

Willow Creek Names New Senior Pastor to Replace Founding Pastor Bill Hybels

Vanderbloemen, the leading Christian executive search firm, is pleased to announce that the elders of Willow Creek Community Church have selected David Dummitt as their new senior pastor.

When asked about Willow Creek's selection of Dummitt, William Vanderbloemen, CEO of Vanderbloemen, said, "I've known Dave for many years. His humble spirit and his focus on the local church—rather than a national platform—is one of many reasons we believe he is precisely the right person to lead Willow in this moment. Every step of the way, during the search, we saw that God was bringing Willow and Dave together to start this exciting new chapter. He is the right leader for this great, influential congregation."

Dummitt comes to Willow Creek after founding and leading 2|42 Community Church in Michigan for the last 12 years. He started the church with a group of friends, and it has grown to an average weekly attendance of over 10,000 at seven campuses across Michigan. Their weekly online attendance has accelerated even more during the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine period.

Pastor Dummitt commented, "I'm grateful for the role Vanderbloemen has played in helping my family and me find a new home at Willow Creek. Their ability to find points of connection and to navigate candidates and a church through the placement process is invaluable; they helped both Willow and me ask the right questions along the way."

Spread over eight campuses throughout Chicagoland, Willow Creek led a worldwide movement that spurred churches to rethink how to attract people to church for the first time or

to come back to church after becoming disaffected with Christianity. Willow Creek's growth into one of the largest churches in the U.S. was notable, and their work shaping the way churches have led and shaped their services has been felt on every continent. It has often been called America's most influential congregation, and at many points, it has been the nation's largest.

Dummitt commented on his longstanding admiration and affection for Willow Creek: "As a freshman at Wheaton College, I'd heard about this church that was doing creative things to reach lost people. We attended, and I can almost point to the seats we sat in that day. The service opened with a Beatles song. I was a church kid who played in the handbell choir at my church. That service opened my eyes to new ways of doing church. I don't know of a pastor or leader in America who has not in some way been shaped by the ministry of Willow Creek."

When asked about the search, William Vanderbloemen, founder of Vanderbloemen, said: "Serving Willow Creek in this search is at the same time one of the highest honors and most humbling tasks I've faced in my many years of helping churches and values-focused organizations find their leaders. Willow changed the way I led my own church when I was a pastor, and it has forever changed the way church is done in the U.S. and throughout the world."

Willow Creek was founded by Bill Hybels in 1975. He led the church for 43 years until retiring early amid multiple allegations of misconduct. The controversy left the church with lower attendance, giving, and multiple staff and elder resignations.

Vanderbloemen commented, "We have completed hundreds of senior pastor searches for churches of all sizes. We have consistently done searches for churches in trauma. But Willow was a perfect storm of a massive congregation experiencing seismic trauma that only God could have led them through. I

applaud the elders for their faithfulness, for their courage, and for their heart to follow Jesus into the next chapter of Willow.”

Search team chairperson Barb Butz said, “I am grateful for the partnership of Vanderbloemen during Willow’s pastoral search process. Their prayerful and pastoral approach, coupled with their active listening and responsiveness, provided invaluable assistance in one of the most important staffing decisions in the life of our church.”

Mr. Dummitt will begin work in early June. For more information, go to .