

2021 Spring Presbytery

Meeting of the Great Lakes / Gulf



Hosted by Sycamore RP Church

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The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA)

Proposed Agenda — Upd. 2/27/21

CLERK

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ASST. CLERK

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2021 ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Time: Thursday March 4 @ 2pm to Saturday March 6 @ Noon

Place: Sycamore Reformed Presbyterian Church
300 E. Mulberry St. Kokomo, IN 46517

Phone: (765) 854-0850

DAILY SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

Business Session #1 (2:00 - 5:30p)

- *Mid-Aft. Break (3:30 - 3:45p)*
- *Dinner Break (5:30 - 6:30p)*

Business Session #2 (6:45 - 9:00p)

FRIDAY

Business Session #3 (8:30a - 12:30p)

- *Mid-AM Break (10:15 - 10:30a)*
- *Lunch Break (12:30 - 1:30)*

Business Session #4 (1:45 - 5:30p)

- *Mid-Aft. Break (3:15 - 3:45pm)*
- *Dinner Break (5:30 - 6:30 pm)*

Business Session #5 (6:45 - 9:00p)

SATURDAY

Bus. Session #6 (8:30a - 12:00p)

- *Mid-AM Break (10:15 - 10:30a)*
- *Adjournment (Noon)¹*

BUSINESS SESSION #1

Thursday 2:00 - 5:30 p.m. (Break @ 3:30a)

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** (Mann)
 - A.** Devotional Address (Tre Cranford)²
 - B.** Prayer of Constitution (Mann)
- 2. ROLL CALL** (Koons)
- 3. FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS** (First-Time Delegates, Fraternal Delegates, Special Guests)

¹ Lunch is typically served following adjournment, with sack lunches available upon request.

² If the C&CC exam recommendation (Item 11a) is approved, this will constitute Mr. Cranford's Expository Sermon 1 exam.

4. **MOTION TO RATIFY AIC ZOOM PARTICIPATION POLICY**³ — That presbytery ratify the decision of the Ad Interim Commission on 1/21/21 “to allow only those certified delegates with specific COVID-19 or other medical excuses to vote via video conferencing.”⁴
5. **CLERK’S REPORT** (Kuehner)
 - A. Report & Recommendations
 - B. Call for Papers⁵, Session/TGB Minute Books, Report to Synod
6. **OFFICER ELECTIONS** (Nominations from Floor)
 - Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk
7. **RULING/TEACHING ELDER MEMORIALS**
8. **AD INTERIM COMMISSION REPORT** (Butterfield)
9. **TREASURER’S REPORT** (Magill)
10. **SHEPHERDING COMMITTEE REPORT** (F. Smith)
11. **CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT** (Niess)
 - A. Oral Report/Update & Recommendations
 - B. Exam: Expository Sermon 1 — Tre Cranford (Floor Comments & Vote)
 - C. Exam: Pastoral & Evangelistic Gifts — Mark Brown
 - D. Exam: Theology 1 — Joe Smith
 - E. Exam: Church History — Mark Brown
 - F. Exam: Theology 1 — Aaron Murray
12. **PRAYER & RECESS ~ DINNER BREAK** (5:30 p.m.)

³ AIC Minutes (1/21/21): “There was discussion regarding how to allow participation via Zoom conferencing. It was moved, seconded and passed to allow only those certified delegates with specific COVID-19 or other medical excuses to vote via video conferencing. This decision would need to be ratified at the start of the actual meeting of presbytery on March 4.”

⁴ Note: This motion does not include any details regarding Zoom participation, for which cause some may desire to move an amendment. For informational purposes, the moderator’s Zoom policy, which the court temporarily adopted on 10/23/20, stipulates the following: “Here is what I am proposing: (1) A Zoom link will be made available only to elder delegates staying away for Covid related reasons.[Rationale: 1) Other sicknesses have kept presbyters away for years and are just part of God’s providence, and we haven’t and will continue to not allow those men to video in. However, in this case we are dealing with men who have no symptoms but are choosing to protect the court by staying away. Therefore, since they are loving their neighbor as themselves via their absence, we will attempt to love them as ourselves by including them. 2) We are not seeking to C-Span this event! It will only be made available to certified delegates.] (2) Zoom delegates will have privileges of the floor, but will not have “last-second” privileges of the floor. [Rationale: If the moderator is getting ready to call a vote, and a delegate in row 10 wants to make a speech, he is able to wave his hand and get my attention at the last second. It is too cumbersome to require checking the Zoom feed to make sure no one on Zoom is seeking the floor. So, if the Zoom delegates want to speak, they will need to give indication early in the discussion.] (3) If Zoom freezes up, the presbytery will proceed as usual. It will be as if those men stepped out of the room voluntarily to get a cup of coffee or something. When Zoom unfreezes, it will be as if they reentered the room. (4) Voting: Zoom delegates will only vote when there is a division or roll call vote. [Rationale: The electronic feed may slightly delay the timing of their responses, and the amplification + or - may not accurately convey the actual votes. Limiting their participation in voice votes while permitting participation in division votes should preserve their right to vote on the more controversial matters while allowing the court to proceed smoothly and fairly on the more clear votes.] (5) Monitoring of the system: (Not the Moderator!) There will be two technology clerks to monitor Zoom both to report when someone is seeking the floor and to inform the clerks of the Zoom vote counts in cases of division. They will also be responsible for keeping the feed live. Authorization: This is a proposal. At the time of the roll call: 1) The roll of those in the room will be called. 2) The moderator’s calling of the meeting will be sustained/not sustained. 3) I will then rule that this Zoom plan is legal participation/attendance. This ruling can then be challenged to the full court, if you deem it to be unconstitutional or unfair. All or individual parts of it can be challenged. 4) If this plan is sustained, we will then add those on Zoom to the roll by calling their names. Participation: Those wishing to participate in this way need to inform me, by noon if at all possible, stating your desire and your Covid reason. Provided that you qualify, we will send you the link and you will be able to join in. You will need to be present when the roll call is taken in order to be considered a voting delegate for this meeting.”

⁵ The last call for papers will be Friday 3/5, immediately following the mid-morning break.

BUSINESS SESSION #2

Thursday 6:45 - 9:00 p.m. (No Break)

- 13. CALL TO ORDER / PRAYER TO RECONVENE** (Moderator)
 - A. Reconstitute in Prayer
 - B. Preaching Exam — Bryan Dage (Scripture Text)
- 14. CLERK'S MOTION** - That presbytery authorize the assistant clerk to take attendance visually in this and all remaining business sessions.
- 15. ROLL CALL / VISUAL** (Assistant Clerk)
- 16. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** (Clerk)
- 17. MODERATOR APPOINTMENTS** (Moderator)
- 18. CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT** (Niess)
 - A. Exam: Preaching — Bryan Dage (Floor Comments & Vote)
 - B. Vote: To Receive Under Care — Drew Poplin (Testimony, Q&A, Voice Vote)
 - C. Exam: Theology 1 — Allen Blackwood
 - D. Exam: Personal Godliness — Bryan Dage
 - E. Exam: Personal Godliness — Drew Poplin
 - F. Paper: Church History — Joe Smith (Floor Comments & Voice Vote)
 - G. Paper: Church History — Allen Blackwood (Floor Comments & Voice Vote)
 - H. Paper: Exegesis — Mark Brown (Floor Comments & Voice Vote)
 - I. Exam: English Bible — Joe Smith (Announce Results, Voice Vote)
 - J. Exam: English Bible — Allen Blackwood (Announce Results, Voice Vote)
- 19. GUIDELINES FOR HOST CONGREGATIONS COMMITTEE** (Mann)
- 20. CHRIST CHURCH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**
- 21. HOME MISSION BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT** (Camery)
- 22. LOUISVILLE COMMISSION REPORT** (Hanson)
- 23. PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT** (9:00 p.m.)

BUSINESS SESSION #3

Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (Break @ 10:15a)

- 24. CALL TO ORDER / PRAYER OF CONSTITUTION** (Moderator)
 - A. Reconstitute in Prayer
 - B. Expository Sermon 2 — Mark Brown
- 25. ROLL CALL / VISUAL** (Assistant Clerk)
- 26. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** (Clerk)
- 27. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE - Cont.** (Niess)
 - A. Exam: Expository Sermon 2 — Mark Brown (Floor Comments & Vote)
 - B. Exam: Theology 2 — Mark Brown
 - C. Vote: Licensure to Receive a Call — Mark Brown (Roll Call, Queries, Prayer, Charge)
 - D. Exam: Theology & Distinctives — Bryan Dage
 - E. Vote: Roll Call Vote to Receive Mr. Dage's ministerial credentials from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
 - F. Exam: Expository Sermon 1 — Drew Poplin (Sermon, Floor Comments & Vote)
- 28. LAST CALL FOR PAPERS** (Assistant Clerk)
- 29. PRAYER & RECESS ~ LUNCH BREAK** (12:30 p.m.)

BUSINESS SESSION #4

Friday 1:45 - 5:30 p.m. (Break @ 3:15)

- 30. **CALL TO ORDER** (Moderator)
 - A. Reconstitute in Prayer
 - B. Expository Sermon 1 — Aaron Murray
- 31. **ROLL CALL / VISUAL** (Assistant Clerk)
- 32. **READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** (Clerk)
- 33. **CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE - Cont.** (Niess)
 - Exam: Expository Sermon 1 — Aaron Murray (Floor Comments & Vote)
- 34. **SOUTHERN CHURCH EXT. COMMITTEE (SOCHEX) REPORT** (Faris/Butterfield)
- 35. **IMMANUEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT** (Niess)
- 36. **IMMANUEL JUDICIAL COMMISSION REPORT** (Camery)
- 37. **JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE DAY** (Chairman)
- 38. **PRAYER & RECESS ~ DINNER BREAK** (5:30 p.m.)

BUSINESS SESSION #5

Friday 6:45 - 9:00 p.m. (No Break)

- 39. **CALL TO ORDER** (Moderator)
 - A. Reconstitute in Prayer
 - B. Expository Sermon 1 — Allen Blackwood
- 40. **ROLL CALL / VISUAL** (Assistant Clerk)
- 41. **READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** (Clerk)
- 42. **CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE - Cont.** (Niess)
 - A. Exam: Expository Sermon 1 — Allen Blackwood (Floor Comments & Vote)
 - B. Vote: Licensure to Preach — Allen Blackwood (Roll Call Only, Wait for Queries/Prayer/Charge)
 - C. Vote: To Receive Under Care — T.J. Patillo (Testimony, Q&A, Voice Vote)
 - D. Exam: Expository Sermon 1 — Joe Smith (Sermon, Floor Comments & Vote)
 - E. Vote: Licensure to Preach — Joe Smith (Roll Call Only, Wait for Queries/Prayer/Charge)
 - F. Licensure: A. Blackwood and/or J. Smith (Queries, Prayer, Charge) — Administered together, if both sustained.
- 43. **PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT** (9:00 p.m.)

BUSINESS SESSION #6

Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Break @ 10:15a)

- 44. **CALL TO ORDER / PRAYER OF CONSTITUTION** (Moderator)
 - A. Reconstitute in Prayer
 - B. Evidence of Progress Sermon — Jon Sturm
- 45. **ROLL CALL / VISUAL** (Assistant Clerk)
- 46. **READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** (Clerk)
- 47. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT - Preliminary Draft** (Chairman)
- 48. **CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE - Cont.** (Niess)
 - A. Exam: Evidence of Progress Sermon — Jon Sturm (Floor Comments & Vote)

- B. Exam: Evidence of Progress Sermon — Jon Sturm (Floor Comments & Voice Vote)
- C. Exam: Personal Godliness — Jon Sturm (Mr. McCollum via Zoom due to COVID)
- D. Exam: Expository Sermon 1 — Zachary Blackwood (Sermon, Floor Comments & Vote)
- E. Motion to Approve C&CC Report (as a Whole)

- 49. **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT** (Magill)
- 50. **TIME & PLACE COMMITTEE REPORT** (Chairman)
- 51. **REPORT ON SESSION MINUTE BOOKS** (Assistant Clerk)
- 52. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT - Final** (Chairman)
- 53. **RESOLUTION OF THANKS COMMITTEE** (Chairman)
- 54. **READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** (Clerk)
- 55. **PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT** (Noon)

The Clerk's Report

2021 Spring Meeting — Kokomo, IN
March 4-6, 2021

Dear Fathers & Brethren,

As we begin another ecclesiastical year together, I want to thank everyone for their support, encouragement, patience, and gratitude over the years. During my two years as assistant clerk (2014-15), Mr. Morton graciously helped to “show me the ropes” of clerical work, for which I am abundantly thankful. Now entering the “busy season” of my sixth year as clerk (2016-Present), I can say without question that none of this would have been possible without those two crucial years of preparation and mentorship, or without the faithful service of assistant clerks, Mr. Hemken and Mr. Koons. My only hope is that someday I can, in some sense, return the favor by training up my own successor to take on this challenging role.

Since my last report (Spring 2020), I have engaged in the following labors as clerk of this presbytery:

- Sent “Letters of Standing” at the request of ministers in this presbytery.
- Sent membership transfer letters in cooperation with the Shepherding Committee and the Ad Interim Commission.
- Forwarded various communications from the Clerk of Synod to the GLG delegates email list.
- Recorded, distributed, and submitted presbytery minutes in accordance with the law and order of the church, which (due to the cancellation of the 2020 synod) will be submitted to the 2021 synod for review.
- Worked with Dale Koons, David Hanson, Kent Butterfield, Adam Niess, and others to help coordinate GLGP meetings.
- Prepared the agenda for this meeting and emailed various reminders and documents to the delegates.
- Forwarded “Delegates List” email change requests to Keith Evans for processing.¹

COMMUNICATIONS

The last call for papers will be Friday 3/5 after the mid-AM break. Relevant communications are as follows:

1. **19-5**: A 2019 petition from the St. Lawrence Presbytery (RPCNA) which has yet to be properly disposed of.²
2. **20-12**: A letter from CCRP member, Mr. Nathan Enas, expressing concern over the cancellation of Mr. LeFebvre’s trial.
3. **20-13**: A request from the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (RPCNA) regarding the work in Birmingham, Alabama.
4. **20-14**: A request from two families at Immanuel RPC for a presbytery judicial commission (AIC Minutes).³
5. **20-15**: A communication from the Immanuel RPC session to the AIC in response to GLG 20-14 (AIC Minutes).⁴
6. **21-1**: A petition from Mr. Smith, forwarded and approved by the Atlanta TGB.
7. **21-2**: A communication from Rev. Kenneth A. Smith of the OPC certifying Rev. Bryan Dage’s ministerial credentials.⁵

HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS

1. Last year, I mistakenly assigned the name “Communication 20-6” to two different items. Please note that the communication from Revs. Holdeman and Faris has been renamed **Communication 20-6A** and the letter from Dr. Ophoff has been renamed **Communication 20-6B**. I sincerely apologize for this admittedly careless mistake.
2. Due to the cancellation of synod last year, we are somewhat behind in terms of obtaining moderator signatures for our presbytery’s minute books. Therefore, I will plan to place the minute books on the clerk’s table with “sign here” color-coded sticky notes indicating where Mr. Mann (2019, **Green**) and Mr. Hanson (2020, **Blue**) may sign their names to the approved minutes.

PROPOSED CORRECTIONS

Words cannot express how grateful I am for the excellent work of our moderator, Mr. Hanson, this past year. Without a doubt, he is the best presbytery moderator I’ve ever had the privilege of working alongside. His wise decision to relieve me of my clerical duties during the October 23 meeting was much appreciated. Mr. Morton’s willingness to come out of retirement to serve in that challenging capacity surely serves to reflect his great love for Christ and His Church. The fact that the minutes from October 23 stand in desperate need of correction ought not to diminish our great admiration for these two godly men. Rather, it ought to increase our reliance upon Christ, who alone is perfect.

¹ Please note that the clerk is unable to make these changes and, therefore, cordially recommends that all such requests be sent directly to Keith Evans: kevans@rpts.edu.

² DCG 6:12 (D-33): “The presbytery... shall adjudicate all matters coming before it by appeal, complaint, reference or petition...” Disposing of this communication could be as simple as returning it to the St. Lawrence Presbytery along with a brief explanation.

³ This communication has already been acted upon by the AIC.

⁴ This communication requires no further action.

⁵ This communication will be held by the clerk pending Mr. Dage’s exams.

Ordinarily, when our minutes are approved at the end of a meeting, they are read and approved in their final *written* form (typed out paragraphs, not handwritten notes or terse oral summaries), with only minor stylistic or typographical changes to be made at the clerk's discretion. Next the approved draft is emailed to the delegates list for further review and correction of any errors or omissions. Only after all errors and omissions have been corrected are the minutes posted on the website, signed by the clerk and moderator, and eventually submitted to synod for review.

On 12/4/20, Mr. Morton submitted the minutes for the 10/23 special meeting. Upon reading them, my impression was that certain sections did not seem to reflect either what was read and approved at the end of the meeting, or my own personal notes and vivid recollection. (Please understand, I am not accusing anyone of wrongdoing or incompetence. I am simply sharing my impression of the document, as one who has spent several years writing and reviewing minutes as a clerk.) It was certainly understandable that numerous names were misspelled. These things happen, after all. It was slightly more concerning that several deliberative actions were left out, multiple motions were incorrectly worded, an amendment was attached to the wrong motion, and John Kim (rather than myself) was listed as a certified delegate representing Southfield. In addition, Robert McKissick's recorded dissent cites (what I would argue is) the *correct* wording of Motion 1 (as amended) and makes mention of a point of order which is nowhere adequately recorded in the minutes. This leaves the careful reader wondering *which* point of order Mr. McKissick has dissented from, and *why* his citation of Motion 1 differs from the minutes.

As a presbytery clerk, I am generally very grateful when others catch my own *many* mistakes (even in matters of substance) in time to be corrected. So, on 12/5/20, while sitting in a Western Pennsylvania deer blind, I emailed Mr. Morton, who suggested that we discuss my concerns over the phone on 12/16/20, to which I agreed. Then, on 12/15/20, Mr. Morton sent me another email cancelling our phone call, insisting that he "cannot make any changes to the substance of the minutes", and urging that "any such changes have to be written and [sent] to me." I quickly followed Mr. Morton's advice and sent him an email on 12/15/20 detailing the proposed corrections. It has been more than two months since then, and I still have not received a response from Mr. Morton. Once again, I am not writing this to accuse Mr. Morton or anyone else of anything. I am simply stating facts and sharing my concerns as charitably as possible.

Given my role in the 10/23 special meeting and its ongoing aftermath, I was hopeful that other delegates would take action to help address this issue. To this end, I forwarded my list of corrections to the AIC chairman in hopes that the AIC might appoint a three-man committee of delegates to review my suggestions and work with Mr. Morton *either* to make the necessary changes, *or* to bring a recommendation to the full meeting. In God's providence, this has not happened and the matter remains unresolved. As clerk of presbytery, despite the awkwardness of the situation and the potential for an accusation of bias, I simply cannot in good conscience remain passive while inaccurate minutes are submitted to synod. These errors need to be corrected immediately, lest further complaints to synod add further complications to this case.

Thankfully, I am not aware of *any* impact that these proposed corrections would have upon the pending judicial case. Therefore, I am confident that delegates on both sides of this controversy will immediately appreciate this as a non-partisan proposal aimed at correcting *unintentional* mistakes made by *godly* men that we all respect and admire for their *excellent* service to Jesus Christ.

My proposed revision is attached, I have attached a piece of evidence. On 10/30/21, I emailed a letter to Mr. LeFebvre (copied to the moderator) in which I conveyed the actions of the court on 10/23/20 *as they were actually adopted*. This email also included a letter of standing, a copy of Ross Fearing's credentials (as an example), and a request for the information necessary to supply Mr. LeFebvre his ministerial credentials. That same day, I received an email response from the moderator, which stated, "I think you did a great job w/ neutral wording."⁶ This wording, however, is noticeably different from that of Mr. Morton's minutes in describing the actions taken by presbytery. Both cannot be correct.

Attached to this report you will find my proposed revisions, along with the emails and attachments noted above. Hopefully all of this will help to demonstrate that there is a real discrepancy that needs to be examined by the judicial committee (of the day) and addressed before these minutes are sent to synod.

In conclusion, while I cannot promise that my proposed revision is devoid of errors, I *can* promise, however, that I have submitted it for the good of the court and not for any private advantage. If my proposal has personally injured or offended anyone, please forgive me. This was not my intent. The countless hours I spend on presbytery work are a labor of love. I appreciate you all very much and simply want our presbytery minutes to be as accurate as possible. If any of my proposed changes have already been made... *GREAT!*

⁶ It is entirely possible that I have misunderstood the meaning of this statement. If that is the case, I apologize in advance for any harm done. My intent here is simply to help the court understand the reasons for my proposed revision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That presbytery appoint Phil Pockras and Jon Hughes as parliamentarians for this meeting, with Steve Rhoda, Keith Evans, and Jason O'Neill serving as alternates.⁷
2. That presbytery instruct the nominating committee to determine the congregations to be visited this year.
3. That presbytery refer the clerk's proposed revision of the 10/23/20 minutes to the judicial committee (of the day) to report back with a recommendation later in the meeting.
4. That presbytery refer GLG 19-5 and GLG 21-1 to the judicial committee (of the day) to report back with recommendations later in the meeting.
5. That presbytery defer any consideration of GLG 20-12 until all relevant complaints have been adjudicated by the synod.
6. That presbytery refer GLG 20-13 to the Southern Church Extension Committee (SOCHEX)⁸ to bring their perspective and recommendation later in the meeting during their oral report.
7. That presbytery adopt the proposed agenda for this meeting.
8. That presbytery receive all written congregational/TGB reports submitted in writing without hearing oral reports.
9. That presbytery approve the following committee/commission reports as submitted⁹, without hearing oral reports:
 - A. Inter-Church Liaison Report
 - B. Presbytery Youth Report (CYPU)
 - C. Visitation Reports (Second RP, Sparta)
 - D. Youth Ministries Committee of Synod Report
 - E. Covfamiko Report
 - F. Internet Maintenance Committee Report
 - G. Geneva College Board of Corporators Report
 - H. Sparta Installation Commission Report
 - I. Andrew B. Installation Commission Report
10. That presbytery grant all RPCNA elders present, including all non-certified delegates from this presbytery, the privilege of the floor during the remainder of this meeting.¹⁰

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Kuehner, Clerk

⁷ The existing AIC includes 3/4 of our normal slate of parliamentarians. The addition of an extra alternate would furnish the court with two non-AIC parliamentarians (Keith Evans, Jason O'Neill) to serve in this role while the court addresses matters directly related to the AIC's work in 2020.

⁸ Following H.P. McCracken's departure, SOCHEX was reduced to just two members (James Faris and Kent Butterfield). However, these are two of our most experienced presbyters, who (more importantly) have a long history of interactions with Sam Ketcham and the folks in Birmingham.

⁹ This motion is designed to facilitate "line item" amendments in case the court prefers to hear an oral report from any of these committees, or if the court desires to add other reports to this list.

¹⁰ Note: Recommendation #4 does not grant *voting* privileges to GLG elders lacking written session certification.

Special Meeting of the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery,

meeting on October 23, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.,

at Southside, Indianapolis, Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery assembled at 1:00 p.m. on October 23, 2020 at the Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church for a special meeting called by the moderator¹ for “the consideration of the Ad Interim minutes & actions up until that day, Communications 20-06 through 20-10, and any other pertinent items related to the disposition of Mr. LeFebvre's credentials and the November 13 and 14 scheduled trial meeting.”

The Moderator, David Hanson, called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

The Moderator read Deut. 17: 8-20.

The Moderator led in prayer and constituted the court.

Roll: Roll call by the Assistant Clerk, Dale Koons, as follows:

ATTENDANCE

¹ Moderator's Edict (10/13/20): Brothers, As moderator, I am calling a Great-Lakes Gulf Presbytery Meeting for October 23rd, 2020 to convene at 1 p.m. at Southside R.P. Indianapolis. The specified business for this meeting is the consideration of the Ad Interim minutes & actions up until that day, Communications 20-06 through 20-10, and any other pertinent items related to the disposition of Mr. LeFebvre's credentials and the November 13 and 14 scheduled trial meeting. DoCG 6.4 "A Presbytery may arrange special meetings. The moderator may, at his own discretion, or upon the request of two members, call a meeting to transact business requiring immediate attention. At least ten days' notice shall be given, and the call shall specify the business to be considered. The first decision after the organization of the court shall be on the question of sustaining the action of the moderator in calling the meeting. The presbytery shall consider only the business specified, other items may be introduced by a two-thirds vote." The rationale for this meeting is that in my judgment we are not prepared and settled enough for our next meeting to be the beginning of a trial. There are several undealt with communications that are complex and lengthy, there are actions of the Ad Interim Commission that have been called into question, and there are other trial preparation issues to work through. To summon witnesses to appear at a meeting at which hours may be spent untangling the past month is an unfair burden to the witnesses. Also, just for your understanding, I communicated to the AIC Moderator, Mr. Butterfield last Thursday that if they moved the trial date that I would take this action of calling a special meeting. Because the AIC's actions are being questioned, they aren't in the best position to request a meeting like this for a review of their own actions, so I am acting. Once again, the responsibility for this action is mine alone, so you know who to blame. In Christ, David Hanson. October 13, 2020

Certified Delegates and Alternates for 2020 Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Special Meeting, October 23, 2020

			Certifications	Status	Notes	Roll Call
Church	First	Last Name	Certified			
Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship	Frank J.	Smith	Spring	TE	Excused*	
Belle Center RPC	Phillip	Pockras	Spring	TE		P
Belle Center RPC- Provisional	Scott	Hunt	Spring	RE	Excused*	
Bloomington RPC	Richard	Holdeman	Spring	TE		P
Bloomington RPC	Phillip	McCollum	Spring	TE		P
Bloomington RPC	Kenneth	De Jong				
Bloomington RPC	Wes	Archer				
Bloomington RPC	CJ	Davis				P
Bloomington RPC	Stephen	Shipp	Spring	RE		
Bloomington RPC	Eric	Cosens	Spring	RE		
Bloomington RPC	Wendell	McBurney				
Christ Church RP	Jason	O'Neill	Spring	ALT		P
Christ Church RP	Dale	Koons	Spring	RE		P
Christ Church RP	Sean	Bird	Spring	RE		P
Christ Church RP	Andrew	Falk	Spring	ALT		
Christ Church RP	Duane	Judd				
Columbus RPC	Gary	McNamee	Spring	RE		P
Columbus RPC	Jeffrey	Jones	Fall	RE		P
Columbus RPC	Ed	Schisler	Spring	RE		
Columbus RPC	David	Schisler				
Durham First RPC	Kent	Butterfield	Spring	TE		P
Durham First RPC -Provisional	Robert	Bibby	Fall	RE	Lafayette	
Elkhart RPC	Wade	Mann	Spring	TE		P
Elkhart RPC	Fikre	Menbere	Spring	RE		
Elkhart RPC	Jonathan	Ummel	Spring	ALT		

Elkhart RPC	Andy DeRosa	Spring	ALT		
Grand Rapids First RPC	Craig Scott	Spring	TE	Excused*	
Grand Rapids First RPC	Jake Schwartz	Spring	RE	ZOOM	P
Hetherton RPC	Ray Morton	Spring	TE		P
Hetherton RPC	Barton Briley	*	RE		
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Jared Olivetti	Spring	TE		P
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	David Carr	Fall	RE		P
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Benjamin Larson	Spring	ALT		
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Keith Magill		*	See Retired	
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Nate Pfeiffer	10/16/20	RE		P
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Zachary Blackwood	Spring	ALT		
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Sergei Spirydovich				
Lafayette RPC	Adam Niess	Spring	TE	ZOOM	P
Lafayette RPC	Ken Nelson	Spring	ALT		
Lafayette RPC	Robert Bibby	Spring	RE	ZOOM	P
Lafayette RPC	Jeff Kessler	Spring	RE	Excused*	
Lafayette RPC	Chris Stockwell	Fall	RE	ZOOM	P
Lafayette RPC	Dan Webb				
Marion RPC	Jason Camery	Spring	TE		P
Marion RPC	Greg Fisher	Spring	RE		P
Marion RPC	Scott Hunt	Spring		Excused*	
Orlando RPC	Jonathon Schaefer	Spring	RE	Excused*	
Orlando RPC	James Pennington				
Orlando RPC	Joe Worsham				
Second RPC, Indianapolis	James Faris	Spring		EXCUSED	
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Joel Hart	Spring	TE	ZOOM	P
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Russ Pulliam	Spring	ALT		
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Richard Blankenship	Spring	RE		
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Richard Blum	Spring	ALT		
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Donald Cassell, Jr				
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Dean Filson		RE		
Second RPC, Indianapolis	David Mauser				
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Terry Magnuson	Spring	ALT		P

Second RPC, Indianapolis	Jeff Platt	Spring	ALT		
Second RPC, Indianapolis	David Pulliam	Fall		ZOOM	P
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Karl Stoicheff				
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Walt Zebrun				
Selma RPC, Alabama	George Evans				
Selma RPC, Alabama	Averette Woodson	Spring	RE	Excused*	
Selma RPC, Alabama	Greg Woodson	Spring	RE	Excused*	
Southfield RPC, Michigan	Adam Kuehner	Spring	TE		P
Southfield RPC, Michigan	Jon Hughes	Spring	RE		P
Southfield RPC, Michigan	John Kim				P
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	David Hanson	Spring	TE		P
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Ian Wise	Spring	TE		P
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Steve Sturm				
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Ross Cerbus				
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	John Hanson	Spring	RE		P
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Mark Hart	Spring	RE		P
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	David Klyen Klyen				
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Jerry Porter				
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Don Prichard				
Southwest Ohio RPC, Mason, Ohio	Dick Knodel, Jr.	Spring	TE		P
Southwest Ohio RPC, Mason, Ohio	Timothy Vincze	Spring	RE		P
Southwest Ohio RPC, Mason, Ohio	Greg Damerow	Spring	ALT		
Sparta RPC	James Odom	Spring	RE		P
Sparta RPC	Jim McMahon				
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo	Shawn Anderson	Spring	RE		P
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo	Robert McKissick	Spring	RE		
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo	Tom Dinkledine				
Terre Haute RPC	Steve Rhoda	Spring	TE		P
Terre Haute RPC	Russell Lodge	Spring	RE		
Terre Haute RPC	Josh Reshey	Fall	RE		
Westminster RPC, Prairie View,					

IL						
Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL	Robert Koch		Spring	RE		
Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL	Jim Ritchhart					
Ministers, Retired	Godfrey Franklin					
Ministers, Retired	Richard Johnston				ZOOM	P
Ministers, Retired	Gordon Keddle					
Ministers, Retired	Ray Lanning		Fall	TE		
Ministers, Retired	Keith Magill		Spring	TE		P
Ministers, Retired	Paul Matthews					
Ministers, Retired	Robert McCracken					
Ministers, Retired	Glenn McFarland					
Ministers, Retired	James McMahon					
Ministers, Retired	Robert Morrow					
Ministers, Retired	James Pennington		Fall	TE		
Ministers, Retired	Dennis Prutow					
Ministers, Retired	Frank Schutz		Fall	TE		
Ministers, Retired	Steven Work		Spring	TE		P
Ministers, Retired	James Wright					
Ministers, in Synod Service	Keith Evans		Spring	TE		P
Ministers, in Synod Service	Michael LeFebvre		Spring	TE		
Ministers, Presbytery Missionary	Zachry Smith		Fall	TE		
Ministers, in Synod Service	David Whitla		Spring	TE		P
				ZOOM		
* Status per email from Adam Kuehner on October 22 at 11:51 PM					Attendance	38 39
			Teaching Elders	26	57	
			Ruling Elders	31	7	
			Alternates	12		

The Assistant Clerk announced that a quorum was present.

The Moderator sought that his call of this meeting be sustained (DCG 7.4 on D-31).

Challenge: Shawn Anderson, Phil Pockras, Adam Kuehner, Dick [Knodle] Knodel

A point of order was submitted in writing, stating that “The motion to ratify the moderator’s edict is out of order, being an improper motion, in that it conflicts with a motion previously adopted by the court, thereby requiring a *Motion to Rescind*, which cannot be moved prior to the ratification of the meeting”; after which the moderator ruled against the point of order and was upheld in his decision by a vote of 19-11.

The following delegates indicated their intent to file a complaint to synod: Shawn Anderson, Phil Pockras, Adam Kuehner, Dick Knodel.

Motion: moved, seconded and passed that the call of this meeting by the Moderator is sustained.

The following recorded a dissent from this action: Phil Pockras and Dick ~~Knodel~~ Knodel.

Motion: moved, seconded and passed that **the moderator’s proposal²** for the use of Zoom communication is agreed for today for:

Rich Johnston, Adam Niess, Bob ~~Biddy~~ Bibby, Chris Stockwell, Joel Hart, David ~~Pollman~~ Pulliam, Jake ~~Swartz~~ Schwartz.

² Moderator’s Email (10/23/20): Here is what I am proposing: **(1)** A Zoom link will be made available only to elder delegates staying away for Covid related reasons. [Rationale: 1) Other sicknesses have kept presbyters away for years and are just part of God’s providence, and we haven’t and will continue to not allow those men to video in. However, in this case we are dealing with men who have no symptoms but are choosing to protect the court by staying away. Therefore, since they are loving their neighbor as themselves via their absence, we will attempt to love them as ourselves by including them. 2) We are not seeking to C-Span this event! It will only be made available to certified delegates.] **(2)** Zoom delegates will have privileges of the floor, but will not have "last-second" privileges of the floor. [Rationale: If the moderator is getting ready to call a vote, and a delegate in row 10 wants to make a speech, he is able to wave his hand and get my attention at the last second. It is too cumbersome to require checking the Zoom feed to make sure no one on Zoom is seeking the floor. So, if the Zoom delegates want to speak, they will need to give indication early in the discussion.] **(3)** If Zoom freezes up, the presbytery will proceed as usual. It will be as if those men stepped out of the room voluntarily to get a cup of coffee or something. When Zoom unfreezes, it will be as if they reentered the room. **(4)** Voting: Zoom delegates will only vote when there is a division or roll call vote. [Rationale: The electronic feed may slightly delay the timing of their responses, and the amplification + or - may not accurately convey the actual votes. Limiting their participation in voice votes while permitting participation in division votes should preserve their right to vote on the more controversial matters while allowing the court to proceed smoothly and fairly on the more clear votes.] **(5)** Monitoring of the system: (Not the Moderator!) There will be two technology clerks to monitor Zoom both to report when someone is seeking the floor and to inform the clerks of the Zoom vote counts in cases of division. They will also be responsible for keeping the feed live. **Authorization:** This is a proposal. At the time of the roll call: 1) The roll of those in the room will be called. 2) The moderator’s calling of the meeting will be sustained/not sustained. 3) I will then rule that this Zoom plan is legal participation/attendance. This ruling can then be challenged to the full court, if you deem it to be unconstitutional or unfair. All or individual parts of it can be challenged. 4) If this plan is sustained, we will then add those on Zoom to the roll by calling their names. **Participation:** Those wishing to participate in this way need to inform me, by noon if at all possible, stating your desire and your Covid reason. Provided that you qualify, we will send you the link and you will be able to join in. You will need to be present when the roll call is taken in order to be considered a voting delegate for this meeting.

Motion: moved, seconded and passed to certify and seat Terry Magnuson as a ruling elder delegate from Second RPC of Indianapolis.

Clerk's Report: Raymond Morton, Clerk pro tem.

a. Listing of the communications as received:

(The text of these communications is in the Addendum)

Communication 20-06B from Roel Ophof, RE from Los Angeles congregation in support of Mr. LeFebvre.

Communication 20-07 a review of AIC Actions from the Defense, Mr. Chellis.

Communication 20-08 Rebuttal Brief from the Prosecution; ~~and Moderator's Memo.~~

Communication 20-09 Michael Lefebvre letter to the AIC with his concerns.

Communication 20-10 addressing certain aspects of the defendant's latest communication, 20-09.

Communication 20-11 An alternate way for the Presbytery to move forward regarding Michael LeFebvre.

Motion: Moved, seconded, and passed, that Communication 20-11 be taken up immediately after the Clerk's Report and the approval of this agenda.

- b. That the **parliamentarians** for this meeting are Jared Olivetti and Keith Evans.
- c. **Motion:** moved, seconded and passed that the Presbytery grant all RPCNA elders present, including all non-certified delegates from this Presbytery, the privilege of the floor during the remainder of this meeting.
- d. **Ad Interim Report**
- e. **Reading of the Minutes.**
- f. **Prayer of Adjournment.**

Motion: moved, seconded, and passed that Presbytery adopt the proposed agenda for this meeting.

The Clerks Report was received.

Recess: The Moderator announced recess from 2:20 to 2:30.

Communication 20-11 was taken up.

Item 1: ~~The Moderator ruled that #1 was constitutional.~~ That Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination.

~~(Item #1—That Michael LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination.~~

A point of order was submitted in writing, claiming that “The motion to grant Mr. LeFebvre his credentials conflicts with multiple previous actions of this court, thereby requiring a Motion to Rescind those actions, which can only be adopted by a two-thirds majority of this assembly, or the equivalent of a simple majority of the entire membership of the court (33/64)”³; after which the moderator ruled against the point of order, noting that it contradicts DCG 9.11 (D-46).

Another point of order was submitted in writing, claiming that “The motion to grant Mr. LeFebvre his credentials is out of order, in that it violates the RPCNA Constitution by failing to specify the specific ecclesiastical body with which Mr. LeFebvre plans to affiliate”⁴; after which the moderator ruled against the point of order and his decision was challenged.

Following debate the Moderator was sustained on a 21 to 17 vote.

The following ~~filed~~ indicated their intent to file a complaint to synod: Adam Kuehner, Shawn Anderson, Steven Work, Kent Butterfield, and Dick ~~Knoble~~ Knodel.³; ~~Robert [Mc] McKissick.~~

Amendment: Motion: moved, seconded, and passed that Michael LeFebvre be removed from the jurisdiction of RPCNA. “That presbytery amend Motion #1 by adding the words ‘thereby removing him from the RPCNA.’”

Motion: moved, seconded, and passed to call the question.

The original motion “~~that Michael LeFebvre be removed from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA~~” “That Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination, thereby removing him from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA” passed 20-18.

The following registered their dissent: Phil Pockras, Kent Butterfield, Greg Fisher, ~~John~~ Jon Hughes, Jason ~~Camrey~~ Camery, Keith Evans, Shawn Anderson, Adam Kuehner, David Whitla, Dick Knodel, Steve Work, Bob Bibby, Jake Schwartz.

The following ~~filed~~ indicated their intent to file a complaint to synod: Shawn Anderson, Adam Kuehner, Jake Schwartz, Kent Butterfield, and Dick ~~Knoble~~ Knodel.⁴; ~~Robert McKissick (filed November 21, 2020).~~

The Following are the written dissents:

³ Robert McKissick, who did not attend the meeting, filed his complaint with the clerk pro tem on 11/21/20.

⁴ Robert McKissick, who did not attend the meeting, filed his complaint with the clerk pro tem on 11/21/20.

From Adam Kuehner:

I hereby request that my dissent at yesterday's meeting of presbytery (regarding Motion 1 of communication 20-11) include the following rationale:

Ministers are officers of the church and men under authority (DCG 6:2; 6:13). How can a man be regarded as a credentialed church officer if he is no longer a member of (or a recognized officer in) any specific branch of the visible church? By giving Mr. LeFebvre's credentials to himself (rather than to a specified ecclesiastical body), we have violated our constitution (DCG 6:2; 6:13) and strayed from Scriptural ecclesiology (2 Cor. 8:23).

Still worse, this action short-circuits the Biblical process of church discipline (Lev. 19:17; Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Tim. 5:19-22) which is a dynamic, Spirit-blessed means of grace "to reclaim a sinning member, to deter others from similar offenses, to maintain the honor of Christ and the purity and peace of His Church, to maintain the truth of the gospel, and to avoid the wrath of God coming upon the church" (BOD 1:3).

Therefore, while I appreciate the noble intentions of the brothers who voted to pass this motion, I must register my dissent in hope that the Lord will be patient and merciful to further sanctify us in the truth of His word. Otherwise, I fear that "A church which does not follow our Lord's commands regarding church discipline will certainly lose His blessing, deteriorating more and more in doctrine and life" (BOD 1:4).

Blessings,
Adam K.

From Shawn Anderson:

There are charges of alleged censurable sin against Mr. Lefebvre. The right and just thing to do is to adjudicate those charges, finding Mr. Lefebvre guilty or innocent. While these charges were filed by two men against Mr. Lefebvre's published works, there was already a request by the St. Lawrence Presbytery to investigate whether these writings were consistent with our subordinate standards, a paper detailing the specific concerns from a session within our presbytery, a record of deep concern and criticism from the faculty of our seminary, a presbytery committee that studied these writings and found that the content was out of accord with our standards, not to mention Mr. Lefebvre's own admission that his writings were contrary to our standards in at least one area. The allegations are not over young earth versus old earth, but concerning a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, the denial of the necessity of Adam being our first parent and the root of mankind.

The judicial process was enacted by this presbytery, yet this same presbytery has never stated that Mr. Lefebvre has violated his vows; those charges have been formally left unanswered – but not informally. Mr. Lefebvre has never admitted or confessed that he is guilty of the alleged charges against him. He maintains his innocence, yet there have been attempts to admonish him, to exhort, to rebuke, to call to repentance, to warn – all without going through the process of contesting these charges. Instead of holding Mr. Lefebvre accountable to the charges and

encouraging him to confess or contest, the simple majority of this court has prejudged the case. It has concluded that it is less costly to make Mr. Lefebvre a “free agent” minister rather than spend the time and resources for a trial.

Further, this court has abandoned the Biblical means of dealing with accusations of guilt in this case. Instead of seeking to lead him in repentance and restoration if guilty, or exoneration and vindication if innocent, they have allowed Mr. Lefebvre to pursue his own course. They have received an accusation against Mr. Lefebvre, and under the pretense of love, they are willing to attach these allegations to his credentials instead of dealing with them. Leviticus 19:17 ‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

This is not honoring to Christ, nor loving toward Mr. Lefebvre, nor maintaining the peace and purity of Christ’s Church, nor protecting the truth of the Gospel, nor avoiding the discipline of the Lord coming upon the Church (BoD 1.3). Therefore, I dissent from this action. May the Lord grant us forgiveness and repentance.

Thank you for your service,
-Shawn Anderson

From Keith Evans:

As notified at yesterday’s presbytery meeting, and for inclusion in the minutes, please find attached my formal statement of dissent in relation to adoption of Motion 1 of Communication 20-11.

I would like my registered dissent at yesterday’s meeting of presbytery regarding Motion 1 of communication 20-11 to include the following rationale:

“By failing to move forward with the properly ordered disciplinary proceedings, unconstitutionally giving Mr. LeFebvre his credentials without an ecclesiastical destination, and dismissing him from the RPCNA, we have grievously deprived our erring brother of Christ’s effectual means of grace: church discipline. We have therefore failed to love our brother, functionally disregarded the blessing of discipline, and allowed unresolved charges to hang over Mr. LeFebvre’s head without properly adjudicating the accusations. We have done a great disservice in this action to Mr. LeFebvre, Christ’s church, and the honor of Christ himself, and I hereby record my dissent.” Keith Evans

From David Whitla:

**Dissent to Action of GLG Presbytery
re. Communication 20-11, Motion 1**

October 23, 2020

I respectfully request my dissent to be registered to this action of presbytery for the following reasons: It suspends presbytery's already-initiated actions of judicial process without proper rescindment, leaving serious charges against Mr. Lefebvre unresolved. Our Book of Discipline reminds us that, "The purpose of Christian discipline is to bring about a redemptive change" (BD, *Intro* [E-1]). This action has deprived Mr. Lefebvre of this means of grace, and thus the opportunity for repentance and restoration to useful service in our midst, to his and our great loss.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. David G. Whitla

Registered Complaints:

Robert McKissick - Registered Complaint against motions at GLGP meeting Oct 23, 2020⁵

1) the sustained motion to uphold the moderator's ruling that the proposed motion granting Dr. Lefebvre's credentials to himself rather than to a receiving denomination

2) the sustained motion that Mr Lefebvre be given his credentials (with pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination, thereby removing him from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA.

Recess: the Moderator announced recess from 3:45 to 3:55.

Item 2: That the November 13-14 trial date be cancelled.

Motion: moved, seconded and passed that the trial date be cancelled.

The following registered their dissent: ~~John~~ Jon Hughes, Steven Work, Jake Schwartz.

Motion: moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion failed.

Item 3: That communications 20-6 to 20-10 be referred to a judicial committee (appointed by the moderator) to report back at the spring meeting.

Item 3 was voted down.

⁵ Mr. McKissick did not attend the meeting, but, upon hearing of the decision, registered his complaint with the clerk pro tem on November 21, 2020.

Item 4: That ~~Michael~~ Mr. LeFebvre be counseled to have his identification as a pastor in the RPCNA and adjunct professor at RPTS be removed, insofar as possible, from his publications concerning the issues found in these charges.

~~Amendment: **Motion:** moved, seconded and passed that Michael LeFebvre ought to have declared to Presbytery the publication of his views.~~

The item was debated and subsequently passed.

Item 5: That the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery reaffirm its commitment to RP Testimony 4.4 and exhort Mr. LeFebvre to turn away from his unbiblical exception to it.

~~Amendment: **Motion:** moved, seconded and passed “That presbytery amend Motion #5 by adding the words ‘and inform him that he ought to have declared his exception to the presbytery before publishing his view~~

~~**Motion:** moved, seconded and passed Item 5 by a count of 20 to 14.~~

~~**Motion:** moved, seconded and passed that this meeting be extended by 30 minutes.~~

Jared Olivetti ~~presented the following statement~~ introduced the following motion:

“Whereas God has used Pastor Michael Lefebvre in many and wonderful ways to bless our presbytery and denomination and to make the RPCNA a blessing to the bride of Jesus throughout the world;

“Whereas God has blessed Pastor Lefebvre’s church planting and pastoring of Christ Church Reformed Presbyterian;

“Whereas God has uniquely gifted our brother’s academic and writing abilities to our great benefit, including the areas of Psalmody, ministering to those struggling with gender issues and same-sex attraction, and our understanding of God’s law in the Old Testament be it;

~~**Motion:** moved, seconded and passed~~ It is moved that presbytery rise to express our profound gratitude to Pastor Lefebvre for his ministry and labors among us, our love for him as our friend and co-laborer, our sorrow at his departure, and that presbytery pray for God’s blessing on his future endeavors to serve Jesus.”

The motion was seconded, after which it was debated and passed.

Pastor Philip McCollum led the Court in prayer.

~~**Report of the Ad Interim Commission.**~~

~~The Report, at this time, was unnecessary.~~

Minutes:

The Clerk read the Minutes of this meeting.

The Minutes were adopted.

Motion: moved, seconded and passed that Presbytery adjourn.

Pastor Phil Pockras led the prayer of adjournment.

The Presbytery adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

David Hanson, Moderator

Raymond Morton, Clerk, pro tem



Attachments

From: A K
ak@streetsermon.org >

To: Michael LeFebvre
michael@lefebvre.us >

Cc: David Hanson
davidrpts@hotmail.com >

[Hide details](#)

Date: On Fri, Oct 30, 2020 at 10:53 AM

3 Attachments

ross fearing credentials.pdf (282 KB)

letter 10-30 (lefebvre).pdf (55 KB)

letter of standing (lefebvre) 10-30-20.pdf (47 KB)



Dear Michael,

Please see the attached letter, formally notifying you of the recent decisions of presbytery, and requesting the information that will appear on the hard copy of your credentials.

Also attached are: an example of ministerial credentials recently received from MWP (as a point of reference), and an official letter of standing to confirm your credentials in the meantime while we get our paperwork in order.

I have also copied our moderator, David Hanson, so that he can provide clarification where needed.

Blessings,
Adam K.



Reply



Reply All



Forward



Re: Attachments

From: David Hanson
davidrpts@hotmail.com >

To: A K
ak@streetsermon.org >

[Hide details](#)

Date: On Fri, Oct 30, 2020 at 11:35 AM

Thanks Adam,

I thought you weren't getting to this until next week. I think you did a great job w/ neutral wording.

DWH

From: A K <ak@streetsermon.org>
Sent: Friday, October 30, 2020 10:53 AM
To: Michael LeFebvre <michael@lefebvre.us>
Cc: David Hanson <davidrpts@hotmail.com>
Subject: Attachments

Dear Michael,

Please see the attached letter, formally notifying you of the recent decisions of presbytery, and requesting the information that will appear on the hard copy of your credentials.

Also attached are: an example of ministerial credentials recently received from MWP (as a point of reference), and an official letter of standing to confirm your credentials in the meantime while we get our paperwork in order.

I have also copied our moderator, David Hanson, so that he can provide clarification where needed.



Reply



Reply All



Forward

GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY, RPCNA

Rev. Adam M. Kuehner
Clerk of Presbytery
248-356-3932
ak@streetsermon.org

October 30, 2020
Dr. Michael LeFebvre
5881 Skyward Lane
Indianapolis, IN 46234

26580 Evergreen Road
Southfield, MI 48076

Dear Dr. LeFebvre,

On Friday October 23, 2020, the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery met for a special meeting at the Southside Indianapolis RP Church. The purpose of this letter is to communicate several decisions made at this meeting and to request the information needed to issue a hard copy of your credentials. Among the decisions made on October 23, please note the following:

1. **That Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination, thereby removing him from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA.**
 2. **That the November 13-14 trial date be cancelled.**
 3. **That Mr. LeFebvre be counseled to have his identification as a pastor in the RPCNA and adjunct professor at RPTS be removed, insofar as possible, from his publications concerning the issues found in these charges.**
 4. **That the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery reaffirm its commitment to RP Testimony 4.4 and exhort Mr. LeFebvre to turn away from his unbiblical exception to it, and inform him that he ought to have declared his exception to the presbytery before publishing his views.**
 5. **Whereas God has used Pastor Michael Lefebvre in many and wonderful ways to bless our presbytery and denomination and to make the RPCNA a blessing to the bride of Jesus throughout the world; Whereas God has blessed Pastor Lefebvre's church planting and pastoring of Christ Church Reformed Presbyterian; Whereas God has uniquely gifted our brother's academic and writing abilities to our great benefit, including the areas of Psalmody, ministering to those struggling with gender issues and same-sex attraction, and our understanding of God's law in the Old Testament; It is moved that presbytery rise to express our profound gratitude to Pastor Lefebvre for his ministry and labors among us, our love for him as our friend and colaborer, our sorrow at his departure, and that presbytery pray for God's blessing on his future endeavors to serve Jesus.**
-

For reference purposes, I have included a separately attached example of ministerial credentials recently received by our presbytery. Please look over this document and provide any personal or professional information that you would like included on the hard copy of your credentials. In addition, I have attached an official Letter of Standing, to confirm your present ministerial status in the meantime, as we put the finishing touches on your paperwork.

For Christ's Crown and Covenant,



Rev. Adam M. Kuehner, Clerk

GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY, RPCNA

Rev. Adam M. Kuehner
Clerk of Presbytery
248-356-3932
ak@streetsermon.org

October 30, 2020

26580 Evergreen Road
Southfield, MI 48076

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter of standing is to confirm that Dr. Michael LeFebvre was ordained as a minister of the gospel by the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) by the laying on of hands on January 26, 2006. He then served continuously as the local pastor of the Christ Church Reformed Presbyterian, located in Brownsburg, Indiana, from his installation on October 27, 2006 until his resignation on October 5, 2020.

On Friday October 23, the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA) passed a motion "That Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination, thereby removing him from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA."

At the time of Dr. LeFebvre's dismissal, there were four pending charges against him, which the court made into a written accusation on Friday September 11, 2020. Please note that these charges, listed below, were filed by two presbyters (not the court itself), and that Dr. LeFebvre was neither tried nor found guilty of any of them.

1. Violating Ordination Query #8 ("to study and promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of the church") and/or Ordination Query #9 (to "engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted") by publishing doctrinal teaching which contradicts our rejection of the theory of human macro-evolution, as articulated in RPT 4.3, RPT 4.4, WCF 4.2, and/or WLC 17;
 2. Violating Ordination Query #8 ("to study and promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of the church") and/or Ordination Query #9 (to "engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted") by publishing doctrinal teaching which contradicts our belief that Scripture presents Adam and Eve as the first human beings and sole biological progenitors of humanity, as articulated in WCF 6.1, WCF 6.3, WSC 13, WSC 15-16, WLC 21-22, and/or WLC 26;
-

-
3. Violating Ordination Query #8 (“to study and promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of the church”) and/or Ordination Query #9 (to “engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted”) by publishing doctrinal teaching which contradicts our belief that the weekly Sabbath is a creation ordinance first instituted by God for the good of all mankind “from the beginning of the world”, as articulated in WCF 21.7, WSC 59, WLC 20, and/or WLC 116;
 4. Violating Ordination Query #4 (“Do you believe in and accept the system of doctrine and the manner of worship set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures?”) by holding a personal exception to RPT 4.4, which states “We deny that man evolved from any lower form of life. Gen. 2:7, 21-22”.

Therefore, by order of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA), please be advised that Dr. LeFebvre, while no longer affiliated with the RPCNA, retains valid credentials as an ordained minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For Christ's Crown and Covenant,



Rev. Adam M. Kuehner, Clerk

Communications

To: Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery, c/o Rev. Adam Kuehner, *clerk*

From: St. Lawrence Presbytery, Brian E. Coombs, *clerk*

October 25, 2019

Dear Brothers,

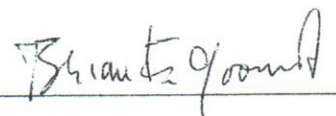
Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been tasked to write to you on behalf of the St. Lawrence Presbytery. At our October 9, 2019 meeting of Presbytery, we received a petition from four of our Canadian ministers. Our Presbytery Minutes consolidate the matter, and read as follows:

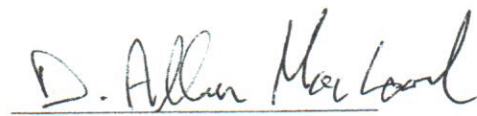
Presbytery considered a petition from Revs. Matt Dyck, Matt Kingswood, Andrew Quigley, and Scott Wilkinson. They moved 'that the St. Lawrence Presbytery write to our brothers in the Presbytery of the Great Lakes – Gulf, and ask them to appraise Rev. Dr. Michael LeFebvre's book 'The Liturgy of Creation: Understanding Calendars in Old Testament Context', his article 'Adam Reigns in Eden,' and his recent posting on the Biologos website (<https://biologos.org/articles/cracking-the-code-of-cadence-the-genre-of-genesis>) to ascertain whether or not these writings are consistent with the subordinate standards of the RPCNA, (viz. The Westminster Confession, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony). We request that the Presbytery of the Great Lakes – Gulf be asked to forward their conclusions to this Presbytery.' Presbytery discussed the matter, noting also that the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary has seated a committee of professors to consider the essence of this Presbytery's motion. Presbytery recessed for lunch at 12pm. Presbytery reconvened at 1:15pm with prayer by led by Victor Tochijara. ... Presbytery returned to the motion it was considering before recess. Presbytery passed the motion unanimously.

We recognize that the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery did not ask the Seminary professors to seat their review committee, nor to our knowledge is involved in formal matters of investigation of Rev. LeFebvre's writings. Even so we respectfully request that the Presbytery consider and support our formal, presbyterial request of you. The Lord guide you in your deliberations, brothers.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the St. Lawrence Presbytery,



Brian E. Coombs, *clerk*



D. Allan MacLeod, *moderator*



Christ Church reformed presbyterian

www.ccrp.church • Phone. 317-456-2551

Mailing address: P.O. Box 34182, Indianapolis, IN 46234

Meeting location: 5075 N. Raceway Road, Indianapolis, IN 46234

November 20, 2020

Dear Mr. Kuehner,

Please find the attached letter from Mr. Nathan Enas, a member in good standing at Christ Church Reformed Presbyterian, for the attention of the Presbytery.

Mr. Enas submitted his communication to the CCRP Session on November 14, 2020. The Session acted on November 17, 2020 to forward the communication to Presbytery without endorsement.

In Christ

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jason O'Neill".

Jason O'Neill, Clerk

23 Oct 2020

To the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery (GLGP):

Today has been a trying day, I am sure, as you met at Southside RPC to deliberate the disposition of Dr. Michael LeFebvre's credentials/charges and the trial you had previously agreed to hold. I attended today's meeting, as well as the 11 Sep 2020 meeting at Second RPC. Church reformers of past centuries taught that Christ's body, the church, is defined by three characteristic marks: the faithful preaching of the whole counsel of God in His word, the faithful administration of the sacraments, and the faithful execution of discipline. GLGP has generally excelled at the first two of these, from my observation, but these last two presbytery meetings have shown your failure to ensure the last one: discipline. Our Testimony says, "When sound preaching and proper discipline are neglected, it is the duty of Christians to attempt its reformation." This is the reason for my letter.

I don't need to create a new thesis. The thesis several of you already explained during today's meeting will suffice: your work of discipline in the case of Dr. LeFebvre remains incomplete until you hold a trial for his alleged offenses that you deemed were credible, and so voted to schedule (and later, did schedule) a trial. The fact that he has since resigned as my pastor, and subsequently asked to be removed from the roles of my church, should have no bearing on the need to complete your work. Yet, you not only cancelled the trial, but you washed your hands of the entire matter by voting that you no longer have jurisdiction over him. Once Motion #1 was approved, I noticed the mood of the meeting lighten greatly. I would have been relieved, too, if I were one of you, to be able to move on to other pressing needs in my life. But our happiness is not paramount, but rather the glory of Christ in His house, and your actions today sacrificed the latter to achieve the former.

Now, I realize some of you have heard that the LeFebvres feel bullied by GLGP, and if indeed any of you have bullied them, or if you have not properly shepherded Michael, you should certainly repent to the LeFebvres. However, no one stood up at today's meeting to represent the members of CCRP who feel betrayed by Michael and the rest of the session at CCRP, and now by GLGP. I did not hear any of you even ask how the members of CCRP had been affected by the controversy that has ensued since Michael's writings were published.

Instead, in a very close vote, you declared Michael is no longer your ecclesiastical concern since he "self-censured" himself and his family has suffered enough for alleged sins he will never be tried for, either to acquit Michael as innocent, or to censure him as guilty. There were some angry words for those who reminded you to do what you committed to do on 11 Sep 2020, but you eventually found a way to stop the bleeding and cover the wound, and now you may feel freed up to get back to your usual duties.

But I don't believe God has freed you. And I don't believe those of you who registered your dissent with the vote believe God has freed you. Those of you who dissented must continue to seek justice and reconciliation for Michael, for CCRP, for GLGP, for the RPCNA, for the blessed bride of Christ, and for the glory of Christ in his church. Otherwise, we are no church.

I believe that we at CCRP enjoyed Michael's exegesis, preaching and teaching for many years, and that, by God's grace, we grew by the sincere milk of God's word. However, now I am sad that 1) this era is over for CCRP, 2) Michael and his family have separated from CCRP and the RPCNA, 3) you have voted to abort church discipline in Michael's case, and 4) the only hope for proper discipline and reconciliation is if some of you will appeal to Synod, in which case our mutual pain and suffering will be prolonged for God knows how long.

For one, I will not go about business-as-usual and ignore this travesty. This is why I have taken time to write this letter. I have prayed for God's grace to attend it. God will defend the righteous, whoever they are, and by His mercy, He will help us all forsake our wicked ways, seek His forgiveness, reconcile with one another, make restitution where it is required, and walk humbly with God and one another until our blessed Lord returns.

