



**MINUTES**  
**OF THE**  
**ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-NINTH**  
**SYNOD**  
**OF THE**  
**REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**OF NORTH AMERICA**

**Indiana Wesleyan University**  
**Marion, Ind.**  
**June 14-17, 2021**

**Church Headquarters**

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Mr. James K. McFarland, Treasurer  
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Pastor R. Bruce Parnell  
Moderator



## ***Minutes of the 189<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RPCNA***

***Monday; June 14, 2021; 6:00 p.m.***

On June 14, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., the 189th Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America met at the call of the moderator in constituted court on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, Indiana), Phillipe Auditorium. Serving as moderator, Mr. J. Bruce Martin of Elkins Park, PA, called this special meeting of the Synod to order. Clerk John McFarland prayed to constitute the Court. The moderator explained about the need for this special *pro re nata* Synod meeting. It was determined that a quorum was present to conduct our business. The moderator asked this question of the Court: Shall we change the Synod-announced meeting schedule from the morning of June 15 to the evening of June 14 (following this meeting)? By voice vote, this question was answered in the affirmative. It was moved, seconded, and carried that we adjourn. Mr. Brian Coombs adjourned this special meeting of the Synod with prayer at 6:07 p.m.



## Minutes of the 189<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RPCNA

### Monday; June 14, 2021; 6:08 p.m.

On June 14 of 2021, at 6:08 p.m., the 189th Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America met pursuant to adjournment in constituted court on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, Indiana), Phillipe Auditorium. Still serving as moderator, Mr. J. Bruce Martin called the meeting to order, then prayed to constitute the Synod Court. The moderator then directed the Court to sing Psalm 48C with Mr. Garrett Mann presenting. Pastor Andy McCracken, our retiring moderator who now serves in the RPC of Australia, recorded a sermon to lead our worship and to set our devotional theme: Living Out the Fruit of the Spirit—Love (from Galatians 5:22-23 and John 13:31-35). The Court heard and viewed this sermon, then sang Psalm 36B.

The attendance roll was made up and is recorded below for each session of this meeting of the Synod. *Note: The moderator made clear that the inclusion of virtual attendees is not to be regarded as precedent setting, but fits within extraordinary circumstances due to the inability of Japanese, Canadian, and Chilean brothers to travel internationally at this time.*

			Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Th.
<b>Alleghenies</b>						
<b>College Hill</b> —Beaver Falls, PA	Martin, Titus	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	McCracken, Herb	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Wing, Keith	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Covenant</b> —Aurora, Ohio	<b>No delegate</b>					
<b>Covenant RPC</b> —Meadville, PA	Gunn, Gary	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Covenant Fellowship</b> —Pgh., PA	Smith, Pete	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Blackwood, Ed	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Buck, Timothy	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Gordon, Drew	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Eastvale</b> —Beaver Falls, PA	Ramsey, Micah	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Willson, Keith	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>First RPC</b> —Beaver Falls, PA	Filbert, Matt	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Schaefer, David	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Grace</b> —Gibsonia, PA	Stivason, Jeff	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Ryce, John	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Sampson, Mark	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X

		Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Th.
<b>Grace</b> — <i>State College, PA</i>	Turner, Trace	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	McHenry, Dean	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Grace &amp; Truth</b> — <i>Harrisonburg, VA</i>	Bever, Ryan	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Hope Community</b> — <i>Beaver Falls, PA</i>	Gregory, George	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Manchester</b> — <i>PA</i>	Scavo, Vince	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Klingensmith, M.	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>North Hills</b> — <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Blocki, Martin	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Ma, Matthew	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Metzger, Harry	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Spear, Sam	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Weir, Bill	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Providence</b> — <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Bradley, Steve	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	McFarland, James	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Rimersburg</b> — <i>PA</i>	Monger, John	TE E	E E E	E E E	E
<b>Rose Point</b> — <i>PA</i>	Brown, Charles	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Wilson, Steven	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Trinity</b> — <i>Burtonsville, MD</i>	Merkel, David	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Skwarek, Vincent	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Tusca Area</b> — <i>PA</i>	Watt, Jonathan	TE X	X X X	X X X	
<b>Certified by POA</b>	Backensto, Bruce	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Etheridge, Rut	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Gamble, Rick	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	O’Neill, Jerry	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Sanchez, Marcelo	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	York, Barry	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Atlantic</b>					
<b>Broomall</b> — <i>PA</i>	Tabaka, J. Alex	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Rizzo, Joe	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Cambridge</b> — <i>MA</i>	Bailey, Noah	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Fisher, Thomas	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Coldenham-Newburgh</b> — <i>NY</i>	<b>No delegate</b>				
<b>Elkins Park</b> — <i>PA</i>	Edgar, John D.	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Hazleton Area</b> — <i>PA</i>	Brace, Paul	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Nelson, Jeremy	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Providence (Christ Church)</b> <i>RI</i>	Howe, Daniel	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Trexler, Jonathan	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Ridgefield Park</b> — <i>NJ</i>	Weir, David	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Walton</b> — <i>NY</i>	Chellis, William	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Cripps, John	RE X	X X X	X X X	X

			Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Th.
<b>White Lake—NY</b>	<b>No delegate</b>					
<b>Certified by Atl. Pres.</b>	Martin, J. Bruce	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Silva-Krug, Mauro	TE	E	E E E	E E E	E
<b>Great Lakes/Gulf</b>						
<b>Belle Center—OH</b>	Pockras, Phil	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Bloomington—IN</b>	Holdeman, Richard	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	McCollum, Philip	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	de Jong, Kenneth	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Shipp, Stephen	RE		X X X	X X X	
<b>Columbus—IN</b>	Hart, Joel	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Schisler, Ed	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Durham (First)—NC</b>	Butterfield, Kent	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Poplin, Drew	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Elkhart—IN</b>	Mann, Wade	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Menbere, Fikre	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>First RPC—Grand Rapids, MI</b>	Scott, Craig	TE	X	X	X X	X
	Schwartz, Harley	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Hetherton—MI</b>	Morton, Ray	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Immanuel—West Lafayette, IN</b>	Olivetti, Jared	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Carr, David	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Alt. Larson, Ben	RE				
<b>Indianapolis (Christ Ch.) IN</b>	Bird, Sean	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Koons, Dale	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Alt. O'Neill, Jason	RE				
<b>Lafayette—IN</b>	Niess, Adam	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Bibby, Bob	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Stockwell, Chris	RE	X	X X X	E X X	X
	Alt. Kessler, Jeff	RE				
	Alt. Nelson, Ken	RE				
<b>Marion—IN</b>	Camery, Jason	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Hunt, Scott	RE	X	X X X	X X X	
<b>Orlando—FL</b>	Eshelman, Nathan	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Second Indianapolis—IN</b>	Faris, James	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Blum, Richard	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Mauser, David	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Selma—Alabama</b>	Brown, Mark	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Woodson, Averette	RE	X	X X X	X X X	
<b>Southfield—MI</b>	Kuehner, Adam	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X
	Hughes, Jon	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X



		Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Th.
<b>Southside</b> — <i>Indianapolis, IN</i>	Hanson, David	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Wise, Ian	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Cerbus, Ross	RE	X X X	X X X	X
	Prichard, Don	RE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Southwest Ohio</b> — <i>Mason, OH</i>	Knodel, Richard	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Work, Steven	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Damerow, Greg	RE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Sparta</b> — <i>IL</i>	Odom, James	RE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Sycamore</b> — <i>Kokomo, IN</i>	Anderson, Shawn	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	McKissick, Robert	RE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Terre Haute</b> — <i>IN</i>	Rhoda, Stephen	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Certified by GLG Pres.</b>	B., Andrew	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Evans, Keith	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Magill, Keith	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Roberts, William	TE	E E E	E E E	X
	Smith, Frank	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Whitla, David	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Japan</b>					
<b>Higashisuma</b> — <i>Kobe</i>	Sakai, Sumito	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Kasumigaoka</b> — <i>Kobe</i>	Hirata, Yusuke	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Mukunoso</b> — <i>Amagasaki</i>	Kanamori, Hiroyuki	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Okamoto-Keiyaku</b> — <i>Kobe</i>	Takiura, Kihei	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Takiura, Shigeru	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Certified by Japan Pres.</b>	Endo, Katsunori	TE	E E E	X E E	X
<b>Midwest</b>					
<b>Christ Covenant</b> — <i>Lawrence, KS</i>	McFarland, John	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Christ Pres.</b> — <i>Grandview, MO</i>	Barnes, Andrew	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Clarinda</b> — <i>IA</i>	<b>No delegate</b>				
<b>Columbia</b> — <i>MO</i>	McNamee, Gary	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Dallas</b> — <i>TX</i>	Prakashpalan, Rom	TE	E X X	X X X	X
	Schoeneberger, N.	RE	E X X	X X X	X
<b>Denison</b> — <i>KS</i>	Allen, Caleb	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Hebron</b> — <i>Clay Center, KS</i>	Hemken, Daniel	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	McMahan, Steve	RE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Laramie</b> — <i>WY</i>	Moore, Derek	TE	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Living Way</b> — <i>Bryan, TX</i>	Rockhill, Steven	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Dennis, Kevin	RE	X X X	X X X	X

				Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Th.
<b>Manhattan—KS</b>	Mann, Will	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Quinter—KS</b>	Sexton, Matthew	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Mann, Max	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Salt &amp; Light—Longmont, CO</b>	McCracken, H.P.	TE		X X X	X X X		
	Bechtold, Jeff	RE		X X X	X X X		X
<b>San Antonio Mission—TX</b>	Leach, Jonathan	TE	E	E E E	E E E	E	E
<b>Sharon—Morning Sun, IA</b>	Schneider, Bryan	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Smith, John W.	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Shawnee—KS</b>	Boyle, Bill	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Wing, Dennis	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Springs Reformed—CO</b>	Mann, Keith	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Sterling—KS</b>	Wright, Brian	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Hayes, Ed	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Stillwater—OK</b>	Parnell, R. Bruce	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Noell, Alan	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Topeka—KS</b>	Johnston, Brad	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Reed, Kyle	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Tri-Lakes—Colorado Springs, CO</b>	Friedly, Joseph	TE	X	X X X	X X X	E	E
	McCracken, Sam	TE	E	E E E	E E E	E	E
<b>Washington—IA</b>	Drost, Dan	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Westminster—CO</b>	<b>No delegate</b>						
<b>Winchester—KS</b>	Borg, Kyle	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Tweed, James	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Certified by MWP</b>	Allyn, Joe	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Koller, Mark	TE	E	X X X	X X X	X	X
	McFarland, Bob	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Moore, Kelly J.	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Pacific Coast</b>							
<b>All Saints—Brea, CA</b>	Sawtelle, John	TE	E	E E E	E E E	E	E
<b>All Saints—Irvine, CA</b>	Tang, Hsing	TE	E	E E E	E E E	E	E
<b>Fresno—CA</b>	Hemphill, Paul	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Los Angeles—CA</b>	Ashleigh, David	RE	E	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Ophoff, Roel	RE	E	X X X	X X		
<b>Phoenix—AZ</b>	Myers, Christopher	TE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
	Shipman, Charles	RE	X	X X X	X X X	X	X
<b>Reno Mission—NV</b>	Samul, Colin	TE		X X X	X X X		
<b>San Diego—CA</b>	Shepherd, Noah	TE		X X X	X X X		
<b>Seattle—WA</b>	<b>No delegate</b>						

		Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Th.
<b>Shelter</b> — <i>Edmonton, Alberta</i>	<b>No delegate</b>				
<b>Squamish (Coram Deo)</b> — <i>BC</i>	McNeely, Patrick	TE X	X X X	X X X	
<b>Treasure Valley Mission</b> — <i>ID</i>	Hemphill, Ryan	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Certified by PCP</b>	Jia, Kevin	TE X	X X X	X X X	
	Maginn, Jon	TE	X X	X X X	
	McCracken, Tim	TE	X X X	X X X	X
	Yang, Namsik	TE E	E X X	X E E	E
<b>St. Lawrence</b>					
<b>Christ Church</b> — <i>Floyd, NY</i>	Goerner, Aaron	TE E	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Christian Heritage</b> — <i>Endicott, NY</i>	Chamberlain, Doug	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Evangelical</b> — <i>Toronto, Ont.</i>	MacLeod, D. Allan	TE X	X X X	X X	X
	Finlayson, Rod	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Fulton</b> — <i>NY</i>	Iamaio, Nicholas	TE E	E E E	E E E	E
<b>Hillside</b> — <i>Almonte, Ont.</i>	<b>No delegate</b>				
<b>Hudson/St. Lazare</b> — <i>Quebec</i>	Ward, Vince	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Dupuis, Dan	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Lisbon</b> — <i>NY</i>	Mann, Garrett	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Messiah's Church</b> — <i>Clay, NY</i>	Coombs, Brian	TE X	X X X	X X X	E
	McCune, David	RE X	X X X	X X X	E
<b>New Creation</b> — <i>Kitchener, Ont.</i>	Wilkinson, J. Scott	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Oswego</b> — <i>NY</i>	Wingfield, Gabe	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	McGrath, John	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Ottawa</b> — <i>Ont.</i>	Quigley, Andrew	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Rochester</b> — <i>NY</i>	Somerville, Ryan	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Pihl, William	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Russell</b> — <i>Ont.</i>	Kingswood, Matt	TE X	E X X	X X X	X
<b>Syracuse</b> — <i>NY</i>	Housewright, Jason	TE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Pinkerton, Bob	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
	Rice, Robert	RE X	X X X	X X X	X
<b>Central Presbytery</b>					
<b>No delegates</b>					

The following members are noted here as being first-time Synod delegates: Andrew B. (TE; special RPGM assignment); Rich Blum (RE; 2nd, Indianapolis, IN); Timothy Buck (RE; Covenant Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA); Ross Cerbus (RE; Southside Indianapolis, IN); Yusuke Hirata (TE; Kasumigaoka, Japan); Dave Mauser (RE; 2nd, Indianapolis, IN); Drew Poplin (RE; First RPC, Durham, NC); Kyle Reed (RE; Topeka, KS); John Ryce (RE; Grace, Gibsonsia, PA); Nick Schoeneberger (RE; Dallas, TX); Harley Jake Schwarz (RE; Grand Rapids, Michigan); Noah Shepherd (TE; San Diego, CA); Vince Skwarek (RE; Trinity, Burtonsville, MD); Jonathan Trexler (RE; Christ RPC, Providence, RI); Trace Turner (TE; Grace, State College, PA).

Other elders present who are not voting delegates were made consultative members of the Court (moved, seconded, and carried). These ministerial students will serve as pages for this Court: Allen Blackwood, Robert Kelbe, and Johnathan Krus.

*Synod Officer Elections:* Acting Moderator Martin asked for nominations for a moderator. The name of Pastor R. Bruce Parnell was put forward and no other nominations were offered. The Court voted in favor of Mr. Parnell by rising applause. Mr. Parnell shook the hand of Mr. Martin and assumed the leadership chair. Nominations and votes for the clerk and assistant clerk positions resulted in the elections of Clerk John McFarland and Assistant Clerk Brian Wright. Former Assistant Clerk Charles Brown was thanked for his years of faithful service. The clerk highlighted the very full Memorials page in the Docket and Digest, covering two years; then the memorial prayer was offered by Mr. Steve McMahan. The following servants of the churches who recently died are remembered for their faithful service to the courts, congregations, and believers:

## In Memory

### Deaths of Teaching Elders

John Tweed	served in many churches and roles	05/25/2020
James Carson	served in many churches and roles	08/01/2020
Robert Fullerton	served in many churches and roles	12/13/2020
Gene Spear	... many roles, especially in Japan	02/26/2021
Jack White	... many roles, especially via Geneva	03/11/2021
Norman Carson	... many roles, especially via Geneva	04/06/2021
Leverne Rosenberger	Atlantic Presbytery church planter	04/14/2021

### Deaths of Ruling Elders

John Jack Ramsey	Broomall, PA; Syracuse, NY	06/05/2019
Jorge Klajnbart	Springs Reformed (CO)	02/15/2020
Bruce E. Adams	Southfield RPC (MI)	03/30/2020
Bob Mann	Springs Reformed (CO)	06/11/2020

Charles "Chip" Lorraine	Christ Church (Floyd, NY)	06/15/2020
Aubrey Ayer	Ottawa RPC (Ontario)	08/13/2020
Gene Huggins	Syracuse RPC (NY)	09/13/2020
Philip Duguid	Topeka RPC (KS)	09/19/2020
Bruce Miller	Rose Point RPC (PA)	09/27/2020
Russell James	Hebron RPC (Clay Center, KS)	12/29/2020
<b>Deaths of Wives of Pastors and Elders</b>		
Jessie Shell	wife of Elder Ralph Shell, dec.	07/15/2019
Marion McMillan	wife of Rev. John McMillan, dec.	08/14/2019
Lois Schaefer	wife of Elder John Schaefer, dec.	11/27/2019
Gretchen Robson	wife of Rev. Prof. Ed Robson	06/05/2020
Alice Joseph	wife of Rev. Ray Joseph, dec.	01/09/2021
Cordelia Harrington	wife of Rev. Milton Harrington, dec.	04/23/2021
Leslie Schutz	wife of Rev. Frank Schutz	04/23/2021
<b>Deaths of Friends of the RPCNA</b>		
George Scipione	RPTS Professor of Counseling	01/22/2020
Timothy Russell	served Geneva & two RP churches	03/30/2020

John McFarland gave his Clerk's Report. Recommendation 1 was seconded and adopted, resulting in the acceptance of the proposed and published agenda as our meeting agenda. Recommendation 2 was seconded and adopted (concerning automatic referrals to the Nominating Committee). Recommendation 3 was seconded and adopted (so presbyteries needing extra meeting times during this meeting of the Synod are granted that liberty). Recommendation 4 was seconded and adopted (so all ministers requesting excused absences from our meetings are granted such). The Clerk's Report as a whole was approved (constituting final approval of the *2019 Minutes of Synod*) and follows:

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### 2021 Report of the Clerk of Synod

Dear fathers and brothers: To my knowledge, I have carried out duties assigned to me in the two years since I last reported to you. The *2019 Minutes of Synod and Yearbook* was expertly edited by Heidi Filbert and proofread by myself and Assistant Clerk Charles Brown. Managing editors of Crown & Covenant Publications secured the printer and handled sale and distribution of the books, with typical excellence. Nathaniel Pockras continues to provide substantial assistance to us as we continue in the discipline of preparing a helpful closing index for all new minute sets, even as Nathaniel has indexed many decades of past minutes. The *Constitution* was updated per Synod directives of the past two years. We commit to greater punctuality with future updates. Pastor Andrew Barnes (MO)

helpfully adds indexing/search features to the online (pdf version) of our updated *Constitution*; contact Andrew or me if you want to download a free copy.

*Who does not know that the Synod of 2020 never met?!* No minute book or directory update was published, but many helpful reports of boards and committees (etc.) were made available for reading on Synod's online document file: <http://synod.rpcna.net/>. By your desire we are keeping these up for reading for five+ years following the relevant reporting date. Thanks to these many report authors who displayed a humble desire to live and labor "in the light." To those authors, contact me soon if it is your intent to have your 2020 report included in the 2021 printing.

Still true (increasingly so), I owe great thanks and appreciation to your diligent presbytery clerks for assisting me/you with many communications between our annual meetings of this court. Passing news and requests through them continues to be most presbyterian and efficient; I ask you to cooperate with them in the weeks following synod as we update our several directories.

The approval of *this* Clerk's Report—by rule—constitutes **the final approval of the Minutes of the previous Synod (2019)**.

I posted most of the reports for this 2021 Synod at <http://synod.rpcna.net> in the 2021 folder. A very large PDF document similar to previous publications of the *Docket and Digest* is posted there along with individual reports. No paper *Docket and Digest* is being published; please print your own (if necessary), but we hope that the e-version is more useful (with searchability, etc.).

A page has been assigned in this *Docket* for all reports. Although some reports may not be ready to be included in the *Docket*, a page number is assigned for inclusion of these reports at Synod. We will utilize a *List-A* approach for agenda business, showing planned *order* of consideration but not the anticipated day/time. We hope time will be available for consideration of all reports, but priority is being given to the most urgent matters (as judged by the Clerk and the Business of Synod Committee). Inform the Clerk if your particular report has not been listed in the agenda.

We will seek to move directly through the listed reports so that a report which was unfinished in one session will be the next one taken up at the following session. Even at this late hour, if your committee or board report requires a particular day/time slot (for example, due to a visiting speaker), we can make that an *order-of-the-day*—always easiest to accomplish just before and after breaks.

As the meeting time for the 2022 Synod (June 21-24, at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion) is announced, notice is hereby given that the 2022 reports should be sent to the Clerk for inclusion in Synod's e-file and digest by May 10, 2022, no later than May 24.

It is good and healthy for all of us to have readily available managers (I'd

say “bosses” but that does not fit my experience)! In that Synod has no AIC and the moderator you elect has little authority between meetings, the Business of Synod Committee is my go-to board for answers and direction. As such, I am seeking to implement their own counsel and standards for you. We are getting better at this, but report authors should aim to deliver reports to me on time, according to general editing standards found in the *2021 Synod Sample Report* document. Especially important as you (*yes, you!*) ask Synod to be *efficient and effective*, please restrict your **recommendations** to real actions you are asking the full Synod to take. That is, put all counsel to the Nominating and the Finance committees, and to prayer warriors, in their own paragraphs. Do not put such counsel in recommendations. I have started to do some individual coaching and light editing to bring all of us closer to this ideal ... and I know you love me all the more for this *ministry of helps* (signed, *Your Mother*)!

In addition, it is a great help to me (and to Crown & Covenant servants who turn all of your reports into one very large book for storage and publication) to receive your report in some common word processing format instead of as a PDF. Letting me turn your report into a PDF also allows me to apply Synod's footers and page numbering. Thanks for this kindness.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the order of business and the hours of meeting stated in the Docket be accepted as The Agenda for this meeting of Synod.
2. That those servants to be elected to fill the vacancies on Synod's boards and permanent committees be referred to the Nominating Committee.
3. That all presbyteries requesting extra meeting times during this meeting of the Synod be granted that permission (with the encouragement to minimize those hours!).
4. That all ministers requesting excused absences from all our meetings be granted that.

*Respectfully submitted, John M. McFarland (Clerk)*

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Mr. Brian Coombs—chairman *pro tem*—presented the Report of the Business of Synod Committee (BOSC) on Communications. In turn, the five recommendations were taken up:

**BOSC Recommendation 1 on Communications:** that a 5-man judicial committee of the day be appointed to address these communications, bringing counsel on Wednesday: Communication #20-03: GLG—LeFebvre, Faris Complaint vs. GLG; Communication #20-04: GLG—LeFebvre, Olivetti Complaint vs. GLG; Communication #20-05: GLG—LeFebvre, Anderson et al Complaint vs. GLG; Communication #20-09: GLG—LeFebvre, Manning Complaint vs. GLG; Communication #21-14: GLG—LeFebvre, Parties Interacting. A motion

to divide was granted. On #20-03, YES (and so this communication is given to the judicial committee of the day). On #20-04, YES. On #20-05, after discussion the moderator ruled this communication is a petition, not a complaint, thus is out of order. This ruling was challenged by a member of the Court; Synod sustained the challenge against the moderator's ruling. So on #20-05, YES. On #20-09, YES. On #21-14, a point of order was made claiming this complaint is improper; the moderator ruled against this point of order and his overrule was upheld by standing vote (92 to 32). Another point of order was raised claiming this communication is out of order and should be returned to its authors; the moderator ruled against the point of order, and then this was challenged. Synod upheld the moderator's ruling by standing vote (69 to 57), so it is back before us; Jon Hughes asked that his dissent be recorded. On #21-14, YES, and so all five of these communications are given to this judicial committee of the day.

*BOSC Recommendation 2 on Communications:* that a 5-man judicial committee of the day be appointed to address these communications, bringing counsel on Wednesday: Communication #21-16: GLG—Immanuel, Redacted Complaint vs. GLG by Faris+; Communication #21-17: GLG—Immanuel, Complaint vs. GLG by Immanuel members; Communication #21-18: GLG—Immanuel, Complaint vs. GLG by Soldatis. A point of order was made that Communications #21-17 and #21-18 are not properly before us, but then the Court voted that we would take them up by special resolution. BOSC Recommendation 2 passed.

*BOSC Recommendation 3 on Communications:* that a 5-man judicial committee of the day be appointed to address this communication, bringing counsel on Wednesday: Communication #21-12: Pacific Coast Presbytery—Edmonton. This recommendation passed.

*BOSC Recommendation 4 on Communications:* that a five-man study committee be appointed to meet through the coming year, bringing counsel and recommendations to the Synod of 2022, giving specific attention to clarity and consistency in the ways these varied communications seek to modify the *RPCNA Constitution* and/or Synod practice: Communication #20-01: Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery—DCG Changes; Communication #20-06: Midwest Presbytery—Vows and Queries; Communication #20-07: Presbytery of Alleghenies—Irregular Calls; Communication #20-08: St. Lawrence Presbytery—Form 2A; Communication #21-19: Atlantic Presbytery—Synod Employee Salaries. It was asked that #20-06 be divided or separated out; granted. By vote, the other four were given to this study committee. It was moved to lay action on #20-06 on the table to entertain a substitute—that this lone communication be given to its own five-man study committee to



report in 2022. The motion to lay on the table passed by voice vote, and then this motion *passed*: that Communication #20-06 be referred to a five-man study committee appointed by the moderator to report back to next year's Synod with a summary of the Scriptural and theological *rationale* for the *existing* vocabulary in our *Constitution* with respect to vows of baptism and communicant membership, and with a *recommendation* regarding the changes proposed in Communication #20-06.

*BOSC Recommendation 5 on Communications*: that each of these communications (below) be taken up by *this* Court (of 2021), in the order set in the List-A agenda, understanding Communications #20-02 and #21-11 pertaining to the Japan Presbytery's perspectives on mission(s) principles be treated together. We expect that an author or one representative from the relevant presbytery will be prepared to lead in each consideration: Communication #20-02: Japan Presbytery—Mission Principles; Communication #21-11: Japan Presbytery—GMB Missions Manual; Communication #21-10: St. Lawrence—Canada RPC Formation Special Resolution; Communication #21-13: Atlantic Presbytery—Divorce and Desertion; Communication #21-15: Great Lakes/Gulf—Smith and Atlanta TGB on Creation. This recommendation passed.

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## Business of Synod Committee

### Report on Communications to 2021 Synod

**DCG 7.14** orders receipt and handling of communications, specifying: *"All such communications shall be directed to the Committee on the Business of Synod no less than thirty days before the meeting of the Synod. No paper shall be brought directly to Synod except those which are presented as a challenge to the recommendation of the Committee on the Business of Synod. Exception may be granted by 2/3 vote of the Synod."* Our current process for handling these communications entails making them available to delegates several weeks before each Synod, recommending disposition of each, and asking Synod delegates to vote on those recommendations during Synod's opening session. For 2020-2021 (no Synod in 2020!), **nineteen** communications were received by the clerk and this Committee in time for treatment by the 2021 Synod.

Let us be frank (and earnest): Nineteen communications *cannot* be adequately addressed one at a time during an abbreviated Synod, with one full day less than our ideal. The Synod is called by God to do our best, within parameters of our limited resources (time, wisdom, stamina, etc.), trusting God to overwhelm *our* weaknesses under *His* super-abundant mercy. Then we will commit to work out godly solutions through diligent follow-through in all of these challenges.

Though we clearly disagree on much, maybe we can concur: “*Enough words have been written.*” Hoping the colors (**bold**, *italic*, **bold italic**, **gray**) come through in the PDF, please notice the commonalities and groupings:

- **Communication #20-01: Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery—DCG Changes**
- Communication #20-02: Japan Presbytery—Mission Principles
- *Communication #20-03: GLG—LeFebvre, Faris Complaint vs. GLG*
- *Communication #20-04: GLG—LeFebvre, Olivetti Complaint vs. GLG*
- *Communication #20-05: GLG—LeFebvre, Anderson et al Complaint vs. GLG*
- **Communication #20-06: Midwest Presbytery—Vows and Queries**
- **Communication #20-07: Presbytery of Alleghenies—Irregular Calls**
- **Communication #20-08: St. Lawrence Presbytery—Form 2A**
- *Communication #20-09: GLG—LeFebvre, Manning Complaint vs. GLG*
- Communication #21-10: St. Lawrence—Canada RPC Formation Special Resolution
- Communications #21-11: Japan Presbytery—GMB Missions Manual
- **Communication #21-12: Pacific Coast Presbytery—Edmonton**
- Communication #21-13: Atlantic Presbytery—Divorce and Desertion
- *Communication #21-14: GLG—LeFebvre, Parties Interacting*
- Communication #21-15: GLG—Smith and Atlanta TGB on Creation
- **Communication #21-16: GLG—Immanuel, Redacted Complaint vs. GLG by Faris+**
- **Communication #21-17: GLG—Immanuel, Complaint vs. GLG by Immanuel members**
- **Communication #21-18: GLG—Immanuel, Complaint vs. GLG by Soldatis**
- **Communication #21-19: Atlantic Presbytery—Synod Employee Salaries**

It is our general proposal that we (Synod) make use of three “judicial committees of the day” during this meeting, tasking these committees (of five) to utilize (especially) Tuesday as a study and preparation day, bringing recommendations to the full Court on Wednesday. They are free to bring any counsel (of course), from ‘return this communication to its authors—but not that one’ to creation of a judicial *commission* assigned to complete its work by mid-October, to boldly asking THIS Synod to do its best (in 1-2 hrs.) to respond to the communications’ varied appeals. This general strategy gives shape to these—our specific recommendations to you—to address when we meet together on Monday evening. If the “judicial committee of the day” concept does meet with Synod majority approval, we (BOSC) will assist the new moderator in appointing men to these *committees*, inviting them to depart immediately (Monday night—surely Tuesday) to confer, research, pray, and prepare specific counsel

and recommendations for us on Wednesday.

The Court should understand that, given the pastoral sensitivity of some of these controversies, there may be additional documents for these judicial committees to study, to be made available to them by the clerk (documents NOT available to all delegates and elders in the online folder). That said, it is BOSCS understanding that these judicial committees, and (perhaps) Synod itself, are to consider only what has been written and made available to us as of one month ago. We are NOT tasking THESE committees of the day to hear witnesses, try cases, sit as juries, etc.

**BOSC Recommendation 1 on Communications:** that a five-man judicial committee of the day be appointed to address these communications, bringing counsel on Wednesday:

- Communication #20-03: GLG—LeFebvre, Faris Complaint vs. GLG
- Communication #20-04: GLG—LeFebvre, Olivetti Complaint vs. GLG
- Communication #20-05: GLG—LeFebvre, Anderson et al Complaint vs. GLG
- Communication #20-09: GLG—LeFebvre, Manring Complaint vs. GLG
- Communication #21-14: GLG—LeFebvre, Parties Interacting

**BOSC Recommendation 2 on Communications:** that a five-man *judicial committee of the day* be appointed to address these communications, bringing counsel on Wednesday:

- Communication #21-16: GLG—Immanuel, Redacted Complaint vs. GLG by Faris +
- Communication #21-17: GLG—Immanuel, Complaint vs. GLG by Immanuel members
- Communication #21-18: GLG—Immanuel, Complaint vs. GLG by Soldatis

**BOSC Recommendation 3 on Communications:** that a five-man *judicial committee of the day* be appointed to address this communication, bringing counsel on Wednesday:

- Communication #21-12: Pacific Coast Presbytery—Edmonton

**BOSC Recommendation 4 on Communications:** that a five-man study committee be appointed to meet through the coming year, bringing counsel and recommendations to the Synod of 2022, giving specific attention to clarity and consistency in the ways these varied communications seek to modify the *RPCNA Constitution* and/or Synod practice.

- Communication #20-01: Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery—DCG Changes
- Communication #20-06: Midwest Presbytery—Vows and Queries
- Communication #20-07: Presbytery of Alleghenies—Irregular Calls
- Communication #20-08: St. Lawrence Presbytery—Form 2A
- Communication #21-19: Atlantic Presbytery—Synod Employee Salaries

**BOSC Recommendation 5 on Communications:** that each of these communications (below) be taken up by *this* Court (of 2021), in the order set in the List-A Agenda, with the understanding that Communications #20-02 and #21-11, pertaining to Japan Presbytery’s perspectives on mission(s) principles, be treated together. We expect that an author or one representative from the relevant presbytery will be prepared to lead in each consideration.

- Communication #20-02: Japan Presbytery—Mission Principles
- Communications #21-11: Japan Presbytery—GMB Missions Manual
- Communication #21-10: St. Lawrence —Canada RPC Formation Special Resolution
- Communication #21-13: Atlantic Presbytery—Divorce and Desertion
- Communication #21-15: Great Lakes/Gulf—Smith & Atlanta TGB on Creation

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Chairman Joel Wood (2020)*

*Brian Coombs (2020)*

*Lucas Hanna (2021)*

*Don Reed (2021)*

*Herb McCracken (2022)*

*Dennis Olson (2022)*

***servicing ex-officio:***

*John McFarland (Clerk), Andy McCracken and J. B. Martin (Mod.)*

Then the Court considered the following reports which did not have *recommendations*: all of the presbytery reports (Alleghenies, Atlantic, Great Lakes/Gulf, Japan, Midwest, Pacific Coast, St. Lawrence), Education & Publication Board, Home Mission Board, Graduate Study Committee, Interchurch Committee, International Conference Advisory Committee, Representatives to the P&R Chaplains, Youth Ministries Committee, the Stated Clerk, and Study Committee on Synod Action Authority. All of these reports were received (moved, seconded, carried). Delegates were encouraged to study these and ask their questions of the authors, presbyteries, and committees; these servants also may have opportunity later this week to highlight progress, needs, and opportunities before them.

## **Report of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies to the Synod of 2021**

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; He*

*utters His voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah.* (Psalm 46:1-7)

All around we see the nations totter. Our culture is chaotic and confused. The Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA) gives thanks for the faithfulness of our God and for the fact that He has promised to “never leave us nor forsake us.” He is, as the Psalmist declares, “with us.” 2020 has been a difficult year, for all of us, yet as we look back, we see His providential care for us. The fields are “white for harvest” and we live in a time of opportunity. The LORD Jesus has promised to care for and build His church, and we find Him doing so in our midst.

In addition to the Teaching Elders currently serving in settled pastorates and the Ruling Elders who serve our congregations faithfully, we have a number of Teaching Elders on our rolls in the following capacities: fourteen that are retired (one who serves as our Regional Home Missionary); nine that are without charges (one of whom serves as Director of Admissions and Student Services at RPTS); and five that are servants of the church (one who serves as RPGM missionary to South Sudan; one who serves at Geneva College and three who serve as professors at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary [RPTS]).

Since Synod of 2019 (where we held a short meeting), the Presbytery of the Alleghenies has met three times: (1) Nov. 8-9, 2019; Eastvale. (2) March 26-27, 2020; North Hills. (3) Nov. 13-14, 2020; Covenant Fellowship.

The Presbytery of the Alleghenies now has sixteen organized congregations, all of which have settled pastors except Covenant Aurora. First Reformed in Beaver Falls has called Matt Filbert to serve as senior pastor to replace Lucas Hanna who took up the call to serve in South Sudan in January 2020. After several years with a vacant pulpit, we rejoiced in the ordination and installation of Trace Turner as pastor of the Grace (State College) RPC. After considerable discussion and prayer, the session of the College Hill Reformed Presbyterian Church successfully led the congregation in the process of becoming two separate congregations. We rejoiced again in October when the Hope Community Reformed Presbyterian Church was organized. The presbytery has three mission churches:

1. Grace & Truth in Harrisonburg, Virginia; the TGB consists of: Ryan Bever, (moderator/“stated supply”), Paul Martin, David Merkel, and Tom Reid.
2. Birmingham Reformed Presbyterian Mission Church; the TGB consists of Paul Martin (moderator), Bruce Backensto, Brian Panichelle, and Mark Sampson.
3. Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Lo Prado in Santiago/Batuco, Chile; the TGB consists of Marcello Sanchez, Steve Bradley, and Mark England.

Matt Filbert is our moderator and Martin Blocki is our clerk with Titus Martin serving as assistant clerk. The Covenant Fellowship Session functions as the Ad Interim Commission.

There were no Presbytery youth retreats this past year due to the pandemic. Will and Sarah McChesney continue to serve as Youth Coordinators; we are thankful for their years of faithful service. This summer, the Laurelville Family camp will again take a “year off” due to the tentative plans to hold the RP International Conference originally scheduled for the summer of 2020. Joel and Tabitha Ward continue to serve as camp directors.

Currently the POA has thirteen men under care: Matthew Bates, H.B., Keith Dewell, F.D., Joe Dunlap, Jordan Feagley, Robert Kelbe, Mike Labutta, Martin Monteith, Charles Oles, Joshua Smith, Jason Thoman, and David Witmer. F.D. is currently serving the Little Rock Chinese Christian Church under the auspices of Ambassadors for Christ. S.D. is another man we are administering exams to on behalf our brethren in the EA churches (he is technically not “under care”); F.D. and S.D. are listed by initials for security purposes. P.Z., Keith Dewell, and Jason Thoman were all licensed to preach in 2020. P.Z. has completed seminary and has returned to EA to finish his examinations in a presbytery there. Edgar Ibarra was licensed to receive a call; we rejoice that he was subsequently called to serve in Las Vegas. Caleb Allen was called to serve in Denison, Kansas.

As noted in our past reports, due to our proximity to the seminary, we often find that our time is dominated by the need to conduct student examinations. Our Candidates Committee has led us in ways to streamline the process and we continue to work at making improvements, while guarding the integrity of the examination process. The Candidates Committee has continued work on the development of a written exam for the first level test in Systematic Theology and Distinctive Principles. Changes in the testing of Mandarin speaking students have been implemented. The Candidates Committee has continued to refine our manual for students under care and at the November 2020 meeting of presbytery, a process for collecting and distributing student evaluations from the Candidates Committee and the student’s local session, in addition to the standard seminary letters of progress, was adopted by the Presbytery.

Paul Martin continues to serve as our Regional Home Missionary. Mr. Martin serves on the TGB for our Mission Church (Grace & Truth) in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He continues to work with the Mission Church in Birmingham, Alabama and is meeting monthly with a third group in Richmond, Virginia. He continues to seek to develop a number of other contacts in the southeastern states. Due to Mr. Martin’s reaching his seventies, we are praying for the Lord to provide his replacement as Regional Home Missionary.

We are thankful to report that by God’s mercy, the generosity of God’s people, and the wisdom of our standing finance committee, we continue to maintain a financially stable position.

The work of the committee to consider how our churches should respond

to PA Act 153 concluded at the Fall meeting with the adoption of the following three motions:

1. That the POA reaffirm the position that “the State is not granted the authority by Scripture to determine who may be called, elected, and installed as officers of any congregation.”
2. “That the POA recommend that congregations within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania comply with the Commonwealth code to the extent of obtaining the required clearances for any volunteers or elected officers of the congregation who may be serving in a position involving direct contact with children.”
3. “That the final decision regarding the qualification for the service of any person covered by Recommendation #2 in the ministry of a congregation be left to the decision and direction of the session of that congregation.”

Desiring to give careful guidance to the people of God under our care related to cultural issues, at our Spring 2020 meeting the Presbytery erected a five-man study committee to examine the Black Lives Matter organization and give pastoral counsel to our churches. The paper was completed by the fall meeting and subsequently approved for distribution. We commend the paper to the attention of the Synod; copies can be obtained by contacting our clerk.

In the opening paragraph it was stated that: “The Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA) gives thanks for the faithfulness of our God and for the fact He has promised to ‘never leave us nor forsake us.’” It is fitting that as a Presbytery we close this portion of our report to Synod by humbly acknowledging the mercy of God and His goodness to us. As we said at the end of last year’s report: “We are excited and grateful to be serving Christ in the context of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies and trust that He will be pleased to continue to use us, as He builds His church.”

Individual congregational summaries as submitted by respective clerks of session follow:

**Birmingham Mission Church.** The Mission Congregation in the Metro area of Birmingham Alabama, continues on a steady path. Paul Martin visits there each month for about ten days and usually preaches at the worship services during that time. We have 17 communicant members and eight baptized members in the congregation. We meet in an office complex which is in Hoover. Rent is charged at \$9 an hour when we use the air conditioning on the days that we are together. We have a Lord’s Day evening evangelistic Bible Study in the home of Richard and Michelle Moeck for men and women who are in some manner related to the Moeck’s work with a call for men. Herb Bowsher, an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church in America but also a member of

the Birmingham/Hoover RPCNA congregation, preaches on the Sabbaths Paul is not there. We stream our worship and Lord's Day Bible classes so members of the TGB are able to listen in on the services. We are having other RPCNA pastors preach so the congregation can become more acquainted with the denomination. We are overseen by a TGB made up of Bruce Backensto, a retired teaching elder; Brian Panichelle, a ruling elder and presbytery's representative to the Synod's Board of Home Missions; and Mark Sampson, a ruling elder who is Director of Institutional Development at RPTS.

**College Hill.** In the midst of a difficult year, we are thankful for the continued blessings of the Lord. On October 9, 2020, a Commission of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies consummated our plan to see two sister congregations emerge out of what had been College Hill Reformed Presbyterian Church (CHRPC). Hope Community Reformed Presbyterian Church was formed from members and officers of CHRPC and occupies the church building at 3400 Fifth Avenue; Beaver Falls, PA. The name of the 125-year-old CHRPC congregation was changed to College Hill Reformed Church (CHRC) and will continue in the old stone building in the midst of Geneva's campus. The year 2020 brought many disruptions to regular activities due to COVID-19, but the two congregations are gradually returning to regular activities as restrictions are lifted. The Lord has allowed our congregation to continue to grow through the pandemic and the session recently unveiled a vision for ministry to College Hill and the region, which we hope will help focus our ministry in the years to come. We have two morning worship services and one evening service and we anticipate being back outside for worship in the summer of 2021. As we emerge from a period of restrictions, we are eager to return to regular patterns of study, prayer, fellowship, and outreach, as the Lord wills.

**Covenant Meadville.** Nothing submitted.

**Covenant Aurora** RPC (Aurora, Ohio) continues to minister in northeast Ohio. We are still fervent for the things of God and the supremacy of the Word in worship. The brethren here love the Word. God's people find joy in being with one another, both on the Lord's Day and throughout the week. Our financial position is low but stable. We are keeping our eyes peeled for a man interested in a part-time or bi-vocational situation. We pray that visitors will come, membership will grow, and we can again have a resident teaching elder. Please join with us in these prayers.

**Covenant Fellowship.** We are profoundly grateful to our Lord for providing for us through a challenging year. Net membership increased by nine persons, most notably with younger families and experienced couples. After years of praying for more ordained leaders, God kindly answered, and we elected and installed two ruling elders and three deacons. Giving has increased such that we are able to contribute more outside the congregation and to improve main-



tenance on our old building. By God's mercy we were able to keep our large auditorium open for worship throughout the pandemic, albeit at times with the large majority of our worshipers joining via livestream. One of our ministries, Wilkinsburg Christian Housing, resolved a years-long tax issue with one of the properties it had purchased to renovate and is now poised to re-focus on its mission of improving blighted properties in this under-resourced borough.

**Eastvale.** Our Lord has continued to mercifully protect Eastvale congregation, as we have tried to navigate the proper balance between a proper continuance of the public worship of God (Heb. 10:25) and living among our neighbors so as to not give unnecessary offense (Romans 12:18; 1 Peter 2:13-17). So far, the few members of the congregation that have tested positive for COVID-19 have suffered only manageable symptoms and have fully recovered. At times the congregation temporarily suspended meeting together as a result of these positive tests. Each week, whether we have been meeting together or not, worship services have been livestreamed via Facebook. Members of the congregation who are particularly susceptible to the worst effects of COVID-19 infection have been encouraged to stay home and participate via the livestream. This year we look forward to the return of Nick and Theresa Bloom, who, along with their children, have served as missionaries to Middle Eastern immigrants in Germany for the past several years.

**First RP, Beaver Falls.** As was the case in 2020 for all the RP Churches, First RP encountered a number of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From mid-March through mid-June, all of our worship services were conducted online exclusively via RingCentral. From mid-June on we offered both live worship at the church building and online for those concerned about attending live or unable to. In addition to our usual February congregational meeting, we held two additional constituted court congregational meetings for the purpose of electing a new Senior Pastor. Matt Filbert was elected during the second meeting, and he began his official duties in August. The pandemic, in addition to affecting our worship, also forced us to curtail all other activities (such as Sabbath School, VBS, Kids Quest, and any social activities). We celebrated the Lord's Supper a total of 6 times during the year. At the end of the year, we had 71 communicant members and 33 baptized members, for a total of 104. Our morning worship services, both live and online, were attended by an average of 74, and 41 in the evening services.

**Grace & Truth Mission Church (Harrisonburg, VA).** By God's mercy, Grace & Truth Mission Church continues to minister in Harrisonburg, VA. We are thankful for the ways in which God has blessed the work here and is using the body to advance His kingdom in this area. We've seen steady growth in the congregation, both spiritually and numerically. God appears to be strengthen-

ing the bonds of fellowship and continues to bless the preaching of His Word to the people. Please pray for continued growth, for a building we can use more suitable to our needs, and for us to be able to organize sometime in the near future.

**Grace (Gibsonia).** Grace (Gibsonia) continues to be blessed with faithful preaching, warm fellowship, and steady growth. In addition to making various adjustments over the last year as a result of COVID-19, we paid off the remainder of our mortgage, elected and installed Mark Sampson as a ruling elder, appointed a new treasurer (Glenn Graner), continued work to establish a diaconate, hired an administrative assistant, and developed more meaningful ways to work with interns and students under care. A formal building committee has been appointed by the session and has worked with the architect to develop a preliminary building plan. They are currently working toward finalizing the building plan. The session works to provide spiritual support and guidance for all members of the congregation within our range of types and sizes of households. Beyond the Lord's Day, which is the primary focus of ministry, members and adherents enjoy various Bible studies and prayer meeting throughout the week. We encourage members of the congregation to serve the Lord and His church in regular, purposeful ministry work to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Grace (State College).** Grace Presbyterian Church in State College, Pa., has enjoyed God's rich blessings in 2020 despite the pandemic. The congregation made a call to Trace Turner in April to be their teaching elder. Mr. Turner had not yet graduated from RPTS, nor was he yet licensed to receive a call by Pacific Coast Presbytery under whose care he was, as a candidate for gospel ministry. Upon graduation and being certified eligible to receive a call, he indicated his willingness to accept the call. The POA examined him for ordination on June 19-20, 2020. He passed his exams and was ordained and installed on August 22, 2020. Rev. Bruce Backensto was the interim moderator for fifty months and was thanked warmly by the congregation on the last Lord's Day he served as the interim moderator, Nov. 15, 2020. The congregation has enjoyed two morning worship services each Lord's Day since September so those who desire masks only are able to worship at 9:00 a.m. and those who do not worship at 10:45 a.m. While this certainly is not ideal, we desire everyone to be able to worship on the Lord's Day to partake in the means of grace. Thus, these multiple services have allowed everyone to participate and enjoy in-person worship. We also have a 5:00 p.m. worship service. Additionally, we are looking forward to beginning classes on the Lord's Day in the spring of 2021, D.V. We are thankful for Rev. Sam McCracken's two months of preaching for us in June and July in anticipation of Rev. Trace Turner being installed in August. We are thankful for

the faithful shepherding carried out by our four ruling elders in the absence of an installed teaching elder. We are also grateful for all the work that our two deacons do—often behind the scenes. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

**Hope Community.** On October 9, 2020 Hope Community RPC was organized as a new congregation by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies. The new congregation was formed out of those who were previously worshipping at the Fifth Avenue building of College Hill RPC and consists of 104 communicant and 35 baptized members. Pastor George Gregory, who had served as co-pastor at College Hill RPC, was called and installed as our first pastor. Six ruling elders and four deacons, all of whom were serving at College Hill RPC, were elected and installed into these same offices at HCRPC. We are grateful to the Lord for His mercy in protecting us during the coronavirus pandemic and in guiding our return to in-person worship. Attendance at morning worship services has returned to pre-pandemic levels at about 110.

**Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Lo Prado.** Nothing submitted.

**Manchester.** The Lord blessed us in many ways during a period of unexpected challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions led to disruption of many of our usual gatherings. We did not meet in-person from mid-March through mid-May, 2020. But we were able to livestream the service during that time and we continue to do so. The worship service livestream brought many visitors watching from their homes and several in-person visitors as well. We were thankful that the Lord brought these opportunities out of a difficult situation. We celebrated the Lord's Supper monthly (with the exception of three months during the pandemic). Our Bible studies continued and several gained new participants from the community. Pastoral visitation and counseling continued. We had fellowship opportunities, although these were reduced, and in some cases creatively changed during the pandemic. We rejoiced in evidence of spiritual growth the Lord brought through all the challenges His providence brought our way. We are thankful for the Lord's blessings.

**North Hills.** God has richly blessed the North Hills congregation! We continue to experience a small measure of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Worship is heard in two languages each Sabbath morning as our Mandarin-speaking brothers and sisters worship at one end of the building and the English-speaking portion of the congregation (which includes a number of different nationalities itself) worships on the other—a foretaste of heaven! The Session has recently introduced a set of "commitment statements" derived from our RPCNA Covenant of Communicant Membership. The purpose is to bring to mind the obligations of Covenant membership, leading to practical daily application. Pastor Metzger, with Session's approval, recently created a *Church Ministry Handbook*

designed to assist members in recognizing the opportunities for serving the LORD that exist within our congregation, and how they might use their gifts, talents, and passions in the context of the local church. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the congregation's Outreach Committee recently initiated a program entitled *Hope4HeavyHearts*. The program utilizes a variety of materials, some produced by the *Christian Counseling Educational Foundation* and some by members of the church, and invites our neighbors to access this material online. The materials cover a wide variety of topics, such as finding hope or joy and issues such as how to deal with fear, guilt, anger, or depression. The program also provides opportunity for direct discussion, discipleship, and counseling for those who wish to engage the material further. In February approximately 1,300 door-hangers were distributed to neighborhoods close to the church and to friends, co-workers, and neighbors of our congregants. The first presentation took place as this ministry summary was being written. We are excited and encouraged by the growth and participation in our discipleship teams, Bible studies, and other small group ministries. The Lord has also given us cause for rejoicing by giving us many opportunities to share the gospel in the past year.

**Providence.** Providence RPC is thankful for another year of the Lord's blessings and provision, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We praise God for sparing our congregation from suffering any deaths from the virus. We are also thankful that even though our worship and fellowship was impacted for several weeks, the overall inconvenience was relatively short-lived. One of the side benefits from it all is that we now have a much stronger online presence as we livestream our services each Lord's Day for those unable to attend in person. We are thankful for the growth we have been experiencing over the last couple of years. We have a good number of adherents who are making their way toward membership with us. We're also thankful for the Lord's gracious blessing of covenant children—we have no shortage of little ones in the flock. The sound of babies in our services is something we are very thankful to hear. As we think about the gift of life, we are reminded that the Lord not only gives, but He also takes away. Last year, the Lord took Frank Williams (father to Pastor C.J. and Elder Mike) out of this world and into His glorious presence. We also lost three ruling elders: Elder Mark Brown moved to minister to the saints in Selma, Ala.; Elder Caleb Allen was called to pastor in Denison, Kan.; Elder Mike Williams also resigned. As for the preaching and teaching ministry, last year Pastor Williams preached through the Books of Lamentations and Micah. Pastor Bradley preached up to Romans 8 and then transitioned back to Genesis which should be wrapped up early this year. Afterward, we plan to return to Romans. We have a weekly fellowship lunch and we observe the Lord's

Supper twice a month during our afternoon service and have Sabbath School twice a month on the alternate Lord's Days during that same hour. We also offer two midweek studies in the homes of each of our pastors. Pastor Williams has been leading an evangelistic study in his home with the hope that this study will aid in church planting in Clairton, Pa., where he and a couple other families live. Pastor Bradley has been leading a study through the Heidelberg Catechism. Both studies include sharing a meal and spending time in prayer. Pastor Williams is currently on sabbatical from RPTS and is using the time to write, with hopes of publishing a book on Lamentations.

**Rimersburg.** The Rimersburg RPC is an aging congregation made up of 18 members with an average attendance of eight. During the COVID-19 pandemic Pastor Monger and Elder Douthett have kept in close touch with the members, seeing the congregation has not been able to meet together for worship since the end of November 2020. Due to a lack of technology, the congregation has been unable to meet virtually. Weekly, Pastor Monger calls each member and mails them a devotional. Pray that the Lord will add to His church in Clarion County with better spiritual, physical, numerical, and financial growth. Pray also for Pastor Monger and his wife, Donna, as they lost their part-time jobs to the pandemic. Give thanks to God that the congregation remains faithful to Him and to one another.

**Rose Point.** Rose Point responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by suspending in-person services for eight weeks (from March 22 through May 10 of 2020). Morning worship resumed on May 17, while the evening service restarted on September 6. Attendance gradually increased during the year as virus concerns waned, but several members were unable to return to worship for health reasons. The fellowship remained united through the pandemic, and the Lord even added new members and visitors. The congregation provided special care for the pastor's family as they lost an infant daughter on July 7.

**Trinity.** We never realized how great a blessing from God we had in the backyard of our property until we had to use it for the majority of our worship services in 2020. By the grace of our Lord, we managed to make it through 2020 unified, amid quiet and polite disagreement over how to manage through the pandemic. Please pray for the Lord to bless us amid tightness in our budget and a desire to reduce our debt load. Also pray for as we move to elect more officers to aid us in our ministry.

**Tusca.** The Tusca Congregation, like most others, has found this past year to be filled with challenges that have seen a variety of responses from our members and friends. Aside from a two-month period last spring, we have held worship services, and these now have four means of availability—attendance in the sanctuary, via closed caption TV in the fellowship hall, via FM radio in

our now-enlarged parking lot, and by recording online on our congregation's website. Other activities have been considerably limited onsite, but visitations and home fellowships continue, naturally. Our session and deacon board are active, and while we have had some members remain distant over the year, we have also received new members into our fellowship.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Martin Blocki (POA Clerk)*

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### **Report of the Atlantic Presbytery to the 2021 Synod**

"O give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His mercies endure forever." In the Atlantic Presbytery we are able to testify to the blessedness of this oft-repeated exhortation and its encouragement.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought changes to our normal routine. The five states where our churches are located all had different degrees of strictures which made being hosted by a local church impossible. Our spring meetings in 2020 and 2021 have been held online and our fall 2020 meeting was held on the hilltop of White Lake Covenanter Camp. The usual camps were not held but some young people did some excellent outside-the-box thinking and provided a virtual family camp.

In December 2020, Bill Chellis was installed as pastor of the Walton Church; he is also continuing his law practice in New York State. Now only two churches remain without an installed teaching elder. The Ridgefield Park Church has called Dr. Andrew Kerr from the Irish RP Synod and he has indicated his intention to accept this call but his arrival in America has been delayed. Until his arrival, Charles Leach is the interim moderator for the Ridgefield Park Session. The Coldenham-Newburgh Church continues to be served at the Session's request by Zachary Dotson, a distance theological student at Greenville Presbyterian Seminary. Interim Moderator David Coon and Elder Mike DeSocio are serving on the session with resident elders Phillip Shafer and Ernie Johnson; other pastors join them four times annually to administer the Lord's Supper.

Mauro Silva-Krug (Trinity; Burtonsville, Maryland) preaches most weeks for a variety of churches and continues doing contract work as a translator between English and Portuguese. The Presbytery commends him to the churches for a pastoral call. Bill Edgar (Broomall), Charles Leach (Coldenham-Newburgh) and Bruce Martin (Elkins Park) are retired as much as retired Reformed Presbyterian teaching elders can be.

Our theological students are Zachary Dotson (Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; South Carolina) and Hunter Jackson (Westminster; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Both are making progress in their second-level presbytery exams.

