



## Beyond The Horizon Vision

### **Welcome Home: Forming and Extending the Family of God**

*Summary: Eager to be constantly formed and filled by the Spring of Living Water, Jesus Christ, our people will be surging streams of hope, love, and good news as we extend the family of God to people in our neighborhoods, East Central Minnesota, and to the ends of the earth.*

As God has worked through our church family to have an eternal impact on many thousands of lives for over 125 years, we now seek to expand on this legacy left to us by our faithful and pioneering brothers and sisters.

In this age of digital relationships, our post-truth culture has lost nearly all sense of family, love and belonging, which creates a hostile desert of devastating loneliness and isolation. This life-threatening situation intensifies the extreme thirst experienced by all who are separated from our Heavenly Father. Due to the drought of real, loving relationships, our region is filled with people suffering from addictions, poverty, depression, confusion, suicide, abuse, homelessness, crime, neglect, the splintering of families, the trials of single parenting, and the abandonment of seniors.

Merely doing what we have been doing will not deliver life-giving water to the wasteland that surrounds us or thwart the work of our enemy. Despite our active ministries, a penetrating assessment revealed significant challenges in discipleship and evangelism – issues that can and must change. Dependence on God is crucial as we discern and design a clearly defined discipleship pathway that helps each of us overcome our timidity in reaching out to our neighbors, sharing our faith, and inviting them to find the true source, Jesus Christ. As we fervently pray for the living water of the gospel to flow into our community, we must realize that we, the Spirit led and empowered family of God, are His vessel for making that happen. We, as a church, must be willing to let go of, without division or politics, even good things that are holding us back from God things. We must hold on to our unity of spirit and of focus for the sake of the gospel because we live in the last split-second of human history. The time to joyfully and courageously follow and live on mission for Jesus is now.

By 2025, God will work through our congregation to revive this dry and thirsty land as we grow in Christ-likeness, sacrificially share His love and become family to everyone in need of one. By prioritizing intentional, life-on-life relationships, we will walk with each other on a discipleship journey that draws each one closer to Christ. Because our society is increasingly indifferent or even hostile to Christianity, we must all commit to bring Jesus to people in our world and to join forces with other Kingdom-minded believers, churches and missionaries. Through these combined efforts, we dream of hundreds of thousands of people here and around the world becoming connected to the family of God.

The overflow of His living water will cause us to be agents of transformation and become family as we serve one another and our neighbors, meet needs through radical generosity, and care with authentic love. As a result, the gospel will be lived and proclaimed near and far, and multitudes will place their faith in Jesus Christ. We will see the flourishing of marriage, parenthood, and family. Divorce, addiction, hopelessness and abuse will greatly diminish. Children in need of a family will be fostered and adopted into loving Christ-centered homes. There will be healing, wholeness and healthy relationships. Children and youth will grow in love and wisdom, young adults will thrive, adults will be renewed, and seniors will find purpose and belonging.

Our church will become a channel where God's living water flows so deeply and so powerfully that all who encounter it will long to be part of it and will yearn *to know, love and become like Jesus*. And we will hand down to the next generation of Christ-followers at First Baptist another chapter of faithful obedience along with endless stories of the power of God doing immeasurably more than all we could have ever asked or imagined.