



WATERMARK

OWNER'S

MANUAL

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**HOW TO
SURVIVE & THRIVE
IN THE 2ND BEST PLACE
TO WORK IN DFW**



IMAGINE A CHURCH...

where every member is wholeheartedly pursuing full devotion to Christ. You find people whose lives demand belief in the existence and power of God. Every person can move forward in a relationship with Jesus. Hurting people can easily connect with life changing community. Everyone has access to teaching that transforms. members are discovering, developing, and deploying their gifts and resources for the Lord.

The community of believers is so authentic that it has favor with all people; so selfless that it creates a sense of awe; so empowered that creativity and excellence are seen everywhere; so obvious about the work of a sovereign God that others are drawn to a relationship with their Savior – a place where day by day the Lord adds to their number those who are being saved.

IMAGINE THIS BEING YOUR CHURCH.



HOW TO USE THIS OWNER'S MANUAL

The words on the previous page were penned by the families¹ who started this church back in November 1999, and they have served as a rallying cry ever since. Those words are what we believe this church can be, what this church should be, and what God wants all churches to be. If Watermark has any hope of being that kind of church, then we who have the privilege of leading this church must lead in wholeheartedly pursuing Jesus and aiming to be the community of believers described by the those words (which are ultimately informed by The Word). This is the awesome responsibility you now get to share in by being a part of the team. So, welcome to the family!

Being on staff here at Watermark is truly a unique experience and opportunity. We do not view ourselves as merely employees, co-workers, and bosses. We view ourselves as a family; a group of people who deeply love one another, who work hard at loving one another, and who together are on a perfect mission, serving a perfect God.

Striving to be a strong and healthy family has a tremendous influence on the staff culture. Technically speaking, **culture is the accumulation of behaviors, motivated by core values, that characterize a group of people**². Our culture can really be summarized by one word: love. We want love to be the core value that drives all our collective behaviors which characterize us. Strong relationships are at the core of every strong culture and if we want to strengthen and preserve our culture, then we must simply do what Jesus has called us to do: love one another³.

The late management guru Peter Drucker has been famously quoted as saying "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." We're not exactly sure why culture eats any meals or even how it could eat a meal, however, we believe

¹ The founding families were: (1) Martin & Linda Massinger, (2) Scott & Stephanie Polk, (3) Kirk & Cathy McJunkin, (4) Kyle & Tresha Kaigler, (5) Kyle & Christy Fagin, (6) Burke & Charla Autrey, (7) Todd & Julie Anders, (8) Jeff & Laurie Richardson, and (9) Todd & Alex Wagner.

² Props to George Barna for greatly influencing this technical definition. We read this definition in his book "Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary" (Wheaton, ILL: Tyndale House, 2005), 108.

³ John 13:34-35

Mr. Drucker was communicating something that we believe to be true: an organization's culture is MORE IMPORTANT than their strategy. We did not hire you because you are a "strategic fit," we hired you because we believe you are a person of character, you are competent, you are a good chemistry fit, and because we believe you are going to help preserve and improve our staff culture. Since we believe the culture is more important than the strategy, it is not a stretch to say maintaining and strengthening the staff culture is our strategy. Everything we do as a local church flows from our staff culture, but, we're getting a little ahead of ourselves...

With all that being said, the purpose of this owner's manual is to try and document what we believe makes the Watermark staff culture distinctive. If you are expecting a document full of Sunday-School Christian lingo, then you are going to be disappointed. We want to try and spell out what we think is really going on around here and what makes this place so special. We all know the answer is "Jesus" but let's be honest that answer isn't very specific. We want this handbook to be specific.

The pages that follow are our best attempt to document what we do, and more importantly, why we do it. We believe this information will help you survive and thrive on staff here at Watermark. This is called an owner's manual on purpose. Every staff member is expected to think and act like an owner. Therefore, we suggest you read this entire manual and keep it close by, especially during your first few months. However, in addition to reading this manual, be a learner, be an observer, and ask plenty of questions because culture is one of those things that is best "caught, not taught"⁴.

You need to know this stuff because it is now your responsibility to help keep the culture alive. Our culture is a living breathing thing, not something we encase in amber or hang on a wall. The staff have been working hard to keep this culture alive and well for twenty years. Now it's your turn to help us make this place better.

⁴ This manual will soon become your manual, so if you have an idea on how we can improve this, please let us know by emailing ownersmanual@watermark.org.

THE TRINITY OF TRUST

A GREAT CULTURE'S FOUNDATION

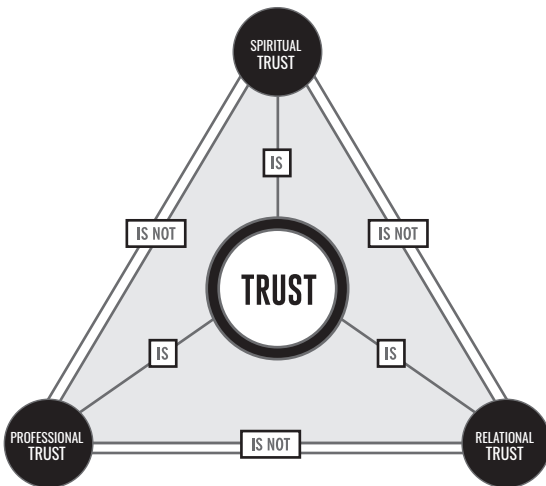




“Random quote from a semi-famous person about trust being super important.”

Unless you’ve been living under a rock, have no friends, or are a complete and total narcissistic sociopath, then you know that trust is the single most important ingredient in a healthy relationship. It should therefore come as no surprise that here at Watermark, trust is a really big deal. If we don’t have trust, then this culture is sunk, because as we said, at the core of every strong culture are strong relationships.

When we talk about trust, we talk about it in three broad categories (which is why we call it the “The Trinity of Trust ¹”): (1) spiritual trust, (2) professional trust and (3) relational trust. Let’s talk about each of these...



¹ #Biblical, #TrinityIsNotInTheBiblePerSeButYouKnowWhatWeMean \ speaking of The Trinity, if you don't know what it is, how to explain it, or why it matters to marriage and community or where to go in your Bible to explain it, then you have some room to grow in professional trust. This is a core doctrine that all followers of Jesus need to be able to discuss. If you need help brushing up on this or any other doctrine, let us know, we'd love to help!

SPIRITUAL TRUST

The highest value held by Watermark’s staff is that we are **dependent** on God. We must first get from Jesus what we need to minister to others. Everything we do flows out of our relationship with Jesus, and we work with the strength that He provides.