The **Broomall Church** gives thanks for more than forty years of service by George Jackson (who is now elder emeritus) and for the addition of Elder Alex Edgar to the session. They are a relatively young session, having no one older than forty. Some members suffered from the economic turmoil surrounding the pandemic, but God has met all of their needs and more, and their church budgeted income exceeded their expectations. They are remembering presbytery's prayerful hope of future church planting and have set money aside in their budget the last two years toward future support of a new work.

The **Cambridge** congregation is thankful for God's continued provision in the past year. The Lord blessed three of our households with covenant children, and we experienced a net gain of five members. The session was able to adapt reasonably well to shepherding during a pandemic, and outdoor worship at a private home made it possible for those with health concerns to take part in public worship in the warmer months. After three years of struggles with contractors, we are hopeful that our building will become handicapped-accessible this year. One of our two deacons moved out-of-state during the pandemic, so we are praying that an election this spring will add to the ranks of our diaconate. We hope to have a public celebration of our congregation's (now) 126th anniversary in August, having postponed it last year due to the viral outbreak.

**Christ RPC** (East Providence, RI) is thankful for God's care and preservation through a difficult year. Membership dropped slightly since last year as members have moved to other regions. We said goodbye to Associate Pastor Gabriel Wingfield and his family so that he could begin serving as pastor of the Oswego, N.Y., RPC. The session has one TE and three REs, and we have a deacon board of three. We have tried to hew to state COVID-19 guidelines carefully, while encouraging heartfelt worship and fellowship. After more than two years of slow preparation by the session, the congregation unanimously adopted new bylaws in the fall. Four little boys, born or adopted in 2020, received Christian baptism. God is good.

The Lord of the harvest has richly blessed the **Coldenham-Newburgh** congregation during the year 2020. In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, worship attendance has increased noticeably (including Zoom service extension) and many major projects, including two roofs replaced and lead paint in the manse abated, were completed. Individuals and churches in the Atlantic Presbytery were very generous with donations, nearly covering expenses. The preschool that meets in the church basement has not had any classes since March and their contributions have been cut in half. Student intern Zach Dotson preached most weeks throughout the year as he continued his seminary training at Greenville Presbyterian Seminary. New elder Ernie Johnson has been helping shepherd the flock.

The **Elkins Park** congregation thanks God for continued growth during COVID-19, for intern Hunter Jackson and family, for new contacts with Westminster Seminary students, and for a good spirit of unity and cooperation in the congregation.

Despite being in one of the nation's earliest and most draconian lockdown zones, **Hazleton** (PA) congregation was basically back to normal by the end of April 2020. Members were allowed to decide their own health considerations, and only the highest risk household livestreamed. Ministry and outreach expanded, and the Harrisburg work, which had closed in 2019, restarted (now Lebanon, Pennsylvania) with additional worshipers from local shut-down churches. The Lord kept us safe and expanded the ministry as we prioritized worship.

The **Ridgefield Park** (NJ) congregation continues to minister the gospel of Christ to the New York metropolitan region. In September 2020 they made out a call to Dr. Andrew Kerr of the Knockbracken Congregation of the RPC of Ireland. In December, they rejoiced to hear that Dr. Kerr has accepted their call. They are currently working on the details of a visa application and look forward to welcoming the Kerrs sometime in 2021. They did not hold morning worship from mid-March to the end of June because of the pandemic, but they learned to worship online with other congregations in the morning, held their own evening worship on the Lord's Day, and held midweek prayer meeting via teleconferencing on Wednesdays. They are thankful to the Lord for sending the many men who have faithfully preached for them during the period without a pastor. They are also grateful for the ministry of Rev. Charles Leach as he moderates the Session.

Two events greatly encouraged the **Walton** congregation last year: First, John Cripps was ordained as a ruling elder; John was then installed at the same meeting where Bill Chellis was installed as Walton's new pastor. Bill plans to continue his full-time legal practice in Jeffersonville and reside there while taking up ministerial duties in Walton. The families of these men have already contributed greatly to the work and life of the congregation. We praise God for providing so well for us through these families!

The **White Lake** congregation is thankful for God's mercies in 2020. While our services and ministries were affected by the pandemic, it also gave us opportunity to minister in unanticipated ways like livestreaming our worship service on Facebook to many people both near and far. Our Bible studies continued online mostly. We were able to offer food and necessary household supplies through Shepherd's Pantry to meet the exponential demand in the community. We ask your prayers for our families as they train their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and our leaders as they seek and train



younger leaders for the future.

A commission consisting of two elders each from the St. Lawrence and Atlantic presbyteries oversees the spiritual direction of White Lake Covenant Camp.

Kyle and Violet Finley continue as our representatives to Synod's Youth Ministries Committee; Bob Allmond is our representative to Synod's Finance Committee; and Dr. Bonnie Weir is our representative on the Geneva College Board of Corporators.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*J. Bruce Martin, Clerk*

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## **Report of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery to 2021 Synod**

Despite an especially challenging year—both nationally and ecclesiastically—our sovereign Lord continues to sustain and strengthen the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG). Below is a list of seven notable developments, followed by a series of updates from each of our 23 ministry locations.

1. We received two new men under care: Mark Brown (Selma) and Drew Poplin (Durham), both of whom presently serve as ruling elders in their respective local congregations.
2. We licensed two men to preach the gospel: Mark Brown (Selma) and Joe Smith (Southside).
3. We ordained and/or installed four teaching elders: Andrew B. (RPGM), Ross Fearing (Sparta), Nathan Eshelman (Orlando), and Joel Hart (Columbus), filling a total of three empty pulpits.
4. We transmitted the ministerial credentials of two teaching elders out of the presbytery: H.P. McCracken (Midwest Presbytery) and Michael LeFebvre.
5. We received three new teaching elders into the GLG presbytery: Bryan Dage (OPC), Ross Fearing (Midwest Presbytery), Bill Roberts (Midwest Presbytery).
6. Three of our congregations remain vacant: Christ Church RP, Selma RPC, and Westminster RPC.
7. Our current presbytery officers are Frank Smith (moderator), Adam Kuehner (clerk), and Dale Koons (assistant clerk).

### **Local Ministry Updates**

**Atlanta RP Mission Church (Georgia).** As of May 2021, we had eleven communicants and seven non-communicants. In spring 2020, we ceased in-person meetings for seven weeks, but returned to public worship on May 10. We are now observing the sacrament of communion on a quarterly basis. On June 1, 2020, we purchased our own building; the price of \$200,000 was quite

reasonable, especially given the very strategic location, the on-going gentrification of the area, and the resultant skyrocketing of real estate prices. We are making modest modifications and renovations to the edifice. We desperately need a deacon or two—any volunteers?

**Belle Center RPC (Ohio).** The Belle Center congregation had a tremendously encouraging year in God's grace. Finances were positive, attendance was up, young people have made personal professions of faith, and we have new adherents. After fourteen years, we are in our own building without any debt. Jesus Christ has built us a building and is building his Church. Attendance is 53, an increase of 5. Membership was down by two. We lost one young family to a physically closer "broad evangelical" church. We are losing another by transfer to the Grace RPMC in Columbia, Missouri. Four baptized members have made profession; another communicants' class will start soon. We have eight adherents, all interested in possible membership. We hope to meet to call elders by the end of 2021.

**Bloomington RPC (Indiana).** Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Lord not only sustained but grew our body. We give Him all the praise. We ended the year with 193 members and were blessed to receive five new families during the year. Significant developments in our efforts to accommodate the growth of the congregation were the addition of three new deacons and the purchase of a property near to our church building. We continue to pray that the Lord will enable us to expand our facility in a way that allows us to improve our ministry. We were also privileged to have a wonderful summer intern from EA join us for the second year in a row.

**Christ Church RP (Brownsburg, Indiana).** Michael LeFebvre's resignation after nearly fifteen years of service as our pastor marked a momentous change in the life of the congregation. We expect to form a pastoral search process in 2021 and are praying steadfastly that the Lord would make His will clear in this matter. Along with many other branches of the church, we have experienced disruptions in worship services and congregational life over the course of the year, but have begun new practices such as video streaming and outdoor services on occasion. Throughout the challenges of the year, the congregation has been blessed with a steady diet of faithful preaching.

**Columbus RPC (Indiana).** The year 2020 was challenging for many reasons. The COVID-19 virus disrupted church activities and the rest of our lives. Andy McCracken, our pastor, was called to the church in Australia. Gary McNamee, a Columbus ruling elder and Louisville church-planter, was called to pastor in Columbia, Missouri. But God is faithful. God provided a new ruling elder, Dave Schisler. God richly supplied solid, encouraging, biblical preaching every week. God led the Session, Pastor Search Committee, and congregation

to elect and call Joel Hart as our new pastor. And the people of this congregation are continuing to pray for each other and serve Jesus Christ to His praise, honor, and glory.

**First RPC of Durham (North Carolina).** Faced with COVID-19, the saints at First RPC Durham increased ministry to advance Christ's gospel and minister to the brethren. During 2020, we continued Lord's Day morning worship, midweek prayer meeting, and added a Sabbath evening study as well. After nearly six years without local elders, Eric Hallfors and Drew Poplin were elected as ruling elders. Drew began laboring as pastoral intern in June 2020 and was just approved to serve in the Resident-in-Training program. The congregation is clearly maturing in both faith and life. We concluded 2020 with 43 members (35 communicant; eight baptized) and weekly attendance of 47.

**Elkhart RPC (Indiana).** ERPC praises God for His care this past coronavirus year. Morning worship has included messages from Exodus and Numbers. Evening services have included time for sermon discussion, application and prayer; bi-monthly observances of the Lord's Supper; Psalm sings; and shepherding group prayer meetings. The congregation was blessed to host Allen Blackwood as a summer intern. Small group Bible studies on Parenting, Christ's Parables, and Miracles were a blessing, as were monthly men's ("Church and State," R.C. Sproul) and women's (*Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*, E. Fitzpatrick) studies. Three new deacons were installed with two stepping down. Pray for God to save and sanctify through the ministry of His Word.

**First RPC of Grand Rapids (Michigan).** The Lord was very gracious to our congregation in 2020. He provided for us in a number of ways. In January the congregation elected Jake Schwartz as ruling elder; he was ordained and installed in February. Church membership increased, including two new members who were converted within a year prior to joining First RP. It was a delight to have our first adult baptism. We met our budget for the first time in many years. Hunger for the Word, experimental religion, holiness, and conversion of soul are growing each year.

**Hetherton RPC (Michigan).** We've received many blessings from the Lord, both from the children and spiritually from the Scriptures. We have developed a love and concern for each other during our fellowship times. Yes—there have been challenges; some with compromised health and not attending; and a family moving because of work. Thus attendance dropped greatly with five to six worshipping regularly. Still, we have had many visitors worship with us. All our financial obligations are paid. Some members helped to pay for special needs such as the septic bed renewal. The Lord continues to bless us.

**Immanuel RPC (West Lafayette, Indiana).** For Immanuel RPC, 2020 was a year of great blessing and great challenges. Since September 2019, we added

72 new members, thirty baptisms, and nine babies. The Lord provided us a building in a prime West Lafayette location; major renovations have started. A Bible-believing Lutheran congregation bought our old property. Four deacons were ordained and installed; two resigned. Sabbath worship services have been held continuously, in various formats, during the pandemic response. Pastor and elders were very active in presbytery ministries. A difficult discipline case is the subject of Presbytery actions; currently four provisional elders are serving with some local elders.

**Louisville RP Fellowship—Preaching Station (Kentucky).** Tre Cranford continues to provide preaching to a gathering of 25-30 souls. His attendance at commission meetings as an invited guest provides clarity regarding on-site developments. Several teaching elders and others licensed to preach have provided preaching support throughout the year. Financially, the work is functioning on a small budget; the Lord has continued to meet needs. May God continue to grant clarity in direction and leadership development for the faithful few gathering in Louisville.

**Marion RPC (Indiana).** The Session and the church together navigated the waters that were COVID-19. This past year has involved great testing for us as a congregation. The Session encouraged the flock to reflect on 2020 as a time in which our faith was tested, producing increased steadfastness in our lives. The Session has tried to balance the command to meet together with the command to care for one another. One of the great challenges we faced was financial uncertainty. In an attempt to show our trust in Christ, we encouraged the congregation to consider the budget shortfall as a challenge and not an obstacle. God has indeed been faithful to his saints in Marion. Not one of our needs was left unmet.

**Orlando RPC (Florida).** In 2020, our membership grew from 99 to 101 members. Four members were added by profession of faith, ten by transfer, and six by baptism. Twelve members were removed due to transfer, including our former pastor H.P. McCracken, three were transferred to Heaven, and one removed by excommunication. Ten of our members are inactive, due to proximity or mandatory isolation or infirmity. The average attendance was not recorded due to COVID-19. The congregation gives praise to the Lord for providing a new pastor, Dr. Nathan Eshelman—in record time! Installation was March 18, 2021.

**RPC of Lafayette (Indiana).** God continues to bless us at RPC of Lafayette. We are grateful to see more fellowship opportunities. The Word of God has been faithfully preached, recently through the book of Leviticus and a topical study on the Attributes of God. We are also excited to see new people added to our midst. We continue to be involved in Jail Ministry, College Ministry, and

Youth Group, among other ministries. We participate in the celebration of communion the first Sunday of each month. Our current membership statistics are: communicant—100; baptized—45. Thank you for praying for us!

**Second RPC (Indianapolis, Indiana).** Current events interrupted church life, but Pastor James Faris made good use of interruptions. From Lamentations, he noted the empty cities. From Ruth, he showed how God uses trials for larger purposes. We miss Pastor Joel Hart, who accepted a call from Columbus RPC. Dean Filson retired as an assistant to the pastors after 20 years. Ruling Elder Rich Blum put us on livestream. Sending included: the Zach Smith family to South Sudan; the “B” family to South Asia; the Aaron Murray family to RPTS. Some members have plugged into one another’s lives in new ways, including a 7 a.m. daily prayer meeting by Zoom.

**Selma RPC (Alabama).** Selma RPC has 23 communicant members, with one homegoing last year. We are led by ruling elder Mark Brown, who also serves as an intern. We meet regularly for Sabbath school and worship. We encourage our most vulnerable to stay home following our governor’s rule concerning COVID-19, but maintain contact and care for their needs. The retirement of Greg Woodson has allowed him more freedom as an elder to participate in presbyterial and church matters. We were encouraged by the Spring presbytery meeting. We are developing a new church website and reaching out to the community. Mark is meeting local pastors and community leaders and has served at the local food pantry. We are trusting in the Lord for a new future and desiring to see Him glorified in Selma.

**Southfield RPC (Michigan).** By God’s grace, we maintained public worship throughout 2020 with zero cancellations, zero infections, zero mandatory shutdowns, and many visitors. Our livestream enabled folks to worship from home as needed, while feeding hungry souls previously outside our sphere of ministry. Midweek and Sabbath meetings met via Zoom for prayer, study, catechism, and sermon discussion. This year we performed seven baptisms (2 adults, 5 children) and observed communion five times, twice in the open air. Since 2014, the Lord has greatly increased our communicant membership (26 to 44), baptized membership (8 to 18), and overall membership (34 to 62).

**Southside RPC (Indianapolis, Indiana).** The Southside Indianapolis congregation found the preaching of God’s word particularly sweet last year, undiminished by bitter providences brought by the Lord. Pastor Hanson’s exposition of Numbers showed God’s faithful provision for His church in the wilderness, and Pastor Wise’s exposition of The Book of Revelation displayed God’s glory, assuring us of ultimate reality. We were able to maintain worship services throughout the year despite the coronavirus pandemic. Adjustments

included making livestreaming of services available, splitting morning worship into two services, holding evening services outdoors when weather permitted, and hosting virtual fellowship times between the morning services.

**Sparta RPC (Illinois).** At Sparta RPC we called Ross Fearing as pastor and his ministry began in October 2020. Since then we have focused on worship, prayer, and outreach. We have regular morning and evening services with Sabbath School for children, youth, and adults. Last month we began prayer societies for men, women, and evangelism; and began intentional evangelistic outreach around the church. We are encouraged to see new and old faces in our worship once again. Our statistics are: communicant—16; baptized—10; adherents—4.

**Southwest Ohio RPC (Mason, Ohio).** Our fifth year as an organized RPC-NA church was one of extraordinary victories—even from a weak platform. It was a year of COVID-19 recovery, with only marginal growth. But God used our Cincinnati work in amazing ways, to (1) expedite 6th Commandment stand-your-ground legislation in Ohio (enabling Ohioans to defend themselves without fear of indictment), (2) to obtain a new building for our Atlanta Mission Church—virtually “paid for,” and (3) to make way for a new “college” here for University Preparation—via another purchase! All this, on top of resumption of worship in May, from COVID-19, and normal 2021 operations!

**Sycamore RPC (Kokomo, Indiana).** At Sycamore RPC, we have found ourselves continually turning to those words of comfort and faith from Psalm 11:4, “The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.” While COVID-19 risk management has brought new challenges to our ministry and fellowship, none of these have been overwhelming to our Savior who turns trials into gospel opportunities to demonstrate love for, patience with, and service to others. We have benefited greatly from God’s Word and we are tied to several local parachurch ministries serving as a bridge to the church.

**Terre Haute RPC (Indiana).** The Gospel ministry continues at Terre Haute RPC. We are active and encouraged as an organized church (as of September 2019) and we are growing in number, faith, and organization. We now have a full array of ministry teams, including Church Life (fellowship), Facilities (building and grounds), Outreach, and Missions. We gather each Lord’s Day, worshiping God in response to His grace to us in Christ, according to the instruction of His Word, and sitting together at the Table of our Lord on first Sundays each month. Our statistics follow: communicant—29; baptized—13; adherents—2. Please pray for us!

**Westminster RPC (Prairie View, Illinois).** The gospel ministry continues at Westminster RPC. Currently, Wade Mann serves as our interim moderator

and Brett Mahlen from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is serving to preach weekly and work with us on pastoral care, on a part-time basis. We gather each Lord's Day, meeting at the church and offering Zoom connection for those who either cannot or chose to not join us for worship. We have seen 3-4 people connect this way each week, worshiping and sitting together at the Table of our Lord on first Sundays each month. Our statistics follow: communicant—20; baptized—5; adherents—1.

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### **Japan Presbytery Report to the 2021 Synod**

Fathers and brothers: We are thankful for the faithfulness of our God toward His people in Japan in the past year. The Japan Presbytery (JP) consists of four congregations and one mission church in the cities of Kobe and Amagasaki in western Japan. Kobe Theological Hall (KTH) and the Covenanter Book Room (CBR) are continuing their ministries. Six pastors and four elders are leading the congregations in JP. Last fall, Mr. Yusuke Hirata was ordained as the pastor at Kasumigaoka congregation. Early this year, two ruling elders retired and we continue asking God to raise up more men to lead His flock. Last year, mainly because of COVID-19 spread, the total average worship attendance of our five churches went down from 115 to 95. Kita-Suzurandai Mission Church stopped having meetings at the end of 2020 and the Presbytery is currently seeking the Lord's guidance on Gospel work in the area, including the possibility of closing the work. Though sometimes we cannot see what our future will be, God is in control. In this trial, we find ways to work together and we still see people visiting churches and even joining our churches. Please pray that we will be continually faithful to the mission our Lord entrusted to us in Japan.

#### **Congregational Reports**

**Mukonosu RPC (Rev. Hiroyuki Kanamori):** (1) We thank God for protecting our worship services even when the coronavirus problem got worse. (2) We also thank God for establishing the work of the session after adding two elders last year. (3) Mr. Norihide Komuro, our oldest church member, passed away this January; please pray for the Lord's comfort of family and congregation. (4) Please pray for the profession of faith of covenant children. (5) Pray that we will be given wisdom to support church life of the elderly in the congregation. (6) Please pray that the Lord will guide a seeker, Mr. Nakano, who is coming to church and prayer meetings.

**Okamoto-Keiyaku RPC (Rev. Kihei Takiura and Rev. Shigeru Takiura):** (1) We thank God for protecting us in COVID-19 spread, and allowing us to continue our worship services. (2) We are thankful for the two babies born to our members. (3) Please pray for salvation of the lost souls in Japan, and that our work will be used by the Lord; also, ask God to give us wisdom for evangelism

during this unusual time. (4) Please pray for the Doyle family, beginning their new lives in Texas. (5) Pray for Mr. Takaaki Inoue, a theological student under care, who is taking presbytery exams. (6) Pray for transition of pastors' living situation.

**Kita-Suzurandai RP Mission Church (Rev. Katsunori Endo):** (1) For the JP Report to the 2020 Synod, which was canceled: Please pray for the saints of Kita-Suzurandai, as the church's declining finances have necessitated some significant adjustments in the ministry, including Pastor Katsunori Endo becoming "a tentmaker," or bi-vocational, from Spring of 2018. One of the long-time core members, Mr. Kiyoshi Okamura, is finally in the process of retirement after more than six decades of hard work as a mechanic, for whom your prayer is much appreciated. The Lord's Day services—now being held in the afternoon since January of 2019—are maintained with the help of Pastor Sumito Sakai and Pastor Hiroyuki Kanamori. (2) For the JP Report to the 2021 Synod: Please pray for the saints of Kita-Suzurandai, as the church's declining finances and membership—as well as some problems with the aging church building—have necessitated the interim session (viz. Kita-Suzurandai Commission under the Presbytery) to discontinue the regular worship on every Lord's Day at the end of December 2020. The Commission has asked the Presbytery to discuss the future of this mission church, while its remaining members have started to attend Higashisuma RPC for worship. Rev. Endo, while also working as a school teacher, serves as the JP treasurer and the interim elder and clerk for Higashisuma RPC's Session, teaches at Kobe Theological Hall, and preaches at Kasumigaoka RPC once a month while their own pastor is studying in Northern Ireland.

**Higashisuma RPC (Rev. Sumito Sakai):** (1) We praise God for Ms. Keiko Akagi joining Higashisuma church; please pray that the Lord will bless her and her church life richly. (2) We are thankful that young people are taking over the work of Sunday school classes and other church work; ask God to continually bless these youth and increase their love for the Lord and His church. Also, pray that new elders and deacons will be raised up. (3) Though the coronavirus disaster gives much difficulty, we are thankful that fellowship with members living far away increased via online options while also creating more evangelistic opportunities (Okuda family, Mr. Kazuki Sakai, and others). Also, ask God to enable us to continue neighborhood evangelistic efforts. (4) Pray for health and church attendance of the elderly; pray for those living in the nursing home (Mrs. Hagiwara and others), and also for their family. (5) We thank the Lord for blessing the health and ministry of Pastor Sakai; ask God to watch and guide him in his work for the congregation, for Kasumigaoka session, as JP moderator and KTH professor, and Japan ETS president. (6) We thank God for faithful work done by our officers these many years, and seek God's guidance to pass down



their work to younger members. Pray for young people as they form Christian homes. (7) Pray that member families will be saved, along with Mrs. Takako Nishimura. Ask God to give us more of those who seek Him, and that He will save them.

**Kasumigaoka RPC (Rev. Yusuke Hirata):** (1) Mr. Yusuke Hirata was ordained and installed as Teaching Elder (TE) of our congregation on Nov. 8, 2020. Pastor Hirata and his family moved to Belfast for his Ph.D. studies, and Rev. Shigeru Takiura and Rev. Sakai continue to serve as provisional elders in the session with Mr. Kato (RE) while Pastor Hirata is abroad. Pastors Shigeru Takiura, Sakai, and Endo are regularly preaching in our worship services while Pastor Hirata preaches once a month online. Also, Mr. Inoue, a theological student under care, preaches occasionally. Pray for the session leadership. (2) We thank God for adding several members to our congregation. Mr. Yuki Shimizu received baptism 12/20, followed by his marriage with Valerie, a member. On 9/13 Yoshikazu Hirata received infant baptism. Mr. Takeshi Yokomori (a former pastor in Japan Evangelical Church Association) and Mrs. Kieko Yokomori transferred to our congregation 03/2021. (3) We mourn the sudden death of beloved deacon Toyoki Hamada, who went to be with the Lord April 1, 2021; ask the Lord to comfort his family. Pray especially for his wife—not yet a believer—that she will open her heart to the good news in this opportunity. Pray for our other two deacons (Mrs. Kato and Mrs. Iwayama), who faithfully serve the church. (4) Pray for the elderly members who are not able to attend services regularly due to their health issues and considering COVID-19. (5) Pray for the stability and growth of new believers.

### **Ministry Reports**

**Kobe Theological Hall (KTH):** There are currently nineteen active students for this 2021 Spring semester—including 11 course students, 3 auditors, 5 credit-taking students, 7 RP, 2 RP guest members, and 10 from other evangelical denominations. Among KTH's graduates are three RP pastors (Rev. K. Endo and Rev. Kihei Takiura, who finished with their M.Div. at RPTS; and Rev. Hirata, who currently pursues his Ph.D in Belfast after RPTS and WTS), four theological students under care including two men who hold the license to preach (Elder Ohara and Mr. Yasunaga).

Five JP pastors (viz. Takiura, Sakai, Kanamori, Endo, and K. Takiura) have continued to participate in teaching responsibilities as KTH professors, and Dr. (M.D.) Hirata is a lecturer. Visiting lecturers this past year include: Dr. David Weir (Ridgefield Park RPC elder) was the only one who was able to teach twice, using Zoom, from the USA. We have Dr. Woody Lauer (OPC missionary, on New Testament Introduction and Old Testament Survey) and Dr. Tsuyoshi Kodama (a PCJ pastor who studied under Dr. Robert Letham on Systematic Theology and

Exegesis), teaching every semester from within Japan. KTH also participated in the West Japan Division of Japan's Evangelical Theological Society, also taking part in the work of a newly published Japanese Bible translation. KTH is a small seminary, but its import among Japanese reformed and evangelicals circles in terms of maintaining the faith and practice in the inspiration/inerrancy of Scripture and of witnessing our Biblical teachings about the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ (etc.) are crucially increasing, facing the recently unstable theological climate of Japanese evangelical scenes. For example, the so-called NPP and Prof. John Walton's new view. KTH participates in RPGA's Fellowship of RP Colleges.

We appreciate financial help through GMB's Japan budget for a part of KTH budget as well as transportation of a guest faculty from RPTS (etc.) annually. Three women (KTH students) assist the work of the KTH representative in the area of treasury and library.

**Covenanter Book Room (CBR)—under Synod's Trustees and directed by a Board appointed by JP:** Deacon Masahiro Harada (Chm.), Shigeru Yamaguchi, and Rev. Shigeru Takiura. (1) The Literature Division: We thank God for His continual blessing on our ministry. Though there were times we had to shorten store hours due to the coronavirus situation, thankfully our finances have been balanced. Large orders for Shinkaiyaku 2017 Bible (Japanese Bible equivalent to ESV) and also increase of sales at seminaries are contributing to the good result. We are trying to improve the quality of books we put on our shelves, including English books. Also, our new service, "The Library Corner," is successfully drawing customer attention and creating opportunities for fellowship and communication with local Christians who visit. About publishing, right now we are working on two projects and speaking with the Psalter committee to aid them in publishing a new Psalter. We are thankful for all prayers and support this past year. (2) The Mission Division: CBR mission division holds evening services in English at the Covenanter Center Building (CCB) on the first Sabbath of every month; Rev. Kihei Takiura serves as its coordinator and Mr. Rintaro Funahashi as clerk/treasurer. Okamoto-Keiyaku Session and Rev. Endo have been serving as the Sannomiya Commission under the JP. We are seeking opportunities for more active evangelism in downtown Kobe.

**The Care-Taking Committee for the Covenanter Center Building (CCB):** Four persons are appointed for the daily care for CCB: three for the management [Rev. S. Takiura (chm.), Deacon Harada (of Higashisuma RPC; vice chm./treasurer), Elder Ohara (of Mukonosu RPC)], and to take care of its guest room in the building [Deaconess Mrs. Iwayama, of Kasumigaoka RPC]. This committee works efficiently, achieving extensive improvements via wise use of its JP treasury supplied budget.

**The Psalter Committee:** Rev. S. Takiura, Rev. K. Takiura, and Mrs. Yoko Funahashi of Higashisuma RPC, are continually working in this committee. Due to COVID-19 our work was slowed, but we're soon to finish the index. We plan to publish a new revised Psalter in early 2022 through Word of Life Press, a major evangelical publishing house in Japan, hoping it will be distributed to all Japanese Christian bookstores.

*Respectfully submitted, Kihei Takiura (clerk, Japan Presbytery)*

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### **Midwest Presbytery (MWP) Report to Synod**

The Midwest Presbytery has one ministerial student under care, Mr. Nicki Imperato. We have also a certified ruling elder, Mr. Joel Wallace, for more regular occasional preaching.

We give praise to the Lord for the service of Rev. Marty Wilsey who retired in August 2020 from full-time pastoral ministry after serving the Salt & Light (Longmont) congregation, as well as Rev. Jack Baumgardner as he retired in March 2021 after serving the Clarinda, Iowa, congregation. Rev. Bob Hemphill finished his service as MWP's Regional Home Missionary in November 2020. In the past year, we also mourn the deaths of two long-term ministers of the Church—Revs. John Tweed and Gene Spear, as well as four ruling elders—Mr. Jorge Klajnbart (Springs Reformed), Mr. Bob Mann (Springs Reformed), Mr. Philip Duguid (Topeka), and Mr. Russell James (Clay Center).

We give praise that the Lord raises up pastors to shepherd His flock at the right time. Since the 2019 Synod, Romesh Prakashpalan (Dallas), H.P. McCracken (Salt & Light RP), Caleb Allen (Denison), Gary McNamee (Grace Reformed, Columbia, MO), and Sam McCracken (Tri-Lakes RP) were installed as ministers within the bounds of MWP.

Since the Synod of 2019, we have had numerous ministers resign, namely, Revs. Shane Sapp (Westminster), Mark Koller (Dallas), Dan Bartel (Minneola), Greg Stiner (Shawnee), and Joe Allyn (Trinity RP, Wichita, KS). Sadly, three of MWP's congregations were disorganized—Casper RP, Trinity RP (Wichita), and Minneola (KS) RP congregations. MWP also asks for prayer for our mission church in San Antonio, Texas, and the exploratory work in North Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. There is now also a new exploratory work in Houston, Texas.

Please pray for the continuing enfolding of these congregations into the life and ministry of the Presbytery as well as our congregations without pastors, namely, Clarinda, Shawnee, and Westminster pulpits are vacant. MWP summer conference usually held in Colorado is not taking place this year (2021), but the Iowa RP Family Camp will be August 2-6, 2021, where Pastor Daniel Drost will be speaking on "Sons and Daughters of the Most High God."

Our Kansas Conference plans this year include the annual joint worship service and Psalm Sing at Camp Curry on Sabbath morning, June 20, 2021. The next MWP youth retreat will be co-hosted by the Springs and Tri-Lakes congregations, July 9-11, 2021, where Rev. Joseph Friedly will be the speaker. These youth retreats are held quarterly.

Brethren, by our God's great kindness the Presbytery has twenty congregations and two mission churches, and two exploratory works. Six congregations were visited by Presbytery elders in 2019-2020. Jerry Milroy served as Moderator from fall 2019 through fall 2020, and Greg Stiner from fall 2020 to the present. Jason Ryce is our AIC Chairman. Joe Allyn, current Assistant Clerk, served as Clerk from fall 2019 to fall of 2020; since then Andrew Barnes is our Clerk. Shawn Stickel is our Treasurer, Mike McDaniel is our Representative to Synod's Finance Committee, and Romesh Prakashpalan is our Home Mission Board Representative.

MWP has made plans to gather at Topeka RPC, November 4-5, 2021 (Thursday-Friday). Together we give thanks and praise to our victorious King and gracious God for His work in our Presbytery!

**Bryan [Texas]: Living Way**—We continue to be thankful for the Lord's mercy poured out upon Living Way RPC. With the baptism of a covenant child this Spring we reached the milestone of 50 total members (30 communicant and 20 baptized). We were first introduced to this child's parents three years ago via our food pantry ministry; it has been a great delight to see the Lord working in their lives. In the fall we were thankful to have several Texas A&M students begin to attend worship regularly. We have had others join with us in the past year who have recently moved to the area. This includes RPs as well as other Reformed folks. Since January, we have added a few more adherents. A common thread with these folks is that they are coming from broad evangelical churches in search of the faithful preaching of God's Word. The result of these newcomers is that we now have a good blend of RPs, Reformed folks moving to the area, local evangelicals, college students, and recent converts. This provides us with many opportunities to minister, teach, and disciple as well as further strengthening the body known as Living Way RPC. For this we are most thankful as we seek to glorify the Lord in all things. Last summer we installed a new ruling elder (Mr. Kevin Dennis) and also ordained and installed our first deacon (Mr. Jaco VanderMerwe).

**Clarinda [Iowa]**—The Clarinda Iowa congregation gives thanks for the thirteen years of faithful service by Pastor Jack Baumgardner, and looks expectantly to our God to lead us into the next phase of congregational leadership following his retirement in March. Please pray for Elders Renwick Adams and Steve Falk as they guide the congregation at this time. Also pray for guidance

as the congregation seeks to responsibly return to congregational activities following the restrictions from the pandemic.

**Clay Center [Kansas]:** Hebron gives thanks to the LORD for His gracious provision during the unusual year of 2020. As we near 150 years since the organizing of this congregation in 1871, the ministry of God's Word continues to do a good work in our midst. Preaching from Genesis, Mark, and Galatians reminded us that God is faithful in all circumstances. Despite the many and frequent alterations to our practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public worship has continued and faithful tithing has met the needs of the church. We note the passing in February 2020 of deacon-emeritus Jettie Condray and in December 2020 our elder-emeritus Russell James; we thank God for the faithful service of these brothers in Christ and rejoice that they are now in glory awaiting the day of resurrection.

**Colorado Springs [Colorado]: Springs Reformed Church (SRC)**—The Springs Reformed Church (SRC) Session continues to be thankful for the blessings that the Lord has poured out upon us. We continue to see growth in numbers with 135 communicant members, 59 baptized members, and several regular adherents. Most importantly, we rejoice at the growth in grace and knowledge of Christ that the Spirit has been accomplishing among us through His means of grace. Pastor Ryce finished preaching through the book of Revelation in the morning services last September, and after a brief series of sermons focusing on the teaching of Christ, began preaching through the book of Numbers during morning worship. Nicki Imperato has been serving as an intern during the first five months of 2021 and his preaching has been well received by the congregation. After taking a hiatus during the pandemic, Pastor Ryce returned to a teaching series through the *Westminster Confession of Faith* for our adult Sabbath school classes. We observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper monthly and have baptized thirteen covenant children during the first four months of this year. Like most churches, we faced difficult challenges with the pandemic, requiring livestreaming worship services and limited fellowship opportunities but we have recently transitioned back to morning and evening services, with precautions, second hour classes and evening prayer time following worship. We have a men's Bible study that meets monthly and two women's Bible study groups that meet monthly as well. Elder John Logan continues to serve the congregation well in his position of Office Manager / Treasurer and he also serves as Clerk of the AIC with Jason as moderator of the AIC. Ruling Elder Dr. Jorge Klajnbart finished his race and went to be with the Lord in February of 2020. Elder Emeritus Bob Mann, a founding member of SRC, went home to be with the Lord in June of the same year and Katie Osborn, a long-time member, also went to glory at the age of 100. SRC recently ordained and installed

two ruling elders—Greg Mann and Keith Mann. These men will serve alongside existing elders John Logan and Jason Ryce. While the Lord continues to add to our numbers with communicant members and covenant children, He also continues to challenge us with trials, testing our faith to develop perseverance in us. Please pray that the Lord would uphold the SRC saints, make the SRC elders faithful under-shepherds, give our deacons wisdom and compassion, and that, in all things, Christ would have the preeminence.

**Colorado Springs [Colorado]: Tri-Lakes**—“Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!” Psalm 106:1. We rejoice that our heavenly Father graciously and mercifully sustains His people. COVID-19 changed routines for all of us, but we were able to worship outside at two different properties within our congregation all last summer and have been able to meet for morning and evening worship each week, with an occasional shared evening worship via livestream, throughout the pandemic. We are thankful for growth throughout the last year and are happy to report that God provided a building for us to purchase last summer! It is south and east of our previous location, but more centrally located to many in our congregation. The building sits on just under five acres which allowed us to continue outside worship last year, and then transition indoors to worship in two spaces and accommodate COVID-19 safe services. We are grateful for God’s grace and mercy to us. Pastor Joseph Friedly has faithfully preached the Word throughout these challenging times, and we were excited to be able to call Sam McCracken to serve as an associate pastor at TLRC. He began his work amongst us in January. Please pray for us as we look for opportunities for outreach and service, as it is our desire to have an impact for Christ and His Church in this new area. Please also continue to pray along with us for our ministry with a growing congregation. God is Faithful!

**Columbia [Missouri]: Grace Reformed Mission Church**—“O give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His mercy endures forever.” The saints at Grace Reformed church continue to thank the Lord for His goodness. For over eleven years the Lord has kept this group together by His Spirit, providing pulpit supply through various pastors and local leadership. On January 21, 2021, Grace Reformed Church installed Gary McNamee as their first pastor. Pastor McNamee of Columbus (Indiana) received and accepted this call in October 2020. Gary and his wife Cynthia just completed their move to Columbia on May 1 and are looking forward to serving the Lord with the saints in Columbia. Grace Reformed church meets twice each Lord’s Day for morning and evening worship. Pastor McNamee has been preaching through the book of Ephesians in the morning and the book of Psalms in the afternoon. Various men have been teaching in the Bible education hour each Lord’s Day morning on subjects

which include “the means of grace,” eschatology, and working through the *RPCNA Testimony*. Grace Reformed also meets each week for prayer meeting, lifting up the needs of Christ’s Church to her Lord. Please pray for the new relationship between the church and her new pastor and family as they endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Dallas [Texas]**—The Dallas RPC is grateful to Christ for blessing us in a year of great transition. The Lord added Mr. Nick Schoeneberger to our session and founding pastor Rev. Koller moved to Manhattan, Kan. Rev. Prakashpalan is now the sole pastor, and Mr. Andrew Silva serves as clerk. We stand at twenty-seven communicant members and fifteen baptized. By God’s grace, our numbers continue to increase. Two families are in a membership class and new visitors have expressed interest in joining. Two baptized members became communicants. Attendance hovers around fifty. We have grown in a greater love for Christ, a zeal for personal holiness and piety, and a desire to reach the lost. The Lord is bringing new converts and non-Reformed Christians. He is providing far beyond our financial projections. We covet your prayers for a new building. Pray that the Lord would raise up deacons and elders to care for our body. Pray for our outreach efforts (door-to-door and street preaching) to bear fruit that souls would be turned from darkness to Christ’s marvelous light to the glory of God.

**Denison, Kansas**—Communicant membership decreased by two, with the deaths of Eleanor Phillips and Helen Hug. We are thankful for the increasing number of young children in our congregation. Our congregation was blessed by the ministry of a variety of pastors, elders and seminary students who have filled our pulpit. In July we resumed Sabbath School classes, noon lunch, and afternoon fellowship. Afternoon activity has been either a time of praise and prayer or discussion of a book, *Duties of Christian Fellowship*—a manual for church members by John Owen. A congregational meeting was held July 12; Caleb Allen was elected to be our pastor. Steve VanHorn represented our congregation at Presbytery in November where Caleb Allen was examined and approved to be installed as our pastor. The Allens arrived Dec. 12, and Caleb has preached here since Dec. 20. What a blessing to have this young family in our congregation and community! We are thankful for God’s blessings and pray that His Spirit would work in each of our hearts, leading us to serve Him in all that we do.

**Grandview [Missouri]: Christ Presbyterian Church**—We give praise to the Lord who has been gracious to us throughout the last year. He has been pleased to grow our number over 50%, despite COVID-19, and all to His glory. By His mercy, we continued worshipping morning and evening each Lord’s Day, and the Gospel continues to be proclaimed. From March to May of 2020, because of COVID-19, we worshipped outside at a rural home, through sun, thun-

derstorms, and cold, returning to our normal worship location in June 2020. In March 2021, we moved a few blocks away to a place with room to grow. Since 2011 our congregation has helped two South Sudanese refugees bring their spouses and children to Kansas City, via US immigration. We are now helping a third man in the same way, one of the 2001 “lost boys of South Sudan.” Lord-willing, they will join our congregation, upon arrival. Pastor Barnes has finished preaching through Romans, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and on several topics, such as church discipline, holy days, and human sexuality. He is almost finished preaching through Ecclesiastes, and is planning to soon preach on the error of critical race theory, and through the Gospel of Matthew.

**Laramie [Wyoming]**—We give thanks to God for His kindness to us in the past year. By His grace, not one sheep has left this little fold due to concerns over the pandemic or politics or any of the other things that have shaken the nation. New members have been added, covenant children have been born, visitors continue to join us on occasion, and the work of the Kingdom continues in Laramie. God has proved to us again that when we are weak, then He is strong. Recognizing God’s mercy to us, our session has set a focus this year on showing that mercy to others in both word and deed. Please pray for our outreach attempts especially during the summer months when people are out and about in the good weather. More and more we are also finding that God has placed us here with a hospitality ministry to those who pass through the state for vacation or business and seek a Reformed church. If you or anyone you know is passing through Wyoming, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us!

**Lawrence [Kansas]:** Christ Covenant is grateful, as must be all our congregations, for God’s preserving grace since we last reported. Moving right through our 50th anniversary (having begun in July of 1970) without celebrating normally, we pause here to glorify the Captain of our salvation, the Cornerstone of our fellowship, and the Namesake of our local body. Most of us managed to gather for 85% of 2020’s Sabbaths; giving was strong and online services continue as tech allows, expanding our reach. May 2021 will see wise resumption of ministries emphasizing fellowship, outreach, and practical ministry. On the hard side, we are remembering how to grieve with those who endure significant losses, trusting that opportunities to rejoice together will come soon. Looking ahead, we prepare for covenant baptisms, plan for officer elections in the fall, and anticipate a weekend seminar to appreciate and support a wide range of community servants.

**Longmont [Colorado]:** Salt & Light—The Salt & Light Congregation has a new full-time pastor, H.P. McCracken. We are blessed with H.P.’s preaching and pastoring gifts. We are blessed to have a full-time pastor. We are blessed to have H.P.’s family and in-laws as part of our congregation. We are blessed to



have our previous pastor, Marty Wilsey, and his wife, Barb, remain in our congregation as faithful servants to Christ's work in our community. We have had new members and are enjoying increased participation in mid-week meetings. We welcome any of you to stop by if you are visiting or vacationing in Colorado!

**Manhattan [Kansas]**—Our congregation (36 communicant members and 19 baptized members) continues to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Over the last year, we have met virtually, in a backyard, and in a local church's building in the afternoon. Our pastor, Jonathan Haney, has labored diligently and preached series on Peace, The Work and Person of the Holy Spirit, and continued a series in Genesis: The Book of Beginnings. Recently, Pastor Haney's ministry reached a critical point due to burnout, and our congregation granted him several months of emergency sabbatical leave. Please pray with us for the growth of our congregation (in spirit and in numbers), the full recovery and encouragement of Pastor Haney, and the return to a “normal” Lord's Day pattern and schedule.

**Morning Sun [Iowa]: Sharon**—2020 has been a very challenging year at Sharon RPC. The COVID-19 crisis stretched the congregation in several of ways. We canceled our 2020 activities and the ministry went entirely online for several weeks. The elders attempted to stay in contact with members by email, text, and phone calls. The congregation met on a semi-regular basis for non-formal meetings to encourage fellowship. During the shutdown Pastor Bryan also began a daily devotional online. In late spring we began to meet outside for corporate worship and broadcasted services on an FM transmitter as well as livestreaming. The congregation has continued to seek out new ways to reach into our local communities. We have advertised online and continue evangelistic Bible studies. The Lord has brought us a few new families. Distance continues to be a difficulty with some traveling up to 2-½ hours for worship. Please pray as we start a preaching station in Burlington. As of September 2020 there are 57 communicant members and 13 baptized on the membership rolls.

**Quinter [Kansas]**—The Quinter Session is humbled to report that the gracious provision and sustaining hand of God allows us to continue to worship and magnify His Name without significant interruption. Notably, some changes have affected us, such as a suspension of outreach in Garden City with Revival on the Great Plains being put on hold indefinitely. Furthermore, our visits to the Long-Term Care have ceased for now. We report that we have held communion twice in the last year, are sustained financially with faithful giving and the Porter Trust, are able to meet our budget, and we have resumed interaction with the Men's community breakfast. We report one new member in the last year, and one interested couple who have begun a membership class. The pastor's family has been involved in a homeschooling effort for one of our members.

The last year has been a season of especially good Christian fellowship for the members of our congregation.

**San Antonio [Texas] Mission**—still a small mission church—flourishes in the abounding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our current membership is thirteen, with another four adherents planning soon to join. Worship attendance this year has averaged just over twenty. Nine additional friends attend our mid-week Bible study. Social restrictions imposed upon many larger local churches have stirred the migration of many seeking to worship not only biblically, but unhindered by measures deemed draconian. Some are finding here the warm (unmasked) Christian community they've missed since restrictions hit their own congregations over a year ago. We have adjusted our schedule to accommodate the need for fellowship beyond the Lord's Day morning and now offer a Thursday evening outreach study in James's epistle and a Sabbath evening supper and book discussion of J.I. Packer's classic, *Knowing God*. Members and friends rotate responsibility for hosting these suppers and leading discussions. Pastor Leach has also begun serving on the board of directors of Presbyterians Protecting Life, a nationwide Presbyterian alliance that champions human life at every phase of the life cycle.

**Shawnee [Kansas]**—We are encouraged as God has permitted a renewed congregational life after a challenging year of limited fellowship and in-person teaching. We are thankful for our technology committee which, in God's providence, had developed our livestreaming capability just a month before COVID-19 shutdown. We have returned to live AM and PM worship and restarted Sabbath School classes. With Greg Stiner's resignation, we are engaged in a pastor search; God has enabled faithful preaching thus far. We profited from a year-long internship by Andrew B. with significant door-to-door outreach and with his support to EM's missionary efforts. Two new ruling elders, Barry VanHorn and Harry Ward, were recently elected; their ordination and installation should take place soon.

**Sterling [Kansas]**—Sterling RPC has, like all other organizations this past year, worked through a year of changing schedules and varying perspectives with the pandemic issues. It has reminded us of our dependence upon Christ and His teachings of unity and love for His people. We have been blessed with preaching series from 2 Thessalonians, living the Christ-centered life, Lamentations, and currently the life of John. Our membership is made up of people who desire the Reformed theology of scripture and come from a geographic region of Central Kansas that is as far out as ninety miles. We continue to seek ways to fellowship and have spiritual relationships with our members. A membership class with about fifteen prospective new members was recently completed and we trust God will call several of these people to join His body in Sterling

RPC. Pray that God would guide us in promoting and delivering the gospel of scripture to the Central Kansas region.

**Stillwater [Oklahoma]**—In April, the congregation called Stephen Mulder as an Associate Pastor for church planting in Oklahoma City (OKC). We look forward to having a pastor to come alongside the core families in OKC and to send out a mission church in the near future. We invite you to join us in praying for this next significant step in starting a new congregation. We also look forward to sending out and supporting Bridget Carroll as a missionary; Bridget is a daughter of the congregation who is using her passion for linguistics, storytelling, and Jesus to help bring the gospel to Nigeria through the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators. Looking back, in 2020 we enjoyed a virtual VBS including a video presentation of *Pilgrim's Progress* set in the old west. Looking forward, we are laying plans for in-person summer outreach opportunities.

**Topeka [Kansas]**—The Topeka Session is thankful for the many ways in which God's providential care continues to bless and sustain our congregation. Although many activities were placed on hold due to the pandemic, God has been gracious and has abundantly blessed the Topeka church family during the past year. We look forward to the full resumption of activities during the coming month. On December 31, 2020, our membership numbered 123, including 94 communicant members and 29 baptized members. We rejoice and give thanks that God continues to bring visitors into our midst and this spring one of our adherents became a member by professions. On September 19, 2020, Elder Phil Duguid passed from this life to his heavenly reward; the Session and congregation miss his wise counsel and the loss of fellowship. Our congregation is blessed by the ministry of Pastor Brad Johnston; his recent mission trip to Pakistan and interest in missions both at home and abroad is an encouragement to the congregation to keep the spread of God's Kingdom in the forefront.

**Trinity Reformed Church (Wichita) [Kansas]** was disorganized, effective January 1, 2021. Ruling elders Rob Haynes and Sean Knaak resigned in 2019. Deacon Ben Price resigned due to a move to Waco, TX. The last local elder, Pastor Joe Allyn, resigned on Dec. 31, 2020. Remaining members are being shepherded to other congregations. We give thanks to God for the ministry of Trinity Reformed Church since its organization on March 29 of 2002.

**Washington [Iowa]**—The WRPC Sabbath day went through a period of various restrictions, but it has now returned to a normal schedule which includes Sabbath School, Morning Worship, Fellowship meal, and Afternoon Service. The Lord's Supper has resumed to be observed quarterly continuing to be served in the pews for now as opposed to our normal practice of gathering around the table. Pastor Drost just finished preaching through Luke and is now

working through 1 Samuel for the morning worship. He is preaching on various texts during the afternoon worship. Our Women's Missionary Fellowship voted to disband, but the women will begin a Bible study in its place starting in May with an emphasis on supporting RP missions. The young people's group meet every other week and have begun a study of *The History of the Scottish Covenanters* by J.G. Vos. In October 2020 we welcomed into membership the Stodt family which included the baptism of their three children. Then in March 2021 we welcomed the transfer of membership of the Skubal family which included two previously baptized children, and we are thankful to have baptized their newest born child. Further, the Iowa RP Family Camp is going forward with plans to host its camp the first week of August 2021.

**Westminster [Colorado]**—Westminster Reformed Presbyterian Church (WRPC) (CO) thanks God for sustaining us during this time without a pastor. We miss Pastor Shane Sapp and thank him for his faithful ministry for the past twelve years. We also thank the other Colorado RP pastors for helping us in our time of need by providing wonderful preaching and ministry to us. We especially thank Joseph Friedly (interim moderator) for his wise counsel. God continues to bring new people to our church. We are currently conducting a church information class for ten people interested in finding out more about the RPCNA. Please pray with us that many will join WRPC. We are also very thankful that God seems to be raising up a number of men for future service as officers in His church. Please pray with us that God will make clear which men He is calling to serve as officers. Please pray for us in our search for a pastor. Our current average attendance is 66 at the morning service and 55 at the evening service. We currently have 73 members (47 communicant, 26 baptized).

**Winchester [Kansas]**—The Winchester congregation is thankful for the preaching and pastoring of Kyle Borg during the past year. COVID-19 has impacted our congregation as most others in the denomination. During the peak of the pandemic live worship was limited to about ten individuals, but morning and evening services have been livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube since March. Most members have been attending live worship since early fall. We celebrated the Lord's Supper three times in 2020, then twice so far in 2021. Our regular congregational meeting was held in February and Family Night resumed in April. Church classes (morning and evening) were discontinued in March, but resumed in October. VBS was not held in 2020 nor is it planned for 2021. Prayer meeting has been observed monthly through the pandemic. Our budget was met for 2020 and has been established for 2021, with provision to entertain seminary student Joshua Smith as our summer intern. Church membership currently stands at 58 communicant and 12 baptized, with four having

been received from baptized to communicant during 2021. Praise God for His sustaining grace!

*Respectfully submitted, Andrew Barnes, Clerk of MWP*

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## **Pacific Coast Presbytery Report to Synod 2021**

Fathers and Brothers: Over the past ten years, the Lord has blessed the Pacific Coast Presbytery with a season of growth like nothing we have experienced in our 110 years of existence. We were comprised of five congregations along the vast west coast in 2011. Now, we contain thirteen churches and missions with possibly one more being established this year. We rejoice in the work of the Holy Spirit among us!

The past two years especially have been a season of challenges and change for our presbytery. The pastoral relationship was dissolved between Rev. Ket-cham and the Fresno RPC, which is still seeking out its next under-shepherd. Rev. England resigned as pastor of the San Diego RPC and Rev. Shepherd has been ordained and installed as its new pastor. Rev. Eshelman was called to the Orlando RPC from the LA RPC, and they are now looking for their next pastor. Rev. Hemphill resigned as pastor of the Seattle RPC to pursue church-planting in the area of Boise, Idaho, leaving that congregation seeking out a new pastor. The Lord has answered our long prayer for a pastor for the Las Vegas RPC; by His will, Mr. Edgar Ibarra will be ordained and installed in July of this year. In addition to these changes, the challenge of finding ways to worship and fellowship in the midst of a pandemic has been a difficult one we have all faced. However, God has been gracious during this difficult time. We ask you to pray for us in the following ways:

- For the Lord to firmly root all of our works that they might endure for generations. Most of our church and mission are young and need His special care to be established.
- For our vacant pulpits to be filled with godly men quickly. Three of our senior congregations (Seattle, Los Angeles, and Fresno) are all without pastors. Pray for God's wisdom in seeking out pastors.
- For ruling elders. Given the majority of our works are young, we have few ruling elders in our presbytery (at last count we have eight total). This is a desperate need in our presbytery as we need the voice and wisdom of ruling elders among us. The current ruling elders are also feeling the burden of being overworked as they are few in number, but there is much work to be done. Pray for God's grace and strength for those brothers currently serving and for God to raise up godly men to serve.
- As in most circumstances, growth arrives with growing pains. A couple of our congregations have endured, or are enduring a season of hard-

ship and testing. Pray the presbytery would have wisdom and move with a shepherd's heart to aid these congregations.

- For the Lord's continued blessing of growth. We desire to see His Kingdom expand along the west coast and there is plenty of room for more churches.
- For this pandemic to come to a close. This is no doubt a request we all share. We are thankful God has watched over our churches and enabled us to continue worshiping. However, may He bring the day quickly where all our churches can worship face to face.

**Officers:** Rev. Colin Samul serves as moderator, Rev. Ryan Hemphill serves as clerk, Rev. Noah Shepherd serves as assistant clerk, and Mr. Aaron Piper serves as treasurer.

**Ad Interim Commission:** Rev. Noah Shepherd servers as moderator, Rev. Ryan Hemphill serves as clerk, Rev. Colin Samul and Elder Eduardo Fricovsky serve as members.

Below you will find summaries of the ministry and life of our congregations and missions. An elder or licentiate has submitted the paragraph on behalf of their churches.

**Boise, ID (Treasure Valley RPC Mission—Rev. Ryan Hemphill):** This work is brand new, but there are good things to report. In 2011, the Seattle RPC began praying for the Lord to use us to build a North Pacific Presbytery. Seattle is the mother church of the PCP, being a continuous congregation since 1892. Our first pastor, Rev. J. P. McDonald, was called to leave Seattle in the early 1900s to work at planting the LA RPC. With this history in mind we asked God to so use us again. We began praying for works in Vancouver, BC; Portland, OR; and Boise, ID. Over the years God has raised up three works in the Vancouver, BC, area (Squamish, West Vancouver, and Surrey). We also had an opportunity in Portland and continue to pray another will surface one day. Last summer, I began to sense a call to be the planter in Boise. So, we began to gently push on the door to see if it would open. Since last summer, we have received much support in counsel we have sought, the Lord brought together a small core group of like-minded households, and the Seattle church gave a sizable financial contribution to start the "Boise Fund" to help support the work. We rejoice in seeing what God has done so far, and look forward to seeing how He will carry us through the challenges ahead.

**Brea, CA (All Saints RPC—Rev. John Sawtelle):** Dear Fathers and Brothers, it goes without saying that 2020 was the strangest and most difficult year we have faced as a congregation but we rejoice to report that the Lord of hosts and the God of Jacob has been our refuge and strength (Psalm 46). Worship proceeded as usual. ASR met for two worship services each Lord's Day through-

out the year, with the exception of one Lord's Day where we were unable to meet together in person due to COVID-19. Other than that, the Lord provided for us; whether it was in homes, backyards, garages, or open-air spaces, we met. There were many challenges accompanying these various places but what we cherished was meeting together in-person as the people of God for worship. We were blessed with four covenant baptisms, two professions of faith, and one wedding which we count as the Lord's richest mercies. Brethren, we rejoice that our help is in the Lord and in the power of His grace. He has been faithful to keep and bless us in the midst of a most challenging season.

