leaders seem to have had a long-term, familial and covenantal relationship with their churches. Furthermore, there are examples of intentionality in raising up leadership to eventually follow them in leadership (See II Timothy 2:2). Of course, the clearest example was Jesus and His disciples whom He taught, encouraged and raised up to lead the church.

Thus, our belief is that pastoral transition should be anticipated and planned for. Ideally, the transition is to find a replacement that has been previously identified, is now a member of the pastoral staff of Lakewood Baptist Church and has been fully vetted and preliminarily approved by the church.

We intend to confront such change by the development and implementation of pastoral staff transition plans. The purpose of such a plan is to have on staff, if possible, the replacement for most, if not all, of the pastoral staff positions.

For example, the next Senior Pastor should come from one of the other members of the pastoral staff.

The congregation received this “transition plan” concept and unanimously approved a new method of securing the next Senior Pastor and other key staff pastoral positions at Lakewood.

Accordingly, in December of 2018, the process of securing the next Senior Pastor of Lakewood began pursuant to our church’s Bylaws, with a recommendation to the Deacon Leadership Council (DLC).

Dr. Smiley recommended that a present staff pastor (see our Pastor's Recommendation to the DLC on page 6) whom he believed had the calling, capacity and commitment to become the next Senior Pastor, be vetted, examined and observed during the course of the year.

The DLC unanimously affirmed the candidate for consideration and examination, and a Senior Pastor Transition Team (SPTT) was appointed by the then Deacon Ministry Team Leader, Jonathan Nix.

The team of seven would interview, fully vet, observe and prayerfully consider **Tyler Smiley** as the future Senior Pastor of Lakewood.

The SPTT consists of Greg Frankum (MTL), Neal Booth, Jason Dykes, Phil Hudgins, Jimmy Lee plus ex officio members Jonathan Nix and Mark Brown.

This team met with Tyler numerous times and explored in depth his:

- personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- personal call to vocational ministry
- sense of calling to shepherd Lakewood
- theological position on essential Biblical doctrine
- assessment of Lakewood's current ministries
- vision for the future of Lakewood
- work ethic and self-motivation assessment
- current and future staff criteria
- growth development process
- passion for ministry and specially his passion for Lakewood

In addition, the SPTT met with Catie, Tyler's wife, exploring several pertinent aspects of ministry.

For over eight months (notwithstanding the previous five years of ministry observation) the SPTT attended worship services led by Tyler for evaluation purposes, reviewed his ministry accomplishments inside and outside of Lakewood, met with his current immediate supervisor, Missions Pastor Robert Puckett, had informal discussions with other Lakewood ministry staff, and received letters of recommendation.

On September 4, 2019, the SPTT made a unanimous recommendation to the DLC that Tyler Smiley be named Associate Senior Pastor and become the Senior Pastor of Lakewood at a yet-to-be determined future time.

The DLC, upon hearing the evaluation and report of the SPTT, unanimously affirmed to recommend to the active Deacon Ministry that Tyler Smiley be named the Associate Senior Pastor.

The Recommendation for October 27, 2019 Special Called Conference:

On October 6, 2019 upon receiving the Deacon Leadership Council and Senior Pastor Transition Team's (SPTT) unanimous recommendation and after discussion and prayerful deliberation, **the Active Deacon Ministry makes the unanimous recommendation** that Tyler Smiley be named Associate Senior Pastor and become the next Senior Pastor at such future time as will be jointly determined by Dr. Smiley, the DLC in office at that time and Tyler Smiley.

Our Pastor's Recommendation of Lakewood's Next Senior Pastor Presented December 5, 2018, to the Deacon Leadership Council:

After careful consideration, I recommend that the DLC initiate the 2-4 year process of securing the next Senior Pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church.

Today, I recommend that Tyler Smiley be affirmed as the next Senior Pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church.

Tyler brings a wealth of potential, capacity and experience that will enable him to serve well as Senior Pastor.

Several considerations led me to this recommendation.

- Tyler has an uncompromised commitment to God's word as truth, a love of the local church and a desire for individuals to develop a personal walk of faith with Jesus.
- He has a strong academic grounding enabling him to clearly and uncompromisingly teach and defend God's Word.
- Tyler is blessed with a supportive and gifted wife, Catie, who will supplement and encourage his ministry at Lakewood. She and Tyler are both committed to personal discipleship and are currently investing in the lives of several Christ-followers.
- He has the character and inner strength to personally handle the pressures and demands of leading a ministry the size and scope of Lakewood. In past and present ministry assignments, he has demonstrated the ability to lead staff and to implement new ministries from infancy to full development.

Finally, Tyler's network of personal relationships in both the Gainesville and larger Hall County region, as well as his knowledge of the history and culture of the Lakewood ministry, make him a better-than-qualified candidate for Senior Pastor.

This past year Tyler has been a valuable asset as a member of the Executive Staff and has made insightful contributions during weekly message planning sessions.

