

# Ian Havercroft & Forest City Bible Church

## Announcement

This news item contains three sections:

1. The script from the family chat, shared with the RBC congregation on Sunday May 3.
2. Timelines of how we got here and possible next steps.
3. An FAQ section for further clarification.

### 1. REDEMPTION CHURCH FAMILY CHAT SCRIPT

*(Expanded slightly from what was delivered in the service on May 3, 2026.)*

Welcome to our family chat. It has been a while since we have had one of these. These are just brief updates, on a Sunday, for our church family about happenings within the family of Redemption. Let me start by saying that there is no terrible news coming, but there are changes – exciting and challenging changes as a part of our commitment to our mission, so please relax and track with me.

Last September during our fall kickoff, we shared with you our commitment to multiplication. Multiplication is at the heart of our mission: **to make disciples** – the great commission, which Jesus has given every church. “Go and make disciples of all people” – by preaching, proclaiming, and sharing the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Our elders are fully committed to living out this God-given mission of making disciples, which is why multiplication is front and center for us. Making disciples means multiplying disciples, multiplying leaders, and multiplying churches.

This Great Commission call to make disciples always involves some risk and many unknowns. It’s natural for us to want to play it safe and stay comfortable as an elder team, as a staff, and as a church. But a life and ministry of faith requires stepping beyond our comfort zone. Without risk, there is no faith. Faith grows when we embrace risk and trust God with the unknowns.

Remember when God called Abraham in Genesis 12:1: “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house (meaning – all that you know and are comfortable with) to the land that I will show you (in other words: somewhere new, with many unknowns and risks).’”



Hebrews 11:8 reflects on this moment, saying: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

**Going not knowing.** That is the beautiful, faith-filled adventure we are called to! Not having all the answers, not knowing exactly how it will turn out, yet stepping out in obedience to God’s call. Going, doing, giving, serving, sending, sacrificing. Going without knowing — that’s where real faith begins!

As an elder team, as a staff team, and as a church, we have chosen to embrace this ministry of multiplication — a ministry that regularly calls all of us to some risk, and much faith. This means we must go. We must send others to go. We must seek, together, to fulfill the great Commission. Going, baptizing, teaching, to see the kingdom of Christ expand.

As a part of this mission of making disciples, multiplying disciples, multiplying leaders, and multiplying churches, we have, for many years now, been inviting you, our congregation, to leave Redemption and to go to one of three other churches in or around the city of London to help strengthen those other churches as they went through a season of what we call revitalization — seeking to become a healthy church again. We have asked many to go, many have, and we have seen God do amazing things through those who went!

When we first partnered with Gospel Fellowship Chapel in St. Thomas (a church of about 100 people that was struggling back in early 2019), we asked our people who lived south of the 401 to consider switching over to that church, in need of some help. We sent leaders, we sent an elder, and we saw about 115 of our people go. We invested around \$300,000 in that work. Today, that church, now called Redemption St. Thomas, has grown to over 600 people, has two Sunday services, and is healthy and vibrant — even looking to plant another church, praise God!

We’ve also seen a number of our people move to Knollwood Baptist Church, at our request, on the east side of London on Cheapside Street and we’ve invested at least \$300,000 in their ministry. We are excited to see Knollwood becoming a healthy and growing church.

We also have asked and seen many of our people leave here and join Forest City Bible Church on Wonderland Road North (north of Fanshawe). Our commitment to multiplication, as part of the Great Commission, is to help churches going through a revitalization to get healthy after a season of trial and loss. We believe we must do either that or plant new churches, for we are all about: multiplying disciples, multiplying leaders, and multiplying churches!

**Today, we want to share an exciting next step** in our commitment to multiplication in relation to Forest City Bible Church, on the north side of London.

Forest City Bible Church (FCBC) is a church of about 80–100 people with a team of godly elders and a pastor. They are part of the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada (AGC) – so not the same association we belong to, but that doesn’t matter to us. They currently have one staff member — their senior pastor, David Driver. David has recently shared with his elders that he and his family will be moving back to Australia, his home country, in early October. David and the elders told their congregation this last Sunday. It is hard to see David leave, as he is a good man, who the people greatly love at FCBC.

