

# The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA)

Official Meeting Minutes  
March 31, 2018

## NOTE TO READERS:

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### CLERK

Rev. Adam Kuehner  
26580 Evergreen Rd.  
Southfield, MI 48076  
ak@streetsermon.org  
(248)356-3932

### ASST. CLERK Pro Tem

Rev. Raymond Morton  
PO Box 249  
Johannesburg, MI 49751  
revmorton@frontier.com  
(989)786-3188

## 2018 ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

**Time:** Thursday March 1 @ 2pm to Saturday March 3 @ Noon

**Place:** Second Reformed Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis  
4800 N. Michigan Rd. Indianapolis, IN 46228

**Phone:** (317) 225-7557

## DAILY SCHEDULE

### THURSDAY

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

- *Mid-Aft. Break* (3:30 - 3:45p)
- *Dinner Break* (6:00 - 6:50p)

**Business Session #2** (7:00 - 9:00p)

### FRIDAY

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

- *Mid-AM Break* (10:30 - 10:45a)
- *Lunch Break* (1:00p)

**Business Session #4** (2:00 - 6:00p)

- *Mid-Aft. Break* (3:30 - 3:45pm)
- *Dinner Break* (5:30 - 6:50 pm)

**Business Session #5** (7:00 - 9:00p)

### SATURDAY

**Bus. Session #6** (8:30a - Noon)

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

**BUSINESS SESSION #1***Thursday 2:00 - 5:30 p.m. (Break @ 3:30a)*

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery met for its annual Spring meeting on Thursday March 1, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. at the Second Reformed Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis, Indiana.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The moderator, Mr. Stan McKenzie, called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

The presbytery sang Psalm 139A to the praise of God, after which Mr. McKenzie read Psalm 119:65-72, preached from verse 66 on the Psalmist's prayer for spiritual discernment, and constituted the court by calling upon the Lord in prayer.

**2. ATTENDANCE**

The assistant clerk *pro tem*, Mr. Morton, called the roll and confirmed that a quorum was present.

**3. CLERK'S REPORT**

Mr. Kuehner presented the clerk's report, calling for papers, urged sessions and TGBs to submit their minute books at the clerks' table for review, reminded the court of the upcoming Presbytery Report to Synod, and issued a call for papers, after which none were received.

Recommendation 1 was seconded and passed.<sup>1</sup>

Recommendation 2 was seconded and passed.<sup>2</sup>

Recommendation 3 was seconded and passed.<sup>3</sup>

Recommendation 4 was seconded<sup>4</sup>, after which a substitute motion was offered and seconded. Mr. Kuehner then withdrew his motion and the substitute motion was passed.<sup>5</sup>

Recommendation 5 was seconded and passed.<sup>6</sup>

Recommendation 6 was seconded and passed.<sup>7</sup>

Recommendation 7 was seconded and passed.<sup>8</sup>

Recommendation 8 was seconded and passed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> That presbytery appoint Mr. Pockras and Mr. Hughes as parliamentarians for this meeting, with Mr. Rhoda and Mr. Evans serving as alternates.

<sup>2</sup> That presbytery instruct the nominating committee to determine the congregations to be visited this year.

<sup>3</sup> That presbytery instruct its clerks to accept signed delegate certificates in hard copy or scanned electronic format.

<sup>4</sup> That presbytery refer Communications 18-01 and 18-02 to a judicial committee of three, appointed by the moderator, to (1) carefully review both documents, (2) confer separately with both parties by phone or in person, if possible, and (3) report back with its recommendation(s) before the end of this meeting.

<sup>5</sup> That presbytery deny Mr. Birn's complaint and return Communications 18-01 and 18-02 to their authors.

<sup>6</sup> That presbytery take up Communication 18-03 in connection with the SOCHEx report.

<sup>7</sup> That presbytery refer Papers 18-04, 18-06, and 18-08 to a judicial committee of three, appointed by the moderator, to consider their proposals and report back with a recommendation before the end of this meeting.

<sup>8</sup> That presbytery refer Paper 18-07 to a judicial committee of three, appointed by the moderator, to consider their proposals and report back with a recommendation before the end of this meeting.

<sup>9</sup> That presbytery adopt the proposed agenda for this meeting.

Recommendation 9 was seconded and passed.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4. OFFICER ELECTIONS**

Mr. Anderson was nominated to succeed Mr. McKenzie as moderator.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to close the nominations, after which Mr. Anderson was elected by the court and took the chair.

Mr. Kuehner was nominated to continue as clerk.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to close nominations, after which Mr. Kuehner was elected by the court.

Mr. Morton was nominated to serve as assistant clerk for this meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to close the nominations, after which Mr. Morton was elected by the court.

It was moved, seconded and passed that a three-man committee, appointed by the moderator, bring a recommendation concerning the dividing of the Assistant Clerk's current job description into two separate positions: one during presbytery meetings, and the other in between meetings.

#### **5. SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST**

Mr. Pockras shared a prayer request for Mr. Larry Bump, a retired ruling elder with significant health problems, who has recently contracted the flu.

Mr. Anderson appointed Mr. Kuehner to pray for Mr. Bump during the intercessory prayer time at the end of the session.

#### **6. AD INTERIM COMMISSION REPORT**

Mr. Andy McCracken presented the Ad Interim Commission Report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report, adopt the minutes, and spread them on the minutes of presbytery.

#### **7. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Magill presented the treasurer's report in Mr. Bishop's absence.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **8. INTER-CHURCH LIAISON REPORT**

Mr. Pockras made an explanatory comment upon the written report, in Mr. Cassell's absence.

Recommendation 1 was forwarded to the nominating committee.<sup>11</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **9. REPORT ON GUIDELINES FOR THE DELEGATES EMAIL LIST**

Mr. Keith Evans presented his report on guidelines for the delegates email list.

Recommendation 1 passed.<sup>12</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **10. CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT**

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<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> That presbytery appoint a new Inter-Church Liaison Officer at this meeting.

<sup>12</sup> That (1) Only official Presbytery communication may be sent to delegates@glgpresbytery.org. (2) Official communications include the distribution of Presbytery documents, and announcements about Presbytery and Presbytery-related events. (3) It is not the intention of the "delegates" list to distribute prayer requests and other unofficial announcements that the GLG teaching and ruling elders may be interested in receiving.

Mr. Olivetti presented the Candidates and Credentials Committee Report.  
Recommendation 1 passed.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Olivetti provided delegates with a letter to the Midwest Presbytery concerning Mr. Brian Schwertley written by his committee, seeking presbytery's endorsement.

#### **11. MID-AFTERNOON BREAK**

Mr. Kuehner called upon God's name in prayer for Elder Larry Bump, recessing the court for its mid-afternoon break at 3:29 p.m.

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 3:46 p.m., after which the court sang Psalm 1A to the praise of God.

#### **12. SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST**

Mr. Koons shared a prayer request for Mr. LeFebvre, who is absent, conducting his aunt's funeral this week in the Chicago area.

#### **13. CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. Hart forward to be examined in Church History by Mr. Pockras.

Mr. Hart answered questions from Mr. Pockras and then from the floor of presbytery, after which a comment was received from the floor.

Mr. Hart's Church History Exam was unanimously sustained by a roll call vote.

#### **14. GRAND RAPIDS VISITATION REPORT**

Mr. Steve Rhoda presented the report of the Grand Rapids Visitation Committee and answered questions from the floor.

Discussion ensued from the floor regarding the congregation's use of the common cup in the Lord's Supper, during which time both Mr. Rhoda and Mr. Scott answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **15. GRAND RAPIDS CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Scott presented the congregational report for First RPC of Grand Rapids and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **16. BELLE CENTER CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Pockras presented the Belle Center congregational report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **17. BLOOMINGTON CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Holdeman presented the Bloomington congregational report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **18. CHRIST CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Koons presented the Christ Church RP congregational report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **19. COLUMBUS CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Andy McCracken presented the Columbus congregational report and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

#### **20. DURHAM CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Butterfield presented the congregational report for First RPC of Durham and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

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<sup>13</sup> That student examinations be conducted at this meeting of presbytery according to the schedule below.

**21. INTERCESSORY PRAYER & RECESS**

The presbytery concluded with a time of intercessory prayer for the congregations preceding, led by Mr. Holdeman, Mr. Carr, Mr. Webb, Mr. Work, Mr. McMahon, and Mr. McKenzie, who recessed the court in prayer at 5:39 p.m.

**BUSINESS SESSION #2**

*Thursday 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. (No Break)*

**22. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Anderson called the court to order, after which the presbytery sang Psalm 24C and the moderator reconvened the meeting at 7:08 p.m. by calling upon God's name in prayer.

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. McNamee forward for his Expository Sermon I preaching exam.

Mr. McNamee read Job 31:16-23, preached from the text on "God's Majesty: A Motive for Mercy", and called upon God's name in prayer, after which the presbytery sang Psalm 111A to the praise of God.

**23. CLERK'S MOTION**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to authorize the assistant clerk to take attendance visually in this and all remaining business sessions.

**24. ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Morton took attendance visually to ensure that a quorum was present.

**25. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Kuehner read the minutes from the previous business session, after which it was moved, seconded, and passed to approve them as amended.

**26. MODERATOR APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Anderson announced the following moderator appointments:

**REVIEW OF MINUTE BOOKS**

**Belle Center** — Rhoda, Butterfield  
**Bloomington** — Pockras, J. Hanson  
**Christ Church** — Holdeman, Dinkledine  
**Columbus** — S. Rhoda, Magill  
**Dayton** — K. Evans, C.J. Davis  
**Durham** — Hughes, W. McBurney  
**Elkhart** — McNamee, Nelson  
**Grand Rapids** — A. McCracken, D. Hanson  
**Hetherton** — Mann, Platt  
**Immanuel** — Scott, \_\_\_  
**Lafayette** — Olivetti, G. Evans  
**Marion** — Larson, \_\_\_

**Orlando** — Niess, F. Smith  
**Pageland** — Webb, Faris  
**Second RP** — Camery, Burchfield  
**Selma** — H.P. McCracken, Filson  
**Southfield** — N/A  
**Southside** — Knodel, \_\_\_  
**Sparta** — Hanson, Work  
**Sycamore** — Damerow, Baum  
**SWORP** — McKenzie, Archer  
**Terre Haute** — Odom, Gregory  
**Westminster** — Carr, Roberts

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Magill (Ch.)  
 Mr. Camery  
 Mr. Damerow

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Faris (Ch.)  
 Mr. S. Rhoda  
 Mr. Larson

**JUDICIAL COMMITTEE (18-04, 06, 08)**

Mr. McKenzie (Ch.)  
 Mr. Holdeman  
 Mr. Olivetti

**REVIEW CALL (Second RP)**

Mr. A. McCracken (Ch.)  
 Mr. Niess  
 Mr. Odom

**ASSISTANT CLERK COMMITTEE**

Mr. Johnston (Ch.)  
Mr. Baum  
Mr. Pockras

**RES. OF THANKS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Knodel (Ch.)  
Mr. Gregory

**TIME AND PLACE COMMITTEE**

Mr. H.P. McCracken (Ch.)  
Mr. Webb  
Mr. Filson

**JUDICIAL COMMITTEE (18-07)**

Mr. Mann (Ch.)  
Mr. K. Evans  
Mr. Hughes

**REVIEW CALL (Second RP)**

Mr. A. McCracken (Ch.)  
Mr. Niess  
Mr. Odom

**27. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti introduced a time of feedback for Mr. McNamee's sermon, after which comments were made from the floor.

Mr. McNamee's Expository I preaching exam was not sustained by roll call vote (25 sustain — 14 not sustain).

Mr. Olivetti announced that Mr. McNamee passed his English Bible Exam, after which the exam was sustained by voice vote.

Mr. McKenzie took the chair for Mr. Anderson, who presented the report of the committee to evaluate Mr. Battiato's Church History Paper, after which comments were received from the floor, and the exam was sustained by voice vote. Mr. Anderson returned to the chair.

Recommendation 3 was passed<sup>14</sup>, after which Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. Allen Blackwood forward to share a testimony concerning God's saving grace and calling in his life.

After doing so, Mr. Blackwood answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 4 was passed.<sup>15</sup>

Recommendation 6 was passed<sup>16</sup>, after which Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. Jay Dharan forward to share a testimony concerning God's saving grace and calling in his life.

After doing so, Mr. Dharan answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 8 was passed.<sup>17</sup>

**28. ELKHART CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Mann presented the Elkhart congregational report and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**29. INTERCESSORY PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT**

The presbytery concluded with a time of intercessory prayer for the Elkhart congregation, led by Mr. Scott, and a prayer for Mr. LeFebvre led by Mr. Mann, who adjourned the court in prayer at 9:04 p.m.

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<sup>14</sup> That Allen Blackwood be granted up to 10 minutes to share his testimony and sense of calling to the ministry with presbytery.

<sup>15</sup> That Allen Blackwood be received as a student under care of the presbytery.

<sup>16</sup> That Jay Dharan be granted up to 10 minutes to share his testimony with presbytery.

<sup>17</sup> That presbytery commit to helping the South Asia Commission by administering floor exams to Jay Dharan in the coming years.

## **BUSINESS SESSION #3**

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

### **30. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 8:31a.m., after which Psalm 143D was sung to the praise of God, and the moderator reconstituted the court in prayer.

### **31. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. Battiato forward for his Expository I preaching exam.

Mr. Battiato called upon God's name in prayer, read Romans 6:5-14, preached from the text on "Christ's and the Believer's Death unto Sin and Life unto God", and concluded in prayer, after which the presbytery sang Psalm 31B to the praise of God.

### **32. ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Morton took attendance visually to ensure that a quorum was present.

### **33. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Kuehner read the minutes from the previous business session, and it was moved, seconded, and passed to approve them as amended.

### **34. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti introduced a time of feedback for Mr. Battiato's sermon, after which comments were made from the floor. Mr. Battiato's Expository I preaching exam was unanimously sustained by a roll call vote.

### **35. SOUTHERN CHURCH EXTENSION (SOCHEX) COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. H.P. McCracken presented the report of the Southern Church Extension Committee (SOCHEX) and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to grant ten minutes for members of the Home Missions Committee of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies to speak on behalf of their written proposal (Communication 18-03) concerning a potential church planting opportunity in Birmingham, Alabama.

Mr. Bruce Backensto and Mr. Paul Martin addressed the court and answered questions from the floor.

Discussion ensued concerning Recommendation 1<sup>18</sup>, including comments from members of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.

### **36. MID-MORNING BREAK**

The court took its mid-morning break at 10:31a.m.

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:48a.m., after which the court sang Psalm 136A (Stanzas 1-2) to the praise of God.

### **37. SOUTHERN CHURCH EXTENSION (SOCHEX) COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Following additional debate on Recommendation 1, it was moved, seconded, and passed by two thirds majority vote to call the previous question, after which Recommendation 1 failed.

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<sup>18</sup> That we thank POA for their willingness to serve but return their request and wait for clearer leading that church planting work in Birmingham should proceed.

It was moved and seconded to amend Recommendation 2<sup>19</sup> so as to strike the words “petition Synod to”. The proposed amendment was then discussed and eventually failed. Recommendation 2 passed.

It was moved, seconded, and passed that the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery welcome the immediate efforts of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies’ Home Missions Committee.

Recommendations 3<sup>20</sup> and 4<sup>21</sup> (from the SOCHEX Addendum) were laid on the table until after the presentation of the Northern Church Extension (NOCHEX) COMMITTEE Report.

### **38. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. McNamee forward to receive his personal godliness exam from Mr. Butterfield.

Mr. McNamee answered questions from Mr. Butterfield and then from the floor of presbytery, after which further comments were received from the floor.

Mr. McNamee’s personal godliness exam was unanimously sustained by a roll call vote.

### **39. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to enter into executive session to discuss Recommendation 8 from the Candidates and Credentials Report.<sup>22</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to leave executive session.

### **40. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to extend the time for five minutes to vote on Recommendation 8. Recommendation 8 was passed without dissent.

### **41. LUNCH BREAK**

Mr. Olivetti called upon God’s name in prayer, recessing the court for lunch at 12:36 p.m.

## **BUSINESS SESSION #4**

*Friday 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. (Break @ 3:30p)*

### **42. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., after which the court sang Psalm 36B to the praise of God, and the moderator reconvened the meeting by calling upon God’s name in prayer.

### **43. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. Hart forward for his Expository Sermon II preaching exam.

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<sup>19</sup> That the GLGP petition Synod to allow the POA to lead church planting efforts in Birmingham with the expectation that the POA would take full responsibility to bring the congregation to maturity. At such a time, the Birmingham work would be enfolded back into the GLGP. Such maturity would mean that the congregation would be defined by the congregation there meeting the following requirements: • The congregation is fully organized (not Mission Church status). • There are at least 2 resident ruling elders and no provisional elders. • There is a resident installed pastor. • The congregation is fully self-supporting (no longer receiving HMB reducing aid, presbytery subsidies, etc.).

<sup>20</sup> That Presbytery establish the SOCHEX Existing Churches Fund.

<sup>21</sup> That Presbytery give \$10,000 to this fund.

<sup>22</sup> That presbytery adopt the letter regarding Brian Schwertley written by the Candidates and Credentials Committee to the C&CC of the Midwest Presbytery.



Mr. Hart called upon God's name in prayer, read Isaiah 43:8-13, preached from the text on "Witnessing to the Blind", and concluded in prayer, after which the presbytery sang Psalm 71C to the praise of God.

#### **44. ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Morton took visual attendance, ensuring that a quorum was present.

#### **45. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Kuehner read the minutes from the previous business session, and it was moved, seconded, and passed to approve them as read.

#### **46. PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Scott introduced two visitors from Grand Rapids: RPCNA ministers, Rev. Namsik Yang and theological student, Mr. Hakryang Seo of Grace Presbyterian Church, Seoul, South Korea.

Mr. Holdeman introduced new delegate, Elder C.J. Davis of Bloomington RPC.

#### **47. LAST CALL FOR PAPERS**

Mr. Kuehner issued the last call for papers, at which time no papers were submitted.

#### **48. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti introduced a time of feedback for Mr. Hart's sermon, after which comments were made from the floor.

Mr. Hart's Expository II preaching exam was unanimously sustained by a roll call vote.

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. McNamee forward to receive his Systematics and Distinctives I exam from Mr. Mann.

Mr. McNamee answered questions from Mr. Mann and then from the floor of presbytery, after which further comments were received from the floor.

Mr. McNamee's Systematics and Distinctives I exam was unanimously sustained by a roll call vote.

The court recessed for its mid-afternoon break at 3:17p.m. and resumed the meeting at 3:33 p.m. with the singing of Psalm 145C to the praise of God.

Mr. Olivetti invited Mr. Hart forward to receive his Systematics and Distinctives II exam from Mr. Keith Evans.

Mr. Hart answered questions from Mr. Evans and then from the floor of presbytery, after which further comments were received from the floor.

Mr. Hart's Systematics and Distinctives II exam was unanimously sustained by a roll call vote.

Mr. Hart's licensure to receive a call was then unanimously sustained by a roll call vote, after which he was invited forward to affirm and sign the queries.

Mr. Prutow called upon God's name in prayer, solemnly licensing Mr. Hart to receive a call in the name of Jesus Christ, the only Head and King of His Church.

Mr. Faris issued a brief charge to Mr. Hart, after which Mr. Andy McCracken indicated his committee's recommendation that presbytery pass the call from Second RPC of Indianapolis to Mr. Hart.

The call was approved by a unanimous voice vote, after which it was given to Mr. Hart, who indicated his intention to accept the call.

#### **49. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to enter executive session to discuss Recommendation 2 from the Candidates and Credentials Report.<sup>23</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to leave executive session.

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<sup>23</sup> That Mr. Andre Pickens' exams to be received into our presbytery be conducted according to the schedule below.

**50. DINNER BREAK**

The court recessed for dinner at 5:54p.m.

**BUSINESS SESSION #5**

*Friday 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. (No Break)*

**51. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Anderson called the court to order, after which Psalm 113A was sung to the praise of God, and the moderator reconvened the meeting by calling upon God's name in prayer.

**52. ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Morton took the roll visually, ensuring that a quorum was present.

**53. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Kuehner read the minutes from the previous business session, and it was moved, seconded, and passed to approve them as amended.

**54. CLERK'S MOTION**

It was moved, seconded, and passed that members of the C.Y.P.U. leadership team be granted privileges of the floor during the Presbytery Youth Report.

**55. PRESBYTERY YOUTH REPORT - C.Y.P.U.**

Mr. Keith Evans presented the Presbytery Youth Report, including a report from the C.Y.P.U. Leadership Team, after which Mr. Larsen addressed the court.

The court rose in a standing ovation, expressing its appreciate for Mr. Evans' faithful service as Youth Secretary. It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**56. YOUTH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE OF SYNOD REPORT**

Mr. Larson presented an oral report on behalf of the Youth Ministry Committee of Synod and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**57. COVFAMIKOI CONFERENCE REPORT**

Mr. Baum presented the Covfamikoi Conference Report and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**58. SHEPHERDING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Smith presented the Shepherding Committee Report and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report.

**59. GENEVA COLLEGE BOARD OF CORPORATORS REPORT**

Mr. Pockras presented the Geneva College Board of Corporators Report and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**60. CHURCH OFFICER ELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Pockras presented a brief oral progress report on behalf of the Church Officer Election Committee.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the oral report.

**61. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti brought Recommendation 2 of the Candidates and Credentials Committee Report before the court.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> That Andre Pickens' exams to be received into our presbytery be conducted according to the schedule below.

Recommendation 2 passed.

## **62. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to enter executive session in order to conduct Mr. Pickens' personal godliness exam.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to leave executive session.

## **63. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to extend the time for fifteen minutes.

It was moved, seconded, and passed by two thirds majority to lay Mr. Pickens' personal godliness exam on the table.

It was moved, seconded, and passed by two thirds majority to call the previous question.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to appoint C&CC, Selma Session, Selma Committee to discuss a way to establish a relationship between Mr. Pickens and Selma RPCNA and report back with a recommendation before the end of this meeting.

## **64. PRAYER OF ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adjourn the court, after which Mr. Camery adjourned the court in prayer at 9:27 p.m.

# **BUSINESS SESSION #6**

*Saturday 8:30 a.m. - Noon (Break @ 10:15a)*

## **65. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Anderson called the court to order at 8:36 a.m., after which Psalm 93A was sung to the praise of God, and the moderator reconstituted the court by calling upon God's name in prayer.

## **66. ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Morton took the roll visually, ensuring that a quorum was present.

## **67. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Kuehner read the minutes from the previous business session, after which it was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes as amended.

## **68. NORTHERN CHURCH EXTENSION (NOCHEX) COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Andy McCracken presented the NOCHEX report, introduced Mr. Trey Cranford of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

## **69. SOUTHERN CHURCH EXTENSION (SOCHEX) COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. H.P. McCracken brought before the court Recommendation 3 (from the SOCHEX Addendum)<sup>25</sup>, after which questions and comments were received from the floor.

Recommendation 4 (from the SOCHEX Addendum) was referred to the finance committee.<sup>26</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

## **70. HOME MISSION BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Mr. Andy McCracken presented the Home Mission Board Representative Report and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

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<sup>25</sup> That Presbytery establish the SOCHEX Existing Churches Fund.

<sup>26</sup> That Presbytery give \$10,000 to this fund.

**71. SPARTA CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Magill presented the Sparta congregational report and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 1 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>27</sup>

Recommendation 2 was seconded and passed.<sup>28</sup>

Recommendation 3 (from the Sparta Addendum) was seconded, passed, and referred to the finance committee.<sup>29</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**72. TIME & PLACE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. H.P. McCracken presented the Time and Place Committee Report and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 1 passed.<sup>30</sup>

Recommendation 2 passed.<sup>31</sup>

**73. PAPER 18-05**

Mr. Pockras addressed the court concerning Paper 18-05, after which discussion ensued from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to endorse the paper and forward it to Synod.

**74. ATLANTA OVERSIGHT COMMISSION REPORT**

Mr. McKenzie took the chair in place of Mr. Anderson, who presented the Atlanta Oversight Commission Report and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 1 passed<sup>32</sup>, after which Mr. Smith addressed the court concerning the work in Atlanta and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendations 2<sup>33</sup> and 3<sup>34</sup> were referred to the nominating committee.

Recommendation 4 was referred to the finance committee.<sup>35</sup>

Recommendation 5 passed.<sup>36</sup>

Mr. Smith was excused from voting on the approval of this report, at his request.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report, after which Mr. Anderson returned to the chair.

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<sup>27</sup> That Keith Magill be reappointed provisional moderator of Sparta RPC.

<sup>28</sup> That Joshua Hall be allowed to participate in the Travel Fund for this meeting of Presbytery.

<sup>29</sup> That Presbytery endorse the Sparta Session's request to the Trustees of Synod that the remaining funds originally designated for new work in St. Louis and Southern Illinois by the Oakdale RPC be granted to the Sparta congregation to be used exclusively for capital investments in the congregation's property in Sparta.

<sup>30</sup> That the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery meet on May 11 at Southside RPC of Indianapolis, to conduct Mr. Joel Hart's ordination exams and other business.

<sup>31</sup> That the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery meet for its annual Spring meeting on February 28 — March 2 at Orlando RPC.

<sup>32</sup> That Presbytery give Dr. Smith up to 10 minutes to address the court and answer any questions.

<sup>33</sup> That Presbytery reappoint the Atlanta Commission until 2019 spring meeting of Presbytery.

<sup>34</sup> That Presbytery receive Erich Baum's resignation from this Commission at the end of this meeting and add a presbyter to the Commission.

<sup>35</sup> That Presbytery provide \$2,000 for the Atlanta Commission to accomplish its work.

<sup>36</sup> That the Atlanta Commission Minutes be spread on Presbytery's Minutes.

**75. NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT — PRELIMINARY DRAFT**

The nominating committee distributed a preliminary draft of its report to the court along with several points of clarification.

**76. DAYTON TEMPORARY GOVERNMENT BODY (TGB) REPORT**

Mr. McNamee presented the Dayton TGB report and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 1 was passed.<sup>37</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report.

**77. MID-MORNING BREAK**

The court recessed for its mid-morning break at 10:29 a.m.

The moderator reconvened the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

**78. REPORT OF THE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS PAPERS 18-04, 18-06, and 18-08**

Mr. McKenzie presented the report of the judicial committee to address Papers 18-01 and 18-02, after which questions and comments were received from the floor.

Recommendation 1 passed.<sup>38</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed by two thirds majority (20-10) to call the previous question.

The recommendation from Paper 18-06 failed.<sup>39</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to return Paper 18-06 to its author with thanks.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**79. REPORT OF THE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS PAPER 18-07**

Mr. Mann addressed the court regarding Paper 18-07, after which questions and comments were received from the floor.

Recommendation 1 passed.<sup>40</sup>

Recommendation 2 passed.<sup>41</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report.

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<sup>37</sup> That presbytery reduce the Dayton Reformed Presbyterian Mission Church to a Preaching Station and appoint the current TGB members to be an oversight committee for up to six months. After the six months, or anytime before that if it should appear necessary, the committee shall re-evaluate and report either to Presbytery or its Ad Interim Commission to decide whether to re-erect a Mission Church, to maintain as a preaching station, to reduce further to an exploratory work, or to close the work.

<sup>38</sup> That presbytery return Paper 18-04 and Paper 18-08 to their respective authors with thanks, and then vote on the recommendation from Paper 18-06.

<sup>39</sup> That presbytery appoint a five-man study committee: (a) to study the phrase “the system of doctrine and the manner of worship” in ordination query four, and the phrase “no divisive 1 courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted” 2 in ordination query nine; and (b) to provide guidelines for upholding these standards in both the examination of candidates and the exercise of personal exceptions as ordained officers.

<sup>40</sup> That Presbytery return Paper 18-07 to its author.

<sup>41</sup> That the GLG Presbytery communicate with Synod’s procedural committee (the committee charged with leading Synod through hearing the Hemphill appeal) our desire for an efficient and streamlined procedure for hearing the appeal, and to call for a significant season of prayer (such as: 1 hour) prior to the proceedings.

**80. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

Mr. Olivetti addressed the court regarding Mr. Pickens' ongoing relationship to the Selma congregation, as discussed by a committee consisting of the Selma Committee, the Candidates and Credentials Committee, and members of the Selma session.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to table the remainder of Mr. Pickens' exams.

Mr. Olivetti continued to address the court regarding this matter, sharing the committee's initial thoughts and conclusions.

Recommendation 9 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>42</sup>

Recommendation 10 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>43</sup>

Recommendation 11 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>44</sup>

Recommendation 12 passed.<sup>45</sup>

Recommendation 13 passed.<sup>46</sup>

Recommendation 14 passed.<sup>47</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report.

**81. SELMA COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Niess presented the Selma Committee Report.

The recommendations of the report were retracted, after which Mr. Niess presented an updated set of recommendations.

Recommendation 1 passed.<sup>48</sup>

Recommendation 2 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>49</sup>

Recommendation 3 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>50</sup>

Recommendation 4 was referred to the nominating committee.<sup>51</sup>

Recommendation 5 was referred to the finance committee.<sup>52</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**82. NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT — FINAL**

Mr. Faris presented the final version of the Nominating Committee Report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed, to adopt the report.

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<sup>42</sup> That Jonathan Schaeffer be nominated to this committee.

<sup>43</sup> That Adam Niess be nominated to this committee.

<sup>44</sup> That Rich Holdeman's term on this committee be renewed.

<sup>45</sup> We recommend the following status changes: (1) That George Gregory's status be "active." (2) That Rich Johnston's status be changed to "retired." (3) That Keith Magill's status be changed to "retired." (4) That Godfrey Franklin's status be changed to "inactive."

<sup>46</sup> That Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan's credentials be transferred to the South Asia Commission of Synod.

<sup>47</sup> That Mr. Cassell's licensure to receive a call be extended for five years.

<sup>48</sup> That the Selma Committee be continued for another year.

<sup>49</sup> That Jerry O'Neill be reappointed as provisional moderator of the Selma session.

<sup>50</sup> That Adam Niess be reappointed a provisional elder on the Selma session.

<sup>51</sup> That Michael LeFebvre be added to the Selma Committee.

<sup>52</sup> That presbytery designate \$3,000 for the work of the Selma Committee.

**83. REPORT ON SESSION MINUTE BOOKS**

Mr. Morton reported the results of the session and TGB minute book review, indicating that nothing in the minutes was found contrary to the law and order of the church, after which Mr. Pockras asked (and was granted by common consent) permission to retain the Dayton TGB minute books until the status of the work is determined in six months. It was moved, seconded, and passed to receive the report.

**84. PAGELAND TEMPORARY GOVERNING BODY (TGB) REPORT**

Mr. Olivetti presented the Pageland TGB Report, and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 1 was referred to the finance committee.<sup>53</sup>

Recommendation 2 passed.<sup>54</sup>

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the report.

**85. CLERK'S MOTION**

It was moved, seconded, and passed that any remaining congregational and TGB reports be deferred until future meetings of this presbytery this year.

**86. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Magill presented the Finance Committee Report and answered questions from the floor.

Recommendation 1 was passed, thereby adopting the report.<sup>55</sup>

**87. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CLERK COMMITTEE**

Mr. Johnston presented the report of the committee tasked with reassessing the role of the assistant clerk, and answered questions from the floor.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to extend the time for finish remaining business.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to lay this report on the table and vote to elect an assistant clerk, according to the existing definition of that role.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to appoint Mr. Koons as assistant clerk.

**88. TIME & PLACE COMMITTEE REPORT — CONTINUED**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the Time and Place Report.

**89. MOTION FROM THE FLOOR**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to permit delegates to share matters occurring in executive session during this meeting with other members of their local session.

**90. RESOLUTION OF THANKS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Knodel presented the Resolution of Thanks Committee Report, after which it was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the report.

**91. READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Mr. Kuehner read the minutes from the previous business session, after which it was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes as amended.

**92. PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting.

The moderator, Mr. Anderson, called upon God's name in prayer for Mr. Pickens and for the Selma congregation, adjourning the court at 12:24 p.m., after which Psalm 133A was sung, to the praise of God.

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<sup>53</sup> That presbytery continue congregational aid in the amount of \$2000 for the 2018 fiscal year.

<sup>54</sup> That presbytery change [Pastor] Ian Wise's status to "stated supply."

<sup>55</sup> That the March 2018 Revised Budget and the 2019 Budget be adopted.

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Moderator of Presbytery

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Clerk of Presbytery



**ATTENDANCE**

Belle Center	Phil Pockras	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Bloomington	Richard Holdeman	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	C J Davis	x	x	x	p	p	x	
	Wes Archer	x	x	x	p	p	x	
	Ken de Jong-Alt					p		
	Wendell McBurney-Alt	P	P		p			
Christ Church	Michael LeFebvre	E	E	E	E	E	E	
	Dale Koons	p	P	P	P	P	P	
	Jason O'Neill-Alt	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Duane Judd-Alt	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Columbus	Andy McCracken	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Ed Schisler	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Gary McNamee	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Elkhart	Wade Mann	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Fikre Menbere	X	X	p	p	p	p	
First R P Durham	Kent Butterfield	P	P	P	P	P	E	
	Robert Burchfield	p	P	P	P	P	E	
First R P Grand Rapids	Craig Scott	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Hetherton	Ray Morton	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Immanuel	Jared Olivetti	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	David Carr	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Ben Larson	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Lafayette	Keith Evans	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Adam Niess	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Jeff Kessler	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Ken Nelson	p	P	P	P	P	P	
	Dan Webb	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Marion	Jason Camery	p	p	p	p	p	p	
Orlando	H P McCracken	p	p	p	p	p	p	
Second Indianapolis	James Faris	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Dean Filson	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Jeff Platt	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Russ Pulliam-Alt							
	Richard Blankenship-alt							
Selma	George Evans	p	p	p	p	p	p	

Southfield	Adam Kuehner	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Jon Hughes	p	p	p	p	p	p	
Southside Indianapolis	David Hanson	p	p	p	p	p	E	
	Stanley McKenzie	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Erich Baum	p	p	p	p	p	E	
	John Hanson	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Jerry Porter							
Southwest Ohio	Dick Knodeel	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Scott Damerow	p	p	p	p	p	p	
Sparta	Keith Magill	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	James Odom	p	p	p	p	p	E	
Sycamore	Shawn Anderson	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Tom Dinkledine	p	p	p	p	p	p	
Westminster	Steve Rhoda	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	James Ritchart	E	E	P	P	P	P	
Dayton Mission								
Pageland Mission	Ian Wise	E	E	E	E	E	E	
Terre Haute Mission	Bill Roberts	p	p	p	p	p	E	
Active/w/o Pastorate	George Gregory	p	p	p	p	p	E	
	Frank Smith	E	E	P	P	P	P	
Retired	Gordon Keddie		P	P				
	Bob McCracken							
	Bob Morrow							
	Denny Prutow							
	Steven Work	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Rich Johnston	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	James McMahan	p	p	p	p	p	p	
	Ray Lanning				p	p	p	
	Dennis Prutow							



Marion	Jason Camery	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Orlando	H P McCracken	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Second Indianapolis	James Faris	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	Dean Filson	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	Jeff Platt	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Russ Pulliam-Alt								
	Richard Blakenship-alt								
Selma	George Evans	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southfield	Adam Kuehner	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Jon Hughes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southside Indianap.	David Hanson	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	Stanley McKenzie	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	Erich Baum	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	John Hanson	S		S	S	S	S	N	S
	Jerry Porter								
Southwest Ohio	Dick Knodeel	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Scott Damerow	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Sparta	Keith Magill	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	James Odom	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Sycamore	Shawn Anderson	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	Tom Dinkledine	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Westminster	Steve Rhoda	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	A
	James Ritchhart		S	S	S	S	S	A	S
Dayton Mission									
Pageland Mission	Ian Wise								
Terre Haute Mission	Bill Roberts	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
Active/w/o Pastorate	George Gregory	S	S	S	S	S	S	N	S
	Frank Smith	S	A	A	S	S	S	A	A
Retired	Gordon Keddie				S				
	Bob McCracken								
	Bob Morrow								
	Denny Prutow				S				
	Steven Work	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Rich Johnston	S	S	A	A	S	S	S	S
	James McMahan	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Ray Lanning								

Revised — March 1, 2018

# The Clerk's Report

## 2018 Spring Meeting — Indianapolis, IN

Dear Fathers & Brethren,

Since my last report in June of 2017, I have performed the following tasks as the clerk of this presbytery:

- Signed and mailed an inquiry into the membership status of Carl and Kathy Donath to Perimeter Church (PCA) in John's Creek, Georgia, resulting in written confirmation of their family's current membership there.
- Signed and mailed a "certificate of transfer of membership" to Open Door Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia for Mr. Alex Kim, who had previously been listed on the roll of presbytery.
- Signed and mailed a "certificate of transfer of membership" to Dayspring Presbyterian Church in Forsyth, Georgia for Mrs. Dee Dee Shaw and her children, previously listed on the roll of presbytery.
- Forwarded photocopies of past minutes to the clerk of the Pacific Coast Presbytery (RPCNA), at his request, to confirm the official exam progress of Mr. Sam Ketcham while a student under care of our presbytery.
- Forwarded various communications from the Clerk of Synod to the GLG delegates email list.
- Prepared the agenda for this meeting and sent out various related communications to the presbytery via email.

### Delegate Certificates

Each session is presently required to mail a hard copy of their delegate certificate to Mr. Morton, our assistant clerk *pro tem*. As indicated in Recommendation #3 (below), I believe we should begin accepting signed delegate certificates in scanned electronic format as well. Our Synod clerks already do this. Insurance companies and civil courts have been recognizing scanned original signatures for years. It's high time we go digital.

### Communications

The last call for papers will be Friday March 2 after the mid-morning break. Thus far, we've received the following:

1. **Communication 18-01:** A letter of complaint against the Session of First RPC of Grand Rapids from former member and current attendee, Mr. Steve Birn. The letter is supplemented by an addendum, also from Mr. Birn.
2. **Communication 18-02:** A letter of explanation from the First RPC session regarding Mr. Birn's complaint, addressing both his original letter and the addendum.
3. **Communication 18-03:** A letter from the Home Missions Committee of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, outlining their proposal for a potential church planting effort in Birmingham, Alabama.
4. **Paper 18-04:** A paper from Mr. Knodel proposing that presbytery "consider a comity agreement" for men taking certain exceptions to ordination vows.
5. **Paper 18-05:** A paper from Mr. Pockras addressing an allegedly unjust action by the RPCNA in 1968 / 1972.
6. **Paper 18-06:** A paper from Mr. LeFebvre proposing a study committee on exceptions to our standards.
7. **Paper 18-07:** A paper from Mr. Carr relating to Synod's handling of the Hemphill Judicial Case.
8. **Paper 18-08:** A paper from Mr. Kuehner affirming our presbytery's current subscription policy.

### Recommendations

1. That presbytery appoint Mr. Pockras and Mr. Hughes as parliamentarians for this meeting, with Mr. Rhoda and Mr. Evans serving as alternates.
2. That presbytery instruct the nominating committee to determine the congregations to be visited this year.
3. That presbytery instruct its clerks to accept signed delegate certificates in hard copy or scanned electronic format.
4. That presbytery refer Communications 18-01 and 18-02 to a judicial committee of three, appointed by the moderator, to (1) carefully review both documents, (2) confer separately with both parties by phone or in person, if possible, and (3) report back with its recommendation(s) before the end of this meeting.
5. That presbytery take up Communication 18-03 in connection with the SOCHEX report.
6. That presbytery refer Papers 18-04, 18-06, and 18-08 to a judicial committee of three, appointed by the moderator, to consider their proposals and report back with a recommendation before the end of this meeting.
7. That presbytery adopt the proposed agenda for this meeting.<sup>1</sup>
8. 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.<sup>2</sup>

*Every Blessing in Christ,*

Rev. Adam Kuehner, Clerk

<sup>1</sup> The proposed agenda includes time slots for Papers 18-05 and 18-07. Feel free to offer an amendment if you like.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Recommendation #4 does **not** grant *voting* privileges to GLG elders lacking written session certification.

## Complaint to Great Lakes Gulf Coast Presbytery

To the Presbytery:

### A. Introduction

My wife (Janna) and I have been believers for over 20 years. We are former members of First RP in Grand Rapids, having left in 2011 ultimately to join the Free Reformed Church also in Grand Rapids. We have a heartfelt faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and desire to be part of the bride of Christ. Unfortunately we have been denied our right to be part of the body for at least a period of six months by the First RP of Grand Rapids Session, which is the basis for this complaint.

### B. Statement of Facts

As previously stated we left First RP in 2011 for reasons that are not relevant here. We briefly joined a church in Wisconsin so we could be under the authority of elders while we searched for a new church. Ultimately we joined the Free Reformed Church (FRC) in Grand Rapids in 2012. We remained there until July 2017, with our papers being delivered to us in September 2017. At that time we handed our papers to First RP, which we had been visiting since March, with a request to join.

On December 14, 2017 Rev. Scott met with us in our home. He and the Session apparently had gone to the FRC to ask why we had left. At no time prior to this meeting had anyone in the First RP Session asked why we left that church. Rev. Scott informed me that at least some of the FRC Consistory believed I was “argumentative” and that we had left over “disagreements.” Additionally we were informed that we would not be allowed to join First RP unless we attended both morning and evening services. We were told that the Session would review their decision in six months.

I vigorously deny being “argumentative.” It is true that we disagreed with the Grand Rapids FRC Consistory on a divorce matter. I’m an attorney by trade and was hired to represent a friend and FRC member in a “separate maintenance” lawsuit filed by his wife. (In Michigan “separate maintenance” is a divorce without the right to re-marry) For the record, this is the first and only divorce case I’ve ever taken in 14 years of practicing law. I didn’t formally represent my client in church court, though my client had been placed under discipline by the Consistory, in my view unjustly. That decision is under appeal. The long and the short of it is that I stood for marriage and argued that absent adultery or physical abandonment scripture doesn’t allow for divorce. The Consistory disagreed.

In February 2017 we were visited by Dr. David Murray, then a pastor at the Grand Rapids FRC. I had invited Rev. Ray Lanning to join this meeting. During the course of the meeting Dr. Murray accused me of being a “miserable person” who “makes everyone around me miserable.” He then invited me to leave the FRC. Dr. Murray scheduled this meeting without the knowledge of the Consistory, though he later told them what had happened and apparently they approved. In any event, I felt that if the pastor didn’t want me around, no matter how unjust or outrageous his

demand, we should leave the FRC. If the Presbytery would like to confirm this story, I would invite you to contact Rev. Ray Lanning as he witnessed it.

### C. Law and Argument

We are appealing the decision of the First RP Session to deny us membership for at least a period of 6 months, if not ultimately altogether. As previously stated both my wife and I are long time believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the distinctives of the RPCNA. We desire to serve the Lord by being part of His church. We are being unjustly denied that right which belongs to all believers. We desire to be under the Biblical authority of the church and elders. Indeed, we need to be under the authority of the church and elders just like every other believer. We are being denied this right under scripture by the Session of the Grand Rapids Church.

The nature and task of the church is to gather, not scatter the sheep of Christ. Confession of Faith, XXV.I (p. A-86): "The catholic of universal church which is visible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof." Testimony, 25:2 (p. A-86): "It is the mission of the Church ... to gather into her fellowship those of every race and people who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord." Confession of Faith, XXV.III: "Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God; for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world." Larger Catechism, Q. 63: "The visible Church hath the privilege ... of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him." Janna and I are sheep, we are followers of Christ. To deny us membership in the Church is to scatter us, even if that denial is only for a period of time.

Strength of personal faith or degree of personal sanctification cannot be tests or requirements of church membership, since the faith of sincere Christians may be weak but genuine faith, the sanctification of all Christians is imperfect in this life, and both are, like assurance of grace and salvation, subject to change and variation. If these factors were made tests of church membership, then the requirements for church membership would be different in every case, and never the same for any two candidates for membership. Confession of Faith, XIV:III (p. A-45): "This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened ... " Confession of Faith, XIII.II: "This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part."

In other words, to require me to prove that I'm not "argumentative" is a test of personal sanctification that cannot be used to determine whether I am allowed to be a church member. My argumentativeness or lack thereof furthermore cannot be used as a test concerning my wife, who wasn't involved in the at issue divorce case nor was she invited to leave the FRC by David Murray. Her membership stands on its own and has been denied her due to a personal sanctification test on her husband that isn't allowed by the Confession.

Candidates for communicant membership should be examined by the session in constituted court. By implication, private inquiries or "background checks," and hearsay testimony from

private individuals cannot be made the basis for admitting or refusing to admit a candidate for church membership. Directory for Church Government, 1.4 (p. D-2): Candidates for communicant membership shall be examined by the session in constituted court. Any information attained by speaking to individual members of the FRC Consistory constitutes little more than hearsay.

The requirements of church membership must be based on Scripture, and they must be the same for all members. Testimony 21.15 (page A-89): "The Church must have membership requirements based on Scripture, to which every member gives his assent. Those who give such assent and their children are church members." The only requirement for church attendance is regularity. Attending Morning Worship each week is certainly a regular pattern of church attendance. Covenant of Communicant or Church Membership ("Queries," p. G-1): "To the end that you may grow in the Christian life, do you promise that you will diligently ...keep the Lord's Day, regularly attend the worship services, ...?" We would submit that we already keep the Lord's Day and regularly attend worship services each Sabbath. There is no scriptural basis upon which membership in the bride of Christ may be denied someone who does not come to two Sunday services, especially one who comes once each Sabbath. Scripture is silent on the number of services to be held on the Sabbath, as is the RPCNA Constitution and the Westminster Confession. This shouldn't be much of a surprise as there are numerous churches in the denomination which hold only one service on Sunday. To add a requirement that potential members attend two services also violates the principles of sola scriptura as scripture is silent on the matter.

To impose an unscriptural requirement for membership on anyone is a sin against that liberty of conscience granted to us in the gospel. Confession of Faith, XX.II (p. A-59): God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or beside it, if matters of faith or worship.

#### D. Conclusion

All my wife and I want is to be communicant members of the church. We are grieved by this denial as it means we aren't under the authority of the church which we so desire. Frankly all believers need to be under the authority of the church, myself especially included. One might say I'm opinionated but that's all the more reason why I should be subject to the authority of the church. The denial is unjust and that the six month waiting period is also unjust. Especially so for someone who has been a long time faithful member of the church who is furthermore not under discipline. To deny my wife membership because her husband is perceived as something negative based on hearsay is arguably more unjust. I respectfully ask the Presbytery to overturn the decision made by First RP and receive us into membership.

If you have any questions the easiest way to contact me is 616-498-8489. If you would like to email me, my address is [sbirn@bkvpc.com](mailto:sbirn@bkvpc.com)



Steven L. Birn

December 16, 2017



## Addendum to Complaint to Presbytery

To the Presbytery:

I am filing this addendum to my family's Complaint due to a January 16, 2018 letter received from the Grand Rapids Session denying us access to the means of grace via communion. (a copy of the letter is attached to this addendum) Their allegation is that Janna and I are not members of the visible church. However, the Westminster Confession Chapter 25, Article II states "The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; the house and family of God, through which men are ordinarily saved and union with which is essential to their best growth and service." As the Presbytery is aware we are seeking to transfer our membership from the Free Reformed Church to the Grand Rapids RP Church.

We were specifically denied a seat at the table on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2018. Because our transfer is not yet complete, we are still technically members of the FRC and thus members of the visible church. We were therefore unjustly denied a seat at the table. We are not under discipline at any church nor have we committed any offense that is worthy of church discipline. Please note that the FRC transfer papers declare my wife and I "sound in the faith and upright in walk." It was particularly troubling to see numerous visitors be allowed to participate while we were unjustly fenced off by the Session. I must note it was also troubling to see only 6 or 7 actual members of First RPC participate out of a total of around 15 participants.

The decision by the Grand Rapids church to deny my wife and I communion is an effective excommunication. That was never the intent of the FRC when they transferred our membership. Historically in the RPCNA people in the process of transferring from one church to another have been allowed to participate in communion, having made profession of faith and otherwise not being under discipline. The Confession itself speaks of the visible church being all those who profess the true religion. Certainly that would apply to people who have been members of this denomination in the past and who have never ceased being part of the visible church and are not under discipline. To suggest that we aren't members of the visible church is to deny our prior profession of faith both within the RPCNA and in other churches, to say nothing of the fact that we are technically still members of the FRC.<sup>1</sup>

It isn't just Janna and I who are being denied, it is our four covenant children as well. The covenant applies just as much to them as it does to us and they are being denied the covenant when their parents are being effectively excommunicated and kept out of church membership and communion. While obviously children don't participate in communion, they get to witness their parents participating in communion and in that they get to witness part of the covenant

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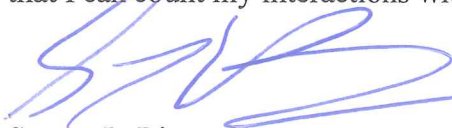
<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that at the December 2017 meeting with Rev. Scott he told my wife and I that our FRC papers indicated that we left over a "disagreement." As the Presbytery can see the papers say no such thing. I hadn't reviewed the FRC papers before the meeting, assuming that they were boilerplate because we were not under church discipline. I didn't have an opportunity to review the papers January. I have asked for clarification from First RPC but haven't received one. It is my view that their investigation was out of order in light what is clearly stated in the FRC papers and the fact that both denominations are NAPARC members. What is not clear is whether Rev. Scott was speaking on behalf of himself or the Session.

made between the Lord and themselves. This makes it all the more imperative that the Session's decision be reversed. It's bad enough denying membership to professing believers, it's even worse to deny the covenant children of those believers.