Spiritual trust means we believe everyone keeps their relationship with Jesus as the top priority in their life and continuously seeks to be growing as a fully devoted follower of Christ². Spiritual trust means we believe all staff members are daily in God’s word, are passionate about prayer, are consistently sharing their faith with those outside the church, and regularly confessing their sin to other trusted family members. Spiritual trust means we believe every staff member understands they can do nothing of spiritual value apart from a vibrant, living, and active relationship with God³.

What this means for you as a new staff member is: we assume you are pursuing Jesus. We assume you know yourself, you know your schedule, and you know your to-do list. Therefore, we don’t feel the need to check up on you when it comes to some of the common spiritual disciplines (bible reading, prayer, solitude, etc). We assume you are doing these things and don’t need us to hold you accountable or to create the time and space to do those things during the workday. This also means “burnout” is your fault, not our fault. Spiritual trust means we believe that you are setting appropriate boundaries in your life and if you start to feel overwhelmed, then you will initiate a conversation with your boss and ask for help in setting priorities. Burnout hurts more than just you, so if you feel like you are starting to burn out, please let us help.

² Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 6:23, Romans 12:11

³ John 15:5

PROFESSIONAL TRUST

Another staff value is that we are **excellent** at what we do. We aim to be found faithful in how we steward God's resources. We believe excellence honors God and inspires people, and every day we press on toward the goal God has called us to.

Professional trust means we believe everyone takes their job seriously, has the skills necessary to complete their job with excellence, can work with relatively low supervision, takes ownership of their responsibilities, and gets stuff done. When you have professional trust, you assume the following: all staff members are (1) working hard, (2) not cutting corners, (3) doing what's best for the church, (4) completing their tasks on time, (5) communicating well, and (6) striving to makes things better.

What this means for you as a new staff member is: we trust you. When you say you are going to complete a task, we believe you are going to complete the task. When you are not at your desk (or in your office), we don't suspect you are out back vaping and playing Doodle Jump on your smartphone. When you work from home, we believe you are really working from home. Bottom line: unless professional trust is broken, we believe you are working hard and striving for excellence. How will you know if your boss doesn't think you are doing your job well or how will you know if professional trust has been broken? We're glad you asked, because this leads us to the next "person" in The Trinity of Trust...

RELATIONAL TRUST

A third staff value is that we are **unified** as a team. We place a priority on cultivating deep relationships, keeping short accounts, handling conflict biblically, and doing everything we can to live at peace with one another.

Relational trust means we believe everyone will work hard to ensure all interpersonal relationships are strong, healthy, and growing. We cannot be a healthy family if we don't trust one another. Relational trust means if someone hurts us, we tell them. Relational trust means if we have a conflict with

someone, we seek to resolve it as soon as possible. Relational trust means we don't talk negatively behind someone's back, and if we hear someone doing so, we encourage them to share their thoughts directly with the appropriate person⁴. Breaking relational trust is the quickest and easiest way to get in trouble around here. Why? Because we're not in high school anymore! We're adults, so we act like adults and communicate like adults. If you want to be passive aggressive, stuff your feelings, and expect us to read your mind, then please know you are going to be miserable being a part of this family.

What this means for you as a new staff member is: you never need to wonder if we are hiding information from you regarding your job performance. If we have positive or constructive information that you need to know, we'll tell you (we aim for the annual performance reviews to be a boring formality full of encouragement and areas for improvement that you've already heard). In fact, you should expect to receive a lot of feedback and be asked to provide a lot of feedback⁵. You never need to wonder if someone is mad at you or if what you said hurt or offended them. If they are, they will tell you. What this also means is we expect you to trust the leadership. We expect you to give leadership the benefit of the doubt, believe the best about them, ask questions if confused, and pray for them regularly.

It can be hard to adjust to organizations with high relational trust, so if you are ever insecure about anything or confused, ask your boss or anyone else who has been on staff longer than you.

Our final staff value is that we are **fun** to be around. Proverbs 17:22 says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength." In ministry, there are plenty of things that might break our spirit and sap our strength. Therefore, we are always on the lookout for reasons to laugh and be cheerful. Bring a smile into work each day and give yourself permission to have a little fun! Here's another way to think about it: Seek to be the kind of person others want in their car on a road trip to our Staff Retreat.

⁴ See 24-Hour Principle in the glossary

⁵ Read more on this in the section Eight Practical Ways to Become an All-Star.

SUMMARY

If we don't have spiritual, professional, and relational trust, then the culture we seek to uphold cannot exist. So be encouraged, the fact we hired you means we trust you. If you follow Jesus, work hard, and build relationships, then we are very hopeful this amazing culture will continue to thrive and be even better because of the vital role you now play.

WHO MAKES THE
**DECISIONS
AROUND
HERE?**



As a new staff member, there will be times when you take a step back and wonder, “who on earth makes all the decisions around here?” The answer to that question is God. He is the King and we serve at His pleasure¹. However, we know that’s not what you mean, so here is a summarized version of the organization chart:

ELDERS ▶ DALLAS LEADERSHIP TEAM ▶ MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Watermark Community Church is elder led. The term “elder” is to be taken biblically, not literally; elders do not necessarily have to be the most chronologically superior people among us. Biblically, elders are men who assume the office of leadership as described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The elders make or approve all of the big-picture directional decisions at Watermark.

The Dallas Leadership Team makes all day-to-day decisions for the campus, and the Ministry Directors make all day-to-day ministry-specific decisions.

However, information regarding decisions made here can sometimes be murky and complicated, so if you ever have a question about how a decision was made or why a decision was made or anything like that, simply ask your boss or someone who’s been on staff longer than you. We don’t try to hide any information, but sometimes disseminating information across the organization can be challenging and is not something we always do super well².

¹ #JesusLuke

² See the section *Stuff We Could Do Better* for a few other things we know we don’t do super well.

SEVEN COMMON PHRASES



Hopefully by now you are starting to get a flavor as to why Watermark is the 2nd best place to work in DFW¹. As we mentioned earlier, we believe culture is the accumulation of behaviors, motivated by core values, that characterize a group of people. In this section, we want to try and describe some of our most common behaviors. To do so, we'll put them in the format of seven common phrases you'll often hear; each of these phrases describe some of our common behaviors.

1 “WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THAT?”

This phrase summarizes the priority we place on God's Word. The Bible is our guide, authority, and conscience in everything. We stand firm where it stands firm and remain flexible where it is flexible². We make it a priority to know God's word, teach God's word, and counsel from God's word. We don't do this so we can be smarter sinners, we do this because we believe this is one of the most practical, and tangible ways to grow in our relationship with God³. It's about intimacy with Him, not information about Him.

