

## **Dear Rocky Partners,**

I want to first say how much we appreciate your prayers over the last several weeks. Many of you have caught us after service, at the store, at ball games, or other places out in the community to say you are praying. Others have emailed or texted your prayers of support. All of you have been praying for us and Rocky when the Holy Spirit brought it to your mind. Again, thanks for your prayers . . . we have felt them.

### **Exciting News!**

Now, for the update. As many of you know, we first began our search for a new Lead Pastor as soon as the Elders learned of Shan's call to Phoenix. It has been a busy couple of months. The Elders have prayed deeply and fervently for Rocky, our future, and that our selection of a new Lead Pastor would align with God's purposes. The Elders have also met countless times to evaluate findings and discuss next steps. We met again this past week. As a result of that meeting, our prayers, and selection process, we strongly feel led to recommend that our Frederick Campus Pastor Matt Cote be confirmed as Rocky's next Lead Pastor. Yes, this is good and exciting news! He is uniquely qualified and the best person for the position.

### **A Candidate Who Embodies Rocky's Values**

The Elders' first item of business when we initially met was to develop a selection process that would thoroughly vet lead pastor candidates. It was important to each of us that we not only evaluate alignment with Biblical preaching and teaching, but also evaluate character, leadership, interpersonal competencies, and fit for our culture in Colorado's Front Range. Collectively, the Elders come from a variety of backgrounds including risk management, government, tech, finance, medicine, and the law. Yes, we have experience advising boards and executives and hiring for specialized projects in our everyday jobs, but this was something special. This was our church . . . a community to which we were deeply devoted. We approached this with the love and care of fellow Rocky Partners. We approached this as someone sitting in the seats on Sunday morning, as a new parent dropping our children off at Rocky Kids, as a family sending our teen to Rocky Students, or as one participating in numerous other Rocky ministries. This wasn't about merely checking boxes, following a process, and finding a person. We deeply desired to find a person who embodied Rocky's motto to "Know Jesus, and Love Like Him" and could lead others in living out Rocky's values. This is what was at the heart of our selection process. The interviews, leadership assessments, and evaluations were all designed with this in mind.

### **Gifted Communicator Who Connects on a Personal Level**

From the very start, it was obvious that Rocky had a strong and well qualified lead pastor candidate in Matt Cote. He is a gifted communicator who not only preaches and teaches here at Rocky on a regular basis, but is also one who connects on a very real level with what many of us are living out on a daily basis. However, a natural question, and one we found ourselves asking, is, "How do you know he is the best person for the job?"

### **Top Caliber Candidate**

I was sharing this thought with a dear friend, confidant, and fellow leader during a phone call a few weeks ago. This friend runs one of the largest Christian recruiting and placement firms in the U.S. and has interviewed and evaluated literally thousands of candidates over the past 15 years while helping over 3,000 churches hire a pastor. At this point in the selection process, we had heard from several pastors and church leaders that Matt would make an excellent lead pastor. I was calling to talk things over and get the thoughts of a veteran. The conversation was insightful and the wealth of knowledge my friend shared was invaluable. In summary, he confirmed Matt is a top caliber candidate who would be an excellent lead pastor.

### **Matt's Qualifications**

So, why are we excited to present Matt to the congregation? As I already mentioned, he is a phenomenal preacher. But his preaching was not the focus of our evaluation. Instead, we focused our attention on leadership assessment, interviewing staff, speaking with other pastors and church leaders who know Matt, and consulting with those who know and can assess the quality of lead pastors in the region and across the U.S.

Here is what we learned about Matt:

1. He is scripturally sound and believes in the doctrines on which our faith is based.
2. He has impeccable character.
3. He exemplifies Rocky's motto and values.
4. He is a confident leader with over 20 years of ministry experience who understands the challenges and tension of leading with vision, yet preceding with humility.
5. He has the unique experience of serving in a dual role as not only a Campus Pastor at Frederick for over 10 years, but also as one of Rocky's Operations Pastors. Translated from church speak, this means Matt has experience in managing facilities (HVAC, roof repairs, etc.), planning and managing the budget, and overseeing portions of the HR department. This is vital experience in managing a church like Rocky.
6. He understands the culture of the West, Colorado, and of Rocky itself. In order to effectively lead in our community, this is essential.
7. Rocky is beyond blessed to have Matt. In fact, many wish they could hire Matt. Over and over again, people we interviewed confirmed that Matt is one of the best candidates a church would be able to find nationwide.
8. Finally, Matt has a deep, abiding passion for Rocky, its mission, and our surrounding communities.

I can confidently say without hesitation that Matt Cote is the best person to lead Rocky. The Elders wholeheartedly ask that you affirm our recommendation that he be our next Lead Pastor.

### **Next Steps**

So, what are the next steps? They are simple:

1. Come next Sunday, March 17.

2. The Elders will host a brief congregational meeting at the end of each service where Rocky will vote on our recommendation that Matt fill the role as Rocky's next Lead Pastor.
3. Go check out [Matt's Bio](#) on our Rocky Lead Pastor landing page. You will not only have the opportunity to learn a little more about Matt, but will also have the opportunity to meet his wife Vanessa, and their four girls Ryah, Lorelai, Norah, and Cadence.

Regards,

James Wittler  
Chairman  
Elder Board