Broadway Christian Church

WHERE LOVE LEADS

March 8, 2023
Dearest Friends,

With the deepest of mixed emotions, I humbly submit my resignation as Lead Pastor of Broadway Christian Church, effective April 9, 2023. Four years ago, we first dreamed together as church and pastor how to heal the open wounds of the congregation and press forward with a new hope for the future. My family enthusiastically embraced the Call to join you with a long admiration of Broadway's rich history and the sweetness of re-rooting in a community that had been meaningful to us in our formative years.

We launched with numerous *Meet 'n' Greet* opportunities and began laying a new foundation together, committed to moving at the speed of trust. Just months into our *start* the world came to an abrupt *stop* as the pandemic upended any plans we had begun to make. Nonetheless, we pressed forward the best we could, adapting week to week, continuing a visioning process and hanging on tight through elections, societal unrest, and the loss of lives to a new predator among us, COVID-19.

Re-entering in person to the new world post-pandemic left us with a frontier reality of many unknowns. What habits changed? What is the role of the Church in this new world? We created new priorities and attempted to hold together the church as closely to its pre-pandemic state as possible. The last six months revealed a new vision in response to the changes of the world. After the inclusion of hundreds of Broadway voices and affirmation of the Board, we affirmed the direction of a new *Unified* vision.

I cannot express my gratitude enough for each brave step that we have taken together in these most unexpected years. For any frustration or disappointment you have encountered because of me, please accept my sincere apology. As we wrestled with the most faithful direction for our congregation, I recognize not all shared agreement. A healthy tension is natural when living in and through frontier moments. When the vision, however, hasn't been painted clearly enough for most everyone to swim with the current forward, a leader recognizes the spiritual cost to continue to swim upstream is too great. This does not mean any of these visions are wrong, just different. Please know that I hold nothing but love for our Broadway family. You are a beautiful people!

The lasting memories of child dedications, baptisms and celebrations of saints who joined the resurrection during these three-and-a-half years are seared into my soul – there is no greater privilege. The countless encounters of faith where some new understanding clicked, some welcome was extended where one had only known rejection, or some sacrifice was made for the sake of the Gospel that revolutionized even one life has been pure gift to me. My colleagues, teammates, and faithful lay leaders have taught me much about Church, about life, and about relationships. I am grateful.

So what now? The Church is in remarkable hands under your elected lay leadership and caring staff team. Our Regional Ministry team will be available to resource the church in discovering the healthiest path forward for a bright future. Be prayerful, patient with one another, and supportive of our staff and leadership as they carry the effort of where love will lead next.

My family plans to continue to call Columbia home. We are passionate about our community and look forward to remaining an active presence in the city. Having grown up in a pastor's home, I have been "*the pastor's family*" for 43 years. My spirit is in need of a reset. This next season of life apart from congregational ministry will be a rich, new discovery of our life and faith together as a family. I will ultimately begin working in the area of client and community relations for Anderson Homes. We covet your prayers and understanding as we write a new chapter just as our deepest prayers for this church we love continue as well.

I pray these final weeks will hold opportunity for us to share the joy and hope we have known together and to pivot forward with the mutual love of our faith that holds us always.

For the gift of this opportunity to serve among you, I could not be more grateful. May the love and peace of Christ carry us all into the next chapter, knowing God is not finished with any of us.

Mark Briley

In Love's leading,
Rev. Mark P. Briley