



1-21-18 Sermon Discussion Guide

"Vision Check - For Fort Dodge"



Context

We are spending these 4 weeks before Lent revisiting our church's mission and vision statement. Our mission, to know Christ and make Christ known, will never change, but how we go about pursuing that mission will change based on our context, time, and place. This is why a vision is helpful- to specifically share how we will live out our mission.

Checking In

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

Introduction

When the Israelites were sent into exile in Babylon, they had no idea how long they would be there. I'm sure they hoped it would be a short, temporary exile. Nevertheless, the prophet Jeremiah encouraged them to seek the welfare of the city. To pray to the Lord for the city. To plant gardens and have children and settle down. Jeremiah reminded them that in the welfare of the city, they will find their welfare, too.

Discussing and Applying the Text

1. At Austin's grandfather's funeral, the eulogies centered around what Ralph was against rather than what he was for. What do you want to be remembered for?
2. So often the church is known for what it's against instead of what it's for. What would you say First Presbyterian Church is for?
3. Do you think the people of Fort Dodge know we are for them? Why or why not?
4. What issues are facing our town today? What would it look like for First Presbyterian to partner with others to learn more about these issues and how to seek to change them. In this we'd embody Jeremiah's call to seek the welfare of the city.
5. More than just trying to "fix" Fort Dodge and its problems, faith calls to simply engage with people where they are. Specifically, people not presently served by the church. What might this look like in your life? Would this be hard or easy for you to do?

Prayer

Share something specific that you will commit to praying about for Fort Dodge. Ask God to show you how you can seek the welfare of the city. Pray for the elected town and county officials and all who live in Fort Dodge.



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FPC Mission ~ KNOWING CHRIST AND MAKING HIM KNOWN

God is calling First Presbyterian Church of Fort Dodge, Iowa to:

- **Encounter**
 - By living our lives within our community, partnering with our neighbors so that we might see God at work
 - By seeking out, building relationships with, and blessing those who have not yet experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ
- **Empower**
 - By caring for the spiritual and physical needs of all our members and all the persons with whom God brings us into contact
 - By growing as disciples of Jesus Christ through the practices of prayer, Bible study, and devotional time
 - By engaging in fellowship as we encourage one another to grow spiritually so that each person identifies, develops, and uses their spiritual gifts in ministry
 - By proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and Bible study in order for lives to be transformed



FPC Vision ~ The Spirit of God is leading First Presbyterian Church in its next chapter of ministry to respect important traditions while cultivating a culture that equips all of God’s people to love others deeply, build relationships and participate more fully in God’s mission in their daily lives within the ever changing circumstances of Fort Dodge and beyond.

Key Guidelines for Partnering with God to Pursue this Vision

- **Stewarding Our Core Ministries:** We will steward well our core ministries while we work to adapt them to respond to the changing needs within our church and our larger community.
- **Willingness to Risk and Experiment:** We will engage in God-ordained risks for the sake of the Kingdom through experimentation in trying new ways to address changes taking place.
- **Every Member in Ministry:** We will increase member involvement within our ministry at all levels, with staff working primarily to recruit, train, and empower these persons to lead.
- **Balancing Inward and Outward:** We will work at achieving more balance in the time and effort we invest in serving our members with that we use to engage our larger community.
- **Learning to Engage With Others:** We will actively engage persons in our larger community not presently served by the church in ways that listen to, walk with, and learn from them as we bear witness to the good news of the gospel. We seek to meet people where they are.
- **Discerning God’s Continued Leading:** We will continually evaluate our ministry environment for places where God appears to be at work both in our church and within our larger community, and then act to align our ministry with these movements of the Spirit.

* Session Approved On 04/12/16.