2019 Belle Center RP Session Report To Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery of the RPCNA

Encouragements

Jesus continues His kindness and grace to us here in Belle Center, Ohio. As He promised in Matthew 16.18, He builds His Church. We have been blessed to see some instances of this since Session's last report to Presbytery last spring. We have long prayed that He would build His church, and that He would provide us a suitable church *building*.

We continue to be thankful for your appointment of Scott Hunt to be our provisional elder again this year. His personal godliness and wisdom continue to bless us who are nearly two hours' drive away. He and Allison, with their kids, have come over for at least one communion and continue to be very dear to our congregation. We hope that, soon, we may be blessed with local ruling elders.

Membership as of 31 December, 2019, was 66. 46 were communicant; 20 were baptized. First service average attendance was 48. Second service attendance averaged 27, due to the distance many of our members and adherents travel. Both of these figures are increases. We had no baptized members making profession of faith this past year. With transfers from other denominations and an irregular transfer out to another evangelical church, we have had a membership increase of 10. We anticipate, however, the removal of a couple more people from our roll by discipline in this calendar year.

Since the last meeting of Presbytery, we have received the following encouragements in God's mercy:

- We continue to use the building of the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. It is about six miles to the north of Belle Center. We have a good relationship with the people of that congregation. We may be ending this relation due to the completion of our building sometime this year.
- We received a newly married couple in the past year the husband from the world and the wife from Presbytery's roll, a former member of the now-closed Dayton, TN, mission church. An older couple transferred in from a PCA congregation in the northwest suburbs of Columbus. Their older daughter was, and is, already a member of our congregation.
- We received another young family transferring in from the Grace Reformed RPC Mission Church in Columbia, MO. The wife is originally from our congregation. To them was born a baby girl, with another on the way.
- We have had a "class" of baby girls born to us three of them! Sadly, in the past few weeks two of our families have had the grief of miscarried babies.
- Attendance for first service and for Sabbath School have both increased. With several of our new families coming from a distance, second service attendance has not benefited as much.
- Several people in our congregation have actively been sharing the gospel with friends and with workmates.
- Several of our young people have been getting more active with CYPU. In addition, one boy attended TFY last summer. One girl has already been nominated to TFY and another boy may be for this coming summer. We have seen much blessing to those kids who go.

- Our minister has continued as part of the Mary Rutan Hospital Chaplain staff. This 46 is the local hospital in Bellefontaine, one of the best of its size in Ohio. It is a 47 volunteer position for at least one week during most months. 48 We are blessed by continued financial gifts for our building fund from outside 49 sources. We now have more than enough money to engage a contractor to do some 50 of the work, or perhaps even finish it. Should the building be completed as we 51 anticipate, it will be without incurring any debt, due to God's favor and the 52 53 kindness of many. The increased giving has continued. More people have, of course, helped with 54 this. For the first time in some years, we have seen a net gain financially, strictly 55 by tithes and offerings. 56 We have continued unity and love, forged stronger by our mutual suffering in 57 much illness. 58 59 Challenges Nonetheless, there are challenges we have faced, some of which remain: 60 61 Serious health issues and ongoing health problems – some debilitating --in several of our members. Our minister, our deacon, and several other members are diabetic. 62 One member is in beginning stages of dementia. There are other health problems, 63 64 as well. Our retired officers are all in declining health: Larry Bump, Jim McDonald, and Paul McDonald. This has hindered our progress in this past year, 65 but increased our love and, perhaps, our general sanctification. 66 67 members currently under suspension. 68 With a now-growing congregation, and our minister coming up to his 66th birthday 69 70
 - Several members or former members deeply needing repentance. We have two
 - in a few months, the pastoral burden is growing. We yearn for, and plead with Jesus for, a local ruling elder. We'd love to have more than one.
 - We need labor to finish our building, although our financial resources are there to do the rest of the work, now. With the completion of state-mandated inspections, work on the building is now apace.
 - We have continued inability fully to support our minister in the way we wish and think, justly, that we should. The manse is also not in good repair. The budget for this year has set an ambitious goal for the repairs, thanks to a generous designated gift for the purpose from outside the congregation. We were able to geve our minister a raise for the first time in several years.
 - At least one family needs a better work situation for the husband and father to allow him to avoid Sabbath work.
 - We are a little discouraged with our apparent meager fruitfulness from witness.
 - Two of our young men, who have married since our last report, have gone with their new wives elsewhere, after much time investment by our pastor and other members of the congregation over the years. We'd had hope that two more new households would be established in our congregation. Both these new families were also blessed with the birth of baby girls.
 - We are praying for a deeper spirit of prayer to come over us.

