

**Report of the Session  
of the Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church  
to the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery  
March 5-7, 2020**

**Overview**

The Lord has graciously provided well for us through another challenging year of ministry as a congregation.

**Statistics**

Total membership: 21

Average morning worship attendance: 16

Average evening worship attendance: 12

New members by profession: 1

Loss by dismissal or transfer: 5

Net change in membership: -4

**Interim pastor**

We were greatly saddened to see Joshua and Amy Hall and their two girls leave Sparta last May when he began a full-time pastoral position in Quincy, Illinois. We are thankful for Joshua's ministry among us from June 2018 through April 2019, especially his preaching of God's word.

**Public ministry**

Since then God has supplied our pulpit with various students and ministers both from within the RPCNA and without. We have been blessed by the ministry of RPCNA ministers Stan Copeland, Daniel Hemken, Paul Finley, and Keith Magill; PCA teaching elders Paul Reynolds, and Shawn Willis; PCA Covenant Seminary students Trey Martin, Matthew Creacy, Bryton Albright; and also by Dan Deason. By the grace of God, we have been able to find pulpit supply for every Lord's Day, as well as several evening services.

We have been blessed in the Sabbath School class by the teaching of Jack Vink all year. Many Psalm sings for evening services on the Lord's Day have given us the opportunity to practice many new tunes as well as to host a number of special guests. On the fourth Lord's Day of the month we continued our afternoon ministry at Cedarhurst Assisted Living under the leadership of Jack Vink. On Thursday mornings several men gather for Bible study. We planned to celebrate the Lord's supper four times last year but weather and schedule conflicts caused two of them to be canceled.

**Session**

Keith Magill continues as our provisional moderator by Presbytery appointment, having served since September 2017. He made weekend trips in January, February, April, July, September, and December to moderate the session on Saturday, lead worship and preach God's Word on the Lord's Day morning and evening, do pastoral visits, carry out many administrative tasks, negotiate contracts for work that needed to be done, and do several work projects on the church's properties. He usually arrived on Friday and often stayed through most of the day on Monday.

Almost 87 year old Robert Morrow continues to serve as a ruling elder as does James Odom. The session has met in constituted court 7 times in 2019. One new communicant member was received – Shuya Ye. There are 15 resident active communicant members, 1 non-resident communicant member (Jim McMahon), 2 resident baptized members, and 3 inactive baptized members on our roll. Most Lord's Day mornings all 17 of the active people are in worship.

One of the most encouraging things last year was when a young Chinese student at Greenville College named Shuya Ye contacted us about attending church. He had made contact with one of our RP churches in his city in mainland China. The Chinese pastor helped him locate Sparta RPC. Providentially, one of our families is able to provide transportation most weeks for the 140 mi round trip. In December Shuya was received as a communicant member.

**Properties**

Several of our property issues were resolved this past year. We sold our parsonage in late 2018 to Landmark Apostolic Church. They demolished the parsonage in 2019 and leveled the land to prepare for building on it. The church's house at 512 N. Maple St., which was beyond repair, was demolished in the spring of 2019.

Our ministry house at 516 N. Maple St. had a major refurbishing of the interior of the house. The house is now warmly welcoming guest ministers and ready for other ministry purposes. Thankfully, the church building is in good condition at this time.

**Finances**

Without a full time pastor our regular expenses were much less than we had budgeted. Our giving was down significantly in 2019 from 2018. But with reduced expenses, it appears that contributions met our regular expenses. We are grateful to God for about 1/3 of our contributions that come from close friends, many of whom are unable to attend frequently.

**The Future**

On January 4, 2020 the Session called the congregation to an informal meeting to discuss the future of the congregation. We received feedback and had good discussion about the men who supplied our pulpit, the challenges of not having a pastor, the challenges of small town ministry, our relationship to our Presbytery, and other subjects. We then asked what the people thought we should do in the future. The strong feedback was that we should continue as an organized congregation and we should try to call a pastor. The calling of a pastor will be pursued by Session, as God enables.

**Congregation Visitation and Provisional Moderator**

The Session requests that Presbytery appoint a visitation committee to review and evaluate our ministry and help us think through our future. It would be helpful to have a least one member of the committee have experience in small town ministry.

After serving for 2½ years as provisional moderator, Pastor Magill is requesting that Presbytery appoint someone else to assume this responsibility.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we continue to 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).

