



Introducing Gary and Mary Westra

It is with great joy that the Pastoral Search Committee, the Elders and the Leadership Council bring to you our wholehearted and unanimous recommendation that Dr. Gary Westra be called to be the next senior pastor of North Shore Community Baptist Church!

Gary grew up in a family of believers in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Though he doesn't remember a time when he didn't believe in Jesus, he did respond to an invitation to surrender to Christ and His Lordship while attending summer camp in eighth grade. He became very involved in his church and with Campus Crusade's high school ministry, and began to sense an inner call to vocational ministry. Gary attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids where he majored in Psychology, with a strong interest in becoming a clinical psychologist. He explored the Fuller Seminary School of Psychology, but as God redirected that interest Gary pursued his MDiv. He spent two years at Fuller Seminary, and then, graduated from Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan in 1983.

Gary met his wife, Mary, while attending Fuller Seminary. She is from San Marino, California and is a graduate of Bucknell University and Western Michigan University (M.A. Speech and Language Pathology). After they married, Gary first served as an Associate Pastor of Education and Youth in Hudsonville, Michigan, and then for 15 years as the Sr. Pastor of Princetown EPC near Albany, NY. In 2002, Gary received his Doctor of Ministry from Fuller. His most recent pastorate was in a church plant in Wilmington, North Carolina. Gary and Mary are the parents of Beth Westra Duncan (24), Ben Westra (22), and Katy Westra (17). They are grateful to God that their children all know Christ and are passionate in following Him.

A Word from the Search Committee

In this brief introduction, we'd like to share just a few of the ways the Lord has clearly and deeply confirmed for us that Gary is just the right man for our church at this particular time in our life together. Gary has a deep love for the Lord and for people, a deeply thoughtful approach to faith and ministry, and contagious energy for the work of God's kingdom. He embodies all that we were looking and praying for in our next pastor. First, Gary has reflected and studied for many years on the subject of ministry in New England. His dissertation was on evangelism and church growth in a New England context! Second, Gary has a pastor's gentle heart and boundless love for the people under his care, but also has strong leadership gifts and great passion for reaching people with the good news and love of Christ. Third, Gary is a gifted preacher, combining thorough study of scripture with a clear and powerful presentation of God's message for His people. Finally, Gary is deeply committed to discipleship, community outreach and equipping the body of Christ for the work of ministry, all of which fit exactly with NSCBC's expressed desires for directions of growth in the future.

We can't wait for you to be able to get to know Gary and Mary directly, and grow to love them as we already have. May the Lord knit our hearts together for the work He desires to do in and through us in the years to come, for the praise of His glory!