



Lead Pastor Opportunity Profile
Spring Creek Church
Pewaukee, WI

October 2024

After 37 years of faithful leadership at [Spring Creek Church](#), Pastor Chip Bernhard has felt led to retire. His departure creates an opportunity for God's next called pastor to step into a healthy, thriving congregation and prayerfully guide it into the future God intends.



Overview

Spring Creek Church is a special place. The warm welcome and genuine vibrancy one experiences coming in the doors sets this church apart. People are friendly, welcoming and happy to invite others into the church family. Spring Creek is not flashy or attention-seeking; rather it is a church that takes the Word of God seriously. Gracious and unapologetic in teaching truth to the generations, Spring Creek has a solid reputation as a church that fulfills its mission *to honor God by producing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ*. People matter here, and those who call this their church home communicate in words and actions they value people because everybody matters to God.

The church has only had five Lead Pastors in the last 110 years of its 142-year history. Originally established as Garfield Baptist Church in 1882, the church initially launched in a humble, wooden frame building on the corner of Second Street and Garfield Avenue in Milwaukee. At its dedication, the founding pastor prayed, *"We humbly pray that this church, which has been planted and is being fostered by the missionary spirit, may always exercise a like spirit, and may it be proved the spiritual birthplace of many souls."* This prayer continues to ring true decades later as Spring Creek has witnessed steady growth, particularly in the last number of years, and continues to focus on reaching people with the transformational message of the Gospel across the street and around the world. The expanding membership necessitated relocating to larger facilities in 1951 and again in 1964. The arrival of Pastor Bernhard in 1987 marked a significant turning point for the congregation. Under his leadership, the church experienced a surge in membership, prompting one final move in 1997 to their current 125-acre property on the border of Pewaukee and Brookfield. Recent additions of a children's wing and youth wing emphasize Spring Creek's priority to reach the next generation and bring the total square footage under the roof to 140,000.

To reflect this new chapter and a broader outlook on ministry, the congregation adopted the name Spring Creek Church in 2001, and has continued to carve a unique path within the Baptist tradition. Independent and theologically conservative, they hold firmly to core Baptist beliefs. This includes doctrines such as Biblical inerrancy, a young-earth creationist view, a complementarian leadership structure, a premillennial pre-tribulational understanding of the end times, and conservative yet gracious social views. They would not call themselves Reformed or Calvinist but do believe in eternal security and that God opens our eyes so we can be saved. They are best described as solidly evangelical. Spring Creek is a haven for serious

Christians who see great value in doctrinal clarity. They remain true to the Bible's message, citing Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Leadership extends a welcoming hand to those with different viewpoints, fostering a space for individuals to discover the truth in God's Word as they journey alongside one another empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As a committed multi-generational congregation of more than 2,000 attendees, Spring Creek has a current vision *to boldly proclaim the Gospel to every generation because Jesus changes everything*. They believe that no matter where you've been, no matter what you've done, no matter what has been done to you, God loves you as you are and wants to transform you into someone who is fully devoted to Him. Each Sunday, the church offers two identical contemporary worship services at 9 and 10:30 a.m. A two-tiered, semi-circular worship auditorium provides comfortable seating for 1,700 focused on a large stage where the talented worship team guides the people into a worship experience that is God-honoring and designed to draw people closer to God. The spirit of the services is authentic, motivating and delivered with technical excellence which allows attendees to focus on worship. Sermon messages are grounded in the depth of Scripture but delivered in a casual, engaging style that invites listeners on a journey through text with the speaker. A number of staff pastors preach throughout the year, with the Lead Pastor preaching roughly 40 times per year. Many attendees actively engage with the teaching by opening their Bibles and taking notes, which is encouraged.

There is truly something for everyone at Spring Creek. Various ministries provide connection points which help this large church feel like a family. More than 800 adults participate in adult Life Groups, Bible studies and care groups offered on Sundays or Wednesdays each week. These ministries cultivate community, personal connections and spiritual growth. More than 300 children enjoy a beautifully designed, engaging space to learn about Jesus and the Bible on Sunday mornings, while the long-standing AWANA program provides Wednesday night fun with valued biblical instruction. The thriving Student Ministry welcomes over 350 students. The ministry prioritizes worship, community, and in-depth biblical training, teaching through the entire Bible during the seven years that students are involved in the ministry. This ministry sets a high bar for students' spiritual growth toward maturity and they respond to it. Recently completed additions to the building created much-needed space for these dedicated ministries to thrive. Pastors and ministry leaders reflect positively on the engagement levels at Spring Creek. They consistently find enthusiastic volunteers, a testament to the congregation's dedication and health.