Sincerely,

Nathan Enas
Member, Christ Church Reformed Presbyterian
Contact info: enasnate@gmail.com



PRESBYTERY OF THE ALLEGHENIES

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America - www.rpcna.org
Moderator: Matt Filbert - PastorMatt@firstprchurch.org - 412-901-3553

Clerk: Martin Blocki - mblocki1@consolidated.net - 412-901-3008
Mailing address: 5368 Hardt Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044-9165

November 20, 2020

Rev. Kent Butterfield
Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery, AIC
727 Clarion Drive
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Martin Blocki
Clerk, Presbytery of the Alleghenies
5368 Hardt Road
Gibsonia, Pennsylvania 15044

Dear Kent:

At the recent meeting of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, the following motion was passed:

“that we ask the Great Lakes Gulf presbytery to appoint a teaching elder from their presbytery to be an advisory member of our Birmingham commission.”

As clerk, it is my responsibility to pass this request on to you as chair of the Great Lakes Gulf Ad Interim Commission. Moderator Matt Filbert has signed the document attesting to the accuracy of this request.

If you would like more information surrounding the nature of the debate and the rationales for this request, I would invite you to contact Matt or myself. We will glad to give you background information that is germane to the request.

In Christ's love and service,

Martin Blocki
Clerk, Presbytery of the Alleghenies

Matt Filbert
Moderator, Presbytery of the Alleghenies.

Atlanta RPC
Temporary Governing Body
Rev. Steven Work, Moderator
Timothy J. Vincze, Clerk

January 21, 2021

Dear Mr. Kuehner

Please find attached to this email two .jpg files containing a petition from Pastor Frank Smith to the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery for its consideration at the upcoming March meeting. The members of the Atlanta RPC TGB approve this petition.

Yours in the Lamb,

Timothy J. Vincze
Clerk of TGB

5830 Millstone Drive
Cumming, Georgia 30028
770-241-3946

December 31, 2020

To the Temporary Governing Body of Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church

Dear Fathers and Brethren:

I am hereby asking that you forward this petition to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery, for it to adopt the following statements, and also for it to forward this petition to the RPCNA Synod so that it can likewise adopt these statements.

1. This court hereby declares that belief in the literal parentage of Adam and Eve as our first parents is an essential point of the Christian system of doctrine.

2. This court hereby declares that belief in biological evolution (that is, the change from one "kind" of animal to another), and particularly belief in the evolution of the body of Adam from lower creatures, is incompatible with the Christian system of doctrine, and furthermore that denial of said evolutionary views is an essential point of the Christian system of doctrine.

I am presenting this petition in the sincere hope that the adoption of these statements may serve as a way of healing the wounds which the RPCNA has suffered as a result of having to deal with Michael Lefebvre's writings. Even though this Presbytery did not approve of Dr. Lefebvre's views, nevertheless, the fact that the Presbytery did not complete the disciplinary process has raised serious concerns that threaten the peace and unity of the RPCNA, and that threaten our reputation as a Reformed branch of the church and a member of NAPARC.

Our brother was well regarded for the work he had done on behalf of the RPCNA—work which also had been of benefit more widely. Personal factors, including considerations of friendship, undoubtedly, played a major role in the decision to terminate judicial process. Short-circuiting the proceedings is, therefore, from one perspective, understandable. However, not following through with the charges raises questions as to whether or not this Presbytery believes that the aberrant positions evident in the Lefebvre corpus are really that serious. For this reason, it is incumbent upon us as a Presbytery to declare, without equivocation, where we stand.

The two issues addressed in these proposed statements go to the heart of the matter. Anyone who does not know who our first parents were (in the plain, common-sense meaning of those words) is not fit to hold church office. The young people of our congregations know who our first parents were—and it would be unconscionable to allow someone who does not know that fundamental truth to occupy our pulpits. Similarly, Genesis 1 and 2 is abundantly clear and plain: God created each of the animals after its own kind, and then, by a separate act of fiat creation, made Adam of the dust of the ground and Eve from one of Adam's ribs. There is no excuse for anyone who holds church office not to adhere to these doctrines.

I am not usually a fan of *in thesi* statements. Our Presbyterian standards are sufficiently clear on these points. However, having failed to carry out discipline on someone who could not affirm these truths, we are now obligated to try to rectify the confusion that has been sown in our congregations and throughout the denomination as a whole. Now is the time. And that is true not only from the perspective that we need to make clear our theological commitment, but also from the perspective that there is at this time no pending judicial case. There is no personal dimension to distract us. While the bonds of friendship could have tempted us not to follow through with ecclesiastical justice, there is no such temptation at this very moment. Accordingly, now is the time to act.

Our making these declarations would be an act of candor and kindness. Dr. Lefebvre argued that he did not know that certain of his views, even though at odds with our standards, would disqualify him from official service. Perhaps there are others in our communion who are likewise confused on these matters. Our taking the envisioned action would clarify our position, so that, going forward, there will be no possibility of confusion.

Let me state what I believe is the crucial issue with respect to these two statements. Let's assume that everyone in our Presbytery personally would agree that Adam and Eve are our first parents, and also would personally disagree with biological evolution, including the idea that Adam's body evolved from a lower creature. However, *those personal beliefs of the members of the court are irrelevant*. What is critical is that the court maintains that beliefs contrary to these doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms is incompatible with holding church office.

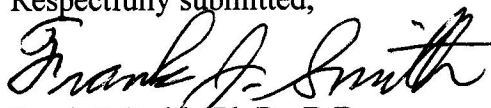
In the 1920s and 1930s, very few ministers in the PCUSA would have denied the virgin birth of Christ. However, a substantial majority of the ministers and elders was willing to allow office-bearers to remain in office even though those liberals denied belief in the virgin birth. Of course, the mushy middle making common cause with the liberals resulted in J. Gresham Machen and others being driven out of the denomination, and has led to the total apostasy and shipwreck of a once-great church.

Not making a firm declaration on these doctrines will signal an uncertain sound on our part. In such a scenario, if church history can be a guide, sliding into doctrinal decline and apostasy would be inevitable. That degradation would be accelerated by the inability of many in the RPCNA to remain within her, should she not take decisive action.

And, as I have suggested, NOW is the time to act, before another judicial case comes before us. Let us hope that that never happens. But, especially given what has transpired, it is far better for us to make clear where we stand, before another situation arises.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this petition.

Respectfully submitted,


Frank J. Smith, Ph.D., D.D.

On Tue, Feb 2, 2021 at 1:01 PM Kenneth A. Smith <515baldwin@gmail.com> wrote:

Mr. Kuehner,

I am writing to inform you that the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario of the OPC has approved the transfer of Rev. Bryan Dage, a minister in good standing, to your presbytery. Please inform me when you have received him and we will at that point remove him from our rolls.

Rev. Ken Smith
clerk

CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS

**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.)

20202021 Budget100 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

Belle Center Session Report to Presbytery

The session of the Belle Center, OH, Congregation met for 7 regular meetings since our last report to Presbytery. The minutes of the session were submitted to the presbytery and approved without correction. Our pastor attended Synod and 2 regular meetings of the Presbytery. Elder Scott Hunt represented us at 2 meetings of presbytery. As well, two men of the congregation have attended Presbytery several times as interested visitors. Due to having no local ruling elders and the pestilence abroad, we have not done family visitation in this past year but hope to accomplish this soon if Providence allows. We hope to visit all families in the congregation. We discussed portions of the Covenant of Communicant Membership with each family, according to our perception of their need(s). The session believes that the current number of elders and deacons is obviously inadequate but may prepare the congregation for elections for both offices in 2021, as we see evidence of the necessary gifts in certain members of the congregation. We have not had to exercise formal discipline in the past year, but we fear that we foresee this possibility soon.

At the end of 2020, our total membership was 64 (47 communicant and 17 baptized members), a decrease of 2, +1, and -3 since the end of 2020. In addition, we have 9 adherents to the congregation, including one individual who is studying with our pastor for membership. We joy that four baptized members successfully completed a Communicants' Class and made credible professions of faith before the Session, being received into communicant membership on November 29, 2020. We also anticipate that at least one further baptized member will profess faith during 2021, and that a baby will be born among our families. The congregation met once, on January 30, 2021, for its annual congregational meeting. There was a good spirit among us. We do not currently have congregational officers except for Greg Probst, treasurer.

Our deacon, Greg Probst, serves us admirably. He cared for two families in distressing circumstances this past year. Our deacon coordinates the maintenance of the properties of the congregation in good condition. Greg is our treasurer and prepares a draft of the annual budget which he submitted to the elders for their approval before submission to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting in January. At least twice a year, the deacon meets with the session in order to keep communication open between us; one meeting concerns the budget.

We meet each Lord's Day at 1:00 PM for worship. Since things so greatly changed in March, we have had no second services or fellowship meals. We hope soon, again as Providence allows, to restart both. Our pastor preached through Matthew's Gospel during the first service and through the last few questions of the Westminster Shorter Catechism and started Paul's Epistle to the Romans in the second service. Average attendance was 53 (+5) in the first service. That number is both in person and virtual. Following morning worship, we meet as a single group. Several young people attended many of the presbytery youth activities in the past year, and one hopes to attend TFY at the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary this year. She planned to last year but was providentially hindered by the TFY suspension.

The congregation meets for prayer on Wednesday evenings at 7:30, with an average attendance of four (the same as last year).

The financial picture of the congregation will be found in the attached treasurer's report and proposed 2021 Budget.

The Church owns its own building, built in 1987 and purchased in 2013; renovation and conversion has occupied the congregation since, as money and manpower were available. It is in generally good condition, and we have finally been able to move in and use it this past year, with much thanks to Charlie Leverett, Paul Soma, Greg Probst, with other members of the congregation and other friends. We, of course, thank all for their generous gifts and prayer that allowed us to have the building finished with no debt. The manse, purpose-built in 1877, has much need for work. At this juncture, we should mention that we began the year 2020 renting the facility of the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, six miles to the north, but had to move location due to the Methodist Bishop of Western Ohio closing all his buildings to their congregations and, of course, tenants. For some weeks we met only virtually on Zoom, until the weather was warmer. It was with great joy that we were able to meet for some weeks *at* our new church building in the parking lot; when we were issued our Occupancy Permit by the State of Ohio, it was with greater joy that we began, finally, to meet *in* our own building for the first time since 2006.

Several members of the congregation have been sharing the gospel with others. They are working to follow-up with several people who expressed interest. The is active online via Facebook, their website, SermonAudio/Reformed Voice, and Zoom; several people have visited as a result.

There are currently four "population centers" in the congregation, which our pastor and others are praying might eventually be used by Jesus for centers for daughter congregations. These include Belle Center/Bellefontaine, Lima/Bluffton, Marysville/northwest Columbus suburbs, and Greenville/Union City, all here in western and central Ohio. Members from these areas travel up to two hours each way for Sabbath worship with commendable regularity.

We look forward to 2021 as a united congregation with a rather clear vision of where we want to go, as we continue to advance a testimony for the mediatorial kingship of Jesus in our area.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Pockras, Moderator

Scott Hunt, Clerk

Belle Center RP Church Budget vs. Actual 2020

	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Income	<u>\$ 70,337.00</u>	<u>\$ 77,069.39</u>
Tithes & Offerings	\$ 68,000.00	\$ 74,467.53
Synod' Dividend	\$ 2,202.00	\$ 2,196.96
Interest Income	\$ 135.00	\$ 44.90
Gifts Received	\$ - 0 -	\$ 360.00
Building fund	\$ - 0 -	\$ - 0 -
 Fixed Expenses	 <u>\$ 6,661.00</u>	 <u>\$ 6,105.17</u>
Insurance	\$ 1,584.00	\$ 1,891.00
Rent	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 650.00
Taxes	\$ 930.00	\$ 1,351.45
Utilities	\$ 1,547.00	\$ 2,212.72
Electric	\$ 300.00	\$ 359.42
Gas	\$ 370.00	\$ 675.10
Sewer	\$ 607.00	\$ 450.27
Water	\$ 120.00	\$ 208.80
BC Cap. Imp.	\$ 150.00	\$ 156.00
Garbage	\$ -0-	\$ -0-
Internet	\$ -0-	\$ 363.13
 Flexible Expenses	 <u>\$ 104,725.00</u>	 <u>\$109,340.45</u>
Church Building Rehab.	\$ 34,533.00	\$51,526.84
Interior	\$ 34,000.00	\$51,292.02
Furn & Fixt.	\$ 533.00	\$ 234.82
Flowers	\$ 50.00	\$ - 0 -

Flexible Expenses Con't**Budget****Actual**

Guest Speakers		\$ 300.00	\$ 748.50
Mercy Fund		\$ 500.00	\$ 783.57
Mowing		\$ 150.00	\$ 125.00
Office Supplies		\$ 400.00	\$ 428.25
Pastor's Expense		\$ 54,783.00	\$52,269.20

Book Allow.	\$ 200.00	\$ - 0 -
Covfamikoi	\$ 200.00	\$ - 0 -
Health Ins.	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 9,600.00
Housing Allow.	\$ 5,300.00	\$ 5,300.16
Med. Exp. Reim.	\$ 500.00	\$ - 0 -
Mileage	\$ 500.00	\$ - 0 -
Office Exp.	\$ 1,650.00	\$ - 0 -
Pension	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 5,150.00
Salary	\$ 32,219.00	\$ 32,219.04
Synod Reg.	\$ 214.00	\$ - 0 -

Presbytery Assessment	\$ 813.00	\$ 812.25
RP M&M	\$ 1,870.00	\$ 640.00
Repairs	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 537.84

Church	\$ - 0 -	\$ 436.67
Manse	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 215.41 <small>101, 17</small>

Synod's Assessment	\$ 1,326.00	\$ 1,469.00
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Budget**Actual**

Total Budget Income 2020	\$ 70,337.00	\$ 77,069.39
Total Budget Expenses 2020	\$ 111,386.00	\$ 115,445.62
Difference	- \$ 41,049.00	- \$ 38,376.23

2020 Asset Summary

Checking Acct. Balance 1/1/20	\$ 59,615.65
Checking Acct. Balance 12/31/20	\$ 23,499.68

Difference	- \$ 36,115.97
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Savings Acct. Balance 1/1/20	\$ 6,151.75
Savings Acct. Balance 12/31/20	\$ 6,156.07

Total cash assets	12/31/20	\$ 29,655.85
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Designated Mercy Fund	\$ 2,600.00
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Designated Manse Repairs	\$ 9,898.83
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2020 General Fund	\$ 17,157.02
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2019 General Fund	\$ 15,633.82
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Budget - 2021

Belle Center Reformed Presbyterian Church

<u>Income</u>		<u>\$ 74,244.00</u>
<u>Tithes & Offerings</u>		\$ 72,000.00
1st Qtr.	\$ 18,000.00	
2nd Qtr.	\$ 18,000.00	
3rd Qtr.	\$ 18,000.00	
4th Qtr.	\$ 18,000.00	
<u>Synods Dividend</u>		\$ 2,200.00
<u>Interest Income</u>		\$ 44.00
Checking	\$ 40.00	
Savings	\$ 4.00	
<u>Fixed Expenses</u>		<u>\$ 62,150.00</u>
<u>Insurance</u>		\$ 1,900.00
<u>Taxes</u>		\$ 1,352.00
Church	\$ 177.00	
Manse	\$ 1,175.00	
<u>Utilities</u>		\$ 2,727.00
Electric	\$ 360.00	
Gas	\$ 675.00	
Internet	\$ 876.00	
Sewer	\$ 451.00	
Water	\$ 209.00	
Belle Center Cap. Imp.	\$ 156.00	
Garbage	\$ - 0 -	
<u>Pastor's Expense</u>		\$ 56,171.00
Book Allowance	\$ 200.00	
Covfamiko Reg.	\$ 200.00	
Health Ins.	\$ 9,600.00	

Housing Allow.	\$ 5,300.00
Med. Exp. Reim.	\$ 500.00
Mileage	\$ 500.00
Office Expense	\$ 1,650.00
Pension Exp.	\$ 4,500.00
Salary	\$ 33,507.00
Synod Reg.	\$ 214.00

Flexible Expenses

\$ 26,003.00

<u>Church Building Rehab</u>	\$ 8,200.00
Exterior	\$ 2,500.00
Chairs	\$ 3,200.00
Furn. & Fixt.	\$ 2,500.00

<u>Church Building Cleaning Supplies</u>	\$ 500.00
<u>Flowers</u>	\$ 50.00
<u>Guest Speakers</u>	\$ 800.00
<u>Mercy Fund</u>	\$ 500.00
<u>Mowing</u>	\$ 150.00
<u>Office Expense</u>	\$ 150.00
<u>Presbytery Assessment</u>	\$ 813.00
<u>Synod's Assessment</u>	\$ 1,470.00
<u>RP M&M</u>	\$ 1,870.00
<u>Repairs</u>	\$ 11,500.00
Manse	\$ 11,500.00

<u>Total Budget Income</u>	<u>\$ 74,244.00</u>
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<u>Total Budget Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 88,153.00</u>
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<u>Difference in Budget</u>	<u>\$ -13,909.00</u>
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<u>Designated Funds on Hand</u>	<u>\$+ 12,498.83</u>
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Manse	\$ 9,898.83
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Mercy Fund	\$ 2,600.00
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<u>Budget Difference</u>	<u>\$ -1,410.17</u>
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Report of the Bloomington RPC Session

2021

"Witnessing for Christ in Bloomington for 199 Years"

... but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever.

– II Peter 3:18.

Membership:

Communicant: 146 (+6)

Baptized: 47 (+1)

Total: 193 (+7)

Changes:

Professions of faith: 6

Covenant baptisms: 4

Transfers in: 9

Transfers out: 7

Removal: 1

Excommunication: 2

Attendance (in-person only):

AM: 168 (+6) pre-Covid

134 post-Covid (-28)

144 total year (-18)

PM: 122 pre-Covid (+13)

108 post-Covid (-1)

112 total year (+3)

The session met 13 times for regular session meetings and had eight additional meetings for particular purposes, such as communion and membership interviews. One meeting was with the deacons to discuss the possible purchase of the property at 619 S. Lincoln St., and one was to conduct the election of deacons.

Much of the session's work centers around taking care of individuals and families in the congregation. Particularly joyful is the privilege of interviewing new members, and particularly sorrowful is the long and arduous process of exercising discipline with members who have wandered away from the congregation. We have had the responsibility for both this year, and are glad that the former is more often than the latter.

At this time last year, and through the first three months of 2020, the session was doing a lot of planning. Prominent in the beginning of the year, we were discussing the wonderful problem of how to house the continually growing congregation, discussing many different options and even considering bringing in help to think through the problem. Little did we know how we

would be exploring options for really expanding the size of the sanctuary! In addition, we were making plans for various conferences, a visiting choir, family visitation, sending members to TFY, and a session retreat. None of these came to fruition however.

Beginning in March, the session spent a lot of time and energy considering how to best navigate the tortured and byzantine landscape of the last year, how to continue to effectively provide for the spiritual sustenance and growth of the congregation, and how to continue to provide spiritual help and oversight with all of the barriers that have been erected between individuals. The early phase saw the (very reluctant) move of services to a virtual format with a small number of individuals in the sanctuary, and then moving into an alternating service with half of the congregation in each service, to eventually fully reopening by mid-summer. While the planned events and programs did not happen, and classes were back in place by the fall semester. Prayer meetings moved to (well-attended) virtual meetings, and then to our first hybrid meetings starting up in the fall (which are continuing). Psalm books were removed from the pews and projected on the wall behind the pulpit, and then books were put back around mid-summer, and projection was suspended in mid-fall. Along the way, a long process of experimenting with live-streaming techniques has ended up with a very stable system which is ceiling mounted so it doesn't cut into the seating in the sanctuary. One

further logistical weakness was uncovered, which we are still in the process of working on, and that is having greeters who help people, especially visitors, to find seating in the artificially-reduced capacity of the sanctuary. One other major change has been the systematic incorporation of the Moore Room into the sanctuary, which has vastly increased the capacity of the sanctuary to the extent that we have been able to house 80% of our peak attendance in the sanctuary with half of the pews being roped off.

Looking back, the Lord has certainly been good to us! The new capabilities incorporated into the sanctuary, both technical and logistic, seem very useful for our future. Prayer meetings have grown a lot. Our membership class continued. Communion, probably the most challenging of all of our activities in the face of the logistical landscape, has only been disrupted once from our expected plan. VBS continued. Financial support has, incredibly, remained stable. And the session has continued to worry about maintaining contact with members and insuring that they remain regularly committed to gathering with the saints.

Concerning the overall congregational membership, the pattern of numerical growth last year is also reflected in numerical growth, this year, despite all of the obstacles. The following figures give structure to the comings and goings of the calendar year 2020.

1. The average in-person morning worship service attendance before the break in services was 168, an increase of 6 over 2019, and average morning attendance after the congregation was invited to participate again was 134, which is approximately 80% of the figures from the first part of the year.
2. The average in-person evening worship service attendance was 122, an increase of 13 over 2019, and after the break in services was 108.
3. The average SS class attendance was 119 an increase of 15 over 2019, and 101 after the break.
4. The total communicant (146) and baptized (47) membership on December 31, 2020, was 193, a net increase of 7 over 2019.
5. Fifteen new communicant members were added.
6. Six individuals were baptized, two of them with profession.
7. Two baptized members of the congregation made professions this year.
8. Four communicant members and one baptized member were transferred to other RP congregations. Two communicant members were transferred to other reformed churches. One member was removed from the roll due to his withdrawing himself from the congregation towards another congregation in town, and two members, sadly, were excommunicated.
9. Altogether, communicant membership at the end of 2019 was at 140 (not 139 as previously reported) and rose to 146 at the end of 2020. The number of baptized non-communicant members at the end of 2019 was at 46 and increased to 47 by the end of 2020.

One further remarkable providence happened during this chaotic period, and that is that the Lord provided for the purchase of a property near the church. We hope that we will further be able to purchase the property which intervenes between the church building and that property, to provide some flexibility for addressing some of the constraints on the current facility. The new property came up for sale in the middle of the summer, and we closed on it in November. Even more remarkable is the fact that we purchased it with cash, partly from the proceeds of the parsonage which was sold in the 1990's, partly from the persistent set-aside for capital that has been in the budget for several years now, and partly from additional savings. An oversight committee is working through how to manage and use the new assets until such time as we have a plan for incorporating all of the properties together. Please pray for the acquisition of the intervening property.

As if this were not enough, the Lord has also provided three new deacons, Brad Dale, Adam Fritz, and David Perron. What is particularly striking about this is that all of this also came to fruition during the period of chaos in the middle of the year. We have completed the process of examination, and celebrated an ordination service for them on the 31st of January, 2021.

Concerning our pastors, the disrupted situation this last year led to a lot of rethinking of Pastor Holdeman's sabbatical plans. As it turned out he and the session decided to continue with the plans. As part of this, the congregation extended a second summer internship to Samuel Dong, with the particular intent of giving him experience with guidance in producing and delivering a longer series of sermons. He was responsible for a 10-week series on Philippians, which also included 3 more sermons delivered to the BCCC (Bloomington Chinese Christian Church). In addition, he continued working with individuals with whom he and Cherry had developed relationships in the previous internship. The session has been very pleased to have been a part of the equipping of these extraordinarily talented individuals for the work of the church in their home base. The current plan is for them to return to their home congregation to be involved the work of church planting, but it seems very prudent and potentially fruitful for them to have a partial internship this coming summer as well. The congregation approved such a plan at the 2021 congregational meeting.

The past few years have given us the great joy and satisfaction of seeing the Terre Haute congregation become organized and largely self-sufficient, after many years of labor involving various members of our congregation. We note that the session there, by the Lord's provision, has been composed largely of members who used to be part of our congregation, and then have moved to Terre Haute for various reasons. As this congregation has been growing independent, we have been shifting attention (and some financial resources) to what the Lord is doing in the RP church plant in Louisville. Several years ago, the congregation supported David Hanson (currently pastor at the Southside RP congregation in Greenwood), as an intern, and one of his projects was to explore potentially fruitful planting sites, eventually leading to a focus on Louisville. We are excited to see this beginning to take shape. Currently, Pastor McCollum is serving on the oversight body of the church plant, and is contributing additional energy with occasional preaching.

Finally, we note a number of other items which may be of particular interest.

We have been interacting with the overseeing body of the Bloomington Chinese Christian Church, and, given the difficult situation this last year, we are continuing the current arrangement with them, in anticipation of seeing in the coming year how they come out of the closure period (they are still worshipping online). We have great love and care for the

congregation, and for their pastor and his wife, Elijah and Jennifer, and are committed to supporting their work.

We currently have three people taking distance-learning classes from our seminary for various purposes related to equipping them for service in the church. We wish to continue supporting this development.

We have experimented with radio broadcasting on the local Christian-music station for part of the year. We will be trying to assess the degree to which this strategy was helpful.

Finally, we note that Elder emeritus Wendell McBurney has published a (mostly) monograph volume on the topic of supporting the pastoral ministry. Reading through this excellent book triggers many memories and reflections on the past 30 years of growth here in Bloomington, as Wendell's intense involvement on the session here and his witnessing the Lord's work here has informed much of what's in the book. (There's also a guest cameo authorship by Amy Holdeman.) May the Lord continue to give His church new life as he works with us to sanctify us and remove our tendency to serve idols, and to love Him and one another more and more!

As the session looks forward to the upcoming bicentennial celebration in 2021, we are once again reminded of the solid foundation of godly wisdom that has been a hallmark of the congregation's history. We trust that the Lord will preserve us as we put our faith in Him. The Lord has been gracious to us!

Respectfully submitted by the Session of the Bloomington Congregation,

Wes Archer, Eric Cosens, CJ Davis, Ken de Jong, Rich Holdeman, Philip McCollum, & Stephen Shipp

Bloomington Financials:

<u>Income</u>					<u>2020 Budget</u>	<u>2020 Actuals</u>	<u>2021 Budget</u>
	External Income						
		Book Table Income				1,741.74	
		Contributions - Offerings			325,000.00	365,498.29	350,000.00
		Designated Income				5,945.00	
		Diaconal Ministry - Vol. Fund				5,000.00	
		Facilities Capital Income				400.00	
		Facilities: 619 S. Lincoln Income					9,000.00
		Grants				3,806.00	
		Interest - Capital Investments & Savings			2,500.00	815.84	500.00
		Miscellaneous Income			75.00	75.00	75.00
		Offerings & Donations			-	2,800.00	-
		Total External Income			327,575.00	386,081.87	359,575.00
		Designated Income from Savings Revolving Funds			14,386.26	113,385.85	5,462.17
		Total Income			341,961.26	499,467.72	365,037.17
<u>Expense</u>							
	External Expenses						
		Book Table Expense				1,697.84	376.91
		Facilities Capital Expense			20,000.00	230,048.09	8,000.00
		Facilities: 619 S. Lincoln St.					12,300.00
		Facilities - Operating			67,890.00	36,924.23	46,890.00
		Finance Committee			7,200.00	7,092.97	10,875.00
		Ministry: Diaconal			2,500.00	1,189.82	2,500.00
		Educational			8,386.26	4,967.21	14,685.26
		Fellowship			3,200.00	2,140.39	3,300.00
		Library			1,000.00	191.22	1,000.00
		Nursery			350.00	291.42	350.00
		Outreach			5,360.00	8,124.26	5,480.00
		Session			4,275.00	2,727.52	4,275.00
		Student			1,400.00	-	1,400.00
		Technology					3,500.00
		Youth			1,200.00	117.60	1,200.00
		Missions			22,925.00	23,718.80	23,125.00
		Offerings - Disbursements				2,800.00	
		Office Expense			14,500.00	12,226.38	15,870.00
		Pastoral Compensation - Holdeman			98,048.00	98,398.00	100,010.96
		Pastoral Compensation - McCollum			77,730.00	77,980.00	79,692.96
		Pastoral Internship			10,000.00	9,000.00	7,000.00
		Pastoral Expenses			7,300.00	2,343.07	7,300.00
		Presbytery			4,033.80	4,033.80	4,334.17
		RPCNA Works			11,280.00	10,480.00	11,357.00
		Special Funds			23,185.85	2,537.05	25,000.00
		Total External Expenses			391,763.91	539,029.67	389,822.26
		Designated Disbursements - to Savings Revolving Funds					
		Benevolence				5,000.00	
		Book Table				376.91	
		Camp Fundraiser				4,199.00	
		Capital Improvements - 8 yr. plan				13,185.85	
		Facilities Capital			-		15,000.00
		Ministry Hedge					4,000.00
		Total Disbursements to Savings Revolving Funds			-	22,761.76	19,000.00
		Total Expense			391,763.91	561,791.43	408,822.26
		Net Income			(49,802.65)	(62,323.71)	(43,785.09)



Christ Church reformed presbyterian

5075 N Raceway Road, Indianapolis IN 46234

February, 2021

Fathers and Brothers of the Great Lakes—Gulf Presbytery,

The year 2020 was a year full of challenging providences in many ways for the Christ Church congregation. Through these challenges, we have been encouraged to rest in the Lord's sovereignty amidst uncertainty and place our faith in Jesus Christ to build his Church.

Michael LeFebvre's resignation after nearly 15 years of service as our pastor marked a momentous change in the life of the congregation. We are thankful for Michael's years of service among us, including his faithful preaching of the Word and his shepherding care. We greatly miss the fellowship of the LeFebvre family in our midst. We appreciate the efforts of the Presbytery committee (Jared Olivetti, Fikre Membre, and Jeff Kessler), and interim Moderator James Faris, in providing counsel and guidance to the Session during this transition. We would welcome continued prayers for the congregation. Several families and members have departed for different reasons, and there are continued pastoral issues that require discernment and grace. We expect to form a pastoral search process in 2021 and are praying steadfastly that the Lord would make His will clear in this matter.

Along with many other branches of the church, we have experienced significant disruptions in worship services and congregational life over the course of the year. In March, Marion County enacted public health measures that required us to suspend in-person services for three months. During this time, the Sermon was recorded, and Psalm selections were recommended for incorporation into family worship on the Lord's Day. We were able to reconvene in-person worship services in June, meeting outdoors at the church property while weather permitted. Since November, we have held our morning worship services indoors, with COVID-19 mitigation measures. We are live streaming our worship services and have significant online participation. Since March, we have also held a Sunday evening prayer meeting over Zoom, which has encouraged many. Pandemic-related restrictions have disrupted many of our supplemental ministries, such as Sunday School and fellowship opportunities. The Session would appreciate prayer as

we navigate COVID-19 restrictions in a wise, discerning manner with the appropriate posture to civil authorities. We have a variety of opinions on these issues within the congregation that have the potential to be divisive.

Through the disruptions and challenges of the year, the congregation has been blessed with a steady diet of faithful preaching. At the beginning of the year, Pastor LeFebvre completed a series on

Total Membership	82
Morning Worship Attendance	58
New Members Professing	0
Baptized Members Professing	0
Transfers/Dismissals	21
Net Change in Total Membership	-17

Deuteronomy. This marked the end of an exposition of the Pentateuch that began with the organizing of the congregation in 2006 (with several breaks along the way). Pastor LeFebvre also preached from the book of Isaiah, from the parables of Jesus, and preached topically on Christian growth and racial reconciliation. Since Michael's

resignation, we have enjoyed the preaching from many men from the Presbytery. We are very thankful for the support shown in helping to supply the pulpit while we are without a pastor.

Christ Church is blessed by the faithful service of deacons Todd Brown, Anna Roberts, and Elliot Judd. In January, Andrew Falk was ordained as a ruling elder and has been a very helpful co-laborer on the Session. Duane Judd has recently returned from a medical sabbatical to service on the Session as he is able. The Session met in constituted court 22 times over the course of the year.

We continue to be blessed by the provision of a worship facility. November 2020 marked the first year of our three-year lease. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were not able to use the facility as fully as intended. However, we are hopeful for opportunities in the next year to extend our ministry presence at this new site.

At the end of 2020, our membership stood at 82 members (58 communicant; 24 baptized). Worship attendance varied significantly during the year due to several factors, but the average attendance (including live stream participants) was approximately 58. Weekly communion is the practice of the congregation, and we celebrated the Lord's Supper 35 times in 2020.

We covet continued prayers that the congregation would be encouraged and united as we make plans for ministry in 2021 and begin to look toward calling a new pastor.

The Session, CCRP

Attachments:

1. 2019 Financial Summary and 2020 Budget

CHRIST CHURCH REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

2020 YEAR END SUMMARY AND 2021 BUDGET

	2020 Budgeted	2020 Actual	Difference % (2020 actual vs budget)	2021 Budget
Income				
Gifts				
Tithes and Offerings	\$125,000.00	\$101,474.39	81.2%	\$110,000.00
Designated Offering	\$0.00	\$3,571.00		
Interest on Bank Accounts	\$85.00	\$31.70	37.3%	\$25.00
Total Income	\$125,085.00	\$105,077.09	84.0%	\$110,025.00
Expense				
Congregation				
Christian Education	\$2,000.00	\$784.69	39.2%	\$1,000.00
Youth Ministry				
<i>Fellowship</i>	\$300.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$100.00
<i>Scholarships</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
Sub-Total, Youth Ministry	\$300.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$100.00
Fellowship Activities	\$1,800.00	\$357.48	19.9%	\$500.00
Guest Ministry	\$4,000.00	\$3,285.00	82.1%	\$6,500.00
Total, Congregation	\$8,100.00	\$4,427.17	54.7%	\$8,100.00
Denominational				
Boards & Committees	\$100.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Presbytery Activities	\$100.00	\$5.42	5.4%	\$15.00
Presbytery Assessment	\$2,097.00	\$2,097.00	100.0%	\$2,025.00
Synod Assessments	\$6,275.00	\$6,277.00	100.0%	\$2,200.00
Synod Delegates	\$500.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$500.00
RPM&M	\$6,650.00	\$6,650.00	100.0%	\$4,150.00
Total, Denominational	\$15,722.00	\$15,029.42	95.6%	\$8,890.00
Missions				
Local Outreach/Evangelism	\$400.00	\$642.33	160.6%	\$400.00
Denominational Ministries				
<i>Denominational Ministry</i>	\$2,500.00	\$2,000.00	80.0%	\$1,500.00
<i>Sister Church Aid</i>	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Sub-Total, Denominational Ministry	\$4,500.00	\$2,000.00	44.4%	\$1,500.00
Non-Denominational Missions/Ministries	\$500.00	\$6,400.00	1280.0%	\$1,500.00
Mercy Ministry				
Community Outreach & Service	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
<i>Benevolence (Local & Distant)</i>	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$500.00
<i>Elder Compassion Fund</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$500.00
Sub-Total, Mercy Ministry	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$1,000.00
Total, Missions	\$6,400.00	\$9,042.33	141.3%	\$4,400.00

		2020 Budgeted	2020 Actual	Difference % (2020 actual vs budget)	2021 Budget	
Pastoral Support						
	Parsonage Allowance	\$51,265.00	\$42,720.83	83.3%	\$20,000.00	(5)
	Salary	\$51,265.00	\$42,720.87	83.3%	\$20,000.00	(5)
	Pension	\$6,100.00	\$4,825.00	79.1%	\$2,500.00	
	Michael Severance		\$17,088.34		\$25,632.50	
	Total, Pastoral Support	\$108,630.00	\$107,355.04	98.8%	\$68,132.50	
Administration						
	Advertising	\$600.00	\$1,380.12	230.0%	\$600.00	
	Pastor Mileage	\$1,500.00	\$823.66	54.9%	\$200.00	
	Pastoral Ministry	\$2,000.00	\$1,440.04	72.0%	\$400.00	
	Worship & Church Supplies	\$400.00	\$1,622.88	405.7%	\$1,000.00	
	Church Equipment	\$500.00	\$6,509.83	8.0%	\$500.00	
	Website	\$1,100.00	\$1,058.66	96.2%	\$1,100.00	
	Insurance					
	Commercial Liability Package	\$1,400.00	\$1,375.81	98.3%	\$1,400.00	
	Umbrella, Business Auto	\$350.00	\$350.00	100.0%	\$350.00	
	Workers Comp	\$495.00	\$495.11	100.0%	\$500.00	(6)
	Sub-Total, Insurance	\$2,245.00	\$2,220.92	98.9%	\$2,250.00	
	Total, Administration	\$8,345.00	\$15,056.11	180.4%	\$6,050.00	
Facilities						
	Raceway Road Rent	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	100.0%	\$30,000.00	
	Lawn Maintenance and Snow Removal	\$8,000.00	\$1,456.24	18.2%	\$2,000.00	
	Future Purchase fund		\$1,477.00		\$0.00	
	Supplies	\$1,000.00	\$0.00		\$500.00	
	Utilities		-\$881.37			(7)
	<i>Electric</i>	\$1,800.00	\$2,962.31	164.6%	\$3,000.00	(8)
	<i>Gas, Water</i>	\$1,500.00	\$10,656.71	710.4%	\$1,500.00	(9)
	<i>Internet, Telephone</i>	\$1,250.00	\$1,697.80	135.8%	\$1,700.00	
	<i>Trash Removal</i>	\$480.00	\$488.40	101.8%	\$490.00	
	Sub-total , Utilities	\$5,030.00	\$14,923.85	296.7%	\$6,690.00	
	Capital Maintenance	\$5,000.00	\$1,394.31	27.9%	\$2,000.00	
	Total, Property	\$48,030.00	\$49,251.40	102.5%	\$41,190.00	
	Total Expenses	\$195,227.00	\$200,161.47	102.5%	\$136,762.50	
(4)	Net Income (Loss)	-\$70,142.00	-\$95,084.38		-\$26,737.50	

Notes

- (1) 2020 Includes \$250 from Synod for Michael's Pension Plan and \$3,321 from Center for Congregations, Inc.
- (2) Based on 26 days of pulpit supply @ \$250/day
- (3) RPM&M reduced by Synod Assessment
- (4) (a) Etheridge commitment of \$1,500 ends 6/21. (b) Knox Commitment of \$500/month ends 3/21.

	2020 Budgeted	2020 Actual	Difference % (2020 actual vs budget)	2021 Budget
<p>(5) Based on estimated 6 months salary</p> <p>(6) Workman's Comp for 2021 paid in 2020</p> <p>(7) Utility reimbursement for use of 5085 from August 1 through Nov 30.</p> <p>(8) Electric has one account each for 5075 and 5085</p> <p>(9) Gas has one account each for 5075 and 5085 and Water is combined into one account. Total water bill was \$8,747.61. This was the result of a water leak in the service line to 5085 and the circuit breaker to the exterior storm pump station was twice turned off due to lack of understanding how the drainage system functioned. This has been resolved.</p>				

BALANCE SHEET, DECEMBER 2020

ASSETS

	2020 Beginning Balance	2020 Ending Balance	
Chase Checking	\$128,337.98	\$31,733.76	
Chase Savings	\$196,688.57	\$196,720.77	
Outstanding Reimbursements	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Deacon Petty Cash Fund	\$144.71	\$144.71	
Outstanding Deposits		\$1,100.00	
Utility Deposits	\$1,020.00	\$1,032.84	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$326,191.26	\$230,732.08	

DESIGNATED FUNDS

Building Fund	\$196,688.57	\$196,720.77	(1)
Outstanding Checks	\$299.96		
TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS	\$196,988.53	\$196,720.77	
TOTAL, NON- DESIGNATED FUNDS	\$129,202.73	\$34,011.31	

(1) Interest on savings accrues to building fund.



First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham Annual Congregation Report to Presbytery Spring Meeting, 2021

Psalm 102:13 You will arise *and* have mercy on Zion;
For the time to favor her, Yes, the set time, has come.

Membership: 35 Communicant (+4), 8 Baptized (+2)

Transferred In: 11 (7 profession of faith)

Transferred Out: 5

Removed from Roll: 1

Baptisms: 2

Average Attendance:

Lord's Day Morning Worship: 41 (in-person) + 6 (on Zoom) = 47

Prayer Meeting [Lord's Day/Wednesday Evenings]: 16 (in-person) + 8 (on Zoom) = 24

Faced with the Covid-19 virus, in the midst of great public and governmental panic, the saints at the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham took safeguards, but also increased ministry to advance Christ's gospel and minister to the brethren. This past year, we added a Bible study and prayer time on Lord's Day evenings at 7 pm. We kept the Wednesday night Bible study and prayer time as well. Both of these times are very well attended. Due in part to COVID, the disruption in our normal rotation of teachers and the infrequent attendance of in-person young children, we have suspended the children's class for the time being. For five months we suspended the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper due to COVID concerns. Precautions put in place allowed us to resume that sacrament, and the fellowship meal with shared dishes has reverted to bring your own lunch.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* study continues during the afternoon Sabbath school class hour. Looking forward, Lord willing, we hope to study through *The Pilgrim's Progress*, various topics on biblical counseling, and later a study on cults with the intent of answering their false teachings with biblical apologetics.

The books of Daniel, Romans, and I Corinthians, and now Exodus and James, are the studies covered on the Lord's Day and Wednesday evenings. The Lord has blessed us with the greatest attendance in memory here at Durham for the Bible study/prayer meeting, averaging between fourteen to seventeen in person, and easily five to eleven on Zoom.

After nearly six years of not having local elders, the congregation elected Eric Hallfors and Drew Poplin to serve as ruling elders. These men were examined and installed on January 22, 2021. Many thanks to our sovereign Lord who has blessed us with these two men and their families. The congregation also gives special thanks to the Lord and to our two provisional elders Elder Bob Bibby (who served for over six years) and Pastor Shawn Anderson (serving two years) for their faithful, tireless efforts and the love they poured into the congregation and helping, along with Pastor Butterfield, through many challenging times.

Drew Poplin, having served previously as an ordained minister in a reformed baptist church, has come to us with desire to be part of the congregation and to pursue examination to be eligible for a pastoral call in the RPCNA. The Lord has used Drew to labor as a pastoral intern these past six months preaching, teaching and greatly helping in many administrative and pastoral tasks. Drew is currently preaching through Philippians, completed a Bible study in Daniel and has started one in Exodus. He has also written many pamphlets dealing with our distinctive and other subjects that are available on our tract tablet and church website.

The congregation has applied for the Resident-In-Training Program. The 2021 budget denotes the congregation's increased commitment to fund Drew's salary for the next two years while he is in that program. We pray for the Lord to open up a church planting opportunity at the end of the two years.

The Lord has blessed us with many additions to the membership roll with more attending a membership inquirers class. People are growing spiritually in their knowledge of Scripture, convictions concerning the Lord's Day, and love to both the lost and to the brethren. The members and adherents have grown in their convictions in keeping the Lord's Day holy. Personal and family devotions have developed into regular practices for all. Increased hospitality and witnessing are very evident in the congregation. Fellowship is strong along with a hunger to grow in biblical knowledge. A few members faced long-term economic hardship, needing help with rent and car repairs. Those needs were often met privately and at times through the diaconal funds. The Lord has recently brought those people out of the difficult financial situations.

We thank the Lord for His blessings and mercies as He blesses His church here in Durham.

For Christ's Crown and Covenant,
The Session of First RPC Durham

	First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham 2021 Draft Budget	2020 Budgeted	2020 Actual Jan-Dec	2021 Draft Budget
	Ministry Income Checking Account Balance Jan 1, 2021: \$33,398.16			
	Investment Balance Jan 2020: 322,445 (1/1/2021)			
100	Undesignated tithes and offerings to the general fund	\$94,862.46	\$105,486.33	\$115,955.62
120	Designated giving - Diaconal fund	\$790.00	\$7,666.00	\$3,000.00
110	Other designated giving	\$250.00	\$1,119.00	\$250.00
115	HMB Resident in Training Funds (offsets line 206)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$16,000.00
190	Total Funds available (tithes & offerings, designated funds carried forward, new designated giving)	\$95,902.46	\$114,271.33	\$135,205.62
199	Withdrawal from investments & cash	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$25,000.00
	100 Total Funds Available	\$115,902.46	\$134,271.33	\$160,205.62
	Ministry Expenses			
200	Payroll Expenses & Pastoral Compensation			
201	Salary & Housing (60% is for housing)	\$60,045.00	\$60,045.00	\$62,447.00
202	Medical Insurance	\$15,072.00	\$15,905.98	\$16,621.68
203	Retirement-\$700/month	\$9,000.00	\$9,250.00	\$9,600.00
204	Professional Expenses and Cell Phone Allowance	\$800.00	\$798.10	\$800.00
205	Pastoral Hospitality	\$300.00	\$172.18	\$300.00
	Subtotal Pastoral Compensation	\$85,217.00	\$86,171.26	\$89,768.68
206	Resident in Training Compensation (60% housing)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35,000.00
207	Resident in Training Medical Insurance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
208	Resident in Training Other Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Subtotal Resident in Training Compensation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$41,000.00
	Total 200 Ministry Expenses	\$85,217.00	\$86,171.26	\$130,768.68
300	Worship, Session, Diaconal, Administration			
285.5	Pulpit Supply	\$1,000.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
315	Intern	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00
320	Session Work	\$500.00	\$592.73	\$2,500.00
330	Communion Expenses	\$100.00	\$72.57	\$150.00
340	Diaconal Fund	\$2,500.00	\$3,544.76	\$2,500.00
345	Children's teaching materials	\$300.00	\$74.57	\$250.00
350	Administration			
351	Office Equipment	\$0.00	\$246.94	\$200.00
352	Treasurer's, Clerk's, CPA expenses	\$200.00	\$7.75	\$500.00
353	Banking Expenses	\$50.00	\$29.28	\$50.00
355	PayPal fees (2.93% per \$1,000)	\$300.00	\$93.32	\$150.00
	300 Total Worship, Session, Diaconal, Administration	\$4,950.00	\$16,786.92	\$6,300.00
400	Synod and Presbytery			
410	Synod room and board fee (pastor & one ruling elder)	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
411	Synod & Presbytery travel expenses (1TE and 1RE)	\$600.00	\$262.81	\$450.00
431	Presbytery assessments	\$694.77	\$694.77	\$686.84
432	Synod assessments (2.2% of 2020 line 100)	\$2,070.69	\$2,070.69	\$2,320.70
	400 Total Synod & Presbytery	\$3,965.46	\$3,028.27	\$4,057.54

500	Missions			
510	RPM&M	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$600.00
520	Other RP works (all from designated giving)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
530	Outreach	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
	500 Total Missions	\$1,200.00	\$600.00	\$1,200.00
600	Book Table, Literature, and Sermon Audio			
440	Book Table - free literature	\$100.00	\$69.83	\$50.00
612	Free literature for distribution (class, prisoners)	\$100.00	\$73.23	\$300.00
620	Sermon Audio	\$360.00	\$459.40	\$479.40
	600 Total BTLA	\$560.00	\$602.46	\$829.40
700	Fellowship			
710	Fellowship expenses-food	\$500.00	\$293.32	\$300.00
711	Fellowship expenses-other (kitchen & BR supplies)	\$500.00	\$344.77	\$500.00
	700 Total Fellowship	\$1,000.00	\$638.09	\$800.00
800	Publicity			
830	Website	\$250.00	\$218.95	\$250.00
	800 Total Publicity	\$250.00	\$218.95	\$250.00
900	Facilities			
910	Utilities (building only)			
911	Gas	\$750.00	\$567.49	\$750.00
912	Electric	\$1,700.00	\$1,616.52	\$1,700.00
913	Water	\$800.00	\$724.98	\$800.00
915	Internet package for office	\$1,900.00	\$982.41	\$1,200.00
	910 subtotal utilities	\$5,150.00	\$3,891.40	\$4,450.00
920	Cleaning supplies	\$0.00	\$131.63	\$200.00
921	Cleaning contract	\$1,860.00	\$610.00	\$2,000.00
930	Facilities maintenance (includes Orkin)	\$5,500.00	\$3,057.87	\$5,000.00
935	Lawncare/Landscaping	\$2,500.00	\$262.28	\$500.00
940	Facilities equipment	\$0.00	\$374.34	\$0.00
941	Sound system	\$50.00	\$400.53	\$50.00
950	Insurance	\$3,700.00	\$3,707.00	\$3,800.00
	900 Total Facilities	\$18,760.00	\$12,435.05	\$16,000.00
	Total Disbursements	\$115,902.46	\$120,481.00	\$160,205.62
	Ending Balance	\$0.00	\$13,790.33	\$0.00

Elkhart, IN RPC Session Report For Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Meeting, March 4-6, 2021

“Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.” (Psalm 27:14 NASB)

1) Total Membership: Communicant and Baptized (12/31/20), **61**. (2) Average AM Worship Attendance, **55**. (3) Average PM Worship Attendance, **25** [1st, 3rd, & 5th Lord's Day]. (4) Baptized Members Professing, **0**. (5) New Members by Profession, **1**. (6) Net Change in Total Membership, **0**.

What a year of unexpected twists and turns 2020 has been! Yet through it all, our sovereign God and gracious heavenly Father has guided, protected, and upheld us in His everlasting arms. We humbly praise Him for His constant care and pray that we will learn the lessons He has for us through the coronavirus pandemic.

Session met 27 times in constituted court in 2020 of which 10 were conducted online. Six of the Session meetings were jointly held with the Board of Deacons. At our regular monthly meetings, the elders began with devotions reviewing two chapters from Sinclair B. Ferguson's book *In Christ Alone*.

In mid-March, we entered a new medium of preaching ministry via internet livestream, as did most of your congregations. We are grateful for the work of our Sound and Recording Team and a grant from Eli Lilly to make this happen. Morning worship services focused on a series through Exodus and Numbers. In the summer, we took a break to consider Jesus' parables in Matthew 25, as well as the office of deacon in preparation for an election of deacons which yielded three new deacons after losing two. In the evening services we studied further the morning sermon passages, focusing on personal application. Four Lord's Day evenings we considered texts from Hebrews followed by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We are thankful for the ministry of guest preachers: Garrett Mann, Rich Johnston, Bill Roberts, and Allen Blackwood. Allen was our summer intern, preaching through Titus. While the virus limited some activities, Allen and his family engaged well in the life and ministry of ERPC, and we were blessed by their service.

Due to COVID restrictions, Bibles studies concluded in the spring via Zoom with SS Classes being suspended from mid-March until September. At that time, we also resumed in-person small group studies with Elder Fik Menbere leading a study on *In Christ Alone*, by Sinclair Ferguson; Elder Andy DeRosa a study on Jesus' parables from *Glory, Veiled and Unveiled*, by Gerald Bilke; and a third study on parenting based on *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp led by Pastor Mann. Also, the Women's Study finished *Side by Side*, by Ed Welch and began a study on *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*, by Elyse Fitzpatrick. The Men's group concluded a study of the Sermon on the Mount and began an audio series on *Church and State* by R.C. Sproul.

The Fresh Lunch Thursdays ministry was interrupted in mid-March but restarted in the fall. We carried on with the monthly meal ministry and tract distribution at Faith Mission, less a few months in late spring.

In January, Ellen Smith was received from Terra Haute RP Church; the Dowell family transferred to Houston Lake Presbyterian Church, Kathleen, GA; Becky Arndt was received as a communicant member by transfer from Michiana Covenant Presbyterian Church. Also, Chris and Becky's children Michael, Mercy and Mara were received as baptized members. In June we grieved the loss of longtime adherent JoAnn Fisher, who left behind her husband Tom after 60 years together. On July 18, 2020 we celebrated the wedding of Sam Stearns and Ellen Smith. Later on November 11, 2020, Ellen (Smith) Stearns's membership was transferred to Columbus RP Church, and Jonathan Daniels' membership was transferred to 2nd RP Church, as he became a new student at IUPUI. We rejoiced when Peyton Markel publicly professed faith in Christ and was baptized on September 13, 2020. On December 30, 2020 we celebrated the marriage of Myra Mann to Calvin Held.

We are grateful to God for His abundant grace in preserving His flock at ERPC during this past year of much turmoil politically, socially, and medically. “To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Respectfully submitted,

Andy DeRosa—RE, Wade Mann—TE, Fikre Menbere—RE, Jon Ummel—RE

ERPC 2020 Financial Report and 2021 Budget

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2020 Difference	2021 Budget
<i>INCOME</i>				
101 Contributions	135,000.00	142,341.31	7,341.31	138,000.00
102 Interest	0.00	2.84	2.84	0.00
105 Designated Gifts	0.00	2,620.00	2,620.00	0.00
107 Other	0.00	5,562.25	5,562.25	0.00
TOTAL INCOME =	135,000.00	150,526.40	15,526.40	138,000.00
<i>EXPENSES</i>				
CONGREGATION				
201 Christian Education	1,000.00	1,017.63	(17.63)	1,000.00
202 Fellowship Activities	1,000.00	366.84	633.16	1,000.00
203 Youth Ministry	500.00	126.58	373.42	500.00
204 Guest Ministry	2,200.00	843.82	1,356.18	2,200.00
205 Administration	1,500.00	810.93	689.07	1,500.00
206 Pastor's Ministry Expenses	3,000.00	2,095.30	904.70	3,000.00
207 Workman's Comp Insurance	350.00	332.69	17.31	350.00
208 Group Study Resources	250.00	44.67	205.33	250.00
209 Session Expenses	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00
210 Other	500.00	1,825.26	(1,325.26)	0.00
<i>Congregation Sub-total =</i>	10,600.00	7,463.72	3,136.28	9,800.00
PASTORAL SUPPORT				
301 Salary	28,960.00	28,960.00	0.00	28,960.00
302 Parsonage Allowance	33,740.00	33,740.00	0.00	33,740.00
303 Salary Supplement	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
304 Pension	4,400.00	5,750.00	(1,350.00)	6,000.00
305 Medical Insurance	6,400.00	6,400.00	0.00	6,400.00
<i>Pastor Sub-total =</i>	73,500.00	74,850.00	(1,350.00)	75,100.00
306 Associate Pastor (Intern)	10,000.00	9,368.93	631.07	0.00
307 New Pastor Relocation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
308 Professional Development	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
<i>Pastoral Support Sub-total =</i>	85,000.00	84,218.93	781.07	76,600.00
MISSIONS				
401 Local Outreach (fresh lunch)	2,000.00	671.68	1,328.32	2,000.00

402 Vacation Bible School	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
403 Short Term Missions	250.00	0.00	250.00	250.00
404 Other Missions (Family Conference)	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
405 Mercy Ministry	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
406 Protection and Preservation of Life	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00
<i>Missions Sub-total =</i>	5,750.00	1,171.68	4,578.32	5,750.00
DENOMINATION				
501 Presbytery Assessments	1,661.65	1,523.68	137.97	1,551.64
502 Synod Assessments	2,373.00	3,266.00	(893.00)	2,970.00
503 Synod & Presby Delegate	300.00	1,411.97	(1,111.97)	300.00
505 RP Home Missions	1,000.00	2,020.00	(1,020.00)	1,000.00
506 RP Global Missions	1,000.00	2,350.00	(1,350.00)	1,000.00
510 RP Missions/Ministry	7,165.35	6,379.48	785.87	6,978.36
<i>Denomination Sub-total =</i>	13,500.00	16,951.13	(3,451.13)	13,800.00
PROPERTY				
601 Mortgage	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
602 Utilities	7,500.00	8,085.94	(585.94)	7,500.00
603 Maintenance & Supplies	7,000.00	6,883.44	116.56	7,000.00
604 Property Insurance	5,000.00	4,858.90	141.10	5,000.00
605 Property Improvements	0.00	6,770.39	(6,770.39)	11,250.00
606 Office Equipment	300.00	0.00	300.00	500.00
607 Other Equipment	200.00	4,891.50	(4,691.50)	800.00
<i>Property Sub-total =</i>	20,000.00	31,490.17	(11,490.17)	32,050.00
TOTAL EXPENSES =	134,850.00	141,295.63	(6,445.63)	138,000.00
YTD NET =	150.00	9,230.77	9,080.77	0.00

	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Total Cash Balance		
Beginning Balance January 1:	90088.35	
Net from This Year:	9,230.77	
Balance =	99,319.12	

First Reformed Presbyterian Church

Grand Rapids, MI

GLG Presbytery Spring 2021 Meeting Congregational Report

Dear fathers and brethren,

If there is a verse that adequately describes 2020 for First RPC it would be Psalm 116:1, "I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications." At the beginning of the year we had no local ruling elder, were \$25,000 under budget, and needed new members. The congregation sought the Lord with prayer and fasting, and our gracious God answered!

Ruling Elder: The congregation elected Jake Schwartz in January 2020 as ruling elder. Jake was ordained into office in February 2020. This was a great blessing to the whole congregation for Jake is a pro-active man with a real love for pastoral work. Visitations, counselling, and shepherding has been much improved thanks to the extra elder. The session is seeking two new ruling elders and has instituted a discipleship meeting for the purpose of training men in the work, qualifications, and call of ruling elder. Pray that Christ will raise up such men for our congregation.

Finances: Our God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10) and promises to provide for His Church. He provided in 2020 by increasing our giving by \$33,000. This means the congregation is self-sufficient for the first time since 2015. Pray that God will continue to meet our financial needs.

New Members: The congregation prayed to the Lord for new households to come and be part of our church family. He heard our petitions and added to the church. The increase includes two young men who were recently converted and began to attend the congregation. One of these new babes in Christ was baptized as a professing adult. According to the membership this was First RP's first adult baptism. May the God of salvation give us more adult baptisms as He delivers sinners from the wrath to come. Each new member actively serves and is faithful in attending both worship services and Wednesday prayer meeting. Pray for the Lord to sustain the new members and to add to the church with conversions.

Covid: The Lord who keeps Israel (Ps. 121) protected His flock in Grand Rapids this past year. We were able to maintain in-person public worship throughout the whole year as we continued to gather in the Seminary, with the exception of 3 weeks of outdoor worship due to the Seminary closing for a period. So far we have had only one minor Covid case. Praise God for His protection.

Lord's Day: Our Sabbaths are a market day for the soul. Pastor Scott's main preaching was Mark in the morning, and two doctrinal series on Worship and Revival in the evening service. Sabbath School was cancelled from May-December due to seminary restrictions during Covid. Our communion seasons continue to be a highlight as we prepare for the Lord's Supper with preparatory services, fellowship, and hospitality.

Women's Fellowship: The sisters in the congregation greatly enjoy their studies. They completed J. C. Ryle's *Practical Religion* and have now begun a study on Christology with John Flavel's *The Fountain of Life Opened*. The women also have a monthly breakfast for fellowship and prayer.

Evangelism: Personal and public outreach continues. Lost family and friends have attended ordinary services and evangelistic services. The street evangelism continues every Saturday throughout the

year. The Tuesday outreach was cancelled for the year due to Covid but will return spring 2021. Thousands have received tracts, Bibles, and apologetic materials. Many new relationships are built through conversations, one on one coffee meetings, and bring many to worship. We plead for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to see lost souls saved for Christ.

