



Dear FBMZ Family,

I have just taken a walk down memory lane that only lasted a few minutes but covered more than a quarter century. Those memories are a source of blessed encouragement and satisfaction for George Ann and me. When we arrived in early 1985 our house was full of children, and our hearts were full of dreams about all that the future held for us and the precious people of Florence Baptist Church. Fortunately, our house is still full—with GRAND-children now—and our hearts are still full of dreams for the bright future of FBMZ.

A major goal of mine has been to complete the challenging transition to our new Mt. Zion campus—and to get us on sound financial footing during our nation's most devastating economic downturn since the Great Depression. While there remains much work to be done, with God's help and your faithfulness, we have made enormous strides toward accomplishing those goals.

Now it is time for us to turn our focus to the future. That entails making decisions about transitioning to our next senior pastor. For more than a year I have been working with trusted advisors in our church regarding that important matter. Believing that our Lord will be honored with a thoughtful and well executed transition plan, I will start by saying that my service as senior pastor will conclude December 31, 2014. Until then we have an enormous amount of work to do. Over the next year or so we will be assessing the future needs of our congregation and community, and then we will get busy determining how to best meet those needs. It could very well take an additional year—or more—to identify and call our next pastor. That will likely leave a year or two for us to work together as he assumes the responsibilities of leading this marvelous body of believers. The ultimate goal is a seamless transition that results in our good and God's glory.

My plans are to work with our deacons and other members to make the transition to FBMZ's next season of ministry the richest and best of our 155 year history. Understand that these are not hollow words when I say to you, "The best is yet to come!" We are poised and well positioned to launch into what is surely going to be our most spiritually productive years.

We would also do well to be reminded that while there are always unique challenges during times of pastoral leadership change—OUR ULTIMATE LEADER NEVER CHANGES. HE IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER. It is to Him that we commit our thanks for the past and our hope for the future.

The Shepherd Loves His Sheep,

Brother Tim

Isaiah 40:8

Dr. Tim Alexander, Senior Pastor

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