You will hear this phrase spoken most often in team meetings, pastoral care situations, and during our all-staff meetings called staff prayer (“Staff Prayer”). We want to think biblically about everything we do around here and therefore are constantly trying to answer the question, “What does the Bible say about that?”

¹ Wondering why we call this the “2nd Best Place to Work in DFW”? That's because from 2011 – 2018, we were #2 on the list of top places to work in DFW, as awarded by The Dallas Morning News. Yes, we came in 2nd place eight years in a row! In 2019, we finally made it to #1, but we'll always be a humble #2 in our hearts.

² 2 Timothy 3:16

³ Psalm 119:9-16

2 “GET INSIDE THE CIRCLE!”

This phrase summarizes the priority we place on our relationships. We're going to say it again because we believe it is so important: you don't have culture without relationships and therefore, we work hard to keep our relationships healthy. We love to be together and because we want our relationships to remain healthy, we believe it is always a good idea to meet together on a regular basis⁴. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it doesn't make relationships healthier.

The most common way we spend time together as a family is during Staff Prayer, which happens every Tuesday morning from 8:30 – 10:30 AM and all staff must attend. When we are together, we sit in a circle and NO ONE can sit outside the circle. You may be thinking, “wow, that must be a big circle!” and if that is what you are thinking, you'd be wrong. The circle is relatively small and therefore most people sit inside the circle, which often looks like a New York City subway during rush hour. For some of you⁵, Staff Prayer (and certain aspects of the annual retreat all staff attends, “Staff Retreat”), will be a complete and total violation of personal space. However, please know, there are some important reasons we set-up this way. First, practically speaking, this allows us to hear each other without the use of microphones and/or yelling. Staff Prayer and Staff Retreat are participatory events and we believe if we add a microphone to the mix or if people must yell, it will kill the communal and participatory vibe. Second, relationally speaking, if we are physically close together, it produces an energy that makes the meetings more engaging and more fun. So, get used to being packed in tight and bless your neighbors by showering before you arrive and not eating beans for dinner the night before.

⁴ See Hebrews 10:24-25

⁵ By “some of you” we mean you introverts. Please be sure to read From One Introvert to Another: An Open Letter

We are a team, we are a family, we love each other, we want to be around each other, everyone is included, and we work hard to make sure no one is left out. Therefore, if you show up late to Staff Prayer, do not attempt to grab a chair and sit outside the circle. If you do this, you'll be called out. Whoever is leading Staff Prayer will look you in the eyes and kindly, but firmly say, "Hey Ann Piper⁶, let's get inside the circle!" When this happens, you're going to have to stand up in front of everyone and awkwardly look for a place to sit inside the circle. Once you find a spot and start tiptoeing over to it, you'll probably end up knocking over someone's coffee. When this happens, you'll have to clean it up which means everyone will watch you run to the bathroom for paper towels and then once you are done cleaning up your mess, you'll have to get that person a new coffee and everyone will, once again, watch you get up and get a new coffee. By the time all of this is done, you'll be in conflict with whoever is leading the meeting because no one has been paying attention to them for the past four minutes because everyone has been paying attention to you. So, a word to the wise: just sit inside the dang circle! Okay? Great.

There are many ways to "get inside the circle!" Staff Prayer is the most consistent outlet for deepening our relationships with one another and being together, but it's not the only way you'll "get inside the circle!" while on staff. Every January we go away on Staff Retreat for the sole purpose of having fun and deepening our love for another. Staff Retreat is not a typical "work retreat" or a "planning retreat," it's for having fun, laughing, making memories, and deepening our love for one another. Every fall we also try to have a day away doing something fun, making memories, and growing our relationships. However, the most common way you'll "get inside the circle!" is with your individual ministry team. Time spent together praying for one another, talking about life, studying God's word together, laughing, and sharing meals might sound inefficient and "not work" and in many ways, you're right. However, as we've said, at the core of every strong culture there are strong relationships and because relational trust is so important, we know these activities are never a waste of time. Inefficient? Maybe.

⁶Name of this legendary former staff member has not been changed to protect the guilty.

Ineffective? No. We believe we are better pastors and shepherds when we are doing God's bidding with people we love and care about.

So, as a family, we strive to "get inside the circle!" physically and metaphorically. You are a vital part of this family, therefore, don't be aloof, don't be anti-social, don't simply come to work and ignore your other family members. Engage with others, build relationships, and be an active part of this family.

3 "IF YOU SEE TRASH, PICK IT UP."

This phrase summarizes an ownership mentality and the priority we place on taking initiative. We say this phrase often, and it's not because Watermark's Campus is dirty and messy but rather because it communicates a "host mentality." We expect everyone, no matter where you fall on the organization chart, to treat Watermark like they own it. Everyone on staff is expected to take initiative in relationships, make guests feel welcome, pick up trash, help out where help is needed, and make this place as welcoming as it can be. No one on staff is above any task. We never want visitors and members to only be impressed with our stuff (i.e. our buildings, our creativity, our teaching, our classes, our printed materials, our use of technology, etc.), but rather we want them to be impressed with the way we take initiative, engage them, and love them. Stuff doesn't make Watermark amazing, Jesus working in and through our staff (and our members) is hopefully what makes Watermark amazing. For any event we host on our campus, we consider the event a "win" if people leave feeling loved and served and that only happens if we have a host mentality, we act like owners, and we take initiative. One of the reasons you were hired is to lead and take initiative. If we needed someone to do mindless and repetitive tasks we would not have hired you, we would have simply outsourced your role overseas and saved a bunch of money. Leaders initiate with tasks and with ideas; so if you ever wonder whose job it is to do something, it's yours!

4 “THE LAST 2%.”

This phrase summarizes one of the approaches we take when having difficult conversations. All healthy families have difficult conversations and this family is no exception. During these difficult conversations, we strive to listen well and communicate clearly, but we also strive to be very candid. We do this because we believe if we are not candid with one another, everyone suffers because no one gets better and relationships never end up being all God desires for them to be. We don't believe this is God's best and so we aim to be 100% honest, not 98% honest; hence, the phrase “the last 2%”.

The two most common opportunities to share the last 2% are when resolving conflict and when providing feedback. Everyone knows what it is like to hold back the last 2%. The last 2% represents those lingering thoughts in the back of your mind you wish you would have shared thirty-minutes after a difficult conversation ended and you are in your car, driving home. The last 2% represents those little observations you want to share with someone, but you don't because you are afraid you might hurt their feelings. The last 2% represents those things you say to your roommate or spouse about your boss or teammate when you get home from work, but you never tell your boss or teammate. The unspoken last 2% isn't just annoying, we believe it can be deadly; meaning it will slowly erode trust, destroy the relationship, and ultimately have a negative impact our staff culture. How does any organization become 100% dysfunctional? 2% at a time.

