



CALVARY MEMORIAL

April 19, 2018

Dear Calvary Family,

For several months we have been in the Antioch Process. This has been a special season of corporate spiritual discernment. We have been asking God to clarify his calling on our life as a church and on our lives as individuals. It has been a joy for me to travel with you on this journey, and I would like to share with you how the Lord has used this process in my life.

Many of you know about The Center for Pastor Theologians (CPT), a ministry that Pastor Gerald and I founded over a decade ago and continue to lead. The CPT was born out of our dual passion for substantive theology and local church ministry. The vision of the CPT is to resource pastor theologians who are called to serve their local congregations while also providing intellectual leadership to the broader church.

By God's grace, the CPT has flourished over the years. It has developed an impressive ministry profile, with a national conference, a published journal, four annual fellowships that serve sixty-plus pastor theologians, and more exciting opportunities before us than we can begin to manage. The CPT is now a nationally recognized organization that serves as an unofficial leader of the pastor theologian movement within evangelical Christianity.

We are, of course, thrilled to see the expansion of the CPT. But we also realize that the ministry has outstripped our ability to give it the leadership it needs in order to increase its impact for the kingdom. As Pastor Gerald and I discussed this challenge, we began to explore what it would look like for me—with my visionary, entrepreneurial, and theological gifts—to step into the leadership of the CPT full-time.

In early February, as part of this season of spiritual discernment, Katie and I sensed that the Lord was indeed setting me apart for this new work—to use my experience, gifts, and passions to strengthen other pastor theologians in their ministries. I shared this with the elders a few weeks later, at our annual retreat, and they were able to confirm their sense of the Spirit's leading in this as well—that this “seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15:28).

As part of this discernment process, I reflected not only on the Lord's leading in my life but also on what the Lord is doing at Calvary Memorial Church—the church I love and have had the privilege of pastoring for a decade now. When I was called to Calvary in 2008, the church at that time needed strong leadership, fresh vision, and substantive teaching to be all that God had called this church to be. A decade later, again by God's grace, the church is in a wonderful place—the staff is strong, the elders are unified, and the congregation is healthy, maturing, and engaged in ministry and mission—*making Jesus Christ known in Oak Park and around the world.*

However, the work isn't done—and Calvary's best days are ahead! In fact, I'm convinced that Calvary will flourish in this next season of the church's life with leadership from a new Senior Pastor who will be able to bless the congregation with his own experiences, gifts, and passions. Of course, none of us can say with one-hundred percent certainty who that person will be; I do have a hunch and hope! God certainly knows who he is—and it will be our joy as a congregation to discover his identity in due course.

As I have been processing God's leading in all of this, it has necessarily led me to a very difficult decision—that I should resign as the Senior Pastor of Calvary Memorial Church. In conversation with the elders, we have set June 3, 2018 as the date of my resignation and final Sunday in the pulpit. You will find a letter from our elder chairman, Chris Jahns, sharing the heart of the elders and outlining this time of transition.

The good news is that we have no plans to move out of Oak Park. Therefore, you will still see the Wilson family around town and in worship—only now I will be sitting in the pew rather than standing in the pulpit! Yes, it will be an adjustment for all of us. Nevertheless, we can be excited about how God will work in this new chapter of our life as a church.

I was called to Calvary as a young man nearly a decade ago, and had every intention of serving as the Senior Pastor for thirty years or more! I remember, though, an older pastor saying to me at that time, "Todd, the Lord has an interesting way of moving his servants around in his kingdom." Indeed, he does!

When we began the Antioch Process several months ago, I had no idea it would bring us to this place. But I guess that is what the Antioch Process is all about—submitting our lives to the person of Christ, listening for God's voice, and in trust, following the leading of the Spirit. While it pains me deeply to have to step aside from pastoring the church I love, I am confident in God's sovereign leading and generous provision for me, for you, and of course for Calvary Memorial Church.

With deep affection and gratitude for you,

Pastor Todd