

**The Atlanta Commission/TGB for
Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church**
Report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery
March 2021

The Atlanta Commission/TGB for Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church has met regularly over the past year. With regard to Atlanta RPC, we are happy to report that the state-of-the-congregation is strong.

Membership

At the end of 2019, there were 10 members on the roll. At the end of 2020, total membership was 17 (including 10 communicants and 7 non-communicants). Reflected in those numbers is a gain of 11 members (including 6 communicants and 5 non-communicants); among the new members, there were 8 baptisms performed (3 adults and 5 children). There was also a loss of 4 members: the Sean McPherson family was transferred to Covenant Fellowship RPC, Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania; and Andrew Jubera was translated to the church triumphant.

Contacts, Visitors, and Prospects

We come across a lot of people in our ministry, some of whom remain anonymous to us. However, we keep track of those whose names we are able to learn and for whom we are able to glean contact information for possible follow-up. In 2020, we made a total of 122 contacts. Some of these are not necessarily prospects for church membership (examples would include out-of-towners whom we might happen to meet); nevertheless, we try to place such people on the Penny's Pen email list. Others, though, can be considered potential recruits for Atlanta RPC.

Last year, there were no fewer than 28 first-time visitors in attendance at a worship service. In the first six weeks of 2021, we have had 16 first-time visitors.

At the moment, at least 8 people (including 2 children who would be baptized and join as non-communicants) have formally expressed a desire to join the church. We can count maybe another dozen (some communicants, some non-communicants) who may be considered reasonable prospects for the future.

Attendance

The average attendance for 2019 was 28.19. In 2020, the average attendance (for the 45 weeks we met for public worship) was 24.56. (The figure for 2020 includes folks who joined the service by telephone. If those attending remotely are not included, then the average attendance would have been 23.11.) Due to the pandemic, we did not meet for worship for seven Lord's Days (March 22nd to May 3rd, inclusive). For six of those seven weeks, we gathered via telephone or Zoom, with an average attendance for those events being 17.17. Those occasions of getting together virtually included a time of prayer, Scripture reading, and a brief message. However, we were careful not to refer to these gatherings as being public worship.

Worship

In March 2020, our worship service was moved from 5:30 PM to 3:30 PM (with Sunday School now starting at 2:30 PM). Customarily, in the worship service, we sing five psalm selections (including a doxology after the benediction). On February 9th, 2020, we had our first communion service. A year later, we were able to observe the sacrament again. Our plan is to have the Lord's Supper on a quarterly basis.

For most of 2020, the pastor has been preaching a series on I Thessalonians. In the fall, he also preached a four-part series on Psalm 2. Two others have also filled the pulpit this past year: Pastor Steven Work and Elder T.J. Pattillo.

Sunday School

Because of the pandemic, we suspended Sunday School for several months. We finally reinstated classes in October 2020. Currently, we offer three classes: adult (taught by Elder T.J. Pattillo), older children (taught by Miss Amy Work), and younger children (taught by Mrs. Michele Haag).

Church Life

Every Lord's Day, we experience warm and sincere fellowship. There is a genuine sense of *koinonia* amongst our people, and a real caring for one another. In numerous informal ways, folks maintain contact with each other during the week.

Bible Studies

A men's midweek Bible study was begun in mid-2020. All told, there were six such meetings (including one in January 2021), with an average attendance of 4.67. Starting in January, that Wednesday night Bible study has transitioned into a co-ed enterprise, with an average attendance for the two gatherings so far being 5.50.

Staff Workers

We are blessed with a wonderful cadre of staff workers, including Miss Amy Work, Mrs. Michele Haag, Mrs. Penny Smith, Elder T.J. Pattillo, and Mrs. Nancy Pattillo. Without them, this ministry would not be able to function.

Ministerial Intern

Since September 2019, Elder T.J. Pattillo has faithfully served as a ministerial intern. In addition to teaching adult Sunday School and helping to pick up people for church, he has shown a lot of initiative, such as by implementing a men's Bible study in 2020.

Leadership Development

One of our goals for 2021 is the development of other leadership, not only for the meeting of present needs, but also in anticipation of eventual organization of the mission church as a congregation. We believe that we have identified several men who show potential to serve in a diaconal capacity (if not ordained, then at least as diaconal assistants), and at least two who could serve as elders.

In the meantime, we could really, really use a deacon! (Any volunteers want to move to Georgia?)

Pastoral Activity

The pastor is a tentmaker, being a fulltime Lecturer of History at Georgia Gwinnett College—a circumstance which helps to pay the bills and also provides good health insurance. Most significantly, his being in that role affords many opportunities for Christian witness.

In 2020, the pastor engaged in at least 154 counseling occasions. Sometimes this counseling might last only a few minutes; other times, it took hours. He has counseled many people in the congregation, but also has counseled others (including college students) who do not attend ARPC, and still others from across the RPCNA and in other branches of the church on a wide variety of topics, including ecclesiastical matters.

