

Leadership at Candlewood

At Candlewood Church, we believe the primary qualifications for church leadership are character based, as outlined in the Bible. As we are thankful for and confident in the work God is doing in raising up these leaders into new roles, we invite you to let one of the pastors know if you have any concerns that would disqualify any of these leaders based on the qualifications recorded in Scripture.

Pastors (Elder/Overseers)

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (ESV) - The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Brett Brandl



Brett received the Lord Jesus in 2003 as a junior in high school after participating in a Bible study with some friends. Over the last 23 years, he has been continually blessed by God's leading and has come to view Him with great awe and admiration. Brett has attended Candlewood since 2005. He has served the church in many capacities, most recently as a Small Group leader, Operation Christmas Child coordinator, and Sunday school teacher. Brett and his wife, Emilee, have been married since 2010 and have 4 children. Brett's heart is for Candlewood to know the glory of our God, to be the hands and feet of Christ as we serve each other and our community, as we reach this city and beyond with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Please pray for Brett and his family, that God would help them in this new journey.

Paul Fortmeyer



Paul was raised in a Christian home but got serious about his faith in 2010. Over that time, the Lord has graciously shown him his need of a Savior and has drawn him away from an empty pursuit of identity rooted in pleasure-seeking, wealth, and status, to a life-giving identity in Christ. He has attended Candlewood since 2013. Most recently, he has served on the Connect Team, the Finance Team, and as a Small Group leader. Paul and his wife, Beth, have been married since 2013 and have 4 children, with #5 due in May. Paul's prayer for Candlewood Church is that it would continue to be a place where Christian love in community is experienced, the Word of God is boldly preached, and steps of faith as followers of Jesus are taken. Please pray for Paul and his family, that God would grant them grace and wisdom as they enter this new role.

Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (ESV) - Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Richard Christie has been attending Candlewood since 2011. He has served as a Campus Missionary, Small Group leader, Connect Team lead, and Sunday School teacher. Richard has been married to Dani since 2016, and together they have 4 children. Richard's anticipated area of service will be with Sunday School.

Dan Corral has been attending Candlewood since 2008. He has served in Campus Ministry, on the Connect Team, in Sunday School, and as a Small Group leader. Dan has been married to Steph since 2012, and together they have 2 children. Dan's anticipated area of service will be with Sunday School.

Nick Mackey has been attending Candlewood since 2004. He has served in Sound, Nursery, Sunday School, Connect, and as a Small Group leader. Nick has been married to Stacy since 2004, and together they have 3 children. Nick's anticipated area of service will be with the Sunday serving teams (i.e. Connect, Ushers, Security).

Niah Nelson has been attending Candlewood since 2008. He has served in Worship, Security, Maintenance, Cleaning, Ushering, and various other teams during his years at Candlewood. Niah also serves as a Small Group leader. Niah has been married to Josie since 2013, and together they have 4 children. Niah's anticipated area of service will be with the Candlewood Church Building.

Levi Sandbulte has been attending Candlewood since 2015. He has served as Worship Leader, Campus Missionary, and Small Group leader for Acts 2 and the Young Professionals. Levi has been married to Bailey since 2023, and together they are expecting their first child in February. Levi's anticipated area of service will be with Acts 2 (Candlewood's Campus Ministry) and the Young Professionals.

Shea Scalise has been attending Candlewood since 2008. He has served in multiple ministries and is a Small Group leader. Shea has been married to Kayla since 2012, and together they have 7 children. Shea's anticipated area of service will be with the Sunday serving teams (i.e. Connect, Ushers, Security).

Drew Swartz has been attending Candlewood since 2008. He has served in Maintenance, Ushering, Connect, Nursery, Sunday School, as a Ministry Team leader, and as a Small Group leader. Drew has been married to Amanda since 2014, and together they have 3 children with a 4th on the way. Drew's anticipated area of service will be with the Nursery and the 3-4 year old classroom.

Jacob Whitney has been attending Candlewood since 1995. He has served in Worship, Campus Ministry, Nursery, and Sunday School. Jacob has been married to Rebecca since 2010, and together they have 4 children. Jacob's anticipated area of service will be with Worship & Production.

Jim Wiebelhaus has served in full time ministry for many years including as a Pastor in Lincoln before moving to Omaha in 2018 to serve at Candlewood. In Omaha Jim has served as Candlewood's Missions Director fostering discipling through Acts 2, LiNC, and Short Term Missions overseas. Jim has been married to Diane since 1989, and together they have 6 children. Jim will continue serving as Candlewood's Missions Director, while also now serving as a Deacon with Missions and Acts 2.