

Pastoral Letter September, 2026

Dear friends,

As we approach September, we will be relaunching a lot of the pre-summer ministries. ESL will start again, small groups, Friday night ministries, seniors, ...and many others that I am not even aware of. Some churches have a kick off Sunday, where all the new programs that are about to start will be announced and members can choose where they want to get involved.

It is a busy time for most churches. But for Trinity Baptist Church, there is an additional challenge—and perhaps an additional opportunity—before you: as you consider God's leading as you prayerfully discern the senior pastor to shepherd you. You are living through a season of transition, moving from where you have been toward where God may be leading you next. It is that interesting place in our spiritual journey that we sometimes describe as the “now and not yet.” We know where we are, but we do not yet fully know what lies ahead.

That can be an uncomfortable place to live. Most of us would rather know the plan. We would rather know where we are going and how we are going to get there. But these in-between places can also become some of the richest places for spiritual formation. They teach us to trust, to listen, to pray, and sometimes simply to wait.

The people of God have been in places like this many times. And each time they have overcome and emerged more healthy spiritually than whence they started. Remember the Exodus from slavery to freedom, from Egypt to Canaan, from Israel to Babylon and back. Remember the rise and fall of many good and not so good leadership. Through times of plenty and times of famine, through times of peace and times of persecution, through it all, we are still here. St. Paul makes this extraordinary claim in his letter to the Romans:

38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love..... 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Rom 8:38,39

So my encouragement to the people of Trinity is don't worry. Don't be anxious, don't be afraid, God's people have been here before and we are still here.

I want to close this letter with an experience I had while serving with friends in China. As our Masters program came to a close, two of our students came with us to Northern Thailand to learn about mission and work cross-culturally with the Thai people. Towards the end of the program, I was sitting with one of my students who was a minister in a small city where we served. It was a difficult time for the church as the government was cracking down on outreach ministries a church could be involved in. . They were forced to close down church organized and managed students centres that our Canadian churches had helped in support and training. These centres ministered to “left-behind” children, whose parents had left them back in the villages to work in the many growing cities of China.

Their sermons had to be scrutinized, their ability to share minimized. Later, his senior pastor will be arrested and jailed for over two years. I asked him, with all the pressure they were currently facing how he was feeling. He turned to me and concurred that ministry was getting more difficult, even dangerous. But...I'll never forget his reply as He turned to face me with a smile on his face and said “...but we are not afraid!” I get pretty emotional when I think of that moment - “We are not afraid.”

Those words have stayed with me because they were not the words of someone who denied the difficulties around him. He knew exactly what was happening. He knew the risks. But he also knew that God was with them, and that gave him courage. And that is what I want to say to you, the congregation of Trinity Baptist Church, as you enter this season of discernment: ****do not be afraid.****

The God who was with Israel through the wilderness is with you. The God who has sustained His people through generations of uncertainty and change is with you. The God who strengthens our brothers and sisters in places where following Christ can be costly is the same God who walks with Trinity today.

You may not yet know exactly where God is leading you. You do not need to have all the answers today.

Be still. Listen carefully. Pray together. Trust one another. And above all, remember that ****God—our God—is with you.****

Joy and Peace,

Pastor Tom