Candidate Information Packet

Christ Church (PCA)
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Greetings!

We are excited you’re considering using your pastoral gifts to shepherd us at Christ Church that we might advance the Lord’s kingdom by bringing the Gospel to Mankato.

Christ Church was planted nearly twenty years ago to love, serve, and advance the Gospel in Mankato, Minnesota in the reformed tradition. During that time we have worshipped the Lord, grown in grace, and loved God’s people and our community. Our lead pastor has retired, and we are seeking a new shepherd to serve, guide, and open the Word of the Lord to us and the people of Mankato.

We are looking for a shepherd that will help us fulfill the Great Commission by encouraging, training, and inspiring us to share the Gospel with Mankato. He’ll do this with evangelistic fervor, Gospel-centered worship, hospitality, vision, and a servant’s heart.

We are praying for you.

It is our hope this packet communicates who we are and who we’re looking for with clarity and specificity.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Grace and peace be with you,

The Pastoral Search Committee
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**Rhythm of Life Together**

**Minnesota**

Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes and the Star of the North, enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the U.S. and is among the most educated. Traditionally known for agriculture, Minnesota’s economy is diversifying to include services and finance sectors. Summers in Minnesota are warm, giving residents access to fishing, hiking, and enjoying the many lakes while the winters provide opportunities for skiing, skating, ice fishing, curling, and fat-tire bike riding.

**Mankato**

Mankato is the county seat of Blue Earth County which derives its name from clay deposits along the banks of our rivers. Located at the bend of the Minnesota River and surrounded by farmland dotted with lakes, Mankato is a vibrant and growing regional hub of around 100,000 people. As a hub, residents of surrounding communities come to Mankato to work, shop, and worship. Mankato has a strong heritage of German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Irish backgrounds. While the dominant religious affiliations are Catholic and Lutheran, fewer than 40% of our population is involved in a religious congregation or community, and involvement is trending downward.

What sets Mankato apart from the rest of the state is our high proportion of young adults. Mankato is host to over 15,000 students who attend local colleges. About 1,200 of these are international students from 90 countries. Minnesota State University, Mankato is the second-largest university campus in the state. Bethany Lutheran College, South Central College, and Rasmussen College also contribute to the college town atmosphere and a few miles north lies Gustavus Adolphus College. 31% of our area’s population is between the ages of 18 and 24.

**Congregational life**

With our long-time pastor retired and our church aging, Christ Church is in a time of transition. We feel the acute need for Christ to recapture our hearts to joyfully fulfill the Great Commission. We have the will and resources to pursue a Gospel-driven direction and are eager to have a shepherd that has a heart for Mankato.

Life together at Christ Church revolves around Sunday worship. Many of our congregants and members drive significant distances to worship. Connecting during the week is sporadic due to the fact that we’re spread out. Because we were formed around a theological perspective, specifically Reformed Theology, we drew in like-minded but geographically disparate people. This makes interactions between Sundays difficult even without the pandemic. We hope to change this. Through evangelism and conversion, we seek to increase the number of congregants who live in Mankato, especially college students.

We are a small core group (23 total regular attenders and members made up of a dozen families) and believe that God wants to revive us. We are praying regularly that He turns our hearts toward Him, our first Love. We love children and their joyful participation in worship. This gives us a heart for single parents and families in Mankato and the hope that we will increasingly be equipped to love and serve them. We are hopeful that the Lord will move us to better serve and love each other and our neighbors, fulfilling the Great Commission. We hope to reach out to the poor and needy, to learn to listen well and build relationships, to show them the love of their Creator and the high value God places on each and every life. We want to be known as a church that comes around people in need. We prayerfully hope that Christ Church can reach the broken and unloved of our community just as Christ reached us.
What we Believe

Beliefs
Christ Church beliefs can be summarized through the five Solas of the reformation and several key confessions.

Five Solas. Key to our beliefs are the five Solas of the reformation, we believe in: Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to Scripture alone for the glory of God alone.

Confessions. We are a confessional church and our point of view on the Bible and faith is summarized in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Additionally, we affirm the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds as fundamental expressions of Christian faith and tradition.

Values
Christ Church is a committed congregation with strong core values:

Love for God. We have sincere love for God at Christ Church and are grateful for His saving and sustaining Grace. We desire that the Lord awaken our hearts daily and that we actively pursue those good works He planned in advance for us to walk in.

The Great Commission. Christ Church is committed to Jesus' mission for the Church of making disciples of the nations. This entails reaching out to unbelievers to see them come to faith in Christ and join the family of God, and equipping God's people so they can faithfully live out God's calling in their lives.

Knowledge of Scripture. Knowing and applying the Word of God to our hearts is vitally important to us. We value meditation on it, study of it, and its application to our hearts. While we hold different perspectives on scripture we strongly believe in learning, enjoying, and obeying it.