**Edmonton, AB (The Shelter RPC—prepared by the Provisional Session):** The Lord has chosen to bring The Shelter RPC into a time of upheaval and sorrow. A ruling elder on sabbatical and two provisional elders brought charges against Rev. Hackett for his harmful conduct in the congregation. Citing procedural irregularities, Rev. Hackett declined to appear at trial, was ordered by presbytery to abstain from exercising the duties and privileges of his office until the final disposition of the case, and subsequently announced his departure from the RPCNA with many members and adherents of The Shelter joining him. We grieve over these actions of Rev. Hackett. Nevertheless, the Lord has not forsaken us; the ministry of God's word continues and people are delighted to gather for spiritual food and fellowship. In light of recent events, we have been taught with utmost clarity not to trust in a son of man in whom is no help (Ps. 146:3). Instead, "our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 124:8). Our future is in His hands. Pray that God will grant repentance to Rev. Hackett and those who follow him. Pray that God will prosper The Shelter in numerical and spiritual growth as it pleases Him. Please pray for us.

**Fresno, CA (Fresno RPC—Vacant—prepared by Elder Paul Hemphill):** 2019 and 2020 have been difficult years for the Fresno congregation. During 2019, the Fresno Session attempted to work through significant conflicts between the pastor and ruling elders. The Pacific Coast Presbytery provided help to the Fresno Session and congregation during 2019, which included the establishment of a special visitation committee, the appointment of a provisional elder, and two special Presbytery meetings. Ultimately, the Presbytery removed Pastor Sam Ketcham from the Fresno Pulpit in December 2019. Since that time, the pulpit has been vacant. The congregation has appreciated the variety of men throughout the denomination who have willingly come to Fresno to fill the pulpit, even during this global pandemic. Please pray that God would soon provide a pastor for the Fresno congregation.

**Irvine, CA (All Saints RPC Irvine—Rev. Hsing Tang):** All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church Irvine (ASRPCI) has experienced many challenges since last March. So far, we have not been able to meet in person for Sunday worship as

well as Bible study and fellowship. Yet, we are blessed to have Rev. John Sawtelle joining us as our provisional elder during this period. Even though session has not yet met formally in person, Rev. Sawtelle and Rev. Tang regularly communicate over the phone for matters of life of church in Irvine. Lord's Day worship service has been held by livestreaming via YouTube since last March. Rev. Tang has been preaching through Matthew and is on Chapter 24. He has also preached on Daniel chapter one, two, and nine, and Habakkuk. Weekly Bible study on the book of Revelation is held on Friday evening from 7-8 p.m., and also by livestreaming via YouTube. There are 26 people attending Lord's Day worship regularly via livestreaming online and around 40 people total including people joining through playbacks afterwards. There are 12 people attending Bible study regularly via livestreaming and around 50 total through playbacks. Since Feb. 9 we have started a weekly fellowship via Google Meet on Tuesday from 8-9 p.m. We sing Psalms, read scripture, and pray together. We plan to hold outdoor worship service on Sunday once a month when the weather gets warmer if the lockdown regulation is still not removed. We are also blessed that the Lord is adding three people who are waiting to become members as soon as we can meet in person for worship. Please pray for us that our Lord may raise up more faithful people of God to join us as coworkers to build up Mandarin RP church in Irvine.

**Las Vegas, NV (Las Vegas RPC—prepared by Rev. John Sawtelle):** The LVTGB met several times this past year to attend to matters pertaining to the congregation. The primary concern of the TGB was to get a pastor on site in Las Vegas. In our first attempt in the late spring, we called Mr. Trace Turner to serve for one year as stated supply; he turned down the offer. Then we worked with the congregation to see how they would like to proceed and a consensus emerged in support of Mr. Edgar Ibarra. On August 14, 2020, a service was convened to vote upon a pastoral call to Mr. Ibarra. A strong call of 13-1 was sent to Mr. Ibarra who in turn accepted it. In the Lord's providence, Mr. Ibarra's exam before presbytery was not sustained. In the aftermath of the exam, the TGB met with Mr. Ibarra and then separately with the Trinity RP session.

The TGB made an effort to determine if Mr. Ibarra was qualified for ministry and our conclusion was that he does seem to be gifted for ministry and that he is a suitable candidate. Our prayer is that Mr. Ibarra will sustain examination at the March meeting and will be on site in Las Vegas as soon as possible. The saints in Las Vegas desperately need an undershepherd who will feed them with the bread of life and watch over their souls. If Mr. Ibarra does not sustain examination, then the presbytery must consider a whole new approach to LVRP since it seems unwise for a congregation to continue on, now well over eight years, without a pastor or local elder.



**Los Angeles, California (LA RPC—Vacant—prepared by Elder David Ashleigh):** The 2020 calendar year got off to a normal start. The LARPC Schedule included Sabbath School for all ages starting at 10 a.m., morning worship at 11 a.m., followed by a fellowship lunch and then the afternoon service at 2 p.m. Pastor Eshelman was preaching through the Ten Commandments in the morning worship service and the book of Mark in the afternoon worship. For the first two months of the year we had monthly Session meetings. Visitation with families of the congregation commenced.

On March 16, 2020, a stay at home order was made by the State of California in response to the increasing severity of the COVID-19 infection rate, now called a pandemic. At that point session moved the congregation to Zoom worship service in the morning with a scripture meditation via Zoom in the afternoon. Pastor Eshelman continued preaching through the book of Mark for the morning worship service. We also had weekly session meetings for almost two months to stay abreast of the changing regulations. Zoom worship in the morning and afternoon continued until mid-June when the congregation returned to indoor morning worship with one half of the congregation on alternating weeks to conform to the indoor capacity limits put on places of worship by the civil authorities. The State and County officials were in a state of flux as far as regulations with constant hints that changes in rules would be made. In May, knowing that regulation changes were likely, Session formed a three person committee made up of members of the congregation to suggest plans for various scenarios and help session be ready to adapt. There was constant effort on Session's part to match appropriate consideration of the laws of the state with obedience to the commandment to love our neighbor. There is a wide difference of opinion among our members about the necessity of pandemic control strategies which also impacted session's decision making.

On July 18, 2020, session, again in response to COVID-19 pandemic regulations, moved morning worship outdoors to the grassy courtyard still with one half of the congregation in attendance. After two weeks of outdoor worship with the congregation divided, we reunited as one congregation in outdoor worship. We celebrated our first communion since Jan. 2020 with an outdoor celebration of the Supper on 8/8/2020. The arrangement with outdoor courtyard worship in the morning with 4 PM Zoom worship has continued to be our practice into the present.

We are thankful to God and also thankful for the flexibility of our congregation as we have continued worship services uninterrupted through this devastating pandemic. Many in our congregation were in quarantine at various times in this year and several tested positive and were sick from the COVID-19 virus. Sadly we lost Higinio Hernandez, longtime member and beloved friend

of the congregation to death from COVID-19 infection; he is deeply missed by his wife and children as well as his church family.

On January 8, 2021, our Pastor of twelve years, Nathan Eshelman, accepted a call to the Orlando RPC congregation. We will miss the ministry of Pastor Eshelman deeply; the Pacific Coast Presbytery has also lost a wise and energetic resource. We are thankful for the ministry of the Pacific Presbytery in our Congregation by supplying—with his generous consent—John Sawtelle to serve as the Moderator of our session.

The congregation has two students, Jerry Foltz and Johnathan Kruis, under care of the Presbytery as Students of Theology. Mr. Foltz is nearing the end of his theological studies. The mentorship of Mr. Foltz by Pastor Eshelman was an important part of the plan of distance study put together by RPTS. Chaplain Pastor Tim McCracken, at the suggestion of the Candidates and Credentials committee of the Presbytery, has agreed to take over the mentor's role for Mr. Foltz. We are thankful for the ministry of Mr. Foltz to our number as he is scheduled to preach regularly for the LA congregation in coming months. In addition, many congregations in our Presbytery and beyond have heard his preaching with benefit. The care of our congregation by Presbytery is a repeating theme and we know this care has been a comfort to our congregation. Johnathan Kruis is in his first year of Theological study. Mr. Kruis and family are adjusting well to Seminary life at RPTS in Pittsburgh. He keeps session informed with update letters filled with accounts of lessons gleaned from all aspects of seminary life. He is benefitting from many interactions with the seminary community including professors' lectures, interactions with fellow students and lessons learned in home fellowship times. We are pleased with what we have heard. At his own request and with the support of the Candidates and Credentials committee, Rev. Ryan Hemphill will serve as his mentor within the Presbytery.

How you can pray for our Congregation: (1) Give thanks along with us that God has been with us through the pandemic with uninterrupted Sabbath worship and been gracious to us in many other ways. (2) Give thanks for our former pastor and the blessings he brought over the years. (3) Give thanks for our Presbytery and their present help. (4) Pray for God's provision for us to call our next pastor. (5) Pray for our congregation that our faith and mutual encouragement would be sustained. (6) Pray for preachers to fill our pulpit. (7) Pray for the officers (the ruling elders and deacons) to be strong and faithful in their duties and that members of the congregation would serve one another.

**Phoenix, AZ (Phoenix RPC—Rev. Chris Myers):** God blessed us with a busy and eventful year, reflected in the Session constituting court 23 times, fifteen pastoral visitations with 36 congregants, and monthly Session prayer meetings for each person in our congregation. A church officer training cur-

riculum was developed and God is raising up prospective officer candidates. The Session found Tyson Froment suitable for church officer candidacy and nominated him in March. We felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet maintained Sabbath school and worship with precautions and some changes. Observance of the Lord's Supper, fellowship lunches, and prayer that followed worship was suspended for a season and Sabbath school and worship livestreaming were made available for isolating brethren. Church fellowship lunches were restored until more recently suspending them to give the Session time to review and pray about our various gatherings and public fellowship. Spaghetti dinners were hosted at the Myers' home and scheduled prayer meetings were planned and are now hosted, currently at one member's home with a plan to expand to more prayer groups at congregants' homes. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the church instituted the celebration of the Lord's Supper with a February 14-16 (2020) Communion Season with Pastor Craig Scott of the Grand Rapids RPC. Later, the Lord's Supper was suspended until weather permitted outdoors and resumed with a November 20-22 (2020) Communion season celebrated with Pastor Romesh Prakashpalan of the Dallas RPC leading. We were blessed to be joined by many RPC brethren and other denominations. We rejoiced in having new adherents, communicant members, and guests with an average worship attendance of 47.

A Five-Year Plan for Prayer was presented and discussed at two special congregational meetings in October, covering why we covenant and seek corporate repentance, our biblical and confessional responsibility to spread the gospel and church plant, along with considerations for the wisest way forward to use our church property to further this missionary spirit. A property management realty broker wants to buy the property and we continue praying for wisdom on next steps. We are endeavoring to shepherd Christ's beloved Bride as He desires, seeking His direction through this season of pandemic and political change, praying for His protection from the attacks of the Evil One and working in us love for God. We pray this be reflected in our worship, fellowship, our faithfulness to His Word and will, and our being a praying church. We have a particular burden and are praying for our singles who believe God is calling them to marriage and for a biblical path to marriage and godly spouses.

**Reno, NV (Great Basin RPC—Rev. Colin Samul):** The previous year has been a year where I have been reminded of Christ's sovereign reign as King and Head of the Church, and as the only Sovereign over the affairs of men. And I don't think I need to rehearse the events of 2020 that we are all too familiar with, in order to communicate to you how this has been a trying year, especially for one's first year in ordained ministry. However, in the midst of everything that we have faced as Christians this year, I have been amazed at Christ's care

in how He comforts, sanctifies, and continues to build His Church through the ordinary means of grace. This was a year where I saw growth in my own walk, in the exercise of my gifts as a pastor, and most of all, where I saw the church that I am called to serve grow in numbers and in grace. Truly, our Triune God is a cover from the tempest, a river of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

As far as the events of this past year go, when the Pandemic hit during our Spring Presbytery of 2020, the congregation unanimously voted in a straw poll to obey the government restrictions on public worship. This continued for eight weeks, where I livestreamed worship and taught Sunday School in the morning going through the Heidelberg Catechism. I chose the Heidelberg Catechism because I determined that what God's people needed was comfort, and the Heidelberg Catechism is truly a book of comfort. In mid-May we decided to reconvene worship, regardless of current restrictions, and the State Government of Nevada simultaneously announced that public worship was acceptable for fifty persons or less. We continued to hold Sunday School online, going through the Heidelberg Catechism, until mid-September when we decided to reconvene in-person Adult and Children's Catechism. The congregation's unity, flexibility, and graciousness with all the changes that have been made this year should be noted, and I personally commend the flock in GBRPC for keeping the peace, when many other congregations have taken the struggles of the past year to be a cause for division. This is truly a sign of Christ's Spirit at work in the Saints of GBRPC.

When it comes to my ministry as Teaching Elder, I concluded my series on Mark last January, completed a series on Philippians in July, and began to preach through the book of Isaiah in the beginning of August. I expect this series to last upwards of three years, which will be my longest preaching series since I began preaching regularly in 2015. I continued to teach through the *Larger Catechism* each Lord's Day (except for when we suspended Catechism for six months), and I likewise expect that series to last for a few more years. As far as teaching throughout the week, I taught two rounds of new members classes (4-5 months each), began a men's study on Ecclesiology (studying R.B. Kuiper's *The Glorious Body of Christ*), and began a Catechumens class going through G.I. Williamson's book on the *Shorter Catechism*. There are currently two catechumens enrolled in the class.

Throughout the year I have had the opportunity to minister to people inside and outside the congregation through counseling, and meeting for mentoring and encouragement. We also began meeting digitally each week for a prayer meeting, which averaged 3-4 attendees each week. Through all of this I can report that the congregation of GBRPC is growing in grace and in love for

one another. With that, we also grew in numbers. At the beginning of the year we had 14 communicants, 9 non-communicants, and two adherents, for a total of 25 regular attendees. By the end of the year we had 16 communicants, 13 non-communicants (one gained by birth/baptism), and 6 adherents (who have 6 children between them), and two regular visitors (who have 5 children), for a total of 48 regular attendees. I anticipate that a few of our adherents will be brought on as members this year. The Lord has been gracious in doubling us in size in what was a very difficult year. With that, our budget likewise grew. We ended the previous year with \$12,741 in savings, and we ended this year with \$32,132 in savings. Due to our increase in income, I have asked for a raise in pay, which will allow me to be free from working outside of ministry (though I still may help my former company as they need me for big projects). I am hoping that with more time, I can tend to my family's needs more, spend more time with the congregation, and grow in other areas of pastoral ministry (writing, evangelism, church courts etc.).

In the year ahead, GBRPC will be strongly considering looking for a new building (we erected a building committee), so that we will be able to worship in the mornings. We pray for and anticipate future growth, both in numbers and in grace. To that end, the TGB nominated Mr. Greg Kothman as an Elder candidate in December, and I will be spending the first half of the year preparing him, in anticipation of putting him up for election in the summer of 2021.

Mr. Kothman spent 10 years in the PCA and is a retired Army NCO currently working for the Nevada National Guard in a civilian role. He has shown consistent Christian character, leadership abilities, and a love for the Church manifested in a servant's heart. Please pray as we continue to prepare him and as we discern his calling. In summary, despite the struggles and heartache that we have especially faced this year, I can report to you that Christ is blessing the work in Reno and continuing to establish this young church plant.

**San Diego, CA (San Diego RPC—Rev. Noah Shepherd):** The Lord has been abundantly good to us this past year and a half. We dearly miss Rev. Mark England and are grateful for the Lord's work in us through his ministry. The Lord has answered many of our prayers—the provision of new elders and deacons (Ruling Elder Eduardo Fricovsky, Rev. Noah Shepherd, Deacon Manabu Torii, and Deacon Barry Heilman), the provision of a pastor for the Las Vegas congregation, as well as good health during the pandemic. Only a few of us have been exposed to the virus, and those who fell ill with it have recovered. We've been through many challenges as a congregation. Some among us struggle very hard with chronic pain and various illnesses including cancer. Others have dealt and are dealing with severe depression. One among us has recently lost her mother and is grieving. Nevertheless, the Lord has kept us and is continu-

ing his work among us. I'm deeply grateful for the love of this congregation, and their devotion to Christ even in hardship. We have many exciting things to look forward to as a congregation as well. As the summer months fast approach and more people are getting vaccinated, we all are looking forward to resuming fellowship meals (hopefully sooner rather than later!). The Session is planning much activity in public evangelism in Balboa Park as well as in front of a Planned Parenthood just up the road from the church's building. Our Sabbath School has been fruitful, as we have explored the doctrines of predestination and union with Christ through Ligonier Ministries studies. Soon, we will also work through a course on evangelism, in preparation for open air preaching in Balboa Park. Please pray for continued growth in sanctification and for boldness in evangelism!

**Seattle, WA (Seattle RPC—Vacant—prepared by Rev. Ryan Hemphill):**

It is without question 2020 was difficult for not only the Seattle RPC, but for other congregations as well, as we were put in positions we never expected. God was gracious to us by giving us the technology to livestream services. The Seattle session rejoiced in hearing from our members through the year how the Lord was using this means to bless and encourage them during a difficult season. Our midweek Bible Study was able to resume meeting via Zoom to the edification of those who participated. However, we faced challenges deepening our fellowship with one another as virtual meetings are no substitute for face to face interaction. Surprisingly, we experienced a steady stream of visitors throughout 2020 into 2021. As our numbers of in-person worshipers were few, these visitors were a great source of encouragement. We were also encouraged by the baptism of a covenant child last July. One of the more bittersweet circumstances is losing the Hemphill family. The church has been praying for a work to begin in Boise, Idaho, since 2011. However, no one expected God to call Rev. Hemphill to be the one to start this work. The Seattle RPC has a history of being used in this way. In the early 1900s, God called our founding pastor, Rev. J. P. McDonald, to go and plant the Los Angeles RPC. Although leaving one another is bittersweet we rejoice in God answering our prayer and are confident that He will bless the Seattle RPC and the new Treasure Valley RP Mission to His glory and honor.

**Squamish, BC (Coram Deo RPC Mission—Rev. Patrick McNeely):** Coram Deo RP Mission Church currently consists of a temporary governing body (TGB): TE Ryan Hemphill, RE Joel Martin, and TE Patrick McNeely. For the greater part of 2020-2021, Coram Deo RP Mission Church has been able to meet for morning and evening worship at the United Church building (Centrepont). However, there have been periods of time where access to the church building has been denied in light of Public Health Order (PHO) restrictions. Coram Deo

has either met in the home of a host family (with an online option), on Zoom only, or as it is now, outdoors on the property of an elementary school with a Zoom option. In the last year, Rev. McNeely has preached through Nehemiah, a new Psalm every month, and is continuing to preach through the Gospel of Mark. Rev. McNeely and the elders in training have been teaching an all-ages Sabbath school class through the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. They are currently at Q/A. 86. The Lord's Supper is typically administered on the last Lord's Day each month, except when not meeting physically together. Please pray the Lord would continue to bless His means of grace to us in this extraordinary time. There are currently 25 members (14 communicant, and 11 baptized), 4 adherents, and various visitors (now mostly family/friends from eastern Canada joining online). We rejoice that members Nathan Bayne and Josiane (formerly Boutin) were married in May 2020 to establish a new household, and give thanks that the Zebaduas are expecting their 7th child this summer, and the McNeelys their second this fall. Please pray for the growth of Christ's church through our covenant children. In this light, we are now working through Joel Beeke's *Parenting by God's Promises*. Counseling has continued as needed for some families and individuals. During COVID-19 restriction lulls (and warmer weather), some meet in backyards for BBQs and informal fellowship time. The congregation is patiently longing for more in-person interactions and hospitality opportunities, but is still taking a cautious approach during this season. Some of us have been blessed by being able to have deeper, longer conversations with our neighbors "across the porch," as more people seem to be home with more time and longing to converse than before. Please pray for the growth of Christ's church through conversions among our neighbors.

**West Vancouver, BC (North Shore Chinese Bible Truth Church Mission—Mr. James Zhou):** The North Shore Chinese Bible Truth Church is under the oversight of a TGB consisting of John Spitzer (RE), Hsing Tang (TE), and Patrick McNeely (TE). Licentiate and student under care, Mr. Zhou Zheng (James), is in West Vancouver teaching, preaching, and providing in-person leadership for the work. Here's the report from those on the ground:

"The year of 2020 was a tough time for our church due to COVID-19, but we still experienced abundant grace in our Lord Jesus Christ. When the spread of COVID-19 became serious at the end of March 2020, our Sunday gatherings at the church stopped at the beginning of April. Though we resumed Sunday church building gatherings in August, we couldn't keep it for long. Sunday gatherings stopped again in September. The rest of 2020 into 2021 saw us doing Sunday worship via Zoom. The number of people coming to our church for Sunday worship in Zoom contin-

ued to grow to regularly. Besides Sunday worship, we had Bible study Friday evenings. The church members met twice every week and had opportunities to share their ideas, thoughts, and understanding related to Bible reading. The church leaders, Bro. Zhouzheng, Lucy, Paul Wang, and Xijin Wang had monthly meetings to make work plans for the next month. They each were assigned to contact 3-4 people through phone calls or wechat, in the hope of helping people with Bible reading and bringing more people to come to faith. Some other forms of connecting with people like weekly food sharing or monthly potluck events kept on before COVID-19 spread in March and was later canceled. Offerings in 2020 were affected. It decreased compared to last year's offering. Sermons in 2020 by church leader, Bro. Zhouzheng, focused on the first four chapters of Hebrews and the first chapters of Acts. There was a very good connection in relation to the building of faith in our brothers and sisters. We believe the Lord is working continuously upon our church. We are small but the Lord is powerful. We are looking forward to seeing brothers and sisters growth in faith in Jesus Christ and the increase of church members."

Since the beginning of 2021, Pastor Hsing Tang and licentiate Mr. James Zhou have been conducting the preliminary interviews for communicant membership and covenant baptism. Once completed, these will be translated for the rest of the TGB, ratified in constituted court, and a plan established for the baptizing and the public vow-taking of these new members. We rejoice at the prospect of six more baptisms to happen soon.

**Prison Ministry (Rev. Tim McCracken):** The Mission to San Joaquin Valley Prisons faced a challenging turn of events when all volunteer involvement was put on hold in the light of the virus threat for the unique situation of prison. The first week after being disallowed entrance, Pastor McCracken collected a mailing list of all the inmates who had attended services since January 2020 and began to mail weekly letters of encouragement, devotion, and Bible study to about 110 men (because some have been released, the current mailing list is 97). Letter #57 went out 4/26. Response has been good, and when yards open again for chapel the ministry expects attendance at the nine study groups to be hearty. Two new locations for weekly Bible study are opening up, because men who have transferred from previous Bible studies have made request. Though the California Department of Corrections has seen more than 49,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the inmate population,



on 4/27 there were only thirteen active cases across the whole state. One yard and the firehouse near it are newly open to volunteer involvement and more will likely gradually open.

**Future Works:** The presbytery established the Treasure Valley RPC Mission (Boise, Idaho) at our March 2021 meeting. Boise sits in an area called the “Treasure Valley.” This valley encompasses the cities of Boise, Nampa, Kuna, Caldwell, Middleton, Star, Eagle, and Meridian. The whole area has a population of about 700K people and is expected to climb to 1M by 2040. During his initial investigation, Rev. Hemphill established contacts with other NAPARC ministers in the area. All of whom agree an RPCNA plant will do well and the area is in need of another Reformed voice. The presbytery also established a Surrey Commission at this last meeting for the purpose of investigating the establishment of a mission church in Surrey, BC. Rev. Kevin Jia is currently leading a Bible study with a core group of people. We are excited about the possibility of God raising up another work among us.

**Students Under Care:** We currently have the following students under care: Mr. Seni Adeyemi (Phoenix RPC), Mr. Jerry Foltz (LA RPC), Mr. Edgar Ibarra (LV RPC), Mr. Johnathan Kruis (LA RPC), Mr. Stephen Mulder (Providence RPC [POA]), Mr. George Wallace (Phoenix RPC), and Mr. James Zhou (North Shore). In addition to the prayer requests above, please pray for these brothers as they prepare for the gospel ministry.

**Recommendation:** Synod grant the Pacific Coast Presbytery extra time for meeting for the examination of theological students.

*Respectfully submitted, Rev. Ryan Hemphill, clerk*

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## **Report of the St. Lawrence Presbytery 2021 RPCNA Synod**

Dear Brothers: The St. Lawrence Presbytery currently has fourteen congregations spanning Canada (six) and New York State (eight). Since our last meeting of the Synod, Ryan Somerville was installed into the Rochester RPC (July 9, 2019), and Dan Dupuis was installed into the Hudson–St. Lazare RPC (October 8, 2019). Even during the pandemic, the Lord worked in such a way that Gabriel Wingfield was installed into Oswego RPC (July 24, 2020) and Garrett Mann into Lisbon RPC (September 25, 2020). Now all of our congregations have installed pastors in their midst; this is a marvelous answer to many years of hopeful prayer. Our Presbytery is reduced to two active students under care, Reuben Lindeman and Chris Goerner. Micah Wright and Jeff Wallace were removed from Presbytery’s care in late 2019. Mark Goerner and Scott Doherty are eligible to receive a call, the former involved in secular work and the latter completing his doctoral work at Westminster Theological Seminary (California).

The Presbytery notes that it has advised Mr. Reuben Lindeman, that before he complete his final exam toward Eligibility to Receive a Call, that he have at least one on-site, protracted (minimum six months) mentoring and internship under a seasoned pastor in a viable congregation within the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Interested sessions could make initial contact with the St. Lawrence Presbytery's clerk or Pastor Doug Chamberlain.

The Presbytery had no organized youth activities in 2020 since the pandemic started. Messiah's Church has hosted CNY Presbytery youth gatherings since early 2021. The Presbytery is well served by financially gifted men who serve as treasurers: Ev Wood (Syracuse), Andy Curran (Oswego), and Jamie Hood (Ottawa). Several deaths occurred throughout the Presbytery in 2020, these elders being mentioned in relation to their congregations. But of equal note is Mrs. Gretchen Robson, who served alongside retired pastor and New Testament professor husband, Ed Robson. Gretchen was a fine example to many pastors and wives of love, joy, and hospitality to the Lord's people; she is deeply missed.

Here are highlights of our congregations in addition to their usual worship and ministry of the Word from week to week:

**Christ Church (Floyd, New York)** saw the death of one of its elders, Chip Lorraine, and the resignation and move of another, George Goerner. The congregation since has elected two elders and one deacon, and is progressing in the renovation of their basement for fellowship facilities. The congregation has been unable to minister at the Oneida Center nursing home since the start of the pandemic. Pastor Goerner continues to reach out to Muslims by his website at [www.bible-quran.com](http://www.bible-quran.com).

**Christian Heritage (Endicott, New York)** has seen growth over the past two years. New families have contributed to the work, and often visitors are in attendance. Other participants have come to midweek Bible studies, too. In addition to weekly morning worship, the congregation observes the Lord's Supper each third week (with a fellowship dinner also), and evening worship weeks 1, 2, and 4.

**Evangelical Presbyterian (Toronto, Ontario)** notes that they largely have done their worship and various meetings online and with livestreaming. They also have ministered to those who live alone and even to the homeless. Pray that they are soon able to move out of lockdowns, and that they have unity of mind and purpose in their ministry.

**Fulton RPC** has had visitors from the neighborhood and area churches to their Bible studies and worship services. The congregation had several ill or hospitalized with the virus. Pastor Nick lamaio is planning his retirement, and thus the congregation is praying (and asking prayer) for a resident elder to be raised up, and the Lord's guidance in the search for their next pastor.

**Hillside RPC (Almonte, Ontario)** witnessed the baptism of three new children and received three new members by profession of faith this past year. A variety of studies are had by Zoom each week, and men meet for prayer weekly. The congregation is glad to see people's gifts used to help steer them during the pandemic.

**Hudson–St. Lazare RPC** has had transfers of membership and occasional visitors over the past year. Elder Brian Brodie has resigned service as an elder; his service of some 30+ years is greatly appreciated. Vince Ward has been a very helpful provisional elder to the session. Elder Tochiara leads the 10-13 year old class and Pastor Dupuis teaches the church information class. Two able deacons assist them and meet with the session quarterly.

**Lisbon RPC** was unable to gather for worship from March 22 to June 7, 2020 because of virus restrictions and the lack of a pastor. The arrival of Garrett Mann was a great relief amidst the stress of being without a pastor for three years. The congregation has added members, and is rejoicing in marriages that have taken place, with others expected.

**Messiah's Church (Clay, NY)** is seeking the Lord for another elder and 1-2 more deacons. They have had the joy of new births, of others still expected, of baptized members professing faith by the vows of communicant membership, as well as one conversion the past year. The elders will begin another round of communicant membership classes alongside anticipated elder and deacon training. The congregation sustained its annual Reformation Symposium, to the blessing of many who attended.

**New Creation (Kitchener, Ontario)** hopes to purchase their rented building from the United Church of Canada and asks that prayer be offered for that. It is quite suitable and in an excellent location. Deacon Tom Gillelan is now the church treasurer after deacon Sam Sutherland's many years as such. Pastor Wilkinson continues his teaching responsibilities at the Gillespie Academy.

**Oswego RPC (New York)** recognizes the faithful and fruitful ministry of now-retired Pastor Kit Swartz (June 2020), who is still active in study and writing, and at this writing, will have surgery for cancer. Plans for a public recognition of Kit's retirement and ministry are yet unfulfilled due to the pandemic. Gabriel Wingfield began his ministry in June 2020. There were various transfers and receptions of memberships.

**Ottawa RPC (Ontario)** notes the death of founding and faithful elder, Aubrey Ayer. The congregation's membership decreased through church discipline; one elder has resigned. Yet there has been a renewal in evening worship participation, encouragements for families in beginning family worship, and the start of five new fellowship groups, bringing the total to six.

**Rochester RPC (New York)** faced various disagreements about COVID-19, and in the end saw the Lord bring unity. The membership grew by baptisms, professions, and transfers.

**Russell RPC (Ontario)** is negotiating the sale of land they purchased years ago and anticipates renovations to a building they have purchased. They have had a boon of births and baptisms. Many have prayed for elder Greg Alexander, and it appears that his cancer is in remission, for which God gets much praise.

**Syracuse RPC (New York)** this year has elected three deacons and two elders for service as well as welcomed new members and youth into communicant membership. The congregation started a Family Conference, and last year's topic was "Worship in the Home." Elder Gene Huggins passed into glory on September 13, 2020.

*Respectfully submitted, Brian E. Coombs, clerk*

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## Report of the Education & Publication Board to the 2021 Synod

Since the last meeting of Synod the E&P Board met once in person in October of 2019, and due to COVID-19 restrictions in the last year has met six times by teleconference in the spring and fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021. The last year was marked with some uncertainty as to how the global pandemic would impact our publishing and finances, especially with the postponement of the RP International Conference, but on the whole we look back at those months and see the Lord's mercy and provision.

**Board Matters.** We are thankful that Daniel Howe was able and willing to extend his time on the board for a subsequent year due to no ability to nominate or approve a new member to replace him. After nine years of serving on the board he now gets to make his exit and he does so with our tremendous appreciation for his work.

The E&P Board has nominated Mrs. Erin Bartel to fill this opening (see recommendations). Mrs. Bartel is a member of the Winchester RPC congregation, a small business owner, writer and editor for a well-known Wichita blog, and is a social media consultant. In the fall of 2020, Kyle Borg was elected as president of E&P and Joseph Friedly as vice-president.

**Publishing.** We are thankful that throughout this season we were still able to move forward with several publications, and have continued to finalize Grassmarket Press (more below). Here are some of the recent and upcoming publications:

- *7 Big Questions Your Life Depends On* by William Edgar is a little but tre-

mendously helpful book in seeking biblical answers to the questions that often confront us in our daily lives.

- *Portraits of Christ* by Gordon Keddie and David Whitla is a compilation of forty meaty devotional studies on the fullness of Jesus Christ.
- *White Chief of Cache Creek* by Faith Martin and Charles McBurney is a gripping history of the RPCNA's mission to the Comanche and other Indian tribes in Oklahoma.
- The printing of *Christ-Centered Voting* was a mandate given to us by Synod in 2019.
- *The Directory of Synod Actions* was helpfully compiled by Nathaniel Pockras and is now complete and published as a PDF book on Reformed-Presbyterian.org. We tried to keep our in-house costs low, and added a line on the copyright page to encourage donations to Mr. Pockras for his work.
- We look forward to soon publishing *Alexander McLeod's Shorter Writings* which are edited by Gordon Keddie. Additionally, Bill Edgar has recently handed in his manuscript for the *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1921-1980*, which we anticipate publishing in the near future. This is a sequel to his title from 2019.

**Grassmarket Press Imprint (GMP).** Grassmarket Press (which has been reported on before) is a new imprint to Crown & Covenant. The goal of GMP is to provide readable material to the everyday man on the doctrine, worship, and practice of Presbyterianism. More information can be found at [grassmarketpress.org](http://grassmarketpress.org).

Our goal with GMP is ambitious but hopeful. If you and/or your congregations would be interested in partnering with and contributing to this good work we would appreciate any assistance that can be given, and are thankful for that which we have received.

Due to the uncertainty of 2020 and the busy schedules of our initial authors (who are all pastors) there has been some delay from the original timeline. However, one manuscript is finished and two more are in the final stage so we anticipate the first of this imprint will be published this year. We also continue to be excited about this project and have begun discussions and lining up authors for more books.

**Online Presence.** Together with webmaster Scott Doherty, Crown & Covenant continues to oversee and manage several websites. In the spring of 2020 there was a series of cyberattacks on the system that processes transactions for a couple of our websites; this was able to be immediately addressed and we opted to pay for a higher level of site security to minimize our exposure to future attacks. Cybersecurity is becoming increasingly important for all who are doing

commerce on the internet and, unfortunately, it adds to our overhead costs without much visible benefit. That said, highlights from our web presence include:

- A migration of the C&C store together with a redesign of crownandcovenant.com.
- In the last six months psalter.org has grown by over 10%, to nearly 450 subscribers.
- The psalm-slides site is now completely operational at SingPsalms.org.
- C&C psalms on music services continue to grow in usefulness; on Spotify we have more than a thousand monthly listeners.
- We continue to maintain and update a number of writer sites for C&C authors.

**Reformed Presbyterian Witness.** Under the editorship of Drew Gordon, the *Witness* continues to publish six issues per year, in print and online. Recently, we have added some recurring columns including a *Question & Answer* column written by James Faris and Noah Bailey. Additionally, we have a regular contribution from *The Jerusalem Chamber* working through the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. We are thankful for Drew's continued labors in helping people connect with the RPCNA.

Some discussion has taken place on the Board about how to continue to fulfill Synod's mandate for the *RP Witness*. We have committed ourselves to some long-range planning that will hopefully chart a clear path forward to further consider our stewardship of resources. For example, the receipts from the *Witness* totaled \$32,808 for 2020 while disbursements—sans employee compensation(s)—totaled \$25,732. At the end of the day the *Witness* does not put us ahead, but we believe (together with Synod) that it is a benefit to the RPCNA. Further, we would like to continue to think through the best ways to make the *RP Witness* coordinate with our increasingly digital age.

**Personnel.** Drew and Lynne Gordon continue to oversee the staff and the work at Crown & Covenant. Additionally, the Gordons recently hired Natalie Dell Hacker for the editorial assistant position that opened up when Shelby Gillies left on April 30. Others part-time employees help to fill out the office staff. This summer the Gordons look forward to having Aubrynn Whitted from the University of Pennsylvania-Kutztown for an internship.

**Finances.** Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic as a small business was at times challenging. Aside from an initial drop in sales, the cancelation of RPI 2020 was a significant blow to budget expectations for the year. Thankfully, with the help of government PPP assistance we were able to end 2020 \$15,000 ahead. We have also been provided for through sales, RPM&M, endowment funds, and direct contributions. The Board is working diligently to oversee a manageable budget that stewards well the resources with which we have been entrusted.

**Nominations (for the Nominating Committee):** (1) that Erin Bartel be appointed for the class of 2024; and (2) that Linda Parker be appointed for the class of 2025.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Class 2020 (extended):*

*Daniel Howe*

*Class 2021:*

*Linda Parker*

*Class 2022:*

*Bob Bibby*

*Betty Burger*

*Joseph Friedly (Vice President)*

*Class 2023:*

*Eileen Bechtold*

*Matt Filbert*

*Kyle Borg (President)*

## Appendix:

**Sales from last 12 months compared to previous 12 months of select titles (bold titles indicate some increase in sales)**

	4/2019-3/2020	4/2020-3/2021
<b>150 Questions About the Psalter</b>	113	<b>115</b>
<b>7 Big Questions Your Life Depends On</b>	N/A	<b>427</b>
<b>ARP Psalter, pew edition</b>	138	<b>260</b>
<b>Book of Psalms for Singing</b>	721	<b>1350</b>
<b>Christ-Centered Voting</b>	89	<b>395</b>
<i>From the Lips of Little Ones</i>	235	<b>199</b>
<i>God Breathed</i> (Etheridge)	943	<b>419</b>
<i>Openness Unhindered</i> (Butterfield)	2605	<b>1657</b>
<b>Portraits of Christ</b> (Keddie/Whitla)	N/A	<b>689</b>
<b>Prayers of the Bible</b> (Keddie)	298	<b>509</b>
<i>The Book of Books</i>	639	<b>12</b>
<b>Book of Psalms for Worship</b>	1818	<b>1852</b>
<i>Book of Psalms for Worship, Slim Mini</i>	514	<b>478</b>
<i>The Secret Thoughts of Unlikely Convert</i> (Butterfield)	4869	<b>2692</b>
<i>The Secret Thoughts of Unlikely Convert—EXP</i>	5147	<b>3057</b>
<i>The White Chief of Cache Creek</i>	N/A	<b>344</b>
<i>Timothy, Titus and You</i>	416	<b>154</b>
<i>Trinity Psalter</i> (words-only edition)	772	<b>228</b>
<i>Westminster Larger Catechism with Scripture Proofs</i>	668	<b>108</b>

**A Little Amazon Primer:** Some of our titles sell in much greater numbers on Amazon. This is why when Amazon was broken for a few months in 2020, some of our titles dipped in sales by the thousands, especially Rosaria Butterfield's titles. While we appreciate the reach and exposure that Amazon gives us, we make a fraction of what we make on an individual book sale, as compared to our own webstore. The average Amazon fee on a book is 45-50% (it is much less on other products). This includes housing, packaging, and shipping to customer, but not our shipping to them. One way to see the difference is to look at one book as an example: *The Book of Psalms for Worship* has a retail of \$21. Ama-

zon charges us \$10.37 for every *BOPFW* they sell. By the time we pay to print it and ship it to them, we clear about \$2 per book. When we sell directly from our web-store, we clear about \$11 for an individual book. For now, our plan is to keep most of our titles on Amazon because it does help our discoverability, sales, and reach. It even helps warehouse some of our books. However, we are going to raise our retail prices where we can to increase our margins at Amazon and—at the same time—increase the discounts and perks at our webstore—coupon codes, personalizations, and great customer service. We are also continuing to explore relationships with other platforms that may someday be able to be an Amazon substitute, like 10ofthose.com and bookshop.org.

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### Home Mission Board Report to Synod 2021

Fathers and Brothers: The Home Mission Board is grateful to Christ for the continued growth of the RPCNA. As of our Fall 2020 meeting we were pleased to note that including the Japan Presbytery, we stood at 105 congregations. The 2020 Vision has been blessed by the Lord and for that, we give great thanks to Jesus Christ and for His promise to build His Church. At the same time, we have seen congregations close, including one of our church-plants. As of the time of this writing, we are at 104 congregations; that figure includes mission churches, but does not include preaching stations or exploratory works. As exciting as it is to see many new works, we are mindful that existing works and their laborers must be strengthened.

**Congregations and Persons Receiving Aid:** The HMB is currently funding church-plants through reducing aid, exploratory grants, Resident in Training assistance, and Regional Home Missionary support.

**Bryan, Texas:** Bryan will receive \$17,595 for aid in 2021; their reducing aid is scheduled through 2023. The church-plant has seen good growth under Rev. Rockhill and recently received their fiftieth member (baptized).

**Harrisonburg, Virginia** is on the same schedule as Bryan (TX) for reducing aid. They will receive \$17,658. The congregation reports good, steady growth under Rev. Bever.

**Reno, Nevada:** Reno is one of the most recent recipients of HMB reducing aid. In 2021, the Board will give \$31,965 to this congregation. Since Rev. Samul has been able to reduce his time in bi-vocational ministry, the congregation has been growing. This is the reason reducing aid grants are given—so a minister may be able to labor full-time in the field and the congregation may grow through a focused ministry.

**Columbia, Missouri:** This congregation is the most recent recipient of reducing aid. In Jan. 2021, Rev. Gary McNamee was installed as pastor of the Grace Reformed Church. This MWP congregation had come to us from the



Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). This year the congregation will receive \$34,506. Already, there are evident signs of blessings with Rev. McNamee's ministry.

**Central Valley, California:** Rev. Tim McCracken continues to be partially funded by the HMB. This year we are giving him \$17,658 towards his ministry to prisoners in California. The HMB's mandate is to support church-planting and evangelism, and we have felt that Rev. McCracken's ministry certainly qualifies. The Board is thankful for Tim's work that reaches those not usually served by the RPCNA.

**Treasure Valley—Boise, Idaho:** The Board granted the Pacific Coast Presbytery \$15,000 to explore church-planting in Boise. Rev. Ryan Hemphill is moving to the location (what we call a "parachute drop") and will be beginning worship services in June. Rev. Hemphill already has several contacts and even a former OPC ruling elder and family ready to help start the work. Both the Seattle RPC and the Pacific Coast Presbytery are supporting the work.

**Paul Martin:** Paul has been serving as Regional Home Missionary (RHM) for the Presbytery of the Alleghenies for many years. HMB is dedicating \$7,200 for 2021. Rev. Martin has helped facilitate the planting of Birmingham, Alabama, as well as exploring new regions, encouraging church planters, and organizing a prayer meeting for the ministers in the South.

**Drew Poplin:** Drew is new to the RPCNA. A former Baptist minister, he has come under care of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery under the oversight of First RPC of Durham and Rev. Butterfield. First RPC of Durham has been granted the Resident In Training (RIT) grant of \$16,000 in 2021 and \$24,000 in 2022. Mr. Poplin will be involved in local outreach as he finishes his exams and ministerial training to minister in the RPCNA.

**Closures:** Casper, Wyoming. A church-plant closing is always an occasion for mourning. But as the Apostle exhorts, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). The work of the church-planter and the saints in Casper was certainly not in vain. The Lord used this congregation for His Kingdom's expansion. We did learn from that closure and some of those lessons are summarized here:

- Providential tragedy greatly impacted the group—positively in binding them together and adversely as a weight on the pastor's heart.
- Dearth of eligible pastors and inability to get someone to come also adversely impacted the group. Add to this that the COVID-19 shut down also providentially hindered the process of hearing candidates.
- Having a small number of core families magnifies the departure of even one family.

- Casper was comparatively isolated geographically.
- The geographic isolation had an impact on support offered to the plant and planter.
- A church-planter fresh out of seminary would benefit from mentoring.
- Consider sending two-by-two, as in pastor/elder or some other such arrangement.
- Take seriously the reality of spiritual warfare.
- Casper is a medium-sized town (about 60,000), perhaps lacking the pool of population that larger cities have.
- We rejoice in the fruit that has been born over the years of ministry in converts, in care for hurting families, in nurture to young believers, and in an RCUS Church in Casper.

**COVID-19:** Due to the pandemic and the Board having a Canadian member facing significant quarantine restrictions, the Board has not met in person since Spring of 2020. Our plan is to meet in person beginning in the Fall of 2021. COVID-19 has made the work of church-planting slow down. Church-plants have faced difficulties in scheduling candidates and having groups meet. All this said, the work has not *ceased*.

**20/20 Vision:** In 2005, with 77 congregations/missions, the Home Mission Board proposed the 20/20 Vision which sought one hundred RPCNA congregations/missions by the year 2020. By God's grace, He has blessed us with more than that: 104. While the HMB has discussed "what comes next," we have not yet felt led by the Lord to consider a new metric for a new "milestone." It seems as if we must pray for the Lord to strengthen and establish our newest works rather than stretch ourselves thin. We also face a lack of laborers for the harvest. Our denomination currently has around fifteen empty pulpits. It is difficult to continue to grow the denomination with such a deficit. Please pray for wisdom on how we might proceed. We are also thankful for the congregations and ministers that have entered the denomination from outside our ranks.

**Church Planter's Course:** The HMB works with Dr. Barry York of RPTS to provide training for church planters in conjunction with Dr. York's church-planting course at RPTS. The course at RPTS is every other year and helps provide further training for our church planters and Board members. The last class was conducted in Summer of 2020. Board President Rom Prakashpalaan was also invited by Dr. York to give a presentation to the class and give potential church planters an idea of how the RPCNA plants churches and the resources that we have to help church-plants. The class was very well attended. There was a distance-learning option that many church planters took. Those church planters we have spoken to have had positive feedback on the course.

**Church Planter's Retreat:** This is held every four years. Church planters and their wives in the RPCNA are invited to get away for several days at the expense of this Board. We pray that these times are refreshing so those who water may be watered (Prov. 11:25). The next retreat is planned for October 2022. The Board is considering potential topics, but pastoral burnout seems to be a timely topic, especially for church planters who labor in hard circumstances and often without local elders to support them. We are currently looking for a speaker and location. If you have recommendations, please let a Board member know.

**Financial:** The Home Mission Board requests \$70,000 from RPM&M.

**Prayer:** We ask Synod to pray for wisdom for how we should next press forward with church-planting, now that the 2020 Vision has come to pass, by God's grace.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Rom Prakashpalan, Midwest (President)*

*John Edgar, Atlantic (Vice President)*

*Brian Panichelle, Alleghenies (Secretary)*

*Jason Camery, Great Lakes/Gulf*

*Doug Chamberlain, St. Lawrence*

*Patrick McNeely, Pacific Coast*

*Vicki Smith, at large*

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## **Graduate Study Committee Report to 2021 Synod**

Fathers and Brothers: Synod established the Graduate Study Fund in 1961 in order to encourage Reformed Presbyterians to pursue graduate studies. The grants it provides are focused on helping RPs (pastors and others) to become academically qualified to serve in our seminary, college, and the wider Church, and on assisting pastors who wish to enhance their pastoral usefulness through post-graduate study.

Your Committee is composed of the presidents of our college and seminary plus two members elected by Synod. The chairman must be an elected member and serves by common consent. The Committee administers graduate study grants from funds provided by Synod.

Our application and policy documents are on the denomination's website, [ReformedPresbyterian.org](http://ReformedPresbyterian.org), in the "Agencies" section; applicants will find the most recent documents there. Deadlines for grant request submissions are April 1st and September 1st. Note that our grant funding is based on the calendar year, not the academic year. Grants are made on a year-by-year basis, subject to Synod funding; applicants must re-apply each year. The granting of an initial application does not guarantee future renewal.

In the last few years, a significant proportion of the available funds have been needed to support the studies of men endorsed by RPTS and Geneva College. Grants in 2020 and 2021 were made to an individual pursuing a Masters degree in linguistics (with a view to Bible translation ministry) and to eight

pastors pursuing either D.Min. or Ph.D. degrees. The grants represent only a portion of the total cost of these studies, as recipients bear some of the costs from their own funds, are receiving scholarship support, and/or have funding from their presbyteries or other donors.

We approved the following grants for 2020 and 2021:

Name	Degree Program/ School	Anticipated Completion	Purpose	2020 Grant Approved	2021 Grant Approved
Bridget Carroll	M.A./U. of N. Dakota	2020	Bible trans.	\$1,500	n/a
Scott Doherty	Ph.D./WTS (PA)	2021	Pastor/prof.	\$2,500	\$2,500
John D. Edgar	D.Min./RPTS	2021	Pastoral enrich.	\$100	n/a
Rutledge Etheridge	Ph.D./WTS (PA)		Request of Geneva Coll.	\$18,250	\$14,000
Keith Evans	Ph.D./Southern Baptist Theo. Sem.	2021	Request of RPTS	\$13,900	\$12,275
Yusuke Hirata	Ph.D./Union Theo. College, Belfast	2023	Pastor/prof.	n/a	\$3,750
Derek Moore	Th.M/Ph.D./PRTS	2025	Pastor/prof.	n/a	\$1,650
Alex Tabaka	Ph.D./WTS (PA)	2022	Pastor/prof.	\$1,250	\$1,550
Namsik Yang	Ph.D./PRTS	2023	Pastor/prof	\$2,500	\$2,500

**Prayer Requests:** We are thankful that the Lord has been giving more RPs gifts suited to graduate study in recent years and that He has provided funds to support them. Please give thanks with us and pray that God would continue to use these individuals for His own glory.

**Nominations:** Tom Fisher is completing his second term on the committee this year and is not eligible for re-election. We are nominating David Carroll to serve on the Committee; Mr. Carroll is a ruling elder in the Stillwater congregation and has served Synod in the past on various committees, including the Business of Synod Committee.

**Finances:** In 2020 and 2021, our funding of \$40,000 was less than the grant requests that we received, and we expect this to be the case next year. Recognizing that funds to support the various ministry needs are limited, we are again requesting \$40,000.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Tom Fisher, Chairman (2021, 2nd term)*

*Barry York (President, RPTS)*

*John Stahl (2022, 1st term)*

*Calvin Troup (President, Geneva College)*

## 2021 Report of the Interchurch Committee to Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers: The Interchurch Committee (IC) met by video-conference twice since last summer: November 10, 2020, and March 25, 2021.

### **Relationship with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP).**

Over the past several years the IC has made an intentional effort to build a stronger relationship with the ARP. At our spring meeting, we invited members of their Interchurch Committee to meet with our IC to discuss further ways to strengthen our bonds. Out of that grew a statement of general vision for the relationship from our perspective as well as several specific goals to pursue. You may look at this working page in the appendix of this report. Here is the general vision of intentionally building our relationship:

In order to develop unity in the visible church, the ARP and RPC have pursued a path of drawing closer by reaching out to know each other better, and to seek to discover ways of mutual cooperation, service, and study. We believe that while we have differences, we may still learn from each other and that our ties will be strengthened as we explore and develop mutual relations. This path is not a proposal for organic union, nevertheless it presents significant goals worthy of our continued pursuit.

Among the stated goals the Committee has identified some ways that we can be working together more on various levels. On a Board level we've found it to be a blessing to participate in the NAPARC organized Board Consultation meetings. This has happened in the area of Global Missions for many years. We are currently investigating working with the ARP to host a similar consultation in the area of Youth Ministries. The Committee also continues to encourage you to think proactively about how your congregation and/or Presbytery might co-labor with the ARP. Consider extending an invitation to preach, or to exchange pulpits with an area pastor. Invite them to participate in your VBS program or some other cooperative outreach/mercy ministry. On the Presbytery level, keep them informed about upcoming meetings and invite them to send a fraternal delegate.

**Reformed Presbyterian Church Worldwide.** The pandemic has hindered our ability to travel so we look forward to reviving our visits as soon as possible. We continue to give a priority to make regular and intentional visits to the synod or presbytery meetings of the global RP family. Here is our planned schedule of delegates with the RPC worldwide through 2025:

- Every year we'll send a delegate to the RPC of Ireland Synod and the RPC of Scotland Presbytery.
- Every other year we will send a delegate to RPC of Australia Presbytery.

- Every year we will invite the RPC of Ireland to send a delegate.
- Every year we will invite and pay for a delegate from one of the two smaller RP churches (Australia and Scotland) to attend Synod on a rotating basis.

**North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).** The annual meeting of NAPARC for 2020 was canceled. The next meeting will be hosted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) on November 9-11, 2021, in Raleigh, NC. One practical way that your local congregation can demonstrate unity in the broader church is to note on your bulletin or website that we are a member of NAPARC.

**International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).** The ICRC, of which the RPCNA is a member denomination, meets once every four years with the next meeting being scheduled for 2022 in Namibia, Lord willing. Noting that we are a member of the ICRC would also demonstrate unity with the worldwide Reformed church.

**Fraternal Delegates.** As possible, we will send fraternal delegates to our sister churches and send out reports on those visits. You can find a list of fraternal churches in the appendix to this report. We have made one change to this list. The North American Synod of the Free Church of Scotland was dissolved in 2016 and replaced with a Presbytery made up of three congregations (two on Prince Edward Isle and one in Livonia, MI). Given this change we have removed them from our list of fraternal churches with the encouragement that presbyteries with geographical closeness might consider reaching out to these remaining churches.

**Finances:** The IC requests \$15,000 for committee expenses, membership fees, travel and delegate expenses.

**Nominations:** The Interchurch Committee nominates Dan Dupuis to the class of 2027 with thanks to Matt Kingswood whose second term has expired.

**Recommendations:** None.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Matt Kingswood; Class of 2020, 2nd term*

*Bruce Parnell, chm.; Class of 2021, 2nd term*

*Dean McHenry; Class of 2022, 1st term*

*Jerry Milroy; Class of 2023, 2nd term*

*Drew Gordon; Class of 2024, 1st term*

*Bruce Backensto; Class of 2025, 2nd term*

*Bruce Martin, Exec. Sect.; Class of 2022*

.....

## **Appendix 1 – Fraternal Churches**

The RPCNA has ecclesiastical fellowship on three levels with the following churches:

1. REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES – full intercommunion:
  - a. Reformed Presbytery of Australia
  - b. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
  - c. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland
2. CHURCHES IN FRATERNAL RELATIONS
  - a. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
  - b. Aweil Community Church in South Sudan
  - c. Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus
  - d. Korean American Presbyterian Church
  - e. L'Église Reformée du Québec
  - f. Orthodox Presbyterian Church
  - g. Presbyterian Church in America
  - h. Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
  - i. Reformed Church in the U.S.
  - j. United Reformed Churches in North America
3. OBSERVER CHURCHES
  - a. Canadian Reformed Churches
  - b. Heritage Reformed Churches

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## **Appendix 2 – NAPARC Member Churches**

The member churches of NAPARC are:

- Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP)
- Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)
- Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ)
- Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)
- Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)
- Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)
- Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA)
- Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)
- Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)
- Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC)
- Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)
- United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA)

It should be noted that membership in NAPARC does not automatically place us in fraternal relations with each of the other denominations. In fact, each church designates its own levels of ecclesiastical fellowship and there is

no uniformity to these designations among the member churches. For some, fraternal relationship means involvement in active talks toward unifying the two churches.

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### **Appendix 3: ARPC-RPC Bilateral Vision and Goals**

*(Rising out of a joint meeting of the respective Interchurch Committees on March 25, 2021. This reflects the thinking of the RPC IC.)*

General Vision for intentionally building our relationship:

In order to develop unity in the visible church, the ARP and RPC have pursued a path of drawing closer by reaching out to know each other better, and to seek to discover ways of mutual cooperation, service, and study. We believe that while we have differences, we may still learn from each other, and that our ties will be strengthened as we explore and develop mutual relations. This path is not a proposal for organic union, nevertheless it presents significant goals worthy of our continued pursuit.