Teaching and Preaching

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We have maintained our normal teaching schedule. In the adult/family Sabbath School class we studied church history with DVDs from Ligonier. The teacher was Dr. Robert Godfrey. That was followed by a short video series by R. C. Sproul on "Justification by Faith Alone". We are now in a long class on Covenant History, taught by our minister, based upon S. G. DeGraaf's *Promise and Deliverance*.

In the first worship service, we continue in the Gospel of Matthew. The second service preaching series finished the *Shorter Catechism*. We have begun an exposition of Romans. We have experimented with using the preaching of other RP ministers via SermonAudio when our minister is absent or ill, using the Probsts' home sound system while we were meeting at their house, and then the sound system at the Mt. Zion Methodist Church's building, and it seems to have worked well. We have made some progress in getting back Psalm Meditations and sermons up on SermonAudio thanks to the diligent work of Miss Sarah Bump. Other electronic outreach is via our website at berpchurch.org, ably maintained by Miss Michelle Brotherton.

We have held Communion on the fifth Sabbath of every month that has a fifth Sabbath. This is much more frequent than our spring and fall Communions that we held until 2006, with a full season. Session continues to have a "split cup" for Communion. We thankfully report that this has occasioned no dissent or disunity.

Miscelleny

Like last year, Session has formally met infrequently, although there has been more frequent informal consultation by telecom. Our Minutes are here for review. The Moderator represented us at Synod and all meetings of Presbytery this past year.

We continue to provide for our minister up to four weeks of paid vacation at his discretion, a book allowance for his continued education and spiritual refreshment, time and reimbursement for his and Judy's attendance at Covfamikoi or RPI, and much prayer.

We have asked you to pray for godly marriages for our young adults. Please continue! There are several single young people in our congregation, or who are no longer members but grew up here, who believe God calls them to marriage, but they have not yet found their spouses.

The Rev. Frank Schutz, due to his physical weakness, can do very little with us. As a Session, we do try to keep up with his situation and keep him in prayer before the congregation. He attends the Grace OPC in Columbus, where his family are members.

As we conclude this report, we give thanks to God for this calling He has given our congregation to serve Jesus in this place. We want to continue. Only Zion's King can bring that about. Please pray for us, that He, through us, will not only sustain but build His Church (Matt. 16:18).

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Pockras, Moderator
Scott Hunt (provisional), Clerk

Belle Center RP Church Budget vs. Actual 2019

		В	ACTUAL	
Income		<u>\$ (</u>	62,089.0 <u>0</u>	<u>\$ 85,628.58</u>
Tithes & Offerings Synod' Dividend Interest Income Gifts Received Building fund			59,840.00 2,178.00 71.00 - 0 - - 0 -	\$ 73,215.50 \$ 2202.51 \$ 135.57 \$ 10,075.00 \$ - 0 -
Fixed Expenses		<u>\$</u>	6,366.00	<u>\$ 6,530.41</u>
Insurance Rent Taxes Utilities		\$ \$ \$	1,500.00 2,600.00 925.00 1,341.00	\$ 1,584.00 \$ 2,600.00 \$ 930.52 \$ 1,415.89
Electric Gas Sewer Water BC Cap. Imp. Garbage	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	159.00 340.00 537.00 120.00 185.00 -0-	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	293.75 366.04 607.10 -0- 149.00 -0-
Flexible Expenses		<u>\$</u>	<u>75,736.00</u>	<u>\$63,916.57</u>
Church Building Rehab.		\$ 17,800.00		\$ 9,466.42
Interior Furn & Fixt. Flowers		\$ 15,000.00 \$ 2,800.00 \$ 50.00		\$ 9,466.42 \$ - 0 - \$ - 0 -

