

May 28, 2024

Dear Chapelstreet Families,

I want to share a Ward family update with you: Ashlyn and I are moving our family to Iowa.

I'll serve as Student Pastor at a church in the Des Moines area and Ashlyn will practice optometry at a family eyecare clinic. Ashlyn grew up in this area of Iowa, and her parents and brother's families still live there.

We love Chapelstreet and we thought we would never leave! However, earlier this year, while we weren't searching for anything new, God led us to explore an exciting opportunity. As we began to walk down this path, God shifted our hearts and opened many doors in unexpected and amazing ways.

As we went through this process we could not fathom leaving this place which means so much to us. In some ways we still can't! After a few months and a lot of prayer God has given both Ashlyn and I abundant clarity and peace to trust that this is what He has for us.

There is so much to this story that I wish I had the time to share with everybody in great detail. God has redirected our steps and guided our path in a completely new way. It's so exciting and clear, but it's also bittersweet and very difficult to say goodbye to people who mean so much to us.

I will still lead trips this summer and help prepare for the next ministry year. My last day on staff is July 10th.

We will share more information about the plan for this transition in the weeks to come. For now, I simply want to say thank you. I'm so grateful for the privilege of serving you and your families for nearly 10 years. I grew up here, my family has grown here, and together with you, we have witnessed God do remarkable things in the lives of so many students and families.

I consider myself blessed for the opportunity to lead this ministry, this staff team, these volunteer leaders and your students. We love you and pray that God would bless you in this next season.

Thank you again for everything you have meant to me and to our family. We are so grateful.

With Gratitude,

*Pastor Tom Ward*