We are very thankful to the Father of Lights for His graciousness to us this past year. We pray with humility seeking His face to further use us for the glory of His name.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Scott TE
Jake Schwartz RE
Stephen Rhoda Provisional RE

Congregational Stats

Church Membership:	29 communicant & 15 baptized = Total 44 members
Baptisms:	2 baptisms. 1 adult and 1 infant.
Net Change In Membership:	Increase of 9

Average Morning Attendance:	60
Average Evening Attendance:	66

First Reformed Presbyterian Church (Grand Rapids)

Financial Report - 2021 Budget and 2020 Budget to Actual

	2021 Budget	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2020 Budget vs Actual
INCOME				
101 Contributions	\$80,141.40	\$55,000.00	\$80,332.34	\$25,332.34
102 Interest/Dividends	120.00	150.00	149.49	(0.51)
105 Designated Gifts	-	-	8,550.00	8,550.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$80,261.40	\$55,150.00	\$89,031.83	\$33,881.83
EXPENSES				
CONGREGATION				
201 Christian Education	200.00	200.00	281.25	\$(81.25)
202 Fellowship Activities	200.00	200.00	30.13	169.87
204 Pulpit Supply	2,000.00	2,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
205 Administration/Office Expenses	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,176.10	23.90
206 Ministry Expenses	200.00	150.00	185.15	(35.15)
Congregation Sub-total	\$3,800.00	\$3,750.00	\$2,672.63	\$1,077.37
PASTORAL SUPPORT				
301 Salary	25,116.00	25,116.00	\$25,116.00	\$-
302 Housing Allowance	21,720.00	21,720.00	21,720.00	-
303 Ministry Expenses	1,500.00	1,500.00	697.52	802.48
304 Pension (RPCNA Plan)	-	-	-	-
305 Medical Insurance	6,000.00	6,000.00	5,029.52	970.48
306 Retirement Contribution	5,850.00	4,200.00	2,800.00	1,400.00
Pastoral Support Sub-total	\$60,186.00	\$58,536.00	\$55,363.04	\$3,172.96
MISSIONS				
401 Media	479.40	360.00	459.40	(99.40)
403 Overseas Missions	-	-	-	-
404 Other Missions/Conferences	2,000.00	2,000.00	83.00	1,917.00
405 Mercy Ministry	-	-	-	-
Missions Sub-total	\$2,479.40	\$2,360.00	\$542.40	\$542.40
DENOMINATION				
501 Presbytery Assessments	500.00	660.00	458.36	201.64
502 Synod Assessments	1,200.00	1,000.00	1,155.00	(155.00)
503 Synod & Presby Expenses	500.00	500.00	-	500.00
505 Home Missions	-	-	-	-
506 Foreign Missions	-	-	-	-
510 RP Missions/Ministry	-	-	-	-
Denomination Sub-total	\$2,200.00	\$2,160.00	\$1,613.36	\$546.64
PROPERTY				
601 Building Rent	10,500.00	10,500.00	10,500.00	-
602 Utilities	-	-	-	-
603 Maintenance & Supplies	-	-	-	-
604 Liability Insurance	521.00	530.00	527.00	3.00
606 Office Equipment	-	-	-	-
607 Other Equipment	-	-	-	-
Property Sub-total	\$11,021.00	\$11,030.00	\$11,027.00	\$3.00
800 Benevolence	575.00	-	6,800.00	(6,800.00)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$80,261.40	\$77,836.00	\$78,018.43	\$(182.43)
YTD NET	\$-	\$(22,686.00)	\$11,013.40	\$33,699.40
FUNDS				
General Fund				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	33,365.41		23,049.79	
Change	-		10,315.62	
Balance General Fund	33,365.41		33,365.41	
Synod 403b fund Contribution				

Beginning Balance Jan 1	250.00		-	
Change	(250.00)			250.00
Balance Sermon Audio Fund	-			250.00
Mission Fund				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	10,392.56		10,460.56	
Change	(1,200.00)		(68.00)	
Balance Mission Fund	9,192.56		10,392.56	
Building Fund				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	8,611.87		8,611.87	
Change	-		-	
Balance Building Fund	8,611.87		8,611.87	
Craig Shoemaker Fund				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	575.00		575.00	
Change	(575.00)		-	
Balance Craig Shoemaker Fund	-		575.00	
Deacon Fund				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	1,992.69		542.69	
Change	-		1,450.00	
Balance Deacon Fund	1,992.69		1,992.69	
Loan				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	1,100.00		1,100.00	
Change	(1,100.00)		-	
Loan Balance	-		1,100.00	
Balance of all funds	54,262.53		56,287.53	

Immanuel RPC report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery March 4-6, 2021

Covering January 2020 through February 2021

The past year has been filled with blessings and challenges. As the year 2020 started, we were continuing to investigate ways to accommodate our growing congregation that was exceeding the capacity of our facility. The real estate market in Lafayette area is very tight and we did not find any suitable place to purchase or rent after a thorough search. Then our committee contacted the Masonic Lodge in West Lafayette, who had shown some interest in selling their building when Immanuel RPC was starting in 2003. They put their property for sale the same week that we contacted them. Through a lengthy, very cooperative process, they agreed to sell to us for less than their asking price. The building is in a prime location on the main road between Purdue campus and Walmart, surrounded by student apartments and residential housing. It needs a lot of renovation to be fully useful as a place of worship, fellowship, and service. The Lord provided Lamb of God Lutheran Church (Wisconsin Synod), who purchased our previous property on February 12, 2021 for a good price. We closed on the purchase of the new property February 22, moved in on February 24, and will have our first worship service in the fellowship hall on February 28, with room enough for the whole congregation to worship together.

A bigger and more significant development in the congregation is membership growth. During 2020, we received 26 communicant members and 28 baptized children. Nine babies were born, 24 children were baptized and 2 weddings. We received 2 communicant members in February and we have additional families nearly ready to join the church. Most of the new members were active in ministry and some had leadership roles in their previous congregations; many are participating in significant ministries at Immanuel. In January 2020 Sergei Spirydovich and Josh Bright and in January 2021 David Allgaier and Cos Gardner were ordained and installed as deacons. We anticipate the need for additional deacons and elders this year and we have a large pool of good candidates for these offices.

The ministry of the Word of God, primarily the preaching and teaching of Pastor Jared Olivetti, has continued to be the main focus of our congregation. Jared spent much of the year preaching through 2 Corinthians. He also had a short series on covenant theology and interspersed sequential sermons on the Psalms. Our evening teaching series have included an annual month of focus on missions, the role and work of a deacon, understanding the Christo-centric nature of the Psalms, and the Heidelberg Catechism. Elders Keith Magill and Zachary Blackwood have preached in our congregation and in other congregations. We have been blessed with guest preachers from RPCNA and other churches. Pastor Olivetti was granted a three-month sabbatical leave starting January 18, 2021.

Response to covid-19 has kept some of our technology-oriented folks busy since March. Following the governor's decree, we held online-only worship services for 2 weeks in March 2020. Since then, we have continued to livestream a morning worship service, also making it available on YouTube. Following online-only services, we had drive-in services in the parking lot. Jared presided and preached from a scaffold and he addressed the congregation via loudspeakers and low-power FM broadcast. As soon as the governor's decree permitted, we started in-person worship services, splitting the congregation into two services with doubled distance between rows of seats and face coverings required at one service and recommended at second service. A few weeks later, evening service was resumed. Because of health concerns, some of our members faithfully watch our online worship services and do not come to our building.

Immanuel elders have been heavily involved in serving Presbytery. Zachary Blackwood and Ben Larson serve the youth through CYPY. Our session was part of the Ad Interim Commission until we asked to be relieved of that role in September. Keith Magill moderated the Sparta session. Pastor Olivetti served as chairman of Candidates and Credentials Committee and was an advisor to Michael LeFebvre before his departure from the RPCNA. Jared also serves on the EAC, but his ministry trip overseas was cancelled due to covid-19.

Two discipline cases have been a huge challenge this year. First, to our great sorrow, a charter member was excommunicated. Secondly, Presbytery authorized an advisory committee and later a judicial commission to help resolve issues related to the Session's handling of a discipline case. There has been considerable turmoil in the congregation because of this. We are very thankful for the work of the advisory committee and judicial commission.

Immanuel RPC	
Membership 2020	
Increase	
Baptism	24
Profession of faith	4
Increase from RPCNA	1
Increase from churches	26
Increase - Other	4
Total	59
Decrease	
Death	0
Decrease to RPCNA	12
Decrease to churches	0
Final Removal	4
Decrease - Other	6
Total	22
Summary - Total Members	
12/31/2019	153
Increase	59
Decrease	-22
12/31/2020	190
Baptized now communicant	1
Communicant Members	95
Baptized members	95
Average Worship Attendance in person	
First 10 weeks of 2020	135
All year: 45 weeks	134

Treasurer's Report: Finances in Review

IRPC 2019-2020 Budgeted vs. Actual

Line #	Budget Category	2019 - 2020 Budget	JUL - SEP 2019	OCT - DEC 2019	JAN - MAR 2020	APR - JUN 2020	% of Budget	YTD Total
Income								
1	Tithes	200,000.00	45,803.18	51,249.49	61,462.84	81,565.01	120%	240,080.52
2	Dividends & Interest	450.00	123.88	466.88	32.41	24.43	144%	647.60
3	Transfer from Ministry Expansion Fund	5,000.00	1,200.00	1,300.00	1,200.00	1,300.00	100%	5,000.00
4	Total General Fund	205,450.00	47,127.06	53,016.37	62,695.25	82,889.44	120%	245,728.12
5	Special Offerings - Misc		2,677.52	7,107.00	7,371.53	6,887.11	N/A	24,043.16
6	Special Offerings - Building		0.00	13,901.67	0.00	24,500.00	N/A	38,401.67
7	Total Income	205,450.00	49,804.58	74,025.04	70,066.78	114,276.55	150%	308,172.95
Budgeted Expenses								
Allowances/Salaries								
8	Salary	42,800.00	10,701.00	10,701.00	10,701.00	10,701.00	100%	42,804.00
9	Housing	25,200.00	6,300.00	6,300.00	6,300.00	6,300.00	100%	25,200.00
10	Healthcare Coverage	12,000.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,200.00	7,200.00	100%	12,000.00
11	Pension	8,000.00	0.00	8,250.00	0.00		103%	8,250.00
12	Long Term Disability Insurance							
13	Bonus				2,000.00	5,000.00	N/A	7,000.00
14	Total allowances/salaries	88,000.00	18,801.00	27,051.00	18,201.00	29,201.00	106%	93,254.00
Building/Facilities								
15	Mortgage	19,300.00	2277.36	2277.36	7700.00	7045.28	100%	19,300.00
16	Insurance	3,200.00	3,100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	97%	3,100.00
17	Maintenance	6,750.00	2,035.30	2,145.75	620.24	749.07	82%	5,550.36
18	Utilities	8,000.00	2,078.43	1,916.19	2855.82	2568.25	118%	9,418.69
19	Debt Reduction	11,500.00	0.00	11500.00	0.00	0.00	100%	11,500.00
20	Building Fund							
21	Total Building/Facilities	48,750.00	9,491.09	17,839.30	11,176.06	10,362.60	100%	48,869.05
Giving								
22	RPM&M	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	100%	5,000.00
23	Missionaries (Speakers)	400.00	150.00	288.00	0.00	0.00	110%	438.00
24	Bill Sebald (Liberia)	2,400.00	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00	100%	2,400.00
25	Peter (C.O.M.)	9,000.00	2250.00	2250.00	2,250.00	2,250.00	100%	9,000.00
26	Rut Etheridge (RP - Geneva College)	2,000.00	1200.00	800.00	0.00	0.00	100%	2,000.00
27	Christina Riepe (Wycliffe)	2,400.00	500.00	600.00	600.00	700.00	100%	2,400.00
28	Mercy Ministry	2000	724.05	430.32	570.00	0.00	148%	2,962.54
29	Scholarships	1,400.00	805.00	0.00	170.00	0.00	70%	975.00

Treasurer's Report: Finances in Review

IRPC 2019-2020 Budgeted vs. Actual

Line #	Budget Category	2019 - 2020 Budget	JUL - SEP 2019	OCT - DEC 2019	JAN - MAR 2020	APR - JUN 2020	% of Budget	YTD Total
30	Adoption	800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%	0.00
31	International Justice Mission	1,200.00	0.00	1200.00	0.00	0.00	100%	1,200.00
32	Pro-Life Ministries	1,600.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	63%	1,000.00
33	Greater Lafayette Gospel Association - James Foster							
34	South Sudan (RP Mission)							
35	Pakistan (RP Mission)							
36	Missions Month							
37	Total Giving	28,200.00	6,229.05	7,168.32	4,190.00	8,550.00	93%	26,137.37
	Ministry Expense							
38	Presbytery Assessment	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,328.83	78%	2,328.83
39	Synod Assessment	5,000.00	0.00	434.00	0.00	4,500.00	99%	4,934.00
40	Pastor's Expense	3,000.00	606.60	740.66	120.00	695.95	72%	2,163.21
41	Continuing Education Fund	3,000.00	485.51	0.00	1,881.47	1,250.00	121%	3,616.98
42	Facilities Admin & Planning (Magill)	10,000.00	2,400.00	2,600.00	2,400.00	2,600.00	100%	10,000.00
43	Office Supplies	800.00	161.86	759.47	59.00	467.31	181%	1,447.64
44	Administrative Assistant	5,400.00	1,350.00	1,350.00	1,350.00	0.00	75%	4,050.00
45	Christian Education	300.00	189.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	63%	189.73
46	Guest Speaker	1,200.00	330.00	150.00	480.00	100.00	88%	1,060.00
47	Domestic Supplies	2,200.00	300.02	690.93	281.60	0.00	58%	1,272.55
48	Church Literature	600.00	405.88	671.81	0.00	0.00	180%	1,077.69
49	Outreach	1,500.00	89.85	89.85	99.85	128.58	27%	408.13
50	VBS	800.00	832.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	104%	832.21
51	Hospitality	200.00	0.00	51.36	0.00	0.00	26%	51.36
52	Social	500.00	127.04	524.26	0.00	0.00	130%	651.30
53	Session	900.00	174.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	19%	174.35
54	Youth Group	2,100.00	0.00	2,100.00	0.00	0.00	100%	2,100.00
55	Ministry Expansion (Intern)							
56	Total Ministry Expense	40,500.00	7,453.05	10,162.34	6,671.92	12,070.67	90%	36,357.98
57	Total Budgeted Expenses	205,450.00	41,974.19	62,220.96	40,238.98	60,184.27	100%	204,618.40
59	Total YTD Expenses		45,747.98	62,970.96	47,888.98	61,776.58		228,818.32

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the Budgeted vs. Actual Report for FY 2019-2020

IRPC Savings & Allocations

Fund #	Total Carry-Over Savings (July 1, 2019)	\$126,494.43
	General Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$49,256.85
	YTD General Fund Income	\$245,728.12
	YTD Special Offerings - Misc	\$24,043.16
	YTD Total Expenses	-\$228,818.32
	Withdrawal: Pay Down Debt Loan 4.75%, expenses for Missions Month, transfer to Adoption Fund, Women Retreat Fund	-\$42,172.45
	Pay Debt Loan 4.00% with surplus while keeping at least \$10K in the	-\$38,037.36
1	General Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$10,000.00
	Building Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$19,119.74
	YTD Special Offering - Building	\$38,401.67
	Withdrawal / Transfer Building Fund	-\$4,146.00
2	Building Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$53,375.41
	Maintenance Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$10,000.00
	Withdrawal / Transfer Maintenance Fund	\$0.00
3	Maintenance Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$10,000.00
	Outreach Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$3,313.94
	Withdrawal / Transfer Outreach Fund	\$0.00
4	Outreach Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$3,313.94
	Continuing Education Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$3,584.80
	Withdrawal / Transfer Pastor Continuing Ed Fund	\$0.00
5	Continuing Education Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$3,584.80
	Ministry Expansion Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$23,330.00
	Withdrawal / Transfer External Ministry Fund	-\$8,997.34
6	Ministry Expansion Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$14,332.66
	Mercy Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$11,574.78
	Withdrawal / Transfer Mercy Fund	-\$892.55
7	Mercy Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$10,682.23
	Adoption Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$4,514.60
	Withdrawal / Transfer Adoption Fund	\$1,218.16
8	Adoption Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$5,732.76
	Women's Retreat Fund (July 1, 2019)	\$1,799.72

IRPC Savings & Allocations

Fund #	Total Carry-Over Savings (July 1, 2019)	\$126,494.43
	Withdrawal / Transfer Women's Retreat Fund	-\$862.72
9	Women's Retreat Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$937.00
	Technology Fund (As of Jun 22, 2020)	5,000
	Withdrawal / Transfer the Fund	-\$589.92
10	Technology Fund (As of June 30, 2020)	\$4,410.08
	Total Assets (As of June 30, 2020)	\$116,368.88

Building Loan Balances (As of June 30, 2020)	
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\$131,000 Loan at 4.75%	\$0.00
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\$125,000 Loan at 4.00%	\$11,233.39
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Total	\$11,233.39
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RECOMMENDATION:

Pay off 4.00% Loan from Building Fund (Fund #2)

Treasurer's Report: Finances in Review

IRPC 2020-2021 Budget

Line #	Budget Category	Proposed 2020 - 2021 Budget	2019 - 2020 Budget	2019 - 2020 Actuals
Income				
1	Tithes	250,000.00	200,000.00	240,080.52
2	Dividends & Interest	500.00	450.00	647.60
3	Transfer from Ministry Expansion Fund	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
4	Total General Fund	255,500.00	205,450.00	245,728.12
5	Special Offerings - Misc			24,043.16
6	Special Offerings - Building			38,401.67
7	Total Income	255,500.00	205,450.00	308,172.95
Budgeted Expenses				
Allowances/Salaries				
8	Salary	47,800.00	42,800.00	42,804.00
9	Housing	32,200.00	25,200.00	25,200.00
10	Healthcare Coverage	2,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
11	Pension	13,000.00	8,000.00	8,250.00
12	Long Term Disability Insurance	1,200.00		
13	Bonus			7,000.00
14	Total allowances/salaries	96,200.00	88,000.00	93,254.00
Building/Facilities				
15	Mortgage	0.00	19,300.00	19,300.00
16	Insurance	3,100.00	3,200.00	3,100.00
17	Maintenance	2,000.00	6,750.00	5,550.36
18	Utilities	10,000.00	8,000.00	9,418.69
19	Debt Reduction		11,500.00	11,500.00
20	Building Fund	56,200.00		
21	Total Building/Facilities	71,300.00	48,750.00	48,869.05
Giving				
22	RPM&M	4,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
23	Missionaries (Speakers)	400.00	400.00	438.00
24	Bill Sebald (Liberia)	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,400.00
25	Peter (C.O.M.)	9,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
26	Rut Etheridge (RP - Geneva College)	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
27	Christina Riepe (Wycliffe)	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,400.00
28	Mercy Ministry	2500	2000	2,962.54
29	Scholarships	1,400.00	1,400.00	975.00
30	Adoption	800.00	800.00	0.00

Treasurer's Report: Finances in Review

IRPC 2020-2021 Budget

Line #	Budget Category	Proposed 2020 - 2021 Budget	2019 - 2020 Budget	2019 - 2020 Actuals
31	International Justice Mission	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
32	Pro-Life Ministries	1,600.00	1,600.00	1,000.00
33	Greater Lafayette Gospel Association - James Foster	1,300.00		
34	South Sudan (RP Mission)	1,200.00		
35	Pakistan (RP Mission)	1,200.00		
36	Missions Month	1,000.00		
37	Total Giving	32,400.00	28,200.00	26,137.37
	Ministry Expense			
38	Presbytery Assessment	2,700.00	3,000.00	2,328.83
39	Synod Assessment	10,000.00	5,000.00	4,934.00
40	Pastor's Expense	3,000.00	3,000.00	2,163.21
41	Continuing Education Fund	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,616.98
42	Facilities Admin & Planning (Magill)	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
43	Office Supplies	1,000.00	800.00	1,447.64
44	Administrative Assistant	6,500.00	5,400.00	4,050.00
45	Christian Education	500.00	300.00	189.73
46	Guest Speaker	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,060.00
47	Domestic Supplies	2,200.00	2,200.00	1,272.55
48	Church Literature	1,000.00	600.00	1,077.69
49	Outreach	1,500.00	1,500.00	408.13
50	VBS	1,500.00	800.00	832.21
51	Hospitality	500.00	200.00	51.36
52	Social	1,000.00	500.00	651.30
53	Session	900.00	900.00	174.35
54	Youth Group	2,100.00	2,100.00	2,100.00
55	Ministry Expansion (Intern)	7,000.00		
56	Total Ministry Expense	55,600.00	40,500.00	36,357.98
57	Total Budgeted Expenses	255,500.00	205,450.00	204,618.40
59	Total Expenses			228,818.32

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed Budget for FY 2020-2021

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Lafayette

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you.” Jeremiah 29:11-12

2020 was quite an adventure for our congregation. As with all churches the COVID pandemic was at the forefront of many of our decisions as a congregation, and as a session. As a session, we are very thankful for the peace and unity of our congregation during this tumultuous season.

During 2020 we were able to experience many blessings from the Lord. One of those blessings was the increased use of technology. Before March of 2020 we did not broadcast any service live online. With the use of a grant from the Lilly Foundation we were able to procure the equipment necessary to stream our services online. This blessing has allowed our members who are unable to come to the building to be able to join our services, we have seen people from the community join our services, and we have seen people from around the World join us online. God is using technology as a means to advance His Kingdom.

During 2020 Pastor Niess finished preaching through the books of Genesis and Acts. He also preached through the book of Ecclesiastes, completed a topical series through the “Fruit of the Spirit”, and finished a series on the Psalms of Ascent. Just recently we have started a series in the book of Leviticus in the morning, and a topical sermon series in the evening on the “Identity of God”. God has uniquely used the preaching of His Word to us during this challenging year.

One of the greatest needs we have had as a congregation for several years was the need for new deacons. One of the greatest blessings of 2020 was the election and subsequent ordination and installation of three new deacons. We are very thankful for God’s provision.

In the summer, Dan Webb retired from the session. Dan faithfully served as an elder in our congregation for over 30 years. We miss Dan’s wisdom on the session, and we are all thankful for Dan’s service.

In 2020 the session met as a constituted court a total of 19 times. The session planning retreat was held July 24-25. The sacrament of Lord’s Supper was conducted seven times.

In 2020, the congregation received six new communicant members, we had two baptisms, and the Lord took two of our members’ home.

As of 12/31/20, our current membership is 125 (85 communicant members, 40 baptized members.) Net change in total membership is +7 from 12/31/19. Since 12/31/20 and the writing of this report, we have welcomed 20 more members into our midst. We are thankful for the growth and seeing God work in our midst.

Our congregation continues to be active and involved in bringing God’s Word to the Tippecanoe County Jail. Bob Bibby continues to lead us in this ministry. In 2020, this was greatly limited, but we are thankful that we can continue to be involved in taking the Gospel to those in jail.

Purdue Corps (CORPS at Purdue) continues to be a key ministry of our congregation, although it looked very different this past year than in previous years. Adam and Anne Niess faithfully lead this ministry.

Youth Group continues to be a joint ministry with IRPC. Jeff and Karla Kessler are the leaders from our congregation.

During the week, we continue to have several mid-week Bible Studies to encourage fellowship and spiritual growth.

As a session, we continue to be involved in the larger courts of our denomination. All of the elders served as delegates to Presbytery, at different times over the year. At the synod level, Adam is on the International Conference Advisory Committee, and RPIC workshop committee; Bob is serving on the E&P board, and on the Inmate Membership Committee. At the presbytery level Adam is serving as a provisional elder at Selma, on the Candidates and Credentials Committee, chaired the IRPC Advisory committee; Bob is serving as a provisional elder at 1st RP in Durham; Jeff is on the Christ Church Advisory Committee, Covfamikoi Advisory Committee; and Ken (and Christy) are serving as Covfamikoi conference directors.

In the coming summer we are excited to have Jonathan Sturm and his family join us as a summer intern. We will get the opportunity to get to know the Sturm's better and we anticipate God using them in our lives.

We thank God for how He is guiding our congregation. We may feel things are out of control at times, but what a comfort to know that God is in control of all, and he is guiding the plans for our congregation.

Membership:

Communicant	85 (+3)
Baptized	40 (+4)
Total	125 (+7)

Changes:

New Converts	0
Transfers-In	10
Baptisms	2
Transferred-Out	1
Removed from Roll	2
Deaths	2

On behalf of the session,

Ken Nelson, Clerk

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Lafayette

2020 Treasurer Report

2021 Proposed Budget

	2020	2020	2020	2021
	Actual	Budget	Over/Under	Proposed
Income				Budget
Interest	439	400	39	300
Rent	19,800	21,600	-1,800	21,600
Tithe	204,112	230,000	-25,888	221,000
Total Budgeted Income	224,351	252,000	-27,649	242,900
Special Gift Income	17,133		17,133	
Total Income	241,484	252,000	-10,516	242,900
Expenses				
<u>Allowances and Salaries</u>				
FICA	1,238	1,258	-20	1,879
Guest Speakers	4,016	3,500	516	5,500
Summer Intern			0	8,000
Housing - Adam	29,700	29,700	0	22,900
Ministry Expense - Adam	2,900	4,100	-1,200	4,100
Ministry Expense - Intern			0	500
Pension - Adam	4,400	4,400	0	4,400
Custodian Salary	5,987	6,240	-253	6,240
Associate Pastor Fund			0	8,000
Office Manager Salary	10,200	10,200	0	10,320
Pastor Salary - Adam	51,400	51,400	0	60,700
Total Allowances and Salaries	109,841	110,798	-957	132,539
<u>Church Building</u>				
Capital Improvements	15,067	20,000	-4,933	15,000
Furniture & Equipment	3,342	4,000	-658	2,500
Insurance	3,952	4,000	-48	4,000
Interest Expense	1,802	1,754	48	1,115
Maintenance	10,747	12,000	-1,253	12,000
Supplies	3,546	4,500	-954	4,300
Utilities	8,295	12,000	-3,705	12,000
Rental Expense	6,356	2,500	3,856	3,500
Total Church Building	53,107	60,754	-7,647	54,415
<u>Congregational Giving</u>				
Gifts	276	800	-524	800
Matrix	200	200	0	200
Miscellaneous Missionary	700	700	0	700
Presbytery Assessment	2,696	2,696	0	2,713
Synod Assessment	5,652	5,652	0	5,412
RP M & M	6,500	6,500	0	6,500
RP Seminary	2,500	2,500	0	2,500

RTF	1,000	1,000	0	1,000
RP Global Mission	4,500	4,500	0	4,500
Trinity Mission	500	500	0	500
International Students Inc	1,800	1,800	0	2,500
Total Congregational Giving	26,324	26,848	-524	27,325
Ministry Expense				
Administrative	3,276	3,200	76	3,521
Christian Ed	1,424	2,200	-776	2,200
College Ministry	288	2,500	-2,212	2,500
Hospitality Committee	800	1,700	-900	1,700
Social Committee	1,171	1,500	-329	1,500
Jail Ministry	0	3,500	-3,500	2,500
Mercy Ministry	577	3,500	-2,923	3,500
Nursery		200	-200	200
Outreach	256	500	-244	500
Session	115	1,000	-885	500
Session Conferences	348	1,000	-652	1,000
Ironmen	220	1,000	-780	200
Theological Education	1,000	1,500	-500	2,500
Youth Group	2,062	1,000	1,062	1,000
Book Table		300	-300	300
Total Ministry Expense	11,537	24,600	-13,063	23,621
Total Budgeted Expense	200,809	223,000	-22,191	237,900
Fund Transfer Expense	1,617		1,617	
Special Gift Expense	14,134		14,134	
Total Expense	216,560	223,000	-6,440	237,900
Net Income	24,924	29,000	-4,076	5,000
Extra Mortgage Paydown	-29,000	-29,000		-5,000
Net Income After Mortgage Paydown	-4,076		-4,076	

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Lafayette

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2020

	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
100 RPC Checking	29,042
110 RPC Money Market	101,538
120 RPC Savings	5
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 130,585
Other Current Assets	
150 Other Receivables	662
155 Prepaid Mercy Gift Cards	250
Total Other Current Assets	\$ 912
Total Current Assets	\$ 131,498
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 131,498
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
215 Deferred Revenue	1,800
217 Other Payable	2,398
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ 4,198
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 4,198
Long-Term Liabilities	
220 Synod Loan Payable	41,085
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$ 41,085
Total Liabilities	\$ 45,283
Equity	
300 General Fund	34,406
310 Retained Earnings	0
320 College Ministry Fund	1,360
330 Family Conference Fund	1,041
355 Book Table Fund	854
358 Associate Pastor Fund	20,000
390 Youth Group Fund	3,630
Net Revenue	24,924
Total Equity	\$ 86,214
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$ 131,498

SESSION REPORT

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4

In some respects, many of us would rather just forget about 2020. It was a difficult year for us personally as we had to adjust our daily lives as we navigated the waters that were Covid-19. Church life was no different. The Session has tried to balance the command to meet together as commanded in Hebrews 10:25 with the due care that we must show for one another's health and well-being as commanded in Exodus 20:13 and Mark 12:31. It is apropos for us to describe this year as a great testing for us as a congregation. Instead of grumbling and complaining, though, the Session encourages the congregation to reflect on 2020 as a time that our faith was tested, and as a result steadfastness is being produced in our lives. As we look back at how the LORD has been at work in us the past year, let us be confident that He is working in us that we may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

As we began the year, one of the great challenges we faced was financial uncertainty. In an attempt to show our trust in Christ, we encouraged the congregation to consider the budget shortfall proposed as a challenge and not an obstacle. We trusted that the Lord who owns the cattle on a thousand hills and has all things at His disposal can and would provide for our every need. As we look back, the Session can report to you (as will be shown in the financial reports) that not one of our needs was left unmet. God has indeed been faithful to his saints in Marion.

Part of being Presbyterian is that we are a part of a broader body of believers with whom we have the privilege to serve alongside. The Session has been heavily involved in the lives not only of this congregation, but of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery this past year. Greg has served on the Presbytery's *Ad Interim* Commission, Scott has continued to serve as a Provisional Ruling Elder for the Belle Center Congregation, and Jason has served on committees and has been appointed to serve on a Judicial Commission with respect to issues at the Emmanuel (West Lafayette) Reformed Presbyterian Church. We share this with you so that you know how best to pray for your Session as we seek to do the work that we have been called to. It is with all this in mind that we are prayerfully considering the addition of Deacons to help us oversee the needs of the congregation. Please join us in that petition to the LORD.

Despite the many challenges we have faced this past year, the Session is grateful for this congregation. The love you share and demonstrate to one another is a clear indication that you are Disciples of Christ, just as He told us in John 13:35. We thank the LORD for that token of His grace.

As has been mentioned in prior years, it is one of the wonderful privileges of the Session to meet together as a Court of Christ's church to meet with you, to pray for you, to counsel you, and to witness the Lord's work in your life. The Session met in constituted court on ten occasions this past year, and an untold number of times informally. We were able to celebrate the Lord's Supper nine times this past year as well. We were also able to witness two baptisms: a covenant child and converted adult. Please pray for continued opportunity to see this sacrament displayed in our midst!

The session would like to take this time again to publically express our gratitude and thankfulness for each one of you. Your many acts of sacrifice and service for the Body of Christ has been an encouragement to us. You have been a great example of what the Church should look like and how the people of God should respond in difficult and trying times. Though we have gone through a year of trials of various kinds in 2020, we can be confident that those trials were for our good and will be used by Christ to bring us Him lacking in nothing as we continue to serve our risen savior in 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott J. Hunt

Clerk of Session, Marion Reformed Presbyterian Church

PASTOR'S REPORT

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Ps.34:7-8

To say that 2020 was a strange year seems to be an understatement. We started the year out well, looking forward to God's design for us here in Marion. By March, the Session agreed to close in-person worship for a time in cooperation with the civil authorities due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. After several long weeks of being apart, we were finally able to open our doors again on May 10th, although with limited services. This caused much inward deliberation within my heart as we wrestled with obeying God's word about worshipping on the Lord's Day and obeying the governing authorities over us. The theme in this report comes from the scripture above, in which we see the protection of Christ's Church by the Lord.

Calvin states:

Though the faithful are exposed to many dangers, they may be assured that God is the faithful guardian of their life. The power of God alone would be sufficient, but in mercy, for our infirmity, God employs angels as his ministering spirits to protect us. It helps confirm our faith to know that God has innumerable legions of angels that are ready to serve as often as he is pleased to help us. What is more, the angels that are called principalities and powers are always intent on preserving our life because they know that this duty is entrusted to them.¹

The Lord has indeed sent angels to protect this small body of believers, and we have always enjoyed His mercy since day one. In 2020, I preached mainly from the Book of Luke and a few topical sermons on different weeks when led by the Lord to do so. My prayer is that you, the congregation of Marion RP Church, have been encouraged by these messages in various ways.

¹ Calvin, J., & Beeke, J. R. (2008). [*365 Days with Calvin*](#) (p. 66). Leominster; Grand Rapids, MI: Day One Publications; Reformation Heritage Books.

As we look ahead to this year, let's remember our vows of church membership. I was thinking about vow 6 in particular, and it states:

Do you purpose to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in all the relationships of life, faithfully to perform your whole duty as a true servant of Jesus Christ, and seek to win others to Him?

Our prayer is that in seeking the kingdom of God in all of our relationships in this life, we would indeed be a servant to each other. That type of love for each other wins people to Christ, and this world needs a church that is trying to honor the Lord in everything we say and do! I am excited to see what the Lord has for us this year and hope that we can have new families join our fellowship!

In Christ,

Pastor Jason

Marion Reformed Presbyterian Church
2020 Spending Report Through December 31, 2020

Income:	2020 Proposal	2020 Actual	2021 Proposal
Tithes & Offerings	93000.00	80215.94	80000
Gifts			
RPM+M	November Collection	43.61	November Collection
Interest		36.16	25
RPCNA Vital Funds			
Other Income (RPCNA Pension Plan)		250	250
Preschool Rent	28,000.00	28325.92	28,325
Special Collections			
Transfer from Savings account		6022.8	
India Mission, 2nd RPC Indianapolis		459.9	500
Total	121000.00	115354.33	109100

200s MRPC Administration

201 - Administration	2000	669.97	1000
202 - Christian Education	350	342.04	350
203 - Pulpit Supply	750	600	750
204 - Pastor Expense	500	602.64	500
205 - MISC.	300	166.05	150
206 - Nursery	300	0	100
208 - Media & Website	2400	1938.13	2000
Total Administration	6600	4318.83	4850

210s MRPC Building

211 - Mortgage	6655.2	6655.2	6655.2
212 - Maintenance	7,500.00	5496.82	5500
213 - Grounds and Parking	2,500.00	2162.48	2000
214 - Supplies	2,000.00	1182.93	1500
215 - Utilities	17,500.00	19319.4	19000
216 - Insurance	4,960.00	5081	5140
217 - Building Improvements			
Total Building	41,115.20	39897.83	39795.2

220s MRPC Ministries

221 - Fellowship & Hospitality	1,500.00	1170.19	1500
222 - Outreach/Evangelism	1,000.00	934.02	1000
223 - Mercy	1,000.00	201.01	500
224 - India Mission	500.00	490	500
225 - Grant County Rescue Mission	250.00		
226 - Atlanta Mission	250.00	250	250
227- RP M+M	November Collection	43.61	November Collection
228 - Synod Assessment	2,400.00	2368	2,400
229 - Presbytery Assessment	1,000.00	860.85	900

Total MRPC Ministries	7,900.00	6317.68	7050
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230s Pastor Camery

231 - Housing	31980	31980	31980
232 - Salary	21,320.00	21,319.92	21320
233 - Pension	4500	4500	4500
234 - Health Insurance	7200	7020	7200
235- Health Expense		0	
236-Pastor Education		0	

Total Pastor Expenses	65000	64819.92	65000
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Grand Total Expenses	120,615.20	115354.26	116695.2
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Savings Account balance after transfer from 2020: 30,050

ORLANDO REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2020 Report of Session
March 2021

*“I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that you may know how one ought to behave in **the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.**” – 1 Timothy 3:14, 15*

In this 100th year of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Orlando, we celebrate God’s faithfulness to the body He has seen fit to gather here at 324 East Livingston Street. The Lord has brought us through many trials and difficulties in the past 100 years, and this year was certainly no exception. This year we have experienced the onset of a global pandemic, civil unrest, our Pastor H. P. McCracken’s departure to Longmont, the passing into glory of long-standing members and loved ones and continued growth both spiritually and numerically. Through it all, we stand as witnesses to the Lord’s grace and mercy, His enduring faithfulness and kind care.

Though our activities have been altered, even constrained by the pandemic, we have continued to meet regularly for worship through almost the entire year. The Elders met 10 times in regular constituted court and also once for a special session meeting wherein we had an election for a new Pastor, resulting in a call to Dr. Nathan Eshelman which he has accepted. During our Session meetings in 2020, we continued in the Lord’s work through administrative planning, shepherding and congregational oversight, prayer, teaching and leading services of worship. We also spent much time and effort planning for how to deal with the impact of the pandemic on our services and other congregational activities. Session continues to meet at 7:45 each Lord’s Day morning for prayer.

On Session, Pastor McCracken served as Moderator of Session through October 2020 when he and his family departed to the Salt & Light Reformed Presbyterian in Longmont, Colorado. This was a sad time for the congregation as we experienced their departure, but we are thankful that the Lord continues to build His church and we see His rich provision in the McCracken’s and Fyfe’s transition, His provision for preaching while awaiting the Eshelman’s arrival, and for the Lord’s grace in providing a replacement for Pastor McCracken in such short order. Since Pastor McCracken’s departure, Elder Jim Pennington has served as Moderator, *Pro Tem*.

Elder Schaefer continued to serve as Clerk of Session. All Elders have shared in teaching, leading times of corporate prayer and presiding. Elders Worsham and Pennington have also led preaching services during the past year, both morning and evening. Elder Worsham has continued to assist with many administrative tasks, including preparing the weekly bulletins.

The congregation was blessed by Pastor McCracken’s faithful ministry until his transition to Longmont. In addition to visitation, shepherding and hospitality ministries, Pastor McCracken:

- Led the congregation in both morning and evening worship services (postponed temporarily during the early days of the pandemic) in 2020 through his final sermon on October 18, 2020:
 - Morning worship: preaching through 1 Peter, select Psalms and other passages; and
 - Evening worship: continued working through the Heidelberg Catechism until Evening Worship was postponed due to the pandemic.
- Led Men’s group meetings for breakfast and book discussions. Those gathering read *“Amusing ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business”* by Neil Postman; *“A Distant Grief: The Real Story Behind the Martyrdom of Christians in Uganda”* by F. Keifa Sempangi; and *“The Vanishing American Adult”*, by Ben Sasse (for which we were unable to meet due to the pandemic).
- Following the cancellation of all gatherings excepting morning worship due to the pandemic, Pastor McCracken led a weekly Zoom (Virtual) prayer meeting open to the whole congregation with a regular attendance of 15-20 members and also prepared a weekly family worship guide.

After Pastor McCracken's departure, the Lord provided pulpit supply by Dr. Mike Glodo (RTS Professor), Dr. John Tweedale (Reformation Bible College), Dr. Larry Minninger (OPC Pastor, retired), Elder Jim Pennington, Mark Goerner, and Dr. Rich Holdeman.

In the Spring, Mark Goerner continued to lead the Adult class in a study of the Westminster Confession of Faith until we postponed morning classes as a result of the pandemic. The Women's Bible Study began the year studying, "The Discipline of Grace", by Jerry Bridges. The Women's Bible Study was postponed as a result of the pandemic but has recently resumed in a different format. The Women have divided into three groups to accommodate differing schedules and making an effort to keep groups smaller and reduce the risk of infection. They are each studying different subjects.

Reflecting on this past year, Session has witnessed the work of the Lord in growing our congregation spiritually. One of the ways we have seen the Lord at work is members contributing in loving service to the Body and the Community. Sandra Bailey again prepared a Member Directory with updated addresses, phone numbers, birthdays and anniversaries. ORPC's participation in Choices Virtual Walk for Life was coordinated by Becky Farrant and Belinda Fyfe. Vanessa Le was awarded special recognition as the highest individual fund raiser! Joe Johnson used his multimedia skills to provide streaming of our worship services which were a great blessing during the heat of the pandemic and continue to bless those who were unable to attend in person due to isolation or infirmity. Joe also worked with Peter McCauley and Scott Bailey who provided backup as needed for coverage.

Many are helping in multiple ways – but there is still much more that may be done to serve the Kingdom! As members of one body, Session has encouraged all to consider how they may grow in their service here in Orlando and to the nations. Christ has given gifts to us that are appropriately used to build up the Body and in so doing serve our Lord. Session has let the congregation know that those desiring to help out more and are not sure how, should let Session know.

The Lord has brought several new members including the Goerner family (Mark, Debra, Isaac, Tava, Nicholas, Lucinda and Amelia – Sam and Elijah were already members), Joel Schaefer, Jayna Baily, Bashia Korten, the Rorke family (Peter, Rachel, Jason, Thomas and Thea), the Knutson family (Paul, Sonja and Phillip) and Will and Kinsey Townsend. Snowbirds and adherents in regular attendance include Mary Donaldson, George and Leslie Goerner, Tom and Genevieve Reid, Marina Silva, Jordan Monaghan, Jason and Lindsey Spanogle, the Joyner family, Emmanuel Valencia, Carlos Calderon, Kendi Jean and the Ramirez family. Regular non-member worshippers comprise over 20 people, many of whom are actively seeking membership but are awaiting Nathan's installation to proceed. The Lord's House has been full of praise, despite the pandemic!

In 2020, many of our members and their families experienced or continue to experience significant health and medical issues including Peggy Terry, Lou Woofert, Dave Tacey, Glenn and Jean McFarland, Ed and Jean Forest, Mary McCracken, Evelyn Fraser, Ruth Pennington, Ray Turmenne, Carolyn Clark and Joe Worsham. The Elders have continued to minister to these members in prayer and personal visits.

In 2020, we had three loved ones pass on into glory. We said goodbye for now to John Bailey, Phyllis Tacey and Bob Fullerton. Though we continue to grieve our loss, we praise our Lord that we do not mourn as those without hope, but rest in the hope of glory.

Please pray for continued unity and wisdom be granted to the Orlando Session in 2021 and that the Lord would raise up new leaders to help shepherd the growing congregation here at 324 East Livingston Street. Please continue to pray for the Eshelman family as they transition to their new home in Orlando and for Nathan specifically as he takes on the role of Pastor. Lastly, and importantly, pray that the Lord would continue to build His church here in Orlando and find us a faithful pillar of His truth.

Respectfully submitted,

The Orlando Session

ORLANDO R. P. CHURCH
2020 Membership and Attendance Report
January 2021

In 2020, our membership grew from 99 to 101 members. Communicant Members added by profession of faith included: Joel Schaefer, Tava Goerner, Bashia Korten, and Jayna Bailey. Communicant Members added by transfer included: Mark, Debra, and Isaac Goerner; Peter, Rachel, and Jason Rorke; Paul and Sonja Knutson; and Will and Kinsey Townsend. Baptized Members added included Nicholas, Lucinda and Amelia Goerner; Thea and Thomas Rorke; and Phillip Knutson.

Communicant Members removed due to transfer included: Jonathan and Samantha Baity, H. P. and Carly McCracken; and Craig and Belinda Fyfe. Baptized Members removed due to transfer included Ambrose, Benjamin and Edith Baity; Owen, Kenzie and Jake McCracken. Members removed due to passing into glory included John Bailey, Phyllis Tacey and Robert Fullerton. JoAnne Branch was removed from the roll by excommunication.

The total membership roll of 101 comprises 73 communicant and 28 baptized members. Of our communicant members, 10 of which are inactive, due to proximity, mandatory isolation or infirmity. There are 2 out-of-bounds communicant members.

The average attendance was unfortunately not recorded due to COVID-19 and a number of other administrative transitions.

Prepared by: Jonathan Schaefer, Clerk of Session

Treasurer's Annual Report

Jan - Dec 2020

Account Reconciliation - Suntrust (All Funds)

Balance Jan 1, 2020	\$	88,888.92			
add 2019 deposits					
subtract 2019 expenses	\$	383.46			
Net 2020 opening balance	\$	88,505.46			
Add 2020 Income	\$	153,351.56			
Subtract 2020 Expenses	\$	123,447.14			
subtract 2020 deposits					
add uncleared 2020 expenses	\$	1,193.00	<u>Checking</u>	<u>MM Account</u>	
Balance December 31, 2020	\$	119,602.88	\$ 69,291.57	\$ 50,311.31	

Suntrust Account -- Quarterly and Annual Changes 2020

Quarterly Balance	Balance	Quarter +/-	From Jan 1
Net opening balance Jan 1	\$ 88,505.46	-	-
Balance March 31	\$ 89,490.28	\$ 984.82	\$ 984.82
Balance June 30	\$ 98,878.77	\$ 9,388.49	\$ 10,373.31
Balance September 30	\$ 89,302.53	\$ (9,576.24)	\$ 797.07
Balance December 31	\$ 119,602.88	\$ 30,300.35	\$ 31,097.42

Annual Comparisons

Year	Acct Balance Jan 1	Income	Expenses
2010	\$60,333.60	\$83,287.90	\$81,991.21
2011	\$62,541.00	\$86,274.67	\$85,730.73
2012	\$62,784.94	\$88,913.16	\$115,443.65
2013	\$36,300.02	\$99,250.31	\$97,051.10
2014	\$39,398.66	\$96,649.42	\$103,984.34
2015	\$39,173.95	\$115,957.19	\$107,760.93
2016	\$41,157.67	\$113,898.04	\$108,673.35
2017	\$42,962.69	\$124,540.88	\$112,645.25
2018	\$55,840.54	\$137,967.29	\$118,072.66
2019	\$79,649.32	\$141,060.95	\$129,580.44
2020	\$88,888.92	\$153,351.56	\$123,447.14
2021	\$119,602.88		

Orlando Reformed Presbyterian Church Profit & Loss Budget Performance January through December 2020

Ordinary Income/Expense	Jan - Dec 20	Budget	% of Budget
Income			
35000 · Carryover- \$88,888.92			
35501 · GF19 Carryover \$85,927.48			
35503 · Desig - Youth Confer - \$105.02			
35509 · Desig - New Carpet f \$2,856.42			
42200 · Maintenance and Upgrade Escrow			
42201 · Sanctuary Roof - \$10,000			
42202 · Exterior Painting - \$5,000			
42203 · Building Reserve - \$22,000	7,000.00	15,000.00	
42204 · Capital Equipment - \$750			
43300 · Pastoral Sabbatical Escrow			
43310 · 2020 Set Aside - \$3,000			
43320 · 2021 Set Aside - \$3,000			
49500 · Tithes/Offerings/Desig Giving			
49510 · General Fund	151,281.73		
49516 · Desig - John Bailey Memorial	250.00		
49522 · T/O Desig Kid2Kid	310.00		
49526 · T/O Desig Pastors pension	250.00		
Total 49500 · Tithes/Offerings/Desig Giving	152,091.73		
49600 · Interest Income	9.83		
49800 · Mercy Fund Offerings			
49800 · Mercy Fund Offerings - Other	40.00		
Total 49800 · Mercy Fund Offerings	40.00		
49900 · Uncategorized Income	1,210.00		
Total Income	153,351.56		
Expense			
60000 · Leadership Expenses			
60010 · Pastor Salary	21,947.16	25,355.32	86.56%
60011 · Pastor Housing	25,961.40	30,000.00	86.54%
60013 · Pastor Medical Insurance	7,019.02	8,610.00	81.52%
60014 · Pastor Pension	4,300.00	4,300.00	100.0%
60015 · Pastor SS/Medicare	3,393.99	4,234.68	80.15%
60020 · Pastor Conference Expense	1,210.00	3,000.00	40.33%
60021 · Pastor Expenses and Supplies	2,881.30	3,200.00	90.04%
60032 · Desig - Pastors Pension from Sy	250.00		
60040 · Pastor Search Expenses	236.22		
60050 · Guest Speakers	2,450.00	900.00	272.22%
60200 · Presbytery's Budget Assessment	1,855.56	2,600.00	71.37%
60250 · Synod Operation Assessment	3,053.00	3,200.00	95.41%
60260 · Synod RPM&M	7,500.00	7,500.00	100.0%

Note: As monies are used from excrow accoujts
current balance will be updated.

Used Current Balance

Orlando Reformed Presbyterian Church Profit & Loss Budget Performance January through December 2020

	<u>Jan - Dec 20</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
60270 · Synod Delegate Travel Expenses	0.00	500.00	0.0%
60300 · Miscellaneous	287.50	100.00	287.5%
Total 60000 · Leadership Expenses	82,345.15	93,500.00	88.07%
70000 · Plant & Equipment Expenses			
70010 · Custodial Service	4,992.07	4,898.00	101.92%
70020 · Lawn Service	1,380.00	1,425.00	96.84%
70030 · Repairs and Maintenance	1,757.45	6,000.00	29.29%
70031 · Bible Study Child Care	250.00	600.00	41.67%
70040 · Office Supplies	676.61	1,800.00	37.59%
70050 · Capital Equipment	378.60	500.00	75.72%
70060 · Food for Kitchen	132.72	300.00	44.24%
70061 · Kitchen Supplies	118.48	300.00	39.49%
70062 · Janitorial Supplies	419.25	250.00	167.7%
70070 · Telephone/Internet	2,079.74	1,900.00	109.46%
70080 · Utilities	5,861.15	4,500.00	130.25%
70090 · Annex Roof	0.00	20,000.00	0.0%
70091 · Desig - New Carpet	2,856.42		
70092 · Audio/Visual Equipment	446.91	1,000.00	44.69%
70093 · Annex Exterior Repair	0.00	5,000.00	0.0%
70094 · Building Reserve	7,000.00		
70100 · Insurance - Property	6,446.44	6,000.00	107.44%
70105 · Centennial Celebration	0.00	1,000.00	0.0%
70110 · Tax & Corp Fee	566.10	600.00	94.35%
70200 · Bank Fees	0.00		
70300 · Miscellaneous	44.85	100.00	44.85%
Total 70000 · Plant & Equipment Expenses	35,406.79	56,173.00	63.03%
80000 · Ministry Activities Expenses			
80010 · Sabbath School	367.15	1,500.00	24.48%
80020 · Bible Studies Expenses	652.13	200.00	326.07%
80021 · Witness Subscriptions	767.70	800.00	95.96%
80030 · RP Missions Scholarships	0.00	1,600.00	0.0%
80040 · Social Committee	284.53	1,200.00	23.71%
80050 · Shower Committee	11.99	200.00	6.0%
80060 · Library/Literature Rack	345.15	500.00	69.03%
80070 · Flowers/Cards	449.91	500.00	89.98%
80075 · Sanctuary Flowers	212.84	500.00	42.57%
80080 · Media	1,034.39	500.00	206.88%
80090 · Mercy Fund	1,219.41	3,600.00	33.87%
80100 · Young Adult Group	0.00	500.00	0.0%
80110 · Youth Events/Conferences	0.00	450.00	0.0%
80120 · Childrens Summer Program	0.00	500.00	0.0%

Orlando Reformed Presbyterian Church
Profit & Loss Budget Performance
January through December 2020

	<u>Jan - Dec 20</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
80130 · Camp Fund - Gen Fund	0.00	2,000.00	0.0%
80133 · Outreach	0.00	1,000.00	0.0%
80280 · Desig Kid2Kid	310.00		
80290 · Desig - Mercy fund	40.00		
80300 · Miscellaneous	0.00	50.00	0.0%
Total 80000 · Ministry Activities Expenses	5,695.20	15,600.00	36.51%
Total Expense	<u>123,447.14</u>	<u>165,273.00</u>	<u>74.69%</u>
Net Income	<u><u>29,904.42</u></u>	<u><u></u></u>	<u><u></u></u>

Orlando Reformed Presbyterian Church 2021 Ministries and Operational Budget

Line Item Description	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	Proposed 2021 Budget
Forecast carryover balance		83,362.27	119,602.88
Forecast income		141,000.00	175,000.00
Total Available Funds		224,362.27	294,602.88
Pastor Compensation			
SALARY	16,300.00	25,355.32	36,110.83
HOUSING	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,555.83
MEDICAL INSURANCE	8,610.00	8,610.00	8,334.00
LIFE INSURANCE			900.00
SOCIAL SECURITY / MEDICARE	3,290.00	4,234.68	-
PENSION	4,300.00	4,300.00	6,250.00
Total Pastor Compensation	62,500.00	72,500.00	82,150.67
Ministry Budget			
<u>Discipleship Ministries</u>			
CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS	1,100.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
CHILDREN'S SUMMER PROGRAM	500.00	500.00	500.00
YOUTH EVENTS/CONFERENCES	450.00	450.00	450.00
YOUNG ADULT GROUP	500.00	500.00	500.00
LIBRARY/LITERATURE RACK	500.00	500.00	500.00
MUSIC	-	-	-
BIBLE STUDY MATERIALS	600.00	200.00	500.00
SHOWER COMMITTEE	200.00	200.00	400.00
SOCIAL COMMITTEE	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
SABBATH SCHOOL	1,500.00	1,500.00	500.00
RP MISSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS		1,600.00	1,600.00
WITNESS SUBSCRIPTIONS	500.00	800.00	1,000.00
Total Discipleship Ministries	7,050.00	9,450.00	9,150.00
<u>Mercy Ministries</u>			
MERCY MINISTRY	3400.00	3,600.00	3,600.00
FLOWERS/CARDS	500.00	500.00	500.00
Total Mercy Ministries	3,900.00	4,100.00	4,100.00
<u>Outreach Ministries</u>			
CONGREGATION OUTREACH	500.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
SYNOD: RPM&M	7,500.00	7,500.00	7,500.00
WEBSITE/CD RECORDINGS	400.00	500.00	500.00
SPECIAL MINISTRY PROJECTS	-	-	-
Total Outreach Ministries	8,400.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
Total Ministry Budget	19,350.00	22,550.00	22,250.00
Operations Budget			
<u>Administrative Expenses</u>			
GUEST SPEAKERS	900.00	900.00	900.00
BIBLE STUDY CHILD CARE	-	600.00	600.00
JOB RELATED INJURY ALLOCATION	2,500.00	-	-
PASTOR CONFERENCES/FAMILY CONFERENCES	1,750.00	3,000.00	1,700.00
PASTOR MILEAGE	-	-	1,800.00
PASTOR HOSPITALITY	-	-	2,000.00
PASTOR EXPENSES, BOOKS, & OFFICE SUPPLIES	3,000.00	3,200.00	2,000.00
POSTAGE	-	-	-
Total Administrative Expense	8,150.00	7,700.00	9,000.00

Orlando Reformed Presbyterian Church 2021 Ministries and Operational Budget

Line Item Description	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	Proposed 2021 Budget
<u>Taxes, Assessments, and Insurance</u>			
PRESBYTERY'S BUDGET ASSESSMENT	2,200.00	2,600.00	1,963.44
SYNOD: OPERATION ASSESSMENT	2,300.00	3,200.00	3,200.00
SYNOD: DELEGATE TRAVEL EXPENSE	500.00	500.00	500.00
SYNOD: DESIG PASTOR'S PENSION	-	-	-
INSURANCE-PROPERTY	7,000.00	6,000.00	6,500.00
TAX & CORP FEE	600.00	600.00	61.25
Total Taxes, Assessments, and Insurance	12,600.00	12,900.00	12,224.69
<u>Facilities Expense and Maintenance</u>			
CUSTODIAL SERVICE	4,898.00	4,898.00	4,898.00
LAWN/GROUNDS SERVICE	1,425.00	1,425.00	1,500.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES	1,600.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
KITCHEN SUPPLIES – FOOD	300.00	300.00	300.00
KITCHEN SUPPLIES	300.00	300.00	300.00
CLEANING SUPPLIES	250.00	250.00	400.00
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE	600.00	250.00	250.00
SANCTUARY FLOWERS	200.00	500.00	500.00
REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
TELEPHONE/INTERNET	1,200.00	1,900.00	1,900.00
UTILITIES	4,500.00	4,500.00	5,000.00
Total Facilities Expense and Maintenance	21,273.00	22,123.00	22,848.00
<u>One Time and Periodic Expenses</u>			
PROPERTY APPRAISAL	1,800.00	-	-
PRESBYTERY HOSTING	1,000.00	-	-
PASTOR HOME LOAN	-	-	35,000.00
PASTOR MOVING EXPENSES	-	-	20,000.00
GENEVANS HOSTING	-	-	500.00
ANNEX ROOF	-	20,000.00	20,000.00
ANNEX EXTERIOR REPAIRS	-	5,000.00	5,000.00
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION	-	1,000.00	1,000.00
SOUND EQUIPMENT	-	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total One Time Expenses	2,800.00	27,000.00	82,500.00
Total Pastor Compensation	\$62,500.00	\$72,500.00	\$82,150.67
Total Ministry Budget	\$19,350.00	\$22,550.00	\$22,250.00
Total Operations Budget	\$44,823.00	\$69,723.00	\$126,572.69
GRAND TOTAL BUDGET	\$126,673.00	\$164,773.00	\$230,973.36
Total Escrow		59,589.27	63,629.52
<u>Allocated Escrow</u>			
SANCTUARY ROOF		10,000.00	10,000.00
EXTERIOR PAINTING		5,000.00	5,000.00
BUILDING RESERVE		22,000.00	15,000.00
EQUIPMENT ESCROW	750.00	1,250.00	1,250.00
PASTORAL SABBATICAL		3,000.00	-
Unallocated Escrow	750.00	18,339.27	32,379.52

Session report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery, spring, 2021, at Sycamore RP Church, Kokomo, Indiana

From: Second RP Church, Indianapolis, 2020

Current events interrupted church life in 2020 but our pastors made good use of the interruptions.

Pastor Faris was preaching from Lamentations, noting how our cities emptied, as in the opening of the book: "How lonely sits the city that was full of people." He showed us how social isolation could be a warning. Social isolation is painful but could be God's way of warning what complete separation from the Lord would be like in the day of judgement.

James also preached from the book of Ruth, on how God uses hard times for larger purposes. In his series on the book of Daniel, he pointed us beyond current events to Christ and His Kingship, beyond yesterday's events, or last week's election, to see the bigger story of redemption. Jesus is King, no matter who sits on the current political throne.

Pastor Hart preached through Proverbs, which offered much timely wisdom on the pandemic. One example: We need discipline throughout life, in pandemics and after them. Chapter 27 helps prepare us for hard times. Tackle responsibilities day to day, verses 23-24, Give careful attention to your herds. That faithfulness prepares us for the bigger challenges.

We are thankful for Dean Filson's 20 years of service as an assistant to the pastors, with his retirement in 2020. We also are thankful for the 15 years of service by Jenny Blankenship Wilson, with her marriage to Jeremy and move to Georgia. We also are thankful for the tech services of Rich and Barbara Blum, who moved us to livestream very quickly in March, keeping our worship doors open electronically. We also thank Aaron Murray and Andrew Gilhooley for their good property work, as well as the David Blank family scout project on an old railroad track on the west side of our property.

The Presbytery Visitation Committee (Adam Niess, chairman, Philip McCollum, Stephen Shipp) came September 19-20 and provided us with helpful feedback and perspective on the growth they saw among us, as well as the big challenges.

We were sending in the Matthew 28:18-20 theme in 2020. Zach and Beth Smith were sent to South Sudan for Christ's building of the young church there. The B family was sent to California for training in preparation for world missions. Aaron and Mary Murray were sent to RPTS seminary in Pittsburgh, for training and a timely opportunity for a pastoral internship with George Gregory in the Hope Community RP church in Beaver Falls.

We have been "perplexed but not driven to despair," II Cor. 4, as several ministries have been limited to Zoom. The pandemic has helped us better understand Paul's desire to see people face to face, and we look forward to more face-to-face doors opening in 2021.

Some members have plugged into one another's lives in new ways, by phone calls or emails and especially a 7 a.m. daily prayer meeting by Zoom, hosted by elders Dean Filson and Richard Blankenship. These daily prayer warriors, and their occasional drop-ins, are praying through the

church membership day by day, as well as a rotation of prayer for individual members of the Indiana General Assembly.

We also have been thankful for the continuation of so many mid-week activities, including Bible studies; marriage and family study group with the Mausers; the Friendship connection group; midweek studies on Romans, prophecies of Christ and the Psalms, by Zoom; creative outdoor fellowship in the summer, including children's Sunday School; ESL by Zoom; youth classes and activities both indoors and outdoors; outdoor porch visits with senior saints. An example of a new online option – Choi-ha Cassell and her family and ESL friends had a Christmas celebration with a Christian friend in Beijing by zoom in December.

