

The Clerk's Report

2022 GLGP Spring Mtg ~ Indianapolis, IN
March 2-4, 2023 @ Southside RPC

Dear Fathers & Brethren,

As you can see, we have our work cut out for us yet again this spring. Thankfully, our labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).

Oral Congregational Reports. Now that we have a stated fall meeting, we are able to begin hearing oral congregational reports again. This spring's proposed agenda will include oral reports from about half of our congregations (plus the Atlanta TGB) in reverse alphabetical order. According to the proposed format, the remainder of the reports will be heard in June and/or at our stated fall meeting.

Corporate Intercessory Prayer. Congregational prayer assignments are noted in the proposed agenda. Wherever possible, I tried to assign delegates to the congregation whose minutes they recently reviewed. Please look for your name in the proposed agenda so that you are prepared to lead in prayer at the appointed time. If you are unable to do so, please inform your alternate that they will need to fill in for you.

Annual Congregational Financial Audits. It has come to my attention that many of our congregations may not be in full compliance with synod's annual congregational financial auditing process (Appendix 1). Therefore, I am recommending that presbytery instruct its clerks to look into this matter and report back to the presbytery in the future.

Assets of Disorganized Congregations. In light of the recent disorganizations at Christ Church RP and First RPC of Grand Rapids, we have a few housekeeping matters to address. Bill Roberts is requesting our counsel on behalf of synod's board of trustees (DCG 2.11, D-6) with respect to the remaining assets from CCRP¹ Rec. 6 (below) seeks to provide this counsel, in keeping with the wishes of the former members. I've also included an update from Steven Rhoda and Jake Schwartz concerning the steps taken since disorganization (Appendix 2).

Minutes Review. The review of digital session/TGB minutes is nearly complete. As of 2/28/23, all minutes have been reviewed and found to be in lawful order except for Hetherton and IRPC. *Session clerks must bring their minute books to the spring meeting to be stamped.*

Communications. Please note the following communications and subsequent recommendations.

1. 22-22: Complaint v. GLGP from N. Enas & K. Swan re: GLGP's recent adoption of a "permission to record" policy.
2. 22-23: Complaint v. GLGP from N. Enas re: GLGP's decision to return his prior complaint v. CCRP Comm. (22-18) stemming from the commission's decision not to sustain his original complaint v. CCRP Session (22-15).
3. 23-1: Complaint v. IRPC Session from K. Borg re: admission of J. Olivetti to the L.S. while under suspension.
4. 23-2: Complaint v. IRPC Session from S. Anderson re: admission of J. Olivetti to the L.S., etc.
5. 23-3AB: Charge of Sin v. IRPC Session from K. Borg re: admission of J. Olivetti to the L.S., etc.
6. 23-4: Update from Synod's Olivetti Commission regarding its ruling on 1/19/23 re: admission of J. Olivetti to the L.S., etc.
7. 23-5: Complaint v. Southfield Session from G. Allison re: session's decision to schedule a trial.
8. 23-6: Request from J. Faris to transfer his ministerial credentials to Zionsville Fellowship Church.²
9. 23-7AB: Complaint v. IRPC Session from J. Smith re: a sermon illustration by Rev. Dan Perrin involving Christians & Muslims (Withdrawn)
10. 23-8: Communication from K. Evans re: Mr. Faris' (apparent) email inviting folks to commune with Mr. Olivetti at IRPC.
11. 23-9: Petition from J. Odom regarding the situation at IRPC.
12. 23-10AB: Two letters from Rev. Dan Perrin (PCA), the latter explaining and qualifying the former.
13. 23-11: Communication from K. Borg confessing a private offense against the GLGP clerk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That presbytery appoint the following parliamentarians for this meeting: J. Odom, F. Smith, P. Pockras (alt), J. Hughes (alt), S. Rhoda (alt), W. Mann (alt), J. Hart (alt).
2. That presbytery enter executive session in order to hear the rest of the clerk's oral report and to consider Recommendations 3, 4, and 5.
3. That presbytery confirm its understanding that the clerk is authorized to "handle correspondence" and to "have charge of all the papers and records belonging to the [court]" (DCG 4.4, D-28), meaning that, at the clerk's discretion, due to the sensitive nature of certain

