

To Grandview Church:

A year ago, my growing burnout and alcohol abuse were exposed after I had an accident with our van. When the denomination gave me a year's suspension of my ministerial credentials, it began a year of recovery, rest and reflection. While I was on leave from my role as pastor, many individuals from our church sent cards or notes or shared words of encouragement, which I genuinely appreciated. This year of reflection, which included a significant week that I spent with the Jesuit community in Guelph this Fall, also gave me space to discern where the Spirit is leading me for my future. After prayer and dialogue with those close to me I have come to the decision to resign as church pastor. While there is some grief in stepping away from my work here as a pastor, work that has shaped me and which I have loved, I have confidence that God is inviting me to step into some new roles that give me the opportunity to share what we have learned here. I am excited to take up these new roles.

As I look back over these past 30 years, my heart overflows with gratitude. For it is here as part of this community that I have learned to become a pastor and that we have learned to become a church, a church which has sought to take up the vision of God's kingdom in East Vancouver. These years have seen us transition from a group that had nearly given up to one that regained a vibrancy and passion around a neighborhood vision of hospitality and transformation. That new life led to the development of many initiatives that began as wild dreams but which through prayer, hard work and the Spirit's ever-present guidance, resulted in some of these dreams taking root and becoming reality. These included dreams such as sharing life together in homes and in proximity to one another, dreams of providing homes for refugees and folks on very limited incomes, dreams of developing meaningful work for those without it, dreams of opening our building so that community can be formed around meals, music, art and interaction with scripture, dreams of seeking a more just city. During these three decades, we have grown from one struggling congregation to become two vibrant congregations that share a common vision for our own formation and transformation as well as for the transformation of our city.

We have sometimes faced huge obstacles or become overstretched. Indeed, that has been the experience for me in these past couple of years and for many of you this year. These places of challenge are not new however. At various points in my 30 years, there were a good number of occasions where we didn't know if we would continue to find our way together towards God's good purposes. And yet at each of these difficult junctures, the Spirit has led us from darkness to light as we took up practices of confession, forgiveness, reconciliation and obedience to the One who leads ahead of us.

Over this long three decade journey, God has brought so many incredible people to join in on this adventure. In these past weeks, I have been reflecting upon some of the names of those who have departed as well as those of you present now and I couldn't help but smile over and over again. I am indeed grateful for how so many people have contributed to living out our vision as a church, people who have used their gifts to work for God's kingdom in our common

efforts and in your personal places of influence. I'm grateful too for the ways that you have all contributed to my life personally.

As I resign, I want to offer this word of encouragement you all. I believe with all my heart and am full of hope that the God we meet in Jesus, the God who renews and leads us by the Spirit, will continue to lead us through the present difficult obstacles and challenges we face towards God's promised and good future. Indeed, hope is different from optimism in that our hope is based on a solid rock, Jesus' resurrection from the dead. While mere optimism can lead us to shy away from dark places, hope enables us to wade into the most broken places with a trust that good can emerge. In that light, my hope is that you will continue to share each other's joys and sorrows, persisting with each other as you take the long view and work out what it means to share in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation in the generations to come. My prayer is that "out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

In Christ and with love

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