Among his academic pursuits were the production of a video, *The Pilgrims: 17th-Century English Emigrants*, and penning an article on the same topic for *The Confessional Presbyterian*. He is currently bringing to completion a book on race relations, *Race, Church, and Society*.

Outreach

Atlanta RPC was a sponsor of the video, *The Pilgrims, 17th-Century English Emigrant*, which has hit more than 1700 views on YouTube.

The pastor's wife continues to write Penny's Pen, with a new article about three times per year. There are over 600 names on the email list.

The weekly pulpit messages are placed on SermonAudio.

We are hoping soon to go door-to-door in our neighborhood, in order to invite folks to come to church. Meanwhile, most of our new attenders have come through the most effective means, viz., as a result of word-of-mouth.

Acquiring a Building

Surely one of the most significant events was the mission church's purchase of a building on June 1, 2020. The price of \$200,000 was quite reasonable, especially given the on-going gentrification of the area and the resultant skyrocketing of real estate prices. We are presently making modest modifications and renovations, to make the edifice more attractive.

A building is, of course, just a building. It has no life in itself. However, it can be very important in terms of establishing a presence in a community, particularly when it is located strategically (as ours is), and when it is somewhere people know that they can go for diaconal and spiritual needs. Our vision is for our building to be open most days of the week, as a place of *shalom* from the hustle and bustle of the world's frenetic pace; a place that can offer a health clinic and an ask-a-lawyer event on a monthly basis, as well as a clothes closet and a food pantry; a place where tutoring can be offered as an after-school program.

Finances

In addition to the acquisition of a building, the financial picture is without a doubt one of the more amazing aspects of 2020. We began the year with \$9,284.41 in the regular account, and \$33,911.00 in the building fund, for a total of \$43,195.41. Including capital expenses, we spent \$97,608.18. By the end of the year, we had received a total of \$253,909.63 in donations. We closed the books for 2020 with a total of \$189,495.86 in liquid assets—an increase of \$146,300.45.

At the moment, we are considering the implementation of a strategy that would invest \$75,000 (thereby generating income) and would use another \$75,000 to reduce mortgage payments via re-financing what is currently a \$150,000 loan.

Planning for the Future

Our goal is that Atlanta RPC could be formally organized in the next year or two or three. Already, we are seeing financial stability, along with the occupation of our own building. We have a great leadership corps, and are working to develop other leaders. We look to the future, with optimism, and with the hope that the Lord who has blessed us so much will continue to supply our needs and to protect us in the uncertain days ahead.

Prayer Requests

1. For a van, in order to facilitate our transporting folks to and from church.
2. For a deacon, who could bring expertise in helping us to discern and to meet diaconal needs.
3. For the raising up of leadership, so we can be prepared for formal organization.
4. For strength and stamina for the current leadership, that they might not be discouraged or lose heart.
5. For courage and boldness in the gospel, that the church would be a faithful witness for King Jesus.
6. For the building renovation, so that the building might be not only attractive but also useful in presenting a visible witness of the kingdom.

Recommendations

1. That the minutes of the Atlanta Commission be approved and spread on the minutes of Presbytery.
2. That Presbytery grant \$2,000.00 for the work of Atlanta RPC for 2021.
3. That Presbytery provide \$2,000.00 for the expenses of the Atlanta Commission.
4. That the membership of the Atlanta Commission consist of the current members plus Elder T.J. Pattillo.

	2020 Year To Date						Totals
	January	February	March	April	May	June	Totals
Opening Balance	\$9,284.41	\$7,130.75	\$6,612.57	\$6,153.62	\$6,463.60	\$11,358.54	
Regular Giving	\$2,378.00	\$3,076.00	\$3,465.00	\$3,324.00	\$8,270.00	\$7,318.00	\$27,831.00
Designated Giving apart from Bldg Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$294.00
Designated Giving for Building Fund	\$9,125.00	\$13,515.00	\$12,005.00	\$3,870.00	\$2,860.00	\$2,045.00	\$43,420.00
Transfer from Bldg Fund to Gen Fund		\$1,000.00			\$40,295.00	\$510.00	\$41,805.00
Total Inflow	\$11,503.00	\$17,591.00	\$15,514.00	\$7,444.00	\$51,425.00	\$9,873.00	\$113,350.00
Sub-total	\$20,787.41	\$24,721.75	\$22,126.57	\$13,597.62	\$57,888.60	\$21,231.54	\$160,353.49
Budgeted Expenses	\$4,372.96	\$3,501.63	\$3,912.03	\$3,180.07	\$3,335.11	\$5,995.36	\$24,297.16
Designated Exp apart from Bldg Fund	\$158.70	\$92.55	\$55.92	\$83.95	\$39.95	\$39.95	\$471.02
Capital Expenses		\$1,000.00			\$40,295.00	\$510.00	\$41,805.00
Transfers to Building Fund	\$9,125.00	\$13,515.00	\$12,005.00	\$3,870.00	\$2,860.00	\$2,045.00	\$43,420.00
Total Outflow	-\$13,656.66	-\$18,109.18	-\$15,972.95	-\$7,134.02	-\$46,530.06	-\$8,590.31	-\$109,993.18
Closing Bank Balance	\$7,130.75	\$6,612.57	\$6,153.62	\$6,463.60	\$11,358.54	\$12,641.23	
Currently in Building Fund	\$43,036.00	\$55,551.00	\$67,556.00	\$71,426.00	\$33,991.00	\$35,526.00	
Checking and Bldg Fund Accts Combined	\$50,166.75	\$62,163.57	\$73,709.62	\$77,889.60	\$45,349.54	\$48,167.23	

