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Dear Grace Family,

I can think of no better name for our church than Grace. For it is in and through this church that my life has been utterly captivated by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. That story has unfolded over 40+ years—from first coming here in high school, to when God’s grace compelled me to leave a finance career to be your Youth Minister, pursue seminary, seek ordination, and ultimately return as your Senior Pastor six years ago. The wonder of God’s grace is that it leaves no part of life untouched—and Grace Church has been a vital context of that for me!

Today, I write to tell you that God’s amazing grace is again prompting me to take a big step of faith. I have decided to step down as your Senior Pastor effective August 9. This decision is the result of extensive personal reflection, prayer, and discernment with trusted friends, family, and advisors. I communicated this to the Leadership Team and a few elders last week before sharing it with the full Session a few days ago.

This has been an extremely hard decision, simply because of the depth of my love for this church and for you. You have been faithful in your love and care for me. You have been encouragers to me through painful times and celebrated with me in joyful times. You have been courageous in your generosity and have “READIED” Grace to further our mission across the street and around the world. You, the people of Grace are champions—and you are and always will be precious to me.

Still, I am confident this decision and timing to step down is right. I feel most alive when I am casting vision, loving people, and being a creative communicator—and for the past six years, I think that’s been an essential asset for Grace. I’ve loved giving voice to the vision of “living to make Jesus visible,” framing the call to gather/connect/bleed for the sake of discipleship, expanding our missional partnerships with the likes of Living Water International, Habitat for Humanity, and many others, and transforming our building for gospel hospitality through the READY campaign. We have taken huge strides together!

I sense different needs emerging now. In this age of COVID, so many of the foundations of how we do church are being upended, and it’s an opportune time to reevaluate systems, finances, and structures at a granular level. This dovetails with important work Grace needs, with a bias toward detailed decision-making. This kind of work is simply not how God has wired me. And while I know vision, preaching, and pastoring are still essential, I believe the next season of Grace needs a senior leader with equal appetite for tactical execution.



In my heart and spirit, I'm willing to do whatever it takes for this church. But the freedom we have in Christ means trusting him. Though this decision may seem sudden to some of you, it's the result of over 18 months of prayerful reflection about who I am in Christ. Last month a group of close friends asked me whether I was in my sweet spot, and I processed that question with the Lord and others closest to me. God led me to this answer—and to deny it, or to extend the timeline, would only prolong the very good things God has in store for me and for Grace.

So now what? Well, funny you should ask, because that's a question that'll preach! In my first sermon as your Senior Pastor, on September 7, 2014, I talked about God's provision in the "Now what?" moments of life. That's exactly where I find myself today. There's no new role I'm transitioning to; my only known plan is to spend some time resting, praying, and relishing time with my bride Niki and our family. As I do, I still proclaim what I preached in my inauguration sermon: "The God we serve is big enough to transform our 'Now Whats?' The God we serve has mighty plans for us—and he promises to never leave us nor forsake us!"

Which brings me back to how I started this letter: a testimony to God's amazing grace. Because of grace, we have nothing to prove, nothing to fear, and every reason to hope! That's true for me, for you, and for this marvelous church. Grace has been and will continue to be a beacon of light in Houston and around the world. I am confident this light will shine brightly for years to come for the simple reason that you are a faithful, loving, caring, generous, and devoted community of believers. I pray you may know more and more of God's amazing grace for you.

In the weeks to come, I trust we will have opportunities to interact and pray together. The Session and Leadership Team will also share plans for a smooth transition, and I'm committed to support them in that.

The future is bright. And by God's grace, you and I and this church stand READY!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trey H. Little".

Trey H. Little