There is one final point in the Session's letter that I would like to address to the Presbytery. They wrote that this six month "initial period" was so we could "get to know you and you us." The letter was the first that I heard their arbitrary period defined in this way. I began attending First RPC when I moved to Grand Rapids in 2003 when the church was ARP, my wife began attending with her brother the following year. Janna and I were married in this church in 2006, three of our covenant children were baptized in this church in 2007, 2009 and 2010. It is a church that even after we left we never stopped praying for and loving. We have enjoyed rekindling old friendships and making new ones in the last 10 months. We believe in the distinctives of the RPCNA, specifically a capella psalm singing. We believe in the Westminster Confession. In short, we are back home where we belong.

If it is the contention that the Session doesn't know us it isn't for lack of trying on our part. Rev. Rhoda is obviously not going to get to know anyone in Grand Rapids because he lives in Chicagoland. However, Rev. Scott has my cell phone number, my email address and we're friends on Facebook. By the time the Presbytery meets we will have attended the Grand Rapids Church for nearly a year, having started attending in March 2017. I can tell the Presbytery that with the exception of two interactions involving our membership, every communication I have had with Rev. Scott has been upon my initiation. If Rev. Scott feels he doesn't know Janna or I very well, it's because of his own lack of effort.

With a Congregation as small as the Grand Rapids Church there's really no excuse for a pastor not to take the time to get to know people who are attending. Especially those people who desire to join. I would submit that one year is more than enough time for a pastor to get to know potential members. We handed our transfer papers to the Grand Rapids church in September 2017. I would submit the Church has already had six months by the time of the Presbytery meeting to get to know us since we declared our intention to join with our Covenant children. Om fact. six months is more than enough time to get to know someone however I can tell you that I can count my interactions with Rev. Scott during this period on one hand.



Steven L. Birn  
January 24, 2018

## Free Reformed Church of Grand Rapids

950 BALL AVENUE NORTHEAST  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

### CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church of Grand Rapids hereby declares that the full communicant members:

**Steven Birn**

Born January 4, 1978; Baptism June 19, 1997 by Rev. Schwertley;  
Confession of Faith June 19, 1997  
Married May 27, 2006

Transferred to Grand Rapids Free Reformed March 1, 2012 from the Westminster  
RPCNA.

**Janna Lynn Birn (Jurries)**

Born November 29, 1982; Baptism January 23, 1983 by Rev. Joostens;  
Confession of Faith May 19, 2002  
Married May 27, 2006

Transferred to Grand Rapids Free Reformed March 1, 2012 from the Westminster  
RPCNA.

Have requested their transfer of membership certificate be sent to their home.

With their baptized children:

**Stuart Mark** born May 11, 2007; Baptism June 10, 2007 by Pastor Ray Lanning.


**Vivian Rosalind** born January 23, 2009; Baptism February 22, 2009 by Pastor Lanning.

**Henry Reagan** born May 17, 2010; Baptism June 6, 2010 by Pastor Lanning.

**Harold Coolidge** born May 23, 2011; Baptism June 26, 2011 by Pastor Lanning.

As far as is known to the Consistory brother and sister Birn are sound in the faith and upright in walk. We therefore commend the above-named brother and sister and their children to their current church. We request the Consistory to take them under their Christian guidance and supervision, permitting them to use the Holy Sacraments and whenever necessary to assist them by word and deed.

In the name of the Consistory,



Pastor Ian Macleod Chairman



Gerrit Kleyn Clerk

Approved in Consistory, August 22, 2017

**BOSCH KILLMAN**  
VANDERWAL, P.C.

Birn, Steve <[sbirn@smvpc.com](mailto:sbirn@smvpc.com)>

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## Greetings! / Rule for Admission to the Lord's Supper

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Stephen Rhoda <[smrhoda@mac.com](mailto:smrhoda@mac.com)>

Tue, Jan 16, 2018 at 9:43 PM

To: Steve Birn <[sbirn@bkvpc.com](mailto:sbirn@bkvpc.com)>

Cc: Craig Scott <[craig.scott1560@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:craig.scott1560@hotmail.co.uk)>

Dear Steve,

Greetings in Christ! Pastor Scott has relayed to me that you are looking for the RPCNA rules on admission to the Lord's Table. Attached to this email is a screen shot of the page of our constitution that contains the rule that currently precludes your admission. You will find it as #11 on the page. We hope that you will not feel singled out by the enforcement of this rule; we only endeavor to be faithful to the rules that we are bound to follow. We also look forward, the Lord willing, to when we can not only admit you to the Lord's Table, but do so by way of receiving you as a member of the congregation. To that end, we continue in our pastoral counsel to you to spend an initial period of time participating in the life of the congregation so that we can get to know you and you us, allowing for the best discernment as to whether First RPC, Grand Rapids, is the best place for you.

Also, please note that the Session believes it prudent to communicate with you hereafter by email only, as opposed to texting. As you may email us, please copy me or Pastor Scott, depending on who you are directly writing to. We will do the same as we respond. This will allow us to keep a good record of correspondence and hopefully will give you the assurance that you are being heard and answered by the full Session.


Otherwise, it was great to meet you, your wife, and children this past weekend! I really enjoyed the Lord's Day with you all, as you all welcomed me so warmly. Stay warm and safe through these winter months, and may God give us perseverance through to spring.

Blessings to you in Christ,

Steve Rhoda  
Clerk of Session  
First RPC, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Full RPCNA Constitution  
<http://rpcna.org/convictions>

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 **RPCNA Constitution, Chapter 3, Article 11 .pdf**  
321K

## DIRECTORY FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

with each other, as members of His body, the church.

10. The Lord's Supper is to be observed regularly, as often as the Session may decide. The elements are bread and wine, representing the body and blood of Christ, and the sacramental actions performed by the pastor signify His incarnation, His consecration to His saving work, His suffering and death upon the cross, and His offer of Himself as Savior. The actions of the communicants signify their acceptance of Christ, and their feeding upon Him, who is the Bread of Life, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

11. Only those who have been baptized and are communicant members in good standing in a true branch of Christ's visible church are to partake of the Lord's Supper. Persons whose manner of life is notably inconsistent with their Christian profession, or who are unknown to the Session in charge of the Table, are not to be invited to commune. Those who desire to commune, who are not members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, are to be interviewed by the elders as to their personal faith and commitment to Christ, their church membership and their Baptism. The church's practice of session-controlled Communion should be clearly explained to visitors, preferably by a carefully worded written statement, given out as people enter the service.

12. It is the privilege and duty of every member to partake of the Lord's Supper regularly and with careful preparation. The Session may appoint one or more preparatory services to assist the people in their preparation. Such Communion seasons are appropriate occasions for pastors from other congregations to be invited to preach the Word. The Covenant of Communicant Membership may be read and explained at one of the preparatory services.

13. In the observance of the Lord's Supper, the pastor should read the Scriptural basis for the sacrament from one of the Gospels, or I Corinthians 11. He should follow the general pattern in the following sections, although he may employ different language.

14. The pastor shall give instruction as to the institution, nature, and purpose of the Lord's Supper, drawing attention to the words of institution in I Corinthians 11:23-26.

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is to be observed until He comes again, in remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself which He offered upon the cross. The physical elements of bread and wine represent the body and blood of the Savior, and are received by true believers as signs and seals of all the benefits of His sacrifice. The Supper signifies and seals remission of sins, and nourishes our souls to grow in Christ, and is a bond and pledge of our union and communion with Him and with each other as members of His body, the church. It assures us that God is faithful to fulfill the promises of the Covenant of Grace, and it calls us to renewed commitment to obey and serve the Lord in gratitude for His salvation. Christ Himself is present by His Spirit in the Supper, to make it truly a means of grace to those who receive it in faith. Those who partake of the Supper do so in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was given, and His blood shed, for them. They rejoice in hope as they anticipate the completion of their redemption in that day when they will share in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

# First Reformed Presbyterian Church

Grand Rapids, MI

Dear Fathers & Brothers,

This letter is a brief explanation of our decision not to receive the Birn family immediately into membership at First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Grand Rapids.

The Birn's were members of First RP seven years ago. Those members of Session who were present during that time expressed concerns over Mr Birn's behavior. They recalled an attitude of being unsubmitive and argumentative. In 2011 a disagreement arose between Mr Birn and session. Session informed Mr Birn of their decision, which Mr Birn did not accept, behaving in such a way that resulted in an admonishment. The Birn family then immediately transferred to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wisconsin (WPCUS).

During 2017 the Birn's began to attend the morning services of First RP. In September 2017 the Birn's applied for membership and handed in their membership papers from the Free Reformed Churches (Grand Rapids) to the session. The session enquired to the FRC concerning 1) the nature of the membership paper and 2) their assessment of the Birn's. The session of FRC appointed Pastor Macleod to communicate verbally with a member of session regarding this enquiry. Mr Macleod informed us that Mr Birn had asked for his membership papers, requesting that they be sent to his home, which request the elders granted. Mr Macleod also informed us of an ongoing marital case involving members of the congregation. In this case friction had arisen between the elders and Mr Birn. Mr Macleod stated that while Mr Birn can at times be friendly; yet is often the source of contention when he is in disagreement with others.

With the above concerns about Mr Birn's past and present behavior the session made the decision not to receive the family immediately into membership. The session appointed Mr Scott to visit the Birn family to relay this decision and also query about the session's concerns. Mr Birn responded that while he does disagree with the FRC elders, he is not argumentative. Mr Scott encouraged the Birn's that if they still desired to pursue membership at First RP, then the session would review their decision in 6 months. In the meantime, he encouraged them to be more active in the life of the congregation. Three days later Mr Birn emailed a complaint to presbytery, handing a copy to Mr Scott at church just minutes prior to the start of the worship service.

Since the complaint the session has experienced further issues for concern. While we have endeavored to answer any request from Mr Birn, in each case he has shown little evidence that he is willing to submit and accept the counsel of the session. Regarding the Lord's Supper, we believe that Mr Birn is presently not a member of the visible church. This was confirmed by Mr Macleod. If, however, we are mistaken then all we needed was contact from the FRC elders to correct us. No communication was ever received. In light of this we informed Mr Birn that it is the RPCNA's position that admittance upon the Lord's Supper is not up to individual Christians, but by session controlled communion. Mr Birn then placed an addendum to his original complaint.

In conclusion, despite Mr Birn's claim that he desires to be under the authority of the local church, we see little evidence that he is willing to accept that authority or the counsel of elders as the vows of membership require. We believe Mr Birn needs to demonstrate that he both understands and is willing to accept the authority and counsel of elders before we would consider receiving him into membership. We would ask Presbytery to support our decision and our current course of ministry to the Birn family.

Respectfully submitted,

Session of First RP Church  
TE Craig Scott (Moderator)  
TE Stephen Rhoda (Provisional Elder & Clerk)  
RE Doug Nadeau (Sabbatical)

December 15, 2017

Greetings Co-Laborers,

Recently, Paul Martin, the Regional Home Missionary (RHM) of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA), visited Birmingham on two occasions, where he met with the families which had gathered monthly with Sam Ketcham for Bible study. Since his departure, the group has continued to meet and made special arrangements to enjoy Paul's ministry. Paul visited with the permission of SOCHEX on each occasion. Paul was also following up particularly with two families in the group, one he knew when ministering in the Pacific Coast Presbytery years ago and another led by a former member of Grace and Truth Mission Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The POA desires to see an RPCNA presbytery develop in the southeast, with congregations from Trinity in Maryland to Orlando in Florida, drawn from both the POA and the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (GL-G). At present, four RPCNA congregations exist in this region, plus three mission churches and one preaching station. Thus, if the POA worked in Birmingham through its RHM and Home Missions Committee (HMC), we would be taking a constructive step toward the creation of a new presbytery out of parts of the two existing presbyteries.

Part of Paul's job description, approved by the POA in 2016, includes helping the presbyteries adjacent to us in church planting. As a result, the HMC of the POA, which has oversight of Paul's work, was also involved in pre-approving his ministry in Birmingham. We encouraged Paul to meet with the Birmingham people to assess where they are with respect to the RPCNA. He is impressed by the quality of the families there and believes that there is real potential there, if God would be pleased to bless the efforts of helpers like Paul. Therefore, the Home Missions Committee of the POA at our most recent meeting unanimously encouraged Paul to talk with members of the Birmingham group to see if they would welcome the following initial plan for a viable ministry there. We present the plan to SOCHEX for your consideration, and for the committee to present it to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery's approval.

- 1) The HMC of the POA will oversee the work in Birmingham, in order to relieve the heavy burden presently carried by the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery in helping scattered groups of Reformed Presbyterians in the southeast.
- 2) RHM Paul Martin will be particularly responsible for the development of the work in Birmingham.
- 3) The HMC will work with the group in Birmingham to establish a bank account, to permit those in Birmingham who wish to contribute to the ministry expenses of a church plant in Birmingham to send their tithes to a central place.

- 4) Paul will go to Birmingham for nine days each month, from a Saturday through a Monday, so that he will be there for two consecutive Lord's Days.
- 5) Paul will work during his week in Birmingham to cultivate community among the families invested in seeing an RPC established. During his first trip to Birmingham, he will contact NAPARC denominations active there in keeping with the Comity Agreement.
- 6) The RHM will coordinate sending teaching elders who will lead worship on the Lord's Days when Paul is not on site. We will be glad for elders of the GL-G to join in this ministry. (For instance, the group has used Gordon Keddie's studies in their meetings and would welcome his ministry among them.)
- 7) The HMC will keep SOCHEX informed regularly about the development of the ministry in Birmingham.
- 8) In a year's time, a careful assessment of the ministry will be made by the HMC of the POA and plans made or adjusted accordingly.
- 9) If a congregation is eventually organized in Birmingham, it will be a member of the GL-G Presbytery, because it is within the usual boundaries of GL-G, unless a southern presbytery has been organized by that time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bruce Backensto, chairman  
Steven Bradley  
Thomas Reid, secretary  
Mark Sampson  
C. J. Williams



## A Comity Agreement regarding the “taking of exceptions” for Ordination Vows

by Richard E. Knodel, Jr.

Whereas significant disagreement arose at our last presbytery meeting, regarding the non-passage of candidate Sam Ketcham, because of disagreement over his stipulated “exceptions” involving differences between the original Westminster Standards and our current Standards, including our current Testimony – with Mr. Ketcham’s exceptions aligning with the original Westminster positions; and,

Whereas testimony was given at that time by current members in good standing, that they had been allowed such exceptions, and that the peace and unity of the church had not been disturbed by those exceptions, and that they still held to those positions; and,

Whereas the failed vote on Mr. Ketcham might signal great future disruption for both our Presbytery and Synod, on account of such disagreements, and

Whereas the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) has been involved in formal efforts to bring about a closer working relationship with its sister denominations around the world, and,

Whereas many of these churches hold to either originalist Westminster Standard positions, and/or differences with our RPCNA Testimony, which would imperil these ecumenical efforts,

Therefore, this paper would propose that Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery consider a “comity agreement” which would stipulate that the Presbytery would grant rising Candidates/Ordinands, and transferring Elders, automatic “exception/s,” should they be requested – to any and all constitutional disputations that *involving originalist Westminster Standard positions* subscribed by the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in earlier days – so that we might defend ourselves against all unnecessary sectarian disagreements and divisions, and show ourselves irenic to the minor constitutional changes we have adopted (in good faith in either the Westminster Standards or our Testimony) in our American branch of the church.

Dear brothers of Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery, RPCNA:

I request that this paper be forwarded to Synod, and it is my hope that it will receive Presbytery's endorsement. It concerns a matter from over forty-five years ago, but it remains an injustice that Synod needs to recognize and repent of. I am, brothers, with the highest respect, yours

In Jesus,

Phil Pockras

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Dear brothers of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America:

It is with the deepest respect and with the glory of God and the blessing upon this Synod that I submit this petition. In consultation with my son, Nathaniel, and relying upon research that he is doing, it has come to our attention that a grave injustice was done against the Rev. G. I. Williamson, Ruling Elder John Leland, and the Session of the former Park City (Wichita), Kansas RP Church in 1972. As well, the Synod of the RPCNA defied its own *Constitution* in these actions. We seek justice in this matter. First, some history:

The Synod of 1968 issued a statement of union upon which merger with the Associate Presbyterian Church of North America was undertaken, being consummated in 1969. One of its provisions (*Minutes of Synod* 1968, page 39) exempted incoming ordained officers of the Associate Presbyterian Church from the RPCNA's prohibitions on tobacco use, although individuals ordained after the merger were not to be exempted.

Paper 1972-1 to the Synod of 1972 (*Minutes of 1972*, pages 94-97) discussed the issue of tobacco use. This paper originated in the Session of the Park City congregation, of which Mr. Williamson was the pastor, because one of the ruling elders (unnamed in the report to Synod, although named as Mr. John Leland on page 107 of the Park City Session Minutes) found himself unable to break a tobacco habit. Observing that Synod had permitted an exception to church law for former Associate Presbyterians, the paper denounced this exception as unbiblical (reference to Exodus 12:49) and as creating a double standard. After petitioning Midwest Presbytery and being informed of the impossibility of relief, Presbytery being unable to overturn a Synodical decision, the Session appealed to Synod for relief. In conclusion, the paper requested that Synod declare either (1. that tobacco use by church officers is sinful and prohibit it entirely, even for the former Associate Presbyterian church officers, or (2. that it be declared not sinful and thus permitted to all officers and licentiates; the petitioners asserting their willingness to abide by "a consistent single standard". The Judicial Committee holding (pages 99-101) that this exemption was a proper recognition of human weakness that ought to be continued, and this report being accepted by Synod, Mr. Williamson presented his intention (page 101) to leave the communion of the Church: he could submit to a no-tobacco standard that he personally believed to be an improper interpretation of the Bible, but seeing the committee-informed prohibition of tobacco *as a manmade law from which the church could grant dispensation*, he denounced this as a departure from a position of the Bible being the only rule of faith and practice, and an invasion of Christ's rights as the only King and Head of His Church. In response (page 102), Synod failed to address his concerns entirely and merely asked Mr. Williamson to reconsider his departure, exempted him from a requirement of the committee's response, and asked Midwest Presbytery to "allow him sufficient time to make necessary provision for his and his family's needs" should he "still fee[1] the same" following reconsideration.

Aside from notes on his departure, Mr. Williamson's only further appearance in the *Minutes* occurred in 1993 (page 62), in which the Pension Trustees were instructed to consider refunding him the money he had paid into the pension fund. Ultimately, this prohibition on tobacco remained until 1998. The Synod of 1997 (page 120) removed abstinence from "habit-forming narcotics" (a class that the Synod of 1940, pages 26-27, had deemed to include tobacco) from the ordination queries, and the Synod of 1998 (page 58) recognized the passage of these queries in overture.

For these reasons, we ask this Synod to take the following steps:

1. Synod recognize the correctness of the argument made by the Rev. Gerald Irvin Williamson and others of the Park City Reformed Presbyterian Church in deeming unbiblical a total prohibition of tobacco to all ordained officers.
2. Synod acknowledge that its acts of 1968 and 1972 created a double standard, imposing one law on some members of the church and another on other members, in violation of Exodus 12:49, "one law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."
3. Synod acknowledge having sinned against (1) God in maintaining a double standard, (2) Mr. John Leland for penalizing his inability to comply with this double standard, and (3) Mr. Williamson for failing to address his arguments biblically and deeming them merely a feeling, rather than an argument from the Church's only rule for faith and practice.
4. Synod seek forgiveness from God, from Mr. Williamson, and from Mr. Leland for these sins;
5. Synod direct the Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to Mr. Williamson, and to Mr. Leland or his descendants, should reasonable inquiry ascertain his address.

Respectfully Submitted,

Philip H. Pockras  
Minister, Belle Center, Ohio, Reformed Presbyterian Church

## ON "TAKING EXCEPTIONS" AND THE ORDINATION VOWS

Fathers and Brothers of the GLGP,

I want to suggest an alternative to the "Comity Agreement" proposed to this meeting of presbytery by Mr. Knodel. His recommendation has several attractive features. After all, who can argue with the goal to improve "comity" among reformed churches? But his proposal is, I believe, addressed to the wrong court.

We are required to interpret the *WCF* by the *RPT* at all points where they differ (*RPT*, intro, §12). Mr. Knodel's recommendation is that the GLGP—at the presbytery level—grant automatic exceptions where the *RPT* disputes the *WCF*. But presbytery does not have the authority to reverse the order of priority established by synod. If RP distinctives are to be suspended in ordination exams, synod must grant that authority. Mr. Knodel's proposal is, it seems to me, out of order—at least in its present form.

As an alternate approach to the matter of "acceptable exceptions," I propose the following:

That presbytery appoint a five-man study committee: (a) to study the phrase "*the system of doctrine and the manner of worship*" in ordination query four,<sup>1</sup> and the phrase "*no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted*" in ordination query nine;<sup>2</sup> and (b) to provide guidelines for upholding these standards in both the examination of candidates and the exercise of personal exceptions as ordained officers.

With regard to ordination query four: we need to clarify which doctrines are "systemic" to our Reformed Presbyterian witness. This is not a new question, in principle. There is a long history of discussion about the phrase "system of doctrine" in presbyterian vows. A helpful summary of the issue was compiled from the writings of Charles Hodge into a 1936 article called, "What is the 'System of Doctrine'?"<sup>3</sup> In that article, Hodge explains the phrase and lists nineteen heads of theology which he regarded as constituting "the system of doctrine" of the *WCF*. We could learn from that kind of study, but we need further to apply it in the context of the RPCNA and her confessional standards.

After all, we are not enforcing the system of doctrine of the *WCF* alone. We vow to uphold "the system of doctrine and manner of worship set forth" in the *WCF* and the *RPT*, with the latter holding priority at points where the two documents differ. For example, some of us

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<sup>1</sup> "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?"

<sup>2</sup> "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?"

<sup>3</sup> *The Presbyterian Guardian* 2.9 (August 3, 1936); online at <http://www.pcahistory.org/documents/subscription/hodge.html>.

voted against Mr. Ketcham's theology exam last spring because he took exception to a key tenet of the RP witness on civil government (*RPT* 23.18)—a position deemed important enough by the church to reject a statement in the *WCF* (a portion of *WCF* 23.3). Is it correct to regard the distinctive RP witness on civil government as “systemic” to our *Testimony*? I would hope that a study committee could develop guidance to help presbyters wrestle with which exceptions are, indeed, “systemic” to the RP witness and which are “acceptable” to contradict. Such guidance could draw upon past material, like that from Charles Hodge, but with particular application to the RPCNA standards. (Again, unless a proposal like Mr. Knodel's is adopted *by synod*, the duty of presbytery is to ordain *WCF*-and-*RPT*-subscribing ministers, not *WCF*-subscribing ministers.)

Furthermore, query nine imposes protections for the church once men are ordained with “acceptable exceptions.” While query four only requires an officer to accept *system-level* doctrines in order *to be* ordained, query nine restricts him from “divisive courses” in *any* point of exception to “the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted.” That latter phrase is much broader than system-level doctrines.

What would constitute a “divisive course” of action in how “acceptable exceptions” are exercised? Is a minister only “divisive” when division and conflict actually occur? Or are there certain settings (e.g., preaching and sabbath school) where an ordained officer must not teach his idiosyncratic views, while in other settings (e.g., home studies and personal conversation) he might express them? Or is it primarily a matter of intention, so that as long as a minister *desires* the unity of the church as he preaches contrarian views, is he free from “divisiveness”? When an elder or pastor is ordained with “acceptable exceptions,” how is he to hold those exceptions without dividing congregants from the church's “solemnly adopted” teachings?

I share keenly Mr. Knodel's interest that the RPCNA more closely align with our reformed and presbyterian brethren. But setting aside our distinctives—especially by the unilateral action of one presbytery—is not a viable way to pursue that end. I therefore submit this alternative in hopes that it might help us address the matter of exceptions more fruitfully.

Respectfully,

Michael LeFebvre  
Christ Church RP  
Brownsburg, Indiana

February 22, 2018

## **Paper for Synod 2018 Repentance for actions regarding the appeal by Bruce Hemphill**

**Submitted by David J. Carr, Clerk of Session, Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette, IN**

**February 26, 2018**

Inasmuch as Synod 2017 did not settle the appeal of Bruce Hemphill regarding his trial in the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, the following response is offered. It consists of an outline of the history of this issue and an exposition of some of the errors and the consequences of Synod's actions, and a recommendation for Synod to respond to the situation.

I request that Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery appoint a committee to review, and modify where necessary, this paper for Presbytery endorsement and submission to the 2018 meeting of Synod.

### **Historical Outline**

- Bruce Hemphill (BH) presented his paper to Presbytery of the Alleghenies (PoA)
- PoA subsequently counseled BH, and conducted a trial resulting in a conviction and discipline
- BH appealed the conviction to Synod 2016
- Appeal was assigned to Judicial Committee to Consider Communication 16-4
- Synod 2017 deliberated on this issue for approximately 6 hours.
- "It was moved and seconded, that Bruce Hemphill's appeal, together with all records and papers of the case, be presented to the of Synod 2018 for adjudication according to the Book of Discipline 4.14(E-18). ... The motion carried." Minutes of Synod 2017, pg. 20
- "A motion was made and seconded: that the moderator appoint a five-man committee to clearly outline the procedural steps – in consultation with the parties- for the 2018 Synod to follow in hearing the appeal and to gather and distribute the records and papers in the case with sufficient time for Synod to review. The motion carried." Minutes, pg. 21
- "It was moved and seconded: that Synod confess our failure to the parties involved (Mr. Bruce Hemphill, PoA, Judicial Committee) to follow the proper procedure that we have agreed to in our Book of Discipline for hearing an appeal, and we publicly express our repentance and seek their forgiveness. The motion carried. " Minutes, pg. 21
- "The moderator expressed our repentance. Rev. Kyle Sims (visiting from Associate RPC), asked to pray for this Court; we were glad for him to do so." Minutes, pg. 21
- "Personal privilege was granted to Chairman Dennis Olson to formally grant forgiveness to the Court on behalf of the Judicial Committee on Communication 16-4." Minutes, pg. 28

### **Substantive Procedural Errors**

Because the grounds for the appeal by Bruce Hemphill have not been clearly stated and defended, the judicial process is being conducted on uncertain grounds. This is likely to produce an unjust verdict, which would leave a root of bitterness that would be difficult to extirpate.

Acceptable grounds for an appeal are: "irregularity in the proceedings; injustice or undue severity in the censure imposed; manifest prejudice or unfairness to the party on trial; admission of improper testimony or refusal to hear testimony that is important; or undue haste in reaching a decision before all the testimony has been heard." (RPCNA Constitution, Book of Discipline, page E-17) In a normal appeal process, one or more of the acceptable grounds for an appeal would be claimed and evidence cited from the record of the trial. The grounds for the appeal, not primarily the facts of the case, would be argued in the appellate court, which would then either sustain or invalidate the decision of the lower court. If this protocol had been followed, the appeal would have been processed in either Synod 2016 or 2017 and the matter settled.

The Book of Discipline also states: "If the decision of the lower court appears unjust and unwarranted, the higher court may itself try the case."(Paragraph 15, E-18) This is the course that Synod has decided to pursue, without this specific rationale.

Synod can act as an appellate court or a court of original jurisdiction. It should be self-consciously clear about its role in this case. If Synod wanted to act as an appellate court, it would have insisted on proper form and procedure for an appeal. Since Synod has decided to judge the case as the original jurisdiction, it is setting aside the work of Presbytery of the Alleghenies. This is an unnecessary centralization of judicial power in the highest court of the Church, which Presbyterians should reserve for only the most extraordinary cases. In this case, PoA has the duty and responsibility to shepherd the people and flocks in its purview. That presbytery knows its constituency and how best to care for and protect them. Not having an intimate, personal knowledge of the people affected by this case, Synod is likely to unintentionally disturb the peace and prosperity of PoA.

However, at this juncture, all that Synod can do is to proceed with the trial at its next meeting. It must be careful to defend the truth of the Scripture, the validity of the subordinate standards of the RPCNA, and the harmony and unity of the Church. The LORD can show us how to accomplish all those objectives, if we seek Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

## Spiritual Consequences

My response to the actions of Synod 2017 is organized in the categories of Micah 6: 8, taken in the order as given in Scripture.

**He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?**

### Justice

Proverbs 3: 27, 28: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.

Justice to the parties of the original litigation was denied to the parties of the original litigation (BH and PoA) by the delay for one year. It was in the power of Synod to adjudicate and complete the process, based on the work of Synod's committee which was given the task of outlining the process for completing the case.

### Mercy

Mercy was denied to multiple parties by the manner in which the issue was handled at Synod 2017 and the consequences of its postponement until 2018. Towards the members of Synod, the lack of mercy mostly is visible in the diversion of time and energy from pastoral ministry to administrative functions and also wasted effort.

#### Mercy lacking towards Synod members

- Effort expended that was discarded:
  - Judicial Committee to Consider Communication 16-4
- Effort expended that should have been used more productively:
  - Synod 2017 deliberations should have been completed promptly and time made available for shepherding the Church.
- Additional effort required because of the inaction of Synod 2017:
  - Administrative Committee for 2018 Judicial Appeal
  - All Synod delegates required to study trial documents preparing for Synod 2018
  - Synod 2018 deliberations

#### Mercy lacking towards Bruce Hemphill

- Temporary disqualification from ministry in RPCNA extended another year
- Disciplinary status makes transfer to another denomination difficult

### Humility

In the confession of failure after Synod concluded its deliberations on this matter, the reason appended to the confession and request for forgiveness is, “our failure to the parties involved ... to follow the proper procedure...” Synod is bound by the Word of God and the Scriptural principle of doing its work decently and in order. Instead of completing the work that it set out to do, as authorized by the King and Head of the Church, Synod spent most of its time wrangling over procedural issues and neglected the weightier matters of justice and mercy. God is not honored when the technicalities are correct but the heart of the matter is neglected. Not only is this offensive to the Lord, but it dishonors Him before the watching world, both within and outside the Visible Church.

Genuine repentance should include 1) an acknowledgement of the specific offense to God and man, 2) an acknowledgement of the evil consequences to the offended party, 3) a resolve to not repeat the offense, and 4) a plea for mercy and forgiveness (cf. Luke 15:21). Essential elements of thorough repentance (points 2 & 3) are missing in Synod’s action, showing its inadequacy. Instead of forsaking the erroneous handling of the case, the errors were compounded by the delay and the unnecessary burden placed on all Synod delegates.

### Recommendation

The Lord is merciful and gracious to all who will acknowledge and forsake sin, casting all the burden of sin on the Savior who paid all the penalty on the Cross. And He will also guide us, individually and corporately, in the paths of righteousness, for His Name’s sake.

Recommendation: That before Synod takes up the Bruce Hemphill appeal this year, Synod devote a half-day to public humiliation, prayer, and fasting, for these purposes:

- a. Seeking forgiveness of God for not fulfilling our responsibility, to Him and the parties of the case, as a Court of His house
- b. Seeking forgiveness from God and men for wasted and misspent time, energy, and resources
- c. Seeking forgiveness of God for not accomplishing justice and mercy toward all the parties involved: Bruce Hemphill, PoA, Synod committees, delegates, and fraternal delegates
- d. Asking the Lord to give wisdom to handle the case properly

#### My attempt to count the time spent on the Bruce Hemphill appeal at Synod 2017

- **6:10 Total** by my approximate accounting
- June 28:
  - after memorials (~9:30) - 10:30 AM break (**60 minutes**);
  - 10:50 – approx. 11:30 (**40**) followed by clerk’s report...(11:55);
  - 2:45 – approx. 4:10, when Synod took up Communication 16-2 (**85**);
  - ~7:20 - 8:45 PM (**85**);
- June 29:
  - after sermon (~9:30) -10:30 AM (**60**);
  - 10:50 - ~11:30 AM (**40**)



February 26, 2018

## Paper 18-08

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

This paper addresses the issue of confessional subscription as discussed in Papers 18-04 and 18-06, with the goal of providing some additional background to the discussion and of reinforcing the relative adequacy of our existing policy as a presbytery.

In 1993, Elder Ray Stevenson of the Southfield congregation submitted a paper to presbytery (93-7) claiming that at least one member of his session had advocated a male-only diaconate in his public teaching. On April 15, 1994, Presbytery approved the following recommendations, as brought by committee chairman, Rev. Robert Henning: *(1) That Presbytery direct the pastor and members of the session, who have taught doctrine contrary to the law and order of the church in regard to women deacons, to repent of such teaching; (2) That the pastor and elders cease teaching such doctrine; (3) That, if they desire to pursue examination of the church's position on the matter of women deacons, they should do so through the courts of the church.*

Later that year, the Southfield session submitted another paper (94-3), in which two members of session sought to “appeal to Synod to exonerate us and to rebuke Presbytery for indulging in such Romanism.” After Synod’s decision to return the paper (94-5) to the lower court, a judicial commission of presbytery was appointed, once again chaired by Rev. Henning. According to the commission minutes, two members of the Southfield session essentially acknowledged that, *prior to the presbytery’s ruling*, they had publicly taught against women deacons, including at least one remark by the pastor from the pulpit, and another by an elder during a congregational election. Mr. Stevenson then “related that members of the Southfield Session, since the stated Spring meeting of Presbytery in 1993, had had opportunity, and even invitations to speak their opinions publicly on women in the diaconate, and that they had declined to do so.” In other words, the men had ceased teaching contrary to the standards.

On December 9, 1995, the judicial commission approved the following conclusions: **(1)** *That we repent, as a Commission on behalf of Presbytery, of the action toward members of the Southfield RP Church Session in adopting the report of the Committee to Deal with Paper 93-7, due to its haste and perceived discipline without trial. (2) That we commend the Southfield Session for responding positively to brotherly counsel by avoiding any appearance of divisiveness in their public teaching. (3) That we remind the Presbytery and Southfield Session of the need always to deal strictly in order, openness, truth, and love with one another, in order to dispel suspicions, unedifying church politics, and perceived “hidden agenda.” (4) That we encourage, again, the Southfield Session to pursue changes in the qualifications for the diaconate through proper means, as defined in the Directory for Church Government, if they still believe this warranted by Scripture. (5) That Presbytery petition Synod to clarify the extent and scope of membership Query 4 and ordination Query 9, when members or officers dissent from the doctrine and order of the church. We desire guidance on what constitutes a divisive course. (6) Upon agreement in regards to the foregoing conclusions, the Southfield Session has acceded to drop all charges preferred against Presbytery in this matter.*

It is unclear (at least to this author) why the commission felt the need to express repentance toward the Southfield session. Was there some deficiency in the tone of the original report addressing Paper 93-7? Did the report imply that the elders in question must repent of their *actual beliefs* and not merely of their *public teaching*? It is hard to say. In any event, the commission clearly reaffirms every elder’s duty to refrain from publicly teaching against the standards of the church. It also indicates a desire for further clarification from Synod regarding the extent to which elders must adhere to the church’s doctrinal standards. In 1997, the presbytery’s petition to Synod for this judicial interpretation (97-5) was returned to the lower court on the following grounds: *(1) Synod has requested that study on issues brought before Synod be completed as much as possible by the lower courts. This does not seem to be the case with this paper; and (2) There is no specific issue in this paper with which Synod may deal.*

Over the next ten years (1998-2008), our presbytery went on to spend hundreds of man-hours wading through a host of position papers, proposals, committee reports, heated dialogues, and divided votes. Notwithstanding this flood of controversy, our ark finally settled upon the existing policy of this presbytery, which essentially consists of The Three D’s:

1. **DISCLOSURE**: Students under care *must* inform the court of any personal exceptions to the standards of the church at each of the three phases of examination by presbytery (Licensure, Eligibility, Ordination).

2. **DELIBERATION**: Delegates must evaluate and determine whether or not a student's personal exceptions are sufficiently contrary to the RPCNA's "system of doctrine" as to prevent him from fulfilling his ordination vows in good conscience; and, on this basis, vote to 'sustain' or 'not sustain' his exam(s).
3. **DEFERENCE**: Ordained officers in the RPCNA must *never* publicly teach or preach against the standards of the church, even in areas where they may personally disagree. While they, at times, inform members of their personal adherence to an opposing view, they should not seek to draw inordinate attention to it. When preaching on a text related to their exception, they may describe common arguments for alternative viewpoints, but should always winsomely state the arguments for the church's position. At no point may they use their teaching ministry (pulpit, Bible studies, blog, etc.) to refute the church's position. Rather, they should respectfully defer to the standards of the church, reinforcing their solidarity with the denomination as a whole, regardless of disagreement on certain points.

This paper represents a peaceable plea to maintain the *status quo*, at least for the time being. Admittedly, our current system is not perfect. It sometimes leaves us with a sour taste in our mouths, or an acute sense of injustice. We all agree that it should be improved. Unfortunately, we often have very different ideas concerning *how* to improve it. After ten years (1998-2008) of wrangling over this issue, the current system remains our best option, unless or until we see evidence of greater unity on these matters. Surely we have more pressing issues to address between now and 2028!

**To my fathers and brethren who are concerned about the growing number of exceptions to our standards, I say this:** The current system preserves your right to vote against men who take exceptions which you deem contrary to the RPCNA's "system of doctrine". In the case of Mr. Ketcham, it enabled your voice to be heard loud and clear.

**To my fathers and brethren seeking a formal "comity agreement" for men who affirm the original Westminster Standards, I say this:** The current system is far from broken. DCG 3:II.D.4b (D-18) states that "Teaching elders who are members in good standing in denominations with whom we have fraternal relations who have expressed commitment to the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and who have been examined by a presbytery in the denomination may be candidates for a call." Rightly or wrongly, it would appear that many RPCNA elders define "the Reformed Presbyterian Church" more broadly, entertaining a strong sense of fraternal unity with our sister churches who share our name. At present, RPCNA congregations regularly call ministers and licentiates from Scotland and Ireland without any objection from their presbyteries. Examples could be multiplied. While the current system does not *guarantee* acceptance for men holding these views, it is *extremely rare* for them to be refused ordination in the RPCNA. Even Mr. Ketcham, whose experiences in our presbytery seem to have sparked much of the present controversy, was peaceably ordained and installed as pastor at Fresno RPC just last month. Additional examples, once again, could be multiplied. Given this trend, is a formal "comity agreement" really necessary?

**To all my fathers and brethren:** Our current policy and practice of confessional subscription took ten years to formulate. While imperfect, it has succeeded in preserving the rights of delegates with differing perspectives on subscription to make their voices heard. There is no compelling evidence that the current system is fundamentally broken. Updating a subscription policy is like replacing a roof. If you try to do it every other decade, you are eventually going to run out of resources. Ask yourself, honestly, "Do we really need to re-open this can of worms?"

**Recommendation:** That presbytery return Papers 18-04, 18-06, and 18-08 to their authors with gratitude for their labors.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam M. Kuehner  
Southfield, Michigan

The Ad Interim Commission for the last year has been made up of the Columbus Session plus Timothy Vincze of Southwest Ohio RPC. The Commission met eight times in constituted court this year and the following are a summary of the actions taken:

**May 9, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to appoint Mark Hart as assistant treasurer for Presbytery.
- It was moved, seconded, and passed to grant the RPC of Lafayette permission to call an additional teaching elder.

**May 14, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded and passed to certify Rev. Keith Magill to attend the meetings of Synod, June 28-30 at Indiana Wesleyan University.

**June 6, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the request of the Heatherton RPC to trade property with their neighbors. The trade involves an equal trade of land and no exchange of funds.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to return the pastor's call upon Daniel Hemken to the Hebron RPC in order to include an additional paragraph addressing the constitutional requirement to *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.* Furthermore, clarification should be made regarding payment of utilities for the manse.
- It was moved, seconded, and passed to certify the following for attendance at the 2017 meetings of Synod at IWU:  
George Gregory, Ray Lanning, Jim McMahon, Gordon Keddie, Robert Morrow  
Bill Roberts, Frank Smith, Steven Work

**July 10, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to pass on the pastoral call from College Hill Reformed Presbyterian Church to Andy McCracken.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved to pass on the pastoral call from Hebron Reformed Presbyterian Church to Daniel Hemken.

**August 7, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to declare the pulpit of Sparta, IL RPC vacant as of July 30, 2017.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved to appoint Keith Magill as provisional moderator for Sparta, IL RPC.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved at the request of the Sparta IL RPC, to appoint a special visitation committee consisting of Keith Magill and Jared Olivetti with a third elder to be selected by the two to advise the congregation as to its next steps and report to the Spring meeting of Presbytery.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved to transfer Daniel Hemken's ministerial credentials to the Midwest Presbytery.

**August 28, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to appoint as provisional elders until the next main meeting of presbytery Steve Rhoda and Chris Stockwell to the 1<sup>st</sup> RP Church in Grand Rapids, MI. At the time of the meeting a report will be given and presbytery will decide whether to continue the appointment.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the call to Adam Niess to the LaFayette, IN congregation as presented.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the request of Marion, IN RP Church to purchase the Westminster United Presbyterian Church building.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to instruct the candidates and credentials committee of the GLGP to transfer Sam Ketcham's ministerial credentials to the Pacific Coast Presbytery.

**November 20, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to declare the pastoral relationship dissolved between Adam Niess and Bloomington RPC as of December 18, 2017.
- It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the call to Matthew Filbert as a church planter from the TGB of the RP Mission Church, Dayton, Tennessee as amended.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved to appoint Ray Morton provisional assistant clerk for the Spring meeting of the GLG Presbytery and to grant him a \$250 honorarium.

**December 28, 2017**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to establish a commission for the installation of Adam Niess in Lafayette on February 2, 2018. Moderator of the commission will be Stan McKenzie with members George Gregory, Rich Holdeman, Wes Archer, and James Faris.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved to return the call on Joel Hart to Terre Haute since Joel has indicated that he declines.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved to return the call on Stan McKenzie to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies since Stan has indicated that he declines.
- It was moved, seconded, and approved that due to the complexity of the situation and having heard only one side of the story regarding the complaint from Steven Birn, the AIC defers action until the full meeting of presbytery in March 2018.

**January 15, 2018**

- It was moved, seconded, and approved to issue an edict for the installation of Adam Niess as teaching elder of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Lafayette.

**Recommendation:**

That the minutes of the Ad Interim Commission be spread on the minutes of Presbytery.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy McCracken, chairman

**GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY****BANK ACCOUNT BALANCE**

1/1/17 Through 12/31/17

**CHECKING ACCOUNT**

Deposits	\$ 46,919.39
Withdrawals	\$ (43,935.58)
Interest	\$ 1.23

OVERALL TOTAL	<u>\$ 2,985.04</u>
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Balance Jan 1, 2017	\$ 9,149.39
<u>Balance December 31, 2017</u>	<b><u>\$ 12,134.43</u></b>

**GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY**

1/1/17 Through 12/31/17

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		2017 Actual
100 - Assessments		
101	2017 Assessments	\$ 44,000.39
120 - From HMB		
123	H.M.B. Supplements - Reducing Aid	\$ 2,919.00
140 - Bank Interest		\$ 1.23
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$ 46,920.62</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>		
200 - Presbytery Meetings		
201	Annual Meeting	\$ 7,495.62
260 - Officer's Expenses		
261	Clerk Honorarium	\$ 1,500.00
262	Assistant Clerk Honorarium	\$ 500.00
265	Officer's Expense	\$ 164.96
266	Youth Ministry Secretary Honorarium	\$ 1,500.00
270 - Standing Committees & Commissions		
272	Candidates & Credentials	\$ 442.49
273	Southern Ch Ext Committee	\$ 775.24
275	Youth Ministry Secretary Expenses	\$ 293.08
300 - Congregational Visitions		
307	Grand Rapids Visitation	\$ 822.33
311	Orlando Visitation	\$ 758.86
400 - New Works		
403	Terre Haute	\$ 2,000.00
406	Pageland	\$ 2,000.00
500 - Seminary Student Aid		\$ 13,800.00
520 - Covfamikoi Family Conference		\$ 3,000.00
540 - Youth Work		\$ 1,500.00
550 - College Ministry		\$ 1,000.00
700 - HMB Aid Distribution		
703	Reducing Aid Supplement	\$ 2,919.00
800 - Special Committees & Commissions		
804	Terre Haute Commission	\$ 427.60
811	Atlanta Commission	\$ 3,036.35
900 - Miscellaneous		
901	Other - Bank Error	\$ 0.05
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$ 43,935.58</b>
<b>ANNUAL NET</b>		<b>\$ 2,985.04</b>
Balance Jan 1, 2017		\$ 9,149.39
Balance December 31, 2017		<b>\$ 12,134.43</b>

**Inter-Church Liaison Officer Report**

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY

02/28/2018

I would like to thank the Rev. Philip H. Pockras for being our fraternal delegate to the Ohio Presbytery's Spring Meeting of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), held at 11688 Mill Rd. Cincinnati OH 45240, on March 10-11, 2017 at Good Shepherd OPC pastored by the Rev. Chris Malamisuro. I have attached Pastor Pockras comprehensive report to this document.

We ask that fraternal delegates at this Presbytery meeting be welcomed and granted floor privileges to convey to us fraternal greetings from their Presbyteries.

As of this writing, I have received another email invitation from the [Ohio](#) Presbytery (OPC) for their spring meeting at Redeemer OPC, 22 South Fairfield Road in Beavercreek, OH on March 9-10, 2018. I have again asked the Rev. Philip H. Pockras to be our fraternal delegate at this meeting. And he has graciously consented.

***I would like to kindly request that the Presbytery appoint a new Inter-Church Liaison Officer at this Presbytery meeting.*** It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve these years.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Donald L. Cassell, Jr., Inter-Church Liaison Officer

## Report of Fraternal Delegate to the OPC Ohio Presbytery

Dear brothers:

At the request of our Interchurch Liaison man, RE Donald Cassell, I again attended the March 10, 2017, meeting of the OPC Ohio Presbytery, held at the Good Shepherd OPC meetinghouse in Fairfield, OH, near Cincinnati. I conveyed the greetings of our Presbytery to these brothers, and I bring back fond and fraternal greetings to you from them.

Ohio Presbytery of the OPC geographically covers the western third of Pennsylvania, much of West Virginia, all of Ohio, and all but the northern third of Indiana. The OPC General Assembly has clearly defined Presbytery boundaries. The Presbytery has one congregation in WV, in Morgantown; one in IN, in Sheridan; and numerous ones in both OH and western PA. Within their bounds are both Geneva College and RPTS, with which their men are all very familiar. Several of the elders, ruling and teaching, were alumni of one or both institutions. At least one RE is on Geneva's faculty.

It was within the OPC Ohio Presbytery that I had two internships while a student at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia in the late 1970s. Both times I served at the Covenant OPC in Grove City, PA. I know, rather well, the western PA congregations. Several of the men in the Presbytery I have known since seminary days, including TEs who were in school with me. I have been delegated there three times, now, so I'm getting to know and be known by many or most of the others. Each time has been a delight to me, but this time was the most, since I was able to stay the entire meeting.

Ohio Presbytery has two stated meetings annually, in March and in October. Normally the spring meeting is in Ohio and the fall meeting in Pennsylvania. Their business is divided between the two meetings.

The brothers convened at approximately 10 AM. Prior to convening, each Session had distributed prayer sheets to all the commissioners (what we call delegates). The Presbytery spent all the forenoon in prayer. Like us, each congregation would have a man assigned to lead the Presbytery in prayer for it. The Moderator would name three men at a time. When the third one of a group concluded, the Moderator announced the next group of three men. The prayer time concluded very close to the order of the day for the noon meal. I have sent all the prayer sheets to Mr. Cassell.

The afternoon and evening were taken up with normal committee reports and the examination of students. I have sent the docket for the meeting, again, to Mr. Cassell. There are three matters that I found interesting in the business that I thought you brothers would want to note. The first is that there is one committee of Presbytery charged with doing all visitation and review of Session Minutes. Sessions do not report to Presbytery directly; only through this committee. Men are placed on it for at least a year. It seems to me that this would be a very burdensome responsibility, but one in which a member of the committee would become expert at this in a "sink or swim" sort of way. The second is that I continue to be very impressed with the level of the OPC licensure and ordination examinations for ministers/TEs. The theology exam, in particular, goes into much more depth than ours. This may reflect historical context, but these young men, and older men in change of calling, are *thoroughly* examined. Each man coming in, even from another OPC Presbytery, to an OPC Presbytery must have a similar examination. The third observation is that Ohio Presbytery runs committees and commissions very tightly through a set of Presbytery Bylaws. No one has any excuse for not knowing their committee



responsibilities or limits. I don't know that we'd want to proceed in this way, but it seems to work rather well for them.

