

2024 GLG Report

By the Rev. Dr. Richard E. 'Dick' Knodel, Jr. (February 25, 2025)

Overview of SWORP (Southwest Ohio RP) Church

Most wonderfully, we've been able to supply our community with Reformed (biblical) worship and fellowship. Many discount this today. I couldn't disagree more! Biblical worship amounts to the modern church's greatest failure. Instead of Christ's bold proclamation of God's revelation, thundering from church pulpits, and flavoring all of life – most settle for a kind of mutual psychological 'stroking' or low-grade sanctification. Both Steven Work and I believe in 'preaching.' The effects of this are not always easy to measure. Often, 20, 30 or 40-years later – we can see wonderful benefits traced back to church & sermons. Furthermore, as we follow God's directions for worship, we know it pleases Him. How wonderful is this? How significant? Romans 1 teaches us that while men know God exists, and that he's worthy of worship – they withhold this from him – constantly incurring his wrath. But with our RP worship, we glorify and enjoy him weekly. We can't easily appreciate the value of this kind of God-honoring worship. We have every right to expect God's blessings! All around us we see church *activity*. But it doesn't last. Men and churches 'come and go.' Frenetic activity produces almost nothing longterm, and society has degraded more and more. But by doing things God's way, in worship and body-love – we have managed to have an affectionate, happy church of significant faith.

I thank the LORD for his sustaining SWORP here in Southwest Ohio, where we can offer help to the watching world. Since we've been operational in 2010, we've been very active in witnessing to our community – and living for Christ. As pastor I've mingled with community leaders. I was our West Chester Tea Party leader for about three years. I've spoken at Township meetings and the steps of our state capitol in Columbus. We've done a lot of street witnessing. Any number have been drawn into the church, including homeless and psychologically dysfunctional people. I have used the knowledge of God to deeply influence Ohio through the Ohio Gun Owners (.Org) and succeeded in winning 'Stand-Your-Ground' legislation and 'Concealed Carry' so that Ohio's families could better defend themselves without fear. This work has leavened Ohio's legislature and made it more and more biblical. Better candidates have been elected. We saw the significance of this kind of local work with the Election of Donald Trump in 2025. Vivek Ramaswami may become Ohio's governor next year. While not obviously believers, both men represent a more Mosaic/Covenantal policy. Both reference the Bible.

I have been blessed especially -- to preach to two of my grandchildren (Kaiya & Kaden) and son & daughter-in-law since 2010. They have testified to me what a tremendous blessing this has been for their family. Everyone else in the congregation is likewise dear! May our pulpit & fellowship continue to sustain us in this era of social decay & crisis! I pray for all our families, and our children's children! May God continue to bless us in His Greatness through our preaching and worship! May it spread to our nation & world!

Bullet-Point Items from this year

- As pastor, I've labored to preach more broadly via our **Face-Book 'streaming' and Sermon Audio** accounts. 200-400 people visit per month from around our nation & world. In this way, we inspire thousands! We've also lifted-up the best things of Puritanism, via our weekly Church History class after worship – developed by Joel Beeke.
- A **Presbytery Visitation Committee** spent the January 13-14, 2024 weekend with us and rejoiced at what they found. They encouraged us in a couple ways, but by and large -- celebrated our SWORP ministry in Southwest Ohio. On September 8th, we celebrated SWORP's 14th Anniversary! As a result of

this visit, we've erected a 'Succession & Continuity Committee' to prepare for my pastoral retirement. This may take a longer time, and we want to make sure we don't become victims of a medical crisis or lack of planning. Budgets and planning are proceeding as we enter 2025.