1. This past year the session held 19 meetings: 12 regular meetings and 7 special meetings. Total membership as of Dec. 31, 2020, was 233, with 178 communicant members and 55 covenant children.

2. The congregation observed the sacrament of Communion on 8 occasions.

3. We rejoiced in these births:

Everly Sage Cutter, daughter of Philip and Ashley Cutter, January 24, 2020

Alexander Justus Smith, son of Zach and Beth Smith, April 22, 2020

Elle Zariah Nwosu, daughter of Obi and Anna Nwosu, November 21, 2020

4. The sacrament of baptism was administered to:

Grant Edmund Filson, son of Eric and Alissa Filson, January 12, 2020

Everly Sage Cutter, daughter of Philip and Ashley Cutter, February 9, 2020

Joanna Ruth Turner, daughter of Ben and Laura Turner, February 23, 2020

Calvin Ross Olson, son of Justin and Leah Olson, March 1, 2020

Alexander Justus Smith, son of Zach and Beth Smith, June 21, 2020

5. We are thankful for these marriages: Jenny Blankenship and Jeremy Wilson, at 4800 N. Mich. Rd., June 6, 2020 by James Faris

Katie Witcher and Tyler Vanderveen, in Bristol, Tennessee, July 18, 2020 by James Faris

Rachel Dinkeldine and Andrew Gilhooley, at 4800 N. Mich. Rd., Aug. 7, 2020 by James Faris

6. Uree Kincaid went to be with the Lord, March 29, 2020.

7. Elder delegates to the Presbytery in Elkhart were: Dean Filson and Rich Blum, February 28-March 2. James Faris and Joel Hart went as teaching elders. Presbytery, September 11, 4800 N. Michigan Road, September 13, Russ Pulliam and Jeff Platt, ruling elders; James Faris and Joel Hart, teaching elders. Presbytery, October 23, at Southside RP: David Pulliam, Terry Magnuson, ruling elders; Joel Hart, teaching elder.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Session,

Russ Pulliam

Clerk of Session

SECOND REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF INDPLS

BALANCE SHEET

As of December 31, 2020

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
CHASE	
Chase Checking	483,920.45
Total CHASE	483,920.45
FIRST INTERNET	
First Internet Bank Money Market	1,919.09
Total FIRST INTERNET	1,919.09
First Internet CD	
FIB CD 2631 (matures 1/15/21)	45,008.41
FIB CD 7638 3.12.2021	78,170.10
Total First Internet CD	123,178.51
FIRST MERCHANTS BANK	111,799.86
Subsplash	13,696.68
Total Bank Accounts	\$734,514.59
Other Current Assets	
Payroll Corrections	0.00
Prepaid Expenditures	0.00
Uncategorized Asset	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$0.00
Total Current Assets	\$734,514.59
TOTAL ASSETS	\$734,514.59

**SECOND REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2021 PROPOSED BUDGET**

	Proposed 2021 Budget	Variance 2021 Budget to 2020 Budget	Variance 2021 Budget to 2020 Actual	FYE 12.31.2020 Actual 2020	Budget 2020	Actual 2020 vs. 2020 Budget	Actual 2019
Revenue							
Regular Contributions	\$600,000	\$75,000	(\$120,361)	\$720,361	\$525,000	\$195,361	\$525,346
Housing Contributions	\$10,800	\$2,796	(\$743)	\$11,543	\$8,004	\$3,539	\$9,305
Rebate Income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8
CD Interest	\$2,600	(\$600)	(\$333)	\$2,933	\$3,200	(\$267)	\$4,594
Interest	\$1,100	(\$950)	(\$779)	\$1,879	\$2,050	(\$171)	\$2,468
Total Revenue	\$614,500	\$76,246	(\$122,217)	\$736,717	\$538,254	\$198,463	\$541,721
Expenditures/Disbursements							
Activities							
A/V Equipment & Supplies	\$15,000	\$14,750	\$14,579	\$421	\$250	\$171	
Christian Education	\$1,400	\$200	\$352	\$1,048	\$1,200	(\$152)	\$1,370
College & Career	\$150	\$0	\$116	\$34	\$150	(\$116)	
ESL	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$500	(\$500)	\$564
Fellowship Activities	\$2,000	\$0	\$1,413	\$587	\$2,000	(\$1,413)	\$2,208
Friendship Bible Study	\$600	\$300	\$338	\$262	\$300	(\$38)	\$734
Hospitality	\$950	\$0	\$688	\$262	\$950	(\$688)	\$143
Womens', Ministry (New)	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Iron Man	\$300	\$250	\$300	\$0	\$50	(\$50)	\$240
Seminary Student Support (New)	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Library-Books	\$250	(\$35)	\$430	(\$180)	\$285	(\$465)	
Total Activities	\$23,450	\$17,765	\$21,015	\$2,435	\$5,685	(\$3,250)	\$5,259
Administrative							
Administrative Support							
Office Manager	\$30,600	(\$4,080)	(\$2,250)	\$32,850	\$34,680	(\$1,830)	\$34,894
Admin. Support	\$6,610	\$6,610	\$4,703	\$1,907	\$1,907	\$1,907	
Digital Media	\$6,000	\$3,000	(\$637)	\$6,637	\$3,000	\$3,637	\$3,128
Guest Ministry	\$2,000	\$0	\$600	\$1,400	\$2,000	(\$600)	\$2,909
Kitchen Supplies	\$1,400	\$0	\$1,300	\$100	\$1,400	(\$1,300)	\$1,545
Ministry Expense	\$16,925	\$300	\$1,945	\$14,980	\$16,625	(\$1,645)	\$15,846
Nursery	\$750	\$85	\$615	\$135	\$665	(\$530)	
Office Expense	\$15,000	\$0	(\$2,508)	\$17,508	\$15,000	\$2,508	\$16,621
Payroll Taxes	\$21,724	\$13,994	\$13,342	\$8,382	\$7,730	\$652	\$9,732
Pensions	\$14,661	(\$1,567)	(\$1,165)	\$15,826	\$16,228	(\$402)	\$18,000
Salary - Faris	\$111,460	\$4,340	\$4,340	\$107,120	\$107,120	\$0	\$104,000
Salary - Hart	\$71,800	\$2,790	\$2,790	\$69,010	\$69,010	\$0	\$67,000
Bookkeeping & Report Prep (New)	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Salary - Filson		(\$20,215)	(\$21,381)	\$21,381	\$20,215	\$1,166	\$47,800
Supplemental Comp.	\$22,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$7,900
Total Administrative	\$328,930	\$25,257	\$21,695	\$307,235	\$303,673	\$3,562	\$329,375
Denominational							
Great lakes/Gulf Presbytery Fund	\$5,975	(\$589)	(\$589)	\$6,564	\$6,564	\$0	\$8,093
RP Missions & Ministry	\$0	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
Synod Assessments	\$16,208	\$3,608	\$4,289	\$11,919	\$12,600	(\$681)	\$12,668
Total Denominational	\$22,183	(\$16,981)	(\$16,300)	\$38,483	\$39,164	(\$681)	\$40,761
Other Missions							
Other Missions	\$20,000	\$4,400	\$3,925	\$16,075	\$15,600	\$475	\$19,388
Total Other Missions	\$20,000	\$4,400	\$3,925	\$16,075	\$15,600	\$475	\$19,388
Properties							
Capital Improvements	\$67,000	\$19,700	\$19,657	\$47,343	\$47,300	\$43	\$35,990
Decorating (New)	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cleaning	\$10,400	\$1,040	(\$960)	\$11,360	\$9,360	\$2,000	\$9,120
Insurance & Legal Fees	\$13,000	\$4,150	(\$18,848)	\$31,848	\$8,850	\$22,998	\$7,827
Maintenance & Supplies	\$31,200	\$0	(\$727)	\$31,927	\$31,200	\$727	\$25,282
Property Taxes	\$12,200	\$2,300	\$2,560	\$9,640	\$9,900	(\$260)	\$9,955
Salary - Property Manager	\$41,500	(\$1,156)	(\$10,008)	\$51,508	\$42,656	\$8,852	\$41,820
Electric Utilities	\$18,000	(\$6,500)	\$6,391	\$11,609	\$24,500	(\$12,891)	\$25,732
Gas Utilities	\$5,000	\$1,300	\$116	\$4,884	\$3,700	\$1,184	\$4,915
Telephone & Internet Utilities	\$4,000	\$750	\$159	\$3,841	\$3,250	\$591	\$3,179
Trash Service	\$2,016	(\$1,534)	(\$264)	\$2,280	\$3,550	(\$1,270)	\$3,515
Water Utilities	\$7,800	\$400	(\$155)	\$7,955	\$7,400	\$555	\$7,857
Total Properties	\$215,116	\$23,450	\$920	\$214,196	\$191,666	\$22,530	\$175,192
Merit Increases Provision		\$0	\$0				
Total Expenditures	\$609,679	\$53,891	\$31,255	\$578,424	\$555,788	\$22,636	\$569,975
Net Revenue	\$4,821	\$22,355	(\$153,472)	\$158,293	(\$17,534)	\$175,827	(\$28,254)

ALLOCATION OF SUPPLEMENTAL COMPENSATION	
JAMES FARIS	\$10,000.00
JOEL HART	\$8,000.00
LAURIE TERPSTRA	\$1,500.00
LAUREN SAUNDERS	\$400.00
ANDREW GILHOOLEY	\$2,100.00
	\$22,000.00

RPC of Selma - Report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery

March 4-6, 2021

The Selma congregation has been nine and a half (9 ½) years without a pastor. That is a long time by any standard, yet the Lord has enabled us to persevere. There is great love among the saints and the desire to carry on with the work Jesus has given to us.

Mark Brown is concluding his year-long internship program with us, and has been unanimously upheld by the congregation and officers in the vote to issue him a call to pastor. He had an article published in the magazine "RP Witness", appeared on television and in online news as a part of a cross-church prayer event, and designed a website for the church. He looks forward to also applying his training as a Biblical counselor on behalf of the Church.

Mark Brown and longtime member James Martin, who has provided pulpit fill for some time, both joined the session as ruling elders, to the delight of the congregation.

We on the session are getting older, so we are anxious to get someone as a pastor. The addition of four new deacons last year—Charles Moorer, Lynne Brown, Regina Woodson, and Jeanne Evans, has boosted the morale of the congregation, and especially the session.

This has been a very difficult season because of the Covid-19 response. We've strived to continue worship, and being a smaller congregation worked to our advantage, because we never had to stop meeting in person. Everyone voluntarily masked and socially distanced. We eagerly look forward to resuming outreach and implementing the planned mid-week Bible study.

Our senior saints have remained home during this time, but maintained contact by visitation, and we miss them. New contacts in the community are arising even without intentional effort, and we thank God for that. Our little city is in flux, and we hope to be part of guiding her in the right direction.

Respectfully submitted,

Averette Woodson
Greg Woodson
George Evans, Clerk
Mark Brown
James Martin
Adam Niess, Provisional elder
Jerry O'Neill, Moderator

Total membership: 20; Average AM worship attendance: 10; Average PM worship attendance: N/A; Baptized members professing: 0; New members by profession: 0; Net change in total membership: -2 (by removal)

Recommendation 1: That Adam Niess be appointed provisional elder for another year.

Recommendation 2: That if Mark Brown passes his exams for ordination and accepts the call, Jerry O'Neill be permitted to step down as interim moderator.

2021 General Fund Budget (Reformed Presbyterian Church of Selma, AL)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	General	Category	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
2	Income						
3		Tithes and Offerings	\$26,000.00	\$24,620.00	\$26,000.00	\$25,030.00	\$26,000.00
4		Open Collection	\$1,600.00	\$1,291.83	\$1,600.00	\$715.01	\$1,600.00
5		Courtesy Offering	\$300.00	\$207.30	\$300.00	\$201.73	\$300.00
6		Other Income	\$2,500.00	\$1,979.84	\$2,500.00	\$4,487.27	\$2,500.00
7		Transfer from Money Market	\$16,195.58	\$22,695.58	\$25,694.61	\$19,848.00	\$34,825.90
8	Total		\$46,595.58	\$50,794.55	\$56,094.61	\$50,282.01	\$65,225.90
9							
10	Expenses						
11	Pastoral Support (Mark Brown)						
12		Pastor's Salary	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$16,800.00
13		Health & Medical Insurance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,200.00
14		Cell Phone Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$540.00
15		Manse Utilities	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,800.00
16		Office Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$480.00
17		Discretionary Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$210.00
18		Book Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
19		Pastor's Pension Assessment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,200.00
20		Synod and Presbytery Expenses (Averette)	\$0.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
21		Synod and Presbytery Expenses (Greg)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$0.00
22		Synod and Presbytery Expenses (Mark)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,400.00
23		Mileage Allowance (Church Related)-.56 per mile	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
24		Conference Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
25	Total		\$0.00	\$1,200.00	\$12,800.00	\$10,300.00	\$32,830.00
26							
27	Congregation Life & Worship						
28		Guest Ministers	\$7,500.00	\$7,265.00	\$3,500.00	\$3,250.00	\$1,000.00
29		Travel/Lodging for Guest Ministers	\$1,600.00	\$355.00	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
30		Sabbath School Materials	\$1,800.00	\$1,608.81	\$1,800.00	\$1,298.52	\$1,350.00
31		Communion Assistant	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
32		Witness Magazine Subscriptions	\$200.00	\$125.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
33		Bulletin Covers/Inserts	\$300.00	\$385.29	\$400.00	\$295.80	\$300.00
34	Total		\$11,700.00	\$9,739.10	\$7,600.00	\$4,844.32	\$3,050.00
35							
36	Instruction						
37		Vacation Bible School	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
38		Special Events & Youth Groups	\$600.00	\$444.58	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$450.00
39	Total		\$600.00	\$444.58	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$450.00
40							
41	Fellowship						
42		Congregational Dinners	\$300.00	\$639.50	\$300.00	\$248.00	\$300.00
43	Total		\$300.00	\$639.50	\$300.00	\$248.00	\$300.00
44							
45	Local Ministries						
46		Youth Groups	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
47		Youth Conference Exp.	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
48		Outreach & Discretionary Funds	\$1,400.00	\$300.00	\$1,200.00	\$250.00	\$400.00
49		Courtesies	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$350.00
50	Total		\$1,750.00	\$300.00	\$1,550.00	\$250.00	\$750.00
51							

2021 General Fund Budget (Reformed Presbyterian Church of Selma, AL)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	General	Category	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
52	Denominational Responsibilities						
53		Mission and Ministries	\$1,000.00	\$1,718.99	\$1,000.00	\$625.00	\$750.00
54	Total		\$1,000.00	\$1,718.99	\$1,000.00	\$625.00	\$750.00
55							
56	Presbytery Responsibilities						
57		Presbytery Assessments	\$569.57	\$569.57	\$436.67	\$436.37	\$408.86
58	Total		\$569.57	\$569.57	\$436.67	\$436.37	\$408.86
59							
60	Synod Responsibilities (23 Comm Mbrs)						
61		Synod's Assessment	\$954.80	\$1,050.00	\$1,112.92	\$1,113.00	\$1,113.00
62	Total		\$954.80	\$1,050.00	\$1,112.92	\$1,113.00	\$1,113.00
63							
64	Charitable Contributions						
65		American Red Cross	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$150.00
66		Ruth J. Brooks Humanitarian Scholarship	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
67		The Miller-Childers Center (Foodbank)	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$250.00	\$250.00
68		American Cancer Society	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$250.00
69		National Council of Negro Women	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
70		United Way	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
71		R.P. Seminary	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
72	Total		\$1,600.00	\$50.00	\$1,650.00	\$600.00	\$1,250.00
73							
74	Other Expenses						
75		Moving Expenses for Tentative Pastor	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
76	Total		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
77							
78	Property Maintenance & Improvement						
79		Property/Van Insurance	\$4,500.00	\$4,695.50	\$5,200.00	\$5,117.75	\$5,224.00
80		Church Utilities	\$7,000.00	\$9,574.85	\$10,000.00	\$10,695.20	\$7,000.00
81		Janitorial Services	\$2,900.00	\$2,900.04	\$2,900.04	\$2,900.04	\$2,900.04
82		Van Repair	\$1,500.00	\$772.51	\$1,000.00	\$30.00	\$250.00
83		Van Gasoline (Church Related)	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
84		Church & Pars. Improv.	\$10,000.00	\$16,833.48	\$6,000.00	\$7,707.38	\$7,000.00
85		Copier/Supplies	\$400.00	\$1,043.07	\$400.00	\$730.89	\$750.00
86		Parsonage Development	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
87		Unallocated Operating Costs	\$1,621.21	\$0.00	\$1,344.98	\$600.00	\$1,200.00
88	Total		\$28,121.21	\$35,819.45	\$27,045.02	\$27,781.26	\$24,324.04
89							
90	Total Expenses		\$46,595.58	\$51,531.19	\$56,094.61	\$49,197.95	\$65,225.90
91	Total Income		\$46,595.58	\$50,794.55	\$56,094.61	\$50,282.01	\$65,225.90
92	Difference (L84-L85)		\$0.00	\$736.64	\$0.00	\$1,084.06	\$0.00
93							
94	Budget		\$46,595.58	\$50,794.55	\$56,094.61	\$50,282.01	\$65,225.90
95							
96	Income vs Expenses Surplus					\$1,084.06	
97	Income vs Expenses Shortfall			\$736.64			
98							
99							
100	(Synod's assessment is calculated as 2% of the congregation's prior year undesignated receipts as determined by						
101	Synod's statistics calculations).						

Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church

**"But you who held fast to the
LORD your God are alive
today, every one of you."
Deuteronomy 4:4 (NKJV)**

**Annual Congregational
Report to Presbytery
Spring Meeting, 2021**

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

We are grateful to the Lord for His abundant mercies to our congregation over the past year. Here are some of the highlights.

1. Starting in March, we replaced our existing worship schedule (morning worship, fellowship meal, afternoon worship) with morning and evening services (10am, 6pm), since only a tiny handful of our members live at a great distance from the church.
2. By God's grace, we were able to maintain public worship for the entire year with zero cancellations,¹ zero infections, zero mandatory shutdowns, zero controversy, and quite a few visitors.
3. Our Facebook livestream provided members with the option of worshiping from home as needed, while delivering God's Word to hungry souls previously outside our sphere of ministry; Zoom was used for midweek and Sabbath meetings involving prayer, Bible study, catechism, sermon discussion, and book discussion.
4. This year we performed seven baptisms (2 Adults, 5 children) and observed communion five times, twice in the open air.
5. On April 12 we baptized an entire family of (now ex-) Mormons who began attending during the early stages of the pandemic, and we are currently discipling a newly converted young man who began attending in December and desires to be baptized.
6. Pastor Kuehner continued his preaching ministry at a Detroit rehab center on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and joined OPC pro-life evangelist Andrew Belanger of OneLife4Life (with other

¹ Recognizing that every congregation's circumstances are different, we heartily rejoice in the many ways by which God's people have "held fast" to Him throughout the pandemic, regardless of their ability to attend in-person public worship services during that time.

MEMBERSHIP

Communicant: 42 (-3)

Baptized: 16 (+2)

Grand Total: 58 (-1)

ATTENDANCE*

AM Worship: 49 (-9)

PM Worship: 35 (-10)

PROFESSIONS

New Converts: 2

Covenant Children: 0

In Lieu of Transfer: 0

BAPTISMS

Adults: 2

Children: 5

OTHER ACTIONS

Transfers (in): 0

Transfers (out): 4

Excommunications: 1

Deaths: 1

* In-person attendees only, not including live-stream participants.

likeminded saints) in evangelizing local abortion clinics, through which the Lord has graciously spared 70+ lives since late 2019.

7. On March 30, we bid a temporary farewell to Elder Emeritus (and nursing home resident) Dr. Bruce Adams, who passed into glory at the age of 93 following a (non-virus-related) heart attack.
8. This year we celebrated two weddings (with another expected in Spring 2021) and rejoiced with four of our households as they welcomed healthy newborn covenant children into the world, including the birth of Dr. Adams' great grandson.
9. In June, one of our most committed families (the Lindsays) moved to Kansas due to unemployment, and was later transferred.
10. In December, we took the painful step of excommunicating Paul Price (and dismissing his wife and son) due to ongoing unrepentant sexual sin and abandonment of his church vows.
11. Our **total active membership** presently stands at **58**, with an **average in-person morning worship attendance** of **49** (Avg: 4 visitors), and an **average in-person evening worship attendance** of **35** (Avg: 3 visitors). Many others regularly tune in via the live-stream.
12. Our membership continues to be on the younger side, with 57% our **communicant** membership and 63% of our **total** membership under the age of 35.
13. Despite several costly and unforeseen expenses, a boost in congregational giving (including unexpected donations from appreciative "live-streamers") left us with a deficit of only \$408.
14. Household visits occur during our class time on the Lord's Day.
15. Thanks to Wendy Hughes (et al), our pastor's newly renovated study has allowed him to adapt to his ever-increasing workload.
16. We are humbled and thankful to the Lord for His rich blessing, and remain eager to see what He will do next, as we continue to seek and serve Him in the year ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Session of the Southfield RP Church

Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church
Treasurer's Report

BALANCE SHEET - AS OF 12/31/20

	<u>YTD as of</u> <u>12/31/2020</u>	<u>2020</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Budget</u>
1 BALANCE FORWARD	24,882.61	24,882.61		24,474.53
2 TOTAL INCOME:	123,578.35	116,230.00	106%	120,100.00
3 TOTAL EXPENSES:	123,986.43	119,202.15	104%	124,982.43
4 ENDING BALANCE	24,474.53	21,910.46		19,592.10

INCOME STATEMENT - December, 2020

5 INCOME:				
6 Tithes	121,366.60	116,000.00	105%	120,000.00
7 5th Sabbath Offerings	1,915.00			
8 Interest - Certificates of Deposit and Savings	284.75	230.00	124%	100.00
9 Other	12.00			
10 TOTAL INCOME:	123,578.35	116,230.00	106%	120,100.00

11 EXPENSES

12 BUSINESS EXPENSES:				
13 RPCNA SYNOD & PRESBYTERY:				
14 Delegates to Synod	0.00	450.00	0%	450.00
15 Synod's Assm't (2.2% of receipts)	2,696.00	2,720.00	99%	2,700.00
16 Presbytery Assessment	1,416.15	1,416.15	100%	1,445.43
17 SOUTHFIELD:				
18 Worker's Comp. Insurance	393.00	425.00	92%	400.00
19 Church Business Expenses	76.71	100.00	77%	100.00
20 Pastor's Expense Account	3,078.64	3,150.00	98%	3,200.00
21 TOTAL BUSINESS EXPENSES:	7,660.50	8,261.15	93%	8,295.43

22 BUILDING EXPENSES:

23 UTILITIES:				
24 Electric	1,370.97	1,450.00	95%	1,500.00
25 Natural Gas	889.49	1,080.00	82%	1,000.00
26 Internet	875.40	840.00	104%	920.00
27 City Water & Sewer	550.40	520.00	106%	520.00
28 PROPERTY INSURANCE:	3,891.00	3,700.00	105%	3,900.00
29 CONTRACTED SERVICES:				
30 Gutter Cleaning - Parsonage & Church	0.00	0.00		
31 Janitorial Services & Supplies	3,209.55	3,900.00	82%	3,900.00
32 Lawnmowing Service	1,590.00	1,625.00	98%	1,700.00
33 Parking Lot & Drive Seal Coating	0.00			0.00
34 Snow Plowing	1,100.00	1,000.00	110%	1,200.00
35 MAINTENANCE & REPAIR:				
36 Building	4,109.54	800.00	514%	800.00
37 Equipment/Appliances/Furniture	2,527.94	800.00	316%	2,000.00
38 Materials/Supplies	408.06	100.00	408%	100.00
39 Groundskeeping/Landscaping	86.23	250.00	34%	250.00
40 BUILDING FUND:	1,650.00	0.00		3,000.00
41 TOTAL BUILDING EXPENSES:	22,258.58	16,065.00	139%	20,790.00

		<u>YTD as of</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>% of</u>	<u>2021</u>
		<u>12/31/2020</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>
42	MINISTRY EXPENSES:				
43	SOUTHFIELD:				
44	Social Committee	522.93	1,000.00	52%	500.00
45	Education	0.00	50.00	0%	50.00
46	Library Expenses	28.00	28.00	100%	28.00
47	Guest Preaching	1,397.55	3,000.00	47%	2,500.00
48	Church Web-Site Expenses	835.13	530.00	158%	625.00
49	Outreach/Evangelism (add to Fund)	0.00	0.00		0.00
50	RP Conference Travel Expenses	0.00	300.00	0%	300.00
51	REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN GIVING:				
52	RP Missions & Ministries	5,186.00	4,900.00	106%	5,000.00
53	RP Home	2,000.00	1,900.00	105%	2,000.00
54	RP Seminary	2,000.00	1,900.00	105%	2,000.00
55	RP Global Missions	2,000.00	1,900.00	105%	2,000.00
56	Home Missions	950.00	900.00	106%	1,000.00
57	Reformation Translation Fellowship	0.00	0.00		0.00
58	Other (Includes desig. gifts)	0.00	0.00		0.00
59	FIFTH SABBATH OFFERINGS:	1,915.00	0.00		0.00
60	NON-REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN GIVING:				
61	Choices Prenancy Center	100.00	100.00	100%	100.00
62	Other	0.00	0.00		0.00
63	MINISTRY OF MERCY(add to Mercy Fnd)	0.00	0.00		0.00
64	TOTAL MINISTRY EXPENSES:	16,934.61	16,508.00	103%	16,103.00
65	PASTORAL COMPENSATION EXPENSES:				
66	Pastor:				
67	Salary	41,750.00	41,750.00	100%	43,550.00
68	Housing Allowance	10,000.00	10,000.00	100%	10,000.00
69	Utilities	5,864.82	5,600.00	105%	5,700.00
70	Health Savings Account	7,099.92	7,100.00	100%	7,250.00
71	Pension Fund-Employer Cont.(10%)	4,500.00	4,500.00	100%	4,600.00
72	Conference Costs	0.00	1,500.00	0%	500.00
73	In Lieu of Social Security	7,918.00	7,918.00	100%	8,194.00
74	TOTAL PASTORAL COMPENSATION EXP:	77,132.74	78,368.00	98%	79,794.00
75	TOTAL EXPENSES:	123,986.43	119,202.15	104%	124,982.43
76	NET INCOME(LOSS)	(408.08)	(2,972.15)		(4,882.43)

OTHER FUNDS

		<u>Cemetery</u>	<u>Mercy</u>	<u>Improvement Fund</u>	<u>Outreach/ Evang. Fund</u>	<u>Payroll Tax Liability Account</u>
1	Balance 01/01/2020	11,683.46	353.44	(1,124.16)	981.85	0.00
2	+ Contrib. or Interest	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
3	+ From General Fund	0.00	0.00	1,900.00	0.00	100.98
4	- Expenditures	2,209.99	47.67	777.67	508.48	100.98
5	Balance 12/31/20	11,473.47	305.77	(1.83)	473.37	0.00

SUMMARY OF ASSETS

Balance 12/31/20

	<u>Bank</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Issue Date</u>	<u>Maturity</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Designation</u>
6	Bk Of America	SV acct.	12/12/19	none	0.02	13,922.51	
7	Live Oak Bank	12 mth.	09/19/20	09/19/21	0.60	10,253.28	CD# 115
8	Live Oak Bank	12 mth.	05/05/20	05/12/21	1.50	10,095.91	CD# 946
9	Southfield checking account balance as of 12/31/20					2,453.61	
10	TOTAL CASH BALANCES					36,725.31	
11	General Fund					24,474.53	
12	Cemetery Fund					11,473.47	
13	Mercy Fund					305.77	
14	Improvement Fund					(1.83)	
15	Outreach/Evangelism Fund					473.37	
16	Payroll Tax Liability Account					0.00	
17	TOTAL FUNDS					36,725.31	

SUMMARY OF NOTES RECEIVABLE

	<u>Type</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Check #</u>	<u>Date of Loan</u>	<u>Total Loan</u>	<u>Amt. Repaid</u>	<u>Bal. Due</u>
18	None at this time						

SUMMARY OF NOTES PAYABLE

19	None at this time						
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Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southside Indianapolis

Report to Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery – Spring 2021

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.

For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

James 4:13-15

Fathers and Brethren,

James says "Come now..." reminding us that we need to repent of arrogant presumptions regarding our plans and recognize our times are not in our hands. This past year has reminded us of our need for submissive dependence on our all-governing, all-wise Father.

Session met in constituted court twenty-one times during the year with three by video conference. In addition to the monthly stated meetings, nine special meetings were held for planning ministry initiatives, for communicant membership interviews, to conduct an election for ruling elders, and to ordain and install John Cavanaugh as ruling elder. In the March meeting, session set aside time to meet jointly with the deacon board to review and discuss ministry initiatives. At this meeting, it was also agreed to appoint a COVID-19 Response Committee to advise session on safety measures for the congregation during the coronavirus pandemic. Session is grateful to the committee (Chris Eddy, Pam Mattox, Rafa Perez, and Jerry Porter) for their help and advice and grateful to the deacons for their help implementing the protocols. Additionally, special appreciation goes to John Cavanaugh for his leadership in researching and acquiring the technology that enabled livestreaming of our worship services and hosting video conferences for meetings and Bible studies.

Public Services

The congregation found the preaching of God's word particularly sweet last year, undiminished by bitter providences brought by the Lord. Pastor Hanson's exposition of Numbers showed God's faithful provision for His church in the wilderness and Pastor Wise's exposition of The Book of Revelation displayed the glory of God and assured us of ultimate reality.

Session is thankful we were able to maintain worship services throughout the year despite the coronavirus pandemic maximum attendance restrictions placed on assembled gatherings. Adjustments included making video livestreaming of morning and evening services available, splitting the morning service into two services to increase physical distancing in the auditorium as attendance limits were increased, holding evening services outdoors when weather permitted, and hosting virtual fellowship times between the morning services via video conference software.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed eight times on the second Lord's Day of most months throughout the year but was suspended March through June due to the pandemic. The sacrament of baptism was administered to seven covenant children: Atticus Job Gwaltney, Elliott Reid Gwaltney, Ailie Elaine Hart, Nathan Michael Heaton, Benjamin Richard Kleyn, Caleb Paul Sturm; and Jane Margaret Sturm.

In addition to corporate prayer in the worship services, a mid-week prayer meeting was held most Wednesday evenings throughout the year, via video conference as necessary. The meeting was led by the pastors and occasionally by pastoral interns.

Pastoral Care

Session conducted elder visitations with a significant portion of the congregation in January and February before further visits needed to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

At the end of 2020, the total membership of the congregation stood at 263. The communicant membership was 192, an increase of nineteen, and the baptized membership was 71, an increase of one, from 2019.

The following twenty-seven individuals united with Southside RPC as communicant members: Daniel Barnard by transfer from Calvary OPC, Tallahassee FL; Chris, Amy and Sylvia Eddy, by transfer from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis IN; Cameron Elder; Ken and Lisa Gomes; Burley and Taelor Gwaltney; Sarah Heaton; Marjorie Main; Josiah Manring; Megan (Sun) Manring by transfer from Free Reformed Church of Hamilton, Ancaster, Ontario; Joe and Kathy Marcisz by transfer from Marion RPC, Marion IN; Sam, Rebekah, Archie, and Titus McKissick by transfer from Christ Church RPC, Indianapolis IN; and Jim McMahan by transfer from Sparta RPC, Sparta IL; Aaron Scott by transfer from Christ Presbyterian Church, Owensboro KY; Ian, Deanna, Forrest, Ethan, Janet, and Kathryn Wise by transfer from Pageland Mission Church, Pageland SC.

In addition to the seven baptized children mentioned above, the following four covenant children were added to the roll as baptized members: Jasper and Felix Eddy by transfer from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis IN; Islay and Greta McKissick by transfer from Christ Church RPC, Indianapolis IN.

Tim Erney was transferred to Columbus RPC, Columbus IN at his request. The following members were dismissed from the rolls: Jesse and Jenna Burgess along with their baptized children Caleb, Cora, and Knox; Jonathan and Andrea Elliott along with their baptized children Ethan, Joshua, Samuel, Matthew, and Elizabeth; and Lorna Peden.

Our two dear sisters, Betty Ray (on 1/24) and Charlene Rider (on 11/21), were transferred to the Church Triumphant upon their deaths.

There were six births during the year: Ailie Elaine Hart (2/24), Caleb Paul Sturm (4/23), Benjamin Richard Kleyn (5/30), Sean Aaron Mauser (7/28), Jane Margaret Sturm (9/4), and Abigail Elise Manring (12/31). There were two weddings: David Manring and Megan Sun (3/21) and Timothy Erney and Jenessa Decker (10/17).

Participation in the Higher Courts and Wider Church Ministry

Presbytery - Our ruling elder delegates to the Spring meeting of Presbytery held at Elkhart RPC were John Hanson and Mark Hart. They also served as our delegates at other special meetings of Presbytery in September and October.

Pastor Hanson served as the Presbytery moderator and as moderator of the Louisville Commission. Jim Bishop continues to serve as Presbytery Treasurer. Mark Hart serves as the Presbytery Assistant Treasurer.

Synod – Pastor Hanson served as President of the Board of RP Global Missions.

Training

Joe Smith and Jonathan Sturm began full-time study at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS) this past fall. Abel Manring continued in an exploratory pastoral internship at Southside. Session has included funds in the 2021 budget to promote the new RPTS Ruling Elders Training Program for men who are considering or preparing for eldership, as well as current elders.

Respectfully submitted,
Southside Indianapolis RPC Session

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southside Indianapolis
Proposed Budget for 2021 - General Fund

	Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Actual 2020	Budget 2021	% Chg-21 Budget vs. 20 Budget
RECEIPTS					
Total contributions	\$505,293	\$480,000	\$566,338	\$500,000	4.2%
Other income	202,483	2,000	34,147	2,000	0.0%
Total receipts	707,776	482,000	600,485	502,000	
EXPENDITURES					
CONGREGATION					
101.0 Pastor's Salary	97,234	120,434	120,434	125,059	3.8%
102.0 Parsonage Allowance	42,159	63,612	63,612	65,941	3.7%
104.0 Pastor's Pension	6,092	18,800	18,800	18,800	0.0%
105.0 Secretarial Services	12,802	15,390	8,740	16,020	4.1%
106.0 Worker's Compensation	1,259	1,510	1,343	1,555	3.0%
107.0 Ministry Expenses	3,566	12,900	7,542	7,950	-38.4%
108.0 Church Office	5,841	7,250	5,042	7,250	0.0%
109.0 Benevolence	1,275	1,000	89	1,000	0.0%
110.0 Pastoral Intern	16,000	6,000	4,000	3,000	-50.0%
112.0 Traffic/Security Officer	4,695	8,100	5,307	10,800	33.3%
113.0 Child Protection Background Checks	89	560	387	560	0.0%
Sub-total	191,012	255,556	235,296	257,935	0.9%
EDUCATION					
201.0 Sabbath School	3,573	3,750	1,208	3,750	0.0%
203.0 Youth Group	1,154	1,000	688	1,000	0.0%
204.0 Conferences & Guest Ministry	10,909	4,000	350	4,000	0.0%
205.0 Fellowship Activities	3,865	5,800	2,294	5,800	0.0%
206.0 Library	90	450	84	450	0.0%
207.0 Seminary Student Assistance	-	4,488	4,488	4,500	-
208.0 Ruling Elder Training	-	-	-	3,000	-
Sub-total	19,591	19,488	9,112	22,500	15.5%
MISSIONS					
301.0 Local Evangelism	870	3,000	1,362	3,000	0.0%
302.0 Missionary Support	45,000	48,300	62,300	51,400	6.4%
304.0 Ministry of Mercy	5,904	6,000	6,000	6,000	0.0%
305.0 Special Missions Projects	-	1,500	-	1,500	0.0%
307.0 Local Ministries	6,500	4,900	4,900	5,800	18.4%
Sub-total	58,274	63,700	74,562	67,700	6.3%
DENOMINATION					
401.0 Presbytery Assessment	7,359	6,288	6,288	5,774	-8.2%
403.0 Synod Assessment	12,506	10,106	15,571	11,327	12.1%
405.0 Synod/Presby. Expenses	331	1,500	218	1,500	0.0%
407.0 R.P. Missions/Ministry	22,500	24,000	44,000	24,700	2.9%
Sub-total	42,696	41,894	66,077	43,301	3.4%
PROPERTY					
503.0 Maintenance & Supplies	28,343	37,680	28,553	38,765	2.9%
504.0 Capital Purchases	7,832	20,000	8,230	20,000	0.0%
505.0 Utilities	16,622	17,280	16,228	16,880	-2.3%
506.0 Insurance	8,771	8,975	7,332	9,425	5.0%
510.0 Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	61,568	83,935	60,342	85,070	1.4%
Total expenditures	373,142	464,573	445,390	476,506	2.6%
Net increase/(dec.) in General Fund Assets	334,634	17,427	155,095	25,494	
Other receipts	369,292	-	2,993	-	
Other expenses	-	-	(15,132)	-	
Total increase/(dec.) in Net Assets	\$703,926	\$17,427	\$142,956	\$25,494	

SYCAMORE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH REPORT
Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Mar 4-6, 2021 (Kokomo, IN)

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:33-36

The elders of Sycamore have sensed the majesty of God declared in this doxology. Amid a restless world, under a global pandemic, with more time to assemble in protest and rioting, and on the heels of a very controversial election, exposing the deep division present in our country, we have found ourselves continually turning to those words of comfort and faith from Psalm 11:4, “The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.”

<u>2020 Congregational Stats:</u>	
2018 Total Members: 35C/30B	65
2019 Total Members: 36C/29B	65
Ave Attendance AM Worship:	57
Ave Attendance PM Worship:	37
Baptized Members Professing:	0
New Members by Profession:	0
Net Change in Total Membership:	(-3/+3)

Due to many restrictions and COVID-19 risk management, ministry and fellowship has seen challenges new to us, though not new to the visible church throughout the ages, and certainly not overwhelming or insurmountable to our Savior. In fact, the challenges of 2020 have provided many opportunities to demonstrate love for, patience with, and service to one another.

Statistically speaking, the Session constituted as a court **10** times in 2020 and met informally many other times for counsel and discussion. We currently have **36** communicant members and **29** baptized members. We witnessed the Lord add Heidi Dinkledine and Sandy and Max Richardson (and witnessed Max’s baptism!). We transferred Lynn, Joy, and Baylie Hullett to Mt Gilead Baptist Church. Though it was difficult to take an accurate attendance with Zoom, our averages turnout was approximately **57** people in the morning service, and **37** in the evening teaching service (exact same numbers as last year).

Regarding our preaching & teaching ministry, we have heard from the mouth of God in His Word as we have walked through a 7-sermon series entitled, “Amid Plagues”. We also considered 9 sermons on “Anger and its Remedies” before we came back to Romans 9-11 and presently find ourselves halfway through chapter 12. Guest preachers included Steven Work, Joe Smith, and Jason Camery. We celebrated the Lord’s Supper 4 times this year due to COVID restrictions. In our evening teaching service, we considered the Lives of Elijah and Elisha, as well as a series on Meditating on the Bible. We also considered how to lovingly respond to the unbiblical practice of Lent and the theology of the Incarnation. We sang consecutively through Psalms 109D to 119M as a congregation in our evening service.

A regular teaching schedule is kept during the week as well as weekly Biblical counseling. Our pastor is also involved in tutoring the ‘7th grade’ community for Classical Conversations each Wednesday. We are tied into the ministry of the Pregnancy Resource Center, Lifeline Family Services, and Turning Point, a social service for families and individuals affected by the trials that come through addiction.

We trust and pray that as we experience our God’s benediction of His love, grace, fellowship, & trial, we would continue to “know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose’ which is “to be conformed to the image of His Son”

SYCAMORE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2020-21 Financials

100 Income	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Proposal
101 Interest	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
102 Tithes and Offerings	\$100,000.00	\$101,580.89	\$106,600.00
103 Flow-In (Anonymous & RP Witness)		\$480.00	
104 Building Emergency Fund		\$0.00	
105 Compassion International		\$10.58	
107 Other Income		\$0.00	
108 Building Improvements		\$0.00	
110 Building Cleaning		\$1,750.00	
111 Special Gifts (Mercy Ministry)		\$2,750.00	
Subtotal	\$100,000.00	\$104,341.47	\$106,600.00
200 Administration			
201 Administration	\$3,000.00	\$5,012.96	\$3,000.00
202 Christian Education	\$1,200.00	\$1,022.49	\$1,200.00
203 Library Education	\$250.00	\$221.55	\$250.00
205 Anderson Ministry Expense	\$2,000.00	\$2,004.95	\$2,000.00
206 Miscellaneous	\$100.00	\$18.00	\$100.00
207 Gift/Donation	\$750.00	\$1,118.00	\$750.00
208 Speakers	\$1,500.00	\$450.00	\$1,500.00
209 Media		\$2,952.71	
Subtotal	\$8,800.00	\$12,800.66	\$8,800.00
300 Congregation			
301 Fellowship & Hospitality	\$1,000.00	\$343.96	\$1,000.00
303 Mercy	\$1,500.00	\$1,848.56	\$1,500.00
304 Memorials	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
305 Outreach & Evangelism	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
306 Compassion International	\$456.00	\$456.00	\$456.00
310 Sermon Audio	\$360.00	\$459.40	\$480.00
311 Pastoral Continuing Education	\$500.00	\$575.11	\$500.00
323 Conference and Missions	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$800.00
Subtotal	\$4,816.00	\$3,683.03	\$4,936.00
400 Denomination & Missions			
403 Presbytery Assessments	\$781.00	\$781.00	\$1,200.00
405 RPM&M	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
407 Synod Assessments	\$2,359.00	\$2,359.00	\$2,240.00
410 Synod	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
Subtotal	\$4,740.00	\$4,340.00	\$5,040.00

500 Pastor			
501 Health	\$8,000.00	\$7,999.92	\$10,000.00
502 Housing	\$19,000.00	\$18,999.96	\$19,000.00
503 Salary	\$23,132.00	\$23,132.04	\$26,132.00
504 Pension	\$5,200.00	\$5,200.00	\$5,200.00
Subtotal	\$55,332.00	\$55,331.92	\$60,332.00
600 Building			
602 Domestic Supplies	\$1,000.00	\$642.23	\$1,000.00
603 Maintenance	\$3,500.00	\$1,804.67	\$3,500.00
604 Building Emergency Fund	\$4,030.00	\$4,029.96	\$2,600.00
605 Insurance	\$3,782.00	\$4,098.00	\$3,792.00
607 Utilities	\$8,000.00	\$7,088.24	\$8,000.00
608 Building Improvements	\$6,000.00	\$5,145.59	\$6,000.00
610 Building Cleaning	\$0.00	\$1,750.00	\$2,600.00
703 Flow Out (Anonymous & RP Witness)	\$0.00	\$480.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	\$26,312.00	\$22,808.69	\$24,892.00
Total	\$100,000.00	\$98,964.30	\$106,600.00
Over/Under Budget	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>+\$5,377.17</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
2020 Ending Balance		\$33,554.18	
2019 Ending Balance	\$28,177.01		

Terre Haute Reformed Presbyterian Church

Terre Haute, Indiana

Report to Presbytery

Spring Meeting 2021

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Greetings in Christ's name from Terre Haute, Indiana. The Gospel ministry continues here, and we are encouraged. As a newly organized congregation, we have our growing pains, as we work to establish the systems and functions of an established church without losing the organic character of a church plant. But our pains pale against our passion and Spirit-given energy for the future.

One thing we have done over the past year is establish "ministry teams" (a.k.a. committees) to manage and encourage efforts and activities in the various areas of ministry. We have four teams now: Facilities, Church Life, Outreach, and Missions.

Our Missions team is the newest of the four, by which we hope to stay informed of RPCNA missionary work both at home and abroad. We have a weekly missions prayer insert in the bulletin and some visuals posted around the building to keep us thinking and praying missionally.

Our Outreach Team continues to prompt us as a congregation to think about and seek numerical growth, given our conviction that we are here not just to maintain but to multiply. The team is currently conducting a survey to discern "What People See" as they come into our building and engage us as a church. By this effort we hope to do a better job of receiving, welcoming, and enfolding newcomers.

Our Church Life Team has done some great work setting up efforts that other churches already have in place, like gathering the church in fellowship beyond our Lord's Day worship service, communicating with each other throughout the week, and giving gifts of recognition and appreciation to those coming into the church and for special occasions like baptisms and significant birthdays/anniversaries. A recent accomplishment is that we now have an updated, pictorial directory for the church.

Our Facilities Team has excelled at keeping the building functional, comfortable, and conducive to weekly ministry. Our small, nondescript building keeps us humble, but we are thankful for it, and the team works hard to maximize its effectiveness for ministry.

Otherwise, Session itself directly oversees worship and educational ministries. We have only a morning worship service, although we gather again online using Zoom for what we call "Afternoon Assembly" at 3:00 pm each Lord's Day, which includes a Psalm explanation, Psalm singing, and prayer. Session desires to see a full second service in the future and is currently conducting a survey of members to discern this possibility. Educational ministry includes Sunday School before the morning worship service for children and adults. Our two adult classes, including the few high school students we have, are these: 1. a study of the Heidelberg Catechism; and 2. a discussion group

reading C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. Our children's classes make use of Sunday School curriculum from Great Commission Publications. We also have a Thursday Evening Bible Study meeting at church with the option to join and participate via Zoom.

As far as Lord's Day worship, we approach God in Christ each Sunday at 10:45 am, serving and celebrating the Lord's Supper on the first Lord's Day of each month. Our current ongoing sermon series is the book of Genesis, and we have taken breaks for shorter topical series, one on thanksgiving, another on sanctification, and most recently, on the "doctrine of the new," looking at things in Scripture that are said to be "new" (new creation, new covenant, new commandment, and new communion), to celebrate the new year in January.

We welcome visitors, both from the community and from Presbytery. Why not choose a Lord's Day in the near future and come visit and encourage us at Terre Haute RPC? We love you and hope to stay close to you, our brothers and sisters throughout Presbytery.

Here are our membership stats for 2020:

Current Professing Members: 27

New Professing in 2020: 7

Transfers In in 2020: 4

Current Baptized Members: 13

New Baptized in 2020: 2

Blessings to you in Christ,
The Session of Terre Haute RPC

THRPC Budget Report 2021

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
100-INCOME	\$ 92,250.00	\$ 101,148.25	\$ 102,000.00
101 - Tithes and Offerings	\$ 82,000.00	\$ 90,783.25	\$ 97,000.00
102 - Designated Gifts to TH (local)		\$ 75.00	
103 - Book Table	\$ 250.00		
104 - Outside Gifts	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,290.00	\$ 5,000.00
105 - Designated Gifts (outgoing)			
200-PASTORAL SUPPORT	\$ 72,750.00	\$ 72,750.00	\$ 72,750.00
201 - Pastor's Salary	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 37,800.00
202 - Pastor's Housing Allowance	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
204 - Pension	\$ 6,750.00	\$ 6,750.00	\$ 4,500.00
205 - Professional enrichment			\$ 450.00
206 - Other Expenses			
300-CHURCH MINISTRY	\$ 6,850.00	\$ 4,101.30	\$ 5,900.00
301 - Children's SS Curriculum	\$ 800.00	\$ 596.73	\$ 800.00
303 - Pastor's Ministry Expenses	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,212.22	\$ 3,000.00
304 - Guest Ministry	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,000.00
305 - Mercy Ministry	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,336.21	\$ 300.00
306 - Website Hosting			\$ 100.00
307 - Other	\$ 250.00	\$ 156.14	
309 - Youth Ministry			
310 - Missions			\$ 250.00
311 - Fellowship Activities/Gifts/Nursery	\$ 300.00		\$ 450.00
400-CHURCH ADMINISTRATION	\$ 700.00	\$ 979.16	\$ 700.00
401 - Church Office Expenses	\$ 700.00	\$ 701.30	\$ 700.00
403 - Other		\$ 277.86	
500-DENOMINATION	\$ 2,550.00	\$ 2,388.00	\$ 3,086.34
501 - Presbytery Assessments			\$ 486.34
502 - Synod Assessments	\$ 2,050.00	\$ 1,888.00	\$ 2,000.00
503 - Presby & Synod Delegate			
504 - RPM&M	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
505 - CYPUP			\$ 100.00
600-CHURCH BUILDING	\$ 16,728.00	\$ 16,827.32	\$ 17,088.00
601 - Mortgage	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
602 - Insurance	\$ 578.00	\$ 575.00	\$ 578.00
603 - Cleaning	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,560.00
604 - Maintenance	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 1,430.00	\$ 2,000.00
604 - Maintenance: Bug Man		\$ 590.00	

THRPC Budget Report 2021

604 – Maintenance: Mowing		\$ 840.00	
604 – Maintenance: Snow Removal			
607 - Utilities	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 3,227.37	\$ 3,200.00
607 – Utilities: Electric – Duke		\$ 902.23	
607 – Utilities: Gas – Vectren		\$ 525.64	
607 – Utilities: Sewer		\$ 338.52	
607 – Utilities: Water		\$ 255.58	
607 – Utilities: Internet & Phone		\$ 562.03	
607 – Utilities: Sermon Audio		\$ 399.49	
607 – Utilities: Zoom			
609 - Other		\$ 716.71	
610 - Church Supplies	\$ 750.00	\$ 528.24	\$ 750.00
700-FACILITIES TEAM	\$ 4,650.00	\$ 5,810.70	\$ 7,000.00
701 - Discretionary Project Fund		\$ 267.44	\$ 500.00
702 - Furnace / Building fund			\$ 2,000.00
703 - Approved Project (2019): Tree Removal		\$ 1,400.00	
704 - Approved Project (2020): Carpet / Garage	\$ 2,150.00	\$ 4,143.26	
705 - Approved Project (2020): Tables / Chairs	\$ 2,500.00		\$ 2,500.00
706 - Proposed Project (2021): Building upgrade research			\$ 2,000.00
800-OUTREACH	\$ 850.00	\$ 88.09	\$ 750.00
801 - Printing	\$ 100.00	\$ 32.10	
802 - Mailing			
803 - Facebook			
804 - Other	\$ 750.00	\$ 55.99	\$ 750.00
900-MISCELLANEOUS			\$ -
TOTAL:	-\$12,828.00	-\$1,796.32	-\$5,274.34

ACCOUNT SUMMARY	12/31/2019	12/31/2020
Account balance:	\$57,462.19	\$63,231.31
Designated for Furnace fund:	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00

**Comissions,
Committees, &
Papers**

Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery
Report of the Ad Interim Commission to Presbytery
March 4-6, 2021

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery would respectfully report that we have taken the following actions in constituted court since September 17, 2020:

1. Regarding the trial of Dr. Michael LeFebvre:
 - a. Set the time and place for a trial for October 23-24, 2020 at Southside RP Church, Indianapolis.
 - b. Appointed Ray Morton as Clerk and Jon Hughes as Assistant Clerk for the trial.
 - c. Determined that counsel for the defense must be a member of the RPCNA.
 - d. Received a letter from Roel Ophoff, Ruling Elder at Los Angeles RP Church, requesting the trial be cancelled, and informed him that we had no authority to end or suspend the trial.
 - e. Informed Rev. Bill Chellis, who was to serve as counsel for the defense of Mr. LeFebvre, that a requested delay in the trial was not to be allowed simply to accommodate his preferred schedule.
 - f. Approved a request from the prosecutors to add additional witnesses to be summoned and subsequently approved a request for a continuance. Re-scheduled the trial for November 13-14, 2020.
 - g. Informed Nathan Enas (a member of Christ Church RP) that a petition from him to the Presbytery, regarding the trial, that was sent directly to the Ad Interim Commission, needed to be re-submitted to his local Session for them to forward it to Presbytery.
 - h. Received complaints against actions of the Ad Interim Commission from James Faris and also from Jared Olivetti (with James Faris) which had also been filed with the Clerk of Synod. Also, acknowledged the existence of three complaints to Synod regarding the LeFebvre judicial case, all of which had been processed through the Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery.
2. Regarding vacant pulpits, pastoral calls, ministerial credentials, etc.:
 - a. Declared the Orlando RP Church pulpit vacant effective October 19, 2020. Appointed Teaching Elder James Pennington as Interim Moderator of the Orlando Session. Transferred the credentials of Mr. H.P. McCracken to the Midwest Presbytery. Authorized the Orlando Session to call a new pastor.
 - b. Declared Christ Church RP's pulpit vacant effective October 5, 2020 on the resignation of Dr. LeFebvre. Appointed Teaching Elder James Faris as Interim Moderator of the Christ Church Session. Authorized the Christ Church Session to continue to conduct the sacraments and to make out a call for a new pastor.
 - c. Sustained the action of the Westminster RP Church Session in hiring Pastor Brett Mahlen as their interim pastor and that, as long as he is the interim pastor, he be invited to the meetings of Presbytery, be granted the privilege of the floor of Presbytery and be included in the Presbytery Travel Fund.

- d. Approved a pastoral call to Gary McNamee from Grace RPC (Columbia, MO) as a regular gospel call and forward it to Mr. McNamee. On his acceptance of that call approved the transfer of his license to receive a call to the Midwest Presbytery effective October 26, 2020.
 - e. Appointed an Installation Commission for installing Rev. Ross Fearing at Sparta RPC on December 4, 2020 consisting of Rich Johnston (Moderator), Russell Lodge and Wade Mann. Subsequently, agreed that due to COVID-19 restrictions that the Commission could operate with two members (the third member could still “attend” via video conference).
 - f. Appointed Ruling Elder David Schisler as Interim Moderator of the Columbus RP Church effective October 27, 2020.
 - g. Received the ministerial credentials for Rev. Bill Roberts from the Midwest Presbytery.
 - h. Receive the ministerial credentials for Rev. Ross Fearing from the Midwest Presbytery.
 - i. Approved a pastoral call to Rev. Nathan Eshelman from Orlando RPC as a regular gospel call and forwarded it to the Ad Interim Commission of the Pacific Coast Presbytery.
 - j. Approved a pastoral call to Rev. Joel Hart from Columbus RPC as a regular gospel call and forwarded it to Mr. Hart.
 - k. Granted Selma RP Church the privilege of calling a pastor. Approved a request from the Selma Session for Ruling Elder Dr. George Evans to Moderate the meeting to elect a pastor on February 7, 2021.
 - l. Appointed a commission for the installation of Rev. Nathan Eshelman at Orlando RP Church on March 18, 2021 consisting of Craig Scott (Moderator), Shawn Anderson, Ray Lanning and Jonathan Schaefer.
3. Other matters:
- a. Appointed Keith Magill temporary moderator of the Immanuel RP Session for matters in which Pastor Jared Olivetti desired to recuse himself.
 - b. Referred a request from Mr. Scott McCullough for cessation of his ordination back to the Marion Session for their disposition and counsel to him.
 - c. Appointed Ruling Elder David Schisler to the Louisville Commission at the commission’s request.
 - d. Referred to the Clerk of Presbytery, Mr. Kuehner, a request for transfer of the Rhyne family from the roll of Presbytery to First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, SC.
 - e. Appointed a commission for the ordination of Andrew Battiato, at the request of the Global Mission Board, at 2nd RPC, Indianapolis, IN, on January 8, 2021 consisting of James Faris (Moderator), Dean Filson, David Hanson, Joel Hart, and Jared Olivetti.
 - f. Referred to this spring 2021 meeting of Presbytery a request from the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, asking that the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery appoint a teaching elder to serve as an advisory member of their Birmingham Commission. Communicated that referral to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.
 - g. Referred to the Clerk of Presbytery, Mr. Kuehner, a request from Rehobeth Presbyterian Church (ARP), Waxhaw, NC, for the transfer of membership to them of Ron and Judy Posvar, former members of Pageland RP Church, Pageland, SC.

- h. Met with members of the Immanuel RP Church Session regarding matters for which a previous Ad Interim Commission (on July 26, 2020) established an Immanuel Advisory Committee to counsel the Session of Immanuel and families of the congregation. Also met with two members of that advisory committee. Established a five-man Judicial Commission to investigate problems at Immanuel RP Church and to bring recommendations to Presbytery at this spring 2021 meeting. The Commission consists of Rev. Jason Camery [Marion] (Moderator), Rev. Shawn Anderson [Kokomo], Rev. Ian Wise [Southside], Josh Reshy [Terre Haute] and Bob Burchfield [Southside].
- i. Approved Immanuel RPC's request for a loan from Synod towards the purchase of a new building.
- j. Referred a question from the Clerk of Presbytery, Mr. Kuehner, regarding the need for corrections to the minutes of the special meeting of Presbytery on October 23, 2020 at Southside, to Presbytery at this spring 2021 meeting.
- k. Moved the location of this March 4-6, 2021 meeting of Presbytery to Sycamore RP Church, Kokomo IN. Approved only those certified delegates with specific COVID-19 or other medical excuses to vote via video conferencing. This decision needs to be ratified at the start of this meeting on March 4, 2021.
- l. Appointed Wade Mann to moderate the beginning of this spring 2021 meeting until a new Moderator is elected and for Phil Pockras to bring the opening sermon.

Recommendations

- 1. That the nominating committee in the future nominate men from different sessions for the Ad Interim Commission.

Kent Butterfield [Durham], Moderator

Jon Hughes [Southfield], Clerk

Greg Fisher [Marion]

Phil Pockras [Belle Center]

Steve Rhoda [Terre Haute]

Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery

Minutes of the Ad Interim Commission

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from September 17, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Thursday, September 17, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute). Pastoral Intern at Durham, Drew Poplin was present as an observer.
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 4:34 p.m. EDT.
3. By common consent Jon Hughes was appointed as Clerk.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to set the time and place for the trial of Michael LeFebvre for Friday and Saturday October 23-24, 2020 at Southside RP Church, Indianapolis, IN, starting at 2:00 p.m. on the 23rd and again starting at 8:30 a.m. on the 24th.
6. It was moved, seconded and passed to ask Ray Morton to serve as Clerk for the trial (with Jon Hughes as alternate).
7. Kent Butterfield will co-ordinate with Southside RPC regarding audio recordings for the trial.
8. Mr. Lefebvre has asked whether counsel needs to be a member in the RPCNA or if private counsel can have privileges of the floor during the trial. Book of Discipline II.3.3 requires that counsel speaking during the trial for either the prosecution or the defense must be members of the RPCNA (private counsel can be any other parties but will not have privileges of the floor during the trial).
9. It was moved, seconded and passed to declare Orlando's pulpit vacant as of October 19, 2020 as H.P. McCracken leaves for Longmont, CO, to appoint Teaching Elder James Pennington as Interim Moderator of the Orlando Session, and to transfer the credentials of Mr. McCracken to the Midwest Presbytery. The Orlando Session is hereby authorized to continue to conduct the sacraments and to make out a call for a new pastor.
10. The minutes were read and approved.
11. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
12. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 5:40 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Letter from H.P. McCracken leaving Orlando RPC

From: H.P. McCracken <mccracken.hp@gmail.com>
To: Kent Butterfield <kentbutterfield@yahoo.com>; Kent Butterfield <kentbutterfield@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020, 12:46:06 PM EDT
Subject: AIC

Kent,

I'm writing you as moderator of the AIC. I will be leaving Orlando RPC October 19. I guess I need the presbytery to dissolve the relationship, declare the pulpit vacant, etc. as outlined in Constitution. I also need AIC to transfer my credentials to Midwest Presbytery at that point. Thanks!

H.P.