I was one of several fraternal delegates welcomed and given floor privileges for the entire meeting, as well as a docketed five minutes in which to bring greetings. Men from the PCA and the URC were there.

Late in the afternoon and into the dinner hour, there was an excited buzz that it appeared that business could be concluded by that evening, and a projected Saturday morning session could be avoided. It happened! The meeting was adjourned a little past 9 PM, with a slight time extension.

I conclude with a couple of observations. The first is that these are precious brothers, and we need to see if we can't encourage them further to send delegates to our stated meetings. They are doing much and are quite active in church extension. They would love to have further contact with us. They have always been very brotherly. The second is that I delight in taking on this appointment, whenever Presbytery, through the Interchurch Liaison, desires. Dr. Knodel could be another natural for this delegation, since he is a former OPC minister. However, as often as Presbytery desires, I am very eager to serve in this way. Thanks to Presbytery and to Mr. Cassell for this blessed opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras

Clerk Donald J. Duff - retired

Asst Clerk

**The Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Presbytery of Ohio**

Proposed Docket for the Spring 2017 Stated Meeting

March 10-11, 2017

Good Shepherd OPC, 11688 Mill Rd. Cincinnati OH 45240

1. Constituting Prayer and Worship Service 10:00 am.
2. Roll call
3. Approval of minutes – Oct 14-15, 2016 (stated meeting)
4. Communications: Communications to Presbytery will be read at the point of the docket at which they are relevant.

17-01	(11-01-16) The Rev. Stephen M. Brown, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic with information about Hailu Mekonnen (clerk)
17-02	(11-07-16) The Rev. Christian M. McShaffrey stating that Brett Mahlen was installed in the Presbytery of the MidWest on Nov. 5, 2016 (Clerk)
17-03	(11-08-16) From the Rev. Donald M. Poundstone stating that David Graves was installed on Nov. 4, 2016, at Coeur d'Alene, ID (Clerk)
17-04	(11-10-16) From The Rev. David G. Graves asking that the membership of his wife and five children be transferred from the roll of the regional church to the Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church. (Clerk)
17-05	(12-16-16) From the Rev. Hank L. Belfield stating that Ken Montgomery was installed as the pastor of Geneva OPC, Marietta, GA on December 3, 2106 (Clerk)
17-06	(12-21-16) From the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension concerning home missions support (CHEX)
17-07	(12-27-16) From the Presbytery of the Dakotas re. The Rev. Rylia D. Fraas (Information)
17-08	(1-03-17) From J. Pekala & Associates, Inc. about insurance (Clerk)
17-09	(1-10-17) Trinity Reformed Church, Lethbridge, Alberta Re. Thomas Albaugh (C&C)
17-10	(1- -17) Covenant OPC (Vandalia, OH) commending James Brinkerhoff as a man well deserving to come under the care of the presbytery (FG XXI.2). (C&C)
17-11	(2-2-17) From the Presbytery of the Dakotas concerning an overture to the GA. (Information)
17-12 a,b,c,d	(2-3-17) From Tomas G. Albaugh asking to be dismissed to the Trinity Reformed Church (URCNA) and a call to be Pastor of Visitation. (C&C)
17-13	(2-15-17) From Zac Wyse a fraternal delegate from the URCNA Eastern Classis US (Clerk)
17-14	(1-27-17) From Allen Moran asking for a transfer of his credentials to the Presbytery of the Southeast. (C&C)
17-15	(2-21-17) Call to Daniel J. Doleys to be the Pastor of Living Water OPC, Springfield, OH (C&C)
17-16	(2-26-17) Dale Parsons recommendation for Daniel Doleys (C&C)
17-17	(2-25-17) John Sutter MD recommendation for Daniel Doleys (C&C)
17-18	(2-28-17) From the session of Lake OPC asking that Leo Fraley augment the session (V&SR)
17-19	(3-1-17) From Phil Pockras a fraternal delegate from the RPCNA (Clerk)
UC-a	(2-13-17) Derek Burger Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-b	(2-21-17) Brian Guinto Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-c	(2-22-17) Alex Eppstein Under Care Report (C&C)

2/14/2017

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UC-d	(2-23-17) Daniel Doleys Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-e	(2-23-17) Tyler Detrick Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-f	(2-24-17) Luke Walkup Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-g	(2-25-17) Stephen Lauer Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-h	(2-25-17) Ryan Cook Under Care Report (C&C)
UC-i	(2-28-17) Matt Soergel Under Care Report (C&C)

## Approval of excuses

5. Report of the Committee on Arrangements

6. Adoption of the Docket

**Order of the day:** Fraternal Addresses at the call of the moderator (Zac Wyse (URCNA), Charles Hinkey (PCA) and Phil Pockras (RPCNA))

7. Report of Stated Clerk (Including Statistical Report)

8. Reports of Standing Committees:

a. Candidates and Credentials (C&amp;C)

Transfer credentials of Allen Moran to Presbytery of the Southeast (17-14)

Transfer credential of Thomas G. Albaugh to Classis Western Canada URCNA (17-09,17-12 a,b,c,)

Call to and ordination Exam of Daniel Doleys (17-15, 17-16, 17-17)

James Brinkerhoff to be taken under care (17-10)

Reports of men under care (UC a-i)

b. Church Extension and Home Missions (CHEX) (17-06)

Proposed By-law change

c. Foreign Missions (FMC)

Proposed By-law change

d. Diaconal Ministries (DM)

e. Fraternal Relations (FR)

f. General Assembly Liaison (GAL)

g. Judicial (J)

h. Visitation and Sessional Records (V&amp;SR) (17-18)

i. Youth Work (YW)

j. Website (WS)

9. Report of Treasurer

10. Appointment of an Audit Committee (not done at the Fall Meeting)

11. Reports of special committees

a. Special Committee to Study WCF 24-6 and "Willful Desertion"

12. Miscellaneous business

13. Set date and place of next meeting— October 20-21, 2017. Host church: Calvary OPC Harrisville PA.

14. Adjournment and prayer

**PRAYER MEETING MARCH 8, 2017 - Calvary**

**Elderly:**

Bill Smith  
Janet Barnes

Opaline Young – Grove Manor

**Youth:**

College adults; Junior & Senior High youth; children

**Congregation:**

Calvary ministries & services  
Kenny Armstrong – wounds healing  
Tommy Houston & Skip Houston  
Jean Buchanan  
Audrey Ward  
Christine Fyffe – healing of wound; fibramyalgia  
Joan Fry – digestive disorder – new medicine  
John Bennett Sr. – heart problem – successful procedure  
Maggie Bennett - inflammation  
Tom Holmes – dialysis  
Madeline Fedor - expecting  
Lindsay Bennett - expecting  
Connie Rex – vocal cord nerve damage

**Denomination:**

HM –  
Machen R.C.; Good Shepherd, Cincinnati OH; OPC, Coeur D' Alene ID  
FM –  
Canada – Westervelds  
Czech Republic – Farniks – (few Christians in the nation)  
Haiti - Hopps, Ben & Heather; Delfis – Adoration school  
Japan – Lauers, Uomotos, Yaegashes (few Christians in the nation)  
MERF – (Middle East persecution)  
North Korea/China – Folta, Sam & McCabe, Mike & Lili  
Uganda -Okkens; Wright; Tuininga; Webers (Mbale)  
Ukraine -Hacquebords  
Uruguay – Richlines; Calls

**Nation:**

Leaders; judges; TROOPS

**Neighbor:**

GCCA & Portersville CS  
Bethany – counselors, adoptive parents & SR Pregnancy Center  
Steve Miller – ALS  
Snyder family – Darlene bone cancer & brain lesion  
Faith Fedor – brother Fred – two – five years to live  
Irene's sister Alzheimer  
Alayna Downard – expecting  
Marry Beth – expecting  
Dan Karns – digestive troubles

## Covenant OPC Grove City, PA

Spring 2017 Prayer Requests

Pastor: Jeremy Jones

Elders: Mark Graham, Marty Pressau, Shawn Ritenour, Paul Tavares

Deacons: Steve Jenkins, Gary Welton, Doug Covert

- Pray that our pastor, elders, and deacons would faithfully and effectively know, feed, lead, and protect the flock entrusted to our care.
- Pray that our elderly would remain strong in the faith even amidst failing health and proclaim God's goodness to all in the church.
- Pray that the Lord would raise up the next generation to serve the Lord and proclaim his might.
- Pray that the Lord would bless our body with a delight in morning and evening worship on the Lord's Day, and fervent prayer for all the saints and that our Christian education (Sunday School, catechism club, youth group, college and career study) would be edifying to the whole church.
- Pray that the Lord would bless our body with growing unity of purpose, love for one another, and heart for outreach.
- Pray for the outreach in Sharon, PA (Living Hope Fellowship): Pray for new contacts. Pray for new birth and spiritual growth among the regular attendees: Ron, Michelle, Wayne, Mira, and Brent.

1. Praise for the Lord sustaining RE Jon Burton through cardiac problems
2. Praise for five individuals beginning a New Members' Class this month
3. Praise for new beginning of monthly men's fellowship/discipleship
4. Praise for almost 30 attendees from the community to our fall conference, "Is the God of Islam and the God of Christianity the Same God?"

1. Petition for God to raise-up men to serve as ruling elder
2. Petition for God to continue to work unity and deeper love for one another in the congregation
3. Petition for God to increase our love for the lost, and to grow us in enfoldng new people in love
4. Petition for God to clearly guide in decisions for the future

**Praise and Prayer for Lake OPC, Mentor/Cleveland Area, OH:**

- Praise God for bringing a number of visiting families to the church recently. Pray that they would decide to return and worship at Lake OPC again, and pray for additional visitors.
- Pray that spiritual fruit would result from the recent advertising and outreach efforts of the church, including a recent two month run of a radio ad for the church at a local Christian radio station, new mover church mailers sent out to targeted neighborhoods near the church meeting location, and a monthly evangelistic Bible study taught by the pastor at an area rehab facility.
- Pray for God to encourage and strengthen the hearts of Lake OPC members, that they might be built up in their faith and that their hearts would be further knit together in love.
- Pray for continuing healing for Ruling Elder Dr. Andreas von Recum, who suffered a stroke in December and who continues to recuperate.

**Praise**

- God's grace in giving us many resources (facility and finances)
- Continued blessing of babies being born
- Unity among the congregation

**Petition**

- Upcoming POH Youth Rally (Mar. 31-Apr. 1)
- Lingered discipline issues
- The future of the congregation, of Brian Guinto, of possible mission works

**Knox OPC, Mount Vernon, OH Spring Preb. 2017**

Praise & thanksgiving to God:

1. For God's faithfulness to His people.
2. For two new deacons serving at Knox since February
3. For allowing us to remain at our current location.
4. For the continual peace & unity of Christ's church.

Prayer Requests:

1. For the congregation's continued spiritual maturity.
2. A zeal for evangelism & effectual outreach.
3. For new visitor's & members.
4. For the session's growing love for the flock.
5. Wisdom, discernment and a passion for mercy for our deacons as they minister to the flock.
6. For our beloved sister Bonnie Lawhon, who has recently had cancer removed from her mouth, and is currently recovering from radiation treatments.

- Many families have difficult ongoing health concerns.
- Several families have inconsistent employment and resulting financial stress.
- We are praying that God would add at least four more committed individuals or families to the work this year.
- We are asking God to bless our outreach plans this year; Easter invitation Sunday, Backyard VBS in June, leadership conference late summer, and Fall invitation Sunday.
- Praise that though our rental building was sold the new owner wants to keep the lease with Grace Fellowship.



2017 Spring Stated Meeting  
Reformation OPC, Morgantown

1. Session
  - a. Two elders on leaves of absence (Messrs. Beezhold and Jackson)
  - b. Complaint concerning the Lord's Supper
2. Diaconate
  - a. Both deacons on leaves of absence (Messrs. Beard and Leslie)
3. Application for a yearlong intern
4. Potential church plant
5. Reformation University Outreach

## **Nashua OPC**

### Praises

- A covenant youth publicly professed his faith.
- New members.
- The spiritual growth of members.
- Thanks for Everett and Billie DeVelde. Pray for them as they move to Wisconsin at the end of the month.

### Requests

- More visitors.
- That God would raise up men to serve as elders.
- The spiritual growth of the covenant children.
- God's blessing upon the new Sunday School classes.
- A member battling an aggressive form of cancer.

**Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church**  
**Sewickley, PA**  
**Spring 2017 Prayer List**

- **Sessional Changes:** Ruling elder Edward Hardesty has retired from the session, and has been designated ruling elder emeritus by action of the session. Mr. John Doyle has demitted the office of ruling elder, which means three ruling elders remain on the session along with pastor Knox; and ruling elder Steven Jantsch has been elected moderator as pastor Brett Mahlen took up the call of Associate Pastor at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, IL as of November 5, 2016.
- **Ongoing Member Health Concerns:** Mr. Kevin McKinney has struggled with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease for several years. Mrs. Wendy Thomas, wife of Dr. James Thomas, continues to suffer with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (A.L. S.). Ruling elder Dr. Jim Gidley suffers with neuropathy in his foot and leg which causes considerable pain and sleep deprivation.
- Woody and Laurie Lauer and continue their mission work in Japan, having relocated to Yamamoto for church planting, utilizing the Nozomi Center as a meeting place. The Lauers have just last week moved into their newly renovated living space. The Lauers' sons Daniel and Paul are studying at Grove City College. On February 26<sup>th</sup> Paul was received as communicant member of Grace Church by letter of transfer. Sarajeon, living in Grove City, has resumed study at Geneva College to complete her bachelor's degree. Also, she has found employment as a physical therapy assistant to begin in August.
- After months of sessional strategic planning, a special congregational meeting was held on February 22 and a pulpit committee was elected to begin a search for our next senior pastor. A follow-up meeting will be held after morning worship on March 19, to act on a proposal from the session regarding the resolution of the current call to pastor Knox.

**Christ Covenant OPC**  
***Sheridan, IN***

**Praises**

1. For the reception of 3 families into membership by letter of transfer.
2. For the baptism of 2 covenant children.
3. For the baptism of 3 young people on profession of faith.
4. For the beginning of both a Young Adult and Adult Fellowship Group.

**Prayer Requests**

1. Pray for one of our families facing serious marital issues. Divorce is imminent.
2. Pray for one lady in our congregation who is with child; it has been a challenging pregnancy.
3. Pray for our finances. Pray that our Lord bring conviction to families not giving on a regular basis.
4. Pray for Ryan Cook as he continues his seminary training.
5. Pray that our Lord might protect us from any form of divisiveness.
6. Pray for our pastor's health.

**Prayer Requests for Living Water OPC, Springfield, OH**

***Praise and Thanksgiving***

- for the congregation's call of Daniel Doleys as pastor and election of two ruling elders
- for the upcoming service of particularization, ordination, and installation
- for several new visiting students
- for a new ministry opportunity within the local Latino community

***Prayer***

- for a member recovering very slowly from a debilitating stroke
- for a visitor struggling with recurring depression
- for a young couple expecting the birth of their first baby in April
- for fruitful outreach

**Providence OPC  
Pataskala, OH**

**Thanksgiving:**

For the blessing of regular visitors

For a blossoming College and Career group

For covenant children recently born and expectant mothers

For a growing love for singing

**Supplication:**

That we would be confident in the power of the gospel and faithful in outreach and that the Lord would be pleased to cause it to bear fruit

For two of our teens who have longstanding chronic illnesses that impact their lives daily

For nominations and training of officers for the church

For those under discipline, that the Lord would draw them back to the congregation

For intense job stresses and uncertainty for several of our members.

## **Covenant OPC (Vandalia, OH)**

Spring Presbytery 2017

- Give thanks:
  - For many new visitors who are staying and about to join.
  - For how God has helped our church plant, Living Water, to grow so rapidly.
  - For a dedicated, godly session of elders who are united in their love for Christ, his church, and one another.
  
- Please pray:
  - For wisdom in how to do outreach effectively in our area.
  - For many college-age young people who are straying and struggling to stay faithful to the Lord.
  - For a member who is struggling with depression and needs to understand the gospel more clearly.
  - For wisdom regarding new church planting efforts we intend to begin soon.

**Presbytery of Ohio Stated Meeting, March 10-11, 2017  
Good Shepherd OPC, Cincinnati OH**

**Prayer**

1. For perseverance, strength, and sustenance for the members as they continue to reach out, host, and support the work of the church in its outreaches and evangelism
2. That the Lord would continue to provide the financial resources to carry out the work of the ministry
3. For fruitful elder family visitation
4. For wisdom and discernment for the congregation and the officers regarding the self-guided study through the Embers to a Flame video conference
5. Help us not to abandon the love we had at first. Remind us to remember from where we have fallen and to come to you in true repentance and to do the obedient works we did at first.

**Praise**

1. For unity of mind and purpose among the session and deacons
2. For the togetherness in worship and fellowship we enjoy
3. For Alex Eppstein's call to ministry at Bethel PCA in Sparta IL
4. For continued financial stability.
5. For the love, prayer and support from the presbytery, the CHEX committee, and from the CHMCE, especially John Shaw



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Good Shepherd OPC, Cincinnati OH**

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GLG Presbytery 2018

## DELEGATES EMAIL LIST: GUIDELINES

**“That Presbytery instruct Mr. Evans to develop a list of basic guidelines for proper usage of the delegates email list and submit them for approval at our Spring 2018 meeting.”**

*-Clerk Recommendation, 2017*

Following the 2017 Spring Meeting of Presbytery, the Great Lakes/Gulf email distribution list ([delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org)) received several informal email correspondences, voicing concerns, reflections, and complaints about the happenings at the then most recent meeting of Presbytery. Therefore, in June 2017, when the GLG Presbytery met briefly during Synod week, the motion was made and carried, that guidelines for proper usage of the delegates email list be created. It is in response to that successful motion made on the floor of Presbytery, that this report is being presented.

The immediate concern that led to this report, then, was the “informal” usage of the email distribution list. Additionally, questions such as: “Can general announcements be made regarding presbytery matters?”, “Are prayer requests acceptable to send to the list?”, “Can the list simply be used as a means to ‘get a hold of’ all the Presbyters at once?”, were on the minds of the delegates.

In light of the above, and according to the original intention of [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org), I propose the adoption of the following guidelines to regulate the usage of the official GLG Presbytery email list (see **Recommendation 1** below):

1. Only official Presbytery communication may be sent to [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org).

Rationale: The original recommendation approved at the 2013 Spring Meeting of Presbytery, established [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org) as the “official means of distributing presbytery documents”; therefore, the above guideline seems to be most in line with the original intention of the email list.

2. Official communications include the distribution of Presbytery documents, and announcements about Presbytery and Presbytery-related events.

Rationale: The primary purpose of the list is to distribute the reports and other documents for the meetings of Presbytery itself. However, there are announcements associated with Presbytery that are perfectly fitting for email distribution. For instance, the CYPUs events are directly overseen and supported by Presbytery, and should be announced via the “delegates” list.

## GLG Presbytery 2018

3. It is not the intention of the “delegates” list to distribute prayer requests and other unofficial announcements that the GLG teaching and ruling elders may be interested in receiving.

Rationale: I like prayer. Prayer is good. Our Presbytery obviously believes prayer is good. And while it is perfectly fitting to ask for prayer for Presbytery, Presbytery-related events, and in the official Presbytery communications, there are other appropriate and sufficient avenues for distributing prayer requests, freeing up the “delegates” list for official communication of our Presbytery. Additionally, while general and unofficial communication may be conveniently distributed over a single master list, ensuring the focused use of the list will preserve its longterm effectiveness.

It is my hope that the above guidelines are unobtrusive and to the point, and that the Presbytery will see the benefit of restricting the only official means of presbytery communication to official communication only.

(By way of reminder: Any ordained teaching or ruling elder is able to email [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org) directly, and you do not need to email the Clerk to have your communication distributed to the Presbytery. If you are not receiving emails, or are unable to send to the list, please notify me and I will gladly correct the problem.)

Finally, and while not immediately within the scope of this report’s directive, it is worthy to keep before our Presbytery that this present year (the remainder of 2018 into the beginning of 2019) is the final year I will be serving as the “Internet Maintenance” administrator. This means it is incumbent to choose my replacement, so that he can begin to learn the process, ensuring a smooth transition at the completion of the 2019 Spring Meeting of Presbytery. At the June 2017 meeting of Presbytery, our Clerk informed us that he cannot take on these additional tasks. A replacement should be identified, or a volunteer step forward, so that the [GLGPresbytery.org](http://GLGPresbytery.org) website will continue to be used, a “docket and digest” will continue to be prepared and distributed, and the [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org) email list will be maintained. If you have the ability to take on these responsibilities, or a willingness and availability to learn, please talk to me at this meeting of Presbytery.

**Recommendation 1:**

That Presbytery adopt the following guidelines for the [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org) email list:

1. Only official Presbytery communication may be sent to [delegates@glgpresbytery.org](mailto:delegates@glgpresbytery.org).
2. Official communications include the distribution of Presbytery documents, and announcements about Presbytery and Presbytery-related events.
3. It is not the intention of the “delegates” list to distribute prayer requests and other unofficial announcements that the GLG teaching and ruling elders may be interested in receiving.

Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery  
Spring 2018  
March 1-3, Indianapolis

## Candidates & Credentials Committee

**When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”**

*Matthew 9:36-38*

Roy Blackwood (emeritus)	Rich Holdeman (2018)
James Faris (2020)	Michael Lefebvre (2019)
Dean Filson (2018)	George Gregory (2018)
Jon Hughes (2019)	Jared Olivetti (2020)

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## Recommendations

1. That student examinations be conducted at this meeting of presbytery according to the schedule below.
2. That Andre Pickens' exams to be received into our presbytery be conducted according to the schedule below.
3. That Allen Blackwood be granted up to 10 minutes to share his testimony and sense of calling to the ministry with presbytery.
4. That Allen Blackwood be received as a student under care of the presbytery.
5. That student aid continue according to plan stated in (2) below.
6. That Jay Dharan be granted up to 10 minutes to share his testimony with presbytery.
7. That presbytery commit to helping the South Asia Commission by administering floor exams to Jay Dharan in the coming years.
8. That presbytery adopt the letter regarding Brian Schwertley written by the Candidates and Credentials Committee to the C&CC of the Midwest Presbytery.
9. That Jonathan Schaeffer be nominated to this committee.
10. That Adam Niess be nominated to this committee.
11. We recommend the following status changes:
  - That George Gregory's status be "active."
  - That Rich Johnston's status be changed to "retired."
  - That Keith Magill's status be changed to "retired."
  - That Godfrey Franklin's status be changed to "inactive."
12. That Vankatesh Gopalakrishnan's credentials be transferred to the South Asia Commission of Synod.

We hope to bring the following items items of business to this meeting of presbytery.

1. **Proposed examinations** - (see recommendation 1)

Student	Exam	Time*	Examiner
<b>Andrew Battiato</b>	History Paper Justification & The Council of Trent	—	Shawn Anderson David Carr
	Expository Sermon 1 Romans 6:7-14	25/-/5	—
<b>Joel Hart</b>	Church History	20/10/5	Phil Pockras
	Expository Sermon 2 Isaiah 43:8-13 “Witnessing to the Blind”	25/-/5	—
	Systematic Theology & Distinctive Principles 2	20/10/5	Keith Evans
	Licensure to Receive a Call		
<b>Gary McNamee</b>	English Bible Exam	—	Andy McCracken
	Systematic Theology & Distinctive Principles 1	20/10/5	Wade Mann
	Personal Godliness	20/10/5	Kent Butterfield
	Expository Sermon 1 Job 31:16-23 “God’s Majesty: A Motive for Mercy Ministry”	25/-/5	—
<b>Andre Pickens (see below)</b>	Systematic Theology & Distinctive Principles	30/10/5	Michael LeFebvre
	Pastoral Giftedness & Personal Godliness	30/10/5	Adam Niess
	Sermon (1 Timothy 4:6) “A Good Minister of Jesus Christ”	25/-/5	—

\*Duration - the first number is minutes allotted for the examiner’s questions; the second is the minutes allotted for Presbytery’s questions; the third is minutes allotted for Presbytery discussion of the exam prior to the roll call vote.

## 2. Students to be taken under care

*Allen Blackwood* From the RPC of Lafayette session: “Allen is a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Lafayette, is married to Eleni, and they have a son, Henry. Allen is the son of Pastor Ed Blackwood, and has been raised in church planting contexts and in cross-cultural mission work, thereby being exposed to various expressions of full-time ministry from a young age. Although Allen has prayerfully considered the possibility of pursuing Gospel Ministry since high school, it is only within the past few years that he has more fully wrestled with this possible calling and direction for his life, and therefore has been brought under the care of the Lafayette Session in 2017. While under care, he has served as an intern in Lafayette and has taught and labored in many different contexts, and continues to faithfully do so. Allen is presently working for the Tippecanoe School Corporation full-time, assisting in the management of the school district’s transportation.” (see recommendation 2-3)

## 3. Student aid - the following students are receiving aid from the presbytery (\$300/mo)

Joel Hart - ending approximately May 2018

Zach Smith & Andrew Battiato - ending approximately May 2019

Gary McNamee - ending date not yet known

## 4. Seminary-level classes

Dr. Prutow has taught two classes over the year. He taught eschatology in the spring of 2017 (24 total students; 6 credit and 18 audit) and hermeneutics in the fall of 2017 (14 total students; 5 credit and 9 audit). A class on the ministry of worship taught by Dr. Prutow is planned for spring of 2018.

## 5. Selma RPC

The Selma congregation has been without a pastor for six years and are grateful to report that they have called Andre Pickens as their next pastor. Most of the presbytery does not know Andre, so we’re glad he is able to attend this meeting. Andre became known to the Selma session through his friendship with Frank Smith. As they got to know him, they introduced him to our committee. Jared Olivetti traveled to Detroit to meet Andre and his wife, Katherine, and begin discussing the process of bringing him into our presbytery. After the congregation called



Andre, Katherine found a good job in Alabama, so they moved. Andre has been preaching as stated supply in the Selma RPC since the move.

Because Andre has served for many years as a pastor in the National Baptist Convention, we are recommending he be brought into the RPCNA following a series of exams similar to ones we've used in the past in similar circumstances. Please see Appendix C for a letter from Andre as well as his C.V. and reading list.

## **6. Request from South Asia Commission**

Please see Appendix D for communication from the South Asia Commission regarding Jay Dharan and the potential of our presbytery aiding the commission by overseeing his coming exams. Appendix E includes Jay's C.V.

See recommendations 5 and 6.

## **7. Communication regarding Brian Schwertley**

Our committee received a communication from Pastor Mark Koller of the Midwest Presbytery regarding Brian Schwertley. It was a request to clarify Mr. Schwertley's relationship to our presbytery in advance of his being brought before the Midwest Presbytery for possible reception. We are not aware of any personal issues or specific charges for which Mr. Schwertley would need to answer our presbytery, so we declined to invite him. However, our committee has strong concerns about Mr. Schwertley being received as a teaching elder into our denomination. We have written a letter to the Candidates and Credentials Committee of the Midwest Presbytery which we hope will reflect the feelings of our presbytery and plan to bring that letter to this meeting of presbytery (for obvious reasons, we chose not to distribute it electronically). If presbytery approves the letter of counsel, we will forward it onto the C&CC of the MWP.

## **8. Subscription issues**

**Introduction** Over recent meetings of presbytery, the issue of confessional subscriptionism and taking exceptions has come up several times. Since it is a "live issue" and one that bears directly on our work as a committee, we have hope that expressing our understanding and practices to the presbytery will aid in both clarity and cooperation. We currently have no recommendations or motions to make concerning these matters, but do hope that this section of our paper may serve as a helpful reference for our presbytery moving forward.

***Student Handbook*** The student handbook continues to serve us well on many fronts, including our section on theological preparation and subscribing to our standards. Though it is somewhat lengthy, we think it is valuable enough to reprint in total here. Here you'll find the essence of the counsel we give to students wrestling with questions about our Confession and Testimony.

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### ***An important note on theological preparation***

The examinations a student will complete during the course of his formal education are described in later sections of this Handbook (§§9–10). At three points in the course of those examinations, the student will be asked the “Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure” (pp. G–2 and G–3 in *The Constitution of the RPCNA*). Students should acquaint themselves with these vows early in the course of their studies, and be prepared to affirm them.

Special notice should be given to the fourth query: “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?”

A great deal of the student’s theological education is aimed at preparing him to take that vow. He should therefore have that query in view so that all his theological studies—being studies of “the system of doctrine and the manner of worship set forth” in the aforementioned standards—might be pursued with the conscientious goal of becoming a co-confessor of the church’s received faith.

Abraham Kuyper explained the importance of ministers subscribing to the church’s received confession, saying, “One man must supplement another [in the exposition of doctrine]... As in social life one ploughs, a second spins, and a third sails the seas, and out of the interaction of these divided labors the full rich life is born; even so it is in the world of thought.” (“Calvinism and Confessional Revision,” p. 484.)

The creeds and confessions of the church are not infallible (WCF 31.4); nevertheless, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would assist the church in her understanding of the Word (Jn 16:13; cf., WCF 31.3). It is, therefore, with confidence that what Jesus promised is true that ministers receive with a spirit of trust rather than skepticism, the conclusions of the church’s Spirit-assisted wrestlings to understand the Scriptures. These conclusions are passed down to us in the ecumenical creeds and reformed confessions of the Church. The Westminster Standards are a full and authoritative expression of the doctrines contained in those earlier creeds and confessions.

In the Reformed Presbyterian Church, we confess that it is due to sin that the church has divided into the many distinct denominations that exist, today (RPT 25.14). It ought to be our

earnest prayer and endeavor to see the church grow in holy unity. This must not be sought through mere organizational union, but through a growing unity of faith. Therefore, as distinct bodies within the confessing church have unique doctrinal insights to contribute to the broader church, those denominational testimonies ought to be held forth for the edification of congregations within that branch of the church as well as that of the broader church. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America has collected the doctrinal gains of her heritage into the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Students preparing for ministry in this branch of the church should become familiar with the doctrinal testimony which, by seeking ordination in the RPCNA, they will be promoting.

If, in the course of the student's theological education, he has doubts about any doctrinal position in either the Westminster Standards or the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, he ought to seek help understanding the reasoning behind the doctrine. This help can be pursued from a professor at seminary, a pastor in the church, or the Candidates and Credentials Committee. Such questions ought not be regarded as cause for shame or embarrassment, either by the student or by those who discuss these questions with him. It is an important part of theological study to examine and to seek answers. However, as all such confessional documents are the result of godly men together studying the Scriptures in prayer, doubts about their conclusions should be examined with a teachable spirit and not a presupposition of error.

The spirit of the age in which we live is one that promotes individual opinion and skepticism of authority; even theological students and ministers need to guard their hearts from the influence of such attitudes. Therefore, students who encounter doubts about certain doctrinal conclusions ought to give themselves to a careful and thorough understanding of the reasoning behind the position in dispute before taking a personal exception to it. Furthermore, he must not satisfy himself that he has adequately studied the matter until he has spoken about the matter with a professor or a minister who is well-equipped to explain the position. In a good faith spirit of trust, a student should give every effort to be taught the doctrine he initially found doubtful.

If, through the course of such study, a student concludes that the corporate testimony of the church is in error, his personal conviction to the contrary ought to be made known to presbytery in one of the oral theology exams that are part of his public examination. The first and second oral theology exams are the setting in which the student's specific views on various aspects of the church's confession and testimony are examined by presbytery. And it is in those examinations that presbytery is to determine whether the student's views are in keeping with subscription to the church's testimony and sustain or not sustain the exam accordingly.

Unlike typical exams at seminary where a student receives a passing grade based on the percentage of questions answered correctly, a presbytery ought "not sustain" an exam if even one point is found to be in opposition to "the system of doctrine and the manner of worship set

forth” in the denominational standards. At the points of certification, licensure, or ordination—when the queries are administered—the student should prepare to answer the queries “in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation” (WCF 22.4), guided in part by presbytery’s determination to sustain his theological exams. The practice of stating exceptions at the point of the queries, however, is imprudent and ought not take place.

Therefore, in anticipation of the queries, a student should take the initiative to resolve any uncertainties well beforehand. Also, rather than avoiding difficult questions in theology exams, a student should discuss doctrinal doubts with the Candidates and Credentials Committee prior to taking theology exams. The Committee will work with the student and with the assigned examiner to ensure that the doctrinal dispute is raised in as honest and as respectful a manner as possible to grant the student the best opportunity to express himself. It will then be possible for the entire presbytery to come alongside the student and to offer any added perspective that may have been previously overlooked in his study of the issue.

Furthermore, if an issue of doubt is raised in the first theology exam (i.e., prior to certification to preach), it is within the prerogatives of presbytery to sustain the exam on the understanding that the student is still teachable and that he will not preach contrary to the denominational testimony, since a second opportunity to take up the student’s views is afforded in the second theology exam.

It must be kept in mind that the purpose of confessional instruments is to preserve and promote the unity of the church. Therefore, all individual exceptions to the united testimony of the church ought to be resolved in a manner that seeks the peace and unity of the church. The teachableness of the individual student and the *semper reformanda* teachableness of the whole church are important features of confessional fidelity.

Two final words of counsel to students should be given. First, not every question about a doctrinal position is necessarily a point of doubt or exception. Students should be careful to discern the difference between a matter about which he has questions and a position with which he disagrees. In the spirit of confessional ecclesiology, a student ought to be willing to trust the painstakingly and prayerfully developed testimony of the church and to stand in a presumed position of accepting the confessed stance while exploring his questions. A student with questions (but not yet disagreement) should, in good conscience, be able to affirm the queries during his certification to preach as he continues to examine his questions.

Second, while theology is a discipline that requires precision with words, it must be admitted that creeds and confessions often contain clumsy or awkward expressions. The unfortunate confusion that has long attended the fifth article of the Apostle’s Creed—“he descended into hell”—is a prime example. As illustrated by Calvin’s exposition of that line of the Creed (Institutes 2.16.8–12), we ought to take difficult wording in the best light one can honestly take it. Seminary is a time when students are developing alertness to the fine points of theological

expression, but care needs to be given not to let unfortunate word choices stir a sense of opposition to the faith confessed by the brethren.

Carl Trueman offers this apt counsel from his own preparation for ordination vows, “We need to understand that subscribing to a creed or confession does not mean that we believe every phrase in the document was as well expressed as it could have been or that if we wrote it today we would use exactly the same vocabulary and phrasing... As I read the Standards in preparation for ordination, I did not make the mistake of confusing the awkwardness or deficiencies of some of the phrasing with fundamental deviations from biblical teaching.” (The Creedal Imperative, p. 192.) Students should be careful to distinguish between perceived inadequacies in how a doctrine is framed and “fundamental deviations from biblical teaching.”

Subscription to the church’s standards does not necessitate a conviction to their inerrancy. The Confession itself admits that “all synods and councils, since the Apostles’ times,... may err; and many have erred...” (31.4). But it does require a good faith confession that they accurately summarize the true teaching of Scripture to the best of our understanding at this stage in the continuing reformation and growth of the church’s faith.

{End}

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**Presbytery History** In the writing of this report, we took time to remind ourselves of our own presbytery’s history of debate regarding subscriptionism, especially in understanding and applying ordination vow #4, hoping to both find more light and also avoid retreading paths already walked. Here are some of the highlights.

- The subscription debate in the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery lasted from 1998-2008.
- In April, 2000, presbytery appointed a study committee to Paper 2000-1 from the Triangle (Durham) session regarding subscriptionism. This paper was in response to previous papers taken to synod regarding our worship distinctives. A study committee was appointed.
- That study committee asked presbytery to approve the paper’s requests and went further to suggest an amendment to Ordination Vow #4, requiring the stating of an exception to the ordaining body whenever such an exception should arise in the conscience of an ordained man. Presbytery approved the recommendation. This recommendation was reviewed in 2001 due to a request from a session within our presbytery. Presbytery did reconsider the paper and passed a report that denied any presumption of guilt among those who appealed the paper. The committee was extended with the goal of reviewing the paper further.

- That committee presented in April 2002. That committee's paper and the minority report which accompanied it, both contain thoughtful dialogue on a thorny topic. After various motions and discussions, especially concerning the motion of charging ministers to declare exceptions, the matter was referred to the November 2002 meeting, where it was referred to the following spring meeting of presbytery. Over the course of that year, these matters became more pertinent due to concerns about men receiving calls from other congregations. Despite debate among the AIC, the calls were all forwarded.
- At the April 2003 meeting of presbytery, the following motions were passed:
  - *That presbytery charge all officers within its bounds to declare to their overseeing body any exceptions they make take to the system of doctrine and manner of worship set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and that such exceptions be recorded in the minutes.*
  - *That the overseeing body, when they deem it necessary, appoint a special committee to counsel those who have declared their exception, in order to seek to persuade them of our system of doctrine and manner of worship, and to report back on the progress or lack thereof that is being made.*
  - *That the presbytery send the four recommendations to Synod with the further recommendation that they be enacted in all the Presbyteries of the RPCNA, and that the Triangle Paper and the body of this report be sent as well for reference.*
- The Synod of 2003 declined to take any of the actions requested by our presbytery except adopting an amended substitute of the first motion above: *That Synod remind all officers of the church that if they find themselves out of accord with the Confessional Standards of the church, their beliefs and commitments having changed, it is their duty to declare their scruples and differences with the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, or the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to their presbytery if a Teaching Elder, or to their Session if a Ruling Elder or Deacon.*
- At the November 2003 meeting of presbytery, it was noted that the actions of synod didn't nullify presbytery's actions, so all teaching elders were (by motion) called to report their exceptions to the Clerk of Presbytery by the Spring 2004 meeting. Three men brought exceptions to the meeting.
- At the November 2004 meeting, presbytery considered and declined to act on an recommendation that their previous action (requiring statements of written exceptions) and interpretation of Vow #4 be rescinded.

- In Spring 2005, a paper asking for another rescinding of presbytery's actions and interpretation of Vow #4. Some presbytery minutes from the following are unavailable, but the committee continued through 2006, with a change in the study committee. In Spring of 2007 it was again deferred until the summer meeting. Their report to the summer meeting (2007) was returned to the committee. The committee brought their work again to the 2008 spring meeting. The discussion mostly affirmed the need for elders to conscientiously make their exceptions known. It ended with a tie-breaking vote which left presbytery's exact interpretation of Vow #4 less than clear.

Summary thoughts on our recent history: Our presbytery's previous work on these issues contains a large amount of helpful resources and thinking. The most clear result of presbytery's previous work is emphasizing (1) the importance of confessionalism and (2) the need for elders to be conscientious in handling their exceptions.

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We hope this information is helpful, at the least to understand how our committee operates.

## **Credential & status changes in 2017**

### **1. Licentiates**

**S. McC.** The McC's are part of the Marion congregation and S. is making contact with students involved or interested in missions. S. also serves on the Global Mission Board and the Pakistan committee of the board. As part of that work, he participates in training for a Pakistani pastoral candidate. He also teaches the Theology and Methods of Missions course at RPTS. He preaches occasionally in Marion and elsewhere in Indiana, usually 5-6 times/year. (license extended 6/15 to 6/20)

**Donald Cassell** Last year, presbytery granted a one-year extension to Donald's licensure to receive a call. We hope to meet with Donald during this meeting of presbytery and to bring a recommendation concerning his licensure to presbytery.

**Sam Ketcham** Upon his graduation from Greenville Seminary, Sam and Dorsey and their children were transferred by the Pageland TGB to the membership of the First RPC of Fresno, California. There Sam accepted a year-long internship with the session and Nathan Eshelman, the interim moderator. Before the internship was completed, the congregation voted to call Sam as their pastor and Sam accepted the call after passing his final exam before the Pacific Coast Presbytery. His ordination was set for the 2nd of February.

### **2. Students taken under care, or removed from under care**

*Gary McNamee* was received as a student under at the spring 2017 meeting of presbytery.

*Sam Ketcham's* "under care" status was transferred to the Pacific Coast Presbytery.

### **3. Licensures, ordinations & installations**

*Adam Niess* was installed as the pastor of the RPC of Lafayette on February 2, 2018.

### **4. Resignations & transfers**

*Keith Evans* - The RPC of Lafayette will be recommending to presbytery that Pastor Evans' pastoral relationship be dissolved at the end of May so he can pursue his calling to the professorship at RPTS.



*Rich Johnston* - Rich Johnston's retirement from the pastorate of 2nd RPC took effect on June 30, 2017.

*Adam Niess* - Adam's resignation from the Bloomington RPC pastorate was approved by the Ad Interim Commission and the dissolution took effect on December 18, 2017.

### **Men under care**

*Andrew Battiatio* "My wife (Laura) and I celebrated the birth of our daughter (Eliana Joy) on April 14, 2017. Our family moved to Pittsburgh in September to begin my second year of seminary, after completing the first online. Our entire family has adjusted well to the new community and are regular attenders of Covenant Fellowship RPC. I am progressing well with my studies and am thankful for the whole-person equipping that I am receiving. My favorite class so far has been Spiritual Development with Dr. Jerry O'Neil. As a family, we are praying and preparing for future mission work to an unengaged unreached people group. We are considering spending this upcoming summer in South Sudan for further mission preparation."

*Joel Hart* "I am presently pressing through to the finish of the winter quarter of my final year at seminary. Relationships in the seminary community, preaching opportunities around the denomination, and studies at seminary have kept me busy - and provided a rich environment for growth in Christ. I am excited about what the future holds as I anticipate graduation. Orlena has enjoyed life in Pittsburgh. She has a PRN job at the RP Home, which has been a good outlet for her to use her gifts and minister to the saints there. David (4), Jenny (2), and Elisha (11 months) bring much joy to the family."

*Gary McNamee* Gary is currently in his second quarter of studies at RPTS. He continues to serve as a ruling elder at Columbus RPC. There his duties include establishing new ministries of outreach to the community and teaching the adult Sunday school. he is organizing and attending a weekly Bible study in Louisville to investigate church planting there as well as serving as moderator of the Dayton TGB. He's preached five times in the last year and served on a mission team to Enid/Stillwalker, OK.

N.B.- In the schedule of exams, we are recommending Gary skip the evidence of progress sermon and give his first expository sermon exam at this meeting of presbytery. Unlike the typical seminarian with little preaching or teaching experience, Gary has been a ruling elder leading in worship, preaching occasionally in his capacity as a ruling elder, and teaching in church settings for many years. Therefore, in light of his experience, we believe he is ready for his first sermon exam without need for the initial "evidence of progress" baseline.

*Zachary Smith* "We praise God for His sustaining grace through a year of change for the Smith family. In the spring of 2017, I completed my first year of seminary at RPTS via distance

learning. On the last day of classes, my family (Zach, Beth, and 1-year-old son Isaiah) boarded a plane and went to serve with Cush4Christ in South Sudan, Africa from May-August. The invitation to come was an answer to prayer for us, as we desired to obtain some overseas missionary experience as a family in preparation for our future. Both my wife and I had been to South Sudan to serve in our single years, and our mutual desires to serve Christ in overseas service is something that we feel God's calling to do as a family. We came back from that summer with a deepened joy and excitement for what God is doing to build His Kingdom around the world, and also a more realistic perspective for what capacities God might use us to serve in similar ways in the future. We are praying towards that end and asking the Lord to continue to direct as we finish seminary.

We relocated from Indianapolis to Pittsburgh in September, 2017 to continue on-site training through RPTS. I am currently in my second year. We enjoy worshipping with the saints at North Hills RP church and participating in mid-week Bible studies during our time in Pittsburgh. My time is primarily spent between taking full loads of classes each quarter, renovating our fixer-upper house, and spending time with my family. Beth works at keeping things in order on the home front and raising our active toddler. Together, we are enjoying developing relationships both with the seminary community and our local community within our neighborhood. We are thankful for the way God has sustained us this past year and look forward to His continued faithfulness in our remaining time at seminary.”

### **Ministers without pastorates (active)**

*George Gregory* (last pastoral appointment with RPC of Columbus, ended on 12/31/16) – George preached 26 times in 2017 including at Christ Church RPC on 1/28/18) where he also last administered the Lord's supper. George is still working at Second RPC as the Facilities Manager. The Gregory's 2-year-old son Jonathan passed into glory on December 8, 2017. George is currently waiting on the Lord for a pastoral call in the RPCNA. The committee recommends that George's status be Active

*Frank Smith* (last pastoral appointment, with Northminster RP Church, ended on August 31, 2013) – Frank and his wife Penny have been active in the presbytery's urban ministry in Atlanta. Their church membership is held by presbytery, but would be transferred to the roll of Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship upon its becoming a mission church. He preached 48 times in 2017 and last preached at the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship on January 7, 2018.

He last administered the Lord's Supper in July at First RPC, Cambridge, MA. Frank continues to teach history full-time at Georgia Gwinnett College. Frank also serves as President of Tyndale International University, a Korean-language seminary in Los Angeles. This past year, he contributed a book review to *The Confessional Presbyterian*, a peer-reviewed academic journal

for which he is an assistant editor. He is nearing the completion of a book-length biography of his later father.

Frank's status is "Active."

*David Whitla* (last pastoral appointment, with the RPC of Southside Indianapolis (SSRPC) ended in August 2016) – After 8 years as pastor David moved to N. Ireland to pursue his doctoral studies (2016-2019). Last year he preached 44 times and delivered 24 lectures. He last administered the Lord's Supper on June 12, 2017 at the Southside RP Church. For the duration of his doctoral studies (2016-19), he is retaining his membership at Southside RP Church, and thus his credentials within the GLG presbytery and the RPCNA, whose ministry he intends to return to at the end of his studies, DV. In meantime, David worships regularly as an adherent of Trinity RP Church, Mossley, Northern Ireland where his family is actively involved in all aspects of congregational life. He preaches at Trinity and lectures for their adult class 2-3 times per month, as well as at various other RPCI congregations and conferences in the RPCI and RPCS upon request.

David's status is "active"

#### **Ministers without pastorates (inactive)**

*Godfrey Franklin* - Following his retirement from the University of West Florida in 2009, Godfrey's church membership continues to belong to our presbytery (was never transferred to another RPC after the Multiracial RPC was disorganized in 2005) but he worships at McIlwain Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Pensacola. Though Godfrey has not participated in ministry activities this past year, he is in relatively in good health and is available to preach if pastors need someone to cover for them. He feels very isolated and would appreciate contact and news from our Presbytery. He is not actively seeking a call in the RPCNA but wants to continue his ordination.

We recommend that Godfrey's status be changed to "inactive."

#### **Ministers without pastorates (retired)**

*Roy Blackwood* (last pastoral appointment ended 12/31/2007) – Roy continues to attend services faithfully at Second RP Church in Indianapolis. Roy was active in pastoral counseling, mentoring and provided support as an evangelistic witness to his neighbors and to the nursing staff at the Hoosier Village Retirement where he lives. Roy ministers in prayer for pastors in the RPCNA and for those at Second RPC. Please pray for Roy's energy and health, and for God's continued blessing on his ministry to those around him.

Roy's status is "Retired."

*Richard Johnston* (last pastoral appointment, Second RPC, ended on July 2, 2017) Rich and Beckie and their son Stephen remain members of Second RPC. Though retired from active pastoral duties after 24 years of pastoral service at Second RPC, he continues in many involvements in the congregation, presbytery, synod and the Indianapolis community. Some of these involvements are chairman of the Disabilities Ministry of the R. P Women's Association, pulpit supply in the past six months, as needed: Lafayette, Elkhart, Belle Center, Topeka RP and Shawnee RPC, chairman of the Board of the Biblical Counseling Center of Indiana, director of the Friendship Bible Study, and member of Second RPC Mission's Committee.

Rich writes: "Because of these and other family involvements I feel sure that the Lord wants me to stay in Indianapolis. My wife, Beckie, travels at least weekly to minister to her parents (92 and 93 years old) in a nursing home in Marion, Indiana. Our special needs son, Stephen, has many deep roots here, in Indianapolis, with medical t professionals, deep friendships and in employment. I am 69 years old, but still healthy and active. I don't feel called to another full-time church pastorate, but I find the Lord using us in many ways and with many people here in Indianapolis. I am also finding extensive overseas ministry in India and Liberia. What is my status? In many ways I feel as active as ever, but I am not seeking a call to another church pastorate. I am writing to help you know where I best fit-- active, inactive or retired status. Thank you for your assistance."

We recommend Rich's status to be "retired."

*Gordon Keddie* (last pastoral appointment, Southside RPC, ended on 6/30/2014) — Gordon retired after 10 years of serving as Senior Pastor at Southside Indianapolis RPC on June 30, 2014. He expects to be involved in church life as able. He is not seeking a new call in the RPCNA but hopes to be available to write and preach as pulpit supply as needed and called upon. Gordon also desires to retain an active involvement in the work of presbytery and attend as he is able.

