

## Lampen Letter for the Fairview Reformed Church Profile

Dear Potential Pastoral Candidate for Fairview Reformed Church,

As the former pastors of Fairview, we would love to encourage you to prayerfully consider submitting your application to serve at Fairview Reformed Church. Over the last five and a half years, the Lord has worked through the congregation in Fairview to shape us into pastors who love their flock and whose understanding of the pastoral profession has been deepened. It has not been all daisies and roses - no call is! - but God has been faithful and has consistently ushered us through the joys and trials of small town ministry.

Though we expect that you'll find a much deeper and richer account in the rest of the profile, we want to name that we have enjoyed raising our family here in this town. Accepting a call to serve as the pastor of Fairview Reformed Church means that you will have the opportunity to serve as the pastor of the village, as well. Opportunities for ministry within the community are plentiful, especially when tragedy shakes the foundation of a family or the community. Some of the most beautiful and holy experiences we've had are when we've been welcomed into a home to hear about a lost loved one, or to sit alongside the sick and dying. To be able to remind someone of the powerful love of Jesus Christ, even in the face of death, is a beautiful calling. You get to be a pastor while in the sanctuary, but also at the nursing home, ball field, and library too. You receive stories while at the bank and stopping at the post office. It is a beautiful calling that is rich.

Weekly life with Fairview Reformed Church consists of the steady, daily experiences of God's grace in worship planning, sermon writing, committee planning, and visiting. Week after week, month after month, you'll push for a deeper and more faithful pursuit of God; you'll have moments of joy and pride when God prompts someone to respond to his love in a beautiful display of grace, and you'll have other moments when you will trust that the Holy Spirit is working, even when you can't see it. Most change comes slowly, and only with trust that has built up over several years. What might God do through you here, in the weekly and seasonal rhythms of life within a small agricultural community?

Whether or not you have an agricultural background yourself, a deep sense of joyful curiosity about the daily lives of the congregation and community will serve you well. Are you curious about the fluctuations of the grain market, the spraying and fertilizing of fields, the delivery of calves and lambs, the development of new varieties of corn and soybeans? What about the rhythms of life for teachers, classroom aides, and school administrators? Or medical professionals and accountants? Are you curious about the daily challenges that retirees face: the doctor's appointments, the care of grandchildren, the struggle to pay bills on a fixed income? As the pastor here, you get to walk through the ins and outs of life with each congregation and community member around you - which is a special privilege.

One of the best places we have found support in the surrounding area is the Illinois Classis. These people are gold. Become friends with them, join them for Zoom prayer times, and put your gifts to work on a classis committee. We have learned so much from the local pastors and elders through the Classis network.

Fairview Reformed Church has provided our family with a place to grow, reflect, grieve, and be curious. We have been given space to try new ideas and process how to serve as pastors well. We pray you faithfully consider loving this beautiful congregation well.

With gratitude and prayer,  
Pastors Chelsea and Jeff Lampen