

**Candidates & Credentials Committee  
Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery  
Spring 2026 Report**

Recommendations

1. That Josiah Cook, Jonathan Park, and Jared Rodriguez be given 10 minutes each to share their testimonies, answer questions from the floor, and be received as students under care.
2. That the ministerial credentials of Rich Johnston be transferred to the Midwest Presbytery, per his request.
3. That Joel Hart, Rich Holdeman, and Adam Kuehner be nominated to serve another term on the C&CC.
4. That a new member (preferably a ruling elder) be provided for the C&CC to serve as a replacement for Ian Wise, per his request.
5. That student exams be conducted according to the schedule outlined below.
  - Note: Christopher Schrock was examined and licensed to receive a call by the Midwest Presbytery (MWP). To alleviate any concerns regarding his past in the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), we have shared three documents with you that he previously prepared for the MWP.
6. That, upon the approval of his exams at this meeting, presbytery decide whether or not to accept Christopher Schrock's ordination in the CREC.
  - Note: This recommendation is primarily due to the fact that he was ordained by a local session, not by a presbytery. If his ordination is accepted, then he will only need to be installed at 2RP. If not, then he will need to be ordained and installed at 2RP.
7. That our report be received.

Serving for Christ,

Joel Hart (2026)  
Adam Kuehner (2026)  
Jonathan Schaefer (2027)

Rich Holdeman (2026)  
Adam Niess (2027)  
Ian Wise (2027)

<b>Student</b>	<b>Exam</b>	<b>Time*</b>	<b>Examiner/Text</b>
T.J. Pattillo	<i>Theology 1</i>	20/10/5	Adam Kuehner
	[Licensure to preach]		
John Punt	<i>Expository Sermon 2</i>	25/-/5	Matthew 4:12-17 (the mortification of sin)
	<i>Exegesis Paper</i>		Joel Hart and Aaron Murray
Christopher Schrock	<i>Personal Godliness</i> (for ordination/installation)	20/10/5	Phil Pockras
	<i>Expository Sermon</i> (for ordination/installation)	25/-/5	Proverbs 10:31-32
	<i>Soundness in the Faith and Commitment to the RP Testimony</i> (for ordination/installation)	20/10/5	Rich Holdeman

\*Duration - The first number is the allotted time for the examiner's question, the second is for questions from the presbytery and the third is for discussion by the presbytery about the exam prior to voting.

### **Student Aid**

Students under care are eligible to receive a \$500 monthly stipend under these conditions:

- They are full-time students at RPTS.
- They maintain a B average.

If you are aware of students seeking to come under care in future meetings, please let us know so that presbytery can begin to plan for this support.

The following students are currently receiving aid from presbytery:

- T.J. Pattillo (began September 2022)
- John Punt (began September 2025)

We anticipate the following aid-plan for students coming under care at this meeting:

- Josiah Cook - beginning full-time classes at RPTS this spring; will receive aid immediately
- Jonathan Park - beginning full-time classes at RPTS this fall; will receive aid then
- Jared Rodriguez - does not anticipate taking full-time classes at RPTS before next presbytery meeting; will not receive aid this year

### **Credential and Status Changes in 2025**

#### Students taken under care or removed from under care

- Nathan Shaver (removed March 2025, per his request)

#### Licensures, ordinations, and installations

- John Punt (licensed to preach, March 2025)
- Frank Smith (installed at Atlanta RPC, October 2025)

#### Resignations, removals, and transfers

- Stephen Rhoda (resigned from Terre Haute RPC, January 2025)
- Wade Mann (resigned from Elkhart RPC, March 2025; transferred credentials to MWP, August 2025)

#### Deaths

- Jim Wright (September 2025)

### **Men Under Care**

*Joe Johnson* - "2025 was a year full of both difficult providences and cherished joys for the Johnsons. Early in the year we praised the Lord for the announcement of our baby Bonnie Victoria, which means Good, or Beautiful, Victory. But we had to, like Job, pray "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord", for He took her, after a still birth, in late April. Our little Bonnie lies next to her cousin, Rowyn, in North Carolina. We praise the Lord in whom we have a beautiful victory.

Our family has much to be thankful for. It's been a year of banana pancakes, collectively learning a little Latin (*Salvete omnes!*), and life on the move, as we've traveled to St. Augustine, Charleston, Seattle, Salt Lake City, and Asheville, for family trips and in support of my search for a call. I was able to do a good amount of

scattered preaching, here and there, and some last-minute pulpit supply for a church who lost their pastor due to misconduct.