Covenantal Worship. Gathered Worship on the Lord’s Day is filled with reformed, high church liturgy, deep theological exposition, and sharing of the sacraments. We believe preaching and teaching of the Word and the highest view of scripture are integral to our sanctification.

Household ministry. At Christ Church, we seek to practice the reformed tradition consistently and lovingly as we catechize our children, bringing them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. We believe strongly in the discipleship of our families and are excited to grow in grace with them.

Financial Responsibility and Giving. Tithing and giving are important to Christ Church. We are a generous church and believe that good stewardship of the Lord’s gifts is an important expression of both love and obedience to Christ.

Reformed Tradition. We deeply value the reformed tradition in our approach to worship, discipleship, the sacraments, and life together. We value deep knowledge of the Bible from a reformed perspective and emphasize spending personal, family, and corporate time studying it.

Presbyterian Governance. We value being members of the PCA and its form of church government. We appreciate that within the PCA we can find other like-minded churches that share our emphasis and distinctives as well as the support and encouragement from our Presbytery.

Hospitality. Practicing hospitality is important to Christ Church. This involves fellowship among Christ Church members and reaching out warmly to visitors and strangers.
Sunday Worship and Sunday School
Every other week we enjoy Sunday School at a member’s home. We currently meet on Sunday afternoons at 1:30 PM at the Living Word Church facility. Worship follows a high church Presbyterian liturgical framework. Our worship is hymn-based and congregationally led with piano accompaniment. We anticipate seeking the Lord’s guidance to find a better place and time to meet that will make us more accessible to the unchurched of Mankato when we call our new pastor.

Our Leadership

Leadership
Due to the loss of a Session quorum in late summer 2019, our Presbytery appointed a Temporary Session including the following members from other Minnesota PCA churches:

Ruling elders:
- Keith Furutani
- Mark Nyman
- Bob Shogren

Teaching elders:
- Charles Kim
- Stephen Wynja
- Chris Harper

Additionally, in the summer of 2020 Christ Church contracted with Flourish Coaching to take them through an Envisioning process as they began to seek a new pastor. This involved looking at Mankato through fresh eyes with a Community Study, examining our core values and spiritual gifts, then together clarifying our Vision moving forward. Flourish Coaching continues to support the Temporary Session and Pastoral Search Committee with guidance, insights, and prayer.

Pastoral Search Committee

Dave Kruse (Chairman)

Dave and his wife are parents to four boys including a little boy with Down Syndrome. They classically homeschool, and their home also serves as the office and headquarters of Dave's software-related businesses.
Greg Burkel

Greg Burkel and his family have been part of the Christ Church, Mankato congregation from its beginning—a longer story showing the humor and providence of God. He and his wife Barb have been married for forty-four years, with four children and seven grandchildren. He has previously been a ruling elder at CC-Mankato and taught the majority of the adult classes for Sunday School, a practice which has just started up again in his home. He was and is CC-Mankato’s treasurer. Greg is currently coordinating weekly pulpit supply as well as leading service as needed. Barb takes an active role in mentoring young women. Along with his role at CC-Mankato, Greg has worked as CFO in various hospitals for the last thirty-four years, mostly in the Midwest, (Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota,) and with a stint in Anchorage, Alaska. Besides the current myriad of church activities, Greg is an avid reader, particularly of theology.

Paul Schuett

Paul is married to Patti. He was raised in the LCMS. Paul served as a ruling elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Gainesville TX. Paul is now retired and working part time at a local hardware store.

Patrick Larson

Pat has been married to Ellen for 29 years. They have 3 married children, 2 grandchildren and 2 more on the way. They live in Mapleton MN where they own and operate a small business.

Carolyn Vance

Carolyn is one of the founding members of Christ Church. She and her husband Dan live in the rural town of Vernon Center and are active in Christian ministry in the county. In addition to being one of Christ Church’s pianists and sending out the church newsletter, Carolyn leads a women’s Precept Bible Study. After a decade of classical homeschooling, God’s path led her to at-home IT work supporting non-profit organizations, amazingly coming back to an early interest in computer systems. She looks forward to seeing what God’s plan is for Christ Church and is honored to be part of His plan by serving on the Pastoral Search Committee.
Thomas Burkel (alternate)

Thomas has been one of the original members of Christ Church since the church was planted in 2003. He has had a unique perspective of Christ Church, observing the changes and development as he grew up and began his Christian journey with this church. Thomas utilizes his musical gifts by assisting with hymn selection and occasionally singing during Sunday service. He is eagerly looking forward to participating with the Search Committee and is excited to see the man God selects to become the next Pastor of Christ Church.

