

From the Pastor

First, a word of thanks: Mary and I both very much appreciate the prayers, the cards, and the food you have given us while Mary recovers from her hip replacement surgery. Thank you so much. Your support has been a big help. Mary's recovery is going very well. And she is certainly looking forward to the day when she can walk and get around without all of the pain. Thank you.

I print here the letter I read to the congregation at the end of worship on September 30:

To the Elders and Members of Centennial Christian Church:

When I came to Centennial Christian Church in January of 2015, my intention was to serve as its pastor at least until I reached the age of 65. I came in good faith, hoping to strengthen the life of the church.

But, for the last several months, I have found myself becoming very tired and wondering if I will have the energy to do the job the way it should be done. So I began to think about early retirement and to look into that possibility. I have found that I can, indeed, retire early and that Mary and I would have more than enough income, enough for us to live very comfortably.

So I have decided to retire early, to retire at the end of this year. My last Sunday at Centennial Christian Church will be December 30, 2018.

I do not make this decision lightly. I take my calling and my ordination vows to God and to the church very seriously and have spent the last 36 years trying my best to fulfill that calling and those vows. I believe I have been faithful. And there are ways of fulfilling that calling and those vows even in retirement. I also become fond of the people I serve and take the responsibilities that arise in those personal relationships very seriously. This makes leaving a church very difficult; it always makes me sad. But I've done it before and people do just fine. I am sure you will, too.

I believe I will leave Centennial stronger than it was when I started and my hope and prayer is that the life of the church will continue to grow and strengthen. You will always have my best wishes.

Sincerely,

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Mary and I will still live over on Olive Street. We have a very nice home in a very nice neighborhood. And Bloomington seems to us a good place to live. We have no plans to move, so we might still see you around town from time to time.

Pastor Neal