



| FEBRUARY 2026 |

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses
entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Effective Training Today | Gospel Impact Tomorrow...

From its earliest days, the church has engaged in the essential work of identifying, training, and deploying pastors. And for years, this multiplication of ministry leaders has been one of our key priorities here at The Orchard. As someone who has benefited from this training personally, I am very thankful for the way our church has embraced this work with joyful generosity and encouragement.

Since 2008, God has allowed us to invest in the lives of nearly 60 pastoral interns and residents, who are now serving the church in a variety of capacities. Some stayed with us, like **Tom Olson**, **Josh Parsons**, and **me**. We have sent others to other churches in the US, like **Adam Magnuson** (Pastor of Westosha Lakes Church in Salem, Wisconsin), **Colton Tatham** (Lead Pastor of Sunflower Bible Church in Olathe, Kansas), and **Scoty Pasupuleti** (Associate Pastor of LifeSpring Community Church in Spring Grove, Illinois). Others have gone around the world, like **Kujtim Rushiti** and **Ilir Stambolliu** who are both now pastoring in Albania.

Our training model has taken on a variety of forms, but in 2021 we launched The Orchard School of Ministry to offer pastoral residents both theological training and mentored-ministry experience.

The Lord has blessed this work, and we have been able to raise up pastors with a lifelong commitment to godliness, a robust biblical doctrine, and competence in a wide range of ministry skills.

Inside this issue of At The Orchard, you will read more about our long-standing commitment to pastoral training the benefits of our current training program, as well as an exciting update about what is next for The Orchard Pastoral Residency.



Brad Wetherell, Senior Pastor
The Orchard



A PLACE TO GROW

2 Timothy

A BIBLICAL MANDATE

To faithfully practice the biblical mandate in 2 Timothy 2:2 is the heart of The Orchard's ongoing mission to raise up the next generation of preaching pastors.

For many years, this looked like working alongside Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to facilitate internships at The Orchard for seminary students.

Pastoral ministry is never learned in isolation; it is cultivated through hands-on experience, mentorship, and immersion in the life of the local church.

Every sermon prepared, every counseling session observed, and every leadership meeting attended helped to shape men who would faithfully proclaim Christ for decades to come.

By the late 2000s, Pastor Colin Smith began pulling a small group of staff and seminarians from The Orchard together for mentorship, teaching, and training. And throughout the 2010s, these efforts grew more intentional and substantial.

In the fall of 2021, we saw the need to officially launch The Orchard School of Ministry under the leadership of Pastor Colin Smith and Pastor Scott Lothey. This new initiative offered a three-year, full-time residency to future preachers, where completing a combination of immersion into pastoral ministry and a rigorous academic curriculum taught by our pastors would earn these residents a Certificate of Pastoral Ministry.

THE ORCHARD SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

Our first cohort of residents included Tim Banna, Ethan Hand, Peiman Khamisi, Scoty Pasupuleti, and Brent Steinke. Their collective character and work ethic immediately demonstrated the value of the program, not just for themselves but for The Orchard, as they served faithfully and joyfully at multiple campuses.

Not only that, they provided pulpit supply for more than ten local churches throughout Chicagoland, giving solo pastors in the area much needed support.

With both that first cohort and the residents that have followed in the years since, the support of our congregation for the school and these preachers-to-be has been a real highlight. There has been excitement on the weekends these young men preach and an eagerness to encourage them on their journey toward pastoral ministry. There have been dinner and coffee invitations that have helped our residents and their wives really feel at home here at our church.

One of the biggest highlights has been to see these residents graduate, find meaningful employment, and faithfully serve Christ and His people in local churches in the Northwest Suburbs of Chicago.

There is a rich history of pastoral training here at The Orchard, and we are excited for the way the Lord continues to lead us in living 2 Timothy 2:2 to the fullest extent.

Read first-hand from our most recent residents and how their experience with The Orchard School of Ministry has impacted their lives and future:





RYAN
COBURN

I grew up in a Christian home in Illinois and felt called to ministry as a teenager. After graduating from Moody Bible Institute, I faced uncertainty about where God wanted me. I prayed, applied to several churches, and asked God to open the right door. Almost immediately, He led me to The Orchard. This residency has been an incredible blessing—immersing me in every aspect of ministry: worship, youth, outreach, children, and senior ministry. I have learned that ministry is not about having all the answers about walking with people and growing together. This program combines theological depth with real-life experience. You do not just study the gospel—you live it.



MARC
KRASTIN

I grew up in South Africa and served in children's and youth ministry before feeling called to preach. When the economy worsened in South Africa, I prayed and applied to churches overseas. The Orchard welcomed my wife and me with incredible hospitality, making our transition to Chicago smooth. This residency has given me preaching opportunities, quarterly sermon reviews, and practical experience in pastoral care. Community is also a huge blessing—we meet twice a week to share, encourage, and grow together as future pastors. This program has strengthened my confidence in God's Word and prepared me for a lifetime of ministry.



