

**August 2, 2015**  
**Thank You**

As it has now been just over a year since you got me for a pastor, I wanted to take a moment and reflect on all that has happened in that year. First off, let me just say that you have been a huge blessing in my life. Being your pastor and growing into that role has so far been a wonderful journey, and I fully expect that God will continue to bless me through you. It is hard for me to believe just how loving and accepting of me and my family you all have been. It warms my heart to know the love and care you all have for us.

For some of you, I know it was scary calling a guy/young man/newbie or whatever else I might have been straight from out of seminary. I know that some of you still had a bad taste in your mouths from a previous seminarian. But, you still took a leap of faith and entrusted the seminary, or rather the Holy Spirit working through the seminary to give you a good match. I pray every day that he did that in me, but for my part the Spirit couldn't have put me in a better church. You are all such a joy to serve and to shepherd. Don't get me wrong. I know things haven't always been smooth sailing, but honestly that is part of the fun that I am having. It is thanks to some of those bumps that I have seen God at work in a very real way here at *Tree*.

For others I know it was a real shock to learn that you were getting someone who didn't want to come to the "South." Well, let me clear that up once and for all (though I know the jokes will never stop, nor should they). For a Coloradan, Texas is not the

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South. To all y'all, I might be a Yankee, but to me Texas was never the "South." It was and will always be

to me "the wild west," or some days "the wild, WILD west." Yes, I realize it was primarily a Southern state in the Civil War. Yes, I realize that you can't really get further south and still be in the USA. But for me, Texas has always had more charm than a southern gentleman, been more fun than a bunch of rebels and more sense than most of the other states I've lived in (including Colorado). I could do with a little less heat, but then I wouldn't have anything to complain about. I am blessed to be an imported Texan.

I mentioned some of the bumps through which I saw God's blessings. One of those was of course when Aliyah got burned. That was rough, but through it I saw and experienced God's love in an extreme way. It makes me teary eyed to think of all the love you showered on my family and I during that fiasco. Further, you continue to shower us with love and blessings through things like the baby shower you gave us in honor of Anja's birth and all the meals you make us and all the time you devote to helping us for whatever reason.

All that being said, Amber and I want to thank you for everything that you have done for us. You all have become a very special part of our lives. You have become our family here in Texas, and we are honored and blessed to have you, to serve you and to share Christ's love with you. Thank you.

Pastor  &  