



Hillside Church

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Dear Church or Ministry Leader,

Jonathan Casas came to Hillside as interim worship pastor May of 2007 while he was considering other opportunities. I never anticipated the help and blessing he would be to me professionally and personally. In June of 2007, my family went on a trip to Mexico. While there, something horrific happened that changed my family's life forever. My world collapsed and I did not know how I would go on. Because Jonathan so quickly proved to be a safe, caring person, I shared with him what we had experienced. He assured me that he would do everything he could to help me and help the ministry continue, and help he did. While I wrestled with resigning, feeling I could not go on, Jonathan took it upon himself to craft a list of ideas, projects, improvements, and leadership directions that he could see needed attention. Over the next year, he filled in the huge gaps I was leaving, encouraged me, and helped the ministry move forward. Just watching this happen renewed my passion for ministry. After a year of being interim worship pastor, I asked that he stay on and he agreed. Jonathan was doing so much outstanding leadership, team building and administration that I changed his title to Associate Pastor.

I must point out that the only reason Jonathan is being released is due to severe financial difficulties affecting the church. He is so valuable to me and to the ministry that I approached the church leadership requesting that my salary be cut to compensate. They declined since that may become inevitable anyway. Of all the staff I have worked with in 21 years at Hillside, Jonathan by far excels as the best. Jonathan has exceeded every expectation I ever had for a worship pastor. He is an amazing musician, yet he sings and leads with humility and grace. He has vocal and instrumental talent that would cause most musicians to highlight themselves, yet he has focused on building a team and strengthening the talents of the other members. He has done this not only with adults, but with our teenagers and children as well. With Jonathan's influence, we now have a youth group excited about worshipping and leading in worship. Hillside is small yet, over and over again I hear from people (those inside and outside of the church) that Hillside has one of the best bands in the area. That is to the credit of Jonathan and his ability to teach, train, and build a team.

Not only as a worship pastor, but Jonathan has also exceeded every expectation that I ever had for an associate pastor. I call Jonathan "Mr. No Problem" because no matter what project or task I gave him, he'd say "no problem" and it would be done. Jonathan is not only punctual, he does everything I ask faster and better than I had expected (and I've been called a perfectionist by some). I never had to monitor Jonathan or make sure he was working because he is probably the best self-led person I know. He creates systems for doing his regular tasks and when he gets discretionary time, he analyzes what else he can do to help the ministry. He led the church in building a new sound booth, a new stage for our auditorium and built one of the most comprehensive church web sites I have ever seen. He tracked trends and statistics and Hillside. He organized and administrated helpful information and details that proved extremely helpful. These are simply illustrations of what he has done. His contributions to Hillside have been countless.

To say I will miss Jonathan is a major understatement. I am heartbroken that our paths must divide, but I know that Hillside's sadness will be another ministry's blessing. I recommend Jonathan without any reservation or hesitation. He is truly a great pastor, leader, Christ-follower, and friend. He is sensitive to the needs of individuals and ministries. His diverse abilities with style make Jonathan a wonderful fit for any ministry and a perfect transitional leader for those wanting growth. I pray God's blessing over Jonathan and any ministry where he may serve.

Joyfully serving Christ,

Pastor David B. Clift
Senior Pastor