Gordon's status is retired.

*Ray Lanning* (last pastoral appointment, with First RPC in Grand Rapids, ended 10/2010) As of the sending of this report we have not received updated information from Ray.

Ray's status is retired.

*Keith Magill* (last pastoral appointment, with the Elkhart RP Church, ended on September 30, 2015) – Keith preached 11 times in 2017 including preaching at Sparta RPC on December 17, 2017. He administered a baptism at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, CA on July 16, 2017 and last administered the Lord's Supper at Sparta RPC on November 12, 2017. Keith and Becky continually are seeking the Lord's direction about how to best serve Him in this next season of their lives. Keith is not seeking a call in the RPCNA, but desires to continue his ordination. They currently live in Lafayette and are members worshipping at Immanuel RPC. Presbytery

appointed Keith the provisional moderator of the Sparta RPC in August 2017 and he plans to attend this meeting of Presbytery.

The committee recommends that Keith's status be changed to "Retired."

*R. Paul Mathews* (last pastoral appointment, ended June 30, 1965, with the W. Monroe St. Mission Church in Phoenix AZ). Paul & Janet have been nonresident members of the RP congregations to which they have belonged since 1992. They currently worship with the Gaylord Evangelical Free Church in Gaylord, MI, where they now reside and where their daughter and family are members. At Hetherton Session's request, the GLGP AIC appointed Paul to serve as provisional elder on their session until the Spring 2018 GLGP meeting. He attended all nine constituted meetings of session, two observances of the Lord's Supper, preached there once, and attended Sabbath worship 16 times during the year. He considers this responsibility a personal blessing.

Paul's status is "Retired."

*Robert McCracken* (last pastoral appointment ended in 2002) — Bob continues to be active in ministry, both in the Columbus RP congregation where he is a member and of the Presbytery. He preached twice last year. He last preached on 9/3/17 at the Dayton RP Mission Church in Tennessee and last administered the Lord's Supper on 5/7/17 at the Columbus RPC.

Bob's status is "Retired."

*Glenn McFarland* (last pastoral appointment, with the Santa Ana RP Church, ended 6/19/1989) — Overlapping as pastor and after leaving the pastorate, Glenn was the Principal of an OPC Christian School in southern California and taught school for 30 years. Glenn and his wife Jean are members of the Orlando RP Church. They worshipped there for 6-7 months and then at Providence RPC in Pittsburgh for 3-4 months and Christ Covenant RPC in Lawrence, KS and an OPC in Vienna, VA during the summers. Glenn is recovering from an extensive 4 1/2 hour knee surgery with some complications.

Glenn's status is "Retired."

*Marion McFarland* (last pastoral appointment, with the Ogemaw RPC in Michigan, ended in 1987) — Marion and Shirley continue to volunteer with SOWER (Servants On Wheels Ever Ready), a ministry that does repair work for Christian ministries throughout the United States. They have been now in all 50 States. They travel with this group in their RV to various youth camps and adult conference centers. Their work is mainly building and maintenance. Marion led devotions each month and completed 102 projects which included painting and various maintenance jobs.

Marion's status is "Retired."

*Jim McMahon* – (last pastoral appointment, with Greeley RPC ended May 1991). Jim is a member of the Sparta RPC where he preached there five times in 2017. Jim reports that he has also preached 22 times in the last year in other situations. His passion is to proclaim Christ whenever and wherever God gives him opportunity and strength. He would like to occasionally preach in the pulpit as needed. Please pray for Jim as he currently struggles with some health issues. He is hoping to move to Indianapolis sometime in the future to be near his daughter and close to an RP church. Jim is planning to be at this spring Presbytery meeting.

Jim's status is "Retired"

*Robert Morrow* – Bob continues to serve as a ruling elder of the Sparta Session. He preached once this past year at Sparta RPC, and has been active in visiting senior citizens and people in need. Bob, like many seasoned pastors, still have a lot to offer the church body and her servant-leaders. Bob is 85 and about 3 months ago, suffered a concussion which blurred his vision at the time and he continues to have headaches. His legs hurt when standing but when sitting he is okay and when he is laying down is even better. He is hoping to attend the Spring Presbytery meeting.

Bob's status is "Retired."

*Jim Pennington* (last pastoral appointment, with the Living Way RP Mission Church in Bryan, TX for the month of April 2017. Before that it was with the Kasumigaoka RPC in Kobe, Japan, that ended in May 2005). Jim preached 8 times in 2017 including occasional pulpit supply in Orlando RPC where Jim continues to serve as a ruling elder, oversees a shepherding group, presides for morning worship in rotation schedule, and teaches Sabbath School class and small group.

Jim's status is "Retired."

*Dr. Dennis (Denny) Prutow* – (last pastoral appointment ended in 2001 with Sterling, Kansas RPC). Dr. Prutow retired in 2013 from serving 12 years as RPTS professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. Denny and his wife Erma are members at Second RPC and his credentials are held in this presbytery. He preached 20 times last year and continues to teach seminary-level classes for our Presbytery at Second RPC. He taught Covenant Theology in the spring and Genre Specific Interpretation in the fall. Denny administered the Lord's Supper at Second RPC on October 16, 2017. Denny and Erma continue to be grateful for their membership and active participation at Second RPC. Denny also taught two series of Sabbath School classes last year: 1 Corinthians 13 in the spring and Worship in the fall. Dr. Prutow was also the main speaker for the Covfamikoi family conference last year. He was installed as Ruling Elder on 1/8/17 at 2RPC. Denny continues as administrator for Westminster Evangelistic Ministries.

Denny's status is "Retired"

*Frank Schutz* (last pastoral appointment ended in 1992). Frank worships regularly at Grace OPC Church in Columbus, Ohio, and is on the membership role at Belle Center RPC. Frank has suffered from some environmental allergies that have plagued him for several years now. Thus, Frank has not been very active in Ministry nor has he been able to attend Belle Center once a quarter as he would like to do.

He has conducted one wedding this past year. The marriage of Laura Schutz to Licentiate (OPC) Brian Guinto. Laura and Brian now reside in Olympia WA where Brian is working with an OP church. Frank also taught the Spring quarter of the Adult Sabbath School at Grace OPC on Sanctification. Frank continues to work in IT supporting Human Resources applications for Nationwide Insurance Company.

He desires to worship and sing the Psalms with the Belle Center congregation, teach more in the church and serve in whatever ways he is able. He also desires to get back to the writing he was doing before his health issues.

Frank's status is "Retired"

*Steven Work* (last pastoral appointment, with the Quinter, Kansas, RP Church, ended on September 1, 2013) — Steven and his wife Jeanie are members at Southwest Ohio RPC in Mason, Ohio. He last preached there on December 3, 2017 and last administered the Lord's Supper on December 10, 2017. Steven preached 10 times in 2017. He may be open to a pastoral call in the RPCNA. He was elected and installed as a ruling elder by the Southwest Ohio RPC back on November 13, 2015.

Steven's status is "Retired."

*Jim Wright* (last pastoral appointment ended on 7/6/1997) — Jim transferred his church membership from the Orlando congregation to Covenant Fellowship of Wilksburg RPC. He is still in the process of getting his ministerial credentials transferred from the GLGP to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies. He is still teaching a Sabbath school and leading a Bible Study there at the RP Home, as well as preaching there on a rotation basis. Jim is very thankful to the Lord for his gracious provision for ministry there and with the RP community. He is planning to write an article for the RP Witness. The title of his article will be "You're Going Where?"

Jim's status is "Retired."

## Appendix A - Seminary Recommendations

January 30, 2018

Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery  
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

RE: Faculty Recommendation of Andrew Battiato

Dear Brothers,

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is happy to report that Andrew Battiato is progressing well in his studies. This is Andrew's first year on campus, but having taken courses online before arriving, he is now a "middler," or second year student. Andrew currently has a 3.86 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) and has shown himself to be academically gifted. If all goes well in his future studies, he will receive his M.Div. degree in May of 2019.

Andrew and his family fit well in the seminary community and participate in the many activities that take place at RPTS. Andrew is proactive in evangelism in the Pittsburgh area, and often meets with other students for prayer. He seems to be a godly husband and father with a fruitful spiritual life.

Andrew shows good discipline in fulfilling his responsibilities, and appropriate respect toward professors. He is well liked by his peers for his gracious demeanor. We believe that Andrew exhibits the gifts and graces that are needed for pastoral ministry. We wholeheartedly commend him to you and look forward to working with him for another year in preparation for what ministry the Lord has in store for him.

For the Faculty,

C.J. Williams  
Professor of Old Testament Studies  
Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
[cwilliams@rpts.edu](mailto:cwilliams@rpts.edu)



**Faculty Evaluation of Joel Hart  
January 2018**

Candidates and Credentials Committee of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery:

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is pleased to report to you—and through you, to the entire Presbytery—the progress of Joel Hart in his preparation for gospel ministry. Joel has completed a year and a half in Pittsburgh after completing one whole year's worth of study in Indianapolis before he came. He plans to graduate this spring.

Joel is a great student with a near-perfect 3.99 cumulative grade point average, which includes distance learning hours he completed before he moved to Pittsburgh. Beyond the grades, there seems to be a real interest in theology and a genuine love for Christ and others. He is a good preacher with good people skills;

Joel is married to Orlena, and they have three children. Joel and Orlena demonstrate maturity in the way they relate to one another and in the way they parent their children. Their family is active in the social events of the Seminary, and it is a delight to have them with us.

The Hart family attends Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Gibsonia. They are faithful in morning and evening worship and participate in the Christian Education hour. Joel is trying to do some work with the Grace session this quarter, but he is too busy with other commitments to do all that he would like to do.

Joel did an internship with the Terre Haute mission church last summer. Things went well there, and the congregation voted to extend a call to him once he is certified eligible to receive a call. He has since "turned down" this would-be call, and he and Orlena are seeking God's will for his life. Second Reformed Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis has called a congregational meeting with the intent to call him as an Associate Pastor, and more possibilities are in the works.

We think highly of Joel. Obviously, our congregations think highly of him as well. He is a talented and mature young man with obvious interest and passion for gospel ministry.

Written on behalf of the Faculty,  
Jerry O'Neill

January 30, 2018

Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery  
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Dear Brothers,

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is happy to report that **Gary McNamee** continues to work towards the M.Div. degree at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary through distance learning.

Gary has been diligent in his studies and interacts regularly with the professors of his various courses. His work has demonstrated a good depth of understanding and an ability to express himself clearly. Gary had earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.933 (on a 4.0 scale) by the end of the fall quarter. After taking one course a term beginning in the spring quarter of 2016, he has been able to increase to four or five courses this academic year, due to retiring from his job. At this pace, he will need to move to Pittsburgh to complete his M.Div. degree in the fall of 2018.

We are looking forward to having Gary among our students in Pittsburgh at some time in the not-too-distant future. Within the limitations of distance learning, we believe that he is showing good progress in preparation for future pastoral ministry.

In Christ's service,

Thomas G. Reid Jr.  
Librarian and Registrar  
For the Faculty

**Faculty Evaluation of Zach Smith**  
**Rick Gamble**  
**January 31, 2018**

Committee of the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery to Counsel Students under Care:

The Faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary is pleased to report to you—and through you, to the entire Presbytery—the progress of Zach Smith. He is currently a Middler M. Div. student.

We have been pleased with Zach's academic work at the Seminary. He completed his first year as a distance student and is close to completing his second quarter in residence. His grade point average is 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

Zach is a former member of the Lisbon, NY congregation. He then became a member at Second RP Indianapolis where he served as an intern for two years. He has been under care since his internship. The Smiths now worship at the North Hills congregation and participate in a mid-week bible study. The Smiths spent time on the mission field of South Sudan.

Zach and Beth (Magnuson) have one child, their toddler Isaiah.

We are happy to commend Zach Smith to the Presbytery as someone who has demonstrated the ability to complete the M. Div. program.

Sincerely in Christ, on behalf of the Faculty,

Rick Gamble

**Appendix B - Student Charts**

**GLGP Student Chart: Andrew Battiato**

	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Examiner/Proctor</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Taken under care	2/2014	-----	
<b>Seminary begun</b>			

Evidence of Progress sermon			
<b>Seminary: First year done</b>			

Personal Godliness exam	4/2017	Shawn Anderson	
English Bible exam ( <i>written</i> )	6/2016	James Faris	
Theology & Distinctives I exam			
Expository Sermon I — <i>assigned text</i>	4/2017	-----	Romans 12:1-11
Church History paper			
<b>Licensure to preach</b>			
<b>Seminary: Second year done</b>			

Pastoral & Evangelistic Gifts exam			
Theology & Distinctives II exam			
Church History exam			
Expository Sermon II — <i>assigned topic</i>			
Exegesis paper			
<b>Licensure to receive a call</b>			
<b>Seminary: MDiv awarded</b>			

Internships		-----	
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<b>ORDINATION EXAMS</b>			
Expository Sermon — <i>assigned text</i>		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the Faith & Testimony			

GLGP Student Chart: **Joel Hart**

	Completed	Examiner/Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	2/2015	-----	
<b>Seminary begun</b>			

Evidence of Progress sermon			(Waived by presbytery)
<b>Seminary: First year done</b>			

Personal Godliness exam	9/2015	Andy McCracken	
English Bible exam (written)	6/2016	James Faris	Passed with distinction
Theology & Distinctives I exam	2/2016	Kent Butterfield	
Expository Sermon I — assigned text	2/2016		Psalm 11
Church History paper	6/2016	Jeff Kessler & Phil Pockras	Mediatorial Kingship in the Depression / War Era
<b>Licensure to preach</b>	6/2016		
<b>Seminary: Second year done</b>			

Pastoral & Evangelistic Gifts exam	4/2017	Bill Roberts	
Theology & Distinctives II exam			
Church History exam			
Expository Sermon II — assigned topic			
Exegesis paper	4/2017	George Gregory, Steve Rhoda	
<b>Licensure to receive a call</b>			
<b>Seminary: MDiv awarded</b>			

Internships		-----	
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ORDINATION EXAMS			
Expository Sermon — assigned text		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the Faith & Testimony			

GLGP Student Chart: **Gary McNamee**

	Completed	Examiner/Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	4/2017	-----	
<b>Seminary begun</b>			

Evidence of Progress sermon			
<b>Seminary: First year done</b>			

Personal Godliness exam			
English Bible exam (written)			
Theology & Distinctives I exam			
Expository Sermon I — assigned text			
Church History paper			
<b>Licensure to preach</b>			
<b>Seminary: Second year done</b>			

Pastoral & Evangelistic Gifts exam			
Theology & Distinctives II exam			
Church History exam			
Expository Sermon II — assigned topic			
Exegesis paper			
<b>Licensure to receive a call</b>			
<b>Seminary: MDiv awarded</b>			

Internships		-----	
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<b>ORDINATION EXAMS</b>			
Expository Sermon — assigned text		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the Faith & Testimony			

**Appendix C - Andre Pickens**

October 16, 2017

To the Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery

Greetings,

My name is Andre Pickens and I am a candidate for the pastorate of the Selma Reformed Presbyterian Church of Selma Alabama. I have over 34 years of ministerial experience which includes almost 20 years as a Pastor

I was saved and called to preach the Word of God at an early age. I preached my "trial sermon" at the age of 17 and was licensed to preach the gospel by the New Bride Baptist Church. Subsequently, I was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in 1992, and have had the privilege of holding several Baptist pastorates in Michigan.

I am married to Dr. Katherine R. Pickens an educator, administrator, and professional counselor. Katherine and he are the proud parents of six children (Brittany, Brandie, Andre, Jr., Jerrod, Jr., Aaron, and Kendall), and two grandchildren (Micah and Eli).

While reading the sermons of Charles H. Spurgeon I became acquainted with the Puritans and the great Reformed theologians of the past. After much prayer and study, I became convinced that Calvinism is the theology of the Bible, and that the gospel received its purest expression in the Reformed Faith. My pilgrimage did not end there, after over thirty years as a Baptist I became convinced of the Presbyterian form of church government, and the doctrine of Infant Baptism.

The glory of God and the salvation of souls is the goal of my preaching and pastoral ministry. I have been guest preacher and lecturer at revivals, conferences, seminars, and church and pastoral anniversaries. I am the regular preacher on the podcast *The Cause of God and Truth*.

I have attached my ministerial vita for your review. You can contact me via email ([theoscholar@hotmail.com](mailto:theoscholar@hotmail.com)) or phone (810-962-9845). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Reverend Andre L. Pickens

**Rev. Andre L. Pickens**

46545 Beau Jardin Drive, Macomb, MI 48044

Mobile: 810-962-9845

*theoscholar@hotmail.com**pastorpickens.wordpress.com, thecauseofgodandtruth.sermon.net***MINISTERIAL STRENGTHS:**

- Strong belief in the Bible as the Word of God.
- Preaching and teaching the Word of God.
- A Shepherd's heart.
- Skilled in Systematic and Historical theology.
- Studious in habits and doctrinal in emphasis.
- Committed to Evangelism and Discipleship.
- A high view of preaching as God's ordained means to save sinners and edify believers.

**MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS**

<b><u>Ordained:</u></b>	Christ Divine Love Baptist Church, 18477 Mt. Elliot, Detroit, MI 48234 Rev. C. C. Jackson, Pastor	03/29/1992
<b><u>Licensed:</u></b>	New Bride Missionary Baptist Church, 1812-16 Field St, Detroit, MI 48214 Rev. Eugene Guy, Pastor	10/02/1983

**MINISTERIAL HISTORY****Pastor** 2009-2015

**Covenant Bible Church**, met at the Erin Presbyterian Church, 30000 Gratiot Ave, Roseville MI 48066

This pastorate had many challenges, especially trying to introduce the Reformed Faith to a new generation of church goers. Most of these people had been nourished on a steady diet of the charismatic movement, non-denominationalism, Word Faith type theology. This situation forced me to rethink my eschatology, and ecclesiology. I came away from this pastorate with a deep conviction that if a church is going to witness effectively to its generation, then it must unapologetically display its banner, and teach its doctrinal standards. Contrary to seeker sensitive philosophy that says denominational labels are a barrier to growth, I found that churches that fly their flag are more likely to have members who can articulate and defend their faith to an unbelieving world. The greatest lesson I learned from this pastorate is not to assume anything. It was during this ministry that I began to seriously reconsider my Ecclesiology.



**Pastor 2000 – 2006**

**New Zeal Baptist Church, 8543 Puritan, Detroit, MI.**

**Pastor 1989 – 1995**

**Cross of Glory Baptist Church, met at the YMCA, 13220 Woodward Highland Park, MI.**

I started a catechism class for the instruction of the children and adult members of the congregation. As far as I know it was the only doctrinal class of its kind in the city teaching Reformed theology. I found that catechizing was the surest way to build a congregation that was rooted and grounded in the Reformed Faith. Because of this class the saints were better prepared to understand doctrinal instruction from the pulpit. Age was not a barrier to memorization, the adult students learned to memorized with the same enthusiasm as the children.

**PROFESSIONAL READING (truncated list):**

Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin.  
 Systematic Theology, Charles Hodge  
 Selected Shorter Writings, B.B. Warfield,  
 Dogmatic Theology, W.G.T. Shedd,  
 Lectures to my Students, C.H. Spurgeon,  
 Historical Theology, William Cunningham,  
 Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures, B.B. Warfield,  
 The Complete Works of John Owen,  
 Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Francis Turretin  
 Creeds of Christendom, Phillip Schaff,  
 Christian Theology, Millard J. Erickson,  
 The Spirit of the Reformed tradition, M. Eugene Osterhaven,  
 The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, Lorraine Boettner,  
 The Works of Jonathan Edwards,  
 God, Revelation and Authority, Carl F.H. Henry,  
 Theory of Preaching, Austin Phelps,  
 Pastoral Theology, Thomas Murphy,  
 Pastoral Theology, Patrick Fairbairn,  
 Reformed Dogmatics, Herman Hoeksema,  
 A Body of Divinity, Herman Witsius,  
 The Christians Reasonable Service, William Brackle,  
 No Place for Truth, David Wells,  
 The Sovereignty of God, A.W. Pink,  
 An All-Round Ministry, C.H. Spurgeon,  
 Amillennialism Today, William E. Cox,  
 The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, Jerome Zanchius,  
 The Works of John Flavel,  
 The Works of Thomas Goodwin,  
 The Works of B.B. Warfield,  
 Christianity and Liberalism, J. Gresham Machen,  
 Christian Dogmatics, Francis Pieper,  
 Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Richard Muller,

The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell,  
Protestant Biblical Interpretation, Bernard Ramm,  
Systematic Theology, Louis Berkhof,  
The Triple Knowledge by Homer C. Hoeksema  
The Doctrine of God, John Frame,  
The Doctrine of the Christian Life, John Frame,  
Twilight of a Great Civilization, Carl Henry,  
Preaching and Preachers, D.M. Lloyd-Jones,  
Calvin's Calvinism, Henry Cole,  
A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith, Robert L. Reymond,  
Loci Theologici, Phillip Melancthon,  
Reformed Dogmatics, Herman Bavinck,  
Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life, John R.W. Stott,  
The Church of Christ, James Bannerman,  
The Bible and the Future, Anthony Hoekema,  
The Lutheran Pastor, G. H. Gerberding,

## Appendix D - Communication from the South Asia Commission

South Asia Commission of the RPCNA

February 9, 2018

Dear brothers of the Candidates and Credentials Committee of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery,

The South Asia Commission of the RPCNA Synod requests the help of your presbytery. We have been given authority by synod to plant churches in India and develop men for pastoral service. To this extent, we've been given the power of a presbytery in the process of establishing a new denomination unique to the nation of India that will be a sister denomination. Jay Dharan is the first student under care of the South Asia Commission (SAC).

We are asking GLGP to lend help in preparing this man for ministry by administering exams to him. It would be a great aid to the SAC, and, we hope, a joy and encouragement to the GLGP to be part of the process.

Jay is from Trivandrum, Kerala (India's southwestern-most state) but is now in Bangalore serving as a pastoral intern at Anugraha RP. He is enrolled full time at RPTS in the distance learning program where he is in his second quarter. We plan to bring him to the United States to take up his studies in Pittsburgh for the third quarter this year which begins in March. Jay will be serving as an intern at Second RP in the summer of 2018 and at Southside RP in the summer of 2019. Lord willing, he will be here for the GLGP 2018 spring meeting. He is a competent man who is of excellent character. We are very excited that the Lord has raised him up. He is an answer to our prayers. His CV is attached, and we hope that you will hear his testimony.

We want his membership and credentials to remain with Anugraha and the SAC. We will be ultimately responsible to see him pass his exams, license, and ordain him, Lord willing. However, we would see great benefit in Jay being examined on the floor of presbytery in the North America. It would give him robust exams and show him what we believe the best exam system looks like. Lord willing, he will, be involved in helping to create a presbytery that will administer such exams in the future. We'd like him to have a very similar experience to what Venky had.

Here is our request, would the GLGP/CCC be willing to be serve the SAC by scheduling and administering all of the regular floor exams for Jay over the next two-plus years?

This would include two preaching exams, two theology exams, personal godliness, pastoral and evangelistic gifts, and church history. Our hope would be that the presbytery would vote on these exams just like regular exams (with the SAC men in India watching online, if possible), with the end result that the vote would serve as a recommendation to the SAC. The SAC would be the party to formally sustain the exams and would administer the written exams and papers. Finally, the SAC would license Jay at the appropriate times.

Would the GLGP CCC please consider this request? If the committee and presbytery are willing, then it would be our desire to have the CCC interview Jay over a meal at the March meeting and then invite him to speak for ten minutes on the floor to share his testimony with the presbytery. There would be no need for the presbytery to vote to take him under care, but the presbytery would need to vote on a recommendation such as the following made by the CCC:

Recommendation: That the GLGP commit to help the SAC in the preparation of Jay Dharan by administering his regular floor exams in the coming years.

In Christ,

James Faris  
Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan (moderator)  
David Hanson  
Ram Rao

**Appendix E - Jay Dharan****JAYAMOHAN DHARAN**

Souparnika, Lekkshmi Nagar D 38,  
Pattom Palace P.O, Trivandrum, Kerala, India – 695004  
jaymnair@gmail.com | +919995048727

**EDUCATION**

**Master of Divinity, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Sept.2017 - present)**

**Bachelor of Arts, University of Madras, 2015**

- Major : English Literature
- Second language : Communicative English
- CGPA : 3.33 out of 4

**MINISTRY EXPERIENCE**

**Pastoral Intern, Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Church, Bangalore (Oct. 2017 – present)**

- Assisting the pastor in the ministry of the word through expository preaching, Bible studies, sermon discussions etc
- Helped start a bi-weekly missions prayer
- Helped start a weekly young adults gathering

**Bible Teacher, Trivandrum Bible Fellowship, Trivandrum, Kerala (April 2016 – Sept. 2017)**

- Expository preaching once every month
- Doctrinal teaching every third Sunday for the extended fellowship

**Ministry Lead, Redemption Hill church plant, Trivandrum, Kerala (Feb. 2015 – Sept. 2015)**

- In charge of preaching and teaching ministry
- Developed a curriculum for systematic teaching of doctrine
- Taught twice every week
- Wrote all the foundational documents dealing with the doctrine and ministry of the new church plant.

**Ministry Intern, Life Fellowship, Trivandrum, Kerala (June 2014 – July 2014)**

- Chosen as one of the Indian interns for One Hope's Cultivate Summer ministry internship, 2014.
- Designed and developed an outcome-based youth ministry model for the church
- Wrote 3 blog posts for Cultivate blog, participated in daily discussion and debate
- Researched the state of youth ministry in the church using diverse research tools
- Worked in a ministry team made up of 3 Indians and 3 Americans.

**Sunday School teacher, Life Fellowship, Trivandrum, Kerala (April 2014 – June 2014)**

- Taught weekly to teens, also preached twice in the Sunday morning services of the church

**PAPERS**

- "Trinity : Why Believe?", a theological and practical primer on Trinity polemically addressing the common non-Trinitarian cults, submitted to the elders of Life Fellowship church, Sept.2011

**ONLINE PRESENCE**

- Personal site : [www.beaconoftruth.in](http://www.beaconoftruth.in)
- Theological resources blog : [www.reformed-theology.blogspot.com](http://www.reformed-theology.blogspot.com)

**REFERENCES**

- Rev. Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan, Pastor  
Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Church,  
Bangalore, Karnataka, India  
[venkatesh83@gmail.com](mailto:venkatesh83@gmail.com)
- Rev. Georgey Varghese, Elder  
Trivandrum Bible Fellowship, Trivandrum, Kerala, India  
[georgey4nlm@gmail.com](mailto:georgey4nlm@gmail.com)
- Rev. Sam T. Varghese, Senior Pastor  
Life Fellowship, Trivandrum, Kerala, India  
[samjessy@gmail.com](mailto:samjessy@gmail.com)
- Matthew Childers, Former Director of Cultivate internship,  
One Hope, Pompano Beach, Florida, USA  
[mchilders87@gmail.com](mailto:mchilders87@gmail.com)

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Date and place of birth : 29<sup>th</sup> January 1985, Trivandrum, Kerala

Marital Status : Single

Church : Communicant member of Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Church,  
Bangalore.

## First RPC (Grand Rapids, MI) Visitation

July 8–9, 2017

### Report to Presbytery at Its March 1–3, 2018 Meeting

Fathers and Brothers,

Below you will find our report on the church visit we completed on your behalf to First RP Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

#### Summary of the Visit

The committee's visit to First RPC began Saturday evening over a fine Italian meal with Craig Scott (TE) and Doug Nadeau (RE) at Pietro's, followed by coffee and discussion in a quiet corner of Baker Book House. This time enabled us to learn more of how the Lord led Mr. Scott to Himself, into the ministry, and to Grand Rapids, and it afforded us the opportunity to discuss one of the key challenges facing the congregation at this time (outlined below). After adjourning for the night to our separate host families, our visit continued on the Sabbath at morning worship (which included the Lord's Supper), followed by a fellowship meal with the congregation and further discussion with Mr. Scott and Mr. Nadeau. The committee met privately in the afternoon before joining the congregation for evening worship, which closed our visit.

#### Strengths

The Lord has certainly blessed the Grand Rapids congregation with a number of strengths.

- From our visit we learned that *the congregation is hungry for the meat of the Word*, which Mr. Scott is eager to provide, as he did at Sabbath worship in the morning (John 12:20–32, “Christ's Conquering Chariot”) and evening (Psalm 149, “Christians Beautified by God”). Christ's finished and ongoing work was extolled with much edification. It was noted by one, without exaggeration, that the Lord has blessed Mr. Scott with the ability to preach beyond his years.
- It was demonstrable following both worship services and in the afternoon meal that *the congregation enjoys a strong sense of fellowship*. Though there is a challenge facing the congregation at this time with regard to the Lord's Supper (below), there is general *peace in the congregation, as well as a love and support for Mr. Scott and his ministry by the congregation*.
- The Grand Rapids church is to be commended for *its zeal in outreach*. Mr. Scott has done street preaching in Grand Rapids and has been joined by another in efforts to evangelize at various events in the Grand Rapids area.

#### Challenges

The Grand Rapids congregation needs prayer and counsel for a number of challenges (listed here), the most pressing of which is a lack of unity around how the Lord's Supper is to be administered.

- *The Lord's Supper.* It is the conviction of Mr. Scott, through much study and deliberation, that the right administration of the Lord's Supper requires the use of the common cup—i.e., communicants are to drink from a single cup, not multiple cups, at the Lord's Table. A minority of members and adherents are not willing to participate in the Lord's Supper if the common cup is used, namely because they find it unsanitary, according to the session. Mr. Scott, seeking unity within the congregation, has on one occasion administered the Lord's Supper with multiple cups but became so struck in his conscience that he said he could not do so again. Because of this impasse, and out of sensitivity to the congregation's needs, Mr. Scott has considered resigning and returning to Scotland.

Complicating the matter is that the session provided assurances to Mr. Scott—when he was considering whether to accept the pastoral call by First RP—that the common cup would be allowed. After he arrived it became apparent that further teaching on the sacrament was needed before that could be the case, which Mr. Scott subsequently provided. (The session later apologized to Mr. Scott for providing such assurances.)

In our visit Mr. Scott sought counsel from the visitation committee (our recommendations are below) on whether he should proffer his resignation. Some providences in his family's circumstances are making the decision even more difficult. These include the following: an approaching deadline to apply for a green card, an expense Mr. Scott is not willing to pass along to the congregation if he plans to return to Scotland; an expired lease on their rented home, which the Scotts are concerned about renewing if they are unable to stay; and an offer by a church in Glasgow to be an assistant pastor, which would enable Mr. Scott (after a three-month separation) to bring his U.S.-born wife to Scotland.

Our counsel on how to navigate these congregational and providential circumstances are listed below.

- *Building a Reformed Presbyterian identity.* First RP has had challenges embracing a more robust Reformed Presbyterian identity. Some in the congregation yet wish to retain “hold-overs” in worship practice, including the reading of the Ten Commandments (morning) and Apostles Creed (evening), and some desire to retain the 1912 Psalter. There is an abiding sense by the congregation of disconnection from the other churches in the presbytery and denomination.
- *Location/relocation.* The session believes that the church's location of worship at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary could hinder growth for a couple of reasons. While the seminary offers a strong facility for worship and fellowship meals at a very reasonable cost, its location is detached from the surrounding community. Furthermore the session is concerned that the facilities of PRTS could be a point of congregational pride. Furthering the session's concern is that the church is still identified in terms of its former pastor—not in terms of its identity as a Reformed Presbyterian Church. The session has considered whether a change in location would be beneficial for the growth, influence, and identity of the congregation in Grand Rapids.



- *The eldership.* Since Mr. Scott's arrival, elder Richard Bonner has retired, and elder Doug Nadeau has expressed the desire to retire as well for personal health concerns. The church is reaching out to Presbytery at this time for provisional elders.
- *Finances.* The church did not meet its budget in the last fiscal year. While the Lord has blessed them with a strong savings account, a lack of support for the local ministry will no doubt be a burden on those funds.

## Recommendations

The committee offers the following recommendations for First RPC:

1. **That Mr. Scott remain at least one more year at First RPC.** It is clear there is an impasse between the shepherd and some of the sheep as to the practice of the Lord's Supper. It's also been expressed that if Mr. Scott leaves, others would leave. It is hard to deny the concern that the doors of First RPC would be closed (eventually) in his departure. The session is willing to pursue whether the congregation would fund Mr. Scott's green card even in light of his possible departure. Given that possible funding and the strong support the congregation has for Mr. Scott's ministry already, the committee believes another year would allow more time for the pastor and the congregation to work on the practice of the Lord's Supper.

One concern remains—the ability for everyone to participate in the Lord's Supper this next year. To address this concern, the committee recommends that Mr. Scott administer the Lord's Supper three out of the next four times (the church practices quarterly communion), with one Lord's Supper administered by another pastor using multiple cups for those unwilling to commune using the common cup. The hope is that in this year unity might be built around the administration and participation of the Lord's Supper, and that Mr. Scott's ministry may continue unhindered there.

2. **That the congregation explore a different venue.** While the congregation has been able to maintain itself with the help of PRTS' affordable facilities, the committee believes that it would be beneficial to look for a new location of worship, if affordable and suitable for their ministry. This would not only allow opportunities for inroads into Grand Rapids that are yet unreached by current Reformed churches, but it also could help with building a fresh identity in the community.
3. **RP Identity.** The committee encourages the church to take advantage, when possible, of events going on with sister congregations in the Presbytery—such as the family camp, International Conference, and TFW/CYPU. One way to build a stronger connection is through prayer—i.e., praying for other congregations in public worship. Yet another opportunity for building a connection between the congregation and other RP churches—and other RP churches to the Grand Rapids congregation—may be through occasional pulpit exchanges, or through a delegation of one or two families from a church visiting Grand Rapids and vice versa.

**Conclusions**

We see strengths within the Grand Rapids RP congregation that are encouraging, including the relationship between the congregation and Mr. Scott and his wife. We hope, therefore, that the relationship between pastor and church will continue and that differences of conscience might be worked out in time. Whether Mr. Scott should pursue ministry back in Scotland, should he find himself better fitted for that context, is not a decision we find necessary to be made at this time. Another year of ministry together, along with love and respect for respective consciences, will hopefully bring both pastor and congregation to a more informed decision in the future.

Please join us in praying for Craig Scott and the Grand Rapids congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Stanley McKenzie  
Stephen Rhoda, Chairman  
Christopher Stockwell

# First Reformed Presbyterian Church

Grand Rapids, MI

## **GLG Presbytery Spring 2018 Meeting Congregational Report**

Dear Fathers & Brethren,

In soccer they say it is a game of two halves. For First RP, 2017 was certainly a year of two halves. The first six months were filled with various challenges, while in the second half of the year the congregation grew both spiritually and numerically.

### Difficulties

We have continued to face many challenges at First RP. Disagreements over Psalter translations, the use of the Apostles' Creed, and battles from 2010-11 were still prevalent in the first half of 2017. In addition to this, an issue with the Lord's Supper arose (see Presbytery Visitation Committee report). This was a difficult time for all concerned. Pastor Craig Scott offered his resignation to the congregation for the sake of unity. The congregation desired that Pastor Scott remain and continue his ministry at First RP. Pastor Scott said he could not remain and go against conscience but could only administer by common cup. After meeting the Presbytery Visitation Committee, Pastor Scott decided that he would remain and minister in the congregation. The session decided to honor its original promise to Pastor Scott and would administer by common cup. Individuals would partake or refrain as determined by conscience. At present the majority of communicant members partake while five members refrain. Those who refrain do not think the common cup is unbiblical or unconstitutional but do not like it for hygienic reasons. Though certainly not ideal, this arrangement permits both the Pastor to remain with conscience intact and members free to partake or refrain. Since this decision, the congregation has partaken of the Lord's Supper on three occasions and peace has been maintained.

### Peace & Growth

The second half of 2017 was very much a contrast. Attendance grew from 25 to 40 as new people started to visit and remain in the congregation. We received 4 into communicant membership and one into baptized membership. The new attendees and members were hungry to learn and serve. They attend faithfully and contribute to the life of the congregation. For most of 2017 there was no adult sabbath school. Many asked session to implement sabbath school so they could learn and study the reformed faith. We happily obliged. The women were desirous of a women's study for fellowship and prayer. We happily obliged. Our own members and the new attendees have merged into a vibrant and hungry congregation. For the first time in years there is a spirit of fervency and unity. Fellowship & hospitality has also increased as many host open homes and get together.

### Evangelism

First RP has been active with evangelism in both jail ministry and open-air witnessing. Four members are active in prison ministry. The Pastor leads a monthly worship service in the local Kent County Jail. We have seen a few visit church but many go back into the world. We are eager to learn how we can improve as a small congregation involved in prison ministry. Our open-air evangelism takes place every Tuesday and Saturday. We also do outreach for large gatherings in the city such as Art Prize. In 2017 thousands of tracts, DVD's, and Bible's were given out. Every week we are engaged in profitable gospel conversations. Approximately 10 unchurched people have come to our church through this witness. Members are meeting weekly with people we have met on the street. God is certainly working! It is our sincere prayer that the Spirit of Christ will convert and bring all to saving faith in our beloved Savior.

### Discipleship

We have many discipleship meetings in the congregation. 5 men and women are receiving weekly evangelism training throughout the winter period as we break from Tuesday street evangelism. Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary have asked if their students may accompany us in our evangelism. Due to this link 8 students help with our evangelism. Most of the students have never done evangelism so it is a privilege to disciple young men training for the ministry in practical evangelism. Two men are currently being disciplined in fortnightly one-on-one studies with the purpose of, Lord willing, serving as ruling elders.

### Objectives for 2018

Our main objective for 2018 is to have local ruling elders. We currently have Pastor Craig Scott as the only active local elder. We are thankful to have Stephen Rhoda serve as provisional elder. With the increase of work, and many opportunities available, more co-laborers are essential for the session. We hope to have at least 1 ruling elder this year. We are currently in discussion with Rev. Namsik Yang to see how he could further serve in First RP. Other objectives include furthering the peace and unity in the church, fostering a love and relationship with the RPCNA in the congregation, and improving our own personal witness to family, friends, and work colleagues.

### Conclusion

We are truly thankful to God for His mercy towards us. In June 2017 all looked dark and lost. Since then, His presence has been manifested and felt. We believe that First RP can be used by our Lord in building His kingdom in the city of Grand Rapids.

Respectfully submitted,

First RP Session

TE Craig Scott  
RE Stephen Rhoda (provisional)  
RE Doug Nadeau (Sabbatical)

Addendum

At Presbytery 2017 the session was exhorted to 1) amend minutes for December 12 and 2) give a statement to the congregation regarding the nature of the collection as an element of worship. The session amended the minutes at our session meeting on March 20 and gave said statement on March 12.

Congregational Stats

Total Membership:

19 communicant  
7 baptized  
Total 26 members

Attendance:

Am = 42  
PM = 36

New Members By Profession:

1

Baptisms:

1 infant

Net Change in Total Membership:

Increase of 4

## First Reformed Presbyterian Church (Grand Rapids)

Financial Report - 2018 Budget and  
2017 Budget to Actual

	2018 Budget	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2017 Budget vs Actual
<b>INCOME</b>				
101 Contributions	\$52,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$43,638.72	\$(11,361.28)
102 Interest/Dividends	330.00	300.00	335.32	35.32
105 Designated Gifts	-	-	16,944.88	16,944.88
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$52,330.00</b>	<b>\$55,300.00</b>	<b>\$60,918.92</b>	<b>\$5,618.92</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>CONGREGATION</b>				
201 Christian Education	400.00	400.00	\$231.71	\$168.29
202 Fellowship Activities	400.00	400.00	138.14	261.86
204 Pulpit Supply	2,000.00	2,000.00	1,887.47	112.53
205 Administration/Office Expenses	750.00	750.00	324.65	425.35
206 Ministry Expenses	300.00	300.00	173.24	126.76
207 Immigration Expenses	4,000.00	-	-	-
<b>Congregation Sub-total</b>	<b>\$7,850.00</b>	<b>\$3,850.00</b>	<b>\$2,755.21</b>	<b>\$1,094.79</b>
<b>PASTORAL SUPPORT</b>				
301 Salary	16,920.00	16,920.00	\$16,363.68	\$556.32
302 Housing Allowance	16,920.00	16,920.00	16,363.56	556.44
303 Ministry Expenses	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,406.19	93.81
304 Pension (RPCNA Plan)	-	7,852.00	-	7,852.00
305 Medical Insurance	6,000.00	8,000.00	4,432.42	3,567.58
306 Retirement Contribution	16,400.00	8,043.00	-	8,043.00
<b>Pastoral Support Sub-total</b>	<b>\$57,740.00</b>	<b>\$59,235.00</b>	<b>\$38,565.85</b>	<b>\$20,669.15</b>
<b>MISSIONS</b>				
401 Media	360.00	360.00	345.44	14.56
403 Overseas Missions	-	-	-	-
404 Other Missions/Conferences	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,193.59	6.41
405 Mercy Ministry	-	-	-	-
<b>Missions Sub-total</b>	<b>\$1,560.00</b>	<b>\$1,560.00</b>	<b>\$1,539.03</b>	<b>\$20.97</b>
<b>DENOMINATION</b>				
501 Presbytery Assessments	500.00	450.00	525.42	(75.42)
502 Synod Assessments	950.00	750.00	981.00	(231.00)
503 Synod & Presby Expenses	500.00	500.00	262.36	237.64
505 Home Missions	-	-	-	-
506 Foreign Missions	-	-	-	-
510 RP Missions/Ministry	-	-	-	-
<b>Denomination Sub-total</b>	<b>\$1,950.00</b>	<b>\$1,700.00</b>	<b>\$1,768.78</b>	<b>\$(68.78)</b>
<b>PROPERTY</b>				
601 Building Rent	9,360.00	9,360.00	9,980.00	(620.00)
602 Utilities	-	-	-	-
603 Maintenance & Supplies	280.00	280.00	-	280.00
604 Liability Insurance	521.00	521.00	526.00	(5.00)
606 Office Equipment	-	-	-	-
607 Other Equipment	-	-	-	-
<b>Property Sub-total</b>	<b>\$10,161.00</b>	<b>\$10,161.00</b>	<b>\$10,506.00</b>	<b>\$(345.00)</b>
800 Benevolence	-	-	2,065.00	(2,065.00)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$79,261.00</b>	<b>\$76,506.00</b>	<b>\$57,199.87</b>	<b>\$19,306.13</b>
<b>YTD NET</b>	<b>\$(26,931.00)</b>	<b>\$(21,206.00)</b>	<b>\$3,719.05</b>	<b>\$13,687.21</b>

## First Reformed Presbyterian Church (Grand Rapids)

Financial Report - 2018 Budget and  
2017 Budget to Actual

<i>FUNDS</i>	<b>2018 Budget</b>	<b>2017 Budget</b>	<b>2017 Actual</b>	<b>2017 Budget vs Actual</b>
<b>General Fund</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	\$70,038.56		\$82,001.58	
Change	(25,530.50)		(11,963.02)	
<b>Balance General Fund</b>	<b>44,508.06</b>		<b>70,038.56</b>	
<b>Sermon Audio Fund</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	60.50		360.00	
Change	(60.50)		(299.50)	
<b>Balance Sermon Audio Fund</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>60.50</b>	
<b>Mission Fund</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	13,424.74		-	
Change	(1,200.00)		13,424.74	
<b>Balance Mission Fund</b>	<b>12,224.74</b>		<b>13,424.74</b>	
<b>Building Fund</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	8,611.87		8,611.87	
Change	-		-	
<b>Balance 930 Building Fund</b>	<b>8,611.87</b>		<b>8,611.87</b>	
<b>Deacon Fund</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	645.16		645.16	
Change	-		-	
<b>Balance Deacon Fund</b>	<b>645.16</b>		<b>645.16</b>	
<b>RP Global Fund</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	140.00		-	
Change	(140.00)		140.00	
<b>Balance RP Global Fund</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>140.00</b>	
<b>Balance of all funds</b>	<b>\$65,989.83</b>		<b>\$92,920.83</b>	

# 2018 Belle Center RP Session Report To Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery of the RPCNA

## *Encouragements*

We are thankful to Jesus Christ, Zion's only King and Head, for gracious provision that He has made for us in the Belle Center, OH, congregation. Session delights to tell the brothers of Presbytery of His kindness to us.

We are thankful for your appointment of Scott Hunt to be our provisional elder. He has a helpful attitude and seeks, as he can, to be useful to us who are nearly two hours' drive away. He and Allison, with their kids, have come over for a couple of communions and quickly made themselves very dear to our congregation.

Since the last meeting of Presbytery, we have received the following encouragements in God's mercy:

- A much better meeting place. We are now using the building of the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. It is about six miles to the north of Belle Center, not the thirty and more miles away that we had been.
- Several visitors who have considered becoming adherents.
- Several people in our congregation have actively been sharing the gospel with friends and with workmates.
- One of our young men hopes to start a Bible Study to build up the other young men in our congregation and to give evangelistic opportunity.
- Several of our young people have been getting more active with CYPUP. In addition, one of our high school girls hopes to be attending TFY this summer.
- Our minister has begun a wider ministry, becoming part of the Mary Rutan Hospital Chaplain staff. This is the local hospital in Bellefontaine, one of the best of its size in Ohio. It is a volunteer position for a week most months. Phil finds this delightful and in line with his gifts.
- Unexpected financial gifts for our building fund from outside sources. We now have more than enough money, if we have purely voluntary labor, to finish the building. There may be enough, in fact, to engage a contractor to do some of the work, or perhaps even finish it. Should the building be completed as we anticipate, it will be without incurring any debt, due to God's favor and the kindness of many.
- The increased giving has continued.
- We anticipate a wedding this summer of one member to an adherent, who is investigating membership.
- We received a baptized member of a United Methodist congregation as a communicant member of our congregation, by her profession of faith.
- Continued unity and love, forged stronger by our mutual suffering in much illness.

## *Challenges*

Nonetheless, there are challenges we have faced, some of which remain:

- Serious health issues and ongoing health problems – some debilitating --in several of our members. Our minister has had two biopsies that were negative, to our joy,



- 43 but has had to have his thyroid removed at the end of November with its compli-  
 44 cations, including reduced energy. Our retired officers are all in bad health: Larry  
 45 Bump, Jim McDonald, and Paul McDonald. This has hindered our progress in this  
 46 past year, but increased our love and, perhaps, our general sanctification.
- 47 • Several members or former members deeply needing repentance.
  - 48 • Continued inability to finish our building, although our resources are there to do  
 49 some further work, now.
  - 50 • Continued inability fully to support our minister in the way we want, and think  
 51 justly that we should.
  - 52 • At least one family needing a better work situation for the husband and father.
  - 53 • Continued sadness with our apparent fruitlessness from witness.
- 54

#### *Teaching and Preaching*

55 We have maintained our normal teaching schedule. In the adult/family Sabbath School  
 56 class we have been studying church history with DVDs from Ligonier. The teacher is Dr. Robert  
 57 Godfrey. Before that, we had used Ken Golden's *Presbytopia*, as well as some additional material  
 58 that our minister supplied, as a refresher for all our members and as a communicants' class for  
 59 some inquirers. It is through that study that we gained one communicant member from the United  
 60 Methodist church (not our hosting congregation) and ongoing inquiry from our anticipated summer  
 61 bride.

62 In the first worship service, we continue in the Gospel of Matthew. The second service  
 63 preaching series continues in the *Shorter Catechism*. There have been other texts used, as well, at  
 64 special occasions. Our pastor has preached at the Dayton RP Mission Church in Dayton, TN, twice.  
 65 We have experimented with using the preaching of other RP ministers via SermonAudio when our  
 66 minister is absent or ill, using the Probsts' home sound system while we were meeting at their  
 67 house, and then the sound system at the Mt. Zion Methodist Church's building, and it seems to  
 68 have worked well.

69

#### *Miscellany*

70 Since Larry's resignation, Session has formally met infrequently, although there has been  
 71 informal consultation by telecom. We plead distance and the Moderator's health problems. Our  
 72 Minutes are here for review. The Moderator represented us at Synod and all meetings of Presbytery  
 73 this year.

74 We continue to provide for our minister up to four weeks of paid vacation at his discretion,  
 75 a book allowance for his continued education and spiritual refreshment, time and reimbursement  
 76 for his and Judy's attendance at Covfamikoi or RPI, and much prayer.

77 We have asked you to pray for godly marriages for our young adults. Please continue! Mr.  
 78 Drew Probst of our congregation is engaged to be married to Miss Kaity King this summer, God  
 79 willing. There are several single young people in our congregation who believe God calls them to  
 80 marriage, but they have not yet found their spouses.