	Jan - June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals
Opening Balance	\$12,641.23	\$11,831.48	\$10,501.05	\$11,269.30	\$10,952.72	\$13,425.62		
Regular Giving	\$27,831.00	\$3,737.00	\$3,852.00	\$4,318.50	\$5,519.00	\$7,043.63	\$118,807.00	\$171,108.13
Designated Giving apart from Bldg Fund	\$294.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$32.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$326.50
Designated Giving for Building Fund	\$43,420.00	\$1,685.00	\$1,025.00	\$975.00	\$704.00	\$649.75	\$24,015.25	\$72,474.00
T/F from Bldg Fund (Capital Expenses)	\$41,805.00	\$543.41	\$0.00	\$16.71	\$0.00	\$66.00	\$50.34	\$42,481.46
Total Inflow	\$113,350.00	\$5,965.41	\$4,877.00	\$5,310.21	\$6,255.50	\$7,759.38	\$142,872.59	\$286,390.09
Sub-total	\$18,606.64	\$16,708.48	\$15,811.26	\$17,524.80	\$18,712.10	\$156,298.21		
Budgeted Expenses	\$24,297.16	\$4,513.47	\$5,182.43	\$3,550.25	\$5,835.58	\$4,570.73	\$6,640.30	\$54,589.92
Designated Exp apart from Bldg Fund	\$471.02	\$33.28	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$32.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$536.80
Capital Expenses	\$41,805.00	\$543.41	\$0.00	\$16.71	\$0.00	\$66.00	\$50.34	\$42,481.46
Transfers to Building Fund	\$43,420.00	\$1,685.00	\$1,025.00	\$975.00	\$704.00	\$649.75	\$24,015.25	\$72,474.00
Total Outflow	-\$109,993.18	-\$6,775.16	-\$6,207.43	-\$4,541.96	-\$6,572.08	-\$5,286.48	-\$30,705.89	-\$170,082.18
Closing Bank Balance	\$11,831.48	\$10,501.05	\$11,269.30	\$10,952.72	\$13,425.62	\$125,592.32		
Currently in Building Fund		\$36,667.59	\$37,692.59	\$38,650.88	\$39,354.88	\$39,938.63	\$63,903.54	
Checking & Bldg Fund Accts combined	\$48,499.07	\$48,193.64	\$49,920.18	\$50,307.60	\$53,364.25	\$189,495.86		

(A \$10,000 grant from Synod at the time of closing on June 1 went straight to the attorney's office without going through our bank account. The final total of donations to the Building Fund in 2020 is therefore \$82,474. Since the grant from Synod went towards the purchase of the building, the total of capital expenses in 2020 was \$52,481.46.)

2020

2021 Budget

100 Facility and Operation

\$12,000.00	\$10,000.00	101 Rent/Mortgage
\$1,800.00	\$3,000.00	102 Utilities—Electricity
\$1,100.00	\$2,600.00	103 Liability Insurance
\$850.00	\$700.00	104 Van Insurance
\$250.00	\$250.00	105 Van Fuel
	\$500.00	106 Van Maintenance & Repair
	\$2,500.00	107 Mileage
\$100.00	\$1,000.00	108 Building Supplies & Maintenance
	\$500.00	109 Synod/Presbytery/Conference
\$500.00	\$500.00	110 Office Supplies
\$100.00	\$500.00	111 Other Supplies (paper goods, cleaning supplies etc.)
\$100.00	\$450.00	112 Hospitality (coffee, snacks, etc.)
\$100.00	\$1,100.00	113 Administration (Sermon Audio, PayPal Fees, Website maint., etc.)
\$16,900.00	\$23,600.00	Total Facility and Operation

200 Ministerial Compensation

\$4,008.00	\$7,200.00	201 Housing Allowance
\$4,500.00	\$4,650.00	202 Pension
\$8,508.00	\$11,850.00	Total Ministerial Compensation
\$400.00	\$400.00	300 Exp for Diaconal and Other Workers
\$500.00	\$1,000.00	400 Pulpit Supply
\$100.00	\$100.00	500 Edification (Teaching Supplies)
\$16,600.00	\$22,000.00	700 Mercy
\$6,000.00	\$9,600.00	800 Intern
\$1,000.00	\$1,450.00	900 Miscellaneous and Contingency
\$50,008.00	\$70,000.00	Total Budgeted Undesignated Items