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August 18, 2019

Dear First Baptist Church Family,

It is with great expectation of what God is doing in us as members of the Body of Christ, and will do in and through us at FBC, that I send you this letter one week out from departing on my 3-month Sabbatical. The theme word for this time of Sabbath rest is GROW!

Over the last year, you have heard me teaching on our mission and vision, our faith and values, our 7 big words and our 7:1 Initiative. All of this has been in preparation for fulfilling the 2020 Vision Initiative and being strategically prepared to enter 2020 on mission for Jesus. As I prepare to leave you for this prolonged time of Sabbath rest, I have no new word or teaching for you because I have already told you everything that is necessary for our fellowship at FBC to mature in Christ and become His Church. I only ask you to do this one thing: **GROW!** Grow in these areas:

- Our mission: **transforming stories through the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- Our vision: **we desire to see communities thriving to the glory of God!**
- The 7 Big Words designed to unite us on what it means to be His Church: **GATHER, FOLLOW, REST, BELONG, LOVE, SERVE, and GO!**
- The “**7:1 Initiative**” to help you grow personally. Research shows that people feel a church is “theirs” when they have 7 people they are in relationship with and have 1 place to serve where they can help make a difference. To that end, I invite you to take part and grow with at least 7 other people and find 1 place to serve. God designed you for this!
- **The four core values:** “Loving others as God first loved us” (red); “Developing people for a life of service” (blue); “Living and giving generously” (yellow); and “Growing closer to Jesus in every season of life” (green). Walk firm in your faith in all these ways.

I have seen you walk in these ways. Excel even more! Regardless of your season of life, you are called to GROW closer to Jesus! This is all I ask of you over the next 3 months: **GROW!**

- GROW in your individual walk with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit!
- GROW in your vital relationships by giving the love of Jesus Christ!
- GROW as a Church Family by living as one people to the glory of the Father!

Thank you for the overwhelming support and exceeding joy I have received from you as I prepare to “enter the rest of the Lord” in a unique way. This is a gift from God that I do not deserve, but that I receive with a thankful and humble heart! Thank you, Jesus, for calling me to grow in you through a set apart season of Sabbath rest. **As Hebrews 4:9-11a states, “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest.”**

Growing in Christ with you,

Pastor Jerry Ingalls