Therefore, because we care about one another, because we want (and God wants) our working relationships to be as healthy as they can be, we strive to always share the last 2%. We'd rather share the last 2% and be wrong, than not share it and be right. It will feel weird at first, but trust us, after a while, you'll see how much better it is to live this way and you'll never again keep in the last 2%.

5 “FAITHFULNESS OF THE LEADER, FAITHFULNESS OF THE TEAM.”

This phrase summarizes the priority we place on faithful obedience. Originally, the saying was “speed of the leader, speed of the team.” We changed the wording because it's not really about how fast you're moving; it's about being steadfast and faithful as you follow Christ and give yourself fully to the work of the Lord⁷.

Everyone on staff and every member of this body has the same job: be faithful. However, as leaders and servants of this local church, we as staff believe it is our job to go first and model a life of faithfulness. If we are not faithful, then we cannot expect our body to be faithful.

Therefore, as a staff, it is your job to wake up each day, pursue God, be faithful, and trust God with the results. We do not consider you or something you work on a success simply because people showed up and were impressed. We consider something a success when you were faithful, regardless of the result.

The most significant way this phrase impacts our culture is in what and who we celebrate. Very rarely do we talk about or celebrate numbers. Numbers help provide context, but they can be misleading and are not always the best evidence of success. In fact, most of us on staff have no idea how big our church is and no one really cares. We care about faithfulness. If there were a contest awarding the most faithful church staff, that would be a contest we'd want to win.

We don't often celebrate numbers, but we do often celebrate stories of faithfulness and life change. We love to celebrate stories about sharing the gospel with people who are far from God. We love to celebrate the faithful servants who work hard behind the scenes and do things that very few

⁷1 Corinthians 15:58

people will ever see. We love to celebrate acts of selflessness, and all the small, but powerful ways God is showing us His kindness. Please note, it is your job to tell stories about how God is moving in this church. Stories are how we know God is at work. Tell stories to your bosses, tell stories to your peers, tell stories to your volunteers, and your community group. If you don't have stories to tell, people will start to wonder why; so celebrate what God is doing and don't give people any reason to wonder.

In the end, we believe God wants to use people to make His name great and we wonder, "why not use us?"⁸ That is what God is looking for, faithful followers who pursue Him, love people, and trust Him with the results.

6 "PEOPLE OVER PAPER."

This phrase summarizes the priority we place on loving people. Jesus made it clear, that one of the best evidences of our faithfulness will be seen in the way we love⁹. Here at Watermark, people are always more important than tasks. People are not interruptions; they are amazing opportunities. If God brings someone to our church, we want to love them the best we possibly can. If God allows someone to call us on the phone, we want to love them the best we possibly can. If God allows someone to email us, we want to love them the best we possibly can. It is an enormous privilege to minister to and love people and we want to steward each opportunity the best we can.

After every weekend service, a team of faithful leaders and volunteers stand in the front of the auditorium to talk to and pray with anyone who shows up. We will not leave until anyone who wants to talk has been served. We invest these hours because we want to love people.

Every week staff members personally reach out to all guests who attended

8 2 Chronicles 16:9

9 John 13:34-35

our weekend service and gave us their name and contact information or asked us to pray for them. We invest these hours because we want to love people.

If someone randomly shows up on one of our campuses because they want to talk to a pastor, we will meet with that person for as long as they want to meet. We invest these hours because we want to love people and we don't believe their showing up was in any way random.

If a member's life suddenly gets difficult or messy, we don't look for ways to outsource the hard work to another ministry or some other professional. We get into the details and do whatever we can to help. We invest these hours because we want to love people.

We do not believe the church exists to build buildings, host events, provide child care, and ask for money so we can continue to build buildings, host events, and provide child care. We believe the church exists to love people and we take that privilege very seriously. People are always more important than tasks.

7 "NOW, THAT'S THE WAY TO LOSE!"

This final phrase summarizes the priority we place on having fun¹⁰. At Watermark, like plenty of other organizations, we like to have fun and play games. This desire is not unique. What makes us unique is we want to have fun both during the game and after the game. How do you have fun after a game? By establishing entertaining consequences for the game's loser(s). We sometimes celebrate and honor the game winner(s), but it's also fun to watch people lose and endure consequences. You never know if a game includes high risk, high reward, or both!

10 Proverbs 17:22

We call our higher risk games “Farkles.” Sooner or later, you are going to lose a Farkle and you are going to have to pay up. Here is our advice: when (not if) this happens, go all in. The reason we like to Farkle is because in past years, faithful men and women of God have held nothing back and lost in the most glorious of ways. People care deeply about the way you lose¹¹. Over the years, we have witnessed some epic losses. Whether it be swimming in the pond for fifty-one weeks straight, taking the S.A.T. as an adult, or allowing themselves to be made into a human gingerbread cookie, our staff is known for leaving it all on the field.

SUMMARY

These phrases summarize some of the essential behaviors that make this place amazing. We aim to be saturated in God’s word, take our relationships with one another very seriously, act like owners, be honest with our thoughts and our feedback, seek to go first and model a life of faithfulness, pray that we’ll love well and try to do all that while having fun and laughing. Life truly is better when you do God’s bidding with people you love.

¹¹ If you don’t believe us, just ask Blake Holmes what it means to be “fully submerged.”