Besides this, I became president of Eola Institute, a church-related non-profit that aims to change community, education, and culture, praying that God may use this for his glory. I hope Eola Institute will largely benefit NAPARC churches. We will work toward a 2026 release of a social networking application made for the church. Please pray for the Johnsons as we strive to serve our Lord.”

*T.J. Pattillo* - “It has been a year of change and opportunity for the Pattillo’s since the last meeting of Great Lakes- Gulf presbytery. We sold our house in Georgia and now live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I am attending class at the seminary on campus. I am still on track to graduate in May of this year. We are adherents at Providence while our letter remains at Atlanta. I have been blessed to have pulpit supply opportunities in Atlanta, Sparta, Coldenham- Newburgh, Providence, and Elkhart. I will also supply the pulpit at College Hill in March, Southwest Ohio in April, and State College in May. There have been challenges since we moved. There was a surprise snowstorm one evening and I couldn’t drive us home. We had to walk home after parking the car at the bottom of the hill we live on here in Squirrell Hill. There have been two deaths that have affected us. My stepfather, David Dilbeck, passed away in January. I was unable to return home and be with my siblings through David’s last days. Then, last week, a drummer I used to tour with passed away unexpectedly. His name was Brian Webber and he was 48 years old. I have known Brian for 35 years. We are still trying to settle in and get used to the change, but we are grateful to have made the move and are thankful for the way our Lord has blessed us and can get to know more of our brothers and sisters as God provides opportunities. We look forward to seeing you in Orlando.”

*John Punt* - John and Elizabeth and family moved to Pittsburgh this fall to attend classes full-time and in-person at RPTS. After a stacked fall quarter of 18 credits and the birth of their fifth child, John is taking 12 credits this winter and is on track for a more manageable credit load the entire duration of his program with an expected graduation date of Spring 2027. The Punts are very blessed by the seminary and North Hills RPC communities and are looking forward to an internship this summer at Columbus RP Church alongside an apprenticeship at Twelve Stones Counseling Ministries in Brown County, Indiana.

## **Ministers Without Pastorates**

### Active

*Andrew B.* - “My family (Laura and 3 kids) have now lived in Central Asia for around 4.5 years. In the last 2 or so years, I took over a language business as part of a door for long-term presence in the country. This has required learning another language on top of the first one we learned. It was an intense time with many demands on my time and energy. We took furlough time in the US in October 2025. However, in November 2025,

an employee of the company died and another went into a coma due to a motorbike accident. As a result, I made an emergency trip back for a few weeks. It was hard, but God sustained me and showed me experientially how desperately I needed Him to be my life, strength, and wisdom (John 15). I returned back with my family in the States in early December.

We are scheduled to return early February 2026, and a young couple and their newborn ("S" Family) plan to join us for at a mid-term commitment (at least 1 year). I am learning more about team leadership and communication, and I have started a simple cohort for peer leadership encouragement with other RPGM team leaders.

Dr. PB has continued with us, now approaching 2 years with us. She is 78 years old and has been a tremendous source of wisdom for us and a relational bridge to locals. In a society that respects the elderly, she breaks down walls of distrust and quickly puts people at ease. As such, she has met and then connected us with various individuals for follow up. Two of those contacts professed faith in 2025. One of them was a refugee from the western neighboring country and was attending our worship time each Lord's Day, but she is now in France. The other just expressed faith in December, and we are at the beginning steps of discipleship. Furthermore, a daughter from a family that we have known for years professed faith in recent months. Her mom is also reading the Scripture, and there is a general openness among the rest of her family. We give all glory and praise to God!

Pray for us: blessing on this upcoming season of team building and change; our marriage and family life; still more laborers; help in the business; continued seed sowing and training of new believers.

*Bryan Dage* - "I am working full time for an engineering company doing hydraulic modeling of drinking water systems. We continue to raise sheep and homeschool our three boys. Our desire is to stay in the area and see what opportunities there may be for a reformed church plant down the road. We are currently attending a reformed-ish bible church where we will likely seek membership soon."

*Mark Koller* - "Currently serving as the Executive Director of Reformation Translation Fellowship and local pulpit supply in Orlando. I work full time in a local laboratory and I also do some editing for RHB. Our family has been recovering from some recent trauma in 2023, so we moved to Orlando and we have been evaluating our future. I am currently retired from full-time service in the church and I might possibly return in the future. The Lord has been gracious to our family and we are doing well."