Flexible Expenses Con	't		E	Budget		Actual
Guest Speakers Mercy Fund Mowing Office Supplies Pastor's Expense			\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	400.00 - 0 - 150.00 150.00 51,967.00	\$ \$ \$ \$	195.12 600.00 115.00 57.00 50,386.00
Book Allow. Covfamikoi Health Ins. Housing Allow. Med. Exp. Reim. Mileage Office Exp. Pension Salary Synod Reg.	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	9,600.00 5,100.00 500.00 150.00 4,300.00 31,172.00		\$ -0- \$ -0- \$ 9,600.0 \$ 5,100.0 \$ -0- \$ -0- \$ 4,300.0 \$ 31,172.0 \$ 214.0	00	
Presbytery Assessmer RP M&M Repairs Manse		1,500.00	\$ \$ \$	908.00 1,870.00 1,500.00 \$ 215.41	\$ \$ \$	907.40 528.22 335.41
Synod's Assessment			\$	941.00	\$	1326.00

	Budget	Actual
Total Budget Income 2019	\$ 62,089.00	\$ 85,628.58
Total Budget Expenses 2019	\$ 81,570.00	\$ 70,446.98
Difference	- \$ 19,481.00	\$ 15,181.60

2019 Asset Summary

Checking Acct. Balance 1/1/19 Checking Acct. Balance 12/31/19	\$ 46,599.27 \$ 59,615.65
Difference	+ \$ 13,016.38
Savings Acct. Balance 1/1/19 Savings Acct. Balance 12/31/19	\$ 6,147.44 \$ 6,151.75
Total cash assets 12/31/19	\$ 65,767.40
Designated Building Fund Designated Mercy Fund Designated Manse Repairs	\$ 34,533.58 \$ 5,600.00 \$ 10,000.00
2019 General Fund	\$ 15,633.82
2018 General Fund	\$ 8,746.71

Budget - 2020

Belle Center Reformed Presbyterian Church

	<u>Income</u>		\$ 70,337.00
Tithes & Offerings 1st Qtr. 2nd Qtr. 3rd Qtr. 4th Qtr.	\$ 17,000.00 \$ 17,000.00 \$ 17,000.00 \$ 17,000.00	\$ 68,000.00	
Synods Dividend Interest Income Checking Savings	\$ 131.00 \$ 4.00	\$ 2,202.00 \$ 135.00	

Fixed Exper	<u>\$ 61,444.00</u>	
	\$ 1,584.00	
	\$ 2,600.00	
	\$ 930.00	
\$ 182.00		
\$ 748.00		
	\$ 1,547.00	
\$ 300.00		
\$ 370.00		
\$ 607.00		
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\$ -0-		
	\$ 182.00 \$ 748.00 \$ 300.00 \$ 370.00 \$ 607.00 \$ 120.00 p.\$ 150.00	\$ 2,600.00 \$ 930.00 \$ 182.00 \$ 748.00 \$ 1,547.00 \$ 300.00 \$ 370.00 \$ 607.00 \$ 120.00 p.\$ 150.00

Pastor's Expense

\$ 54,783.00

Book Allowance \$ 200.00 Covfamikoi Reg. \$ 200.00 \$ 9,600.00 Health Ins. Housing Allow. \$ 5,300.00 Med. Exp. Reim . \$ 500.00 \$ Mileage 500.00 \$ 1,650.00 Office Expense Pension Exp. \$ 4,400.00 \$ 32,219.00 Salary Synod Reg. \$ 214.00

Flexible Expenses

\$ 50,442.00

Church Building Rehab			\$ 34,533.00		
Interior	\$ 34,000.00				
Furn. & Fixt.	\$ 533.00				
Church Building Sup	plies	\$	500.00		
Flowers		\$	50.00		
<u>Guest Speakers</u>		\$	300.00		
Mercy Fund		\$	500.00		
Mowing		\$	150.00		
Office Expense		\$	400.00		
Presbytery Assessme	<u>ent</u>	\$	813.00		
Synod's Assessment		\$	1,326.00		
RP M&M		\$	1,870.00		
Repairs		\$	10,000.00		
Manse	\$ 10,000.00				
Total Budget Income	<u>e</u>			\$ 70,337.00	
Total Budget Expen				\$ 111,886.00	
Difference				\$ -41,549.00	
Designated Funds of	on Hand			\$+ 50,133.58	
Budget D	<u>ifference</u>			\$ + 8,584.58	