



THE PASTOR'S PEN

Volume 45 No. 12

June 22, 2015

A Request

For the foreseeable future, this will be my last *Pastor's Pen*. Instead of taking the time and the space to provide another pearl or two of wisdom, I would rather use this opportunity to express to everyone at First Christian my gratitude and my thanks for allowing me to minister with you for the last six years.

During my time here I have had the privilege to see many new faces come into our fellowship and I have also had the responsibility to help a few others make that final transition into eternity and receive their final rewards for their service and their faith. I have shared with you in your financial challenges and your work to reach out to those who are less fortunate in our community. I have sat with our sick and visited with others in the local jails. I have been blessed to teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Being a minister of the Gospel is a weighty responsibility. It is at times, a burden, especially when you are heartbroken and grieve with those who are grieving, as well as when you cry with those who are crying. Yet at the same time it can be empowering as you celebrate with those who are celebrating and rejoice with others who are rejoicing.

Ministry encompasses all areas of life. It takes place in good times and bad times, up times and down. It happens at the church building and in the community. In ministry you are involved with people at their best as well as when they are at their worst. In all of life's situations and conditions though, you are present with the guidance and leading of the Spirit to help and care for those in need and to care for those who do not even know that they have a need.

In all of these areas of ministry: service, teaching, evangelizing, preaching, administration and more, you have supported me and prayed for me. I cannot thank you enough for that. In the end, God has blessed our congregation and it is in a healthy condition. However, for it to stay healthy and for it to continue to grow, you all must now step up and serve as fully as you can.

The time has come for me to depart as your minister and now you must pray for and support the one coming after me. It is my hope and my desire that you will be faithful in your attendance and in your service with Rev. Paul Ingram as he now guides and ministers with you. Paul is a good minister and he knows how to work with people so that they can be their best in service and in love. Pray for him, reach out to him, listen to him and work with him as he cares for your congregation. If you do this, then there is no

limit to what First Christian can accomplish and no end in sight to the impact that you can have on our community for the cause of Jesus Christ.

This is my final request of you: Love God and serve Him as He has loved and given Himself for you. Be good and faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ and love others as Christ has loved you. Thank you all for the six wonderful years of ministry that I have been allowed to share with you and may God keep you all in His care.

**Blessings of Christ be upon you all,
James**