Tyler has the respect and confidence of the present staff who are eager to work alongside him to ensure Lakewood's continuous local, national and global ministry.

Respectfully,

Dr. Tom Smiley
Senior Pastor

Remarks from Mark Brown Deacon Ministry Team Leader 2019-2020

Fellow Lakewooders:

I love Lakewood, and I love Dr. Smiley. I love God more! I am thankful that God has faithfully led this ministry and men like Dr. Tom have followed His lead.

I am thankful that God blessed Dr. Tom with a passion for people, a passion for God's Word, and a unique gift for leading people. Dr. Tom has used these gifts to faithfully serve God as the Senior Pastor of Lakewood for the last 29 years. He continues to seek God's direction in every decision he makes, as he serves God as the Senior Pastor of our ministry.

In keeping with our church bylaws, as he felt led that the timing was right, Dr. Tom was charged with evaluating and recommending to the Deacon Leadership Council a future potential Senior Pastor from within our ministerial staff.

On December 5, 2018, he made that recommendation to the Deacon Leadership Council. The DLC voted unanimously to affirm Dr. Tom's recommendation and create an evaluation team, the Senior Pastor Transition Team.

This group was charged with meeting several times with the candidate, his wife, and consulting with his immediate supervisor. The team prayerfully considered his personal relationship with Jesus Christ, his accomplishments, qualifications, and ability to serve as Senior Pastor at Lakewood.

Under the leadership of Greg Frankum, the seven-member Senior Pastor Transition Team began the process of prayerfully evaluating Dr. Smiley's recommendation. The team thoroughly vetted Dr. Tom's recommendation and on August 4, 2019 unanimously and enthusiastically affirmed Tyler Smiley to the DLC as the next Senior Pastor of Lakewood.

On September 4, 2019 the DLC unanimously affirmed the recommendation. On October 6, 2019 the Deacon Ministers also affirmed Tyler Smiley as the next Senior Pastor.

As stipulated by our bylaws, Dr. Tom has now called a Special Business Conference for the purpose of affirming the next Senior Pastor for Sunday evening, October 27th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Lakewood Chapel.

I participated as a member of the Senior Pastor Transition Team. Although I had served under Tyler's leadership and knew him to be a humble, wise, thoughtful leader, I approached my role, as the rest of the team did, with prayerful and thoughtful consideration. We came away with an overriding peace that Tyler is in fact the man that God has provided to serve as our next Senior Pastor.

Tyler is passionate about spreading the Gospel in our community, nation and around the world. He is a Bible scholar who stands firm in defending the truth from God's Word. He is intelligent, calm, thoughtful, organized, hard-working and well-spoken.

He has the respect and love of the Lakewood ministry staff. He is a Godly husband and father, and his wife, Catie, is supportive, spiritually mature, and a compassionate, protective helpmate to his ministry.

More important than any of these qualities, Tyler is a humble servant of God. He loves Lakewood and wants to serve wherever God leads him. He approached the near yearlong evaluation process with a humble and prayerful spirit wanting to also confirm a calling from God to this role.

I speak on behalf of the transition team when I say that we believe without any doubt that in Tyler, God has provided the Senior Pastor to lead Lakewood into the future. At the end of the process, our team celebrated how amazing our God is and thanked Him for His provision of leadership for Lakewood.

As a fellowship, I invite you to a night of affirmation, celebration and worship on October 27, 2019 at 6:00 pm in the Chapel.

Let us come together and thank God for how he has used Dr. Smiley as God has led and grown and blessed our church.

Let us come together and celebrate that Dr. Tom will continue to be used in the coming months and years to help prepare our new Senior Pastor.

Let us come together and celebrate how God has so well gifted the next man to use as God leads our church.

Let us come together and celebrate that God has again provided what we need in a Senior Pastor.

Let us come together and celebrate that Tyler feels the calling and is humbly willing to serve God in this important ministry.

Let us come together and worship God for His provision of future leadership.

I love Lakewood, and I love Tyler Smiley. I love God more! I am thankful that God will faithfully continue to lead this ministry as men like Tyler continue to follow His lead. Let us all come together, celebrate, and join God where He is leading our ministry on October 27, 2019 at 6:00 pm.

Remarks from Jimmy Lee

Assistant Deacon Ministry Team Leader 2019-2020

Even though we find our church traveling an uncharted journey, for me, in my spirit, I'm totally convinced that God chose Tyler Smiley to be our next Senior Pastor at Lakewood.

I believe He made that decision long before our congregation unanimously approved a new method of securing our next Senior Pastor.

I believe He made that decision long before Tom solicited our pastoral staff as for consideration to become Lakewood's next Senior Pastor.

I believe He made that decision long before Tom recommended a current staff minister for Lakewood's next Senior Pastor.

I believe He made that decision long before the DLC appointed Senior Pastor Transitional Team went to work.