TIMELINE

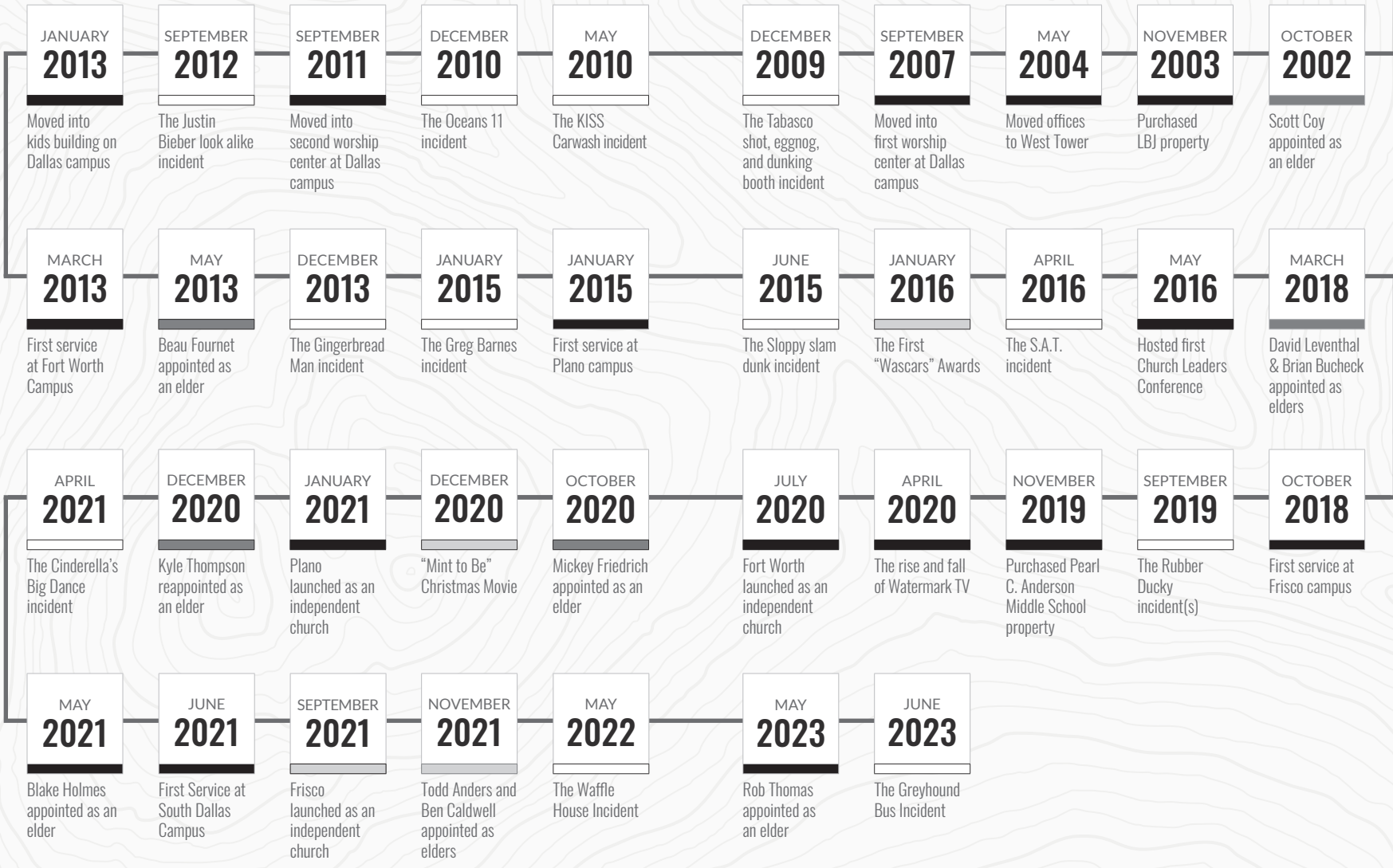


TIMELINE

- Staff
- Elders
- General
- Famous Farkle Loss

NOVEMBER 1999
First corporate worship service at Watermark

AUGUST 2001
Todd Wagner, Dean McFarlan, Kyle Thompson & Brett Johnston appointed as elders



STUFF WE'RE NOT

AWESOME AT



Every organization has its flaws and Watermark is no different. We serve a perfect God, but unfortunately this staff is made up of imperfect people. As a new staff member, we think it's helpful to be fully aware of areas we're not awesome. Here is a list, in no specific order:

PLANNING MORE THAN SIX WEEKS OUT

We are fantastic at pulling stuff off last minute. Things change around here all the time and when they change it's often at the last minute. Sometimes they change because we believe we heard from God and need to make a change, and sometimes they change because our church personality is one that often does better reacting to the moment rather than planning the moment. If you are an extreme planner, please know you can help us, but also please know you're going to get frustrated. When that happens, don't be surprised and remember what you read in relational trust and The Last 2%. Watermark is a place that values flexibility and embodies the entrepreneurial ethic that says, "planning is priceless, but plans are useless"¹. While we have been working on this with new tools like a Master Calendar, we still have plenty of room to grow!

¹ Collins, James C. 2001. Good to great: why some companies make the leap ... and others don't. New York, NY: Harper Business. & Proverbs 16:9, 19:21

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Sometimes we struggle with internal communication. One of the biggest reasons we can struggle in this area is because the organization is growing so quickly. However, this does not make it any less frustrating, or at times, counter-productive. What this means is sometimes you might not hear about someone's role on staff changing until after the fact. This means you might not know a new ministry started or that one was shut down. Sometimes this means you will have to change ministry plans because of scheduling conflicts that take precedent. This means that you might not know that your Membership Renewal was due before the Staff Christmas Party and now you must swim in the pool at Sky Ranch...in January (oh wait, never mind, we did a good job of communicating that one, some people just didn't read their email!). Despite our shortcomings, it is possible to get information and the best way to do that is to simply talk to people. Ask questions, be curious, be social, and don't take it personally if you seem to be the "last to know" on certain things. It's not done on purpose².

BEING POLITICALLY CORRECT

We do something crazy around here: we believe God's word is true. We read it daily, we seek to know it, memorize it, and teach and counsel from it. Because we have such a high view of God's word, sometimes we say things that don't sound "politically correct." Our heart is never to be abrasive or hurtful or purposefully "politically incorrect." Our heart is to love people and we believe God's word equips us to do just that³. We know that when people don't love truth, then truth sounds unloving⁴. We believe it is our responsibility to try and say things as graciously and winsomely as possible⁵, but unfortunately, sometimes we fail. As a new staff, please

² Unless the most loving thing to do is tell you last.

³ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁴ 2 Timothy 4:3-4

⁵ Colossians 4:6

know that we seek to be full of grace and truth⁶, meaning we want to say what's true and we want to say it lovingly. If you (or someone you know) is ever hurt or offended by something said during Staff Prayer, something said during Staff Retreat, or something said anywhere, let your boss or someone who's been on staff longer know, and they'll guide you to the appropriate next steps.

FOLLOWING THE CROWD

We will often do the exact the opposite of what other churches do. We don't do this to be contrarian. We do this because following the crowd may not be the best decision for our local church. We love learning from other churches, but often times, what we think is best for our church doesn't line up with "popular thinking." Sometimes, it's like we live in the Seinfeld episode titled, "The Opposite." You know, the episode where George does the opposite of what he thinks he should do and it all works out for the better. That's what it will feel like around here sometimes, so don't freak out. Like on TV, it often works out for the better.

