

September 14-15, 2024, the Marion Visitation committee made up of Bruce Bowers, David Mauser, and David Hanson was wonderfully hosted by the Marion RPC. Prior to our arrival, the session had completed the presbytery visitation form, providing all the necessary background information for our visit. Our visit began with an early dinner after which we gathered at the church building around 6 p.m. Following a tour of the facility, we met with the session for two and a half hours of encouraging and wide-ranging discussion of the history, ministry, and relationships of the Marion congregation. Overnight we were hosted in the elders' homes. Sunday, we attended the adult Sabbath School class and worshiped with the congregation before concluding our visit after lunch at Pastor Murray's home.

There were many encouraging aspects of this visitation, but some key areas in which led us to give thanks to God were:

- An incredibly suitable facility with plenty of room for future growth.
- Removal of the work associated with leasing to the daycare and financial provision from God even as that income source was removed.
- A notable increase of children in the congregation since the arrival of the Murray family in 2022.
- Evident heart for the city and awareness of the surrounding community in the worship service and life of the congregation.
- Enthusiastic congregational participation in outreach activities.
- Abundant evidence of mutual respect and love amongst the elders. The elders clearly value their friendships with one another and work diligently to highlight the strengths and cover the weaknesses of their fellow elders.
- Careful effort on the part of the elders to individually shepherd the members and households of the congregation.
- Frequent participation of the entire session, usually all 4 of them each Lord's Day, in leading aspects of worship on a rotational basis.
- A heart, vision, and active labor on the part of the elders to see additional elders and deacons raised up to expand the leadership of the congregation.
- Active discipleship and equipping of young men, and young men who are willing to sacrifice to be involved in receiving the additional training.
- Elders prioritizing church involvement and working to refresh one another even in the midst of weighty work pressures

In the various times on Sunday before and after class and following worship, we were able to visit with many of the members of the congregation and received ample confirmation that the congregation's view of the session and the ministry aligned with what we heard in our visit with the session.

In addition to these encouragements, we shared some additional observations with the Marion session. These observations were minor suggestions and considerations as the ministry continues forward.