*Steve Rhoda* - "In January 2025 I stepped down from my position as pastor of Terre Haute RPC, and at the 2025 spring meeting of presbytery my credentials were suspended as a teaching elder for abuse of alcohol. Since then I have sought recovery, and last month in January I reached one year of sobriety. God has been gracious to me, granting me freedom from addiction, healed relationships, good medical care, and financial provision. My employment is stable, and I enjoy the work

that I am doing. Mary and I split our time between Terre Haute and Lafayette, as Mary teaches school, first grade, at Lafayette Christian School. We became grandparents in September as a son was born to our son and daughter-in-law, Jacob and Regan, in Lafayette. Our son Philip also lives in Lafayette and works as a computer programmer. Our daughter Abigail teaches art at Crown Point Christian School in northwest Indiana. I am grateful for the Shepherding Committee assigned to my care and for their recommendation to presbytery that my suspension be lifted. I hope and pray that that will be the outcome at next month's meeting."

*Colin Samul* - "Fathers and brothers, it continues to be an honor to serve with you, even though I am not currently serving as an installed TE in the GLGP. This past year I had the privilege to serve on the Sycamore Visitation Committee, and was later appointed to the Shepherding Committee. I continue to serve as Professor of City Seminary of Sacramento (RCUS), teaching Ancient, Reformation, and Modern Church History over three trimesters. I have filled the pulpit many times at Southfield RPC, and throughout the denomination (and even outside of the denomination) throughout the past year. I continue to pray about and seek a call, and I may have several prospects developing. If a viable call does not develop, I am praying about options to continue my education through a Th.M. and possibly doctoral work in line with my teaching duties. I would appreciate prayers for my family and me during this pivotal time."

*Zach Smith* - [Updates to be found in other communications re: him.]

*David Whitla* - "It is a privilege to serve our denomination as Professor of Church History at RPTS. I continue to serve as director of the Theological Foundations for Youth program and chair the synodical Youth Ministries and Church History Committees. In the past year I have been privileged to regularly preach in several venues, including various congregations of the RPCNA and OPC, the Banner of Truth Youth Conference in the UK and West Coast Ministers Conference, the devotional service at the 50th anniversary of NAPARC at Geneva College, and our own Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Winter Youth Conference. Further afield, I continue to serve as a trustee of the Banner of Truth Trust and the steering committees of the Puritan Theology and Scottish Theology study groups for the Evangelical Theological Society, where I presented a paper in the fall. In January, I taught another two-week intensive seminary course virtually for our brothers in EA. Recent projects include various magazine and journal articles, podcast interviews, Works of Samuel Rutherford (RHB, ongoing), and archive manuscript transcriptions for a new Intermediate Paleography elective at RPTS. In their seventh year of teaching, RPTS faculty are afforded a sabbatical, which I will be taking in this spring quarter, DV. I anticipate several weeks of rest at home and in Northern Ireland, and a season of travel to Asia and Europe for the purpose of teaching (China Reformed Theological Seminary in Taiwan, and Kobe Theological Hall in Japan), connecting with the global RP family, and pursuing educational opportunities in my field."

*Namsik Yang* - "I am very grateful that in 2025 I had opportunities to bring God's Word to various churches in West Michigan, as well as to Elkhart RPC. Over the year, I

preached on thirteen Lord's Days, presided at the Lord's Supper three times, and led a conference attended by over one hundred Korean Americans in this region. Compared to the previous year, when much of my time was spent with my son, Minsol, during his hospitalization and rehabilitation, it has been both a joy and a humbling encouragement to continue my preaching calling. While my family and I are currently living some distance from our home congregation, Southfield RPC, we regularly worship with a local OPC congregation in Grand Rapids. At present, I am devoting more time to completing my doctoral degree and seeking the Lord's guidance for the next step, while continuing to ask for God's grace for Minsol's ongoing recovery and good health."

### Inactive

None

### Retired

*Jack Baumgardner* - "I am a member at 2nd RP, I am moderating Terre Haute RP, I preached twice at Columbus RP, three times at Terre Haute R P and six times at 2nd RP."

*Rich Johnston* - Rich (along with his wife, Beckie, and son, Stephen) have moved to Topeka, KS, to be closer to family. They have transferred their membership to Topeka RPC and are enjoying life in their new home.

*Ray Lanning* - [We did not receive an update from him.]