PUTTING STUFF BACK WHERE YOU FOUND IT

Rocking chairs, bistro tables, sofas, exercise bikes, weights, coffee mugs, flatbed carts, dollies, wooden partitions on wheels, rugs, iPad chargers and kiosks, signframes, televisions equipped with Apple TV...God has graciously allowed us to be stewards of an amazing campus and all the resources in it. If we all don't do our part to create a hospitable environment, our church home will quickly descend into unwelcoming chaos. Your job as a steward is to take care of the resources entrusted to you and please, for the love of all things holy, put stuff back where you found it!

⁶ John 1:17

8 PRACTICAL WAYS
TO BECOME AN

ALL-STAR



1 FOLLOW JESUS

Following Him is your number one priority. Everything you do flows out of your relationship with Him. Following Him helps you better understand life and makes you better at life. Read His Word, know it, memorize it, and teach and counsel from it.

2 LIVE IN THE LIGHT

Don't have any secrets. If you sin, confess it¹. If you messed up, own it. If you hurt someone, own it and ask forgiveness. If you're tired, rest. If your heart is not in it, tell someone. If you feel worn out, don't stuff it. Honesty builds trust. The best way to live is in the light.

3 LEARN HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK²

Our strategy for continuous improvement is candid feedback. In fact, one of the best ways to add value to any organization is learning how to give good, honest, and helpful feedback. You need to learn this skill and grow in this skill. Some of the most valuable people on staff are those who know how to give helpful feedback. Feedback happens at all levels of the organization and anyone on staff can provide feedback to anyone else on staff, provided the feedback is helpful. What is helpful feedback? Helpful feedback is specific and actionable. For example, if you are providing

¹ If you have something to confess and your boss is the opposite gender, consider speaking first with a fellow staff member of your same gender. We know the mixed gender thing can be a little tricky when it comes to confession, so invite a trusted advisor to help you navigate the situation.

² We especially want you to do this during your first 90 days on staff. This is when you have the most unique perspective and can provide some very valuable feedback.

someone feedback on a lesson they recently taught, unhelpful feedback would be something like, "I liked it, but it could have been a little better." Helpful feedback would be something like, "I really liked your tone and your illustrations and I think it would have been a little bit better if you would have talked slower and not read from your notes as much as you did."

Our feedback culture doesn't only impact the staff, it impacts the entire church. We often provide feedback to our members as part of shepherding them, caring for them, and at times correcting them. We do this because we love them and we believe this is part of our role as pastors and shepherds³.

4 DO YOUR JOB INCREDIBLY WELL

The world (or maybe your parents or your friends) might believe you joined a church staff because you don't want to work hard. They think all we do is sit around, drink coffee, talk about the Bible, and color pictures of Jesus with a lamb around His shoulders. We have the privilege of getting paid to work at an amazing place on the most perfect mission ever known. When compared to other churches our size, our staff is smaller than it could be. One reason we're able to maintain a smaller staff is because we have so many amazing volunteers who do quite a bit of heavy lifting and another reason is because we have such a gifted staff who work incredibly hard and are able to accomplish so much. We don't necessarily hire staff to do the work of the ministry. We hire staff to do ministry through others⁴. That is hard work. If you want to take it easy, then you probably need to go work somewhere else. People's eternities are at stake, so bring your best every single day!

³ See 1 Thessalonians 5:14

⁴ Ephesians 4:12-13

5 DON'T SURPRISE YOUR BOSS

It's a universal truth that bosses hate surprises. Therefore, if you want to love your boss well, do whatever you can to eliminate surprises. The most effective way to avoid surprising your boss is to share information with him/her in a timely manner and in a way they prefer (i.e. face-to-face, email, text message, handwritten notes, notes on their white board, cut out letters from a newspaper to make it look like a creepy ransom note, etc.). For example: If you are going to be away from your desk or office for an extended period, tell him or her where you are and what you are doing. If you cannot meet a previously agreed upon deadline, communicate as early as possible and give the reasons the deadline cannot be met. If you need to get out of a meeting you have scheduled, be up-front and communicate the reasons you need to be released from that commitment. If you are feeling overwhelmed, have something going on in your personal life, or are struggling in some other way, communicate, communicate, communicate. The task of eliminating surprises is your responsibility.

A great question to ask your boss is this, "What information would you like to hear from me on a regular basis and how would you prefer to hear it?" Listen to their answer, write it down, and then execute on what they tell you.

6 SAY "THANK YOU" FOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK

When someone shares feedback with you (or shares some uncomfortable last 2%) the appropriate response is always "thank you". Feedback is a gift and should be treated as such⁵. Feedback makes you better and feedback helps you stay humble; both of those results are awesome. So, when someone says, "May I share a few observations with you?" Say "YES!" and thank them for caring enough about you to engage in that conversation.

⁵ See Proverbs 12:15 & 19:20

However, there is one qualifier worth mentioning. Just because someone is providing you with feedback doesn't necessarily mean you must absorb everything they are telling you. There can be a difference between honesty and truth. We value candor, but just because we are open and sincere in our feedback doesn't mean we are always right and speaking truth. When someone provides feedback, imagine they just gave you the gift of a new shirt. You can take it home, examine it closer, try it on, ask others if they like the shirt, and then decide whether you are going to keep the shirt. Same with feedback, you can think about it, compare it to God's word, ask others if they agree or disagree, and then decide if you are going to "wear it" or not.

7 PICK UP THE TRASH

As previously mentioned, now that you are on staff, you are an owner. If you see trash, pick it up. If someone is walking around looking lost, initiate a conversation and ask them how you can help. If the line at the Welcome Center is four people deep, jump back there and help answer some questions. If the coffee seems to have run out, go make some more. It is your job and you have the authority to lead.

8 BE LEGENDARY

When you lose a Farkle, just remember, heroes get remembered, but legends never die⁶. Now, to be clear, legends sometimes do go to the hospital, but they never die. Be legendary.

⁶ Babe Ruth in *The Sandlot*, ©1993, Twentieth Century Fox

6 EASY WAYS

TO RUIN THIS
OPPORTUNITY



1 NEGLECT LEADING YOURSELF

Miss a time with the Lord here, miss a time with Him there. Pray a little less on this day, pray a little less on that day. Stay up a little later. Skip that one workout. Miss community group a few times. Eventually this all adds up. If you neglect keeping yourself spiritually, physically, and emotionally healthy, you are going to crash and burn.

2 NEGLECT YOUR VITAL RELATIONSHIPS

We all have vital relationships (family and friends) and those relationships cannot and should not be neglected because of your job. If you have a family, they are your number one ministry. If you are not doing well leading and serving at home, then it does not matter how well you are leading and serving at work. Your family sees the real you and that is your purest form of leadership and service.