We’ve been in conversation with FCBC since last summer about how we can partner more deeply with that church as part of our shared commitment to the Great Commission. Denominations don’t divide us here — whether AGC, GCC, or Fellowship Baptist — because we are all gospel-centered churches with the same heart: making disciples for Jesus. So, we have been communicating with their elders for many months about next steps for them, and through our increasing partnership, how we can help them.

**Here is where faith and risk meet for us — this is our update, an exciting and terrifying update:**

We are planning to send one of our pastors, **Ian Havercroft**, to serve as the new lead pastor at FCBC, Lord willing, and if approved by the people of FCBC.

Let that sink in for a moment — this is a big announcement. Ian and Amy are deeply loved here at Redemption. They and their children have been a vital part of everything God is doing in our church family since they arrived in 2021. Ian has served as a key pastor on our staff, a gifted preacher on our Sunday team, an elder, and a significant leader and shepherd in our ministry and we know all of you who know them, love and respect them.

Ian and Amy have been praying about this for some time. Our elders have prayed with them, and the elders at FCBC have as well. Together, we all sense God’s clear call on their lives, and we fully support and confirm this step of faith — leaving here and going there.

Of course, this is bittersweet. None of us want Ian and Amy to leave, and they didn’t want to go either. But our shared commitment to multiplication and the Great Commission led us all to prayerfully consider this — and we have seen God move. They are excited about this call by God for this new role and church, and we are excited to see multiplication happening. FCBC is a separate church from us and will continue to be so. They have their own elder leadership. We are partnered with them, but just by relationship and friendship in the gospel.

The more you learn about this gospel commitment to multiplication, the more you will learn this often requires churches to **give away their best**. That’s exactly what we are doing. We are sending some of our very best, as we have done in the past as well.

The FCBC elders shared this news with their congregation last Sunday — of David’s departure and Ian’s consideration as new lead pastor. During May and June, Ian will be spending much of his time at FCBC — several days a week and many Sundays — so their church family can get to know him, Amy, and their children better. On a Sunday in early June, their church will vote on Ian becoming their new lead pastor. If affirmed, he would officially join their staff late in July.

We are also investing in other practical ways to help them with their commitment to revitalization. We hope to help them financially to hire a part-time worship leader and provide financially, if needed, for a part-time administrative assistant.

**And this is where you come in, our church family.**

1. **First and foremost, please pray.** Pray for God’s clear leading in all of this. Pray that if this is His will, He would confirm it in the hearts of the FCBC elders and congregation when they vote. Pray for Ian and Amy and their children and pray for all of us.
2. This may seem a strange request, many of you have heard us ask this many times, but once again, **we are asking some of you to prayerfully consider moving with Ian and Amy to FCBC!** Some of you may sense God inviting you to make Forest City Bible Church your new church home this spring or summer. To plug in as members there, to commit to serve, to give financially, and to help this church flourish for the glory of Christ.
3. Finally, for those not moving to Forest City with Ian, **would you consider how God will help you pick up the needs that will be ours, with leaders and people and donations moving to FCBC.** Would you consider giving more financially here at Redemption or start giving — if you haven’t been, as we will see a drop in our donations with the move of many to that church as well as a loss of leaders and workers in our ministry here.

Well, our time is done. This is just an introduction. We know you may have questions! We’ve posted a helpful PDF in the News section of our website that provides more details about this plan, and we will keep you updated as this moves forward.

We are both excited and more than a little nervous about what this means for our church family. Losing Ian and others who may go with him will create real gaps in our ministries, leadership, and giving. But we believe God has called us to this step of faith. As Ian and others go, it will strengthen FCBC, expand the Kingdom of Christ, and create fresh opportunities right here at Redemption for new leaders to rise up and for others to step forward in new ways.

This is what walking by faith looks like — trusting God in both the risk and the kingdom advancement — going not knowing! Ian and Amy will be here at the front, to my left, as we conclude, so please come up and talk with them. They will also be here several Sundays in May and June, and we will have a proper commissioning and sending on a Sunday in June, so there will be more time to connect with them, if you wish.

