

Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church
Session Report to Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery
March 2, 2021

Overview

The Lord has graciously provided for us in the midst of nationwide shutdowns and ministerial transitions and we stand ready to continue and grow as a congregation of Christ Jesus and to work toward the growth of Christ's kingdom in Sparta and the surrounding region.

Pastor

After a few years of transition in the pastoral office, God has provided for the full time pastoral care through calling Ross Fearing to the congregation. He began serving on October 25, 2020 and was installed on January 15, 2021. He continues to serve in the United States Army Reserve as a Chaplain, assigned to the 77th QM GRP in El Paso, TX, drilling monthly and anticipating a two week exercise this June.

Public Ministry

Until Ross began serving regularly in October, James Odom coordinated pulpit supply and we were blessed with the ministry of RPNA ministers Keith Magill, and Rich Johnston, OPC minister Terry Dowds, and PCA seminary students Matthew Creasy, and Paulo Caproni. The public ministry was greatly restricted by the response to COVID 19 and we had no in person public meetings March 22-May 17 and almost no evening meeting until October 25 when Ross Fearing began his regular ministry. From October 25 on, we have had Ross Fearing preaching regularly morning and evening, and Terry Dowds providing supply when Ross has been performing military duty.

Regular Sabbath School was interrupted by COVID 19 as well, but we have resumed regular classes, with Jeanne Finley teaching the elementary and kindergarten class, Ross Fearing teaching the middle and high school class, and Bill Wilson and Bob Finley leading the adult class. Worship at Cedarhurst was canceled starting in March and we have still not resumed that service. We celebrated communion February 9 and August 9.

Session

Keith Magill served as the provisional moderator through Ross Fearing's installation on January 15 and was present in Sparta serving the congregation in January, February, August 2020, and again in January 2021. Over the last year he has moderated the session, led worship and preached God's Word, and carried out numerous administrative tasks. In the last several months he has been proactive and helping Ross transition into his work as moderator of session and pastor of Sparta RPC.

In the last year we lost 4 members due to transfers to other denominations and received Ross and Emily Fearing and their daughter Reyna into communicant membership and received Barnabas, Lydia, Annabelle, and Natalie as baptized members from San Antonio RPC.

There are currently 14 active resident communicant members, 6 resident baptized members, soon to be 7 (Lawrence), 2 non-resident baptized members, and 1 inactive baptized member on the roll. In the new year, Lord's Day morning attendance is normally between 15-20.

Properties

In the last year the ministry house at 516 N. Maple St. was painted and received a new roof. It is currently in excellent condition and ready for other ministry purposes.

The church building continues to be in good condition, without need major repairs in the last year.

The south 50 ft. of the vacant lot next to the ministry house was transferred to Joel Finley for his and Bob Finley's services painting the ministry house.

Finances

We are thankful for Eric's work as treasurer and Mary's work as assistant treasurer. In addition we owe great thanks to Keith Magill for doing much of the bookkeeping last year and look forward with thanks to Bob Finley taking on portions of that work in his place.

With the addition of a full time minister, our regular expenses went up significantly. To date, the Lord has provided generously and we ended the year with contributions exceeding expenses. Looking to the future, we anticipate expenses to exceed contributions without significant increase in giving. That said, the Lord has provided enough resources to provide for the needs of the congregation throughout this year.

The Future

On August 9, 2020 the congregation met to call Ross Fearing to pastoral service and he was installed in January 15, 2021. While there are distinct challenges related to small church ministry in a small town, we are encouraged by the coming of Ross Fearing and the opportunities to serve our Lord in the coming year. Priorities for ministry in the coming year will include maintaining the public ministry of the word, improving organization among leadership and communication with and among the congregation, promoting prayer together within the congregation, and engaging in evangelistic outreach to our area.

Conclusion

As we concluded in the last two years, it is always appropriate to remember Jesus promised, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Too often we can look at the obstacles to that growth and become discouraged, but Christ calls us to carry forward the work with the people and resources he gives us, trusting that in our weakness he is strong. There is much reason to hope, to be much in prayer for the congregation and region, and to be seeking opportunity to serve him. At all times we must resist temptations to discouragement and infighting, and seek to love each other in humility as Christ has loved each of us, and seize the great opportunities God has given us to serve him in a lost and dying world.

