



A Note from the Pastor's Corner

This month, I will depart from my typical musings to bring news that will affect each of us in some way. Knowing how news can easily and innocently become distorted, I think it's important that everyone in our congregation gets the same information at the same time.

Tanya and I are in the process of buying a house. We have a signed contract and a projected closing date of February 1st. The part that will bring us the biggest effect is that our soon-to-be new home is in Fayetteville. Things happened very quickly as we only began looking seriously in early December.

Some may be wondering things like, "Why there?" and "Why now?"

The now question is easier speak to. Retirement age is on the horizon for both of us. It may be a few years or so, but it's within view. From all indications, there's not a better time to buy a house. Interest rates are very low - and inching up; housing prices are beginning to level off; and we are both at the point of feeling the impact that the passage of time eventually brings to our physical beings.

I need to make clear that neither of us has settled on when we might retire. In all likelihood, Tanya will retire before I do. One factor that complicates the timing of this is not knowing what kind of mischief the new Congress will stir up regarding health insurance since my coverage is through her employment benefits.

The where is not so easy. As you might imagine, our hearts are where our family members are. Although we have many beloved friends, our family bonds are strong and enduring. For me, that's Pennsylvania. And Tanya would be agreeable to that location. The problem for us is that the area we would consider is simply out of our price range.

For Tanya, that would be the Atlanta - Chattanooga area. And I would be agreeable to that location. But, as one who has followed the actual science of global warming - as opposed to the anti-science statements that many of our well-moneyed, politicians broadcast - I'm not willing to commit the last decades of my life to an area that is already being hit hard by this phenomenon.

The American Southeast is projected by most, if not all, climate models to become severely drought-stricken. The fact is, that region is now in the grips of a serious, years-long drought which brought the city of Atlanta to its knees last Winter and is even now driving livestock farmers out of business.

We both have made good connections in the Syracuse area, so remaining here is in no way a hardship. But that brings the reality of the typical lake-effect snow belt into the equation. To be sure, there are trade-offs to be made, but staying in what is often 'ground zero' for Suzie Snowflake was huge in our decision-making.

Even though closing is expected to be soon, we do not plan to actually move until early April, when the possibility of snow has eased. It will also give us time to make the improvements we think need to be made before we move in.

Certainly there will be rough spots as I adjust to not being just next door, but I believe they will mostly impact me and my home life more than the church. I will need to be more organized when I leave home in the mornings. Instead of working at home a few hours a day - or night - a couple of times a week, I will be scheduling a day to work at home for reading and sermon preparation. That would most often be on Wednesday, but not always. My work-at-home day will be in the printed announcements on Sunday morning. Yes, it will be more road time for me, but less for Tanya.

I will do my best to keep you informed about our moving plans. I expect to take a vacation week when we actually do move but do not foresee any other interruptions.

Please feel free to speak with me about any concerns you may have about this change. I will make every effort to minimize the impact this might have on my being your pastor.

Grace and peace, Pastor Bud