81 As we conclude this report, we give thanks to God for this calling He has given our con-  
 82 gregation to serve Jesus in this place. We want to continue. Only Zion's King can bring that about.  
 83 Please pray for us, that He, through us, will not only sustain but build His Church (Matt. 16:18).

84

85 Respectfully submitted,

86

87 Phil Pockras, Moderator

88 Scott Hunt (provisional), Clerk

## *2018 Belle Center Membership Statistics for Presbytery*

1. Total Membership – 45
2. Communicant – 33
3. Baptized – 12
4. Average AM Attendance – 35
5. Average PM Attendance – 28
6. Baptized Members Making Profession – 0
7. New Members by Profession – 0
8. Net Membership Change -- +1

Belle Center RP Church Budget vs. Actual 2017

			<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>
<b>Income</b>			<b><u>\$ 50,110.00</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 87,954.43</u></b>

Tithes & Offerings		\$ 48,000.00		\$ 55,255.30
Synod' Dividend		\$ 2,100.00		\$ 2,177.65
Interest Income		\$ 10.00		\$ 21.48
Gift Received		\$ - 0 -		\$ - 0 -
Building fund		\$ - 0 -		\$ 30,500.00

<b>Fixed Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$ 3,757.00</u></b>		<b><u>\$ 5,477.30</u></b>
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Insurance		\$ 1,395.00		\$ 1,477.00
Rent		\$ - 0 -		\$ 1,950.00
Taxes		\$ 886.00		\$ 925.98
Utilities		\$ 1,476.00		\$ 1,124.32

Electric	\$ 225.00		\$ 112.08
Gas	\$ 318.00		\$ 333.19
Sewer	\$ 540.00		\$ 559.05
Water	\$ 120.00		\$ - 0 -
BC Cap. Imp.	\$ 120.00		\$ 120.00
Garbage	\$ 153.00		\$ - 0 -

<b>Flexible Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$ 74,556.00</u></b>		<b><u>\$ 52,945.29</u></b>
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Church Building Rehab.		\$ 17,800.00		\$ - 0 -
Interior	\$ 15,000.00		\$ - 0 -	
Furn & Fixt.	\$ 2,800.00		\$ - 0 -	
Flowers		\$ 50.00		\$ - 0 -

**Flexible Expenses Con't Budget Actual**

Guest Speakers	\$	400.00	\$	494.40
Mowing	\$	150.00	\$	130.00
Office Supplies	\$	150.00	\$	98.00
Pastor's Expense	\$	50,959.00	\$	49,355.00

Book Allow.	\$	200.00	\$	- 0 -
Covfamikoi	\$	200.00	\$	- 0 -
Health Ins.	\$	9,600.00	\$	9,600.00
Housing Allow.	\$	5,100.00	\$	5,100.00
Med. Exp. Reim.	\$	500.00	\$	- 0 -
Mileage	\$	500.00	\$	- 0 -
Office Exp.	\$	150.00	\$	-0-
Pension	\$	4,200.00	\$	4,200.00
Salary	\$	30,264.00	\$	30,264.00
Synod Reg.	\$	245.00	\$	191.00

Presbytery Assessment	\$	862.00	\$	861.07
RP M&M	\$	1,870.00	\$	743.92
Repairs	\$	1,500.00	\$	321.90

Manse	\$	1,500.00	\$	321.90
Synod's Assessment	\$	815.00	\$	941.00
	\$	-0-	\$	
	\$	-0-	\$	
	\$	-0-	\$	

**Budget Actual**

**Total Budget Income 2017 \$ 50,110.00 \$ 85,954.43**

**Total Budget Expenses 2017 \$ 78,313.00 \$ 58,422.59**

**Difference -\$ 28,203.00 \$ 27,531.84**

	\$	- 0 -	\$	
	\$	- 0 -	\$	
	\$	- 0 -	\$	

<b>Checking Acct. Balance 12/31/16</b>	<b>\$ 11,418.71</b>
<b>Checking Acct. Balance 12/31/17</b>	<b>\$ 35,327.79</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+ \$ 23,909.08</b>
<b>Building Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 37,000.00</b>
<b>Savings Acct. Balance 12/31/16</b>	<b>\$ 6,138.87</b>
<b>Savings Acct. Balance 12/31/17</b>	<b>\$ 6,143.15</b>
<b>Total cash assets 12/31/17</b>	<b>\$ 41,470.94</b>
<b>Designated Building Fund</b>	<b>- \$ 37,000.00</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$ 10,614.09</b>

# Budget - 2018

## Belle Center Reformed Presbyterian Church

	<b>Income</b>	<b>\$ 54,120.00</b>
<u>Tithes &amp; Offerings</u>		
1st Qtr.	\$ 13,000.00	
2nd Qtr.	\$ 13,000.00	
3rd Qtr.	\$ 13,000.00	
4th Qtr.	\$ 13,000.00	
	<b>\$ 52,000.00</b>	
<u>Synods Dividend</u>		\$ 2,100.00
<u>Interest Income</u>		\$ 20.00
Checking	\$ 15.00	
Savings	\$ 5.00	
		<b>\$ 57,437.00</b>
	<b>Fixed Expenses</b>	
<u>Insurance</u>		\$ 1,477.00
<u>Rent</u>		\$ 2,600.00
<u>Taxes</u>		\$ 925.00
Church	\$ 194.00	
Manse	\$ 731.00	
<u>Utilities</u>		\$ 1,476.00
Electric	\$ 112.00	
Gas	\$ 333.00	
Sewer	\$ 0.00	
Water	\$ 120.00	
Belle Center Cap. Imp.	\$ 0.00	
Garbage	\$ 0.00	
<u>Pastor's Expense</u>		<b>\$ 50,959.00</b>

Book Allowance	\$ 200.00		
Covfamikoi Reg.	\$ 200.00		
Health Ins.	\$ 9,600.00		
Housing Allow.	\$ 5,100.00		
Med. Exp. Reim.	\$ 500.00		
Mileage	\$ 500.00		
Office Expense	\$ 150.00		
Pension Exp.	\$ 4,200.00		
Salary	\$30,264.00		
Synod Reg.	\$ 245.00		
<b><u>Flexible Expenses</u></b>			<b><u>\$ 23,723.00</u></b>
<u>Church Building Rehab</u>		\$ 17,800.00	
Interior	\$ 15,000.00		
Furn. & Fixt.	\$ 2,800.00		
<u>Flowers</u>		\$ 50.00	
<u>Guest Speakers</u>		\$ 400.00	
<u>Mowing</u>		\$ 150.00	
<u>Office Expense</u>		\$ 150.00	
<u>Presbytery Assessment</u>		\$ 862.00	
<u>Synod's Assessment</u>		\$ 941.00	
<u>RP M&amp;M</u>		\$ 1,870.00	
<u>Repairs</u>		\$ 1,500.00	
Manse	\$ 1,500.00		
<u>Total Budget Income</u>		\$ 54,120.00	
<u>Total Budget Expenses</u>		\$ 81,160.00	
<u>Difference</u>		\$ -27,040.00	

## **Report of the Bloomington Reformed Presbyterian Church to Presbytery**

2018

*“Witnessing for Christ in Bloomington for 196 Years”*

*[Paul] planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. - 1 Cor. 3:6*

As the session looks back on 2017, we rejoice at how the Lord continues to move in the congregation, strengthening, growing, and adding to us.

When we review the events of the past year, we are most cognizant of the number of ways that God has used the people of the congregation to minister to one another and adorn the gospel of Christ. The work of administering and coordinating the gifts of the Spirit among us has grown over the years through the various committees that were set up in response to the loss of the deacon board approximately 20 years ago. Now that the congregation has a strong deaconate, we still find these structures to be an invaluable help in incorporating the congregation into the ministry of the church. We are truly thankful for the hard-working people that make up these committees, and maintain their individual ministries. We also see how the Lord has given a spirit of hospitality and helpfulness that pervades the congregation. We are so thankful for the way we see the congregational ministry growing through the initiative of individual members pursuing the work as the Spirit lays it on their hearts and in their minds. A most striking example of this concerns the range of Bible studies that go on from week to week, as the Lord puts the desire among us to gather together around His word. He is at work among us in such obvious ways, and we are very thankful for it.

The last year has seen an unusual number of changes in the congregation. Among the greatest joys we have as a session is to talk with new members about how the Lord has brought them to faith, and then into the congregation. While a number of people have left the congregation over the last year, the Lord has brought others to join us, and their active work among us is real testimony to God’s provision for the congregation and for the community of Bloomington.

The most striking development, though, concerns the changes to the session. Although we are saddened with the loss of Adam and Anne Niess, we rejoice in their benefit to the Lafayette congregation, and the Lord has compensated us with the addition of two elders to the session. We have been discussing the need for a larger session, and praying for it over the last four years. To see the Lord’s work come to fruition in the election of CJ Davis and Stephen Shipp is a real encouragement, and we trust will enable the congregation to continue to grow, and provide the needed attention for this larger congregation. We examined these men in the January, 2018, session meeting, and not only sustained the call of the congregation, but have also been able really to appreciate the way God has raised these men up, with just the



right disposition and gifts for us at this time. These men were ordained and installed on February 4, 2018. The Lord provides richly.

Concerning the overall congregational membership, the following data are particular to calendar year 2017.

1. The average morning worship service attendance was 164, an increase of 17 over 2016.
2. The average evening worship service attendance was 105, an increase of 10 over 2016.
3. The average SS class attendance was 110, an increase of 13 of 2016.
4. The total communicant (119) and baptized (43) membership on December 31, 2017, was 162, a net increase of 2 over 2016.
5. Ten new communicant members were added.
6. Two communicant members were transferred to other confessional reformed churches, two were transferred to other non-reformed churches, and seven were removed from the rolls due to their involvement in churches with no discernable membership recognition.
7. Communicant membership at the end of 2016 was at 116, and rose to 119 at the end of 2017. The number of baptized non-communicant members at the end of 2016 was at 44 and fell to 43 at the end of 2017.

The session continues to contemplate how to provide for the continued growth of the congregation, especially on two fronts. The most important concerns development of leadership. We continue to pray that the Lord will call more individuals into ordained leadership, and see Him continuing to work in this direction with various individuals in the congregation. More particularly, we continue to actively pursue a second pastor by working with men in various positions around the denomination who we can envision being called to a dual pastorate in our context. We envision this being a major focus during the upcoming spring, depending upon the Lord's leading.

The second way concerns the infrastructure of the congregation. Part of this is what was involved with a move last year to incorporate the congregation. The more tangible area of concern, though, is the facility. The session has been monitoring the use of the facility, and its capacity. With some of the special events that we have seen this last year, the Thanksgiving Psalm Sing and three weddings, we have been able to ascertain the remarkable ability of the sanctuary to house a congregation of a larger size. However, we are keenly aware of constraints on facilities and classroom space, as well as the long-standing problem of accessibility. We have continued to seek to purchase property adjacent to the congregation, in advance of making a specific plan to expand the congregation's facilities.

The session met 14 times in formal court, only 10 of which were regular monthly meetings. Each of these meetings begins with the privilege of praying for the

congregational members, each by name over the course of the year. We also spend much time considering some of the needs and challenges of the individuals in the congregation in the context of giving counsel. Other meetings were conducted for the purpose of interviewing individuals for membership and communion, and one of them was combined with a congregational meeting to elect new ruling elders. In addition, the session again took the better part of the day last spring to go to Nashville and spend time together, talking through the larger issues facing the session and the congregation. The day continues to be very valuable for focusing our thinking about the direction of the congregation, and we plan on continuing this pattern.

With respect to the church beyond our congregation, our session members have fulfilled various responsibilities. Adam Niess, among other things, has been a member of the Selma oversight committee. Ken de Jong has been appointed to the Trustees of Geneva College, and is currently chairing the academic affairs committee of the college. Rich Holdeman is a Trustee of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Rich is also an active member of the candidates and credentials committee of the presbytery. Rich, Ken and Eric Cosens all are members of the Temporary Governing Board of the Terre Haute congregation. Finally, Wendell serves on the board of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, a large coalition of individuals seeking to develop an appreciation of Reformed doctrine among a broad variety of churches.

We are so thankful to our God who gives us such tangible unity in Christ. This year has been a joy to us, we continue to give praise to him for you all, and pray that He will richly bless each one of you in Christ.

Respectfully submitted by the Session of the Bloomington Congregation

Wes Archer, Eric Cosens, CJ Davis, Ken de Jong, Rich Holdeman, Wendell McBurney,  
& Stephen Shipp.

**Bloomington Financial Report:**

<b>Income</b>						<b><u>2017 Budget</u></b>	<b><u>2017 Actuals</u></b>	<b><u>2018 Budget</u></b>
	External Income							
	Book Table Income					-	604.5	
	Contributions - Offerings					303,500.00	314,437.74	305,000.00
	Designated Income					-	20,009.82	
	Diaconal Ministry - Vol. Fund						1,215.00	
	Interest - Capital Investments & Savings					5,625.00	5,733.98	5,625.00
	Miscellaneous Income					75.00	75.00	75.00
	Offerings - Benevolence					-	3,237.00	
	<b>Total External Income</b>					<b>309,200.00</b>	<b>345,313.04</b>	<b>310,700.00</b>
	Designated Income from Savings Revolving Funds					22,570.51	22,563.75	100.76
	<b>Total Income</b>					<b>331,770.51</b>	<b>367,876.79</b>	<b>310,800.76</b>
	<b>Expense</b>							
	External Expenses							
	Book Table Expense					-	448.77	-
	Facilities Capital Expense					-	-	-
	Facilities - Operating					42,600.00	30,644.98	49,900.00
	Finance Committee					1,200.00	1,363.93	1,200.00
	Ministry: Diaconal					2,500.00	3,467.86	2,500.00
	Educational					4,506.76	6,491.66	4,850.76
	Fellowship					3,200.00	2,599.65	3,100.00
	Library					500.00	487.01	500.00
	Nursery					350.00	198.69	350.00
	Outreach					5,370.00	6,438.76	5,360.00
	Session					1,750.00	2,211.07	6,950.00
	Student					1,400.00	474.64	1,400.00
	Youth					1,150.00	483.73	925.00
	Missions					22,295.00	35,557.15	22,895.00
	Offerings - Disbursements					-	3,100.00	-
	Office Expense					11,900.00	8,844.42	14,250.00
	Pastoral Compensation - Holdeman					84,400.00	84,750.00	90,958.00
	Pastoral Compensation - Niess					67,340.00	69,340.00	-
	Pastoral Compensation - New							33,670.00
	Pastoral Expenses					7,300.00	3,861.44	5,800.00
	Presbytery					4,728.74	4,728.74	6,766.84
	RPCNA Works					8,550.00	8,722.80	8,900.00
	Special Funds					37,563.75	22,563.75	15,000.00
	<b>Total External Expenses</b>					<b>308,604.25</b>	<b>296,779.05</b>	<b>275,275.60</b>
	Designated Disbursements - to Savings Revolving Funds							
	Benevolence						-	
	Camp Fundraiser						94.00	
	Capital Improvements - 8 yr. plan						-	
	Facilities Capital					15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
	Ministry Hedge					4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
	<b>Total Disbursements to Savings Revolving Funds</b>					<b>19,000.00</b>	<b>19,094.00</b>	<b>19,000.00</b>
	<b>Total Expense</b>					<b>327,604.25</b>	<b>315,873.05</b>	<b>294,275.60</b>
	<b>Net Income</b>					<b>4,166.26</b>	<b>52,003.74</b>	<b>16,525.16</b>



# Christ Church reformed presbyterian

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Mailing address: 5881 Skyward Lane, Indianapolis, Indiana 46234-9128

Pastor: Michael LeFebvre • pastor@ccrp.org • 317-456-2551

February, 2018

## *Fathers and Brothers of the Great Lakes—Gulf Presbytery,*

In the Lord's providence, 2017 was a year where blessing and rejoicing was intermixed with trials and hardships for many of the members of Christ Church in Brownsburg. We rejoiced in May as seven covenant children publicly professed their faith and took the vows of church membership. Throughout the year, four families were blessed with new babies, and we continue to see evidence of spiritual growth in our members and our youth. We mourned as Rutledge Etheridge, Jr. succumbed to ailments that had beset him for many years, and died in August. We continue to pray for other members who continue to suffer from chronic medical conditions. Furthermore, several families are facing challenge or transitions in their employment situations. We pray that Jesus would minister peace and hope to the members of the body and to our surrounding community through the efforts of this branch of the church.

At the end of 2017, our Communicant membership stood at 64, an increase of six over the previous year. We received the transferred membership of one family (two communicant members; one baptized) from Lafayette RPC due to a relocation. As noted previously, seven covenant children publicly professed faith and joined the church. One member was transferred to another local church, one was dismissed at his request, and one was separated from us by death. Two covenant children were baptized in 2017, leaving us with 32 baptized members. There were no new members by profession of faith. The net change in total membership in 2017 was three. We are also blessed with the presence of two families who regularly participate in the life of the congregation, but have not yet joined the church. Christ Church has not taken regular attendance counts at worship services, but the Session is considering ways to implement the practice.

The weekly ministry of the Word continues to be the focal point of our congregational life, and we are blessed to sit under Michael LeFebvre's continued faithful preaching. The preaching in the morning services has been focused on the book of Acts. In the evening services, Pastor LeFebvre concluded a short series on a selection of Psalms before beginning an exposition of Deuteronomy, the final book of our Pentateuch

series. A Psalm sing is held on the first Sabbath evening of each month in place of a preaching service. In addition to his preaching duties, Michael meets regularly to counsel members of the congregation and is active in denominational and presbytery assignments. In July, Michael traveled with his wife Heather to Malaysia to deliver a series of lectures at the Pilgrim Church Family Conference. The congregation was blessed by the preaching of George Gregory during Michael's four week absence. Additional guest preaching was provided by Rut Etheridge, III, Gordon Keddie, James Faris, Stan McKenzie and David Hanson over the course of the year. Christ Church practices weekly communion and observed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper 53 times in 2017.

The Session typically meets twice monthly -- once for a business meeting and once for a prayer meeting -- and was constituted in court 25 times over the course of the year. The Deacon board (three deacons) meets monthly and is actively engaged in the ministry of mercy both within the congregation and to the community at large. The Session and Deacon board periodically meet jointly to discuss the needs of the congregation.

Our Sabbath School program is conducted for nine months of the year, pausing for a break over the summer. Classes are provided for the primary, middle school, high school, and adult age groups. Fellowship activities are regularly planned for the middle school and high school students, and many participate in Presbytery youth activities. Two high school students were able to participate in the Theological Foundations for Youth program at the Seminary over the summer. We continue to hold midweek small group meetings in four locations: Avon, Brownsburg, Zionsville and West Indianapolis. These groups have been working through studies on Leviticus, Ruth and Esther over the course of the year.

Our building situation continues to be a matter for prayer. While the Seventh Day Adventist building we are meeting in meets our needs in a number of ways, we are stretching the capacity of the auditorium and classroom/fellowship space. Solutions to this issue are not apparent, so we continue to pray for the Lord's direction in the matter.

*The Session, CCRP*

*Attachments:*

*1. 2017 Financial Summary and 2018 Budget*

# CHRIST CHURCH REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

## 2017 YEAR END SUMMARY AND 2018 BUDGET

		2017 Budgeted	2017 Actual	Difference % (2017 actual vs budget)	2018 Budget
<b>Income</b>					
<b>Gifts</b>					
	Tithes and Offerings	\$170,000.00	\$154,613.60		\$155,000.00
	Building Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00		
	Designated Offering	\$0.00	\$250.00		
	Interest on Bank Accounts	\$200.00	\$121.28	60.6%	\$125.00
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$170,200.00</b>	<b>\$154,984.88</b>	91.1%	<b>\$155,125.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
<b>Congregation</b>					
	Christian Education	\$2,500.00	\$1,497.35	59.9%	\$2,000.00
	Youth Ministry				
	<i>Education</i>	\$500.00		0.0%	\$0.00
	<i>Fellowship</i>	\$500.00	\$289.25	57.9%	\$500.00
	<i>Scholarships</i>	\$1,000.00	\$600.00		\$1,000.00
	Sub-Total, Youth Ministry	\$2,000.00	\$889.25	44.5%	\$1,500.00
	Fellowship				
	<i>CovFamKoi Assistance</i>	\$2,000.00	\$550.00		\$0.00
	<i>Church T-Shirts</i>	\$0.00			\$0.00
	<i>Fellowship Activities</i>	\$2,000.00	\$860.82		\$1,000.00
	Sub-Total, Fellowship	\$4,000.00	\$1,410.82		\$1,000.00
	Guest Ministry	\$4,000.00	\$3,400.00	85.0%	\$4,000.00
	Pastor Mileage	\$1,400.00	\$1,652.18	118.0%	\$1,500.00
	Pastoral Ministry	\$2,000.00	\$2,249.16	112.5%	\$2,000.00
	Worship & Church Supplies	\$400.00	\$586.94	146.7%	\$400.00
	<b>Total, Congregation</b>	<b>\$16,300.00</b>	<b>\$11,685.70</b>	71.7%	<b>\$12,400.00</b>
<b>Denominational</b>					
	Boards & Committees	\$50.00	\$93.76	187.5%	\$50.00
	Presbytery Assessment	\$2,709.00	\$2,716.27	100.3%	\$2,561.00
	Synod Assessments	\$3,900.00	\$3,393.00	87.0%	\$3,092.00
	Synod Delegates	\$500.00	\$326.00	65.2%	\$500.00
	<b>Total, Denominational</b>	<b>\$7,159.00</b>	<b>\$6,529.03</b>	91.2%	<b>\$6,203.00</b>
<b>Insurance</b>					
	Commercial Liability Package	\$2,480.00	\$1,985.09	80.0%	\$1,330.00
	Umbrella, Business Auto	\$10.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$537.00
	Workers Comp	\$10.00	\$266.33	2663.3%	\$576.00
	<b>Total, Insurance</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>	<b>\$2,251.42</b>	90.1%	<b>\$2,443.00</b>

# CHRIST CHURCH REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

## 2017 YEAR END SUMMARY AND 2018 BUDGET

	2017 Budgeted	2017 Actual	Difference % (2017 actual vs budget)	2018 Budget
<b>Missions</b>				
Advertising	\$400.00	\$635.02	158.8%	\$400.00
Local Outreach/Evangelism	\$300.00	\$221.54	73.8%	\$200.00
Community Groups (memberships)	\$100.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Denominational Ministries				
<i>Missions</i>	\$7,000.00	\$4,500.00	64.3%	\$1,250.00
<i>RPM&amp;M</i>	\$10,000.00	\$9,805.00	98.1%	\$8,639.00
<i>Sister Church Aid</i>	\$8,000.00	\$1,500.00	18.8%	\$3,500.00
Sub-Total, Denominational Ministry	\$25,000.00	\$15,805.00	63.2%	\$13,389.00
Non-Denominational Missions/Ministries	\$2,000.00	\$3,484.48	174.2%	\$500.00
Mercy Ministry				
<i>Community Outreach and Service</i>	\$500.00	\$896.17	179.2%	\$1,000.00
<i>Benevolence (Local &amp; Distant)</i>	\$3,000.00	\$3,211.87	107.1%	\$2,500.00
<i>Elder Compassion Fund</i>	\$1,000.00	\$540.00		\$1,000.00
Sub-Total, Mercy Ministry	\$4,500.00	\$4,648.04	103.3%	\$4,500.00
<b>Total, Missions</b>	<b>\$32,300.00</b>	<b>\$24,794.08</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>\$18,989.00</b>
<b>Pastoral Support</b>				
Healthcare	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
Parsonage Allowance	\$41,760.00	\$41,663.22	99.8%	\$48,700.00
Salary	\$50,640.00	\$50,736.78	100.2%	\$48,700.00
Pension	\$6,100.00	\$6,350.00	104.1%	\$6,100.00
<b>Total, Pastoral Support</b>	<b>\$98,500.00</b>	<b>\$98,750.00</b>	<b>100.3%</b>	<b>\$103,500.00</b>
<b>Property</b>				
Church Equipment	\$100.00	\$0.00	8.0%	\$100.00
Church Office Rent	\$0.00			
Building Fund	\$1,500.00		0.0%	
Facility Rent	\$11,040.00	\$10,120.00	91.7%	\$11,040.00
Website	\$450.00	\$439.74	97.7%	\$450.00
<b>Total, Property</b>	<b>\$13,090.00</b>	<b>\$10,559.74</b>	<b>80.7%</b>	<b>\$11,590.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$169,849.00</b>	<b>\$154,569.97</b>	<b>91.0%</b>	<b>\$155,125.00</b>
Net Income (Loss)	\$351.00	\$414.91		\$0.00

<b>BALANCE SHEET, DECEMBER 2017</b>			
<b>ASSETS</b>			
	2017 Beginning Balance	2017 Ending Balance	
Chase Checking	\$30,907.92	\$19,620.11	
Chase Savings	\$242,994.30	\$246,490.23	
Outstanding Reimbursements	\$0.00	\$90.28	
Deacon Petty Cash Fund	\$0.00		
Outstanding Deposits	\$0.00	\$6,769.33	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$273,902.22</b>	<b>\$272,969.95</b>	
<b>DESIGNATED FUNDS</b>			
Building Fund	\$242,994.30	\$246,498.02	(1)
Building Fund (2016 Budget)	\$3,382.43	\$1,500.00	(2)
Outstanding Checks/Deposits	\$3,429.70	\$2,114.74	
<b>TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$249,806.43</b>	<b>\$250,112.76</b>	
<b>TOTAL, NON- DESIGNATED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$24,095.79</b>	<b>\$22,857.19</b>	

(1) Interest on savings accrues to building fund.

(2) Transferred \$3,382.43 from the general fund to the savings account on January 10, 2017.



## COLUMBUS RPC REPORT TO PRESBYTERY - SPRING 2018

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

It has now been a full year since Pastor McCracken and his family returned from four months of sabbatical away. The stated purpose was for pastoral renewal. From the vantage point of a year later we are convinced that all the preparations, planning and writing were worth it. It was a time which revitalized several aspects of pastoral ministry and the fruit has been a year of formulating and preparing to implement a new vision for our congregation.

The year has been one of purposeful preaching on various aspects of this vision, taking a break from many years of expository preaching to address topically the church's calling to ...

*"offer help, hope and a home by proclaiming the word, living out the gospel by investing in relationships and making disciples of Jesus Christ."*

and this by intentionally seeking the Holy Spirit to work in us the fruits He bestows upon those who trust in Christ [Gal. 5:22-23].



The session began formulating this vision in the spring, and three teams of layperson were then recruited, each representing one of the three main elements therein. These teams then worked for several months to present proposals to the session of ways to implement the vision. In November, those proposals were presented to the session, which then prioritized, filtered through them and coordinated them to lay out a plan for ministry together with necessary budgetary adjustments to begin following this congregational meeting. We are excited to see how God will use us in the coming year.

The congregation was thrilled to elect, ordain and install a new Deacon this year. Sean Mathews brings a caring heart, a craftsman's skill and an insightful mind to the board.

Pastor McCracken remains very busy with pastoral duties, administrative and teaching duties on the Paideia Co-op Board, serving the presbytery on the TGB of Dayton, TN and the denomination as secretary of the Home Mission Board. He looks forward to the help of elder Gary McNamee, who has just begun a year-long internship of about 10 hours/week (more during the summer months) while he continues his online studies at RPTS.

The Lord has increased counseling opportunities this year so that it is not unusual to be meeting with two or three people a week in this capacity. In November the session invited Pastor Barry York to come and address the topic of Pornography and Sexual Purity with the men of our community and congregation. This time was extremely helpful and a great many expressed how necessary this frank conversation is in the church today. A number of men both from within the congregation and from the community have begun meeting for regular discipleship as a result of this seminar.

One of the initiatives that flowed from our new mission teams is an effort to explore church planting possibilities in Louisville, KY. Both a single man and a couple from this area have become members in the Columbus RP Church and their contacts led us to begin an investigative Bible Study at the public library downtown, using Pastor McCracken's Commentary/Study-Guide in Luke that he edited for publication during the sabbatical. The group consists of about six or seven regulars who drive down

## COLUMBUS RPC REPORT TO PRESBYTERY - SPRING 2018

from Columbus and a combination of ten others from Louisville. The Columbus congregation commends this work to either the Northern or Southern Church Extension Committees.

Other new ministries that are in the works for 2018 are:

- Good News Club (Child Evangelism Fellowship) at a local public school.
- Companionship Ministry at *The Greentree Assisted Living Center* where we have a monthly worship service.
- Development of an ESL ministry in this city which is second only to Seattle in the nation for H-1B visas (a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign, graduate level workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise).
- New discipleship small groups.
- A welcome table with small gifts for visitors.
- “Children’s Quiet Worship Bags” for use during the worship service or Sunday School.
- *Guess Who’s Coming to Lunch* - teams of families ready to prepare and share a meal with one another and with any visiting guests at the church.
- Mission Teams being sent out (one went to Stillwater, OK this past year).

In the last several months the Lord has brought in several new families that are currently undergoing the church information classes with the intent of joining with us. These are not reflected in the statistics shown below. For God’s good care and provision of our church, we thank Him!

### MEMBERSHIP

Communicant: 102 (formerly 97)  
 Baptized: 41 (formerly 45)  
 Grand Total: 143  
 Net Change: +1

### ATTENDANCE

AM Worship: 94 (down from 99)  
 PM Worship: 50.3

### PROFESSIONS

New Converts: 0  
 Covenant Children: 1

### BAPTISMS

Adults: 1  
 Infants: 1

### OTHER ACTIONS

Transfers (in): 3  
 Transfers (out): 3  
 Dismissals: 1

<b>Columbus Reformed Presbyterian Church</b>								
	1Q17	2Q17	3Q17	4Q17	Total	2017	Spend	2018
						Budget	vs Bud	
<b>Giving Income</b>								
Giving	70,514.99	65,622.25	58,874.12	64,305.46	259,316.82	236,772.00		253,336.76
Interest Income	4.81	4.87	7.33	7.44	24.45			25.00
Designated Giving	0.00	8,511.96	6,609.68	787.97	15,909.61			8,300.00
<b>Total Giving Income</b>	<b>70,519.80</b>	<b>74,139.08</b>	<b>65,491.13</b>	<b>65,100.87</b>	<b>275,250.88</b>	<b>236,772.00</b>	<b>116.3%</b>	<b>261,661.76</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>25,566.21</b>	<b>18,362.71</b>	<b>6,940.67</b>	<b>-1,742.69</b>	<b>49,126.90</b>			
Operating Fund ( <i>Checking</i> )	32,756.89	27,053.75	36,455.87	25,000.00				
Seminary Scholarship Fund - <i>Reserved</i>	0.00	0.00	5,500.00	3,000.00				
Higher Education Scholarship Fund - <i>Reserved</i>	0.00	8,274.00	0.00	0.00				
Parking Lot Repair Fund - <i>Reserved</i>	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00				
HVAC Repair Fund - <i>Reserved</i>	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00				
Roof Repair Fund - <i>Reserved</i>	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00				
Add'l Mortgage Payment Fund - <i>Reserved</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00				
Sabaticall Expenses - <i>Reserved</i>	120.16	0.00	0.00	0.00				
Insurance Expenses - <i>Reserved</i>	-1,205.58	-1,205.58	0.00	0.00				
Non-Restricted Savings	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	22,955.37				
<b>Total Overall Cash Fund Balances</b>	<b>106,671.47</b>	<b>109,122.17</b>	<b>116,955.87</b>	<b>115,955.37</b>				
<b>Total Non-Restricted Cash Funds</b>	<b>52,756.89</b>	<b>47,053.75</b>	<b>56,455.87</b>	<b>47,955.37</b>				
<b>Long Term Debt</b>								
Church Building Mortgage	50,206.70	48,886.88	47,553.86	46,207.50				40,686.11
<b>Expense</b>								
<b>Ministries</b>								
Benevolence	0.00	0.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	150.00	53.3%	150.00
Christian Education (incl. WBS)	181.50	292.42	0.00	514.82	988.74	1,150.00	86.0%	1,150.00
Church Listings	520.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	520.00	600.00	86.7%	600.00
CPRC Short Term Missions	0.00	2,700.00	0.00	0.00	2,700.00	3,000.00	90.0%	3,000.00
Digital Ministry	89.85	59.90	330.86	59.90	540.51	700.00	77.2%	700.00
Evangelism/Outreach	0.00	0.00	275.00	554.04	829.04	800.00	103.6%	1,000.00
Fall Seminar	1,440.00	0.00	0.00	1,302.03	2,742.03	3,000.00	91.4%	3,000.00
Fellowship	812.22	569.16	343.07	956.57	2,681.02	4,500.00	59.6%	2,800.00
Gift Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	N/A	
Higher Education Fund Scholarship	0.00	4,137.00	4,137.00	0.00	8,274.00	8,274.00	100.0%	8,300.00
Mercy	2,122.96	264.33	421.27	4,060.77	6,869.33	7,000.00	98.1%	7,000.00
Pregnancy Care Center	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	100.0%	500.00
RP Global Missions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.0%	0.00
RP Missions & Ministries	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00	100.0%	25,000.00
RP Witness Subscription	0.00	0.00	0.00	915.30	915.30	850.00	107.7%	950.00
Seminary Scholarship	0.00	0.00	800.00	4,900.00	5,700.00	3,200.00	178.1%	0.00
Session Ministries	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	N/A	2,500.00
Vacation Bible School	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.0%	1,000.00
Vision Implementation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	N/A	6,000.00
Youth Memory Work Scholarship	0.00	923.00	0.00	0.00	923.00	2,500.00	36.9%	1,500.00
Youth Ministry	0.00	36.35	856.71	110.31	1,003.37	900.00	111.5%	1,000.00
Youth Missions Training -TFY/Echo	0.00	450.00	0.00	0.00	450.00	750.00	60.0%	750.00
<b>Total Ministries</b>	<b>11,166.53</b>	<b>15,432.16</b>	<b>13,663.91</b>	<b>19,453.74</b>	<b>59,716.34</b>	<b>62,874.00</b>	<b>95.0%</b>	<b>66,900.00</b>
<b>Synod &amp; Presbytery</b>								
Presbytery Assessment	0.00	0.00	4,180.62	0.00	4,180.62	3,000.00	139.4%	3,911.42
Synod Housing	0.00	573.00	0.00	0.00	573.00	750.00	76.4%	750.00
Synod's Assessment	0.00	560.00	4,574.00	0.00	5,134.00	5,000.00	102.7%	5,186.34
<b>Total Synod &amp; Presbytery</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,133.00</b>	<b>8,754.62</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>9,887.62</b>	<b>8,750.00</b>	<b>113.0%</b>	<b>9,847.76</b>

<b>Columbus Reformed Presbyterian Church</b>	<b>1Q17</b>	<b>2Q17</b>	<b>3Q17</b>	<b>4Q17</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Spend</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Senior Pastor</b>						<b>Budget</b>	<b>vs. Bud</b>	
Salary	11,947.20	11,947.20	11,947.20	11,947.20	47,788.80	47,788.80	100.0%	49,127.00
Housing Allowance	7,964.80	7,964.80	7,964.79	7,964.79	31,859.18	31,759.20	100.3%	32,649.00
<b>Total Compensation</b>	<b>19,912.00</b>	<b>19,912.00</b>	<b>19,911.99</b>	<b>19,911.99</b>	<b>79,647.98</b>	<b>79,548.00</b>	<b>100.1%</b>	<b>81,776.00</b>
<b>Pastor Benefits</b>								
Book Fund	68.24	0.00	34.58	0.00	102.82	150.00	68.5%	150.00
Business Expense	289.62	26.78	589.66	144.84	1,050.90	1,800.00	58.4%	1,800.00
Health Deductible	0.00	0.00	1,753.98	2,630.54	4,384.52	5,000.00	87.7%	5,000.00
Major Medical	1,392.81	2,016.30	2,688.40	1,344.20	7,441.71	7,800.00	95.4%	10,000.00
Pension Contribution	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,600.00	97.8%	4,950.00
Refreshment/Continuing Education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.0%	500.00
<b>Total Pastor Benefits</b>	<b>1,750.67</b>	<b>2,043.08</b>	<b>5,066.62</b>	<b>8,619.58</b>	<b>17,479.95</b>	<b>19,850.00</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>22,400.00</b>
Pastoral Internship Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-		16,000.00
<b>Total Pastorate</b>	<b>21,662.67</b>	<b>21,955.08</b>	<b>24,978.61</b>	<b>28,531.57</b>	<b>97,127.93</b>	<b>99,398.00</b>	<b>97.7%</b>	<b>120,176.00</b>
<b>Property</b>								
Church Mortgage Payment	1,821.89	1,821.89	1,821.89	1,821.89	7,287.56	7,288.00	100.0%	7,288.00
Church Capital Expenditures	134.29	0.00	1,304.69	4,986.61	6,425.59	8,500.00	75.6%	5,000.00
Church Repairs	732.68	1,925.33	467.12	834.32	3,959.45	8,000.00	49.5%	5,000.00
Church Utilities (incl Phone/Internet)	4,089.18	2,454.15	2,410.99	2,195.86	11,150.18	13,000.00	85.8%	13,000.00
Clerical Labor	1,011.00	765.00	864.00	803.00	3,443.00	5,000.00	68.9%	5,000.00
Custodial Labor	975.00	1,049.99	600.00	1,375.00	3,999.99	4,000.00	100.0%	4,000.00
Grounds Upkeep	125.00	2,923.98	2,080.00	3,380.00	8,508.98	10,000.00	85.1%	10,000.00
House Capital Expenditures	0.00	843.09	194.97	0.00	1,038.06	10,000.00	10.4%	1,000.00
House Repairs	0.00	0.00	267.50	0.00	267.50	1,000.00	26.8%	500.00
House Utilities	1,138.01	420.06	423.54	307.05	2,288.66	2,000.00	114.4%	1,750.00
Insurance/CPR License Fees	0.00	3,115.00	0.00	0.00	3,115.00	3,500.00	89.0%	3,500.00
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>10,027.05</b>	<b>15,318.49</b>	<b>10,434.70</b>	<b>15,703.73</b>	<b>51,483.97</b>	<b>72,288.00</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>56,038.00</b>
<b>Supplies</b>								
Custodial	141.93	166.06	63.67	221.22	592.88	750.00	79.1%	750.00
Kitchen	189.20	135.40	122.80	30.69	478.09	600.00	79.7%	600.00
Library	0.00	0.00	0.00	61.49	61.49	200.00	0.0%	200.00
Nursery	0.00	0.00	10.56	0.00	10.56	500.00	2.1%	200.00
Office	1,766.21	916.04	73.54	1,332.46	4,088.25	4,800.00	85.2%	4,800.00
Pulpit	0.00	698.65	448.05	1,508.66	2,655.36	1,200.00	221.3%	2,000.00
Worship (incl. Psalters/Bibles)	0.00	21.49	0.00	0.00	21.49	150.00	14.3%	150.00
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>2,097.34</b>	<b>1,937.64</b>	<b>718.62</b>	<b>3,154.52</b>	<b>7,908.12</b>	<b>8,200.00</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>8,700.00</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>44,953.59</b>	<b>55,776.37</b>	<b>58,550.46</b>	<b>66,843.56</b>	<b>226,123.98</b>	<b>251,510.00</b>	<b>89.9%</b>	<b>261,661.76</b>

Congregational Report for First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham 2018 Presbytery

Psalm 145:6-7 Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, And shall sing of Your righteousness.

2017 has witnessed many blessings of the Lord. We have seen growth in grace and membership. We thank God for His care upon FRPCD.

This past year we have been blessed with our first intern, Drew Pressoir, from Greenville Theological Seminary. Drew came to us from the PCA, and we greatly enjoyed his teaching and his friendship. It was a blessing for Pastor Butterfield to have someone to mentor and help prepare for future ministry. Having an intern allowed for time for formal visitations with the membership.

We have three Sunday School classes, studying Church history, the Bible as literature, and a small children's sabbath school class. The Book of Genesis was the subject of the preaching series for the year. Now we are back in the Book of Hebrews. At Wednesday prayer meetings we continue through the Psalms for our meditation and have time for singing and praying for the needs of each other. This past summer, we started a Thursday night dinner and Bible study in our neighborhood to reach out and share the gospel. We have covered The Beatitudes, The Lord's Prayer and presently the Parables in that study. It continues to grow in momentum. Attending the study are neighbors, Christians from outside of our congregation, as well as our own people. The Lord has sent many visitors for Lord's Day worship our way, and some of them continue to worship with us. Among the new people is a family originally from Colombia, South America. Our Psalm Sings are not as numerous this past year as hoped but still very inclusive with Christians from all backgrounds join us. We are in the process of organizing our first conference sharing the riches of the reformed faith to both the wider church community in our area and to the lost.

The Lord has been gracious to give us Eric and Denise Hallfors to serve as our new Treasurers. On the financial front we have taken in more in tithes and offerings that we anticipated. Our expenses were higher than expected due to the three HVAC systems that were replaced this summer, and still we ended the year in the black!

Although we were saddened by our loss of Carolyn Walters, we rejoice she is blessed forever more in the presence of her great God and Savior. It was an honor and privilege conducting her funeral, grave side service, and memorial service for her family, friends and co-workers. One member we have taken off the role for lack of attendance and four others are inactive due to various circumstances. Two professions of faith were made from our baptized members and we received three others by profession of faith and another by transfer. We end 2017 with 22 Communicant members, 4 of which are Inactive members, and 17 Adherents. This is an increase of 5 Communicant members from 2016. Three people are in a membership class presently. The Session met nine times in 2016.

A new dynamic has developed within the congregation: people attending here, both members and adherents are reaching out to help, encourage and minister to one another, which adds a beautiful new dynamic to the life of the congregation. In ways both spontaneous and scheduled, we are in each others lives and homes with great consistency.

Denise and Eric Hallfors continue to bring brothers from Orange Correctional Center to worship and fellowship with us; twice Pastor Butterfield was honored to preach there in 2017. Pastor Butterfield also preached at two evening services at First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Burlington and preached at an ordination service for an ARP Missionary.

Behind the scenes, Pastor Butterfield is providing counseling to both members and nonmembers. Those outside of the congregation are often introduced to biblical teaching at greater depth. The congregation is not only praying for the many prisoners we know, but writing letters, and witnessing gospel hope to them. Lord willing with the many prisoners the Lord has given us, we desire to develop a ministry to help them prepare for life after prison. We also are hopeful about developing a Spanish ministry, or participating with other churches in their ESL program. We wait for further developments and guidance from the Lord as to how better minister in Durham.

We thank the Lord for his goodness towards us and His blessings to the congregation. The Lord builds his house through the faithful works and prayers of his people. We rejoice to see this evident blessing working in our midst.

#### Membership Statistics:

2017

Communicant Members: 22

Baptized Members: 0

Baptized Members Making a Profession of Faith: 2

Members received on profession of faith: 3

Members added by transfer from other denomination: 1

Inactive Members: 4

Members removed from roll for indifference: 1

Members graduated to heaven: 1

Average Attendance (only have AM service): 37

Increase of 4 Communicant members from 2016 (we mistakenly listed 17 Communicant members in 2016 when the actual number was 18).

	First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham 2018 Budget	2017 Budgeted	2017 Actual	2018 Proposed
	Ministry Income Checking Account Balance Jan 2018 --\$11,379.37			
	Investment Balance Jan 2018 - \$312,539			
100	Undesignated tithes and offerings to the general fund (w	\$95,460.60	\$101,257.17	\$98,222.92
120	2017 designated giving - Diaconal fund		\$310.00	
111	Book Table, Literature, and Sermon Audio			
114	Missions			
190	<b>Total Funds available (tithes &amp; offerings, designated funds carried forward, new designated giving)</b>	<b>\$95,460.60</b>	<b>\$101,567.17</b>	<b>\$98,222.92</b>
199	Withdrawal from investments & cash	\$24,000	\$34,300.00	\$24,000.00
	Interest/Dividends on Investments			
	<b>100 Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$119,460.60</b>	<b>\$135,867.17</b>	<b>\$122,222.92</b>
	<b>Ministry Expenses</b>			
200	<b>Payroll Expenses &amp; Pastoral Compensation</b>			
201	Salary & Housing (60% is for housing)	\$50,800	\$50,799.96	\$55,880.00
202	Medical-Prescription-Dental	\$11,000	\$10,756.50	\$11,000.00
203	Retirement-\$350/month	\$4,200	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00
204	Professional Expenses	\$200	\$96.77	\$200.00
205	Pastoral Hospitality	\$1,000	\$897.28	\$1,000.00
	<b>Total 200 Payroll Expenses Pastoral Compensation</b>	<b>\$67,200</b>	<b>\$66,750.51</b>	<b>\$72,280.00</b>
300	<b>Worship, Session, Diaconal, Administration</b>			
285.5	Pulpit Supply	\$1,200	\$919.90	\$1,200.00
315	Intern	\$12,000	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
320	Session Work	\$500		\$500.00
330	Communion Expenses	\$200	\$55.01	\$200.00
335	Conference Expense			\$1,500.00
340	Diaconal Fund	\$3,000	\$2,851.50	\$3,000.00
345	Children's teaching materials	\$150	\$96.80	\$150.00
350	<b>Administration</b>			
351	Office Equipment			
352	Treasurer's, Clerk's, CPA expenses	\$50	\$48.89	\$325.00
353	Banking Expenses	\$50	\$42.00	\$50.00
355	PayPal fees (2.93% per \$1,000)	\$470	\$470.16	\$470.00
356	Bookkeeper, temporary	\$2,400	\$2,400.00	
	<b>300 Total Worship, Session, Diaconal, Administration</b>	<b>\$20,020</b>	<b>\$16,884.26</b>	<b>\$17,395.00</b>
400	<b>Synod and Presbytery</b>			
410	Synod room and board fee (pastor & one ruling elder)	\$180	\$0.00	\$180.00
411	Synod & Presbytery travel expenses (pastor & one ruling e	\$60	\$0.00	\$60.00
431	Presbytery assessments	\$528.30	\$528.30	\$700.17
432	Synod assessments (2% of 2017 line 100 -\$199.50 credit)	\$1,920.30	\$1,920.30	\$1,759.00
	<b>400 Total Synod &amp; Presbytery</b>	<b>\$2,688.60</b>	<b>\$2,448.60</b>	<b>\$2,699.17</b>
500	<b>Missions</b>			
510	RPM&M	\$500	\$500.00	\$500.00
511	Global Missions (all from designated giving)			
512	Home Missions (all from designated giving)			
520	Other RP works (all from designated giving)			
525	Prison Ministries	\$1,500		\$1,000.00
530	Outreach		\$500.28	\$500.00
		<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$1,000.28</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
600	<b>Book Table, Literature, and Sermon Audio</b>			
440	Book Table - free literature			
612	Free literature for distribution	\$400	\$197.79	\$400.00
620	Sermon Audio	\$360	\$329.45	\$360.00
	<b>600 Total</b>	<b>\$760</b>	<b>\$527.24</b>	<b>\$760.00</b>
700	<b>Fellowship</b>			
710	Fellowship expenses-food	\$700	\$721.44	\$700.00
711	Fellowship expenses-other		\$125.07	\$390.00
	<b>700 Total Fellowship</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>\$846.51</b>	<b>\$1,090.00</b>
800	<b>Publicity</b>			
830	Website	\$260	\$0.00	\$260.00
	<b>800 Total</b>	<b>\$260</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$260.00</b>
900	<b>Facilities</b>			
910	Utilities (building only)			
911	Gas	\$700	\$649.38	\$700.00
912	Electric	\$2,200	\$1,641.22	\$1,641.00
913	Water	\$650	\$795.69	\$800.00
915	Internet package for office	\$1,700	\$1,682.83	\$1,700.00
	<b>910 subtotal utilities</b>	<b>\$5,250</b>	<b>\$4,769.12</b>	<b>\$4,841.00</b>
920	Cleaning supplies	\$250	\$190.80	\$250.00
921	Cleaning contract	\$6,695	\$6,695.04	\$7,029.75
930	Facilities maintenance (includes Orkin)	\$7,000	\$20,916.27	\$7,760.00
935	Lawncare/Landscaping	\$2,485	\$2,484.96	\$2,540.00
940	Facilities equipment		\$90.09	
941	Sound system	\$50		\$50.00
950	Insurance	\$4,102	\$3,268.00	\$3,268.00
	<b>900 Total Facilities</b>	<b>\$25,832</b>	<b>\$38,414.28</b>	<b>\$25,738.75</b>
	<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$119,460.60</b>	<b>\$126,871.68</b>	<b>\$122,222.92</b>
		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$8,995.49</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**CHURCH HISTORY PAPER EXAMINATION & REVIEW**

SECOND RP CHURCH (INDIANAPOLIS, IN)

MARCH 1-3, 2018

Student: Andrew Battiato

Examiners: Shawn Anderson and David Carr

Title of Paper: *Justification & the Council of Trent: Semi-Pelagianism in Roman Catholicism and Protestant Response*

Thesis: “An examination of the historical circumstances and the teachings of the Council of Trent reveal how it solidified the RC position on justification, which, in effect, reinforced the PT outlook that the RC Church had become and remains an enemy of the true gospel of Christ.”

