

Date: July 26, 2018
To: Rosewood Congregation
From: Transition Team
Re: Recommendation

The Transition Team unanimously recommends that the Consistory consider Pastor Austin Vondracek as our next Lead Pastor. We reached this decision after a discernment process that began in April 2017, since that time, we have met nearly every other week, listened to countless sermons by a long list of preachers provided by our Pastor Search Consultant, conducted phone or skype interviews with many candidates, conducted on-site interview with three candidates, on-site visit with one candidate and spouse, and wrapped the process diligently in prayer.

During this discernment process, we prioritized five qualities in the ideal candidate:

1. Christ-like character
2. Competency in the areas of leading the congregation in its next chapter and following the prompting of the Spirit as a faithful and diligent servant of the Lord.
3. Chemistry with the Rosewood Reformed Church
4. Cultural fit with our community
5. Credentials (ordained or ordainable with RCA)

The Transition Team believes that Austin Vondracek, a native of Iowa and currently the Pastor of Discipleship and Outreach at the Beechwood Reformed Church in Holland, meets each of our expectations for our next Lead Pastor.

1. He is a good teacher and preacher. You can see for yourself here:
 - a. 8/06/17 - <https://livestream.com/beechwoodchurch/events/7639836/videos/160862047>
 - b. 2/04/18 - <https://livestream.com/beechwoodchurch/events/8043060/videos/169763276>
 - c. 2/25/18 - <https://livestream.com/beechwoodchurch/events/8073481/videos/170706941>
 - d. 5/27/18 - <https://livestream.com/beechwoodchurch/events/8223832/videos/175491478>
 - e. 6/10/18 - <https://livestream.com/beechwoodchurch/events/8243020/videos/176107452>
2. He is enthusiastic and genuine, with a love for the Word and the Church.
3. He has strong passion for outreach.
4. He is excited about connecting with a multi-generational congregation.

Our process included reference checks. Here are some excerpts:

- “Austin is a hard, hard worker with lots of energy and great people skills.”
- “He can preach the paint off the walls.”
- “Austin is comfortable in his own skin.”
- “Austin is humble, a constant learner who does not think he has all the answers; these qualities make him an excellent leader.”
- “His strength as a Lead Pastor will be preaching and authenticity.”

Here are some words used to describe Austin: dedicated, committed, genuine, go-getter, patient, spiritually mature, competitive, and independent.

We have attached several documents for you. They include the team’s process, timeline, an introductory letter from Austin Vondracek, a resume, and the position description. If you desire further information, please let us know and we will make every attempt to provide it for you.

Finally, we solicit your prayers. A simple one will do: “May thy will be done.”

The Team:

Mike Anderson
Joe Bares
Barb Boomstra
Roger Bruins

Lisa English
Nate Koetje
Tracie Kumko
John Peterson

Tyla VanderMaas
Frank Vander Meer
Max Veldman
Bob Spaman – *Scribe*

The Transition Team Process:

- Team has been meeting over a year
- Screened for outside vendor
- Selected Chapter Next - Sam Hamstra
- Completed a survey of congregation
- Conducted listening sessions with the congregation
- Sam met with the staff for input
- Created a Profile of the church - approved by the consistory
- Ads were placed for the position
- Those that responded received the profile
- Team screened 25 candidates (4 were recruited and the rest applied)
- Listened to many sermons
- Conducted zoom (live online) interviews with those selected (8 were interviewed)
- Listened to many more sermons
- Conducted second interviews live at Rosewood (3 were interviewed)
- Listened to more sermons
- Some teams visited churches of candidates
- Pastor Jim met with the top 2 candidates
- Ran APEST and SOI assessments on both candidates
- Scheduled mystery visits to Rosewood by candidates and social gathering afterwards
- One of the candidates removed his name from consideration
- Ran background and financial checks on the candidate
- Conducted a 3-hour interview including the spouse at Rosewood with a supervisor from RCA present with our top candidate
- Team unanimously approved to recommend our choice to the consistory.
- Ran reference checks on the candidate
- One on one meetings held with the staff
- Interviewed by RCA Supervisor and team and approved

