

Ellen and I have reached the age where the privilege of retirement is now before us. After an adventurous life of pastoral ministry, we have accepted an invitation for mission service in Southeast Asia focused on mentoring and leadership development. Our flight leaves on New Year's Day – what a fitting day to follow our God of unfailing love into a new chapter.

Having made this decision, we had to prepare. The first step was to put our house on the market. It sold quickly. Then we were faced with the task of emptying the house of everything that made it a home. We thought of an estate sale, but the opportunities began to present themselves to make meaningful donations.

First, personal and generational items were shared among family. Then a church in Rochester that provided two apartments for women and children in crisis backed up and loaded a U-Haul truck. Then we delivered a load to a house for women recently released from prison. Then a load to a family that recently relocated to Rochester whose moving truck was broken into with all of their contents stolen. Then we loaded a U-Haul truck and made a donation to a local church for their annual missions garage sale. And finally, everything left was delivered into multiple trips to Goodwill. Mission accomplished – the house was empty and ready for new occupants in time for closing.

It was an emotional experience to dismantle our house of all that made it a home for the many fulfilling years of our marriage and family. Yet, it came with a surprising sense of peace that we were all in. No regrets. No turning back. God has blessed us. God is blessing us. God will bless us as we continue in our simple baby steps of obedience to His calling.

Southeast Asia here we come!