



GLG 22-5

Forwarded by FRPCD Session
w/ Endorsement on 2/7/22

First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham

1316 Watts Street
Durham, NC 27701

February 7, 2022

Re: First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham Petition Request

PETITION: The Session of the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham formally petitions Synod that the congregation of the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham be transferred from the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.¹

Fathers and Brothers,

On November 20, 2021, the congregation of the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham held a congregational meeting and voted unanimously to petition Synod to transfer our congregation into the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.²

Next year, this congregation will celebrate its 25th anniversary since organizing. Since the beginning of our existence, we have been under the care and oversight of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery. Over the years we have been greatly blessed by the elders in the presbytery and often had to rely upon your help through numerous hard times. We are thankful to the Lord and to all of you men for your love, assistance and labors on Christ's behalf.

Our struggle is the distance. We exist very far from the centrality of the Presbytery, and, as a result, miss out on the vast amount of activity that other congregations enjoy. Our youth do not partake in any of the presbytery youth activities. They do not know any of their peers in other congregations, and distance prohibits consideration to attend and participate in events. None of our families attend Covfamikoi.

Our elders usually attend only the longer presbytery meetings due to the time to travel to presbytery. We tend to leave Saturday early morning to allow sufficient time to get back to NC.

¹ *Directory for Church Government Chapter 6, Paragraph 1 (D-31)*. Groups of congregations are organized into presbyteries within certain geographical boundaries. Appeal for such organization may be made to the Synod by interested congregations.

² *Congregational Meeting Minutes, 20 November 2021*. "The Moderator asked the congregation, 'Should FRPCD petition the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America to transfer our Congregation into the Presbytery of the Alleghenies?' The communicant members of the FRPCD congregation voted on the question by the raising of hands with 17 in favor, none opposed. Seven other communicant members submitted their votes via email absentee ballots with 7 votes in favor and none opposed. Out of a total of 24 votes submitted, 24 were in favor, none opposed. The congregation unanimously voted to petition the Synod of the RPCNA to transfer our Congregation into the Presbytery of the Alleghenies."

At the last annual meeting of presbytery, we stayed to the very end for an important vote, and the meeting went late until 3pm. We arrived home at 4am on the Lord's Day. We lack freedom to fully participate due to the distance of our meetings. Our contributions to assist other congregations, even providing pulpit supply on short notice, is severely limited.

Geography is an issue that cannot be changed. Grace and Truth RPC in Harrisonburg, VA, who will likely organize this summer Lord willing, is 3.5 hours away from Durham. Trinity RPC in Burtonsville, MD, is 4.75 hours away from us. Broomall RPC, which is two presbyteries away, is 6.67 hours from us. We can drive to the seminary in 7.5 hours. Getting to Indianapolis, however, takes 10.5 hours.

As we eagerly seek the Lord's leading in church planting, it makes sense to call on churches that are actually close to us to help; and the opposite should be true as well, helping nearby churches in their efforts to plant. Virginia can easily become a location for such efforts of future church planting for Durham, and the Presbytery of Alleghenies is already active in that state.

For practical reasons alone, it makes more sense to be part of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.

The Constitution of the RPCNA does not provide specific steps as to how to transfer into another presbytery, apart from the clarification that Synod has the authority to do so.³ We do want to inform our presbytery of this intent and desire the blessing of presbytery to transfer.⁴ We are happy to answer any questions and hope we can leave the Spring 2022 meeting with presbytery's blessing to go forward with this request.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. *To the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery:*
 - A. That this communication be sent to Synod with endorsement.
 - B. That this communication be sent to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.

- II. *To Synod:*
 - A. That the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham be transferred from the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.

Sincerely in Christ,

The Session of First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham
Kent Butterfield
Eric Hallfors
Drew Poplin

³ *Directory for Church Government Chapter 6, Paragraph 2 (D-31)*. The Synod, alone, may organize a presbytery, define its approximate boundaries, determine which congregations shall be under its oversight . . .

⁴ *Directory for Church Government Chapter 8, Paragraph 11 (D-40)*. . . . All communication from subordinate courts, or from individuals not members of the court, to be brought to the attention of Synod, such as . . . petitions, . . . must bear endorsement showing that they have been regularly transferred by the lower courts. 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 . . .