



Dear Friends,

The season of Dwell is coming to an end.

While this decision has been difficult and is the result of much prayer, counsel, and grieving, know that we believe that this is actually cause for joy. We are following God into this new journey and are trusting His plan. There are many reasons to praise Him even in this. There has been no scandal. We are not in desperation. We are not unhealthy. These are all too often the endings with church plants. We are not even completely out of money or people to continue Dwell. Having this freedom of choice allows us to trust God in His prompting in this. We can also praise God that Dwell was here for a season, just like every church that has ever existed. By some statistics, we lasted longer than 80% of most urban church plants. The transience of modern life and of our city means that we were a church for a season for so many people. There were even people who came and left Denver amid Dwell's lifespan. For them, Dwell will live forever as their Denver church. This reminds us that nothing lasts forever, save the Kingdom of God, and until He returns, every church is temporary. Most of all, we can praise God that through our efforts - yours, mine, and everyone who was a part of Dwell - people came to know Jesus, walk more closely with Him, and find a family, defined by the love of God, and committed to giving it away. We were faithful to create Dwell, now we must be faithful to end it.

The question "Why?" is not a simple one to answer. There are a lot of reasons why Dwell should not have lasted this long. We never had enough money or enough people, it seemed. From a purely strategic point of view, Dwell was not built to last in an incredibly expensive, transient, and unchristian place. More importantly, though, I have come through years of growth, processing, and prayer to believe two things. One, the people that currently comprise Dwell will be able to serve the Kingdom of God more effectively and with more joy and long-term sustainability as parts of other churches. Individual members of the Dwell family have so much to offer the Church. I believe that to perpetuate Dwell would have resulted in burnout, frustration, and a limitation of the ways in which men and women could use their gifts and talents for the Body of Christ. Sometimes, like in the book of Acts with the early Church, God scatters so he can build (Acts 8). Two, and perhaps more importantly, in preaching through Exodus, I believe that God revealed His truth to me through His word. In Exodus 33, the people of God are called to leave Sinai. This was the place where God had given them the 10 Commandments and worked mightily in and through them. It was a true mountaintop experience. In calling them to abandon that place, the people wept and prayed. Moses went to God asking to know His ways. God responded to him, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." I believe that God is walking Dwell through the same painful process and that His promises are the same.

So much that is beautiful is also temporary. A flower in bloom, a baby's laughter, falling in love, and so much more about life is miraculously wonderful because it is short-lived. This is how I have come to feel about Dwell.

Many of you will be concerned for me, my family, and our future. For me, JRR Tolkien captures my sentiment perfectly: "There are some things that it is better to begin than to refuse even though the end may be dark." Surely there were numerous tears and failures along the way. There were also moments of great joy. I have never been, and perhaps will never be again, so wholly invested into a singular task and calling. The challenges that it brought to my family and me have been great. However, the growth, learning, and beauty that it has brought to our lives has been even greater. I think I now better understand Paul when he claims to have suffered much to gain Christ.

Our family is processing this transition and trusting the Lord for our future. They too have suffered much for this church, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope (Romans 5:3-4). It has built in all of us a hardiness and contentment that will serve us for the rest of our lives. Simultaneously, we look forward to a season of rest and to resetting our family rhythms as we walk into what God has next for us. On that note, we do not yet know what the future will hold. The other elders at Dwell have graciously chosen to give us and our worship leader a severance that will give us some space to make a wise decision about what is next. Past that, we are not sure. I love serving the Church, and we love Colorado. We say with Moses, "if Your presence will not go, we will not go." If you are wondering how you can help in this time, please keep us in your prayers as often as you can.

Finally, I want to say thank you. If you are receiving this email, that means that you have been a part of the Dwell story and that the people who came to know Jesus, the people who grew in discipleship, and the countless other lives that were changed in big and small ways are partly because of you. My life and the Kingdom of God will forever be shaped by your kindness, generosity, prayers, encouragement, and love.

I will say with Paul:

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

If you have any questions about the process or dissolution of Dwell, feel free to reach out to Dwell elder, Wade Lee, at wade.lee2020@gmail.com.

Our final gathering will be on May 18th and will culminate in a celebration of the life of Dwell. If you have been a friend to Dwell and are able to make it, we would love to have you join us that Sunday.

Grace and Peace,
Josh Cook