

Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church
Congregational Report
February 4, 2026

Overview

Losses in membership and continuing financial challenges have brought the session to recommend that the congregation petition for disorganization.

Pastor

Ross Fearing has completed his fifth year of ministry at Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church. In addition, he continued to serve as an Army Reserve Chaplain. This year he moved from serving at the 76th Operational Response Command to the 139th Medical Brigade. He also worked as a math teacher at Christ our Savior Lutheran High School during the spring semester, concluding his work when the school closed. His daughter, Luthien, was born on January 23, 2025.

Public Ministry

The congregation continued to worship morning and evening each Lord's Day, with Ross providing most of the preaching. Because Ross was serving with the Army approximately 10 Lord's Days this last year, Pastor Terry Dowds filled the pulpit on most of these occasions. We thank Pastor and Mrs. Dowds for faithfully attending and supporting the congregation and especially for Pastor Dowds' clear preaching over the last five years. At the end of 2025, worship attendance was 10-15.

The congregation reduced to two Sabbath School classes, with Mrs. Fearing leading the young children and Ross leading the rest of the congregation. We also continued to gather on Wednesday evening for congregational prayer.

Session

The session consists of Moderator Ross Fearing, Clerk Bill Wilson, and Provisional Elder Josh Reshey. We especially thank Mr. Reshey and the Terre Haute congregation for his consistent and helpful service to us on our session.

Membership

The congregation added one communing member and one baptized member this year and lost two communing members. The current membership count is 9 communing members and 7 baptized members. We have two adherents who frequently with us and two adherents who due to health and distance regularly use the worship livestream.

Properties

The properties of the church remain in serviceable condition. The congregation replaced the church water heater this year.

Finances

The 2025 financial report is included as Appendix 1 to this report. Expenses were about \$700 less than budgeted and giving was about \$12,000 more than budgeted. Expenses exceeded receipts by

almost \$11,000 which was drawn from the congregation's general fund. As of December 31, the congregation had about \$35,000 in the general fund. Changes in the church membership led us to anticipate a reduction in giving over the next year. Anticipating the disorganization of the congregation, the 2026 budget commits to spending at the same levels as 2025.

Disorganization

The petition for disorganization is included as Appendix 2 to this report. The petition highlights the lack of people and lack of funding needed to sustain a ministry. These easily measurable factors reflect that despite efforts to conduct outreach in the community, prayers for the addition of more families, and improvements in the leadership of the church, the church has not shown growth and we do not see evidence that would suggest growth in the next year. For these reasons, the session is making the hard recommendation that the congregation petition for its disorganization.

Appendix 1: 2025 Financial Report

	2025 Budget	2025 Actual
Receipts		
Offering	\$45,000.00	\$57,214.75
Interest	\$100.00	\$101.31
Other		
Total	\$45,100.00	\$57,316.06
Expenses		
<i>Congregation</i>		
Ministry and Education	\$1,000.00	
Funerals		
General Supplies	\$200.00	
Conferences		
Pastoral Supplies	\$1,000.00	
Returned Checks		\$1,368.00
Total	\$2,200.00	\$1,368.00
<i>Pastoral Support</i>		
Salary and Housing	\$38,100.00	\$38,099.00
Pension	\$4,850.00	\$4,850.00
Guest Ministry	\$3,275.00	\$2,650.00
Guest Travel	\$2,500.00	\$2,278.70
Total	\$48,725.00	\$47,877.70
		\$-
<i>Outreach</i>		
		\$-
Local	\$500.00	\$-
Mercy	\$500.00	\$1,104.42
Total	\$1,000.00	\$1,104.42
		\$-
<i>Denomination</i>		
		\$-
Presbytery Assessment	\$597.17	\$420.00
Synod Assesments	\$1,700.00	\$1,101.00
Synod and Pres.		
Delegate	\$500.00	\$292.00
RP Global Missions	\$-	\$-
RP M&M	\$-	\$-
Total	\$2,797.17	\$1,813.00
<i>Church Property</i>		
Water	\$800.00	\$758.59
Gas/Electric	\$2,000.00	\$2,431.46
Insurance	\$3,765.00	\$4,282.00

Cleaning	\$1,560.00	\$1,410.00
Grounds	\$1,200.00	\$960.00
Supplies	\$500.00	\$221.14
Repairs		\$1,447.92
Internet Ministry	\$1,250.00	\$1,006.27
Total	\$11,075.00	\$12,517.38

Ministry House

Insurance	\$350.00	\$343.70
Maintenance	\$300.00	\$-
Trash	\$400.00	\$263.00
Water	\$600.00	\$579.98
Gas/Electric	\$1,400.00	\$2,242.28
Total	\$3,050.00	\$3,428.96

Total Expenses	\$68,847.17	\$68,109.46
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Starting Account

Balance	\$45,866.24	\$45,866.24
Total Receipts	\$45,100.00	\$57,316.06
Total Expenses	\$(68,847.17)	\$(68,109.46)
Net Difference	\$(23,747.17)	\$(10,793.40)
Ending Balance	\$22,119.07	\$35,072.84

Appendix 2: Disorganization Petition

Sparta Reformed Presbyterian Church petitions the Great Lake Gulf Presbytery to disorganize the congregation with an effective date of April 1, 2026.

The reasons for this request are as follows:

- 1. The financial condition of the congregation.** The congregation has operated at an increasing deficit for three years and we project that there will not be sufficient funds to provide for another year of ministry.
- 2. The declining membership of the congregation.** The average attendance for worship is approximately 12, with a recent loss of two family units (3 members). Note, this number includes 8 from Pastor Fearing's family. Total active communicant membership is 7.