Dear HLBC Family,

As time grows ever closer to my departure as your pastor, Cheryl and I couldn’t begin to describe to you the range of emotions we are feeling. You are on the verge of calling a new pastor and I have been struggling with how to do my part in getting you ready for God’s new man. I have shared with you in recent letters, sermons, meetings and by various other means, ways you can prepare your heart for the new pastor and his family.

I have, however, hesitated in the search for a new youth pastor and worship leader after Covid. (Tony left in late 2019 and the Covid pandemic started in the spring of 2020). I tried, but it was virtually impossible to find anyone who would even be interested in talking about a move during the pandemic.

Once the pandemic waned (at least we pray and believe it has), I knew I would be announcing my retirement (as I did in a council meeting earlier this year), making Easter my “official” date to retire. I offered then, and you accepted my staying on until you found a new pastor, but not beyond October 30th, 2022. I then believed God (and still do), would have me allow the new pastor to call his own youth and worship leaders that he would work with in the years to come.

To say the least, I want to finish my pastoral ministry strong for the Lord; and not from a prideful standpoint, but from the assuredness and responsibility of my calling. For obvious reasons, it would be ill-advised for me to implement new long-range strategies and programs to restart/revitalize our overall church ministry. That will be a part of the fresh vision your new pastor brings with him.

We must, however, begin (with intentional determination), focusing on the main thing; sharing the gospel and growing the Kingdom. I believe that is what God would have us to do in these days of preparation. God reminded me of this by taking me back to my life verse regarding my calling which is Acts 20:24: But life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God’s mighty kindness and love. (TLB)

That verse has always brought me back to clarity of focus when I have had an inclination to let other things re-arrange my priorities; even good things. By the way—that verse applies to all of us! In the Great commission, God has assigned all of us to share the Good News of the Gospel.

With that said, I told our Monday night folks, who came for evangelism training and visitation, we need to get back to the basics of sharing the gospel and making preparation in our neighborhood to do that. So, this is what we want to (hopefully and prayerfully), get you excited about again, anticipating the faithfulness of God as we once again, make the 2 main thing the main thing. We shouldn’t wait for a new pastor to restart this process. He will, no doubt, be elated we are so focused on evangelism when he gets here. So please plan to stay for 30 to 45 minutes after service this Sunday morning as I discuss the plan with you.

Next, mark this on your calendar as well: November 5th, we will do a blitz into our neighborhood hanging packets of information on as many doors as we can. The packet will include tracts, children, and adult ministries, info such as movie nights and AWANA, etc, as well as general info on our church and personal invite to visit us in person.

So let me repeat this, again, as this is important! This Sunday, October 9th, immediately after Sunday morning service, I want to meet with any and all of you to map out a plan to accomplish the above, i.e., for getting the gospel into our neighborhoods and families. PLEASE. PLEASE, PLEASE plan to stay for the brief meeting. God honored our efforts in this so many times through the years. When we show Him we are serious about the main thing He will bless us again with a harvest. But we need you all to help. Our numbers are fewer now and we need ‘all hands on deck’ now more than ever. Please plan to stay and listen this Sunday morning.

People still need Jesus today and we still have to share Him. We are compelled to!

Until all the Nets are Full,

*Jimmy*

Pastor Jimmy