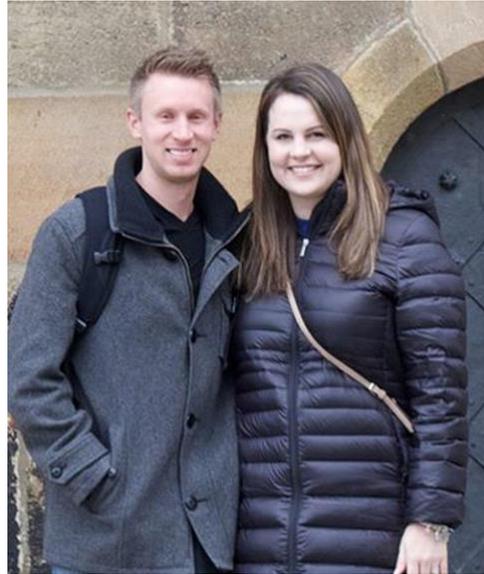
Timeline:

- June 27 – Final interview with candidate and spouse
- June 27 – Transition Team unanimously votes to recommend candidate
- July 11 & 13 – Candidate had one-on-one meetings with all the staff
- July 16 – RCA Supervisor and team interviewed candidate and gave their approval
- July 18 – Transition Team approves written report and recommendation
- July 19 – Report forwarded to Consistory members
- July 25 – Candidate Interview by Consistory
- July 26 – Send presentation to Congregation – printed copies will be available at the Welcome Center
- July 29 – Candidate to preach and participate in a Q&A with Congregation
- July 31 – Consistory votes on recommendation to call candidate
- August 12 – Congregational Meeting to vote on recommendation from Consistory
- August 13 – Signed Called Letter forwarded to Classis and then forwards call to candidate
- August 29 – Response from candidate read to congregation
- October 1 – Candidate starts as Lead Pastor of Rosewood
- Month of October – this will be the Transition Month with Pastor Jim on-site.
- November – December – Transition continues with Pastor Jim available as needed.
- November 4 – Candidate preaches for the first time.

Dear Rosewood Consistory and Congregation,

My name is Austin Vondracek, and I am excited to be called into the role of Lead Pastor at Rosewood Church. I believe I possess the gifts necessary to spiritually shepherd the flock of Rosewood and reach those in the greater Jenison community who don't have a relationship with Jesus.

My wife, Leah, and I met through mutual friends after I moved to Holland for seminary and we've been married for three years. The two of us enjoy working on our house, visiting the family farm in Hesperia, and playing card games into the night. We are also looking forward to a whole new life as our family is expected to grow by one this October when our first son is born.



For seven years I have served at Beechwood Church in Holland, beginning in the student ministry department and then being called as the Pastor of Discipleship and Outreach. Within that time I also helped plant the Church at Benjamin's Hope, which is designed to provide a meaningful worship environment for people with developmental differences. My experience leading volunteer and staff leaders and preaching has taught me that in order to inspire authentic faith in my congregation I must first practice and prioritize authentic faith in my own life.

Preaching is the most life-giving gift I possess. A weekly message that tells the gospel story from any angle is important to me. Sermons aren't just a means of conveying information to the masses, but an opportunity to speak truth to believers and skeptics alike. I embrace the challenge to present ancient truths with relevant meaning in an ever-changing world that connects with people right where they are and moves them forward to the next step of faith. I am animated on stage, commonly utilize visual handles to reinforce one, clear point, and teach with unashamed conviction of Christ's resurrection power.

Having had the chance to visit Rosewood, meet the staff, and interact extensively with the Transition Team, Leah and I are growing all the more excited to join you in the fall. I am confident Jesus' hand is in the life and work of Rosewood, and partnering with you in our God-given vision for the future to make disciples who make disciples would be a privilege.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Austin Vondracek

Austin Vondracek

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Experience

Beechwood Church – Pastor of Discipleship and Outreach

February 2015 – Present

- Oversee all small groups, service teams, Host Teams, local and international missions, and supervise Student Ministries, Beechwood Kids, Kids Hope & hand2hand Director, and intern staff members.
- Oversee the expansion of our community outreach efforts and service teams, including a weekly summer outreach experience that provides meaningful service and evangelism opportunities.
- Preaching one to two times per month.
- Working with the Worship Arts Ministry Team to plan weekly worship experiences, series, and special events.
- Working strategically to see lives changed by the gospel, grow Beechwood, and grow the budget. We celebrated 10 adult baptisms last summer, have seen Beechwood grow from around 350 worshippers two years ago to 600 now, and an increased budget.

The Church at Benjamin’s Hope – Co-Pastor

February 2014 – February 2015

- Benjamin’s Hope is an organization that provides homes, meaningful work opportunities, and accessible worship to adults affected by autism and other intellectual and developmental differences. The Church at Benjamin’s Hope is a church plant of Beechwood Church, and another pastor and I shared part-time responsibilities.
- Preached regularly, provided personal care to the residents and families, and included individuals with disabilities in worship services through meaningful entry points.

