

Pastor Albers' Final Letter to St. Paul Congregation, read at his Memorial Service on December 18, 2018

Looking back on all the years spent in this church there are a few things to share...

First, thank you. Thank you for allowing our family into your lives 47 years ago. When we arrived, none of us knew the impact you would have on our lives and on our walk with Christ. You were gracious, and kind and you allowed us to learn and grow into stronger servants of God. You let us weep with you in your joys and your sorrows; you let us celebrate with you in your successes and your failures. You allowed us to rejoice in your births, weddings, anniversaries, and celebrations. You trusted us to mourn with you and serve you through deaths, tragedies, disappointments and adversities. You shared your families, your lives, and your needs. Through all of this, you served us as well allowing us to be human and comfortable and walked beside us as we, too, experienced happy and sad times. You overlooked our inexperience and were patient as we learned to serve. We will be forever grateful for your influence, your friendships, and the times we have spent together.

Second, be encouraged. As a church body, be reminded that when God calls a servant home, things will change and there will be days when life doesn't quite seem the same. When things change, don't let it change you. Matthew 24 says "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." God has given us His word to comfort us, to guide us, and to hold strong in our hearts. Share the encouraging words of the Lord with those around you, with each other, and your joy, your strength, and your comfort will never pass away.

Finally, be challenged. We have faced many challenges as a church family. We have leaned on each other through growing pains and world wide events. We have rejoiced as our family grows and as we have opportunities to serve each other and this community. We have trusted the Lord to guide this church to be a light in a darkened world. In the days ahead, there will be times that people will be tempted to change their focus, or change their direction and you need to remain true to the words our Lord gave us. Paul told Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." When times are hard, when temptations come, when you see your brother struggling, fight the good fight. Lift each other up in the Lord, pray for each other, stand beside one another and be strong in the knowledge the your heavenly Father has provided a Savior. Be servants of the word by visiting others, helping your neighbor, and sharing all the Lord has done for you.

Thank you from a humble and loving family for walking this life with us. Be encouraged by the words of the Lord and the promise of forgiveness and eternal life through His son Jesus Christ and be challenged to pick up the cross daily and be strong in the Lord, your God. And may the Lord bless and keep you - today and forever more.