General Observations:

This paper fulfills all the Presbytery requirements for a history paper, including grammar, punctuation, and annotation. This thesis a vitally important subject for the contemporary church.

First, we would like to commend this paper for its strengths. The topic is relevant to the contemporary Church. Many Evangelical churches that have descended from the Protestant Reformation can undermine many of the tenets of the Reformation in their theology and ecclesiology, including the preaching of a Gospel that sounds more semi-Pelagian than Biblically Reformed. The thesis relates directly with the message and the ministry of the Gospel. Further, the salient points of the Council of Trent’s doctrine of Justification are distilled from the much larger work in a clear and helpful way. Andrew has helped his readers engage with the statements from the Council. It is also clear, looking through the Bibliography, that Andrew has not only researched from sources that would speak polemically for “the Protestant side”, but has investigated from multiple perspectives.

Second, we believe that there are a number of weaknesses that do not negate but detract from the thesis. The only primary sources cited are from the Council of Trent. When any Protestant view is cited, it is not from Calvin, Luther, Evangelical Roman Catholics, or any contemporary with the Protestant Reformation, but instead only and always from historians. Further, the paper contains historical generalizations, such as, “*Christian humanism, with its movement toward an Augustinian theology that emphasized the grace of God, was destined for a momentous conflict with scholasticism, with its movement toward a Pelagian theology that emphasized the merit of man.*” To identify and judge Scholasticism, or Medieval Scholastics as Semi-Pelagian is “to bite off more than one can chew” in this kind of paper, especially given the resurgence in study of the diverse intellectual movements within Scholasticism. More importantly, to read this paper, one would think that the Augustinian influence was lacking in the First Council of Trent, which is unintentionally misleading. Even the secondary resources cited in the paper would verify this internal debate. Finally, it was thought that a lack of clear definition and consistent usage of terms detracts from the paper. In other words, if any reader were occupied on the wrong side of the Semi-



Pelagian debate, this lack of primary sources, hasty generalization, and the lack of interaction with the internal debates of the Council of Trent on the topic of Justification from the Augustinian party, would all distract said person from the sound thesis and conclusion of the paper.

Conclusion: While there are significant areas for Andrew to work on in both research and argumentation, we believe that he has sufficiently established his thesis statement. Andrew takes the pertinent historical content provided in multiple volumes and makes it accessible to his audience in a brief paper. Finally, while this paper falls short of “refuting the debater” it does exhort in sound doctrine (Titus 1:9) and provides a foundation for anyone interested in further study of the topic.

**Recommendation:** That Presbytery sustain this paper for the Church History Exam.

## Elkhart, IN RPC Session Report For Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Meeting, March 1-3, 2018

*“For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’” (2 Cor. 6:16 NASB)*

1) Total Membership: Communicant and Baptized (12/31/17), **50**. (2) Average AM Worship Attendance, **55**. (3) Average PM Worship Attendance, **NA** [2x/mon. Bible study, prayer; 1x-Faith Mission ministry; Psalm sing periodically on 4<sup>th</sup> Lord’s Day; 6x/yr. Lord’s Supper]. (4) Baptized Members Professing, **2**. (5) New Members by Profession, **0**. (6) Net Change in Total Membership, **-2**.

We have much reason for which to give thanks to the Lord as we reflect back on 2017! He is faithful and He has sustained and prospered ERPC through His everlasting mercy in Jesus Christ. While we acknowledge the challenges we rejoice in the blessings, trusting that our Lord will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. (Matt. 26:18).

This past year during the morning worship services Pastor Mann completed studies through 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and selected psalms (Pss. 65, 67, 110, 126). In addition, multiple mini-series were presented including Psalm 89, John 15, church vitality, and the offices of elder and deacon. In December we began a new series on the Ten Commandments. Evening gatherings have focused on study expanding on the topics of the morning sermons. We have also met bimonthly on Lord’s Day evening for worship with the Lord’s Supper. Three testimony and sharing evenings were a blessing, as well as joint services with Michiana Covenant Presbyterian Church for Reformation Day and at the Marion, IN RPC for a Thanksgiving Psalm Sing. We are thankful for the preaching ministry of Pastors Rich Holdeman, Ray Lanning and Rich Johnston, who also filled our pulpit this year.

In January, 2017, we launched a men’s discipleship group which studied *The Hole in Our Holiness*, by Kevin DeYoung through the spring. After a summer break with an enjoyable outing to see the South Bend Cubs, we began a monthly ABC study through 1 Timothy in the fall. The women also were strengthened by a 1 Peter Bible study early in the year and began a plan for one-on-one accountability in the fall. Four recreation nights at the church in the summer provided a great time for fun and fellowship as we gathered for volleyball and Ultimate Frisbee, as well as horse shoes and croquet with brief devotions following. In September we also kicked-off two small group Bible studies on Proverbs and parenting. It has been a blessing to spend time in the Word and prayer together in these settings. Prayer continues to be an emphasis with biweekly meetings the first half of the year and monthly the second half interspersed with the small group schedule. Some of the youth of the congregation have taken advantage of various ministries: Presbytery CYPUP, TFY, SonRise Party, COVFAMIKOI, Winter Conference, short-term international ministry through a local Christian school. We hosted a CYPUP Fall Ministry Project team in October and are thankful for their good work. We were blessed by various fellowship gatherings (ice skating, picnics, Resurrection Psalm sing/brunch, mission night on Pakistan, Christmas dinner) during the year.

In 2017, Session met 20 times in constituted court. We are thankful for the committed elders and deacons God has provided for ERPC, and that He has raised up an additional elder and two deacons to minister in answer to our prayers. The elders have sought to visit each household in our shepherding groups during the course of 2017 in TE/RE teams and very nearly reached that goal.

God has abundantly blessed financially in 2017, allowing us to pay off the building mortgage three years early. In addition, several major building and grounds renovation projects have been accomplished – HVAC upgrade and repair, new linoleum floor by the west entrance, parking lot resealing, repair of steps at three outdoor entries, and replacement of interior doors with windows.

We continue the Thursday Fresh Lunch outreach to the community and the monthly Lord's Day evening ministry at Faith Mission, serving the meal and seeking gospel conversations with diners.

The Session has sought to faithfully shepherd the following people through the transition of their status in the church. We were saddened to excommunicate Rochelle Moore after repeated efforts to reconcile her with her husband. We rejoice in the baptism of Olivia Dean born to Eric and Jessica Dean, and are blessed by the presence of Keith and Courtney Lorenz and their children Rudy and Jackie who were received as new members by transfer. Lauren Daniels also was received by transfer while she is attending college at Moody. We praise God for the professions of baptized members Jonathan Daniels and Jonathan Dean who were received into communicant membership. We miss Kevin and Patty McClintock, who were dismissed to a church near them upon their request, and Kelly McClintock who was transferred to the Marion RPC. Care was also given to inactive and out of bounds members: Alex Dean and Colin McClintock were removed from membership as indifferent members after several efforts to reach them; Charlie Dean was dismissed at his request.

We give glory to God who has protected, preserved and richly provided for His people in the Elkhart RPC over this past year, and pray for His grace and power to be demonstrated through the advancement of His church here in 2018. *"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere."* (2 Cor. 2:14 ESV)

Respectfully submitted,

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

## ERPC 2017 Financial Report and 2018 Budget

	2017	2017	2017	2018
	Budget	Actual	vs 2017	Budget
			Actual	
<b>INCOME</b>				
101 Contributions	115,000.00	143,295.58	28,295.58	128,000.00
102 Interest	3.00	2.61	(0.39)	3.00
107 Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME =</b>	<b>115,003.00</b>	<b>143,298.19</b>	<b>28,295.19</b>	<b>128,003.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>CONGREGATION</b>				
201 Christian Education	650.00	979.11	(329.11)	1,000.00
202 Fellowship Activities	1,000.00	678.24	321.76	1,000.00
203 Youth Ministry	350.00	0.00	350.00	350.00
204 Guest Ministry	2,000.00	2,017.86	(17.86)	2,000.00
205 Administration	2,000.00	1,343.79	656.21	1,500.00
206 Pastor's Ministry Expenses	4,000.00	2,620.72	1,379.28	3,000.00
207 Workman's Comp Insurance	350.00	345.80	4.20	350.00
208 Study Resources	250.00	52.59	197.41	250.00
209 Session Expenses	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00
210 Other	500.00	930.51	(430.51)	1,000.00
<i>Congregation Sub-total =</i>	<i>11,400.00</i>	<i>8,968.62</i>	<i>2,431.38</i>	<i>10,750.00</i>
<b>PASTORAL SUPPORT</b>				
301 Salary	22,560.00	22,560.00	0.00	22,560.00
302 Parsonage Allowance	33,840.00	33,841.00	(1.00)	33,840.00
303 Salary Supplement				3,000.00
304 Pension	4,200.00	4,200.00	0.00	4,200.00
305 Medical Insurance		0.00	0.00	6,400.00
<i>Pastor Sub-total =</i>	<i>60,600.00</i>	<i>60,601.00</i>	<i>(1.00)</i>	<i>70,000.00</i>
306 Associate Pastor	0.00	0.00		10,000.00
307 New Pastor Relocation		0.00	0.00	
<i>Pastoral Support Sub-total =</i>	<i>60,600.00</i>	<i>60,601.00</i>	<i>(1.00)</i>	<i>80,000.00</i>
<b>MISSIONS</b>				
401 Local Outreach (fresh lunch)	2,000.00	1,523.99	476.01	2,000.00
403 Short Term Missions	250.00	0.00	250.00	250.00
404 Other Missions	200.00	1,050.00	(850.00)	200.00
405 Mercy Ministry	250.00	119.93	130.07	250.00
<i>Missions Sub-total =</i>	<i>2,700.00</i>	<i>2,693.92</i>	<i>6.08</i>	<i>2,700.00</i>

	2017	2017	2017	
	Budget	Actual	vs 2017	2018
			Actual	Budget
<b>EXPENSES (cont)</b>				
<b>DENOMINATION</b>				
501 Presbytery Assessments	1,661.65	1,661.65	0.00	1,661.65
502 Synod Assessments	2,359.00	2,373.00	(14.00)	2,373.00
503 Synod & Presby Delegate	300.00	298.00	2.00	300.00
505 RP Home Missions	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
506 RP Global Missions	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
510 RP Missions/Ministry	5,179.35	7,353.97	(2,174.62)	6,165.35
<i>Denomination Sub-total =</i>	<i>11,500.00</i>	<i>13,686.62</i>	<i>(2,186.62)</i>	<i>12,500.00</i>
<b>PROPERTY</b>				
601 Mortgage	4,800.00	15,798.21	(10,998.21)	0.00
602 Utilities	6,000.00	6,449.29	(449.29)	6,500.00
603 Maintenance & Supplies	5,200.00	14,015.46	(8,815.46)	6,000.00
604 Property Insurance	4,000.00	4,081.75	(81.75)	4,000.00
605 Property Improvements	25,000.00	30,713.57	(5,713.57)	5,000.00
606 Office Equipment	200.00	690.00	(490.00)	200.00
607 Other Equipment	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
<i>Property Sub-total =</i>	<i>45,300.00</i>	<i>71,748.28</i>	<i>(26,448.28)</i>	<i>21,800.00</i>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES =</b>	<b>131,500.00</b>	<b>157,698.44</b>	<b>(26,198.44)</b>	<b>127,750.00</b>
<b>YTD NET =</b>	<b>(16,497.00)</b>	<b>(14,400.25)</b>	<b>2,096.75</b>	<b>253.00</b>

	2017	2017	2017 Budget	2018
	Budget	Actual	vs 2017	Budget
			Actual	
<b>FUNDS</b>				
Beginning Balance Jan 1	85,864.39	85,864.39		71,464.14
Net from This Year	(16,497.00)	(14,400.25)		253.00
<b>Balance =</b>	<b>69,367.39</b>	<b>71,464.14</b>		<b>71,717.14</b>

## Southern Church Extension Committee

### Report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery

### 2018

Our committee has not fielded requests for or pursued any new Southern works in the past year. Church planting in this region has been historically and continues to be a challenge for our presbytery and denomination. The reasons for this are not all clear to us, though one factor we believe will likely be a significant contributor to successful church planting in the future is the strengthening of our existing Southern congregations. So, our committee plans to meet monthly this year to pray for the strengthening of our Southern congregations and to ask God for wisdom and vision for his Kingdom in this part of the country.

We have had communication with the Birmingham Bible study group and would like to share both our perspective on that and our recommendation regarding the Presbytery of the Alleghenies Home Missions Committee's proposal to our presbytery (which is also appended to this report).

In 2016/17, we oversaw Sam Ketcham's leading of a Bible study in the Birmingham area for about 7 months. Though we had some concerns about moving forward with this group, we were prepared to do so in light of the Ketchams' plans to move to Birmingham. When that did not happen last spring, we decided not to continue the Bible study by some other means. Several households began again to meet in the summer of 2017, and one contacted us concerning the possibility of moving forward in church planting with our presbytery.

Following are some reasons why we continue to believe that pursuing a work in Birmingham is unwise for our presbytery at this time. Some of these reasons also support our recommendation regarding the POA Home Missions Committee's proposal.

- Distance from existing, vibrant churches in the presbytery: We have noted both from our presbytery's recent history and the counsel of synod's Home Mission Board that "parachute" plants have seen far less success than "daughtering" plants and the support they receive, and this caution is heightened in the absence of a local church planter. It would be very difficult to provide adequate shepherding at such a distance from the rest of our presbytery.
- Strained resources in the presbytery and strength of existing Southern churches: The results of our planting efforts across the South over the last 35 years are stark; as a presbytery, we have yet to plant a congregation that is not reliant on at least one of the following: a temporary governing body, financial aid, provisional elders, and outside preaching/pastoring. We do not see Birmingham as having a significantly better set of circumstances and resources than areas where there are existing-but-not-yet-stable new works. Rather than begin a new

effort, we sense that it would be wise to invest our resources in present efforts and ask the Lord to show us more blessing in bringing existing works to stability.

- The absence of a local church planter: 12 months ago we believed that Sam's eagerness to go to Birmingham (a place he was from and familiar with) and that the energy and giftedness he seemed to have for the work was a significantly compelling factor in moving forward despite the 2 bullet points above. Part of our failure in planting thriving churches in the South might be attributed in part to the fact that we have rarely had a Southern church planter.
- The group itself: There are certainly encouragements and strengths to speak of among these saints, but in terms of church planting and given the concerns above, the drawbacks are significant. These concerns relate to geography, leadership potential, and philosophy of ministry, among others.

Our committee is grateful for Paul Martin's ministry to this group on a couple of occasions and for his committee's interest in seeing a church raised up to the glory of God in Birmingham and our presbytery. However, we are not in favor of this proposal at this time, for the reasons outlined above, particularly with regard to distance, limited man-power for preaching/TGB/etc., and the many presbyters already serving provisionally in the South (without strong, established congregations).

**Recommendation 1:** That we thank POA for their willingness to serve but return their request and wait for clearer leading that church planting work in Birmingham should proceed.

If recommendation 1 is not the will of the presbytery and fails, we offer this alternative:

**Recommendation 2:** That the GLGP petition Synod to allow the POA to lead church planting efforts in Birmingham with the expectation that the POA would take full responsibility to bring the congregation to maturity. At such a time, the Birmingham work would be enfolded back into the GLGP. Such maturity would mean that the congregation would be defined by the congregation there meeting the following requirements:

- The congregation is fully organized (not Mission Church status).
- There are at least 2 resident ruling elders and no provisional elders.
- There is a resident installed pastor.
- The congregation is fully self-supporting (no longer receiving HMB reducing aid, presbytery subsidies, etc.).

H.P. McCracken, chair  
Kent Butterfield  
James Faris  
George Gregory

APPENDIX

December 15, 2017

Greetings Co-Laborers,

Recently, Paul Martin, the Regional Home Missionary (RHM) of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA), visited Birmingham on two occasions, where he met with the families which had gathered monthly with Sam Ketcham for Bible study. Since his departure, the group has continued to meet and made special arrangements to enjoy Paul's ministry. Paul visited with the permission of SOCHEX on each occasion. Paul was also following up particularly with two families in the group, one he knew when ministering in the Pacific Coast Presbytery years ago and another led by a former member of Grace and Truth Mission Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The POA desires to see an RPCNA presbytery develop in the southeast, with congregations from Trinity in Maryland to Orlando in Florida, drawn from both the POA and the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (GL-G). At present, four RPCNA congregations exist in this region, plus three mission churches and one preaching station. Thus, if the POA worked in Birmingham through its RHM and Home Missions Committee (HMC), we would be taking a constructive step toward the creation of a new presbytery out of parts of the two existing presbyteries.

Part of Paul's job description, approved by the POA in 2016, includes helping the presbyteries adjacent to us in church planting. As a result, the HMC of the POA, which has oversight of Paul's work, was also involved in pre-approving his ministry in Birmingham. We encouraged Paul to meet with the Birmingham people to assess where they are with respect to the RPCNA. He is impressed by the quality of the families there and believes that there is real potential there, if God would be pleased to bless the efforts of helpers like Paul. Therefore, the Home Missions Committee of the POA at our most recent meeting unanimously encouraged Paul to talk with members of the Birmingham group to see if they would welcome the following initial plan for a viable ministry there. We present the plan to SOCHEX for your consideration, and for the committee to present it to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery's approval.

- 1) The HMC of the POA will oversee the work in Birmingham, in order to relieve the heavy burden presently carried by the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery in helping scattered groups of Reformed Presbyterians in the southeast.
- 2) RHM Paul Martin will be particularly responsible for the development of the work in Birmingham.



3) The HMC will work with the group in Birmingham to establish a bank account, to permit those in Birmingham who wish to contribute to the ministry expenses of a church plant in Birmingham to send their tithes to a central place.

4) Paul will go to Birmingham for nine days each month, from a Saturday through a Monday, so that he will be there for two consecutive Lord's Days.

5) Paul will work during his week in Birmingham to cultivate community among the families invested in seeing an RPC established. During his first trip to Birmingham, he will contact NAPARC denominations active there in keeping with the Comity Agreement.

6) The RHM will coordinate sending teaching elders who will lead worship on the Lord's Days when Paul is not on site. We will be glad for elders of the GL-G to join in this ministry. (For instance, the group has used Gordon Keddie's studies in their meetings and would welcome his ministry among them.)

7) The HMC will keep SOCHEX informed regularly about the development of the ministry in Birmingham.

8) In a year's time, a careful assessment of the ministry will be made by the HMC of the POA and plans made or adjusted accordingly.

9) If a congregation is eventually organized in Birmingham, it will be a member of the GL-G Presbytery, because it is within the usual boundaries of GL-G, unless a southern presbytery has been organized by that time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bruce Backensto, chairman  
Steven Bradley  
Thomas Reid, secretary  
Mark Sampson  
C. J. Williams

**ADDENDUM TO THE SOCHEX REPORT**  
**SOCHEX PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN CHURCH EXTENSION IN THE SOUTH**  
**February 2018**

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery has struggled to plant and sustain churches across the south. Over the last half century, great investment has led to little visible fruit in these organizations.

Here's a brief summary of the churches in the south:

- Pensacola, Florida: Opened and closed.
- Lynchburg, Virginia: Opened and closed.
- North Atlanta, Georgia: Opened and closed.
- Birmingham, Alabama: Ministry possibility explored last year, SOCHEX recommends not moving forward with efforts there at present.
- Atlanta, Georgia: Commission-led ministry seeking strength to apply for mission church status in 2019.
- Dayton, Tennessee: Mission church requesting a downgrade to preaching station in 2018.
- Pageland, South Carolina: Mission church requesting its pastor have his status changed to stated supply in 2018.
- Selma, Alabama: Congregation rejoicing in signs of new life and the hope of a new pastor, but this after many years of aging and decline. Provisional elders serve on session.
- Durham, North Carolina: Congregation rejoicing in renewed growth. Provisional elders serve on session.
- Orlando, Florida: Congregation stable, with local leadership.

In sum, only Orlando has sufficient local leadership. Note that, in spite of many efforts, we have yet to plant a single church in the south in the last half century that is self-sufficient in finances and/or leadership. By contrast, other parts of the denomination have seen significantly greater fruit through the daughtering of congregations. For instance, in Indiana, there were about 120 RP members in the early 1960s. Over the next nearly thirty years, by 1990, there were about 575. Today, almost thirty years since then, there are about 1300 members in Indiana, which has come about through the daughtering method. In 1990, the first extension work in the south was begun in Pensacola. Over these thirty years, there is far less fruit that we would like to see in the south, and we believe that the hope of daughtering churches around existing churches is our best hope. We think there would be much greater fruit in the long run if we could see three congregations in the Triangle area, for instance, and so we believe that focusing our energies to such ends.

The remit of SOCHEX is to oversee church extension in the south, rather than support existing churches. However, until we see at least one "new" congregation reach a level of sustained

success, we believe that the best way to extend the church in the south is to strengthen existing churches and daughter from there.

SOCHEX plans to shift to strengthening existing churches as the medium-range strategy for extension. Thus, we plan to say "no" to exploring new parachute works, and instead will focus on strengthening existing churches through the following means (which is just our start for now):

1. Call the presbytery to greater prayer for the churches currently in existence.
2. Establish a grant program for current churches to strengthen outreach (see below).
3. Seek other funding/resource options to strengthen outreach efforts in existing churches.
4. Seek co-laboring help for the existing congregations from retired/available pastors, insofar as help would be welcomed by the congregations.
5. Seek funding options to secure more laborers to help these churches and explore local outreach (RITP, interns, retired pastors/elders).

To fulfill the second of these commitments, we propose that a fund be established for non-competitive grants to be given to existing Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery congregation and mission churches for outreach. SOCHEX would review the grant-requests and grant the resources.

Funding could come from the following sources:

- Presbytery funds (in place of exploratory funds for other new works)
- Remaining funds from works closing in the south (in the event any ministry closes)
- Vital Churches resources (proposals to this committee of synod would be necessary)
- Personal gifts

SOCHEX would also seek to help locate other local sources of income for these churches, such as local grant programs.

Only existing congregations and mission churches would be eligible, which we expect would be four congregations at the end of presbytery. The grant-process would require that these existing congregations show a plan for how the funds would be used to reach out into the community in new ways. The funds could not be used to simply cover existing costs; extension efforts would be required. A maximum of \$2,500 would be granted to any one congregation in 2018-2019.

Finally, congregations would be required to submit an evaluation of the ministry-efforts enabled by the funding. Our hope is that accountability in planning and review would also help to develop the leadership and vision of these churches ministering in their local communities.

This proposal is designed to focus our outreach efforts in the south more narrowly and more deeply. To this end, we ask for renewed support in prayer and finances from the presbytery.

SOCHEX acknowledges that these plans will need to be tweaked, and we desire your counsel as a presbytery. However, we do believe that there should be a fundamental shift in our approach to church planting for the next few decades until the Lord establishes stronger bases of ministry around the south.

Recommendations:

- That Presbytery establish the SOCHEX Existing Churches Fund
- That Presbytery give \$10,000 to this fund.

March 2, 2018

Candidates & Credentials Committee  
Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery

Dear brothers of the Midwest Presbytery's Candidates & Credentials Committee,

Greetings in the name of the Lord. Pastor Koller contacted us through our Candidates and Credentials Committee, asking us to clarify the status of Brian Schwertley. We thought it wise to interact directly with your committee. As you know, Mr. Schwertley left our presbytery many years ago. His credentials were transferred to the RPCUS on February 17, 2001 by our Ad Interim Commission. Later, in 2006, the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church asked us for his "papers of commission", to which our minutes state "Mr. Schwertley was never charged with any offense or received any discipline in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and therefore we have no relevant documents to send."

Despite his being transferred without discipline, as the rest of this letter will show, we have grave concerns about Mr. Schwertley's history and reputation, which we believe render him unqualified for ministry in our denomination. We are not interested in building a case against him and going through the incredible effort of cataloguing the offenses and wrongs left in his wake. Therefore, we do not believe his visiting our presbytery would be necessary or helpful. This is especially true since the problems we see in his eligibility extend far beyond the concerns of our presbytery. Should he at some point come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, being bowed low under the weight of his actions, we trust he will show the marks of a changed man in a life of repentance.

The Scripture says that those who are office-bearers in Christ's church must be men of good repute. All of us have developed a reputation, whether good or bad. Mr. Schwertley has developed a consistent reputation from his days in the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery and since then. It is our judgment and counsel that Mr. Schwertley's reputation is so negative that he should not hold office in the RPCNA, and that it would require many decades to rebuild the kind of reputation needed to be biblically eligible. We do not believe that he is eligible now, and we do not see that gaining eligibility would be possible in the span of a normal life time for someone of such age as Mr. Schwertley. We are glad that the session in Dallas has found him kind and courteous, and perhaps he could someday be a good member of an RPCNA congregation. However, there are behaviors

and patterns of life that do render a man ineligible for ordained service. Repentance should be appreciated but is not always or necessarily followed by restoration to office or position.

The following examples are parts of how his reputation has been shaped:

- When he was originally examined by the GLGP, there were many concerns about his character and manner. We voted to ordain him by a narrow margin. Later events confirmed the fears of many.
- As a church planter in Lansing, Michigan, he was ineffective. After a presbytery visitation, the presbytery voted to discontinue HMB decreasing aid funding in light of Brian's ineffective work and inability to wisely focus the resources at hand on the work he was called to do.
- Brian was then considered for a pastoral call in Southfield. After a very difficult election process, presbytery was called in to sort out the results. The presbytery nullified the whole election and asked the congregation to start again. Immediately, Brian left the congregation, effectively and divisively taking 38 members with him, ignoring our presbytery's counsel and invitations to return. He immediately went to the RPCUS, and the presbytery, disappointed in his response, but at as loss as to what else to do, transferred his credentials.
- Since then, Brian has lived for nearly two decades in the world of micro-presbyterianism. He has not been able to establish a healthy congregation anywhere in that time.
- Brian has publicly written and spoken against the RPCNA and her doctrinal positions in books, on the internet, and in sermons posted online.<sup>1</sup> Even if these have been removed, these have built his reputation, and it is not a reputation of love for this branch of Christ's church. Indeed, his reputation is not good in many parts of the denomination and beyond due to his argumentative spirit and quarrelsome attitude. These stand directly opposed to the Scripture's requirements for teaching elders.

The first deacons were to be "men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3), and we have not found Brian to be this sort of man over the last quarter century. Second Timothy 2:24 says that "the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness." Again, we have not seen this fruit in Mr. Schwertley. God requires in 1 Timothy 3 that the elder must be "above reproach" (3:2) , and this man has not conducted himself in such a way,

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<sup>1</sup> We would especially note Schwertley's "The 1980 Testimony of the RPCNA: A Biblical Critique", where he, in 72 pages, he describes his many disagreements with us. [http://www.reformedonline.com/uploads/1/5/0/3/15030584/the\\_1980\\_testimony\\_of\\_the\\_rpcna\\_a\\_biblical\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.reformedonline.com/uploads/1/5/0/3/15030584/the_1980_testimony_of_the_rpcna_a_biblical_analysis.pdf)

instead being known for his abrasiveness. Paul also says that "he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he does not fall into disgrace" (3:7), but indeed his name, as a leader, has been a disgrace in the church over time.

We would note that our Constitution gives clear direction from Scripture on this matter. The Directory for Church Government (1.4) states concerning communicant membership that "No one should be admitted who... assumes an attitude antagonistic to the principles set forth in the standards of the Church." We would further note that Mr. Schwertley's antagonism toward the RPCNA is not a past matter but a current one. In a lecture (or sermon) posted online from December 31, 2017, he clearly and specifically impugns the RPCNA and our own presbytery in particular!<sup>2</sup> Given his long-standing antagonism toward our denomination, we can't understand why he would even want to be a part of us, nor why he would be allowed to.

We will give thanks to God if Mr. Schwertley bears sorrow and the fruit of repentance for the kind of spirit he has evidenced over the years. We rejoice when those who go astray in spirit come to understanding and when those who murmur accept instruction (Isa. 29:24). The church belongs to such as these. But the qualifications for leadership are far higher. Even in cases where leaders have fallen and been restored, there is not merely a "reset" but a long season of repentance, humility, and repudiation of error. Having not seen such evidences or interest from Mr. Schwertley, we counsel you to oppose the RPCNA receiving his credentials as a teaching elder. We believe that acknowledging him as an elder would be bad for the denomination and bad for your presbytery as well.

Please be assured that the strength of this letter is only meant to communicate clearly and not to communicate any disrespect or lack of love for you men and your presbytery. We understand this situation is likely difficult for you as well and have the utmost respect and love for you in your services to the Lord.

In Christ,  
The Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery

cc: Pastor Mark Koller

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<sup>2</sup> "Why are Most Modern Presbyterian Churches Unfaithful Covenant-Breakers?" on [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com)

GLG Presbytery 2018

## Presbytery Youth Report

**Psalm 78:4 - We will not hide *them* from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.**

It is the goal of the Covenanter Young Peoples' Union (CYPY) to assist churches, pastors, and parents in making Christ known to our presbytery young people, that they too will personally praise Him and know His wonderful works. In the GLG Presbytery, with the help of pastors, leaders, and counselors, the CYPY Leadership Team carries out 6 Christ-centered CYPY events throughout the year:

1. Fall Ministry Project (October)
2. Winter Conference (December)
3. Theological Foundations Weekend (February)
4. SONrise Party (March)
5. ECHO summer mission trip (June)
6. Covfamikoi youth program (June)

Our current CYPY leadership team is composed of students from Bloomington, Christ's Church, Columbus, Immanuel, Second RP, Southside, and Sycamore. Our present team members are as follows:

- President: *Sarah Mangan*
- Vice President: *Luke Pfeiffer*
- Recording Secretary: *Tim Hanson*
- Registration Director: *Janae Fisher*
- Corresponding Secretary: *Clara Mauser*
- Treasurer: *Elise De Jong*
- Advertising Director: *Joel McCracken*
- Food and Set up Coordinator: *Jed Enas*
- Sports Director: *Calvin Held*
- Sports Supportinator: *Cargill Faris*
- Photo Collector: *Emma Saunders*
- Communication Specialist: *Cameron Faris*

The most recent Winter Conference, "The Church's Role" was led by Pastor Micah Ramsey, long-time "friend of the conference" (having been our keynote speaker 3 times now), and pastor of Eastvale RP Church in Pennsylvania. Attendance was slightly lower than normal this year; however, this was primarily due to the present demographics in our Presbytery. As always, the event was excellent, exceptionally planned and executed by Ben and Anna Larson. Although Ben will be assuming the responsibilities as the Youth Secretary of Presbytery (see **Recommendation 1** below), we are thankful that he and Anna will continue their faithful and tireless leadership over the Winter Conference.

At the time of this report, we just concluded a successful Theological Foundations Weekend (TFW), with Pastor David Hanson and myself as the speakers. This year marks a transition in TFW leadership, because Pastor Hanson will be assuming responsibility of administrating the



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program. David Whitla faithfully piloted TFW for many years, but seeing as David Hanson appears to be “the New David” all things GLG Presbytery, it is only natural for him to shoulder this responsibility as well! I am excited for the program to be in Pastor Hanson’s more-than-capable hands, and look forward to future years.

Additionally, SONrise Party is quickly approaching on March 30-31, 2018, and aims to be a fun evening for inviting friends, in order that they might hear a testimony with a Gospel focus. We will be returning to Covenant High School in Indianapolis for the normal lock-in format. This is the first year that Andrew and Lauren Saunders will be taking over leadership of the event from Zachary and Flo Blackwood.

On October 6-8, 2017, Second RP hosted the Fall Ministry Project, where students heard from Pastor George Gregory on the topic of “Service in the Church”. Then the next morning, students traveled throughout the Presbytery to engage in service projects and stayed overnight to worship with the respective congregations that Lord’s Day morning. We are thankful for Kevin and Bethany Mauser’s faithful leadership of FMP, and are excited to see Aaron and Mary Murray shadowing the Mauser’s to prepare for a possible future transition of FMP leadership.

Once again we made it a priority to offer significant scholarships to churches outside close proximity of Indiana. As a Presbytery spanning the Great Lakes to the Gulf, it is important to ensure that more distant churches have an opportunity to participate in the CYPUP events as well, and we are thankful for the Presbytery’s financial support to make this a possibility. This year, students and administrators alike have noted a desire to see more youth attend the Covfamiko youth program. While a good number of students do attend with their families, few attend Covfamiko when their family is not attending. Therefore, the Team desires to offer additional CYPUP Scholarships, aimed at students unable to attend Covfamiko with their families. The goal is to significantly offset conference costs so that youth would only have to pay an amount comparable to Winter Conference. As it stands presently, the CYPUP funds are at \$2,020. In order to offer a “pilot” year of Covfamiko Scholarships, it is estimated that \$500 more than normal would be needed from Presbytery. Therefore, in **Recommendation 2** below, we are requesting a total of \$2,000 for the 2018-19 program.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve your youth for the past handful of years. It was a privilege and a blessing; and I will greatly miss my work with these godly young people. However, the CYPUP Leadership team and events will be in excellent hands in Ben Larson; of that I am confident!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Keith Evans

**Recommendation 1:**

That Ben Larson be nominated as the Youth Secretary of Presbytery.

**Recommendation 2:**

That Presbytery support the Covenant Young People’s Union in the amount of \$2,000 this year.

## **2018 Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery Meeting COVFAMIKOI Conference Report**

### **2017 Conference**

#### **Recap**

The 2017 COVFAMIKOI Family Conference took place June 17 to June 22 at Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Kentucky.

The attendance for the 2017 conference was 340 representing 27 congregations. The attendance was down 15% from 2015 likely as a result of the conference being held in a new venue and in June. The 2017 conference was also maiden voyage of online registration with an option to pay online. These options were well received and extremely helpful for conference administration.

We were blessed to have Dr. Dennis J. Prutow, Dr. Calvin L. Troup, and Joel Hart as speakers for the conference. Dr. Prutow served as the main speaker walking us through the first 38 questions of the Westminster Shorter Catechism under the title of “The Glory of God in the Gospel”. Dr. Calvin L. Troup served as the High School speaker, and Joel Hart served as the Junior High Speaker.

#### **Conference Staff**

The 2017 conference staff was a hard working group that can certainly be credited with the success of the conference. Anna Larson managed the nursery. Melanie Sturm taught the Pre-School aged children with help from Heather Kessler. Barb Mann led the 6-8 year olds with help from Natalie Faris and Cariann Spirydovich. Phil and Sharon Joseph lead the 9-11 year olds. Zachary and Flo Blackwood assumed overall leadership of the High School and Junior High Program activities and counselors. Ben Larson took responsibility for Psalm presenting. Jonathan and Michael Sturm managed the recreation program.

#### **Conference Leadership**

The executive committee of the conference consists of Charley Moore (Conference Manager), Zach Blackwood (Youth Director), and Erich Baum (Conference Director). The committee would like to recognize Beth Moore, Flo Blackwood, and Bobbie Baum as being invaluable to the effort.

The advisory committee appointed by the Presbytery serves as a sounding board for the leadership. The committee consists of Jeff Kessler, Ben Larson, and Jonathan Schaefer. The Conference leadership thanks these men for their counsel.

#### **Financials**

The financial report for 2017 is attached for your review. We started the year with a checking account balance of \$11,255 and ended the year with a balance of \$15,257. Typically, conference leadership

attempts to break even year to year. However, this year saw a net growth despite only taking one offering during the conference. This increase is attributed to the following reasons.

- 1) The generosity of the conference attendees.
- 2) The conference rates were increased 7% from 2015 for unknowns associated with a new location.
- 3) The Presbytery allocation increased from \$2,000 to \$3,000.
- 4) Lindsey Wilson College waived several of the facilities and support fees that were budgeted.
- 5) Football field rental and golf cart rent were not required.

## **2018 Conference**

### **Times and Dates**

The 2018 COVFAMIKOI Family Conference will be held June 9 to June 14 at Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Kentucky. The time was moved to earlier in June to obtain exclusive access to the main dorms at Lindsey Wilson College. Conference registration for 2018 will only be available online, with an option to pay online or directly to the conference manager. The cost structure for 2018 will be the same as 2017.

### **Speakers**

We are pleased to have Kyle Borg as the keynote speaker for this year's conference. Kyle Borg is the pastor of Winchester Reformed Presbyterian Church in Winchester, KS. He will be speaking on the topic "The God of Glory and the Glory of God". This year the High School group will join the adults for the plenary sessions. David Hanson has kindly agreed to serve as the Junior High speaker.

### **Conference Staff**

Conference leadership is still in the process of gathering a staff for the 2018 conference. We hope to have the staff put together by the end of March.

### **Challenges**

The conference director, Erich Baum, has taken a job in Cambridge, MA and will be starting there in mid March. He agreed to serve as conference director for a 3 year term (2017-2019) and will honor this commitment if the Presbytery so desires.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1.) That Presbytery approves \$3,000 for conference expenses.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the COVFAMIKOI Committee and Staff,

E. Baum

02/03/18

Covfamikoi Family Conference  
Profit and Loss Standard  
January through December 2017

	<u>Jan - Dec '17</u>
Ordinary Income/Expe...	
Income	
General Fund	100.00
Presbytery Contribut...	3,000.00
Registration Fees	57,680.02
Tithes/Offerings	<u>1,703.00</u>
Total Income	62,483.02
Expense	
Conference Fees	49,459.00
Dues and Subscripti...	144.00
Elementary Class	292.01
Honorariums	2,699.16
Insurance Expense	115.00
Nursery Class	46.31
Office Supplies	897.13
Phase II	201.38
Preschool Class	307.71
Primary Class	168.34
Recreation Program	37.46
Refunds	950.00
Youth Program	<u>1,438.60</u>
Total Expense	<u>56,756.10</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>5,726.92</u>
Net Income	<u><u>5,726.92</u></u>

### Shepherding Committee Report

Beginning shortly after the Spring 2017 meeting of Presbytery, the members of the Shepherding Committee contacted all of the former members of the Northminster congregation who were on the general roll of Presbytery as of that time. As a result of our efforts, the transfers of several people were effected (see the report of the Stated Clerk).

Those in this category who are still on the general roll of Presbytery are as follows:

T.J. and Nancy Pattillo, and their covenant child Hannah Louise; another covenant child, Sawyer Blake, has not been baptized

Bob and Patty Shapiro

Abby Shapiro

Frank and Penny Smith

The Smiths are heavily engaged in Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship (APF), and the Shapiros have been attending APF, though not as regularly as the Smiths, due at least in part to Bob's battle with cancer. Both the Smith and Shapiro families are anticipating placing their membership in APF as soon as it is constituted as a mission church. The Pattillos have struggled with various health and financial issues, which have been a major factor in their sporadic church attendance; at the moment, they are not settled in a congregation.

Recommendation: That this report be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank J. Smith

Kent Butterfield

Bob Shapiro

**2018 Report of Presbytery's Nominee  
to the Board of Corporators  
of Geneva College**

Dear brothers:

I am reporting to you 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 am delighted that I now 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.

I here 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.

Since my last report, the Board has met twice. The first was on 1 July, 2017, at the Baymont Inn and Suites near the Indianapolis airport, the day after Synod. Trustee Chair Joye Huston reported that the Trustees were working well together, and that the goal of board members to raise \$100,000 for the College was more than realized. She also informed us that there was an ongoing weekly prayer meeting for increased enrollment. College President Calvin Troup reviewed his presentation that he had given at Synod, "The College as Mission Station". He had attended or would (and did!) attend all the various Presbytery family conferences, either giving presentations or teaching high school students. He spoke about the new Shanghai Pathway program that has been developed. Finally, he expressed gratitude to Synod for its two position papers on sexual orientation in 2011 and on gender identity, adopted at last Synod. At this summer meeting, we have our normal time for elections. New or re-elected officers of the Corporator Board are Steven McMahan, chairman; Matthew Filbert, vice-chairman; and Philip Pockras, secretary. We elected or re-elected Trustees, as well.

Our most recent meeting was a few weeks ago, on 10 February, 2018, at Geneva College. Before the meeting, we had been invited to join the Trustees, as well as some administrators, staff, and faculty, for dinner and a presentation on the evening of 8 February given by Dr. Carl Trueman on possible cultural threats to Christian institutions, followed by a response from ADF Attorney Greg Baylor. Then, on the morning of 9 February, we met with the Trustees for breakfast, prayer, and an additional presentation

by Mr. Baylor with additional comments by the College attorney, Mr. David Porter. Their presentation was somewhat of a follow-up to the previous evening, along with comments on the social/political climate in Pennsylvania that might affect Geneva.

At our actual meeting on Saturday, 10 February, we had the pleasure of being joined by two new Corporators: Mr. Chris Huggins, nominee of St. Lawrence Presbytery, and Mr. Scott Reynolds. Mr. Huggins, who has previously served as a Corporator, replaced the now-deceased Dr. Peter Howe. Mr. Reynolds replaces Mr. James Tweed, who wished not to be re-elected, to give more time to his family and to the Winchester, KS, congregation and Session. Trustee Chair Huston spoke of the concern of the Trustees with the pressures of societal and governmental threats. The strong tie of the College to the Church is seen to be hugely valuable and useful. Trust and unity on the Trustee Board has largely been restored. President Troup had a useful presentation on several topics. The first topic was “financial and other College health matters”. One of the most important matters Presbytery should know is that the College is emphatically not in financial crisis. While things could be better with a billion-dollar endowment, Geneva is better placed, financially, than many smaller liberal arts colleges. The second topic was “New Programs”, including nursing, a Master’s degree in cybersecurity, and a men’s volleyball team. As well, interest in the Bible and Philosophy department has grown quite a bit. The third topic was “Relationships”. Things with the CCCU are better and more unified, particularly on social and political matters. In case the NCAA starts harassing the school on such matters, already exploration is being done toward a possible affiliation once again with the NCCAA. Lastly, in “Spiritual Work”, Dr. Troup noted that a fund endowed by Roy and Bob Blackwood has provided for many new discipleship groups springing up on campus.

There is something else I want to repeat from last year, because it is very important to keep before Presbytery: some of you may remember that there was a reorganization of the governance of the College, as well as extensive Bylaw revision in recent years. This was all in order to the stronger ties with the RPCNA. In all the talk about social and political pressures, the big one now has its own abbreviation that I just learned at this meeting, and you’ll be seeing it more and more: SOGI. It means “Sexual Orientation and Gender Issues”. The college’s strong tie to the Church is coveted by many schools, now. Our strong stands at Synod on SOGI, with much of that work done by men of our Presbytery, are a huge help to Geneva.

College enrollment numbers are up somewhat, and our Trustees continue to exercise financial prudence. Geneva continues to be rated well by *US News and World Report* as a good value in the eastern part of our country and is rated well for its beauty.

Our next meeting is to be, D.v., on the afternoon of 1 July, 2018, the day after Synod’s adjournment, again at the Baymont Inn and Suites near the Indianapolis airport.

For your information, the website for the College is at [www.geneva.edu](http://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, which you have shown by your nominating me again to Synod. I am happy to continue this service as long as you desire.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras

NORTHERN CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE  
Report to GLG Presbytery - Spring '18

Largely due to my negligence, this committee has not met this year and therefore has nothing official to report. As chairman, I would like to mention however two things:

I received an email from Phil Jones requesting information regarding our presbytery's ongoing interest in church planting in Fort Wayne, IN. His letter is below for information:

*"We belong to the only reformed and Presbyterian church in Fort Wayne, which is a PCA. Over the last three years, I have seen a growing interest in reformed theology in Fort Wayne. There is a young family in the PCA here that believes in exclusive Psalmody, and would be interested in an RPCNA work here. While he loves the PCA church family, he would enjoy being in a denomination that holds to a stricter subscription to the Westminster Standards and practiced exclusive Psalmody. There is a CREC congregation 28 miles west of Fort Wayne; a couple of young men who were once associated with the PCA, and who believe in exclusive Psalmody, attend there. There is at least one CREC family who live in Fort Wayne and attends the CREC but wish there was another reformed church option in Fort Wayne. There may be others. Lastly, Jared Olivetti's father-in-law is a ruling elder in the PCA here. He is actually a graduate of RPTS. Again, I have no idea of he would be interested in an RPCNA work or not."*

Secondly, as you saw in the Columbus congregation's report, there is an organized and intentional effort being made by that congregation to investigate the possibility of a church plant in Louisville, Kentucky. While there is a strong Reformed Baptist church there, the Associate Reformed Church there has been in serious decline and is seriously having to consider closing. The Columbus RPC is currently conducting a weekly Bible Study at the downtown Public Library in Louisville made up of three or four family units from that area. The Lingerfelt family (formerly of Rochester RPC in NY are attending that study) as are two other family units that have joined or will soon join the Columbus RPC membership.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy McCracken, chairman



The Home Mission Board met last on October 6, 2017 at the Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis, IN. The new board member representatives from each presbytery are as follows:

Brian Panichelli.....Alleghenies Presbytery  
 Steven McCarthy.....Atlantic Presbytery  
 Andy McCracken.....Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery  
 Bruce Parnell (alt.).....Midwest Presbytery  
 Nathan Eshelman.....Pacific Presbytery  
 Kevin Plummer .....St. Laurence Presbytery  
 Jim McFarland.....Ex-officio Member - Board Treasurer

[The Board is still seeking to find a woman to replace Rachel Roberts' after her term expired.]

The HMB met jointly with the GMB to discuss the need to prepare for those opportunities that are arising regarding the adding of congregations and presbyteries both within and outside of our national borders.

- The two boards will begin working from basic geographic boundaries of North America & non-North America.
- Our two boards can help the Synod do a better job in defining the gray areas (i.e. Japan, CASA, EA, etc...)

We will format a joint recommendation to synod regarding making “presbyteries” that are not within the boundary of the HMB sphere. Commissions are being established that are establishing presbyteries that now require unreasonable demands on the HMB.

## **PRESBYTERY UPDATE**

### **ALLEGHENIES**

Grace and Truth in Harrisonburg, VA has installed Ryan Bever and Paul Martin. North Hills Congregation is seeking to move forward with their ministry to Chinese Immigrants and has also expressed interest in planting another congregation in the next couple of years (north to Cranberry Township and Sharpsburg).

### **Open Pulpits:**

Grace RPC (State College), Covenant RPC (Meadeville)--Gary Gunn has accepted a call here and was examined on October 14, 2017.

### **Students Under Care:**

- Men under care: Joshua Giesler, Chris Myers, Edgar Ibarra, Mark Brown, Josiah Bull, Caleb Allen, Bryan Schneider, Kevin Jia, Joe Dunlap, Jeremiah Wilson, Brendan Byham, Jason Thoman, HL, Timothy Bloedow and Keith Dewell.
- Licensed to Preach: Caleb Allen, Josiah Bull, Edgar Ibarra, Kevin Jia
- Eligible to Receive a Call: Chris Villi (currently serving as a RE at Grace RPC in Gibsonia) and Dan Woodring

**ALANTIC**

**Cambridge, MA:** Noah Bailey was installed as their pastor as of September 9, 2017.

**Hazleton/Harrisburg:** Hazleton session has been holding monthly evening services in Harrisburg since July, led by Pastor Paul Brace. They have had around 40 in attendance (the three newest Hazleton families plus the Braces, three other individuals, and various visitors) each time. Edgar Ibarra has been interacting with Pastor James Machuca from a Spanish speaking congregation led by a newly reformed, ex-Pentecostal preacher about a mile from their meeting place.

**Men under care:** Gabriel Wingfield, Hunter Jackson

**Licensed to Preach:** Gabe Wingfield

**Vacant congregations:** Coldenham-Newburgh

**GREAT LAKES-GULF**

The groups being watched by the HMB this year have been the **Atlanta Fellowship** (Frank & Penny Smith), **Dayton, TN, Pageland, SC** – (Ian & Deanna Wise), **Terre Haute, IN** (Reducing Aid) – (Bill & Rachel Roberts) and an **Investigative Work in Birmingham, AL** [Paul Martin, regional home missionary for the Alleghenies Presbytery has several natural connections with people who are involved in a small group meeting for Bible Study in Birmingham.]

**Men under care:** Andrew Battiato, Joel Hart, Zachary Smith, Gary McNamee

**Eligible for a call** - Donald Cassell, Scott McCullough, Frank Schutz, George Gregory

**Vacant Congregations:** Selma, AL ; Sparta, IL

**MIDWEST**

The Midwest Presbytery currently has the following works in the area of church planting:

- One fully organized congregation graduating from reducing aid from the HMB (Enid)
- One fully organized congregation receiving reducing aid (Dallas)
- One mission church with a church planter on site and receiving reducing aid (Casper)
- One mission church with a church planter on site applying for reducing aid (Bryan). Pastor Steve Rockhill was installed as church planting pastor in the Living Way RP Mission Church in Bryan, TX.
- Exploration going on in the following locations (Garden City, KS, Sabetha, KS, and San Antonio, TX)
- Laramie, Manhattan, and Tri-Lakes continue to establish their ministries in their respective cities.

