



November 5, 2023

Hello fellow Genevans,

It is with a mixture of great joy and sweet sadness that I have accepted a call to serve as the Solo Pastor at Placentia Presbyterian Church. Placentia is a Los Ranchos Presbytery Church, just up the 5 Freeway, near Cal State Fullerton. My last Sunday at Geneva will be November 26. Immediately following the service there will be a Special Congregational Meeting for the dissolution of my pastoral relationship with Geneva. Immediately after the meeting there will be a celebration of God's call in Simpson Hall.

Your Session, Pastor Steve and I are acutely aware that this would be a hard time for any congregation. Learning of the departure of both your pastors in a manner of months can be disorienting. It may be worthwhile to know how this decision was made and to look forward to what's ahead.

After Pastor Steve announced his retirement in July, I became increasingly aware that I was not prepared to be an Interim Pastor in this season of my life. The Interim's job is to help a congregation face its past so it can move boldly into a bright future. It often requires a person who isn't already connected to the church in order to lead an honest, thorough process. That isn't a fit for where I am at this time.

I did not *want* to leave Geneva. This is my family's church. My kids have spent many formative years here. *But God's calling is not always what we want. Faithfulness to God reorients our will.* The church that called me has been through a healing Interim season. They also looked deeply at their mission and made tough decisions to jettison parts of the past that were stifling their ministry. I sensed that God has prepared me to pastor at this kind of church and so I said yes to God's call.

When I told your Session, they expressed joy for God's calling in my life. They also expressed a resolute movement toward what God had in store for Geneva. Your Session is even now working to ensure that Geneva can courageously walk through this next season with a gifted Interim pastor. Where your Pastors' departures certainly can feel like great loss, God is already using it to do something wonderful. Your elders and staff have committed to disciplined, transparent communication with you during this season. Please look at the Q&A that we've prepared to answer just about anything you might be wondering.

My hope is that we can pray for each other in each of our next journeys. This is bigger than all of us. The heart of the gospel is at stake. Let us be faithful to Jesus' new commandment to love one another and let God be faithful to all the Kingdom-shaped surprises that are the true gifts of faith in Jesus Christ.

Your grateful Associate Pastor,

Ryan Romberg