H.P. McCracken

Pastor,
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Orlando
324 E. Livingston St.
Orlando, FL 32801
407-843-4361

Declaring Orlando Pulpit Vacant

The pastor of the Orlando congregation, H.P. McCracken, indicated his intention to accept a call to Salt and Light RP Church in Longmont, CO and presented his resignation to Presbytery's Ad Interim Commission at its meeting on the 17th day of September, in the year 2020. The resignation was accepted, to take effect on the 19th day of October in the year 2020 at which date the pastoral relationship will be dissolved. May the Lord guide the Orlando congregation to the choice of another under-shepherd. The Orlando Session is hereby authorized to continue to conduct the sacraments and to make out a call for a new pastor.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from September 19, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Saturday, September 19, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 9:00 a.m. EDT.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the Immanuel RP Session's request to appoint Keith Magill as a temporary moderator of the Session for meetings covering

matters from which Jared Olivetti desires to recuse himself. This would be in force until at least the Spring 2021 meeting or Presbytery.

4. The minutes were read and approved.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
6. Phil Pockras adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 9:10 a.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Immanuel RP Session's Request to Appoint Keith Magill as a Temporary Moderator
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From: Jared Olivetti <jared@immanuelrpc.com>
To: Kent Butterfield <kentbutterfield@yahoo.com>; Keith & Becky Magill <keith@magill.com>
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020, 01:24:12 PM EDT
Subject: Request to AIC from IRPC

Kent,

Here's the motion we passed this morning:

That the IRPC session request the AIC to appoint Keith Magill as a temporary moderator of the IRPC Session for meetings covering matters from which Jared desires to recuse himself and not be present. This would include the power to call those meetings on his own.

Our understanding is that this is necessary for meetings from which I desire to be absent, hence the request. Thanks in advance for your help.

In Christ,
Jared

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from September 21, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Monday, September 21, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 4:30 p.m. EDT.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. A request was received by the Clerk of Presbytery and forwarded to the Ad Interim Commission. It was from Scott McCullough requesting the cessation of his ordination as a

ruling elder. While the Directory for Church Government, 3.I.E.7 (p. D-12) says, "The continuing privileges and responsibilities of ordination would cease if: a. An elder is deposed from his ordination by judicial action of a church court. b. An elder's request that his ordination be terminated is granted by a church court after careful consideration" our determination is that his local Session is the court of jurisdiction. As a result it was moved, seconded and passed to refer Mr. McCullough's request for cessation of his ordination be referred to the Marion Session for their disposition and counsel to him.

5. As Michael Lefebvre has announced his resignation from Christ Church RP, it was moved, seconded and passed to accept the resignation and to declare Christ Church's pulpit vacant as of October 5, 2020, and to appoint Teaching Elder James Faris as Interim Moderator of the Christ Church Session,. The Christ Church Session is hereby authorized to continue to conduct the sacraments and to make out a call for a new pastor.
6. A further request from Mr. Lefebvre has asked if counsel for the defense during the scheduled trial of October 23 could be someone not a member of the RPCNA. The Book of Discipline II.3.3 (p. E-12) says, "No person shall be permitted to act as counsel who is not a member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of its courts. This does not preclude the parties from seeking legal advice privately." We are not persuaded that someone in another denomination meets the requirement of both being a member of the church and subject to its jurisdiction as stated in our Constitution. If we were to allow that interpretation then we would have to allow a re-interpretation of vow 4 of the Covenant of Communicant Membership in which members promise to respect the authority and discipline of "the church". In addition in Book of Discipline II.1.2 (p. E-9) it says, "Any member in good standing in the church may press charges against any other member before the court to whose jurisdiction he himself belongs." This is similar to the case regarding counsel. The intent of that section is that only members of the RPCNA ("the church") may bring charges against another member of the RPCNA. Also, Book of Discipline II.2.6 (p. E-11) says, "Only members of the church can be summoned to appear, and these only by the court to which they are subject." Other examples could be noted. So while the word church is often used in the Constitution to refer to the visible Church, we do not believe that we have any warrant to interpret as such in the case of counsel. It was moved, seconded and passed that we state that Book of Discipline II.3.3 (p. E-12) precludes the use of counsel (with privileges of the floor during a trial) from anyone other than a member of the RPCNA.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed that further requests from Mr. Lefebvre regarding his ordination and credentials be referred to the full Presbytery to answer at the outset of the trial scheduled for October 23.
8. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Jon Hughes as the Assistant Clerk during the October 23 trial. (Note: Ray Morton has agreed to serve as Clerk.)
9. It was noted that the credentials of H.P. McCracken have been transferred to the Clerk of the Midwest Presbytery.
10. The minutes were read and approved.
11. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.

12. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 6:00 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Letter from Scott McCullough

16 September 2020

To: Jared Olivetti, Chair of Candidates and Credentials, Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery, RPCNA

Re: Request to terminate license to preach

Dear Jared,

I am writing to you in your capacity as chair of the Candidates and Credentials Committee to request that Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery terminate my license to receive a call. I need to do so because I have an exception to item 4.4 of the RP Testimony that was ruled to be unacceptable by the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery at their meeting on Friday, 11 September 2020, at Second Reformed Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis. There is not an explicit provision for termination of licensure in the Directory for Church Government, but I make the request by analogy with the provision for termination of ordination for a ruling elder as stated in Chapter 3-I-E-7-b on page D-12.

I have already resigned from the board of RP Global Missions and synod's Pakistan Commission and will also submit a request for my ordination as a ruling elder to be terminated.

I make this request with sadness but without rancor or resentment. I am grateful for the trust you placed in me in at the time of licensure and for the privilege of ministering the Word in many congregations.

With gratitude,



Scott McCullough

Cc David Hanson, Moderator

Cc Adam Koehner, Clerk

Letter from Michael Lefebvre

September 20, 2020

To the Christ Church RP Congregation
and Great Lakes–Gulf Presbytery,

This letter is to announce my resignation as the pastor of this congregation, effective two weeks from tomorrow. Serving this congregation has been one of the great privileges of my life. However, in view of the conclusions drawn by presbytery on September 11th, I feel it is necessary to resign as your pastor at this time.

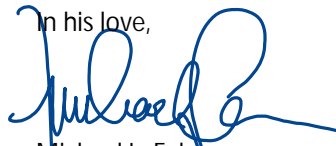
When I wrote my recent book and articles on the early chapters of Genesis, I believed that my views were acceptable within the parameters of the RP ministerial vows.¹ Ministers frequently have various personal exceptions to the RP Testimony which they are permitted to hold.

I believed mine were in that category. However, at its recent meeting, presbytery ruled that certain of my views are not acceptable to hold while a minister in the RP Church.² That being the case, I can no longer be faithful to my ordination vows and must resign.

Our church order requires that "any teaching elder desiring to resign shall give notice of his intention to the congregation at least two weeks before offering his resignation to the presbytery."³ Therefore, I am presenting this letter to you, my congregation, on Sunday, September 20th; and I will forward the same to presbytery's Ad Interim Commission, requesting that they make this effective on Monday, October 5th. I anticipate October 4th will be my final Sunday in the pulpit.

I want to thank each of you in this congregation for the fellowship we have shared in the worship and service of our Lord. It has been an immense privilege to serve among this exceptional group of God's people. It is no light matter to undertake the office of a shepherd anywhere in Jesus' flock, but I am especially thankful to have had the opportunity to fulfill that role in this fellowship.

I will forever cherish the blessings of these past fourteen and a half years. Although I will no longer be your pastor, my family and I look forward to continuing to enjoy our friendships with you. If I, as your brother in Christ, can ever be of support to you in any way, please do not hesitate to let me know.

In his love,

Michael LeFebvre

¹ See my Feb. 6, 2020, letter to presbytery; GLGP Communication. 20-01.

² Specifically, my exception to RPT 4.4.

³ Dir. Ch. Gov. 3-II-E-5b, p. D-21.

Declaring Christ Church Pulpit Vacant

The pastor of the Christ Church congregation, Michel Lefebvre, presented his resignation to his congregation on the 20th day of September, and to Presbytery's Ad Interim Commission at its meeting on the 21st day of September, in the year 2020. The resignation was accepted, to take effect on the 5th day of October in the year 2020 at which date the pastoral relationship will be dissolved. May the Lord guide the Christ Church congregation to the choice of another under-shepherd. The Christ Church Session (Moderated by James Faris) is hereby authorized to continue to conduct the sacraments and to make out a call for a new pastor.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

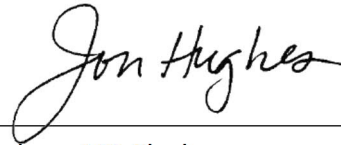
Ad Interim Commission Minutes from September 24, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Thursday, September 24, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 9:33 p.m. EDT.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve a response explaining our previous action on Mr. LeFebvre’s request regarding his credentials. The response (which includes Mr. LeFebvre’s request) follows.
4. A report from Westminster RPC (Prairie View, IL) concerning the hiring of Orthodox Presbyterian Church Chaplain Brett Mahlen as interim pastor was received. The report follows. Recommendation 1 was moved, seconded and passed. Recommendation 2 was moved, seconded and passed.
5. The minutes were read and approved.
6. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
7. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 10:15 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission response on Mr. LeFebvre’s Request Regarding His Credentials

To: Elders of the Great Lakes - Gulf Presbytery September 24, 2020

It was the intent of the AIC to include the correspondence from Mr. Michael LeFebvre in our Minutes to give clarification to the context of the requests that came to our attention. We are including Mr. LeFebvre’s correspondence with the AIC (in bold italics).

Mr. LeFebvre requested he be able to secure counsel from outside the RPCNA membership. The AIC Minutes of September 17, 2020 item 8 responded to Mr. LeFebvre’s earlier request for having counsel outside of the RPCNA:

8. Mr. Lefebvre has asked whether counsel needs to be a member in the RPCNA or if private counsel can have privileges of the floor during the trial. Book of Discipline II.3.3 requires that counsel speaking during the trial for either the prosecution or the defense must be members of the RPCNA (private counsel can be any other parties but will not have privileges of the floor during the trial).

The AIC received another request from Mr. LeFebvre on this same issue regarding counsel with his reasoning in a letter dated September 18, 2020:

To the GLGP Ad Interim Commission:

Thank you for your attention to my inquiry regarding BOD II.3.3, which states:

Each of the parties shall be entitled to appear and to be represented by counsel. No person shall be permitted to act as counsel who is not a member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of its courts. This does not preclude the parties from seeking legal advice privately. No one who serves as a party to or counsel or special prosecutor in a case may participate in the judgment of that case.

Based on the opportunity for counsel provided in that paragraph, and the lack of express indication that counsel must be a member of the Reformed Presbyterian branch of the church, I respectfully appeal your ruling and ask that you reconsider in light of the following factors relevant to my case.

The positive purpose of that passage is to ensure that parties have access to counsel. BOD II.2.7 further elaborates, "A church court is obliged to afford the accused every opportunity to protect his or her good name," competent counsel surely being one such opportunity. But finding competent counsel in my defense is particularly difficult for the following reasons. To be fairly represented, I am in need of an advocate who (a) understands the church courts, (b) possesses sufficient legal capabilities, and (c) is already up to speed on my writings and their theological nuance. That last point is particularly challenging.

The only individual whom I believe can serve in this role is Anthony Selvaggio. As a former minister in the RPCNA, Mr. Selvaggio is well acquainted with our courts. He has also read and interacted with my writings extensively, and is therefore able to step into this trial with full understanding of both the courts and the issues of this case.

Although Mr. Selvaggio is not currently a member of the RPCNA, he is a minister in another branch of the church and is under the oversight of its courts. Mechanisms exist to communicate objections over his behavior for ecclesiastical redress, if necessary. Furthermore, since he would be granted the privileges of the floor in this presbytery as a minister from another denomination: at any time during the trial, presbytery could remove that privilege if he were to step out of line.

It seems that both the intentions and the wording of BOD II.3.3 can be satisfied, even if in an unusual arrangement, by allowing me to avail of Mr. Selvaggio's service. This could be accomplished, either if "the church" in that provision is found to allow for other branches beyond the RPCNA, or, more particularly, if AIC were to rule that Mr. Selvaggio can serve as my "private legal advisor" alongside another lead, RP counselor, granting Mr. Selvaggio privileges of the floor alongside that lead, RP counselor.

I would therefore ask that you reconsider your ruling in light of these specifics and the unique challenges with finding a competent counselor for my case. Alternately, I fear I will lack adequate counsel; or, I may need to seek a second summons (BOD II.2.4) to secure more time than the present trial date allows to bring another counselor up to speed to represent me.

I am grateful for your carefulness in these matters and look forward to hearing back from you regarding this appeal.

Respectfully,
Michael LeFebvre
September 18, 2020

In response to Mr. LeFebvre's request to the AIC to reconsider its earlier decision, the AIC provided reasons for our decision in the September 21, 2020 Minutes:

6. A further request from Mr. Lefebvre asks if counsel for the defense during the scheduled trial of October 23, 2020 could be someone who is not a member of the RPCNA. The Book of Discipline II.3.3 (p. E-12) says, "No person shall be permitted to act as counsel who is not a member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of its courts. This does not preclude the parties from seeking legal advice privately." We are not persuaded that someone in another denomination meets the requirement of both being a member of the church and subject to its jurisdiction as stated in our Constitution. If we were to allow that interpretation then we would have to allow a re-interpretation of vow 4 of the Covenant of Communicant Membership in which members promise to respect the authority and discipline of "the church". In addition in Book of Discipline II.1.2 (p. E-9) it says, "Any member in good standing in the church may press charges against any other member before the court to whose jurisdiction he himself belongs." This is similar to the case regarding counsel. The intent of that section is that only members of the RPCNA ("the church") may bring charges against another member of the RPCNA. Also, Book of Discipline II.2.6 (p. E-11) says, "Only members of the church can be summoned to appear, and these only by the court to which they are subject." Other examples could be noted. So while the word church is often used in the Constitution to refer to the visible Church, we do not believe that we have any warrant to interpret as such in the case of counsel. It was moved, seconded and passed that we state that Book of Discipline II.3.3 (p. E-12) precludes the use of counsel (with privileges of the floor during a trial) from anyone other than a member of the RPCNA.

The AIC answered Mr. LeFebvre's question whether his counsel could be someone outside of the RPCNA. We see the BOD II.3.3 (p. E-12) stating clearly a "no" to that question. Mr. LeFebvre can have "private legal advice" that can be present at the trial. The private legal advisor does not need to be a member of the RPCNA, but they do not have the privilege of the floor in a trial. The private legal advisor, in other words, cannot speak to the Court of Presbytery but only advise privately.

The AIC received an email with an attached resignation letter from Mr. LeFebvre on September 20, 2020 with a request concerning his credentials. [The email, and the letter of resignation is below, in that order.]

To the AIC (cc: GLGP Moderator; CCRP Session), (dated September 20, 2020)

At a congregational meeting held this evening, I announced my resignation to my beloved congregation at Christ Church RP. I wanted to address these matters personally with them, before presenting my resignation to presbytery. This Sunday was the first opportunity to do so after the recent presbytery meeting. Therefore, having now announced this step to my congregation, I am attaching my letter of resignation for the AIC's attention.

As explained in this letter, I feel this step is necessary since presbytery ruled on Sept. 11th that exceptions to RPT 4.4 violate Ordination Query 4. That being the finding of the court, now indicated for the first time, I recognize I can no longer uphold my ordination vows and I must resign. I ask that

you act on this letter according to DCG 3.II.E.5.b-c by dissolving the pastoral relationship two weeks after my announcement. I am asking that this be made effective on Oct. 5, 2020. Furthermore, my session is requesting that the AIC would appoint James Faris to serve as the session's interim moderator from that date. We have already discussed this with Mr. Faris, and he is willing to serve in this capacity.

I also recognize that it would seem prudent under these circumstances, not only to resign, but to withdraw my ordination from the RPCNA altogether. According to the provisions of DCG 3.II.E.5.i, it seems that I would typically be able to request such a release of my credentials for transfer to another denomination. I want you to know that I am willing to take that step, as I do not desire to be in violation of my vows now that it has been determined (as of 9/11) that I am. But I also recognize that presbytery specifically voted not to grant me allowance to depart peaceably. I am certainly willing to cooperate and walk through the trial process if that is what presbytery deems best; however, I want to go on record that presbytery's actions in this manner force me into a quandary of conscience in the meantime. I would therefore like to state that, with my submission of this letter of resignation, I would welcome the opportunity to withdraw peaceably because of my respect for the ordination vows, if the AIC thought, under the circumstances, that it would be consistent with the will of presbytery and the guidance of the Directory for me to do so. I welcome your guidance on this matter, as you deem fitting.

Meanwhile, I leave you with the attached letter of resignation for your attention.

Thank you.
Michael LeFebvre

[attached resignation]

September 20, 2020 To the Christ Church RP Congregation and Great Lakes–Gulf Presbytery,

This letter is to announce my resignation as the pastor of this congregation, effective two weeks from tomorrow. Serving this congregation has been one of the great privileges of my life. However, in view of the conclusions drawn by presbytery on September 11th, I feel it is necessary to resign as your pastor at this time.

When I wrote my recent book and articles on the early chapters of Genesis, I believed that my views were acceptable within the parameters of the RP ministerial vows. (1) Ministers frequently have various personal exceptions to the RP Testimony which they are permitted to hold. I believed mine were in that category. However, at its recent meeting, presbytery ruled that certain of my views are not acceptable to hold while a minister in the RP Church. (2) That being the case, I can no longer be faithful to my ordination vows and must resign.

Our church order requires that "any teaching elder desiring to resign shall give notice of his intention to the congregation at least two weeks before offering his resignation to the presbytery." (3) Therefore, I am presenting this letter to you, my congregation, on Sunday, September 20th; and I will forward the same to presbytery's Ad Interim Commission, requesting that they make this effective on Monday, October 5th. I anticipate October 4th will be my final Sunday in the pulpit.

I want to thank each of you in this congregation for the fellowship we have shared in the worship and service of our Lord. It has been an immense privilege to serve among this exceptional group of God's people. It is no light matter to undertake the office of a shepherd anywhere in Jesus' flock, but I am especially thankful to have had the opportunity to fulfill that role in this fellowship.

I will forever cherish the blessings of these past fourteen and a half years. Although I will no longer be your pastor, my family and I look forward to continuing to enjoy our friendships with you. If I, as your brother in Christ, can ever be of support to you in any way, please do not hesitate to let me know.

In his love,
Michael LeFebvre

1. See my Feb. 6, 2020, letter to presbytery; GLGP Communication. 20-01. 2. Specifically, my exception to RPT 4.4. 3. Dir. Ch. Gov. 3-II-E-5b, p. D-21. 3

The AIC would like to clarify what is meant by the wording of item #7 in the AIC Minutes of September 21, 2020.

[From the GLGP AIC Minutes of September 21, 2020]

7. It was moved, seconded and passed that further requests from Mr. LeFebvre regarding his ordination and credentials be referred to the full Presbytery to answer at the outset of the trial scheduled for October 23.

The members of the AIC see our role as limited on behalf of presbytery. We do not possess any authority to overrule previous actions of presbytery or circumvent future intended actions of the presbytery (the transfer of Mr. LeFebvre's credentials to another denomination or the trial of Mr. LeFebvre).

The AIC responded to Mr. LeFebvre's correspondence to us on September 20, 2020. He stated:

To the AIC (cc: GLGP Moderator; CCRP Session),

I also recognize that it would seem prudent under these circumstances, not only to resign, but to withdraw my ordination from the RPCNA altogether. According to the provisions of DCG 3.II.E.5.i, it seems that I would typically be able to request such a release of my credentials for transfer to another denomination. I want you to know that I am willing to take that step, as I do not desire to be in violation of my vows now that it has been determined (as of 9/11) that I am. But I also recognize that presbytery specifically voted not to grant me allowance to depart peaceably. I am certainly willing to cooperate and walk through the trial process if that is what presbytery deems best; however, I want to go on record that presbytery's actions in this manner force me into a quandary of conscience in the meantime. I would therefore like to state that, with my submission of this letter of resignation, I would welcome the opportunity to withdraw peaceably because of my respect for the ordination vows, if the AIC thought, under the circumstances, that it would be consistent with the will of presbytery and the guidance of the Directory for me to do so. I welcome your guidance on this matter, as you deem fitting.

Meanwhile, I leave you with the attached letter of resignation for your attention.

Thank you.
Michael LeFebvre

Ordinarily a Teaching Elder may request his credentials to be transferred to another denomination. But this is not an ordinary situation because presbytery adopted four sets of charges against Mr. LeFebvre on Sept 11, 2020. A motion failed at that meeting to grant Mr. LeFebvre ninety days to reconsider his position and also be allowed to transfer his credentials. The AIC cannot reverse that, and in fact we understand presbytery must follow through with the trial set for September 23, 2020.

We do recognize as part to the process to trial, our Book of Discipline states in ii, 3.4 (E-13)

4. The accused may offer objections to proceeding with the trial on the grounds that there have been gross irregularities, that the court has no jurisdiction, or that the offense charged, if proved, is not censurable. The court shall hear his objections, but he shall not be permitted to argue against the principles of the church. If any of these objections prove to be well founded, the court must dismiss the case, or permit amendments to the charge without changing its nature. The accused may challenge the right of any member of the court to sit in judgment of the case. If the challenge is sustained and there is no longer a quorum, the case shall be referred to a higher court.

The AIC recognizes that at the “outset of the trial” Mr. LeFebvre can bring objections to the proceedings of the trial on a number of issues, if he chooses to do so. It will be the whole court that weighs in on these objections. If the charges are dismissed then the court can rule on the matter of credentials being transferred. The AIC was simply recognizing the process that is ahead, and only if all the charges are dismissed can the presbytery transfer Mr. LeFebvre’s credentials based on simply his request to do so.

At the present time the presbytery has committed itself to a trial of Mr. LeFebvre and preparations are underway by both the prosecution and defendant for that trial. The AIC cannot reverse or hinder the process for trial.

Some presbyters have brought up the following provision in The Directory of Church Government in E, 5.i (D-21)

i. A teaching elder desiring affiliation with another denomination may upon application be given credentials by his presbytery and a letter of standing by his session. If there are charges pending, they shall be included.

The “charges pending”, we the AIC, would interpret as meaning they have not been filed and accepted by the presbytery court. In Mr. LeFebvre’s case the charges have been made and accepted by presbytery and a trial date set. To simply give a Teaching Elder his credentials in this situation would in essence allow a Teaching Elder to flee justice without due process.

Whether it is the AIC, the presbytery or individual presbyters, we are all bound and guided by the Book of Discipline and the Directory of Church Government. Scripture is our final authority in all things and controversies. We hope this brings clarification and smooths the way to the work set before us on October 23, 2020.

Sincerely in Christ,

GLGP AIC
Kent Butterfield - Moderator
Greg Fisher
Jon Hughes - Clerk
Phil Pockras
Stephen Rhoda

Report of the Westminster RP Church (Prairie View, IL) to the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery AIC, September 20, 2020
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Dear Fathers and Brothers,

We are writing to update you on the latest ministry developments at Westminster RPC. It has now been almost 14 months since Pastor Rhoda and his family departed for ministry in the Terra Haute RPC. During this time, the Lord has sustained the congregation with regular preaching ministry. Some pastoral candidates have been heard, but the Lord has not yet opened the way to a pastoral call. The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly hindered the search process. It also limited our gatherings for worship, but we greatly appreciated joining Second RPC, Indianapolis worship livestream for three and a half months until we resumed local worship in July, and in person services in August. While the number of worshipers has dwindled, there is a strong nucleus of about 20 committed members who gather. At our recent, September 12, session meeting we were saddened to receive and accept the resignation of Jim Ritchart from the office of elder with gratitude for his over 15 years of service. He is seeking to worship with his wife Connie, as they pursue membership in a church near where they live in Kenosha, WI.

In God's gracious providence, we received a ministry proposal from Chaplain Brett Mahlen in early August. His ministry credentials are with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and he is supported by Covenant OPC in Orland Park, IL in his work as a chaplain at the Stateville Correctional Center, Joliet, IL. Brett is married with an 11-year-old daughter. He was trained at Westminster Theological Seminary, graduating in 2009 and has almost 10 years of ministry experience since his ordination in early 2011. He is currently working on his DMin at RPTS. Since March, due to a high infection rate of the coronavirus at Stateville, he has been prevented from entering the facility for ministry. Covenant OPC continues to support him, but Pastor Mahlen is eager to minister in other ways while his access to Stateville is significantly restricted. Over the past year, he has served as pulpit supply for WRPC, and God has put a burden on his heart for this congregation. As a result, in consultation with the Covenant OPC Session, he presented to us a proposal to serve as a part-time interim minister at WRPC. (The agreement is attached to this report.)

After consideration and interaction with him and the Covenant OPC Session, the WRPC Session agreed to move forward with this proposal. On August 23, we presented this to the Westminster congregation, and it was unanimously approved along with the budget revisions necessary to accommodate the remuneration package. We are excited about this new relationship which has begun on September 1. As you can see from the agreement, Pastor Mahlen will not only be filling the pulpit, but also doing shepherding ministry. He has already contacted a number of WRPC families, as he seeks to get acquainted and encourage the saints of WRPC.

It is our understanding that Presbytery has approved of NAPARC ministers administering the sacraments in our congregations, so we are planning for Pastor Mahlen to do so while he serves in this capacity. As noted in the agreement, this relationship may be concluded if a pastor is called by WRPC or when Pastor

Mahlen is able to take up chaplain duties again at Stateville. All parties plan to evaluate the relationship at the end of 2020.

We ask that Presbytery approve the following recommendations as we move forward with this ministry plan.

Recommendations:

1. That Presbytery sustain the action of the Westminster Session in hiring Pastor Brett Mahlen as their interim pastor.
2. That, as long as he is the interim pastor at Westminster RPC, Pastor Mahlen be invited to the meetings of Presbytery, be granted the privilege of the floor of Presbytery and be included in the Presbytery Travel Fund.

Your servants in Christ,

Robert Koch, Clerk

Wade Mann, Interim Moderator

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from October 2, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, October 2, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 5:34 p.m. EDT.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. A pastoral call to Gary McNamee from Grace RPC (Columbia, MO) was reviewed. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve it as a regular gospel call and forward it to Mr. McNamee.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to receive a letter from Roel Ophoff, Ruling Elder at Los Angeles RP Church and to thank him for it, to inform him that it was delivered to the Commission members and that we have no authority to end or suspend the LeFebvre trial.
6. A request from Adam Kuehner and Shawn Anderson, prosecutors in the LeFebvre trial was taken up. The request follows. Request #1 was moved, seconded and passed. Request #2 was moved, second and passed, noting however that we judge the materials do not constitute evidence but rather supporting documentation germane to the case and the defense will also be free to use them. It was moved, second and passed to return request #3 to the authors recognizing that the prosecutors can communicate with the defense in that matter.
7. Letters were received from Rev. Bill Chellis stating that he is to serve as counsel for the defense to Mr. LeFebvre and also requesting a possible delay in the trial date to accommodate his schedule (which was not stated). It was noted that the Book of Discipline (II.2.3) only allows for a delay based on the introduction of new evidence or witnesses.
8. The minutes were read and approved.

9. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.

10. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 6:45 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Pastoral Call for Gary McNamee

Pastor's Call

We, the **Grace Reformed Mission Church of Columbia, MO**, under the care of the **Midwest Presbytery**, being without a pastor to take the spiritual oversight of us in the Lord; and satisfied that your spiritual attainments, intellectual abilities and soundness in the faith and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are fitted to our capacities, do now, with the concurrence of Presbytery, call you,

Gary McNamee,

to undertake the office of pastor among us. Upon your accepting this call and performing the duties of your office as set forth by the Constitution, we promise you all due respect and support in the Lord.

We hereby promise to pay you **\$50,000** a year, as the Lord provides, in the event of your accepting this call, and performing the duties of a pastor among us—a direct compensation of **\$44,000**, payable in **24** installments of **\$1,833.34** each. An amount for health insurance was considered and is included in the base salary. The pastor will be accountable for securing his own health insurance. Of this compensation **60%** is designated as an allowance for furnishings and appurtenances for your dwelling as set forth by Section 107 of the I.R. Code. **The provisions of this call are based upon our current budget and the expectation of the RPCNA Home Mission Board's declining scale funding beginning in the year of 2021.**

1. Housing (Indicate which of the following you will provide.)

We include the following in the compensation package, except item 4 as shown below:

- N/A - Free use of the manse.
- \$ N/A per month to be used for housing.
- \$ N/A as an interest-free loan to be used for down payment on housing.
- N/A - Payment of utilities, water, gas, electricity, phone, trash service, etc.
- Payment of \$ N/A to be used for utilities.
- List any other housing arrangements.

2. Business Expense (Indicate which of the following you will provide by a check mark and/or fill in the amount.)

- Mileage allowance as set forth by Synod for travel to Synod – **reimbursed by Synod**
- Mileage allowance of **57.5 cents per mile** (2020 IRS Allowance) up to **\$100** / month
- Office materials and supplies used for church work reimbursable
- Book allowance of **\$50** per month.

Fees: Synod; Presbytery; Presbytery Camps;

3. Other Benefits (Indicate the congregation's specific plan and commitment to provide for the new pastor's continuing pastoral development such as sabbatical leaves, annual professional conference attendance, the purchase of books and related professional resources as recommended by the Synod.) (Indicate which of the following you will provide by a check mark and/or fill in the amount.)

- Pension Plan: **\$4,200 per year for Synod's retirement plan** - paid quarterly
- **3** [number] of weeks will be provided for vacation time each year.
- Attendance at church functions: **Yes** time off for Synod; **Yes** Presbytery
- [number] of Communion(s) allowed each year in the congregations **1 per year**;
family youth conferences **1 per year**; & a, **1 month sabbatical for 3 every years of service.**



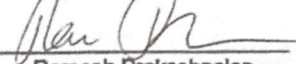
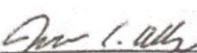
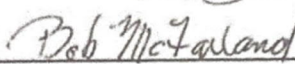
4. Moving Expenses (Indicate which of the following you will provide.)

One-time cost to be used for moving expenses from present location to new location, up to **\$2,500** (negotiable).

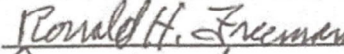
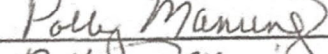
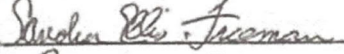
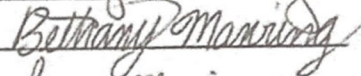
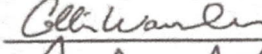
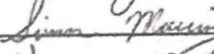
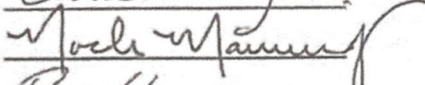
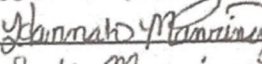
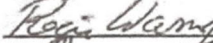
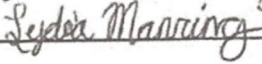

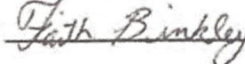
We promise to review annually with you the adequacy of this compensation prior to the adoption of the congregation's budget meeting to take into account the cost of living increase (e.g. C.P.I.).

In witness thereof, we subscribe this call and financial agreement, the 28th day of August in the year 2020, in the presence of these witnesses:

Grace Reformed Church Temporary Governing Board (Columbia Commission):

 _____ Greg Stiner - Moderator	 _____ Bryan Schneider	 _____ Romesh Prakashalan
 _____ Joe Allyn - Clerk	 _____ Bob McFarland	

Grace Reformed Church Communicant Members:

 _____ Ronald H. Freeman	 _____ Polly Manning
 _____ Andrea B. Freeman	 _____ Bethany Manning
 _____ Celia Manning	 _____ Lina Manning
 _____ Noel Manning	 _____ Hannah Manning
 _____ Razi Wang	 _____ Lydia Manning
 _____ Ben Binkley	_____
 _____ Faith Binkley	_____

Adherents:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Attestation of a Call and Financial Agreement

I hereby certify that this call and financial agreement were made out on the date therein specified in accord with the law and order of the church.



Greg Stiner, Moderator

Letter from Roel Ophoff, Ruling Elder at Los Angeles RP Church

My dear brothers and fathers of the Great Lakes Presbytery:

I am writing this letter to express my full support for Dr. Michael Lefebvre in his efforts to come to a faithful and Biblical exegesis of the creation account of Genesis 1-4 as presented in his book "The Liturgy of Creation" and article "Adam reigns in Eden". This book provides a brilliant exposé of times and calendars found in Scripture, and especially in the Pentateuch. Realizing that the purpose of the creation account is not a scientific report of chronological events but that it provides a display of God's power and splendor, in which all of creation is positioned and mankind is receiving special endowment, all leading to the Sabbath's rest, makes me marvel in amazement that this God is my Abba Father. His article further highlights Adam's position in God's story of redemption. In my opinion Dr. Lefebvre's contribution promotes the purity, peace, and progress of the church by taking the Word of God seriously and acknowledging that our historic (and perhaps anachronistic) attitude toward the creation account does not always match with special revelation or general revelation. Psalm 19 summarizes it so beautifully: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." and "The law of God is perfect, reviving the soul".

In his book and article Dr. Lefebvre gives full weight to the Scriptures and so must any discussion of his thesis be based on the Word of God as well. Not every biblical topic is mentioned in the Westminster Confession that was written almost 400 years ago. Not every topic was considered as relevant or important, and sometimes a more restrained approach was used by the Westminster Divines to describe topics such as the "Last Judgment". One day, we will experience Christ's return, and we will all share that experience with one another, glorifying the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I wonder sometimes how this will work for the creation of the world. We could ask Adam or Eve about this, but would they fully know? Will we ever gain a full knowledge of that time beyond the Genesis account? There is no such thing as a shared experience of creation as we will have with Christ's return. Well, we will certainly praise God's name when we experience His fulness in the new heavens and the new earth.

I am Roel Ophoff and a ruling elder at the Los Angeles congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. I am a tenured professor of Human Genetics and Psychiatry at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). In the professor series I have reached step 6 which requires a formal recognition of great academic distinction, recognized nationally, in scholarly achievement. My professional expertise is in human genetics and genomics. I obtained my PhD (cum laude) in 1997 at the Leiden University in The Netherlands. I have published more than 330 peer reviewed papers and my current H-index (an author-level metric of productivity and citation impact) is >100 which puts me in the top 5% of my field. Because of my expertise, I have served on many review committees of the National Institutes of Health and am a member of a number of PhD thesis committees at UCLA. I have also a secondary appointment as full professor at the Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam in The Netherlands. I am not listing my accomplishments to boast but to demonstrate my scientific credentials in my field and the value that is attached to my opinion when discussing matters dealing with human genetics and genomics.

When we consider the scientific knowledge of human genetics with regard to human origin and expansion, I would like to share the following facts that have some bearing on the Genesis creation account:

1. The genetic history of man goes back some 100,000 – 200,000 years.
2. The origin of mankind resides in the geographic heart of Africa and the human populations subsequently spread throughout the world; this global spread started some 60,000 years ago.
3. Based on the genetic diversity of humans today, the best estimate of the founding population size from which all humans are derived, is a few thousand individuals.
4. The genetic makeup of the human genome in non-African populations demonstrates an admixture with other hominoids that are now extinct, such as the Neanderthals and Denisovans (from which we have genome sequence data obtained from very old bones). There is emerging evidence that other distinct hominoids may also have intermingled with humans in the founding African populations.

It is clear that the human genetic evidence is incompatible with a recent ex nihilo creation some 6,000 years ago, and that the origin of humanity resides in the Middle East. There is also conflicting data between the genetic diversity today and the suggestion that mankind arose from a single couple, one man and one woman. Furthermore, it is now well established that the biological progenitors of non-African human populations include other hominoid species.

How do these observations inform our interpretation of Genesis 1? Shall we close our eyes and dismiss the science as irrelevant since most of the scientists are non-Christians? That is not the attitude we find in Scripture, not even in the early chapters of Genesis. Descendants of Cain were the first to build cities, dwell in tents and have livestock, make instruments and music, and were forgers of bronze and iron

(Genesis 4:17-22). These were not the 'Sons of God' but they were still recipients of God's common grace, to bless mankind with their inventions. Today, the notion of a solar system that is heliocentric is widely accepted but it was a Copernican revolution that took place in the 1600s requiring a paradigm shift from the Ptolemaic model of the heavens depicted in the Bible. As Christians, knowing that God has created all things and continues to uphold all things, we are at ease. 'Test everything and hold fast what is good' (1 Thess 5:21). The Copernican revolution turned out to be more of an evolution in our thinking. We adjusted our viewpoint about the language used in Scripture without violating the historic and trustworthy nature of the writings. There can be no threat against the Creator in God's handiwork, nor is there an imperfection in his revealed will. In other words, be faithful exegetes of the Word of God, accept our creaturely status with all its limitations in these activities, and be amazed how much more there is to learn through special revelation as well as general revelation. We confess that 'The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.' (WCF 1.6). Any apparent obscurity of special and general revelation, or alleged confusion or contradiction between them, arises from the natural limitations of man (RPT 1.2). I am grateful for Dr. Lefebvre's contribution toward opening up the Word of God, reflecting on his majesty, and pointing us toward the eternal rest from the very first pages of the Pentateuch.

I am therefore enormously surprised and deeply troubled by the fact that charges have been filed with the Great Lakes Presbytery of the RPCNA (by Shawn Anderson and Adam Kuehner), claiming that Dr. Lefebvre has committed censurable offenses by writing his book "The Liturgy of Creation" and the article entitled "Adam reigns in Eden".

Dr. Michael Lefebvre is the example par excellence of a man within our denomination who has worked tirelessly toward studying and promoting the purity, peace, unity, and progress of the church. He has been serving as a pastor in a local church, serving on the board of our seminary for years, publishing books that have shaped our thinking and understanding of the singing of the psalms, of worship, substantially contributing toward discussions at presbytery and synod meetings for many years. His latest writings on creation may require more time and consideration for some of us. For me, he is one of the first theologians that has unlocked the creation account in a consistent, biblical and faithful approach of exegesis. This does not mean that no questions or disagreements remain – on the contrary, there are many texts in Scripture (including in the book of Genesis) that will elicit a widespread display of opinions, even within the walls of our own denomination. His writings, however, should certainly not be condemned as leading to or following divisive courses.

Let us consider the charges. First, I would argue that in cases of censurable offenses that deal with the exegesis of Scripture, the use of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) and especially the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony (RPT), come secondary to Scripture itself. These documents are called "secondary standards" for a reason. Thus far, I have not seen a substantiated/substantial effort to address the writings of Dr. Lefebvre through the primary standard, i.e. Scripture itself.

Charge 1: Contradiction of our rejection of the theory of human macro-evolution, as articulated in RPT 4.3, RPT 4.4, WCF 4.2 and/or WLC 17.

RPT 4.3 states that 'the theory of evolution which assumes that chance happenings are an explanation of the origin and development of matter and living things is unscriptural.' Nowhere in Dr. Lefebvre's writing does he state that chance happenings are an explanation of origin and development of matter and living things. There are multiple ways to describe evolution (e.g. selection or adaptation) but the core element of the definition of evolution in

RPT 4.3 is the notion of 'chance happenings', which is impossible with God (Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:3).

RPT 4.3 further states that 'the increase of varieties which has occurred is within genetic limitations provided at creation.' As human genetics expert I have no idea what the expression 'genetic limitations' means in this statement. Every living being has genetic limitations, that is Biology 101, but how is that relevant for our discussion? As far as I know this topic is not being discussed or debated in any of the writings of Dr. Lefebvre.

RPT 4.4 states that 'we deny that man evolved from any lower form of life.' I assume that the original writers of this text used the word 'evolve' based on the prior definition of 'evolution' in the preceding paragraph (in RPT 4.3), which implies the chance happenings leading to the rise of Homo sapiens as a species. I am not aware, based on my reading of the book 'The Liturgy of Creation' and article "Adam reigns in Eden", that this is propagated by Dr. Lefebvre.

If we assume that the writers intended to say that there is no direct biological link between Homo sapiens and any (other, lower) species independent of chance happenings, the statement is simply incorrect. Not only are there direct genetic introgressions of other hominoids into the human genome of individuals with European ancestry (i.e. 90% of all members of the RPCNA carry genetic material from Neanderthal or Denisovan ancestors!), there is also abundant evidence of DNA sequences in the human genome of viral origin that directly impacts cell biology. The evolution, i.e. the development, of the human species as we know it today, is genetically marked by lower forms of life. This is not a statement of unbelief or rejection of Scripture, but simply a statement of fact.

The wisdom of the Westminster Divines is shown in their faithful reflection of the creation account of Adam and his wife in WCF 4.1 and 4.2. The confession does not elaborate on the details beyond Scripture and I am not aware of Dr. Lefebvre taking any exception on these statements.

Charge 2: Adam and Eve as sole biological progenitors of humanity.

I am not sure where the WCF states that Adam and Eve are the sole biological progenitors of humanity. The WCF highlights the fact of the Fall into sin with the first Adam as our federal head and the subsequent condemnation of all mankind of all generations. Moreover, the biological evidence clearly shows that those among us with European ancestry have hominoid biological progenitors that are non-Homo sapiens species.

Charge 3: The weekly Sabbath as creation ordinance from the beginning of the world.

Have you read the book? The whole thesis of Dr. Lefebvre is about the creation account pointing toward the Sabbath.

The words "from the beginning of the world" is language used by the Westminster Divines to reflect that this ordinance is connected to the creation account of Adam and Eve. I do not see an issue here, but if we prefer to take a literal approach, (which I do not advocate) the Sabbath was not in place until the end of the creation account in Genesis 1, sometime after the beginning of the world.

Charge 4: Holding a personal exception to RPT 4.4, the denial that man evolved from any lower form of life.

Please see my response to Charge 1.

In summary, I strongly encourage you, my dear brothers and fathers, for the peace and purity of the church and the honor of God's name, to end your trial against Dr. Lefebvre and acquit him from the four charges brought forward by Shawn Anderson and Adam Kuehner.

Roel A. Ophoff, PhD

Los Angeles, September 28, 2020

Request from Prosecutors Adam Kuehner and Shawn Anderson
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To the Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA),

In preparation for Dr. Lefebvre's upcoming trial, we, as the prosecutors, would like to make three requests of the court, by way of your commission.

According to Book of Discipline II.2.3 (E-11),

At least ten days shall pass between the issuing of the accusation and the date of the trial, except by consent of all concerned. If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense.

REQUEST #1

Having discovered additional witnesses that will prove vital to our case, we hereby request that the following individuals, all members in good standing within the RPCNA, be summoned (per form 24, H-21) to appear before the court as witnesses at Dr. Lefebvre's trial.

1. Joel Hart
2. Richard Holdeman
3. Jon Hughes
4. Michael Lefebvre
5. Jared Olivetti
6. Jeffrey Stivason
7. C.J. Williams

REQUEST #2

Having discovered additional evidence that will prove vital to our case, we hereby request that the following items be added to our existing list of evidence as detailed in the written accusation.

1. The Minutes of the RPCNA Synod
2. The Minutes of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery
3. The Minutes of the GLG Ad Interim Commission
4. The Letter from GLG to MWP concerning Rev. Brian Schwertley (March 2, 2018)
5. The GLG Student Handbook
6. GLG Communications 18-06, 18-08, and 19-04.
7. The report of the Judicial Committee to review 19-04

According to our reading of BOD II.2.3 (E-11), the granting of our first two requests would require the court to grant the defendant "further time... to prepare a defense" ONLY IF he failed to receive notice of the action "at least ten days" prior to the trial. We trust that, if our requests are granted, you will notify the defendant as soon as possible, exercising proper discretion in determining the most equitable way forward.

REQUEST #3

In light of Dr. Lefebvre's recent letter(s) of resignation, we would like to give the defendant an opportunity to join us in affixing his signature to the following document, which would essentially permit us to drop Charge #4 from the written accusation against him.

Before presenting our offer to the defendant, we thought it best to run it by your commission for advance confirmation. We ask that you would please review the proposed agreement and make a ruling as to whether or not it accords with the law and order of the church. We also desire that this communication be included in the AIC minutes.

Finally, we want to clarify that the list of new witnesses and evidence enumerated above was compiled with an eye to prosecuting all four of the charges included in the written accusation against Dr. Lefebvre. If Charge #4 were to be dropped, per the proposed agreement, it is possible that some of these persons and/or documents might no longer be vital or necessary to our case.

The proposed agreement is as follows:

Proposed Agreement Regarding Charge #4

I, the rev. Dr. Michael Lefebvre, do hereby freely and voluntarily attest that the following statements are, to the best of my knowledge, entirely true, accurate, and agreeable to my own sincerely held personal beliefs.

1. Based upon my own conscientious understanding of Biblical teaching, I hold an exception to RPT 4.4, which states "We deny that man evolved from any lower form of life. Gen. 2:7, 21-22."
2. On September 11, 2020, the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA) determined "That an exception to RPT 4.4 be found out of accord with the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church."
3. Due to the presbytery's recent decision, I acknowledge that (a) my exception has been found in violation of Ordination Query 4, (b) I can no longer uphold my ordination vows as an RPCNA minister, and (c) I can no longer continue, in good conscience, as an ordained minister within the RPCNA.
4. In hindsight, I regret not having declared my exception to the presbytery more promptly.
5. While this attestation addresses substantial elements of Charge #4 in the written accusation against me, it shall not be construed as a formal plea of "guilty" to any of the charges, nor as waiving any of my ecclesiastical rights and privileges as outlined in our blue book, including the right to file an appeal or complaint with the higher court in connection with the upcoming trial.

Defendant's Signature

Date

We, the prosecutors in this case, Revs. Adam Kuehner and Shawn Anderson, do hereby make the following promises in good faith, contingent upon the defendant affixing his signature (along with the date) to the preceding attestation, and submitting it electronically via email to either of us no later than 11:59 p.m. on October 12, 2020.

1. Being satisfied with the preceding attestation, we do hereby drop Charge #4 against the defendant, which accuses him of "Violating Ordination Query #4 ('Do you believe in and accept the system of doctrine and the manner of worship set forth in the Westminster Confession of faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures?') by holding a personal exception to RPT 4.4, which states 'We deny that man evolved from any lower form of life. Gen. 2:7, 21-22.'"
2. We will not use the defendant's signature on this document as evidence against him at his trial.
3. We will submit this signed document to the Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery to be received, included in their minutes, and appended to the minutes of the upcoming trial.

Prosecutor's Signature

Date

Prosecutor's Signature

Date

We are grateful to your commission for taking the time to consider our three requests. We will continue to intercede in prayer on your behalf for abundant wisdom as you seek to honor the Lord in all your labors. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Kuehner
Shawn Anderson

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF NORTH AMERICA
GREAT LAKES GULF PRESBYTERY

ADAM M. KUEHNER,
SHAWN ANDERSON,

Complainants

NOTICE OF APPEARANCE

- vs. -

MICHAEL LEFEBVRE,

Defendant

TO: Ad Interim Commission, Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery,
Moderator, Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, THAT I, William H. Chellis, Esq., have been retained by
and appear for the above named defendant with regard to the above-entitled matter.

Please provide me a copy of the record as it exists to today, as well as a formal copy of
the charges made against Dr. LeFebvre. I will accept serve by email a
william@chellislaw.com

Dated: 10/1/20


Counsel for Defendant

Address:

27 Maple Avenue
PO Box 624
Jeffersonville, New York 12748

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from October 9, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, October 9, 2020
by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 5:36 p.m. EDT.

3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint an Installation Commission for installing Rev. Ross Fearing at Sparta RPC consisting of Rich Johnston (Moderator), Russell Lodge and Wade Mann on Friday, December 4, 2020.
5. Having received a letter of acceptance of the call to Grace Reformed Church from Gary McNamee, it was moved, seconded and passed to approve the transfer of his license to receive a call to the Midwest Presbytery effective October 26, 2020.
6. The minutes were read and approved.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
8. Phil Pockras adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 6:03 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator

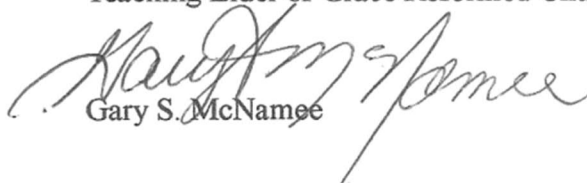


Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Letter from Gary McNamee Accepting the Call to Grace Reformed Church
--

To: The TGB of Grace Reformed Church and Grace Reformed Church, Columbia, MO
From: Gary S. McNamee
 10/09/20

I hereby humbly and gladly accept the attached call to become the Pastor/
 Teaching Elder of Grace Reformed Church, Columbia, MO.



Gary S. McNamee

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from October 12, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Monday, October 12, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 8:04 p.m. EDT.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. Having received a request from the prosecutors (in a letter addressed to the Ad Interim Commission on 10/10/2020 and subsequently in communication 20-10 addressed to the Presbytery on 10/12/2020) for a continuance to delay the LeFebvre trial and due to

previous granting of the introduction of additional prosecution witnesses and also in concurrence with BOD II.2.3 (E-11) which says, "If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense", it was moved, seconded and passed to grant the continuance and re-schedule the trial of Mr. Michael Lefebvre at Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church on Friday, November 13, 2020 and Saturday the 14th starting at 2:00 p.m. EST on the 13th and again at 8:30 a.m. EST on the 14th.

5. It was also moved, seconded and passed, at the prosecution's request, to remove the name of Mr. Michael Lefebvre from the prosecution's witness list.
6. The minutes were read and approved.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
8. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 8:56 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Request from the Prosecutors for a Continuance
--

To the Ad Interim Commission,

We, the prosecution, hereby request that AIC approve a continuance, postponing the defendant's upcoming trial until Friday, November 13 and Saturday, November 14, 2020.

Rationale: The defense's counsel had approached the prosecution on Tuesday, Oct. 6, offering to drop opposition to prosecution's witness list in exchange for a "more workable trial date". An agreement was quickly and amicably reached, and prosecution intended to sign a joint petition with defense on Thursday, Oct. 8, in time for the AIC's meeting on Friday, Oct. 9. We never received the joint petition; therefore, we would still petition the AIC for a postponement of the trial, believing that this would be in the best interest of the defense.

We also request that Mr. Michael Lefebvre be removed from our list of witnesses.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Anderson
Adam Kuehner
Date: 10/10/2020

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from October 20, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Monday, October 20, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).

2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Jon Hughes at 5:34 p.m. EDT.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Ruling Elder David Schisler to the Louisville Commission at the commission's request.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to refer to the Clerk of Presbytery, Mr. Kuehner, a request for transfer of the Rhyne family to First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, SC.
6. It was moved, seconded and passed to adopt the Ad Interim Commission report to presbytery for the upcoming meeting on October 23, 2020.
7. The minutes were read and approved.
8. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
9. Phil Pockras adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 6:02 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Request from the Louisville Commission
--

Gary McNamee <gmcnamee@rpts.edu>

To: Kent Butterfield

Wed, Oct 14 at 3:46 PM

Hi Kent,

The Louisville Commission would like to ask the AIC to Appoint RE Dave Schisler of the Columbus RPC to serve as a member of the Louisville Commission.

Dave has worked with the commission in matters regarding the Louisville work and would be a great asset to the commission and provide a valuable link to the Columbus RPC which is largely funding the Louisville work.

Dave has agreed to serve on this commission. This commission started with 5 members. Since Andy McCracken left in February, we have been operating with 4 members. With the impending move of Gary McNamee to Columbia, MO, this commission would be down to 3 members. Therefore we are asking that you appoint Dave Schisler to the commission.

Thank you,
For the Louisville Commission
Gary McNamee

Rhyne Family Transfer Request



First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

701 North Main Street • Lancaster, SC 29720
P.O. Box 864 • Lancaster, SC 29721
803.285.1578
email: onahill@comporium.net
website: firstarplancaster.org

October 12, 2020

Great Lakes/ Gulf Presbytery of RPCNA
ak@streetsermon.org

Attention: Adam Keener

Dear Mr. Keener,
R. Glenn Rhyne, Anna Rhyne, and Madelyn Rhyne met with the Session on October 4, 2020 and expressed their desire to join the fellowship of First ARP Church. Please transfer their membership from the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery of the RPCNA on behalf of the former Pageland Reformed Presbyterian (Mission) Church which is now closed.

We look forward to their participation in the ministry here at First ARP. Thank you for your attention in this matter.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam Huey".

Mr. Sam Huey
Clerk of Session

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from October 23, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, October 23, 2020 at Southside Indianapolis RP Church (in conjunction with a special meeting of Presbytery).

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute). Also present were Jeff Jones and Gary McNamee.
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Phil Pockras at 5:35 p.m. EDT.

3. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Dave Schisler as Interim Moderator of the Columbus RP Church effective October 27, 2020.
4. The minutes were read and approved.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
6. Steve Rhoda adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 5:38 p.m. EDT.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from November 12, 2020
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The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Thursday, November 12, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute). Also present was Drew Poplin (pastoral intern at Durham).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 5:33 p.m. EST.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to receive the ministerial credentials for Rev. Bill Roberts from the Midwest Presbytery.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to receive the ministerial credentials for Rev. Ross Fearing from the Midwest Presbytery.
6. A letter addressed to the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery from Nathan Enas (member of Christ Church RP) dated October 23, 2020 was sent directly to the Clerk of Presbytery (and forwarded to this Commission). The Directory for Church Government 8.11 (page D-40) says, "A petition addressed to a presbytery or Synod shall first be submitted to a session, and by it transferred to the presbytery or through the presbytery to the Synod." It was moved, seconded and passed that the letter be referred back to Mr. Enas with encouraging instruction that he re-submit the letter to his local Session requesting them to forward it to the Presbytery. Greg Fisher will communicate this to him.
7. Mr. Rhoda left the meeting.
8. It was moved, seconded and passed to acknowledge receipt of complaints against actions of the Ad Interim Commission from James Faris and also from Jared Olivetti (with James Faris) which have also been filed with the Clerk of Synod.
9. The minutes were read, corrected and approved.
10. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.

11. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 6:20 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Certificate of Ministerial Credentials

in the REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

Name: **Roberts, William L.**

Birth Place: Missoula, MT

Date of Birth: March 2, 1951

Citizenship: United States of America

Baptized: May 19, 1960 in Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Horseheads, NY

Profession of Faith: June 6, 1966 in Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

Education

<i>Institutions attended, high school and up</i>	<i>From/To</i>	<i>Diploma/Degree</i>
Horseheads High School, (Horseheads, NY)	1965-1969	Regents Degree
Cornell University, (Ithaca, NY)	1969-1973	A. B in mathematics
Purdue University, (W.Lafayette, IN)	1973-1974	
Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary,	1976-1979	M.. Div.

Record of Church Service

Date Presbytery

Under Care of Ohio-Illinois Presbytery 1975 Ohio-Illinois Presbytery

Ordination July 22, 1983 Ohio-Illinois Presbytery

Installed in the Bloomington [IN] congregation 1983

Released by Bloomington [IN] congregation 2010 Great Lakes-Gulf Presb.

Church Planting in the Terre Haute [IN] mission 2009 Great Lakes-Gulf Presb.

Released by Terre Haute [IN] mission June 30, 2019 Great Lakes-Gulf Presb.

Transfer from GLG Nov. 15, 2019 Midwest Presbytery

Other: Clerk, Ohio-Illinois Presbytery 1985-88. American Representative, Reformation Translation Fellowship, 1989-____.

Certificate of Ministerial Credentials

in the REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

Name: Fearing, Olin Ross
Birth Place: San Antonio, TX
Date of Birth: 30 June 1988
Citizenship: United States of America
Baptized: 1992(?) in the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, FL Rev. Tony Dollison (sp?).
Profession of Faith: 2001(?) in the Covenant Presbyterian Church, Lufkin, TX.

Education

<u>Institutions attended, high school and up</u>	<u>From/To</u>	<u>Diploma/Degree</u>
Home-school,	2001-2005	High School Diploma
Texas A&M University,	2005-2010	Bachelors in Science
Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary,	2010-2014	Master of Divinity

Record of Church Service

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Presbytery</u>
Taken under care as student of theology	2010	Houston Metro Presbytery
Licensed to preach the gospel	2013	Calvary Presbytery
Ordination	Sep 2014	SE Alabama Presbytery
Installed in (MMI) Ministry to the Military and Internationals	Sep 2014	SE Alabama Presbytery
Released by MMI	Oct 2019	SE Alabama Presbytery
Received by the Midwest Presbytery	Nov. 8, 2019	Midwest Presbytery

Other: _____

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from November 24, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Tuesday evening, November 24, 2020, by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Phil Pockras (Belle Center), and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. Kent Butterfield called the meeting to order and asked Phil Pockras to pray and constitute. He did so, seeking God's blessing on the meeting and constituting the meeting as a commission of the court of Christ, in His name and by His authority at 8:03 p.m. EST
3. By common consent, Steve Rhoda was appointed as temporary clerk in the absence of Jon Hughes.

4. Kent Butterfield presented the agenda and asked for additions. None were offered, and the agenda was approved by motion made, seconded and passed.
5. A Commission was appointed, by motion made, seconded and passed, for the ordination of Andrew Battiato, at the request of the Global Mission Board, at 2nd RPC, Indianapolis, Indiana, at 7:00 pm, on January 8, 2021. Members of the commission are the following: Dean Filson, James Faris, David Hanson, Joel Hart, and Jared Olivetti.
6. The Commission acknowledged the existence of three complaints to Synod regarding the recent LeFebvre judicial case, all of which have been processed through the moderator and clerk of Presbytery, according to Book of Discipline II.4.3.
7. A request from the Presbytery of the Alleghenies was received, asking that the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery appoint a teaching elder to serve as an advisory member of their Birmingham Commission. The AIC discussed the request and decided, by motion made, seconded and passed, to refer this request to the full Presbytery, and to communicate this decision to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.
8. The minutes were read and approved.
9. The motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed.
10. Moderator Kent Butterfield asked Greg Fisher to close with prayer and adjourn the meeting, which he did, giving thanks to God, seeking His continued blessing upon our Presbytery, and adjourning the court in the name and by the authority of Christ.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Steve Rhoda, AIC Clerk Pro Tem

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from December 11, 2020
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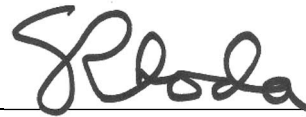
The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday evening, December 11, 2020, by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Phil Pockras (Belle Center), and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. Kent Butterfield called the meeting to order and asked Greg Fisher to pray and constitute. He did so, seeking God's blessing on the meeting and constituting the meeting as a commission of the court of Christ, in His name and by His authority at 5:50 pm.
3. By common consent, Steve Rhoda was appointed as temporary clerk in the absence of Jon Hughes.
4. Kent Butterfield presented the agenda, which was approved by motion made, seconded, and passed.
5. A request was received from Rehobeth Presbyterian Church (ARP), Waxhaw, North Carolina, for the transfer of membership to them of Ron and Judy Posvar, former members of Pageland Reformed Presbyterian Church, Pageland, South Carolina.
6. The minutes were read and approved.