In Christ Jesus,

Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church Session

Ross Fearing, Moderator
James Odom, Clerk
Robert Morrow

Appendix 1: Financial Report/

	A	D	G	H	I	J
1	Sparta RPC					
	Financial Report - December 31, 2020 & 2021 Proposed Budget					
2	Session Approved _____					
3		2018	2019	2020	2020	2021
4		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
5						
6	<i>INCOME</i>					
7	101 Contributions	47,770.96	35,731.64	32,000.00	50,101.29	32,000.00
8	102 Interest	43.12	79.98	75.00	51.50	75.00
9	103 Other	166.00	66.00	66.00	168.39	66.00
10	104 Transfer from Acc't 980	7,980.92	10,199.07			
11	105 Transfer from Acc't 975					
12	TOTAL INCOME =	55,961.00	46,076.69	32,141.00	50,321.18	32,141.00
13						
14	<i>EXPENSES</i>					
15	CONGREGATION					
16	201 Christian Education	153.27		0.00	105.65	240.00
17	202 Fellowship Activities	95.58	6.00	60.00	28.77	60.00
18	203 Youth Ministry		255.00	360.00	0.00	360.00
19	204 Guest Ministry	8,053.77	11,436.17	16,800.00	11,862.98	4,800.00
20	205 Administration	646.63	355.55	480.00	43.81	480.00
21	206 Pastor's Ministry Expenses	892.31	544.11		0.00	1,020.00
22	207 Workman's Comp Insurance	263.64	261.62	300.00	256.57	300.00
23	208 Study Resources	145.00		120.00		120.00
24	210 Other	329.88	11.98	100.00	400.51	100.00
25	<i>Congregation Sub-total =</i>	<i>10,580.08</i>	<i>12,870.43</i>	<i>18,220.00</i>	<i>12,698.29</i>	<i>7,480.00</i>
26						
27	PASTORAL SUPPORT					
28	301 Salary	6,048.70	3,456.40		6,308.66	34,020.00
30	302 Parsonage Allowance	5,600.00	3,200.00		1,112.90	6,000.00
31	303 Insurance - Life & Disability	496.30	285.35			
32	304 Pension	5,355.00	11,918.25			4,400.00
33	305 Medical Insurance					
34	302a Moving Expenses				2,500.00	
35	<i>Pastoral Support Sub-total =</i>	<i>17,500.00</i>	<i>18,860.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>9,921.56</i>	<i>44,420.00</i>
36						
37	OUTREACH					
38	401 Local Outreach	142.75	1,077.14	1,000.00	896.00	1,000.00
42	405 Mercy Ministry		180.00	240.00	180.00	240.00
44	<i>Missions Sub-total =</i>	<i>142.75</i>	<i>1,257.14</i>	<i>1,240.00</i>	<i>1,076.00</i>	<i>1,240.00</i>
45						
46	DENOMINATION					
47	501 Presbytery Assessments	598.51	536.38	430.00	430.91	355.00
48	502 Synod Assessments	786.00	1,056.00	786.00	786.10	1,102.00
49	503 Synod & Presby Delegate	264.00		360.00	400.00	360.00
50	504 Home Missions		1,500.00			
51	509 RP Global Missions	1,000.00		1,130.00		2,125.00
52	510 RP Missions & Ministry	250.00	500.00	500.00		1,000.00
53	<i>Denomination Sub-total =</i>	<i>2,898.51</i>	<i>3,592.38</i>	<i>3,206.00</i>	<i>1,617.01</i>	<i>4,942.00</i>
54						
55	CHURCH BUILDING					
57	602 Property & Liability Insurance	1,878.36	2,068.92	2,100.00	2,298.79	2,500.00
58	603 Cleaning				720.00	1,040.00
59	604 Maintenance & Supplies	775.28	3,279.50	480.00	274.55	480.00
60	607 Utilities	2,775.98	2,816.73	2,880.00	2,429.49	2,880.00
61	606 Office Equipment					600.00
62	608 Property Improvements	265.17		240.00	59.05	600.00
63	610 Church Equipment					
64	<i>Church Building Sub-total =</i>	<i>5,694.79</i>	<i>8,165.15</i>	<i>5,700.00</i>	<i>5,781.88</i>	<i>8,100.00</i>
65						

