

**The Atlanta Commission/TGB for
Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church**
Report to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery
February 29th-March 2nd, 2024

The Atlanta Commission/TGB for Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church met seven times since the stated meeting of the Presbytery in March 2023.

Membership

In 2023, our membership remained stable, as we neither gained nor lost any members. Our membership remains 14 (twelve communicants and two non-communicants).

Contacts and Prospects

We come across a lot of people in our ministry, some of whom remain anonymous to us. However, we keep track of those whose names we are able to learn and for whom we are able to glean contact information for possible follow-up. In 2023, we made a total of 182 contacts. Some of these are not necessarily prospects for church membership (examples would include out-of-towners whom we might happen to meet); nevertheless, we try to place such people on the Penny's Pen email list. Others, though, can be considered potential recruits for Atlanta RPC.

Attendance and Visitors

In 2022, the average attendance was 16.62. In 2023, the average attendance was 16.53. (These figures do not include those joining via telephone.)

In 2022, there were no fewer than 43 first-time visitors in attendance at a worship service. In 2023, there were no fewer than 66 first-time visitors in attendance at a worship service.

Worship

Customarily, in the worship service, we sing five psalm selections (including a doxology after the benediction). In 2023, we observed the sacrament of communion four times. Our ongoing goal is to have the Lord's Supper on a quarterly basis.

In 2023, the pastor offered messages from a variety of texts. He concluded a series on Ezra which included several message from Haggai; began a series on the Law of God and the Ten Commandments; in conjunction with consideration of the Second Commandment, preached on the necessity of exclusive psalmody; and delivered messages from Psalm 56, Song of Solomon 2:4, and I Timothy 3:15-16.

Three others have also filled the pulpit this past year: Elder T.J. Pattillo; PCA minister David Donovan; and Rev. Paul Martin.

Sunday School

Currently, we offer two classes: adult (taught by Elder T.J. Pattillo), and children (taught by Mrs. Michele Haag).

Church Life

Every Lord's Day, we experience warm and sincere fellowship. There is a genuine sense of *koinonia* amongst our people, and a real caring for one another. In numerous informal ways, folks maintain contact with each other during the week.

Pastoral Activity

In 2023, the pastor engaged in at least 289 counseling occasions. Sometimes this counseling might last only a few minutes; other times, it took hours. He has counseled many people in the congregation, but also has counseled others who do not attend ARPC, and still others from across the RPCNA and in other branches of the church on a wide variety of topics, including ecclesiastical matters.

Among his academic pursuits was an article, "'Like a Box of Chocolates': Experiencing PCA Worship," which appeared in the 2023 edition of *The Confessional Presbyterian*. He is very close to finishing a biography of his father entitled, *God's Man From Brooklyn: The Life and Times of a Twentieth-Century Minister*. In the meantime, in September, he published a small book, *'Til Death Us Do Part: Meditations on Courtship and Marriage*.

That same month, he was a featured guest on Presbycast to talk about the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the PCA. In October, he was a speaker at a special event in Kingsport, Tennessee, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Westminster Presbytery (PCA)

His activities were seriously curtailed towards the end of the year. On November 17th, a catheterization test revealed severe blockages of several arteries, and he was immediately hospitalized. Four days later, he underwent open-heart surgery. Since that time, he has been unable to attend church services in person. However, he has still been able to do some ministry at a distance, speaking with folks on the telephone and sometimes in person, and coordinating renovations of the building. (His first-person account of this experience, "Nobody Ever Expects . . . Quadruple Bypass Heart Surgery," is available at the church's website [atlanta-rpc.org] through the Penny's Pen tab.)

Ministerial Intern

Since September 2019, Elder T.J. Pattillo has faithfully served as a ministerial intern. In addition to teaching adult Sunday School and helping to pick up people for church, he has shown a lot of initiative. He is presently a full-time student at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and hopefully he will soon start his licensure examinations. Most significantly, since mid-November, he has gallantly filled in as the regular preacher and provided leadership during the pastor's absence.

Staff Workers

We are blessed with a wonderful cadre of folks who help the church run, including Mrs. Michele Haag, Elder T.J. Pattillo, Mrs. Nancy Pattillo, Mrs. Penny Smith, and Jonathan Steele. We remain

grateful for the faithfulness of these servants. We are especially thankful that the laity stepped up to the plate to assume responsibilities since the time of the pastor's heart surgery.

However, we note with sadness that Miss Amy Work, who had labored with us for 13 years, moved to Pennsylvania in order to be closer to family. On May 20th, we honored her by dedicating a walkway as the Miss Amy Walk NW, complete with a street sign attached to the wall of the church.

