

## **Dale Heights Guiding Vision Statement DRAFT**

### **WE ARE A PEOPLE OF SALT AND LIGHT LIVING FOR THE WORLD:**

Bold in action, resisting despair, advocating for those whose voices go unheard, seeking peaceful resolution rather than escalation of conflict, challenging our culture of materialism with one of contentment and creativity, countering the culture of arrogance with one of humility, we speak into our culture the truths of Jesus Christ. We trust in God's faithfulness, and trust that as a church we are in company with a God that never sleeps; therefore, we strive to be this church of the Living God, the church needed in our world.

Acknowledging our relationship with God, we are called to worship in the spirit of love. God gathers us together in a wide variety of planned and unplanned encounters in which we experience and offer reconciliation and hope in a world that desperately yearns for both. With a broad definition of worship, we are a place for all to rest when weary, to come and be transformed to our very roots, to learn faith, love and hope, and to radiate these gifts.

Called to get to work, we are an open-minded and caring church, which desires to act as though we are in the world that God intended. Governed by that desire, recognizing people's essential needs, among them food, fellowship and spiritual connection, we will continue our tradition of outreach mission projects and continue to look for and identify areas of need where we can serve as the Holy Spirit moves among us.

We will let people know: we are a church in and for the neighborhood, an intimate and diverse place where "everybody knows your name." God is already at work in our community, guiding our congregation as we seek to discern our part in that mission. We are asking, "How shall we reflect God's amazing grace?"

### **WE ARE A PEOPLE OF SALT AND LIGHT LIVING OUT "Jesus' vision of right relationships":**

We embrace Jesus' commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength—and our neighbors as ourselves. Given a clear mandate, we are called to love boldly and to act faithfully. With each opportunity where we can choose our actions, we are heartened by the reminder that as we love, the world comes closer to what God intends.

Our first and foremost relationship is the one between each of us and God. As individuals in the church we accept the responsibility of learning, practicing and growing in our faith, doing all we can to deepen our relationship with God. God is invisible, made visible in Jesus Christ, made visible in us. In relationship with our loving Creator we live in hope and joy and experience peace.

We claim God's loving acceptance of all as a cornerstone on which we build. All are equal and equally welcomed to the banquet—young, old or in-between, receiving

encouragement from God's love and through Jesus' teachings. Because we are taught that Jesus wanted people to know each other and care for each other and encourage each other, we continue to look for opportunities to do exactly this. We are all on individual trajectories yet we strive to listen to and support one another. Sometimes this will be difficult and require all of our strength and mind and reliance on the many ways God interacts with us as we go through passages of sickness, need, betrayal and death. We will also be guided by Jesus' admonition to love our enemies. And each time we encounter other human beings, we endeavor to look for the Christ in them.

Recognizing Christ with outstretched arms, we seek to stretch our own arms out to the world, embracing all. We will live and act in the spirit of that powerful image.

### **WE ARE A PEOPLE OF SALT AND LIGHT ENVISIONING HOW OUR CHURCH PRAYS AND ACTS:**

Bold in prayer we come to the glorious well of living water that nourishes and heals. We pray with the expectation that prayer will move aside all that stands between us and God. Our prayers equip us to live in harmony with one another and with the earth; to accept all, forgive all and live in hope. We believe that praying and acting will make a difference in the world.

It has been said, "Pray as if everything depends on God; act as if everything depends on us." We believe that praying and acting are well-considered together. Acting flows out of prayer, and prayer supports and fine tunes acting. Our models for praying and acting are informed by the Scriptures' teachings about God, in Jesus' words and actions, and in the apostles' words and actions. Our models for praying and acting may also be witnessed in each another. Through our prayerful actions, we are God's loving hands on earth.

In prayer we encounter an awesome, living God, a burning bush experience. We praise and give thanks. We ask for and receive forgiveness and ask for the strength to let go of anything that prevents our forgiving others or holds us back from living our faith. In the communal experience we gain from the closeness of others. In private times of prayer we can say what we would say to no other, and even in our doubt we can bask in the atmosphere of indescribable love and acceptance and clear and sound guidance. We endeavor to pray and act so that we do not live in darkness, but in the light of God.

We are a people bold in action, empowered by our relationships with the living and loving God, a gathered and sent community seeking to be faithful witnesses through prayer and action. We look to break the bonds of despair. We look to knock fear out of the ballpark. We say to hopelessness—"begone!"—we are following One who carries hope like a glorious banner for all to see and who offers courage to work for right relationships in the church, our families, our community and our world. In a world of doubt and fear we choose to trust and hope.