A talented and committed team of 18 full-time and 30 part-time staff members lead the ministries and congregation at Spring Creek. Many staff are long-tenured and believe Spring Creek is a great place to work. The team is mature, wise and experienced. They love one another and enjoy a strong collegiality as they work alongside one another in the ministry. They report their excitement for the roles they play and when speaking about other team members, they express a sense of alignment by saying "it seems all are in the right seats on the bus." Many employees describe staff culture as "hard-working, caring and fun." The incoming Lead Pastor will work closely with the pastoral and ministry staff as well as the Executive Pastor of Ministries, Executive Pastor of Operations and Executive Assistant.

Spring Creek is a pastor-led church where pastors set the overall direction and oversee the day-to-day ministry operations. The nine pastors meet every Monday morning to discuss, pray and determine any needed course of action. In the very rare instance where there is not a consensus, the Lead Pastor listens to the other pastors and makes the final decision. The church is also served by 24 Deacons who enjoy great unity with the pastors. They have six combined meetings a year where they review finances, pray together and review important things happening at the church. The Deacons serve as a trusted support system, offering guidance, prayerful counsel, and engaging in open discussions with the pastoral team on critical matters. This collaborative model of leadership blends the strengths of both groups and is grounded in a unified theological foundation and a shared practical approach to ministry. Clear roles and structures ensure a well-functioning governance system the congregation respects and trusts. Deacons are active in ministry by engaging in Life Groups and serving on various committees, such as finance and personnel. The church is in an excellent financial position with an annual ministry budget of \$4.3MM and zero debt.

Following a beloved long-tenured leader is never easy. Pastor Bernhard is loved and appreciated for his personal warmth, confident leadership, pastoral heart and faithful teaching of God's Word. While there is a natural sense of loss as he steps into retirement, the congregation also celebrates his many years of faithful and fruitful ministry. As a new pastor is called, the church will be ready to welcome its new leader with a spirit of both anticipation and appreciation in God's provision. Confident in the superintending leadership of the Holy Spirit, Spring Creek will embrace their incoming pastor. They trust that as He has faithfully done before, God will once again guide the church through a smooth transition and into an exciting new chapter.

Pewaukee, Wisconsin is a beautiful suburban Milwaukee community nestled in the heart of Lake Country. It boasts a rich tapestry of small-town charm with all the modern amenities found in the city of Milwaukee. With its top-rated schools, scenic parks, and bustling local businesses, Pewaukee offers residents a balanced lifestyle amidst picturesque landscapes. Friendly residents and a strong sense of community make Pewaukee a welcoming place to raise a family or simply enjoy a comfortable lifestyle.

The Opportunity

The Lead Pastor opportunity at Spring Creek represents a valuable and rare opportunity to step into something excellent and help it evolve and grow to the next level. A church health assessment completed in March 2024 confirmed Spring Creek is an exceptionally healthy and vital congregation with multiple positive markers of health noted. Continued vitality and success hinges on optimizing and building on the foundation of great things already present, while embracing opportunities to innovate or improve them. This means the church does not need the incoming Lead Pastor to make wholesale changes. Instead, he will have the opportunity to build up the good things already there, and to work with others to assess opportunities to make meaningful improvements or additions. He must align with the current vision, but also look toward the future and work with leadership to prayerfully assess and discern a refreshed vision for the church's next ten years. Managing shifts and changes effectively will include taking time to pray, socialize ideas with other leaders, invite input and feedback and then pro-actively communicate rationale to help people understand the "why" behind the "what." These kinds of activities will help Spring Creekers develop confidence in their new pastor.

The incoming pastor will have the opportunity to continue the rich tradition of deep Bible-centered teaching and preaching, skillfully drawing out biblical truth and weaving it into messages that are thought-provoking, convicting and motivating. The Lead Pastor will work closely with other pastors in planning messages and series that keep the whole of Scripture in balance. It is important he be skilled in communicating with people at various stages of their faith journey while contextualizing God's eternal Word to the complexities of contemporary culture. Ideally, the pastor will project a spirit of encouragement, inspiring the listener to trust God more and motivating them to participate in His mission.

Patience is a virtue in successful succession, and developing trust must be a priority for the incoming pastor. Trust results from a commitment to honor the past, understand the present, and listen and learn from those with experience before proposing next steps. The incoming pastor will do well to dedicate ample time to immerse himself in the church's culture, its people, and its existing ministries. Congregants expect to see him take the time to view the ministries in action, such as visiting Life Groups or talking to various ministry volunteers. They hope their new pastor will be available to shake hands at the door as they leave services or greet them in the common area before or after church. A pastor who prays with and for people, and who notices both children and widows will inspire trust and affirmation from the people. As stated before, Spring Creek is a special place. As the new pastor learns the uniqueness of this church, his ability to shepherd, speak to and lead the people will only increase.

