

**AND**  
**The Acts of the Holy Spirit in His Church - Acts 6:1-7**  
Pastor Terry Bishir    January 26, 2025  
Planting, Building, Supplying, Sending, Replacing, Resending

**I. What God has Done - What this means for us.**

Karen and I, along with our family, will celebrate in June of this year 38 years of pastoral leadership to this wonderful body here at Liberty Baptist. God has led all the way; He has provided all that was needed. He has done amazing things - the salvation of people and the discipleship of others. He has provided in both the spiritual and physical realms.

I have spent many nights going back, beginning in June of 1987, and remembering the people, pastors, deacons, ministries, missions, fellowships, and services. There were easier times and harder times, but always times of God's faithfulness. To God be the glory; it is amazing what God has done.

**II. What God is Doing - What this means for us.**

Tonight is another AND event in the life of this church as we move forward in obedience to the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. For many years, I have had on my mind continually a sincere concern for the health and future leadership of Liberty, and the desire to see Liberty thrive until the rapture of the Church. Others and I have prayed together for such. We have known through whatever years God gave, God's sustaining provision would be necessary, and if the Lord tarried, one day new leadership would be necessary. We have trusted the Lord to work all things out in His time for His glory. Over the last few years, this desire has increased. The Lord has been moving in my heart and the hearts of others that we are drawing closer to the time of transition for such purpose. We have already begun talking more often with the pastors and deacons about this need and goal, discussing and praying in our meetings. We waited on the Lord to clearly lead and give perfect peace for His timing and replacement for the lead pastor position. This was a cautious and careful following by each.

Last January we sensed an intensification in this process and serious discussions occurred with the pastors. That brought us to the summer of 2024. It was in midsummer that there was a particular time in my life that God made it clear that it was time to proceed. At first, I had difficulty with the instruction, and there was a struggle to feel the peace that the Holy Spirit did eventually give. Through this, Karen and I were communicating and praying about this decision. By late July, we also sought the counsel of our children and communicated what God was saying. We then began serious conversation in the fall with our pastors and the deacon fellowship. Those discussions included who the Lord would want to fill my position. The Lord was working in our hearts and we began to have clear direction as to my transition time and who should take the lead pastor position.

In my transition, it is our hope to remain at Liberty and continue to assist the church family by remaining in the preaching rotation, teaching, shepherding, advising, praying, and other opportunities as God directs that I am excited to do without being in the lead position. We will do so without financial remuneration, allowing other staff to be added.

**III. What God is Still Doing - What this means for us.**

The Lord has worked in Pastor Aaron's heart to be led to become the lead pastor at Liberty to be my replacement. The deacon fellowship, along with the support of Pastor Corey and me, has voted to nominate Pastor Aaron for a congregational vote on February 9th, AM and PM services, giving you time to pray and to ask questions. His leadership would begin the first of June.

What God is also doing is leading us to add another pastoral staff person as soon as possible with the goal of another when God provides. We are prayerfully looking to add ministry assistants.

God, prayerfully, will still be building His church here at Liberty. The main purposes remain: preaching and teaching God's Word, sharing the Gospel with the lost, discipling the believer, and caring in multiple ways for the needs of the body. God is still manifesting Himself. He is leading. He is providing. He wants to unite us for these God-given opportunities.

I have always tried to embrace change when it was right. I have always wanted to advance forward. This is an exciting opportunity and time in both our individual and church lives.

#### **IV. What You can Do**

##### **A. Helping Each Other**

We need to follow Christ; not our preferences or our own desires.

We need to work hard to unite on purposes and plans of God.

We need to spend times of prayer individually and corporately.

We need to freely ask questions of the leadership where there is confusion or unanswered questions over the next few months.

We need to understand that Satan will attempt to divide and scatter.

##### **B. Helping Pastor Aaron and staff**

Seek to understand what the staff faces after 38 years of leadership of another.

Pray for great wisdom and discernment through this transition.

Support and encourage the staff as they attempt to follow Christ.

##### **C. Helping Karen and me**

Understand that this has not been or will be easy. It should be a satisfying and blessed time, as it is God's will.

Pray for us as we seek to stay, serve, and support the new leadership.

Accept and understand our thanksgiving and love for each and every one of you. You have been an amazing group of family and friends. You have supported and loved us well. Words really do not express our deep gratitude for your impact in our lives.

Follow the leadership as we move into new growth. Love one another. A sign of a strong, successful, and healthy body is when a leader can transition and the church continues to thrive and expand its borders.

#### **V. Recognizing this Opportunity**

Karen and I desire to end our lives well. Change happens. We want to, through our testimony, demonstrate to our community and the world that God is powerful and able to do mighty things with us and in spite of us. This is far bigger than us. We are "His workmanship". Paul's words summarize our desire: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" Philippians 3:13-14. Paul also said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" II Timothy 4:7 Help us to finish well as we will help you to continue well.