I believe He made that decision even before our DLC, our Deacon Ministers and even our Church has had a chance to affirm His choice.

As His disciples and others prayed in the first chapter of Acts concerning a replacement for Judas, they did not ask God to show them which one they should choose, but asked God to show them which one He had chosen.

I believe our collective and individual prayers have been for His Holy Spirit to reveal to us which one He has chosen.

I believe God has remained faithful and has done a good work in answering our prayers in calling out and preparing and delivering our next Senior Pastor, Tyler Smiley.

Praise God!

Remarks from Greg Frankum MTL of Senior Pastor Transition Ministry Team

Jonathan Nix, 2018-19 Deacon Minister Ministry Team Leader, appointed a seven member Senior Pastor Transition Team to consider Dr. Smiley's recommendation that Tyler Smiley become the future Senior Pastor of Lakewood. I was honored and humbled that he asked me to serve as the Transition Team Leader. We met with Tyler on numerous occasions. We also met with his wife, Catie. Some of the topics we discussed with Tyler can be reviewed on page 5.

As you might guess, the Senior Pastor Transition Team had lots of questions and some uncertainty given we have never done this before. However, as soon as we began the process of meeting with Tyler it became clear that he has a passion for the Lord and he was very clear on his calling to be a pastor.

As Tyler spoke to the team about "vocation vs. pastoral calling," the entire team realized he understood the difference between being a pastor with a calling instead of being a pastor with a job. It is clear that Tyler's desire to answer the Lord is much greater than filling a position at Lakewood. Understanding this is so important. Jesus said to put Him first, and this is exactly what Tyler does.

We believe that Tyler has been called to be a pastor, and we affirm that we need him at Lakewood. Tyler loves Lakewood and was quick to say Lakewood taught him what it means to be a Christian. He was baptized here and learned how to read scripture here. Lakewood sent him to seminary and welcomed him back after seminary.

He feels the love from the church and truly loves the church. Tyler understands the many ministries that are established and healthy within our church, and he desires to nurture and grow them. Tyler leans on the Holy Spirit for his direction and isn't afraid to state that. He stands strong on the Bible and will not allow current events in this modern-day world to lessen or undermine what God says.

Tyler does not roam around seeking a fight, but more importantly, he will not back down from one when it comes to God's Word. Tyler leads by example and is full of wisdom. The time spent interviewing Tyler turned into Biblical educational sessions and practical application opportunities for the Senior Pastor Transition Team.

The Senior Pastor Transition Team unanimously and enthusiastically recommends Tyler Smiley as the next Senior Pastor of Lakewood.

Respectfully,
Greg Frankum, MTL
On Behalf of:

Jason Dykes, Neal Booth, Phil Hudgins, Jonathan Nix, Mark Brown, Jimmy Lee

Excerpts of Recommendations:

Robert Puckett, Missions Pastor

Tyler loves God and His Word. Tyler loves people. I know of and could share countless experiences of him caring for and shepherding people.

Tyler has learned team and system development among several of Lakewood's missional endeavors. The complexity of these initiatives requires working with healthy and sometimes unhealthy relationships.

He has learned to be patient, listen well, pray for others, be strong in leadership, and resolve conflict as needed. Working alongside of Tyler has made me a better man and leader.

Dennis W. Jackson, Mission Team Leader

Lakewood has been fortunate to have Tyler Smiley on staff. His leadership with our church planting network, educational programs, pastoral training, outreach to the local community through Midland Station, direct involvement in local and global missions, oversight of our adoption and foster ministry, stewardship of church funds are all evidence of his passion that all may know Jesus Christ.

He has exhibited leadership qualities. He is fair in all dealings. He possesses wisdom beyond his years. He is a student of The Bible. He is a servant. He is prayerful. He is fiscally responsible. He can laugh, even at himself.

His wife Catie is very supportive and owns many of the same qualities that are a result of a love for Jesus Christ. They are a very effective team.

Darlene Brown, Lakewood Member

As an educator, I have always enjoyed watching the growth process of one who has been called to teach. Over the past several years, it has been very rewarding to see Tyler Smiley not only grow in this role, but to flourish and excel in it.

His sermons, studies, and podcasts are delivered with ease and conviction, but as any seasoned instructor recognizes, to do this well he has spent many hours planning, preparing, and praying.

I find myself looking forward to Tyler's sermons. I enjoy his comfortable manner and banter, but I always know that no matter the subject, I will learn from the time he has taken to dig into God's word, explaining it in detail, allowing me to see it in a fresh, new

way. He has a gift for reminding us that God's Word is pertinent and moving, always creating moments that matter to us.

God has patiently revealed and instilled in me an excitement and eagerness to embrace Tyler Smiley stepping into and thriving in this transitional role of teacher and leader. I am thankful for Tyler's willingness and constant hard work that allows him to continue to grow in his faith and knowledge, ultimately allowing each of us to flourish in our relationship with God.

