

Asking for directions

When you need directions, it helps to have a good GPS. Or access to Google Maps. Or an up-to-date paper map. Or a friend who knows how to get there.

As Grace Church begins a new leg of the journey, we have a Friend who knows the road. He knows potholes, construction slow-downs, and important scenery. Jesus is not big on shortcuts. But he guarantees to get us where we need to be.

Our challenge is to let him lead.

The Apostle Paul provides travel-tips in his letter to folks in Ephesus.

When Paul prays, he doesn't start by asking God to keep them safe, or help them find jobs, or give them good health, or any of the things we usually think of to pray for. He starts by asking God to give them *wisdom, so they may know God better*. (Ephesians 1:17)

What a great prayer for Grace Church! That *we'll get to know God better*.

The better we get to know God, the more we'll notice along the route. We'll take fewer detours. We'll begin to travel in ways that delight God's heart. We'll become more effective partners in God's project for the world.

And as we get to know God better, we'll learn to *hope*. That's the next bit Paul prays for the Ephesians: "that you may know the hope to which God has called you." (Ephesians 1:18)

At Grace Church, you didn't anticipate blessing your siblings as they plant a new church. You didn't expect the sorrow, and the challenge, that accompany the shift. Sometimes it's tempting to get discouraged or anxious.

But we are called to *hope*—which is not at all the same as wishful thinking. We're not talking about an ambiguous hope that "things will be okay." Nor a hope that we'll bushwhack our own way to somewhere.

God calls us to hope in *God's promise* and *God's power*. This God raised Jesus from the dead! This God turned 11 demoralized disciples into people of irrepressible joy.

The same God called Grace Church into being in the first place. He has good plans. As we pray together, as we listen for his guidance and commit ourselves to follow him, Jesus will lead us into the good future he has in mind.

On this road trip you have friends. Elaine Tsang, Edwin Nkengla, Dan Seekings, and Ken Saah Fon are excellent preachers, who have each heard God's call to partner with you. You'll have regular opportunities to hear each of them in the months ahead.

The folks of Gloucester Church (where Denise serves), and St. Paul's Church (where Grant serves) pray for you each week. And both of us pray for you often.

Would you pray too? With thanksgiving and confidence? Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us *get to know God better*, to fill us with *hope in God's power*, and to *equip and guide us* on this road.

We're glad to be your travel companions on this leg of the journey.

Denise & Grant