

Pastor Matthew Stewart's Resignation – April 14, 2024

Dear church,

We have accomplished a great deal for the kingdom in the past 11 years. During this time we have witnessed 40 people give their hearts to Christ or recommit their lives to him. We've seen 16 people baptized. We've added 36 members. We have seen 749 unique guests come through our doors. In addition, we've been instrumental in helping 18 interns discern their particular calling. All of these figures fail to capture all of the countless individual moments of God stirring in the hearts of people or calling them to higher service. I am personally filled with joy and satisfaction at the cultural and missional shift that has taken place over these 11 years. I'm grateful to God for how he has equipped and directed us on this journey.

Therefore, it is with a measure of confliction that I am announcing my resignation as Senior Pastor of Sweetser Wesleyan Church.

On March 24th, Palm Sunday, during the opening songs we were singing together, I heard the voice of the Spirit say to me "It is time for you to go." The message that day was about surrender and it spoke to me as much as it might have to any of you. When everyone was dismissed that day and I went to the house, Jennifer met me at the door and she said to me, "I think I heard the voice of the Lord say to me that it's time for us to leave." We ended up taking the next 2 weeks to spend time in prayer. Even during our time in Pigeon Forge, we had some speakers there that really spoke into our lives and we were convinced that this was the Lord moving us in this direction. Since that day, God has been opening up doors to potential new ministry. We are waiting on and trusting him in this process.

I plan to remain with you as Pastor until the end of June allowing you the time to secure the call of the next Pastor. Thank you so much for your every kindness, support, and prayer over these years. We've always been able to keep great relationships with those that we've served even from our church in Rochester, NY and we plan to continue those relationships with you as well.