Dr. Jo Jo Thomas, Associational Missionary, Chattahoochee Baptist Association

In the past few years, I've been able to observe Tyler in multiple ministry roles. As his influence has expanded, we've enlisted him to provide leadership to other churches via the Membership/Credentials Team of the CBA.

As chair of that team, Tyler has helped evaluate the churches applying for CBA membership. He's proven to be a wise and dependable leader with a solid doctrinal awareness.

Tyler is a bright young leader with tremendous potential for Kingdom impact.

Katherine Hall, Lakewood Member

Catie has loved the Lord and sought to please and follow Him as long as I have known her (since we were 12-years-old).

She loves Tyler and is a constant support of encouragement for him. She admires her husband and speaks kindly about him, never complaining about long hours at work or school.

She loves her children and is so intentional in the way she mothers them, seeking to show them God's love and to teach them how to have a biblical worldview.

She loves our church and serves and gives her time and energy selflessly – teaching classes, discipling younger girls, volunteering in every arena at one time or another.

Catie is always opening her home to host dinners for church members and faculty, cooking delicious meals as an act of service to those she feeds and loves. Everything she has she shares with open hands, knowing it is all a gift from God. She is careful with her words, diligent and hardworking. She is a godly woman and a faithful follower of Christ.

Scott and Dawn Smith, Adult Discipleship Ministry, Lakewood

Years ago, when Tyler was still in seminary, while home for the holidays he delivered the message at a Sunday morning service. We were both extremely impressed with the maturity that Tyler displayed - both in spirit and communication.

Dawn, specifically, had an impression during that service that our Senior Pastor was not always going to be older than us. We have sensed for some time now that the next senior leader we would serve beside would be younger than us, so we asked the Lord to allow us to help the next generation prepare for church leadership.

There are few leaders in Tyler's age and stage of ministry with the capacity for leadership that he displays - spiritually, intellectually, financially, and relationally. We've observed him in numerous capacities and in each capacity he has served faithfully, led influentially and walked humbly.

He has shown great deference to senior staff in times when he could have easily flashed his educational acumen. This has demonstrated great restraint, self-control and maturity. The men in his peer group respect him and they consider him a friend.

We have mentored both Tyler and Catie, together and individually. From their premarital counseling, one to one discipleship, and small group environments, we have observed teachable spirits, a willingness to grow in all aspects in Christ and not only a devotion to one another, but to the things of God.

Catie has served in many roles herself - from a ministry assistant in the Discipleship Ministry, a discipler of young mothers, and now a mentor of the wives of our young pastors. She has been consistent in seeking wise counsel from upstream women on matters of home, church and work. She is well-loved among her peers and is doing a good job building relationships with the older generations of women at Lakewood.

Lord willing, we look forward to many more fruitful years of ministry beside Tyler and Catie!

Dr. Bart McMillian, Founder Life Lessons Ministry, Lakewood Member

It is with great pleasure and spiritual affirmation, due to many years of watching Tyler Smiley become the godly man that he is today, that I recommend him to you...I have known Tyler for over 20 years.

I have watched him in nearly every facet of life hold to his commitment to Christ and the integrity of a man with character. Whether on the basketball court or football field or the pulpit...

Tyler is a genuine leader and well respected among his peers because of his vision and passion.

Catie is a committed follower of Christ, devoted wife and loving mother.

Beth Everett, Adult Discipleship Associate, Prayer Ministry Director

Catie is a wise, caring, thoughtful, authentic friend. Catie has great vision for what she knows the Lord would have her do in support of her husband and in nurturing her family.

She is a woman of great faith who is able to speak Truth in love with wisdom.

She has a calming spirit about her that helps others to feel comfortable around her.

She is a great source of brainstorming in ministry and helping to bring ideas to reach their full potential and dependable to get tasks done!

Catie also has a unique perspective in that she has experienced the ministry of Lakewood through various stages of her own life which gives her rare insight into how to support this ministry from many angles.

Tim Soots, Pastor Well Spring Church, Colorado

Tyler Smiley is the hardest-working person I know. His careful planning, work ethic, attention to detail, and natural ability have made him an expert in the field of theology, as is proven by his forthcoming PhD.

While Tyler is a theologian, he is first and foremost a preacher of God's word. Theology serves as a helpful platform for communicating the deep things of God to God's people. He would never be satisfied living in the dusty halls of the academy, but is called to serve in the coffee shop, the pastor's office and the pulpit. He is a man who loves and cares for people, and he loves and cares for them by

helping them see the deep things of God more clearly in his preaching, counsel, and leadership.

Tyler's second major strength: leadership. Tyler's deep understanding of people, organization, and the conviction to make the right decision is evidenced in his leadership of COR 3:6. In obedience to the Lord, Tyler has taken this dream of planting churches and made it into a reality. He strikes a necessary balance between hands on and hands off leadership. Trusting the people he leads, while also giving the necessary structure and guidance for success.