**Stated goals**—to draw near in a way that gives mutual benefit to each denomination:

1. Maintain formal relationship by ...
    - a. annual attendance at respective Synods
    - b. invitations to preach at Synod
  2. Promote efforts on the congregational/presbytery level by ...
    - a. invitations to preach or exchange pulpits
    - b. promote having fraternal delegates at presbytery
  3. Build relationships that develop mutual benefit and service by ...
    - a. joint meeting of various boards or
    - b. promote participation at NAPARC board consultations (e.g. foreign missions)
    - c. consider jointly sponsoring NAPARC board consultation
    - d. consider pre-synod conferences, maybe drawing in other NAPARC speakers (possible subjects: elders, evangelism, ... ) (e.g. ARP pre-synod conference aimed at evangelism by their ONA)
    - e. explore areas of education or publication that could bless both bodies (e.g. ARP Adult Quarterly or Psalter project).
-



## RP International Conference Advisory Committee to 2021 Synod

Dear Brothers: Elephant in the room ... we did **not** have one of our much-loved international conferences in 2020 OR 2021 ... nor are we inclined to continue pushing this out year after year “until it is safe.” One lesson learned last year (and we take responsibility for any offense) involves increasing our communication with the presbyteries and those responsible for the many other important summer conferences. Lord willing, our next RPIC will be in 2024 (dates tba, soon). That said, much good effort was invested and our generous Savior encourages us to be a grateful people. Our outstanding, long-serving program director—Bruce Backensto—offers this review:

God’s providence beset humanity globally with a pandemic, COVID-19. As a result, RPIC 2020 was tentatively postponed to become RPIC 2021 ... which was then canceled for many reasons. As plans are now being readied for RPIC 2024, we are pleased that Sam Spear will serve as program director, with Dr. Joel Ward assisting. Here we list hard-working, talented friends who prepared to serve us well; some will continue as we press toward 2024. Operations: Kyle Reed and Jack Dillard. Registrars: Kim Backensto and Lorrie Meneely. Webmaster: Tim Meneely. Treasurers: Dennis Wing and Andrew Stewart. Secretary: Linda Parker. We’re thankful to these directors who prepared for each canceled conference. College-age: Jonathan and Elsa Sturm. High school: Keith and Jill Mann. Youth counselor coord.: Will and Sarah McChesney. Middle school: Noah Bailey. Juniors (grades 1-5): Dr. Meg Morton and Jennifer George. Wee ones (ages 2-5): Barb Mann. Seminars / workshops for adults: Adam Niess and HP McCracken. Recreation: Afton Pelton and Micah Ramsey. Activities for singles (coord.): Vida Brown. Main speaker: Rev. Warren Peel, with challenging messages from Daniel. Preachers (for Wed., Fri., Lord’s Day): Revs. Kyle Borg, James Faris, Paul Martin, Rut Etheridge. Now, we are greatly looking forward to RPIC 2024, D.V.

Allow Synod’s Advisory Committee to add this final word about how thankful we are to the never-retired Rev. Bruce Backensto for his many years of assembling great teams, then coordinating their service for encouraging weeks of worship, fellowship, and rejoicing. As an ongoing legacy, Bruce has prepared The Team very well for success as he steps away from his leadership post. Bruce made our advisory committee task very simple.

**Nominations:** We need replacements for Pastor Andy McCracken (RPC of

Australia) and Elder Sam Spear; both will be for the Class of 2025 (with our four-year terms).

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Andy McCracken*

*Sam Spear*

*Garrett Mann*

*Adam Niess*

*John McFarland (chairman)*

## **2020-2021 Report to Synod from the Presbyterian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains & Military Personnel (PRCCMP)**

### **I. Reports from Endorsed Chaplains:**

#### **A. Report from Chaplain (MAJ) Ross Fearing, U.S. Army Reserve.**

**Overview.** In addition to serving as pastor at Sparta RPC, I serve as a Chaplain in the US Army Reserve assigned to the 77th Quartermaster Group (Petroleum) (QM GRP) station at Ft. Bliss, Texas, near El Paso, Texas.

**Duties.** As Group Chaplain to the 77th Quartermaster Group, I perform and provide religious support to over 1,000 soldiers in multiple duty locations in Texas and New Mexico. Some of my key responsibilities are performing regular chapel services, providing pastoral counseling, supervising and mentoring subordinate chaplains, and providing ethical and moral leadership and advice to leaders and soldiers.

**Ministry Update.** I have been serving in my current position for one year, having previously served at the battalion level first in Harlingen, Texas, and then El Paso, Texas. This is my first assignment at a brigade-size element. In addition, I was recently promoted to Major. I have been able to provide regular chapel services—introducing soldiers to the richness of Reformed preaching and the joys of singing the Psalms. In addition, I am routinely counseling soldiers regarding a host of personal and spiritual issues, some in formal counseling settings and many more in informal settings. Finally, I get to be the personal spiritual and moral advisor to the commander, a man who sets the tone for over 1,000 men and women. One new thing about this assignment is that for the first time I oversee other chaplains and chaplain candidates within our organization. This responsibility is in many ways a joy as I get the opportunity to help young chaplains, many passionate about ministry, to learn how to serve the Lord effectively in the Army, and hopefully avoid a few of the mistakes I made in the past. At times it can be challenging as I deal with the fact that soldiers and chaplains come from a host of different background and may have quite different beliefs.

**Challenges.** There are a couple of challenges I am facing. The first is growing into my new role. I love the mentorship work with the battalion chaplain and chaplain candidates; at the same time, I am having to learn a series of adminis-

trative and planning roles. The balance of direct ministry versus enabling ministry is different and I still need to work out how best to use my time. The second challenge is that I am six months into my first pastorate. This is the first time I've had to make both church and military work. Finally, I live in Sparta, Illinois, and travel to and from drill takes six or seven hours. Blessedly, I serve in a unit that is supportive of my ministry and have had no abnormal hindrances to my work.

**Prayer Requests.** Please pray for my growth as a chaplain and as a pastor, especially in evangelism and openness about my faith. Pray for my family as I am absent from them 70+ days a year. Pray that God would raise up more RPCNA chaplains.

*In Christ, Ross Fearing, Chaplain, USAR, Pastor, Sparta RPC  
(936) 615-6336 (text/call) orfearing@gmail.com*

## II. Actions of the PRCC at the February 2020 meeting:

- A. The Commission re-elected Associate Endorsers Mack Griffith and Mike Stewart to one-year terms, and elected Don Sampson as an Associate Endorser.
- B. The PRCC re-elected the following officers for 2020: Chm., Bentley Rayburn (PCA); Vice-Chairman, Michael Yarman (ARPC); Secretary, Bill Wagner (RPCNA).
- C. The PRCC adopted a revised budget of \$567,194 for 2020 and a proposed budget of \$614,859 for 2021.
- D. The Commission approved the following updated wording for the PRCC Chaplains' Manual Requirements and Duties Section VII. WHAT THE COMMISSION EXPECTS FROM THE ENDORSEE/ CANDIDATE. The new text is:

"VII. WHAT THE COMMISSION EXPECTS FROM THE ENDORSEE/  
CANDIDATE

A. Maintain regular contact with his presbytery by providing copies of his required PRCC reports and through other forms of communication such as an email or letter to the Stated Clerk, or to the appropriate Committee Chairman of his Presbytery.

B. Each chaplain should make every effort to attend presbytery meetings in person as they're able, even pursuing 'orders' (if they're military) as the command may allow. If unable to attend a meeting of presbytery, he should follow the rules of his presbytery in requesting an excused absence for each meeting.

C. A chaplain in good standing in a PRCC-related denomination will not be endorsed by any other endorsing agency.

D. Notify the Executive Director and Presbytery:

- 1. on change of assignment or duty station, change

of status, change of address, promotion, etc.

2. if significant difficulties with, or disciplinary action by, his command are encountered; the endorsee's denominational commissioners must be notified as well.

3. if the endorsee or candidate changes or considers changing his theological position; it is a profound and necessary professional courtesy to notify the endorser and presbytery of potential or actual changes in one's vows.

E. Provide regular reports:

1. Active-duty military and full-time civilian chaplains will submit three written ministry reports (with prayer requests) per year to the Commission and provide any other information relative to their ministry when requested by the Commission or their presbytery. Those triannual reports are due March 1, July 1, and November 1.

2. Reserve Component Military Chaplains and Part-time or Volunteer Civilian Chaplains will submit at least an annual written ministry report (with prayer requests) to the Commission."

### **III. Actions of the PRCC at the February 2021 meeting:**

- A. The Commission re-elected Associate Endorsers Mack Griffith, Don Sampson, and Mike Stewart to one-year terms.
- B. The PRCC re-elected the following officers for 2020: Chairman, Bentley Rayburn (PCA); Vice-Chairman, Michael Yarman (ARPC); Secretary, Bill Wagner (RPCNA).
- C. Commissioners unanimously reelected Dr. James R. Carter (required every four years) for another four years as PRCC Executive Director and Endorser.
- D. The PRCC adopted a revised budget of \$565,786 for 2021 and a proposed budget of \$629,305 for 2022.

### **IV. Other areas of interest:**

- A. The PRCC Executive Director and Endorser Dr. James R. Carter reported that as of December 31, 2020, the PRCC had 232 military chaplains, eighteen military chaplain candidates in seminaries, and seventy endorsed civilian chaplains (eight chaplains are both military and civilian), so the total number of PRCC endorsed chaplains is 312 as of 12/31/2020. Dividing the budget by the number of chaplains endorsed gives an annual cost per chaplain of \$1,813 for 2021. The PRCC Denomination Contribution for 2021 required from the RPCNA is \$3,100 (billing is based on the number of endorsed chaplains at the end of 2019—three military and

- one civilian for the RPCNA). Our chaplains are required to pay annual dues based on military rank and status or civilian status as appropriate, and the PCA has been graciously subsidizing much of the remaining cost for our denomination.
- B. William Pihl (class of 2020) has completed his second six-year term and is not eligible for re-election. Because CH (COL) Kelly Moore, USA (Ret.) retired from active duty in the U.S. Army in March 2021 after a full and varied career at all levels of the military chaplaincy, we believe his experience and current understanding of issues facing our chaplains makes him the most qualified person to serve on the PRCC. Therefore, we submit his name to the Nominating Committee as our only candidate to fill this position (Class of 2026) and ask the Synod to elect and support him in this important role.
  - C. Executive Director Carter explained his desire to create something like a PRCC trauma care team to provide information and resources to PRCC pastors, sessions, and presbyteries as they minister to military members and their families. Its purpose would be to provide resources such as CRU has done for other organizations. It might hold regional training workshops to help pastors and/or their staffs. It would not be limited to just military. It could help (1) answer the calls Director Carter gets from pastors concerning PTSD and where to go for help and (2) provide alternate organizations that accomplish good work in this area of ministry. The VA (Veterans' Administration) does much good, but it is not Christ-centered.
  - D. Guest CH (COL) Steve Prost discussed several high-level issues of interest to the PRCC. He noted the high bar of scrutiny, that of compelling interest, is still in place for those like the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) seeking to infringe upon religious freedom. There was a recent case of Mikey Weinstein of the FFRF going after a PRCC chaplain who sent out an electronic version of John Piper's book on coronavirus without comment. In the end the chaplain was upheld, but FFRF and others are specifically targeting chaplains. Steve also said that under the concept of confidentiality for the chaplain, there is still no exception for chaplains due to federal supremacy doctrine either Title 10 or 32. In other words, chaplains still have confidentiality. Use of religious liberty rights in a winsome way is critical to providing care to all regardless of religious background.
  - E. The Executive Director and Endorser, along with the Associate Endorsers spend much time visiting and ministering to chaplains, and in assisting those who seek to become chaplains. There are many oppor-

tunities for chaplain ministry, both in military and civilian places of service. Chaplaincy positions provide opportunities to proclaim Christ and minister in His name beyond our local congregations. We would like to encourage pastors to consider chaplain ministry as an opportunity to broaden your ministry for Christ. Please note the following:

- (1) Endorsement by the PRCC is not required for many civilian chaplaincy opportunities but is available for those serving (or seeking to serve) as a civilian chaplain if needed. Contact Gary Hitzfeld (ghitzfeld@pcanet.org) for further info.
  - (2) A PRCC visionary goal for civilian chaplaincy is to have a minimum of three teaching elders in paid civilian chaplain positions, endorsed by the PRCC, in every presbytery of our member denominations.
- F. We encourage the congregations to sponsor our chaplains, and to financially support the work of the PRCC where possible:
- (1) The Commission continues to seek congregations to sponsor our chaplains through regular prayer for the chaplain, his ministry, and his family. Contact Gary Hitzfeld at ghitzfeld@pcanet.org for further information.
  - (2) The Commission is also continuing to seek congregations to consider including the PRCC in their annual missions' budgets. If your congregation is interested in providing financial support for the ministry of the PRCC, contact Gary Hitzfeld at ghitzfeld@pcanet.org for further information.
- G. We ask that Synod uphold our chaplains and their ministries in prayer and that Synod pray for the Lord to raise up more laborers from our midst for chaplain ministry.

#### **V. Recommendations are included in the body of our report.**

*Respectfully submitted, Synod's Committee to the PRCCMP:  
William Wagner, Gary McNamee, William Pihl*

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### **Youth Ministries Committee of Synod Report to 2021 Synod**

The Youth Ministries Committee of Synod plays an important role in sponsoring and supporting both new and long-standing youth initiatives at the Synod and presbytery levels of our denomination.

However, as with so many activities in our church, youth ministry has witnessed a significant hiatus in events during the COVID-19 pandemic. A key part of your committee's role is to coordinate youth activities at the Synod level. For 2020-21, we had anticipated and planned to lead the youth program at the RP International Conference. Our team was in advanced stages of prepa-

rations when the Conference committee was compelled to cancel due to the pandemic. It is hoped that the groundwork we have laid will be easy to return to and use for the next conference.

Similarly, 2020 saw no Theological Foundations for Youth (a seminary program which is also supported by YMCS). However, we're pleased to report that with appropriate COVID-19 protocols in place it is anticipated that there will be two programs this summer—one to accommodate new applicants, the other to accommodate last year's disappointed group. While the off-campus events will be restricted considerably, we are hopeful to give our young people the same full slate of courses and as many normal activities as possible. We especially covet your prayers that the measures we take might in the Lord's providence preserve attendees from illness.

YMCS met virtually in the fall of 2020 and had a useful meeting to discuss, among other things, the peculiar needs of our young people through the unique stresses and limited fellowship of the pandemic and how each presbytery was attempting to minister to its young people in these difficult times. Through this consultation, many useful ideas were exchanged and implemented in the remaining months of state lockdowns.

We met again in spring 2021 in Beaver Falls and in the absence of an immediate event to plan since the cancellation of RPI 2021, we instead addressed other matters. First, we heard the normal youth ministry reports from each presbytery—which of course in the pandemic were anything but normal! Our youth are eager to get back to fellowship as restrictions ease, but some presbyteries face the fresh challenge of starting up presbytery-wide youth events again which have lost considerable momentum due to repeated cancellations. Pacific Coast Presbytery in particular reported the urgent need to maintain the momentum of its youth activities with a loss of leadership at the departure of the Eshelmans and local COVID-19 restrictions. It was agreed to invest some YMCS funds in the PCP to maintain its annual youth conference at a new venue and send personnel support (counselors, etc.) from neighboring presbyteries if needed. The temporary suspension of the Theological Foundations Backpacking trip with the recent loss of key coordinating staff was also noted, and it is hoped this valuable program will find fresh leadership to maintain its vision and begin again soon.

Secondly, we had a strategic discussion about the subject of child protection at presbytery and congregational youth events. Presbytery reps were reminded to ensure that their child protection policies were up to date with evolving mandatory reporting rules state to state, and to encourage congregations to ensure they have policies in place and up to date clearances for their youth workers. In order to better facilitate our reps. offering practical guidance

on these matters to congregations, it was decided to order a copy of Deepak Reju's book, *On Guard* from Crown & Covenant for each presbytery representative, and also to invite attorney Rob Keenan (North Hills RPC) to make a presentation and answer child protection questions at the YMCS fall meeting.

Moving forward, in the interests of reaching a broader base of young people across the denomination, we've decided to host our Youth Leadership Conferences alternately in the Eastern US at Geneva College and at a new venue in the Western U.S.; our next YLC is thus scheduled for July 22-25, 2022 at the Golden Bell Camp and Conference Center (Divide, CO).

Membership of the YMCS is appointed by presbyteries, with the exception of the synodical liaison (chm.) and current RPMissions director. In fall of 2019, David Whitla resumed his role as synodical liaison following his return from doctoral studies in Northern Ireland (thereby relieving Matt Filbert's *pro-tem* chairmanship), and Keith Mann replaced Matt as RP Missions representative upon becoming its program director. Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery also appointed Ken and Christy Nelson as *pro-tem* members at its spring 2022 meeting.

We covet your prayers for the ongoing work of discipling our young people!

For Finance Committee: We request that Synod allocate \$12,000 to YMCS for 2021-22.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Will & Sarah McChesney (Alleghenies)*

*Kyle & Violet Finley (Atlantic)*

*Ken & Christy Nelson (Great Lakes / Gulf)*

*Craig & Shana Milroy (Midwest)*

*Paul & Megan Hemphill (Pacific Coast)*

*Keith Mann (RP Missions)*

*Chris & Megan Goerner (St. Lawrence)*

*David Whitla (Synodical Liaison)*

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## Report of the RPCNA Stated Clerk as of December 31, 2020

### MEMBERSHIP

	<u>12/31/2019</u>	<u>12/31/2020</u>
Communicant Members	5,274	5,274
Baptized Members	2,159	2,162
Total Members	7,433	7,436
Increases:		
By Baptism	179	179
By Profession of Faith	114	132
From Other RP Congregations	187	316
From Other Denominations	202	216
Other	22	23
Total Increase	704	866



## Decreases:

Deaths	42	53
To Other RP Congregations	198	352
To Other Denominations	252	278
Final Removal	151	99
Other	68	81
Total Decrease	711	863
Baptized Member becoming Communicant Member	75	52

**CONGREGATIONS**

Congregations	94	95
Mission Churches	12	10
Teaching Elders	182	180
Men Under Care of Presbyteries	43	37
Certified Eligible to Preach	12	17
Certified Eligible to Receive a Call	11	6
Ruling Elders	280	283
Deacons	260	265
Missionaries	5	5
Sabbath Worship Average Attendance *	6,218	6,218

\* "Average Attendance Worship" is taken from the 2019 submitted statistics, as 2020 attendance statistics were inconsistent due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**CONGREGATIONAL FINANCES**

	<u>12/31/2019</u>	<u>12/31/2020</u>
Beginning Balances	6,403,800	6,952,225
Receipts	15,975,844	15,983,632
Disbursements		
Pastors Salaries & Comp.	6,419,002	6,451,885
RP Mission & Ministry	455,384	468,718
Other RP Works	927,919	972,659
External Ministries	460,057	585,660
Other	5,826,080	5,678,337
Total Disbursements	14,088,442	14,157,259
Transfers	(1,338,977)	218,162
Ending Balances	6,952,225	8,996,763
Other Assets	8,052,264	9,424,447

**Congregations/Missions Organized or Received from other Denominations**

Hope Community RPC, Beaver Falls, PA	Alleghenies	10/09/2020
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Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Lo Prado Alleghenies 11/2020  
(Mission Church, Santiago / Batuco, Chile)

### Congregations/Missions Disorganized

Pageland RP Mission Church, SC Great Lakes / Gulf 03/02/2020  
Casper RP Mission, WY Midwest 06/03/2020

### Names of Preaching Stations

Louisville, KY Great Lakes / Gulf

### Vacant Congregations/Missions

Birmingham RP Mission Church, AL Alleghenies  
Covenant RPC, Aurora, OH Alleghenies  
Coldenham-Newburgh RPC, NY Atlantic  
Ridgefield Park RPC, NJ Atlantic  
Christ Church RPC, Brownsburg, IN Great Lakes / Gulf 10/05/2020  
Columbus RPC, IN Great Lakes / Gulf 03/24/2020  
Orlando RPC, FL Great Lakes / Gulf 10/19/2020  
Selma RPC, AL Great Lakes / Gulf  
Sparta RPC, IL Great Lakes / Gulf  
Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL Great Lakes / Gulf  
Denison RPC, KS Midwest  
Grace Reformed Mission, Columbia, MO Midwest  
Minneola RPC, KS Midwest 11/22/2020  
Westminster RPC, CO Midwest 11/13/2020  
Fresno RPC, CA Pacific Coast  
Las Vegas Mission Church, NV Pacific Coast  
N. Shore Chinese Bible Truth MC, W Vanc., BC Pacific Coast

Presbytery	Ministers						Congregations	
	2019 Total	2020 Total	Pastors	Other Church Work	Retired	Other	Congs.	Mission Churches
Alleghenies	47	48	20	8	14	6	16	2
Atlantic	12	11	7	0	3	1	9	0
Great Lakes/Gulf	41	38	19	3	15	1	21	1
Japan	5	6	6	0	0	0	4	1
Midwest	42	41	21	2	11	7	23	2
Pacific Coast	14	14	10	2	1	1	8	4
St. Lawrence	21	22	14	1	6	1	14	0
Totals	182	180	97	16	50	17	95	10

**Ministers Ordained and Installed**

Gabriel Wingfield	Oswego RPC, NY	Installed	07/24/2020
Rom. Prakashpalan	Dallas RPC, TX	Installed	07/31/2020
Trace Turner	Grace State College RPC, PA	Ord./Inst.	08/22/2020
Garrett Mann	Lisbon RPC, NY	Installed	09/25/2020
George Gregory	Hope Community RPC, PA	Installed	10/09/2020
Yusuke Hirata	Kasumigaoka RPC, Japan	Ord./Inst.	11/08/2020
H.P. McCracken	Salt & Light, Longmont, CO	Installed	11/13/2020
Noah Shepherd	San Diego RPC, CA	Ord./Inst.	11/21/2020
William Chellis	Walton RPC, NY	Installed	12/12/2020

**Ministers Received from Other Denominations**

None

**Ministers Released from Pastoral Charges**

Lucas Hanna	First Reformed, Beaver Falls, PA	01/22/2020
Andrew McCracken	Columbus RPC, IN	03/24/2020
Kit Swartz	Oswego RPC, NY	05/30/2020
Mark England	San Diego RPC, CA	05/31/2020
Gabriel Wingfield	Christ RPC, E. Providence, RI	06/01/2020
Martin Wilsey	Salt & Light RPC, Longmont, CO	08/31/2020
Michael LeFebvre	Christ Church RPC, Brownsburg, IN	10/05/2020
H.P. McCracken	Orlando RPC, FL	10/19/2020
Shane Sapp	Westminster RPC, CO	11/13/2020
Dan Bartel	Minneola RPC, KS	11/22/2020
Mark Koller	Dallas RPC, TX	12/29/2020

**Stated Supplies**

Ryan Bever	Grace & Truth, Harrisonburg, VA
Brett Mahler	Westminster RPC, IL
Zheng (James) Zhou	North Shore Chinese Bible Truth Mission, W Vancouver BC

**Ministers Transferred to Other Denominations**

Andrew McCracken	RPC of Australia	03/24/2020
Michael LeFebvre	no destination specified	10/23/2020
Daniel Kok	to Free Church (Continuing)	12/02/2020

**Deaths of Teaching Elders**

John Tweed	05/25/2020
James Carson	08/01/2020
Robert Fullerton	12/13/2020

**Deaths of Ruling Elders**

Jorge Klajnbart	Springs Reformed, CO	02/15/2020
Bruce E. Adams	Southfield RPC, MI	03/30/2020
Bob Mann	Springs Reformed, CO	06/11/2020
Charles "Chip" Lorraine	Christ Church, Floyd, NY	06/15/2020
Aubrey Ayer	Ottawa RPC, Ont.	08/13/2020
Gene Huggins	Syracuse RPC, NY	09/13/2020
Philip Duguid	Topeka RPC, KS	09/19/2020
Bruce Miller	Rose Point RPC, PA	09/27/2020
Russell James	Hebron RPC, Clay Center, KS	12/29/2020

**Theological Students**

Matthew Bates	Alleghenies	
H.B.	Alleghenies	06/26/2020
Keith Dewell	Alleghenies	
Frank Du	Alleghenies	
Joe Dunlap	Alleghenies	
Jordan Feagley	Alleghenies	
Edgar Ibarra	Alleghenies	
Robert Kelbe	Alleghenies	06/26/2020
Mike Labutta	Alleghenies	
Charles Oles	Alleghenies	11/13/2020
Joshua Smith	Alleghenies	05/21/2020
Jason Thoman	Alleghenies	
Zachary Dotson	Atlantic	
Hunter Jackson	Atlantic	
Allen Blackwood	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Mark Brown	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/05/2020
Tre Crawford	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Aaron Murray	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Joe Smith	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Jonathan Sturm	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Colin Doyle	Japan	
Takaaki Inoue	Japan	06/29/2020
Hayato Ohara	Japan	
Dempei Takiura	Japan	
Keita Yasunaga	Japan	
Nicki Imperato	Midwest	
Seni Adeyemi	Pacific Coast	
Jerry Foltz	Pacific Coast	
Sean Holm	Pacific Coast	

Johnathan Kruis	Pacific Coast
Stephen Mulder	Pacific Coast
George Wallace	Pacific Coast
Zheng (James) Zhou	Pacific Coast
Scott Doherty	St. Lawrence
Chris Goerner	St. Lawrence
Mark Goerner	St. Lawrence
Reuben Lindeman	St. Lawrence

**Certified Eligible to Preach**

Matthew Bates	Alleghenies	
Keith Dewell	Alleghenies	06/26/2020
Joe Dunlap	Alleghenies	
Jordan Feagley	Alleghenies	2020
Edgar Ibarra	Alleghenies	
Jason Thoman	Alleghenies	11/13/2020
Zachary Dotson	Atlantic	
Hunter Jackson	Atlantic	03/26/2020
Mark Brown	Great Lakes / Gulf	08/25/2020
Hayato Ohara	Japan	
Keita Yasunaga	Japan	
Jerry Foltz	Pacific Coast	
Sean Holm	Pacific Coast	
Stephen Mulder	Pacific Coast	
Zheng (James) Zhou	Pacific Coast	
Chris Goerner	St. Lawrence	11/17/2020
Reuben Lindeman	St. Lawrence	

**Certified Eligible to Receive a Call**

Timothy Bloedow	Alleghenies	
Edgar Ibarra	Alleghenies	06/26/2020
H.L.	Alleghenies	
Stephen Mulder	Pacific Coast	03/12/2020
Scott Doherty	St. Lawrence	
Mark Goerner	St. Lawrence	

**ADDENDA**

**Congregations/Missions Organized**

Treasure Valley RP MC, Boise, ID	Pacific Coast	03/11/2021
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**Congregations/Missions Disorganized**

Trinity Reformed, Wichita, KS	Midwest	01/01/2021
Minneola RPC, KS	Midwest	03/17/2021

**Vacant Congregations**

Shawnee RPC, KS	Midwest	01/03/2021
Clarinda RPC, IA	Midwest	03/08/2021
Los Angeles RPC, CA	Pacific Coast	02/21/2021
Seattle RPC, WA	Pacific Coast	04/30/2021

**Ministers Ordained and Installed**

Andrew B.	RPGM ( <i>Sine Titula</i> )	Ordained	01/08/2021
Caleb Allen	Denison RPC, KS	Installed	01/08/2021
Ross Fearing	Sparta RPC, IL	Installed	01/15/2021
Gary McNamee	Grace Reformed, Columbia, MO	Installed	01/22/2021
Sam McCracken	Tri-Lakes, Monument, CO	Installed	02/19/2021
Nathan Eshelman	Orlando RPC, FL	Installed	03/28/2021
Joel Hart	Columbus RPC, IN	Installed	04/16/2021

**Ministers Released from Pastoral Charges**

Joe Allyn	Trinity RPC, Wichita, KS	01/01/2021
Greg Stiner	Shawnee RPC, KS	01/03/2021
Nathan Eshelman	Los Angeles RPC, CA	02/21/2021
Jack Baumgardner	Clarinda RPC, IA	03/08/2021
Joel Hart	2nd RPC Indianapolis, IN	2021
Ryan Hemphill	Seattle RPC, WA	04/30/2021

**Ministers Received From Other Denominations**

Bryan Dage	OPC Presb. Of Michigan & Ont., to GLG	03/05/2021
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**Deaths of Teaching Elders**

Gene Spear	02/26/2021
Jack White	03/11/2021
Norman Carson	04/06/2021

**Theological Students**

Drew Poplin	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/04/2021
Martin Monteith	Alleghenies	04/09/2021
David Witmer	Alleghenies	04/10/2021

**Theological Students Certified Eligible to Preach**

Joe Smith	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/05/2021
Robert Kelbe	Alleghenies	04/10/2021
Joshua Smith	Alleghenies	04/10/2021

**Certified Eligible to Receive a Call**

Frank Du	Alleghenies	04/10/2021
Joe Dunlap	Alleghenies	04/10/2021

*Respectfully submitted, James K. McFarland, Stated Clerk*

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## 2021 Report of the Study Committee on Synod's Action Authority

Dear Brothers: This Committee was formed at the 2019 Synod in response to the Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery's Communication #19-1. Said communication sought clarification and change about the authority of Synod's actions. It proposed two recommendations, both seeking an excision of the phrase, "together with the actions of the Synod" from our Directory for Church Government. In the first (D-1, DCG, Introduction), it recommends that "past actions of Synod [be] treated as historical examples and valuable counsel." In the second (D-36, DCG, chapter 7, section 1), it recommends that the actions of Synod not constitute the law and order of the church, as currently is the case.

This committee report serves as an update and progress report only. Given the Coronavirus scenario of 2020, the related cancellation of the 2020 Synod, as well as a resultant fuller agenda in this even-abbreviated 2021 Synod, we have considered it more useful for Synod to bring our completed work at the 2022 Synod. We intend to finish our work by December 2021. We regret the delay, as some delegates may too, but we believe it a wiser course. We anticipate questions and/or discussion, whose time may be limited at this meeting, leaving the report possibly tabled until next Synod. We desire the report have a full consideration, and thus our course of action.

Even so, we report that study, discussion, and initial formulations are occurring. As a sort of introduction, we reviewed some NAPARC documents. For our report, we intend to consider primary Bible passages touching church authority, and to offer an analysis of their key principles throughout church history in relation to Church Councils and Reformed Confessions. Stemming from this will be a complete layout of our own RPCNA Constitutional structure and statement of authority condensed into a one-page summary with footnoted references (a distinct page will contain their full citation.) We are also looking into the record of past *Minutes of Synod* for wider perspective and any relevant statements and/or applications. From all this we will then offer final considerations and conclusions on the sought recommendations of Communication #19-1 relative to the authority of Synod's actions.

Meanwhile your Committee prayerfully continues to study, discuss, and arrange our material for a finished report next year.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Jared Olivetti*

*Brian E. Coombs (chm.)*  
*David Schaefer*

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Similarly, the Court received these agency reports: RP Woman's Association (with the Disability Report) and Reformation Translation Fellowship (moved, seconded, carried).

Turning to the agenda's "List A," the Court took up these reports in sequence:

Global Missions Board (presented by board President James Faris). Recommendation 1 was taken up, asking that RPGM Bylaws be amended as proposed. During discussion of referring Section 7 back to RPGM for further thought, the Court took a 5-minute recess. Returning to deliberation, the motion to refer passed. Then another motion from the floor was made to return all of the proposed amended Bylaws to the Board; this passed. The RPGM Report as a whole was received.

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## Reformed Presbyterian Global Missions Board Report to 2021 Synod

"Praise the Lord! Praise the LORD! All you nations, extol Him; extol Him, all you peoples; for great is His love towards us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. ..." Psalm 117 from *The Book of Psalms for Worship*

More people in more nations are praising the Lord this year because they have come to know His love through the work of Reformed Presbyterian Global Missions. The RP Global Missions (RPGM) Board is appointed by the Synod for the purpose of encouraging and promoting the health, growth and multiplication of Reformed Presbyterian Churches by establishing vigorous and truly biblical, indigenous churches beyond the U.S. and Canada, especially where RPCNA presbyteries do not have jurisdiction.

### Individual Field Updates

**Japan:** Decreasing aid from RP Global Missions continues on the agreed upon schedule. Other details of the work in Japan can be found in the Japan Presbytery Report.

**South Sudan:** While the work in South Sudan continues to grow and mature, there is much work left to be done. Give thanks that the Lord has raised up the new personnel for Cush4Christ "2.0."

- We continue to praise the Lord for the provision of the Smith and Hanna families for the work in South Sudan. While the Smiths focus on language learning, the Hannas actively engage in everyday ministry, specifically Lucas as he trains and mentors the church leaders and future leaders.
- The Hannas plan to return to the United States after three years of service in South Sudan, so the need to find someone to serve alongside Zach remains present in our minds.



- Cush Christian School (CCS) continues to grow under the leadership of Scott Brinkerhoff. After being closed for over a year due to COVID-19 regulations, CCS opened its doors to students once again in May of this year.
- The radio station (Weer Bei Radio)—being run in partnership with Every Village—has continued to cover its operating costs through funding coming in from local radio listeners and advertisers. Joseph Njuguna (Every Village missionary from Kenya) has moved back to South Sudan and serves alongside the Cush4Christ team together with his wife Carol and their two young girls. RP Global Missions/ Cush4Christ have resumed discussions with Every Village to renew the official memorandum of understanding and develop a Board of Trustees for the Weer Bei Radio. There was a pause in the development of this agreement, but the fact that funds in-country for operating costs at half of what they need to be for this year has created an urgency to look at this agreement again.
- Jan Buchanan plans to return to North America at the end of this year after over ten years of service in South Sudan.

James Faris, Heather Huizing, and James' son Caleb visited South Sudan for a couple of weeks in January and February of this year. It was a joy for them all to see this team working hard for the Kingdom and loving one another well.

- Pray that God would raise up those who could labor with the team, especially following the departures of Jan Buchanan and later the Hanna family. Praise God for the good work of Cush4Christ and for the unity on the team. Pray for Cush Christian School and Weer Bei Radio, that our Father would provide them with every need to continue the work of building the church both now and into the future. Pray for the day-to-day life of the church—especially in areas relating to mercy ministry where the needs are very great. Pray that God would supply the needs of His people in this dry and thirsty land.

**Pakistan 1:** In April 2021 members of the Pakistan Commission were able to visit and take care of some matters that had been delayed due to travel restrictions because of COVID-19. Chaura RP Mission Church was formally organized into Chaura RP Church. Two mission churches were established in two other locations, two ruling elders were ordained in both mission churches, and a deacon was ordained in Chaura. Praise the Lord with us as we marvel at the ways He is building His church in this neglected but fertile land. Dr. EM continues to translate and author books in Urdu for the Urdu Center for Reformed Theology (ucrt.org). This site continues to connect EM with others throughout Pakistan who are working to share about Jesus and have adopted a reformed understanding of Scripture, as well as others who are just beginning to learn

about these things. Some from among these contacts are being trained online by Dr. EM for work in the church across the country and the Urdu-speaking world.

- Pray for each of these things and that the Lord would draw many Pakistanis to Himself through these loving outreaches and activities.

**Pakistan 2:** In April 2020 the RP Global Missions board agreed to move forward with a second work in Pakistan which is typically referred to as Pak2. This new work requires an entirely different strategy and will have North American workers laboring in country. One family—the B Family—has been called to serve. They have accepted this call and hope to be in-country before the meeting of this Synod. We are meanwhile looking for others who could labor together with the B Family.

- Pray for the B Family as they adjust to life in Pakistan; pray also that others would be raised up to go and labor with them.

**South Asia:** While COVID-19 continues to ravage this great land, the Lord is using even this tragedy to build His church. Anugraha RP Church has gone back to just streaming their services after a short time of in-person services. This gives those who are curious about Jesus the opportunity to participate in worship when fear and cultural restrictions would make it difficult to enter through the physical doors of a church. Ministry to those who are in need has been taking place through local initiatives, giving church members the opportunity to care for their neighbors in very practical ways in the name of Jesus Christ. They have also had a pastoral intern serving with them. He has been an encouragement to them all. And, as they look to the future, they pray that new works will be planted to establish a truly indigenous presbytery. For now, the work is overseen by the South Asia Commission.

- Pray for those who have been attending their worship services. Pray for the members of ARP Mission Church as they seek to help meet the spiritual and physical needs of those who God has been sending to them. Pray for ongoing leadership development and church-planting opportunities.

### **Other Ministry Updates**

**RP Missions (Short-Term Missions):** Once again, COVID-19 has greatly impacted this work. Since travel all but completely came to a halt in 2020 and continues to be limited in 2021, the majority of RP Missions trips have been canceled or put on hold. It is hoped that one or two international trips and a few domestic trips will take place in the summer of 2021. In addition, RP Missions founder and director, Matt Filbert, stepped down from his role after accepting a full-time pastoral position at First RPC in Beaver Falls. Keith Mann was hired as RP Missions coordinator to continue this work. Keith has worked

together with Vince Ward to re-vamp the training program for RP Missions. We now have a training curriculum called RP Global Missions Explore that is taken in conjunction with RP Missions trips or can be taken as a stand-alone training.

- Pray for the continued efforts to relaunch RP Missions trips in this era of COVID-19.

**Development of Missionaries:** Since the last time this Synod met, RP Global Missions has developed several initiatives to fill out the funnel to long-term service. Starting with RPGM Explore (training), participants then go on to short-term trips (practical cross-cultural experience). Next, those who are interested in discerning a call to cross-cultural ministry overseas can enroll in RPGM's NeXt Steps (training). NeXt Steps leads to mid-term trips (practical cross-cultural experience). And those who are committed to going overseas long-term join our ARROW group (training/mentoring) as they await going on to long-term service.

**Proposed Bylaw Changes:** The current bylaws of RPGM have become somewhat dated and need to be updated as we seek to serve the church and those serving the church in missions. Some changes reflected in the document were already implemented by Synod in past years but were not then changed in the actual bylaw documents (the name change from Foreign Missions Board to Global Missions in 2008 and the change to six-year terms for board members in 2013). Most significantly, however, we are simplifying our Bylaws to three pages of what is most critical for Synod to oversee directly. We are proposing that much of the policy and operational content of the existing bylaws be relocated to the RPGM Policy Manual. Many details such as missionary application forms, policies on furloughs, safety procedures, and other such matters do not need direct Synod oversight and the Board will be helped to be able to change such operational procedures as needed. As our missions works expand the Policy Manual is also expanding. The Board is happy to share our Policy Manual at any time with members of Synod who may have interest, questions, or concerns.

**Nominations:** David Hanson (TE) completed his already extended terms with RPGM in the summer of 2020, but due to their being no Synod, he has remained on the record as a member of the Board. The Board is recommending that Titus Martin be nominated to fill this post. SM (former RE) and AM (W) have made the difficult decision to transfer their membership to a non-RPCNA church, which leaves their two Board posts vacant; the Board is recommending that Dean Filson and Marianne Baczkur be nominated to fill these two posts. Jonathan Haney (TE) has taken a sabbatical and has informed us that his future ministry plans are uncertain. While he would like to remain on this Board, he understands that we cannot wait for his future to be more certain; the Board is

recommending that Kelly Moore be nominated to fill this post. John Kim (RE) completes his second term this mid-year, leaving a second RE post vacant. The Board is recommending that RE Joe Rizzo be nominated to fill this post. Please see Appendix A for brief biographies of our nominees.

1. That teaching elder Titus Martin be nominated to serve his first term (2020-2026).
2. That TE Kelly Moore be nominated to complete Jonathan Haney's term (to 2024).
3. That RE Joe Rizzo be nominated to serve his first term (2021-27).
4. That RE Dean Filson be nominated to complete SM's term (to 2023)
5. That Marianne Baczkur be nominated to AM's term (to 2022).

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the *RPGM Bylaws* be amended as proposed in Appendix B.  
*Respectfully submitted,*  
*James Faris (President, Class of 2022, 1st term)*  
*John Kim (Class of 2021, 2nd term)      AM (Class of 2022, 1st term)*  
*Greg Moberg (Class of 2025, 1st term)      Elizabeth Noell (Cl. of 2025, 1st term)*  
*David Hanson (Class of 2020, 3rd term)      Jonathan Haney (Cl. of 2024, 1st term)*  
*Heather Huizing (Executive Director)      James McFarland (ex officio)*

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## **Appendix B: Proposed Bylaw Changes**

### **BYLAWS of the RP Global Missions Board of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America**

#### **CONTENTS:**

1. Authorization and Purpose of RP Global Missions
2. Mission Board Organization
3. Long Term Missionaries

#### **1.0 AUTHORIZATION AND PURPOSE of the RPGM Board**

1.1 The RP Global Missions (RPGM) Board is appointed by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) for the purpose of encouraging and promoting the health, growth, and multiplication of Reformed Presbyterian Churches by establishing vigorous and truly Biblical, indigenous churches beyond the U.S. and Canada, especially where RPCNA presbyteries do not have jurisdiction.

1.2 The warrant for this work comes from the Great Commission which our Lord Jesus has placed upon His Church—to make disciples from every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that He has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).

1.3 RPGM aims to establish Biblical churches composed of God's people who confess saving faith in Jesus Christ as their only hope in this life and the

life to come, and who commit themselves to love and serve Him faithfully as the Scriptures direct. In considering requests for developing new missions, the Board will show preference to situations in which members of the RPCNA are, or will be, available as field workers.

1.4 This work shall be pursued in accordance with the *Constitution* of the RPCNA and its Synod, and in close cooperation with its presbyteries and congregations. The doctrine and ecclesiology contained in the denominational standards shall govern this Board, the missionaries it appoints, and the congregations that are formed under its auspices.

## **2.0 MISSION BOARD ORGANIZATION**

2.1 The board shall consist of eight RPCNA members who may be nominated by the board and elected by Synod for six-year terms. The eight board members shall normally include three teaching elders, three ruling elders, and two women. Additionally, the board shall include two *ex officio*, non-voting members: Executive Director and the Denominational Treasurer.

2.2 If a board member is elected to fill a vacancy, that person may not be asked to serve on the Board for consecutive terms that total more than 14 years.

2.3 Upon fulfilling two full terms, a member shall be ineligible for re-election until a one-year hiatus of service has passed, except by special permission of the Synod.

2.4 A board member's resignation must be in writing and received by the President or the Secretary, but acceptance of resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. A board member may be terminated from the board due to excess absences.

2.5 Board members should be elected so that at the time of each meeting, the terms of no more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the members shall expire.

2.6 The board shall elect annually from its membership a President, Vice President, and Recording Secretary. It shall also elect an Executive Secretary (who is a non-voting appointee of the Board) every two years, unless there is an Executive Director in the employ of the board.

2.7 The President shall preside at board meetings and prepare the annual report to Synod. The President shall also serve on the Executive Committee when needed between meetings.

2.8 The Executive Committee shall be made up of the Executive Director (or Executive Secretary), President, and Vice President. The Denominational Treasurer shall be a non-voting, consultative member on the Executive Committee, as needed. The Executive Committee shall always communicate the matters being decided to the entire board. Such communication shall include alerting the full board to a call for the Executive Committee to meet before such a meeting takes place.

2.9 The parameters for authority and actions of Executive Committee are as follows:

- A. Any and all necessary interim actions, including authority to approve up to \$5,000 beyond budget for a single expenditure.
- B. No authority to amend or change bylaws, incur debt or encumber funds.

2.10 The Recording Secretary will take minutes of meetings and circulate them to board members and (when necessary and appropriate) to missionaries, presbyteries, or other workers.

2.11 The Executive Director (or Executive Secretary) shall attend to routine business matters between meetings; serve as the publicized contact person for inquirers; coordinate with the President to arrange details of board meetings; be a liaison with other missions organizations, especially within NAPARC; help with the orientation of new board members; refer incoming matters to appropriate committee chairmen; issue publicity information and assignments; and maintain board files.

2.12 The full board shall regularly meet each fall and spring at a place and time designated at a prior board meeting. The committee scheduling the date, time, and place shall do so in coordination with other board members and the Executive Director (or Executive Secretary). Special meetings of the board may also be called as needed by the Executive Director or President with notification of time, purpose, and place or mode being sent to board members in an expedient manner prior to the meeting.

2.13 The board may sustain standing committees, such as field-specific, task-specific, or study committees, from within its membership.

2.14 The Bylaws may be amended in any manner at any regular or special meeting of the board, provided that specific written notice of the proposed amendment shall be given to each board member in an expedient manner prior to the meeting. Any amendment requires the affirmative vote of 3/4 board members and approval of Synod according to the rules of Synod.

### **3.0 LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES**

3.1 The board shall send qualified men and women to mission fields in accordance with the types of church office and service recognized generally by this denomination and commensurate with their gifts and interests.

3.2 Such missionaries shall be considered employees of the board, whose appointments and employment conditions are subject to the *Directory for Church Government* and the RPGM Policy Manual.

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**The moderator announced the following committees-of-the-day:**

- **Nominating Committee: Carrying over, J. Bruce Martin (convener)**

- and Ryan Hemphill. Serving 1 year: Keith Wing and Kevin Dennis. Serving 2 years: Daniel Hemken and Craig Scott.
- State of the Church Committee: Paul Brace (chairman), Philip McCollum, and Matt Filbert.
  - Resolution of Thanks: Richard Knodel (chairman), Bob McFarland, and Andrew B.
  - Judicial Committee 1 (re. GLG and LeFebvre): Daniel Howe (chm.), Paul Hemphill, David Weir, Kyle Borg, and Bruce Backensto. Note: Jeff Stivason was initially appointed, then replaced.
  - Judicial Committee 2 (re. GLG and Immanuel): John D. Edgar (chm.), Titus Martin, Roel Ophoff, James Tweed, and Gabe Wingfield. Note: Kyle Borg was initially appointed, then replaced.
  - Judicial Committee 3 (re. PCP and Edmonton): Pete Smith (chm.), Jonathan Watt, Fik Menbere, Joe Rizzo, and Mark Koller.

Brian Coombs and David Merkel were appointed by the moderator to serve this Court as substitute parliamentarians.

Seminary Trustees (presented by board president Alan Noell). Recommendation 1 passed and so the Court heard for several minutes from RPTS President Barry York. During his remarks, the Court rose in applause of the continuing service to the Seminary of former president Jerry O'Neill. Recommendations 2-5 go automatically to the Nominating Committee. Recommendation 6 is referred to the five-man study committee considering Communication #21-19. Recommendation 7 went automatically to Finance. The report as a whole was received.

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## **2021 Report of the Board of Trustees to RPCNA Synod Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary**

This year marks the 211th anniversary of the Seminary. By the grace of God, the Seminary has functioned this past year amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to prepare men for pastoral ministry and men and women for service in the church and on the mission field. This has been a year of change and adjustment, especially in staffing, while the institution continues to advance in the area of online instruction and the technology that makes such instruction possible. The Board of Trustees held one online meeting in the summer, an in-person meeting in the fall with some members joining online, and another online meeting in the spring. We have been experimenting with these different modes of meeting, and will continue to evaluate the pros and cons of in-person, hybrid, and virtual meetings.

**Student Body.** The Seminary conferred 14 diplomas during the 2020-2021 academic year.

<b>Diplomas Conferred During the 2021 Academic Year RPTS</b>				
Degree	RP Students Under Care	Other RP Students	Non-RP Students	Total
D.Min.	1	0	1	2
M.Div.	2	3	1	6
M.T.S.	0	4	1	5
G.T.S.D.	0	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>

Student enrollment held steady for the 2020-2021 academic year, with fall FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) of 44, 44.8 FTE in the winter, and a slight decline in the spring to 43.1 FTE. See distribution according to degree track in the table below. The total number of for-credit students in the fall was 94; of those, 33 were online-only students. Five RP M.Div. students graduated in 2021. Headcount enrollment can be summarized in the following table:

<b>Fall Headcount Enrollment, 2020-2021 Academic Year, RPTS</b>				
Degree	RP Students Under Care	Other RP Students	Non-RP Students	Total
D.Min.*	4	2	19	25
M.Div.	13	10	20	43
M.T.S.	0	10	7	17
G.T.S.D.	0	3	4	7
Special**	1	0	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>94</b>

\* *D.Min. includes all student active in this program, not only those enrolled in the Summer. Students who are also in the MTS degree program during school year are counted as D.Min. students. These are not included in the FTE numbers above.*

\*\* *Special is non-degree but for credit.*

**Full-Time Faculty, 2020-2021.** There are six full-time faculty members at the Seminary: Keith Evans, Rick Gamble, Jeff Stivason, David Whitla, C. J. Williams, and Barry York.



Professor Evans serves as Professor of Biblical Counseling, Director of the Biblical Counseling Institute (BCI), and Academic Dean. He completed his Ph.D. coursework with distinction in December 2020 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and successfully passed his comprehensive exams at that time. He is presently working on completing the prospectus for his dissertation. He achieved Fellow status in the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and therefore can now serve as the one overseeing the Counseling Certification of our students as well as overseeing the institution as an ACBC Training Center. In the standard evaluation done on faculty members, Professor Evans received very fine reviews for his work at the Seminary.

It should be noted that after the Board held its Spring meeting on April 3, 2021, the Chairman of the Board received several written communications from parties in the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery concerning Professor Evans' handling of a particularly difficult case in that presbytery for which he was asked for counsel. The Executive Committee of the Board concluded that the Board did not have the judicial capacity or the depth of knowledge of the case to make a determination concerning this part of Professor Evans' ministry and whether that should affect his nomination to a seven-year term. The Chairman of the Board and the President of the Seminary did communicate to the parties who communicated to the Board that they should address any judicial concerns to the presbytery, and that the Board would work with Professor Evans on his professional conduct in this particular case.

Professor Gamble serves as Professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of the Faculty. He spoke at the virtual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in November 2020. He pre-recorded his lecture on the Westminster Confession and then participated in a live round-table discussion via Zoom. In December, 2020 he finished the manuscript for Volume 3 of *The Whole Counsel of God*. It was a great relief to him to complete that part of the project! He began working with a copy editor on copy-editing the manuscript in February 2021 and that process is nearly completed. In January 2021, Professor Gamble taught a Ph.D. course for Westminster Theological Seminary on Theological Method. He pre-recorded the lectures and also taught via Zoom during the intensive week of instruction. He has preached in chapel and is planning to teach this spring via Zoom for the Friday Men's Bible study at Memorial Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Professor Stivason was formally inaugurated to the Professorship of New Testament Studies on Friday, Oct. 16, 2020. Dr. Stivason taught two courses per quarter this year as Dr. Jack Kinneer finished out a final part-time year before his retirement. He is the editor of a volume of essays on B. B. Warfield's theology that he is hopeful will be published in 2021, the centenary of Warfield's death.

He continues his work as an editor at the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals and is also working on a devotional commentary on *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He is also writing a three-part series on the doctrine of the church for a project sponsored by the Global Alliance. He spoke at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary's conference at the beginning of March and at the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology (PCRT) in April. He is also teaching a five-week course on God and Politics on Wednesday evening at Cornerstone Church in Murrysville, Pennsylvania.

Professor Whitla serves as Professor of Church History. He is nearing the completion of his preparation of new lecture materials and is now teaching a full slate of courses and enjoying more time to engage with students than his first year afforded. His devotional volume *Portraits of Christ*, co-written by Gordon Keddie, was released by Crown & Covenant in September, and he is negotiating a contract with Brill Academic to publish his edited dissertation in the Saint Andrews Studies in Reformation History series under the title, *Archibald Johnston of Wariston, the National Covenant, and the Formation of British Puritanism, 1611-38*. This spring, the same publisher is projected to publish his chapter (co-written with Crawford Gribben) on "Preaching and Sermons in Late-Reformation Scotland" in their extensive *Companion to the Scottish Reformation*. He has begun work with a team of international scholars on a critical edition of the letters of Samuel Rutherford as part of Reformation Heritage Books' projected 12-vol. *Complete Works of Samuel Rutherford*.

Professor Williams serves as Professor of Old Testament Studies and Director of the D.Min. Program. He enjoyed his first sabbatical from both RPTS and from Providence Reformed Presbyterian Church during the Spring and Winter quarters. He has been working on two writing projects: "The Shadow of Christ in the Book of Lamentations" and "The Ancient Roots of Reformation" (a study of the reformer kings and the theme of reformation in II Chronicles). His plans to travel to Israel in the Spring of 2021 were canceled because of COVID-19 restrictions.

President York continues to serve as President and Prof. of Pastoral Theology and Homiletics. While COVID-19 has restricted some of his travel, he has been able to make Zoom presentations to nine congregations of the RPCNA stretching from eastern Ontario and Massachusetts to Florida and out to Kansas during the past year. He has also preached in pulpits ranging from the New York metropolitan region to California and many places in between. Significant contacts have been made with PCA presbyteries in western Pennsylvania and Ohio. He continues the process of writing a book on the Trinity for the new Grassmarket Series for Crown & Covenant.

**Adjunct Faculty.** The following individuals served as adjunct faculty during the 2020-2021 Academic Year:

- Bruce Backensto, Adjunct Professor of Pastoral Theology
- John Bower, Adjunct Professor of Church History
- Seulgi Byun, Adjunct Professor of Old Testament (sabbatical replacement for C.J. Williams)
- Andrew Cooper, Adjunct Professor of Church History
- Jack Kinneer, Professor of New Testament
- Mark Robinson, Adjunct Pastor of Systematic Theology
- Aaron Sams, Adjunct Professor of Pastoral Theology
- Calvin Troup, Adjunct Professor of Speech
- Vince Ward, Missions Mentoring Practicum
- Jonathan Watt, Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies

**Staff.** 2020-2021 has been a time of significant change in the area of staffing at the Seminary. After many years of faithful service, two individuals have cut back significantly on their service to RPTS but still remain involved in some of its operations. Sharon Sampson and Kim Backensto have been integral to the functioning of the Seminary for ten years and 25 years, respectively. We commend these two women to the Lord and to the church, and thank them deeply for their years of dedication to the ministry of RPTS. The various responsibilities of Sharon Sampson, Kim Backensto, and Thomas Reid have been re-arranged and re-assigned to different members of the Staff. The responsibilities of the Staff include support and coordination in the areas of:

Admissions	Assessment
Biblical Counseling Institute (BCI)	Development
Doctor of Ministry Program	Finance and Accounting
Financial Aid	Library Services
Operations	
Records (Academic, Financial, Personnel)	

The following people serve on the Staff of the Seminary in a full-time capacity:

- Mark Sampson, Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Institutional Advancement
- Ed Blackwood, Director of Admissions and Student Services; Registrar
- Jordan Feagley, Director of Library Services
- Josh Nye, Director of Support Services
- Taylor Dymond / Katelyn Rhodes, Executive Assistant\*

These individuals work part-time in various aspects of support services: Melissa Evans, Victoria Mann, Stephen Mulder,\*\* Rachael Nye, Aaron Sams (Distance Learning Consultant), Clark Stockdale, June Whitla, and Al Wissner.

\* *Taylor Dymond resigned to get married and was replaced by Katelyn Rhodes.*

\*\* *Stephen Mulder has recently resigned to accept a call to Oklahoma.*

Finance and accounting services are provided by James McFarland and Vida Brown of the Office of the Denominational Treasurer.

**Retiring.** After eighteen years of service to the Seminary, Dr. Jack Kinneer is retiring this year from his position of Adjunct Professor of New Testament. Dr. Kinneer began his service at the Seminary in 2003. Jack also was instrumental in the launch of the Doctor of Ministry program and played a crucial role in the refinement of the Seminary's internal assessment processes. A retirement party was held for him in April to honor his many years of service. We extend our thanks to him for his faithful service to RPTS.

**In Retirement.** A retirement dinner was held for Rev. Thomas Reid, retired Librarian, and for his wife Genevieve, in June 2020 after the original dinner date, scheduled for April, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Former President Jerry O'Neill has served part-time for three years in Institutional Advancement, but has indicated that he will step down from that role at the end of June 2021. We once again thank Jerry for his ministry to the Seminary for these many years.

#### **Other Developments:**

**The COVID-19 Pandemic.** While the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Seminary into online instruction for the second half of the spring 2020 semester, President York made the decision to open the Seminary for in-class instruction beginning in September 2021. Except for two weeks in October, the Seminary has continued to have in-person instruction while offering its regular distance learning program for the 2020-2021 Academic Year.

**Theological Foundations for Youth (TFY).** Because of the COVID-19 pandemic the Summer 2020 TFY program was postponed. To accommodate those who were supposed to come in 2020, there will be two TFY programs in the Summer of 2021, each two weeks long. The first program will be for 2021 applicants and the second will be for 2020 applicants.

**Physical Plant.** Various projects on the physical plant have been pursued, particularly in the library. Another one of the gables was completed; one more remains to be completed. Plans are underway for substantial upgrading of the kitchen and the ground floor rooms.

**Chaplaincy Concentration.** After numerous inquiries about a chaplaincy program here, combined with hearing of the need for chaplains in prisons, hospitals, business, and the military, the Seminary worked on developing a chaplaincy program in consultation with the Presbyterian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains & Military Personnel (PRCC). The Faculty Board both approved this program in Spring, 2021. The program will include courses already developed and will involve development of two new courses in chaplaincy ministry.