Leadership Development

One of our goals for 2024 is the development of other leadership, not only for the meeting of present needs, but also in anticipation of eventual organization of the mission church as a congregation.

Outreach

The pastor's wife continues to write Penny's Pen, with a new article about two or three times per year. There are about 880 names on the email list.

The weekly pulpit messages are placed on SermonAudio. The mission church was the featured congregation in the November-December 2023 edition of the *RP Witness*

We are still trying to find ways to establish an effective "presence" in our neighborhood. Among the ideas broached is setting up a prayer table in the park two blocks away.

Meanwhile, most of our new attenders have come through the most effective means, viz., as a result of word-of-mouth.

Sextons

One of the ways that we hope to develop leadership while also engaging in outreach is through the use of sextons, who will live in the church building. Already, Daiyaan Winston has taken up residence there, and we are hopeful that another one or two will be joining him by the summer.

Renovating the Building

Twice in 2023, volunteers from Calvary Baptist Church, Smyrna, Georgia, worked on the building. One of their very important accomplishments was the installation of LVL beams. The most critical need presently is repair of the roof, which is leaking. A roof inspector has determined that a full replacement of the roof is not necessary. Other renovations will focus on the area we plan to use as the new sanctuary, and the addition of a couple of apartments for use by the sextons.

Finances

Our general fund ended in the black by about \$400.

In December 2023, we placed moneys from both the general account and the building fund into 7-month CDs earning 4.75% interest. We expect to pay off the 20-year mortgage by 2025—that is, fifteen years early. However, it is possible that when the CDs mature in July 2024, we may decide that it is feasible to pay off the mortgage at that time.

The financial statement for 2023 and the budget for 2024 are attached.

Mission Statement

The following mission statement was adopted by the Atlanta Commission on January 19, 2023.

Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church aims to be a faithful church, in doctrine, worship, personal piety, church life, fellowship, outreach, and hospitality, with specific focus on downtown Atlanta, demonstrating the love of Jesus to all people, and seeking to impact the Atlanta metro area by modeling a covenantal Christ-like community and by the multiplying of other Reformed Presbyterian congregations.

Planning for the Future

Our goal is that Atlanta RPC be formally organized in the next year or two—that is, by 2025 at the latest. The year 2025 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the beginning of this ministry, and the sixth anniversary of it being established as a mission church. Starting in 2022, we began paying the Synod assessment (in our case, \$1,604 in 2022 and \$1,462 in 2023)—a sign that we are beginning to shoulder our share of denominational responsibility. We anticipate presenting a petition for organization at next year's stated meeting of Presbytery. We look forward to taking our place among the other organized congregations in the RPCNA constellation.

Prayer Requests

1. For the addition of several members this year.
2. For the raising up of leadership, so we can be prepared for formal organization.
3. For strength and stamina for the leadership, that they might not be discouraged or lose heart.
4. For courage and boldness in the gospel, so the church would be a faithful witness for King Jesus.
5. For the building renovation, so that the building might be not only attractive but also useful in presenting a visible witness of the kingdom.

Recommendations

1. That Presbytery grant \$4,000.00 for the work of Atlanta RPC for 2024.
2. That Presbytery provide \$1,000.00 for the expenses of the Atlanta Commission.
3. That the membership of the Atlanta Commission consist of the current members.
4. That the report of the Atlanta Commission be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank J. Smith

Frank J. Smith, Ph.D., D.D.
Pastor

2023 General Fund Checking Account

	January	February	March	April	May	June	Totals
General Fund Chk Acct Opening Balance	\$98,232.68	\$47,141.27	\$48,115.47	\$50,181.69	\$49,072.18	\$48,832.73	
Undesignated Giving	\$3,013.46	\$5,487.73	\$6,781.46	\$2,720.50	\$4,136.00	\$6,807.50	\$28,946.65
Designated Giving	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$288.00
Total Inflow	\$3,013.46	\$5,487.73	\$6,819.46	\$2,720.50	\$4,386.00	\$6,807.50	\$29,234.65
Sub-total	\$101,246.14	\$52,629.00	\$54,934.93	\$52,902.19	\$53,458.18	\$55,640.23	
Budgeted Expenses	\$4,104.87	\$4,513.53	\$4,753.24	\$3,792.01	\$4,625.45	\$7,778.87	\$29,567.97
Designated Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38.00
Transfer into Certificate of Deposit	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Total Outflow	-\$54,104.87	-\$4,513.53	-\$4,753.24	-\$3,830.01	-\$4,625.45	-\$7,778.87	-\$79,605.97
General Fund Chk Acct Closing Balance	\$47,141.27	\$48,115.47	\$50,181.69	\$49,072.18	\$48,832.73	\$47,861.36	

