



First Baptist Church

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*Pastor Steve & Esther Aldridge
with sons (L) Aidan and (R) Dominick*

The Lord relocated my family and I from upstate New York to minister in Upstate Minnesota in July of 2020. We have had to adjust to a completely different culture while also facing the difficulties of ministering and getting to know people during the complexities of Covid-19. Needless to say, this did not leave any room for a quiet transition period. I found myself in the middle of a room, with unfamiliar faces, a church history that I was not overly familiar with, personalities that I was unsure of how they were going to react to changes, all looking for answers and direction on how to deal with governmental mandates, proposed church shutdowns, and questions about the future of the church. Feeling the pressure to lead was an understatement.

Thankfully, the Lord in His grace and wisdom, reminded me of two key verses that brought peace and refocused trust upon God into my heart and mind. Psalm 32:8 – “*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.*” And James 1:5 & 6 – “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting...*” Instantly, man-made pressure to perform was removed and the Spirit of the Lord began to open doors and answer questions for our Leadership team from that point on. What made this even easier was the grace & love shown by the body and the wisdom of our Elders. The whole church remained focused on glorifying God, making every Scriptural decision necessary for the direction of the church to be made with confidence and peace of mind. Without Him, I am not sure how my transition would have gone in the midst of earthly uncertainty.

We had a desire to find a way to minister to our various shut-ins and make sure they know they are still included in church and cared for. After much prayer, several people in the church came up with a prayer action program. Each month we'll be sending out a newsletter with all the church info and activities for that month and a specific topic to pray for. Each week, I'll be posting a devotional to add specifics to the prayed upon topic, and a dedicated group of people will be calling, sending cards, and if possible, visiting our shut-ins. Hopefully, this will allow people to feel included, active, and cared for.

We have been blessed to see a hunger grow for the truth of Jesus Christ and I believe God has used this virus to help increase this passion in the lives of men and women around us. There is no question that the glory of the Lord shines all around us. As the apostle Paul says in Romans 8:31 – “*...If God is for us, who can be against us?*”

With all gratitude,
Pastor Steve Aldridge