

Town Hall Meeting
Sunday, December 3, 2023 between services

Sam Hamstra, consultant from Rukes search firm, joined us for worship and held a Town Hall meeting in between services. Sam began the meeting by sharing his background. He's served multiple congregations throughout the states mainly in the RCA and CRC. He also spent time serving as a Chaplain at Trinity Christian College. In 2007, Sam began helping churches find pastors on a part time basis which later turned into full time work in 2012. He has successfully completed over 100 searches.

Sam provides 3 main resources during a search.

1. Biblical foundation for the search
2. Provides a human resource tool—database, networking
3. Risk Management—finding the right fit for the church and pastor to help prevent pendulum swings)

Sam works for the Discovery Team. He will help the Discovery Team to keep their eyes and hearts in tune with the Holy Spirit as they follow God's will during this search process.

Q&A from the congregation:

- Q: How long do pastors typically stay at a church?
 - A: 7-10 years. Pastors seem to be somewhat predictable when they move, usually based off the age of their kids.
- Q: What characteristics are found in healthy churches?
 - A: High expectations for Sunday mornings—worship leaders are intentional and the people coming into worship are receptive; leadership has a clear idea where they are going—what's the next hill we as a congregation need to climb next; leadership is honest about their shortcomings; churches tend to be healthier with an adequate amount of staff and volunteers
- Q: How do you do risk management?
 - A: Speaking the truth in love with the Discovery Team, asking the Discovery Team to keep listening to sermons of candidates and not to rest on just an interview.
- Q: How many candidates are given to Discovery Team?
 - A: Sam filters his list of 40-50 candidates down to 5-10 candidates for the Discovery Team begin vetting. In general, it takes about year from the beginning of the process to find a new lead pastor.
- Q: What denomination will this candidate be coming from
 - A: Consistory will help provide guidance to the Discovery Team around acceptable denominations and the amount of extra work it would take for this next pastor to be ordained in ARC.
- Q: Do pastors reach out to Sam or does he reach out to pastors?
 - A: Goes both ways but Sam prefers to reach out to pastors.

As the Discovery Team begins their work, we ask that you as a congregation surround this process in prayer. The Discovery Team hopes to send out specific prayer requests as they start the preparation and discernment phases.