Tyler is an exceptional leader whose character matches his competency.

Molly Legg, Lakewood Member

I first met Catie when she was a teenager. Catie's desire to learn and grow as a Christian struck me when I first met her. Those traits continue to be true of her today.

Catie consistently seeks out upstream relationships for herself as well as younger women in whom she can invest. She is a fantastic hostess and lifegiver.

I love how Catie loves Jesus, loves Tyler, loves Andrew, Matthew and Peter. Catie also loves Lakewood. We have talked numerous times over the years about how thankful she is for Lakewood and how much it has influenced her walk with Jesus.

Even though I am much older than Catie, I am grateful and honored she is my friend.

Meet Tyler Smiley

In his own words: Tyler's statement of Faith and Purpose

I received Christ and was baptized at age eight. In the years that followed I grew in my personal walk with the Lord by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and with the help of many wonderful mentors. During college I felt reassurance of God's call in my life to be a pastor and began preparing for full-time Christian vocation. My wife, Catie, and I are passionate about serving the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Personal Information:

Tyler writes, "I grew up in the home of a loving family, my father the Senior Pastor of our church. I have been actively involved in the church since a very early age. I married my high school sweetheart, Catie, and we have been very happily married for 11 years".

Tyler and Catie have three young sons, Andrew, Matthew and Peter. Tyler was born in September 1987 at Northside Hospital, Atlanta, Georgia.

Education:

Tyler graduated with honors from North Hall High School, where he lettered in four varsity sports.

He attended North Georgia College & State University in Dahlonega, GA, earning a B.S. in Health and Physical Education, with Teacher Certification. (Graduated Summa Cum Laude)

Tyler attended Denver Theological Seminary, in Denver, CO, on a Kern Academic Scholarship, earning a Master's of Divinity with emphasis in Leadership. He graduated in 2013 with honors.

Tyler received a Master's of Theology from Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri in early 2019 and currently is a Ph.D. candidate at Midwestern, completing the program in December of 2019.

Catie and Tyler are both certified and trained in "Prepare and Enrich" marriage counseling.

Vocational Ministry Experience:

- **Pastoral Intern at Journey Church Centennial, CO.**
Tyler assisted staff with pastoral duties as assigned. He was responsible for launching and maintaining AXIS ministry for young adults. He preached midweek Good Friday service, participated in staff and sermon preparation meetings, and facilitated vision-casting meetings while serving. He wrote devotionals for church-wide "21 Days of Prayer and Fasting."

- **Interim Youth Pastor at Journey Church Centennial, CO.**
Tyler served middle and high school students. Responsibilities included spiritual leadership for youth, preaching, organizing and leading small groups, planning and speaking at retreats, coordinating volunteers.
- **Interim Pastor of Logos Central Chapel Church Denver, CO.**
While attending seminary, upon the recommendation of a professor, Tyler was asked to serve as Interim Pastor of Logos Church, a first generational Korean-American congregation. Tyler lead in pastoral functions of preaching, leading and administration as the congregation searched for a full-time Senior Pastor.
- **Associate Missions Pastor Lakewood Baptist Church 2013 to Present.**
At Lakewood, Tyler directs the ministry's local, national and global church planting initiative, where he currently interacts with over 20 new church plant pastors. He coordinates Lakewood's Adoption and Foster Care Ministry, the church planter apprentice ministry and the church residency ministry. Tyler is responsible for managing two mission budgets that exceed \$400,000 each. Additional duties include serving as a Teaching Pastor at Lakewood and participating as a member of Lakewood's Executive Staff. He and Dr. John Morrison are currently producing a podcast, "Rooted and Grounded."



From My Heart

Dr. Tom Smiley

I am nowhere near the wordsmith to be able to describe what being the Senior Pastor of Lakewood since 1990 has meant to me. Just a boy from Gumbranch!

The best description I could possibly use would be words of Scripture from the apostle Paul:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. Ephesians 3:20

October 27, 2019 has been coming since August 5, 1990. As our Bylaws state, "Pastoral transition is a certainty; how and when is up to the church."

Lakewood is a work of God, accomplished by willing hands and hearts of Christ-followers committed to God's Church and Word. No doubt we have seen God work, and no doubt the "cloud of witnesses" that Hebrews speaks of cheering us on has increased as we have seen many from our ministry enter into their eternal home – Heaven.

So today, as we affirm new direction and a new Senior Pastor and celebrate what God has done, we more importantly focus on what God is going to do!

The next 2-3 years will be exciting ones. I look forward to working with Tyler and bringing him up to date on many administrative and technical issues of our expansive ministry. He is up to the task. He has the capacity to absorb the diverse aspects of our Local, National and Global Ministry.

I am looking forward in these coming years to "finishing strong" and preparing the next generation of leadership.