While the people of Spring Creek are energized by their participation in the church, they are clearly hungry for more. They share a priority to strengthen the process by which attenders are called and equipped for ministry and leadership. People are eager to know how to step up into ministry and

leadership but seem to be waiting for direction and guidance. There is an opportunity for the Lead Pastor to work with pastors and staff to ensure accessible pathways are in place, and are well-communicated, to empower people to put their God-given gifts and talents to use for God's Kingdom purpose. People are ready to be stretched and challenged, but they want to do so with clear alignment to the overall vision of the church. This might include development of a leadership pipeline for deacons, creating small group studies focused on spiritual gifts and practical ministry skills, intentionally guiding the connection of people and their gifts with ministry opportunities in the church or in the community, or launching mentorship programs that connect experienced members with those yearning to serve and grow. By providing clear pathways for people to develop and deploy with knowledge and confidence, the Lead Pastor aims to unleash the full potential of Spring Creek's dedicated congregation.

Spring Creek has a very high value for international missions and is actively engaged in supporting 19 missionaries around the world. International mission trips are an important part of keeping missions in front of the congregation. Additionally, they partner with several national and local ministries such as Samaritan's Purse, Care Net, a local rescue mission (and many more), to actively demonstrate their care and love for people in need. There is an opportunity to further empower the congregation to live out their faith locally and to help people get boots on the ground to the benefit of those across the street as well as those around the world.

The recent growth of the congregation presents an exciting opportunity to maximize ministry impact by expanding the staff. It is likely the incoming Lead Pastor will be able to speak into the expansion of the pastoral team as well as the addition of several support staff. Additionally, the recent completion of a significant facilities expansion was made to provide relief and support to this growing congregation and its flourishing ministries. However, the growth has not slowed, and it may not be long before space feels constrained once again. This presents an exciting leadership challenge for the incoming pastor as Spring Creek will have some interesting questions to explore.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to strengthen technology and church wide communication channels to effectively support the church's ongoing growth and future endeavors. This might involve supporting the exploration of new technology and communication platforms, and ensuring systems are supporting the effective delivery of timely communication. Additionally, the new Lead Pastor may have the opportunity to work with the Executive Pastors to refine, or in some cases, rebuild these systems to ensure the necessary internal strength is present to support the ongoing growth of the congregation.

The Candidate

The ideal candidate for Spring Creek is an experienced pastoral leader who feels called to shepherd a staff and congregation into a deeper, more intimate walk with Jesus. This individual will love God and His Word and will lead from the overflow of his personal relationship with the Lord. He will spend time in the Scripture not only in preparation for Sunday morning, but as an expression of his own discipleship and desire to know God more. He will be a humble, yet confident leader of leaders who is secure in his identity in Christ and in his commitment to lead Spring Creek Church. He will not strive to make a name for himself but will consistently point people to what God is doing. Rather than see this call as a steppingstone to something greater, he will whole-heartedly embrace the opportunity to invest and cultivate the spiritual well-being and development of the congregation God places in his care.

Spring Creek is unified as a theologically conservative congregation without being contentious, so it is essential the incoming pastor remain steadfast in honoring Spring Creek's clear foundation as a biblically-centered church that is bold in declaring the inerrant truth of Scripture, yet with a gracious and loving approach. The right pastor for Spring Creek will teach the whole counsel of Scripture and will be unapologetic as he stands in the truth of God's Word. He also will be thoughtful, winsome, and kind with his communication, building bridges with those who do not yet know Jesus and taking opportunities to share the hope of the Gospel with those who need Him. He will not shy away from the hard topics, difficult passages, or tough conversations, but will eagerly and courageously engage others with an

authentic desire to communicate God's truth with love, and to see people come to know the redemptive power of Christ in every life and circumstance.

People matter at Spring Creek and the Lead Pastor will set the example for this value in attitude and action. It is essential the incoming Lead Pastor be relational. He will be able to relate with a full range of ages, care to know them personally and spiritually, and treat everyone with dignity and respect. Whether in the church or in the community, the ideal pastor for Spring Creek is someone others find approachable and accessible; someone who will personally engage and listen without looking around to see who else might have entered the room. As he enters into the church, he will take the initiative to get to know people, remembering their names or the names of their children, and expressing interest in them. He will invest himself in cultivating relationships with staff and leaders. While he cannot be physically present with everyone, he will understand the strategic value of personally visiting some members of the congregation when they are in moments of joy or crisis, and he will take initiative to do so. He will champion the value that all people matter, and he will be drawn to the opportunity to pastor people of all ages, including children and widows.

