



September 2018

Dear Friends of Waterstone:

It's a bit coincidental that this morning in our sermon series we reached the part of the life of Moses where he explored his calling and his transition from being a shepherd to be the prime leader of Israel and the Exodus — and now, I am here to share with you a big shift in my own journey. Over the last number of months, with a lot of prayer and discussion, I have come to the conclusion that it is time for me to step aside from the senior pastor role at Waterstone.

In September of 1984, Waterstone (back then we were known as Centennial) called me to be its pastor — I was 28, had very little experience and was fresh out of seminary. I said yes even though I had no clue what I was supposed to be doing. Three decades later, it has been a great journey and one of the best experiences of my life. I feel very blessed to be a part of this community. No one could ask for a better church to pastor and lead. Thank you so much for giving me the privilege.

For the last few years, the executive team and elders have been thinking through the eventual reality of this change, what it might look like and when it will happen. We want to see a vision-centric transition for Waterstone. Rather than find an outside leader who would bring a whole different direction, we want to maintain our mission and momentum. We thought in our best scenario that would mean someone stepping up from inside our staff who understands our theology, values and commitment to the Kingdom. We thought that Larry would be the best and most obvious choice, but at the time he was not really interested.

Then, last year, I went on sabbatical. Larry took over the leadership of the staff and the role of senior pastor, and it was during that time that he realized maybe this was something he could do well and, in fact, something God was calling him to. When I returned, he shared that with me, expressing that, down the road when I was ready for the change, he was ready to step in.

Although the timing was unclear before, when I returned from sabbatical I began to realize that the church is ready for a new season of ministry — now. And, I also began to realize that I did not have the energy or the vision to bring that about. I shared my heart with the elders and executive team, and we even brought in a consultant to help us think through the process and timing. We decide that the change should happen at the end of this year.

There is no back story — the elders did not ask me to transition or recommend that I should. This is totally my decision and choice, both the move itself and the timing. The elders and staff have been nothing but supportive of me, my ministry, my family and my plans. After so many

fruitful years, it is simply time for a change and to pass the torch. Waterstone is ready for a new season of ministry, and I and the elders believe that Larry is the person to lead that season. Beginning January 1, once our church membership affirms the recommendation, Larry will officially become the new senior pastor of Waterstone.

The plan is for me to stay on staff — this is a transition, not a retirement — but I will no longer be part of the executive team or elders. I will still be a part of the preaching team, oversee the Leadership Development Program, be part of Alpha, help develop and train preachers, and serve as a mentor to some of the staff. I also plan on increasing my coaching role with pastors outside of Waterstone and to pursue a certificate in leadership coaching.

I'm excited about Larry stepping into the lead role, and I believe some of the best days of Waterstone are still ahead. It's been my deepest honor to serve as your pastor, and I look forward to playing a new part in our story.

I believe God has his hand on this church and that there are great things in store.

Nick Lillo

FROM THE ELDERS

As Nick Lillo shared above, on January 1, 2019, he will officially step out of the senior pastor role at Waterstone. We cannot begin to express how much Nick has meant to us across the last 35 years — as our founding pastor and as a mentor, advocate, counselor and friend to so many across our church and the greater Denver community. Through his teaching, his life's example, his unassuming nature and his unashamed preaching of the Word, no matter how it shakes our culture, Nick has left an indelible mark.

Nick, we love you and are eternally linked to your ministry and spiritual legacy.

Though he is entering a new phase, we want to reassure you that Nick is not leaving the church or stepping down under pressure from anyone. As he shared, this is what he wants, and the elders agree that the timing feels right. Today, we have an incredibly talented, well-balanced staff, including Larry Renoe, whom Nick and the elders are submitting to you for consideration as our next senior pastor. Larry and Nick have worked closely over several decades and periods of change at Waterstone, and during this transition process we have been extremely encouraged at how much their hearts and vision for the church align.

While no two leaders are the same, we believe Larry is the right leader for our next season. Now, we want to open this collaborative process to all members of Waterstone who can vote in matters of church business and pastoral calling. In the coming months, we invite you to participate in these key phases of the decision:

- **September 23 and October 10** – Anyone who calls Waterstone home is invited to attend one of two congregational forums to understand the proposed change and ask Nick and Larry questions
- **November 4** – We'll share more about Larry and Jan Renoe at all weekend services
- **November 11** – A senior pastor vote will take place at all weekend services
- **November 18** – Results will be announced at weekend services

Also, in the new year, we'll host a special gathering to celebrate Nick, Barb and their family, and to honor the next chapter in Nick's service with us. Please watch our website for that announcement.

As ever, we're reminded that God's Kingdom is bigger than individual congregations or leaders, and we know Nick would be the first person to say that. Still, we'll probably never fully realize how deeply he helped shape our faith and lives. We're grateful for his sterling leadership and friendship, and together, we're all excited for the next chapter.

We appreciate your support during this time, and encourage you to talk with Nick, Larry or any of us if you have questions.

In Him and for His glory,

Jon Watters
Cory Clauss
Marla Dense
Jim Friesen
Betsy Nesbit
Adam Biegler
Dennis Vogan