



June 30, 2024

Greetings church, family.

As a Christian and as a pastor, I always enjoyed meaningful correspondence. Communication is key in any relationship, not the least in pastoral ministry. That is why over the last four years I made it a rhythm to write you a monthly letter. A routine born out of the pandemic showed itself to be a great value to congregational life. However, after some fifty plus letters, each of which I loved writing, this will be my last. I've written on current and congregational events, issues of theology, personal matters and even ideas around philosophy of ministry. It has been a joy to write you, and I trust for you to receive. From my heart to yours.

Today is my last Sunday with you. A moment that is bitter-sweet for sure. I am indeed excited for opportunities of future ministry. The world is wide open and with your support church planting is on the horizon. But I will no longer be your lead shepherd—a role that I took more seriously than some perhaps perceived (1 Peter 5:2). That you will soon be under the care of another, I trust, is something I'm learning to surrender to the Lord, our Chief Shepherd (v. 4). But at ground level, pastoral ministry weds together the pastor and his flock. And for many of you—some new to CBC, others who predate my arrival—my heart will forever be attached to yours.

Seven years is not that long, but it is nothing to wink at either. Many pastors never see past year five. That we have makes my heart swell with gratitude, as such a tenure speaks more to your patience than my endurance. I've been around long enough to know you as a congregation. I know your habits and quirks, virtues and vices. And further—you know mine! Seven years is long enough to lead change, or not. It's long enough to make relationships to last a lifetime and memories that stick. For those, my family and I say a hearty "thank you."

Kingdom Wins

There is much we could reflect upon over these last seven years. But as we have always been a church that has sought to "seek first the kingdom" (Matt. 6:33), it is best to remember what matters most for eternity. More than anything the Lord has done during our time together, I rejoice in that two families were raised up and sent out from among you as full-time missionaries. With a total of ten children in tow, you sent Bradley and Ember Wilkie; Jesse and Carrie Danner; and now us, Neal and Ashley Thornton. Church, you have sent missionaries! Your legacy is one of missions and ministry. Just think of the kingdom over the generations. Keep it up!

Making disciples. Multiplying the church. Raising up and sending out. I pray your partnership prospers and your efforts return one-hundred-fold. As our time of ministry together comes to a close, I trust your leaders are making preparation now for a new season. Be sure to give attention to membership, leadership and discipleship. These areas are vital for the health of any local church. You have great potential that you shouldn't want to miss. I look forward to hearing favorable reports in the months and years ahead. And let's do commit to stay in touch.

As of August 4, our new home will be Fairview Baptist in Apex. We'll be there for the better part of a year as they prepare to send us out as church planters. If you are interested in being part of this new work, please reach out to me directly. My email address will be active through year end but forwarded to pastor Jimmy. You can always reach me via phone at 910-890-5580 or stay up to date by newsletter or website. Both are soon to come.

Blessings, church. One last time — It's All About Him!



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Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
(No evening services through July)