7. The motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed.
8. Moderator Kent Butterfield asked Phil Pockras to close with prayer and adjourn the meeting, which he did, giving thanks to God, seeking His continued blessing upon our Presbytery, and adjourning the court in the name and by the authority of Christ.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Steve Rhoda, AIC Clerk Pro Tem

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from December 18, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, December 18, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute). Also present was Drew Poplin (pastoral intern at Durham).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 5:31 p.m. EST.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. A petition for a Presbytery Judicial Commission from two families at one of the congregations was considered. The petition normally should have been made to the session first, which would then be required to pass it to Presbytery with or without approval. However, DCG.8.11 (D-40) includes a provision that, "The higher court may in exceptional cases admit a petition directly from a person who is not a member of the court." Since the content of the petition is in its nature dealing with an urgent matter the AIC agrees that it is an exceptional case. In addition the AIC is expecting to receive a letter from another TE on the matter in the next few days. It was agreed that once that letter is received then to meet on Monday, December 21, 2020 with some of the principal parties to determine a course of action.
5. A request from Immanuel RPC for approval to request a loan from Synod to purchase a new building was received. It was moved, seconded and passed to table the request until the next meeting on Monday, December 21, 2020.
6. A pastoral call from Orlando RP Church was received but, as required by DCG 3.II.D.5.e (D-17, 18), it did not include signatures, the membership roll or the minutes of the congregational meeting. It was moved, seconded and passed to return the call to the Session with instructions to provide the required documents.
7. The minutes were read, corrected and approved.
8. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
9. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 6:37 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from December 21, 2020
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The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Monday, December 21, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. Kent Butterfield read Psalm 39.
3. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 8:08 p.m. EST.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
5. The required documents having been received and inspected, it was moved, seconded and passed to approve the pastoral call from Orlando RP Church on Rev. Nathan Eshelman as a regular gospel call and to forward it to the Pacific Coast Presbytery AIC.
6. Keith Magill, Zachary Blackwood, David Carr, Nate Pfeiffer and Ben Larson from the Immanuel RP Session joined the meeting at 8:36 p.m.
7. The request from two families of the Immanuel RP Church for a judicial commission was taken up regarding matters for which a previous AIC (on July 26) established an Immanuel Advisory Committee to counsel the Session of Immanuel and the families. The AIC asked questions and received answers after which the Immanuel RP Session members were dismissed at 9:48 p.m.
8. By common consent the AIC will plan to meet with the Immanuel Advisory Committee on December 29 at 7:00 p.m. prior to any other action. This timetable was also acceptable to the concerned families.
9. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve Immanuel RPC's request for a loan from Synod towards the purchase of a new building.
10. The minutes were read, corrected and approved.
11. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
12. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 10:37 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk



REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH *of* ORLANDO

Pastor's Call

We, the **Orlando Reformed Presbyterian Church, 324 E. Livingston St. Orlando Florida** under the care of the **Gulf- Great Lakes Presbytery**, being without a pastor to take the spiritual oversight of us in the Lord; and satisfied that your spiritual attainments, intellectual abilities and soundness in the faith and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are fitted to our capacities, do now, with the concurrence of Presbytery, call you, **Dr. Nathan Eshelman**, to undertake the office of pastor among us. Upon your accepting this call and performing the duties of your office as set forth by the Constitution, we promise you all due respect and support in the Lord. We hereby promise to pay you **\$80,000.00, (total package, excluding moving expense is \$105,900.00)** in the event of your accepting this call, and performing the duties of a pastor among us:

Direct Compensation

\$80,000.00, payable in 24 installments of **\$3,333.33** each. Of this compensation 55% is designated as an allowance for furnishings and appurtenances for your dwelling as set forth by Section 107 of the I.R. Code. We include the following in the compensation package:

Housing

\$3,666.66 per month from direct compensation to be used for housing. (see direct compensation above)

\$35,000.00 or up to 12% of the cost to purchase a house as an interest-free loan to be used for the down payment/closing on housing. The Loan is to be repaid in monthly installments over the first 10 years of the contract at **\$291.66** per month. If the pastor dies during the term of this loan, monthly payments are not required as this would be a burden on the widow. Payment of the remaining balance will be paid from the proceeds when and if the residence is sold or ownership transferred.

Health Insurance \$10,000.00 per year(company and coverage to be determined with pastor input)

Business Expense

Mileage allowance of **\$1,800.00 per year** including e-pass and toll payments. Actual tolls.

\$200.00 per year Special office materials and supplies. (General office supplies through general budget)

Book allowance of **\$1,000.00** per year.

Study/Office: Provide a private study/counseling room supplied with office furniture, a computer, printer, internet connection and cell phone **\$800.00** per year.

Secretarial services provided as needed on volunteer basis.

Fees:

All non-reimbursed travel, supplies, and fees for attending Synod, Presbytery and assigned committee work.

Presbytery Family Camp: **\$1,500.00** per conference travel and cost for family Gulf-Great Lakes Presbytery or international conference in U.S.

Seminars: **\$200.00** Ligonier Orlando national conference (or other approved conference) registration and expenses.

\$2,000.00 per year to be used for hospitality and/or entertainment expenses.

Pension Plan: X **\$7,500.00** per year Synod:

Vacation:

4 (Four) weeks per year

Paid Sabbatical of 6 weeks after 7 years of continuous service.

In addition, the time for attendance at Synod, Presbytery, Family Conference and assisting with one communion per year, preaching is not required the Sabbath following these events. Attendance at these and other session approved conferences or ministries will not count against vacation time.

Moving Expenses:

Cost of professional movers from present location to new location or as arranged by session in agreement with the pastor.

Other Benefits:

Life Insurance **\$900.00** per year

We promise to review annually with you the adequacy of this compensation prior to the adoption of the congregation's budget meeting to take into account the cost of living increase (e.g. C.P.I.). In witness thereof, we subscribe this call and financial agreement, the 17 day of December in the year 2020, in the presence of these witnesses:

Elders:

James Pennington James Pennington
Jonathan Schaefer Jonathan Schaefer
Joseph A. Worsham Joseph Worsham


Deacons:

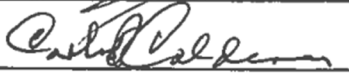
Scott Bailey Scott Bailey
Becky Farrant Becky Farrant
Steve Garrow Steve Garrow
Chuck Bloom Chuck Bloom

Communicant Members:

<u>Elyse de la Cruz</u>	<u>Diane Schaefer</u>
<u>Laura & Jenn Duffey</u>	<u>Katie Pote</u>
<u>Jessica Schaefer</u>	<u>Mr. Petra</u>
<u>Al J. Bluff</u>	<u>Jayna Bailey</u>
<u>Steven Family</u>	<u>Anthony J. Farrant</u>
<u>Timothy</u>	<u>Judith Bailey</u>
<u>Anja Knutson</u>	<u>Pell Binkley</u>
<u>Joe Johnson</u>	<u>Stephen Garrow</u>
<u>R. R. R.</u>	<u>Erin</u>
<u>Willie D.</u>	<u>Donna Worsham</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Pete & Pat</u>

Adherents:






Witnesses:



Attestation of a Call and Financial Agreement I hereby certify that this call and financial agreement were made out on the date therein specified in accord with the law and order of the church.


James Pennington, Moderator

Request from Families of Immanuel RP Church
(Note: names have been redacted)

GLG 20-14
Partially Redacted

December 5, 2020

To the Presbyters of the Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery

Greetings,

We the _____ and _____ families are writing to request action of the GLG Presbytery following a decision of the Ad Interim Commission of this Presbytery. This commission, on July 26, 2020, passed a motion as follows:

At the request of the Immanuel RPC session, a motion was made to form a committee of three to advise the Immanuel RPC session as they deal with a sensitive matter. The committee members will be chosen by the Immanuel RPC session. The motion was seconded and carried.

The members chosen to formulate the Immanuel Advisory Committee were Adam Niess (chair), David Hanson, and Wade Mann. This committee has given real help to us while a sensitive matter has unfolded within our congregation (a situation which affects us deeply as families and congregants). However, as we have sought for an equitable path forward in this situation we have come upon limitations that are couched within the nature of a committee. Therefore we are asking that Presbytery give more authority to resolve the situation before us and the Immanuel Session. Our formal petition follows as thus:

That Presbytery dismiss the Immanuel Advisory Committee (which was established on July 26, 2020) and in its place, form a five-man Commission, to be composed of Adam Niess, David Hanson, Keith Evans, and two additional men at Presbytery's discretion, in order to facilitate resolution in this sensitive matter and to ensure a just and impartial decision between the various parties of this case.

Sincerely yours,

_____ and _____, _____ and _____

Petition Addendum, December 14, 2020

Dear Ad-Interim Commission of the Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery,

We would like to modify our original petition in regard to the naming of three members for the requested commission. In an email on December 9, 2020 the Immanuel Advisory committee wrote a document which included their hesitations for their involvement on a Presbytery commission:

The current committee members each has questions about our own ability to serve on such a commission for various reasons including: scheduling in light of other responsibilities, growing conflicts of interest that we feel, and questioning our own ability with all the evidence we have heard already to honestly rehear & reevaluate alongside an expanded team.

We take their concerns seriously and would like to modify our petition to reflect that Presbytery choose all members of this commission. An updated version of this petition would be:

That Presbytery dismiss the Immanuel Advisory Committee (which was established on July 26, 2020) and in its place, form a five-man Judicial Commission, members selected at Presbytery's discretion, in order to adjudicate this sensitive matter between us and the Immanuel Session, and to ensure a just and impartial decision between the various parties of this case.

Sincerely yours,
_____ and _____, _____ and _____



December 18, 2020

Ad Interim Commission
Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery

Fathers and Brothers,

Attached please find a petition to the Presbytery from two of our member families asking

That Presbytery dismiss the Immanuel Advisory Committee (which was established on July 26, 2020) and in its place, form a five-man Judicial Commission, members selected at Presbytery’s discretion, in order to adjudicate this sensitive matter between us and the Immanuel Session, and to ensure a just and impartial decision between the various parties of this case.

At this time we are opposed to this appeal for a Presbytery commission. Another more expeditious approach would be our desire.

Our session has been working closely with the Presbytery committee appointed on July 26, 2020 to help all of us through this difficult situation. The Presbytery committee has spent many hours over the last several months becoming familiar with the issues, consulting other resources, and giving counsel to all the parties involved.

The committee is willing and able to continue their ministry to us.


To attempt to bring the issues to a conclusion, they have offered to spend up to three days in January working with all of us in a “binding mediation” setting. If any of us are dissatisfied with the results of that mediation, an appeal could be made to Presbytery at that time.

We agree with the Presbytery Committee’s concerns that to bring five other men (likely three other teaching elders and two ruling elders) up to speed who are completely unfamiliar with the issues, would take a tremendous amount of time and effort delaying any resolution for many months or longer.

We recommend giving the plan of the present Presbytery committee the opportunity to be used of the Lord to bring resolution before starting all over again now with a Presbytery commission.

Attached are the members’ petition and also the proposal of the Presbytery committee on how to move forward.


Keith R. Magill, Moderator Pro Tempore


David J. Carr, Clerk

Immanuel RPC Building Loan Request

MORTGAGE LOAN APPLICATION For Congregations and Presbyteries of the RPCNA

Applicant:

Name Immanuel RP Church, Inc

Date December 12, 2020

Address 1893 E 600 N

Phone 765.320.0077 - church main

W. Lafayette, IN 47906

E-mail keith@immanuelrpc.com (574-206-6394)

Summary of Application Requirements:

- Building Loan Fund mortgages can be a maximum of \$175,000 at 3% interest over a max of 20 years. All loans may be paid off early with no penalty.
- General Mortgage Loan funds can be a maximum of \$225,000 at approximately market rates of interest over 20 years. The combined maximum loan for both types of loans is \$400,000.
- There is a small grant available with specific requirements listed in the application in order to qualify. Any grant received would reduce the total loan amount available.
- If approved, payments will be required on a monthly or quarterly basis **by ACH withdrawal only.**
- All loans require a minimum 10% down payment, or 10% of the project paid by the congregation's funds. A larger down payment is much preferred.
- All loans require much the same information that a bank would request, such as an income statement (prior year's income and expenses and a budget for the next calendar year) and a balance sheet (a list of your assets and loans or debts). The committee that oversees these loans has a fiduciary responsibility over these investment funds of the church, so they must ask for complete financial information much like a bank.
- An appraisal of the property, whether being purchased or improved, is usually necessary, and is the responsibility of the applying congregation. A local realtor or a title company or lawyer can usually help arrange for these things and the other requirements below.
- If approved, the congregation would be required to also arrange for and pay for a mortgage and note to be drawn up and filed at your local courthouse, along with a title search and title insurance and property insurance. The Trustees do not charge any fee for the loan, but you may have considerable expense for these other items.
- If possible, please return the application and other material by email. It will help speed up the committee's approval process. Please feel free to ask questions, I'll be happy to help. Our contact information is in the letterhead.

Before completing this application, please read the applicable portions copied below from the "Policies and Procedures for Loans and Grants Through Synod's Board of Trustees' Building Loan and Grant Committee" and the article written by Ray Bowman.

Please check all of the following that you are requesting:

X General Investment Mortgage X Building Loan Mortgage X Grant

Purpose of the Loan Request: (Check both A and B)

- A. Purchase _____
Construct _____
Remodel _____
Repair _____
- B. Church Building _____
Parsonage _____
Property _____

If "Purchase" is checked, attach a **written appraisal** (Appendix #1) of the property prepared by a qualified real estate appraiser (a real estate listing of a property for sale is not sufficient).

Also include a **survey** (Appendix # 2 & 3 – poor quality but the best available) of the property.

C. On a **separate sheet** (Page 6 below), please describe in some detail the cost, need, and other pertinent factors of the project for which this loan is being requested. Please demonstrate in your response how this plan satisfies the requirements in section IV. D. of the "Policies and Procedures" below. If a grant is being requested, please specifically respond to items IV.C., IV.D.9., and IV.E. below in demonstrating the need for a grant.

Additional Information:

- A. Do you currently own property (building and / or land)? Yes _____ No _____
- B. Value of present property and buildings, if any \$ 425,000 - sale price of present property (Attach a realtor's appraisal **Purchase Agreement** (Appendix #4) to support the above figure)
- C. In whose name is the title to the property? Immanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church
- D. Are there any restrictions to this title? No
- E. What mortgages or other liens are on the above titled property; and by whom are they held? None
- F. Is this requested loan to apply to any property on which there is already any mortgage or other outstanding lien? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please give details:

The following additional requirements apply to a congregational request for a loan:

1. Attach a report of the current year's total congregational budget and a copy of the previous year's total financial report (income statement). Also include all assets and liabilities of the congregation (balance sheet).

Note: Our fiscal year end is June 30. Attached are the **2019-20 Financial Report** (Appendix #5), the **2020-21 Budget** (Appendix #5) and the **July thru September 2020 Financial Report** (Appendix #6).

2. Attach a copy of next year's budget (or proposed budget), which shows all expenses of the above proposed project, including payments on this mortgage loan.

Note: We have allocated \$56,500 for building expenses on Line 19 of our current 2020-21 Budget

Note: We do not have a 2021-22 budget at this time.

Note: We are in the process of replacing our “homemade” financial spreadsheets with commercial software. Unfortunately, we have not yet completed that transition.

3. In light of the work of the Board to Address Disability Concerns, we recommend that: “in all new construction, additions, or renovations, consideration be given to including accessibility to persons with disabilities.”

Financing Arrangements:

A. Total proposed cost of project	(1) \$ <u>1,100,000</u>
Available cash on hand	(2) \$ 480,000
Additional amount to be raised by borrower	(3) \$ 190,000
Additional amount to come from a Grant or other sources	(4) \$ 30,000
Total of (2), (3), and (4)	(5) \$ <u>700,000</u>
Amount requested; (1) less (5)	(6) \$ <u>400,000</u>

Please give details of (3) and (4):

- (2) – Includes our Building Fund plus proceeds from the sale of our current property
- (3) – Please see the letter at the end of this application as requested in “Purpose of the Loan Request Section C” above for the details
- (4) – The Center for Congregations in Indianapolis is the source

B. Repayment Schedule:

Please note: The loan period shall not exceed twenty (20) years for either type of Mortgage loan. The more rapidly funds are repaid, the more quickly others can be helped with loans. Payments will be due quarterly unless otherwise arranged, and all payments will be made by ACH withdrawal only.

1. Please give details on the loan period you are requesting, and the payment frequency.
We are requesting a 20 year loan, payable on a quarterly basis via ACH.
2. The Trustees of Synod hold funds for approved loans available for a maximum of 90 days. This limit has been set so funds will not be held inactive for an undue length of time. If the loan is approved, how soon would you plan to use the funds?
by 12/30/20

C. Requirements For Closing:

1. As security for the Church’s investment, the Trustees of Synod require that they be issued a standard commitment for title insurance and given a recorded mortgage for the amount of the loan. These will be the responsibility of the borrower.
2. Adequate property and casualty insurance is required with a mortgagee clause included according to item IV. L. of the “Policies and Procedures”. A certificate of insurance to confirm the coverage should be sent to the Trustees of Synod.

Note: We will send these items to you as soon as we have them.

Authorization:

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

For loans to congregations, please provide signatures of all elders, **and the deacon chair.**

Signature	<i>Keith R. Magill</i>	Signature	<i>Madison Blackwood</i>
Signature	<i>Benjamin D. Larson</i>	Signature	<i>David J. Carr</i>
Signature	<i>Nathaniel D. Phillips</i>	Signature	<i>Israel P. Christ</i>
Signature	<i>Benjamin C. [unclear]</i>	(Deacon Chair)	

Loans to congregations require the approval of the Presbytery or Ad Interim Commission based on their evaluation and counsel according to item IV. G. of the "Policies and Procedures" below.

Name of Approving Organization: Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery

Officers: Signature _____ Title Moderator

Signature _____ Title Clerk

Your signature means you have read, evaluated, and approved this application.

FOR TRUSTEES USE ONLY	
Date of Receipt of Application _____	Date of Reply _____
BUILDING LOAN MORTGAGE	GENERAL INVESTMENT MORTGAGE
Amount Requested \$ _____	Amount Requested \$ _____
Amount Approved \$ _____	Amount Approved \$ _____
Time Period of Loan _____ Years	Time Period of Loan _____ Years
Annual Interest Rate _____ %	Annual Interest Rate _____ %
Payments \$ _____ per _____ (Includes Interest & Principal)	Payments \$ _____ per _____ (Includes Interest & Principal)

FUNDS GRANTED \$ _____

Dear Trustees,

A couple years ago, it was becoming clear to our Session that our congregation was approaching the maximum capacity that could reasonably be expected to function well in our present building. The Session decided to ask Keith Magill to take on a newly created position of “Facilities Administration and Planning Coordinator” to address both how to maximize the use of our present facility and to begin planning for what might be next if our congregation continued to grow. In God’s Providence, we’ve experienced an unprecedented growth in adherents and members over the past year and a half, far beyond what we anticipated when this position was first being proposed. In the past 18 months Jesus has added to his church at Immanuel about 17 family units and 25 covenant children. More are in the membership process. We’ve had 18 baptisms so far in 2020 and more are coming. With COVID, we have had to go to 2 services in the morning and crowded classrooms for our Sunday evening Sunday School. Our facilities have gone from tight to overcrowded. Our classrooms are packed, our sanctuary seating likely violates fire code and necessitates either overflow to the fellowship hall or two services, and our fellowship dinners (before COVID) overflow to the sanctuary or to the outdoors. This is a great blessing to our congregation, as many of these new adherents and members are new to Reformed and Presbyterian doctrine and life.

We have carefully considered sending out a group of our people to start a new congregation at this time. But for many reasons we don’t see this as a workable option right now. Reasons include, that of our total communicant and baptized membership of 173, there are 94 children high school age and below. This does not count adherent families and children who are in the process of joining. In addition, all these new families are not yet sufficiently oriented to the RP church to become “seed families” in a new work.

In 2019 a Facilities Expansion Committee was created to consider how to deal with the pressing situation with our facilities. We talked with church builders about new construction and about adding onto our present facilities. When the numbers they provided were reviewed, the consensus was that our congregation was much better off buying another existing building if at all possible. However, the few properties that were available were too expensive or weren’t going to meet our needs in terms of space or parking. So, we praised God when a local Masonic Lodge came on the market that was a good size and a great location for a price that we felt was viable. The Masons quickly received several full price offers (\$670,000) from others who wanted to convert the building into apartments or tear it down. We offered \$600,000, waited and prayed for several months while things shut down due to COVID-19, met with the Masons to discuss the offer, and revised our offer upward to \$610,000 (plus side perks like manpower for doing the clean-out and providing storage space). We rejoiced greatly when the Lord answered our prayers, and they accepted our offer. The building has been poorly maintained for the past decade or more, so there is a great deal of cosmetic work to do. For example, the 70+ year old boiler heating system needs to be completely replaced with a modern HVAC system. Initial estimates are \$100,000+. However, the

building has a 2 year old roof and is constructed with concrete block and poured concrete floors with a limestone exterior veneer (Masons!). The structure is very solid. You can see a lot of details in the Appraisal (Appendix # 1) that is included with this application.

As for our present property - We have a signed **Purchase Agreement** (Appendix #4) with a local Lutheran church for its sale for \$425,000. The anticipated closing date is December 28, 2020. This will provide much of the seed money for the new building. Our financial plan also includes \$190,000 of further fundraising by our congregation, nearly half of which has been pledged already. And we are debt free. Our tithe (General Fund) income is up about 35% over last year and, there is \$56,890 in our Building Fund. We praise God that the increase in members and adherents is evident in our giving increases. We have budgeted about \$475,000 for renovations to the new (to us!) building. Although this loan application is requesting the maximum amount from Synod, we feel confident that we can pay it off without difficulty.

You can see from the included financial reports that our budget this year (2020-21) (Appendix #5 & 6) is much the same as last year (2019-20) in terms of our ministry expenses and giving to missions. The congregation is committed to keeping spiritual ministry preeminent even in the midst of what will be a large renovation project, and our budget is evidence of that.

We are in the process of revising our 2020-21 budget now that we have a better idea of Building Expenses.

We are requesting a grant from the Building Loan and Grant Fund. We are not a wealthy congregation per capita, especially since over half our congregation is children. Finances are dictating that we will need to do much of the work on this building ourselves. Our greatest concern as a congregation is losing sight of the ministry in front of us because of the large amount of work to do on this building. Our members have offered hundreds of hours of volunteer labor over the next couple years. So, we request a grant simply because it will allow us to contract out some parts of the renovation that otherwise would not have been possible and will free time up for our members to do other kinds of spiritual work that may not be possible with a hammer in hand.

The building does need modifications to make it handicap accessible. We have plans for permanent fixes that include a ramp and a multi-level lift. The lift, in particular, will be expensive, but we are committed to allowing all people to worship the Lord, not just those who can walk up stairs.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from December 29, 2020

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute). Also present were two of the three members of the Immanuel Advisory Committee (David Hanson and Adam Niess).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 7:03 p.m. EST.
3. Kent Butterfield read from and commented on 1 John chapter 5.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
5. The Immanuel Advisory Committee members gave an update on their work with the Immanuel Session and other affected families and answered questions.
6. David Hanson and Adam Niess were dismissed from the meeting at 8:13 p.m.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to establish a five-man Judicial Commission to investigate the degree of problems of child abuse at Immanuel RP Church, determine what counseling and any help that any perpetrators and victims, along with their families, and the Session and congregation may need and whether parties involved are cooperating with civil authorities (since the Department of Child Services and the Tippecanoe County Sheriff have been involved). They are also to give recommendations to Presbytery in the following areas: 1. Legal, 2. Ecclesiastical and 3. Pastoral. In addition, we call upon the churches and members of Presbytery who are becoming aware of this situation to practice grace, mercy, and patience. We would give assurance that much ministry has already taken place and the establishing of a Judicial Commission is for the purpose of ensuring good and just ministry in the future.
8. A pastoral call from Columbus RP Church on Rev. Joel Hart was taken up. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the call as a regular gospel call and to forward it to Joel Hart.
9. The minutes were read and approved.
10. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
11. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 9:34 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Pastor's Call

We, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Indiana, under the care of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery, being without a pastor to take the spiritual oversight of us in the Lord; and satisfied that your spiritual attainments, intellectual abilities, and soundness in the faith and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are fitted to our capacities, do now, with the concurrence of Presbytery, call you, Joel Hart, to undertake the office of pastor among us.

Upon your accepting this call and performing the duties of your office as set forth by the Constitution, we promise you all due respect and support in the Lord. We hereby promise to pay you a direct compensation of \$7,000 per month, equivalent to \$84,000 annually. Of this compensation, up to 50% is designated as an allowance for furnishings and appurtenances for your dwelling as set forth by Section 107 of the I.R. Code. We include the following in the annual compensation package, except item 4 as shown below:

1. Housing: up to 50% of total compensation designated as housing allowance
2. Business Expense
 1. Study/office and furnishings
 2. Office materials and supplies
 3. Secretarial services
 4. Mileage allowance as set forth by the IRS Standard Mileage Rate
 5. \$500/year for refreshment and/or continuing education
 6. \$1,000/year for book allowance
 7. \$1,500/year for hospitality and/or entertainment expenses
3. Other Benefits
 1. Pension Plan: \$6,000 per year
 2. 3 weeks paid vacation time each year
 3. Paid time off for attendance at church functions: Synod, Presbytery, Presbytery Family Camp or RP International
 4. Presbytery Family Camp or RP International: family fees paid
4. Relocation Package: \$5,000

We promise to review annually with you the adequacy of this compensation prior to the adoption of the congregation's budget meeting to take into account the cost of living increase.

In witness thereof, we subscribe this call and financial agreement, the 28th day of December in the year 2020, in the presence of these witnesses:

Elders:

John Decker David Schisler Edward Schisler

Deacons:

Shane R. Decker R.L. Grayson
Scott D. Decker Sean Matthews

Communicant Members:

<u>Ann Ann Brown</u>	<u>L.S.E.</u>	<u>Stephen Plonak</u>
<u>Cynthia McNause</u>	<u>Amelir Jones</u>	<u>R.L. Grayson</u>
<u>Marvin Sabatino</u>		<u>Mary Lynn McCracken</u>
<u>Jacqueline Sabatino</u>		<u>Kara L. Schisler</u>
<u>McKenzie Marston</u>	<u>Jenelle C. Schisler</u>	<u>Katelyn Schisler</u>
<u>Henry Miller</u>	<u>Richard W. Holcomb</u>	<u>Debbie Woodman</u>
<u>Krista Best</u>	<u>Jane Melling</u>	<u>Abigail Plonak</u>
<u>Lisa R. Shoop</u>	<u>Bryan Plonak</u>	<u>Tom Miller</u>
<u>Shane R. Decker</u>	<u>Michael Melling</u>	<u>Katherine Jones</u>
<u>Denise Meng</u>	<u>A.A.</u>	<u>Brenda Plonak</u>
<u>Benji R. Meng</u>	<u>John Decker</u>	<u>Robert McCracken</u>
<u>Andrew Meng</u>	<u>Jayanna G. Decker</u>	<u>Lynn Schisler</u>
<u>Harry D. Webb</u>		<u>Zachary Plonak</u>
<u>Sarah Key</u>	<u>Lydia Plonak</u>	<u>Laura M. Decker</u>

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from January 1, 2021

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, January 1, 2021 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 8:07 p.m. EST.
3. Kent Butterfield read from and commented on James 1:12-27.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint the following men to the five-man Immanuel RP Church Judicial Commission (established on December 29, 2020):
 - Rev. Jason Camery (Marion), Moderator
 - Rev. Shawn Anderson (Kokomo)
 - Rev. Ian Wise (Southside)
 - Josh Reshy (Terre Haute)
 - Bob Burchfield (Southside)

This Commission should plan to report to the Spring 2021 meeting of Presbytery (March 4-6 at Southside RP Church).

6. The minutes were read and approved.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
8. Phil Pockras adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 8:31 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from January 11, 2021

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Monday, January 11, 2021 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Phil Pockras at 7:04 p.m. EST.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to grant Selma RP Church the privilege of calling a pastor.

5. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve a request from Selma RP Church for Ruling Elder Dr. George Evans to Moderate the meeting to elect a pastor tentatively scheduled for February 7, 2021.
6. The Clerk of Presbytery having informed us of the need for corrections to the minutes of the meeting of Presbytery on October 23, 2020 at Southside, it was moved, seconded and passed to refer the communication to Presbytery at the 2021 spring meeting.
7. The Sparta Installation Commission (for the installation of Rev. Ross Fearing) notified us that one member of the Commission is under quarantine due to COVID-19. Since according to the Book of Church Government (6.15 page D-33, "A quorum of a commission shall consist of not less than two-thirds of its members") the remaining two members of the Commission still constitute a quorum and so it was agreed that they could operate with two members (the third member could still "attend" via video conference).
8. The minutes were read and approved.
9. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
10. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 7:43 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

<h3>Ad Interim Commission Minutes from January 19, 2021</h3>
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The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 7:06 p.m. EST.
3. Southside RP Church has informed us that they are unable to host the spring meeting of Presbytery in March. Sycamore RP Church has agreed to host the meeting. It was moved, second and passed to move the location of the March 4-6, 2021 meeting of presbytery to Sycamore RP Church, Kokomo IN (starting at 2:00 p.m. on March 4).
4. There was discussion regarding how to allow participation via Zoom conferencing. It was moved, seconded and passed to allow only those certified delegates with specific COVID-19 or other medical excuses to vote via video conferencing. This decision would need to be ratified at the start of the actual meeting of presbytery on March 4.
5. The minutes were read and approved.
6. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.

7. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 7:59 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from January 29, 2021
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The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, January 29, 2021 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Greg Fisher (Marion), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Steve Rhoda at 7:03 p.m. EST.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint the following men as the Installation Commission for the installation of Rev. Nathan Eshelman at Orlando RP Church on March 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.:
 - a. Craig Scott, Moderator
 - b. Shawn Anderson
 - c. Ray Lanning
 - d. Jonathan Schaefer
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Wade Mann to moderate the beginning of the Spring Meeting (March 4-6, 2021 at Sycamore RP Church, Kokomo, IN) until a new Moderator is elected and for Phil Pockras to bring the opening sermon.
6. The minutes were read and approved.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
8. Greg Fisher adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 7:46 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

Ad Interim Commission Minutes from February 19, 2021

The Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery met on Friday, February 19, 2021 by Zoom video conference call.

1. Elders present were Moderator Kent Butterfield (Durham), Jon Hughes (Southfield), Phil Pockras (Belle Center) and Steve Rhoda (Terre Haute).
2. The court was constituted, in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, by Phil Pockras at 7:16 p.m. EST.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda.
4. A pastoral call from Selma RP Church on Mark Brown was taken up. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the call as a regular gospel call and to forward it to Mark Brown when he is licensed to receive a call.
5. It was moved, seconded and passed to adopt the report to Presbytery for the spring meeting March 4-6, 2021 in Kokomo, IN.
6. The minutes were read and approved.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn.
8. The Moderator adjourned the court in prayer in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ at 7:30 p.m. EST.



Kent Butterfield, AIC Moderator



Jon Hughes, AIC Clerk

PASTOR'S CALL

We, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Selma, Al, under the care of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery, being without a pastor to take the spiritual oversight of us in the Lord; and satisfied that your spiritual attainments, intellectual abilities and soundness in the faith and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* are fitted to our capacities, do now, with the concurrence of Presbytery, call you, Mark Brown, to undertake the office of pastor among us. Upon your accepting this call and performing the duties of your office as set forth by the Constitution, we promise you all due respect and support in the Lord.

We hereby promise to pay you \$ 29,750.00, in the event of your accepting this call, and performing the duties of a pastor among us----a direct compensation of \$ 21,540.00, payable in 12 installments of \$ 1,795.00 each, on the first of each month. In the event that any new tithing members join the church, all compensation will be adjusted accordingly.

We include the following in the compensation package:

1. Housing

Free use of the manse.

\$ N/A per month to be used for housing.

\$ N/A as an interest-free loan to be used for down payment on housing.

Payment of utilities, water, gas, electricity, phone, trash services, security, internet:

All utilities covered

Other housing arrangements.

Repairs and upkeep. (The church is not obligated for anything outside of normal wear and tear. The church should be informed before any repairs are made).

2. Business Expenses

 VAN Provide a car/van for church use.

 N/A Mileage allowance as set forth by Synod.

Mileage allowance of 56 cents per mile for church related business.

\$ 480.00 Office material and supplies, per year.

Book allowance of \$ 200.00 per year.

\$ 45 Cell phone allowance per month. (Included in direct compensation)

Fees: \$ 700.00 Synod; \$ 700.00 Presbytery; \$ 500.00 Conferences;

 \$ N/A Seminars; \$ 500.00 Educational Meetings; _____ (list any others). Permitted upon approval.

 N/A Secretarial services

\$ N/A to be used for hospitality and/or entertainment expenses.

3. Other Benefits

Pension Plan: \$ 4,200.00 Synod: \$ N/A Annuity: \$ N/A per month.

\$ N/A Payment in lieu of Social Security.

Health Insurance: Pastor's Preference . Amount to be paid \$ N/A .

This Insurance only applies to the Pastor and coverage amount is included in the direct compensation. Said coverage amount may not exceed \$4,200 annually. In the event the Pastor marries the Pastor can choose to be covered by a Spouse's Health Plan without any further obligations from the church.

Vacation:

 3 weeks will be provided each year. (No carryover)

Holidays:

New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. (If any holiday falls on a Sunday another day can be chosen in lieu of).

Attendance at church functions: 1 week time off for Synod; 1 week time off for Presbytery; 1 week time off for guest preaching/speaking opportunities; 1 week time off for Presbytery Summer Conference or RP International Conference; 1 week time off for Ministry-Related Conference.

Other functions: Pulpit exchanges after Presbytery and Synod.

Non-financial compensation-e.g. food for locker, etc. N/A

Other special benefits.

Discretionary Fund. (Line item on budget, no more than \$ 210.00).

Long Term Disability Insurance

The church presumes that the pastor shall carry long term disability Insurance (LTDI) protection. The church agrees to pay for 20% of the cost of the premium for such policy. However, the church has the right to approve the usage of a given policy. Should the pastor not purchase any (LTDI), the church has no additional obligation other than what is discussed in the subsequent paragraph of this agreement. The church will not reimburse the pastor for any short term disability Insurance premiums.

Disabling Event

In the event of a disabling accident or illness, the church will continue to pay the pastor the usual compensation (as quantified in above Total Dollar Financial Compensation) through the first three (3) months of the disability. After the above three (3) month period, the church shall compensate the pastor at a rate of 40% of the pastor's compensation for an additional three (3) month period. The session has full discretion with respect to whether the pastor has suffered a disabling event. However, in the event that the pastor has LTDI, any determination by the insurance carrier that the pastor is disabled will result in the presumption that a disabling event has indeed occurred.

Death

Should the pastor die during his employment with the church, his surviving spouse shall be compensated in the same fashion as in the foregoing paragraph entitled "Disabling Event." Should the pastor not be married at the time of his death, the church shall not have any obligation with respect to the above "Disabling Event" paragraph unless the pastor has children under the age of twenty one (21).

4. Moving Expenses

Cost of professional movers from present location to new location.

Up to \$ N/A to be used for moving expenses.

We promise to review annually with you the adequacy of this compensation prior to the adoption of the congregation's budget meeting to take into account the cost of living increases.

In witness thereof, we subscribe this call and financial agreement, the 7TH day of ~~FEBRUARY~~ in the year 2021, in the presence of these witnesses:

Elders: James Martin
George Evans
August A. Woodson
Cherette Woodson SA.

Deacons: Jeanne W. Evans)
Charles Moore
Requia Woods
Lynne Brown

Communicant Members:

Velma Moore _____
Willie Maxey _____
Carrie Jones _____
Crandell C. Brown _____

Minutes of the Ordination Service for Mr. Andrew B to serve as "m" to South Asia as called by the RPGM Board

January 8, 2021, 7:00 p.m. at Second Reformed Presbyterian Church (Indianapolis)

Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery. Commission members: James Faris, moderator, Dean Filson, David Hanson, Joel Hart, Clerk, and Jared Olivetti.

Pastor James Faris, Moderator of the Commission, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and constituted the court in prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.

The Clerk called the roll of the Commission. All members were present. David Hanson and Jared Olivetti attended via Zoom due to issues tied to the COVID-19 outbreak.

A motion was made to invite all Reformed Presbyterian elders who are present to participate in the ordination prayer with the laying on of hands for Andrew B. The motion passed.

Pastor James Faris read the narration of the previous steps leading to the ordination service and delivered the final reading of the presbytery's edict for the ordination.

Mr. Andrew B indicated his adherence to his acceptance of the call. James Faris, the present member of the RPGM board, reaffirmed the board's adherence to the call.

The moderator called the assembly to worship using Psalm 72:18-19 after which Psalm 24A was sung by the gathered congregation. The moderator then called upon the name of the Lord in prayer.

Elder Dean Filson read the queries for ordination to Andrew, who publicly affirmed the same and signed them.

Psalm 25A was then sung by the congregation.

Rev. James Faris read Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-33, and then preached a sermon titled "As Christ Loved the Church", in which Andrew was called to the daily life of dying for Christ. Pastor Faris concluded in prayer and introduced Psalm 96D, which was sung to the praise of God.

Pastor Joel Hart, offered the prayer of ordination, thereby ordaining Mr. Andrew B to serve as a(n) "m" to South Asia under the call made by the RPGM board.

Mr. B was greeted by the RPCNA elders present at the service.

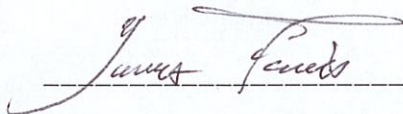
Pastor Vince Ward charged Andrew via video that was played for the congregation, in which he was reminded that he is an ambassador, a beloved brother, and a faithful servant.

Psalm 72E was then sung, after which Rev. Andrew B pronounced a benediction upon the assembly.

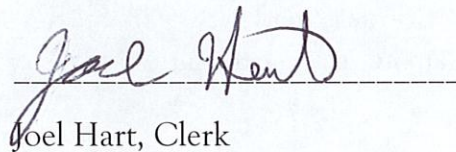
Psalm 117C was then sung to the praise of God.

The clerk, Joel Hart, then read the minutes of the meeting, after which, it was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the minutes.

The moderator prayed to adjourn the court at 8:18 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James Faris", written over a horizontal line.

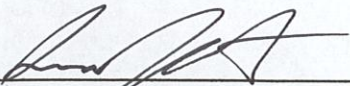
James Faris, Moderator

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joel Hart", written over a horizontal line.

Joel Hart, Clerk

Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and life?
2. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only Redeemer of men, and do you confess Him publicly as your Saviour and Lord?
3. Do you believe that it is the duty of Christians to profess publicly the content of faith as it applies to the particular needs of each age and situation, and that such public profession, otherwise called covenanting, should be made formally by the churches and other institutions as well as informally by each believer according to his ability?
4. Do you believe in and accept the system of doctrine and the manner of worship set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures?
5. Do you believe it to be the teaching of Scripture—that church and state are distinct and separate institutions; that both are under the mediatorial rule of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the permanent form of church government is presbyterian?
6. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord of men and nations, and that in loyalty and obedience to Him, it is our duty to follow the noble example of the faithful confessors and martyrs of Jesus in their witness for divine truth, and in their sacrifices and labors to establish the Kingdom of God on earth?
7. So far as you can know in your own heart, is it the call of Christ, the glory of God and the welfare of the church, and not any selfish object, that moves you to undertake this sacred office?
8. That you may perform faithfully all the duties of the office to which you have been called, do you engage to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Do you promise, in His strength, to live a holy and exemplary life, to study and promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of the church— to bring to your congregation the fruits of earnest study of the Word, to maintain a testimony for the Kingdom of God, to endeavor to minister to others and win them to Christ, to watch for souls as one who must give account?
9. Do you promise subjection in the Lord to the courts of this church, and engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted; and do you promise to submit to all the brotherly counsel which your brethren may tender you in the Lord?
10. Do you make these promises in the presence of God, in humble reliance upon His grace, as you desire to give your account with joy at the Last Great Day?



Signature

1-8-20

Date

**Candidates & Credentials Committee
Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery
Spring 2021 Report**

Recommendations

1. That student exams be conducted according to the schedule outlined below.
2. That Adam Niess and Jonathan Schaefer be nominated to continue serving on the committee.
3. That Ian Wise be nominated to serve on the committee.
4. That Drew Poplin and Trevor Patillo be given ten minutes to share their testimony with presbytery and be received as students under care.
5. That our report be received.

Serving for Christ,

Joel Hart (2022)
Adam Niess (2021)
Jared Olivetti (2023)

Rich Holdeman (2023)
Jon Hughes (2022)
Jonathan Schaefer (2021)

Student	Exam	Time*	Examiner / text
Joe Smith	Church History Paper	N/A	Chris Stockwell and Kent Butterfield
	Theology 1	20/10/5	Joel Hart
	English Bible Exam	N/A	Proctor: Ed Blackwood
	Expository Sermon 1	25/-/5	Acts 12:1-24
	[Licensure to preach]		
Tre Cranford	Expository Sermon 1	25/-/5	1 Corinthians 15:33-34
Allen Blackwood	Theology 1	20/10/5	Keith Evans
	English Bible Exam		Proctor: Ed Blackwood

	Church History Paper		Frank Smith and Jon Hughes
	Expository Sermon 1	25/-/5	Psalms 142
	[Licensure to preach]		
Mark Brown	Theology 2	20/10/5	James Faris
	Pastoral and Evangelistic Gifts	20/10/5	Rich Holdeman
	Expository Sermon 2	25/-/5	Matthew 6:25-34
	Exegesis Paper		Joel Hart and Wade Mann
	Church History	20/10/5	Phil Pockras
	[Licensure to receive a call]		
Aaron Murray	Theology 1	20/10/5	David Whitla
	Expository Sermon 1	25/-/5	Psalms 30
Jon Sturm	Evidence of Progress Sermon	25/-/5	Matthew 6:1-2
	Personal Godliness	20/10/5	Philip McCollum
Zachary Blackwood	Expository Sermon	25/-/5	1 Peter 4:7-11
Drew Poplin	Personal Godliness	20/10/5	Ray Morton
	Expository Sermon 1	25/-/5	1 Samuel 4:13
Bryan Dage (transferring from OPC)	Personal Godliness	20/10/5	Craig Scott

	Theology & Distinctives	20/10/5	Steve Rhoda
	Sermon	25/-/5	Ezra 3:10-13
	Vote to receive Pastor Dage's credentials		

*Duration - The first number is the allotted time for the examiner's question, the second is for questions from the presbytery and the third is for discussion by the presbytery about the exam prior to voting.

Note about paper standards

In response to a committee formed to advise synod, recommendations for standardized papers were made and accepted by synod ("Report from Committee on Standardization of Student Papers"). These recommendations were for church history papers and exegesis papers presented by students under care to their presbyteries. Since they were recommendations and not requirements, and since our presbytery has not acted formally on these recommendations, your C&CC is currently asking our students to abide by our current standards in our "Student Handbook", which can be accessed online. Especially for the church history paper, we believe our current standards are more reasonable and manageable. If presbytery wishes to change our current standards to adopt the recommendations from synod, please let us know.

Student Aid

The following students are receiving aid from presbytery:

- Allen Blackwood (began fall 2019)
- Joe Smith (began spring 2020)
- Jon Sturm (began September 2020)
- Tre Cranford (began spring 2020)
- Mark Brown (began spring 2020)

Seminary-Level Classes

- In the spring of 2020, Andrew Gilhooley – a PhD Candidate in Old Testament studies and member of 2nd RP - taught a 2-credit course on Biblical theology. The course had two credit students, as well as a large group of auditors. Through COVID, the course was held in a hybrid Zoom + in-person format. The course was well-received.

- In the spring of 2021, we anticipate Andrew teaching a course at 2nd RP on the Old Testament narratives (Joshua through Esther).

Credential and Status Changes in 2020

Licentiatees

- No one was licensed to receive a call in 2020.

Students taken under care or removed from under care

- Mark Brown (taken under care March 2020)

Licensures, ordinations, and installations

- A.B. (ordained to overseas work)
- Ross Fearing (ordained to Sparta RPC)
- Gary McNamee (ordained to Columbia, MO RPC)

Resignations and transfers

- Michael Lefebvre (resigned, credentials released by GLGP)
- H.P. McCracken (transferred to MWP, accepted call to Salt and Light RPC)

Deaths

- Thankfully, we are not aware of any deaths of credentialed ministers this year.

Men Under Care

Allen Blackwood - From Allen: "The past year in Pittsburgh has certainly been a different one (as it has for everyone) under COVID. We were very thankful that we were still able to do a summer internship in Elkhart under Wade Mann from the end of May to the beginning of August (2020). It was certainly a blessing for me, as I learned much, was stretched and challenged in good and profitable ways. Eleni and the kids enjoyed the time in Elkhart as well. I am continuing in full-time classes at RPTS, still intending to graduate (D.V.) in May of 2022. One big thing that is coming up is the mid-March due date of our third child, a girl, to go along with Henry (5), who is starting to learn how to read, and Marian (1.5) who is getting confident in her walking. We certainly thank God for these children with which He has blessed us."

Mark Brown - Upon arriving at Selma, God blessed Mark in the first few days of his residency with the opportunity to serve at a food bank across the street from the church which the church has supported for some time. Within weeks, the Covid lockdowns began, and in the interest of any compromised church members he pulled back from close interaction with great numbers of the public, and turned to working on internal church concerns and settling into the manse. The last couple of months have been a productive time of getting to know the area, local pastors, and where to find the best deals on groceries!

Tre Cranford - Tre continues to minister deeply to the church plant in Louisville. For this meeting of presbytery, he is working with Phil Pockras and Dr. Andrew Cooper on an independent church history paper regarding the life and ministry of C.L. Franklin. His last classes with RPTS were Greek and the doctrine of the church. He continues working with recovery houses in Louisville. His oldest daughter is expecting her first child in February.

Gary McNamee - (By presbytery, Gary will not be a student under care, d.v., but we are including this as matter for prayer.) "We had our house up for sale but had to take it off the market. Cynthia had a small tumor show up under her left jaw. A CT scan revealed a bigger tumor(golf ball size) inside her skull between her nasal passage and her right ear. This will require two different surgeries at two different times. So timing wise this is delaying our relocation to Missouri by at least 3 months. We are going there on the weekends to do the ministry until we move."

Aaron Murray - The Murray family is doing well. We have adjusted fairly well to seminary life. We miss our home church but are beginning to establish good relationships here at HCRP. Our two boys are doing well and Mary is pregnant with our third child. While classes are going well it is becoming increasingly challenging to balance my time as a husband/father, seminary student, and intern. Through the Lord's grace I am able to maintain all the responsibilities the Lord has given me. Areas for prayer: my expectant wife, that my kids would continue to make lasting friendships, that I would serve the church here well, and that I would thrive academically.

Drew Poplin (to be taken under care): "My name is Drew Poplin. Being raised in the Tidewater Virginia area, I was greatly blessed to be raised in a Christian household where the Gospel was clearly taught and I was encouraged to study the Scriptures. The Lord used the witness of my parents, and particularly of my mother, to draw me to Himself. At a young age, I was brought under the conviction of my sin; and by the Spirit working through the Scriptures, the Lord brought me to faith in the perfect obedience, substitutionary death and bodily resurrection of Christ Jesus alone for salvation. Being raised in a baptistic household, I was baptized soon after that. The Lord from that very early age gave me a love for His Word; and in high school, I began to be impressed with a call to the ministry of the Word. What was discerned inwardly was confirmed outwardly, as the Lord gave me many opportunities to serve in the church. I had served vocationally in pastoral ministry as a Reformed Baptist for seven years; was ordained by a regional body of Baptist ministers in 2016; and completed my M.Div. in the Spring

of 2020. During these years of ministry, the Lord slowly brought me by the Spirit working through His Word to Reformed Presbyterian convictions - to the point that I (with the blessing of my session and congregation, as well as the encouragement of other Godly men with whom I sought counsel) knew that I had to move to the RPCNA, that I may serve the Lord and His Church more freely and faithfully. By God's grace, my wife (Anna) and I were brought into the membership of First RPC Durham in March 2020; after a few weeks of commuting to Durham for worship, we moved to Durham in April; and then our daughter (Sarah) was born and baptized in August. I currently serve under the instruction of Pastor Kent Butterfield as an intern at FRPCD, where I am thankful the Lord has continued to allow me to utilize my gifts and calling for His glory and the service of His Church. My desire is to be licensed to be eligible to receive a call in the RPCNA, so that I may be able to serve as a teaching elder and churchman faithfully in the RPCNA for as long as the Lord would allow me.”

Joe Smith - Joe and Ally have had a successful transition to Pittsburgh and full-time studies at RPTS. He has been blessed in his studies so far and is currently doing an internship with Pastor Jeff Stivason at Grace RPC in Gibsonia. Ally is expecting their fourth child, due next summer. They are encouraged at the many ways God has provided for them financially.

Jon Sturm - Jon and Elsa welcomed their first child, Jane, four days before the start of the Fall semester, which was cause for an extra amount of adjustment. Jane is now four months old and sleeping through the night, so things are now progressing routinely. Jon's classes are going well and he is serving as Dr. Whitla's TA. Elsa has been welcomed into the Seminary wives group and adjusting well to life at the Seminary. She is also teaching part-time for a local home school group. They worship at the North Hills RP Church.

Ministers Without Pastorates

Active

Keith Evans - Keith continues to fulfill his Synodical appointment at RPTS as the professor of Biblical Counseling. While presently pursuing the completion of his PhD studies, Keith semi-regularly fills the pulpit in local RPCNA congregations on an as-needed basis, preaches semi-regularly at a PCA congregation, and on-occasion at an OPC congregation. In addition to teaching and preaching responsibilities, Keith maintains a very full pastoral counseling schedule each week.

David Whitla - David is now in his second year as professor of Church History at RPTS, teaching the full slate of Church History and several assigned Pastoral Theology courses, plus attendant administrative and mentoring responsibilities. In the past year he has been thankful for several preaching opportunities within the Alleghenies, Great Lakes Gulf, Midwest and Pacific Coast Presbyteries, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as other conference-speaking. He has also been pursuing a number of popular-level and academic writing

projects, notably preparing his doctoral dissertation on Archibald Johnston of Wariston for publication. He also serves on Synod's Church History and Youth Ministries Committees, and as Director of the seminary's Theological Foundations for Youth program.

Stan McKenzie - Stan's ministerial status is active. Stan is currently employed outside of the ministry.

Andrew B. - For security reasons, please refer to his family as the "B Family", their field of service as "South Asia", and their work as "laboring/serving overseas" or something similar. From Fall to Winter 2020, Andrew and his family completed an intensive training for those looking to serve among unreached peoples. They originally hoped to leave for South Asia in January 2021. They were not able to depart then due to visa delays and other logistical challenges,. While still in the US, Andrew and his wife, Laura, have started full-time language learning with the help of language mentors and online tutors. They plan to leave for South Asia this Spring or Summer as the Lord wills in order to continue language learning and begin laboring among the unreached. Andrew has plans to work as an English teacher or pursue graduate studies in the language that they are currently studying in order to maintain a legitimate visa in country. Please join them in prayer that the King of the nations would open doors for them in this nation and that He would establish them for their anticipated long-term labors for the glory of His name!

Inactive

Godfrey Franklin - We were unable to make contact with Godfrey for this report.

Retired

Rich Johnston - Having retired in 2017, Rich continues an active ministry, expressing a willingness to preach when needed (he preached four times in 2020). As many are aware, Rich is continuing to give much attention and energy to mission work in Liberia. He also serves on the disabilities ministry committee of RPWA. He continues active in the life of Second Reformed Presbyterian Church where he serves on several committees and he leads the weekly Friendship Bible Study. Rich has asked that we pray for the disabilities ministries programs at the RP international conference. Adults with special needs will be invited to attend a daily Friendship Bible Study to demonstrate this ministry to other churches. There will also be several workshops taught during the conference on how to better minister to disabled adults.

Gordon Keddie - Gordon's health prevents him from engaging in any public preaching and speaking ministry, but he is thankful to be allowed to serve the Lord in encouraging the pastors at SSRPC and completing some writing projects. Work previously completed and now in the process of publication includes a new (and first) collection of shorter writings of Alexander McLeod (1774-1832), under the title *Ruin, Redemption and Reformation*, and more recently completed a little book on *Giving* (both with Crown

& Covenant). An earlier MS for the Welwyn Commentary Series, on Romans, is in the hands of Evangelical Press (UK) but editorial work has not yet been started. He is now digitizing a number of previously hand-written expositions for a possible E-book series (also with Evangelical Press, UK). Already completed are expositions of Genesis, 1 and 2 Corinthians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians and he is working on Exodus (and the Ten Commandments) and hopes to be spared to tackle some other expositions in the future. Do please pray for stable health in the days to come.

Ray Lanning - We were unable to make contact with Ray for this report.

Keith Magill - Keith continues to serve IRPC as a ruling elder and also as their Coordinator for Facilities Management & Expansion. He's also served this past year as moderator of the Sparta session.

R. Paul Mathews - Paul continues as a non-resident communicant member of Elkhart RPC. Locally he & Janet worship at Gaylord E-Free (Evangelical Free) Church with occasional visits to worship & fellowship at Hetherton RPC near Johannesburg, MI. His daily quiet time includes Bible reading & daily prayer for RPCNA needs; GLGP churches & pastors; Elkhart and Hetherton members & adherents; & missionaries & Bible translators serving around the world. Since April this year he has stayed at home on the Sabbath Day & has been blessed to join the Elkhart RPC live-stream worship. It is a great blessing to be a part of their Psalm-singing.

Bob McCracken - Bob and Lynn are still a part of the Columbus, Indiana congregation, and happy for the Lord's provisions for them, both physically and spiritually. Because some of their pulpit suppliers during their days without a pastor were students, he has had opportunity to conduct the communion services several times in Columbus, and has also given the benedictions. He preached only a couple times in the last year. He and his wife give thanks to God for their good health.

Glenn McFarland - The doctors all say that Glenn is amazingly well for his 90 years of age. He fell recently on his head, but thankfully, there is no skull fracture or concussion. The Lord is gracious. He and his wife are still blessed to travel and see their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren each year. They have 41 so far in their family. They appreciate membership at Orlando RPC and worshiping at Providence RPC in Pittsburgh over the summer months.

Jim McMahon - We were unable to make contact with Jim for this report.

Bob Morrow - We were unable to make contact with Bob for this report.

Jim Pennington - We were unable to make contact with Jim for this report.

Dennis Prutow - Dr. Prutow did not preach during 2020 but has maintained the web presence of Westminster Evangelistic Ministries through dennyprutow.com and continues his writing ministry.

Frank Schutz - Frank reports: "I have not really been able to do much in the way of ministry this past year. I continue to have respiratory issues that put me on disability, but I have now retired and that is a blessing considering my and my wife's health. Also, my job has become caring for my wife. Leslie however, started getting very sick somewhat over a month ago and ended up in the hospital for just over a week and is now in a facility to get Physical Therapy. She has developed a thyroid condition that is quite dangerous in conjunction with her liver disease. She is working hard and I just got the wonderful news that she will be able to come home on December 22, 2020 -- in time for Christmas! My daughter and son-in-law are expecting a daughter in March! Brian continues to serve in an OPC Church in Olympia Washington. My other daughter has just been married to a wonderful man. So, in the midst of many trials the Lord is blessing us richly."

Steven Work - In 2020, Steven served on the session of Southwest Ohio Reformed Presbyterian Church, prepared the agenda and moderated the monthly Atlanta TGB, served on the LeFebvre Writing Study Committee, and preached 12 times in 3 congregations.

Jim Wright - We were unable to make contact with Jim for this report.

Appendix A: Student Recommendations



Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary

RPTS Faculty Evaluation of Student E. Allen Blackwood, II Winter 2021

To the Candidates and Credentials Committee of the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery:

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is pleased to report to your committee the progress of Allen Blackwood as he continues his training for gospel ministry.

He is in his second full-time year of studies at RPTS as he is on target to graduate in 2022. We are well-pleased with Allen's academic progress, Christ-like character development, and pastoral sensibilities. He presently maintains an admirable GPA of 3.72 in his M.Div. with Counseling Concentration degree program and is a blessing to the faculty, staff, and student body alike, here at RPTS.

Allen demonstrates a teachable spirit, is a peaceable man, and he is godly in all his interactions. Additionally, Allen avails himself of multiple avenues of growth, whether that is pursuing course work not required for graduation or seeking a variety of electives or opportunities to serve so as to be more broadly prepared. It is clear that Allen is intent on being found faithful to the Lord Jesus, as one to be used as Christ sovereignly purposes.

As such, we wholeheartedly commend Allen Blackwood to the GLG Presbytery as a man walking with Christ and displaying the expected gifts and abilities of one called to be a shepherd of Christ's flock as he prepares for pastoral ministry.

We on behalf of the RPTS Faculty, and as Allen's academic advisor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith A. Evans', written in a cursive style.

Keith A. Evans
Professor of Biblical Counseling,
and Academic Dean

**RPTS Faculty Evaluation of Student
Aaron Murray
Winter 2021**

To the Candidates & Credentials Committee of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery:

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is pleased to report to your committee the progress of Aaron Murray as he continues his training for gospel ministry. After completing 9 credits in the classes offered in your presbytery and doing another 18 credits as a distant student in 2019-2020, Aaron moved his family to Pittsburgh last summer to study full-time with us. He currently is on a schedule that would allow him to graduate by May of 2023.

We are well pleased with Aaron's progress at the Seminary. He is a faithful student who has a very strong GPA of 3.98 through 41 completed credit hours earned thus far. Aaron is a dedicated student in the classroom, shows respect to faculty and staff, and has good relationships with others in the seminary community. He gives every evidence of being an attentive husband and father (he and Mary will have a third child join them this summer). Aaron also has a strong work ethic, as he serves with great diligence in his work study (When he came down with COVID-19 in the fall quarter, he worked hard to catch up on his hours.). Though I have not had the opportunity to hear him preach yet (he will do so later this quarter), early signs in class presentations and reports I hear show promise that he will be an effective preacher.

We are happy to commend Aaron Murray to the Presbytery as a man that shows growing and confirming evidence of pastoral gifts, and we look forward to his ongoing studies here with us at RPTS.

Written on behalf of the Faculty,

Barry York
RPTS President and Professor of Pastoral Theology & Homiletics

**RPTS Faculty Evaluation of Student
Joseph Smith
Winter 2021**

To the Candidates & Credentials Committee of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery:

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is pleased to report to your committee the progress of Joseph Smith as he continues his training for gospel ministry. After doing 24 credits as a distant student in 2019-2020, Joseph moved his family to Pittsburgh last summer to study full-time with us. He currently is on a schedule that would allow him to graduate by May of 2023.

We are well pleased with Joseph's progress at the Seminary. He is a faithful and gifted student who has a very strong GPA of 4.0 through 44 completed credit hours earned thus far. Joseph exhibits a serious mind in the classroom, and has an engaging spirit with others in the seminary community. He is an attentive husband and father. Joseph also has a strong work ethic outside of the classroom, as he serves with great diligence in his work study. He also exhibits a true gift for preaching God's Word clearly and with passion.

We are happy to commend Joseph Smith to the Presbytery as a man that shows growing and confirming evidence of pastoral gifts, and we look forward to his ongoing studies here with us at RPTS.

Written on behalf of the Faculty,

Barry York
RPTS President and Professor of Pastoral Theology & Homiletics

**RPTS Faculty Evaluation of Student
Jonathan Sturm
Winter 2021**

To the Candidates & Credentials Committee of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery:

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is pleased to report to your committee the beginning progress of Jonathan Sturm in his training for gospel ministry. After moving his family to Pittsburgh last summer, he completed successfully 15 credits as a new student in the fall of 2020 while welcoming his and Elsa's first child into the family. He is taking another 15 credits this quarter and is on a schedule that would allow him to graduate by May of 2023.

We are well pleased with Jon's initial progress at the Seminary. He is a faithful student who earned a GPA of 4.0 in his first quarter. Jon is always engaged in the classroom, and joyfully interacts with others in the seminary community. He is a loving husband and new father. Jon is faithfully serving Dr. Whitla as a teaching assistant, helping him in editing, compiling research, and publication projects. I have not had the opportunity to hear him preach but look forward to doing so.