In Him,

Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church Session

James Odom, Clerk

Robert Morrow

Keith Magill, Provisional Moderator

**Recommendations:**

1. That Presbytery appoint a visitation committee to Sparta with at least one member having experience in small town ministry, the committee to report to the June 2020 Synod meeting of Presbytery.
2. A new provisional moderator be appointed to begin serving after the Presbytery receives the visitation committee's report at the June 2020 Synod meeting of Presbytery.

<b>Sparta RPC</b>					
Financial Report - December 31, 2019 & 2020 Adopted Budget					
	2017	2018	2019	2019	2020
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
<b>INCOME</b>					
101 Contributions	39,270.94	47,770.96	37,200.00	35,731.64	32,000.00
102 Interest	13.08	43.12	10.00	79.98	75.00
103 Other	66.00	166.00	66.00	66.00	66.00
104 Transfer from Acc't 980		7,980.92	10,519.08	10,199.07	
<b>TOTAL INCOME =</b>	<b>39,350.02</b>	<b>55,961.00</b>	<b>47,795.08</b>	<b>46,076.69</b>	<b>32,141.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>CONGREGATION</b>					
201 Christian Education		153.27	150.00		0.00
202 Fellowship Activities		95.58	100.00	6.00	60.00
203 Youth Ministry	75.00		150.00	255.00	360.00
204 Guest Ministry	4,828.27	8,053.77	4,000.00	11,436.17	16,800.00
205 Administration	431.24	646.63	480.00	355.55	480.00
206 Pastor's Ministry Expenses	191.00	892.31	2,040.00	544.11	
207 Workman's Comp Insurance		263.64	265.00	261.62	300.00
208 Study Resources		145.00	120.00		120.00
210 Other	437.75	329.88	320.00	11.98	100.00
<i>Congregation Sub-total =</i>	<i>5,963.26</i>	<i>10,580.08</i>	<i>7,625.00</i>	<i>12,870.43</i>	<i>18,220.00</i>
<b>PASTORAL SUPPORT</b>					
301 Salary	14,537.00	6,048.70	40,020.00	3,456.40	
301a In Lieu of Social Security			3,900.00		
302 Parsonage Allowance	4,083.00	5,600.00	2,040.00	3,200.00	
303 Insurance - Life & Disability		496.30	1,020.00	285.35	
304 Pension	3,500.00	5,355.00	9,600.00	11,918.25	
305 Medical Insurance					
<i>Pastoral Support Sub-total =</i>	<i>22,120.00</i>	<i>17,500.00</i>	<i>56,580.00</i>	<i>18,860.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>
<b>OUTREACH</b>					
401 Local Outreach	0.00	142.75	1,000.00	1,077.14	1,000.00
405 Mercy Ministry			240.00	180.00	240.00
<i>Missions Sub-total =</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>142.75</i>	<i>1,240.00</i>	<i>1,257.14</i>	<i>1,240.00</i>
<b>DENOMINATION</b>					
501 Presbytery Assessments	617.17	598.51	600.00	536.38	430.00
502 Synod Assessments	1,689.00	786.00	800.00	1,056.00	786.00
503 Synod & Presby Delegate		264.00	360.00		360.00
504 Home Missions			1,500.00	1,500.00	
509 RP Global Missions		1,000.00			1,125.00
510 RP Missions & Ministry		250.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
<i>Denomination Sub-total =</i>	<i>2,306.17</i>	<i>2,898.51</i>	<i>3,760.00</i>	<i>3,592.38</i>	<i>3,201.00</i>
<b>CHURCH BUILDING</b>					
602 Property & Liability Insurance	1,683.72	1,878.36	1,950.00	2,068.92	2,100.00
603 Cleaning					
604 Maintenance & Supplies	65.47	775.28	750.00	3,279.50	480.00
607 Utilities	2,526.49	2,775.98	2,700.00	2,816.73	2,880.00
606 Office Equipment					
608 Property Improvements		265.17	200.00		240.00
610 Church Equipment					
<i>Church Building Sub-total =</i>	<i>4,275.68</i>	<i>5,694.79</i>	<i>5,600.00</i>	<i>8,165.15</i>	<i>5,700.00</i>