While I will always be a fan of Lakewood, my specific continued involvement will be solely at the service of our new Senior Pastor and his leadership. I will be prepared to assist the Lakewood Ministry in whatever capacity God opens and that the Senior Pastor and leadership affirm.

No "good-byes" or even "see you later" at this time! We have much still left to do in the coming years.

Dr. Tom

P.S. I'm keeping "the file."

Appendix

How Old Are America's Pastors?

By Aaron Earls, 2017

As the average pastor grows older in America, churches say they are struggling to find young Christians who want to become future pastors, according to a new study from Barna Research.

Today, half of American pastors are older than 55. In 1992, less than a quarter of pastors in the U.S. (24 percent) were that old.

Pastors 65 and older have almost tripled in the last 25 years, from 6 percent to 17 percent.

Meanwhile, pastors 40 and younger have fallen from 33 percent in 1992 to 15 percent today.

In 1992, the median age for a Protestant pastor in America was 44. In 2017, it has climbed 10 years to 54.

More than half of all Protestant clergy (55 percent) were younger than 45 in 1968. In 2017, only 22 percent of pastors are under 45.

The church has gone from a time when a majority of leaders were in their 20s, 30s, and early 40s to a time when most are in their late 50s and beyond.

There are now more full-time senior pastors who are over the age of 65 than under the age of 40, according to David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group.

"For the Christian community to be at its best, it needs intergenerational leaders to move it forward." David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group.

Full Text Letters of Recommendation:

Dear Lakewood Family and Friends:

Thank you for this opportunity to express some thoughts and observations on Tyler Smiley. I have had the great opportunity these last five years to work alongside Tyler as the Missions Pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church.

Tyler loves God and His Word. This can be exhibited through his academic pursuit to be a trained and prepared pastor, as well as his receptivity to grow through discipleship and mentoring as a Christ-Follower. He has applied himself well, for multiple years, to grow and to “know Christ”. Importantly, Tyler has not done this in a solo way for self-gain, but for the good of others at Lakewood and our community as a whole.

Tyler loves people. I know of and could share countless experiences of him caring for and shepherding people. He has done this through ministry team building, leadership, personal evangelism and discipleship. Tyler is a gifted young man that God has empowered to shepherd a local church well on a large scale, as well as life to life.

Specific to missions, Tyler has learned team and system development among several of Lakewood’s missional endeavors. This would include, but not limited to, church planting (COR 3:6), adoption and foster care ministry, residency program, regular teaching and preaching, and finally local and global missional works.

The complexity of these initiatives requires working with healthy and sometimes unhealthy relationships. He has learned to be patient, listen well, pray for others, be strong in leadership, and resolve conflict as needed which is definitely not an easy task for a leader young or old. Tyler has learned well and has always exhibited a teachable and humble attitude.

In closing, and on a personal note, I want to express that Tyler truly desires to see God’s name praised, not his, among the nations locally and globally. He has a unique leadership ability to keep the focus on God and not himself, as Jesus’ under shepherd.

I can honestly say working alongside of Tyler has made me a better man and leader. We as a local congregation are very fortunate that God has placed Tyler and Catie at Lakewood.

*Robert Puckett
Missions Pastor
Lakewood*

Dear Lakewood Family and Friends:

The existence of mankind has many purposes, but the central theme is that we exist to ultimately worship God, not just in our earthly and current temporary setting, but also in our post-Earth eternal existence. To achieve that, God has put into motion a master plan that offers the human race a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

This will be accomplished through the Church and God's obedient children. The local church must possess a determination in taking the gospel of Jesus Christ into all regions of our world. God's urgency must be OUR urgency. Lakewood is blessed to have several in its ministry that have that urgency. This is in part due to the urgency of the Senior Pastor. Our current Senior Pastor has that passion. As time passes, we must be diligent that as leadership transitions, we continue to have God's urgency in the forefront. Lakewood has been fortunate to have Tyler Smiley on staff. His leadership with our church planting network, educational programs, pastoral training, outreach to the local community through Midland Station, direct involvement in local and global missions, oversight of our adoption and foster ministry, stewardship of church funds....all evidence of his passion that all may know Jesus Christ.

He clearly has the "urgency." He has exhibited leadership qualities. He is fair in all dealings. He possesses wisdom beyond his years. He is a student of The Bible. He is a servant. He is prayerful. He is fiscally responsible. He can laugh, even at himself.

His wife, Catie, is very supportive and owns many of the same qualities that are a result of a love for Jesus Christ. They are a very effective team.

My observations are not just recent, I've observed Tyler through many years of his life. My favorite Tyler story, from my wife, once his elementary school teacher: After a severe scolding to the entire class, they were excused for recess. On the playground, one student felt moved to apologize for his transgressions. My wife responded to Tyler: Tyler, go play, you were the only one I was not talking to.

May I introduce you to Tyler Smiley.