General Fund Checking Account Closing Balance	\$47,141.27	\$48,115.47	\$50,181.69	\$49,072.18	\$48,832.73	\$47,861.36	
General Fund Certificate of Deposit	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$97,141.27	\$98,115.47	\$100,181.69	\$99,072.18	\$98,832.73	\$97,861.36	
Building Fund Checking Account + CD	\$82,709.13	\$82,919.13	\$82,994.13	\$83,092.13	\$82,117.13	\$80,867.13	
General Fund + Building Fund Grand Total	\$179,850.40	\$181,034.60	\$183,175.82	\$182,164.31	\$180,949.86	\$178,728.49	

	Brought Forward	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals
General Fund Chk Acct Opening Balance	\$47,861.36	\$47,150.29	\$49,718.46	\$43,504.74				\$46,087.26
Undesignated Giving	\$28,946.65	\$3,870.00	\$6,736.00	\$2,778.00	\$3,862.50	\$6,727.00	\$8,904.50	\$61,824.65
Other Income	\$288.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$288.00
Total Inflow	\$29,234.65	\$3,870.00	\$6,736.00	\$2,778.00	\$3,862.50	\$6,727.00	\$8,904.50	\$62,112.65
Sub-total	\$51,731.36	\$53,886.29	\$52,496.46	\$47,367.24	\$50,229.27	\$54,991.76		
Budgeted Expenses	\$29,567.97	\$4,581.07	\$4,167.83	\$8,991.72	\$3,864.97	\$4,142.01	\$8,295.93	\$63,611.50
Designated Expenses	\$38.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38.00
Certificate of Deposit	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$60,000.00
Total Outflow	-\$79,605.97	-\$4,581.07	-\$4,167.83	-\$8,991.72	-\$3,864.97	-\$4,142.01	-\$18,295.93	-\$123,649.50
General Fund Chk Acct Closing Balance	\$47,150.29	\$49,718.46	\$43,504.74	\$43,502.27	\$46,087.26	\$36,695.83		

General Fund Checking Account Closing Balance	\$47,150.29	\$49,718.46	\$43,504.74	\$43,502.27	\$46,087.26	\$36,695.83	
General Fund Certificate of Deposit	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$61,929.06	
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$97,150.29	\$99,718.46	\$93,504.74	\$93,502.27	\$96,087.26	\$98,624.89	
[The \$61,921.06 in the CDs includes \$1921.06 earned interest]							
Building Fund Checking Account + CD	\$79,891.06	\$79,891.06	\$79,788.51	\$75,318.11	\$75,491.18	\$77,080.06	
General Fund + Building Fund Grand Total	\$177,041.35	\$179,609.52	\$173,293.25	\$168,820.38	\$171,578.44	\$175,704.95	

2024 Budget for Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church

	2023	2024
<u>100 Facilities and Operation</u>		
101 Mortgage	\$ 9,982.80	\$ 9,982.80
102 Utilities	3,000.00	4,800.00
103 Building Insurance	3,000.00	3,500.00
107 Mileage	3,500.00	4,500.00
108 Building Supplies/Maintenance	550.00	1,000.00
109 Synod/Presbytery/Conference	500.00	500.00
110 Office Supplies	250.00	500.00
111 Other Supplies (paper goods, etc.)	500.00	400.00
112 Hospitality (coffee, snacks, food, etc.)	800.00	900.00
113 Administration	900.00	900.00
113 Administration—website maintenance	500.00	500.00
<u>200 Ministerial Compensation</u>		
201 Housing Allowance	19,500.00	19,500.00
202 Pension	4,700.00	4,800.00
<u>300 Expenses for Diaconal Workers</u>	100.00	100.00
<u>400 Pulpit Supply</u>	1,200.00	1,200.00
<u>500 Edification</u>		
501 Teaching Supplies	250.00	150.00
<u>600 Synod and Presbytery</u>		
601 Synod Assessment	1,350.00	1,500.00
<u>700 Mercy</u>		
701 Benevolences	1,200.00	1,000.00
<u>800 Intern</u>	10,000.00	10,000.00
<u>900 Miscellaneous and Contingency</u>		
901 Miscellaneous Travel	2,000.00	2,000.00
902 Miscellaneous General	1,217.20	1,267.20
Total	\$65,000.00	\$69,000.00