**Applied Theology for the Church.** The Seminary continues to grow its

“Applied Theology for the Church” program in order to take RPTS resources and package them in such a way that might be beneficial to pastors, elders, deacons, and congregants. Currently, courses are available online in the following areas of study: Biblical Counseling (a total of 6), the Reformed Presbyterian response to American slavery, Deacons and the Ministry of Mercy, and Introduction to Reformed Theology. Information on the courses can be found at <https://rpts.pathwright.com/library/>. Congregations can utilize these courses for venues such as their Christian Education Hour or study groups interested in a particular topic.

**RPTS Statement on Human Identity and Christian Behavior.** In light of cultural, governmental, and educational developments, the Board also adopted the following statement, which will appear in the RPTS handbooks, catalog, and website. This statement was modeled on the similar statement developed by Geneva College.

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#### **RPTS STATEMENT ON HUMAN IDENTITY AND CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR**

**Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life.** We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

**Statement on Gender.** We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect God’s image and nature (Genesis 1:26-27). We acknowledge that in this fallen world, on rare occasions, a person is born with anatomical ambiguity. We affirm the dignity and image of God fully shared by such persons and support their efforts to determine with competent medical counsel their anatomical sex and coordinate gender calling (*2017 Minutes of Synod*, page 122). Nevertheless, the vast majority of persons are born with clear anatomical sex distinction. God has called each person to live within the gender indicated by his or her anatomy (*2017 Minutes of Synod*, page 120). We believe it is sinful behavior to reject one’s sex given by God at conception or attempting to alter one’s sex given by God at conception, including dressing in such a way as to willfully reject one’s sex given by God at conception.

**Statement on Marriage.** We believe the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that marriage between one man and one woman, for life, uniquely reflects Christ’s relationship with His Church (Ephesians 5:21-22). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy

to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

**Statement on Sexuality.** We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, cohabitation, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, attempts to alter one's sex, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

**Student Under Care Plan.** The Board has spent time discussing the policy of financial aid to students under care of presbyteries. We continue to work on revisions and adjustments to the current policies, procedures, and practices, and will bring this plan via members of the Board to the various fall meetings of the presbyteries for input. We would then seek to make a final report to the 2022 Synod.

**Changes in the By-Laws.** In 2020 the Board made an addition to the By-Laws of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America concerning adding items to the Agenda of the regular meeting. The addition was made to the end of Section 5 of the By-Laws. The By-Laws are attached to the Constitution of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and are included in the RPTS Board of Trustees Handbook. Section 10 of the By-Laws states: "Any change in the By-Laws shall be reported to Synod at its next regular meeting." Since there was no regular meeting in June 2020, we are notifying the 2021 Synod of this change. The addition, in italics below, reads as follows:

*The Board has adopted these three principles as a proper procedure to follow regarding adding items to the agenda of its meeting.*

1. *Ordinarily, agenda items are to come through the committee that best represents the concern of an issue. Members not on a given committee with a concern they would like to see addressed should send that matter in writing to the chair of the committee in sufficient time for it to be processed before the Board meeting.*

2. *Matters that do not pertain directly to a committee's purview and are of a greater RPTS concern should be addressed to the Executive Committee in a timely manner as stated above for this committee to process.*

3. *A board member having a matter of great urgency, who has not been able to process it as above in time to have it on the agenda, may submit a written recommendation to the Board Chairman at the time of meeting. The Chairman will introduce it as a special resolution, give the*

*board member an opportunity to explain his rationale for introducing it and the Board opportunity to discuss it, and then it can be added to the agenda if approved by a 2/3 vote.*

**Atlantic Presbytery Paper Concerning Salaries.** The Board adopted the following document at its spring 2021 meeting: “A Response to the Atlantic Presbytery Paper Regarding Board Salaries.” The Board recommends that the Synod refer this document to the Board of Trustees of the Synod for its counsel and comments. This response is included as an addendum to this report.

**Finance and Fund Raising.** Total Revenue for the year 2020 was \$1,798,215 and Total Expenditures totaled \$1,604,410 resulting in a Surplus of \$193,805.

The Seminary did not experience any real change in giving patterns throughout the year, as some charities did. Generally, the RPCNA has not seen the negative effects from economic events that have regularly affected charities. God provided financially for RPTS in marvelous ways during the COVID-19 crisis, allowing us to even regain much of what we lost in 2019. He has also raised up several new staff persons who are using their gifts to bless the ministry. Despite not having a local support dinner, God blessed us with a virtual one that expanded greatly our number of participants, with a couple in China even hosting a support breakfast as they were 13 hours ahead of us! The Rev. Robert McFarland received the Faithful Servant Award at that event.

**Trustee Nominations.** The roster of the Board is as follows:

- Class of 2020: (extended due to no Synod meeting in 2020): Jonathan Schaefer (2nd term), Aaron Goerner (1st term)
- Class of 2021: vacant (Michael LeFebvre resigned April 4, 2020), Robert Hemphill (2nd term)
- Class of 2022: Rich Holdeman (1st term), Rutledge Etheridge (1st term)
- Class of 2023: David Weir (2nd term), Chris Villi (1st term)
- Class of 2024: Wade Mann (2nd term), David Reese—resigned April 3, 2021 (1st term)
- Class of 2025: David Ashleigh (2nd full term), Alan Noell (2nd term)

This Synod, both the 2026 and 2027 classes will be elected.

For the Class of 2026, the Board agreed to nominate Bob Bibby (for a 1st term) and Aaron Goerner (for a 2nd term).

For the Class of 2027, the Board agreed in April 2020 to nominate Brian Wright as a replacement for Michael LeFebvre. The Board is recommending Joseph Friedly as a nominee for the other teaching elder to fill Bob Hemphill's position when he concludes his service at Synod 2021. We again wish to express much appreciation to Jonathan Schaefer (13 years) and Bob Hemphill (12 years) for their years of faithful service!

In addition, David Reese has asked to resign due to his being outside the bounds of the RPCNA and not currently serving as an elder. We are recommending that Brad Stewart be nominated to complete the final three years of David's first term. We are sorry to have David step down, but greatly appreciate his service on the Board!

**Items for Prayer.** Continue to pray for the ministry of RPTS! We anticipate that four new trustees will be added to the Board this Fall; pray that they are integrated into the work of the Board as they serve the Lord in the coming years. Pray that the Lord will raise up workers for the spiritual harvest who can be trained for the RPCNA specifically and the church at large generally. And pray that the Lord would protect RPTS and its ministry from the attacks of Satan.

**Recommendations:**

1. That President Barry York be given five minutes to speak about the ministry of RPTS.
2. That Professor Keith Evans be elected to a seven-year term as Professor of Biblical Counseling, with his service beginning July 1, 2021.
3. That Robert Bibby (1st Term) and Aaron Goerner (2nd Term) be elected to the Class of 2026 of the RPTS Board of Trustees.
4. That Brian Wright (1st Term) and Joseph Friedly (1st Term) be elected to the Class of 2027 of the RPTS Board of Trustees.
5. That Brad Stewart be elected to the Class of 2024 of the RPTS Board of Trustees to fulfill David Reese's term.
6. That the Atlantic Presbytery paper and this response from the RPTS Board be referred to the Trustees of the Synod of the RPCNA for them to study, evaluate, and recommend the best course of action for Synod and its ministries regarding reporting Board employees' salaries. Furthermore, we would ask them to study the ongoing necessity of publishing ministers' salaries as well and likewise make a recommendation to Synod.
7. That RPTS be granted \$82,000 from the Reformed Presbyterian Missions and Ministries Fund (RPM+M) for its 2021 Annual Budget.

*Respectfully submitted, The Board of Trustees of RPTS:*

*Alan Noell (Class of 2025), Chm.*

*Richard Holdeman (Class of 2022), Vice-Chm.*

*David Weir (Class of 2023), Secretary*

*Aaron Goerner (Class of 2020/2021)*

*Jonathan Schaefer (Class of 2020 / 2021)*

*Robert Hemphill (Class of 2021)*

*Rutledge Etheridge (Class of 2022)*

*Chris Villi (Class of 2023)*

*Wade Mann (Class of 2024)*

*David Ashleigh (Class of 2025)*

*James K. McFarland, Treasurer, ex officio*

*Barry York, President, ex officio*



## **Board of Trustees of the RPTS to the Synod of 2021 A Response to the Atlantic Presbytery Paper Regarding Board Salaries**

At the Synod of 2019, the Atlantic Presbytery brought a paper requesting that all ministries of the church overseen by Synod boards publicly publish the salaries of their employees. The Synod returned that paper to the presbytery. Anticipating that the Atlantic Presbytery will resubmit its paper and having the courtesy of their men communicating as such with the paper specifying the details of their proposal, the RPTS Board would respectfully place before Synod the following response and recommendation. We do so believing we already have the proper oversight, accountability, and transparency in our governing structures in place.

We see the rationale offered in the Atlantic Presbytery proposal to be summarized as follows:

1. *The Minutes of Synod* regularly publish the salaries of the pastors, so it is only fitting that the salaries of Board employees be published as well.
2. *The Minutes of Synod* show that in previous generations such salaries as RPTS professors, Education & Publication employees, or Foreign Mission Board missionaries were approved and published by Synod.
3. Certain federal laws require the salaries of the top five employees of Geneva College to be published publicly.
4. Since Synod has oversight of its Boards and their ministries, it should have this information to help it do this work.

The following is our response point-by-point:

1. The *Minutes of Synod* regularly publish the salaries of the pastors, so it is only fitting that the salaries of Board employees be published as well. Regarding the analogy of pastor salaries being published, we would raise two issues. First, why does the RPCNA collect this information and what is its purpose? While the presbyteries have the responsibility to know and oversee the salaries of the ministers under their charge, which takes place at presbytery meetings and visitations, does Synod need to do so? With ministers in a variety of ministries, economic settings, parsonage benefits, vacations, tent-making work, etc. that make their compensation widely disparate and difficult to report in a standardized manner, beyond simple curiosity it would not seem necessary for Synod to keep collecting this statistic. We would note that other NAPARC denominations, such as the ARP and OPC, do not publish this salary information in their minutes. These factors figure into the recommendation of this paper.
2. The *Minutes of Synod* show that in previous generations such salaries as

RPTS professors, Education & Publication employees, or Foreign Mission Board missionaries were approved and published by Synod. With respect to this observation that previous *Minutes of Synod* published salaries of denominational employees, we would make several observations.

One of the key references offered in the Atlantic paper is that in the 1977 *Minutes of Synod* the RPTS professors' salaries were published. However, it is interesting that the *Minutes of 1976 and 1978* do not reflect any specific salaries.

We believe there was a reason for the 1977 publication. Up until 1976, the board at RPTS was called the Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary. In 1976, RPTS made application to the State of PA for accreditation of the M.Div. program and the *Minutes* state that "it is the position of the Board that a separate charter and constitution are now required."

Beginning in 1978 the Synod docket and the *Minutes* are all in alignment stating the RPTS report is from the "Board of Trustees." The next years seems to indicate that the practice of getting Synod approval for salaries, number of books purchased, etc., had been discontinued and that the responsibility for management and oversight of RPTS under the new charter and constitution was entrusted to the Board of Trustees.

We are also concerned that the open publishing of compensation across the denomination could have unintended consequences. Without sufficient involvement in the ministry, Synod members could begin to spend valuable time raising questions and investigating the reasons for different compensation levels. Further details such as bonuses, honorariums, housing, health insurance, etc., can cause packages to vary widely. Having non-RPCNA employees' information listed could create legal difficulties. Employees within and across different agencies could compare baseline figures and, without all the other considered factors that go into determining compensation, complain of bias and even seek legal recourse.

3. Certain federal laws require the salaries of the top five employees of Geneva College to be published publicly. Regarding the federal requirements on Geneva to report their top earners, we would suggest this government policy is undoubtedly in place because the college receives federal funding through student grants and loans. This practice is not necessarily true of our other agencies (RPTS ended its Title IX loan involvement in 2020 for matters unrelated to this paper). A government requirement does not seem to warrant the whole of the church responding in this manner.

4. Since Synod has oversight of its Boards and their ministries, it should have this information to help it do this work. The concern is raised: Synod needs this information to do the work of oversight. We would simply respond that Synod-appointed boards are in place to do this more detailed work of overseeing a board's employee salaries. Board members are more intimately involved and have direct responsibility for the employees of the various agencies and ministries. We should trust these members of Synod to rule well when appointed to oversee one of our institutions or ministries. For example, the twelve members of the RPTS Board are teaching and ruling elders of the church representing the presbyteries in North America. We believe these godly men provide the delegated responsibility Synod needs in the area of RPTS finances. Otherwise, Synod could begin to operate as a Board of the whole for each ministry.

Given these observations, the RPTS Board makes the following recommendation:

**Recommendation:** that the Atlantic Presbytery paper and this response from the RPTS Board be referred to the Trustees of the RPCNA Synod for them to study, evaluate, and recommend the best course of action for Synod and its ministries regarding reporting Board employees' salaries. Furthermore, we would ask them to study the ongoing necessity of publishing ministers' salaries as well and likewise make a recommendation to Synod.

*Respectfully submitted, The RPTS Board of Trustees  
Adopted at the Spring Board Meeting; April 3, 2021*

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**Pension Trustees (presented by board president David Merkel). Recommendation 1-2, together, carried, and so the Board of Pension Trustees is now The Benefits Board. Recommendations 3-4 are sent automatically to the Finance Committee. Recommendation 5 was approved, and so the Synod approves the board-proposed "Self-Insured Life Insurance Plan." Recommendation 6 was approved, and so the changes to Form 7 are adopted. The report as a whole was received. The Court expressed its thanks to board president David Merkel for his years of faithful service.**

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## **2021 Report of the Pension Trustees (Benefits Board) to Synod**

**Executive Summary.** The Board spent much of the year considering self-funding the life insurance benefit and presenting to Synod an insured long-term disability plan. A long-term disability plan is still under informal consideration. We have an agreement in principle with Synod's Trustees and the

Finance Committee to bring a proposed self-funded life insurance plan to the 2021 Synod; our proposal is at the end of this report (Appendix B). The denomination's official retirement plan was ended several years ago; the Board has been concerned with developing a mechanism for monitoring what are now individual retirement accounts. Most of the retirement accounts are with Clergy Advantage and Equitable Life Insurance Company, which is our recommended provider, but some participants have chosen to invest their funds elsewhere.

**Meetings of the Pension Trustees.** The Board of Pension Trustees held four regular meetings since our last report. These meetings were held on Sept. 13, 2019; March 9, 2020; October 9, 2020; and March 12, 2021. The September meeting was held at RPTS (Pittsburgh, PA); the other meetings were held by teleconference.

**Officers.** The officers of the Board, elected at the fall meeting 2020, are as follows: David Merkel, chairman; Peter Smith, vice-chairman; Matthew Van Vlack, secretary; and James McFarland, treasurer. In addition to the regular officers of the Board, the Board elected A. Wayne Duffield as executive secretary.

**How to Contact us.** All correspondence should be mailed to the Executive Secretary of the Board, A. Wayne Duffield, P.O. Box 373, New Alexandria, PA 15670. Rev. Duffield may also be contacted by calling (724) 668-7506 or by emailing [awd70@windstream.net](mailto:awd70@windstream.net) or by faxing him via (724) 668-7252.

**Reporting.** The Board would again remind the clerks of presbyteries and/or clerks of ad interim commissions of the importance of informing the Secretary of the Pension Trustees/Benefits Board about actions taken by presbyteries relative to licensures, ordinations, installations, and other changes from active to inactive service. This information is needed for insurance and/or pension purposes.

**Contributions.** The Pension Trustees recommend that employee contributions to our new preferred provider (Clergy Advantage, Inc.) be set at \$4,500 for 2022 by having employers contribute a minimum contribution of \$1,125 per quarter by check from a congregational checking account. Quarterly contributions should be made prior to the quarter end date on March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31. Administratively, care should be taken so that funds are in individual accounts prior to December 31, as it takes some time for funds to be credited to accounts. It is noted that in 2020, many employers contributed more than the minimum contribution. More than the minimum was contributed to the accounts of most of the participants. All employers—including boards of the church—are encouraged to contribute over the minimum. Congregations and boards are reminded that it takes on average at least 10% of a pastor's direct compensation to provide for an adequate retirement. Partic-

ipants are urged to consider working out an arrangement with their employer whereby additional funds may be contributed to their retirement account.

**Assessments.** The 2019 assessment for the Pension Fund Current Account was set at 0.6% of non-designated receipts by the 2019 Synod and it is recommended that the percentage be 0.6% for 2022. It will be credited to the Current Account of the Pension Board and used to fund the expenses as shown in the Treasurer's Report.

**Administrative Changes.** Inasmuch as the work of the Board has significantly changed with the change to Clergy Advantage, the Board has decided to change its name to the Benefits Board. This change more accurately describes our work. We are no longer trustees of anything. A proposal to change our name to the Benefits Board and to change the Constitution of the Board is before this year's Synod; please see Appendix A at the end of this report.

Due to the changes that are taking place, we are proposing changes in Form 7 in the "Suggested Forms" in the *RPCNA Constitution*. The objective is to clarify the various employee benefits provided to pastors by congregations in the call documents. These changes may be found at the end of this report in Appendix C.

The Board is attempting to keep the cost of "Professional Services" at a minimum. All technical questions regarding the Retirement Plan with Clergy Advantage and should be addressed to the Executive Secretary and should go through him for a response.

The Pension Trustees still want to be able to monitor our retirement program so as to be sure that teaching elders and certain other denominational employees retire with an adequate income. Since the transition to the new Clergy Advantage 403(b) Retirement Plan by Church and Clergy Alliance involves individual accounts, the Board no longer receives information regarding who is a participant and who is not. In order for the Board to monitor our retirement program, the Pension Board will contribute \$250 a year to each active participant's account on condition that the participant sends their year-end retirement statement to the Board. This will enable the Board to offer helpful advice to participants, should it be needed, and to advocate for them if their congregation is not contributing the required amount for their retirement account.

**New Developments.** The Board has been considering self-funding our life insurance program in an effort to reduce expenses. Nearly every year the cost of life insurance increases, but we think self-funding life insurance could reduce the cost. We've been discussing this with Synod's Trustees and have an agreement in principle with them to bring this to the 2021 Synod as a proposal; please see Appendix B. The Board has also been considering providing self-funded long-term disability insurance for pastors in conjunction with Synod's

Trustees. The Board is still considering this matter informally, but it seems the administrative challenges would be much greater than for the self-funded life insurance we are proposing. Also, we estimated that for every \$10 we would put into such a plan we would get less than \$1 of benefits on average. Therefore, at this point, the Board is not planning to pursue this further.

**Benefits.** The 2007 Synod approved the recommendation of the Pension Trustees to establish a Pension Plan “B” Supplement Program. Step One of this program was completed in 2008 in which 38 participants (in some cases a spouse if the retiree died) who have already retired under Plan “B” received a one-time supplement. Step Two is to supplement 39 pastors and denominational employees under Plan “B” who were age 50 or above in 2007. These supplementary payments began in 2008 and will continue until the participant retires from active ministerial service or has reached the age of 70. These supplements (ranging from \$400 to \$700) will total approximately \$2,500 for this year. The number of active pastors under this program decreases each year. There are only five pastors still receiving funds under this program. These supplements are added to the participant’s retirement funds.

The Board recently reviewed our policies with regard to benefits and adopted some new policies. Consult the *2018 Minutes of Synod*, pp. 193f, for a list of these. Also be aware that the form in which you receive income may affect your ability to take distributions as “housing allowance” (see discussion of Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code).

**Canadian Pension Program.** In 2001, the Pension Plan Document was amended, effective as of October 1, 2001, to exclude non-resident aliens with no U.S. source income from an employer. This means that a Canadian citizen who is a pastor of a congregation in Canada is not eligible to be a participant in the pension plan with Clergy Advantage. At the same time, the Board committed itself to the task of working with the congregations in Canada to replace the benefits provided by our former Plan “B” with similar or comparable tax-favored retirement benefits in Canada and similar or comparable life insurance. One problem we have encountered is that there are certain financial requirements in Canada that must be met to set up a pension program. At this point we do not have enough congregations and adequate pension funds in Canada to establish our own pension program for our pastors there. It would seem that the best solution—at least for now—is for pastors and/or congregations to set up and contribute to registered retirement savings plans (RRSP). Canadian congregations with no pastor in IRA, 403(b), or similar U.S. plans are exempt from paying the pension portion of the annual assessment of Synod.

**Health Insurance.** Health insurance is also part of the work Synod has assigned to the Board. Due to a number of factors beyond our control, there

is no longer a denomination-wide health insurance program. Congregations and presbyteries are encouraged to investigate local health care options. While denominational employees previously had a group plan, they too must now acquire their own health insurance. The respective boards are providing additional compensation to help employees pay for their health insurance. The Affordable Care Act has made major changes in what health care coverage is now available. The Board continues to be concerned about health insurance and continues to examine the various options that are available. Another option is Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). HSAs have two parts: The first part is a high deductible health insurance policy that provides significant benefits, including coverage of large hospital bills, but has statutorily required high deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles, co-payments, and other amounts but not premiums). A HSA is a tax-exempt medical savings account to which one may contribute and then withdraw money tax-free. HSAs pair with high deductible plans (HDHP) only. The Affordable Care Act usually works well with Health Savings Accounts. A Health Savings Account is recommended if your plan has an annual deductible of more than \$1,350 for individual coverage or \$2,700 for family coverage. A high-deductible plan paired with an HSA can provide the best overall value of any health insurance option. HSAs can be set up with most banks. For 2021, annual out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles, copayments, and other amounts—but not premiums) cannot exceed \$8,150 for individual coverage and \$16,300 for family coverage. The out-of-pocket expenses for ACA compliant plans for 2021 cannot exceed \$8,550 for individual coverage and \$17,100 for family. Once a plan's out-of-pocket maximum is reached, the insurer covers 100% of costs. Each year you can contribute dollars tax free to your HSA up to a certain limit. The annual contribution limit for 2021 for an HSA is \$3,600 for an individual, \$7,200 for a family. HSA holders 55+ can contribute an extra \$1,000 tax deductible dollars to their HSA, \$4,550 for an individual and \$8,100 for a family. HSA contributions exceeding the applicable limit (or "excess contributions") are not deductible and are subject to a 6% excise tax. This 6% excise tax can be avoided if the excess contribution is returned to you by not later than April 15 of the year immediately following the year in which an excess contribution is made. If the excess contribution is not returned to you on or before the applicable April 15 deadline, the 6% excise tax is cumulative and continues into future years until corrected. An excess contribution carried over to a future year will be reduced by the difference between the limit for the future year and the amount actually contributed for the future year. If you have a health insurance policy that has a high deductible, it may already be HSA qualified. You can open an account with an insurance company or bank that offers health savings accounts or with an HSA administrator. Further information

is available throughout the internet. Congregations, boards, presbyteries, and pastors are urged to investigate this option.

**Social Security.** It has come to the attention of the Pension Trustees that a number of teaching elders have opted out of Social Security. The IRS allows only ministers with moral objections to civil government collective security plans to withdraw from Social Security and Medicare. If ministers are doing this only for their personal convenience and enrichment, they are breaking the law. We cannot monitor this so we encourage all ministers to do what they think is right before God. It should be clearly understood that the denomination's retirement plan was not designed to provide an adequate retirement income without the help of Social Security. Further, Social Security also provides certain survivor benefits for a young family. Those who have opted out of Social Security will need to purchase adequate insurance coverage to provide benefits for their family that they will not receive from Social Security, like Medicare. It should be understood that there are important advantages to being eligible for Medicare with respect to qualifying for other programs. While the Pension Board recognizes it is a family matter for individual pastors to decide for themselves, we think opting out of Social Security is an unwise financial course of action.

**Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.** Section 107 of the I.R.C. regarding "parsonage allowance" permits "ministers of the gospel" to exclude (1) the rental value of a home furnished as part of compensation or (2) the rental allowances paid as part of the minister's compensation, to the extent used by the minister to rent or provide a home, and to the extent such allowance does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities. Treasury Regulations §1.107-1(c) provide that a rental allowance must be included in the minister's gross income in the taxable year it is received, to the extent such allowance is not used by him during such taxable year for rent or to otherwise provide a home. Therefore, the amount of a parsonage allowance that is excludable from gross income is the least of:

1. the amount actually used to provide a home;
2. the amount officially designated as a housing allowance; or
3. the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and a garage, plus cost of utilities.

See the IRS Minister Audit Technique Guide: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Minister-Audit-Technique-Guide>.

The fair rental value of a home paid for in previous years may not be included in a parsonage allowance. See *Swaggart v. Commissioner*, T.C. Memo 1984-409.



Distributions from the Pension Plan may be excluded from the income of a retired minister under Section 107 of the I.R.C. if the distribution is designated as a housing allowance by the employing church, or in the case of denominational plan, the national governing body of the church, but only to the extent the Pension Plan distribution is used by a retired minister to rent or provide a home (Rev. Rul. 75-22). In our case the retiree housing allowance resolution is adopted each year by the Synod at its annual meeting. However, if the retired minister elects a lump sum payment, the amount of the lump sum payment that will be eligible for exclusion as a housing allowance will be limited to the amount used to rent or provide a home, not to exceed the fair rental value of the home for only the year in which the lump sum payment is received. Therefore it may be to the advantage of a retired minister to select an annuity option instead of a lump sum payment.

The Pension Trustees recommended and the 2005 Synod adopted two resolutions prepared by Mr. Thomas Graves, our legal counsel at that time, relative to the parsonage allowance exclusion. The resolutions are as follows:

Resolution 1: "Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Synod designates 100% of the pension received by ordained elders under the Plan as eligible for exclusion from income under I.R.C. 107 as a maximum rental allowance paid as compensation for past services, to the extent such allowance is actually used to rent or provide a home and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities" (2005 Minutes of Synod, page 56).

Resolution 2: "That the Synod recommends to congregations, presbyteries, and boards of the church that, for teaching elders who are required to file income taxes to the Internal Revenue Service of the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury and who are participants in the Plan, up to 60% of their compensation be designated as eligible for the maximum exclusion from income under I.R.C. 107 as a rental allowance paid as compensation for services, to the extent such allowance is actually used to rent or provide a home and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities" (2005 Minutes of Synod, page 56).

It should be understood by all interested parties that the terms "ministers of the gospel," "ordained elders," and "teaching elders" are all equivalent terms referring to individuals who are (or were, prior to retirement) recognized as ministers or religious leaders of their congregations and who perform (or performed, prior to retirement) the types of services set forth in Treasury Reg.

section 1.1402(c)-5(b)(2), which, in this regulation, are described in part as “the ministration of sacerdotal functions and the conduct of religious worship and the control, conduct and maintenance of religious organizations (including religious boards, societies and other integral agencies of such organizations), under the authority of a religious body constituting a church or church denomination.”

**Severance Pay Program.** Presbyteries and ad interim commissions are reminded that it is the policy of the Pension Board/Benefits Board to pay an allowance toward a three (3) month severance compensation for teaching elders who are participants in the Pension Plan of Synod. Certain eligibility requirements must be met for teaching elders to qualify for this program. Provided that one does qualify, as determined by the Pension Board, funding for this program should be by congregation, presbytery, and the Pension Board in that order. The Pension Trustees will be responsible only for a maximum of one-third of the total of the three-month severance pay package. See *1991 Minutes of Synod (MOS)*, pp. 23-25, for program details.

**Moving Allowance Program.** The Pension Board / Benefits Board has been authorized to pay an allowance toward the once-in-a-lifetime moving allowance as specified in the statement of this program. The amount that will be paid will be an allowance equal to 50% of the moving expenses, up to a maximum payout of \$2,000. See the *1991 MOS*, pp. 25-27 and the *1993 MOS*, pg. 58, for program details.

**Investments.** For questions about investments with Clergy Advantage & Equitable, contact the RPCNA treasurer James McFarland at (412) 731-1177 or William Brandt at (970) 776-1371. Customer Service Representatives of Equitable Life Insurance Company may be contacted at (800) 628-6673. There are 403(b) contribution limits. IRS guidance may be found at <https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/plan-participant-employee/retirement-topics-403b-contribution-limits>.

**Pension Plan Info.** There is considerable information regarding the Church and Clergy Alliance Retirement Program online at [www.Churchandclergyalliance.org](http://www.Churchandclergyalliance.org).

**Prayer Requests.** Thank God for those have been called to serve as teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons. Thank God for this branch of His church. Pray for those who minister God’s word every week in a post-Christian, hostile culture. Pray for spiritual revival and the growth of the church. Pray we remain faithful to the Lord.

**Nominations.** The terms of Christopher Huggins and Matthew Van Vlack expired at our fall 2020 meeting. Matthew informed the Board that he did not want to be renominated, but given the fact there was no 2020 meeting of Syn-

od, he continued serving to the present time. The terms of David Merkel and Peter Smith expire at the fall meeting of the Board. Because of the two-term rule of Synod, David Merkel is not eligible to be renominated, but Peter Smith is. The Board wants to thank David Merkel for his many years of faithful service on this Board. The Board is nominating Christopher Huggins, Peter Smith, Seth Wing, Jonathan Morton, and Jacob Long. This Board desires that Synod elect the following in these classes: Seth Wing, 2022; Chris Huggins and Jacob Long, 2023; Peter Smith and Jonathan Morton, 2024.

**Finances:**

- 1. That Synod set the minimum contribution rate of \$4,500 for 2022 by each employer for participants in the Retirement Plan.
- 2. That Synod set the 2022 assessment for the current account of the Benefits Board at 0.6% of non-designated receipts as of Dec., 31, 2021 as reported to stated clerk.

**Recommendations:**

- 1. That the Synod of 2021 approve changing the name of the Pension Trustees to the Benefits Board (thus more accurately describing the work of the Board).
- 2. That Synod adopt the new Constitution of the Benefits Board.
- 3. That Synod set the minimum contribution rate of \$4,500 for 2022 for each employer for participants in the Retirement Plan.
- 4. That Synod set the 2022 assessment for the current account of the Benefits Board at 0.6% of non-desig. receipts as of Dec. 31, 2021, as reported to the stated clerk.
- 5. That Synod approve the "Self-Insured Life Insurance Plan" as proposed.
- 6. That Synod adopt the proposed changes in Form 7.

<i>Respectfully submitted,</i>	<i>David Merkel (chairman)</i>
<i>Joel Hart</i>	<i>Christopher Huggins</i>
<i>Pete Smith</i>	<i>Matthew Van Vlack</i>
<i>A. Wayne Duffield (executive secretary)</i>	
<i>James McFarland (treasurer)</i>	

**Appendix A: Constitution of the Benefits Board, 2021**

- I. Name.** The name of this Board shall be called the Benefits Board of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Hereafter called the "Benefits Board" or "Board."
- II. Function.** The function of the Board shall be to glorify God as a servant in helping the denomination to fulfill its ministries in providing benefits for its workers that are best provided as a group, and to oversee the retirement benefits paid to workers. Depending on how laws are structured, and the perceived

needs of the denomination's workers, the package of benefits may change over time.

### III. Structure:

- A. Membership.** The Board shall be composed of six (6) voting members divided into three classes who are elected from the membership of the denomination by the Synod. Each member is to be elected for a three-year term. Old terms expire and new terms begin at the fall meeting of the Board. The Treasurer and Executive Secretary (if any) are consultants and non-voting members of the Board.
- B. Officers.** The Officers of the Trustees shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary, each elected for a one-year term at the Fall meeting of the Board and eligible to succeed himself in office. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall not be from the same class. Synod's Treasurer is the Board's Treasurer. If desired by the Board they can also elect an Executive Secretary at the Fall meeting. The Executive Secretary is a non-voting member. His task is to handle the ordinary actions between meetings, such as information requests, and ordinary payments. If extraordinary actions are needed between meetings, he would notify the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer to deal with the extraordinary action. He would then execute what the Executive Committee decides.
- C. Meetings.** The Trustees shall hold two (2) regular meetings annually (one in the spring and one in the fall—the date, time, and location of each to be decided before adjournment of the preceding meeting) and special meetings called by the Chairman. Meetings by teleconference are permitted. 4 voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- D. Organization.** The Board shall be divided into committees as determined from time to time by action of the Board. Each member shall be appointed by the Board's Chairman and approved by the Trustees to serve on a committee. Committee chairmen shall be appointed by the Board's Chairman. Responsibilities of committees are outlined in the minutes of the meetings of the Board.
- E. Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary, with the Treasurer and Executive Secretary (if any) as consultant(s). The Executive Committee shall deal with matters arising between Board meetings that need the attention of the Benefits Board.

**IV. Funds.** The finances of the Board shall be obtained from grants by Synod, investments, and other special means as approved by Synod. A budget of anticipated receipts and expenditures for each calendar year shall be prepared at

the Spring meeting of the preceding year for presentation to Synod. This budget shall be reviewed and revised as necessary at the Fall meeting. A financial statement shall be presented by the Treasurer at each regular Board meeting.

**V. Amendments.** Amendments may be proposed by any member or committee. Adoption of all amendments shall be by a two-thirds vote of the members present at such regular meeting. All amendments that have been adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Board shall be submitted to Synod for their adoption by a two-thirds vote.

**VI. Scriptural Basis for the Work of the Benefits Board:**

- A. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14; Galatians 6:6.** Here the principle presented is that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. In the Old Testament period those who ministered in the temple were supplied by the temple offerings of God's people. In the New Testament times the people of God present their contributions in various forms. In our culture, monetary support is provided for the ministers of the gospel. The scriptural passages do not inform us how to distribute support from the members of the churches nor what to do with accumulated sums, whether they are collected in a shorter or longer period. The funding concept is based on the principle that those who ministered in the Word should be supported as long as they live and that funds for that support should be in reserve when the workers reach retirement. Those who administer the fund seek to maintain adequate support for retired workers. Another principle is that each generation should be responsible for the obligations assumed by it, and to avoid the development of an excessive burden of support from future generations.
- B. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.** Three principles are established: (1) offerings are to be made regularly; (2) every member contributes; and (3) the contributions are to be made in proportion to the means of the giver. The funds regularly received were gathered together and brought to the poor in Jerusalem. Both references reveal a deep concern for the needy. Obviously, the cause of Christian benevolence went beyond the immediate congregation.
- C. Matthew 25:14.** As Jesus' story goes, before the master left home to go to another country, he called three of his servants in and gave each of them a definite sum of money. On returning home, the master called his servants in to settle account. Obviously the master expected the servants to put his money to good use while he was away, and this they understood. The duty of the church is to do its business wisely—whether that be on a congregational or denominational level. Money is not barren but can be a productive item and should be used accordingly.

Sometimes the “people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light” (Luke 16:8).

- D. Ecclesiastes 11:1-2; Exodus 20:15 (Deuteronomy 5:19).** Diversification is an important element of many economic strategies. Just as a wise farmer does not depend on a single crop, even so it is wise to prepare against calamities that may harm a person by spreading the risk over a wider group of people. Since disasters are unlikely to affect many people at the same time in the denomination, a relatively small amount paid each year can protect everyone. Protection is never total, though, and denominational workers are encouraged to increase their protection through private insurance plans. Private life insurance can supplement group life coverage. That is not true for some other coverages like disability. Consult professionals or wise friends to understand when private coverage is an effective add-on. Pooling risks leads to better outcomes for all, as no one can tell when he or she might be disabled, or even die. It is prudent to take care of some of the major risks that could lead to impoverishment for the families of denominational workers.

**Summary:** Scripture clearly teaches that church workers (pastors, missionaries, and other full-time employees) are to be adequately paid and protected. Denominational benefit plans can play a significant role in aiding that protection.

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### **Appendix B: The Self-Insured Life Insurance Plan**

A little more than two years ago, the Pension Board considered the possibility of starting a long-term disability plan for pastors and the servants of Synod. In the process of doing that, we realized that potentially we could do it a lot cheaper if we did it in a self-insured manner. That led us to consider doing the same thing with the current life insurance plan.

In subsequent discussions with the Trustees of Synod and the Finance Committee, we realized that if we did this, we needed to do it in such a way that would pose no great risk to the Reformed Presbyterian Church (of North America) and could be run by ordinary people without insurance expertise.

In working through that, those that are insurance experts on the Pension Board concluded that self-insuring a long-term disability benefit would not work well, but that a self-insured life insurance benefit would work well. As such, we will be getting quotes for insurance from disability insurers, with an objective of having the benefit in place at or before Synod 2021. The annual cost would likely be below \$40,000. Some of the funds would come

from savings on the life insurance plan. Therefore, here is our proposal for the self-insured life insurance plan:

### **Answering the Questions Given to us by the Trustees of Synod**

The trustees gave us four questions/tasks to answer with respect to self-funding:

#### **1. How would we do risk control from multiple events to avoid large claims?**

We looked into excess insurance, and even travel accidental death insurance for both life and disability. In short, our group is too small, and the amount insured per person is too small for that to be an option. It is not worth the time of what few insurers might be willing to quote it (and we have not found any). As a result, we took a different approach to mitigate the risk of the life benefit. Instead of paying it all out at once, it gets paid 50% when the death occurs and 25% for the next two years.

This does not change the economics of making the payment—the same amount of money goes out. But it gives us more time to raise the liquidity, and we will not have to keep as much liquidity on hand. Given that we typically do not have many deaths of those active in the ministry, this makes funding the death benefits relatively simple.

#### **2. Anti-selection: How would we keep from incentivizing pastors who are marginally disabled from using this benefit?**

This is only a risk for self-insured disability, and we are not doing that.

#### **3. Future administration: We might have the right people to do this now but how do we institutionalize this so a less talented group could administer this?**

This was the major reason that we gave up on the self-insured disability plan. We did not want to place future trustees of the pension board in the rough position of having to choose between protecting RPCNA finances and caring for a marginally disabled brother in Christ. This is not a problem with a life plan. Disability can vary in a wide number of ways. Death is binary—you are either alive or dead, there is no in-between. Once someone provides an official copy of the death certificate, you pay, and not until that is provided to the Board.

#### **4. They want us to get an actuarial analysis done to show how much we would need to set aside per year for this.**

See below for the actuarial analysis.

### **Why Do a Self-insured Life Insurance Plan?**

The main idea is to save money because Reformed Presbyterians tend to live longer than the mortality tables would indicate. Also, we end up not having to pay for the expenses and profits of the insurance company.

Additionally, this gives us the flexibility to use a benefit that pays out 50%, 25%, and 25% over a two-year period; most insurers want a lump sum payout.

We had already been considering raising the life insurance benefit to \$150,000 in order to adjust for inflation since the benefit was set at \$100,000. By doing that increase together with the other changes, changing the way the benefit is paid out is less of a sting because they will get more over time. For most of the bereaved, it is useful to get the money paid over time because it aids in the adjustment process, as they do not have to figure out how to manage a large sum of money that comes all at once.

So, the new proposed benefit is \$75,000, and then \$37,500 one year later and \$37,500 two years later. For those dying over the age of 70, the benefit is half of that as is the practice now. The cost of that benefit for the existing group that we insure would run between \$50,000-55,000. Humana has been raising our premiums recently, thus the range. Self-insuring the benefit would cost \$30,500. The “savings” of \$19,500-24,500 (on average \$22,000) can help defray the cost of the new insured disability benefit.

**Actuarial Analysis.** Here is the analysis provided by David Merkel, who worked as a life actuary for four different life insurers in his career, as well as being an external analyst of the industry as an investor. He was a Fellow in the Society of Actuaries, but stopped paying dues in 2008, and as such, can still call himself an actuary but can't call himself an FSA. It is legal for him to do analyses like this, just not to do any work that regulators would rely on. Assumptions:

1. I used the roster as given to me by James McFarland, which was used by Humana for the last premium calculation.
2. I used ratios of population mortality tables for group life death rates—both sex and age distinct. The ratios came from the Society of Actuaries 2016 Group Life study. The population mortality tables are the most recent ones [2011] calculated by the CDC.
3. I assumed that there is no correlation between deaths—there are no joint diseases or accidents that lead to multiple deaths.
4. I assumed no mortality discount for SIC code [8661–Religious Organizations]. The SIC code [86–Membership Organizations] that workers in membership organizations would be in has death rates 78% of the average worker receiving group life insurance, given the preponderance of males that we insure.
5. I also assumed no mortality discount for being pastors—or RP pastors—which are likely lower than those for workers in membership organizations.
6. Finally, I assumed zero investment income is earned on the money retained by not paying insurance premiums net of life insurance claim payments.

Methods: Direct calculation, and simulation of claim costs over 10 million

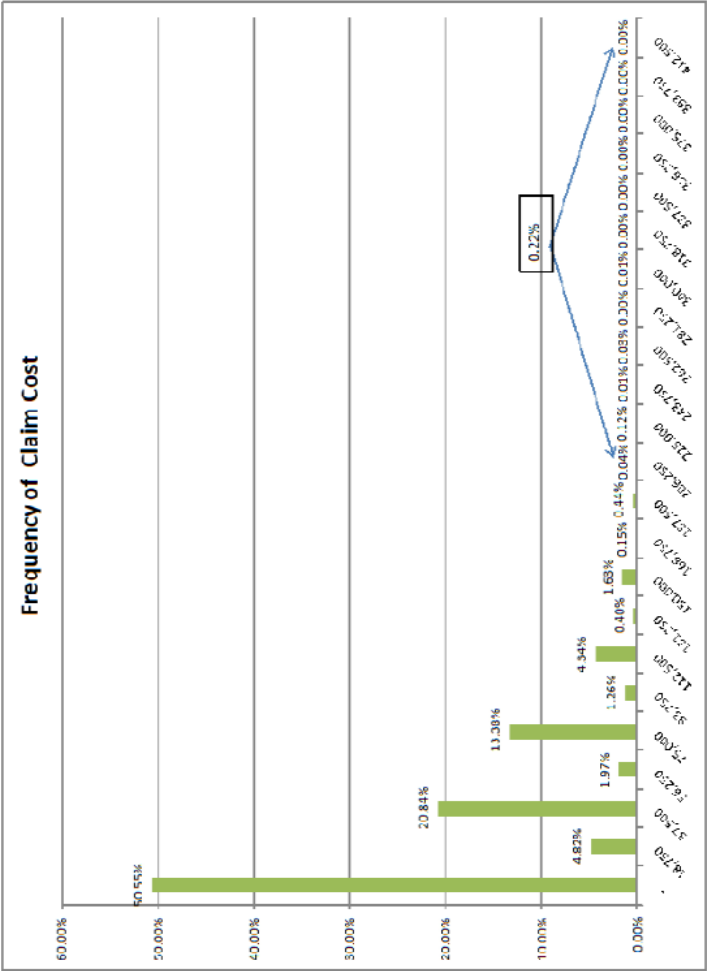


random years.

Results: Pure premium by direct calculation is \$30,487. Calculation via simulation yields \$30,333, validating the math of the simulation model. The pure premium is consistent with the amount of profit and expense loading an insurance company could layer onto the “pure premium.” That said, Humana is making a lot of money off the current life insurance plan.

The odds of claim payments in a year exceeding \$225,000 (as modeled) is around one in 1,886. Since the odds of this are remote, there is no need to hedge against high death claims.

The following table and graph show the likelihood of annual claim payments:



Claim Amount (\$)	Expected Claim Cost (\$)	Frequency	Odds	Deaths	Cost for Claims Over \$225K (\$)
-	-	50.55%	2.0	-	-
18,750	903.77	4.82%	21	1.000	-
37,500	7,815.60	20.84%	4.8	1.009	-
56,250	1,106.42	1.97%	51	2.002	-
75,000	10,037.84	13.38%	7	1.324	-
93,750	1,179.49	1.26%	79	2.316	-
112,500	4,877.87	4.34%	23	2.143	-
131,250	528.89	0.40%	248	3.132	-
150,000	2,442.15	1.63%	61	2.547	-
168,750	256.69	0.15%	657	3.533	-
187,500	822.86	0.44%	228	3.266	-
206,250	85.37	0.041%	2,416	4.250	-
225,000	276.44	0.123%	814	3.717	-
243,750	29.13	0.012%	8,368	4.698	2.24
262,500	75.84	0.029%	3,461	4.394	10.83
281,250	7.99	0.0028%	35,211	5.433	1.6
300,000	19.95	0.0067%	15,038	4.895	4.99
318,750	2.07	0.0007%	153,846	5.831	0.61
337,500	5.00	0.0015%	67,568	5.439	1.67
356,250	0.43	0.00012%	833,333	6.583	0.16
375,000	1.43	0.00038%	263,158	5.947	0.57
393,750	0.08	0.00002%	5,000,000	6.500	0.03
412,500	0.17	0.00004%	2,500,000	6.750	0.08
Pure Premium	30,333.38				
More than \$225K	418.50	0.053%	1,886		22.77

Check \$30,487.33  
 Difference (\$153.96)  
 -0.5050%

Here are a few notes to explain the calculations:

1. "Pure premium" is the amount that an insurance company would charge if it had no expenses, no profits, and did not care about how results vary over time, but only cared about the average claims expected.
2. The figure for the pure premium in the "over \$225K" column in the lower right-hand corner, reflects the amount that an excess insurer would charge as a pure premium for insuring all amounts over \$225,000. Now, no insurer would bother to write a policy for \$22.77. Even if they charged \$1,000 for it, it still would not be worth their while, given the fixed costs involved in creating an unusual one-time insurance contract. This is why getting excess insurance will not work.

3. In half (50.55%) of all years, the plan would likely pay out nothing. In terms of new claims, they would occur in roughly one out of five years. This is consistent with the death rate of active ministers in the RPCNA over the last 61 years, where under a plan like this, there would have been eleven death claims across the 61 years. Two years had two active ministers die in the same year.
4. Assumptions 4-6 introduce some conservatism into the calculation. RP pastors die at even lower rates than the ordinary working population, including religious clerics. The true pure premium could be \$6,000+ less than modeled here. Since this analysis includes mortality experience dating back to 1960, when death rates for workers were 40% higher on average than the most recent table calculated in 2011, we should have experienced fifteen deaths. These are small numbers, so do not put too much into this.
5. There is one liberal assumption (#3), and the effects of that assumption are described in the next section:

Only significant limitation ... events leading to multiple deaths. Examples:

- Nuclear attacks on Central Indiana, Western Pennsylvania, Western New York State, or Eastern Kansas.
- Terrorist incidents at Presbytery or Synod Meetings, or just an aggrieved appellant with a gun.
- Van or plane crash traveling to Presbytery or Synod Meetings.
- Mass shooting or poisoning at RPTS.
- Plague worse than 1918.
- Targeted lethal persecution of RP pastors.
- You get the idea ... these are unlikely.

Across the last 120 years, to the best of my knowledge, we have had no events leading to deaths of multiple active pastors. Even the influenza epidemic of 1918 had only one death of a pastor in active ministry. Also, if we had a significant disaster, the saints would rally to help. Think of what we did in the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Even in the midst of a bad economic environment our saints gave over \$250,000 for a disaster that was distant from us. And this was after RPGM had just ramped up their fundraising and RPM&M had a good fundraising year.

The benefit of moving to self-insurance: This would save the RPCNA around \$22,000 per year (on average)—perhaps more given the lower death rates of RP pastors, and added investment income.

**Funding methods in theory.** There are several different ways to do this, depending upon how you want to structure it. In the end though, the funding method does not matter, as no one in the RPCNA would feel right in not paying on a legitimate death claim.

The first branch of the decision tree is whether you want the Pension Board to watch over a separate pool of money, mostly for accounting purposes. Note that the Pension Board does not have a separate economic identity from the Trustees of Synod. The Pension Board is just a notional segment of the overall finances of the Trustees. As a result, Solution 1 is that the Trustees adopt a “pay as you go” strategy and keeps a certain amount of liquid assets available to pay death claims. If that amount were \$225,000, the odds of having to reach for additional liquidity would be remote (one out of 1,886). If the amount were \$450,000, the odds would be virtually zero.

Solution 2 is to have the Pension Board hold the funds, and on the same basis. If the Pension Board always had \$225,000 in its coffers, it could handle the claims under all but remote circumstances. Even \$150,000 plus whatever was needed for the next year’s payments for death claims from the prior two years would be adequate. The challenge comes in the two years after the death claims to top up the account. But, there will be time to raise the liquidity.

In a simulation plus regression analysis to try to come up with other methods than these, methods of varying the amount contributed to the Pension Board based on the amount of assets in their coffers, the simulation and regression model validated that the above are the only real solutions. And, that makes sense because the economic effects of the death benefits come when they will come, and in self-insuring one has to be adequately prepared for the future.

Geek Note: In the simulation plus regression analysis, I re-ran the simulation models for two million more years of death claims, then asked the regression model to calculate what sort of transfers from the Finance Committee or endowment of the Trustees to the Pension Board would always leave the Pension Board solvent. The answer that came back was a complex version of what is written above. Simple strategies are usually preferred to what is complex, so that is why I give the two solutions above.

Proposed Initial and Future Funding Rule Using a Separate Account:

For the initial funding, we would contribute \$100,000 of the Pension Board’s account to establish the self-funded life plan, and ask the General Account of Synod to contribute \$50,000. We would hold back around \$50,000 in the Pension Board account as a buffer, because of our two-year planning cycle, so that we could contribute \$50,000 immediately to the life plan in a year where we have two or more deaths. Beyond that, the denominational office would allow us to run a deficit in a severe scenario, and in a very severe scenario, we would ask for additional support from the congregations and members of the denomination.

The proposed future annual funding method would be to allocate \$40,000 to the Pension Board each year for the life plan. If the Pension Board's endowment account gets above the greater of \$225,000 or \$150,000 plus death claims yet to be paid, the Pension Board rebates the excess assets back to Synod's budget. If the account gets below \$100,000, allocate \$60,000 to the Pension Board's account until it is above \$150,000. Allocate more if the Pension Board's account is less than the sum of the death claims yet to be paid. Note: The Pension Board has in its account \$190,000 or so at present.

Also note that for future years the expenses of the Pension Board are likely to be the amount to fund the life insurance endowment fund plus ~\$20,000/year. For 2022, we are asking for 0.6% of non-designated receipts, in future years, that % will vary acc. to the method described in this paragraph plus ~\$20,000.

The reasoning behind this funding method is as follows: Under most conditions it is unlikely that we will get more than two deaths of active members of the life plan in a single year. Over the last 61 years, we have had two deaths of active pastors twice (1971, 2010), and seven times once (11 total). There was an 18-year stretch with no deaths. We are playing with "the law of small numbers" here. History always looks a little unusual when looking at small groups. But looking at actuarial theory, we had fewer deaths than would have been expected (~15) from looking at group life mortality tables and adjusting for the lower mortality rates for religious clerics.

**Conclusion.** Self-insuring the life insurance benefit will save the RPCNA money; it does not materially increase the economic risks to the RPCNA. In a real disaster, our brothers and sisters in the RPCNA will rise up to help us. Whatever we choose for the funding method, the economics to the RPCNA as a whole will be the same. We spent time over the last two years talking with the Trustees of Synod regarding the risks and benefits of this change, and they gave us their approval using the approach where we wall off a portion of the endowment to pay life claims. We also talked with the Finance Committee about the initial and continuing funding methods, and they gave us their approval as well. With God's help, the self-funded life plan should save us money and provide a higher benefit to the families of active pastors and servants of Synod who go to be with the Lord.

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Appendix C: Form 7, Section 3 (comparison)

New Language	Old Language	Rationale
<p>3. Other Benefits</p> <p>(Indicate the congregation's specific plan and commitment to provide for the new pastor's continuing pastoral development such as sabbatical leaves, annual professional conference attendance, the purchase of books and related professional resources as recommended by the Synod.)</p> <p>(Indicate which of the following you will provide by check mark and/or fill in amount.)</p>	<p>3. Other Benefits</p> <p>(Indicate the congregation's specific plan and commitment to provide for the new pastor's continuing pastoral development such as sabbatical leaves, annual professional conference attendance, the purchase of books and related professional resources as recommended by the Synod.)</p> <p>(Indicate which of the following you will provide by check mark and/or fill in amount.)</p>	<p>No Change</p>
<p>Synod-required Retirement Plan [type of plan, amount to pay into it, institution to be used]: _____</p> <p>Supp. Retirement Plan [type of plan, amount to pay into it, institution to be used]: _____</p> <p>Payment in lieu of Social Security: \$ _____</p> <p>Health Insurance [name of plan, and amount to be paid]: _____</p> <p>Allowance for incidental health costs if any: \$ _____</p>	<p>Pension Plan: _____</p> <p>Synod: _____</p> <p>Annuity: _____</p> <p>\$ _____ payment in lieu of Social Security.</p> <p>Health Insurance [name of health plan and amount to be paid]: _____</p>	<p><i>Substantive Changes:</i> To clarify our current practice. There are retirement arrangements required by Synod and those that go beyond that. There is health insurance and flexible aid beyond that.</p>

<p>_____ [number of] weeks that will be provided for vacation time each year.</p> <p>Attendance at church functions:</p> <p>_____ time off for Synod;</p> <p>_____ time off for Presbytery;</p> <p>_____ [#] of communion(s) allowed each year in the congregations;</p> <p>_____ family youth conferences;</p> <p>_____ [list any others]</p>	<p>_____ [number of] weeks that will be provided for vacation time each year.</p> <p>Attendance at church functions:</p> <p>_____ time off for Synod;</p> <p>_____ time off for Presbytery;</p> <p>_____ [#] of communion(s) allowed each year in the congregations;</p> <p>_____ family youth conferences;</p> <p>_____ [list any others]</p>	<p><i>No changes of substance; efforts to clarify.</i></p>
<p>Non-financial compensation— e.g. food for locker, etc.</p> <p>List any other special benefits.</p>	<p>Non-financial compensation— e.g. food for locker, etc.</p> <p>List any other special benefits.</p>	<p><i>No change.</i></p>

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**At 9:00 p.m., minutes of the Monday evening sessions were read, corrected, and approved as corrected. Synod’s manager Herb McCracken stood to make announcements. The Court sang Psalm 127A. At 9:15 p.m., Synod was led in a prayer of evening adjournment by Mr. Drew Gordon.**



***Tuesday; June 15, 2021; 8:15 a.m.***

At 8:17 a.m., the moderator called the Court to order, introducing Pastor Noah Bailey who led in morning worship. Mr. Bailey preached on the spiritual fruit of joy, then closed our worship in prayer. The assembly sang Psalm 65B (Mr. Brian Wright presenting).

Mr. Marlin Klingensmith constituted the Court in prayer. The attendance roll was passed. Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Jeff Stivason to introduce Grace (Gibsonia) intern Clay Joseph to the Court. Attendance roll instructions were offered and updates given concerning recent committee assignments. Discussion ensued, and the moderator's appointment of Mr. Gabe Wingfield (in place of Mr. Kyle Borg) to Judicial Committee #2 was challenged; the moderator's appointment was upheld by a standing vote, 71 to 57. Business from "List A" was pursued.

The Report of Synod's Trustees was presented by Mr. Marlin Klingensmith. The Court was urged to rejoice in God for His generous provisions to and through us in recent years and to take this grateful spirit back to our congregations. Discussion ensued pertaining to issues within the body of the report. The Board's recommendation, that the Investment Policy be approved as updated, passed. The moderator's judgment that this passed was questioned, and then supported by a standing vote, 63 to 34. The report as a whole was received.

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**Report of the Trustees of Synod, 2021**

We are thankful to God for providing for the work of the denomination through giving to the Reformed Presbyterian Missions & Ministries (RPM&M) Fund in 2019 and 2020. We exceeded the RPM&M goals for both years, and a combined \$1.1 million was raised for the work of RPCNA ministries. More information is found below in the report of our Stewardship Committee.

**Regarding Continuing Duties of the Board:** The Trustees of Synod have held six regular meetings since the last Synod in 2019. The fall 2019 meeting was in person. The winter 2020 and 2021 meetings were by remote conference call as usual. The spring and fall 2020 and spring 2021 meetings were originally planned to be in person but were held by remote internet video due to the pandemic.

The work of the denominational office is overseen by our Board. Some office work is done remotely, and some is done in the Penn Avenue office: Jim McFarland and Vida Brown are located in the Pittsburgh area and both are in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, while Vida is also there on Fridays.



