

SWORP Report 2020

SouthWest Ohio Reformed Presbyterian Church (West Chester/Mason, Ohio)
GL-G Presbytery Meeting 3/4/2020
by The Rev. Dr. Richard E. "Dick" Knodel, Jr.

Broad Overview: A.D. 2020 was truly a 'year of our Lord!' Closed by the China COVID Virus in March, we saw the LORD re-open our church in May — and then use Southwest Ohio RPCNA to effect great changes — even on Ohio's political landscape!

'Stand-Your-Ground.' Our political-action arm, through member Chris Dorr and OhioGunOwners.Org freed Ohio's citizens of the onerous responsibility of having to retreat before defending themselves when we got Gov. DeWine to sign our 'stand-your-ground' style Right-of-Self-Defense bill. This freed Ohio's parents to defend their families, according to the 6th Commandment — without having to first prove their innocence regarding their use of a family firearm (Genesis 4:14)! For decades, prior to defending one's family, an armed parent had to worry about justifying their retreat from someone attacking their home and family. But when Cris Dorr and OGO.ORG got Bill (SB175) signed by the governor, it gave Ohio's parents the right to defend their families — without first having to worry about justifying their biblical behavior in a court of law. God granted us a tremendous mercy in this legislative effort! To think that such a change could originate from a small church like ours, boggles the mind!

The Atlanta RPCNA Blessing. Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA) gave SWORP the responsibility for helping its new-church development work in Atlanta become a self-standing RPCNA Church. AD 2020 saw great progress in this — as our inner-city multi-cultural church outreach effort was

blessed with obtaining its own building and seeing many victories in real Christian growth and sanctification. In the way of this, over \$125,000 additional funds came in after our faith-venture purchase (i.e., additional to our original building fund project of some \$80,000) — to totally overwhelm our expectations and put Atlanta RPC on an even more stable ground for the future!



Organizing a new Christian College in Cincinnati. From 1988 through 2007 Dr. Knodel was part of the Lynchburg, Virginia, Christ College (CC) project. During 2020, successful graduates of this effort have been begging us to resurrect it, so they would have an effective place to send their 'next-gen' children for undergraduate preparation like they had received. In the way of doing this we've raised almost half a million dollars and have a purchase offer pending on a suburban Cincinnati property. We plan to open our school in AD 2022, under the leadership of President Dr. Kevin L. Clauson, J.D. (with whom presbytery worked, in Dayton, Tennessee).

The Big Picture. The amazing thing to consider is that the Lord has done these things while SWORP has been weakened by plague and closure! Despite our frailty, though, God marches on! A.D. 2020 was SWORP's fifth year in operation as an organized church. We had small membership changes involving a net loss of one communicant member and net gain of one baptized member. Our literal attendance dropped to twenty-two while our literal-plus-virtual attendance rose to 34. We made budgetary gains, and our bank balance increased by almost \$20,000 over 2019. Despite our spring COVID closure, almost all our members have returned to our real weekly services, and we continue to love and enjoy each other immensely. We see the Lord being glorified via our families and their cultural accomplishments and attainments.

Officer's Contributions. RE **Steven Work** has contributed weeks ('even months!') of work to the Atlanta work, in helping Frank Smith and our effort there! He also initiated a church-wide Sunday School class on Church History using Dr. Robert Godfrey's Ligonier series. He's filled in for me (Pastor Knodel) for all my vacations, and done all our Lord's Supper Table Exhortations. He's also supplied for other Presbytery pulpit needs as they have manifested themselves. RE **Timothy Vincze** has faithfully served as our Session Clerk, Worship Precenter, and Church Treasurer. He's also done a lot of witnessing and outreach, and has sponsored group meetings in his roomy Townhouse. He visited throughout the congregation in 2020, touching base with all our families, sharing the love of our Lord as our Sessional Representative. RE **G. Scott Damerow** has helped by engineering our Virtual (weekly) Wednesday Night fellowship, teaching our Sunday School most of the year on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. He also heads up our Church's Safety Committee, and has helped set up our ZOOM meetings for both us and as a TGB for Atlanta. Deacon **Chris Knodel** has served as assistant treasurer and our I.T. Specialist, facilitating our Virtual Sunday services with appropriate equipment and operational expertise. We often obtain over fifty viewers of our Facebook Livestream services, and generally average between 300-600 SermonAudio.Com downloads per month.

Conclusion: For all of this bounty, Southwest Ohio RPCNA makes 'A joyful noise unto the Lord!' Psalm 100:1. God is so sufficient. His kingdom presses inexorably forward. He's using Christ's Church to "fill all in all!" Ephesians 1:22-23.

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