The Pastoral Transition Committee and Board of Elders are excited to introduce RICK HENDERSON as our candidate to become Senior Pastor of Autumn Ridge Church.
On the advice of Pastor John Steer, in the fall of 2014, the Autumn Ridge Church Elder Board created a Senior Pastor Contingency and Succession Planning Committee to develop plans for the eventual Senior Pastor transition. We worked for several months and presented a report to the Elder Board identifying important pastoral transition themes, approaches, and steps ARC could take to prepare for its next season of ministry.

The Elders asked the Committee to continue, re-named as the Pastoral Transition Committee (PTC), and implement proposals outlined in the report in partnership with the Elder Board. Our committee focused during this season on praying, learning, and networking. Pastor Leith Anderson met with the PTC and Elder Board and provided wise guidance. We also met with others to broaden our exposure to the evangelical community, including visits by several pastors and seminary professors.

In 2018, Pastor Steer announced his intention to transition out of the Senior Pastor role, and the PTC became more visible in the life of our church. We called the church to begin praying about pastoral transition. We also hosted a series of focus groups seeking input about the future of the church and the qualities and competencies needed in our next Senior Pastor.

Following Pastor Steer’s retirement in January 2019, the PTC communicated regularly and transparently to the congregation. After interviewing multiple search firms, the committee hired Agora Search Firm, because of their focus on understanding our church, networking to identify candidates with a record of success elsewhere, and deeply understanding candidates’ characters and callings.

We are grateful to God for directing every step in our Senior Pastor transition. He gave Pastor Steer the insight and grace to launch the process years ahead of time. He gave the Elder Board wisdom and energy as it directed the church through transition. He directed the church Personnel Committee to Pastor Jim Fleming, who has served as ARC’s interim Executive Pastor. God brought together ARC’s Pulpit Supply Committee and used visiting preachers to speak into the life of our church. We are also grateful to God for the service of many ARC members who assisted the PTC with particular aspects of our work and to the team that beautifully orchestrated the Steer’s farewell event.

God has richly blessed each of us who have served on the PTC. We are a diverse group and we marvel at the spirit of unity, respect, and love God has given us. We strove to understand where God is leading our church and to place the needs of ARC above our own personal preferences. We have tried to always move forward in prayer and by prayer. We are especially grateful to our Elders, who have given us both guidance and freedom to fulfill our charge.

To God be the praise and glory!

THE AUTUMN RIDGE PASTORAL TRANSITION COMMITTEE
WHY AUTUMN RIDGE?

REASONS WHY I AM INTERESTED IN COMING TO AUTUMN RIDGE CHURCH

I’m attracted to this opportunity for two reasons: the community and the church. The city has over 100,000 people, a large portion of whom do not attend any church. With DMC and the multi-billion dollar investment, this city should grow. It’s already under-churched, which means the potential for Kingdom impact is significant.

My wife and I were drawn to Autumn Ridge because of your obvious commitment to Kingdom advancement through generous mission investments, trips, and partnerships. After talking with people who know the church personally, we were drawn in by the reputation you’ve built through serving the local community.

From the outside looking in, Autumn Ridge seems poised to reach nonbelievers and make disciples. That energizes me.

– RICK HENDERSON

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

The apostle Paul wrote that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Our city, our nation, and our world need the proclamation of God’s truth, as revealed in Scripture, now more than ever.

Rick Henderson is a gifted communicator who is able to proclaim truth with authenticity and Biblical accuracy to both the student of Scripture and the skeptic. In the words of one of Rick’s former colleagues, Rick “builds a rational foundation for Biblical reality.” The Pastoral Transition Committee and the Elders found Rick’s sermons to be engaging and challenging. We would want to invite our friends to hear him preach.

Rick is also a visionary and strategic thinker. He is not afraid to ask the tough questions and challenge us to maximize our impact for furthering the gospel by making disciples of Jesus Christ. In addition, he is a collaborative leader who genuinely wants to partner with Elders and Pastors to serve the people of Autumn Ridge and our city. Importantly, we believe that Rick meets the criteria for a Pastor outlined in Titus and First Timothy.

It is with great anticipation that the Pastoral Transition Committee and the Elder Board unanimously recommend, with the full support of pastoral staff, Rick Henderson as the next Senior Pastor of Autumn Ridge Church.