¹ Email to Clerk (2/10/23): Adam, The Trustees of Synod have a policy that money from the closing down of congregation is placed in the building and loan fund of the denomination. There is an exception that the presbytery can request the funds be held for up to 5 years to support a new work of the presbytery in the vicinity of the closed congregation. The session at Christ Church wanted the funds from there to be set aside for a new work in Marion County or one of the eight counties in central Indiana that touch it. For it to be acted upon by the Trustees, it will need a formal request from the presbytery to be sent to the Trustees (i.e., Jim McFarland). I have heard nothing about Grand Rapids if they might want to reserve the funds for a new work in SW Michigan. You may know the answer to this question. If so, a formal request by the presbytery would also be needed to be sent to the Trustees. I am not planning on attending this meeting of the presbytery. ~ Bill Roberts

² 23-6: "Dear Brothers of the CCC and AIC, The Lord has graciously granted me nearly twenty years of service as a pastor in the RPCNA. All of those have been served in this presbytery. I am thankful to have been born, baptized, raised, married, ordained in this denomination. My children have been born and baptized here. Elizabeth and I are thankful for all that the Lord has done here and the people the Lord has used in our lives, including you. Most of all, we are thankful for the Lord himself. He's made us and redeemed us in Christ. He's worked his grace in our hearts and given us newness of life. He's given us his word to be believed and obeyed. We have never been more thankful for his word and Spirit than now. Seeking to be faithful to his word, the time has come for me to depart from the RPCNA and to move my credentials to Zionsville Fellowship Church in Zionsville, Indiana. This independent church is willing to receive me and my credentials as a presbyterian pastor. I remain presbyterian in my convictions, but at this time, I am not sure what presbyterian assembly I will join next. I do know that I will no longer be part of the RPCNA. You know well the disagreements I have with many actions of the RP church in recent years and how truly grieved I am over these. I can no longer be under the jurisdiction, and so need to move elsewhere now, even if not to another presbyterian body immediately. I still love the RP church & pray for her sanctification through the risen Savior. Please send a letter with my credentials to Drew Hunter, pastor of Zionsville Fellowship (9090 Oak St., Zionsville, IN 46077). In Christ, James"

- documents, he may restrict access and transmission of such documents to the presbytery delegates only, and that these restrictions constitute binding counsel tendered in the Lord (QFO 9), unless or until reversed or modified by the Presbytery or its Ad Interim Commission, such that anyone who willfully violates these restrictions, has sinned against the court and may be subject to censure.
4. That presbytery, in keeping with the 2006 decision of GLGP and Synod (MoS, 142) to permit RPCI's policy of discretionary access to session minutes, confirm that a session clerk's duty to "furnish extracts from the minutes when ordered by the court" (DCG 4.4, D-28), to present session minutes "for review by the presbytery once a year" (DCG 4.5, D-29), to "transmit to the higher [court] all records and papers pertaining to [a complaint]" (BOD II.4.4, E-16), and to ensure that "ordinarily... minutes of the session are open to members of the congregation" (DCG 4.5, D-28) does not imply an unqualified or inalienable license for every individual to access or disseminate every such record for every conceivable reason,³ much less for non-members of the congregation and/or presbytery to procure previously unpublished or uncirculated minutes in an unauthorized manner for widespread publication without the court's consent or knowledge.
 5. That presbytery form a three-man committee, appointed by the moderator, to contact Rev. Kyle Borg, the Winchester RPC session, and the Midwest Presbytery, respectively, on behalf of the GLGP to articulate our very serious concerns and ask that steps be taken in love to effectively persuade Rev. Borg to publicly repent and receive the freely and eagerly offered forgiveness of the GLGP and the IRPC session for his sin against these ecclesiastical bodies (not merely against the GLGP clerk) in admittedly publishing sensitive, password-protected GLGP judicial records — submitted by the IRPC session to the GLGP in connection with Rev. Borg's own complaint against them — on the website, *Peace, Purity, Progress*, against the express instructions of the GLGP clerk.
 6. That presbytery instruct the nominating committee to (A) Determine the congregations to be visited this year, (B) Consider the Geneva College B.O.C. nomination of P. Pockras as GLGP Rep.,⁴ (C) Replace the two departing members of the Membership Comte, (D) Replace the GLGP HMB Rep., (E) Nominate an IRPC provisional moderator, (F) Replace J. O'Neill as GLGP Rep. on Synod's Finance Comte.
 7. That presbytery instruct the incoming AIC to determine and disseminate the time and place for the fall meeting by 7/31/23.
 8. That presbytery form a two-man committee, appointed by the moderator, to review the RPC of Lafayette's pastoral call to Jonathan Sturm and report back with its recommendation(s) later at this meeting.
 9. That presbytery approve the following committee reports as submitted, without hearing oral reports: (A) Geneva College Board of Corp.'s Report, (B) Fearing Chaplaincy Report, (C) Home Mission Board Rep. Report
 10. That presbytery counsel the Synod Board of Trustees (DCG 2.11, D-6), in keeping with the wishes of the former CCRP congregation in Brownsburg, Indiana, to hold the remaining funds from the disorganized CCRP congregation for up to five years for a new work in Marion County or one of its eight bordering counties.
 11. That presbytery transmit GLG 22-22 and GLG 22-23 to synod without endorsement.
 12. That presbytery formally dismiss the CCRP Commission with thanks.
 13. That presbytery instruct its clerks to look into the synod's requirements for annual congregational financial audits and report back to the presbytery no later than the spring of 2024.
 14. That presbytery refer GLG 23-5 to the three-man, moderator-appointed Business Committee (OTD) [BUSCOM]⁵ to examine the complaint (with pertinent records), to interact with the parties (as able), and to report back with its recommendation(s) later at this meeting.
 15. That presbytery refer GLG 23-1, 23-2, 23-3, and 23-9 to a three-man, moderator-appointed IRPC Committee (OTD) to examine each communication (with pertinent records) and report back with its recommendation(s) later at this meeting.
 16. That presbytery refer GLG 23-8 to BUSCOM to advise whether or not its contents warrant any further action(s) by the presbytery (e.g. BOD I.3.1/2, E-4; BOD II.1.3/4, E-9), and to report back with its recommendation(s) later at this meeting.
 17. That presbytery, in response to Mr. Faris' request "for his credentials to be sent to Zionsville Fellowship Church" (GLG 23-6), instruct the clerk to send ZFC a letter of ministerial standing, but not to *transfer* Mr. Faris' credentials to ZFC.⁶
 18. That presbytery instruct the moderator to announce the following appointments by the start of Bus. Session 2 at the latest:

A. Business Comte of the Day [BUSCOM] (3)	E. Resolution of Thanks Committee (2)
B. IRPC Comte of the Day (3)	F. Time and Place Committee (2)
C. Nominating Committee (3)	G. Lafayette Call Review Comte (2)
D. Finance Committee (3)	
 19. That presbytery adopt the proposed agenda for this meeting.
 20. That presbytery grant all RPCNA elders present the privilege of the floor during the remainder of this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Kuehner, Clerk

³ Even with regard to the parties in a judicial trial, excerpts from the trial minutes are limited to instances of practical *necessity* as discerned by the court: "Parties are entitled to such extracts from the minutes as may be necessary in preparing an appeal" (BOD II.4.11, E-17).

⁴ Email to Clerk (2/14/23): "Dear Rev. Kuehner, On behalf of the Geneva College Board of Corporators' Nominating Committee, we would like to recommend Phil Pockras for re-election to the Board of Corporators as Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery Representative. We continue to thank God for Phil's faithful and wise service to the Corporators... Sincerely, Shana Milroy, Nominating Committee Chair"

⁵ The Business Committee of the Day [BUSCOM] is designed to handle *all types of business* referred to it by the court: *judicial and non-judicial*. This allows us to refer an item to BUSCOM without passing judgment in advance as to whether it involves a *judicial* or *non-judicial* matter. This same principle would apply to the 'IRPC Committee of the Day'. The point is to avoid spinning our wheels over nomenclature during the clerk's report, so that we have more time later in the meeting to discuss the well-digested thoughts and recommendations of our committees.

⁶ Rationale: (1) In keeping with the historic principles of biblical presbyterianism, the RPCNA (DCG 3.II.E.5.i, D-21; DCG 6:2, D-31; DCG 6:13, D-33) places the oversight of ministerial credentials in the hands of regional presbyteries rather than the minister himself, or a local church, such as ZFC; (2) A letter of standing would grant the substance of Mr. Faris' request — *i.e. facilitating whatever recognition he is seeking from ZBC, and enabling him to request removal from the GLGP TE roll as soon as this is obtained* — while remaining true to biblical presbyterianism. (3) In light of the possibility of unresolved questions stemming from GLG 23-8, some may regard it as imprudent to transfer Mr. Faris' credentials out of the RPCNA at this time.