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December 15, 2019

Dear First Baptist Church Family,

It is with Christian Joy and Eternal Hope that I send this letter to you, the seventh in a series of such letters, as I return from my first-ever sabbatical and prepare for my 10th Christmas celebration with my First Baptist Church family!

In my last letter to you, I encouraged every member of our church family to GROW while I was gone. I took this encouragement to heart personally, as I have heard many of you did as well. Thank you for taking this opportunity seriously!

As I shared with so many of you upon my return at our annual Awesome Autumn Dinner on Sunday, November 24, my 3-month Sabbatical was filled with spiritual growth, soul care, family health, and investment in all three of our children and in our marriage. My family experienced health, healing, and happiness through every aspect of the Sabbatical. We will always treasure our memories from National Parks to spiritual retreats, from Disney to quiet times at home, from exploring Scotland and Ireland to swimming with the dolphins in Nassau, from reading books and diving for sand dollars at Fort Myers beach to trail running and family hikes at Westwood Park. God was with us always! Thank you for this gift! We love you!

As I return and fully engage my pastoral calling at First Baptist Church, I am filled up with the Spirit to lead our elders, officers, and staff so that we all mature in our calls to be healthy, fully-functioning members of Jesus' Church. I come back with my eyes wide open to the large workload not only on my desk, but also on the plate of every leader at FBC. But this is not only a job for me and the leaders, this is a calling to every member of FBC and to every disciple of Jesus Christ who considers FBC their home church. I am extending the call to all of you to be faithful to the needs we currently face. We have financial needs if we are going to keep our commitments to our staff, to our community partners, and to one another. We have maintenance needs if we are going to continue to be able to use this building as the tool God intends for it to be for our community. We have interpersonal (emotional and social) needs if we are going to be a healthy people on mission together.

For FBC to head into 2020 and beyond, I need to know that we are all in this together. In my absence, your elders, officers, staff, and leaders did a fantastic job with hard situations and difficult decisions, based on the real facts that are right in front of us. We will need those leaders to continue in like fashion. I ask them to continue to serve in this same capacity and for all of us to see our corporate need for them. I am not enough, and they are not enough; we, together, are

the body of Christ, and our vision and mission need all of us working together according to our faith and values to accomplish the God-sized calling on FBC for 2020 and beyond.

With the God-sized calling entrusted to us, I remain steadfast in my calling and excited for 2020 and beyond. Please pray for me and your leaders and stay patiently tuned-in for more information to come as I will be leading the elders and officers in developing a practical plan on how we are going to move forward. My goal is for us to be able to present that to the congregation prior to our 110-year celebration in July of 2020. Until then, I need you to end 2019 strong with me and with us.

It is to no one's surprise that we are in need of financial partnership in significant ways to end 2019 healthy and to start 2020 with enthusiasm. We need this not only for general budget needs like personnel, bills, weekly operations, and mission/ministry support commitments, but we need substantial financial gifts for our facility needs such as new HVAC units and infrastructure that must be addressed very quickly. We will be examining all possibilities in the new year and without significant increases in our overall current level of financial partnerships, hard decisions will continue to fall to the officers of FBC.

Thank you to those of you who are already giving sacrificially and faithfully; without you we wouldn't have a staff, building, or be able to do what we do on a weekly basis. Fulfilling our vision and mission for 2020 and beyond is going to take many more people like those who are already committed in word and deed. The leaders of the church look forward to presenting practical ways to apply what we have been learning as a church body in the coming year.

Please join with me in believing God to do great things in East Central Indiana through First Baptist Church—we are not there yet, but we can't get there without you and without your faithful and tangible partnership. This is why we were saved in the first place—not to be served, but to serve! We have been blessed to be a blessing! We exist to make an impact in the world for the Name of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God.

Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

Pastor Jerry Ingalls