Together in Christ,

BRAD ANDERSON JAY MAIER
Pastoral Transition Committee Chair Elder Board Chair

- RICK HENDERSON
There are many reasons I am excited that Rick, Heather, and their family are interested in Autumn Ridge. God was preparing Rick’s heart and life for the Senior Pastor role at ARC while we were preparing for our pastoral transition. When the time was right Rick, led by God, pursued us before we began to pursue him. Rick is a great communicator, loves the Lord, and is a phenomenal preacher and teacher. Rick and Heather have a Christ-centered marriage.

I was most deeply moved by the many stories we heard about how Rick has not only led people to Christ, but also discipled them through radical life change. He is a man who preaches God’s Word in a way that demands a response. I am excited to be challenged and encouraged by the words God has given him.

Rick Henderson has a heart for seeking the lost. One of the first statements he made to us was that he’s interested in Autumn Ridge Church because of the large unchurched population in Rochester and the potential for future population growth. He sees an opportunity to win a great number of souls for Christ through Autumn Ridge Church, and this energizes him greatly. Rick would be instrumental in creating a “spiritual revival” in our city and even abroad.

Rick’s ability to preach to the newcomer and the life-long follower is what makes him outstanding. He has a heart for reaching those on the fringe and at the same time wants to foster theological growth in the most ardent of believers. One of Rick’s strengths is his ability to engage in thought-provoking conversations that focus on the heart of Christianity.

Rick and Heather Henderson have a passion for helping people come to know and grow in relationship with God. Rick is a gifted communicator and is able to effectively share the truth of the Gospel and insight from God’s Word to people from all different backgrounds and life experiences. Heather is also a highly capable leader and a kindhearted, outgoing person who immediately makes people feel welcome and cared for in her presence.

We were looking for several key characteristics in our next pastor: a deep faith, very gifted preaching, and strong leadership ability. Rick abounds in all three areas. He will diligently minister to us and also boldly challenge us. His wife, Heather, is also a woman of deep faith and a fantastic leader, and she will be a boon and a blessing to our congregation.

I find Rick’s preaching to be nourishing and challenging for committed followers of Christ and engaging and winsome to skeptics. His visionary leadership will be an asset both to our congregation and to our church staff. Heather is a delight and possesses a wealth of leadership skills.

I am looking forward to being challenged by Pastor Henderson’s preaching and inviting others to hear the gospel preached in an appealing way. I am very optimistic for what God has for the future of ARC. I am all in. Let’s go!!!

I am looking forward to Rick’s gifted teaching and preaching of the Word. He has spiritual gifts to reach those who are far from God. I am excited because I believe Rick will challenge us to a new level for reaching the people of Rochester for Jesus Christ.

Rick and Heather Henderson have a passion for helping people come to know and grow in relationship with God. Rick is a gifted communicator and is able to effectively share the truth of the Gospel and insight from God’s Word to people from all different backgrounds and life experiences. Heather is also a highly capable leader and a kindhearted, outgoing person who immediately makes people feel welcome and cared for in her presence.
He is visionary. His wisdom, brainpower, and wit make him very easy to follow.
He is passionate about the gospel, lost people, and the truth.
He is looking for ways to develop the staff.
Both of my brothers were agnostic, on the verge of atheist, and after hearing Rick preach one Sunday they fell in love with hearing the Word of God.
Without reservation I recommend him for this role. He is a next-level leader, and we were privileged to have had him hone his skills among us.
Rick is a collaborative leader.
Rick is a gifted speaker, writer, teacher, and leader.
He is a master at listening and asking questions.

Rick is receptive to feedback and always willing to grow in any area that is brought to his attention.
I recommend him for this role. I honestly don’t want to lose Rick, but I want him to pursue his dreams when it comes to leading a church.
Rick has changed my life. I have never had a strong spiritual leader in my life who cared about me as a person. His love for God and serving others motivated me to go to seminary so I can know God’s Word the way Rick knows it. He challenges, teaches, motivates, listens, and loves me well. I am thankful for the pastor and man that he is.
Rick will lead and take the wheel if needed, but what was impressive to me is he led us by working with us shoulder to shoulder.

