**January, 2024. Nine months ago, I announced at the Ministry Meeting that I was not retiring and not resigning. But I was aware of changes coming for me and for the church. Let’s revisit those two words.**

**Retiring. If you mean I should go sit down and do nothing, that is not me. Not while I have health and senility. I will continue ministering as long as God allows me. It may not be at Collinsville Baptist. But it will be somewhere.**

**Maybe Israel. Or Shocco. Ridgecrest? Christian Witness in the National Parks? Or I might be writing from those places. Or writing from Collinsville.**

**Or writing for newspapers. Maybe being a team chaplain. Or working with local sports teams any way that I can. I love this little town. Lots of ways to continue ministry.**

**I might be doing lots of things. I will endeavor to become a better father for our children. And our grandchildren. And a better husband for Gloria.**

**I might be doing something I haven’t thought of yet. God has lots of ways to use all of us in ministry. But what I want be is retired.**

**Resigning. Resigning as pastor of Collinsville Baptist. I did say at that meeting nine months ago that I get tired sooner and remember less. I am aging. And, as much as I love being your pastor, I need to be fair to you and move away from the pastor position.**

**I also said that I felt that I could continue for “a while” as the church makes decisions about which way to go for the future. I have been surprised at how God has often used my weakness in these months. I have learned to trust Him more. To release more of my plans to Him. I think that He has done some great things with all of us during this time as we feel our way forward as His Body in Collinsville. So far, things are going well.**

**I also think that “a while” will be ending by July. Maybe a little earlier or a little later depending on what CBC decides about a pastor. I will try not to leave the church without a pastor. I am also willing to step down sooner if the church decides sooner.**

**Sometime after Easter, I will take off a month or two. I have lots and lots of unused vacation and off days built up. I will think and wonder about my future. And what God wants for this church to do about a pastor. The *resign* word will become real for me sometime soon.**

**After that for me? Lots of choices. See the opening paragraphs above. The church has mentioned Pastor Emeritus. I would love someday to have that title. Depending on what Collinsville Baptist says it means. I also understand that with a new pastor I may need to be elsewhere for a while. We don’t have to decide that right now. Keep looking for God’s plans.**

**John Morgan**

**In the meantime, I hope you will each worry a little less about who the pastor may be. And instead make sure you decide “Who Are We?” Who is Collinsville Baptist Church?**

**My thoughts on that are on another paper. Ignore them if you want to do so.**

**John Morgan**

**Who is Collinsville Baptist Church**

I have loved being pastor of a church that is Baptist. Not just in name. This church is older than Dekalb Association and The SBC. Our Baptist heritage is almost 190 years old. CBC has been proudly Southern Baptist a long time.

We have maneuvered through denominational disagreements. We need a pastor who is truly Southern Baptist.

Being Baptist for CBC means that we proudly embrace missions. Our beginning came from that decision to send and support missionaries. We continue that emphasis through mission groups, offerings and activities. Lottie, Annie and all levels of missions. Our pastor must agree to that, also.

I want CBC to continue to be a church that embraces other churches in Collinsville. We have been able to disagree in some areas but to always love fellow Christians and neighbor churches. Our loving and working with each other says something important to our community about Church and Christianity.

For over a hundred years, CBC has had strong youth and children’s ministries. We were picking kids up with horse and wagon as the 1900s came along. I hope we will continue to have active children and youth programs. With the right pastor.

We are a church that wants education. To have Bible studies and activities. To want to have a pastor who embraces learning for all. And has the education himself to do it. We were the first church in this area to have a full time pastor. And to seek pastors with training. We need a pastor who knows the Word and knows how to teach it.

I want to be part of a church that supports directly helping in our community. To show people Jesus with our labors and offerings. Pastor and members reaching out.

Leaders and workers for Collinsville Community and Schools.

We want to be a part of a church that loves to worship. That has a music ministry on Sunday morning that shows our Baptist Hymnal backgrounds. And is able to embrace other music. A church that sings. And prays. And praises. As it has for many decades. Not like all the other churches in our area. Like us. Our pastor will need to know that and support it.

We want to be a part of a church that loves to have fun. Christian fun. Socials and picnics and parties and trips. To be a group that is silly in love with each other and with Jesus. And willing to show it. The world aches to see such love.

I want a pastor who will support and promote all of this. That is who we should be searching to find. A Pastor Search only after a Search Within. An honest look at ourselves.

*Forgive me for what I left out. You add it. John Morgan*