- Our sister **Atlanta Church** (pastored by the **Rev. Frank Smith** & supported by his faithful wife '**Penny**') receives direct help from SWORP by our providing them a '**Temporary Governing Body (TGB)**,' moderated by **Elder Steven Work**. This amounts to their essential 'government' until they are finally organized, and, involves at least bi-monthly meetings. In **2024 Pastor Knodel** visited ARPC for a long Spring weekend and ministered to its people. I was so encouraged to be there and see the fruits of our long-distant relationship! **The Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)**, as it's called, not only survived **Frank's severe heart surgery** – but has plowed-on in witnessing to Atlanta. This past year has been committed to the major renovation of their church-building there, as well as Frank's recovery. **T.J. Pattillo**, one of Great Lake Gulf's Under-Care 'ministers' has been an essential help to Frank in this endeavor – especially during his months of surgical rehab. His **wife Nancy**, and his **daughter Hanna and son Sawyer** have likewise been inspirational for ARPC. Through the rehab and the ministry of both the Pattillo's and the Smiths – any number of new people have been reached. At our 2025 Spring Presbytery meeting, ARPC will be petitioning Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery for 'organized church' status.

In terms of other developments: • During most of 2024, we dealt with **Elder Tim Vincze's distraction**, as he lived much of the year in western Pennsylvania (after his father's dementia worsened) – commuting back to Southwest Ohio for assorted church services and Lord Suppers, etc. While this blessed Tim in terms of supporting his father prior to his translation above, and getting reacquainted with his adult brothers, it also took a significant toll on both Tim and SWORP. Tim is our church Clerk of Session, Treasurer, and our primary Precentor. **Steven Work** and **Grant Linville** filled in as Precentors in Tim's absence. **With sadness** we pray for both **Capt. Billy Ferrell** and **Grant Linville** who moved from our area to Florida and Michigan. Both had made major contributions to SWORP prior to their moves! **With Joy** we welcomed **Rob Moore** into *SWORP membership* and **Linda Jones** into *our Lord's Supper list!*

- **Tim Vincze, Grant Linville, John McMullen and Jeremy Jordan** gained major advancements in terms of Employment, with the first two working remotely with their companies in California. **Chris Knodel** was promoted to Senior Manager at CareSource Insurance Company in Dayton.

Summary 2024 numbers & Thoughts

- **With two solid members moving away**, our attendance averaged 20 people this year. We've just learned that a new family plans to join us this year if he's hired by Mars Hill Academy where we meet.

- **Our financial resources increased during 2024.** Our year-end balance increased about 15K. (See attachments.)

- **We restarted a Witness & Tract distribution ministry** we hope will pay dividends in terms of visitors.

- **We anticipate welcoming a number of pulpit visitors and/or a Summer Intern** in 2025-6. Pastor Knodel has plans to visit a number of our seminaries, beginning with RPTS in April of 2025.

- **Pastor Knodel is trying to finish LIFESTYLE, II**, where the applications from biblical theology/philosophy (& LIFESTYLE 1) will be explored to overcome the weaknesses of "Reformed Pietism," where the insights of the 'Genesis Dichotomy' can better be promoted. The **Patrick Henry Institute** of Virginia has already agreed to help Pastor Knodel to find a publisher for this work, or publish it themselves.

SWORP Budgeting 2025

	<u>2024</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2025</u> <u>Projected</u>
Giving	\$80,380.82	\$66,222.58
General Fund	\$79,295.82	\$65,012.58
Diaconal	\$500.00	\$510.00
Pulpit Search Fund	\$500.00	\$500.00
RP M&M	\$35.00	\$100.00
Special Designations	\$50.00	\$100.00
Expenses	\$59,363.88	\$62,711.39
Pastor's Salary	\$39,674.33	\$41,658.05
Pastor's Expense	\$1,860.00	\$1,860.00
Pastor's Insurance	\$5,286.60	\$5,286.60
Liability Insurance	\$395.00	\$395.00
Rent	\$3,675.00	\$3,750.00
Pulpit Supply	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Synod Assessment	\$1,411.00	\$1,411.00
GLGP Assessment	\$544.02	\$600.00
Synod Registration	\$0.00	\$500.00
Sermon Audio	\$629.35	\$629.35
Zoom	\$221.39	\$221.39
Advertizing	\$0.00	\$500.00
Reimbursement	\$433.40	\$400.00
Other	\$3,733.79	\$4,000.00
Surplus/Deficit	\$21,016.94	\$3,511.19