

Letter of Retirement  
Sunday August 20, 2023  
To the Clarence Church of Christ,

Earlier this Spring I met with Jim, Larry and KC to share my decision to retire as the minister of the Clarence Church of Christ. There are many factors leading to this decision. I will turn 70 in November. I have 10 grandchildren spread over the USA from coast to coast. I want to share in the care of my 92-year-old dad. Deb and I have opportunities overseas. I'm finding it hard to keep up with all the duties of the job.

We came here in 1986. Our daughter, Krista, was 6-months-old. Josh and Caleb were students at Ledgeview Elementary. The church has been our family since that time. You helped us buy a house.

We've experienced the highs and lows of life together. The Bills' Super Bowl losses, 9/11. Flight 3407, Covid epidemic, blizzards, mission trips, building expansion, the Alley project, joyful weddings, triumphant funerals, new babies, God answering Big Hairy Audacious Prayers, Columbus Day outreach, Jesus's proms, food packing events, mentoring students, on and on it goes.

Each day has been an adventure. You patiently encouraged me and trusted me with your greatest treasures, despite my many flaws. God called me to this work and whatever good was accomplished was because God enabled us to do the work. He put his treasure in this jar of clay. Now it's time to step aside and let others take their turn.

I want to assure you that this is my decision. The elders are not forcing me to retire. I am not angry at anyone or anything. There's no issue causing me enough stress to retire. Thank the Lord my health is good. I am not going to another church. The church leadership is unified.

What's next? Well, plans are uncertain but I can assure you the Lord has great things in store for the Clarence Church of Christ. Please pray for our elders as they discern the leading of the Spirit in these exciting next steps. As we've learned, the Lord loves to surprise us. So be watching for surprises.

I plan to end my official work here at the end of December. Deb and I plan to stay in our home in Clarence Center. We will do our best to "encourage, comfort and urge you to live lives worthy of Christ" as we are able. We will travel some and eventually I'll take a part-time job somewhere. (My application from 1972 with the Cleveland Indians is still pending.)

This is weird because Clarence is my home church. I know the normal standard is for the retiring minister to disappear. I have no desire to be in any leadership capacity but I'd like to continue to worship together with you and participate as we are able. I'm still under obligation to deny myself, take up my cross and follow the Lord. I expect the Lord will help me find my place to serve him.

This is another happy/sad day but God is in this. He has great things ahead for us as we seek first the kingdom.

Thanks for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. God is faithful. He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.

Be strong and courageous,  
Mike Bowers