The Presbytery maintains the services of a Regional Home Missionary, Bob Hemphill.

**Vacant pulpits** – Enid, OK, Sharon, IA, and Shawnee, KS

**Students under care** – Matthew Bates, Chris Manfreda, Rom Prakashpalan, Tom Rowell, Jake Terpstra, & Tim Yin

**Licensed to preach** – Rob Haynes

**Licensed to receive a call** – Patrick McNeely

***PACIFIC COAST*****This presbytery is investigating or has begun Church Plants in:**

Squamish, WA, Irvine, CA, Las Vegas, NV

Tim McCracken continues to hone his vision for a prison ministry that includes membership as well as access to the sacraments.

**Open Pulpits: Las Vegas, NV**

**Students under care:** Caesar Arevalo, Jordan Feagley, Jerry Foltz, Sean Holm, Hsing Tang.

***ST LAWRENCE***

Vacant Pulpits – Syracuse (Salina St.), Lisbon, Hudson St Lazzare

Students under care – Chris Georner, Micah Wright

Licensed to preach – Warren Campbell, Dan Dupois, Reuben Lindeman, Derek Baars

Licensed to receive a call – Scott Doherty

**OTHER ACTIONS:**

- \$5000 exploratory work grant was issued to the Midwest Presbytery for San Antonio, TX.
- The Midwest Presbytery was granted a 6-year reducing aid package for the Living Way RPC in Bryan, TX with stipulations for evaluation.
- The Providence RPC was granted an RIT grant of \$24000/year for two years for Gabe Wingfield.
- The North Hills RPC was granted \$17,000 for Matthew Ma and the Mandarin Ministry.
- Tim McCracken was granted \$2000/month until the Spring meeting of the HMB in support of his jail ministry.

**Church Planters' Conference: April 5-9, 2018 in Los Angeles, CA.**

**Report of the Sparta Session to Presbytery – March 1-3, 2018****Page 1 of 4****Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church  
Report of the Session to Presbytery – March 1-3, 2018**

2017 was a challenging year for us. We began with a settled pastor who was starting his fourth year with the congregation. We ended with no pastor and a provisional moderator. The Hemkens desired to begin the adoption process but Daniel and Kim did not see any way they could afford the costs on the income which our congregation was able to pay them. Consequently, in December 2016 the Session gave its blessing (with some sadness) to Daniel's request to pursue a call in a larger congregation. On July 31 they completed their ministry with us and began to minister at the RP Church in Clay Center, Kansas.

In the first half of the year Daniel preached Malachi and I Timothy in the morning worship service and in the evening he taught on exclusive psalmody and a cappella singing, a survey of Ezra and a topical series on apologetics.

**Public ministry**

Since Daniel's departure, God has graciously and kindly provided Frank McGuigan as our regular pulpit supply. Frank is a graduate of Covenant Seminary who is searching for his place of ministry. The Sabbath School class for both adults and older children has included sermons from Rich Ganz and a powerful seminar on church revitalization by Pastor Harry Reeder. There has been a regular Wednesday evening prayer time at the church led by Bob Morrow. Communion was observed on three Lord's Days. The fourth Lord's Day of the month we continue our ministry at Cedarhurst Retirement Center under the leadership of Jack Vink.

**Provisional moderator**

In August, at our request, Presbytery appointed Keith Magill to be our provisional moderator. Beginning in September he has made monthly trips to Sparta to not only preach God's Word on the Lord's Day but also to get to know our people and to understand our financial situation including the four properties we own. Each weekend included a lengthy and hopefully productive Session meeting on Saturday afternoon.

**Session meetings**

The first two Session meetings of the fall were given mostly to bringing our provisional moderator up to speed on the families and the circumstances of the congregation. We also began an evaluation process of the congregation's ministry in the past and up to the present. How has God used us in this community? Why, in recent years, have we not seen conversions and new people to whom we can minister? Why is God not entrusting some of his precious, elect children to our congregation to be discipled and equipped for ministry? What could another pastor do that has not already been tried by the previous two pastors to have a more effective ministry in the community? Why should the Sparta RP church continue?

**Membership**

Some uncertainties about our roll have been resolved. We have 18 communicant members, (a loss of 4) and 5 baptized members (a gain of 2). 5 of the communicant members are either inactive or non-resident. Average morning attendance was 16 and evening attendance was 12. No baptized members professed faith and there were no new members by profession of faith.

**Properties**

Our provisional moderator and Robert Finley have examined the four properties which belong to the congregation. The house at 512 Maple St. is so damaged that it is unlikely that anyone would want to rehabilitate it. Therefore, it is a candidate for demolition. The property at 516 Maple St. is where Jim McMahon lives. Jim is planning to move to Indianapolis as soon as there is an opening in the retirement center that he believes will work best for him. That will leave that house vacant. The Session is beginning to address once again what to do with these two houses.

The church building is in good condition with only a few minor maintenance issues that need to be taken care of. For this we are very thankful.

When we first visited the parsonage at 411 Vine St. last fall we saw quite a few issues that needed to be addressed

**Report of the Sparta Session to Presbytery – March 1-3, 2018****Page 2 of 4**

if anyone was to live there. Thankfully, Bob Finley took the initiative to prepare the house for what we thought would be an unoccupied winter. However, God had other plans for our parsonage.

**Finances**

Our provisional moderator has worked with our treasurer, Eric Morrow and his faithful assistant, Mary Morrow, to review and update the church's financial record-keeping. This has led to a new form for the financial statement. We ended 2018 with a surplus of about \$2,300 for the year.

**Our clerk**

James Odom and his family have done valiant work in carrying out many things which had been done by Pastor Hemken and Elder Morrow. James has been Clerk of Session since January 2016. He and his daughter Clara prepare the bulletin every week, which is no small task. He coordinates securing the men to fill our pulpit on the Lord's Day. And most recently he has initiated an early morning Bible study for the men of our church and others who are interested. The Odoms also run the "Odom's Guesthouse" which has been a wonderful provision for ministers coming from out of town and many other friends traveling through. The Odoms minister in many other ways for which we are thankful.

**Joshua Hall**

The most unexpected development of the year has been the coming of Joshua and Amy Hall into our midst. Pastor Hemken met Joshua a couple years ago through an area pastors' fellowship. Joshua has preached at least two times for us. He is currently the Assistant Pastor for Students and Families at nearby Marissa PCA. However, his position at Marissa will come to an end on May 31, 2018. Last fall Joshua presented a plan to our Session which involved the Halls moving into our parsonage and exploring the possibility of a longer-term relationship with our congregation. After an extensive interview in our December 2017 Session meeting, we decided to accept the Hall's offer after which we entered into a written agreement with the Halls. The Halls moved into the parsonage the third week of January and are doing extensive renovations on the parsonage in exchange for rent.

**The future**

Joshua Hall is interested in being hired as a part-time interim pastor of our congregation. Before we can recommend to the congregation to enter into this relationship, we are contacting references which Joshua provided us. He will be preaching four morning worship services in the next few months and maybe some evening services as well. With our help, he is exploring what is required to be received by our Presbytery as a teaching elder in the RPCNA.

If we believe that the Lord is leading us toward hiring Joshua as our interim pastor, we will have another congregational meeting where we will have Joshua present his vision, where he will be interviewed by the congregation and where we will present a revised budget. The congregation will then decide if we want to enter into this relationship. If we do, we will request that Presbytery continue appointing a provisional moderator for our Session. This arrangement would be similar to the one Presbytery approved for Steve Rhoda to be interim pastor at Westminster RPC several years ago. Session anticipates bringing any such request to the Synod meeting of Presbytery in June.

We anticipate that Joshua Hall will be present for most of this Presbytery meeting. Please take the opportunity to meet him.

**St Louis Ministry**

Several years ago Sparta initiated ministry in the greater St. Louis area. We were given a grant from the HMB and a commitment from Presbytery funds. Also, at the request of Presbytery, the Trustees of Synod approved making available some of the proceeds from the sale of the Oakdale church property. Unfortunately, the ministry in St. Louis was ended in about 2011. Sparta is holding funds left over from the Oakdale property sale. We intend to ask the Trustees to allow Sparta to use those funds for its local ministry. We may need some help from Presbytery in our appeal to the Trustees.

**Report of the Sparta Session to Presbytery – March 1-3, 2018****Page 3 of 4****Conclusion**

In conclusion, we rest on the fact that Jesus promised, **“I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** (Matthew 16:18). He did not promise anything about specific congregations at specific times in history, but He did promise that whatever we see happening, He is about the work of building His church and we are part of it. Further, he promised that, **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”** Therefore, **“Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.** (Psalm 32:8-9). And further and most reassuring, is that the Lord tells us, **“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.”** (Proverbs 16:9)

## Recommendations:

1. That Keith Magill be reappointed provisional moderator of Sparta RPC.
2. That Joshua Hall be allowed to participate in the Travel Fund for this meeting of Presbytery.

## Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church Session

Keith Magill, Provisional Moderator  
James Odom, Clerk  
Robert Morrow  
Jim McMahan

<b>Sparta RPC</b>		
<b>FINANCIAL REPORT - DECEMBER 31, 2017</b>		
<b>PROPOSED BUDGET - 2018</b>		
	2017	2018
	Actual	Budget
<i><b>INCOME</b></i>		
101 Contributions	39,270.94	33,600.00
102 Interest	13.08	10.00
103 Other	66.00	66.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME =</b>	<b>39,350.02</b>	<b>33,676.00</b>
<i><b>EXPENSES</b></i>		
<b>CONGREGATION</b>		
203 Youth Ministry	75.00	150.00
204 Guest Ministry	4,828.27	15,600.00
205 Administration	431.24	480.00
206 Pastor's Ministry Expenses	191.00	
207 Workman's Comp Insurance		200.00
210 Other	437.75	
<i>Congregation Sub-total =</i>	<b>5,963.26</b>	<b>16,430.00</b>
<b>PASTORAL SUPPORT</b>		
301 Salary	18,620.00	
302 Parsonage Allowance		
304 Pension	3,500.00	
305 Medical Insurance		
<i>Pastoral Support Sub-total =</i>	<b>22,120.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>MISSIONS</b>		
401 Local Outreach	0.00	780.00
404 Other Missions		
405 Mercy Ministry		
410 Other		
<i>Missions Sub-total =</i>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>780.00</b>

## Report of the Sparta Session to Presbytery – March 1-3, 2018

## Page 4 of 4

	2017	2018
	Actual	Budget
<b>DENOMINATION</b>		
501 Presbytery Assessments	617.17	600.00
502 Synod Assessments	1,689.00	786.00
503 Synod & Presby Delegate		360.00
510 RP Missions & Ministry		250.00
<i>Denomination Sub-total =</i>	<i>2,306.17</i>	<i>1,996.00</i>
<b>CHURCH BUILDING</b>		
602 Insurance	1,683.72	1,704.00
604 Maintenance & Supplies	65.47	240.00
607 Utilities	2,526.49	2,700.00
608 Property Improvements		
<i>Property Sub-total =</i>	<i>4,275.68</i>	<i>4,644.00</i>
<b>PARSONAGE</b>		
702 Property Insurance	829.28	900.00
704 Maintenance & Supplies	164.00	2,400.00
707 Utilities	882.52	240.00
708 Property Improvements	75.00	1,000.00
<i>Parsonage Sub-total =</i>	<i>1,950.80</i>	<i>4,540.00</i>
<b>516 MAPLE STREET</b>		
802 Property Insurance	135.36	144.00
804 Maintenance & Supplies		600.00
807 Utilities	154.51	1,080.00
808 Property Improvements		
<i>516 Maple Sub-total =</i>	<i>289.87</i>	<i>1,824.00</i>
<b>512 MAPLE STREET</b>		
902 Property Insurance	135.35	144.00
908 Demolition		
<i>512 Maple Sub-total =</i>	<i>135.35</i>	<i>144.00</i>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES =</b>	<b>37,041.13</b>	<b>30,358.00</b>
<b>YTD NET =</b>	<b>2,308.89</b>	<b>3,318.00</b>
	2017	2018
	Actual	Budget
<b>950 General Fund</b>		
Beginning Balance Jan 1	16,137.04	18,445.93
Net from This Year	2,308.89	3,318.00
<b>General Fund Balance =</b>	<b>18,445.93</b>	<b>21,763.93</b>
<b>960 Mercy Fund</b>		
+Beginning Balance Jan 1	(927.24)	(1,661.09)
+Income	367.33	
-Expense	(1,101.18)	
<b>Mercy Fund Balance =</b>	<b>(1,661.09)</b>	<b>(1,661.09)</b>
<b>Outstanding loans =</b>	<b>1,891.09</b>	
<b>970 Special Projects</b>		
+Beginning Balance Jan 1	0.00	370.00
+Income	370.00	
-Expense	0.00	(370.00)
<b>Special Projects Fund Balance =</b>	<b>370.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Balance of all Funds =</b>	<b>17,154.84</b>	<b>20,102.84</b>

**Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church**  
**Addendum to the Report of the Session to Presbytery – March 1-3, 2018**

Sparta is presenting an additional recommendation.

3. That Presbytery endorse the Sparta Session's request to the Trustees of Synod that the remaining funds originally designated for new work in St. Louis and Southern Illinois by the Oakdale RPC be granted to the Sparta congregation to be used exclusively for capital investments in the congregation's property in Sparta.

**Background:**

In late 2005 the Sparta congregation began a concerted effort to develop new work in the St. Louis area. In 2008 the Home Mission Board granted us \$4,000 for ongoing exploratory expenses in this effort. The HMB asked the Presbytery to match that amount. Presbytery put \$2,000 in its 2010 budget and another \$2,000 in its 2011 budget.

In 2008, as the Oakdale congregation was in the process of closing, they requested that the Trustees of Synod, with the endorsement of our Presbytery, make available 33% of the proceeds from the sale of their property for "evangelistic and church planting work in Southern Illinois and the St. Louis area." In February 2009 the Trustees of Synod granted this request of the Oakdale congregation. The Trustees noted that, "Typically, the funds would be distributed to the Building Loan Fund of the Trustees, unless the funds are requested for a new work in the general area of the disorganized congregation." As a result, about \$8,000 came to the Sparta congregation from the Oakdale property sale for work in the St. Louis area.

In 2011 the work in St. Louis was disbanded. The congregation had spent the \$4,000 from the HMB as well as some of its own funds in the earlier stages of the work. They also spent about \$4,000 of the funds from the Oakdale congregation. They never received the budgeted funds from the Presbytery because, with the ending of the ministry, there was no longer a need. About \$3,800 from the Oakdale property sale remains in a Sparta account today.

It is this \$3,800 that the Session is petitioning the Trustees to be granted to Sparta for capital investment in its properties.

**Support for this petition:**

1. The Sparta and Oakdale congregations were yoked closely together especially after Oakdale lost their last full-time pastor in 1991. Ray Morton was installed as their part-time pastor in 1998. Ray preached in both places and moderated both sessions for more than 12 years until Oakdale was disorganized in 2010. Oakdale paid a significant percentage of Pastor Morton's compensation. Although there is no way of knowing for sure, it would seem reasonable that the Oakdale congregation would have been supportive of more of their funds going to the surviving congregation in Sparta if the outreach efforts did not materialize.
2. Sparta will use these funds only and exclusively for capital investments in their property. For example, we are in the process of significantly upgrading the parsonage which has many deferred maintenance issues. The funds could be used toward replacing the roof and gutters which are in disrepair. If the Sparta congregation did not survive, an eventuality we are not contemplating at this point, we are confident that the Oakdale funds would have increased the value and salability of the Sparta properties. This might result in an increase in the value of the Oakdale funds that would then be returned to the Trustees. In our view, this would be a better return on these funds than simply adding more money to the Building Loan Fund of the Synod.
3. At this time the best means of increasing outreach in the Southern Illinois and St. Louis area is to strengthen the Sparta congregation which would be the supporting base for any such outreach.



**THE ATLANTA COMMISSION REPORT**  
**Great Lakes-Gulf Spring Presbytery March 1-3, 2018**

Fathers and Brothers,

Thank you for the privilege, as your commission, to serve you in overseeing the work of Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship (APF hereafter) since August 2014. Our report includes: 1) APF Interviews; 2) Present Assessment of APF; 3) Financials; 4) The Commission's Evaluation.

**1) APF Interviews with the Commission October 2017**

Last year the APF Board of Advisors asked the Commission to petition the Presbytery for "Mission Church Status." The Commission was not ready to make such a petition. The most significant reason was the unique nature and status of APF as an organism and an organization. The central question for consideration was: Has APF reached an *organic* level of community life and profession required to become *organized*? This is a typical question asked of each of our church plants over the years and always requires much discernment. APF *is* unique. It has unique challenges but also an abundance of opportunities, gifts, blessed fellowship and love experienced by adherents and visitors alike. Due to this uniqueness, we implore the Lord for an increase of wisdom and discernment as we move forward with the work of APF in "The Bluff."

This Commission asked for and received your endorsement to go to Atlanta to investigate the viability of Mission Church Status in 2017. Altogether, four of the five members were able to visit APF on October 6-9 and interview all those interested in joining a local mission church in the "Bluff". The Commission placed all those interviewed into following categories;

- 1) Those the Commission is willing to receive into communicant membership without reservation;
- 2) Those the Commission is willing to receive into communicant membership but would have to work through various pastoral issues prior to being received; and
- 3) Those the Commission is not willing to receive into communicant membership at this time.

The total number of those who fall into the first category are 7 individuals. The second category is comprised of individuals who are facing a variety of pastoral issues ranging from seeing APF as a place to serve, but not to be served to fiancés who are members at another church. Finally, the third category is comprised of individuals, who in the opinion of the Commission lack credible professions of faith or are precluded from membership based on current life experiences.

41 **2) Present Assessment of APF**

42

43 ***A) Goals***

44 Initially, we were charged with measuring viability of the work. Based on our bi-annual visits  
45 since 2014, we have measured the health of the organism of APF by attempting to answer the  
46 following questions.

47

48 1) How many core adult members live locally, attend three or more services a month, and are  
49 committed to joining the fellowship?

50

51 2) Does APF demonstrate evidence of church life, to include 1:1 discipleship, evangelism, and  
52 fellowship among the core group and their friends?

53

54 3) Does leadership or potential leadership live locally?

55

56 4) Are local financial contributions growing, demonstrating financial accountability and  
57 stewardship?

58

59 ***B) Challenges***

60 The Commission believes that the most significant challenges to the above goals are (1) life in  
61 the “Bluff”, (2) need for additional leadership, (3) Dr. Smith’s leadership, and (4) lack of a  
62 morning worship service.

63

64 The APF ministry is challenged intrinsically by life in the “Bluff”. The community is influenced  
65 by matriarchy in the family structure. Additionally, the welfare system promises the community  
66 money and resources but perpetuates circumstances so that the mothers raise kids who continue  
67 in the same path. Finally, there is a lack of stable men in the “Bluff”. Consequently, there is a  
68 lack of any local model of a Christian home and associated family life, there are is minimal male  
69 presence to mentor young men, and local giving is unable to meet the budget.

70

71 The APF ministry is also challenged with the need for additional leadership. There is no local  
72 ordained leadership living within the “Bluff”. This challenge is not only present for APF, but  
73 also of other churches in the Bluff community. About 98% of the congregants from  
74 congregations in the area consist of families living outside these neighborhoods. Related to this  
75 is that the ministry seems predominantly tied to Dr. Smith and there is the question of what  
76 would happen if he were no longer there. Finally, there is some 1:1 discipleship going on (Amy  
77 Work), but there is much need and there is currently no formal or informal midweek contact.

78 Furthermore, Dr. Smith’s leadership presents the APF ministry with an additional challenge. Dr.  
79 Smith is known throughout the presbytery for his committed optimism. He has acknowledged  
80 that he would greatly benefit from more local leadership gifted with a realistic wisdom for the

81 urban context of English Ave/Vine City (beyond the gifts and support of his wife, Penny).  
82 Considering this enthusiastic tendency, in addition to the somewhat strained relationship that Dr.  
83 Smith has had with the Presbytery, it is apparent that the question of the church planter's  
84 limitations of skill and ability in this setting has directly affected the viability question of the  
85 church plant. Commission members have counseled with Dr. Smith on these issues.

86 Finally, there is the lack of a morning worship service. It is challenging to have a sense of who  
87 would truly make up the membership of this mission church without using the discernment that  
88 an AM service provides.

### 89 C) Strengths

90 Positively, the Commission identified many strengths and gifts in APF.

91 1) A diversity of people, with an obvious spirit of fellowship and love, gather weekly for  
92 worship, where the clear preaching of the Gospel as well as catechizing is present. We  
93 expect to see the morning services, begun in February, to increase the shared partnership.  
94

95 2) The supportive core is healthy, service-oriented, transparent and willing to talk about  
96 struggles. There are many willing servants, to include mature and competent women who  
97 are mentoring other women and teens.  
98

99 3) The children currently attending are joined and overseen by parents. Transportation is  
100 available and supplied weekly. It is clear that APF's ministry continues to be respected and  
101 appreciated in the community.  
102

103 4) Dr Smith's idealism energizes him in many ways, culminating in a sacrificial ministry.  
104

105 5) Significant financial giving is provided so that budget is met annually.  
106  
107

### 108 3) Financials

109

110 The 2018 Budget is attached to the end of this report. A summary of 2017 includes:  
111

- |     |                                          |                                               |
|-----|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 112 | • 2017 Total Inflow: <b>\$46,557.92</b>  | 2017 Net Total: <b>\$710.67</b>               |
| 113 | • 2017 Total Outflow: <b>\$45,847.25</b> | 2017 Closing Bank Balance: <b>\$15,733.86</b> |

114

115 Amy Work serves as treasurer and Penny Smith serves as the financial secretary, with Warren  
116 Jackson, Sean McPherson, and Amy Work being given signing privileges.  
117  
118  
119

120 **4 Concluding Evaluation**

121

122 Though we have identified the most significant challenges, we are eager to tell you of the  
123 developments of APF that have, by God’s Providence, recently transpired:

124

125 1) Robert Lebus will step into the position of “Local Diaconal Care Leader” and plans to live  
126 in the apartment complex where APF meets for worship. Robert has previously lived in  
127 the “Bluff” and owned a bike shop in the neighborhood 23 years ago. Robert is a very  
128 visible and active “handyman” who is able to encourage and guide others who serve with  
129 him. Moreover, Robert picks up people from the “Bluff” and brings them to church. He is  
130 burdened for the lost and cares deeply for the neighborhood. He was attracted to APF  
131 because of the uniqueness of the ministry but ended up staying to deeply connect himself  
132 to the work because he feels like this is a “real” church. He has been drawn closer to the  
133 Lord because of, (in his words,) “seeing the fruit of people repenting”. His functions and  
134 duties will now also include:

135

136 a) Giving temporal relief and spiritual care to those in need as directed by the APF Board  
137 of Advisers, in coordination with the Minister;

138

139 b) Assisting the Minister in transportation of families to worship;

140

141 c) Living at the APF building several days during the week to provide building security  
142 and a local contact;

143

144 d) Maintaining the APF facility;

145

146 e) Providing formal and informal reports to various oversight bodies; and

147

148 f) Assisting Treasurer in annual budget plan for mercy, maintenance, and janitorial items.

149

150 2) APF has begun morning worship services as of February 2018.

151 3) In February 2018, the request for Mission Church Status was put to the Commission by  
152 Dr. Smith. The Commission advised Frank to wait at least another year, given the above  
153 developments so that as a Commission and Presbytery we could further see, evaluate, and  
154 understand the growing care, love, and fellowship at APF. Dr. Smith chose to take the  
155 counsel of the Commission and voluntarily put the request on pause, asking for some  
156 brotherly assistance. Therefore, in this spirit, we ask of our brothers take some time to  
157 advise Dr. Smith on how to encourage those who currently want to be baptized and  
158 celebrate the Lord’s Supper at APF.

159

160

161 For these and other reasons we make the following five recommendations:  
162

163 **Recommendations:**  
164

165 **Recommendation #1** That Presbytery give Dr. Smith up to 10 minutes to address the court and  
166 answer any questions.  
167

168 **Recommendation #2 (Nominating Committee)** That Presbytery reappoint the Atlanta  
169 Commission until 2019 spring meeting of Presbytery.  
170

171 **Recommendation #3 (Nominating Committee)** That Presbytery receive Erich Baum's  
172 resignation from this Commission at the end of this meeting and add a presbyter to the  
173 Commission.  
174

175 **Recommendation #4 (Finance Committee)** That Presbytery provide \$2,000 for the Atlanta  
176 Commission to accomplish its work.  
177

178 **Recommendation #5** That the Atlanta Commission Minutes be spread on Presbytery's Minutes.  
179

180 Thank you for the blessed opportunity to serve Christ and His Bride,  
181

182 Shawn Anderson (Moderator)

183 Erich Baum

184 Jason Camery

185 G. Scott Damerow

Jon Hughes (Clerk)

<b><u>ATLANTA PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP 2018 BUDGET</u></b>		
186		
187		
188	<u>Facility &amp; Operating</u>	\$20,650.00
189	Rent and Water	\$9,000.00
190	Utilities	1,000.00
191	Liability Insurance	944.00
192	Van: Insurance	684.00
193	Van: Fuel	1,000.00
194	Van: Maintenance	2,000.00
195	Mileage	2,822.00
196	Building Supplies	500.00
197	Synod/Presbytery/Conference	500.00
198	Office Supplies (paper, ink, etc.)	250.00
199	Other Supplies	350.00
200	Hospitality (coffee, snacks, etc.)	1,500.00
201	Administrative	100.00
202	<u>Denominational</u>	0.00
203	RP M&M	\$0.00
204	Presbytery	0.00
205	Synod Assessment	0.00
206	<u>Ministerial Compensation</u>	24,000.00
207	Housing Allowance	\$19,800.00
208	Salary	0.00
209	Education stipend (taxable)	0.00
210	Healthcare Insurance	0.00
211	Pension	4,200.00
212	Disability Insurance	0.00
213	Out of Pocket Medical	0.00
214	<u>Expenses for Diaconal and Other Workers</u>	5,400.00
215	<u>Pulpit Supply</u>	600.00
216	<u>Edification</u>	250.00
217	Teaching Supplies	\$250.00
218	Ministers' Book Allowance	0.00
219	RP Witness Magazine	0.00
220	Family Retreat	0.00
221	<u>Missions &amp; Outreach</u>	900.00
222	VBS/Seminar	\$900.00
223	Missionary Support	0.00
224	Foreign Missions	0.00
225	Short Term Missions	0.00
226	<u>Mercy</u>	1,200.00
227	Assist: Congregation	\$1,200.00
228	Assist: General	0.00
229	<u>Intern</u>	12,000.00
230	<u>Miscellaneous and Contingency</u>	<u>1,400.00</u>
231		
232	Budget for 2018:	\$66,400.00

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

September 5, 2014

The Atlanta Commission appointed by the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery *Ad Interim* Commission met on Friday, September 5, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. at 2 G/g's BBQ Restaurant in Bellefontaine, OH.

1. Elders present were Moderator John Hanson (RE, Southside), Phil Pockras (TE, Belle Center), Shawn Anderson (TE, Kokomo) and Jon Hughes (RE, Southfield). Jason Camery (TE, Kokomo) was not able to attend.
2. The Moderator led a time of devotion from 2 Timothy 2:14-26 on the danger in taking verses of Scripture out of context and the erroneous doctrines that result.
3. Phil Pockras constituted the court of the Commission in prayer at 12:00 p.m.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Jon Hughes as Clerk.
5. Shawn Anderson volunteered to act as Treasurer and that was approved by common consent.
6. Shawn Anderson presented an update on the current circumstances on the south side of Atlanta (the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship) where Dr. Frank Smith has been ministering and church planting (including those attending, the meeting place and the community). That was followed by a time of discussion of the task assigned to the Commission.
7. The Commission recessed and after a brief visit to the new building of the Belle Center RP Church reconvened at the home of Pastor Phil Pockras in Belle Center, OH.
8. Plans were formulated to:
  - a. Help Dr. Smith and the Presbytery work together.
  - b. Visit the work in Atlanta.
  - c. Evaluate the development of the group meeting there.
  - d. Encourage Dr. Smith and his wife Penny in the work.
  - e. Help Dr. Smith and the others to more fully develop fellowship, mercy ministry and potential future leadership.
9. Shawn Anderson agreed to put together a questionnaire for Dr. Smith to answer that would help Dr. Smith evaluate his own ministry there, address goals for the work, assets and needs in the present state of the work and how those assets might be used to meet the needs.
10. Phil Pockras led in prayer for the work in Atlanta and adjourned the court at 2:50 p.m.

---

John Hanson, Moderator

---

Jon Hughes, Clerk

December 12, 2014

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, December 12, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. at a restaurant in Marion, IN.

1. Elders present were Moderator John Hanson, Phil Pockras, Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery and Jon Hughes.
2. The Moderator led a time of devotion from Philippians 1:1-2, 12 showing that the saints of God need to be in churches with elders and deacons and also that all that we do is to be subservient to the will of the One to whom we are servants.
3. Shawn Anderson led in prayer and constituted the court in at 1:45 p.m.

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

4. The minutes of the September 5, 2014 meeting had been distributed and read and were approved.
5. Shawn Anderson and Jason Camery gave an update on their recent trip to Atlanta (with stops in Dayton and at Northminster) describing the work Dr. Smith is doing as unique in our presbytery, the dangers involved, the good reputation he is gaining and the challenges ahead as the neighborhood where the ministry is focused is transforming as more affluent people move in.
6. At 2:05 p.m. Frank and Penny Smith joined the meeting by phone. Dr. Smith gave a further update on the most recent Lord's Day activities. He also mentioned that a PCA licentiate and Greenville seminary student, Sam Ketcham, is scheduled to preach for them on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December. Sam has recently become committed to a position of exclusive Psalmody.
7. The Commission members and the Smiths discussed and compiled a list of the core group of persons in the work in Atlanta to give a clearer picture of the levels of commitment.
8. The Smiths left the meeting.
9. Shawn Anderson reported on the levels of giving of those attending in Atlanta.
10. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve Sam Ketcham as pulpit supply on December 28.
11. There was discussion on various other topics including:
  - a. Frank Smith's answers to the questionnaire that had been sent to him to assess the work and his role in it. He plans to revise his responses further in the near future.
  - b. The need for the ministry to have a regular place to meet and that that is something that the group there should pray for and slowly work toward.
  - c. The need for the Smiths to live closer to the ministry's location.
  - d. Another trip to allow additional Commission members to go to Atlanta.
12. Phil Pockras led in prayer and then left the meeting to return home.
13. The Commission discussed recommendations regarding the work. The assessment at present is:
  - a. In terms of a core group they are not ready yet to be organized as a congregation. They do not yet have men qualified to be officers nor are they financially strong (more money continues to be distributed than is being contributed).
  - b. The Smiths need to prayerfully consider moving much closer.
  - c. The group is not nearly ready to purchase a building and any such purchase, at the right time, would require the approval of the Commission or Presbytery.
14. Shawn Anderson presented a proposed budget.
15. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the following budget for the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship:

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENSE</u>	
101 Interest	\$0	200 Administration	
102 Local Offering	\$33,850	201 Administration	\$100
103 Gifts & Contributions	\$0	202 Pulpit Supply	\$200
		300 Congregation	
		301 Designated Mercy	\$1,400
		302 Rent	\$2,400
		303 Insurance	\$680
		304 Website	\$70
		400 Denomination & Missions	
		401 RPM&M	\$0
		402 Short Term Missions	\$1,000



## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

		500 Smith (appointed pulpit supply)	
		501 Salary	\$24,000
		502 Mileage	\$3,000
		503 Travel	\$1,000
Total Income:	\$33,850	Total Expense:	\$33,850

16. In August 2013, the Session of Northminster Reformed Presbyterian Church adopted the following:

“It was moved, seconded, and carried that effective September 1, 2013, Pastor Frank J. Smith be appointed to minister on a regular basis at Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship, with compensation of up to \$2,000 per month, designated as housing allowance. It is understood that this compensation is dependent upon the raising of sufficient giving to The Atlanta Fund.”

Since the Presbytery has assumed responsibility for the assets and obligations of Northminster Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr. Frank J. Smith has continued to labor according to that agreement. It was moved, seconded, and passed that effective January 1, 2015, the Atlanta Commission appoint Pastor Smith to minister on a regular basis at Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship (APF), with compensation of up to \$2,000 per month, designated as housing allowance. It is understood that this compensation is dependent upon the raising of sufficient giving to APF. Also, he will be allowed to take one month of vacation per year of employment in this capacity. Furthermore, this is a six-month agreement, subject to renewal.

17. It was moved, second and passed to adjourn. Jason Camery adjourned the court at 4:05 p.m.

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John Hanson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

January 23, 2015

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, January 23, 2015 at 12:50 p.m.

1. Elders present were Moderator John Hanson, Phil Pockras, Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery and Jon Hughes.
2. Shawn Anderson constituted the court in prayer at 12:52 p.m.
3. John Hanson gave an update on the trip he and Phil Pockras took to Atlanta in early January. IN addition it was noted that a van was donated to the work. John Hanson will be drive it there. The ministry will need to decide how it will be titled and licensed.
4. There was considerable discussion of what “viability” for mission church status means:
  - a. Regular attendance (3-4 services per month) of adults from core families in the local community committed to joining the church.
  - b. Definitive evidence of increasing church life including discipleship, fellowship and evangelism.

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- c. Some leadership of the group needs to live in the local community (i.e., in the Bluff).
- d. A substantial and measurable growth in financial contributions that exceeds present mercy needs. Presently most people who come regularly (and even contribute some) have needed more assistance than they contributed.

The reality of things is that the majority of people in the area are at the level of subsistence living. As a church it may always need external assistance or substantial contributions from members at a larger distance.

5. It was moved, second and passed to make the following recommendations to Presbytery:

Recommendation #1 That Presbytery reappoint the Atlanta Commission until 2016 spring meeting of Presbytery.

Recommendation #2 That Presbytery provide \$3,000 for the Commission to accomplish its work.

Recommendation #3 That Presbytery approve the following goals for the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship for 2015:

1. Gathering of core adult members who live locally, attend 3 or more services a month, and are committed to joining the work.
2. Evidence of Church Life, including 1 to 1 discipleship, evangelism, and fellowship among the core group and their friends.
3. Some leadership living locally in the Bluff.
4. Measurable growth in local financial contributions exceeding financial diaconal needs.

6. By common consent John Hanson and Shawn Anderson will write the report for the spring meeting of Presbytery.
7. Jason Camery led in prayer and adjourned the court at 2:45 p.m.

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John Hanson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

February 20, 2015

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, February 20, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. by conference call.

1. Elders present were Phil Pockras, Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery and Jon Hughes. Also present was Elder Dr. Frank Smith of the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship. The Moderator, John Hanson, was absent due to medical concerns for his mother who fell and broke her thigh and is battling pneumonia.

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2. The Clerk, Jon Hughes, constituted the court in prayer at 10:05 a.m.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Shawn Anderson as Moderator *Pro Tem* in the absence of the Moderator.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed for Dr. Smith to have privileges of the floor.
5. The minutes of the two previous meetings (December 12, 2014 and January 23, 2015) were approved.
6. Shawn Anderson presented the proposed report of the Atlanta Commission for the spring meeting of Presbytery.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to amend the 2015 budget for the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship as recorded in the Atlanta Commission Report.
8. There was further discussion regarding the content of the report which was amended with the revised budget and some modified recommendations.
9. It was moved, second and passed to adopt the amended Atlanta Commission report for the spring meeting of Presbytery.
10. The minutes of this meeting were read and approved.
11. Jason Camery led in prayer and adjourned the court at 10:45 a.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator *Pro Tem*

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

April 10, 2015

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, April 10, 2015 at 12:30 p.m. by conference call.

1. Elders present were John Hanson, Phil Pockras, Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery and Jon Hughes. Also present was Elder Dr. Frank Smith and his wife Penny of the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship.
2. The Moderator led devotions with a few thoughts on Psalm 23 and constituted the court in prayer at 12:36 p.m.
3. The Moderator appointed Shawn Anderson as Moderator *Pro Tem*.
4. The goals that we had presented to, and were adopted by, Presbytery were reviewed and Dr. Smith gave an update on each. Effort is being focused on cultivating core members (several people attending may fit that category soon). Communicants/Catechism classes are being conducted with the young people. No progress has been made yet regarding local leadership living in the immediate area. There has been a small increase in the local giving, but it is still below the levels that are needed.
5. It was moved, second and passed to give Dr. Smith flexibility in finding pulpit supply when needed and to and communicate those plans to the Commission.
6. There was discussion regarding (as suggested by a motion at Presbytery) the possibility of getting some other local Reformed churches (such as ARP, PCA, RPCUS) to help in the work by lending some elders or deacons to give advice from time to time. Dr. Smith expressed that diaconal help would be very valuable especially as people come seeking financial help. He also said that the local RPCUS congregation (Covenant Presbyterian) about 50 minutes away has already expressed interest in helping.

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7. There was a request from Dr. Smith to designate \$4,200 per year from his total compensation to be contributed to the RPCNA pension fund for him (see the motion later).
8. Some other financial matters were discussed. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve compensation of \$20 per trip for the Children’s Coordinator, Jerusha Wheeler.
9. Regarding the present facilities, Dr. Smith indicated that there were 62 in worship recently (with 42 of them children) and that the facility was tight. He discussed the plans that Rev. Howard Chou’s congregation in California has to purchase a building and provide access for AFP, indicating that AFP would only have access to one quarter of that building. So instead they are considering looking for a different church building (such as the North Avenue Baptist Church) to rent for now.
10. It was moved, second and passed to change Dr. Smith’s yearly compensation, at his request, to \$19,800.00 and that we then budget a yearly contribution of \$4,200.00 to the RPCNA pension fund in his name.
11. There was discussion regarding how AFP can exercise “crowd control” with the large number of young people in attendance.
12. It was moved, second and passed to adjourn. Shawn Anderson adjourned the court in prayer at 2:20 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator *Pro Tem*

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

July 17, 2015

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, July 17, 2015 at 12:50 p.m. at the Tree of Life meeting hall in Marion, IN.

1. Present were the Moderator John Hanson, Phil Pockras, Shawn Anderson, Jon Hughes and Jason Camery and by phone: Dr. and Penny Smith, Chris Meyers and Amy Work.
2. The Moderator constituted the court in prayer.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Shawn Anderson as Moderator.
4. Dr. Smith gave a report on recent activity:
  - a. Latest worship had 39 (of which 34 were children) – 10 (9 children) at recent youth meeting.
  - b. He explained how the new facility is working logistically.
  - c. They are working on more structured “pre-worship” activities with the children.
  - d. Short-term they will explore better use of the space in the new facility.
  - e. There had been the possibility of someone living in the “apartment” part of the building.
  - f. Update that Mark Brown is probably not moving to Atlanta.
5. Shawn Anderson gave an update on his talk with Harriet Morton, 37 (whose husband is Stacy, 44):
  - a. They are a core family in the area.
  - b. However they have been inconsistent in attending worship (desiring a more emotional experience in worship).

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- c. Harriet has problems understanding answers to her questions by Dr. Smith and the RP distinctive doctrines and practices.
  - d. Shawn explored her other concerns and ways to minister to them.
6. Shawn Anderson requested that Frank and Penny start reporting a more complete breakdown of who attends worship. They do keep records based on local/remote (i.e., suburban) and adult/children (older and younger) and gave a more complete report of attendance for the month of June.
7. Dr. Smith's most recent assessment of how the goals set by Presbytery were being met was reviewed. There is an expectation that at least one individual will begin tithing to the work. There was discussion about how to encourage people at worship to contribute to the work.
8. Shawn presented the Treasurer's Report:
  - a. Actuals for 2014 compared with 2015 budget and income/expenses so far this year.
  - b. The rent has increased (almost doubled).
  - c. There as discussion regarding quarterly contributions to the pension fund for Dr. Smith.
  - d. Local tithes and offerings are not currently separated from other gifts to the work.
9. A report/assessment from H.P. McCracken based on his recent visit to preach was received.
10. Correspondence from Chris Myers' was discussed. There was a suggestion that there be a local steering committee. This was based on a comparison with the work in Harrisonburg, VA. However the Commission members felt that the two works are at very different stages with Harrisonburg being more mature with more families committed to joining with the church when it is organized. Such a committee is desirable at a later stage as things continue to develop. It was moved, seconded and passed to table the implementation of a steering committee until a future time. The suggestion to Chris was that he could spearhead the organization of a group of men in the Atlanta work to take on some of the things that Dr. Smith currently does on his own and are not necessarily seen by the congregation. It was moved, seconded and pass that Christ Meyers be authorized to informally organize this activity.
11. In line with a suggestion from Presbytery to try to have other local churches support the work, Dr. Smith submitted a draft of a letter that could be sent to other NAPARC churches in the Atlanta area to try to form a "consultative committee" to assist Frank with some of the immediate ministerial concerns that it's difficult for Commission members to deal with at a distance. Dr. Smith stated that he (or other Commission members) would speak with some representatives in those other churches to see if there is any interest in assisting APF and then the letter would be a follow-up to those conversations. More work will need to be done in this area and which churches we might contact.
12. There was discussion regarding strategies for the fellowship to better manage the number of children that attend. Amy Work explained some ways she and others have been teaching and training the children and has seen progress among some of them in terms of paying attention during worship and even taking notes. Dr. Smith indicated that he sees the possibility of the parents of some of the children beginning to come as well.
13. John Hanson gave a positive update on the one young person from Atlanta that went on the recent trip to ECHO in Florida.
14. There was discussion about another trip by the Commission members to Atlanta.

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15. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. Jason Camery adjourned the court in prayer at 2:55 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

January 29, 2016

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, January 29, 2016 at 12:30 p.m. at the Tree of Life meeting hall in Marion, IN.

1. Present were the Moderator Shawn Anderson and Jason Camery and by phone: Phil Pockras, Jon Hughes and Dr. and Penny Smith.
2. The Moderator read from Psalm 106:15 and Phil Pockras constituted the court in prayer.
3. New Business:
  - a. Dr. Smith presented for approval a child-care policy (which has already been reviewed for completeness and suitability by Scott Hunt, an attorney in the Marion congregation). The policy follows this set of minutes. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the policy.
  - b. Jason Camery and Shawn Anderson gave an encouraging report on their recent trip to Atlanta. They had the opportunity to meet with the various workers in the congregation and see their commitment to the work. It was noted that Dr. Smith continues to engage in training the men in the congregation. Some constructive feedback was given to Dr. Smith. Dr. Smith talked about the possibility of beginning an adult classes. He also continues to reach out to other congregations for assistance. There was further discussion of various issues and concerns within the congregation.
  - c. There was discussion regarding the possibility of the Commission asking, at the June meeting of Presbytery, for Presbytery's approval to be able to organize APF as a mission church at an appropriate time. It is still the consensus of the Commission that we are not yet be at that point. One of the more significant concerns currently is that if the congregation was to have the Lord's Supper then many of the current "staff" who attend from outside the community, having consistent lives and professions, would come to the Lord's Table but many who attend from the local area would not currently be welcome since they may not have lives that conform to their profession. In addition there is still not "leadership" and a significant number of consistent adherents living in the community who are committed to giving to the work and to joining the RP Church. The question of having worship services Sunday mornings was also considered and whether people would be committed to being there week-by-week.
  - d. Dr. Smith has requested that there be a local treasurer and indicated that he has spoken to Paul Struwe about his willingness to serve (Penny Smith would do the actual bookkeeping work). It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Paul Struwe as the Treasurer of the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Penny Smith as the Financial Secretary of the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Paul Struwe and Warren Jackson as

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signatories on the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship bank account. Shawn Anderson will work with them to iron out the details regarding bank accounts.

- e. In keeping with the spirit of concerns previously expressed by Presbytery, it was moved, seconded and passed to appoint a local “board of advisors” (to assist Dr. Smith with some of the more immediate ministerial concerns that it’s difficult for Commission members to deal with at a distance). The board will be made up of Warren Jackson, Chris Myers, John Greer and Paul Struwe.
  - f. Phil Pockras and Jon Hughes will try to coordinate plans for a visit to Atlanta in the next four months or so.
  - g. The report for the next meeting of Presbytery will be prepared by Shawn Anderson and will be circulated by e-mail to the Commission members for concurrence.
4. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. Jason Camery adjourned the court in prayer at 3:10 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

### Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship Childcare Policy

Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship (APF) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of APF from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

#### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. The term “volunteer” means anyone involved in a day care or school, in overnight activities involving minors, in counseling of minors, or in one-on-one mentoring of minors.

#### Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

- a) Six-Month Rule  
As a general rule, no volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until he or she has been involved with APF for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.
- b) Written Application  
All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant

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and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at APF.

c) Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at APF.

e) Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and volunteers as defined above. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing APF to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he will be unable to work with children. A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Atlanta Commission on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at APF.

f) Waivers

The six-month rule and the criminal background check may be waived if a congregation that is known to us attests in writing to the good character and abilities of the individual.

### Two-Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher.

### Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.



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- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at APF becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his or her care, this should be reported immediately to the Atlanta Commission for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at APF or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. Any worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children, pending an investigation, and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and APF will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. APF will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The Moderator of the Atlanta Commission will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from his or her position working with children or youth.

### Medications Policy

It is the policy of APF not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the minister to develop a plan of action.

### Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.

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2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

### Emergencies

The minister shall designate a person who will be responsible, under the minister's direction (unless he is unable to give direction), for calling the police, the fire department, and/or medical personnel in the case of an emergency.

### Discipline Policy

It is the policy of APF not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking of children. Workers should consult with the minister if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

All workers and volunteers are to sign this document, indicating their agreement to abide by it.

Signature:

Date:

### Policy on Emergencies

The person designated as "Emergency Coordinator" by the minister will be responsible, under the minister's direction (unless he is unable to give direction), for calling the police, the fire department, and/or medical personnel in the case of an emergency. In case the Emergency Coordinator is not present or is unable to act, an Assistant Emergency Coordinator will take action.

The Emergency Coordinator will always have a cell telephone ready in order to call 911 if necessary.

The Emergency Coordinator should be familiar with the following:

- (1) the streets near the building
- (2) the compass directions (North, South, East, West)
- (3) the places where the fire extinguishers are kept
- (4) how to operate the fire extinguishers

February 23, 2016

The Atlanta Commission met on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 8:15 p.m. by conference call.

1. Present were the Moderator Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Phil Pockras and Jon Hughes.
2. Jason Camery led in prayer.
3. There was a period of informal discussion regarding the Atlanta work and the report being prepared for Presbytery prior to the formal business of the meeting.
4. Phil Pockras led in prayer and constituted the court at 9:00 p.m.
5. The minutes of the April 10, 2015, July 17, 2015 and January 29, 2016 meetings (having been distributed and amended) were approved.
6. Dr. Frank Smith and his wife Penny joined the meeting by phone at 9:03 p.m.

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7. Shawn Anderson presented the final budget for 2016 as prepared by the new APF board of advisors. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the budget. The budget will be included in the report to Presbytery.
8. There was further discussion of the report with Dr. Smith and discussion of the goals we desire to see reached in the next year or so. Dr. Smith spoke to these goals and also gave a brief report on some recent developments. It was agreed that the final draft of the report will be distributed to the Commission members and approved by email and then distributed to the Presbytery delegates.
9. The minutes of this meeting were read and approved.
10. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. The Moderator adjourned the court in prayer at 10:25 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

June 10, 2016

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, June 10, 2016 at 4:15 p.m. by conference call.

11. Commission members present were the Moderator Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Phil Pockras, Erich Baum and Jon Hughes. Also present were Dr. Frank Smith and Chris Meyers.
12. Shawn Anderson constituted the court in prayer.
13. Ruling Elder Gary McNamee is leading a mission team to Atlanta from June 11-18 and has been approved by the Columbus Session to preach occasionally. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve for Gary to preach in the Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship on June 12, 2016.
14. It was noted that Bennie Castle a student at Greenville Seminary (a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, OPC) will be filling the pulpit for Dr. Smith on July 3, 2016 when the Smiths are on vacation.
15. The Commission received a letter from the, previously established, APF Advisory Board requesting the possibility of inviting a pastoral intern to go to Atlanta to serve in the ministry there and also to approve the establishment of a building fund that people could contribute to. Dr. Smith discussed a few possible interns that could be invited but did not have any one particular person in mind.
16. It was also noted that the Advisory Board members agreed that at this point it was their "conclusion that conducting a morning or early afternoon service is premature." Dr. Smith pointed out that having an intern would greatly help if additional service times were added or current times were changed.
17. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve for Dr. Smith to begin exploring possible intern candidates for the Commission to consider.
18. The possibility of Commission members travelling to Atlanta was considered with Dr. Smith outlining his upcoming college teaching schedule (with the best dates starting in September). Phil Pockras, Erich Baum and Jon Hughes will prepare a plan for them to travel there later this year.