We are happy to commend Jon Sturm to the Presbytery as a man that shows great potential in his pastoral giftedness. We look forward to his ongoing studies and development here with us at RPTS.

Written on behalf of the Faculty,

Barry York
RPTS President and Professor of Pastoral Theology & Homiletics

Appendix B: Student Charts

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Allen Blackwood**

C&CC representative: Adam Niess

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	5/2018	-----	
Seminary: begun			
Evidence of progress sermon	3/2020	-----	
Seminary: first year completed			

Personal Godliness exam	3/2020	Gary McNamee	
English Bible exam (written)			
Theology & distinctives 1 exam			
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Church history paper			
Licensure to preach		-----	
Seminary: second year completed			

Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			

Church history exam			
Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			

Internships			
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Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Zachary Blackwood**
 C&CC representative: Jared Olivetti

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	n/a	-----	Zachary is working toward licensure for more regular preaching as a ruling elder.

Personal Godliness exam	3/2020	Kent Butterfield	
English Bible exam (written)			
Theology & distinctives 1 exam			
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Licensure to for “more regular occasional preaching”		-----	

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Mark Brown**
 C&CC representative: Adam Niess

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	Fall 2013 (POA) Spring 2020 (GL-GP)	-----	
Seminary: begun	Fall 2011		
Evidence of progress sermon	N/A	-----	
Seminary: first year completed			

Personal Godliness exam	Spring 2014	POA	
English Bible exam (written)	Spring 2020	Proctor: George Evans	
Theology & distinctives 1 exam	Fall 2014	POA	
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)	Spring 2014	POA	
Church history paper	August 2020	Phil Pockras, Donald Cassell	
Licensure to preach	August 2020	-----	
Seminary: second year completed			

Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			
Church history exam			
Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded	Spring 2015		

Internships	Summer 2014 (Providence RPC) 2020-2021 (Selma RPC)		
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Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Tre Cranford**
 C&CC representative: Jared Olivetti

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	June 2018	-----	
Seminary: begun	8/2018		
Evidence of progress sermon	3/2020	-----	Haggai 2:1-5
Seminary: first year completed			

Personal Godliness exam	3/2020	Jared O.	
English Bible exam (written)	9/13/2019	Andy Mc./Jared O.	
Theology & distinctives 1 exam	3/2020	Ian Wise	
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Church history paper			
Licensure to preach		-----	
Seminary: second year completed			

Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			

Church history exam			
Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			

Internships			
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Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Aaron Murray**
 C&CC representative: Joel Hart

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	9/13/2019	-----	
Seminary: begun			
Evidence of progress sermon	3/2020	-----	Mark 10:17-45
Seminary: first year completed			

Personal Godliness exam	3/2020	Jason Camery	
English Bible exam (written)			
Theology & distinctives 1 exam			
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Church history paper			
Licensure to preach		-----	
Seminary: second year completed			

Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			
Church history exam			

Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			

Internships			
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Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Joe Smith**
 C&CC representative: Jared Olivetti

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	11/2018	-----	
Seminary: begun			
Evidence of progress sermon	9/13/2019	-----	Deu. 9:1-12
Seminary: first year completed			

Personal Godliness exam	3/2020	Philip McCollum	
English Bible exam (written)			
Theology & distinctives 1 exam			
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Church history paper			
Licensure to preach		-----	
Seminary: second year completed			

Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			
Church history exam			

Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			

Internships			
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Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **Jonathan Sturm**
 C&CC representative: Jonathan Schaeffer

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	9/27/2019	-----	
Seminary: begun			
Evidence of progress sermon		-----	
Seminary: first year completed			

Personal Godliness exam			
English Bible exam (written)			
Theology & distinctives 1 exam			
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Church history paper			
Licensure to preach		-----	
Seminary: second year completed			

Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			
Church history exam			

Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			

Internships			
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Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

2021 Great Lakes/ Gulf Presbytery Meeting

COVFAMIKOI Report

Next Conference:

Due to RPIC being delayed from 2020 until 2021, Covfamikoi will not be held in the summer of 2021. We are continuing to make plans for our next summer conference (2022). As we reported last year, we are planning on moving to Johnson University, near Knoxville, Tennessee. We are very excited about this new facility.

Due to having to push our first conference at Johnson back from 2021 until 2022, we lost some leverage on the week of our conference. For the summer of 2022, we are tentatively planning on having the conference the week of July 4th. While we realize this is not optimal for some, we believe it can work sufficiently for our needs and can add some exciting changes. Also, due to having the conference around the July 4th holiday, we have decided to change the conference schedule to a Monday -> Saturday plan. The dates we are planning for the 2022 conference are Monday, July 4th to Saturday July 9. Currently, the plan is for Dr. Barry York to be the keynote speaker, with the conference topic being "The Beauty of the Church."

Promotion of Covfamikoi:

As we reported last year, a promotional video of Covfamikoi is currently being produced. Sometime in mid-fall of 2021, this video will be distributed to each congregation. The goal is for this video to be shown to every church in our Presbytery, in order to help churches promote the conference to their members, and give a glimpse to those who may never have attended, of what Covfamikoi is all about. We also hope this video generates excitement for Covfamikoi 2022.

Financials:

Please see the attached Covfamikoi financials. Due to not having a conference in 2021, we are not asking for any financial support this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Nelson, Conference Director

Covfamikoi Family Conference
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2020

	December 31, 2020
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Petty Cash	-
PayPal	-
Regions Bank	16,548.21
Total Checking/Savings	16,548.21
Total Current Assets	16,548.21
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>16,548.21</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	1,023.26
Retained Earnings	14,939.66
Net Income	585.29
Total Equity	16,548.21
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>16,548.21</u>

GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY

1/1/2020 Through 12/31/2020

<u>INCOME</u>		2020 Actual
100 - Assessments		
101	2020 Assessments	\$ 38,000.47
120 - From HMB		
121	H.M.B. Supplements - Louisville Aid Grant	\$ 10,000.00
140 - Bank Interest		\$ 1.59
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 48,002.06
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
200 - Presbytery Meetings		
201	Annual Meeting	\$ 8,932.93
236	Terre Haute Organization 9/13/19	\$ 899.00
237	Zach Smith Ordination 9/27/19	\$ 725.00
239	Special Meeting 9/11/2020	\$ 2,067.86
240	Special Meeting 10/23/2020	\$ 1,347.55
260 - Officer Expenses		
261	Clerk Honorarium	\$ 1,500.00
262	Assisstant Clerk Honorarium	\$ 500.00
265	Officer's Expense	\$ 110.00
270 - Standing Committees & Commissions		
272	Candidates & Credentials	\$ 93.94
300 - Congregational Visitions		
304	Columbus Visitation	\$ 78.88
316	Sparta Visitation	\$ 303.10
317	2nd RP Visitation	\$ 458.85
400 - New \ Works		
408	Atlanta Mission Church	\$ 2,000.00
500 - Seminary Student Aid		\$ 15,000.00
520 - Covfamikoi Family Conference		\$ 2,000.00
540 - Youth Work (CYPY)		\$ 2,000.00
550 - College Ministry		\$ 1,000.00
700 - HMB Aid Distribution		
701	HMB Louisville Aid Grant	\$ 10,000.00
800 - Special Committees & Commissions		
809	Selma Committee	\$ 823.87
811	Atlanta Commission	\$ 982.48
812	Immanuel Committee	\$ 303.02
900 - Miscellaneous		
913	Selma Internship for Mark Brown	\$ 3,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 54,126.48
ANNUAL NET		\$ (6,124.42)
Balance Jan 1, 2020		\$ 20,632.23
Balance December 31, 2020		\$ 14,507.81

**Fearing Installation Commission
November 9, 2020 by video conference**

7:08 PM Moderator Rich Johnston called the meeting to order, and Wade Mann constituted the court with prayer. Commission members present were Russell Lodge (RE Terre Haute RPC), Rich Johnston (Retired TE Second RPC, Indianapolis), and Wade Mann (TE Elkhart RPC).

Rich gave some background information leading up to our commission appointment. He mentioned that he, Russell, and Phil Pockras served on a visitation committee together just prior to Ross Fearing being called as pastor for the Sparta RPC. He noted that they were present for the meeting to call Ross Fearing, and that it was a unanimous call.

By common consent it was agreed that Wade Mann would serve as clerk. The agenda distributed by Rich was approved.

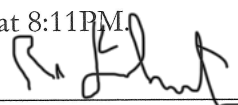
1. Organization. Travel costs were discussed. By common consent it was agreed that travel expense would be covered for commission members, as well as those asked to speak at the service, which include Daniel Hemken and Keith Magill. Overnight housing for those traveling to the service will be explored with the congregation.
2. Edict. By common consent we agreed to set the time for the installation service at 6:30PM and approved the edict to be sent to the presbytery and congregation. It will be read in the congregation two Lord's Day prior to the service.
3. Speaking/preaching roles. It was confirmed that Daniel Hemken will preach; Keith Magill will give the charge to congregation; Wade Mann will give the charge to Ross Fearing.
4. Order of Service. It was agreed to ask James Odom, clerk of session, to prepare and read the narration of the steps; Wade Mann will read the edict for the final time; Russell Lodge will propound the queries of installation to the pastor-elect and have him sign the queries; Rich Johnston will offer the prayer of installation; Ross Fearing will adjourn the court with prayer and pronounce the benediction.

It was noted that Wade will notify the clerk of presbytery of this service and ask him to communicate this action to the Midwest presbytery, and that Ross Fearing's credentials are now held by the Great Lakes—Gulf Presbytery.

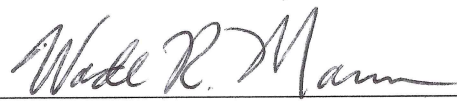
Rich will select psalms and prepare the installation service order, asking James Odom to print the programs.

Next meeting is scheduled for over supper at 5PM in Sparta, IL on December 4, 2020.

The minutes were read and approved by common consent. Russell adjourned the court in prayer at 8:11PM.



Moderator

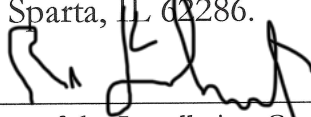


Clerk

Edict for the Installation of Rev. Ross Fearing in the Sparta, IL RPC

The Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery has received a call made by the Sparta, IL Reformed Presbyterian Church upon Rev. Ross Fearing to be their pastor, and has sustained it as a regular gospel call. He has signified his intention to accept the call. Notice is hereby given that the 4th day of December in the year 2020, has been fixed as the time for his installation, with certification that the Presbytery will proceed in the same, unless some valid objections be offered to this Commission of Presbytery appointed to oversee the installation. The meeting for the installation will be held at 6:30PM, at Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church, 605 North Market Street, Sparta, IL 62286.


Clerk of the Installation Commission


Moderator of the Installation Commission

By order of the Presbytery this 9th day of November in the year 2020.

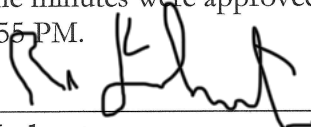
**Fearing Installation Commission
January 15, 2021 at Sparta RPC**

5:30 PM The Commission met over dinner. Moderator Rich Johnston called the meeting to order and Wade Mann constituted the court with prayer. Commission members present were Rich Johnston, Wade Mann, and Russell Lodge (via phone; he was unable to attend due to COVID quarantine). Sparta RPC Provisional Moderator Keith Magill was also present.

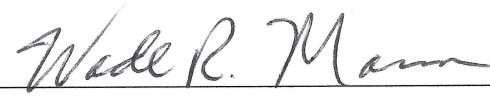
The change of installation date was taken up. Due to Sparta RPC members being exposed to COVID, the December 4, 2020 installation service was postponed. The Installation Commission in consultation with the Sparta Session agreed to reschedule the meeting for January 15, 2021 at 6:30PM. This was informally approved via email on December 14, 2020 along with a new edict for the meeting. By common consent, this action was formally approved by the Commission.

The order of service for the installation service was reviewed with assignments.

The minutes were approved by common consent. Russell adjourned the court in prayer at 5:55 PM.



Moderator

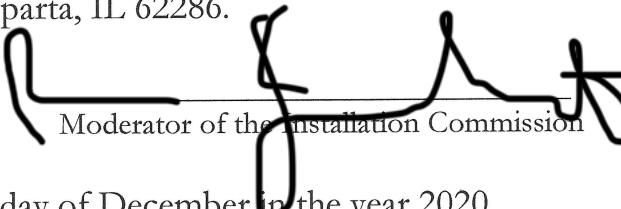


Clerk

Edict for the Installation of Rev. Ross Fearing in the Sparta, IL RPC

The Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery has received a call made by the Sparta, IL Reformed Presbyterian Church upon Rev. Ross Fearing to be their pastor, and has sustained it as a regular gospel call. He has signified his intention to accept the call. Notice is hereby given that the 15th day of January in the year 2021, has been fixed as the time for his installation, with certification that the Presbytery will proceed in the same, unless some valid objections be offered to this Commission of Presbytery appointed to oversee the installation. In case of inclement weather, January 22, 2021 will be the alternate date. The meeting for the installation will be held at 6:30PM, at Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church, 605 North Market Street, Sparta, IL 62286.


Clerk of the Installation Commission


Moderator of the Installation Commission

By order of the Presbytery this 14th day of December in the year 2020.

**Fearing Installation Service
January 15, 2021 at Sparta RPC**

The installation of Rev. Ross Fearing as pastor of the Sparta, IL RPC was held at the Sparta RPC, on January 15, 2021 at 6:30PM.

Commission members present were Pastor Rich Johnston-moderator, Pastor Wade Mann-clerk, and Elder Russell Lodge via livestream.

Pastor Rich Johnston welcomed the congregation, introduced the commission, and constituted the court with prayer. By common consent, all RPC elders present were given the privileges of the floor. Elder James Odom, Clerk of the Sparta RPC Session, gave the narration of steps leading to this occasion, after which Pastor Wade Mann read the edict for the final time. Both Pastor-Elect Ross Fearing and the Sparta congregation indicated their adherence to the call.

Pastor Rich Johnston proceeded with the call to worship from Psalm 63:1-3, followed by congregational praise from Psalm 97C and the prayer of invocation.

Pastor Wade Mann read Acts 2:42-47 and preached a message entitled, “A Vitalized Church—the Hope of the World,” followed by prayer and praise from Psalm 67A.


Pastor Rich Johnston propounded the Queries for Installation to Pastor-Elect Ross Fearing who indicated his subscription to each one and then signed the queries. All RPC and NAPARC elders present were invited to come forward for the prayer of installation led by Pastor Rich Johnston.

A charge to newly installed Pastor Ross Fearing was given by Pastor Rich Johnston from Ezra 7:10, after which Sparta RPC Provisional Moderator, Pastor Keith Magill, gave a charge to the congregation from various passages.

The service was concluded with praise from Psalm 133A followed by the benediction pronounced by Pastor Ross Fearing.

The minutes were read and approved, after which Pastor Rich Johnston adjourned the court in prayer at 8:20PM. A time of fellowship hosted by the Sparta congregation followed.


Moderator


Clerk

Queries for Installation

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and life?
2. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only Redeemer of men, and do you confess Him publicly as your Saviour and Lord?
3. Do you believe that it is the duty of Christians to profess publicly the content of faith as it applies to the particular needs of each age and situation, and that such public profession, otherwise called covenanting, should be made formally by the churches and other institutions as well as informally by each believer according to his ability?
4. Do you believe in and accept the system of doctrine and the manner of worship set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures?
5. Do you believe it to be the teaching of Scripture—that church and state are distinct and separate institutions; that both are under the mediatorial rule of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the permanent form of church government is presbyterian?
6. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord of men and nations, and that in loyalty and obedience to Him, it is our duty to follow the noble example of the faithful confessors and martyrs of Jesus in their witness for divine truth, and in their sacrifices and labors to establish the Kingdom of God on earth?
7. So far as you can know in your own heart, is it the call of Christ, the glory of God and the welfare of the church, and not any selfish object, that moves you to undertake this sacred office?
8. That you may perform faithfully all the duties of the office to which you have been called, do you engage to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Do you promise, in His strength, to live a holy and exemplary life, to study and promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of the church, to bring to your congregation the fruits of earnest study of the Word, to maintain a testimony for the Kingdom of God, to endeavor to minister to others and win them to Christ, to watch for souls as one who must give account?
9. Do you promise subjection in the Lord to the courts of this church, and engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted; and do you promise to submit to all the brotherly counsel which your brethren may tender you in the Lord?
10. Do you make these promises in the presence of God, in humble reliance upon His grace, as you desire to give your account with joy at the Last Great Day?



1/15/2021

**2021 Report of Presbytery's Nominee
to the Board of Corporators
of Geneva College**

Dear brothers:

I am reporting to you again as your nominee to Synod to serve on the Board of Corporators of Geneva College. I currently serve as the Board's Secretary and, consequently, upon the Executive Committee of the Board. I continue to serve with two other Corporators from our Presbytery, elected by Synod: Dr. Kenneth de Jong of our Bloomington congregation and Session, and Mr. Scott Reynolds, also of our Bloomington congregation. Dr. de Jong also serves as a Trustee. The current Chair of the Corporators' Board of Trustees is Mr. Joel Silverman of our Southside congregation.

As always, I'll repeat a paragraph that I place in every year's report, because some delegates to Presbytery may not be familiar with the governance of Geneva College. To refresh you, the Board of Corporators has twelve members, all elected by Synod. Each of the North American Presbyteries have nominees to Synod, with Synod's Nominating Committee nominating the others. All must be members in good standing in the RPCNA. We each serve four-year terms. The Corporators are the legal owners of the College. They are the members of the Corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Corporators' main tasks, under the Bylaws it originates, are to govern the College through a Board of Trustees it has created and whose members it elects, to elect a President of the College, to steward the Bylaws, and maintain a strong connection to the Synod of the RPCNA. The Board does its governing through the Trustees, who operate the College on the Corporators' behalf. Half of the Corporators serve as Trustees, as well, thus maintaining useful liaison between the Boards and allowing Synod, in effect, to have direct placement of some Trustees. Dr. de Jong is an example of this.

Most of the remainder of this report was written by Mr. David Schaefer, Alleghenies Presbytery's nominee to the Board, with his permission. I was unable to attend the latest meeting of the Board due to my wife's surgical recovery.

COVID has been the primary driver for much of the activities of the College in the past year. During the Spring semester, the Governor of Pennsylvania declared a mandatory closure of all college and university campuses. Geneva complied with that order, transitioning rapidly to an online learning format to complete the semester, but was severely financially impacted by our decision to return the remainder of the semester's room and board fees to the residential students.

The College received relief at the end of the school year due to the passage of the Federal CARES Act and was able to obtain a refundable loan under that act which substantially offset the financial impact of closing residential services in the middle of the semester. However, we were left with a large unknown: What would the impact of COVID-19 be on the coming year? Would students enroll at all? Would athletic programs continue? What physical changes would be required on campus to reduce the possible spread of the disease? How would the College address things like quarantine requirements for those potentially exposed? What would the financial impact be of another mandatory closure?

With of these considerations in mind, the College planned a budget for the 2020-2021 year which included salary reductions, deficit spending, accelerated fundraising, benefit reductions and several additional contingency plans given the uncertainty in the coming months. In addition, a weekly prayer program was started with Faculty, Staff, students, parents, and alumni, providing direction around a shared message and critical issues, and commending a weekly day of fasting for those who were willing and able to participate.

The Lord has blessed. Although we are only partway through the Fall semester, enrollment was significantly above our conservative projections, which has allowed the college to avoid the proposed salary reductions. The student body has been extremely cooperative with the safety precautions put in place, and currently there is only one documented case of COVID infection in the campus community. That number has gone up and down throughout the semester, at times requiring the president to vacate his home so that it could be used for quarantine containment for potentially exposed students. However, there has not been any large-scale infection, and the precautions being taken have had good effect. The campus has responded well to the transition of the Chapel program to online delivery, and attendance has been full and regular. The Governor has announced that in the event of a larger infection rate in the state, his direction for colleges and universities will be to “shelter in place”, rather than sending students away from the campus, where they could be carriers of the disease.

On another note, we were greatly saddened by the loss of Phil Duguid in the early fall. Phil has been a member of the Board of Corporators and a Trustee of the college for many years, and his love of the College and his wisdom have been greatly appreciated. He will be a difficult member to replace on both Boards.

The establishment of the Geneva College Foundation is complete, and the foundation directors will now assume a large part of the responsibility for fund raising efforts on behalf of the College. Pray that this will be a good opportunity for those who have close relationships with the College but are not willing or able to serve on one of the Boards to be actively engaged with the College’s ministry.

Pray that the Lord will be pleased to sustain the work of the College through these challenging times. The College is working to develop our strategic vision for the next several years, which is a real challenge as current events are causing the landscape of Higher Education to shift radically. Thank you all for your continued support of Geneva College as a ministry of this denomination.

ynod just reelected me to this Board three years ago, so that I am three quarters through this latest term. I have served our Presbytery, our Synod, and our College this way since 1998, and I thank Presbytery for its previous and current nominations. I am beginning prayerfully to consider whether to continue to accept nomination to the Board, or to allow another man to take my place.

To remind you, the website for the College is at www.geneva.edu. Much information is there on all sorts of matters pertaining to the College.

I again thank you for your confidence in me. I continue blessed in serving you in this way.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras

Guidelines for Congregations Hosting a Presbytery Meeting Committee

For Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Meeting, March 4-6, 2021

Fathers and Brothers,

Our committee was tasked with clarifying and enhancing the guidelines for congregations hosting presbytery meetings. In fulfilling our task, we asked for input from five past host churches regarding cost. Based on those who responded, an upper range of \$1,200-\$1,300 was identified, while one church incurred under \$500 in expenses. This did not include additional housing costs in hotels. We also note that the number of delegates and participants has been increasing, so that about 60 delegates registered for the March, 2020 meeting and 80 plus were served the evening meals.

We believe it would be helpful for the Time and Place Committee and/or Nominating Committee to communicate the parameters required for hosting a presbytery meeting to potential host congregations when inquiring as to whether they might serve as hosts. This will help to avoid misunderstandings by host congregations and enable them to plan appropriately financially and logistically.

Following are the current basic responsibilities of the host congregation as we understand them:

1. Provide housing for delegates and guests who attend the meeting. (2 overnights typically)
2. Provide meals and snacks during breaks while presbytery meets (morning & afternoon drinks and snacks; meals--typically 2 bfasts, 2 lunches—including bag lunch for departing delegates, 2 dinners).
3. Provide transportation to and from local airports.
4. Arrange for transportation to hosts' homes where necessary.
5. Provide comfortable sufficient meeting space for 60-100 with A/V equipment, PA system, wireless service for a large group, power strips for computer plug-ins, etc.
6. Provide access to copying/printing capabilities and supplies.
7. Misc. items

In 2020 presbytery budgeted up to \$750 to assist the host congregation with these costs. Hotel costs are not typically reimbursed by the presbytery, although the AIC has approved presbytery covering this cost for our March, 2021 meeting due to COVID concerns.

With the growing size of the presbytery, it could become a burden for congregations to host and fund most of the expenses for the meeting. Yet, if we want to keep the cost to presbytery lower, perhaps some of the larger congregations are content to continue to bear this cost. For discussion, we propose two alternative solutions below in our recommendations, as well as the status quo option.

1. That presbytery provide additional support for host congregations through one of the options below:
 - a. That presbytery increase the amount budgeted for offsetting expenses to host congregations.
 - b. That presbytery authorize host congregations to collect a modest registration fee for delegates attending the meeting to be paid by the delegate's home congregation.
2. That presbytery continue to minimize the cost to delegates and presbytery by asking larger host congregations to bear most of the expense for hosting the meetings.
3. That the basic hosting requirements and expectations be communicated to potential host congregations when they are asked to serve as hosts.
4. That this committee be dismissed.

Respectfully submitted,

Wade Mann and Richard Holdeman (H.P. McCracken transferred to MWP)

Atlanta Fellowship

Atlanta RPC has had an exciting year, being able to purchase its own building in a very strategic location. Average attendance in 2020 for public worship for the 45 weeks that the church met in person (services being suspended for seven weeks due to the Wuhan virus) was 23.56. For the first seven weeks of 2021, attendance has averaged 30.29. In 2020, there was a gain of eleven members and a loss of four members, resulting in a total membership of 17 (ten communicants and seven non-communicants). Among the new members, there were eight baptisms (three adults, five children). Finances were strong, with \$253,909.63 in donations and \$189,495.86 in liquid assets at the end of the year. At the same time, there is evident spiritual growth among the people. The pastor, Dr. Frank J. Smith, continues as a tentmaker, teaching full-time at Georgia Gwinnett College, and also serving as Chancellor of Tyndale International University, a Korean-language seminary in Los Angeles. The ministerial intern, Elder T.J. Pattillo, is hoping to finish his undergraduate degree in about a year and then start seminary.

Louisville RP Fellowship

Weekly evening worship services continue, although as with most congregations Covid has posed major challenges. There were a few months where we were not allowed to use our rented church building, Tre' has had some Covid-related health struggles of his own, and of course there aren't as many visitors as normal. Gary McNamee accepting the call to Columbia, MO will greatly impact the ministry as now more of the load will fall on the shoulders of the other commissioners and Tre'. We are very thankful for Gary's role in getting this work off to a good start. The next 18 months will be very pivotal as we see if God will send more people to this ministry.

From Gary McNamee:

In May of 2017 we began meeting for weekly Bible study at the Louisville public library. We had on average 12-15 people from Louisville attending this study. ,

We started worship services in the evening on 9/2/2018.

We first met in a hotel conference room, then in June of 2018 we began meeting in an Assembly of God building at 1810 Appleton lane, Louisville, KY. We have 20-25 people attending the worship service.

Preaching is provided by Gary, Tre, and other members of the Louisville commission namely David Hanson and Phillip McCullum. After worship we meet for prayer and a time of food and fellowship. We also have had other Pastors from the RPCNA provide pulpit supply.

Outreach-We have conducted door to door outreach efforts. We have one lady from the effort who began visiting and is now a member of the Columbus Church. The Columbus church currently holds the membership of those attending in Louisville and want to be members of the church. We have 8 communicant and 2 baptized non communicant members of the church from Louisville.

We have also held other outreach events in different outdoor parks. We have held two outdoor Psalm sings and cook outs, where we had several visitors attend and heard Tre Cranford preach the gospel.

We also held a cookout with gospel conversations where we cooked food for people at a park and as we gave out the food, we talked to people about Christ and his church.

We are currently meeting for Wednesday night Bible study in the same building where Tre Cranford, student under care of presbytery is conducting the study. We have 10-12 people attending this Bible study. Of our original 4 core families, only one remains (Tre Cranford, wife and daughter). The other three families have moved out of state. We have a good state of fellowship amongst the people and the people are committed to planting an RPCNA church in Louisville.

Tre Cranford has played a huge role in this work. He lives in Louisville and ministers to many people on a daily basis. He is currently a student under care of the GLGP. He has passed his first four exams and is currently working on his "church history" paper for his next exam. Once this is done, he will be eligible to be licensed to preach.

Gary McNamee has served as the "Resident in Training" since June of 2019. He has been involved in shepherding, discipling, preaching and outreach. He has as of 11/6/2020 passed his ordination exams with the MWP. He has taken a call to the Grace Reformed Church, Columbia, MO.

First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham

The Durham congregation has made a request for RIT grant for Drew Poplin. Drew is a man who has attended the Durham church and is a graduate from Southeastern Baptist Seminary and has a MDiv. The plan is to take Drew under care in the spring meeting of 2021. Drew would have been taken under care already but due to the Covid-19 break out the schedules have been changed and this delayed the meetings in which that would have happened.

RIT – [Request pending for First Reformed Presbyterian Church Durham, Drew Poplin]

Men for the Ministry: Eligible for a call - Donald Cassell, Frank Schutz
Students under care: Joe Smith, Allen Blackwood, Aaron Murray,
Zachary Blackwood, Tre Cranford, Jon Sturm,
Andrew Battiato

Vacant Congregations: Selma, AL; Christ's Church, Indianapolis, IN;
Westminster, Chicago, IL

Respectfully Submitted,
Jason Camery, GLG Presbytery Representative

IRPC Advisory Committee

Report to Presbytery - Spring 2021

In early August 2020, our committee was asked to serve by the Immanuel RPC session and appointed by the Ad Interim Commission. We were given four tasks by the IRPC session: 1) Provide general counsel and oversight on incidents of abuse which had taken place; 2) Aid in the process of repentance and reconciliation; 3) Provide counsel regarding balancing the need for transparency and privacy; and 4) Review recommendations that result from the investigation. We were also given a copy of IRPC's Child Protection Policy and a preliminary investigative report by the IRPC session investigative team (Nate Pfeiffer and Zachary Blackwood) detailing multiple acts of abuse against multiple children in church settings.

From August 2020 to January 2021, our committee met a total of 26 times. On numerous occasions, we met with the IRPC session, as well as with various parties involved. Being an advisory committee, we sought to give the best counsel we could, both when requested and not requested. Regretfully, not all of our recommendations were followed by the IRPC session, including some of what we believe to be our most important words of counsel. Our concern over this decision was expressed in writing to them in early November 2020, along with some additional words of caution regarding the path they were currently pursuing in handling this situation.

Towards the end of 2020, we also sought to help key parties be reconciled to one another by offering a binding mediation proposal, but this was declined. Since our committee lacked presbytery's authority, one of these parties (along with another family) petitioned the Ad Interim Commission for the appointment of a judicial commission to investigate the situation. When our committee was asked to meet with the Ad Interim Commission regarding the possible formation of this commission, we expressed our agreement with the petition and fully supported the commission's appointment.

Though we cannot dismiss ourselves as a committee, on January 5, 2021, we informed the IRPC session that we planned to cease operating as an advisory committee effective immediately. Our reasons were as follows: 1) Since a judicial commission had been appointed, their session should work with them, seek their counsel, and be guided by their wisdom; and 2) Since some IRPC members were starting to worship at the RPC of Lafayette, our chairman now had a conflict of interest and could no longer serve. In February 2021, we met with the newly formed judicial commission per their request.

It has been our pleasure to serve in this capacity, though we grieve at the circumstances, and hope that the Lord has been pleased to use us in some way. Our prayers continue to be for the IRPC session and congregation.

Sincerely in Christ,

Adam Niess, chairman

David Hanson

Wade Mann

Recommendations

1. That this committee be dismissed.

**Shepherding Committee Report
Spring 2021 Meeting of Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery**

Below is a list of those who are presently on the general roll who had been members of the mission church in Dayton, Tennessee, with communicants being marked with an asterisk.

Adam* and Sarah* Campbell; Noah*, James. The Campbells are still attending Grace Bible Church, Dayton, Tennessee, and are planning to pursue membership in that congregation. Both Adam and Sarah have struggled with health issues.

Kevin* and Marcia* Clauson; Lori, Rachel. The Clausons are attending Independent Presbyterian Church, Sale Creek, Tennessee. Prof. Clauson reports: “We hope and pray that after we move in about 1+ year we will establish good ecclesiastical roots, and that is a consideration in this next ‘retirement’ (from Bryan—not from activity) move. Stephen is hoping for something better too. Who knows, DV, we may all end up in Ohio somewhere, if so, probably Southern/Southeast/Southwest OH. If we were near Cincinnati, which is a reasonable possibility, we would likely settle in SWORP, Rev. Knodel’s church. But another option is Huntington, WEST Virginia. This is my hometown and we are familiar with life there. There is a good PCA there, as well as two other Reformed churches (a whole lot more than when I last lived there some 40 years ago). That would still be fairly near everyone (including our son/daughter-in-law/grandchildren who live near Chattanooga). We’ll see where the Lord takes us, and what he has for me to do. (Some folks and I are working on a ‘project’.)” He made the following prayer requests: retirement plans; assuming retirement from Bryan College, ‘winding down’ things there and moving; his elderly mother; eventually finding a good church to settle in; same for Stephen; same for his son-in-law/daughter/grandchildren in Pennsylvania (they are having a hard time finding one there; they were fine in Ohio).”

Stephen Clauson.* According to his parents, Stephen has not been attending church. We tried contacting him, but were not successful.

Reggie* and Lori* Ecarma; Nathan, Jonathan. As of last year, the Ecarmas were attending a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod congregation in Cleveland, Tennessee. Dr. Ecarma has not been re-hired by Bryan College for the coming academic year. Nathan is now married, and has become a member of Wayside Presbyterian Church (PCA), Signal Mountain, Tennessee, where he is serving as a ministerial intern.

Bill* and Natalie* Goodpaster; Jonathan, Anna, Jackson, Matthew, R.C. Bill and Natalie Goodpaster and their non-communicant children are attending a Primitive Baptist church, but have expressed interest in worshipping at Atlanta RPC, at least on an occasional basis.

Joshua Goodpaster.* We were not able to contact him, despite our best efforts.

Some of the members from the now-dissolved Pageland (S.C.) mission church have been transferred outside the RPCNA, by action of the Ad Interim Commission. The other members who are still under our jurisdiction are **David Usher, Gil and Gwen Whaley, and Gary and Patrice Wise.** We will be circling back with regard to them in this coming year.

Recommendations:

1. That Nathan Ecarma be transferred to Wayside Presbyterian Church (PCA), Signal Mountain, Tennessee.
2. That this report be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank J. Smith, Chairman
Kent Butterfield
Craig Scott

STUDENT PAPERS

Calvin's Geneva and her Refugees

Edwin Allen H. Blackwood, II

February 12, 2021

One famous Genevan refugee said that Geneva “was the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles. In other places, I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion to be so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place.”¹ The refugee who said this rather well-known quote was John Knox, who was later one of the most important reformers in Scotland’s reformation. This is just one example (of many) refugees whose life was impacted in a major way for good through Geneva. And in this paper, I will seek to show how Calvin’s Geneva dealt with a tumult of religious refugees, and the impact this had on the church in Europe. In order to do this, I will look at some aspects of the overall situation in Europe during the time Calvin was in Geneva, as well as focusing on Geneva and her reformation both before and during Calvin’s time there. Additionally, I will look at problems in Geneva as a result of an abundance of refugees going there, as well as some of the lasting impacts from Geneva’s treatment of her refugees.

In order to understand this topic, I believe it is necessary to have some understanding of the situation in Europe, particularly for Protestant believers, in the time of the Reformation. I am specifically concerned with the situation during the Reformer John Calvin’s time in Geneva (during the 1540s to the 1560s). This is a fairly long period of time, and the situation in different states and nations in Europe changed often in the sixteenth century, especially depending on who was in power in each nation-state at the time, and whether they were Catholic, Protestant, or at least sympathetic to Protestant Christians.

¹ Jeannine E. Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the Bourse Francaise* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1989), 145.

There was much turmoil and upheaval throughout Europe, both political and religious. Germany was split into Lutheran and Catholic sections; England went back and forth under Protestant and Catholic rulers; some of the Swiss Confederate Cantons became protestant – notably Zurich; and in France, though it was never officially illegal, some Protestant Reformers were temporarily tolerated, though it was not to last.²

A French language printing of the Bible was first printed in the late fifteenth century, with the first complete translation of the Bible by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples published in 1530.³ However, printing, possessing, or even reading a Bible in the common tongue could result in cruel punishment or even death.⁴ In fact, at the request of the Roman Catholic church, the king of France even issued a decree completely banning *all* printing of any book in France, under penalty of death, although this was short-lived.⁵ After beginning to take root after the 1520s, the Protestant church in France continued in its growth despite persecution, and was much influenced by Calvin and his writings, especially by the late 1550s, when they even met as a national Reformed and Presbyterian assembly.⁶ However, after a very brief peace between the French Calvinists (known as the Huguenots) and the Roman Catholics, the King of France's mother, Catherine de Medici planned a mass killing of Huguenots, and on August 24, 1572, approximate-

² Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume II: A.D. 1500-A.D. 1975* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2007), 765-766.

³ James D. McCabe Jr., *Cross and Crown: Or, the Sufferings and Triumphs of the Heroic Men and Women Who Were Persecuted for the Religion of Jesus Christ* (Cincinnati: National Publishing Co., 1874), 184.

⁴ McCabe, *Cross & Crown*, 189.

⁵ McCabe, *Cross & Crown*, 191. See also David Pottinger, *The French Book Trade in the Ancien Régime, 1500-1791* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 56.

⁶ Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power, Volume 3: Renaissance and Reformation*, Revised (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2016), 315-317.

ly 20,000 Huguenots were massacred – which became known as “the Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day.”⁷ As a result of the on-and-off persecution of Protestant Christians in France, many French believers fled from their homes during the sixteenth century, including a significant number who ended up spending some time, or even settling permanently, in Reformed Geneva.

In the decade prior to Calvin’s first arrival at Geneva, there had been much political and ecclesiastical upheaval. Geneva had been under the rule of the Duke of Savoy, with the Bishop having much political influence as well – including having the only authority to call a meeting of the citizens of Geneva.⁸ However, due to both internal and external pressures, Geneva was seeking her own independence. When Charles III, Duke of Savoy, entered Geneva in 1525, prominent Genevan citizens, now fugitives, were in the nearby Swiss Confederacy cities of Fribourg (Catholic) and Bern (Protestant), seeking alliances and protections from both.⁹ Shortly after Charles III left, the fugitives returned, along with allies from Fribourg and Bern, carrying an alliance pact with these cities, which was quickly approved by the citizens of Geneva, despite initial attempts by the Bishop to stop them. In the next few years, although the Genevan revolution began as a political revolution, not a religious one, Protestantism slowly began to take hold, especially after 1528, when Bern officially became a Reformed city.¹⁰ There were many attempts by Charles III to retake Geneva, culminating in some success in the winter of 1535-1536, but the

⁷ Needham, *2000 Years*, Vol 3, 319.

⁸ E. William Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), 42.

⁹ Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, 42.

¹⁰ Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, 46-47.

Bernese army came and “liberated” Geneva from Savoy, actually intending to make Geneva her subject.¹¹ However, the Genevans protested, claiming, “we have endured war [...] not because we intended to make this city subject to any power, but because we wished that a poor city which had warred and suffered so much should have her liberty.”¹² The Bernese relented, and the Genevan Republic began its’ independence that would last a quarter of a millennium.

Shortly after this, John Calvin, born and educated in France, was first asked to come to Geneva in late 1536 by the Reformer William Farel, who had been ministering in Geneva for a few years.¹³ Calvin had just written his first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, after which he left France under threat of persecution or death. When Calvin spent the night in Geneva while he was on his way to go live in Strasburg, Farel heard that the author of The Institutes was staying in Geneva, he met with him and eventually compelled Calvin to remain in Geneva, insisting that God’s will for Calvin was to preach the Gospel with him in Geneva.¹⁴ However, after only a year and a half of ministry in Geneva, both Calvin and Farel were expelled from Geneva by the city authorities and the Genevan citizens, and Calvin moved to Strausburg, his original destination before his prolonged stay in Geneva.¹⁵ While in Strasburg, he pastored a small French congregation there, and wrote prolifically, but after three years there, he was persuaded by a Genevan delegation to come back to Geneva to assist them in their continuing Ref-

¹¹ Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, 55.

¹² Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, 55.

¹³ Needham, *2000 Years, Vol 3*, 187, 197–98.

¹⁴ Theodore Beza, *The Life of John Calvin*, ed. Henry Beveridge (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1909), 16-17.

¹⁵ Needham, *2000 Years, Vol 3*, 199.

ormation.¹⁶ However, when Calvin returned, he insisted that the city leaders officially commit to wholesale reformation in Geneva, and to that end, that a commission be appointed to set up laws for the Genevan church government.¹⁷ They agreed, and Calvin and others wrote up the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* to give specific guidelines for the churches in Geneva, including their being led by pastors and lay-elders – a Presbyterian form of church government.¹⁸

For the purposes of this study it is important to note that, in the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, Calvin describes the biblical office of deacon as a necessary and permanent office of the church,¹⁹ and, as also mentioned in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, to care for the needy.²⁰ Specifically, Calvin states that “The care of the poor was entrusted to the deacons. However, two kinds are mentioned in the letter to the Romans,” arguing from Romans 12:8 and 1 Timothy 5:9-10 that the first type of deacon were to “distribute the alms” and the second were to “[devote] themselves to the care of the poor.”²¹ Calvin devotes significant time in chapters three through five in book five (“Means of Grace: Holy Catholic Church”) of his *Institutes* dealing with the deaconate, the church’s giving to the poor, and how, in his words, “the ancient form of [church] government was completely overthrown by the papacy.”²² Thus, it is not at all surpris-

¹⁶ Needham, *2000 Years, Vol 3*, 199, 202.

¹⁷ David C. Hall, *The Legacy of John Calvin: His Influence on the Modern World* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2008), 55.

¹⁸ Beza, *Life of John Calvin*, 29.

¹⁹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume VIII: Modern Christianity. The Swiss Reformation*, Third (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2009), Section 104 [4.8.7], <https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc8/hcc8>.

²⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.9.

²¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.9.

²² Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.5.

ing that care for the poor, and specifically, care for the foreigner or refugee, would be one of the focuses in Geneva during and after Calvin's time there.

It is difficult to find precise numbers for inhabitants of Geneva before and during Calvin's time there, but it is estimated that there were around 10,000 people living in Geneva upon Calvin's return there in 1541.²³ And yet, this relatively small city took in many thousands of refugees, some temporarily passing through, and some long-term or permanent settlers, and while some were wealthy and were able to contribute much to Geneva and its' economy, the majority were poor. Most of these poor were helped by Geneva's General Hospital, but also various Genevan charitable funds, which will be further discussed later in this paper. Unsurprisingly, this influx of refugees into Geneva raised concern in the minds of many Genevans, and resulted in some financial strains in the city.²⁴

To give an idea of the multitude of people coming to Geneva, we will look at some statistics from the time. For example, from the records of the General Hospital, from October 1538-October 1539, more than 10,000 poor strangers were helped (in different ways) who were passing through Geneva – they were given medical care, a meal, a place to sleep, and other things such as clothing and food to take with them on their journey.²⁵ And these were the people who were only passing through, and of those, only those who were poor and needed assistance on their way. Recorded in the *Livre des Habitants*, Geneva's "refugee entry register," there are

²³ William Naphy, "Calvin's Church in Geneva: Constructed or Gathered? Local or Foreign? French or Swiss?," in *Calvin and His Influence, 1509-2009*, ed. Irena Backus and Philip Benedict (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 114.

²⁴ William C. Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, ed. Susan Cembalisty (Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1983), 209-211. Also Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, 82.

²⁵ Naphy, "Calvin's Church in Geneva," 114. Also Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 132-133.

records of more than 5,000 refugees coming to Geneva in order to settle there between 1549-1560.²⁶ And of these records, 95% of them are men, some of whom brought a wife and family who were not recorded in the register, which likely means that the number actually well exceeds 5,000.²⁷

One of the problems with the influx of refugees into Geneva was that those in the new independent Geneva were xenophobic, and a prominent group led by Ami Perrin were troubled by the many, mostly French refugees coming to Geneva, fearing that “the refugees and the French pastors were plotting to take their city away from them.”²⁸ There was also a shortage of housing in Geneva, and there was inflation – for which some Genevan citizens blamed these new refugees.²⁹ There are specific examples of some citizens coming before Geneva’s Consistory (the group of all the Genevan pastors along with councilors from the different city councils which met weekly to judge ecclesiastical matters) who were rebuked for insulting foreigners – specifically the French. One said that “there was not one good man among them whatsoever,” and another “May God curse so many Frenchmen.”³⁰

Dealing with the poor and the beggar was an increasing issue throughout Europe, including Geneva, in the sixteenth century, and this resulted in some reform in social welfare in Europe

²⁶ Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 205.

²⁷ Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 206-207.

²⁸ Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 210.

²⁹ Ludi Schulze, *Calvin and "Social Ethics": His Views on Property, Interest and Usury* (Pretoria: Kital, 1985), 72.

³⁰ *Registres Du Consistoire de Genève à l'époque de Calvin*, n.d., 6.206, 218. Cited in Jeffrey R Watt, *The Consistory and Social Discipline in Calvin's Geneva*, *Liberal Arts Faculty Books*, 2020, 23, https://egrove.olemiss.edu/libarts_book/225.

simply out of necessity.³¹ Thus, in this, Geneva was not unique in caring for the poor and needy, but the Reformation (spurred by Humanist philosophy) seems to have led to practical and radical social welfare reform in Geneva.³² However, Geneva *was* unique in the degree they took to reform, in many ways, including in welfare reform. Robert Kingdon, an expert on Geneva during Calvin's time, argued that, in regard to social welfare reform, Geneva was "more thorough, more radical in their break with the past;" and that "it was probably Geneva's uncompromising brand of Protestantism that made this radicalism possible."³³ Calvin certainly had much to do with this radical reform, even of social welfare, but this did not start with Calvin – as several hospitals in Geneva were started even before the Reformation began to take hold in Geneva, with the Reformation leading to their consolidation into one General Hospital, in 1535, a few years before Calvin's arrival.³⁴ These hospitals were not like today's hospitals, though part of their task was caring for the sick – rather, Kingdon calls them "an all purpose institution that provided "hospitality" to all sorts of people who were recognized to possess needs that they could not meet with their own resources."³⁵ In other words, it was an organization simply devoted to caring for the needy in many different areas of life.

But although Calvin was not involved in the founding of the General Hospital, it was, in theory and in practice, a prominent feature in the life of the church. It featured prominently in

³¹ Elsie Anne McKee, *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1984), 93-98.

³² McKee, *Calvin on the Diaconate*, 106.

³³ Robert M. Kingdon, "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva," *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (1971): 50–69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1869776>, 66.

³⁴ Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 52.

³⁵ Kingdon "Social Welfare," 52.

Geneva's Ecclesiastical Ordinances, with one writer about social concern in Geneva, William Innes, stating:

Evan a casual reader of Geneva's Church constitution, the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances, cannot help noticing the large amount of space Calvin devoted to the city's new hospital.... Calvin outlines the hospital's purpose and operation in great detail. One cannot help but conclude that the hospital was important to Calvin's vision for Reformed Geneva.³⁶

I believe that this makes abundantly clear that Calvin was concerned with the poor and needy in Geneva. However, many scholars have argued that Calvin simply inherited the General Hospital and Genevan systems which were already in place, and he had little or nothing to do with them.³⁷

Robert Kingdon states that:

...[O]ne must conclude... that Calvin was neither indifferent to the needs of the poor nor unwilling to enter politics to advance a cause he valued. He simply selected with care the particular arenas in which he deployed his formidable energies. If he did not work hard to solve Geneva's social problems personally, it was probably because he thought they were already being handled by men of competence whom he trusted.³⁸

Kingdon further argues his point through showing that, through the Registers of the Genevan Council, one can see that the decision-makers in the General Hospital were men who were devoted to Calvin and his leadership and teaching.³⁹ Thus, Calvin could trust that those who were running the General Hospital, and many of the Deacons who dealt with the other so-

³⁶ Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 13.

³⁷ McKee, *John Calvin on the Diaconate*, 127-128. McKee says that "most scholars imply that the reformers simply went along with a civil poor relief system which they had not inspired and did not control."

³⁸ Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 64.

³⁹ Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 64-65.

cial concerns in Geneva, were performing their ministry well, as he knew many of them personally.

The General Hospital was known to care for the refugee specifically, but it mainly dealt with the needy already in Geneva, as well as those who were simply passing through Geneva – the local poor and the traveler. Additionally, the General Hospital was not prepared to care for the huge flood of refugees into Geneva.⁴⁰ In fact, in 1545, when Geneva in general, and the General Hospital specifically, was overwhelmed by an influx of 1,000 refugees, the city leaders demanded that this group of “newly-arrived refugees to make plans to leave town.”⁴¹ However, only ten days after this decree, a large sum of money arrived from a wealthy refugee, David de Busanton, with instructions for Calvin to see that the money would be used to help the poor in Geneva.⁴² This donation is what some have speculated was the start of a fund specifically for the French refugees, known as the Bourse française, or French fund.⁴³ However, the first official records of the Bourse française do not begin until 1550, so it is hard to pin down exactly when it was started. Regardless, this fund was a way to help to fill the ‘gap’ in the programs of the General Hospital, as helping refugees who desired to stay in Geneva was not generally one of the

⁴⁰ Jeannine E. Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the Bourse Francaise* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1989), 24. Also, Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 210-214.

⁴¹ Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 210, 214.

⁴² Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 214.

⁴³ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 169-170. Also John Calvin, *Letters of John Calvin, Volume I*, trans. Jules Bonnet (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858), 463, https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/dqxDAAAAYAAJ?hl.

functions of the hospital.⁴⁴ The fund was run by deacons who were elected to oversee the fund, and they themselves were under the umbrella of Geneva's Company of Pastors.⁴⁵

The contributors to the fund, especially in the early records of the fund, were generally (but not exclusively) French, including many wealthy French refugees who were themselves in Geneva, as well as wealthy French nobles still in France, and even the Queen of Navarre.⁴⁶ However, Calvin himself contributed to the fund, and some believe that he was very likely the most generous single donor to the fund in its' infancy.⁴⁷ Additionally, Calvin may have even founded the fund, and from the records, he was certainly regularly involved, even hosting the Deacons of the Bourse française at his home on one occasion.⁴⁸ Even though the fund started out as a fund for French refugees by French donors, native Genevans eventually started to contribute to the Bourse française as well.⁴⁹ Additionally, the fund broadened in scope in who it would assist – assisting, to name a few examples – native Genevans, a Jew, and many non-French refugees. The Bourse française also proved to be long-lasting, with the deacons continuing to meet to discuss disbursement of funds for 300 years – until 1849, when it was merged with the General Hospital.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 170-179; Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 64.

⁴⁵ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 70-72.

⁴⁶ Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France: 1555-1563* (Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1956), 60-61; Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 107-108; Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 64.

⁴⁷ Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 64.

⁴⁸ Kingdon, "Social Welfare," 64; Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 12-13.

⁴⁹ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 109.

⁵⁰ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 177, 178.

Geneva's care for her refugees, particularly through the Bourse française and other programs assisting refugees, proved to have a lasting impact throughout Europe, especially in France. In addition to helping the refugees as they stayed in Geneva, the fund also assisted missionary activity, especially missionary activity in France. In Jeannine Olson's most helpful book on the Bourse française, she has a fascinating chapter entitled "International Activities" which deals with this missionary 'arm' of the Bourse française.⁵¹ In this chapter, she shows that some of the funds regularly were disbursed to a wealthy "financial and distributor of books" who was well-known to have sent many booksellers to his native France.⁵² Additionally, many purchases of Bibles, psalters, catechisms, and other books were made by the fund, and there are records of some of them going to France, and a suspicion that many more than recorded went to France.⁵³ Clearly, the Bourse française was not the only Genevan involvement in printing and distributing books internationally, as Geneva had a massive printing industry, and a major international export industry of religious literature, including many prominent refugees involved in that industry!⁵⁴

In addition to books, it is also well-known that Geneva exported people. Refugees came to Geneva, many in fear for their life, with the desire to worship in the protestant manner and live in this well-known oasis of Protestant Christianity. And most of the refugees who came to Geneva did not remain there. Rather, they returned to their home lands and attempted to bring home

⁵¹ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 50-69.

⁵² Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 51.

⁵³ Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 53-54.

⁵⁴ Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, 173-182; Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva*, 222-226.

Reformation like they had witnessed in Geneva.⁵⁵ Many were trained in Calvin's Academy, some (like John Knox) pastored in Geneva, and some were explicitly sent out as missionaries, many knowing that they were likely to lose their lives in the process of preaching the gospel.⁵⁶ Clearly, the care that Calvin and many in Geneva had for the refugee extended to the foreigner throughout the world.

There has not been sufficient space in this paper to spend much time on Calvin's theology of care for the stranger, but this theology is very evident in Calvin's *Institutes*, his commentaries, and especially in his sermons. In one of his sermons on Deuteronomy 16, Calvin preached:

God does not want only that each of us rejoice, but that our neighbors share in the joy which is in us. He wills that not only the man may call his wife, and the father his children, but that we may deal those who seem to be far away from us, and that we may so seek to bring them before the face of our God, that the most alien and the ones furthest away from us may be participants of our joy.... [T]hat the stranger, the widow, and the orphans may rejoice with those who present themselves thus to God to make Him an offering.⁵⁷

In another sermon from Deuteronomy, Calvin emphasized that one ought not only to care for the poor, but that there was a particular obligation to care for the poor *who were particularly unprotected*, such as strangers, widows, and orphans. From Deuteronomy 27, Calvin preached:

A stranger is going to be robbed; he is tortured; a very obvious wrong is done to him; but a pretense is made. Why? Everyone wants to be his neighbor's friend, but this fellow is a foreigner, not a fellow-towns-man; he doesn't belong at all! So there you have it: a poor man will be robbed. So too it is with widows and orphans.... Everyone holds back from them – just as if they were robbed. Because, of course, that does happen, God takes such people under His wing and says that if strangers or widows or orphans are deprived of justice, he

⁵⁵ Hall, *The Legacy of John Calvin*, 58.

⁵⁶ Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, 134–35; Kingdon, *Geneva and the Wars*, 127–29; Hall, *The Legacy of John Calvin*, 62–64.

⁵⁷Quoted and translated by Elsie McKee, *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*, 55–56.

will avenge it, even though the world does not take that into account. . . . God wished to proclaim by these examples to that if we crush those without credit or the means to look after themselves and in human terms have no means of support, punishment belongs to him.⁵⁸

But not content only to say these things, Calvin practiced what he preached, and he led the Christians in Geneva to do the same, and even those who were not well-off themselves contributed eagerly. André Biéler, who scoured Calvin's works as well as the Genevan Council registers in writing *Calvin's Economic and Social Thought*, stated that "Calvin himself climbed the spiral stairways of the city's tenements three at a time to collect the charitable donations of the Genevese."⁵⁹ Calvin led Geneva in caring for the poor during his time there, and he also focused on the poor stranger, for whom there ought to be particular concern.

Calvin had a heart for the poor, the needy, the stranger and the refugee, and he wanted to personally be reformed, as well as to have the city of Geneva be reformed in all of life, including in how they cared for the refugee. Does the church today have such a heart? Does your church actively seek to help the poor, the needy, the refugee? In many cases, the church in the West today, and perhaps the reformed church particularly, seems to have lost much of the desire for caring for the needy and the refugee, instead leaving this ministry in the hands of governing authorities and para-church organizations. The church could do well today to study the example of Calvin's Geneva and take application from her care for the refugee. By God's grace much of Calvin's vision for reformation in all of life took place in Geneva, and had a lasting impact, not only in Geneva, and in fact, not only in Europe, but throughout the world. And a significant rea-

⁵⁸ André Biéler, *Calvin's Economic and Social Thought*, ed. Edward Dommen, trans. James Grieg, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006), 364.

⁵⁹ Biéler, *Calvin's Economic and Social Thought*, 140.

son for the worldwide impact of John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation was her care for the refugee.

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Exegesis Paper Focused on Philippians 2:1-11

Prepared by Mark L. Brown

Introduction

This exegetical paper on Philippians 2:1-11 is an attempt to identify and resolve the key interpretive issues found in this text for the purpose of greater understanding and in turn more effective preaching. To accomplish this end, first the historical and literary contexts were considered. Next, the passage was translated from the original language in order to better connect Paul's flow of ideas. The translation was compared to numerous standard translations in print today¹, with justification provided where the author's translation differed significantly in terms of meaning. Three key interpretive issues were then identified and reasoned through. In the process of working through these interpretive issues, the works of seven different theologians, whose lives span nearly the entire era of church history, were consulted.² The three interpretive issues addressed in the paper, all of which are Christological in nature, are:

1. What did the apostle Paul mean when he said that Christ was "in the form of God" (evn morph/l qeou)?
2. What is the reader to make of Christ not considering "equality with God something to hold onto" (a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew)?
3. How is the reader to understand Christ "making Himself of no effect" (e`auto.n evke,nwsen)?

¹ The standard translations consulted include, in no particular order, the King James Version, the New King James Version, the English Standard Version, the New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New Living Translation, and Young's Literal Translation.

² The commentators consulted were John Chrysostom, John Calvin, Matthew Poole, Handley C.G. Moule, J.B. Lightfoot, William Hendriksen, and F.F. Bruce.

Having resolved these key interpretive issues, the paper moves on to discuss how the passage is to be preached. The exegetical paper then concludes with final thoughts on Philippians 2:1-11 and the undertaking as a whole.

Historical and Literary Context of Philippians 2:1-11

The apostle Paul's first visit to the Roman colony of Philippi occurred sometime in the early 50s A.D., while he was on his second missionary journey. Although his time there was brief, Paul and his companions (at a minimum, Silas, Timothy, and Luke) saw multiple conversions, baptized two households (those of Lydia and the Philippian jailer), and established a church that most likely met at Lydia's house. This newly found church at Philippi provided support to Paul on his second missionary journey, as well as during his third. As Paul's third missionary journey was coming to a close, the Philippians sent him off with a generous gift for the Jerusalem church. The church at Philippi was the last church Paul visited before that fateful return to Jerusalem. Paul would never make his way back to Macedonia to visit his friends at Philippi, but they had built a relationship filled with prayer and love for one another that would last until the end of Paul's ministry.

At the time of Paul's writing of this epistle, he was imprisoned (most believe in Rome). The beloved church at Philippi had sent Epaphroditus to him with a generous gift. Paul had then returned this affectionate letter to the Philippian saints by the hand of Epaphroditus. Paul knew that his impending trial could very well result in execution, and he was quite aware of that fact as he penned these words. Although Paul could be sentenced to death, as a Roman citizen under the jurisdiction of Roman law, he was not allowed to be crucified. How humbling it must have been to Paul, to know that he was

exempt from the very curse His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ willingly took upon Himself.

Paul, a Jew, was writing to a mostly Gentile church immersed in the culture of a miniature Rome of sorts. With regard to the content of the letter itself, after a typical Pauline greeting, Paul begins his letter by affectionately sharing with the Philippians how thankful and prayerful he is for them. Their relationship was approaching the span of a decade, and Paul expresses the joy he has experienced in his fellowship with the Philippians during this time, and offers great comfort to them. He assures them that he is in chains for the gospel, and that despite all outward appearances, the gospel is being proclaimed boldly as a result of his imprisonment. Paul expresses his desire to visit the Philippians again, and warmly exhorts them to let their manner of living be worthy of the gospel of Christ. Paul then goes on to discuss the passage at hand, urging unity among the Philippian saints. The letter overall is one of joy and great rejoicing, meant to encourage the Philippians and exhort them to unity in Christ. It is Paul's most encouraging letter, which only serves to further demonstrate his affection for the saints in Philippi, given that he wrote it while in chains for Christ.

Translation of Philippians 2:1-11

Below is a verse-by-verse translation of Philippians 2:1-11. The Greek text used was drawn from Bibleworks 6.0's Bibleworks Greek LXX/BNT, and represents the United Bible Societies' Fourth Revised Edition of The Greek New Testament. The translation seeks to connect the flow of ideas from one verse to the next, presenting a sustained and cogent argument for the correct meaning of the passage, and includes

only as much commentary as is necessary in order to do so. Interacting with outside commentaries has been reserved for a later section of the paper. The four textual variants of the passage are addressed as they arise.

^{BGT} **Philippians 2:1** Ei; tij ou=n para,klhsij evn Cristw/l(ei; ti paramu,qion avga,phj(ei; tij koinwni,a pneu,matoj(ei; tij spla,gcna kai. oivktirmoi,(

“Whoever therefore has any encouragement in Christ, whoever has any comfort of love, whoever has any fellowship in the Spirit, whoever has any affection and compassion,”

The first verse, in the Greek, is a verbless clause. The encouragement in Christ, the comfort, the fellowship, the affection and the compassion are the subjects (all nominative nouns), and thus the thrust of the first verse is to gain the attention of the Philippian saints who have experienced any of these. In English, in order to show possession of these characteristics, it is necessary to add “has” in multiple places (i.e. if anyone *has* encouragement), with the present tense seeming to be the most natural choice. To get the correct sense of possession and include everyone that Paul meant to, it is necessary to add “any” to each of the series of phrases also (i.e. if anyone has *any* encouragement), showing that if someone has any part of even one of these benefits in Christ, then what follows applies to him. Additionally, it seems better to render “if anyone” (Ei; tij) as “whoever,” as it is not an abstract thought that Paul is really questioning whether or not somebody actually possesses these things, but rather assuming that each of the Philippians, if they are in Christ, possess them in some measure.