**Let me pray to close our time together this morning.**

## **2. TIMELINES**

*(Leading up to the announcement and going forward from the announcement.)*

First, how we got here:

- February 2025: Norm trained with a handful of other GCC senior pastors, in Kansas City, led by Dave Harvey on the new material calling all GCC churches to recommit to the idea of multiplication being at the heart of the great commission – our mission as a church, to make disciples.
- Saturday April 12, 2025: Norm takes the RBC elders through the material. This multiplication material is seen as a Biblical and very timely help to RBC, refocusing us on our mission of making disciples, and calling us to a greater walk of faith, including embracing the risk associated with that, to give ourselves increasingly to multiplying disciples, multiplying leaders, and multiplying churches.
- April – May, 2025: Elders continue to discuss and pray about this. Beginning April 12, Ian sensed a press from God toward the idea of multiplying churches, and this was discussed and prayed about many times.
- May 2025: Norm takes the RBC staff through the multiplication training material over 1.5 days. It resonates deeply with our staff. All are asked to work toward implementing it in their 2025/26 September to June ministry plans.
- The RBC elders/staff agree, our focus on multiplying churches should be focused on the revitalization situations we have been involved in, rather than planting. We agree, as elders, to start to pray about planting in or around London, but the primary focus is to continue to partner with, and seek to help, Knollwood Baptist Church and Forest City Bible Church.
- RBC continues to ask, from the pulpit, for our people to consider moving to one of those churches (and a one-time request in the summer of 2025 to consider RBC St. Thomas, as they were starting two services, but numerous requests for Knollwood and FCBC). We saw a number move to each of these three churches during 2025.
- 2025: David Driver, lead pastor of FCBC, sensing a call back to his home country of Australia, praying and seeking God’s leading with his wife Jess and some trusted mentors.
- Spring/summer 2025: David shares with two RBC pastors his sense of this call back to Australia, with his concern for FCBC and who would replace him. Asked for

prayer, thoughts, and would it be possible for a pastor to consider moving over. David asked about Ian. Ian and RBC elders began to pray about this with David.

- Fall 2025: David shares with FCBC elders this understanding of God's call back to Australia, that he will be leaving, likely in 2026, and he shares his concern for his replacement and the well-being of FCBC. In this David opens up to the elders the idea of Ian Havercroft being considered and engaging RBC elders in this process.
- Late fall 2025: Numerous discussions and meetings between the FCBC elders and the RBC elders, David, and Ian. Ian and Amy begin to seriously pray to see if God is leading in this, as do both elder teams.
- Late winter 2026: Ian and Amy sense God's call, RBC elders affirm this and communicate it to FCBC elders. Both elder teams meet together, some concerns, ideas, and plans were shared about how this could help continue the revitalization going on at FCBC, support David moving back home, and see the gospel advance better in our city and beyond.
- April 2026: Decision was made by both elder teams, Ian and David, to proceed with this plan, introducing it to FCBC congregation on Sunday April 26, and to RBC congregation on Sunday May 3.

Second, possible next steps:

- May – June: Ian spends 1-2 days a week at FCBC mid-week to connect with David, the elders, to meet people, get a better understanding of the church and the needs.
- May – June: Ian and Amy spend over half the Sundays at FCBC, preaching some, meeting with people, helping with the services, etc.
- May 17: FCBC elders will hold a congregational meeting to allow their people to formally meet, ask questions of, and hear more from Ian and Amy – their story, Ian's vision for the church, thoughts on changes needed, about his theological and methodological positions and how he would lead, about his preaching, etc.
- May 24: Ian would formally "preach for a call".
- May 31: Ian will preach his last time at RBC.
- June 7: Vote by FCBC congregation on Ian as new lead pastor.
- June 21 (tentative): RBC has a thank you time in the morning services for the Havercrofts, and a laying on of hands, with prayer to send or commission them for this new role and ministry.
- First two weeks of July: Ian and Amy in Romania, with RBC team to serve our partner church in Sibiu, Romania. Ian and Amy staying a week to celebrate their anniversary.
- First full week back, likely July 27: Ian begins at FCBC on staff as lead pastor, David moves to associate role.
- June-July: Ian and others actively recruit RBC people to move over to FCBC to serve, give, supporting the revitalization efforts alongside the FCBC congregation.
- Summer: Ian to hire part-time worship leader and look at need for part-time admin help at FCBC and/or other staff needs.

