

Winfield Gross

Candidate for

Associate Pastor of Youth and Sports Outreach Position



Thank you for the opportunity to be considered as a candidate for the position of Associate Pastor of Youth and Sports Outreach. In May of this year, I completed my M.Div at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. My time at Southeastern was so fruitful that I have decided to continue my studies through the Th.M program with hopes to continue into a Ph.D in 2027.

My wife and I serve as volunteers in the student ministry of our current church. Although I have only served in a volunteer capacity, I have been shepherding the same 15-20 students consistently through their 7th-10th grade years. This shepherding has included leading weekly Bible studies, planning and leading group hangouts, attending extracurricular events at schools, and attending summer camp/weekend retreats. It has been a blessing to see students experience the love of Christ through my love for them. The reason I am submitting my application for this position is so that I can give more of my time, energy, and life to discipling youth for Christ. Moreover, I love how Good Hope Baptist Church has a sports outreach ministry as I loved playing baseball in middle school and ultimate frisbee in high school. Thanks for your consideration as you seek the right person to serve the elders, families, and youth of Good Hope Baptist Church.

EDUCATION:

-Master of Divinity in
Christian Ministry,
*Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary*
(2024)

-Bachelor of Music in
Music Education K-12
*Appalachian State
University*
(2019)

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE:

08/2022 – 08/2023

Small Group Leader • The Summit Church • Raleigh, NC

- Cultivated an environment where men can come together to study God's Word and encourage one another in Christ.

10/2021 – Present

Students Life Group Leader • The Summit Church • Raleigh, NC

- Leading Bible studies and counseling students through anxiety, loneliness, sexuality, etc.
- Fostered an environment where students experience genuine biblical community.
- Attended Sunday nights, retreats, and summer camp to intentionally disciple students.

08/2018 – 06/2019

College Student Leadership Team • Alliance Bible Fellowship • Boone, NC

- Collaborated with fellow college students for cultural analysis and to develop evangelistic strategies to reach our campus with the gospel.

Philosophy of Student Ministry

World history reveals that Christianity has gone through periods of growth and decline. It is safe to say that the global West, especially the United States, is experiencing a decline of Christianity. It has become normal to hear of kids who grew up in church, were baptized, and did the "Christian" thing just to leave once they become adults. So, what is going on? Certainly, some students leave because they were never truly a part of what was happening (1 Jn. 2:19), but others leave for legitimate reasons. So how should we respond as believers? We ought to pray knowing God is the one who saves (Jonah 2:9), and act trusting God will use our efforts for his purpose of redemption.

Acknowledging that students are primarily to be disciplined by their parents (Prov. 1:8-9; 13:24; 22:6, Eph. 6:4), student ministry can come alongside parents to provide opportunities to disciple students for Christ. My personal philosophy for student ministry is for students to experience and develop three things: biblical community, biblical literacy, and critical thinking skills. It is helpful to think of these as belonging to God's Community, knowing Christ through the Scriptures, and going on mission for Christ.

1. Biblical Community (Belong)

Humans are designed to find identity, purpose, and belonging within community. This means that it is essential for a student ministry to be a place where each student feels known, loved, valued, and needed. This healthy environment allows students to develop strong relationships with peers and adults. Strong relationships then unlock the door to authentic and fruitful Bible study, prayer, confession of sin, fellowship, and fun.

2. Biblical Literacy (Know)

We live in a time where people have little to no understanding of what the Bible actually says. Instead of relying on the opinions of others and secondhand information, student ministry should equip students to read and comprehend the Bible for themselves. Not only does this enable students to interact with what God has revealed in the Scriptures for a lifetime, but it protects them from misinformation about God or the Bible.

3. Critical Thinking Skills (Go)

Regardless of the subject, it is unwise to believe everything you hear. Rather than creating students who can regurgitate the "right" convictions that they may or may not hold, student ministry ought to teach students how to think through what they believe. If we believe the Bible to be inerrant and infallible, which we do, we ought to create an environment that invites open and honest conversation about what the Bible says. Difficult spiritual conversations not only reveal that Christianity is the most coherent and existentially satisfying worldview, but they exemplify how to have loving and charitable conversations with those who disagree (Ps. 127:5).

Schedule for January 4th and 5th

Saturday, January 4th Winfield and Rachel will meet at:

- 9:00 am with the Deacons in G106
- 9:45 am with the Student Ministry Team in G103
- 10:30 am with the Sports Team in G104
- 11:00 am with the Students and Parents in the Student Area
- 12:00 pm with the Church Family for a light lunch and meet and greet

Sunday, January 5th Winfield and Rachel will meet at:

- 9:00 am with the Students
- 10:30 am with the Church Body during the Worship Service
- Church vote after the service

Please contact the Youth Pastor Search Team with any questions

BEFORE the candidate weekend at

studentpastorsearch@goodhopechurch.org

and a member of the team will reach out to you.