I desperately want to say “no” but it would be out of pure selfishness. I’ve worked for churches for almost 20 years, and he is by far the best pastor I’ve ever worked with and had the pleasure to learn from. I would 100% recommend him.
He’s self-aware, humble, admits when he doesn’t understand and needs more info. He is not the type who acts like he knows it all, but instead knows when to listen and when to act.
I highly endorse Rick. You would be getting a gem; he would do very well as a Senior Pastor for your church.
If you’re looking for someone to share the Gospel with both theologians and newcomers to the faith, Rick is your guy.
WHAT WE SAW

OBSERVATIONS FROM VISITING SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY CHURCH | DRAPER CAMPUS

Walking into South Mountain Community Church (SMCC) - Draper Campus, we were warmly greeted and invited into the church, the foyer bubbling over with joyful conversation and heartfelt embraces. It was explained to us that it was Rick Henderson’s last weekend at the church, and we were told to anticipate a Sunday that was a little out of the ordinary. From the start, it was obvious the congregation at SMCC adored and cherished Rick’s ministry there. Before he began his sermon, the congregation broke out in thunderous applause, and soon the entire congregation was on their feet. They showed him great appreciation, and it was clear that he would be dearly missed.

Pastor Rick’s last sermon was entitled “Applying the Bible”, part of a multi-week series themed “Versed Well: Becoming Well Versed in the Verses We Don’t Know Well.” The sermon was based in Scripture, engaging, relevant, and easily applicable to the lives of the congregants with a dose of humor thrown in. We were impressed by Rick’s heart for God’s Word in that his last sermon was a zealous appeal for the congregation to cling to the full truth of the Bible.

After the sermon, an Elder for the Draper campus called Rick and Heather up to the stage. On behalf of the Elders and leadership of SMCC, he thanked Rick and Heather for their ministry at the church for the past seven years.

He spoke at length about Rick’s growth as a preacher and affirmed his leadership skills and ability to collaborate well with others. He spoke highly of Heather’s inviting warmth, her spirit, and the gift of her voice in worship, and shared that it has been a joy to watch their children grow up there as well. The Senior Pastor was on vacation that weekend, but he pre-recorded a video in which he also thanked Rick for his pastoral service to SMCC and wished him well wherever God leads him next. The current Campus Pastor for Draper similarly expressed his thanks and closed in prayer for Rick and Heather.

After both services, Rick and Heather stood at the front of the sanctuary as congregants gathered around them expressing gratitude, well wishes, and confidence in God’s work in and through the Hendersons. In these moments, it was clear Rick and Heather were also speaking into the lives of individuals in their congregation, providing comfort and personal encouragement in their goodbyes. Although Rick and Heather invited us to attend their send-off reception at SMCC, we declined as we wanted them to be fully present and enjoy the remaining time with their church family. We left SMCC that day feeling a sense of excitement and confidence in Rick’s ability to teach and lead well in the Senior Pastor position, and we were filled with hope that one day we might welcome the Henderson family into our own community at Autumn Ridge Church.
RESUMÉ HIGHLIGHTS

EXPERIENCE

SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY CHURCH | DRAPER, UT
Draper Campus Pastor | 2016 – 2019
- Average weekly attendance: 1400+
- Baptism: 100+ (65% adults)
- Giving: Increased by 15% over 3 years.
- Groups: 800+ adults in a group.
- Teams: 420+ adults serving on a team.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY CHURCH | DRAPER, UT
Pastor of Adult Ministries | 2012 - 2016

TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY CHURCH | GRASS VALLEY, CA
Pastor of High School & College | 2005 - 2012

STRENGTHS

TEACHING
LEADERSHIP
STRATEGY
WRITING

EDUCATION

BAPTIST COLLEGE OF FLORIDA | GRACEVILLE, FL
B.A. Theology

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY | NEW ORLEANS, LA
M.A. Theology, with a concentration in Philosophy and Ethics
(all course work completed, lacking final thesis)

CALL TO MINISTRY

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” These are the words of our Lord Jesus from Matthew 9:38. They are an apt description of what Jesus has asked of Rick and how Rick has responded to his Lord. Throughout his life, Rick Henderson has been laboring to share the gospel and to raise up more laborers for God’s great harvest field.

In Rick’s most recent role, he led a large church campus in Utah. This campus expanded the number of people reached by the gospel. The congregants grew in their love for Jesus.

At his prior church in California, where he served as youth pastor, the Senior Pastor remembered those years as the strongest the youth ministry ever had. Our Pastoral Transition Committee even talked to someone who knew Rick when he was in high school. She was so worried that Rick and her son were out quite late at night, until upon their return, she was amazed to find that Rick had taken her son to a Bible study!

In his early 40s and yet with 20 years of pastoral experience, Rick Henderson wants to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel. In his interview with the Pastoral Transition Committee he said, “I would go crazy if I didn’t share the gospel and preach.”