- Summer – September: David helps Ian become familiar with all he needs, share the ministry, under Ian’s lead, work with elder team to implement changes required by revitalization.
- End of September: Goodbye to David and Jess as they head off, first of October, back to Australia.
- July 2026 – July 2028: If needed, RBC helps with finances at FCBC to ensure staff team can be supported.

### **3. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Is Ian leaving well, or are there some underlying issues?**

- There are no underlying issues. This is purely our commitment to multiplication.
- We did not approach Ian about leaving, but in hearing about David’s desire to move back to Australia, Ian started sensing a call and then was approached by FCBC to consider this role.
- Ian has kept our Elders in the loop this entire time, and our elders have been 100% supportive. Not because we want to lose Ian, but because we are committed to multiplication and sending our best.
- Ian is leaving extremely well. We love him, are so grateful for all his contributions here, and we know it was a difficult decision for he and Amy, as they and their kids love us. Please know, we are sending him and them, and this is their and our decision together.

#### **Who will replace Ian on staff?**

- Ian is candidating at FCBC for the lead role. Their elders believe he is their next lead pastor, as do we, but the people of FCBC need to vote on this, which will happen early in June. So, we are not yet in a place to begin the process of replacing Ian, as this is not final until then.
- We are fine going into summer, when small groups wrap up, and it’s a slower season with Ian’s role open.
- Right now, our focus is on a smooth transition of Ian moving over to FCBC.
- Please be praying with us for the right person to join our team as an Associate Pastor when we begin that process of filling this key role.

#### **What if Ian is not affirmed (by vote) at FCBC?**

- If Ian is not affirmed at FCBC, he will remain on staff, and part of the preaching team at Redemption.
- We will continue to believe, at some point in the future, God may call Ian back to a lead role as we see this in his future, as he does. He will not be actively looking to leave, as he wasn’t looking to leave to this role at FCBC, but will remain open to

God's leading. The needs in the church in Canada are overwhelming for trained, gifted, godly men... so how can we be selfish with Ian?

### **What about the preaching team? Will someone replace him on the preaching team?**

- As of June, our core preaching team will be Norm and Scott.
- We likely will bring in more guest speakers, and already have a few familiar faces planned for this summer. You can look forward to Stephen Yuille, who will be here in July, and Ken Gentzler, who will be here in August.
- We will work on how we will replace Ian on the Sundays he would have normally covered in September to June, knowing the Lord has many options for us in this.

### **What will happen to small groups, and the classes Ian runs?**

- As small groups and classes normally slow down over the summer, this is the ideal transition time.
- We will be looking to start things back up again this Fall as we have high quality, sacrificial, and committed small group leaders – a great team.
- We remain very committed to small groups being our primary form of discipleship.
- In the interim, if you have questions about small groups, please contact Ian through the end of June, and Norm after that.

### **Was Ian told to go, or did he volunteer?**

- The elders and Ian began talking about this in April 2024, as we re-committed to our multiplication mission of multiplying disciples, multiplying leaders, and multiplying churches.
- At that time, Ian sensed a call from God, over the next few years, to consider a possible move back to a lead role and our elders thought he would be a good fit for a revitalization situation, should one arise.
- Ian has 13 years of experience as a lead pastor, and has God's call on his life toward this.
- So Ian volunteered to go and we affirmed this fully, but it wasn't a quick or easy decision for him nor for the elders.
- The Havercroft family love our church, but praise God, they have a kingdom mindset and are willing to take this step of faith, something we all greatly respect.

### **Why is David leaving FCBC? Is it a healthy church?**

- David and his wife have always had a desire to return home to Australia, where David's family is. They will be heading back there early October. David will work alongside Ian, under Ian's leadership (assuming he is voted in) from July through to when David leaves.
- David loves FCBC and was committed to staying until they were able to find a replacement, so he sees this as a wonderful provision of the Lord. David was the first to actually suggest the idea of Ian replacing him.

- FCBC is healthy in terms of theology, commitment to the Word, and godly men as elders, but like our experience with St. Thomas, they recognize the need for some changes required for revitalization, and they are inviting and embracing the changes Ian will help them bring.
- Ian is working with us as well as the elders at FCBC to help establish a small staff team at FCBC to help provide some needed leadership as FCBC seeks to move that ministry forward.