*Dennis W. Jackson
Mission Team Leader*

Dear Lakewood Family and Friends:

As an educator, I have always enjoyed watching the growth process of one who has been called to teach. Over the past several years, it has been very rewarding to see Tyler Smiley not only grow in this role, but to flourish and excel in it. It is true that Tyler has spent countless years observing and absorbing the practices of some of the most gifted and Godly church leaders, but he does not rest on those skills and that understanding. His sermons, studies, and podcasts are delivered with ease and conviction, but as any seasoned instructor recognizes, to do this well he has spent many hours planning, preparing, and praying.

Typically, when church members think of their senior pastor being absent, we can sometimes bemoan the idea of a substitute speaker; however, I find myself looking forward to Tyler's sermons. I enjoy his comfortable manner and banter, but I always know that no matter the subject, I will learn from the time he has taken to dig into God's word, explaining it in detail, allowing me to see it in a fresh, new way.

He has a gift for reminding us that God's Word is pertinent and moving, always creating moments that matter to us. His passion is clear as he challenges himself to grow and learn more each day, ultimately helping us all to become more mature Christians. Saying all this, I want to be completely honest; God alone, is responsible for allowing me to appreciate what a gift Tyler is to our church.

When I visited Lakewood for the first time, I returned and later joined because of the preaching of Dr. Tom Smiley. I could explain this in several ways, but simply stated, he drew me in, and I wanted to learn from him and be a part of the family of Lakewood. Just like so many, I could never imagine anyone else standing in the pulpit; however, God has patiently revealed and instilled in me an excitement and eagerness to embrace Tyler Smiley stepping into and thriving in this transitional role of teacher and leader.

I am thankful for Tyler's willingness and constant hard work that allows him to continue to grow in his faith and knowledge, ultimately allowing each of us to flourish in our relationship with God.

*Darlene Brown
Lakewood Member*

To Whom It May Concern:

In the past few years I've been able to observe Tyler in multiple ministry roles. Initially, he gave focused attention to the church planting ministry of COR 3:6. In that role he was quick to see the potential impact of multiplying churches.

He was also quick to learn how to help other leaders grow. As his influence has expanded, we've enlisted him to provide leadership to other churches via the Membership/Credentials Team of the CBA.

As chair of that team, Tyler has helped evaluate the churches applying for CBA membership. He's proven to be a wise and dependable leader with a solid doctrinal awareness.

Finally, it's been a blessing to work with him on ministry projects that impact our wider region – from adoption/foster care to training events of various kinds.

Tyler is a bright young leader with tremendous potential for Kingdom impact.



*Dr. JoJo Thomas
Associational Missionary
Chattochee Baptist Association*

Dear Church Family,

Years ago, when Tyler was still in seminary, while home for the holidays he delivered the message at a Sunday morning service. We were both extremely impressed with that maturity that Tyler displayed - both in spirit and communication. Dawn, specifically, had an impression during that service that our Senior Pastor was not always going to be older than us. We have sensed for some time now that the next senior leader we would serve beside would be younger than us, so we asked the Lord to allow us to help the next generation prepare for church leadership.

From our vantage point, Tyler thrives in his service at Lakewood. There are few leaders in his age and stage of ministry with the capacity for leadership that he displays - spiritually, intellectually, financially, and relationally. We've observed him in numerous capacities from a centerfielder in both softball and kickball, a teacher in the Young Couples ministry, a community group leader alongside Catie with other couples, a facilitator of a men's accountability group.

In each capacity he has served faithfully, led influentially and walked humbly. He has done well building and working with teams to begin new initiatives like COR 3:6, The Residency Program and Midland Station. He has shown great deference to senior staff in times when he could have easily flashed his educational acumen. This has demonstrated great restraint, self-control and maturity. The men in his peer group respect him and they consider him a friend.

We have mentored both Tyler and Catie, together and individually. From their premarital counseling, one to one discipleship, and small group environments, we have observed teachable spirits, a willingness to grow in all aspects in Christ and not only a devotion to one another but to the things of God.

Catie has served in many roles herself - from a ministry assistant in the Discipleship Ministry, a discipler of young mothers, and now a mentor of the wives of our young pastors. She has been consistent in seeking wise counsel from upstream women on matters of home, church and work. She is well loved among her peers and is doing a good job building relationships with the older generations of women at Lakewood.

Lord willing, we look forward to many more fruitful years of ministry beside Tyler and Catie!

*Scott and Dawn
Adult Discipleship Ministry
Lakewood*

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure and spiritual affirmation, due to many years of watching Tyler Smiley become the godly man that he is today, that I recommend him to you as Senior Pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church.

I have known Tyler for over 20 years. I have watched him in nearly every facet of life hold to his commitment to Christ and the integrity of a man with character.

Whether on the basketball court or football field or the pulpit, Tyler has always exemplified his determination and preparation for being his best.

Tyler is a genuine leader and well respected among his peers because of his vision and passion.