*R. Paul Mathews* - 2025 brought a significant change to Paul and Janet's lives. Janet, after grappling with a brain tumor for over a year, was called by our Heavenly Father to her heavenly abode on September 29, 2025. Paul is residing in their home near Gaylord, MI, where he is near family. Their daughter, Diane Wiltse, is his care giver and faithfully visits him daily. Due to infirmities and age, he is largely homebound. He treasures reading God's Word; prayer time for RPCNA entities, individuals, and their churches; and outreach by phone to those with spiritual needs. Due to being located 230 miles from the nearest RP church, he livestreams the Lord's Day worship from Elkhart RPC, where he is a member. Paul is grateful to our Heavenly Father, our Refuge and Strength. To God be the glory for His watch-care and for family and friends who have faithfully prayed for him during these difficult days.

*Glenn McFarland* - Glenn and Jean continue to be in regular attendance and model well how to grow graciously in Christ in later seasons of life. Always present with a kind smile, listening ear, warm greeting, and hands ready to help, Glen and Jean remain active. Though they have occasional physical challenges, they continue to press on to the glory of God.

*Jim McMahon* - This past year, Jim took a fall and received an injury that necessitated he be moved to a facility that provides a greater level of care. Whereas before his injury he was attending worship services in person, he now participates via livestream. Jim loves his daily time of fellowship with the Lord, and is a blessing to his family, fellow residents, and those who visit him.

*Ray Morton* - [We did not receive an update from him.]

*Jim Pennington* - "Celebrated with gratitude to our Lord my 90th Birthday on December 25, 2025. Invested considerable time in pre-op prep for spinal surgery, which hopefully will be scheduled soon. Still semi-active as elder emeritus. Meet and greet visitors and members before and after morning worship. Communicate with senior members by phone and texts/emails regularly and pray with some on the phone. Participation in congregational meetings. No preaching/presiding during 2025. Thankful for reasonably good health for a 90 year old, and able to care for Ruth with her health concerns."

*Tom Reid* - "Since the spring 2024 Presbytery meeting, I have continued to preach, teach, and counsel among the small flock of the Gainesville Reformed Presbyterian Fellowship. I have made six written reports, on a bi-monthly basis, to the session of the Orlando RPC, our sending Church. I have preached: 1) ten sermons on worship; 2) on Psalms 34 through 41, monthly; and 3) on Hebrews, covering chapters 8:7 through 13:6. On Wednesday nights, I led studies on prayer from the Westminster Shorter Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism, before returning, by popular demand, to a careful study of the Westminster Confession and the RPCNA Testimony, reaching the end of Chapter 6. I taught three times at the Kobe Theological Hall, on the Reformed Presbyterian Doctrine of the Church; How to Conduct Reformed Presbyterian Worship, and the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ: The Biblical Basis. I led a monthly Seasoned Men's Bible Study on the Epistle of James, as well as one study on the Mediatorial Kingship for a group of men; both groups were mostly made up of men from outside our Fellowship. I prepared the text for, and helped present, a Psalm Sing on The Life of Christ in the Psalms. It may be possible for me to attend the spring Presbytery meeting in Orlando."

*Bill Roberts* - "Rachel and I are enjoying good health as well as active participation in the Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church. During 2025, I preached 27 times in various RP congregations in Indiana, administered the Lord's Supper twice, and performed one infant baptism in an Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, I served on the Second Indianapolis RPC Shepherding Committee. I regularly visit two prisoners at the Federal Penitentiary in Terre Haute. The two men were part of the 37 death row inmates whose sentences were commuted by President Biden. At least for the time being they remain in the Special Containment Unit in Terre Haute so I can continue to see them. They could be transferred to Colorado at any time."

*Frank Schutz* - [We did not receive an update from him.]

*Steven Work* - "In 2025, the Lord has allowed me to supply the pulpit 18 times in 5 congregations. My assignment as moderator of the Atlanta Temporary Governing Body (Atlanta, GA) ended on October 5 when they became an organized congregation. I serve on the session of Southwest Ohio RP Church (Mason, OH) as a ruling elder. At our quarterly Lord's Suppers, I prepare and present a table address.

