

Pastor Erik Gustafson

Erik Gustafson has a passion to see the local church impact the life of a community with the presence of Jesus. With over 17 years of ministry experience, Erik draws from his spiritual gifts of evangelism and teaching to challenge God's people towards spiritual growth and maturity. His heart's desire is to see the local church take the gospel of Jesus into everyman's world within the flow of their everyday lives. In light of this, one of his favorite phrases is "the church is not the building, but rather the people of God, thus you shouldn't have to leave life to go to church!"

As a former Youth Pastor, Worship Leader, and now Senior Pastor, Erik has a unique ability to articulate a relevant gospel utilizing Pop Culture to teach the timeless truths of God's Word. As a worship leader, Erik has written, recorded, and produced songs on three different worship CD's. Erik is currently working on developing a Small Group Leadership School at Lake of the Woods Church which will train and empower students to lead holistic small groups in local homes and 3rd Place communities. His desire is to forge a "culture of leadership" within the local church that will effectively minister to both the needs of the LOWC family as well as the surrounding community in the Champaign County area.

Lake of the Woods Church in Mahomet, Illinois is the central ministry home for Erik & Christie along with their two children. They joined Lake of the Woods Church in January of 2005 and are excited to see what God is going to do through their lives to impact the area with the saving gospel of Jesus.

LOWC History

Erik Gustafson was brought on as Senior Pastor of Lake of the Woods Church on January 9, 2005. Joining Erik was his wife Christie and their two children, Austin and Alexis. Erik had served as an Associate Pastor for 14 ½ years at Lake Michigan Christian Center in Bridgman, Michigan in the areas of youth ministry, worship, small groups, bible school teacher, and evangelism.

Pastor Erik and Christie bring a strong vision for outreach, teaching, and worship within the local church. It is their heart's desire to see the water level of the Holy Spirit's activity rise not only within the local church but also within the hearts and lives of those in the surrounding community. One of the ways that they see this vision realized is through the vehicle of a vibrant small group ministry led by capable leaders from the LOWC family. In the fall of 2006 they launched the *Small Group Leadership School* with the purpose of training and empowering small group leaders. They had the privilege of seeing the first 11 students graduate in the spring of 2007. The purpose of this school is to create a missional "culture of leadership" within the LOWC family that strives to take the gospel into the flow of everyday life. Currently, Lake of the Woods Church has four small groups that meet throughout the Mahomet community with more on the way.

Since January of 2005 numerous facility refurbishments have taken place which have greatly enhanced the overall look of the LOWC campus. In the winter of 2006 the *Extreme Makeover* project was started to upgrade the children's wing and the foyer area. As a result of this project, the children's wing and the foyer received a significant facelift that have been very much appreciated. A significant milestone was reached when the parking lot was finally paved in May of 2006. While still in progress, the *Extreme Makeover* initiative has gone a long way in upgrading the look of the LOWC campus to the Mahomet community.

There have been many changes that have taken place over the years at Lake of the Woods Church. From its humble beginnings as a bible study at Candlewood to its present location at Trailside Drive, Lake of the Woods Church is still a refreshing place to grow. With the timeless truths of the Scriptures as its foundations and the wind of the Holy Spirit as its motivation, the people of Lake of the Woods Church are greatly anticipating the next chapter in their history within the Mahomet community.