While serving as Interim Student Pastor at Lakewood, I hired Tyler and Catie to be my assistants in student ministry in 2006. They both exceeded my expectations in the ministry that they had been bestowed.

I stood before them when they made their commitment to become one before God. Catie is a committed follower of Christ, devoted wife and loving mother.

With everything in me, it is my pleasure to recommend that Tyler Smiley becomes the next Senior Pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church.



*Dr. Bart McMillan
Founder Life Lessons Ministry*

Church Family,

I have known Catie for many years. When they returned to Lakewood from seminary in Colorado, I remember getting reacquainted with her when she was pregnant with Andrew. The Lord was allowing a sweet friendship to grow at that point. Catie is a wise, caring, thoughtful, authentic friend. She is one of those people I want to run toward when I see her. Catie has great vision for what she knows the Lord would have her do in support of her husband and in nurturing her family. She is a woman of great faith who is able to speak truth in love with wisdom. I appreciate that about her so much.

Catie cares deeply and listens well. She has a calming spirit about her that helps others to feel comfortable around her.

I have also had the privilege to work alongside Catie. She is a great source of brainstorming in ministry and helping to bring ideas to reach their full potential and dependable to get tasks done!

She is invested in helping Lakewood to continue to grow and be the church God intends it to be and she reaches across age and stage to do so.

Catie also has a unique perspective in that she has experienced the ministry of Lakewood through various stages of her own life which gives her rare insight into how to support this ministry from many angles.

I am honored to be her friend and our church body is blessed to have her.

*Beth Everett
Counseling & Prayer Director
Lakewood*

Dear Friends,

Tyler Smiley is the hardest working person I know. When I met him in seminary, we were both fresh out of college. I was a typical slacker of a student, but Tyler would have the entire semester charted out within the first week of the semester. His careful planning, work ethic, attention to detail, and natural ability have made him an expert in the field of theology, as is proven by his forthcoming PhD. Tyler is never satisfied with simple answers, but wants to see the complex and textured beauty of God presented in an accurate and compelling way that is insightful to both scholars, but even more so, to men and women on Sunday morning.

While Tyler is a theologian, he is first and foremost a preacher of God's Word. Theology serves as a helpful platform for communicating the deep things of God to God's people. He would never be satisfied living in the dusty halls of the academy, but is called to serve in the coffee shop, the pastor's office, and the pulpit. He is a man who loves and cares for people, and he loves and cares for them by helping them see the deep things of God more clearly in his preaching, counsel, and leadership.

Which brings me to my second major strength of Tyler, leadership. Tyler's deep understanding of people, organization, and the conviction to make the right decision is evidenced in his leadership of COR 3:6. In obedience to the Lord, Tyler has taken this dream of planting churches and made it into a reality. COR 3:6 did not exist before Tyler came to Lakewood, and now it is a booming ministry that helps plant churches all over the world. He strikes a necessary balance between hands on and hands off leadership. Trusting the people he leads, while also giving the necessary structure and guidance for success. Tyler is an exceptional leader whose character matches his competency.

*Tim Soots
Pastor
Well Spring Church, Colorado*

Dear Church Family,

I first met Catie when she was a teenager. Catie's desire to learn and grow as a Christian struck me when I first met her. Those traits continue to be true of her today.

I have had the privilege of being in both a community group with Catie and Tyler when they were newlyweds, as well as several women's Bible studies with Catie. Catie consistently seeks out upstream relationships for herself as well as younger women in whom she can invest.

She is a fantastic hostess and lifegiver. She serves her family, her church, and others faithfully. I love how Catie loves Jesus, loves Tyler, loves Andrew, Matthew, and Peter.

Catie also loves Lakewood. We have talked numerous times over the years about how thankful she is for Lakewood and how much it has influenced her walk with Jesus. This is what makes Catie passionate and committed to faithfully serving at Lakewood. Even though I am much older than Catie, I am grateful and honored she is my friend.

*Molly Legg
Lakewood Member*



Dear Lakewood Family,

Catie has loved the Lord and sought to please and follow Him as long as I have known her (which has been since we were 12-years-old!).

She loves Tyler and is a constant support of encouragement for him. She admires her husband and speaks kindly about him, never complaining about long hours at work or school.

She loves her children and is so intentional in the way she mothers them, seeking to show them God's love and to teach them how to have a biblical worldview. She loves our church and serves and gives her time and energy selflessly – teaching classes, discipling younger girls, volunteering in every arena at one time or another.

Catie is always opening her home to host dinners for church members and faculty, cooking delicious meals as an act of service to those she feeds and loves. She hosts numerous baby showers and wedding showers for church members and faculty. Everything she has she shares with open hands, knowing it is all a gift from God.

Catie is kind, trustworthy, smart and loving. She is careful with her words, diligent and hardworking. She follows through with her commitments, in both activity and prayer. She is a godly woman and a faithful follower of Christ.

*Katherine Hall
Lakewood Member*



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