



**Name: Karen and Ian Smith**  
**Title: Interim Field Directors**

Karen grew up in a Christian home, in the western Canadian province of Alberta. Her parents served among the Plymouth Brethren movement, as her father was a commended worker. She accepted Christ and was baptized at a young age but struggled with her faith in her teen years. Through a series of events, Karen strongly felt the Lord calling her to live her whole life for him, and by the conclusion of high school, she was convinced the Lord was calling her to the mission field. As such, she enrolled at Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, to earn an associate of arts in Bible Missions and later obtained her bachelor of science in Nursing from the University of Alberta.



While God's call to the overseas mission field did not come to Karen's life at the time she was anticipating, through her young adult years she quickly realized that great need for the Gospel in Canada.

Ian grew up on Canada's east coast in the province of Nova Scotia and was frequently exposed to church and biblical teaching from a young age. At age eleven, Ian accepted Christ and was baptized. However, it wasn't until tenth grade that Ian began to take his walk with the Lord more seriously, committing to be used of the Lord in the way he so desired. Ian moved to Alberta to go to Mount Carmel Bible College, later transferring to North American Baptist College. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Christian Studies (Pre-Seminary). Between his first and second year of Bible college, Ian was asked to come serve in a part-time youth pastorate at a Baptist church in Edmonton, Alberta, and so began a long season of pastoral work.

Karen and Ian met through mutual friends and, after a season of friendship, decided to pursue a relationship that led quickly to engagement and marriage. They were married July 15, 2000, and the Lord has blessed them with many years of great marriage! When Karen and Ian began dating, they regularly discussed Karen's feeling about pastoral ministry in Canada as opposed to an overseas context, feeling this was where God was calling them. They agreed to serve our home nation but always be open to the Lord's leading should he have other plans.

Nathan was born in 2006, Kendra in 2009. Zachary was born in 2011 but is now with Christ. Nathan has a huge heart for God's glory, and a growing heart for global ministry. He has accepted Christ, been baptized, and is actively serving the Lord. Kendra has a huge heart for people and animals. She is an extrovert who makes others feel welcomed and comfortable in the context of the church, and truly wherever she is. She too has accepted Christ and followed him in baptism.

Karen and Ian served their first congregation for nine years. After Ian resigned, he finished his MDiv from Briercrest Seminary in Saskatchewan and pursued a lead pastorate in a Baptist church in the town of Mayerthorpe, Alberta, a rural congregation that loves the Lord and has loved their pastoral family very well.

Karen and Ian have been privileged to serve in two churches that are very committed to global ministry. In Edmonton, part of Ian's role was to lead annual short-term mission teams that saw the Smiths serve in Colombia, Peru, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya. In Mayerthorpe, the church was committed to

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helping serve pastors in contexts where very little education was possible for these faithful workers. Ian was part of a team of Canadians who travelled to the Philippines to provide pastoral training to these pastors. Ian travelled to the Philippines six times, and Karen and the kids joined him on two of those experiences.

In early 2022, Nathan was invited by a friend of his to join an NAB mission team heading to Romania to serve in the ministry of construction at Camp Falcon Rock. The Smiths quickly agreed to this opportunity but stated the need that either Karen or Ian attend with Nathan, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine seemed likely. Joining Whitecourt Baptist Church, Ian and Nathan prepared to serve however they were asked.

Both Ian and Nathan were deeply impacted by the quality team of missionaries the NAB has serving in northwest Romania, as well as by the approximately sixty pastors serving more than two hundred churches in the Hungarian Baptist Convention, and further still by the ministry vision of Camp Falcon Rock. Nathan and Ian's ministry included construction work, refugee ministry, youth ministry, and preaching. The Lord began to prod their hearts, and they began to wonder if he was calling us to serve in a different nation.

Upon returning home, and in discussions with Paul and Tanya Gericke, Karen and Ian were made aware of the need to install interim field directors in Romania while Paul and Tanya are on home assignment. Given the very short window of time, as well as their desire to remain in their current pastoral ministry and the stage of life their kids are in, they committed to pray about the idea but did not have significant thought that this possibility was likely. However, as they prayed, the Lord first brought them to agreement as a couple (after all, Karen has never been to Romania), and then began to open doors for them to see this was clearly his will.

They are currently wrapping up pastoral ministry in Mayerthorpe (done August 21) and will seek to be in Romania by September 1 for a year-long defined term mission. They will be serving in three main areas of ministry: 1) providing care, direction and accountability for NAB personnel and programs in northwest Romania, 2) facilitating youth ministries in the local church, as well as in conjunction with Camp Falcon Rock, and 3) helping to serve the Hungarian Baptist pastors and churches through preaching and teaching ministries.

The Smiths are so excited for many reasons . . . but here are three:

- 1) They love the church, and they love missions and missionaries and find it humbling that God is calling them to provide care and leadership in this capacity.
- 2) They love the opportunity this is for Nathan and Kendra to hear from the Spirit of the Lord if he would be calling either or both of them to global ministry or to see them encouraged for their future ministry in Canada.
- 3) They love the opportunity to experience what God is doing in Romania and find him so kind to allow them to be some small part of his work.

Please pray for the Smiths:

- For a smooth transition to the field in a very short window of time.
- For good rest for the Gerickes on home assignment.
- That God would use their family to minister in the ways he desires in the church.
- That he would grow their hearts for Hungarian-speaking Romanians and burden them to pray and share the Gospel fervently.

KÖSZÖNÖM SZEPEN (Thanks!)

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