# Appendix A: Student Evaluations



## Student Evaluation

### Presbytery/Church requesting review

**Presbytery/Church requesting evaluation**  
Great Lakes- Gulf

**Review Recipient Name**  
Adam Niess

**Email of Recipient**  
adamniess@gmail.com

### Student being reviewed

**Student Being Reviewed**  
Trevor Pattillo

**GPA**  
3.77

**Credits Taken**  
119

**Student Rating** (*scale: Strong, Acceptable, Concerning, Unknown, N/A*)

**How well does the student meet the academic standards of the seminary?**  
Strong

**How consistent and disciplined is the student at fulfilling responsibilities in a timely manner (e.g., arriving to class, submitting assignments, paying tuition and other expenses, registering for classes, returning library books, completing work study responsibilities)?**  
Strong

**Does the student fit in well with the campus environment, get along well with others, and show concern for them?**  
Strong

**Does the student show appropriate respect for professors and students, both inside and outside of class?**  
Strong

**Does the student conduct himself with wisdom, grace, and love toward others?**  
Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's personal character and walk with God?**  
Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's emotional stability**  
Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's relationships with his closest family members?**  
Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's gifts and calling to pastoral ministry?**  
Strong

**Given his current progress, how would you rate the student's overall preparedness toward being an effective pastor?**  
Strong

**Any Additional Comments?**

It's wonderful to have TJ on campus this academic year! His presence here confirms the strong ratings above, as he is an eager and humble learner.

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**Faculty Sign-Off**

**Faculty Reviewer**  
Dr. Barry York

**Signature**

*Barry J York*

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## Student Evaluation

### Student being reviewed

Student Being Reviewed	GPA	Credits Taken
John Punt	3.90	81

**Student Rating** (scale: *Strong, Acceptable, Concerning, Unknown, N/A*)

**How well does the student meet the academic standards of the seminary?**

Strong

**How consistent and disciplined is the student at fulfilling responsibilities in a timely manner (e.g., arriving to class, submitting assignments, paying tuition and other expenses, registering for classes, returning library books, completing work study responsibilities)?**

Strong

**Does the student fit in well with the campus environment, get along well with others, and show concern for them?**

Strong

**Does the student show appropriate respect for professors and students, both inside and outside of class?**

Strong

**Does the student conduct himself with wisdom, grace, and love toward others?**

Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's personal character and walk with God?**

Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's emotional stability**

Strong

**What is your assessment of the student's relationships with his closest family members?**

Acceptable

**What is your assessment of the student's gifts and calling to pastoral ministry?**

Strong

**Given his current progress, how would you rate the student's overall preparedness toward being an effective pastor?**

Strong

#### **Any Additional Comments?**

John is a most faithful and disciplined student who has integrated extremely well into the seminary community, among other things, serving as chapel precentor. He has managed his time and energies well despite the pressures of moving a large family and welcoming a new baby in the first couple of months of study. His work is consistently of very high quality (top 5%) and I look forward to seeing how the Lord will continue to develop his gifts for ministry in the years ahead.

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If all other criteria are met, do you recommend the student advance to the next level of Under Care Financial Aid?  
Yes

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### **Faculty Sign-Off**

**Faculty Reviewer**  
Dr. David Whitla

**Signature**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Whitla", written in a cursive style.

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## Appendix B: Student Charts

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **T.J. Pattillo**

C&CC representative: Ian Wise

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	11/2021		
Seminary: begun	9/2022		
Evidence of progress sermon	3/2024	-----	Ephesians 2:1-10
Personal Godliness exam	3/2024	Joel Hart	
English Bible exam (written)	6/2025	Frank Smith	
Theology & distinctives 1 exam			
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)	3/2024	-----	1 John 3:11-18
Church history paper	3/2025	Jon Sturm and Philip McCollum	
Licensure to preach		-----	
Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			
Church history exam			
Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			

Internships	Atlanta RPC (began 9/2019)		
Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			

GLG Presbytery Student Chart: **John Punt**  
 C&CC representative: Rich Holdeman

	Date Completed	Examiner / Proctor	Comments
Taken under care	6/2023		
Seminary: begun	3/2022		
Evidence of progress sermon	3/2024	-----	Titus 3:8-15
Personal Godliness exam	3/2024	Aaron Murray	
English Bible exam (written)	3/2024	Rich Holdeman	
Theology & distinctives 1 exam	3/2025	Phil Pockras	
Expository sermon 1 (assigned text)		-----	
Church history paper	3/2024	Phil Pockras, Nathan Eshelman	
Licensure to preach	3/2025	-----	
Pastoral & evangelistic gifts exam			
Theology & distinctives 2 exam			
Church history exam			
Expository sermon 2 (assigned topic)		-----	
Exegesis paper			
Licensure to receive a call		-----	
Seminary: MDiv awarded			
Internships	Bloomington RPC (9-12/2022)		

Ordination Exams			
Expository sermon (assigned text)		-----	
Personal Godliness exam			
Soundness in the faith & Testimony			