Johanna Tollefson (alternate)

Johanna Tollefson is currently an English instructor while she finishes a master’s degree at Minnesota State University. Relatively new to the area, she’s found a welcoming community at Christ Church, Mankato over the last year. Johanna is a pastor’s daughter and has grown up in the Christian faith, mostly reformed denominations. She’s excited to share and grow her faith with the saints in Mankato. As well, she has a heart for those in her academic circles who are still unaware of the love of Christ. Most of her “free time” is spent exploring and hiking around the Mankato countryside, but mostly she’s just trying to keep up with schoolwork and teaching. She moved to Mankato from Idaho but grew up in the northeast corner of Oregon.

Mark Nyman (Temporary Session liaison)

Mark is a ruling elder at Trinity Presbyterian Church, the church that originally helped plant Christ Church. He also serves on the Temporary Session for Christ Church. Mark chaired the last pastor search committee at TPC that brought Chris Harper to Rochester and will serve as an ad-hoc member on the Christ Church pastor search committee. Mark is married to Kathleen and lives in Rochester, MN - they have four grown children and two grandchildren. He practices General Internal Medicine at Mayo Clinic.

Who we need

Lead Pastor Role

The Lead Pastor of Christ Church serves as the moderator of the Session, leads in the shepherding of the hearts of the congregation, leads us forward in evangelizing the Mankato community, and supports Christ Church’s core values and beliefs. The role of Lead Pastor includes:

- Modeling Christ’s life through love of God, evangelism, prayer, commitment to the Scriptures, and sacrificial living.
- Living out the Great Commission, which includes evangelizing the unchurched of Mankato and training the congregation in the same; and discipling God's people that they might grow in their love and obedience to the Lord and love for one another.
- Expository preaching and teaching of the Scriptures in an
accessible, straightforward, and Gospel-centered manner, which includes helpful application.

- Leading Lord’s Day worship including preaching, liturgy, administering the sacraments, and engaging the hearts of all who attend with the Gospel.
- Living as a member of the Christ Church family cultivating deep trust and intimacy with the congregation.
- Practicing hospitality and helping the congregation to do the same.
- Visiting and caring for the elderly and shut-in.
- Discipling parents to raise their children lovingly in the fear and admonition of the Lord.
- Promoting a culture of grace rather than a culture of performance, without diminishing the deadliness of sin.

Lead Pastor attributes
The lead pastor at Christ Church ought to be known for the following attributes:

- Loves Christ above all things, has a repentant heart, and leads Christ Church in the same.
- Happily and regularly befriends non-Christians and new Christians evangelizing and discipling them.
- Seeks to understand the times in which we live in order to live and minister with cultural intelligence.
- Loves non-Christians and is passionate to equip the saints to reach them with the Gospel.
- Known as a peacemaker, discipler, capable counselor, and developer of leaders.
- Heartily and openly laments and repents of his sin with a profound sense of joy in Christ’s forgiveness and Grace.
- Able to extend the reach of Christ Church to include young people, specifically the unchurched, skeptical, and hurting.
- Is committed to the PCA theological standards and form of government, and the general framework of liturgical worship principles established at Christ Church.

Experience
The lead pastor will have at least five years of experience ministering in a similar context. He should have experience in intensive evangelism, collaboratively forming a vision, and leading a small core group (under 50) to a medium-sized church (sustained existence at 100 or above) and have a commitment to the Reformed tradition. Familiarity with the joys and challenges of the culture of the Upper Midwest will be helpful.
Applying

Questionnaire
We want to get to know you, your heart, and your life with Christ. In addition to your resume, PCA Ministerial Data Form, and cover letter please respond in no more than ten sentences each to the following questions:

- Tell us who Christ is to you and what your relationship with him is like.
- Tell us how you would prepare us to share the Gospel with our neighbors and friends.
- How would you have shepherded Christ Church through 2020?
- Tell us the story of the last person you led to Christ including a timeline.
- How would you encourage a diversity of spiritual maturity at Christ Church?
- How have you developed relationships with individuals in your congregation in the past?
- How would you imagine implementing Christ Church’s beliefs and values?

Application requirements
If you are interested in learning more about the Lead Pastor role or would like to provide your information for consideration, please send copies of the following documents in PDF format to pastoralsearch@christchurchmankato.org.

- Cover Letter
- Resume
- PCA Ministerial Data Form
- Completed, typed-out responses to the questionnaire

Please use the following format to label all attachments: FirstnameLastname_DocumentName. Examples:

- JohnSmith_CoverLetter
- JohnSmith_Resume
- JohnSmith_MDF
- JohnSmith_Questionnaire

We are looking to begin receiving applications from candidates beginning the first week of November. We will receive and process applications on a rolling basis until the position is filled which we hope and pray will be by summer 2022.

Thank you for your interest in Christ Church. We look forward to hearing your heart for the Gospel and advancing God’s kingdom and getting to know you better.