

## *Statement on Ministry*

At the height of the Protestant Reformation, as reformers struggled to transform the theological landscape of the day, many came to believe that their church buildings were also in need of some serious transformation. With all the gusto of Bob Vila, these reformers set out to renovate their worship spaces. Among their most notable achievements was the replacement of the beautiful, stained glass windows that adorned their sanctuaries with boring, plain glass ones. The reformers' reason for doing this was a simple one and hits to the very heart of my understanding of ministry.

Why did the reformers replace stained glass windows with plain glass ones? They wanted churchgoers to be able to see the world around them even while they were gathered together inside of the church building. For the reformers, church wasn't a sacred space set apart from the world. Rather, they believed that the church exists as part of the world for the sake of the world. They installed plain glass windows into their sanctuaries so that they would never forget that what was being done inside of the church building was being done for the sake of the world outside it.

Whether a congregation is gathered together in prayer, in worship, in study, or even in fellowship over a potluck dinner, I believe that all these activities should be done with our eyes locked steadfastly on the world around us. We pray so that we may discern what horizons of love and justice God is calling us to strive for in our local and global communities. We worship so that we may be upbuilt in the knowledge of God's love for us in Christ that we may be better witnesses of that love to those around us. We study so that we may be emboldened by the testimonies of that great cloud of witnesses to proclaim a message of love and grace in a world full of injustice and hate. And we gather together in fellowship – over coffee, over potluck casseroles, or over nothing at all – so that we may practice loving our neighbors even when it's not the easy thing to do.

I see my role as a minister of a local church to be one of helping to create and nurture a community that is excited to carry the light of Christ out of their church building and into the world. As a preacher and teacher, my hope is to provide Christ-centered worship and small group experiences that challenge, uplift, and equip people of all ages to go out, serve those in need, and bring healing to a badly broken world. As a pastor, my hope is to provide a consistent presence to a congregation that lifts up individuals' gifts, helping them to discern the ministry to which God is calling each of them. As a fellow Christian, my hope is to lead a congregation by example, striving always to strengthen my relationship with God, to deepen my understanding of the scriptures, and to be a witness to Christ's love in all of my personal conduct. Finally, as a member of the local church, be it a church housed in a building with plain glass windows or in a building with stained glass windows, my hope is that we can work together to make the light of Christ shine ever more brightly out of our sanctuary and into the world around us.