	A	B	C	D	E	F
		2018	2019	2020	2020	2021
		Actual	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
65	PARSONAGE (411 N. Vine St)					
66	702 Property Insurance	383.72				
67	704 Maintenance & Supplies	49.97				
68	707 Utilities	816.93				
69	708 Property Improvements	7,055.92	1,131.07			
70	Parsonage Sub-total =	8,306.64	1,131.07			
71						
72	516 MAPLE STREET					
73	802 Property Insurance	202.08	219.50	240.00	231.48	240.00
74	804 Maintenance & Supplies	602.15	16.78	240.00	191.70	240.00
75	807 Utilities	1,467.84	2,739.92	1,800.00	2,384.21	1,800.00
76	808 Property Improvements	2,470.68	4,165.89	3,000.00	5,517.32	1,020.00
77	516 Maple Sub-total =	4,742.75	7,142.09	6,280.00	8,334.71	3,300.00
78						
79	512 MAPLE STREET					
80	902 Property Insurance	143.84	94.28			
81	908 Demolition		7,500.00			
82	512 Maple Sub-total =	143.84	7,604.28		0.00	
83						
84	TOTAL EXPENSES =	60,008.28	68,812.64	38,648.00	38,418.45	68,482.00
85						
86	YTD NET =	5,951.74	(14,535.85)	(1,505.00)	10,901.73	(37,341.00)
87						
88	950 General Fund					
89	Beginning Balance Jan 1	18,445.93	24,397.67	9,861.82	9,861.82	32,257.56
90	Net from This Year	5,951.74	(14,535.85)	(1,505.00)	10,901.73	(37,341.00)
91	From 980 Special Contributions				11,494.01	
92	General Fund Balance =	24,397.67	9,861.82	8,356.82	32,257.56	(5,083.44)
93						
94	980 Mercy Fund					
95	+Beginning Balance Jan 1	(1,651.09)	(1,119.96)	68.89	68.89	268.89
96	+Income	945.55	1,188.85		200.00	
97	-Expense	(404.42)				
98	Mercy Fund Balance =	(1,119.96)	68.89	68.89	268.89	268.89
99						
100	Outstanding loans =	1,188.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
101						
102	970 Special Projects					
103	+Beginning Balance Jan 1	370.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
104	+Income	0.00	0.00			
105	-Expense	(370.00)				
106	Special Projects Fund Balance =	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
107						
108	Total Funds Above =	23,277.71	9,930.71	8,425.71	32,526.45	(4,814.55)
109						
110	975 Parsonage Sale					
111	+Beginning Balance Jan 1	0.00	49,960.00	49,960.00	49,960.00	49,960.00
112	+Income	50,000.00				
113	-Transfer To Acc't 105	(40.00)				
114	Parsonage Sale Fund Balance =	49,960.00	49,960.00	49,960.00	49,960.00	49,960.00
115						
116	980 Special Contributions					
117	+Beginning Balance Jan 1	0.00	21,693.08	11,494.01	11,494.01	0.00
118	+Income	29,674.00				
119	- Giving	(1,000.00)	(1,500.00)			
120	- Pastor Retirement 2018	(2,345.00)				
121	- Pastor Retirement 2019	0.00	(1,333.00)			
122	- Pastor Conferences	0.00				
123	- Parsonage Repairs	(4,635.92)	(4,296.07)			
124	- Long Term Maintenance		(3,070.00)			
125	- Outreach					
126	- Other					
127	- Transfer to Account 104	(7,980.92)	(10,199.07)	0.00		0.00
128	- Transfer to 950 General Fund				(11,494.01)	
129	Special Income Fund Balance =	21,693.08	11,494.01	11,494.01	0.00	0.00
130						
131	Balance of all Funds =	94,930.79	71,384.72	69,879.72	82,486.45	45,145.45