The apostle Paul has spelled out to the Philippian saints exactly who needs to take to heart what he is about to say, and that is anyone that has experienced any of these tangible or intangible benefits in our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. His intent was clearly to capture the attention of all of the saints of Philippi, and after having done so, to give them further instruction. He is very pastoral and affectionate, appealing to them as one who has personally shared these emotions with them during his second and third missionary journeys, and now continues to share them while writing from his imprisonment.

Philippians 2:2 plhrw,sate, mou th.n cara.n i[na to. auvto. fronh/te(th.n auvth.n avga,phn e;contej(su,myucoi(to. e]n fronou/ntej(

“fulfill my joy that you might think the same, having the same love, united in spirit, of one mind,”

Paul addresses his second person plural, aorist active imperative verbal command (plhrw,sate,) to “fulfill my joy” to the Philippian saints he affectionately appealed to in verse one. The Philippian saints themselves now become the subject of discourse. The nature of the verb Paul uses suggest that he had already experienced great joy on behalf of the Philippians (elsewhere Paul attests to this, for example in Philippians 1:4), but now he is asking them to fill that joy up...to make it complete. Paul’s connects the imperative command to “fulfill his joy” with a present active subjunctive verbal condition (i[na to. auvto. fronh/te...) that the Philippian saints “might think the same...” Paul is saying, in essence, that if the saints at Philippi fulfill his joy, if they do what is necessary to bring about his happiness, they will be united in mind, love, and spirit.

The order of Paul's imperative to the Philippians and the conditions he sets forth after issuing the command appear to be reversed to the English-speaking reader. It seems it would make more sense for Paul to give the commands for them to be of one mind, having the same love, and united in spirit, so that his joy might be complete. Paul, however, has already given them a command in chapter one, verse 27 to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (NAS)." It is easy to see the parallels in the latter half of verses 1:27 and 2:2, as the conditions following the imperative commands both speak of the Philippian saints being of one mind and of one spirit. It is not necessary to try and directly equate the command to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ" from 1:27 with "fulfill my joy" from 2:2, although one can readily ascertain that Paul sees them as one and the same. The obvious structural parallelism is enough to show that Paul commonly uses this construction, and the translator can thereby leave the straightforward rendering of verse two intact, and not try to rearrange it in a way that makes more sense to the modern English mind. Paul is simply restating what he's already written in chapter one, verse 27, in order to add emphasis and more fully develop the idea to lead into what will follow.

Philippians 2:3 mhde.n katV evriqei,an mhde. kata. kenodoxi,an avlla. th/l
tapeinofrosu,nhl avllh,louj h`gou,menoi u`pere,contaj e`autw/n(

"neither according to selfishness nor according to deceit, but in humility considering one another as being better than yourselves,"

This verse naturally builds on verse two, further expounding just how the Philippians are to be of the same mind, love, and spirit. Paul uses a strong adversative (avlla.) to contrast the wrong way to do this, which is according to selfishness (evriqei,an) or deceit (kenodoxi,an), with the right way, which is by considering (h`gou,menoi, a present middle participle, masculine nominative plural) one another as being better than (u`pere,contaj, a present active participle, masculine accusative plural) yourselves. The Philippian saints are still the subject, but Paul now introduces as the object “one another,” thus shifting their focus from themselves to each other. Paul’s words aren’t meant to suggest that the Philippian saints believe others are of more innate value to God than themselves, but rather, knowing that all men are created in the image of God, they are to consider others more important than themselves in their daily living. If the Philippians will practice love in this way, they will be of one mind and united in spirit, and they will thus fulfill Paul’s joy in them. With no verbs present, participles again provide the only action in the sentence (h`gou,menoi,, u`pere,contaj). Paul’s writing style seems to rely heavily on participles up to this point, and it will continue to be the case in the rest of the passage.

Philippians 2:4 mh. ta. e`autw/n e[kastoj skopou/ntej avlla. Îkai.Đ ta. e`te,rwn e[kastoiÅ

“not being concerned about yourselves, but each other.”

Paul here is simply expounding on the end of the previous verse. Practically speaking, how are the Philippians to consider one another as being better, or of more value than, themselves? They are to be concerned about their neighbor’s welfare, and not their own. Paul again relies on the participle (skopou/ntej, a present active participle,

masculine nominative plural) to communicate the action of paying attention to one another's needs, with the Philippian saints remaining the subject and each other the object.

Philippians 2:5 Tou/to fronei/te evn u`mi/n o] kai. evn Cristw/l Vlh sou/(

“Have this in mind among you, which was also in Christ Jesus,”

The demonstrative pronoun (Tou/to) to open verse five doesn't look back to what has preceded it, but rather to what Paul is about to say regarding Jesus Christ. In order to convey this idea in English, it seems best to bump it forward in the sentence. The author has inserted it in the thought of the present active imperative, second person plural verbal command to “have in mind” (fronei/te), thus rendering it “have *this* in mind.” Paul commands the Philippian saints to have the mind that their Lord Jesus Christ had, which he develops further in verses six through nine. The latter half of the verse contains no “to be” verb, which it needs in English and has been supplied in the author's translation above. The simple past tense seems to fit best, as what Paul will go on to refer to are Christ's actions in His Incarnation and earthly ministry.

Verse five includes the first textual variant of the passage. Instead of beginning with Tou/to fronei/te, the textual variant begins with Tou/to ga.r fronei/te, sandwiching a conjunction between the demonstrative pronoun Tou/to and the imperative verb fronei/te. The ga.r, taken as “for, then,” or even as “indeed, certainly,” would only add emphasis to what the Philippians are to have in mind among them. There is no significant theological value associated with the absence or presence of the conjunction in this case.

Philippians 2:6 oj] evn morfhl qeou/ u`pa,rcwn ouvc a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to.
ei=nai i;sa qew/l(

“who by nature being God, did not consider (Himself) being equal with God something to hold onto,”

This verse contains what the Philippian saints are to have in mind among them, and that is the mind of Christ. Christ, as part of the Godhead, was very God Himself. As such, He had always existed with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and would always exist with them. Jesus, however, did not consider (h`gh,sato, an aorist middle indicative, third person singular verb) His equality with God something to hold onto. Instead of remaining in the realm of eternal heavenly glory with the God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, He instead left it in order to take on human flesh. In verse three, Paul commanded the Philippian saints to not consider themselves equal with their neighbor, and to look to the needs of others before their own. He now has shown them how Christ is the ultimate example of humility in doing this, and they are to have that in their minds as they interact with and serve each other.

Philippians 2:7 avlla. e`auto.n evke,nwsen morf.h.n dou,lou labw,n(evn
o`moiw,mati avnqrw,pwn geno,menoj\ kai. sch,mati eu`reqeij w`j a;nqrwpoj

“but He made himself of no effect, choosing the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man; and appearing as a man by nature...”

Paul is now coming down from the abstract thought of Christ not considering Himself to be equal with God, to the practical way in which He demonstrated that. Christ made Himself of no effect (e`auto.n evke,nwsen, an aorist active indicative, third person singular verb), choosing (labw,n, an aorist active participle, masculine nominative

singular) the form of a servant, being born (geno,menoj, an aorist middle participle, masculine nominative singular) in the likeness of man. Paul again relies heavily on participles to communicate the actions of Christ in His humility, which complement the main thrust of the verse communicated in the verb keno,w (to deprive of power, to make of no meaning or effect). Christ made Himself of no effect by becoming a man, and in His humiliation as a man He would serve the needs of His fellow men. Although Christ remained fully God, it is in His Incarnation, His earthly ministry, and ultimately in His death as a man that one can understand how He “did not consider (Himself) being equal with God something to hold onto.” Paul’s next thought begins at the end of verse seven and continues into verse eight. “And appearing (eu`requei.j, an aorist passive participle, masculine nominative singular) as a man by nature...”

Philippians 2:8 evtapei,nwsen e`auto.n geno,menoj u`ph,kooj me,cri qana,tou(qana,tou de. staurou/Å

“He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death by the cross.”

In verse seven, Paul set the stage for what Christ would do after He had taken on human flesh. Paul now tells us that Christ humbled (evtapei,nwsen, an aorist active indicative, third person singular verb) Himself, suffering humiliation as God in human flesh, and He did it willingly. And if that were not enough, He did it by becoming (geno,menoj, an aorist middle participle, masculine nominative singular) obedient to death, even the excruciating death of crucifixion on a cross. The apostle Paul, as a Roman citizen, could not even be subjected to the kind of death that His Lord willingly endured. No form of death, either in the eyes of a Roman or in the eyes of a Jew, was

more despised than death by the cross. No doubt Paul's mind comprehended this as he humbly wrote this letter to his beloved Philippian saints.

Philippians 2:9 dio. kai. o` qeo.j auvto.n u`peru,ywsen kai. evcari,sato auvtw/l to. o;noma to. u`pe.r pa/n o;noma(

“For this reason God raised Him to the highest position and granted Him the name above every name,”

God, because of Christ willingly going to the cross, raised (u`peru,ywsen, an aorist active indicative, third person singular verb) Him to the highest possible position. Further, God granted (evcari,sato, an aorist middle indicative, third person singular deponent verb) His Son the name that is exalted above all names, that of the Lord God Himself.

Verse nine includes the passage's second textual variant. The article (to.) preceding the neuter accusative singular noun “name” (o;noma) is not present in some versions. There is no significant theological value associated with the absence or presence of the Greek article in this case.

Philippians 2:10 i[na evn tw/l ovno,mati Vlhsou/ pa/n go,nu ka,myhl evpourani,wn kai. evpigei,wn kai. katacqoni,wn

“that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth...”

As significant as the highly exalted name that God granted to His Son is, that is not the subject of this verse (although it will be in the following verse). The subject is every knee, and the action of every knee in God's creation with regard to the name of Jesus is that it should bow (ka,myh, an aorist active subjunctive, third person singular

verb). Although Paul uses the subjunctive, the force here is that every knee will in fact bow to King Jesus as Lord. There is no degree of uncertainty in Paul's mind. It would certainly be easy to see the name "Jesus" itself being the name that God the Father highly exalted and granted to His Son. It is significant that the text reveals it is the "name of Jesus," and not the "name Jesus." God granted the Son His own Name, that of Lord, as will be discussed in verse eleven.

Philippians 2:11 kai. pa/sa glw/ssa evxomologh,shtai o[ti ku,rioj Vlh sou/j Cristo.j eivj do,xan qeou/ patro,j

"and every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Not only should every knee bow at the name of Jesus, but every tongue should confess (evxomologh,shtai, an aorist middle subjunctive, third person singular verb). Again, Paul uses the subjunctive but the force of the passage is not that it might happen, but it will indeed happen. God the Father has so highly exalted Jesus as Lord that at the last day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess Him as Lord, and all unto the glory of God the Father.

The string of nominative nouns at the end of the sentence (ku,rioj Vlh sou/j Cristo.j) has been translated as "Jesus Christ is Lord." It is the name of Jesus as Lord that has been exalted, and it is the name of the Lord that every tongue will one day confess. The language here is undoubtedly eschatological in scope. At Christ's second coming all will confess King Jesus as Lord.

This verse contains the last two textual variants of the passage. Skipping the third for now, the fourth (and final) textual variant of the passage has to do with the string of nominative nouns (ku,rioj Vlhsou/j Cristo.j) in the middle of the verse. Other manuscripts attest to three other variations in this chain of nouns, with one saying (ku,rioj Vlhsou/j), another (ku,rioj Vlhsou/j ku,rioj), and yet another (Cristo.j ku,rioj). All of these contain the noun Lord (ku,rioj), which is the name that God has granted to His Son and that all of creation will confess Jesus as upon His return. None of the variants alter the meaning of the text in an appreciable manner.

The other textual variant in this text is of a more significant nature. The verb evxomologh,shtai comes from the root evxomologe,w. The basic nature of the verb conveys the idea of agreeing or consenting. Here, it is used as an aorist middle subjunctive, third person singular verb. As a middle, the meaning shifts a bit from agreeing or consenting to confessing, admitting, acknowledging, praising, and/or thanking. So, Paul is saying "...and every tongue might confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord..." Paul has used the subjunctive here, although there seems to be little if any doubt in his mind that at the last day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

A significant number of manuscripts, however, attest to the verb evxomologh,setai, a future middle indicative, third person singular. This removes even the possibility of any uncertainty in Paul's thought, as "...every tongue *will* confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord..." Although it is tempting to embrace the verb as a future middle indicative, before doing so it is prudent to ask the following question. Is there any

difference in Paul's thought between every knee bowing and every tongue confessing to King Jesus?

Given there is no textual variant on the former, the reader can be confident that Paul is comfortable using the subjunctive to describe as certain the bowing of every knee to Christ as Lord. In view of this, there seems to be no necessity to adopt the latter phrase as a future middle indicative instead of as an aorist middle subjunctive. Nothing seems to be gained, as clearly Paul is using the subjunctive in a way that is all but identical to the future indicative. That does not mean, of course, that the future middle indicative could not have been Paul's original choice. But the literary and theological differences between the two, in this case, seem to be null and void. That being said, the author agrees with the United Bible Societies' decision in favor of the aorist middle subjunctive. It is more heavily attested to in the manuscripts. Literarily, it also just seems to make sense that Paul would use the subjunctive for both every knee bowing and every tongue confessing, as the thoughts are sequential in nature and parallel in thought.

Final Translation of Philippians 2:1-11 Compared to Today's Standard Translations

This section includes the translation in its entirety and seeks to compare it to various standard translations. The translations considered are, in no particular order, the King James Version (KJV), the New King James Version (NKJV), the English Standard Version (ESV), the New International Version (NIV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New Living Translation (NLT), and Young's Literal Translation (YLT). Any significant differences from these translations are addressed in order to justify the

translations rendered above. The final translation of Philippians 2:1-11 (along with the Greek text it is based upon) is below:

Philippians 2:1-11 ^{BGT} Ei; tij ou=n para,klhsij evn Cristw/l(ei; ti paramu,qion avga,phj(ei; tij koinwni,a pneu,matoj(ei; tij spla,gcna kai. oivktirmoi,(² plhrw,sate, mou th.n cara.n i[na to. auvto. fronh/te(th.n auvth.n avga,phn e;contej(su,myucoi(to. e]n fronou/ntej(³ mhde.n katV evriqei,an mhde. kata. kenodoxi,an avlla. th/l tapeinofrosu,nhl avllh,louj h`gou,menoi u`pere,contaj e`autw/n(⁴ mh. ta. e`autw/n e[kastoj skopou/ntej avlla. Îkai.Đ ta. e`te,rwn e[kastoiÅ ⁵ Tou/to fronei/te evn u`mi/n o] kai. evn Cristw/l Vlh sou/(⁶ o]j evn morf h/l qeou/ u`pa,rcwn ouvc a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew/l(⁷ avlla. e`auto.n evke,nwsen morf h.n dou,lou labw,n(evn o`moi w,mati avnqrw,pwn geno,menoj\ kai. sch,mati eu`requei.j w`j a;nqrwpoj ⁸ evtapei,nwsen e`auto.n geno,menoj u`ph,kooj me,cri qana,tou(qana,tou de. staurou/Å ⁹ dio. kai. o` qeo.j auvto.n u`peru,ywsen kai. evcari,sato auvtw/l to. o;noma to. u`pe.r pa/n o;noma(¹⁰ i[na evn tw/l ovno,mati Vlh sou/ pa/n go,nu ka,myhl evpourani,wn kai. evpigei,wn kai. katacqoni,wn ¹¹ kai. pa/sa glw/ssa evxomologh,shtai o[ti ku,rioj Vlh sou/j Cristo.j eivj do,xan qeou/ patro,jÅ

¹Whoever therefore has any encouragement in Christ, whoever has any comfort of love, whoever has any fellowship in the Spirit, whoever has any affection and compassion, ²fulfill my joy that you might think the same, having the same love, united in spirit, of one mind, ³neither according to selfishness nor according to deceit, but in humility considering one another as being better than yourselves, ⁴not being concerned about yourselves, but each other.

⁵Have this in mind among you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶who by nature being God, did not consider being equal with God something to hold onto, ⁷but He made himself of no effect, choosing the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man; and appearing as a man by nature, ⁸He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death by the cross. ⁹For this reason God raised Him to the highest position and granted Him the name above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Each of the standard translations listed above (save Young's Literal Translation) seems to weaken Paul's exhortation to the Philippian saints in verse four. Verse four includes Îkai.Đ in the United Bible Societies Fourth Revised Edition text, with the

brackets signifying that the presence or position of the conjunction kai in this text being regarded as disputed. Instead of rendering the latter half of the verse as something like “look to the needs of each other,” the translations have chosen instead to imply that the Philippians are to “look *also* to the needs of each other.” Given that the kai is disputed and may very well have been included in Paul’s autograph, at first glance this rendering seems feasible. The first half of the verse, however, does not contain the thought of “not looking *only* upon your own needs,” the sense the translations have chosen in order to contrast it with their rendering of the second half of the verse, but rather just “not looking upon your own needs.” In other words, was Paul saying that the Philippian saints were to take care of their own needs and also meet the needs of others, or to trust God to meet their needs and to be used by God as His instruments to meet the needs of others? The difference is slight, but the author thinks the latter is more in line with Paul’s line of thought here in this passage. Christ did not consider His own needs when He became man and willingly went to the Cross, but rather the will of the Father and the needs of others.

In verse six, the translations are split between the notion of “not counting equality with God a thing to be grasped” (ESV, NASB, NLT) and “thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (YLT, KJV, NKJV). The NIV takes a different approach with “did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.” Although the idea of equality with God will be discussed more in the section on interpretive issues, briefly, the idea Paul is conveying seems to be one of Christ leaving what He had with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in heaven. With the Incarnation of Christ the main thrust of verse seven, what Paul seems to be getting at is Christ’s willingness to

not hold onto His equality with God, to not grasp after it so tightly that He is unwilling to mask it in His humiliation. The notion of thinking it “not robbery to be equal with God” can aptly be applied to Christ generally and supported by various Scriptures, but it does not seem to be as directly tied to the Incarnation. The NIV’s rendering, although similar to the ESV, NASB, and NLT, also seems to miss the mark with regard to tying the thought to the Incarnation of Christ present in the verse that follows.

With regard to verse seven, of all the translations, only the New Living Translation retains the last clause in verse seven itself. The other six translations have bumped it forward into verse eight. The author has retained the clause in verse seven.

The New American Standard Bible chooses to render verse ten as “so that at the name of Jesus every knee *will* bow,” and the parallel clause in verse eleven as “and that every tongue *will* confess.” Although certainly a valid rendering of verse eleven, in verse ten it seems forced to express the subjunctive in this way, as well as unnecessary. The thoughtful reader understands full well that Paul is not expressing an event that is at all improbable, but rather a certainty that is as fixed in his mind as the return of Christ Himself. The author sees no need to render the subjunctive conditions in verses ten and eleven in a future middle imperative sense.

Significant Interpretive Issues in Philippians 2:1-11

Although several interpretive issues arise upon a careful study of Philippians 2:1-11, the most significant are found in verses six and seven. Not surprisingly, they are all Christological in nature. In verse six, what did the apostle Paul mean when he said that Christ was “in the form of God” (evn morphē/ qeou)? Also in verse six, what is the

reader to make of Christ not considering “equality with God something to hold onto” (a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew)? And lastly, in verse seven, how is the reader to understand Christ “making Himself of no effect” (e`auto.n evke,nwsen)? Seven different theologians, spanning nearly the entire era of church history, will be referenced in the paragraphs below as the author attempts to address these significant Christological questions.

evn morph/l qeou. What exactly did the apostle Paul mean in verse six when he said that Christ was “in the form of God” (evn morph/l qeou)? Upon closer study of the Greek word morph/l, one finds that it can be used to represent either the form or nature of what something truly is (its essential nature), or merely its outward appearance. So which did Paul mean here? Was Christ truly God in His essential form, or did He just outwardly appear to be God?

It is significant to look at the participle that Paul used in connection with this phrase, that of u`pa,rcwn (a present active participle, masculine nominative singular). u`pa,rcwn comes from the verb u`pa,rcw, meaning “to be” or “to exist.” In the phrase o]] evn morph/l qeou/ u`pa,rcwn, which in the author’s translation is rendered as “who by nature being God,” Paul employed the present tense participle to convey the notion of continuous being. So, whatever is meant by this “form” or “nature” of God (morph/l qeou), it is attributed to Jesus Christ as what He has always been and still was at the time of Paul’s writing. Paul leaves no possibility to conceive of Christ as ever being anything less than in the “form” or “nature” of God, either in His pre-incarnate state or while He was incarnate.

The question still remains, then, is this meant to be understood as Christ's essential nature, or merely outward appearance? The testimony of Christ Himself quickly answers this inquiry. Claims such as "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30, NASB), "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works" (John 14:10, NASB), and, "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one" (John 17:21-22, NASB), clearly demonstrate that Christ thought of Himself as of the same essential nature or substance of God the Father. Paul, if he is faithful to Christ's own testimony, has no choice but to word his epistle to the Philippians in a manner consistent with this understanding of Christ's divine nature. There is no room to casually assert that Christ was merely the outward appearance of God the Father. Orthodox commentators from the patristic period up until the modern day are in consistent agreement on this, as is shown below.

J.B. Lightfoot, in his commentary *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, asserts that Paul's use of *morphh* here "implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes."³ He further explains that it "must apply to the attributes of the Godhead. In other words, it is used in a sense substantially the same which it bears in Greek philosophy."⁴ Handley C.G. Moule, in his *Philippian Studies*, defines *morphh* as "*reality in manifestation*." He translates the phrase in verse six as "who in God's manifested Being

³ J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zoncervan Publishing House, 1953), 110.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

subsisting,' *seeming* Divine, because He was divine, in the full sense of Deity."⁵ William Hendriksen, in his *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Philippians*, similarly comments that Paul's use of *morfh* in Philippians 2:6 "*refers to the inner, essential, and abiding nature of a person or thing.*"⁶ He sums up what Paul is saying with "*Christ Jesus had always been (and always continues to be) God by nature, the express image of the Deity. The specific character of the Godhead as this is expressed in all the divine attributes was and is his eternally.*"⁷

John Calvin, in his commentary on Philippians, similarly remarks that "the *form of God* means here his majesty...Christ, then, before the creation of the world, was in the form of God, because from the beginning he had his glory with the Father, as he says in John xvii. 5." He goes on to say that "being such as he (Christ) was, he could, without doing wrong to any one, *shew himself equal with God*; but he did not manifest himself to be what he really was, nor did he openly assume in the view of men what belonged to him by right."⁸

Matthew Poole, a post-Reformation voice in England, concurs with the above theologians in saying that "the *being* or subsisting Paul here speaks of, respects (what the best philosophers in their most usual way of speaking do) the essential form, with the glory of it."⁹ He further says that "*being, or subsisting, in the form of God*, imports not

⁵ Handley C. G. Moule, *Philippian Studies: Lessons in Faith and Love* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis), 92.

⁶ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Philippians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953), 104.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979), 55.

⁹ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible, Volume III: Matthew-Revelation* (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Company), 687.

Christ's appearance in exerting of God's power, but his real and actual existence in the Divine essence, not in accidents, wherein nothing doth subsist."¹⁰ According to Poole, "the apostle here treats of Christ's condescension, proceeding from his actual existence, as the term wherein he is co-eternal and co-equal to God the Father, before he abated himself with respect unto us. For he says not the form of God was in Christ (however that might be truly said,)...but he speaks of that wherein Christ was, viz. *in the form of God*, and so that form is predicated of God, as his essence and nature, and can be no other thing."¹¹ F.F. Bruce words only echo those of Poole and others when he said that "possession of the form implies participation in the essence."¹²

John Chrysostom's famous sermons from the late fourth century only strengthen the reasoning and logic presented by the theologians listed above. In preaching on Philippians 2:5-8, with regard to *morfh/l qeou*, he said that "the form of God, is the nature of God."¹³ He expounds on the thought later in the sermon when he says that "*the form of a servant* means, Man by nature, wherefore *the form of God* means, God by nature."¹⁴ Although the Greek word *morfh* can, in certain contexts, signify merely external appearance, the overwhelming evidence from Scripture and the near-unanimous opinion of orthodox theologians throughout the ages is that Christ was indeed in the form of God, as very God Himself.

¹⁰ Ibid., 688.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² F.F. Bruce, *Philippians: A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco, California: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), 45.

¹³ John Henry Parker, ed., *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Oxford, England: J. G. F. and J. Rivington, MDCCCXLIII), 62.

¹⁴ Ibid., 63.

a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew. So, given that Christ was indeed God in form, what is the reader to make of Christ not considering “equality with God something to hold onto” (a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew)? How can Christ, who is by very nature God and yet distinct from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, still be equal with God? Poole aptly states that “things may be equal which are so diverse, that yet they may be one in some common respect wherein they agree: wherefore when Christ is said to be equal with the Father, he is distinguished from him in person and subsistence, yet not in essence, wherein it is his due to be equal, and therefore one.”¹⁵ Thus, the previous thought of Christ “being in the form of God” (morph/l qeou) and the current consideration of His “equality with God” (to. ei=nai i;sa qew) come in perfect harmony, the latter naturally building on the former.

What then is the reader to make of Christ not holding onto this equality, by Christ not grasping after it? How is one meant to understand a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato? Translations range from “thought it not robbery” (KJV) to “did not regard...something to be grasped” (NASB) to my rendering above, “did not consider...something to hold onto.” Calvin, arguing from the notion of “thought it not robbery,” says that “there would have been no wrong done though he had shewn himself to be *equal with God*.”¹⁶ Furthermore, he adds that “where can there be *equality with God* without *robbery*, excepting only where there is the essence of God?” To Calvin, Christ’s “eternal divinity is clearly set forth in these words.”¹⁷ Poole’s train of thought only echoes Calvin’s, as he

¹⁵ Poole, 688.

¹⁶ Calvin, 55.

¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

pushes the assertion that Christ subsisted in the same nature and essence of the Father, and can therefore be God by nature, and not by usurpation.¹⁸

Hendriksen and Lightfoot, however, consider both the ideas of “thought it not robbery,” and of “did not consider...something to hold onto,” and each side with the latter. Hendriksen asks if the noun *ἀρπαγμοῦ* should “be taken in the active sense – an act or robbery or usurpation – or in the passive sense – a *prize* to be held on to, a treasure to be clutched? Is it *an action* or is it *a thing*?”¹⁹ Both he and Lightfoot posit that the majority of the Latin fathers take it in its active sense, while the preponderance of the Greek fathers in its passive sense.

Hendriksen sees conflict in taking it in its active sense (robbery). To him, “this meaning is in conflict with *the words that precede* (see Phil. 2:1-4). The apostle has just exhorted the Philippians to be humble and not always to be insisting on their own rights but to be thoughtful of others. Surely, in such a context the idea that Christ *asserted* his rights – ‘thought it not robbery to be equal with God’ – does not fit.”²⁰ As the author argued above (see section on “Final Translation of Philippians 2:1-11 Compared to Today’s Standard Translations”), Hendriksen also thinks the “thought it not robbery” rendering “does not do justice to *the words that follow*. The conjunction *but* suggests a direct contrast. The demand is satisfied only when the clause ‘he emptied himself’ is preceded by something like ‘he did not cling to,’ or as the text actually reads, ‘He did not count his existence-in-a-manner-equal-to-God something to cling to.’”²¹

¹⁸ Poole, 688.

¹⁹ Hendriksen, 129.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hendriksen, 129.

Lightfoot similarly considers the different senses that may be assigned to the word ἀπαγορεύω. “In the one the prominent idea is the *assertion*, in the other the *surrender*, of privileges. The one lays stress on the *majesty*, the other on the *humility* of the Lord.”²² Lightfoot looks at the clauses that immediately precede and follow οὐκ ἀπαγορεύω ἡμῶν. To Lightfoot, a “thought it not robbery” rendering “neglects the foregoing words. For the Apostle is there enforcing the duty of humility, and when he adds ‘Have the mind which was in Jesus Christ,’ we expect this appeal to our great Example to be followed immediately by a reference, not to the right which He *claimed*, but to the dignity which He *renounced*.”²³ To Lightfoot, “the act expressed by οὐκ ἀπαγορεύω ἡμῶν is brought forward as an example of humility, and can only be regarded as such, if the expression τοῦ ἐνανθίμου refers to rights which it was an act of condescension to waive.”²⁴

John Chrysostom proclaimed from his pulpit that “this equality with God He had not by robbery, by as His own by nature.”²⁵ His preached word is again consistent with the reasoned writings of orthodox theologians throughout the ages. Christ was, in His essence, equal with God, yet He did not consider that something to hold onto, but willingly gave it up.

ἐὰν ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν. The last significant interpretive issue to be discussed is how exactly is the reader to understand Christ “making Himself of no effect” (ἐὰν ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν)? What does it mean that Christ emptied Himself?

²² Lightfoot, 133.

²³ Ibid., 134.

²⁴ Ibid., 137.

²⁵ Parker, 77.

Christ made Himself of no effect by “taking the form of a man” (morph.n dou,lou labw,n). A careful reading of the text nowhere suggests that Christ traded His nature as God for the nature of a man. It says that Christ, who is God, took on the form of a man in addition to His being God. Calvin comments that “Christ, indeed, could not divest himself of Godhead; but he kept it concealed for a time, that it might not be seen, under the weakness of the flesh. Hence he laid aside his glory in the view of men, not by lessening it, but by concealing it.”²⁶

Poole agrees that Christ’s divinity was veiled by His human flesh, but also explains Paul’s use of e`auto.n evke,nwsen as a matter of comparison. Poole wrote, “considering the disproportion betwixt the creature and the Creator, he, in the eyes of those amongst whom he tabernacled, appeared to have nothing of reputation left him.” Poole goes on to explain that “it is not said the *form of God* was cut off, or did empty itself; but he who did suffer *in* the form of God, made himself of no account, did empty, abase, or abase himself...he lessened himself for the salvation of his people.” With regard to the nature of this self-abasement, Poole says that “his condescension was free, and unconstrained with the consent of his Father.”²⁷ Poole summarizes his thoughts later when he says that Christ “emptied himself, not by ceasing to be what he was before, equal with his Father, or laying down the essential form of God, according to which he was equal to God; but by taking *the form of a servant*, wherein he was like to men, i.e. assuming something to himself he had not before, viz. the human nature.”²⁸

²⁶ Calvin, 56-57.

²⁷ Poole, 688.

²⁸ Poole, 689.

Lightfoot concurs with both Calvin and Poole, stating that *ἐκένωσεν* should be understood to mean that “He divested Himself, not of His divine nature, for this was impossible, but of the glories, the prerogatives, of the Deity. This He did by taking upon Him the form of a servant.” Lightfoot sees Christ’s “voluntary, self-imposed” act of humility in taking on human flesh as that which “emptied, stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty.”²⁹ Hendriksen’s thoughts are along similar lines, albeit more detailed.

According to Hendriksen, “Christ emptied Himself of his existence-in-a-manner-equal-to-God.”³⁰ The effect of this, to Hendriksen, was fourfold in that Christ “gave up his favorable relation to the divine law, he gave up his riches, he gave up his heavenly glory, and he gave up his independent exercise of authority.”³¹ Bruce’s explanation does not break rank when he says that “he ‘emptied himself’ or ‘divested himself’ specifically in that he took the nature of a servant... This does not mean that he *exchanged* the nature (or form) of God for the nature (or form) of a servant: it means that he displayed the nature (or form) of God *in* the nature (or form) of a servant.”

Chrysostom’s words to his eager hearers are of the same substance as Calvin, Poole, Lightfoot, and the like. Let his exhortations ring still today, how “the Son of God feared not to descend from His right, for he thought not Deity a matter of robbery, He was not afraid that any would strip Him of that nature or that right, wherefore He laid it aside, being confident that He should take it up again. He hid it, knowing that He was

²⁹ Lightfoot, 112.

³⁰ Hendriksen, 107.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

not made inferior by so doing.”³² He goes on to say, “For lest when you hear that He emptied Himself, you should think that some change, and degeneracy, and loss is here; he says, whilst He remained what He was, He took that which He was not, and being made flesh He remained God, in that He was the Word.”³³ Building further, the thought continues with “The Word who was God did not degenerate into man, nor was His substance changed, but he appeared as a man; not to delude us with a phantom, but to instruct us in humility.”³⁴ Chrysostom’s sermons on Philippians 2:1-11 repeatedly address a host of Christological controversies, with the excerpt below serving as just one final example.

*“Being in the form of God, it is written, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. We do not find ‘He became,’ ‘He took,’ concerning His divinity, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; concerning His humanity we find He took, He became. He became the latter. He took the latter. He was the former. Let us not then confound nor divide the natures. There is one God, there is one Christ, the Son of God; when I say ‘One,’ I mean a union, not a confusion, the one Nature did not degenerate into the other, but was united with it.”*³⁵

Christ, as has been shown, made Himself of no effect by taking the form of a man. He was fully God, and thereby equal with God, yet He did not grasp onto that nature, but also took on human flesh. The difference between the Creator and creature being infinite, it is readily understood what Paul meant when He said that Christ emptied Himself (ε`αυτο.ν εϋκε,νωσεν).

³² Parker, 76.

³³ Ibid., 79-80.

³⁴ Ibid., 80.

³⁵ Ibid.

Preaching Philippians 2:1-11

How is the minister of God best suited to preach Paul's message from Philippians 2:1-11? The apostle made an affectionate appeal for unity among the Philippian saints. If they were to achieve this unity, then they must do it by imitating the example Christ Jesus Himself set before them, which was one of humility. The minister of God is best served by delivering the message in much the same way the apostle Paul did.

The minister should appeal to his hearers that are in Christ, to all who have experienced His saving work in their lives, and entreat them to strive for unity among the Body of Christ (verses one and two). He should then instruct them how that unity is to be promoted and maintained, which is through humility, considering your neighbor's needs rather than your own (verses three and four). The preacher would be well-served to then shift the focus away from the congregation and the needs of each other, to Christ Himself (verse five).

With the focus now firmly on Christ, the minister can begin to entail just how the congregation can follow Christ's example of ultimate humility. Christ was in every way equal to God, yet did not hold onto that equality for the sake of doing the will of the Father in saving, and thus serving the ultimate needs of His people (verse six). Similarly, man should not hold onto his equality with fellow man, but should instead seek to serve.

Christ made Himself of no effect, condescending to become a servant by taking human flesh (verse seven). Man should, likewise, take the form of a servant with regard to his fellow man, seeking to meet others' needs before his own.

Christ humbled Himself in His Incarnation, and continued to humble Himself in His earthly ministry by being willingly obedient to the will of the Father, even unto the most despised death known to man (verse eight). Similarly, man is to humble himself by serving others with a view to build unity among the Body of Christ, and is to continue to do so as long as the breath of life is in him.

The minister is now able to shift from Christ as an example to the motive of Christ in setting this example, which is the glory of God the Father (verses nine through eleven). The Christian serving others in Christ-like humility, with a view to promoting and maintaining unity in the Body of Christ, should also have as his primary motive the glory of God the Father.

Here is an example of a potential order of worship and preaching outline for this passage of Scripture, based on the current order of worship of my church, with acknowledgement that from congregation to congregation, the Order may change. This recognizes that this is not the only sermon which could or should be preached from this passage.

Call to Worship – 1 Corinthians 12:12-18
Opening Psalm – 119M
Prayer of Adoration
Psalm of Praise – 51F
Tithes and Offerings
Prayer of Thanksgiving
Old Testament reading – 1 Samuel 24
Psalm of preparation – 41A
Pastoral prayer
New Testament reading – Philippians 2:1-11
Sermon – Only the truly humble get to be truly great
Psalm of Response – 110
Benediction Romans 15:5-6
Doxology - 150B

Jesus, the Christ, agreed to forever alter the interactive state of His relationship to the Father by taking on a human body forever, humbling Himself beyond anything you can imagine, but He knew His personal relationship to the Father would remain as solid as ever, and this is what He wants you to learn; humbling yourself won't hurt your standing with God.

HP - Christ did not consider it robbery to humble Himself; and neither should you

1. You have been blessed by Christ
2. Now, show the love He does
3. Join your brethren to your own self-care
4. He knew He wouldn't lose His place over this
5. If you are in Christ, your position is secure too
6. Secure yourself in Christ, then lift up those around you

HP - Christ did not consider it robbery to humble Himself; and neither should you

Conclusion

Philippians 2:1-11 presents certain interpretive issues, all centering on Christology, that must be worked through in order to arrive at a proper understanding of Paul's thought. This is because the passage is so foundational to Christian truth and living. Having done that, the minister of God is well-prepared to teach this passage's truths to God's people, as well as apply it to their lives. Having a proper understanding of Christ's nature, both in His pre-Incarnate and Incarnate states, help us to more fully grasp the example of humility He set forth for us to follow. In following this example of Christ, the Body of Christ can promote and maintain the type of fellowship that leads to unity of mind, love, and spirit. This was Paul's desire for the Philippian saints, and it is God's desire for His church today.

Babies, Bread, and Wine:

Paedo-Communion in the First Three Hundred Years of Church History

Joe Smith

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Introduction

Is paedo-communion *the* historical practice of the church? In the modern debate over the practice of paedo-communion church history plays an important part, as it should. While never primary or determinative for our theology and practice church history certainly carries much secondary and informative weight in our discussions. The purpose of this paper will be to look to the first three hundred years of church history and discern if the historical evidence favors the practice of credo-communion or paedo-communion. Our arguments must ultimately rest in the Scriptures themselves. Nevertheless, if the testimony of the early church is unanimous or even heavily tilted toward one side or the other, then that is a voice that must be honored and given serious consideration.

This paper will concentrate on three primary sources from the first 300 years as an attempt to discern the early church's voice on this issue of paedo vs credo communion. Now, it must be admitted up front that there are other sources which both sides appeal to from the first three hundred years of church history. However, these sources are not nearly as relevant as the three which will be dealt with in this paper. First, some of their statements simply require too much inference to be persuasive either way. Ignatius' comments would fall into this category.¹ Second, some of their statements are too vague to carry any real weight in the debate. Origen's comments on a section from the Book of Judges would fall into this category.² Lastly, some

¹ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians: Chapter 4* (Peabody: Hendrickson, repr. 2004), 81.

² Origen, *Homilies on the Book of Judges 6:2*. As quoted in Leonard J. Coppes, *Daddy, May I Take Communion* (Thornton: Leonard J. Coppes, 1988), 41.

quotations that may be relevant are contained in works which are hotly debated as to their date and composition. The Apostolic Constitutions would fall into this last category.³

This paper will focus on quotations from Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian of Carthage. Their quotations will be set before the reader in their historical and literary context. This will be mixed with interpretation that focuses on the implications of their comments in so far as they bare on the communion debate. This paper will seek to show that the evidence from the first three hundred years of church history does not heavily favor either side in the modern debate. This is because the sources that will be examined result in a historical tie. In light of this conclusion, a final exhortation will be given to the church to hold fast to *sola scriptura* as the final and ultimate authority for our theology and practice.

Sources from the First Three Hundred Years

Justin Martyr (110-165 AD)

Our historical investigation begins in “The First Apology.” Justin states very clearly his purpose for writing this apology. He is addressing and petitioning the civil leaders of the Roman empire in regards to the unjust hatred, slander, and abuse that he and his fellow christians are experiencing. His desire is that an objective inspection of the lives and teachings as set forth in his apology would be made and an unbiased judgement passed.⁴ Remembering this context will be helpful.

³ A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 Volumes (Peabody: Hendrickson, repr. 2004), 7:387-390. See also Needham’s discussion of the date and compilation of the Apostolic Constitutions in, Nick Needham, “Children at the Lord’s Table in the Patristic Era,” in *Children and the Lord’s Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan (Geanies House: Christian Focus, 2011), 153-155.

⁴ Justin Martyr, “The First Apology,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 Volumes (Peabody: Hendrickson, repr. 2004), 1:163.

One more important contextual note must be made before we set forth his words concerning our topic. In Chapter LXI Justin begins to speak about Baptism. He states:

I will also relate *the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ*: lest if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. *As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to live accordingly*, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then *they* are brought by us where there is water, and *are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated*.⁵

In this section it is clear that *adult converts* are in view. This is important to note. In Chapters LXII-LXIV comments are made about the imitation by demons, how God appeared to Moses, and further misrepresentations of the truth of Christian baptism. Chapter LXV is a continuation of this section as evidenced by its first words, “*But we.*” There is no break in thought. In Chapters LXV and LXVI the line of thought is still that of new adult converts. Justin’s comments relative to our topic in these chapters are as follows:

But we, after we have thus washed *him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled* ... And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion. And this food is called among us Eucharist, *of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined*.⁶

These quotations, from Chapter LXI and from LXV-LXVI, ought to make clear that he does not have the issue of paedo-communion on his mind at all. This means that when he makes the comment that, “no one is allowed to partake *but the man who believes,*” he is saying that

⁵ Martyr, *First Apology*, 1:183. Emphasis added.

⁶ Martyr, *First Apology*, 1:185. Emphasis added.

unbelievers, those who have not been baptized, may not partake of the Eucharist. He is not speaking in any way to the issue of baptized adults versus baptized infants, but to baptized adults versus unbaptized adults. For this reason Justin’s comments do not support those who oppose paedo-communion. They cannot. The context will not allow it. He must be considered a neutral source. Therefore, Justin ought to be left on the sideline in the debate over paedo-communion.⁷

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-219 AD)

Next, we have two quotations from Clement of Alexandria that have implications for the issue at hand. First, in his work “The Instructor” Clement begins by giving practical instruction on the issues of eating and drinking. After discussing the benefits of drinking water instead of wine for temperance sake he discusses why water is mixed with wine in the Lord’s cup. It is here that he states “And the mixture of both — of the water and of the Word — is called Eucharist, renowned and glorious grace; and they who *by faith* partake of it are sanctified both in body and in soul.”⁸

⁷ Peter Leithart in his book “Daddy, why was I excommunicated” also points out the weaknesses inherent in using Justin’s quotes as if they favor the position of credo-communion. He seems correct when he points out that to use Justin here to oppose paedo-communion is to be forced to take Justin’s earlier comments about baptism as also opposing paedo-baptism. For as the quotations above show Justin says that not only those who believe are allowed to partake of the supper, but also that only those who believe are baptized. Leithart states (correctly, I believe) that “neither Ignatius nor Justin furnishes us with the evidence we are looking for” to settle the debate. Even if we disagree with Leithart on the issue of paedo-communion we would do well not to put forth Justin’s quotes as supportive of our position. He simply is not speaking to the issue. We should use only the strongest arguments if we desire to be truly persuasive. See Peter J. Leithart, *Daddy, why was I excommunicated?* (Niceville: Transfiguration Press, 1992), 38. Blake Purcel sees Justin’s statement that “each of those present” partook as implying infant communion since baptized infants would have been present. This is not a very persuasive inference though, because just prior to this statement Justin identifies “those present” as those who have just expressed their assent. This would exclude infants. Purcel is trying to find an implication where there is not one. See Blake Purcel, “The Testimony of the Ancient Church,” in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Monroe: Athanasius Press, 2006), 133-134.

⁸ Clement of Alexandria, “The Instructor,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 Volumes (Peabody: Hendrickson, repr. 2004), 2:242. Emphasis added.

Second, in “The Stromata” as he discusses the usefulness of written compositions and how each individual should judge himself in regards to making use of them, that is whether one prefers to utilize writing or speech, he states the following:

Both must therefore test themselves: the one, if he is qualified to speak and leave behind him written records; the other, if he is in a right state to hear and read: as also some in the dispensation of the Eucharist, according to custom, enjoin that each one of the people individually should take his part. *One’s own conscience is best for choosing accurately or shunning. And its firm foundation is a right life, with suitable instruction.* But the imitation of those who have already been proved, and who have led correct lives, is most excellent for understanding and practice of the commandments. ‘So whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body of the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.’”⁹

As with Justin, it must be admitted that Clement is not discussing the issue of paedocommunion. However, his comments in both of the above quotations are made in writings that are addressed to Christians. This is important because unlike Justin, Clement is not contrasting the believer versus the unbeliever. His comments are more general in nature. For this reason they do seem to have implications for the debate. According to the quotation from “The Instructor” it is “by faith” that the partakers of the Supper are sanctified. From Clement’s statement it is clear that he did not hold to an *ex opere operato* view of the Supper. He saw the Supper as a means of grace to the believer that partook of it by faith. This would require the ability to believe and trust in certain truths and promises. This would also require the ability to understand something about what is being presented to the believer in the Supper. An infant simply is not mentally capable of such things. This being the case it would be rather strange for Clement to make this statement while also holding to the practice of paedocommunion.

⁹ Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 Volumes (Peabody: Hendrickson, repr. 2004), 2:300. Emphasis added.

In regards to the quotation from “The Stromata,” Matthew Winzer offers the following helpful summary of the implications of Clement’s words:

The following is to be observed from the father’s words: (a.) That each individual has the responsibility to choose or to shun the Eucharist. (b.) That it is only by the testimony of an individual’s conscience that such a determination can be made. (c.) That a right life and suitable knowledge is foundational for participation in the Eucharist. (d.) That all of this is according to custom. (e.) And this is in accord with Paul’s words to the Corinthians, which requires self-examination.¹⁰

If the above inferences are correct the necessary implication would be that infants ought not to partake of the supper. If the inferences are correct it would also seem to imply that it is unlikely that Clement was aware of, or at the very least personally in favor of, infants partaking of the Supper.¹¹

Cyprian of Carthage (c. 250 AD)

Next, we come to two quotations from Cyprian in his Treatise III “On the Lapsed.” In this treatise, he is dealing with the issues that arose after the Decian persecution which had splintered the early church into two camps: the confessors and the lapsed. The lapsed were those who had given in to the persecution, sacrificed to idols, and denied Christ. In Cyprian’s eyes, once they had sacrificed to idols, they had partnered with wickedness. They had become polluted and corrupt.¹² Their apostasy had even opened some to demonic possession.¹³ He believed that this

¹⁰ Matthew Winzer, “The True History of Paedo-Communion.” *The Confessional Presbyterian* Volume 3 (2007): 29-30. <https://www.cpjjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Winzer-HistoryPaedocommunion.pdf>

¹¹ Cornelis Venema comes to similar conclusions regarding the implications of Clement’s comments. See Cornelis P. Venema, *Children at the Lord’s Table?*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009), 13.

¹² Cyprian of Carthage, “Treatise III: On the Lapsed,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 Volumes (Peabody: Hendrickson, repr. 2004), 5:439, 443.

¹³ Cyprian, *Lapsed*, 5:443-444.

had brought upon the lapsed judgement both in this life and in the life to come. He saw this temporal punishment as a sign from the Lord given to correct those who would heed it. With this context in mind, we will take a more detailed look at two of Cyprian's most relevant statements to the topic of this paper.

In paragraph nine Cyprian speaks of the lapsed sealing their own destruction and pledging their own death by "turns in the deadly cup," that is the pagan sacrifice.¹⁴ As if this was not terrible enough, others were exhorted to partake with them, and infants were carried by their parents and made to partake of the deadly cup with them. Of this reality, Cyprian states that when these infants were made partakers of this pagan sacrifice they "lost, while yet little ones, what in the beginning of their nativity they had gained." "Gained," here clearly refers to eternal life. In the Ante-Nicene Father's translation of Cyprian, an editorial footnote is inserted after this statement, which claims that "the baptism of infants seems now to be general, and also the communion of infants."¹⁵ It is possible that Cyprian has only baptism in mind as the means by which the infant had gained eternal life. However, based on what will be seen below it is certainly possible that Cyprian has both sacraments in view. He then goes on to paint an imaginary scene in which these infants stand before the Lord on Judgement day and condemn their parents for having "murdered" them and caused them to be condemned. They say:

We have done nothing; nor have we forsaken the Lord's bread and cup to hasten freely to a profane contact; the faithlessness of others has ruined us. We have found our parents our murderers; they have denied to us the Church as a Mother; they have denied God as a Father: so that while we were little, and unforeseeing, and unconscious of such a crime, we were associated by others to the partnership of wickedness, and were snared by the deceit of others.

¹⁴ Cyprian, *Lapsed*, 5:439. All quotations in this paragraph are taken from paragraph nine on page 5:439.

¹⁵ Editors Footnote 6, 5:439.

They point out that they were not the ones who had consciously forsaken the Eucharist, the Church, and God the Father, but that their parents bore the responsibility for this. In this imaginary scene Cyprian's own beliefs come through. Though these infants were unconscious of partaking in the deadly cup, he believed that it was a crime on their account and that by it they were partnered with wickedness. This fact will be important to keep in mind as we look at the next section relevant to our discussion.

Of this section though it must be said that no hard proof for infant communion can be found. As was noted above, Cyprian could simply be speaking of baptism as the means by which infants gained eternal life. The statement that they had not "forsaken the Lord's bread and cup" in no way requires one to take this as a reference to them having been kept from it in their infancy. It is simply a plea that they had been robbed of their membership in the church and the means of grace by the wickedness of their parents. A person born into a Presbyterian and Reformed Church today who was led astray into paganism by their parents in infancy could make a similar claim, even though these churches do not practice paedocommunion.

However, for those who want a smoking gun in favor of paedocommunion in the early church may have it in Cyprian's next section we will address. After pleading with the lapsed to repent and so escape the punishment of the Lord Cyprian notes that the Lord has punished some and given them over to various torments, which serve as an example to all. Then, in paragraph twenty five, he recounts a scene in which he personally witnessed one such example of punishment and torment.¹⁶ Certain parents, who were fleeing, had left their baby with a nurse who then gave the baby to the magistrate. The magistrate gave this baby "in the presence of an

¹⁶ Cyprian, *Lapsed*, 5:444. All quotations in this paragraph are quoted from paragraph 25 page 5:444.

idol...bread mingled with wine.” This bread and wine had been part of a sacrifice offered to idols. At some point the mother recovered her child and brought her into the assembly when the church was partaking of the Eucharist. Cyprian also notes that the child had been, at the point of receiving the bread and wine offered to idols, and at the point in which her mother received her back, too young to be able to stop it or to speak about the “crime that had been committed.” At this point, we should note the similarities with the section we commented on above. In both, there is an infant partaking unwillingly and unknowingly of a sacrifice offered to idols. In both, Cyprian calls this a crime. We can infer then that Cyprian also saw this infant, as he saw the first, as having been made a partaker with wickedness by the deeds of another. He goes on to note how the infant began to cry and wail during the Eucharist, attributing it to the fact that the child somehow was confessing its unworthiness to be in the midst of the saints as they offered prayer and supplication. The infant was somehow conscious of its having been polluted and made a partaker with wickedness by its being given the bread and wine sacrificed to idols. After the prayers were ended he notes, “the deacon began to offer the cup to those present, and when, as the rest received it, *its turn approached*, the little child, by the instinct of the divine majesty, turned away its face, compressed its mouth with resisting lips, and refused the cup.”¹⁷ Two things must be noted. First, the statement “its turn,” seems to rather strongly imply that the infant was part of the normal rotation. Simply put, the infant had a recognized turn in being offered the cup. Second, he states that the infant “refused the cup” not because it was too young, not because it had somehow rationally considered the matter, but by the instinct of the divine majesty. Cyprian goes on to state that the deacon persisted and forced some of the wine into the infant. However,

¹⁷ Emphasis Added.

the infant immediately began to vomit. He notes that “in a profane body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain.” He attributes this vomiting by the infant, like the instinct to turn its head, to the Lord’s power. In Cyprian’s eyes the Lord would not allow this infant’s body to partake of the Eucharist because it had been polluted by the bread and wine sacrificed to idols. The relevant point to note in regards to our discussion is that Cyprian does not condemn the deacon nor does he say the Lord caused the wine to be vomited because the child was an infant and thus not worthy based on age. The infant in Cyprian's eyes was not worthy only because it had been polluted. It would seem then that the comments in this second section of Cyprian seem to give clear evidence to the practice of infant communion in the third century. It also seems clear that Cyprian had no issue with its practice.¹⁸ This does not mean that it was necessarily a universal practice in the church at this time. It simply means that by the middle of the third century the practice did exist.

Conclusion

We have given a brief overview and interpretation of the most relevant quotations from three fathers during the first three hundred years of church history that pertain to the issue of paedocommunion. Justin Martyr has been shown to be a neutral source. Though both sides in the modern debate seek to bring Justin onto their side it has been shown that taken in context he simply must be left on the side lines. To pull him in on either side simply does not do justice to

¹⁸ Matthew Winzer argues for a different interpretation of Cyprian’s comments that would paint him as actually unfavorable to the practice of paedocommunion. Although this writer agrees with Winzer that paedocommunion is not the biblical practice, he can not follow Winzer’s interpretation of Cyprian at this point. See (Winzer, “True History,” 31-32). Both Leonard Coppes and Cornelis Venema, who argue against paedocommunion, admit that Cyprian’s comments must be understood as evidence for the practice in his time. See (Coppes, *Daddy*, 42); and (Venema, *Children*, 14-15).

the general context of the First Apology, nor to the particular section in which he speaks of the Supper.

Clement of Alexandria on the other hand has been shown to be a source that can be quoted favorably by those who hold to a credo-communion position. Clement speaks of the need for faith in order for the Supper to be a means of grace to any who would partake. He then goes on to speak about the need to examine one's own conscience as they choose to partake of the Supper or not. If this is the proper interpretation of his comments then the necessary inference is that infants ought not to partake since they can not understand the Supper nor examine their own conscience.

Cyprian, however, has been shown to be a source that can be quoted favorably by those who hold to a paedocommunion position. He speaks of an infant having a "turn" during the Supper. He in no way condemns the action of the deacon who not only offered the cup to the infant, but even forced the infant to partake of some of the wine. Cyprian condemns none of this. He instead praises the power and majesty of the Lord for not allowing an unclean vessel to partake of the holy Supper. It seems necessary to infer that paedocommunion was at minimum an accepted practice in some parts of the church by the middle of the third century.

Both sides of the debate admit that paedocommunion became the common practice of the church in the east and west by the fourth century and even continues in Eastern Orthodoxy to the present day.¹⁹ How or why this came to be common practice is a debated issue. Some believe it was due mainly to the church coming to view the sacraments as conferring saving grace in and

¹⁹ Venema, *Children*, 18-19.

by themselves — *ex opere operato*.²⁰ While this may be the case, that debate must be left for another paper. The purpose of this paper has been to investigate the most relevant statements of the first three hundred years and to discern what, based on the extant historical comments alone, can be discerned regarding the early church's practice of paedocommunion. The conclusion seems to be clear. Of the three sources cited one was neutral in the debate, one was favorable toward credo-communion, and the last was favorable toward paedocommunion. Therefore, based on the sources we have from the first three hundred years, it must be conceded that the debate over the practice of paedocommunion can not be decided by mere nose counting alone during this early period of church history.²¹

Thus it is that scripture alone, is and must continue to be our standard for doctrine and life. The Church must continue to hold tenaciously to this principle. We must also be honest with the historical data. Unfortunately, some in this debate have tried to find historical allies in places where they simply do not exist. If we try and make the early church fathers say more, or even worse something different than they actually do we only open ourselves up to criticism which could have been avoided. Scripture is our rock, not church history. Let us stand firmly and faithfully on that rock and rest our arguments upon it confidently. May we who defend the biblical practice of credo-communion hold fast to these exhortations!²²

²⁰ Coppes, *Daddy*, 43. See also Berkhof's comments on the development of the supper in the patristic era. Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, repr. 2015), 252.

²¹ It should be noted that it is the latest witness of the three that favors paedocommunion. If we were to have limited our discussion to the first two hundred years the evidence for paedocommunion would be totally lacking. Here it can perhaps also be noted that other voices from church history speak against paedocommunion. For some of these other voices see Joel Beeke, "Only for His Believers': Paedocommunion and the Witness of the Reformed Liturgies," in *Children and the Lord's Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan (Geanies House: Christian Focus, 2011), 163-179.

²² To be clear, the author of this paper does hold to the practice of credo-communion.

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**MISC.
&
FORMS**

ECHO Application 2021

*Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery Youth
Summer Missions Opportunity*

ECHO 2021 is a ministry of the Great Lakes/Gulf Covenanter Young People's Union (CYPU). It has been organized to provide opportunities for the participants to grow in their walks with God, to develop a personal vision for world evangelism, and to serve missionary work by assisting in carrying out agricultural research.

ECHO 2021 is a missions-serving opportunity and is not a summer camp. The primary focus of this serving will be to help ECHO. ECHO is a forty year old Christian organization which was started with the goal of helping the hungry in developing countries feed themselves. To do this, agricultural research is conducted on a fifty-acre farm near Fort Myers, Florida. The knowledge gained from the research is passed on to 139 countries through missionaries and through various other organizations.

The dates have now been set for the ECHO 2021 missions trip. It is important to note that there are a limited number of spots on the team. The trip is June 11 to June 26. Having this trip is dependent on several factors not yet worked out. Covid -19 is one of those factors. Covid will bring changes to what we have done in the past. I can tell you we are needed in a very big way this year, and we will do everything we can to meet this need. The cost for the trip will be \$425, due by June 1st.

Because of the nature of the ministry, a minimum age of fourteen has been set unless special arrangements are made. The team of youth will be selected from those individuals who express interest in participating.

There will be times of fun, but please understand that the primary time focus is on physical work in a hot climate; the lodging conditions are not first-class; and the food is not as good as one's mother makes. This is not a vacation. It is an opportunity from God to serve. What we do is important work.

Interested individuals should indicate their interest by returning the application. Before you apply, I ask that you make this a matter of prayer. You should discuss your desire to apply with your parents and pastor and apply only after receiving their approval. Remember, ECHO 2021 is a missions-serving journey, and the primary focus of this serving will be to help ECHO.

Please note, you must include a short testimony of God's work in your life.

Please write clearly. Often, I can't read the e-mail addresses. It is best if you e-mail applications to me.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail in large letters _____

John Hanson

409 W. Washington St.

Fairland, Indiana 46126

Phone (317)835-2801

E-mail johnhanson@att.net. Please note that my E-mail has an extra "h".

GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY
Application for 2021 Travel Expense Reimbursement

Date _____

Annual Meeting _____
Other Presbytery Expenses _____ \$ _____ Auto
Mileage Beginning Odometer _____
Ending Odometer _____
Total Miles @ \$.56 _____ \$ _____
Airplane-Bus or Train Fare (attach copy of receipt) \$ _____
Airport Parking \$ _____
Tolls \$ _____
Meals-Number of meals en route @ \$8.00 \$ _____
Total Reimbursement applied for \$ _____
Name _____
Address _____
City & State _____
Zip Code _____
Email _____

Send to:
James Bishop
1541 Connemara Road
Indianapolis, IN 46217-7418
Email: jbbishop797@gmail.com

GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY
Application for 2021 Travel Expense Reimbursement

Date _____

Annual Meeting _____
Other Presbytery Expenses _____ \$ _____ Auto
Mileage Beginning Odometer _____
Ending Odometer _____
Total Miles @ \$.56 _____ \$ _____
Airplane-Bus or Train Fare (attach copy of receipt) \$ _____
Airport Parking \$ _____
Tolls \$ _____
Meals-Number of meals en route @ \$8.00 \$ _____
Total Reimbursement applied for \$ _____
Name _____
Address _____
City & State _____
Zip Code _____
Email _____

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