SPRINGHILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

May 1, 2016

Dear Springhill Family,

I submitted my resignation as Executive Pastor to the Session this past Wednesday night.

Letters of resignation are part of life. Yet reading such an opening line from someone from the church where you worship under the Word of God may be somewhat unsettling. I imagine you have several questions swirling around your head. For some of you, several questions may come to mind; for most of you, it's only two or three. The purpose of this letter is to answer a few of those questions.

So why have I resigned from the role of Executive Pastor? The primary answer is that I have accepted another role at a different church. Yet there's always a general context.

I came to a conviction that a change in my role would be beneficial to both the church and my own career. The ministry of Springhill has made a natural evolution in its ministry. As I watch our ministry move forward, we are moving into a season of gospel-directed mission and Christian unity in our Valley. I'm unequivocally, completely, 100% for the new season. Brenda and I have been praying for this step for Springhill since we first moved here. However the new season no longer needs an Executive Pastor. It did in the past, but it does not need one now. If I were an outside consultant I would advise that the church retool my position to fit the center of Springhill's vision, i.e. the missional center.

For the sake of clarity, there are no relational struggles or professional missteps. As well, I'm not being run out of the church by any pastor or elder. Curiosity mongers may wonder whether my resignation is connected to some other resignation. The blunt answer is, absolutely not. My wife, Brenda, and I made an independent decision in dependence upon Christ who moves His people as He directs the wind. Jesus used the term wind, in John 3 to describe the invisible movement of the Spirit. For our part—as the people whose clothes have been blown by His wind in this case—we are left with the dumbfounded awe of a God of mystery and sovereignty as we have sensed His movements.

In tandem with this new season, I also sense a transition in my career. The Lord has quietly affirmed over the last six weeks, "I have something beyond Springhill for you." I am going to step into a broader purpose as I finish my career in the next few years. I will serve as the Executive Pastor at Catalina Foothills Church in Tucson, Arizona. Along with that ministry I will formally serve as a coach to other pastors (who may be struggling with ministry) and a teacher to seminary students (who are just starting in ministry). I'm also going to try my hand at writing a book about relational leadership.

Brenda and I carry an absolute resolution that my role was needed at Springhill in 2011. We will never question our decision to move to Springhill. We have made lifelong friends and have even wondered if we should move back to Bozeman after I retire. We have loved this church and given our lives to it with no hesitations. No hesitations at all. We do not have adequate words to fully communicate our care and love for you.

Yet Christ is galvanizing all of us—older and younger, tenured and new, men and women—into unity and momentum for a new season. It will be full of God-surprises as we move together into His purposes. Yet Scripture promises that it will be the ride of our lives if we simply follow the winds in Christ's Kingdom.

My resignation is not immediate. Brenda and I will remain at Springhill for several weeks until Sunday, June 5. I have a number of commitments to keep, including the coaching of leaders as Springhill aligns its ministries to the mission statement. You'll still see us around the church. I'm even preaching on May 22 so that Sam Knight can visit our Youth Rendezvous partners in Chicago.

This is just one of two letters about my resignation. I encourage you to read on the church website, *"An Open Letter to the Congregation of Springhill and the Congregation of Catalina."*

So with the deepest of love for you, the utmost hope for the missional future of this church, with a lifelong appreciation for a life lived together in grace, and with prayers for the fullest blessing of Christ's heart upon you. . .

Paul L. Utnage