



Pastor Steve's Last Letter to the Congregation

Retired January 13, 2019

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philipians 1:3-6

I want you to know what a privilege and honor it has been for the past thirteen years to be your pastor. You are an amazing congregation filled with servants of Christ, who love God and love others. I have every confidence that the good work God is doing in you will continue with the partnership and leadership of your new pastor, Pastor Jeff Teeples.

You have blessed Lynn and me with your friendship, your encouragement, and your love. We love you and will keep you in our hearts always. As I look back over the years that we have served together, I am filled with wonderment at what God has done in us, for us, and through us. We are not the same congregation we were thirteen years ago. That is due in part because we have aged, people have come and gone, and the world has presented us with different challenges. Yet, those are not the only reasons we are different. The Holy Spirit has been at work in us to mature us with wisdom and deeper faith in Jesus Christ. God's Word has guided us and we have a greater understanding of its authority in our lives. Our fellowship with one another has deepened and there is spirit of unity that God has given to Shepherd of the Hills.

In 2018, we lost many of our saints to death. Sherry Baltimore, Dorothy Webster, Jack Everhart, Ralph Truax, Katy Peters, Alan Conner, Ray Shellabarger, Aileen Renkel, Ruth Barnett, and Del Ryland all joined the Church Triumphant. Received as children of God through baptism were Grayson Arndt, Ellyana La Greca, Marilyn Richison, Laurie and Howard Li, Blake and Michael Weisenbach, Patti Fields, Cambrie Bain, Hannah and Micah Julian. Receiving first communion were Hannah and Micah Julian, Aubrey Weisenbach, Declan Murphy, Brooke, Beckett, Abigail, and Evan Bergeson.

I want to thank our church council of Chris Dean, Jim Skivington, Darlene Dailey, Jack Critchett, Sharon Sealund, Gail Hanson, and Steve Friel. They are faithful servants of God, who prayerfully led our congregation. I had the wonderful privilege to work side by side with our staff – Julia Becklund, Jan Gavle, and Deanna Freund. They are the hardest workers I know. They love the Lord and our congregation. I will greatly miss serving with them and the joy we experienced working together. Zac Lusk was our youth director for the first half of the year. Mick McGraff was hired in August to replace Zac, who left to focus on his seminary education. Keep the light on the hills shining brightly! The world needs Jesus! Bring others to him!

Pastor Steve Bergeson