Leading a growing, multi-faceted, multi-generational congregation requires both relational and organizational skill and experience. Ideally, the incoming pastor will understand from experience how to navigate the challenges and complexities of church leadership dynamics. He will be an effective communicator both in the pulpit and throughout the organization of the church. He will be articulate, wise, consistent, and careful with his words. He will know how to lead, collaborate, and empower other leaders in their area of expertise. The ideal candidate will appreciate, value and empower the highly qualified staff around him, but will accept ultimate responsibility for the continued health and well-being of the church as a whole. He will not micro-manage, but will establish healthy rhythms of communication, accountability and reporting to ensure he understands the state of the church, its ministries and leadership.

He will also enjoy bringing the staff together to pray, dream, assess, stretch, and explore ways God might desire to further advance the good things happening at Spring Creek. He will be a unifying leadership presence for the staff; one that encourages faith, teamwork, excellence, and innovation in order to bring out the very best in people as they work together to realize and implement the vision God provides. He will challenge and stretch the team to innovate, dream and advance the work of the Kingdom together in fresh, meaningful ways. He will strive to be an emotionally and physically healthy leader and will uphold the high standards of leadership character and conduct currently in place at Spring Creek.

As a leader of leaders, he will find joy in developing and empowering the leaders around him. He will understand how to effectively draw out the potential in others and help them realize it. He will also possess insight and understanding. He will be able to read the room and recognize dissonance, issues or potential conflicts before they loom large. Proactively addressing dissonance or underlying issues is one of the ways Spring Creek's leadership has remained so healthy throughout the years. The incoming Lead Pastor must be willing and able to step into the breach of conflict, hurt or fear in order to foster understanding, reconciliation or healing. This kind of courageous leadership is required to protect the body from potential division or disunity.

The blessing of stepping into a ministry that has been well-led cannot be underestimated. As the church looks to the future, the incoming Lead Pastor of Spring Creek Church will have the unique opportunity to have a positive, shaping influence on a ministry that is healthy, faithful and positioned well for more. By God's grace, exciting days are ahead.

Ideal Candidate Qualifications - These descriptions represent the ideal experience or background:

- Clear alignment with the core beliefs of Spring Creek Church found [here](#).
- No less than ten years of full-time Lead/Senior Pastor ministry experience in a multi-staff setting with regular preaching opportunities in a church or campus context of >1,000 attendees. This will include preaching, leading, planning, collaborating, delegating, equipping, overseeing, and developing paid staff and unpaid volunteers.
- Master of Divinity or equivalent theological master's degree is preferred, with a master's degree required.
- Meets the Biblical qualifications as outlined in Titus 1:5-9, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- Exceptional Bible-based preaching, teaching and communication skills. A genuine love and passion for the Lord, the Gospel and people.
- Inspiring leader who empowers others and leads with a shepherd's heart.
- Demonstration of a mature faith and wisdom that has been tested and proven through faithful discipleship and personal intimacy with Jesus.

Inquiry Process

If after reading this description you have interest in the Lead Pastor position at Spring Creek Church, and you feel you meet the qualifications for the role, you are invited to submit the following information for consideration:

1. Your **resume** or CV (**in Word format only**)
2. Links to at least three videos of **sermon messages**. Please direct us to specific messages (dates and context) you feel best represent your teaching/preaching style and talent.
3. The **results of any personal assessments** you have completed (CliftonStrengths; DiSC; Meyers-Briggs, etc.) in the last three years.
4. **Five references** (one supervisor, two peers, one subordinate and one of your choice). These references will be contacted later in the process with your prior approval.
5. **Written responses to the following questions** (prepared and attached in a Word document).
 1. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ. Tell us how you came to personal faith as well as your journey into full-time ministry.
 2. What is it about the opportunity at Spring Creek Church that attracts you to this position? What excites you most about this role?
 3. What are two or three of your core strengths, and how have you used your core strengths to positively shape or advance the church you led?
 4. Tell about a time when you initiated something new or improved in a context that had a long history behind it. What did you do and how did you do it?
 5. What are the key characteristics of a church that would align well with you and your preferred approach to ministry and leadership?

Please submit your information to:

Kara Bubar, Search Associate

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