September 4, 2018

Dear BurlPres Family,

As I sit at my desk here in my office at church, and look out my window, I can see the leaves on the trees begin to turn from green to yellow and red, and I realize that the seasons are changing here in Burlingame. The book of Ecclesiastes reminds us that these seasonal changes are very much a part of our lives; “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Ecc. 3:1). And so, there are many very exciting changes taking place in our church. Our Next Gen Ministries has an average of around 60 children and youth coming each Sunday. Our entire building is getting a make-over inside and out. We have a new and very wonderful Front Desk Administrator named Lupe Rodriguez, who is a blessing to our church. We have so many people coming to the 9:30 worship services that a change in time is now necessary for our traditional service (11:15). And there are many, many more signs of God’s providence here.

At the same time that these exciting changes are occurring, we are also, as a faith family, about to experience some changes that may be a little bit sad for some. We are announcing the retirement of three extremely talented staff members at this time. All of these retirements are voluntary, and all of them are driven by personal decisions based on season changes in their own lives.

For the past 50 years Rev. Linda Galligan has served our congregation capably. Linda has quite literally served in almost every staff position in which a pastor can serve. She began as a Children’s Choir Director, and then served as a Children’s Ministries Director, and then became a fully ordained Pastor. Linda has literally delivered hundreds of memorial service liturgies, and almost an equal number of Christmas Pageants. Linda will be retiring as a pastor of our congregation on Jan 31, 2019. Let us take a moment to consider how phenomenal a 50 year call to one church really is. No previous pastor before Linda has served the church for longer than 35 years. The pastors of two of the previous pastorate, each 17 years, do not together add up to as long as Linda has served here. It is almost unheard of, in the modern era of ministry, to find an individual who has served as long and as faithfully as Linda. On a personal note, I will miss Linda’s strength of character and spiritual depth. Please see Linda’s words enclosed with my own.

For the past 8 years, Alex Bootzin has served as our Director of Worship Arts. Alex came to us after a lifetime of service in the music arts in other churches and in the world of theater. Alex has literally been on the ground floor of helping to create our new Contemporary worship format, while at the same time capably leading our Bell Choir, and assisting with the traditional worship service.
Alex is an exceptionally talented musician and songwriter. He has led several major productions in our congregation, most recently, “Joseph’s Amazing Technicolored Dreamcoat.” Alex will be retiring as a Worship Leader in our congregation on Jan. 31, 2019. On a personal note, I will miss Alex’s willingness to collaborate with me on musical arrangements. Please see Alex’s words enclosed with my own.

For the past 20 years, Sara Prusko has served in various different capacities in our Worship Technology department. Sara, in many ways, grew up in this congregation, and has offered her professional gifts for countless hours of worship presentation preparation. She has creatively produced many of the images that we see each Sunday on the sails. Sara will be retiring as Worship Tech Assistant on Sept. 23. On a personal note, I have so appreciated Sara’s support of my own ministry ever since I began.

Again, we know that for some these transitions will be a moment of sadness. We also hope that these announcements are also a reminder of the many ways that God has continued to provide for our incredible congregation through almost 100 years. Just take a moment to think about how many talented people have served as employees of our church through our years in ministry. As we speak, an APNC is being formed, and will be voted on by the congregation on September 30th at a congregational meeting, for the purpose of calling a new Associate Pastor to fill Linda’s position. In addition, an incredibly capable team has also been assembled to help to hire the next Worship Leader for our church. And a team is working on what our communications needs will be, exactly, for our church, as we move forward together. We will spend portions of the next few months honoring each of these fabulous individuals. Please stay tuned for further information about this.

As we enter into this new season of change for all of us, please be assured that I will continue to walk beside you as your pastor. More importantly, God will be with us. I believe in my heart that the next season of our church will be equally as exciting for our church as the previous seasons have been. And, perhaps it is also helpful to think about the words of Ecclesiastes once again, “He has made everything beautiful in its time” (Ecc. 3:11). I know that by the power of God this is definitely the case – that God will also make these transitions beautiful – in their time. And know that, I remain,

Sincerely Yours,

In Christ,

[Signature]

Dr. Graham Baird
Lead Pastor