If your friends or family are embittered towards Watermark, that is probably your fault, not our fault. Remember, we have spiritual trust, so we believe you are monitoring your work load and will establish boundaries that are healthy for you and your vital relationships. If life seems to be getting out of balance, simply communicate with your boss and ask for help in establishing priorities and healthy boundaries.

3 GET CAUGHT HIDING A DESTRUCTIVE SIN PATTERN

You are a sinner and will continue to be one until you are home with Jesus. We don't expect you to be sinless, but we do expect you will not hide your sin. There is a difference between confessing and grieving a sin or sin pattern and getting caught and grieving a sin or sin pattern. Getting caught communicates a heart issue that is often a bigger deal than the sin or sin pattern itself. Don't ever let fear of losing your job be a reason to not live in the light. It is simply not worth it to hide for the sake of your employment.

4 HAVE NO BOUNDARIES

Here is the sobering reality: God doesn't need you to further His kingdom. What this means is that you don't have to answer your phone every time it rings on the weekend or at night. This means you don't have to immediately answer every email that hits your inbox after 5 PM. This also means you don't have to make someone's lack of planning your emergency. Boundaries in ministry are vital and if you don't implement them, you'll crash. Are there times we put in extra hours? Of course. Are these times we give up a weekend to minister to people? You better believe it. Are there times you drop what you are doing to help someone? Absolutely. That's what owners do. Boundaries are an art, not a science, and we trust that you will implement the boundaries that work best for you and your vital relationships.

5 DON'T RESOLVE YOUR CONFLICTS

Nothing tears apart relationships quite like unresolved conflict. As we have said, healthy relationships are at the core of our staff culture, so if someone says or does something that hurts you (or you say or do something that hurts someone else), we expect you will do whatever it takes to resolve that conflict as soon as possible¹. As you can imagine, because we value candid feedback and often share the last 2%, conflict can arise on a fairly regular basis. If you stuff, hide, ignore, or refuse to address conflict with another staff member, that is your problem, not the other person's problem. Conflict is not the sign of an unhealthy relationship. Conflict is normal when people get around one another. Unresolved conflict is a sign of an unhealthy relationship and cannot be tolerated if we want to maintain this amazing staff culture.

¹ Matthew 5:23-24, Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14

6 MAKE THIS ABOUT YOU

As Rick Warren famously wrote in 2002, "It's not about you."² Watermark does not exist to make you famous or to build your platform. Watermark exists to call those who have been transformed by Christ, to love like Christ. Together, as a family we are trying to faithfully accomplish this goal. Ministries are not competing with one another, and therefore, staff members are not competing with one another. As a family, we "rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn"³ which means at times we celebrate individuals or ministries, but that's what families do, celebrate each other. If you make your job all about you, you are going to struggle. If you seek the spotlight, you are going to struggle. If you are looking for notoriety and popularity, you are going to struggle. If you make decisions with no regard for the greater mission Watermark, you are going to struggle.

² Warren, Richard, 1954-. *The Purpose-Driven Life : What on Earth Am I Here for?* Grand Rapids, Mich. :Zondervan, 2002.

³ Romans 12:15

FROM ONE INTROVERT TO ANOTHER:
AN OPEN LETTER



If God made you one of those people who enjoy being alone rather than being with people, then this letter is for you. If you are one of those people who worked at summer camp, loves to be the center of attention, and would much rather be around people than sit at your desk and work on your computer, then you can skip over this letter, or keep reading to gain insight on people who are different than you.

If you are an introvert and a new staff member, then your first few months are going to be a little overwhelming; so don't freak out. You must remember this: **we are valued, but we are outnumbered.** Introverts are needed and no one will ever ask you to try and change the way God made you and become an extrovert. However, because introverts are outnumbered, one of the ways we can serve our family¹ is to go with the flow, have fun, be silly, act a little obnoxious every once in a while, and rest well knowing you will never be asked to do anything that will permanently hurt you or cause you to have to go back through *re:generation*². As members of this family, there are a few times a year when all the introverts gladly suck it up and with a great attitude choose to be around other people for an extended period. You can do this; it will not kill you and you might even secretly have a lot of fun. Of course you won't admit it was fun until a few days after the event has ended and you've had a chance for some extended alone time to journal and read, but you will eventually admit it was fun.

Simply put, the best way to survive staff as an introvert is to know who you are, be who you are, and like who you are. In addition, it's wise to plan and get your alone time when you can and when you need it. Don't forget, there is spiritual trust here which means leadership trusts you know yourself and you will lead yourself appropriately.


Adam Tarnow³

¹ See Philippians 2:3-4, Mark 10:45, Matthew 20:28

² Re:generation is a year-long discipleship program focused on 12 steps of recovery.

³ Adam left staff in 2020, but it wasn't because he is an introvert.

FAQs

FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS



We know you probably have some more specific questions, so here is an attempt to provide some clarity and direction on a few “hot topics”:

HOW MANY HOURS AM I EXPECTED TO WORK?

If you are a Coordinator, Director, or Senior Director, then we expect you to think like an owner and work as many hours as necessary to faithfully accomplish your job with excellence. We have high professional trust, so we don't think you will abuse this principle and work 24/7 (24 hours a week, 7 months a year). If you are consistently working more than 45 hours a week as a Coordinator and more than 50 hours a week as a Director, communicate with your boss or someone who has been on staff longer; we can probably help you.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH EXPENSE REPORTING?

Every employee submits their own expenses. This is a blessing to the finance team and the IRS. The finance team makes our life SO MUCH EASIER. They work hard to make sure Watermark manages the resources God has entrusted to us. It is expected that every single staff member will complete their expense report on time (typically by the 3rd of the month) and will do it without complaining.

DO I HAVE TO USE MY VACATION?

No, but something is wrong if you do not. Think about this for a moment: you get paid to NOT come to work. THAT'S AMAZING! Part of leading yourself well is taking some time off, so use your vacation hours by the end of each calendar year (if you don't use it, you lose it!). There are a few “black-out dates” where it is rarely a good idea to request time off: Easter, Christmas Eve, Staff Retreat. Other than that, communicate with your boss and use this gift!

WHAT'S A 403(B)?

It's just like a 401(K), but for non-profit institutions. It refers to a section of the U.S. Tax code that allows churches to set up these investment plans for their staff members. The Watermark elders have graciously set up this plan for all eligible staff members and we highly recommend taking advantage of it if you can.

DO I HAVE TO ATTEND STAFF PRAYER AND STAFF RETREAT AND THE STAFF CHRISTMAS PARTY?

