

Celebration Family:

November 29, 2020

In 2015 I was honoured to leave a company I had worked for, for 25 years. A job I loved with an organization I respected and still speak well of today. That took place so that I could move into the role of Lead Pastor here at Celebration Church. This church is Helene and my home. We have attended her for 38 years, and intend, God willing to attend here for many more years.

When the board invited me into this role they asked how long I would be in the role. I indicated that I had prayed and believed that God had told me that I would be in this role for five to seven years. We have kept that in mind all through my tenure.

Five years was up in October. Knowing that that time was coming I provided the board with a letter in July indicating that I believe my time as the Lead Pastor at Celebration is finished. I offered them the opportunity to choose when my time would end and offered to be available to stay or go anytime in the next two years. After some discussion and prayer we have agreed to a transition plan that will see my formal employment with Celebration finish on May 1<sup>st</sup> this coming spring.

I have never left a role before. I have always had something that I was going to. This time was very different. God had promised me that he would not leave me here too long, nor end my time here too soon. But leaving, with nothing to go to was a new experience for me. Crazy – so you may see where some of today's sermon had its genesis.

But as you've heard me preach many times: our responsibility is to Listen, Trust and Obey. So when I heard him say it was time, I had to trust that He was right and be obedient.

I love to watch God work. Literally the day after my act of obedience - in submitting my notice to the board – I received a phone call from an organization called Leading Influence. We had some exploratory conversations and then in October I received an offer and accepted a role to provide Chaplain services to Elected Officials in Saskatchewan. I am being asked to form relationships and provide support and guidance to those that make up the Legislative Assembly. I could not be more honoured.

I did not step down because I had an opportunity to go to. I stepped down because God said I had finished the things He had called me to do.

We have done some great things together in the last 5 years Celebration:

- Better financial safeguards in place to protect donors and those handling our funds
- Stronger budgeting processes that engage a broader group of stakeholders and provide the means for monitoring and adjusting budget management during the year.
- We undertook several major maintenance and upgrade projects that needed to be done, including a sanctuary renovation, office renovations, building-wide wi-fi, solar panels and meeting room renovations that make our spaces much more user friendly and functional.

- We have built bridges to new ministry partners including Church Renewal and helped to restart a local pastor's ministerial association.
- We have formalized and focused our missions work with a group of contracted field partners which we communicate with regularly and support much more intentionally.
- We introduced a path of discipleship that begins with teaching us to Hear God, then trains us to be Set Free and to help others be free from spiritual bondage so that we can serve well. Those are followed by a new set of training we introduced this spring called Empower Ministers which helps us understand our gifts and callings from the Holy Spirit.
- We introduced Prayer Summits which we held consistently every month for 4 years until Covid had us rethink everything. Those experiences lead to us modifying our Sunday services and added a weekly Encounter service every Wednesday.

But one of any leader's primary responsibilities is to be surrounded by great people and to be intentional about succession planning. We have been very intentional about developing and giving opportunity for Matt Adams to grow and mature as a spiritual leader and we intentionally added a wonderful pastoral leader in Nico Deschner. I believe that we will be well served both in the immediate transition period and we will be well served with whomever the congregation ultimately decides should be our Lead Pastor.

At this time Nico has indicated a desire to be our Lead Pastor. Both Matt and I support that. Nico is ordained as an Anglican priest and is part of the Via Apostolica movement. That would have a certain impact on the future of Celebration. So the congregation will have to diligently seek God, Listen to His voice, Trust what He says and be Obedient to what we hear in this regard. We may have personal opinions one way or another, but the most important thing will need to do is listen to God and respond accordingly.

Matt and I fully support investigating the option of inviting Nico to be our next lead pastor. The Board will define a process to move forward. That process will begin with a congregational meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Please make every effort to participate.

I was thrilled to have this opportunity to lead Celebration for this season. I count it as one of the greatest highlights of my life. My wife, Helene and I intend to remain as active participants of Celebration as long as we are able.

If you have any questions I would be pleased to hear from you?

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