KOSTAS
TRIGKAS

From preaching to premarital counseling and even putting babies to sleep in the nursery, this pastoral residency had it all. Both my wife and I believe this program was exactly what I needed to grow and learn the rhythms of ministry, and we praise God for that. I will especially cherish the times I was able to meet with each pastor—every one of them was approachable, supportive, and eager to help. Moving from Greece to Chicago and switching professions after ten years in dentistry was a big step, but in the end, it was completely worth it. I wholeheartedly recommend this program.



SAMUEL
WENNER

When I joined The Orchard School of Ministry, I expected to step into a residency role alongside our pastoral staff—and I knew it would be hands-on. What I didn't expect was just how transformative it would be. Over three years, I have preached, led services, and learned the behind-the-scenes work of ministry. I even found myself leading Awana, something I never thought I'd do—and now I love it! This program has given me practical experience in every area of church life and built a strong foundation for wherever God calls me next. If you want real, immersive training for pastoral ministry, this is it.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?

We give thanks for some of our former interns and residents who are serving locally and around the world.

Karolina Bajkowska	Missionary (Albania)
Ryan Coburn	Pastor of Worship and Student Ministries The Orchard Itasca
Peiman Khamisi	Pastor of Congregational Life The Orchard Barrington
Dillon Mack	Associate Pastor The Orchard Marengo
Richard McConnell	Pastor Blackrock Community Church (Ireland)
Josh Newton	Pastor of Student Ministries The Orchard Barrington
Kelsey Oldenkamp	Administrative Pastor Rock Hill Community Church (MN)
Meritt Raup	Pastor of Children and Student Ministries The Orchard Arlington Heights
Jeremy Schambach	Pastor of Children and Student Ministries The Orchard North Shore

GOSPEL TRAINING CONTINUES...

Identifying, training, and deploying pastors is as essential today as it has ever been.

Across the nation, churches are struggling to fill open pastoral positions, as fewer people pursue pastoral ministry, and nearly half of those who do leave the ministry within the first five years. So, for the good of our church and the church more broadly, we want to continue investing in faithful pastors who will serve for a lifetime.

This has been the heartbeat of The Orchard School of Ministry. And this fall, we are planning to launch an updated Pastoral Residency with the same purpose, but with one key addition: A new relationship with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School—also known as TEDS.

The Orchard and TEDS have a rich history. Our church was planted by TEDS faculty and students in 1953. We have been blessed to have TEDS students, faculty, staff, and board members in our congregation. We have even sent pastors to teach at TEDS and serve as its president. So, when TEDS announced that they would be closing their campus in Bannockburn and relocating to Canada, this change brought a real sense of sadness.

But God has a way of bringing joy from sorrow. And in His kindness, even though TEDS is moving more than 2000 miles away, we now have an opportunity to work more closely together than ever before.

Over the course of three years, our residents will complete a Master of Divinity Degree from TEDS while learning from and serving alongside our pastors. So, we will no longer call this The Orchard School of Ministry. We will call this The Orchard Pastoral Residency because TEDS is now our school.

Residents will take classes online, as well as at The Orchard Barrington, benefiting from in-person courses taught by TEDS faculty and our pastoral team. These courses will not only benefit our residents, but they will also be open to any TEDS students who want video courses as a part of their program.

Outside the classroom, our pastors will mentor residents as they take what they are learning and apply it in the areas of preaching, pastoral care, and leadership.

I could not be more excited about this opportunity. It brings the seminary and the church together in a shared effort to train pastors, blending rigorous theological education with mentored ministry experience. This is the best way to prepare for a lifetime of faithful ministry.

Please join me in praying for this initiative, asking the Lord to bless our efforts to train pastors for the good of the church and the glory of Christ.

UPCOMING



PREACHING SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 7/8

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS | BRAD WETHERELL
BARRINGTON | TOM OLSON
ITASCA | RYAN POTECKI
MARENGO | JUSTIN SEARLES
NORTH SHORE | JOSH PARSONS
VERNON HILLS | TOM YOON

FEBRUARY 14/15

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS | BRAD WETHERELL
BARRINGTON | TOM OLSON
ITASCA | RYAN POTECKI
MARENGO | JUSTIN SEARLES
NORTH SHORE | JOSH PARSONS
VERNON HILLS | GREG LAWRENCE

FEBRUARY 21/22

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS | BRAD WETHERELL
BARRINGTON | TOM OLSON
ITASCA | RYAN POTECKI
MARENGO | JUSTIN SEARLES
NORTH SHORE | JOSH PARSONS
VERNON HILLS | TOM YOON

FEBRUARY 28/MARCH 1

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS | BRAD WETHERELL
BARRINGTON | TREY SONNENBERG
ITASCA | RYAN POTECKI
MARENGO | DILLON MACK
NORTH SHORE | JOSH PARSONS
VERNON HILLS | TOM YOON



ROOTS | LIFE | FRUIT



SAVE THE DATE!



Vernon Hills
June 22-25



ORCHARD
kids week

Arlington Heights
June 8-11

Marengo
July 14-16



Barrington
June 15-19



THE ORCHARD
theorchard.church