Anna Dinkledine, who supports the office in the processing of bills and payroll, among other things, currently lives in Tennessee and works on a part-time basis. Because of their ability to work remotely, the pandemic did not greatly hamper the day-to-day business of the denominational office.

The denominational office is situated in a building adjacent to RPTS that is shared with the Crown & Covenant office. Thanks to the generous grant of Synod funds in 2019, the leaking roof has been repaired, and the sidewalk and porch have been replaced. Some interior ceiling repairs and possible mold damage remediation still needs to be done. The Trustees will be working with the E&P board to prioritize and execute the remaining needed repairs.

**The members of the Board are:** Class of 2020: David McCune, James McFarland (Treasurer), Cheryl Hemphill. Class of 2021: Nathan Anseth, John Duke, Marlin Klingensmith (President). Class of 2022: Larry Gladfelter, David Robson, Bill Roberts (V.P.).

Per BOSCS's instruction from last year: "The membership of the classes of the Standing and Special Committees and Boards of Synod will remain in their roles of active service, as they are able, until regular elections can be held in 2021."

The terms for David McCune and Cheryl Hemphill expired in 2020, but both were able and willing to remain in their roles for 2021, and they continued to serve for the past year. We are nominating them to continue to serve as the class of 2023.

James McFarland, as Treasurer, is required by the Board's charter to be a member and so has been exempted from Synod's two-term policy. We have nominated him and he should be voted on by a Yes/No vote of Synod.

At the end of 2019, Nathan Anseth resigned from the Trustees of Synod. With the departure of Nathan Anseth, we have no trustees from the Pacific Coast Presbytery. We were not able to replace him last year because the 2020 Synod was cancelled.

Marlin Klingensmith is completing his second consecutive term and is ineligible for re-election. John Duke is completing his first term and has respectfully requested that he not be re-nominated; we honor him for his many years of faithful service on the board both on this term and on his many previous terms. As a consequence, we have three vacancies on the board to fill. We are nominating the following people:

Pacific Coast Presbytery: Gayle Copeland (Fresno RPC), Provost of Academic Affairs, Fresno Pacific University. Gayle previously taught at Geneva and has served on Geneva's Board of Trustees and the Board of Education and Publication.

Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery: Bob Sabolich (Lafayette RPC, Deacon, Treasurer), Retired Tax Partner and Chartered Financial Consultant.

Presbytery of the Alleghenies: Douglas Comin (Manchester RPC, Ruling Elder, Teaching Elder without a call), Financial Advisor.

**Pandemic Relief.** The US Congress authorized the Paycheck Protection Program to offer loans for up to 2.5 times the organization’s average monthly payroll. If all employees are retained for 8 weeks after the loan, the loan is forgiven. After researching to make sure there were no “strings” attached, we came to the conclusion we would not be committing the denomination to any requirements by taking advantage of this program. We received the following, and having met all the requirements, the loan has been fully forgiven.

RPTS	\$204,794
RPGM	50,499
RP Missions	6,364
Crown & Covenant	42,837
Trustees of Synod	35,193
Pension Board	703
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 340,390</b>

Stewardship Committee: The Lord provided abundantly for the needs of the RPCNA; a portion of this provision is the RPM&M Fund.

2019 RPM&M goal:	\$ 445,000
2019 RPM&M received:	629,000
2020 RPM&M goal:	475,000
2020 RPM&M received:	559,000

As we have done for several years, we contacted representatives of most congregations to speak with them about the support that RPM&M gives to the church’s ministries, to promote giving to RPM&M, and to answer questions about assessments and related matters.

For 2019, about one-fifth of our churches did not send an RPM&M contribution. This rose to three in ten churches for 2020. While our Board seeks to do all that it can to promote RPM&M giving, the members of Synod do also have a responsibility in this regard.

We remind you that the Synod of 2011 passed the following recommendation: “Every session should promote what the RPCNA does in its missions and ministries to their congregation, in order to explain the needs and promote support of the RPCNA through their congregation, and individually. Every session should also instruct whoever constructs their budget to include RPM&M as a line item in their budget, and show them [the Finance Committee] report, including the Targets of Honor formula. Every session should provide a minimum of at least one opportunity per year to contribute to a special collection for RPM&M so that there are no longer any congregations that give \$0.” We again urge each member of Synod to personally promote RPM&M giving in

your respective congregations. Elders, deacons, church treasurers, and in fact, all church members need to be reminded that the ministry of the church extends beyond our individual congregations.

**Industrial Appraisal and Insurance Renewal:** Our Property, Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance policy renewed 4/1/2020. We were concerned that our coverage might not be sufficient for the current properties. If there is a significant claim, and the Insurance company deems that we are significantly underinsured, they can limit how much they pay toward the claim. To get a better idea of the actual value of the insured properties, we hired an Industrial Appraiser. This cost \$4,100. The results of the appraisal were that we were insured for roughly half the current value of the properties under coverage. The end result is we increased our coverage to the recommended amount and increased our deductible from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per claim to reduce the increased cost. The new policy is about \$2,000 more per year.

**Investment Committee:** The Trustees of Synod continue to use Wilmington Trust Investment Advisors as our investment advisor and broker. We have given Wilmington Trust full discretion to purchase or sell securities in our portfolio, subject to our investment policies, which include an asset allocation target and prohibitions on investing in companies that engage in overtly immoral, sinful, or dangerous behavior or which promote immoral, sinful, or dangerous behavior as part of their business model.

As of 12/31/19 the portfolio of stocks and bonds managed by Wilmington Trust had a market value of \$20,814,458—an increase of almost \$4MM from the prior year-end 2018.

Due to the pandemic and other market concerns, the stock market has greatly fluctuated. As of 12/31/2020 the portfolio market value was \$23,037,339, and as of 04/30/2021 the portfolio market value was \$25,020,042.

The Trustees used a 4.4% total return spending policy in 2019 to pay out income to the boards, institutions, and congregations whose funds are invested with us. The payout was based on the average market value of the previous twelve quarters as of the end of the prior year. Long-term studies and the practice of other institutions have persuaded us to reduce the payout due to concerns that the spending rate was too aggressive and that the inflation-adjusted value of the endowments was declining over time. As reported in 2019, we set the 2020 spending policy at 4.3%, and at our fall meeting in 2019 we set the 2021 policy at 4.2%. In our fall meeting in 2020 we set the 2022 policy at 4.1%. Our expectation is that we will continue to lower the rate by 0.1% again next year to reach 4%.

In 2020, the Trustees, in conjunction with Wilmington Trust, have determined that our policy of holding between 50% to 70% of the portfolio value

in equities and equity tracking funds should be relaxed. We have authorized Wilmington Trust to now allow up to 80% of the portfolio to be held in equities and equity tracking funds. Our reasons for the increase to up to 80% of the portfolio in equities and equity tracking funds are:

- Converting the portfolio to be more heavily weighted in equities and equity tracking funds has a modest increase in risk with an out-sized increase in potential returns.
- Equities have historically outperformed all other investment vehicles, and we are holding our investments for the long term.
- At the time of the change, the equity market was severely discounted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the investment long-term timescale for the endowment, the market downturn was viewed as temporary and therefore represented a buying opportunity.

**Recommended Update to Investment Policy:** The Trustees would like to update the investment policy. Most of the updates are clerical in nature. However, we are proposing some changes to the current investment policy which require Synod approval. We believe these changes are appropriate and are in the best interest of the denomination and furtherance of the Lord's work in a God-honoring way while in the midst of a fallen world.

The purpose of the changes is to allow us to use more cost-effective investment instruments that better match overall market returns.

Summary of the recommended changes to the Investment Policy:

1. Allow for investment of mutual funds and index funds.
2. The existing "moral filter" restrictions are to be applied to individual equities and industry-specific funds, not to general sector mutual or index funds.
3. To better enforce the "moral filter," the investment committee reserves the right to prospectively approve or reject the portfolio manager's recommendation for investment in any new equity or fund.
4. Numerous minor changes for clarity and consistency.

The updated investment policy to be approved is included as Addendum 1. The redline version of the investment policy showing the changes is included as Addendum 2.

**Cecil J. S. MacLaughlin Trust:** In 2019 we reported that the Special Trustees of the MacLaughlin Trust reduced their payout from 4.5% to 4%. But they have since reported that due to California law, they could not reduce the spending rate without court approval. So, the spending rate remained at 4.5% until they could get the required court approval. The court approval was delayed because of COVID-19 but has just recently been approved.

The change will go into effect 7/1/2021, with the result that for 2021, the payout rate will effectively be 4.25% (4.5% for the first half year and 4.0% for the second). The payout for 2022 will be at 4.0%.

The market value of the Cecil J. S. MacLaughlin Charitable Trust was \$4,505,407 on 12/31/2019, a \$700K increase from the previous year end. The market value on 12/31/2020 was \$4,840,081 and as of 3/32/2021 it was \$4,960,051.

The terms of the Trust provide that a person designated by this Board should serve as Special Trustee of the Trust. Our Special Trustee, Mr. David Schaefer, represents the Synod at annual meetings which include the two other Special Trustees (as provided for in Mrs. MacLaughlin's directives: one representing Geneva College and another from her lawyer's firm) and the Corporate Trustee, who manages the trust's investments.

**Audit Committee:** Holsinger, our auditor, has audited the financial records of the Trustees of Synod for the year ending 12/31/2019. We have a clean audit report for 2019. At our spring 2020 meeting, the auditors expressed to us their appreciation for Jim and Vida's work on our financials and noted that they were able to remove from their report several prior remarks recommending improvements in our systems because all of those items have been satisfactorily addressed.

The financial records for the year ending 12/31/2020 are currently being audited. Working with our auditor to lower our not inconsequential audit costs, we have moved the beginning of the audit to after the tax season. But the result is we are not able to present the 2020 audit results in this report. We do not anticipate any problems being found in the 2020 audit, and we expect to be able to report more fully on the audit at the Synod meeting.

**Building Loans and General Mortgages:** The Building Loan and Grant Fund ended 2019 with a balance of \$984,364 in loans outstanding or receivable. As of December 31, 2020, there were General Mortgage Loans outstanding or receivable in the amount of \$958,998. As of 12/31/19 the General Mortgage Loans outstanding or receivable were \$672,241 and as of 12/31/20 they were \$707,841.

**Liability Claim—REmaker Conference:** In the summer of 2017, RPTS held a work/study conference at which volunteers helped in the renovation and repair of some of the seminary's property. A volunteer, who was also a seminary student, sustained serious injuries while taking part in the conference and consequently needed two surgeries at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. In March 2019, our insurance company informed us that the individual has presented a claim for a settlement of \$1.5 million to cover costs associated with his injuries and subsequent disability. Since the seminary's properties are owned by Synod's Trustees, the claim was presented to us. Given the fact that this matter is still being negotiated, we need to be careful in what we disclose publicly,

but we feel obliged to at least inform the Synod of the current state of the claim. Based on what we know presently, it is possible that the matter will not exceed our insurance limits.

**Implied Trusts and Congregational Properties:** In 2017 we informed you of a question that came to us from the Terre Haute (Indiana) Mission Church which made us aware of the possibility that laws in several states have changed such that local congregations of the RPCNA may no longer be regarded in some states as holding their properties in trust for the denomination. It is difficult to address legal issues spanning many states. We are not able to make recommendations to the Synod on this concern, but we are still aware of the issue.

**Prayer Requests:** Join us in giving thanks to the Lord for abundant giving from his people to the work of Reformed Presbyterian Missions & Ministries (RPM&M) in 2019 and 2020. Give thanks for the good work of the denominational office employees, whose labors, though often unseen, are essential to conducting denominational ministry. Pray that the injury claim we've mentioned can be settled justly and amicably, in a way that honors the Lord.

**For the Nominating Committee:** (1) that David McCune and Cheryl Hemphill be nominated to serve as Trustees of Synod in the class of 2023; (2) that Gayle Copeland and Bob Sabolich and Douglas Comin be nominated to serve as Trustees of Synod in the class of 2024; (3) that James McFarland be nominated to serve as a Trustee of Synod and Treasurer in the class of 2023, with a Yes / No vote of Synod.

**Recommendation:** that the Investment Policy be approved as updated.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Class of 2020: David McCune, James McFarland, Cheryl Hemphill*

*Class of 2021: John Duke, Marlin Klingensmith*

*Class of 2022: Larry Gladfelter, David Robson, Bill Roberts*

## **Addenda 1: Updated Investment Policy to be approved**

**Effective Date:** TBD

### **Investment Policy Statement for the Trustees of Synod of the RPCNA**

#### **Scope**

This Statement reflects the investment policy, objectives, and constraints of the methods and management of assets available for investment on behalf of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) denomination.

#### **Purpose**

This Investment Policy Statement is set forth by the Trustees of Synod, which is the governing body of the RPCNA, via the Investment Committee, in order to:

1. Define and establish the responsibilities of all involved parties.

2. Establish a clear understanding for all involved parties of the investment goals and objectives for the denomination's assets.
3. Provide guidance and limitations to the Investment Manager regarding investment of the denomination's assets.
4. Establish a basis for evaluating investment results.
5. Ensure that the denomination's assets are managed in accordance with applicable standards.

In general, the purpose of this statement is to outline the principles that will guide the investment management of the assets toward the desired results. It is intended to be sufficiently specific as to be meaningful, yet flexible enough to be practical.

### **Delegation of Authority**

The Investment Committee is responsible for directing and monitoring the investment management of the denomination's assets. As such, the Investment Committee is authorized to delegate certain responsibilities to professional experts in various fields. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Investment Manager. At the discretion of the investment committee, the Investment Manager may be given full discretion to purchase, sell, or hold the specific securities that will be used to meet the denomination's investment objectives. The investment committee reserves the right to request advance notice and prospectively approve or reject investments in new securities.
2. Custodian. The Custodian will physically (or through agreement with a sub-custodian) maintain possession of securities owned by the RPCNA, collect dividend and investment payments, redeem maturing securities, and effect receipt and delivery following purchases and sales. The custodian may also perform regular accounting of all assets owned, purchased, or sold, as well as movement of assets into and out of the denomination's account.
3. Additional specialists such as attorneys, auditors, accountants, and others may be employed by the Investment Committee to assist in meeting its responsibilities and obligations to administer the denomination's assets prudently.
4. The Investment Committee may from time to time choose to directly control investment decisions.

### **Assignment of Responsibility**

**Investment Committee.** The specific responsibilities of the Investment Committee relating to the investment management of assets include:

1. Projecting the denomination's liquidity needs and communicating such needs to the Investment Manager on a timely basis.

2. Determining risk tolerance and investment time horizon and communicating these to the appropriate fiduciaries.
3. Establishing reasonable and consistent investment objectives, policies, and guidelines that will direct the investment of assets.
4. Prudently and diligently selecting qualified investment professionals, including the Investment Manager and Custodian.
5. Regularly evaluating the performance of the Investment Manager to ensure adherence to the investment policy guidelines stated herein and to monitor progress toward investment objectives.
6. Developing and enacting proper control procedures and policies.
7. Interviewing, retaining, monitoring and, when necessary, replacing Investment Manager.

**Investment Manager.** The Investment Manager will have discretion, in agreement with the Delegation of Authority section, to make investment decisions for the assets placed in its care, while operating within all policies, guidelines, constraints, and principles outlined in this statement and in any additional statements or amendments which may be adopted by the Investment Committee from time to time. Specific responsibilities of the Investment Manager include:

1. Discretionary investment management, in agreement with the Delegation of Authority section, including decisions to buy, sell, or hold individual securities, and to adjust asset allocation within the guidelines established in this statement.
2. Advising on the establishment of and any changes to the policies, procedures and guidelines.
3. Reporting investment performance results of the portfolio. The manager will mail performance results and pertinent data quarterly to the Investment Committee. The manager will meet at least annually with the committee to discuss the portfolio, its performance results, and its investment strategy and plans.
4. Communicating any significant changes to economic outlook or investment strategy that might impact the investment results.
5. Informing the Investment Committee of any qualitative change in its investment management organization (e.g., changes in portfolio management personnel, ownership, structure, investment philosophy, etc.).
6. Forwarding proxies to the denomination's Treasurer for disposition.

### **Investment Goals**

To conserve and enhance the capital value of the denomination in real terms, through asset appreciation and income generation while maintaining a responsible risk profile.



The long-term goal of the Investment Committee is to pursue a set of investment objectives designed to maximize the returns to the denomination in a God-honoring way without exposing it to undue risk, as defined herein. In order to meet its needs, the investment strategy of the denomination is to focus on total return, with an emphasis on appreciation. The objective shall be achieved using a balanced approach that may consist of cash equivalents, fixed income instruments, equity securities, mutual funds, and index funds.

Specifically, the primary goals in the investment management of assets shall be:

1. Long-term growth of principal—to achieve returns that meet or exceed future disbursement needs.
2. Preservation of purchasing power—to achieve return in excess of the rate of inflation over the investment time horizon in order to preserve purchasing power of the assets.

### **Investment Objectives**

Recognizing that short-term market fluctuations may cause variations in the portfolio performance, the expectation for portfolio performance is to achieve the following objectives over a five year moving time period:

- The portfolio shall exceed the return of a target policy comprised of 75% S&P 500 Index / 22% Lehman Brothers Intermediate Government Corporate Index / 3% Cash Index.
- Enable the annual distribution (in February or March of each year) of a percentage of the average market value of the portfolio, calculated over the previous twelve quarters, beginning with the prior year end. Withdrawal rates shall be per the following schedule:
  1. The withdrawal rate will be 4.2% for 2021.
  2. This rate shall be reduced by 0.1% per year until the rate is reduced to 4.0%.

### **Volatility of Returns**

The Investment Committee understands that in order to achieve its investment objectives, the portfolio may experience volatility of returns and fluctuations of market value. In the judgment of the committee, a level of volatility comparable to the stated benchmarks is deemed acceptable in order to achieve the long-term investment objectives of the portfolio.

### **Liquidity and Marketability of Assets**

Assets shall be invested in liquid securities defined as securities that can be sold quickly and efficiently, with minimal impact on market price. The Investment Committee will provide the Investment Manager with advance notice of distributions greater than 5% of the portfolio to allow the manager sufficient time to convert securities or other non-cash assets into cash.

**Allowable Investments**

1. Cash Equivalents
  - Treasury Bills
  - Money Market funds
  - STIF Funds
  - Commercial Paper
  - Banker’s acceptances
  - Repurchase agreements
  - Certificates of Deposit
2. Fixed Income Securities
  - US Government and agency securities
  - Corporate notes and bonds
  - Mortgage backed bonds
  - Preferred stock
  - Asset backed securities
  - Collateralized mortgage obligations
  - US dollar-denominated Euro and Yankee bonds
  - Fixed income securities of foreign governments and corporations
3. Equity Securities
  - Common stocks
  - Convertible notes and bonds
  - Convertible preferred stocks
  - American Depository Receipts (ADRs) of non-US companies
  - Stocks of non-US companies (ordinary shares)
  - Mutual funds
  - Index funds

**Asset Allocation**

The investment of the aggregate assets of the portfolio shall be in accordance with the following asset allocation guidelines (at market value):

<b>Asset Classes</b> Sub-Asset Classes	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Benchmark Target</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Benchmark Index</b>
Total Equity:	65%	80%	90%	S&P 500 Index
Total Fixed Income:	10%	18%	30%	Bloomberg Barclays Intermed. Gov’t/ Credit Index
Cash Equivalents	0%	2%	15%	IA SBBI US 30 Day T-BILL Index

With respect to the assets that are held at a third party for collateral purposes, the market value of these assets will be included in the asset allocation calculation to determine the appropriate mix of Equities, Fixed Income and Cash. This will result in the Equity allocation percentage typically being above the Maximum percentages stated above. Those assets are removed from the Fixed Income portion of the portfolio, reducing the total amount of assets held in the MTBIA portfolio, thus increasing the Equity portion of the reported portfolio.

### **Restrictions and Diversification**

In order to achieve a prudent level of portfolio diversification, the following restrictions, based on market value, apply:

1. Fixed Income
  - a. With the following exception, assets may be invested only in investment grade bonds rated A- or higher by S&P or A3 or higher by Moody's and in cash equivalents rated A1/P1 (S&P/Moody's) or higher.
  - b. The objective is an average quality of AA, except that the average of convertibles will be no lower than Baa.
  - c. No more than 5% of the fixed income portfolio shall be invested in any single security or in securities of any single issuer, with the exception of securities of the US Government and its agencies.
  - d. The weighted average duration of the bonds shall be within 20% of the Lehman Intermediate Government Credit Bond Index.
  - e. If securities fall below the above credit quality restrictions, the Investment Manager will notify the Investment Committee. Information on the prospects of any further downgrade possibilities and the Investment Manager's opinion as to whether or not to sell the security will be provided. The Committee will then provide notification whether to hold or sell.
2. Equity
  - a. Major sector weightings (using Wilshire Associates' sector definitions) of the equity portfolio shall be no more than 2.0 times that of the S&P 500. "Major sectors" are defined as those that carry an S&P weighting of 20% or more. Minor sector weightings shall be no more than 2.0 times than that of the S&P 500.
  - b. No more than 7% of the equity portfolio shall be invested in equity securities of a single company.
  - c. Investments shall not be knowingly made in the securities of companies that engage in overtly immoral, sinful or dangerous behavior or which promote immoral, sinful or dangerous behavior as

part of their business model. Examples include production of tobacco products, gambling businesses, sexually explicit content or “adult” entertainment, or equipment/drugs intended primarily for the purpose of inducing abortion. The Investment Committee shall be consulted by the Investment Manager whenever there is uncertainty about the acceptability of a prospective investment.

#### **Other Restrictions**

Investment Manager may not:

1. Acquire any security subject to any restrictions on its sale or subject to any investment representation.
2. Use margin or otherwise borrow funds for the acquisition of any security.
3. Knowingly sell any security not owned by the denomination.
4. Use futures or options in the separately managed account. The use of futures and options in a mutual fund is allowed for purposes of currently hedging and/or as unleveraged substitutes for allowable securities.

#### **Performance Review and Evaluation**

Performance reports shall be compiled regularly and presented to the Investment Committee for review. The investment performance of the portfolio, as well as asset class components, will be measured against commonly accepted performance benchmarks. Consideration shall be given to the extent to which the investment results are consistent with the investment objectives, goals and guidelines as set forth in this statement. The Investment Committee intends to evaluate the portfolio over at least a three-year period, but reserves the right to terminate the Investment Manager for any reason including the following:

1. Investment performance, which is significantly less than anticipated given the discipline employed and the risk parameters established, or unacceptable justification of poor results.
2. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this statement of investment policy, including communication and reporting requirements.
3. Significant qualitative changes to the Manager’s organization.
4. Other reasons which the committee may or may not make clear to the manager.
5. The Investment Manager shall be reviewed regarding performance, personnel, strategy, research capabilities, organization and business matters, and other qualitative factors that may impact the manager’s ability to achieve the desired investment results.

**Investment Policy Review**

To assure continued relevance of the guidelines, objectives, financial status and capital markets expectations as established in this statement of investment policy, the Investment Committee plans to review this investment policy at least annually.

**Addenda 2: Redline version of Investment Policy showing changes**

This addenda is not printed in these minutes but is available from the clerk.

**Financial Statements  
TRUSTEES OF THE SYNOD OF THE  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF NORTH AMERICA  
DECEMBER 31, 2020 AND 2019**

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT**

To the Trustees of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Trustees of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America ("the Trustees") (a Not-for-Profit Organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2020 and 2019, and the related statements of activities, statements of functional expense and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

**Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implemen-

tation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### **Auditors' Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Trustees of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America as of December 31, 2020 and 2019, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

*Holsinger, P.C.*

*117 VIP Dr., Suite 220*

*Wexford, Pennsylvania 15090*

*724-934-4880*

*June 30, 2021*

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**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

	As of Dec. 31, 2020	As of Dec. 31, 2019
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,139,900	\$ 660,648
Investments, at fair value	22,980,677	20,768,643
Accrued investment income receivable	56,662	49,254
Receivables	21,741	11,565
Building loans receivable, current portion	119,185	93,522
General mortgages receivable, current portion	54,888	47,450
Inventories	251,655	247,604
Prepaid expenses	7,847	9,507
Total Current Assets	24,632,555	21,888,193
Property and Equipment, net	1,499,874	1,551,471
Other Assets:		
Building loans receivable, net of current portion	839,813	890,842
General mortgages receivable, net of current portion	652,953	624,791
Total Other Assets	1,492,766	1,515,633
Total Assets	\$ 27,625,195	\$ 24,955,297
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$ 409,462	\$ 373,415
Accrued expenses	13,568	30,590
Deferred tuition revenue	59,453	100,591
Charitable remainder trust and gift annuities payable	128,475	120,885
Custodial funds	4,744,898	4,190,203
Total Liabilities	5,355,856	4,815,684
Net Assets:		
Without donor restrictions	529,657	482,013
With donor restrictions	21,739,682	19,657,600
Total Net Assets	22,269,339	20,139,613
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 27,625,195	\$ 24,955,297

*\*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.\**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**  
**YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues and Support:			
Support:			
RP Missions & Ministries	\$ 186,524	\$ 372,000	\$ 558,524
Stock gifts	-	164,706	164,706
Other contributions	103,026	1,418,797	1,521,823
Total Support	289,550	1,955,503	2,245,053
Revenues:			
Net gain (loss) on investments	219,555	1,751,856	1,971,411
Building loans interest	-	30,853	30,853
Sales and revenue from publications	-	276,642	276,642
Tuition and fees	-	859,382	859,382
Assessments	214,486	75,426	289,912
Rental income	-	70,847	70,847
PPP grant income	35,193	305,197	340,390
Other income	6,000	91,658	97,658
Total Revenue	475,234	3,461,861	3,937,095
Net assets released from restrictions	3,455,899	(3,455,899)	-
Total Revenue and Support	4,220,683	1,961,465	6,182,148
Expenses:			
Program	2,659,616	-	2,659,616
General & Administrative	1,255,619	-	1,255,619
Fundraising	137,187	-	137,187
Total Expenses	4,052,422	-	4,052,422
Change in Net Assets	168,261	1,961,465	2,129,726
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	482,013	19,657,600	20,139,613
Reclassifications (see Note 1)	(120,617)	120,617	-
Net Assets - End of Year	\$ 529,657	\$21,739,682	\$ 22,269,339

*\*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.\**



**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**  
**YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019**

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues and Support:			
Support:			
RP Missions & Ministries	\$ 234,943	\$ 397,555	\$ 632,498
Stock gifts	-	101,799	101,799
Other contributions	103,621	1,289,030	1,392,651
Total Support	338,564	1,788,384	2,126,948
Revenues:			
Net gain (loss) on investments	238,992	2,943,257	3,182,249
Bequests	25,000	41,688	66,688
Building loans interest and acquisition	-	28,552	28,552
Sales and revenue from publications	-	348,767	348,767
Tuition and fees	-	690,245	690,245
Assessments	203,128	66,435	269,563
Synod registration fees	36,870	-	36,870
Rental income	-	85,860	85,860
Other income	6,000	754	6,754
Total Revenue	509,990	4,205,558	4,715,548
Net assets released from restrictions	3,801,432	(3,801,432)	-
Total Revenue and Support	4,649,986	2,192,510	6,842,496
Expenses:			
Program	2,867,504	-	2,867,504
General & Administrative	1,307,874	-	1,307,874
Fundraising	223,634	-	223,634
Total Expenses	4,399,012	-	4,399,012
Change in Net Assets	250,974	2,192,510	2,443,484
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	231,039	17,465,090	17,696,129
Net Assets - End of Year	\$ 482,013	\$ 19,657,600	\$ 20,139,613

*\*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.\**

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES**  
**YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

	Program Services		
	Theological Seminary	Education & Publications	Global Missions
Salaries and Wages	\$ 668,117	\$ 139,238	\$ 147,533
Payroll Taxes	6,720	10,948	1,910
Health and Life Insurance	-	-	14,112
Retirement, Incentives and Supplements	38,865	11,002	15,877
Travel	737	-	44,225
Scholarships	347,290	-	5,000
Auxiliary Enterprises	17,643	-	-
Student Services	16,972	-	-
Digital Education	39,617	-	-
Library	29,548	-	-
Professional Development & Graduate Study	13,338	-	-
Theological Foundations for Youth	1,111	-	-
Other	-	-	-
Crown & Covenant Publications	-	157,468	-
RP Witness	-	25,732	-
Grassmarket	-	-	-
Field Expenses	-	-	176,289
Short Term Mission Teams	-	-	14,961
Presbytery Aid	-	-	-
Resident in Training & Regional Home Missionary	-	-	-
Synod & Committee Meetings	-	-	-
Vital Churches, EAC & CASA Support, Intl Conference	-	-	-
Graduate Study, History & Archives, Youth Ministries	-	-	-
Building Fund Grant	-	-	-
Dividends paid	-	-	-
Distributions to Related Institutions	-	-	-
Advertising	-	-	-
Board Meetings	-	-	-
Computer and Web Sites	-	-	-
Conferences and Counseling	3,942	-	-
Depreciation Expense	-	-	-
Development	-	-	-
Repairs, Equipment Maintenance and Supplies	-	-	-
Insurance & Workers Compensation	-	-	-
Office Rent & Parking	-	-	-
Postage	-	-	-
Professional Services and Memberships	4,771	-	-
Property Tax	-	-	-
Utilities and Telecommunications	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,188,671</b>	<b>\$ 344,388</b>	<b>\$ 419,907</b>

				Supporting Services		
Home Missions	Synod	Benefits	Total	General & Administrative	Fundraising	Total
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 954,888	\$ 739,850	\$ 100,804	\$ 1,795,542
-	-	-	19,578	42,358	5,917	67,853
-	-	44,651	58,763	20	-	58,783
-	-	21,227	86,971	47,398	7,077	141,446
-	-	-	44,962	4,536	4,531	54,029
-	-	-	352,290	-	-	352,290
-	-	-	17,643	-	-	17,643
-	-	-	16,972	-	-	16,972
-	-	-	39,617	-	-	39,617
-	-	-	29,548	-	-	29,548
-	-	-	13,338	-	-	13,338
-	-	-	1,111	-	-	1,111
-	-	-	-	6,533	-	6,533
-	-	-	157,468	-	-	157,468
-	-	-	25,732	-	-	25,732
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	176,289	-	-	176,289
-	-	-	14,961	-	-	14,961
121,355	-	-	121,355	-	-	121,355
17,200	-	-	17,200	-	-	17,200
-	23,721	-	23,721	-	-	23,721
-	51,969	-	51,969	-	-	51,969
-	42,102	-	42,102	-	-	42,102
-	10,000	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
-	135,925	-	135,925	-	-	135,925
-	238,500	-	238,500	-	-	238,500
-	-	-	-	30,474	7,119	37,593
-	-	-	-	1,298	-	1,298
-	-	-	-	59,048	-	59,048
-	-	-	3,942	1,265	-	5,207
-	-	-	-	104,616	-	104,616
-	-	-	-	-	11,739	11,739
-	-	-	-	64,501	-	64,501
-	-	-	-	25,393	-	25,393
-	-	-	-	3,386	-	3,386
-	-	-	-	7,181	-	7,181
-	-	-	4,771	65,788	-	70,559
-	-	-	-	2,857	-	2,857
-	-	-	-	49,117	-	49,117
<b>\$ 138,555</b>	<b>\$ 502,217</b>	<b>\$ 65,878</b>	<b>\$ 2,659,616</b>	<b>\$ 1,255,619</b>	<b>\$ 137,187</b>	<b>\$ 4,052,422</b>

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES**  
**YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019**

	Program Services		
	Theological Seminary	Education & Publications	Global Missions
Salaries and Wages	\$ 648,722	\$ 139,131	\$ 101,400
Payroll Taxes	4,245	10,508	4,023
Health and Life Insurance	-	-	4,946
Retirement, Incentives and Supplements	29,917	6,473	9,675
Travel	3,693	-	70,102
Scholarships	296,799	-	5,000
Auxiliary Enterprises	17,476	-	-
Student Services	13,517	-	-
Digital Education	39,557	-	-
Library	54,181	-	-
Professional Development & Graduate Study	53,484	-	-
Theological Foundations for Youth	23,681	-	-
Other	11,383	-	-
Crown & Covenant Publications	-	224,865	-
RP Witness	-	25,807	-
Grassmarket	-	1,304	-
Field Expenses	-	-	198,928
Short Term Mission Teams	-	-	103,557
Presbytery Aid	-	-	-
Resident in Training & Regional Home Missionary	-	-	-
Synod & Committee Meetings	-	-	-
Vital Churches, EAC & CASA Support, Intl Conference	-	-	-
Graduate Study, History & Archives, Youth Ministries	-	-	-
Building Fund Grant	-	-	-
Dividends paid	-	-	-
Distributions to Related Institutions	-	-	-
Advertising	-	-	-
Board Meetings	-	-	-
Computer and Web Sites	-	-	-
Conferences	-	-	-
Depreciation Expense	-	-	-
Development	-	-	-
Equipment Maintenance and Supplies	-	-	-
Insurance & Workers Compensation	-	-	-
Office Rent & Parking	-	-	-
Postage	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-
Property Tax	-	-	-
Utilities and Telecommunications	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,196,655</b>	<b>\$ 408,088</b>	<b>\$ 497,631</b>

				Supporting Services		
Home Missions	Synod	Benefits	Total	General & Administrative	Fundraising	Total
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 889,253	\$ 683,169	\$ 156,417	\$ 1,728,839
-	-	-	18,776	35,269	9,538	63,582
-	-	39,854	44,800	-	-	44,800
-	-	19,366	65,431	41,151	12,443	119,025
-	-	-	73,795	88,309	12,182	174,285
-	-	-	301,799	-	-	301,799
-	-	-	17,476	-	-	17,476
-	-	-	13,517	-	-	13,517
-	-	-	39,557	-	-	39,557
-	-	-	54,181	-	-	54,181
-	-	-	53,484	-	-	53,484
-	-	-	23,681	-	-	23,681
-	-	-	11,383	44,625	-	56,008
-	-	-	224,865	-	-	224,865
-	-	-	25,807	-	-	25,807
-	-	-	1,304	-	-	1,304
-	-	-	198,928	-	-	198,928
-	-	-	103,557	-	-	103,557
110,665	-	-	110,665	-	-	110,665
49,200	-	-	49,200	-	-	49,200
-	71,193	-	71,193	-	-	71,193
-	64,721	-	64,721	-	-	64,721
-	51,400	-	51,400	-	-	51,400
-	4,000	-	4,000	-	-	4,000
-	132,481	-	132,481	-	-	132,481
-	222,250	-	222,250	-	-	222,250
-	-	-	-	23,285	17,539	40,824
-	-	-	-	8,964	-	8,964
-	-	-	-	59,663	-	59,663
-	-	-	-	5,235	-	5,235
-	-	-	-	89,956	-	89,956
-	-	-	-	-	15,516	15,516
-	-	-	-	89,514	-	89,514
-	-	-	-	26,467	-	26,467
-	-	-	-	4,602	-	4,602
-	-	-	-	10,300	-	10,300
-	-	-	-	30,991	-	30,991
-	-	-	-	2,843	-	2,843
-	-	-	-	63,534	-	63,534
<b>\$ 159,865</b>	<b>\$ 546,045</b>	<b>\$ 59,220</b>	<b>\$ 2,867,504</b>	<b>\$ 1,307,874</b>	<b>\$ 223,634</b>	<b>\$ 4,399,012</b>

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS**  
**INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS**

	Years Ended December 31, 2020	2019
Cash Flows from Operating Activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 2,129,726	\$ 2,443,484
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:		
Depreciation	104,616	89,956
Bad debt expense	-	12,439
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	(20,071)	(127,143)
Net (gain) loss on investments	(2,448,183)	(4,033,252)
Donated stock	(164,706)	(101,799)
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Receivables	(10,176)	3,778
Accrued investment income receivable	(7,408)	(6,061)
Inventories	(4,051)	(15,884)
Prepaid expenses	1,660	4,430
Accounts payable	36,047	1,823
Accrued expenses	(17,022)	(11,414)
Deferred revenue	(41,138)	100,591
Charitable remainder trust & gift annuities payable	7,590	16,037
Custodial funds	554,695	904,617
	(2,008,147)	(3,161,882)
Total adjustments		
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Oper. Activities	121,579	(718,398)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities:		
Purchases of property and equipment	(53,019)	(133,735)
Proceeds from sales of investments	4,545,493	4,636,155
Purchases of investments	(4,173,419)	(4,112,267)
Dividends paid	(135,925)	(132,481)
Proceeds from sale of donated stock	164,706	101,799
Principal receipts on building loans receivable	189,162	130,553
Building loans receivable issued	(163,796)	(86,280)
Principal receipts on general mortgages receivable	114,400	105,111
General mortgages receivable issued	(150,000)	-
	337,602	508,855
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Investing Activities		
Cash Flows from Financing Activities:		
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	20,071	127,143
	20,071	127,143
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Financing Activities		
Net Change in Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Restricted Cash	479,252	(82,400)
Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Restricted Cash - Beginning of Year	660,648	743,048
Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Restricted Cash - End of Year	\$ 1,139,900	\$ 660,648

*\*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.\**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**DECEMBER 31, 2020 AND 2019**

**Note 1—Nature of Operations and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**Organization Background**—Synod is the governing body and the highest court in the denomination of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. The Board of Trustees (“the Trustees”) holds title to property and is responsible to Synod for managing and reporting on the financial condition of the denomination. The financial activities include various boards and committees of Synod. Congregations and domestic and global missions are sanctioned by Synod through such boards and six regional Presbyteries. The accompanying financial statements include the assets, liabilities, net assets and financial activities of the Trustees and of Synod’s various boards and committees.

Although sanctioned by Synod, congregations and mission churches (domestic and global) of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America do not have financial accountability to the Trustees. Accordingly, the assets, liabilities, net assets and financial activities of such organizations are not included in the accompanying financial statements. Periodically, certain of these assets, to which the Trustees hold title, are sold. Proceeds from the sale of such assets are recorded at the time of disposition. Further, funds disbursed in support of domestic and global mission fields are charged to expense in the accompanying financial statements.

**Congregations and Mission Churches**—As of December 31, 2020, there were 91 congregations and 9 mission churches in North America. During 2020, a new mission church opened, and 2 mission churches closed. There was \$91,392 received from these closed mission churches and included in other income on the Statement of Activities. As of December 31, 2019, there were 90 congregations and 11 mission churches in North America. Subsequent to year end December 31, 2020, 2 small congregations have closed, and 1 new congregation was brought into the denomination. There are other developing works as well.

**Basis of Accounting**—The financial statements for the Trustees have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (“GAAP”).

**Basis of Presentation**—The Trustees are required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to two classes of net assets: net assets without donor restrictions and net assets with donor restrictions.

Net assets are classified as follows:

- Net assets without donor restrictions are neither permanently nor temporarily restricted by donor- or grantor-imposed restrictions.
- Net assets with donor restrictions are inflows of assets whose use is limited by donor or grantor-imposed stipulations that they may be used for operations or specific purposes within each board or are required to be maintained permanently by the Trustees.

**Fund Accounting**—The accounts of the Trustees are maintained in accordance with the principles of fund accounting. Resources for various purposes are classified for accounting and reporting purposes into funds established according to their nature and purpose. Separate accounts are maintained for each fund; however, in the accompanying financial statements, funds that have similar characteristics have been combined according to the two classes of net assets.

**Cash and Cash Equivalents**—All unrestricted, highly liquid instruments with original maturities of three months or less are considered to be cash equivalents. The Trustees maintain cash and cash equivalents at banks which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (“FDIC”). All accounts are insured up to \$250,000 by the FDIC. From time to time, the Trustees have a credit risk for cash when the cash balance at a single bank exceeds the federally insured amount.

**Investments**—Investments consist of debt and equity securities that are invested and held in a pooled investment vehicle by the Trustees. Gains, losses, and dividends are allocated to investors using the market value unit method. The investments are carried at fair value and all investment activity is recorded within the Statement of Activities as Net gain (loss) on investments.

Allocation of income (ordinary income and gains and losses upon sale or other disposition of investments) to the various funds is accomplished using the market value unit method. Substantially all ordinary income from investments of endowment funds is restricted for support of particular purposes. These purposes are usually broad enough to be encompassed within one of the designated boards of the Synod.

**Fair Value of Financial Instruments**—Receivables, accrued investment income receivable, prepaid expenses, and payables and accrued expenses have been identified as short-term financial instruments. The related carrying amounts in the financial statements as of December 31, 2020 and 2019 approximate fair values because of the relatively short time between the origination of the instrument and its expected realization / liquidation.

**Receivables**—Receivables consist of Synod assessments, tuition and accrued investment income. No allowance for doubtful accounts is deemed necessary.



**Inventories**—Inventories are comprised of religious publications and are reported at the lower of cost (first in, first-out (“FIFO”)) or net realizable value. Crown & Covenant is the publishing arm of the Trustees, and they produce 90% of the inventory shown below; 10% of inventory is purchased from outside publishers. 100% of inventory is available for sale as of December 31, 2020 and 2019. Inventory is made up of the following:

Inventory Type	As of December 31,	
	2020	2019
Books and Pamphlets	\$ 209,875	\$ 200,644
CDs	34,566	38,705
DVDs	5,581	6,291
Blue Banner Accessories	1,633	1,964
<b>Total</b>	<b>251,655</b>	<b>\$ 247,604</b>

**Property and Equipment**—Property and equipment are carried at cost or, if donated, at the approximate fair value at the date of donation. Property and equipment are depreciated on a straight-line basis over 5-30 years for buildings and improvements, and 4-7 years for furniture, fixtures and equipment. The cost of property and equipment retired or otherwise disposed, and the related accumulated depreciation are removed from the accounts, and the resulting gain or loss is reflected in current operations. Additions and betterments of \$10,000 or more are capitalized, while repairs and maintenance which are not considered to extend the estimated useful lives of the assets are charged to expense as incurred.

**General Mortgages and Building Loans Receivable**—The Trustees occasionally grant credit secured by first and second mortgages to congregations, and individuals within the denomination. Typically, general mortgages are granted to congregations, pastors, and employees of the denomination for the purchase or building of churches, houses, or other property. Building loans are typically granted to congregations for the building or purchase of a church or parsonage. Loans are stated at unpaid principal balances. Because the general mortgages are issued from pooled investment funds they are required to be collateralized by a first mortgage. The building loans are issued from a separate fund and may be collateralized by a first or second mortgage on the property. A title policy is required for both types of loans, showing the Trustees as the valid first lien on the property, with the exception of smaller loans for repairs or renovations. Certain insurance coverage is required, and the policies must name the Trustees as additional insured. The maximum amount available to be issued as a general mortgage cannot exceed 25% of all of the invested funds.

For general mortgages, individuals can borrow up to \$150,000, and congregations can borrow up to \$225,000. For building loans, congregations can borrow up to \$175,000. Interest on the above mortgages is recognized as income over the term of the loan and is calculated using the interest method on principal amounts outstanding.

When management believes, after considering economic conditions and collection efforts, that a loan is impaired, the interest for that loan is rolled into the principal balance until such time as payments are made again. At that point, payments are applied first to the outstanding interest balance. Interest income on nonaccrual loans is recognized only to the extent that cash payments are received. No loan loss allowance is deemed necessary as of December 31, 2020 and 2019.

**Charitable Gift Annuities**—Donations of assets received in exchange for distributions of a fixed amount for a specific period of time to the donors or other beneficiaries is recorded as charitable gift annuities. These gifts stipulate that annuity payments must be made to the donor or their designees until the time of death. The gifts are invested directly into the Trustees' investment pool. Upon termination of the annuity obligation, the remaining principal becomes available for the Trustees' use in accordance with donor restrictions, or if no restrictions are imposed by the donor, for the Trustees' unrestricted use. As required by the Pennsylvania Regulations of Charitable Gift Annuities, the Trustees maintain a segregated reserve fund and net assets without donor restrictions of at least \$100,000.

**Charitable Remainder Trust**—The Trustees administer one charitable remainder trust from an individual that comprises three installments. The charitable remainder trust provides for the payment of distributions based on the value of trust assets to the grantor or other designated beneficiaries over the trust's term. At the end of the trust's term, the remaining assets are available for the Trustees' use. Management's estimate of the liability to the trust is recorded within the charitable remainder trust and gift annuities payable line item on the statement of financial position. On an annual basis, the Trustees revalue the liability to make distributions to the designated beneficiary based on various contractual provisions.

**Custodian Funds**—The Trustees accept funds from related parties, such as Reformed Presbyterian congregations and presbyteries, for investment with the Trustees' pooled investment funds. The funds invested are considered long-term investments and congregations and presbyteries may only withdraw funds at the beginning or end of the calendar year. These Custodian Funds are assigned Pool Units based on the value of the funds at the time they are deposited, and they receive investment gains or losses each year reflecting the

performance of the pooled investments. A dividend is calculated and paid out each year, unless the owner of the funds elects to re-invest the dividend. The dividend is calculated according to the spending policy set by the Trustees, which for the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019, was 4.3% and 4.4%, respectively, of the pooled investments 12-quarter average market value, ending with the prior year. See Note 8.

**Contributions**—Contributions received are recorded as “with donor restrictions” or “without donor restrictions” depending on the existence and/or nature of any donor or grantor restriction. All donor-restricted contributions are reported as increases in net assets with donor restrictions, depending on the nature of the restriction. When a donor restriction expires (that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose for restriction is accomplished), net assets with donor restrictions are reclassified to net assets without donor restrictions and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions. Donor-restricted contributions, whose restrictions are met in the same fiscal year, are reported as “without donor restriction” support.

**Tuition Revenue, Scholarships, and Student Aid**—Students are required to pay their tuition by the end of the second week of a quarter unless they sign a payment plan. Deferred tuition revenue results from the Seminary receiving tuition in December for the winter quarter which spans December through February. Accordingly, the revenue recognition of tuition and fees received for the last 2 months of the winter term are deferred until the related educational instruction is performed. All tuition for a prior quarter must be paid before a student can enroll in another quarter. When a student withdraws from courses, no refunds are given on fees, and no tuition refunds are made after the end of the fifth week. 100% of tuition is refunded until the end of the second week, 80% until the end of the third week, 60% until the end of the fourth week, and 40% until the end of the fifth week. Scholarships and student aid given on the basis of financial need totaling \$347,290 in 2020 and \$296,799 in 2019 were approved and applied against tuition revenue. Scholarships provided with restricted funds and included in net assets released were \$32,500 in 2020 and \$60,825 in 2019.

**Assessment Revenue**—Two years after becoming organized as a part of the RPCNA denomination, a congregation is assessed on its unrestricted and undesignated receipts. There are two components of the assessment for congregations in the US: Synod and Benefits. Due to restrictions surrounding benefits in Canada, the Canadian congregations owe only the Synod assessment. In 2020 and 2019, the Synod assessment rate was 1.6% and the benefits rate was 0.6%. The assessment is charged on the previous years’ receipts and is due by the end of the calendar year. Once the statistical data is received for each

congregation for Synod reporting, assessment income is recorded in full as a receivable and receipts are recorded against the receivable. Assessment receivables were \$15,371 and \$9,588 at December 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

The denomination has a policy for assessment relief providing the congregation's Presbytery certifies the congregation is facing a real need and the Presbytery significantly contributes towards the congregation's outstanding assessment relief. Assessments for two congregations, totaling \$12,439, were deemed by the Board of Trustees to meet these conditions and were written off as bad debt expense in 2019 after requests were submitted by their presbyteries. No allowance has been established for assessments at December 31, 2020 and 2019, as all amounts owed were received subsequent to year end. The Japan presbytery is not charged an assessment, but it does contribute annually an amount to be applied to the Synod assessment.

**Contributed Services**—During the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019, the value of contributed services meeting the requirements for recognition in the financial statements was not material and has not been recorded.

**Income Taxes**—The Trustees is a not-for-profit organization that is exempt from income taxes under Section 50(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**Expense Allocation**—The costs of providing various programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the statement of activities and in the statement of functional expenses. Accordingly, salaries, payroll taxes, fringe benefits and advertising costs have been allocated among the programs and supporting services benefited, based on management's judgment of time and effort.

**Estimates**—The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

**Reclassifications**—Certain reclassifications of prior year's data have been made to conform to the current year presentation. These reclassifications had no impact on the change in net assets. A correction of prior year tuition and interest revenue previously shown as without restrictions has been reclassified as with restrictions. The correction had no impact on the change in net assets.

**Accounting Standards Update**—FASB Accounting Standards Codification Topic 606, Revenue from Contracts with Customers, as amended, supersedes or replaces nearly all GAAP revenue recognition guidance. These standards establish a new contract and control-based revenue recognition model, change the basis for deciding when revenue is recognized over time or at a point in time, and expand disclosures about revenue. We have implemented

Topic 606 and have adjusted the presentation in these financial statements accordingly. The amendments have been applied retrospectively to all periods presented, with no effect on net assets.

**Note 2 —Fair Value Measurements**

The Trustees report investments at fair value. Market price observability is impacted by a number of factors, including the type of investment, the characteristics specific to the investment, and the state of the marketplace (including the existence and transparency of transactions between market participants). Investments with readily-available, actively-quoted prices, or for which fair value can be measured from actively-quoted prices in an orderly market, will generally have a higher degree of market price observability and a lesser degree of judgment used in measuring fair value.

Investments measured and reported at fair value are classified and disclosed in one of the following categories based on inputs:

- Level I - Quoted prices are available in active markets for identical investments as of the reporting date. The type of investments which would generally be included in Level I include listed equity securities and listed derivatives. The Trustees, to the extent that it holds such investments, does not adjust the quoted price for these investments, even in situations where the Trustees hold a large position, and a sale could reasonably impact the quoted price.
- Level II - Pricing inputs are observable for the investments, either directly or indirectly, as of the reporting date, but are not the same as those used in Level I. Fair value is determined through the use of models or other valuation methodologies. The types of investments which would generally be included in this category include publicly-traded securities with restrictions on disposition, debt securities, and partnerships that hold Level I assets and real estate held for investment, if measured by a current appraisal.
- Level III - Pricing inputs are unobservable for the investment and include situations where there is little, if any, market activity for the investment. The inputs into the determination of fair value require significant judgment or estimation by the Trustees. The types of investments which would generally be included in this category include debt and equity securities issued by private entities, and real estate held for investment, if measured using management estimates.

In certain cases, the inputs used to measure fair value may fall into different levels of the fair value hierarchy. In such cases, the determination of which category within the fair value hierarchy is appropriate for any given investment is based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measure-

ment. The Trustees’ assessment of the significance of a particular input to the fair value measurement in its entirety requires judgment and considers factors specific to the investment.

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Trustees’ assets at fair value:

As of December 31, 2020:

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Total
<b>ASSETS:</b>				
Money market	\$ 263,364	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 263,364
US Government Agency securities	835,447	-	-	835,447
US Treasury notes	3,150,632	-	-	3,150,632
Mortgage backed securities	12,569	-	-	12,569
Common stocks	15,520,099	-	-	15,520,099
Corporate and international bonds	-	3,255,228	-	3,255,228
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 19,782,111</b>	<b>\$ 3,255,228</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 23,037,339</b>
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>				
Annuities Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 128,475	\$ 128,475

As of December 31, 2019:

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Total
<b>ASSETS:</b>				
Money market	\$ 118,643	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 118,643
US Government Agency securities	424,382	-	-	424,382
US Treasury notes	4,087,561	-	-	4,087,561
Mortgage backed securities	16,621	-	-	16,621
Common stocks	14,028,411	-	-	14,028,411
Corporate and international bonds	-	2,142,279	-	2,142,279
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 18,675,618</b>	<b>\$ 2,142,279</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 20,817,897</b>
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>				
Annuities Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120,885	\$ 120,885

The Trustees determined the general mortgages and building loans receivables were Level II assets.

**Note 3—Liquidity and Availability of Financial Assets**

The Trustees regularly monitor liquidity required to meet its operating needs and other contractual commitments, while also striving to maximize the stewardship of its available funds. The Trustees have various sources of liquidity at their disposal, including cash and cash equivalents and marketable debt and equity securities.

For purposes of analyzing resources available to meet general expenditures over a 12-month period, the Trustees consider all expenditures related to its ongoing activities of teaching, supporting, training, and ministry, as well as the conduct of general expenditures undertaken to support those activities.

The Trustees generally operate with a balanced budget and anticipate collecting sufficient revenue to cover general expenditures not covered by donor-restricted resources. Refer to the statement of cash flows, which identifies the sources and uses of the cash, and shows positive cash flows from operations.

The following table shows the total financial assets available within the next 12-month period that will be available to meet the current cash needs for general expenditures:

	As of December 31,	
	2020	2019
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,139,900	\$ 660,648
Investments, at fair value	22,980,677	20,768,643
Receivables	21,741	11,565
Building loans receivable, current portion	119,185	93,522
General mortgages receivable, current portion	54,888	47,450
Accrued investment income receivable	56,662	49,254
 Total financial assets	 24,373,053	 21,631,082
 Less contractual or donor-imposed restrictions:		
Charitable remainder trust and gift annuities payable	(128,475)	(120,885)
Net assets with donor restrictions	(21,739,682)	(19,657,600)
Board designated reserve	(100,000)	(100,000)
 Financial assets available to meet cash needs for general expenditures within one year	 \$ 2,404,896	 \$ 1,752,597

It is important to note that based upon the nature of the custodial funds, the Trustees do not know when funds may be requested to be returned; however, the Trustees do not expect any of the funds to be requested for return within the next 12-month period. Accordingly, they have not been included as donor restricted. However, it is at least reasonably possible that this could happen, and in such a case, the Trustees would likely be required to liquidate certain investment holdings.

**Note 4—General Mortgages and Building Loans Receivable**

General mortgages receivable are due over periods from 1 to 20 years through July 2040 and bear annual interest primarily from 3.35% to 5.75%.

The general mortgages receivable were due from the following groups:

	As of December 31, 2020	2019
Congregations of the denomination	\$ 193,302	\$ 273,683
Ministers and employees of the denomination	514,539	398,558
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 707,841</b>	<b>\$ 672,241</b>

The aggregate annual maturities of general mortgages receivable as of December 31, 2020 are as follows:

<u>Years Ending December 31,</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2021	\$ 54,888
2022	49,596
2023	42,163
2024	38,683
2025	40,241
Thereafter	<u>482,270</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$ 707,841</u></b>

Substantially all of the building loans receivable as of December 31, 2020 have been granted by the Building Loan Committee at interest rates of 3% or 4% through July 2040 for the purchase or construction of church buildings. The receivable balances for congregations as of December 31, 2020 and 2019 were \$958,998 and \$984,364, respectively.

The aggregate annual maturities of building loans receivable as of December 31, 2020 are as follows:

<u>Years Ending December 31,</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2021	\$ 119,185
2022	74,336
2023	76,828
2024	74,749
2025	64,651
Thereafter	<u>549,249</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$ 958,998</u></b>



The following tables present informative data by class of financing receivable regarding their age and interest accrual status at December 31, 2020 and 2019:

	Number of Loans	Past Due			Total Past Due	Total Financing Receivables on Nonaccrual Status	Status of Interest Accruals
		30-59 Days	60-89 Days	≥ 90 Days			
December 31, 2020							
General Mortgages	12	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 707,841	\$ -	Financing Receivables Past Due ≥ 90 days and Still Accruing Interest
Building Loans	18	-	-	-	958,997	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,666,838</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

	Number of Loans	Past Due			Total Past Due	Total Financing Receivables on Nonaccrual Status	Status of Interest Accruals
		30-59 Days	60-89 Days	≥ 90 Days			
December 31, 2019							
General Mortgages	13	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 672,241	\$ -	Financing Receivables Past Due ≥ 90 days and Still Accruing Interest
Building Loans	20	-	-	-	984,364	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,656,605</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

**Note 5—Property and Equipment**

The components of property and equipment are as follows:

	As of December 31,	
	2020	2019
Land, building and improvements	\$ 3,028,093	\$ 2,691,315
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	95,341	265,341
Construction in process	25,416	309,176
 Total	 3,148,850	 3,265,832
 Less: Accumulated depreciation	 (1,648,976)	 (1,714,361)
 Property and Equipment, net	 \$ 1,499,874	 \$ 1,551,471

Depreciation expense for the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019 was \$104,616 and \$89,956, respectively. Construction in process at December 31, 2019 included \$302,716 for the Seminary’s gables project which was placed in service in 2020. Also included in Construction in process at December 31, 2020 and 2019 was \$25,416 and \$6,460, respectively, for the basement renovation project; it is not yet determined when work will be completed for this project.

