

# Report of the Hetherton RPC Visitation Committee

## Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery, Fall 2023 Meeting

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September 30, 2023

This committee, made up of Bob Bibby, Joshua Smith, and David Hanson, was appointed in May to visit the Hetherton Congregation to provide counsel and encouragement. While an onsite visit is still planned, our work thus far has been focused on helping Pastor Ray Morton and the leadership of the congregation sort through issues related to the timing of Pastor Morton's retirement along with plans for congregational life following his retirement. The recommendations at the end of this report are aimed at smoothly accomplishing that transition.

On September 17, Pastor Morton announced to the congregation his retirement, effective December 31, 2023 at the close of the day. In accordance with the Directory for Church Government (II.E.5.b), Pastor Morton has waited two weeks to inform the presbytery and requests that this report serve as the notice of his retirement.

Pastor Morton's retirement is a remarkable event as it marks a major transition point in a ministry spanning five decades and including service on 3 continents (Africa, Europe, & North America) and 4 countries (Canada, Ethiopia, Scotland, & United States). Pastor Morton has faithfully labored in multiple congregations and community ministries.

Currently, the plan for the remainder of 2023 is that Pastor Morton and Elder Bryan Dage will share the preaching duties. Pastor Morton will continue moderating the session with RE Dage serving as clerk. These next months will give the session some time to evaluate additional steps to take in the new year after the retirement. Currently though the plan is for Ray and Susan to continue active participation in the congregation and living in the manse. These retirement arrangements will also allow Ray to continue his illustrious hockey career.

The Hetherton Visitation Committee desires to be continued through the spring meeting of presbytery in order to accomplish an onsite visit which will hopefully include a congregational event recognizing Pastor Morton's retirement.

With gratitude to God for His help and for Pastor Morton's faithful service,  
Bob Bibby, Joshua Smith, and David Hanson

### Motions:

- 1) That with gratitude and appreciation for the lengthy and faithful service of Pastor Raymond Morton, the Great-Lakes Gulf Presbytery receives his notice of retirement and sets the conclusion of December 31, 2023 as the time at which the pastoral relationship between him and the Hetherton Reformed Presbyterian Church will be dissolved.
- 2) That Phil Pockras and Wade Mann be appointed provisional elders to Hetherton as requested by the session.