Rick describes his own story in this way:

I grew up in a religious, often loveless, highly judgmental, Bible Belt culture, in the Deep South. And yet, at a young age I was drawn to the Gospel message and gave my allegiance to Jesus. I happily engaged in ministry, leading Bible studies and did some public speaking as a teenager. It was in college that my trust in Jesus truly deepened, and I developed a love for God’s Word. It was also during college that I dropped the blinders concerning the church culture in which I was raised.

A passion took root in me to have the kind of church that ran on the rails of grace and truth. That’s the kind of church that’s attractive to non-believers and the perfect environment to cultivate mature, joyous followers of Jesus. In short, I grew up religious, judgmental, and Gospel confused. Today, I’m hungrier for and more satisfied by the Gospel than ever before. I love helping others find full devotion and full delight in Christ.
STATEMENT of FAITH

GOD THE FATHER & TRINITY: God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

JESUS: Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate his power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven’s glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make mankind aware of our need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right.

HUMANITY: We are all made in the image of God, designed to live in relationship with him. We are the supreme objects of God’s creation. We are marred by rebellion or disobedience toward God called “sin.” This separates us from and makes us enemies of God.

SALVATION: Salvation is a gift from God to mankind. We can never overcome our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God’s offer of forgiveness can we be saved from sin’s penalty. Eternal life begins and grace is received the moment we believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

ETERNITY (HEAVEN/HELL): We all were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. The place of eternal separation from God is called Hell. Heaven is the place of eternal union and eternal life with God.

ETERNAL SECURITY: Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in their salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives this security.

THE BIBLE: The Bible is God’s word to all mankind. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error.

MEET the HENDERSONS

RICK & HEATHER
- Rick and Heather have been married for 20 years.
- They have 3 kids – one via adoption (adult) and have been foster parents.
- Rick is rare combination of experience and energy - 41 years of age, but pastoral experience of 20 years.
- Rick served as Campus Pastor at South Mountain Community Church–Draper, UT.
- Rick is a fan of the New Orleans Saints (please forgive him).
- Heather has been on 3 international mission trips and numerous domestic ones.
- Heather loves traveling, music, maps (she’s been Rick’s navigator for 20 years), and painting walls.
- Heather is loved by her company and has been given the freedom to work remotely.

CAROLINE
- 16 years old
- Singer, song writer, plays both piano and guitar
- Has been on 1 mission trip to India; going back again in January 2020
- Has been girls small group leader for 2 years
- Loves traveling, hoodies, and sarcasm

JACK
- 13 years old
- Loves animals
- Loves serving in kids’ ministry, especially the 3-year-olds’ room
- Trained in Karate, so watch out
- Very imaginative, science whiz
- Good at building things and fixing what’s broken

SERMON LINKS
The links below are to a few of Pastor Rick Henderson’s sermons given at South Mountain Community Church over the past couple of years. The link to his final sermon at the church is also provided. These sermons provide a glimpse into Rick’s preaching style and gift of communicating truth from the Bible to people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

- https://vimeo.com/255197607
- https://vimeo.com/318091170
- https://vimeo.com/255457752
- https://vimeo.com/194257968
- LAST SERMON: https://vimeo.com/375481243
CANDIDATING SCHEDULE

JANUARY 25-26
Elders and members of the Pastoral Transition Committee will be available after the services to answer questions.

JANUARY 28
Video links in Connect will allow you to watch a historic moment in the life of Autumn Ridge Church and to hear a word from Senior Pastor Candidate, Rick Henderson.

FEBRUARY 1-2
Come to the Annual Meeting to view some amazing Q&A responses, via video, from Rick Henderson. Come to either the Common Grounds at 7:00pm on Saturday or the Upper Room at 10:30am on Sunday.

Elders and members of the Pastoral Transition Committee will once again be available after all services to answer questions.

Get a special bulletin insert that outlines all the opportunities for you to get acquainted with Rick and Heather during our upcoming historic weekend.

FEBRUARY 4
If you weren’t able to be a part of the annual meeting (or you just want to watch it again), video links in Connect give access to the full video of Rick Henderson’s answers to key questions. Connect will also include the full event schedule for the candidating weekend.

FEBRUARY 8-9
The weekend we’ve all been waiting for! Pastor Rick Henderson will preach in all services followed by an opportunity for you to let us know whether you believe Rick Henderson to be God’s choice as our next Senior Pastor.

BETWEEN NOW AND FEBRUARY 9
Pray for God to lead us, guide us, and direct us as we seek the man of His choosing. Thank Him for how He has sustained us in this last year. Praise Him for preparing us for our next chapter of serving Him together!