**Note 6—COVID-19 and PPP Funding**

The World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (“COVID-19”) to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020. On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States a national emergency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has issued various guidelines and directives for communities and businesses to follow to prevent the spread of the virus. These directives and guidelines have resulted in the closure of schools and non-essential businesses which have significantly disrupted commerce domestically. The Seminary, denomination office, Crown & Covenant Publications and Global Missions were fully functioning with most of the employees working from home for a short time during 2020. Since the Seminary already had an established distance learning program in place, they were well positioned for the transition from on-site to online classes. The short-term mission’s component of the Global Missions board has been impacted the most since all team projects for 2020 were cancelled due to travel restrictions to other countries or required social distancing. In addition, the Synod meeting and the International Conference scheduled for June and August of 2020 were cancelled. The level of contributions to the various missions and ministries of the church remained steady.

The Trustees received Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) round one funding in the amount of \$340,390 from the U.S. Small Business Administration (the “SBA”) in June 2020. The Trustees elected to consider the PPP government funding as a conditional grant under FASB ASC 958-605. The PPP funding was initially recorded as a refundable advance until all the conditions have been substantially met or have been explicitly waived. For the year ended December 31, 2020, management determined all the PPP forgiveness conditions were met and barriers were overcome to properly release the refundable advance and recognize the grant revenue in the Statement of Activities as PPP grant income. Subsequent to fiscal year-end, management received notification of the acceptance of forgiveness from the financial institution which was forwarded from the SBA.

**Note 7—Benefit Plans**

The Trustees provide all ministers and employees of the denomination the option of salary deferral to individually-operated retirement arrangements, maintained separately by employees. The Trustees do not sponsor any of these plans. During 2020 and 2019, Synod required each congregation contribute a minimum of \$4,400 and \$4,300, respectively, per employee into these individually-held plans. Total contributions for denominational employees were \$106,563 and \$113,208 for the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively, and are recorded within the statement of activities.

**Note 8—Endowments**

The Trustees’ endowments consist of individual funds established for a variety of purposes. The endowments include both donor-restricted funds and funds designated by the Board of Trustees to function as endowments. Net assets associated with endowment funds, including funds designated by the Board of Trustees to function as endowments, are classified and reported based upon the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions.

Endowment Net Asset Composition by Type of Fund as of December 31, 2020:

	Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	Total Endowment Net Assets
Donor-restricted endowment funds	-	\$10,077,067	\$ 10,077,067
Synod-designated endowment fund	-	423,839	423,839
<b>Total funds</b>	-	<b>\$10,500,906</b>	<b>\$ 10,500,906</b>

Endowment Net Asset Composition by Type of Fund as of December 31, 2019:

	Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	Total Endowment Net Assets
Donor-restricted endowment funds	-	\$ 9,331,830	\$ 9,331,830
Synod-designated endowment fund	-	393,312	393,312
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$ 9,725,142</b>	<b>\$ 9,725,142</b>

Changes in endowment net assets as of December 31, 2020 are as follows:

	Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	Total Endowment Net Assets
Endowment net assets, beginning of year	-	\$ 9,725,142	\$ 9,725,142
Contributions	-	20,071	20,071
Investment income	-	404,027	404,027
Net appreciation (depreciation)	-	736,999	736,999
Amounts appropriated for expenditure	-	(385,333)	(385,333)
<b>Endowment net assets, end of year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$ 10,500,906</b>	<b>\$ 10,500,906</b>

Changes in endowment net assets as of December 31, 2019 are as follows:

	Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	Total Endowment Net Assets
Endowment net assets, beginning of year	-	\$ 8,031,989	\$ 8,031,989
Contributions	-	127,143	127,143
Investment income	-	383,305	383,305
Net appreciation (depreciation)	-	1,554,330	1,554,330
Amounts appropriated for expenditure	-	(371,625)	(371,625)
<b>Endowment net assets, end of year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$ 9,725,142</b>	<b>\$ 9,725,142</b>

Investment Return Objectives, Risk Parameters and Strategies—The Trustees have adopted investment and spending policies for endowment assets that attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding to programs supported by its endowment funds, while also maintaining the purchasing power of those endowment assets over the long-term. Accordingly, the investment process seeks to achieve an after-cost total real rate of return, including investment income as well as capital appreciation, which exceeds the annual distribution

with acceptable levels of risk. Endowment assets are invested in a diversified asset mix, which includes equity and debt securities that is intended to result in a consistent inflation-protected rate of return that has sufficient liquidity to make an annual distribution, while growing the funds, if possible.

Therefore, the Trustees expect its endowment assets, over time, to produce an average rate of return of approximately 8% annually. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this amount. Investment risk is measured in terms of the total endowment fund; investment assets and allocation between asset classes and strategies are managed to not expose the fund to unacceptable levels of risk.

Spending Policy—The Trustees had a policy of appropriating for distribution for the years ending December 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively, of 4.3% and 4.4% of its invested fund’s average fair value of the 12 quarters for the previous years through the calendar year end of the prior fiscal year for which the distribution is made. The Trustees Investment Committee voted to decrease the appropriation for distribution to 4.2% and 4.1% for the years ending December 31, 2021 and 2022, respectively. In establishing this policy, the Trustees considered the long-term expected return on its investment assets, the nature and duration of the individual invested funds, many of which must be maintained in perpetuity because of donor restrictions, and the possible effects of inflation. The Trustees expect the current spending policy to allow its invested funds to grow at a nominal average rate of 3% annually, which is consistent with the Trustees’ objective to maintain the purchasing power of the invested assets, as well as to provide additional real growth through investment return.

**Note 9—Net Gain on Investments**

The Trustees reported the following investment activity related to the pooled investments:

	Years Ended December 31,	
	2019	2020
Dividend income	\$ 422,467	364,981
General mortgage interest income	28,570	31,741
PNC interest income, net	(3,167)	1,536
M&T Bank fees	(91,588)	(85,332)
Net realized gain	484,325	475,575
Net unrealized gain (loss)	1,130,804	2,393,748
Net gain (loss) on investments	1,971,411	3,182,249
Less: Denomination Office Expenses allocated	(219,555)	(238,992)
Amount subjected to pooled investment dividend payout	\$ 1,751,856	\$ 2,943,257

The net gain(loss) on investments from the Statement of Cash Flows is different when compared to the Statement of Activities as a result of the custodial and other accounts within the investment pool. See reconciliation as follows:

	Years Ended December 31,	
	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Net gain (loss) on investments per Statement of Cash Flows	\$ 2,448,183	\$ 4,033,252
Investment interest accrual	7,408	(37,131)
Less custodial / annuity realized gains	(180,318)	(167,953)
Less custodial / annuity unrealized gains	(329,265)	(679,196)
General mortgage interest income	28,570	31,741
PNC interest income, net	<u>(3,167)</u>	<u>1,536</u>
Net gain (loss) on investments per Statement of Activities	<u>\$ 1,971,411</u>	<u>\$ 3,182,249</u>

#### **Note 10—Assets Pledged as Collateral**

The Trustees had pledged specific investments for a \$250,000 limited guarantee to a bank as additional collateral for a construction loan and line of credit for the Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association ("RPWA"). During the first quarter of 2019, the RPWA paid down their loan substantially and the financial institution removed the Trustees' pledged collateral. The \$250,000 held by the Federal Home Loan Banks ("FHLB") was transferred directly into the Wilmington Trust portfolio.

#### **Note 11—Concentrations & Contingencies**

The Trustees maintain much of their assets in the form of investments, which are not on deposit with an insured financial institution. The values of these investments are subject to market fluctuation and may lose value. The Trustees' assets could be materially affected by changes to the financial markets.

The Trustees sell publications in various digital markets. Authors receive a royalty per book printed and per eBook sold. The Trustees are required to pay certain authors various rates that range from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per printed book, and either 10% or 17% per eBook sold.

RP Mission and Ministries ("RPM&M") received a contribution from one individual that made up 19% of total contributions for RPM&M for the year ended December 31, 2020. One individual made up 22% of total contributions for RPM&M for the year ended December 31, 2019.

On April 3, 2019, the Trustees received a claim for an accident that occurred on June 19, 2017. The suit is proceeding slowly. Settlement was rejected, but a court date has not yet been set. In the opinion of management, the ultimate

liability, if any, resulting from the claim, will not materially affect the financial position of the Trustees and is expected to be covered by insurance.

### **Note 12—Subsequent Events**

Management has evaluated subsequent events through June 30, 2021, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, and determined the following subsequent events have occurred:

The 2020 international conference which was tentatively re-scheduled for 2021 was cancelled due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the meeting venue.

At its meeting in June 2021, Synod approved the adoption of a self-funded life insurance program to be effective around September 1, 2021. This benefit will be for all active pastors and full-time employees of the RPCNA denomination who are United States citizens. A separate fund will be established with initial funding of \$150,000. Benefit payments will be a total of \$150,000 in installments of 50% upon the receipt of a death certificate, and 25% at each of the next two anniversaries of this date. Benefits will be reduced to 50% at age 70 and eliminated at age 75.

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*Study Committee on Inmate Church Membership, with majority and minority reports.* Chairman Robert Bibby presented the majority report. After introductory comments about the many agreements shared by the full committee and the logic under the majority's recommendations, discussion ensued about the report. Comments offered pertained to both parts of this report, with both Mr. Bibby (majority report) and Mr. Tim McCracken (minority report) responding. It was moved and seconded to lay the majority report on the table in order to take up the minority report. Motion carried, so the minority report was properly before us, with Mr. McCracken leading. Questions and responses ensued.

Mr. Nick Schoeneberger prayed as the Court recessed for a refreshment break from 10:00-10:22 a.m. The Court resumed with the singing of Psalm 28A. The judicial committee re. PCP and Edmonton asked permission to converse with certain members of the Court from the Pacific Coast Presbytery and the moderator granted this permission.

*Order of the day:* 2021 Communication #21-10: STL re. Canada RPC Formation Special Resolution (presented virtually by Mr. Andrew Quigley from Ottawa, via Zoom). Mr. Quigley summarized the resolution. Discussion ensued regarding the resolution as a whole. We note, with interest, interaction of delegates from three continents and four nations!

[Announcement: Mr. Jeff Stivason has recused himself from the judicial committee concerning the GLG and Mr. LeFebvre; the moderator substituted in Mr. Kyle Borg.]

The Court continued to discuss the special resolution, Communication #21-10. The Court turned to the four recommendations, summarized in Section 3 (parts A-D), taken as a whole; these passed. Going into prayer about the Canadian opportunity, personal privilege was granted concerning personal needs of members and friends. After the moderator prayed about all these matters, the Court received Communication #21-10.

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### **2021 Communication #21-10: STL re. Canada RPC Formation Special Resolution**

St. Lawrence Presbytery; c/o Messiah's Church  
8181 Stearns Road; Clay, NY 13041 USA

May 4, 2021

To: John McFarland, Stated Clerk of Synod.

FROM: St. Lawrence Presbytery of the RPCNA

Dear John: Greetings in Christ! On behalf of the St. Lawrence Presbytery, I am passing along a Special Resolution recently adopted by our Presbytery for inclusion into the Docket & Digest of the 2021 Synod at Indiana Wesleyan University, June 14-17. As our April 20, 2021 Presbytery Minutes record (page 3): "Andrew Quigley presented the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada Formation Committee report, which can be found after these Presbytery minutes. Presbytery by motion approved the petition, to be sent up to Synod for inclusion in the 2021 Docket & Digest." The Special Resolution petition-report reads as follows:

#### **Special Resolution for Synod 2021**

This Special Resolution comes to the 2021 RPCNA Synod through the St. Lawrence Presbytery with its support, from the following congregations:

- Hillside (Almonte) RP Session
- Hudson Saint Lazare RP Session
- Kitchener RP Session
- Ottawa RP Session
- Russell RP Session
- Evangelical Presbyterian (Toronto) RP Session

**The aforementioned RPCNA Canadian Sessions are working towards being sent out by the 2022 RPCNA Synod to form an indigenous RP Church of Canada and request that the Synod work with us to facilitate that.**

In support of this request, we provide the following:



1. The reasons why the participating sessions view this to be warranted.
2. An historical outline of the process.
3. Our understanding of how this could be achieved.

**1. The reasons why the participating Sessions view this to be warranted because of.**

- Our commitment to national covenanting requires the formation of a national Canadian RP church.
- The practical need for congregations of such a national church to be focused on a vision for the work of the Lord in Canada.
- The need for an indigenous church to reach out and seek biblical union with other churches.
- The stated position of the RPCNA. In making this request, we are mindful of the 2019 RPCNA Global Missions Board Report, which references a 1951 operational manual and recommends Section 7 of their 2003 manual be implemented. That recommendation speaks to the Board's desire to develop indigenous congregations to the point where they are able to establish a national Reformed Presbyterian Church.

**2. An historical outline of the process:**

*On 30th April 1999*, the St. Lawrence RPCNA Presbytery passed a motion "to establish a Canadian Presbytery by July 1999," which would occasionally meet with the new St. Lawrence Presbytery "for mutual support and encouragement until July of 2004." Although this did not materialize, another motion passed at the same Presbytery meeting which established the separate Canadian financial account still used today in anticipation of an established Canadian Presbytery.

*In April 2015*, the St. Lawrence Presbytery appointed a "Committee to Explore RP/ARP Union" in Canada. This committee was tasked with working with a similar committee from the ARP Canadian Presbytery to explore the feasibility of constituting a national Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada.

*In October 2018*, this committee in its report to the St. Lawrence Presbytery indicated that the goal of a national church comprised of a united RP/ARP Church would be best realized if a Canadian RP Church were first established and constituted. As a result, the St. Lawrence Presbytery passed a motion to form a committee to initiate discussion among the Canadian ministers and elders and proceed to the formation of a Canadian RP Church.

"Presbytery returned to the RP-ARP Witness Furtherance Committee report. Discussion ensued, and this motion was passed in replacement of the original: that the St. Lawrence Presbytery form a committee which has the remit of preparing the groundwork for discussion among the Canadian ministers and elders with a view to proceed-

ing to the formation of a Canadian RP Church. Another motion was passed: that this committee be comprised of Matt Kingswood, Andrew Quigley, Rod Finlayson, Scott Wilkinson. A motion was passed that Andrew Quigley chair the committee. Two other recommendations of the report were withdrawn.”

Clear in its remit; the “Formation” committee has worked to realise the task of proceeding to “formation of a Canadian RP Church.”

*Spring of January-March 2019—Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley, chair of the Committee, met with each RP Session in Canada. Two questions were asked, and the responses as cited were received:*

1. Would your Session be committed to the goal of establishing a Canadian RP Church?
2. If so, will the Session be prepared to participate in the process of seeing this goal realized with those other Ministers and Elders in Canada who wish to do likewise?

Edmonton RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Hillside (Almonte) RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Hudson Saint Lazare RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Kitchener RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Ottawa RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Russell RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Squamish RP TGB	- Yes and Yes
Toronto RP Session	- Yes and Yes
Vancouver APC Session	- To be confirmed (subsequently, Yes and Yes)

*Spring of 2019—A Statement of Intent was agreed. The Canadian RPC Sessions expressed a desire is to establish a Reformed Presbyterian Church in Canada based on the following constitutional documents:*

1. *The Westminster Standards, viz., The Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms.*
2. An agreed *Directory for Public Worship.*
3. An agreed *Book of Church Government.*
4. An agreed historical statement of the church. There would not be *Tes-timony*, instead the church will produce position papers based on the issues of the day.

*April 2019—St. Lawrence Presbytery Meeting.* The St. Lawrence Presbytery acceded to the ‘Formation’ Committee’s request that it be granted permission to continue to undertake the work necessary to facilitate the formation of a Canadian RP Church.

*13th June 2019—1st Gathering*

*10th and 11th October 2019—2nd Gathering*

*3rd - 5th March 2020—3rd Gathering*

These “Gatherings” involved the ministers and ruling elders in the Canadian RP Churches and the Vancouver APC Church.

*16th April 2021—4th Gathering.* This “Gathering” agreed on the petition to be submitted to the St. Lawrence Presbytery.

Edmonton RP Session	- Did not participate.
Hillside (Almonte) RP Session	- Yes
Hudson Saint Lazare RP Session	- Yes
Kitchener RP Session	- Yes
Ottawa RP Session	- Yes
Russell RP Session	- Yes
Squamish RP- Rev. Patrick McNeely;	written expression of support.
Toronto RP Session	- Yes
Vancouver APC Session	- Not within the bounds of the RPCNA

*20th April 2021—St. Lawrence Presbytery.* The St. Lawrence Presbytery acceded to the crave of the Petition from the participating Sessions and agreed to forward it to the RPCNA Synod of 2021 with its support.

### **3. Our understanding of how this could be achieved.**

#### **A. The RPCNA Synod recognise the work done by the participating Sessions to prepare for the governance of the new denomination.**

The following has been agreed to, in respect of:

- (i) The subordinate standards; *The Westminster Standards*, viz., *The Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms*. We have agreed on two exceptions and are close to finalising two clarification statements.
- (ii) *The Book of Church Government*. Following extensive work and review by the participating Sessions, the document is being professionally edited before being considered for final agreement.
- (iii) *The Directory of Public Worship* has been drafted and will be considered towards finalisation in the fall of 2021.
- (iv) Working groups have been established to address areas such as: the Training of Men for the Ministry, Church Planting and Mission, RPCC Camps and Conferences, National Issues and Communications.

#### **B. Release the participating RPCNA Congregations from the RPM&M obligations in 2021-2022.** That the RPCNA Synod release the participating RPCNA Congregations from their RPM&M obligations in 2021-2022, so that they can make their contributions to the St. Lawrence RPCNA Canadian Congregations Presbytery account.

**C. A Committee of the RPCNA Synod be formed as per 3.C.iii-v to work with the St. Lawrence RPCNA Presbytery Committee for the Formation of an RPC of Canada.** That this joint Committee (hereafter the SOR Committee) be tasked with drafting a “Sending Out Resolution” (hereafter SOR) which will consider, among the matters to be addressed, the following issues:

- (i) Confirmation of the Governance documents: The SOR Committee would:
  - Confirm the existence and agreement of the new denomination’s governance documents by each of the participating Sessions. The SOR Committee would not be required to approve the content of these documents.
  - Ensure that there is a clear procedure whereby individual communicant membership, ministers, ruling elders and deacons will automatically transfer into the new denomination.
- (ii) Discipline Issues: The SOR Committee would ensure that the SOR includes a statement that all discipline issues pertaining to transferring members of the RPCNA—whether pending or in process—would come under the jurisdiction of the new denomination at the time of their joining that denomination.
- (iii) Property issues:
  - The SOR Committee would clarify the “legal” title to all of the church property in Canada is in the name of each local congregation. If that is the case the SOR Committee would draft a statement to the effect that RPCNA Synod is therefore not required to grant a transfer deed.
  - The SOR Committee would draft a statement and an accompanying document specifying that the RPCNA Synod would release whatever interest it has ever held in property of those congregations affiliating with the new denomination in Canada, to ensure that any subsequent transfers are protected and free from challenge. These documents would be recorded in each local jurisdiction in Canada where real property records are maintained.
  - In respect of Church personal property (church furniture, etc.) the SOR Committee would draft a statement that the RPCNA Synod release and waive all claim to any congregational personal property of those congregations affiliating with the new denomination in Canada.
- (iv) Personal property in the form of accounts (cash, general operating

account(s), deacons' fund, etc.): The SOR Committee would draft statements in relation to the participating Canadian RPCNA congregations that:

- their bank accounts remain the property of the local congregations.
  - the personal property in the form of intangibles: phone numbers, websites, Facebook pages/accounts, etc., remain the property of the local congregations.
  - they will to seek to ensure that all references to 'RPCNA' will be deleted from their websites, signs, stationery, advertising, etc. upon their joining the new denomination.
  - any existing loan agreements they have with RPCNA Synod will be rewritten to acknowledge the change of status of the congregations relative to the RPCNA.
- (v) Financial Issues: The SOR Committee would draft a statement in relation to the participating Canadian RPCNA congregations that their obligations to make financial contributions to the RPCNA RPM&M fund will cease upon their joining the new denomination.

**D. That upon the formation of the new denomination the RPCNA be one of the required two sponsors for our admission as members of the RP Global Alliance.**

*Respectfully yours,*

*Hillside (Almonte) RP Session*

*Hudson Saint Lazare RP Session*

*Kitchener RP Session*

*Ottawa RP Session*

*Russell RP Session*

*Evangelical Presbyterian (Toronto) RP Session*

*(End of petition.)*

Having passed this motion as a Presbytery to receive and forward this Special Resolution for Synod's action, we are petitioning the Synod of the RPCNA accordingly, that they concur with us toward official action to form a distinct, indigenous Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada according to the aspirations and plans of the St. Lawrence Presbytery.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Brian E. Coombs (St. Lawrence Presbytery, Clerk)*

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At 11:57 a.m., the moderator called for announcements. As the Court went to lunch break, they sang Psalm 126B, leading into recess followed by the various presbytery meetings.



***Tuesday; June 15, 2021; 2:30 p.m.***

At 2:30 p.m., the Synod Court resumed meeting, with the singing of Psalm 145C and a prayer by Mr. Kyle Reed. The attendance roll was passed. Minutes of the Tuesday morning session were read. During corrections, it was moved that Synod no longer record in its minutes the contents of specific and personal prayer requests; motion was seconded and carried. The minutes were approved as improved. Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Jerry O’Neill to summarize his considerable PPA health struggles which are impacting his ability to communicate clearly and efficiently. The moderator invited the Court to remember Mr. O’Neill in prayer; Mr. Jonathan Watt did so aloud.

*Order of the Day (special privilege):* The CEFF (Chinese Education Freedom Fund) was introduced and a ministry update was offered by CEFF board member and member of this Court, Mr. Jonathan Watt. Permission was granted to distribute CEFF literature. Special privilege was granted to Stillwater RPC ruling elder Alan Noell, who presented to his pastor and our moderator a lovely flower arrangement from their congregation—a token of their joyous affection for Pastor Parnell; the Court applauded in response.

The Court returned to the discussion of the Report of the Study Committee on Inmate Church Membership. With the Committee’s expressed desire, the paper in full was referred back to this committee for their continued refinement under this remit: “referral to the study committee to seek ways for long-term incarcerated prisoners to become members of local congregations” to report back to the 2022 Synod.

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**Synod Committee to Study Church Membership  
for the Incarcerated (Majority Report)**

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has been authorized, commissioned, and called to go forth into all the world to preach the gospel, discipling and baptizing the nations. This is both a mandate and a personal yearning of all true believers and faithful churches. To witness the earthly cost of sin one does not need to look further than to the prison system. The growth of the population

of U.S. prisons provides vivid evidence of the destructive power of sin, both in the life of an individual and also in society.

There is no question that gospel-based ministry is desperately needed in the prisons. Broken people can receive the true healing only through the proclamation of Christ Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Our committee supports taking advantage of every opportunity to go to the prisoner and proclaim Christ and Him crucified. When it comes to the matter of granting membership to long-term incarcerated prisoners, we must consider seriously the imposed limitations of the Church operating within the prison system. Prisons are part of society but greatly different from normal society. In some ways prisons are analogous to the military, but far more restrictive. Prison is all about restrictions and punishments, and no external organization has full freedom to operate within it.

The question before this Synod Committee is whether long-term incarcerated prisoners can become communicant members of the church. We have found the desire to incorporate long-term incarcerated prisoners into the communicant membership of an existing church body outside of prison or forming a particular church body within prison walls problematic for many reasons. The following are some of the greater problems we find in considering membership for long term incarcerated prisoners.

**Examination for membership:** How does one judge a convicted felon of their particular repentance from sins, especially those that doubled as a crime? Pedophiles do not have access to children in prison, so where is the evidence of their repentance in a very controlled environment? A drunkard who has no access to alcohol may swear off drinking because there is limited possibility for drunkenness or access to alcohol or drugs behind bars. Some sins unrepentant can still manifest in the lives of prisoners (petty theft and violence, for example), but we must concede the evidence of change is limited although perhaps believed by many. John the Baptist called sinners to have fruit to their repentance (Mt. 3:8—Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance).

**Examination of officers:** If the question is whether or not a church be established within prison walls, made up of entirely of prisoners for membership, then the church officers would have to come from that population. If a prisoner is a member of the church, how could he serve as an officer? How is such a man to meet the biblical requirement that a man have a good reputation outside the church and the prison? If we intentionally exclude prisoners from serving as church elders but receive them as communicant members, what does that say about the prisoner/church member's "good standing"? We must follow the directive of Scripture regarding the qualification for church officers. 1 Tim. 3:7: "Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

We all accept the term “outside” means outside of the church. Is a man beyond reproach? Is he a man with a good reputation in the community? The answer will certainly be “No” for convicted criminals. They have the worst reputation in society without question! Once again as long as they remain incarcerated, and the subject of this study involves specially the long-term inmates or “lifers,” they do not have the privilege of living out their faith in the real world and establishing a new testimony, as far as the public is concerned. The gospel does transform any hardened sinner, but our brethren still in prison do not have a testimony of that new life outside of the prison walls. Indeed, they may display godliness and evidence a true faith and establish a very real and impeccable reputation as a man of God within the walls of the prison, but since they have committed a crime (we must assume they are guilty due to the incarceration that came about as the result of a criminal conviction—sin), they cannot serve as an officer in the Church.

Another hindrance in fulfilling the biblical requirement for eldership from among the prisoner population is the passage 1 Timothy 3:4-5: “one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).” Prisoners sadly are dysfunctional and if they have a wife or girlfriend and children more than likely, their lives will be very dysfunctional. Even forgiven sin impacts the life of an inmate and his family. We must view the imprisoned believers as sheep and not regard them as potential elders as long as they are incarcerated.

**Access:** Prisoners are wards of the state who have had their freedom of movement and association removed from them. Prisoners may start with many restrictions and have some of those restrictions loosened over time, perhaps due to prison policy or for their own good behavior. But that freedom can change dramatically. Lockdowns are a familiar occurrence due to a danger level in the entire prison facility, or gang activity, or numerous other reasons. Lockdowns bring regular activity to a stop: work, worship, and visitation for prisoners. Those in solitary confinement often can be seen only by their lawyer and would not be allowed access to regular visitation or worship services. A church service can be canceled and the minister has no recourse but to accept it. The freedom to assemble and to worship openly is recognized by the Church but not by the State within prison walls. The availability to even hold worship services in any given prison must be extended by the State.

**Discipline issues:** If a prisoner is accused by the prison officials of an infraction (i.e., possessing a weapon, having contraband—a credit card, cell phone, pornography, and etc.), it is a matter between the prisoner and the prison system/administration. If the prisoner claims to be innocent, how are the elders to respond? Elders will not be able to investigate or interview others



as to the veracity of the claim. Conversely, how does the church respond if the prisoner/member is guilty of a serious sin that warrants formal discipline? How is the church able to administer discipline to the offender? Can communion, if offered to the prison population, be denied to any? Will prison policy allow the RPCNA practice of session-controlled communion, or would only open communion be allowed, leaving it up to the prisoner to decide if he wants to participate in communion or not? If the church cannot fully control the sacraments and who receives them or have full freedom to exercise church discipline then the church cannot function biblically as Christ commands it to do.

**Covenant privileges for members not fully exercised:** We believe the Lord works through His promise in the covenant, that He will be a God to us and to our children. (Gen. 17:7—"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.")

It is a wonderful truth that the Lord includes our children in the body and life of the church and they too are exposed to the means of grace: having the gospel proclaimed week after week, participating in public worship, and enjoying the loving care and oversight of the elders, along with being disciplined. A believer is part of the covenant, as well as his spouse and children. We baptize all children of believers based on the believer's faith (Acts 16:15, 34). So if we have prisoners becoming members and their children previously were not baptized (or even if they previously were), what happens to them? If services are held within the walls of the prison, the services are held within a closed community. The public is not free to enter the prison and join in the worship service. Some prisons do allow civilian adults to enter selectively but children are not allowed to come in on a regular basis. If organized churches were established within prisons, their families remain excluded from them and they could not worship together nor enjoy the mutual benefit of the oversight of the Lord's undershepherds. There may be freedom of religion in the prisons in a limited sense, but not freedom for the Church.

If the family is far away from the facility, there are practical considerations of how extremely difficult it is to minister to that family regularly. The difficulties to establish a church inside a prison or to have long-term incarcerated men on the rolls of a local church and not participate in the life and worship of the body makes such a request from Pacific Coast Presbytery impossible to fulfill. However, this raises a pressing question: What can the church do within prisons? The chief means of grace is available to those prisoners we encounter and our *Westminster Shorter Catechism* provides guidance. "Question 89: How is the Word made effectual to salvation? Answer: The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convinc-

ing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.”

We recognize that true believers are presently incarcerated and are need of regular ministry. Many need the gospel and can come to saving faith while in prison. The Church does have a responsibility to this growing population. The need is great and who better than the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America to acknowledge real change comes about by the power of God’s saving word and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in hardened sinners? Apart from formal church membership and administering the sacraments, there is endless opportunity to do good with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ministry to long-term incarcerated sinners is immense. The regular ongoing ministry beyond the corporate worship services can consist of the ministry of the Word, discipling, counseling, evangelism, apologetics, and providing prayer meetings. The Church is exhorted by the Lord to fulfill ministry to especially persecuted believers in prison but to bring the word to the lost in prison as well. (Hebrews 13:3—Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.)

There is much that can be done. Joseph ministered as a prisoner and Daniel also gave a strong testimony; John the Baptist stood firm for the truth of God, rebuking King Herod. Paul wrote his pastoral epistles, encouraged churches through teaching, and evangelized his judges from prison. John Bunyan wrote the beloved *Pilgrim’s Progress*, while incarcerated. The Lord will be glorified in all the earth by all peoples even among the incarcerated. Praying for revival in the prisons with the continual development of ministry to the incarcerated will certainly, by God’s saving grace, bring a transformation to our society.

By all means we desire to encourage prison ministry and have more people involved, with the church supportive and active in this mission field. Much good can be done in this field of ministry as an extension of the RP Church. We therefore recommend the following to reach the remaining goal of the original paper that came to the Synod from the Pacific Coast Presbytery.

**Recommendations:**

1. That presbyteries encourage the churches and chaplains in their midst to continue, develop, and expand ministry to prisoners in both the local jails and prisons.
2. That ministry/outreach to family members of the incarcerated be part of a local RP Church or other biblical church in their area. Provide support and ministry as the need is evident to these hurting families.
3. That churches support and provide biblical counseling to prisoners and their family members (may need to refer far away family to local elder/counselors in their area).

4. That accountability be promoted by chaplains and the church among the brethren in the institutions where believers are found.
5. That churches contribute financially to purchase Bibles and other material to foster spiritual growth and vitality among the prison population.
6. That members, elders and congregations partner with faithful prison ministries/chaplains when possible and take initiative to visit and write to prisoners regularly.
7. That congregations explore the possibility to hold worship services (minus the sacraments) in their local jails and prisons.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Bob Bibby*

*Jason Camery*

*Kent Butterfield*

*Bob Hackett*

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### **Synod Committee to Study the Matter of Church Membership for the Incarcerated Minority Report—Tim McCracken**

Dear Fathers and Brothers: Having received from the Pacific Coast Presbytery's study committee a proposal to engage incarcerated men in a church membership relationship, PCP presented paper #18-8 to our 2018 Synod meeting with the following recommendation: "That Synod approve the policy for inmate membership being considered in Pacific Coast Presbytery for their particular circumstance as being within the bounds of the *Directory for Church Government* and other RPCNA subordinate standards."

That recommendation was laid on the table, and the following recommendation passed: "That our Nominating Committee lead the Synod to establish a one-year study committee, to report to Synod 2019, about how the Pacific Coast Presbytery might proceed with the matter of inmate membership ..."

Let me say at the very beginning how much all members of the Committee have cared about the work here in the San Joaquin Valley. The cause of gospel proclamation and the worth of energies invested in the discipleship of those in prison is heartily agreed upon! You will see that in the majority report.

Having come, though, to difference of conviction on the subject of church membership itself, we are presenting two reports—majority and minority—so that Synod will have all things to consider.

May I say also that the membership model should not be engaged unless we can give it a very hearty support. Applying formal labels to association with the body of the church, if those are not accompanied by organic and committed relationship, would be harmful rather than helpful. I would even go so far as to say that the Pacific Coast Presbytery is not at present in the best position to serve in this way. We are spread fairly thin and we have some open pulpits.

The biblical principle of the thing is what I hope to convey, though, and the very last thing this Synod should do is to create a statute against inmate membership, declaring it contrary to our subordinate standards. I set forward the case under three main headings:

1. God ordained the visible church as a means by which He would glorify His name through the sanctification of those whom He is redeeming.
2. All believers are called of God to seek a stated relationship with particular believers in the visible church.
3. The unique circumstance of long-term incarceration does not negate the above calling.

On this third point, a number of issues will be addressed.

- a. Special challenges to sanctification
- b. Special challenges to fellowship
- c. Special challenges to oversight
- d. The status of being under discipline of the civil magistrate
- e. The historic and current practice of Reformed churches

We brother-shepherds of the RPCNA may not need a lesson on the fact of God's plan for the visible church, but I would ask that you consider how the burden of proof would fall upon the case that would be made to identify any believing soul to whom the model would not pertain.

**The visible church, God's means of glorifying His name in those whom He is redeeming.**

The matter of identity with and membership in the body of Christ begins with the essential matters of salvation itself. If God has reached out to save, He has granted identity with His body.

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:17)

... in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being

built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:18-22)

... we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:5)

While any believer in any age or location has an identity with all believers in every age and location, God's call upon believers seems in Scripture to imply also a specific relationship with specific believers, living out the familial and heavenly citizenship connection in a stated association. The word "church," in the singular, is used broadly in Scripture (Ephesians 1:22), but the fact of its use also in the plural (i.e., "churches") implies the more direct association of particular and stated relationships (Acts 15:41; Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Thess. 1:4; and thirty other passages).

The idea that God intends to glorify His good name through calling upon His people to serve one another and build one another up in direct fellowship is highlighted in the following passages:

... the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ ... (Ephesians 4:12)

... speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph. 4:15-16)

...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ. (Colossians 2:2)

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom ... (Colossians 3:16)

... let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

... love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:8-11)

...the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. (1 Cor. 12:22-25)

The fact that these particular communities function in a stated relationship is shown also by Scripture's reference to particular persons among them, elders, to whom God has giving the assignment of shepherding care.

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood ... (Acts 20:28)

... I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town ... (Titus 1:5)

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. (Hebrews 13:17)

**All are called to church membership.** The reason I set forward the passages above is to show that membership in the church and service in it is the default calling for every believer. Spiritual membership in the chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, and people of God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9-10: "... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.") calls for a tangible relationship with particular believers on the ground. The best approach to our question is that of considering the matter of calling, rather than the matter of rights. We hear the sense of the universality of the call in our *Confession of Faith and Testimony*.

The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. (WCF, Ch. 25: Of the Church, paragraph 2)

It is the mission of the Church ... to gather into her fellowship those of every race and people who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and promise obedience to Him; to build them up in their most holy faith ... (*RP Testimony*, Ch. 25: Of the Church, paragraph 2)

We hear it also in the wording of the *Belgic Confession* ...

... since this holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from it, no one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, regardless of his status or condition. But all people are obliged to join and unite with it... (*Belgic Confession* 28.1-2)

... no one ought to be separated from it. ... As for those who can belong to the church, we can recognize them by the distinguishing marks of Christians: namely by faith, and by their fleeing from sin and pursuing righteousness, once they have received the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. They love the true God and their neighbors, without turning to the right or left, and they crucify the flesh and its works. (*Belgic Confession* 29.3-4)

Reading an excerpt from Pastor York's book *Hitting the Marks* that touched on the matter of the "keys of the Kingdom," it was striking, with this question on my mind, to consider this paragraph ...

"Now to the church, which is the New Testament temple (1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:4f), Christ grants spiritual keys, so that those possessing them can either allow those clean from their sins to enter the door of the kingdom or to close the door to those who remain impenitent. In other words, God has given the church power to recognize proper professions of faith in Christ (through visible fruits of holiness), grant visible privileges of membership in Christ's body, or deny them to those whose faith and lifestyle do not warrant them." (September/October *Witness*, page 18)

We must consider what the keys we bear as shepherds imply, if we leave the door to membership locked to someone. To the best of my understanding, if shepherds have reason to believe that someone belongs to the invisible church, it makes sense to encourage him or her to engage a stated relationship with the visible church. A number of possible concerns arise.

**Special challenges to sanctification.** The life-pattern history of many of the folks incarcerated and the culture situation of imprisonment make for particular challenges to sanctification. These challenges are real. But the dif-

ference between what goes on in the hearts of prisoners and free people is not a difference of essence, not a difference in kind. Among still-free people, if we were to compare the sanctification challenge of one category of sin-history to another, we might find observable high percentages of obedience or faith recidivism in certain categories, but we should not rule out church membership on the grounds of category by the analysis of statistical patterns observed. The visible church will always face the challenge of obedience-recidivism and professed-faith-recidivism. According to Scripture, the tangible fellowship of visible church membership is a crucial means of God to prevent apostasy and unrepentant sin.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:12-13)

... Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

... pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16)

**Special challenges to fellowship.** Electric fences have a way of separating people. Later we will have to address the matter of whether the separation caused by legal action on the part of the civil magistrate constitutes a unique category of status-under-discipline such that formal membership association with our churches is inappropriate, but at one level of consideration it is simply a practical difficulty. When challenges are merely practical, we should work to overcome them.

Consider this comparison: If, in global mission endeavor, we count persons continents away to be fellow-members of the RPCNA, we will certainly face the practical challenges of language barrier, travel cost, and infrequency of interaction for fellowship. Those practical barriers are worth overcoming if the relationship serves the causes Scripture describes for church association. So also, such hurdles are worth overcoming to bring body-of-Christ fellowship to the incarcerated.

The practical barriers for fellowship presented in the situation of incarceration are not insurmountable.

- In my immediate situation, men from any of the ten chapels where I minister have access to the preaching of the Word each week.
- While any sharing of such private information as could be a potential tool for manipulation should be avoided, many kinds of requests for



- prayer for the church are no security threat. Electric fences are no impediment to prayer. (Ephesians 6:18)
- ... keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints ...
  - People from the Fresno RP congregation and from other area churches could sign up for clearance and share in worship occasionally (or even on a weekly basis, if they were so mission-inclined and churchly inclined!).
  - At the Walker State Prison in northern Georgia, those who are members of the area PCA congregations receive twice-monthly one-to-one mentorship/discipleship/fellowship. Those who have engaged the mentoring testify that they are as truly built up as the ones on the inside.
  - The practice of the sacraments is legal.
  - Both discipleship by correspondence and shepherding by correspondence can be engaged. Our New Testament letters bear testimony that shepherding-by-mail is biblical.

Challenges to fellowship are real, but nothing essential about fellowship is impossible for the incarcerated.

**Special challenges to oversight.** I have already mentioned that deeply legitimate discipleship, shepherding, and oversight can be practiced through correspondence and visitation. The greatest challenge, perhaps, is that of discipline. A great deal of care needs to be exercised so that matters of church discipline do not create any undue burden on state staff. The weight of responsibility on staff for maintaining safety and peace in the volatile situation of prison culture should be soberly recognized, and the officers should be held in highest regard because of what they are charged with preserving. It is not hard to envision a church discipline case that could go sour, but there is nothing inherently against biblical principle in it. Church discipline among the free is also subject to potential conflict, but that does not rule out the calling to practice it carefully and wisely. What about a church member's right to contest charges? On a practical level this surely presents difficulty, but it could be handled through correspondence. It would be very slow, but it could be thorough.

**The status of being under discipline of the civil magistrate.** What does the Scripture teach about the role of the civil magistrate as it relates to church membership? It cannot be denied that the state has a right to take away certain kinds of liberties, if a person has shown themselves dangerous to their community, but two things seem very clear:

1. The state is not charged by God with the watching over of souls described in Acts 20:28, and

2. The state is not allowed to dictate to the visible church who may belong to it.

Visible Church membership becomes, then, a question for shepherds, not magistrates. If a wrongdoer who has been a member of a congregation has had his or her liberty taken away by the state, the church is not called upon to automatically remove that person from membership for the duration of the incarceration. By the same token, the church ought not prevent the obedience of membership in a repentant person who has first found hope in Christ while inside. The church and the state always function simultaneously in the calling and authority of their respective spheres. Inmate membership does not wrongly intrude on the state's sphere at all. The key issue is due respect for the state's functions, which pertain to its own impositions of lawful consequence. The state works with a lot of keys, but not the keys of the Kingdom.

**The historic and current practice of Reformed churches.** While it may be difficult to document the history of Reformed churches engaging incarcerated persons in membership relationship (that is, those incarcerated for wrongdoing rather than under persecution), an equally legitimate challenge would be to document any biblical case made by them against it. If it is not a subject that has been taught on, we may not be able to find our answer by means of this research. With regard to the practice of our NAPARC churches, to my knowledge there exists no denominational statement from any of them. Particular congregations in the PCA, OPC, and RCUS have engaged inmates in membership, but none of the represented denominations has, to my knowledge, made a whole-counsel statement. Likewise, some respected individuals belonging to NAPARC churches, or sessions of local congregations, may, on conviction, oppose the practice, but none of their presbyteries or denominations have (again, to my knowledge) rendered any judgment on the matter. Membership for the long-term-incarcerated seems like something that we ought to explore, even something all of our NAPARC denominations should explore together. I have plenty of fears about the possibility of our doing it badly, but if the biblical way seems liable to difficulty, we will not find our solution in departing from it!

**Recommendation 1:** That the RPCNA recognize church membership for the incarcerated as legitimate in principle, allowing presbyteries to engage believers inside in this manner, if they sense that the Lord is calling them to do so.

*Yours, Tim McCracken, Regional Director—San Joaquin Valley, California; Metanoia Prison Ministries | Mission to North America; [tmccracken@pcanet.org](mailto:tmccracken@pcanet.org) | 559-455-3356*

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*Special Committee on Christ's Mediatorial Kingship; no report was provided.*

*Study Committee on Recusals in Discipline Cases.* Chairman Phil Pockras stood to summarize committee progress on this matter. It was moved, seconded, and carried to receive this oral report.

*Communication #21-13: Atlantic Presbytery on Divorce and Desertion* (as presented by Mr. Noah Bailey). After introductory comments, questions were raised on the paper as a whole. The recommendations were taken up. Recommendation 1 (we recommend that the Synod clarify that the only biblical causes for divorce are sexual immorality, as given in Matthew 19, and desertion, as given in 1 Corinthians 7); this carried. Recommendation 2 (we recommend that the Synod clarify that desertion, as described in 1 Corinthians 7, is a willful, irremediable, physical departure of one spouse from the domicile in accord with *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24.6). It was moved and seconded to amend this recommendation, substituting in “physical separation by one spouse from the other” for “physical departure of one spouse from the domicile.” This was discussed.

Friendly amendment, “by one spouse from the other” in place of “of one spouse from the domicile.” The amendment passed, so new language being discussed: “We recommend that the Synod clarify that desertion, as described in 1 Corinthians 7, is a willful, irremediable, physical departure by one spouse from the other in accord with *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24.6.” Moved and seconded, to add: “or irremediably caused by one spouse or the other.” This passed, by standing vote, 72 to 29. So new language being discussed: “We recommend that the Synod clarify that desertion, as described in 1 Corinthians 7, is a willful, irremediable, physical departure by one spouse from the other or irremediably caused by one spouse or the other in accord with *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24.6.” It carried. The report as a whole was received and is printed here.

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### **Communication #21-13: Atlantic Presbytery on Divorce and Desertion**

Fathers and Brothers,

Several members of this court have been distressed to find a novel and expansive understanding of desertion as a ground for divorce being taught recently at our Seminary, beginning with the late and beloved Dr. George Scipione. Personal efforts with both the professor and Seminary Board failed to curtail this teaching. The Atlantic Presbytery asked Synod to study the matter and Synod appointed a committee, which twice returned recommendations in line with our concerns. Although these recommendations were unanimously presented by the committee, they were defeated on the floor of Synod in 2018 and 2019.

Nevertheless, Synod’s reasoning can be difficult to discern sometimes.

Some delegates seemed to vote in agreement with Dr. Scipione’s teaching, but others were persuaded by the plea for deeper study on the matter before deciding. As a result, and because of our desire to see the Lord Jesus obeyed in this matter, we offer this paper, built on the work of several members of this court, as a deeper study which will, we pray, persuade the Synod to reaffirm its commitment to the historic, confessional definition of desertion as it relates to marriage and divorce.

**Recommendations**

1. We recommend that the Synod clarify that the only biblical causes for divorce are sexual immorality, as given in Matthew 19, and desertion, as given in 1 Corinthians 7.

2. We recommend that the Synod clarify that desertion, as described in 1 Corinthians 7, is a willful, irremediable, physical departure of one spouse from the domicile in accord with *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24.6.

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## 1 Introduction

This paper argues that desertion, as alluded to in 1 Corinthians 7:15, must mean such willful, physical departure of an unbelieving spouse that “can no way be remedied by the Church, or the civil magistrate” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 24.6). This argument rests on a careful examination of Matthew 19 and its relation to the principle of the general equity of the civil law, and other texts, such as 1 Corinthians 7.

The paper begins by examining Jesus’ teaching on divorce in Matthew 19, noting that he establishes only one ground, or justification, for it: sexual immorality. Jesus’ authoritative approach to divorce precludes an expansive definition of desertion. He prioritizes the creational institution of marriage in Genesis 1 and 2 over the Mosaic concession to hard hearts in Deuteronomy 24, teaching us that he is restoring marriage’s original intent of lifelong fidelity by changing hard hearts. Granting a divorce on grounds such as are found in Deuteronomy 24 functionally denies the full power of Christ’s redemptive work. Indeed, employing any justification other than the sexual immorality given in Matthew 19 violates Jesus’ authoritative teaching. Thus, Paul was not providing a parallel, but previously unacknowledged, ground for divorce when commenting on willful, irremediable desertion in 1 Corinthians 7.

Next, an appeal to the general equity of the Mosaic Law, particularly Exodus 21, as a reason for broadening the meaning of desertion is rejected. Such thinking runs counter to Westminster’s teaching on general equity and Jesus’ redemptive-historical hermeneutic employed in Matthew 19. Turning to Mosaic case law, such as Exodus 21, to provide a wide range of meaning for desertion undercuts Christ’s authority as the messianic interpreter of the Old Testament. Thus, Paul did not cite the general equity of Exodus 21 or any other Mosaic provision in 1 Corinthians 7, for Jesus had explicitly rejected such a her-

meneutic in Matthew 19.

The key text on desertion, 1 Corinthians 7, is then addressed, noting that, in that passage Paul was acknowledging a narrowly defined and tragic reality that can occasion a divorce. Because Paul would not have contradicted or added to Jesus' only ground for divorce, his teaching on desertion must be understood as recognition of a dissolution that has already occurred, and not a separate ground on par with that of *porneia*.<sup>1</sup> Paul first instructs unequally yoked couples to remain married; unbelief is not a ground for divorce. In that context, Paul acknowledges that sometimes, sadly, a *de facto* divorce occurs through the unwillingness of an unbeliever to remain present. Paul instructs believers to acquiesce to this departure for the sake of peace.

The paper includes three appendices. The first examines the importance of clarity in our definition of desertion at this particular time, along with some consideration of the pastoral efforts which ought to be made in difficult circumstances, instead of pursuing a divorce. In the wake of the Sexual Revolution, our historical moment leaves us vulnerable to the temptation to broaden the grounds for divorce. But Christ would have us resist these trends and instead exalt marriage with a robust exercise of Christian discipleship and church discipline. The second appendix engages more directly with Dr. George Scipione's hermeneutics. The third appendix surveying previous rulings of Synod which reference or pertain to desertion is also provided.

These samplings ground this paper's argument in the history of our denomination. The points argued are neither novel nor innovative. Rather, this line of reasoning has been the ascendent, confessional view of our denomination throughout its history.

Building from Jesus' cornerstone teaching on divorce, this paper extends his principles into the discussion of desertion, concluding that it can only be a willful, irremediable, physical removal by an unbeliever from the otherwise shared domicile.

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## 2 For Any Reason? Jesus' Teaching on Divorce (Matthew 19)

Matthew 19:3-12 gives us the teaching of Jesus Christ on divorce. Basing his argument on Genesis 1 and 2, he taught that one may not divorce one's wife for "any reason" (NASV). But he was challenged by the Pharisees, who brought forward another passage from the Torah. His answer not only reinforced his teaching on divorce, it also raised significant hermeneutical issues for his followers, who objected and received further teaching, to our profit. Jesus cites three Old Testament passages in his debate with the Pharisees. The first, in

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A on the *Testimony*, parts I and II for discussion on the language of "grounds."

verse 4, is from Genesis 1:27, “male and female he created them,” and the second, in verse 5, is Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” The third reference, in verse 7, is a clear allusion to Deuteronomy 24:1, accessed first by the explicit appeal to Moses, second via a technical term for “bill of divorce,” and lastly by *απολυσαι*, or divorce, which summarizes the ensuing actions described in Deut 24:1. Jesus’ use of these three passages<sup>2</sup> is very instructive for our understanding of his view of divorce.

In Matthew 19, Jesus reasserts marriage’s lifelong permanence, as expressed in Gen. 1:27 and 2:24, thus removing Moses’ temporary and ambiguous concession and granting only one ground for divorce: sexual immorality. The setting aside of Moses in order to return to marriage’s original design is an exercise of his great messianic authority. By analyzing Jesus’ use of these three OT texts, we see him employ his mediatorial offices to restore marriage to its original design of permanence. As Matthew 19 is the cornerstone text, we will examine it thoroughly.

### **The New Testament Context in Matthew 19**

Matthew wrote his gospel to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of God’s Old Testament promises, and the ruler of the world. He gives us Jesus’ teaching in five addresses, found in chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and 23-25. In chapter 19, Matthew returns to action. Jesus leaves Galilee and approaches Jerusalem on the east side of the Jordan, where the Pharisees test him in regard to divorce. This examination comes after Jesus’ teaching about our attitudes toward wives, children, and the rich. It is followed by a warning concerning his death, including a gentle rebuke of James and John, in which Jesus twice states that “many who are first will be last, and the last first.” The discussion of divorce thus fits perfectly into its context of status and forgiveness. Where must we practice repentance and forgiveness more often than in marriage? And where is a man more often tempted to lord it over others than within his marriage? When his wife sins or displeases him, must he forgive, or can he send her away? Is marriage a sphere in which Jesus’ followers should expect to be served, or to serve?

In Matthew 19, Jesus directly answered a question about divorce at some length, citing the Scriptures he expected the Pharisees to understand. He then answered their Scripture-based objection, and finally answered an objection from his own disciples.<sup>3</sup> The common English translation, “for any reason,” is

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2 One might also note an echo of Genesis 1:1 in “He who created in the beginning” but this paper will not discuss this brief reference. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotes are from the English Standard Version (Crossway).

3 In Mark 10 Jesus sends the initial question back to the Pharisees, who begin with Deuteronomy 24. His ensuing answer then combines the two answers given to the Pharisees in Matthew 19. His disciples then ask him privately about the matter (unlike

ambiguous. Were they asking, “will any reason do” or “is there any reason at all?” Were they assuming many reasons, or almost none? The Greek word translated “any” is *πασαν*. A standard lexicon lists “every, any and every” as a meaning, and then lists our passage under this definition, glossing it as “for any reason at all.” The entry for the word translated “reason” also cites our passage, glossing it as “for any and every cause.” *πασαν* is a very common word, often translated as all or every, so we can be confident that the Pharisees were seeking confirmation that there are many legitimate reasons for divorce.

Jesus rebuked them for this assumption (“Have you not read?”) and launched into his summary of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Having quoted his key verses for marriage, he drew his conclusions: they are no longer two but one flesh, God has joined them together, and man is not to separate them. The Pharisees answered by asking about Moses’ commands in Deuteronomy 24. Jesus acknowledged the passage, attributing Moses’ concession to their hard hearts, but asserting that this law was not in effect in the beginning. Nor would it remain in effect: asserting great messianic authority (“And I say to you”), Jesus ruled out divorce, except for sexual immorality. Outside of this cause, remarriage would constitute adultery.

His disciples then challenged him, apparently in public: “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” He answered with an initially enigmatic statement about eunuchs. Some are eunuchs from birth (born with birth defects that make reproduction impossible), some are made eunuchs by men (castrated to be slaves or singers, or as punishment), and some “have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.” (Perhaps, some, awed by the lifelong fidelity required by God, will be afraid they will fail and choose never to get married, or, perhaps, some will seek to spread the kingdom without extra anxieties and thus remain single.<sup>4</sup>)

The quotations from Genesis serve as the basis for Jesus’ conclusions about divorce. The allusion to Deuteronomy grounds the Pharisees’ objection in Scripture. Jesus interprets this passage as a temporary permission no longer in effect now that he is present. A review of previous uses of these Old Testament texts will help us understand how he could read Moses in this way.

#### **Moses’ Original Uses of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and Deuteronomy 24:1**

*Genesis 1:27.* In Genesis 1 God creates, speaks, separates, and names. What he does is good. He sets out great lights to rule the heavens, and creates man to rule the fish, birds, livestock and creeping things. Man is honored by divine

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the seemingly public objection in Matthew 19), and in his answer he adds a prohibition of a wife divorcing a husband. The parallel structure of this prohibition crucially shows that his teaching on divorce applies to wives in the same way as to husbands. The concluding discussion of eunuchs does not appear in Mark 10. See also Luke 16:18.

4 See the example of Paul, and 1 Corinthians 7:7, 32-35, 38, 40.



reflection before his creation (“Let us make man”), endowed with God’s image, given a blessing and a commission to multiply and rule, and provided with plants for food. The work is finished and God rests on and blesses the Sabbath. The whole passage emphasizes that the way God made things was good. He created basic distinctions, such as light and darkness, day and night, dry land and water, male and female. These distinctions are good. He also created rulers, both celestial and terrestrial. These rulers are likewise good. It is within this context that we find the words “male and female he created them.” Male and female, a distinction basic to man, is of like importance to their being made in God’s image and likeness for, as male and female, they will fulfill the commission to be fruitful and multiply. As male and female they fill the earth and subdue it.

*Genesis 2:24.* In Genesis 2 we continue the creation account. God has formed Adam of the dust of the ground, breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, and God has planted a garden in Eden, filling it with good things for the man. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are within reach, and Adam is tasked with working the garden. He is not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

One thing alone is not good: Adam is alone. God did not say he was lonely. Being alone, he cannot keep his mandate to be fruitful and multiply. So every beast and bird is brought to the man, and he exercises his dominion by naming them, but none is able to help him fulfill his commission to multiply and fill the earth. So the Lord God causes a great sleep to fall on the man, and he takes one of his ribs, makes it into a woman, and brings her to the man. Adam enthusiastically names her in a way that highlights their close bodily kinship, for this at last is bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh.

Moses pauses to give us Genesis 2:24. It is the moral of the story, the conclusion to be drawn from the creation of the woman. Adam and Eve are our model, holding fast to one another (and not to parents), becoming one flesh. We are to go and do likewise, except that in our case we must first leave father and mother (unlike Adam and Eve!) so that we may hold fast to our wife or husband.<sup>5</sup> After establishing the abiding moral relevance of the account, Moses returns to Adam and Eve to develop their bliss further: they are naked and unashamed. Shame soon enters, and nakedness disappears, first lamely through human efforts, and then effectively through divine provision. Within this context, Genesis 2:24 stands out as the moral of the meeting of Adam and Eve, the pattern for humanity to follow even when the initial glory and happiness of creation had faded.