Beechwood Church – Student Ministries Intern/Assistant

September 2011 – February 2015

- Advanced from intern to part-time ministry assistant.
- Shared teaching responsibilities, coached volunteer small group leader, co-led mission trips, and supported the team with administrative responsibilities.
- Director of Young Adult Ministry responsibilities were later added, during which time we saw an influx of young adults and families.

Education

Central College

Graduated Spring 2011

- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Religion Major

Western Theological Seminary

Graduated Winter 2014

- Masters of Divinity

Rosewood Reformed Church awaits the arrival of a Lead Pastor (LP) with a heart for God and a mind for the truth, good communication skills, and a sense of humor. The LP will be responsible for leading the life and ministry of our congregation in such a way that we fulfill our mission and realize our vision.

Qualifications

A. Spiritual

1. Evidence of a meaningful personal relationship with the Lord, a commitment to prayer and personal, spiritual accountability.
2. Responsible to achieve and experience ongoing personal, spiritual growth and model such spirituality in his/her professional and personal conduct.
3. Committed to the centrality of communal worship in the life of the Christian community.
4. Passionate about gathering the lost and discipling the found.
5. Affirmation of the Reformed understanding of the Christian faith, as summarized in our Forms of Unity, and to the integrity, faithfulness, and unity of our denomination in its loyalty to these standards.

B. Personal/Emotional

1. Characterized by a deep and growing love for the Lord and His church.
2. Servant character in working with others on staff and in the congregation, willing to submit to the supervision of the Consistory and Elders.
3. Ability to relate effectively and affirmatively with the people he/she leads.

C. Professional

1. Preference will be given to candidates ordained or willing to be ordained within the Reformed Church in America. Consideration will be given to those ordained by other Reformed bodies, such as, but not limited to, the Christian Reformed Church in Northern America and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
2. Leadership skills and experience guiding a dedicated group of volunteers towards the adoption of a renewed vision of the future of Rosewood, one that includes clear measurements and definitive strategies.
3. Strong skills in preaching and worship leadership.
4. Demonstrated ability and desire to work in a staff environment, and to provide leadership and management for an effective and harmonious staff ministry.
5. Strong communication skills by which to articulate and convey the church's vision, as well as build congregational consensus.

Primary Responsibilities

1. Worship - The Lead Pastor will have the privilege of preparing and delivering biblically based and relevant sermons to the gathered community, as well as planning and leading inspiring worship services. In so doing, the LP shall ...
 1. Preach at least 80% of the worship services.
 2. Provide leadership in the development of the preaching plan and schedule.
 3. Provide leadership in the process of worship planning.
 4. Provide direction and support to the worship staff to ensure the effective implementation of our core value of Authentic Worship.
2. Leadership/Management - The LP will work alongside, encourage, and empower a core group of dedicated volunteers (Consistory) and professionals (staff members) towards the realization of the vision of Rosewood Church. In providing such leadership, the LP shall...
 1. Champion the vision of Rosewood Church.
 2. Together with Consistory and staff, develop an annual ministry plan, including a statement of goals and strategies for the coming season.
 3. Provide direction and management in the area of general ministry organization *and* coordination, making sure that all the ministries of the church are being conducted in a manner consistent with the church's mission statement, yearly program plan, and annual budget.
 4. Support and encourage other staff members in their areas of ministry leadership. Maintain an effective and harmonious team ministry with other staff, and, through regular reviews, help each staff member fulfill his/her duties with a clear sense of purpose, affirmation and accountability.

Expectations

1. Commit to the vision and goals of Rosewood Church while affirming the creeds and confessions of the Reformed Church in America.
2. Assist the Consistory to insure that the ministry of Rosewood Church aligns with the church order of the RCA.
3. Share responsibility with the Elders and other staff members for the public presence of Rosewood Church in the community and in the denomination.
4. Complete at least one professional development event (workshop, seminar, conference) per year.

Accountability

1. In the overall performance of his/her ministry, the LP is accountable to the Consistory and shall report at least quarterly to Consistory.
2. The LP shall participate in an annual performance review to be conducted by Consistory through its Personnel Committee.
3. Annually (in May) present to Consistory a written assessment of progress in his/her areas of ministry, together with a statement of short-term (1 year) and long-term (5 year) goals and objectives for continued implementation in these areas.