

Darla has degrees from Missouri State University and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. In 1985, Darla began her ministry journey as a student pastor with her husband, Mike, in Chickasha, Oklahoma, where she finished her second degree in Fine Arts at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, graduating Summa Cum Laude in 1987. The student group grew under their leadership from a small group to more than 400 attending weekly meetings.

Darla then served with her husband in Central Assembly's student ministry in Springfield, Missouri, under the leadership of senior pastors Phil and Betty Wannemacher for several years before relocating to Winter Haven, Florida. After serving six years as lead pastors in Winter Haven, Darla and Mike went on to successfully plant GreeneWay Church in Orlando, Florida, which continues to flourish to this day.

Following the leadership of the Spirit, the Rakes accepted a pastorate in Winston-Salem, NC, where Darla often interacted with city officials and key leaders in the community to address the needs of the under-resourced. The church is the most diverse in race in the city, with 60% of the attendees being people of color, and includes both men and women in pastoral and board leadership.

In 2007, after an encounter with the Holy Spirit, Darla began a platform ministry, speaking weekly to over 2,000 congregants. She pursued and completed a Master of Arts in Ministerial Leadership and received the highest accommodation from the Dean as the Most Outstanding Graduate Student. She often teaches about one's true identity in Christ, encouraging her listeners, "You are not your thoughts and things, or your self-created and culturally influenced identity. Instead, you are the very image of God, immensely loved and valued, created to reflect His divine presence on earth."

She was at the center of bridging racial divisions in the city of Winston-Salem for more than a decade and served in various city-wide initiatives, mayoral councils, and ministerial associations. She preached at women's retreats and conferences and was in a doctoral program at ORU when her daughter, Whitney, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Darla walked away from her scholarly work to provide care while leading hundreds of prayer meetings for those suffering and in need of God's help. Whitney entered the next reality in 2019.

Mike and Darla are passionate about the spiritual health of the U.S. church. They are committed to mobilizing faith communities for God and the good of humanity, using compassion as a bridge to be with the suffering and introduce them to the source of all life, Christ Jesus. Darla and Mike launched the Do Good initiative in Winston Salem, presenting to the mayor a document revealing a church's economic value to the city through their Do Good Community Impact report. The Winston Salem First Church Capital Summary demonstrated a significant economic impact on the entire city through the sustained volunteer hours by the folks of WSF Church.

Darla currently serves as Evangel University's Ambassador to Students and Donors. She inspires students to be courageous in pursuing God's calling and plans for their lives. Darla is currently in the final stages of completing the Doctor of Ministry degree she started at ORU and finishing up

through AGTS. Darla and Mike have a son, Brayden, married to Heather, and two grandchildren, Blake and Beau.