Yes. Sometimes you'll love it, sometimes you'll hate it, but these should only be missed on the rarest of occasions (i.e. if you are sick or you are out of town). Therefore, please block out every Tuesday morning from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM on your calendar. This is not the time to have the DirectTV guy come to your house, get the oil changed on your vehicle, or schedule a dentist appointment. In addition, block out the second Tuesday through Thursday each January for Staff Retreat (leave early Tuesday morning, return Thursday afternoon). These three days are not the days to schedule an epic wedding anniversary trip, or go skiing with your kids, or schedule to get that sleeve tattoo. Finally, schedule the evening of the second or third Friday in December for the Staff Christmas Party. This is not the time to Christmas shop for your friends and family, this is the time to watch normally wise and mature adults act like crazed Bieber fans. If for some reason, you believe you need to miss a Staff Prayer, the Staff Retreat, or the Staff Christmas Party, communicate with your boss and the sooner the better.

GLOSSARY



24-HOUR PRINCIPLE –

We do not tolerate gossip. If someone hears you gossiping about someone behind their back they are to say, “It sounds like you need to have a conversation with that person. I want to challenge you to speak with them sometime in the next 24 hours.” That’s the 24-hour principle. Our relationships are important, so we work hard to keep them healthy.

ALL HANDS ON DECK (AHOD) –

Any event where every staff member is required to attend and serve. Examples: Easter weekend, certain conferences being run by Watermark, Christmas Eve. We also use this phrase for our semi-annual elder-led member meetings. You will always be given plenty of advance notice when these events are put on the calendar. For these events, show up and work like the entire event was your idea.

AUTO-FILL PERSECUTION –

Every Spring the entire staff family participates in a NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament Challenge. You will be required to fill out a bracket and if you choose to use one of the auto-fill options, you will be persecuted and shamed. This doesn’t mean you cannot use one of the auto-fill options, it simply means you better honestly assess how strongly you believe Galatians 1:10, because it can get a little ugly.

FARKLE –

Already defined. See SEVEN COMMON PHRASES “Now that’s the way to lose!”

FIVE-YEAR BRAND –

One of the coolest ways we celebrate our staff family is with a custom made branding iron affixed with the Watermark “W” logo. These brands are given to staff members after their fifth anniversary. In addition, all staff members write on the display board a word or phrase that describes the person receiving the branding iron. Each person receiving the branding iron is individually encouraged and celebrated and handing out these branding irons is always a highlight.

HAGWOW –

Since the beginning, Watermark has dismissed services with the encouragement to “have a great week of worship.” This phrase captures the biblical idea that worship is not confined to a few hours spent in a church building; our entire lives are meant to be an unending act of worship to God¹. A certain Jamaican millennial on staff shortened the phrase to “HAGWOW.”

HEALTHIEST PEOPLE –

This phrase refers to anyone who has been through or is currently attending *re:generation*. These folks have been referred to as the “healthiest people” at Watermark because of the way they embody the core values of living “fully surrendered” while embracing “authentic relationships.”

KNOCK OUR SOCKS OFF –

As a staff, our mission is to inspire and equip every member to live a life of full devotion to Christ. And because we hire all-stars like you, sometimes folks literally knock our socks off by the way they serve, lead, ideate, and create with excellence. Excellence honors God and inspires men, and we want to recognize greatness on our staff. We know that one day every believer will be rewarded for our good work done here on earth². Here at Watermark, we reward greatness with a pair of branded tube socks in front of our entire staff.

¹ Romans 12:1, John 4:24

² Matthew 6:19-21

LONE STAR COMMUNITY CHURCH –

What this church would have been called if someone hadn't thought of the name Watermark in the nick of time. You don't want to know how dangerously close we were to being unquestionably Texas-themed for life.

LOVE ON –

A phrase often used by Christians to describe a desire to care for others. It sounds like a violation of space, or something that might get you canceled. Jesus said, "love your neighbor" not "love on your neighbor." If we work together, we can eliminate this shameful phrase from Watermark staff vocabulary.

OCEANS 11 –

Refers to 11 staff members, who unwisely agreed to swim in the pond for 51 consecutive weeks because they believed by doing so they were going to receive a free trip to Costa Rica. They did not receive a free trip. They only swam.

PIGGY-BACK –

If someone is talking about a specific topic during Staff Prayer and you have something else you'd like to add to the conversation, you are all but required to start your comments off by saying, "To piggy-back off that, I too was loving on someone this weekend and..."

PORCHDAY –

In case you missed it, Porchday is the third day of the week. Yes, Tuesday is out and Porchday is in thanks to our young adult ministry, The Porch. Just ask the thousands of young adults across the DFW metroplex... and Porch Nation. If you don't fall under the "young adult" category and it sounds crazy, just roll with it. They are the future of the church after all.

PREACH, PRAY, OR DIE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE! –

A saying, popularized by the legendary Blake Holmes, which has served as a mindset and attitude for staff members over the years. At a moment's notice, we should be ready to do any of those activities for the name of Jesus, or for the sake of not embarrassing yourself at Staff Prayer.

RESIDELLOW –

A resident or fellow in the Watermark Institute. There is a difference between "resident" and "fellow," but we're not really clear on what that difference is, and it is impossible to tell which category someone fits into just by looking at them. So, when you see the year's crop of "Instituters" (another made-up term that was rejected in favor of this one), it's acceptable to refer to them as "residellows."

SHORT-TERM DISCIPLESHIP TRIPS –

Matthew 28:18-20 makes it clear that as followers of Jesus, every day is a "mission trip," no matter where you are in the world. Therefore, since your life is a mission trip, you don't go on mission trips, you go on short-term discipleship trips. Our suggestion is to remove the phrase "mission trip" from your vocabulary, otherwise, like Auto-Fill Persecution, there will probably be some consequences.

WATERWEAR –

Cool gifts that are graciously given to the staff at various times throughout the year (most common: Christmas and Staff Retreat). Waterwear is one of the amazing perks of being on staff. You are now a part of the exclusive club, so wear your gear proudly and do not ask if you can get a piece of Waterwear for anyone not on staff because the answer will always be "no".

WHOLE MILK CHALLENGE –

AKA The White Dragon. This is when someone attempts to drink an entire gallon of whole milk in sixty-minutes without throwing up. Often there is the promise of winning cash if one can complete the challenge and often the promised cash never changes hands. Why? Well, because everyone pukes. However, one of the reasons we hired you is because we believe you can tame The White Dragon! If you want to win \$100 today, then email ownersmanual@watermark.org and we'll see if you can pull it off! Come on, email us, we know you can do it. Everyone else we've ever hired is worthless and weak, YOU are not like everyone else. YOU ARE DIFFERENT. YOU ARE WORTHY. YOU ARE STRONG. YOU CAN DO IT. EMAIL US!!!!



