

## Getting Our Bearings

One of my favorite activities is to hike and climb in the Rocky Mountains. The Rockies are rugged and dangerous, and in order to both a) survive, and b) not get lost, I need to be sure where I'm going at all times.

The church is also on a journey; one that is every bit as rugged and dangerous as a hike in the mountains. Our journey is in setting people free to **listen to the Spirit, follow the Son, and exalt the Father**. It is a beautiful path, but it is also a difficult path. There are too many voices in our lives that would seek to drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit. We tend to follow the paths of our own making—towards selfish ambition, pride, and the little gods of this world—instead of that of Christ. We commit our time, energy, and loyalty to the created things of this world instead of the one true God of heaven and earth. God is at work, however. We can do this.

The purpose of this journey is, of course, not for our own sake. Unlike a walk in the woods, our journey has a very particular aim: *to reach the nations with the good news of Jesus Christ the King!* The focus is beyond ourselves and towards the larger vision of what God is doing in the world through his church. We believe God has given FRC a very clear vision of where we are going:

**Our vision over the next 3-5 years is to envelop every new person who moves into Sioux Center and every person who is far from Jesus into the life and ministry of First Reformed Church. Furthermore, we are going to expand the reach of the kingdom locally, regionally, and globally and become a multi-site ministry.**

With all of that in mind, January is a good time for us to reorient ourselves; to get our bearings as we journey along.

**Where have we been**—New staff, new members of the congregation, new visitors, a new sanctuary, new bylaws, and a new vision have resulted in FRC looking and feeling quite different from what it did a few years ago. *I am grateful for your gracious adaptation to the changes!* All of these changes have been purposeful, as we constantly seek to be transformed according to the Spirit's leading in order to accomplish the mission and vision God has for us.

**Where we are now**—As the staff and structures of ministry are in place, and people are being engaged in the Spirit's movement here, we are seeking how to best execute the mission and vision. How do we engage people in the work of ministry? How do we best disciple and care for each other? How do we create a culture of hospitality, service, and worship in the church? All of this is focused on the mission and vision God has laid before us.

**Where are we going**—Our aim is the kingdom. Our vision is the vehicle: enveloping new people and people far from Jesus; expanding the reach of the kingdom locally and globally; leading and encouraging ministry in other communities. To that end, we are seeking to hire a campus pastor at our Hawarden campus. More generally, we are going to be hiring a full-time worship director to vision and lead worship at FRC. All areas of ministry will be honing and refining what we do and how we do it to better live into our mission and vision. *It will continue to look different here.* As unnerving as that might seem, we can move forward in trust: God has this; God has us.

Listen to God's voice and receive this blessing as you engage in the journey: God go before you to guide you. God go behind you to protect you. God go beneath you to support you. God go beside you to befriend you. Do not be afraid. May the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you and keep you. Do not be afraid. Go in peace to love and serve him.

Pastor Travis