

Dear Fellow Little River Baptist Churches,

We are Josh and Betty Stewart. We, with our highly enthusiastic 9 year old, Malcolm, and precious 3 year old, Lydia, have been at Point Church Fort Bragg in western Harnett County from very near the beginning of its launch. The lead planter started gathering a core team in early 2019 and Josh joined the team as the associate church planter in August of that year. As a proud Harnett County native growing up at Antioch Baptist Church and serving at Holly Springs Baptist, I (Josh) have been to many Little River Baptist Association churches and annual meetings where the Great Commission is taught and mission endeavors and giving are celebrated. We experienced that generosity and passion first hand as LRBA churches pulled together to help plant Point Church Fort Bragg. We can enthusiastically say that Jesus has built his church and we have learned so much! Today, Point Church is thriving and it's been a team effort. For the last couple of years a desire has grown in our hearts to multiply our efforts. Truthfully, planting another church domestically or internationally has always been a hope among the leadership at Point Church. After seven years at Point Church—and ten years as IMB missionaries in Indonesia before that—God is now leading us to Vancouver, Canada.

Vancouver, Canada is one of a few cities the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has identified as a “Send City” because of its ethnic diversity, highly secular population, and awesome potential to impact unreached nations with the gospel. Roughly 200 language groups are represented among metro Vancouver’s 3 million residents. Over half of its residents (52%) report having no religion. Just the kind of place LRBA churches have set their sights on to “make disciples of all nations” in the past, and just the kind of place Betty and I are drawn to. In God’s providence, we spent four months there for training before moving back to Indonesia in 2012. Burquitlam (ber-QUIT-luhm) is an area within metro Vancouver with a growing population of young professionals and families with children. Nearly half of its residents (45%) were born outside of North America. When we traveled there in April we encountered many stroller moms, students, and a large group of construction workers in a grocery store cafe. Burquitlam is the focus of the city’s condo and commercial development reflecting the need for living spaces as people pour into the area for its relative affordability and convenience for those commuting into the city center for work. We toured a YMCA near the skytrain station when we were there and hope to build a partnership with the leadership as it’s clearly a community hub in Burquitlam.

The vision for a multi-ethnic church committed to scripture, discipleship, and bringing the transforming power of Christ into their community has solidified in our hearts. We want to invite you into a partnership for the church that Jesus will build in Burquitlam.

We received the NAMB Church Planter endorsement in April—another answer to prayer! We praise God for how He’s already moved in the hearts of believers as a few churches and individuals have begun to partner with us in prayer and in giving financial resources. Our target is to move by the end of 2026, so we’re busy sharing the vision and securing funds and partners. Our visa costs will total around \$3600. To qualify for a Canadian “religious worker” visa we need to prove a minimum annual salary of \$70,000 Canadian dollars (US\$49,626). We plan to host sports camps and English clubs to reach our new community and those outreach events require funds as well. Our plan is to spend our first 6-12 months with a healthy Baptist church near Burquitlam while getting settled and learning the culture. The early stages of planting a new church will involve recruiting local Christians to form a core team and a lot of evangelism, prayer, and community service, hopefully with occasional help from mission trip teams from our partnering churches.

“Making disciples of all nations” is a God-sized task and requires a vast network of churches and individuals. Betty and I would love your partnership in this next “deployment”. Imagine how amazing it would be to plant a multiethnic, Great-Commission-oriented church that’s reaching their lost neighbors and their extended family among unreached ethnic groups around the world. Now imagine doing that *together* for King Jesus’ glory! If you or your church are interested in learning more or partnering with us in praying, giving, or going, we’d love to share with you in person. Feel free to email us at joshua.t.stewart@gmail.com and we can set something up!

