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August 19, 2018

Dear First Baptist Church Family,

I count it all joy that God has brought us together to be His family! What a gift it is to share with you in the story-transforming message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our unity is found in nothing less than our common faith and baptism, in the name of God's one and only Son Jesus Christ. May we continue to be built up together "as a spiritual house for a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

On August 25, 2019, one year from the sending of this letter, I will be embarking upon a 3-month sabbatical. In 2017, the officers of our church, overwhelmingly supported by the congregation, unanimously approved this sabbath time of soul-rest for me and my family. This opportunity has been fully funded through a generous grant award.

My Hope and Goal for FBC

After being your pastor for nearly 9 years, my God-given hope and goal for you is to be an empowered and equipped Christ-like community to the glory of God. As I stated to you on July 11, 2010, "It is the imperative of the 2020 Vision Initiative to prepare for our full availability and intended usage as ministers of reconciliation in the hands of God Almighty!"

Nothing has changed; that is still my hope and goal. Your elders and I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is the way God will help communities thrive to the glory of God. We are committed to be the church God has called us to be. This is my heart's desire for FBC.

Seven Big Words

The areas I would like you to focus on excelling even more now and during my sabbatical are captured in seven big words: GATHER, FOLLOW, REST, BELONG, LOVE, SERVE, and GO! Over the next year, from August 19, 2018 through August 25, 2019, we will learn more about it what means for all of us to grow and excel as individuals, in relationships, and as a church family to gather, to follow, to rest, to belong, to love, to serve, and to go!

As a healthy and functioning Jesus-community to the glory of God, built upon the Bible, I deeply desire to see you thrive as we move towards 2020. 2020 will be a "Year of Celebration" at FBC. We truly have a lot to celebrate as the Jesus-community who are called to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

I can't wait to celebrate on November 24, 2019 and throughout 2020 what God did in me and in you during not only the 3 months of my sabbatical, but more importantly through our first decade of shared ministry together as the First Baptist Church family. We have a lot to celebrate!

With Faith, Hope, and Love,

Pastor Jerry Ingalls