Hello, and thank you for taking the time to consider my application. My name is Jonah Stalsberg, and I currently serve as the Young Adults Pastor at New Heights Church in Fairfield, Ohio, where I have been for nearly the last two and a half years. My wife Jenna and I have been married for just over four years, and we welcomed our firstborn son, Charles, last year. In this short letter, I will explain the rationale for my application and my excitement about this opportunity.

I have begun searching for my next place of ministry for two primary reasons. First, my theological convictions have developed to the point that they no longer align with those of the denomination in which I was raised. Second, I believe the Lord has been leading me to pursue a ministry role with a stronger emphasis on discipleship within the local church.

Having grown up in the Assemblies of God for most of my early life and into young adulthood, the tenets of their theology were all that I was familiar with. As I finally entered the ministry, I began to study many of their theological foundations and found that I was not in agreement. This realization began a several-year process of ironing out my theology on the core beliefs as well as many denominational distinctives, culminating in my search for a new denomination, which has led me to where I am today. Because of my previous experience, I have been diligent in searching for our next church home to ensure we align with their convictions. I thoroughly read Midland's Statement of Faith, and I agree with their stances.

The second motivation behind my search is that I have discerned the Lord's leading to pursue a discipleship role in the local church. During my nearly five years of vocational ministry, I have served as a Youth Pastor before adding Young Adults to my portfolio in January 2025. Over the last few months, we began to pray and seek God's guidance in transitioning from youth ministry to a role that better suited my giftings. I want to emphasize that this was not a result of

the youth group struggling; in fact, the youth ministry was in the best place it had been since we began. Yet I knew that God had begun to give me a passion for discipleship ministry.

To this end, I invited the leadership at New Heights into this process and shared where I believed the Lord was leading me. They affirmed the path and set a timeline for my transition out of youth. Knowing that my next steps involved furthering my education, I began an M.DIV program at Liberty Theological Seminary, where I expect to graduate in the summer of 2027. Lord willing, I will continue my education by pursuing a D.Min in expository preaching from an ATS-accredited seminary – likely either MBTS or SEBTS.

At the end of May, I resigned my position as the full-time youth pastor, but I have remained part-time as the Young Adults Pastor, allowing me to focus on my M.DIV while we await our next ministry assignment. In this intermediary period, I am balancing a forty-hour corporate job, a full-time M.DIV, a part-time Young Adults pastor, and leading my family. Although this season is not easy, I am thankful for God's grace in giving me the energy to work hard in all these important pursuits.

I want to be clear that, despite the theological differences with the Assemblies of God, I maintain a great relationship with the entire pastoral staff at New Heights Church. This is evidenced by listing both the Lead Pastor and Executive Pastor as references on this application. They are aware of our search, and although they are sad to see us go, they are happy to bless us in pursuing God's will.

During my search for a new position, I discovered this listing on the Gospel Coalition website, and after finding a local church in the EFCA with a job description that aligns with my passions, I was excited to apply. I sincerely hope to stay in my next position for the foreseeable future, and I certainly see Midland Evangelical Free Church as a place to put down roots. I

would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this position with you, and perhaps the Lord will align our next steps. In Christ, Jonah