Report of the Sparta Session to Presbytery March 5-7, 2020

	2017	2018	2019	2019	2020
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
<b>PARSONAGE (411 N. Vine St)</b>					
702 Property Insurance	829.28	383.72			
704 Maintenance & Supplies	164.00	49.97			
707 Utilities	882.52	816.93			
708 Property Improvements	75.00	7,055.92		1,131.07	
<i>Parsonage Sub-total =</i>	<i>1,950.80</i>	<i>8,306.54</i>		<i>1,131.07</i>	
<b>516 MAPLE STREET</b>					
802 Property Insurance	135.36	202.08	240.00	219.50	240.00
804 Maintenance & Supplies		602.15	600.00	16.78	240.00
807 Utilities	154.51	1,467.84	3,360.00	2,739.92	1,800.00
808 Property Improvements		2,470.68	1,000.00	4,165.89	3,000.00
<i>516 Maple Sub-total =</i>	<i>289.87</i>	<i>4,742.75</i>	<i>5,200.00</i>	<i>7,142.09</i>	<i>5,280.00</i>
<b>512 MAPLE STREET</b>					
902 Property Insurance	135.35	143.84		94.28	
908 Demolition			10,000.00	7,500.00	
<i>512 Maple Sub-total =</i>	<i>135.35</i>	<i>143.84</i>	<i>10,000.00</i>	<i>7,594.28</i>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES =</b>	<b>37,041.13</b>	<b>50,009.26</b>	<b>90,005.00</b>	<b>60,612.54</b>	<b>33,641.00</b>
<b>YTD NET =</b>	<b>2,308.89</b>	<b>5,951.74</b>	<b>(42,209.92)</b>	<b>(14,535.85)</b>	<b>(1,500.00)</b>
<b>950 General Fund</b>					
Beginning Balance Jan 1	16,137.04	18,445.93	24,397.67	24,397.67	9,861.82
Net from This Year	2,308.89	5,951.74	(42,209.92)	(14,535.85)	(1,500.00)
<b>General Fund Balance =</b>	<b>18,445.93</b>	<b>24,397.67</b>	<b>(17,812.25)</b>	<b>9,861.82</b>	<b>8,361.82</b>
<b>960 Mercy Fund</b>					
+Beginning Balance Jan 1	(927.24)	(1,661.09)	(1,119.96)	(1,119.96)	68.89
+Income	367.33	945.55		1,188.85	
-Expense	(1,101.18)	(404.42)			
<b>Mercy Fund Balance =</b>	<b>(1,661.09)</b>	<b>(1,119.96)</b>	<b>(1,119.96)</b>	<b>68.89</b>	<b>68.89</b>
<b>970 Special Projects</b>					
+Beginning Balance Jan 1	0.00	370.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
+Income	370.00	0.00		0.00	
-Expense	0.00	(370.00)			
<b>Special Projects Fund Balance =</b>	<b>370.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Funds Above =</b>		<b>23,277.71</b>	<b>(18,932.21)</b>	<b>9,930.71</b>	<b>8,430.71</b>
<b>975 Parsonage Sale</b>					
+Beginning Balance Jan 1	0.00	0.00	49,960.00	49,960.00	49,960.00
+Income		50,000.00			
-Transfer To Acc't 105	0.00	(40.00)			
<b>Parsonage Sale Fund Balance =</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>49,960.00</b>	<b>49,960.00</b>	<b>49,960.00</b>	<b>49,960.00</b>
<b>980 Special Contributions</b>					
+Beginning Balance Jan 1		0.00	21,693.08	21,693.08	11,494.01
+Income		29,674.00			
- Giving		(1,000.00)	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)	
- Pastor Retirement 2018		(2,345.00)			
- Pastor Retirement 2019		0.00	(4,000.00)	(1,333.00)	
- Pastor Conferences		0.00			
- Parsonage Repairs		(4,635.92)		(4,296.07)	
- Long Term Maintenance				(3,070.00)	
- Outreach			(1,000.00)		
- Other					
- Transfer to Account 104		(7,980.92)	(10,519.08)	(10,199.07)	0.00
<b>Special Income Fund Balance =</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>21,693.08</b>	<b>4,674.00</b>	<b>11,494.01</b>	<b>11,494.01</b>
<b>Balance of all Funds =</b>	<b>17,154.84</b>	<b>94,930.79</b>	<b>35,701.79</b>	<b>71,384.72</b>	<b>69,884.72</b>