

July 10, 2018

Dear CPC Family,

The Bible verse that has long been closest to my heart is 1 Corinthians 15:10, “**Because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am**” (The Message). This affirmation of God’s perfect grace is true of my salvation story—and just as true of my CPC story, which began when God graciously brought Laura, me, and our two little girls here 29 years ago. Serving at CPC has been the privilege of our lives!

Today, I write to tell you that I feel God once again calling me to a new chapter of our story, and that I will be stepping down as Senior Pastor effective January 15, 2019. I first shared this decision with the Session on June 19 and now share it with you as our church family.

This decision has been many years in the making and comes as a result of a great deal of prayer, study, and reflection with trusted confidantes. The matter of when and how to step down has long been a sacred question for me and Laura, especially since we were so enormously blessed by how our predecessors, Roger and Dottie Anderson, navigated their transition. Roger left a staff, congregation, and building in solid order for the next senior pastor to build upon. Roger and Dottie created a wide berth for a new couple to come in, giving space and support in ways that blessed this whole church for the long-term. It has always been our fervent desire to do the same.

In partnership with the Session, the past five years have involved strategic initiatives to set up CPC for a flourishing future. We navigated the multi-year process of transferring denominations, which included securing ownership of our building and property. We brought fresh focus to our values and vision. We initiated our first capital campaign in almost 20 years, enabling us to update and maximize our space for the next generation. We hired and developed younger staff, including bringing on four dynamic pastors in their 20s and 30s. And, in recent months, we made difficult decisions to align our budget and spending.

In the midst of all this, succession planning has been an open conversation. It was about five to seven years ago that I started saying publicly that I would likely depart in five to seven years. Two years ago, I worked with the Elders to appoint a Succession Planning Taskforce to develop a plan and process for how a transition would be handled when the time came. Please see the accompanying letter from the Elders to learn more about the plan and sequence of next steps.

Two weeks shy of my 66th birthday, I feel God’s gracious clarity that the time has come to turn the page. This clarity is, to me, a gift of the Spirit—because leading CPC is one of the greatest jobs there is! But I feel that the pieces are in place to make this the right time for a new chapter for CPC. Laura and I also feel this is the right time for us. We don’t have a next step figured out, but we do sense it will include more joint ministry ventures in teaching, mentoring younger leaders in the ECO denomination, or partnering with international service organizations. After I conclude here in January, Laura and I will spend several months out of town for rest and discernment.

Until January, I’m committed to giving my all for you, the staff, and this church every day. You will still see me around this summer (when you’re not gone yourself!). I will still facilitate the staff retreat in August, preach all scheduled times this fall, and celebrate Christmas together with you.

There will be much more information coming in the months ahead. We'll be posting relevant information on our website at cpconline.org/transition. But please plan now to join us September 8/9 for Kickoff Weekend, when we'll come together as a family to dedicate our new building spaces and celebrate our calling—as a church and as people—to boldly extend the invitation Jesus makes to us, to everyone.

The story of CPC is so much bigger than who holds the title of Senior Pastor. I'm forever grateful to have had the privilege to carry that title for this remarkable community. God's perfect grace indeed!

I'll see you soon.

Love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Crosby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Crosby