



March 6, 2023

My Dear McCoy Family,

After considerable prayer and godly counsel, Nancy & I have decided to step down from the senior pastor role at McCoy Memorial Baptist Church. This will become effective Sunday, Aug. 27, 2023.

In our culture, our decision might be called “retirement”, but Nancy & I have no plans to stop serving the Lord. “Retirement” does not have to mean we are finished serving. My understanding of biblical retirement allows me to move from one stage of my life’s ministry (41 years as the senior pastor of two churches) to the next stage without any guilt, hesitation, or regret. I’m moving from being the pastor who carried the full load of the ministry to being a ministry counselor, mentor and advisor to others. To be a “pastor to pastors”. I have a stewardship. I believe the Lord expects me to use my training (1973-77; 1978-1982) and my pastoral experience (1982-1990; 1990-2023) to assist and encourage other pastors who are carrying the full load of ministry and to disciple/train others in the body of Christ. It’s like one retired pastor said, “I have been blessed with the best of both worlds. I am active in assisting God’s work and ministry in the local church, yet I do not go into the office during the week, nor do I carry the burdens of being a pastor. It is like being a grandparent: you love on your grandchildren and influence them the best you can, but you give them back to their parents who have the responsibility to raise them.” Oh, speaking of grandchildren, Nancy and I have ten of them (soon to be eleven), and we plan on spending more time with them, visiting their plays, sports activities, birthdays, etc.

I know there are questions on your mind. Let me address a few of them. 1) We’re not stepping down from the senior pastor role at McCoy because we are hurt, discouraged, mad, frustrated, disillusioned, etc. Nothing like that at all. You as a congregation have done nothing at all to contribute to our decision. 2) We’re not stepping down from McCoy to become the pastor of another church. 3) We’re not leaving the general area. We’re having a home built in a neighborhood about two miles north of Middlebury (between Paul & his family in Plainwell, MI ... and Rachel & her family in Zionsville, IN). And finally, 4) what about Pastor Christopher and his family? He is committed to the ministry here at McCoy and plans to keep serving as a pastor here at McCoy.

With that said, I have been thinking about my “retirement” for a couple of years now, and I do have a suggestion for how McCoy might move forward. Christopher knows what that plan is and so do the Board of Deacons. They are supportive of the plan because they see the wisdom of it. So, over the next three weeks (March 12, 19, 26) we would like to take the Sunday School hour and share the plan, answer questions, and talk about transition). We’re using the Sunday School hour because this is when the majority of our congregation will be with us, & it’s very important that everyone is well informed.

Attached/enclosed is a letter from our chairman of the Deacon Board, Mark Anderson, outlining the plans for the next few Sundays as we prepare to lay plans for our pastoral transition. I’m looking forward to seeing what the Lord has in store for McCoy in the years to come.

Pastor Ray