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19. Dr. Smith gave an encouraging update on the current state of the Fellowship.
20. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. Jason Camery adjourned the court in prayer at 5:00 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

December 23, 2016

The Atlanta Commission met on Friday, December 23, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. by conference call.

1. Commission members present were the Moderator Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Erich Baum, G. Scott Damerow and Jon Hughes. Also present were Dr. Frank Smith and his wife Penny, Chris Myers (representing the APF Board of Advisors) and Bob Shapiro.
2. Shawn Anderson constituted the court in prayer.
3. It was moved, seconded and passed to adopt the proposed agenda.
4. Jon Hughes gave an update on his, and his wife's, visit to Atlanta over the last weekend in September.
5. Dr. Frank Smith addressed the Commission:
  - a. He expressed how challenging it has been with his schedule including work at the college, but that should improve in 2017.
  - b. Seven individuals have left the area and so attendance is down some, but there are also a few new regular attendees.
  - c. Also the current group seems to be more stable than before.
6. Regarding the work of the Board of Advisors:
  - a. Dr. Smith spoke about Sean McPherson (an ordained deacon from Meadville RPC) that has moved to the area. Sean has been leading the adult class (in the Confession and Catechisms) and his wife Anne has been leading the singing. They live near the "Bluff" area. The recommendation is that Sean be added to the Board of Advisors. Shawn Anderson has also spoken to Pastor Lucas Hanna in Meadville about Sean and his character and qualifications.
  - b. It was moved, seconded and passed to add Sean McPherson to the Board of Advisors.
  - c. The Board of Advisors is now made up of Chris Myers, Warren Jackson, John Greer (from the OPC), Paul Struwe and Sean McPherson.
  - d. Chris Myers gave an update on his recent visit to Atlanta to preach and visit with various people. He also surveyed all of the attending families about their desire to commit to being members if APF was to gain mission church status. He said that the response was very positive.
  - e. The Board will present to the Commission a written assessment and petition regarding mission church status by February 1, 2017 so that the Commission can consider it before the spring meeting of Presbytery.
  - f. Bob Shapiro gave an update regarding his current status.

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- g. It was moved, seconded and passed to appoint Amy Work as Treasurer (to replace Paul Struwe).
  - h. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve Amy Work as signatory on the APF bank account (also to replace Paul Struwe).
  - i. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve Sean McPherson as signatory on the APF bank account.
  - j. Approved signatories on the bank account are now Amy Work, Warren Jackson and Sean McPherson.
7. Dr. Smith spoke about the fact that APF may need to relocate since the building they currently rent is up for sale with a new owner and they may not be able to extend their lease past May 31, 2018.
  8. With regard to pulpit supply, it should be noted that the pulpit has been filled by the following people: Bennie Castle, a student at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary who is aspiring for the ministry in the OPC, on July 3rd; the Rev. David Balzer, a PCA pastor from Stone Mountain, Georgia, on October 9th; and Capt. Chris Myers, a licentiate in Presbytery of the Alleghenies, on November 13th.
  9. All non-Commission attendees left the meeting.
  10. There was discussion regarding a future visit by some Commission members and also Dr. Edward Dalcour who is being considered for an intern position at APF. Shawn Anderson and Eric Baum are planning to visit Atlanta January 27-30, 2017.
  11. Shawn Anderson reminded the Commission of the need of those visiting to both encourage Dr. Smith in the ministry and also to help direct Dr. Smith in properly assessing the status of the work.
  12. There was considerable further discussion of the various people that attend week-by-week at APF, the "mandate" given by the Commission to the Board of Advisors, the overall status of APF and also the difficult work of establishing a viable mission church in the particular urban context that APF finds itself in.
  13. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. Scott Damerow adjourned the court in prayer at 3:00 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

February 20, 2017

The Atlanta Commission met on Monday, February 20, 2017 at 8:30 p.m. by conference call.

1. Commission members present were the Moderator Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Erich Baum, G. Scott Damerow and Jon Hughes.
2. Jon Hughes constituted the court in prayer.
3. The proposed agenda was accepted by common consent.
4. The minutes of the June 10, 2016 meeting were read, corrected and approved.

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5. The minutes of the December 23, 2016 meeting were read, amended and approved.
6. A proposed extension of the pastoral call on Dr. Frank Smith was moved and seconded.
7. It was moved, seconded and passed to amend the wording to clarify the amount of vacation approved in the call.
8. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the following extension of the call on Dr. Frank Smith: "The Commission acknowledges with thankfulness the ministry of Pastor Smith under its auspices since January 1, 2015 according to the terms of the call to him (up to \$2,000 per month designated as housing allowance, later modified to reduce this amount by the minimal amount for the denominational pension, which is currently \$4,200 annually, and also granting one month of vacation per year while he's employed in this capacity), and hereby reaffirms our ongoing call to him, including the year 2017 and beyond."
9. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the proposed budget for 2017. The budget follows these minutes.
10. The Commission has received the petition from the APF Board of Advisors requesting for Mission Church status. It was moved, seconded and passed that the petition be included in the Commission's report to the Spring meeting of Presbytery so that Presbytery may provide additional counsel to the Commission. (The Commission then will plan to visit APF again before the Summer meeting of Presbytery. The primary purpose of the visit will be to interview each of the persons and families to assess and confirm their level of commitment to the work of APF and then to make a recommendation to Presbytery.)
11. The minutes of this meeting were read and approved.
12. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. Erich Baum adjourned the court in prayer at 9:45 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

<b><u>Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship 2017 Budget</u></b>		
<b><u>Facility &amp; Operating</u></b>		\$18,650.00
Rent and Water	\$6,600.00	
Utilities	1,000.00	
Liability Insurance	800.00	
Van: Insurance	1,300.00	
Van: Fuel	1,000.00	
Van: Maintenance	2,000.00	
Mileage	2,750.00	
Building Supplies	500.00	
Synod/Presbytery/Conference	500.00	
Office Supplies (Paper, ink, etc.)	250.00	
Other Supplies	350.00	
Hospitality (coffee, snacks, etc.)	1,500.00	
Administrative	100.00	
<b><u>Denominational</u></b>		0.00
RP M&M	\$0.00	
Presbytery	0.00	
Synod Assessment	0.00	
<b><u>Ministerial Compensation</u></b>		24,000.00
Housing Allowance	\$19,800.00	
Salary	0.00	
Education stipend (taxable)	0.00	
Healthcare Insurance	0.00	
Pension	4,200.00	
Disability Insurance	0.00	
Out of Pocket Medical	0.00	
<b><u>Staff Expenses</u></b>		1,500.00
<b><u>Pulpit Supply</u></b>		600.00
<b><u>Edification</u></b>		250.00
Teaching Supplies	\$250.00	
Ministers' Book Allowance	0.00	
RP Witness Magazine	0.00	
Family Retreat	0.00	
<b><u>Missions &amp; Outreach</u></b>		900.00
VBS/Seminar	\$900.00	
Missionary Support	0.00	
Foreign Missions	0.00	
Short Term Missions	0.00	
<b><u>Mercy</u></b>		1,200.00
Assist: Congregation	\$1,200.00	
Assist: General	0.00	
<b><u>Miscellaneous and Contingency</u></b>		<u>900.00</u>
Budget for 2017:		\$48,000.00
NB: the amounts for these line items may be adjusted by the Treasurer so long as the total amount is not exceeded.		

May 26, 2017

The Atlanta Commission met on May 26, 2017 at 1:02 p.m. by conference call.

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:02 PM by TE Shawn Anderson.
2. Commissioners present at the appointed time were RE Erich Baum, TE Shawn Anderson and RE G. Scott Damerow. RE Jon Hughes joined the meeting at 1:14 pm.
3. Also present were Dr. Rev. Frank Smith and Mrs. Penny Smith.
4. Proceedings were opened with prayer by TE Shawn Anderson.
5. The current finances of the APF were added to the docket as item #2.
6. Docket/Agenda was approved by common consent.
7. Mrs. Penny Smith gave the financial report: Bank balance as of end of May was \$17,953 with \$3500 funds designated for building fund.
8. Pulpit supply was discussed. Pastor Chris Strelve is scheduled for July 16 2017 with July 9th supply TBD. Possible pulpit supply included Wayside PCA intern Mike "Hutch" Hutchinson.
9. Renewal of lease of current APF meeting place discussed: It was noted that the APF board is in favor of renewing the lease for one more year until 2018.
10. RE Jon Hughes joined the meeting at 1:14 PM
11. The possibility of a different future meeting location for APF was discussed with a view to enabling more people to move closer to the work.
12. By common consent the commission voted to allow the APF board to renew the lease for the 472-B Paines Ave location through 2018.
13. The baptism of William McCoy was discussed, exploring the possibility of obtaining baptism for Mr. McCoy outside of the RPCNA. Mr. McCoy's spiritual journey through Roman Catholicism were detailed by Dr. Smith.
14. Options for Mr. McCoy's baptism and church membership mentioned were 1) Mr. McCoy's Baptism into other NAPARC church 2) Put Mr. McCoy on roll of a nearby church. 3) Put Mr. McCoy on roll of presbytery. 4) Add Mr. McCoy to roll of a nearby congregation. 5) Make inquiry of Synod.
15. The RPCNA's DCG, Chapter 1, paragraph 2, "extraordinary circumstances" clause was referenced by RE Damerow in relationship to the individuals worshipping at the APF.
16. Dr. Robert Horton was discussed as a possible appointee to the APF board of advisers.
17. TE Baum left the meeting at 1:59
18. A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to: "Invite Dr. Horton to join the board of advisers"
19. A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to: "Accept John Greer's resignation from the APF board of advisers, with thanks."
20. It was reported that Chris Myers (man under care) has been appointed by the APF board of advisers to be liaison to the APF commission.
21. Alleghenies Presbytery Regional Home Missionary, Paul Martin's April 30 2017 visit and letter about APF was presented by Dr. Smith.
22. A schedule of events and a meeting plan for a late summer visit by the APF commissioners was discussed with a suggestion that commissioners arrive on a Thursday night and depart the following Monday afternoon after concluding the visit with a meeting of the APF Commissioners.
23. Dr. Smith and Penny Smith recounted some of the visitation and counseling done with worshipers at APF: Mrs. Rose Hillman, Tawana Franklin, Andrew Jubera and his girlfriend Jamika.
24. The Divine Providence in the theft of the air conditioning compressor at APF's leased building and the resulting sounds of the outdoor worship services that drew new visitor, Oscar to APF



## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

was told by Dr. Smith and Dr. Smith also recounted that there had been two more recent first time visitors.

25. The reporting of the APF Commission to GLG presbytery was discussed.
26. It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.
27. RE Jon Hughes closed in prayer at 2:00 pm.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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G. Scott Damerow, Clerk *Pro Tem*

September 20, 2017

The Atlanta Commission met on September 20, 2017 at 4:15 p.m. by conference call.

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:15 PM by TE Shawn Anderson.
2. Commissioners present were TE Shawn Anderson, TE Jason Camery, RE Erich Baum, RE G. Scott Damerow, RE Jon Hughes. Also present were Dr. Rev. Frank Smith and his wife Penny.
3. Proceedings were opened with prayer by TE Shawn Anderson.
4. Items covered:
  - Mandate agreed to:
    - To visit APF, investigate the work, and interview prospective members re: commitment to the work, taking of the vows of Communicant Membership and organization as a Mission Church.
  - Visit:
    - Reservations at a downtown hotel near APF meeting place.
    - Dates agreed on:
      - § Oct 6 (Fri) We travel to Atlanta (travel up to each individual) to Hampton Inn (downtown). We meet that evening (7 p.m.) with a prepared agenda for the weekend based on our discussion at this present meeting. Questionnaires will be available for the upcoming visits.
      - § Oct 7 (Sat) We meet with family units.
      - § Oct 8 (Sun) We gather with APF, observe Sabbath School classes, the worship service, and fellowship.
      - § Oct 9 (Mon) We meet from 8-10 a.m. at hotel to discuss our observations, sharing of notes, and questions; then depart.
  - Dr. Smith:
    - Gave feedback on the scheduling and regarding various APF family units and complications regarding visiting them.
    - Suggested that the commissioners go around and visit each family unit rather than expecting each family units to arrive at the meeting place at a specified time.
    - It was pointed out that attendees arriving at the meeting place at scheduled times (as they would on a normal Lord's Day) should be seen as part of demonstrating their commitment.
  - Questionnaire:

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

- How regular have you been in attendance APF?
  - Do you attend the class time or just the worship service?
  - Other than attending Lord’s Day services, how have you shown commitment to APF?
  - Have you read the vows in the Covenant of Communicant Membership?
  - Maybe some questions regarding some of the vows!
  - If the church were to move several miles further away, how would that affect you?
  - What is your understanding of the Lord’s Supper?
  - If children, are they baptized? If not are you committed to have them baptized?
  - How have you been able to contribute financially to the church (“as the Lord prospers you”)?
  - What is your practice regarding reading the Scriptures and prayer?
  - If children, how are you training your children “in the Lord”?
  - Preaching on the Lord’s Day during the visit:
    - While our primary purpose is to be observers of the life of the fellowship, Dr. Smith asked that Jason Camery plan to preach so that the people get a chance to hear another preacher. Jason agreed to preach that Lord’s Day.
  - Discussion regarding flight and travel arrangements:
    - Some are flying, some driving.
    - Those flying will try to co-ordinate arrival and departures if possible.
    - Those driving may be able to assist in getting people to/from the airport.
    - Cell phone numbers should be communicated to other commissioners.
5. RE Jon Hughes closed in prayer at 5:20 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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G. Scott Damerow, Clerk *Pro Tem*

February 9, 2018

The Atlanta Commission met on February 9, 2018 at 2:00 by conference call.

1. Commission members present were the Moderator Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Erich Baum, G. Scott Damerow and Jon Hughes. Also present were Dr. Frank Smith and his wife Penny.
2. Shawn Anderson constituted the court in prayer at 2:10 p.m.
3. The proposed agenda was accepted by common consent.
4. There was discussion regarding Robert Lebus taking on a role as “diaconal assistant”. He has been:
  - a. Entrusted with special responsibility for administration of temporal relief and spiritual care as directed by the APF Board of Advisors in coordination with the Dr. Smith
  - b. Assisting Dr. Smith in transportation of families to worship
  - c. Living in the church building several days during the week providing building security and being a local contact for APF

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

d. Doing maintenance for the APF facility

He would also assist the Treasurer in yearly budget plan for the mercy ministry, maintenance, and janitorial line items. For that he would be compensated as shown in the proposed budget later.

5. Budget for 2018: Dr. Smith gave a few comments on the budget. It was moved second and passed to approve the budget. The budget will be made available to the Presbytery in the report to the upcoming Spring meeting of Presbytery.
6. Visit of October, 2017: The assessment is as follows:

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

### Atlanta Commission APF Assessment

Visit October 6-9, 2017

#### STRENGTHS OF APF

- People gather weekly for worship
- There is clear preaching of Gospel as well as catechism of the people
- APF's ministry is respected / appreciated in the community
- There is an obvious spirit of fellowship and love
- A diversity of people fellowship together
- There are many willing servants
- APF have stable women who can mentor other women and teens
- Transportation is available and supplied weekly
- Currently the children present are tied to present parents
- Dr Smith's idealism energizes him in many ways, culminating in a sacrificial ministry
- The supportive core is healthy and service-oriented
- The people who gather are transparent and willing to talk about struggles
- Significant financial giving is made so that budget is met annually

#### CHALLENGES AT APF

- No local leadership living in / near bluff (whether for jobs and/or safety concerns) – Missionaries needed
- The ministry is too tied to Dr. Smith (what would happen to APF if he passed?)
- The APF needs to know how to delegate better, and would benefit from a delegator
- There is little 1:1 discipleship currently
- There is little to no formal or informal midweek contact currently
- APF lacks stable men who are willing and able to mentor teen men
- There is a lack of local modeling of Christian parenting / homes
- Dr Smith's idealism has demonstrated an inability to realistically assess significant needs and situations
- The Bluff survives in a welfare system that promises money & resources only to perpetuate circumstances so that the moms raise kids to continue in same path
- APF Core living in bluff is unhealthy but sincere
- Some are living in voluntary scandal
- There are unequally yoked relationships
- The African-American community is influenced by matriarchy in the family structure, seen in some APF families
- Some believe that they can serve at APF, but not be served, or shepherded
- Local giving is unable to presently meet budget

#### MEMBERSHIP

We can see the following families able to join APF tomorrow if progressed to Mission Church status

- Frank & Penny Smith
- William McCoy

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

- Harriet Moton
- Miyoshi Robinson
- Amy Work
- Robert Lebus

It is possible that these family units could be taken into membership if some issues are sorted out

- Sean & Anne McPherson – would they want to become members. It is unclear especially with the statement made, “We do not see this as a church for us, but a place to serve others. If Sean was not so pulled to the ministry we probably would not be present as often.”
- Stacy Moton – it is unclear if he has a profession of faith. His behavior health diagnosis poses serious challenges to the church’s time and ministry for this family.
- Tawana Franklin – she says that she desires to be involved, but has left multiple times for a season. We think Dr Smith should file for PoA (Financial).
- Andrew Jubera – eager to ask questions and willing to talk about many spiritual things. Concern for a possible unequally yoked relationship with Jemika Crayton.

We do not believe that these individuals qualify for communicant membership at APF at this time, based on our interviews.

- Bob & Patty Shapiro – Of course Bob & Patty demonstrate a credible profession, but in the providence of God they are facing serious challenges with Bob’s health. Bob admitted that if he had been a member of an APF mission church before he became sick, they still would not have been present at APF, nor been able to contribute financially, which is very understandable. We think that they need to be counseled in preparing for Bob’s passing, and Patty’s connection with a local church that she will receive support from when he passes.
- Abby Shapiro – She appears to have a credible profession of faith, but works on the Sabbath, making her unable to keep her vows.
- Felson Harden – living in voluntary scandalous sin
- Jenario Robinson – does not know if he is a Christian. Believes that he is living a worldly, godless life.
- Jemika Crayton – member of another church, and it is reported that she is presently unwilling to join APF.

Full assessment cannot be accomplished until after November when the Myers’ plan comes to fruition.

The Commission members plan to write up a summary (*within 7 days*) of each person interviewed, answering the following questions, and sharing them with each other and Frank:

- What does this person know well? (Doctrinal – Practical – Shepherding)
- What does this person need to work on? (Identify tangible plans & goals to help articulate faith and grow in Christ)

7. Shawn Anderson covered the essential points of the assessment and then opened the floor for discussion:
  - a. Bob Shapiro’s health has improved somewhat but is still undergoing chemotherapy
  - b. We don’t want to count people as “there” who are not actually “there”
8. There was discussion of the status of many of the other persons at APF.

## Minutes of the Great Lakes – Gulf Presbytery Atlanta Commission

9. It was noted that APF has recently begun having a morning worship service as well as the evening (total attendance was 37 distinct people).
10. Recommendations to Presbytery 2018 (March 1-3) were discussed:
  - a. The possibility of petitioning Presbytery for Mission Church Status was discussed
  - b. Shawn Anderson presented the two prevailing views on it. One of the prior objections was the absence of morning worship services, which has now begun (and the plan is for that to continue). Another objection was the absence of "leader" living in "The Bluff". That seems to be partially resolved with Robert Lebus being regularly in the area.
  - c. Things appear to be strengthening the position in favor of Mission Church status but perhaps we should still give these new evidences time to develop more
11. There was discussion of the report that will be written up to present to the Presbytery at the Spring meeting.
12. It was moved, seconded and passed to adjourn. Jason Camery adjourned the court in prayer at 4:40 p.m.

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Shawn Anderson, Moderator

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Jon Hughes, Clerk

GLG Presbytery  
Nominating Committee Report ~ Spring 2018

**Ad Interim Commission***Southfield + (Bob Koch)***Candidates & Credentials Committee***Roy Blackwood  
(emeritus)***Class of '21***Jonathan Schaeffer  
Adam Niess  
Rich Holdeman***Class of '20***Jared Olivetti (Ch.)  
James Faris***Class of '19***Jon Hughes  
Michael LeFebvre***GLG Internet Maintenance***Keith Evans***Church Ext. Committees****Southern Ch. Ext. Cmtee.  
(SOCHEX)***H.P. McCracken (Ch.)  
Kent Butterfield  
George Gregory  
James Faris***Northern Ch. Ext. Cmtee.  
(NOCHEX)***Andy McCracken (Ch.)  
Phil Pockras  
Jeff Platt  
Jason Camery***Financial Officers***Treasurer – Jim Bishop  
Assistant Treasurer - Mark  
Hart***Visitation Committees****First RP, Durham***David Hanson (Ch.)  
Craig Scott  
Ed Schisler***Lafayette***Bill Roberts (Ch.)  
Jason Camery  
Fik Menbere***Home Mission Board Rep.***Andy McCracken (Cl. of '21)***Board of Corporators of  
Geneva College Nom. to  
Synod***Phil Pockras***Selma Committee***Adam Niess (Ch.)  
Dr. Jerry O'Neill  
Richard Blankenship  
Michael LeFebvre***COVFAMIKOI Conference***Director: Erich Baum  
Manager: Charley Moore  
Advisory Committee: Jeff  
Kessler, Ben Larson,  
Jonathan Schaefer.***Interchurch Liaison***Dick Knodel***Youth Secretary***Ben Larson***Synod Finance Committee***Jason O'Neill***Representative to the Youth  
Ministries Committee of  
Synod***Ben & Anna Larson***Moderators of Vacant  
Congregations***Selma – Jerry O'Neill  
Sparta - Keith Magill**Approve all Congregations  
without pastors be permitted  
to administer the sacraments  
and call a new pastor.**Durham - Bob Bibby  
- Bob Burchfield**Grand Rapids - Steve Rhoda  
Selma - Adam Niess  
Hetherton - Paul Matthews  
Belle Center - Scott Hunt***Pageland TGB***Jared Olivetti (Moderator)  
Ron Posvar  
Bob Shapiro  
Ian Wise***Terre Haute TGB***Jerry Porter (Moderator)  
Rich Holdeman  
Ken DeJong  
Dale Koons  
Joshua Reshey (Approved for  
ordination, but not yet  
ordained. Consultative for  
now.)***Dayton Committee***Andy McCracken  
Gary McNamee (Mod.)  
Phil Pockras***Atlanta Commission***Shawn Anderson (Mod.)  
John Hanson  
Jon Hughes  
Jason Camery  
G. Scott Damerow*

GLG Presbytery  
Nominating Committee Report ~ Spring 2018

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**Sessions serving as Ad Interim Commission**

*2008 Columbus*  
*2009 Southfield*  
*2010 Immanuel*  
*2011 Lafayette*  
*2012 Second*  
*2013 Bloomington*  
*2014 Orlando*  
*2015 Southside*  
*2016 Sycamore*  
*2017 Columbus*  
*2018 Southfield*

**Presbytery Visitation of Congregations History**

*2006 – Second*  
*2007 – Columbus*  
*2009 – Selma*  
*2010 – Elkhart*  
*2011 – Hetherton, Southfield*  
*2012 – Sparta*  
*2014 – Southside, Christ Church, Immanuel*  
*2015 – Bloomington, Sycamore*  
*2016 – Belle Center, Westminster*  
*2017 – Grand Rapids, Orlando, [Selma]*  
*2018 - Durham, Lafayette*



DAYTON REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (MISSION)  
REPORT TO PRESBYTERY  
MARCH 2018

“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

Due to our weaknesses, it is good that we do not face trials continuously. But it is also good that we do meet them from time to time, for these times of trials produce growth in the body of Christ. Praise God that He promises to be with us through them all.

This past year has been an up and down one for the DRPC. Throughout the first half of the year, attendance was growing and fluctuating at the same time. The year started with five member families, of which 15 people were communicant members. One of these families transferred to a PCA church early in the year. The average attendance was around 40 people at its highest and sometimes higher depending on how many Bryan College students were in attendance. Unfortunately, of all the Bryan College students who attended in the spring, only one returned to worship at the DRPC. Some of this was due to graduations and non-returning students. Several other families were also attending but never joined the church. Two of these were families of the reformed persuasion that had moved to Dayton because of their work with Bryan College. Four other families were also of the reformed persuasion driving from forty-five minutes to seventy minutes away. There were 22 people in number from these nonmember families.

The church seemed to be stable for the first part of the year, but there was not any growth in numbers coming from the Dayton community. There was also not a significant outreach effort to the community. The finances of the church had begun to improve due to increased tithing of the member families and to the giving of the non-member families attending worship.

Members of the TGB visited the DRPC every other month. Pastors Pockras and McCracken preached and provided the Lord's Supper to communicant members when they were in Dayton.

We are thankful to God for all the men who filled the pulpit during the year. Along with members of the TGB, Rev. Bob McCracken and Rev. Tom Reid both served as pulpit supply. We also had pastors from the RPCGA, and the PCA preach as well. Kevin Clausen, a member of the church and former elder in the OPC also preached on occasion.

Dr. Matt McMahon, an ordained minister in the RPCGA, and his wife were one of the nonmember attending families. They had been visiting for over a year. He also was one of the ministers who filled the pulpit on occasion. In September, to provide a more consistent pulpit supply, the TGB asked Dr. McMahon to be the 'regular pulpit supply.' With the approval of his presbytery, Dr. McMahon accepted this invitation. He served as pulpit supply until 12/31/17.

In November, the TGB invited the Rev. Matt Filbert to come to Dayton as a candidate for the Church Planting Pastor position. The TGB believed that Matt's gifts and skills would be very beneficial to the DRPC. In November, the TGB extended a call to Matt who turned down the call. It was during this time of Matt's visits that the evidence of a division within the body became apparent. Many of the nonmember families who were attending the church made it known that they would not be coming back. There was also one member family (Goodpaster) who decided that they too would not be back.

They have yet to transfer their membership. Three member families were very much in favor of calling Matt as the church planting pastor. As of 12/31/17, there were three families remaining with the DRPC, (Ecarma x 4, Clausen x 4, Campbell x 4)

On January 19, 2018, all three members of the TGB went to Dayton to assess the situation and personally visit each remaining family. The families that left the church were offered a visit but did not desire to do so. During these family visits, the TGB sought to discover the intentions of the remaining families and their desire for the continuation of the RPCNA work in Dayton. While each family is committed to Presbyterian and reformed principles of faith, they are not all committed to the same degree that the RPCNA is the only way to keep a reformed faith work going in the Dayton community. They all agreed that they want a local Presbyterian and Reformed work to remain in Dayton. They also were all willing to keep working at their current level of service to the church. One family, the Campbells, genuinely want to see the RPCNA work continue. One family, the Clausens like the RPCNA church and is very glad to see it continue, but they could also attend another reformed church if necessary, and one was available. But they know one is not available other than the RPCNA, so they are eager for the RPCNA work to continue. One family, the Ecarmas, was of the opinion that the distinctiveness of the RPCNA made it difficult to reach other families and students at Bryan College. On 2/12/18, the Ecarmas informed the TGB that they would be leaving the church if it is reduced to a preaching station.

It is with the above information, and after many days of praying about this situation that the DRPC TGB comes to the GLGC Presbytery with the following recommendation:

“The DRPC TGB recommends the GLGC Presbytery reduce the Dayton Reformed Presbyterian Mission Church to a Preaching Station, and appoint the current TGB members to be an oversight committee for up to six months. After the six months, or anytime before that if it should appear necessary, the committee shall re-evaluate and report either to Presbytery or its Ad Interim Commission to decide whether to re-erect a Mission Church, to maintain as a preaching station, to reduce further to an exploratory work, or to close the work.”

Please pray for these saints in Dayton, who are going through a difficult time. Even those who have left are in need of prayer as they seek to find a Biblical place of worship and fellowship.

### **Church Statistics as of 12/31/17**

Total Membership, Communicant and Baptized: 21

Total Membership 12/31/2016: 25

Average AM Worship Service: 40

No PM Worship Service

Baptized Members Professing: 0

New Members by Profession: 0

To Other Denomination: 4

Net Change in Membership: -4

Communicant Members: 13

Baptized: 8

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy McCracken

Phil Pockras

Gary McNamee

December						
	Date	Posted	Deposits	Debits	Balance	
	01/01/2018				\$11,609.85	
	01/14/2018	01/22/2018	\$446.00		\$12,055.85	Giving
	01/28/2018		\$373.00		\$12,428.85	Giving
	01/06/2018	01/22/2018		\$325.00	\$12,103.85	Ck1474 Dayton Community Chapel, rent Jan
	01/28/2018	01/28/2018		\$300.00	\$11,803.85	Ck1475 Kevin Clauson preaching 1/7 1/14
	01/28/2018			\$300.00	\$11,503.85	Ck1476 Michael Hutchinson preaching 1/21 1/28
Total			\$819.00	\$925.00	\$11,503.85	

**JUDICIAL COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS PAPERS 18-04, 18-06, and 18-08**

Fathers and brothers,

Per Presbytery's directive our committee met to discuss and return a recommendation concerning papers 18-04 ("A Comity Agreement regarding the 'taking of exceptions' for Ordination Vows"), 18-06 ("On 'Taking Exceptions' and the Ordination Vows"), and 18-08 which discusses the issue of subscription raised in the previous two papers. **Our recommendation is that Presbytery vote on paper 18-06, which was submitted by Mr. LeFebvre.**

*Rationale*

Our committee is sympathetic to the reasons that gave rise to paper 18-04 and its aim to form a basis for greater unity and ecumenicity following the matter of Sam Ketcham. However, the committee does not believe the route it proposes is viable—in part (1) because it appears irregular to have a single Presbytery setting standards for interdenominational comity; and (2) because granting automatic exceptions involving originalist positions allows little room to discuss said exceptions and doesn't appear to acknowledge the special notice the Testimony gives to these things.

Furthermore, we are sympathetic to those who think our "system" is adequate and wish to maintain the status quo, as proposed in paper 18-08. Should the recommendation on 18-06 fail, we are prepared to suggest all three papers be returned, with thanks to their authors, effectively maintaining the status quo.

However, our recommendation to vote on 18-06 suggests to Presbytery that there may be value in seeking clarity on the "system of doctrine and manner of worship" in vow 4 and the relationship the WCF and RPT sustain to one another, should Presbytery deem the cost worthwhile. Our hope is not to see a list of "allowed" or "disallowed" exceptions but guidance for assessing exceptions taken by ministerial candidates/ordinands and transferring elders.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rich Holdeman  
Stan McKenzie (Ch)  
Jared Olivetti

## Special Judicial Committee to Review Paper 18-07

In paper 18-07, Mr. David Carr, requested of our committee “to review, and modify where necessary, this paper for Presbytery endorsement and submission to the 2018 meeting of Synod.” However, upon review of the paper and consultation with Mr. Carr, it was determined that there was perhaps a better path forward to accomplish Mr. Carr’s goals. It is our Committee’s recommendation to return the paper to Mr. Carr, a course of action that he is agreeable to, in hopes that the second recommendation of this committee will be a more expedient course to his ultimate ends.

### **Recommendation 1**

That Presbytery return Paper 18-07 to its author.

#### Rationale:

For this paper to have any impact on the proceedings of the Hemphill appeal hearing at Synod 2018, the paper would had to have come to Synod *prior* to the 2018 meeting. Therefore, the paper fundamentally cannot accomplish its desired end. Additionally, there is a very real possibility that when Synod takes up this paper, it would accomplish the exact opposite (i.e. further hangups in deliberation and debate over procedure) of that which it seeks. Lastly, the way the paper understands Synod proceedings up to this point, and the way it calls for *further* repentance from Synod, seems to demonstrate some confusion about what our Synod has done and is procedurally preparing to do. In light of the above, our committee and Mr. Carr believe it is best simply to return the paper to its author.

### **Recommendation 2**

That the GLG Presbytery communicate with Synod’s procedural committee (the committee charged with leading Synod through hearing the Hemphill appeal) our desire for an efficient and streamlined procedure for hearing the appeal, and to call for a significant season of prayer (such as: 1 hour) prior to the proceedings.

#### Rationale:

In consultation with Mr. Carr, it was made clear that the two main objectives of his paper were:  
1) to see a more efficient use of our time in navigating the Hemphill appeal at the 2018 Synod, in contrast to the inefficiency of the 2017 Synod; and  
2) to call us to a significant time of prayer to ask the Lord’s blessing for a faithful execution of mercy and justice in the proceedings.

Respectfully submitted by,

Keith Evans  
Jon Hughes  
Wade Mann (Chair)

## **Selma Committee - Report to Presbytery (2018)**

Dear fathers and brothers,

It has been a pleasure to serve as your Selma Committee this past year. In the spring of 2015, you appointed our committee and charged us: 1) to help the Selma RPC find a new pastor; 2) to aid in the improvement of relations between the Selma RPC and the GL-G Presbytery; and 3) to find a member of the GL-G Presbytery to serve as the new interim moderator of the Selma Session. Seeking to please the Lord and bless His church, we have done our best to serve faithfully. Over the past year, our committee has met five times via conference call, as well as conducted business via e-mail.

Towards the middle of the year, we were sorry to receive the news that our faithful secretary, Daniel Hemken, would be leaving us to take up the ministry in Clay Center, Kansas. Daniel was a great man to have on the committee and a blessing to serve with. We miss him, but rejoice in his new calling from the Lord. Richard Blankenship has since kindly agreed to take on the responsibilities of secretary, for which we are all deeply grateful.

One of our primary objectives as a committee has been to help the Selma RPC find a new pastor. You may remember that we had been working with Mark Brown regarding his interest in Selma in the past, but we came to realize last spring that he was no longer interested. Not having any other prospects at the time, you can imagine our excitement when Frank Smith put us in touch with Rev. Andre Pickens who was very interested in the Selma congregation. Our committee contacted Andre and, since he was from outside the RPCNA, we then put him in touch with the Candidates and Credentials Committee, who has worked with him since. We are very thankful for the involvement of that committee, as it has made our workload quite light. Lord willing, Andre will be received by the presbytery at this meeting and Selma RPC will finally have a new pastor.

Another one of our primary objectives as a committee has been to aid the improvement of the relationship between the Selma congregation and the presbytery. With much thanksgiving to God, we believe it has continued to improve greatly over the past year. Elder Averette Woodson attended the meeting of presbytery last spring. He also attended Covfamikoi and brought with him some young people from the church. What's more, we believe there will be a delegate at this year's meeting of presbytery as well. These are all signs of improvement and reasons for thanksgiving to God.

We were not able to visit Selma this year (as was our plan), but with Adam Niess and Jerry O'Neill being on the Selma session and the above mentioned activities taking place, we believe we have remained in close contact with the church. There have not been any other plans to improve our relationship with them (nor are there any in the works), as we believe it has been greatly improved already and things are happening that we believe will only continue the improvement.

Again, we want to thank you for the privilege of serving on the Selma Committee. It has been a pleasure for all of us, as well as exciting to see how the Lord has blessed our efforts over the years. May King Jesus continue to build His church in Selma, Alabama!

Sincerely in Christ,

Richard Blankenship, secretary

Adam Niess, chairman

Jerry O'Neill

**Recommendations (if Andre Pickens is sustained):**

1. That Adam Niess be made a provisional elder on the Selma session for another year.

Rationale:

With Andre Pickens being new to the RPCNA, we believe it will be helpful for there to be another RP pastor on the session to help him with the transition. We also believe having Adam on the session for another year will help continue the good relationship we have worked to build with the congregation.

2. That the Selma Committee be dismissed.

Rationale:

As stated above, we believe we have fulfilled our charge as a committee.

**Recommendations (if Andre Pickens is not sustained):**

1. That Adam Niess be made interim moderator of the Selma session for one year.

Rationale:

Jerry O'Neill has faithfully served in this position for many years, but announced last year that it would be his last. Since Adam has worked closely and well with the Selma session in the past, we believe he is the natural choice for this position. He is also a member of our presbytery, which is something that has been stated to be desired by all.



## Session Report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery

March 1-3, 2018

The Selma congregation has been six and a half (6 ½) years without a pastor. That is a long time by any standard, and we are glad to report that we are still “alive and well.” Actually, we are not as “well” as we would like to be. In these years, Mrs. Ruth Brooks, a workhorse for the Lord’s work in Selma has gone to be with the Lord, and we are in desperate need of a young generation of servants of the Lord who can tackle the work of ministry in our city.

The highlight of the year was the November 30, 2017, meeting in which the congregation unanimously elected Rev. Andre Pickens to be our next pastor. We rejoice in the fact that a fellow pastor in our presbytery let us know about Andre, and we pray that he will pass his presbytery exams this spring, and in so doing pave the way for his installation as our next pastor. His wife has accepted a job in nearby Montgomery, and it is very exciting for us to think about our own pastor again.

We are still contemplating a lift to help get members of the church who are in need of assistance up and down the stairs. We would ask Presbytery to officially look at this with us and make a recommendation as to how to proceed. We have also contacted Larry Hovee of our Southside Indianapolis congregation for input as well.

We are encouraged that the Presbytery has reached out to us in the last couple of years; and our prayer is that Andre Pickens, after passing his Presbytery exams, can be used by God to lead us back to a vital ministry marked by Biblical worship, discipleship studies, and mercy ministry. We also hope to become more involved in the work of Presbytery as schedules allow for this to happen.

Respectfully submitted,

Averette Woodson

Greg Woodson

George Evans, Clerk

Adam Niess, Provisional elder

Jerry O’Neill, Moderator

## 2017 Year In Review Pageland SC

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.”

We have experienced things this year that have been both encouraging and discouraging. Through it all, we are confident that God is the protector and lover of His church.

We have seen the God of Reconciliation at work in our midst. Chris and Tammy Mangum and all of their children (including one born this year) have been restored to us. What joy it has been having them once again worship and dwell with us.

We have seen God greatly bless the Ketcham family, as Sam and Dorsey, along with their now four children, have departed to Fresno, CA to take up Sam’s new ministry.

We continue to be fed very tasty meals from God’s Word twice a week. Pastor Wise continues to be a blessing and a servant to us. Even with his teaching, coaching, and athletic director duties, he has kept the centrality of God’s Word before us. We are indeed thankful.

We took part in another splendid summer picnic at the home of Gary and Patrice Wise.

We are glad to still see Joe and Becky Mangum, and their children worshipping with us. We continue to pray that God would extend His work of reconciliation to them and have them once again join with us.

The discouragement has been the steady diminishing of our finances. Pray that God would give us more helpers in the ministry.

We were blessed with three baptisms: Benaiah Ketcham, Jonathan Mangum, and Knox Rhyne.

The Mangum family was added to our membership and the Ketcham family was transferred to our Fresno, California congregation. Our membership has increased to 19 communicant and 15 baptized. The average weekly attendance for worship was 30. The Lord’s Supper was observed 6 times.

Due to his workload outside the church and the limitations of our finances and our interest in looking for another pastor to come to Pageland, the TGB is recommending to presbytery that Pastor Wise’s status be changed to “Stated Supply.” (see recommendations after the budget)

Very Respectfully Submitted,

Ron Posvar

Checking account balance

12/31/14 - \$29,017.57

12/31/15 - \$28,133.72

12/31/16 - \$12,259.78

12/31/17 - \$7887.84 (NB: this includes \$3800 recently discovered in an older account)

**Recommendation 1** - That presbytery continue congregational aid in the amount of \$2000 for the 2018 fiscal year.

**Recommendation 2** - That presbytery change Ian Wise's status to "stated supply."

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2018 Stated Supply Job Description

Expectations: Our expectation is for you to prepare and preach one sermon per week during Sunday morning services at Pageland RPC and to prepare and lead one Scripture lesson during the Wednesday night prayer services. You will be given 4 Sundays out of the pulpit during the year at your discretion.

We also expect you to partner with the other local elder to do a reasonable amount of shepherding as you are able.

Remuneration: We promise to pay you the salary of \$25,000 for your labors.

Pageland RPC		2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget
<b>Category</b>	Sub-category			
<b>Income</b>	Tithes & Offerings	\$49770.00	\$40779.50	\$40000.00
	Presbytery aid	\$2000.00	\$2000.00	\$2000.00
	Special projects	\$0.00	\$550.00	\$0.00
	Student aid	\$0.00	\$1500.00	\$0.00
	Total	\$51770.00	\$44829.50	\$42000.00
<b>Expense</b>				
<b>Pastor</b>	Salary	\$12000.00	\$12000.00	\$13000.00
	Housing	\$12000.00	\$12000.00	\$12000.00
	Health Insurance	\$3000.00	\$3000.00	\$0.00
	Medical Savings	\$4000.00	\$4000.00	\$0.00
	Pension	\$4200.00	\$4200.00	\$0.00
	in lieu of S. Sec.	\$2300.00	\$2300.00	\$0.00
	Expense	\$500.00	\$380.45	\$500.00
	Fam. Conf.	\$0.00		
	Sub-total	\$38000.00	\$37880.45	\$25500.00
<b>Ministry</b>	Rent	\$9600.00	\$9600.00	\$9600.00
	Utilities			
	Power	\$1700.00	\$1680.00	\$1700.00
	Water	\$400.00	\$379.50	\$400.00
	Bank fees	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
	Synod assess.	\$850.00	\$837.00	\$850.00
	Presb. assess.	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Sermon audio	\$0.00	\$360.00	\$0.00
	Diaconal	\$0.00		
	Furnishings	\$0.00		
	Misc. Ministry	\$0.00		
	Pulpit supply	\$350.00	\$500.00	\$1000.00
	Savings			
	Sub-total	\$13770.00	\$13376.50	\$13570.00
	Total	\$51770.00	\$51256.95	\$39070.00

## Great Lakes - Gulf Presbytery Financial Report

Updated 3/5/18 - FINAL

	2016	2017	Mar-18	Mar-18
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
<b>INCOME</b>				
100 - Assessments				
101 - General Fund	34,041.02	44,000.39	44,000.00	48,000.00
<i>Total Assessments =</i>	<i>34,041.02</i>	<i>44,000.39</i>	<i>44,000.00</i>	<i>48,000.00</i>
120 - From HMB				
123 - Reducing Aid	11,490.00	2,919.00		
<i>Sub-total HMB Aid =</i>	<i>11,490.00</i>	<i>2,919.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>
140 - Interest	1.50	1.23		
<b>TOTAL INCOME =</b>	<b>45,532.52</b>	<b>46,920.62</b>	<b>44,000.00</b>	<b>48,000.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
General Expenses				
200 - Presbytery Meetings			4,000.00	4,000.00
201 - Annual Meeting	5,251.40	7,495.62	7,000.00	16,000.00
227 - Craig Scott - Ord/Install - 5/20/16	1,828.94			
228 - Venky Ord 6/29/16	70.92			
229 - Mann installation 10/14/16	556.42			
230 - Hanson installation 10/19/16	492.25			
231 - Neiss installation 2/2/18				
232 - Joel Hart exams 5/11/18				
233 - Joel Hart Ord/Install				
<i>Sub-total Presbytery Mtgs =</i>	<i>8,199.93</i>	<i>7,495.62</i>	<i>11,000.00</i>	<i>20,000.00</i>
260 - Officer Expenses				
261 - Clerk Honorarium	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
262 - Ass't Clerk Honorarium	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
265 - Officer's Expenses	472.81	164.96	100.00	100.00
266 - Youth Ministry Secretary Honorarium	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total Officer's Expenses =</i>	<i>3,972.81</i>	<i>3,664.96</i>	<i>2,100.00</i>	<i>2,100.00</i>
270 - Standing Committees & Commissions			500.00	500.00
271 - Ad Interim Commission				
272 - Candidates & Credentials		442.49		
273 - Southern Ch Ext Committee	162.96	775.24	500.00	500.00
274 - Indiana-Ohio (Great Lakes) Ch Ext Committee	350.00		500.00	500.00
275 - Youth Ministry Secretary Expenses	341.82	293.08	400.00	400.00
<i>Sub-total Standing Cmtte's &amp; Comm's =</i>	<i>854.78</i>	<i>1,510.81</i>	<i>1,900.00</i>	<i>1,900.00</i>
290 - Other General Expenses			200.00	200.00
<i>Sub-total General Expenses =</i>	<i>13,027.52</i>	<i>12,671.39</i>	<i>15,200.00</i>	<i>24,200.00</i>
300 - Congregational Visitations			1,500.00	1,500.00
301 - Belle Center Visitation	710.12			
306 - Durham, NC Visitation				
307 - Grand Rapids Visitation		822.33		
310 - Lafayette Visitation				
311 - Orlando Visitation		758.86		
317 - Sycamore (Kokomo) Visitation	65.73			
318 - Prairie View (Westminster) Visitation	310.25			
<i>Sub-total Congregational Visitation =</i>	<i>1,086.10</i>	<i>1,581.19</i>	<i>1,500.00</i>	<i>1,500.00</i>
400 - New Works				
406 - Pageland	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
<i>Sub-total New Works =</i>	<i>4,000.00</i>	<i>4,000.00</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>
500 - Seminary Student Aid	8,100.00	13,800.00	12,600.00	7,200.00
520 - Covfamikoi Family Conference		3,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
540 - Youth Work (CYPUP)	1,500.00	1,500.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
550 - College Age Ministry	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00

			Mar-18	Mar-18
	2016	2017	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
560 - Fraternal Delegates			100.00	100.00
610 - SOCHEX Church Extension Fund			5,000.00	5,000.00
<i>Sub-total Other Ministries =</i>	10,600.00	19,300.00	22,700.00	17,300.00
700 - HMB Aid Distribution				
703 - Reducing Aid	11,490.00	2,919.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total HMB Aid Distribution =</i>	11,490.00	2,919.00	0.00	0.00
800 - Special Committees & Commissions				
804 - Terre Haute Commission (3/16 - TGB)	135.54	427.60	250.00	
809 - Selma Committee - Appointed 2/27/15	4,389.17		3,000.00	1,500.00
811 - Atlanta Commission - Appointed 8/11/14	743.06	3,036.35	2,000.00	2,000.00
<i>Sub-total Special Cmtte's &amp; Comm's =</i>	5,267.77	3,463.95	5,250.00	3,500.00
900 - Miscellaneous				
901 - Other		0.05		250.00
902 - Synod - Retired Pastor's Expense/Other	136.00		500.00	500.00
910 - Pageland TGB Expenses (special request)	591.29			
911 - Special Honorarium - Retiring Clerk Ray Morton	1,500.00			
912 - Hetherton Provisional Elders	364.65			
<i>Sub-total Miscellaneous =</i>	2,591.94	0.05	500.00	750.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES =</b>	<b>48,063.33</b>	<b>43,935.58</b>	<b>47,150.00</b>	<b>49,250.00</b>
<b>ANNUAL NET =</b>	<b>(2,530.81)</b>	<b>2,985.04</b>	<b>(3,150.00)</b>	<b>(1,250.00)</b>
Balance Jan 1 =	11,680.20	9,149.39	12,134.43	8,984.43
Balance Dec 31 =	9,149.39	12,134.43	8,984.43	7,734.43

#### **Presbytery Policy Reminders**

1. The policy of the Presbytery is that the mileage reimbursement rate is the standard IRS rate in effect on the date the reimbursable mileage was incurred (2018 = \$.545)
2. The meal allowance is \$6/meal for travel to/from Presbytery meetings.
3. Normally the congregation pays the expenses of its provisional moderators and elders.
4. Congregations are to remit not less than one fourth of their assessment each and every quarter. If needed, the Presbytery treasurer is authorized to send reminders quarterly to congregations.
5. Up to \$750 is offered to congregations which host the annual meeting of Presbytery to help with their hospitality expenses.
6. That Presbytery offer to congregations to reimburse them for pulpit supply when their pastor is away for non-visitation Presbytery business.
7. For calculating the annual Presbytery assessments, the income amount used for each congregation shall be the same as is used by Synod for calculating Synod's assessment.

#### **Recommendations 2018**

1. That the Mar 2018 Revised Budget and the 2019 Budget be adopted.

## Resolution of Thanks Committee

As we desire to in everything give thanks, knowing that this is the will of God for us in Christ Jesus, we offer thanksgiving to our most gracious God:

- for the care and hospitality of Christ Church; for the willing and cheerful spirits of those who served; and for the excellent and wonderfully delicious meals to strengthen the Presbytery to its task;
- for the Second Reformed Presbyterian Church which provided a pleasant environment for the Presbytery to conduct its business, And especially the “sound-ministry” delivered to us by Deacon Rich Blum (who has so competently raised, lowered and muted microphones);
- for The Lord’s blessed provision in the raising up of faithful men to whom the oracles of God may be entrusted;
- for His blessing and the outpouring of His Spirit in the churches of our Presbytery, and for His enduring faithfulness to each congregation;
- for His transforming words spoken to us as His Word was preached;
- for the work of His Spirit in the hearts of the youth of our Presbytery, and for His work in and through the efforts of the CYPYU team;
- and finally for His gracious provision of wisdom, guidance, and strength given to the Presbytery to make decisions and take actions to the end that we may build the house for the sanctuary of the Lord.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Dick Knodel

Pastor George R. Gregory