*Deuteronomy 24:1.* Much has changed by the time the reader reaches Deu-

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<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew accents confirm this analysis. The accent is on “his mother,” thus setting “leaving” and “cleaving” as the two essential halves of the verse.

teronomy 24. God has flooded the earth and scattered the nations. He has called Abraham and promised that his descendants will succeed in being fruitful and multiplying, and inheriting the Promised Land. His descendants have suffered as slaves in Egypt, but God has brought them out and given them his law. They have sinned repeatedly in the wilderness, and God has judged them frequently, but has nonetheless brought them to the plains of Moab, on the edge of the Promised Land. Moses, about to die, preaches the book of Deuteronomy, exhorting them to love God through pure worship and careful obedience. Among the laws in Deuteronomy 23 and 24 pertaining to vow-keeping, boundaries, and the privileges of the first year of marriage, a brief statement on divorce is found. God decrees that a divorced wife cannot return to her first husband after marrying a second. It does not matter if the second died or divorced her. Returning to her first husband is an abomination that will bring sin upon the land the Lord is giving them.

Far more briefly described is the cause for the first divorce: "if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her." Are men given wide discretion in divorce? What must "some indecency" mean? "Debar" is a very common word, meaning speech or word, or, secondarily, a thing or matter, so to understand the nature of this particular thing our attention must go to "erwat." The related verb "erah" means to be naked or bare, and the noun "erwah" is used primarily of shameful human nakedness, as with Noah, or sinful sexual unions, as in Leviticus 18 and 20. The word can be metaphorically applied to a land exposed to hostile eyes, as in Genesis 42:9,12, or exposed to God's wrath, as in Isaiah 19:7, but the overwhelming use of the term is for shameful nakedness or sinful sexual acts, often incest. Moses creates a verbal link with Genesis 2:25, where Adam and Eve are described as naked and not ashamed. The term translated "naked" in Genesis shares its root with "erwat" in Deuteronomy 24:1.

The full Hebrew phrase in Deuteronomy 24:1, "erwat debar," occurs in only one other place, Deuteronomy 23:14. While the reference to excrement (not the act of excreting) broadens the semantic range beyond sexuality, the term remains in the realm of the fleshly, the shameful, that which should not be seen. Broadening the meaning of the nakedness embedded in this unusual phrase does not do it justice. In Deuteronomy 24, Moses lays out a scenario in which, if a wife has been divorced by her first husband by means of giving her a certificate of divorce, and she has departed and remarried, and her second husband has also given her a certificate of divorce, then she may not go back to her first husband. It would be an abomination. The reason for the first divorce is briefly described as "erwat debar."<sup>6</sup>

6 The Hebrew accents show the lengthy one-sidedness of the sentence: the accent

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 came to have great importance because interpreters assumed that the divorce procedure described in it is obligatory: "he writes her a certificate of divorce<sup>7</sup> and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house." This procedure receives immense attention in the rabbinic tradition, culminating in the Pharisees' question to Jesus in Matthew 19. Before turning to the Mishnah and Talmud, however, we need to examine three other texts, as their uses of Moses' teaching on marriage and divorce pave the way for Jesus' teaching.

### **Prophetic Uses of Genesis 2:24 and Deuteronomy 24:1-4**

*Isaiah 50.* In Isaiah 40-66, the Lord describes in soaring terms how he will save his people. In 49:14, personified Zion claims that the Lord has forgotten her. The Lord replies that even if a woman could forget her nursing child, He will not forget Israel. She will ask where all her children came from, for nations shall bring them back to her. Even the captives of a tyrant will be rescued by the Lord. Then, in chapter 50, the Lord asks, "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce<sup>8</sup>, with which I sent her away?" More ominously in light of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, "Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" If Israel had gone to another after the Lord divorced her, Deuteronomy 24 would indicate that she could not return to the Lord. Such faithlessness is exactly what is charged by prophets like Hosea. Yet the Lord asks, "Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?" (Isa. 50:2) Despite having been duly divorced, and having gone to foreign lovers (see Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea), the Lord is able to welcome Israel back again. If there is shame in this, it is absorbed by his Servant: "I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced." (Isa. 50:6b-7a) The Mosaic certificate and prohibition of return once remarried becomes a barrier that the Lord promises to sweep aside to bring his people back.

*Jeremiah 3.* Jeremiah also speaks of the certificate of divorce and makes the parallel to faithless Israel explicit: "If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me?" (v. 1) We see the predicament: if the Lord deals with Israel as the Israelite is to deal with his wife, no return is possible. And Judah is the same, despite having the warning of Israel, "She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the

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comes very early, on "marries her." The marriage is the obvious counterpoint to the divorce, but as a "midpoint" it is unusually far from the actual center of the verse as one reads it aloud.

7 Hebrew בְּרִיתָתָא

8 As in Deuteronomy 24:1, סֵפֶר בְּרִיתוֹת

whore." (v. 8) Is God bound by the prohibition of Deuteronomy 24? Not at all:

Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord, I will not look on you in anger...  
I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with  
knowledge and understanding...and the ark of the covenant of the Lord...  
shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed. (Jer. 3:12, 15, 16)

In both uses of Deuteronomy 24:1 in the prophets, the Lord declares that despite his sending them away with a certificate of divorce for their unfaithfulness, they will return to him and be saved.

*Malachi 2:14-16.* Faithlessness in marriage led the Lord to reject the returned exiles' offerings. Why? Verse 15 literally reads, "and not one he make? And portion of Spirit to him/it? And what the one seeking? Seed-God." The language is brief and confusing. The context suggests the first "one" is the couple, but the second "one" sounds like God. After two become one flesh, according to the One God's will, the one couple may produce many, since he is seeking offspring. This suggests possibilities for word-play. The one seeks offspring for God. What one? The one flesh couple, for most couples desire children, but also the One Spirit of God in their union who also desires godly offspring. Further, "did he not make them one," is an allusion to Genesis 2:24, in which in the context of God's creative decree the two become one flesh. But, the prophet goes further, "with a portion of the Spirit in their union." God's Spirit has a portion in every marriage, and he seeks godly offspring. The focus on offspring echoes the concern of Genesis for humanity to multiply and fill the earth. The statement "did he not make them one," applied to every marriage, provides a basis for Jesus' assertion that "God has joined together" every couple and man may not separate them. God has united husband and wife, even in a context where unhappy marriages are clearly in view. None of the translations seem quite to capture verse 16, but it is clear that God links hatred and divorce, thus condemning divorce. Given this, and the presence of his Spirit in our marriages, we are to guard our spirits and be faithful to our wives.

To summarize, these are the prophetic uses of Genesis 2:24 and Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Isaiah and Jeremiah invoke the certificate of divorce to illustrate Israel's sin and predicament, yet conclude that even their divorce will not prevent the Lord from remarrying his people. Malachi alludes to Genesis 2:24 to highlight God's hatred of divorce and desire for child-filled permanence. These are hints of Jesus' interpretation in Matthew 19. The divine intention and ongoing application to human life is given first in Genesis 2:24. Moses gives a carefully couched provision for divorce, but the prophets deny the implications of this provision for Israel's relationship with God. Then, at the end of the Old Testament, God makes clear his indignation at their faith-

lessness to the wives of their youth. God made provision for divorce, but he did not approve. He has a higher call than the allowances of Deuteronomy. Jesus will reassert this truth in the context of the Pharisees' misguided question and misuse of Deuteronomy 24, which sprang from the rabbinic mishandling of these texts.

### **Jewish Uses of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and Deuteronomy 24:1-4**

Moses gave the original principle in Genesis: lifelong exclusivity and fidelity in marriage. He later added a restrictive concession in Deuteronomy: provide your spouse with a writ of divorce. The prophets foresaw the Messiah restoring Israel by changing their hard hearts. One aspect of this restoration includes the sweeping away of the Mosaic concessions to divorce. Where then did the Pharisees who questioned Jesus get their more expansive approach to divorce? The rabbinic readings of Deuteronomy 24 provided the debate which occasioned Jesus' teaching.

The three targums of Pseudo-Jonathan, Neofiti I, and Onqelos display their characteristic differences in handling these passages. So, it is quite significant when all three agree against the Masoretic Text. A shared change, retained by Jesus, is the explicit spelling out that "the two" become one flesh. In Hebrew it is "they." Thus polygamy is explicitly discouraged. When it comes to Deuteronomy 24, Onqelos sticks to the Hebrew text, using the phrase "a bill of dismissal." Neofiti I adds the concept of the man "endowing her" and adds "grace" to the favor that she does not find before him. Neofiti uses the phrase "letter of divorce." Pseudo-Jonathan specifies that the "bill of divorce" is written "before the court." It also describes the twice-divorced woman negatively: "the heavens cry out against her that the latter man hates her."<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, "her children who are born to her shall not be an abomination."<sup>10</sup>

Josephus and Philo likewise offer fertile ground. When speaking of creation, Josephus gently downplays the sexual nature of man. He does not directly comment on Genesis 2:24. But Deuteronomy 24 interests him greatly:

He that desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatsoever (and many such causes happen among men), let him in writing give assurance that he will never use her as his wife any more; for by this means she may be at liberty to marry another husband, although before this bill of divorce be given, she is not to be permitted so to

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9 Clarke, E.G. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy*. Translated, with Notes. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998. p. 66.

10 There are three rabbinic technical phrases for the divorce paper, and each targum uses a different one. There is the "bill of dismissal," the "writ of divorce," and the "letter of release." In current parlance, the document is often simply referred to as a "get." It retains its importance in Orthodox communities.

do; but if she be misused by him also, or if, when he is dead, her first husband would marry her again, it shall not be lawful for her to return to him.<sup>11</sup>

Josephus was a Pharisee, and sounds like the Pharisees. In his own life, the wife Vespasian had forced on him left him, and he himself divorced his second. For Josephus, the “erwat debar” of Deuteronomy 24:1 means anything that the man wants it to mean.

Philo, on the other hand, interprets Genesis 2:24 as ordering the man to “behave with an excess of affection.” The man, being bolder, Philo says, is the one told to leave father and mother for her sake. The two become one flesh, the flesh is tangible, and both may derive pleasure and pain from the same sources, and feel the same. Still more may they think the same. Philo, like Jesus, finds marriage instruction in Genesis 2:24, instruction particularly directed towards the man, and instruction with a physical message; though, ever the philosopher, Philo does wish to highlight unity in thinking over unity in body.

Finally, when the Mishnah and the Talmud consider Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and Deuteronomy 24:1, most of the attention goes to Deuteronomy 24. In the Mishnah, only one paragraph, six lines out of fourteen pages, are devoted to the why of divorce. The other thirteen and a half pages are devoted to the how of the divorce paper: the one who delivers it, did he see it written and signed? Who may write the document? On what may it be written? Who may deliver it? (not minors or gentiles). There is a question about whether the divorce paper has an expiration date. Co-wives appear regularly. But for what reason may a man divorce his wife? This gets only cursory attention, and is only mentioned at the end, after the how has received exhaustive attention.

10. The School of Shammai say: A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her, for it is written, ‘*Because he hath found in her indecency in anything.*’ And the School of Hillel say: even if she spoiled a dish for him, for it is written, ‘*Because he hath found in her indecency in anything.*’ R. Aqiba says: Even if he found another fairer than she, since for it is written, ‘*And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes.*’<sup>12</sup> (emphases original)

Thus all three authorities appeal to Deuteronomy 24:1, and none to Genesis 2. Their interpretations cancel one another out, and thus leave the reasons for divorce up to the husband. The Talmud repeats the pattern on a much grander scale. One division among six is devoted to women. The volume on women

11 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 4.253. See William Whiston, trans. *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. USA: Hendrickson Publishers. 1987.

12 Danby, Herbert. *The Mishnah*. London: OUP, 1933. See p. 321.

first discusses who may not be married and levirate marriage. The next section covers marriage contracts, tokens of virginity, and who is to be believed when the token of virginity is not found. The third and fourth sections cover vows. The fifth covers jealousy and bitter water. The sixth, writs of divorce for women and writs of emancipation for slaves. These are dealt with together. Eighty-nine sections discuss the how of divorce, and only the ninetieth covers the why. Or to put it differently, 436 pages on the mechanics of divorce, mostly on how to write and deliver the get, or bill of divorce. Three concluding pages deal with the actual reasons for divorce.<sup>13</sup>

The substance of these final pages is also found in the Mishnah, this time with the flavor of the debate added. Hillel stressed “thing” and Shammai “uncleanness.” Shammai also interprets the  $\text{בְּ$  as “because,” while Aqiba understands it as “if.” Hillel does note that divorce is prohibited in the case of marriage as a result of rape. And then we read that men differ with food and with wives. One man will not drink his cup if a fly has landed in it. This is compared to a rabbi known to lock his wife in the house while he was away. Another will pick out the fly and drink the cup. This is compared to most men, who let their wives speak to their brothers and relatives. But the man who drinks the cup with the fly? This is the bad man who lets his wife go out with her armpits uncovered, and bathe with men. A husband is duty-bound to divorce such a one as this.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the question of divorce is removed from the moral realm, and left up to the vagaries of men. As men differ about flies in their cups, so they differ over when to divorce their wives. Who can legislate in the face of such differences? The careful reader may think that God did, in the book of Malachi. But here the difficulties of translation help the rabbis avoid the clear force of the passage. They read Malachi 2:16 as “for a hateful one put away.”<sup>15</sup> Thus Rabbi Judah said, if you hate her, you should put her away. Another countered, he who sends his wife away is hated. Then the majority voice resolves the two, by saying that one spoke of the first marriage, and the other of the second. Only Rabbi Eleazar seems to dissent, when he says, “if a man divorces his wife, even the altar sheds tears, as it says,” and then he most aptly quotes Malachi 2:13-14, where the Lord’s condemnation of their easy divorces is obvious.

To summarize the rabbinic uses of our three passages, we see that Philo used Genesis 2:24 to speak powerfully of the husband’s duty to love, Rabbi Eleazar used Malachi 2:13-14 to dissent from the majority’s view of easy divorce., and Rabbi Shammai insisted that *erwat debar* in Deuteronomy 24:1 must refer

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13 Page counts from Epstein, I. *The Babylonian Talmud*, v.17. London: The Soncino Press, 1936.

14 Epstein, p. 438.

15 Epstein, p. 439.

to unchastity. Nonetheless, their voices were drowned in the increasingly dominant view that divorce was allowed for any reason, or at least so many thought so that further discussion was pointless and attention should be given to the mechanics of writing and delivering the certificate of divorce. When divorce was discussed, Deuteronomy 24 was the key text, with Malachi 2 receiving brief and largely erroneous attention in the Talmud. Thus, when Jesus used Genesis 1 and 2 in reference to divorce, he revived what lay dormant in Malachi 2, gave Shammai's view new support, and ran counter to the dominant view.

#### **Jesus' Hermeneutical Use of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and Deut. 24:1-4**

While Jesus' use of the Old Testament<sup>16</sup> in Matthew 19:4-6 stirred up controversy with both the Pharisees and his own disciples, he and his opponents shared multiple assumptions. They began by asking him about the lawfulness of divorce, signaling their shared agreement that God spoke his law to Moses, and his law addresses divorce. They also agreed that God created us male and female in the beginning, and that his authority over us begins with creation. Their shared commitment to the divine authorship and authority of Torah is shown by Jesus' opening words, "Have you not read...?"

They differed, however, on where to look in the Old Testament. The Pharisees assumed that a passage that mentions divorce would be the key passage to consult, and they continued to bind themselves to the Mosaic covenant established at Sinai. Further, outside of the school of Shammai, they assumed that since the precipitating cause of divorce is only briefly stated in Deuteronomy 24 (*erwat debar*), they were free to interpret it broadly. The fact that neither Adam and Eve, nor Abraham and Sarah, nor Jacob and Rachel, nor Nabal and Abigail, nor any other married couple in the scriptural text appear to have gotten divorced did not seem to occur to them. Outside of Shammai and Eleazar, the cries of Malachi appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

Jesus teaches us that before we ask about divorce, we need to understand marriage. The first place to go then is the text in which God first created marriage, in the garden, when all was very good. Here is the divine intention for marriage, and from it we can deduce God's will in regards to divorce. To use theological terminology, Jesus asserted that marriage is a creation ordinance, and what God willed regarding marriage in the beginning is what he wills for it in Jesus' day and ours. If he were in a formal debate, Jesus might have pointed to the lack of divorces mentioned above, the presence of numerous accounts of how the patriarchs met the matriarchs, the sayings in the book of Proverbs that put God at the center of finding a wife, and the passage in Malachi as evi-

<sup>16</sup> When we see exactly the same use in Mark 10, with Jesus again as the source and his own disciples doubtful, it is surely not correct to speak of Matthew's use of the OT. We deal here with Jesus' own use, a use that Matthew and Mark faithfully reproduce. See also Luke 24:44-45 and John 14:26, 16:13-15.



dence that God's will for marriage and divorce is in accord with his initial action of bringing the woman to the man. We should recall that the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to pause the action in order to give the moral for marriage in Genesis 2:24. In short, by his use of Genesis 1 and 2, Jesus teaches that God's created intent sets the context for the subsequent Torah legislation.

Once God's created intention for marriage is established—that it is to be lifelong—the permission granted by Moses is seen in another light. When he wrote "*erwat debar*," we are to remember their one-flesh relationship, accessed by a term that invokes their original unashamed nakedness. As was said before, the term "*erwat debar*" suggests the flesh, something visible and shameful. To expand it to anything that displeases a husband is lexically irresponsible, as Shammai perceived. Thus Jesus corrected the majority view when he specified that divorce may not lawfully occur, except for *porneia*.

But Jesus did more than call the Pharisees back to a proper sense of semantic range. When he cited their hard hearts as the reason Moses allowed them to divorce their wives, he taught that the civil legislation of Exodus through Deuteronomy was given in the context of a resistant nation. The state of their hearts affected what God permitted. Therefore the civil legislation is neither God's first nor final word revealing his own perfect will. Moses allowed them to divorce their wives, "but from the beginning it was not so." By beginning with creation, Jesus made it clear that God's creation mandates take precedence over the detailed permissions of the Mosaic covenant. By saying "Have you not read?" he implied that they should have done the same. By repeating his prior "I say to you," he taught that he came to restore God's original full intent.

Beale and Carson, in their introduction to the *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, note that both Paul and the author of Hebrews use the order of Old Testament events as key to the correct interpretation of them.<sup>17</sup> This "salvation-historical grid" or "historical sequencing within the Hebrew Scriptures" is a basic difference between the New Testament writers and their Jewish contemporaries.<sup>18</sup> In Matthew 19, Jesus himself is revealed as the origin of this sense of "historical sequencing." As the Messiah, Jesus set the revelation concerning marriage given in creation before the revelation given in the Law, both in terms of time and significance.

The sequence begins with creation. God's original purpose is to be the foundation of our moral reasoning, at least for creation ordinances such as marriage, and especially when the biblical text pauses the action to tell us the

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17 See Galatians 3:15-29, Romans 4:10-13, Hebrews 4:8-10 and Hebrews 7:1-19.

18 See Gregory Beale and D.A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. pp. xxvi-xxvii. See also Gregory Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

continuing moral application (e.g. Gen. 2:24). Jesus used Genesis 1 and 2 to demonstrate that in his teaching on divorce, he was on the side of God the Creator, and that the true messianic hermeneutic begins with these and similar divine principles. Any biblical investigation into abiding moral questions like marriage and divorce must begin with God and his original revealed will. Where there is a tension between a creation ordinance and a civil precept from the Mosaic covenant, Jesus directs his followers to prioritize the creation ordinance. This was not merely a shrewd deduction on Jesus' part but an authoritative exercise of his messianic authority as our prophet.

**Jesus' Theological Use of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and Deut. 24:1-4**

When Jesus proceeded to say, "And I say to you," he echoed his refrain in the Sermon on the Mount. He came, not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. His fulfilling would not be a relaxing of the commandments, but a restoring of their full import by driving their demands into the heart. In Matthew 19 he once again appears as our Prophet, who reveals to us the will of God for our salvation, and shows the full extent of the moral law.

Following Calvin, we can note three arguments that Jesus derived from Genesis 1 and 2 to ground his teaching against divorce. First, if the fifth commandment requires us to honor father and mother, yet marriage is greater than the parent-child bond ("Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife"), how much more must we honor our wives? Second, no man is able to rip his body in half and leave one half behind. Since the two have become one flesh, neither are we to tear ourselves in half by divorcing a wife or husband. Third, since God has joined husband and wife together, it is gross impiety to nullify God's special work in our lives and reject his gift.<sup>19</sup>

Why then Deuteronomy 24:1-4? As before stated, God granted this permission in the context of their hard hearts. It was therefore God's perfect solution for that time, but not his perfect solution for all time. As Calvin notes repeatedly,<sup>20</sup> Jesus here teaches that God in the beginning laid down his will

<sup>19</sup> See John Calvin, *Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. 2. Trans. Pringle. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1949. pp. 378-381.

<sup>20</sup> See Calvin's commentary on Deut. 24:1-4: "Although what relates to divorce was granted in indulgence to the Jews, yet Christ pronounces that it was never in accordance with the Law, because it is directly repugnant to the first institution of God, from whence a perpetual and inviolable rule is to be sought." Or his commentary on Malachi 2:16: "We indeed know that repudiation, properly speaking, had never been allowed by God; for though it was not punished under the law, yet it was not permitted. It was the same as with a magistrate, who is constrained to bear many things which he does not approve; for we cannot so deal with mankind as to restrain all vices. It is indeed desirable, that no vice should be tolerated; but we must have a regard to what is possible." Or, on Matthew 19:7: "it appears that whatever God permits by his law, whose will alone establishes the distinction between what is good or evil, is lawful. But Christ disarms the falsehood and

for marriage, and the Mosaic legislation does not alter it. Thus the civil laws of ancient Israel are no longer in effect, save for the general equity thereof, not only because of altered economic and political conditions, but also because Jesus has come, and so our spiritual condition is changed. In Jesus, hard hearts are removed and replaced.

The majority Jewish interpretation of divorce focused on the places where the word “divorce” could be found in the Scriptures. Jesus looked to the first meeting of husband and wife and the ongoing purpose of God revealed by the moral lesson drawn in Genesis 2:24. In this way he pursued what he elsewhere called “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.”<sup>21</sup> Why one may get divorced is surely a weightier matter than how, yet Pharisaic and rabbinic attention was obsessed with the how while despairing (briefly!) of defining the why. As in many other places, Jesus insists on the divine intention and weighty matters.

But how could Jesus declare that a Mosaic utterance, even if given on account of hard hearts, could ever be set aside? Only if something new has arrived in himself. Jesus here teaches, once again, that he came to do what Moses could not. He came to restore God’s very good created purpose. He is not only greater than Jonah and Solomon, he is even greater than Moses. But how? Who is he?

#### **Matthew’s Rhetorical Use of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and Deut. 24:1-4**

In Matthew 19, Jesus addresses divorce for the second time in this gospel. By this repetition Matthew stresses how important the subjects of marriage and divorce are in the sight of God. Matthew also alerts us to the presence of seemingly contradictory legislation in the Torah, and our corresponding need for more hermeneutical explanation than Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount. By including three Old Testament passages in the course of an extended, three-round discussion, Matthew shows us the importance of understanding his will regarding marriage and divorce.<sup>22</sup>

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slander by the appropriate reply, that Moses permitted it on account of their obstinacy, and not because he approved of it as lawful. And he confirms his opinion by the best argument, because it was not so at the beginning. He takes for granted that, when God at first instituted marriage, he established a perpetual law, which ought to remain in force till the end of the world. And if the institution of marriage is to be reckoned an inviolable law, it follows that whatever swerves from it does not arise from its pure nature, but from the depravity of men.... And if the rule of a holy and pious life is not always, or in all places, to be sought from political laws, much less ought we to seek it from custom.”

21 Matthew 23:23, KJV.

22 What God promised to do himself in Malachi 2-3, Jesus did in Matthew 19-21. Jesus rebuked his people’s faithlessness and their questioning of his justice. He then purified the temple. Matthew displays Jesus’ divine nature through this parallel, which extends

Since Jesus is the Lord incarnate, his judgment on divorce is authoritative, and those who relax his commandments will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>23</sup> Since Jesus is the Lord, he can do what Moses could not. He has given the new heart that Moses knew had not been given (Deut. 29:4) but knew God would give (Deut. 30:6). He has made the new covenant, which, unlike the Mosaic covenant, puts his law within us, writing it on our hearts (Jer. 31:31-33). He does this by the Spirit that Jesus promised to give, the same Spirit that is in our marriages (Mal. 2:15)—the Spirit that he puts within us, together with a new heart (Ezek. 36:26-27). Jesus does not legislate in light of hard hearts; he changes hearts and gives us the upward call of the gospel. Truly we must be born again, and in him we are.

Once we perceive the powerful messianic argument embedded in Matthew 19-21, we can look with new eyes on the other Old Testament passages that mention divorce: Isaiah 50 and Jeremiah 3. In Isaiah, the overcoming of Israel's "certificate of divorce" is the work of the Messiah, who also takes the captives from the tyrant (Isa. 49:24-25 with Matt. 12:29), absorbed shame in God's service (Isa. 50:6-7 with Matt. 26:67, 27:28-30, Luke 9:51), and became a light for the nations (Isa. 49:6, Matt. 28:19). Similarly, in Jeremiah, faithless Israel and Judah can return to the Lord, despite their decree of divorce, because God will create a time when the ark of the covenant of the Lord will no longer be "remembered or missed," and they shall no more "follow their own evil heart" (Jer. 3:16-17). We need not remember the ark, because Jesus made a new covenant in his blood, a covenant unlike the Mosaic, because in it the law is written on our hearts (Jer. 31:31-33, note "though I was their husband" in v. 32).

Jesus used Genesis 1 and 2 to show that a church that relies on Deuteronomy 24<sup>24</sup> to define and defend divorce is staying in bondage with Hagar. For in all the Bible she alone was sent away, as could have been predicted, since the slave does not stay in the house forever (John 8:35).<sup>25</sup> If we belong to the Jerusalem that is above, we are children, and not slaves, and we remain. We do the will of the Father, walking by the Spirit. The Spirit that governs our lives is not directed by laws made for hard hearts. The moral law of the Kingdom is a higher righteousness than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.<sup>26</sup>

Matthew rounded off his discussion of divorce by recording the apostles' even further.

23 Matthew 5:19.

24 Given his appeal to creation, the same point must be made about any other divorce interpretations that might be derived, plausibly or not, from other parts of the civil law found in Exodus to Deuteronomy.

25 The woman at the well in John 4 had apparently been divorced repeatedly. In no way does her past function as normative or permissive. Rather, Jesus' leading her to faith shows us that indeed, God in his grace forgives sin.

26 Matthew 5:20. See also Galatians 4:21-31.

objection. Jesus replied by reminding us that there is a greater good than marriage. The kingdom of heaven is the pearl of great price. It alone gives true immortality. Therefore the wise will discern God's call for themselves in reference to marriage, and some will sacrifice the privilege, either to avoid the sin of divorce or to pursue the kingdom unhindered. As for the many who are called to marriage, they also are not to place their ultimate hopes in marriage or children (see Matt. 22:30).

### **Implications for Today**

Being divine, Jesus taught the law authoritatively, removing concessions once granted on account of hard hearts. He alone can do this, because he alone changes our spiritual situation. In him, we are a new creation.<sup>27</sup> He gives us a new heart. Therefore, an appeal to the civil legislation of the Old Testament for Christian guidance on divorce is a category error.

We are no longer in the Mosaic era. To appeal to passages such as Deuteronomy 24 or Exodus 21:7-11 to justify divorce today amounts to an implicit denial of Christ's mediatorial work. As prophet, he has interpreted the Law of God for us, and told us plainly that the civil law's provisions for divorce were a temporary concession that have now ceased. As priest, he has given us soft hearts which nullify the Mosaic exception. As king, he has commanded us not to separate what God has joined together. To do so, outside of *porneia*, is to violate the law of the king and ignore the teaching of the prophet, which together rest on his priestly accomplishment of creating a new covenant in which his law is written on our hearts.

Exodus 21:7-11 exemplifies the "hardness of your heart" that Jesus described. The chapter addresses ancient slavery, and verses 7-11 aim to ameliorate one of slavery's many evils. This section does not address marriages freely entered into and is not cited by Josephus, Mishnah, or the Talmud in their discussions of divorce, even though they were seeking broad permission to divorce.<sup>28</sup> Further,

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27 2 Corinthians 5:17

28 John Seldon, in *Uxor Ebraica*, did a deep dive into rabbinical sources and found that some rabbis had used Exodus 21:7-11 in establishing grounds for divorce. He published his work in 1646, the same year the Westminster Assembly wrote chapter 24 on marriage and divorce. Far from following that approach, the Assembly instead wrote, "although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can in no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate..." Found in *Willful Desertion in Westminster* 24:6, pp. 15-17. Note the OPC committee's conclusion: "apart from ... porneia ... any married Christian – irrespective of the spiritual state of his spouse – seeking to be free from his/her spouse when that spouse expresses her/his will to stay together is acting in defiance of the command of both the Apostle and the Lord" p.83. See "Willful Desertion" [https://pohopc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/divorce\\_desertion\\_committee\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://pohopc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/divorce_desertion_committee_final_report.pdf) Presbytery of Ohio, Orthodox Presbyterian

the *Westminster Confession of Faith* does not cite passages such as Exodus 21 in reference to divorce. It cites Deuteronomy 24:1-4, but only to support “wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed.” The crucial parts of the paragraph, describing the only acceptable reasons for divorce, are supported by Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7:15 alone. Since Jesus, as the Messiah, nullifies the grounds for Mosaic provisions such as are found in Exodus 21, they cannot be appealed to in our understanding of divorce. Our study of Matthew 19 also reveals that the desertion contemplated in 1 Corinthians 7 cannot be conceived of broadly. When Jesus was asked about reasons for divorce, he mentioned only *porneia*. This alone gives a believer valid grounds for divorce. 1 Corinthians 7, therefore, must be regarded as acknowledging a *fait accompli*, clarifying the limits of a Christian spouse’s responsibility. If an unbeliever leaves and will not return, there is nothing further that the believer can do. Pursuing the absent spouse will not be fruitful, and God does not require it. But, on the believer’s side, *porneia* is the only grounds upon which a believer may initiate divorce. The Christian may suffer divorce by desertion, but may not instigate it.

Finally, our study provides guidance on the meaning of *porneia* in Matthew 19:9. The word can be taken broadly; one might think of “looking at a woman lustfully” in Matthew 5:28.<sup>29</sup> But a broad interpretation runs counter to the flow of Jesus’ discussion, which erects a strong barrier against divorce, commanding us not to separate what God has joined together. Whatever the limits of *porneia* as grounds for divorce may be, Matthew 19 indicates a restricted range of possibilities.<sup>30</sup> When asked to confirm an open list of reasons for divorce, Jesus pointed to marriage’s original intent and his messianic prerogative to assert only one: *porneia*.

### Conclusions Regarding Matthew 19

In his explanation of these three Old Testament texts, Jesus teaches historical sequencing as key to the correct interpretation. Jesus restores God’s created purpose, which could not be pursued by Moses because of Israel’s hard hearts. Moses, rather, was compelled to permit divorce. Jesus in no way faults Moses or the Scripture; he quotes them throughout. But Jesus makes two redemptive-historical points. First, God’s created purpose was for two to become one as long as they both shall live. Second, he came to restore this purpose. Deuter-

Church, accessed August 28, 2020.

29 Although “porneia” is not used in Matt 5:27-30, it is used in 5:32 in a way that matches Matt. 19:9.

30 The *Westminster Larger Catechism* may provide guidance here. In Q/A 139, a very long list of sexual sins is usually divided by commas, but occasionally, deliberately, by semicolons. The initial portion of the list, those sins occurring before the first semicolon, could well be considered the kinds of “porneia” grave enough to validate divorce; namely, “adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts”.

onomy 24 finds its place as a tutor, a law to moderate the angry passions of divorce and to limit its possibilities for evil. God was educating his people, leading them higher. One might say, "When the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." Or one might update a prophet, "the sun of righteousness has risen, with healing in its wings."<sup>31</sup>

God unites husband and wife. A portion of his Spirit is in their union, and he seeks godly offspring. Man is not to separate the married couple, save for *porneia*. By appealing to creation, Jesus put his teaching beyond the reach of "Israel-only" interpretations. God made all mankind from one in the beginning. His creation ordinances are for the entire world. Jesus' teaching on divorce, therefore, is not an especially rigorous expectation placed on Israel alone. If anything, God's covenant people were given a lower expectation for a season. But Jesus, God with us, restores the full demand of God's original design, because he also provides the power to fulfill it. Jesus' authoritative handling of divorce in Matthew 19 gives us the hermeneutic and the theology for handling subsequent questions such as the general equity of Exodus 21 and the meaning of desertion in 1 Corinthians 7. To those texts we now turn.

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### **3 General Equity and the Interpretive Authority of the Messiah**

Having examined our Lord's teaching in Matthew 19, we now consider his words specifically in their relation to old covenant legislation. Interplay between Jesus and Moses was a prominent feature of Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees. In response to Jesus in Matthew 19, the Pharisees object, "But, Moses...!" We must therefore examine the question of grounds for divorce from a redemptive-historical or covenantal vantage point. This section of the paper develops its viewpoint in conversation with a counter-argument; namely, that old covenant case law allows the new covenant church, via the confessional category of general equity, to extend the meaning of desertion beyond its natural and inherent meaning: spatial proximity. This appeal to Old Testament case law considerably broadens the scope of lawful grounds for divorce beyond what Jesus taught. We would argue that doing so is unbiblical for two reasons.

First, such appeals do not adequately reckon with the dominical authority and redemptive-historical finality with which Jesus interprets the Old Testament. Jesus exercises his messianic prerogative to explicate the meaning and intention of God's Word when he coordinates and relates the creation ordinances, the Seventh Commandment, and the Mosaic law regarding divorce. Second, such appeals do not adequately take into account the legislative implications of the transition from the old covenant to the new. An appeal to Old Testament case law to expand the definition of desertion is contrary to the manner

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31 See Gal. 3:22-4:7, 1 Cor. 13:9-10. Mal. 4:2 modified deliberately.

in which the new covenant church is to interpret the Mosaic civil code.<sup>32</sup> We will look first at Exodus 21 as a representative example of case law used by some in the discussion of the new covenant understanding of desertion.<sup>33</sup>

### **Exodus 21 and the New Covenant Understanding of Desertion**

Exodus 21:7-11 is found in “the Book of the Covenant” (Ex. 24:7). In chapter 20, God gives the Ten Commandments to serve as the summary of his moral law. In chapters 21 and following, the Book of the Covenant, God unfolds the application of that moral law in a manner suited to the local, national context of Israel, in her unique situation as both ancient Near Eastern and Mosaic. The “rules” (Ex. 21:1) that comprise this section of the Mosaic legislation begin with the subject of indentured servitude as it existed in the ancient church. Indentured servitude in ancient Israel differed significantly from any of the modern forms of slavery with which we are more familiar.<sup>34</sup> One noticeable difference in Exodus 21 is that the male Hebrew servant was compelled to serve his master for only six years, after which he was set free. If he entered servitude with a wife, the wife went free with her husband.

It should be noted that these servants were considered to be property.<sup>35</sup> This had implications for marriages that were entered into after the male servant had become the property of his master. If he was given a wife by his master, and that wife had borne him sons and daughters, the wife and children did not go free with the male slave at the end of the six years—“he shall go out alone.”<sup>36</sup> It is at this point that there is an intervening provision that allows for this family to stay intact. There is no provision for them to leave their servitude as a complete family unit. There is provision, however, for the family unit to be preserved through the male servant’s pledging of himself to perpetual servitude to his master.<sup>37</sup>

What happens if a man in Israel sells his daughter to be a female slave? The Mosaic legislation established a distinction between the servitude of male and

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32 As taught by the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 19, “Of the Law of God.”

33 For one notable example of the use of Exodus 21:7-11 as determinative for a new covenant understanding of desertion, see Dr. George Scipione, “Exegetical work on desertion as grounds for divorce as listed in the Westminster Confession of Faith,” submitted to The Presbytery of Ohio, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Spring 2016. See Appendix B.

34 It is worth noting that within the very chapter of Exodus that we are considering, the type of slavery practiced in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade of the 16th to 19th centuries would have been condemned and censured with the death penalty—“Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.” (Ex. 21:16).

35 Exodus 21:21b.

36 Exodus 21:4.

37 Exodus 21:5-6.



female slaves. The female slave “shall not go out as the male slaves do.”<sup>38</sup> However, it is precisely for this reason that the Mosaic legislature then proceeds to enumerate several important protections for the female slave:

- 1) “If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed.” (v. 8a)
- 2) “[The master] shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has broken faith with her.” (v. 8b)
- 3) “If [the master] designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter.” (v. 9)
- 4) “If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. And if he does not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.” (v. 10-11)

In this paper we will not explore the exact meaning and force of all of these protections. Our concern now is to consider one particular argument that leverages the fourth provision above as a *central* consideration in the new covenant church’s understanding of the meaning and scope of desertion as a cause of divorce.

The fourth provision protects the female slave in a very particular situation. What happens if the master takes another concubine that he likes better? What if, as a result of his preference, the food, clothing, and marriage rights of the first are diminished? She is protected from that negligence. The master is to set her free, without money. Some argue that this Mosaic provision establishes similar protection for modern marriages, by reason of an argument from the lesser to the greater. If there exists a minimum threshold of food, clothing, and marriage rights in the case of a “betrothed” slave, without which that bond is nullified, how much more should this protection exist in the case of the married free woman?

By reason of the lesser to the greater (*a minore ad maius*) argument, some assert that the protections offered to the slave woman under Moses are legitimately extended into the new covenant church’s understanding of desertion. As the argument goes, a new covenant understanding of desertion must include lack of provision of food, clothing, and marriage rights.

There are substantial reasons to doubt the validity of this reasoning. Exodus 21 deals with and regulates a terrible aspect of ancient life: the sexual use of female slaves. The argument from the lesser to the greater runs thus: if concubines are offered this sort of protection, how much more so in the case of wives. But is the female slave the “lesser” concern, and the wife the “greater”? Surely not. God is the God of the oppressed,<sup>39</sup> and he is showing himself to be

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38 Exodus 21:7.

39 Psalm 146:7-9.

so; he is pouring out mercy on the female slave, in these verses from Exodus 21. Moreover, these verses do not regulate the boundaries of divorce in the creational ordinance of marriage, but seek to restrain a master's abuse of his female slaves (plural) in the specific societal context of the ancient Near East. The leap from the Mosaic regulation of slavery to the creation ordinance of marriage is not valid.

We turn now to another theological argument, a specific application of the principle of general equity, which some cite in their use of Exodus 21 to broaden the definition of desertion. As we shall see, such an application of general equity is not valid.

### **Exodus 21 and Westminster's Principle of General Equity**

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* synthesizes and systematizes centuries of reflection on the relationship of the law of Moses to the new covenant, by setting forth and distinguishing the three parts of the Old Testament law: moral, ceremonial, and judicial. These distinctions are explicated especially in paragraphs two through four of chapter 19 of the *Confession*, "Of the Law of God." Paragraphs two and three deal with the moral and ceremonial law, respectively. It is paragraph four which deals with the judicial law and states: "To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require."<sup>40</sup> The argument for expanding the definition of desertion in the new covenant era is based partly on an interpretation of Exodus 21:10-11 in light of this paragraph. Thus, a careful understanding of what this paragraph is and is not saying is key to evaluating the argument.

It is important to note that the *Confession* describes the whole of the judicial law as expired. The judicial law was intended for that era of redemptive history when the church was a geo-political entity, a "body politic." When the geographic boundaries and geo-political constitution of the church were ended by the coming of Christ, the church ceased to be a "body politic," and the judicial laws relating to the political governance of Israel as a nation expired.

The basic assertion of *WCF* 19.4 is categorical and unqualified. Not a single part of the judicial law survived the covenantal transition from Moses to Christ. This is important because the concept of general equity is often expressed as though it were an exception to the stipulation of expiration. It is not. The judicial laws of Israel oblige none.<sup>41</sup> Only the moral law continues, and that is where

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40 *WCF* 19.4

41 The teaching of *Westminster Confession of Faith* 19.4 stands firmly opposed to all species of the Theonomic error. This is despite Theonomists' consistent effort to argue that their view is, in fact, the view of *WCF* 19.4. *Pace* this contention, cf. Sinclair Ferguson, "An Assembly of Theonomists? The Teaching of the Westminster Divines on the Law of God," in *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*, ed. William S. Barker and W. Robert Godfrey

general equity enters into the discussion.

If the judicial law has expired, does it have any relevance for the new covenant church? It surely does have relevance, for the judicial law of any nation is the application of the moral law to a particular time, place, and people.<sup>42</sup> How much more the body politic of Israel, whose judicial laws came to them through direct inspiration of the Spirit! The judicial law of Israel, unlike that of other nations, is an inerrant application of the moral law of God to the unique milieu of Israel as an ancient Near Eastern body politic; the one time in human history when a nation's laws were delivered by the mouth of God.

The abiding validity of the Old Testament case law, then, does not lie in its particular statutory form, but only in the specific aspects of the moral law of which the particular judicial code was meant to be a temporary expression suited to a cultural, political context.<sup>43</sup> One of the Scottish Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly, Samuel Rutherford, wrote:

"It is true, Christ hath not said in particular, I abolish the debarring of the leper seven dayes, and he that is thus and thus unclean shall be separated till the evening; nor hath he said particularly of every carnall Ordinance and judiciall Law, it is abolished. But we conceive, the whole bulk of the judiciall Law, as judiciall, and as it concerned the Republick of the lews only, is abolished, though the morall equity of all those be not abolished."<sup>44</sup>

It is significant to note that, for Rutherford, general equity is synonymous with "moral equity." The root of the judicial law in the moral law remains. The form of the judicial law, pertaining to "the Republic of the Jews only," has expired ("is abolished"). General equity is, therefore, a specific and delimited concept that refers the new covenant church to the abiding validity of the moral law standing beneath the temporary judicial legislature of Israel as a body politic.

In other words, general equity is not some vague, nebulous concept that exists somehow "in addition" to the abiding validity of the moral law. It is not a

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(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 315-349.

42 Hence, the shift from the more forceful and definitive language of "abrogation" with respect to the ceremonial law, to the softer language of "expired" with respect to the judicial; owing to the organic connection between the judicial and the moral law. The moral law, of course, remains in force.

43 To give one clear and concrete example: does the Mosaic prohibition against bestiality (cf. Lev. 20:15-16; Deut. 27:21) remain in force in the new covenant? Yes, to be sure; but not on account of the particular form of the judicial code, but on account of the abiding condemnation of this sin by the moral law.

44 Samuel Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication* (London: John Field, 1646), chapter 22, question 18.

Trojan horse by which to import whatever feature of the Mosaic judicial law we happen to like into the new covenant. Neither is it some quasi-gnostic mode by which a “hidden” or “deeper” explanation of God’s commandments can be attained by a hyper-spiritual perception. General equity expresses the specific aspects of the moral law that constitute the fundamental animating force beneath a particular judicial code.

Applying this to Exodus 21:7-11, we can ask: do these verses fall within the genus of those “sundry judicial laws” which expired with the political constitution of God’s ancient church? A brief look at the proof texts for *WCF* 19.4 answers the question. As an example of those sundry laws, now expired, the *Confession* simply cites the entirety of Exodus 21. For clarity on this point, David Dickson, one of the early commentators (early 1650s) on the *Confession*, writes: “Do they [the sundry judicial lawes] oblige any other now, further than the general Equity thereof may require? No; Exodus 21, from the first to the last Verse.”<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, one cannot argue the principle of general equity on the basis of the judicial expression of the Mosaic code, which has altogether expired. Also, one cannot argue for the principle of general equity on the mere assertion of a logical argument from the lesser to the greater, as though the moral law of God were constituted on the basis of the powers of human rationality.<sup>46</sup> One can only argue the principle of general equity on the basis of an abiding principle from within the moral law, standing beneath the temporary form of the judicial code.

With regard to Exodus 21 and the new covenant understanding of desertion, does such an abiding principle exist? To evaluate this question further, we turn back to Matthew 19 and the teaching of our Savior on the subject of divorce.

### **General Equity, Divorce, and Matthew 19**

Jesus fulfills three offices: prophet, priest, and king.<sup>47</sup> The Larger Catechism describes Jesus’ office of prophet in this manner: “Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.”<sup>48</sup> During his earthly ministry, as the final prophet,<sup>49</sup>

45 David Dickson, *Truth’s Victory Over Error: A Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2007).

46 This is to be distinguished from good and necessary consequence (*WCF* 1.6), which is no mere assertion, but a necessary deduction demanded from the text of Holy Scripture. The application of Exodus 21 to the new covenant subject of desertion, while failing the logical argument a *minore ad maius*, also cannot be argued from the biblical principle of good and necessary consequence.

47 *WCF* 8.1.

48 *Larger Catechism* 43.

49 Hebrews 1:1-2.

Jesus repeatedly faced one particular challenge. The man-made traditions of the Jews obscured the true meaning and force of the law of God.<sup>50</sup> Again and again, Jesus exercised his messianic authority as our “last days” prophet to clear away the novel elements of human tradition that had been added to God’s Word, in order to re-establish the spiritual clarity and rigor of God’s moral law.

This messianic authority is most clearly seen in the “but I say to you” assertions of our Lord. Whether it is with reference to the Ten Commandments (Matt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44), Old Testament messianic prophecy (Matt. 17:12), or the coordination of the creation ordinances, the moral law, and the Mosaic judicial code (Matt. 19:9), Jesus zealously asserted the messianic authority of his prophetic office to make known “the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.” Certain Pharisaical traditions had softened, relaxed, or otherwise reinterpreted God’s moral law—no small matter, as Jesus knew, better than anyone. Adding to God’s commandments puts one in immediate peril of idolatry. As Jesus himself said to the Pharisees, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying...in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:7, 9)

Determining the true general equity of the Mosaic judicial code is not always a simple task. At this point in our consideration, we note the cardinal importance of another hermeneutical principle laid down in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. In chapter one, paragraph nine, the *Confession* states:

The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.<sup>51</sup>

When Jesus, as the final prophet of God and the Son through whom God delivers his last-days revelation, says, “but I say to you,” this is the epitome of the “more clear.” Here Jesus decisively exercises his messianic prerogative to bring clarity to the interpretation of God’s Word, where the traditions of men have obscured it.

To understand how this applies to our discussion of Exodus 21, and any interpretation of Old Testament case law that might be considered relevant to the subject of Biblical divorce, we now return briefly to the passage considered more extensively in the first part of our paper, Matthew 19. In verse 3, the Pharisees’ “test” involves an invocation of Old Testament case law regarding divorce. They have their own sense of the “general equity” of the Mosaic judicial code that allows them to expand the grounds for divorce to the nth degree! And it is of great significance, as we saw in the earlier section, that Jesus does not

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50 Cf. Matthew 15:1-9.

51 WCF 1.9.

simply take the Pharisees back to the giving of the law at Sinai, but back to the creation order itself. The Pharisees think that they have “got him.” Their test has worked this time: “Why then did Moses...?” The Pharisees think that they have finally tripped up Jesus, putting him at odds with the law of Moses.

The Pharisees, of course, have not “got him.” Jesus is not at odds with the law of Moses. But neither is the law of Moses at odds with Jesus’ declaration concerning the creation ordinance of marriage. Something else is going on entirely. In accord with his messianic authority to interpret God’s Word, as himself the Word Incarnate, Jesus tells the Pharisees that it was a unique, redemptive-historical concern that led to temporary divine tolerance of a more expansive understanding of the grounds of divorce; namely, “the hardness of your hearts.”

“Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.”<sup>52</sup> Jesus is not referring to the general hardness that characterizes the fallen and sinful human nature in its posture toward God and his Word; this is not a broad reference to what Paul calls “the flesh.” This is the hardness that characterized the administration of the Covenant of Grace in the time of the law. As our *Confession* puts it, under the Gospel, the Covenant of Grace is held forth in more “spiritual efficacy.”<sup>53</sup> The divorce legislation in passages like Deuteronomy 24 pertained uniquely to the covenantal epoch prior to this boon of spiritual efficacy in the new covenant. The Mosaic code permitted a more expansive allowance of divorce only for a church “under age.”

Jesus knows (again, better than all) that his arrival marks the church’s redemptive historical “coming of age.” The greater spiritual efficacy of the new covenant involves the new heart (Jer. 31:31-33; Eze. 36:26-27) that he gives to his people by the power of his Spirit. As specified in the previous section, Jesus came to do what Moses could never accomplish. The “hardness of heart” that characterized the time of the law now gives way to Christ, the substance, and to the revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven. And so, with all the clarity and force of his messianic authority, Jesus concludes in Matthew 19: “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” Any allowance for divorce beyond the sole ground of sexual immorality traces back to the redemptive-historical hardness of heart that characterized a church “under age.” The disciples understand Jesus exactly, which is why they respond thus: “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” At this point, the disciples themselves still stand, covenantally, in need of the ascension of Christ and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, for the com-

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52 Matthew 19:8.

53 WCF 7.6.

pleted inauguration of the new covenant.

The protection of the female slave given in Exodus 21:7-11 is a hallmark example of both the “hardness of heart” that Jesus references in Matthew 19 and the “sundry Judicial laws” of *WCF* 19.4, that have expired with the age of the Gospel. Those verses pertain to slavery and concubinage, two institutions common to the ancient Near Eastern context which Israel inhabited and which the Mosaic judicial code sought to regulate and ameliorate. Jesus does not employ a labyrinthine casuistry in order to incorporate such Old Testament case law into a more expansive view of the grounds of divorce in the new covenant. He simply sweeps it away.

The conclusion of this section of the paper is that on the basis of both Jesus’ magisterial teaching on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19 and on the *Westminster Confession of Faith’s* consideration of general equity, Exodus 21 cannot legitimately be applied to new covenant teaching on desertion, or on divorce more broadly. Employing Exodus 21 to enlarge the definition of desertion is only a sophisticated version of “But Moses...?” The church must beware of that corruption of man “such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage” (*WCF* 24.6). To avoid these pitfalls, we bow before the prophetic authority of God’s Son.

We must not approach Jesus’ teaching on divorce with our own preconceived framework of thought regarding Old Testament case law. It is Jesus himself who gives us the hermeneutic necessary to build such a framework. Jesus tells us the true meaning and force of Old Testament teaching, not the other way around. We do not read our Old Testaments *de novo*, and come to Jesus’ teaching only after we have formulated our own hermeneutical frameworks. We sit at the feet of the Messiah and humbly receive and submit to his authority, asking that his Spirit may illumine our darkness so that our hearts may burn within us.

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#### **4 The Relationship of the Teachings of Jesus and Paul on Divorce (1 Cor. 7)**

Having described the hermeneutical and theological foundations for understanding divorce in Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19, and having rejected any attempt to alter that teaching by an appeal to the general equity of the law, we turn now to 1 Corinthians 7. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* gives the sufficient causes for divorce as follows:

6. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage; wherein, a public and orderly

course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion, in their own case. Matt. 19:8-9; 1 Cor. 7:15; Matt. 19:6; Deut. 24:1-4.<sup>54</sup>

The *Confession* references both Christ and Paul to support its claim. Often adultery and desertion are considered to be two separate grounds for divorce—Paul simply adds a ground which Jesus omitted. But such reasoning invites the question, “Why did Jesus give only one ground for divorce?” Jesus surely knew that Paul would add a second. Moreover, could other grounds be added?

Our Lord gave one ground for divorce; his apostle built on his teaching, noting that there are some unbiblical situations that result in a *de facto* divorce by the desertion of an unbelieving spouse. Both Jesus, as prophet, priest and king, and Paul, as apostle, addressed this subject. We should not expect therefore to find other grounds for divorce, nor should we seek to establish any. Nevertheless, some expand the definition of desertion to include abuse or dereliction of duty. In doing so, they sanction grounds for divorce never intended by the Lord or his apostle. Notice the strength of the language in the *Confession*: not merely “desertion,” but rather “such wilful desertion as can in no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate.”

### **Jesus’ Teaching on Divorce**

The teaching of Jesus on divorce is found in Matthew 5:27-32, especially verse 32; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18. A close examination of Matthew 19 has already been presented. Matthew 5 is part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Mark 10, like Matthew 19, reports Jesus’ response to a question from the Pharisees, attempting to trip him up in something he might say. In Luke 16:18, Jesus addresses Pharisees who mock him, rebuking them and correcting their attitudes and actions. In Matthew 5:32 Jesus states that divorcing one’s wife causes her to commit adultery; in the remaining three passages, he adds the phrase “and marries another.” By allowing only a single ground, Jesus disallows all other grounds for pursuing a divorce.

Notice also that in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was not legislating a criminal code that could be enforced in church discipline. If that had been his purpose, there should be many in the church today wearing patches over their right eye sockets and having their right arms ending at their wrists. Jesus’ declaration that one who lusts in his heart for a woman has committed adultery does not give his wife permission to divorce her husband on the grounds of sexual immorality. The one ground for divorce countenanced by Jesus, and assumed by Paul, is physical sexual immorality. And as we recognize that non-

<sup>54</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 24, Paragraph 6



physical sexual immorality does not provide grounds for divorce, we recognize also that non-physical desertion does not provide such grounds.

It is important to recognize that the contexts of the statements made by Jesus and Paul differed, affecting what each of them said. Jesus was responding to a specific question from Pharisees who lived under the old covenant. Israelites were permitted to marry Israelites only—Israelites by birth,<sup>55</sup> virgins taken in war and cleansed to become Israelites,<sup>56</sup> or non-Israelites who by profession of faith in Israel's God had become Israelites.<sup>57</sup> This call to marital purity was ignored by many of the returning exiles, to great hurt.<sup>58</sup>

Under the new covenant Christ no longer requires the divorce of "non-Israelite" spouses. In dismissing the old covenant divorces, which were rooted in hardness of heart,<sup>59</sup> Jesus disallows being unequally yoked as grounds for divorce. Paul assumes and employs this teaching when he urges believers to remain with unbelieving spouses. Jesus and Paul are united in dismissing unbelief and its accompanying hardships as grounds for divorce.

The eschatological shift that Jesus brought about gives believers good grounds for remaining married to unbelievers, the very point on which Paul will build his reasoning in 1 Corinthians 7. Moreover, this same point necessitates understanding Paul's statement about desertion as permanent, physical departure. To see this we must examine how Paul's teaching grows organically from Jesus'.

### **Paul's Teaching on Divorce**

After the cross, when Jesus had instituted the new covenant, many changes took place. As the law with its types and shadows came through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.<sup>60</sup> The Mosaic sacrifices never removed sin, but Jesus the true Lamb of God actually took away the sin of the world.<sup>61</sup> Worship now takes place not in the types and shadows of Jerusalem, but through Christ in the true tabernacle in the heavens, as he told the woman at the well.<sup>62</sup>

55 See Exodus 34:16 and 1 Kings 11:2.

56 See Deuteronomy 21:10-13.

57 Rahab (Joshua 2:11) and Ruth (1:16) are prime examples.

58 Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13.

59 Often this phrase is taken to refer to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, but other passages could be referenced as well. For example, Exodus 21:10 is cited by Jay Adams (*The Christian Counselor's Commentary: I & II Corinthians*, p.50 [Timeless Texts, Hackettstown, NJ], 1994) and others as showing us the basic duties of a husband. Adams then goes on to say that if these duties are not performed, the wife has the option of divorcing her husband. But this reference is to a polygamous man who has not been caring for his first wife—a prime example of one who has displayed a hardened heart rather than pointing to duties that if neglected could provide grounds for divorce. Jesus clearly states in Matthew 19:2-10 that the only ground for divorce is sexual immorality.

60 John 1:17.

61 John 1:29.

62 John 4:24.

Likewise, Jesus restores to us God's purpose for marriage, and since he joins a man and a woman in a marriage, only he may dissolve it. Thus, Christian marriage must always include the commitment "till death do us part." Moreover, under the new covenant, Christians are taught to marry only Christians<sup>63</sup> and to remain morally upright. But since we live in a fallen world where temptations abound, there will surely be marriages among God's people where immorality and unequal yoking exist. How should the church handle them?

Paul was aware of such sins, and the Gentile church in Corinth faced many such trials. The members wrote to Paul about some of these issues. In his response in 1 Corinthians, Paul addressed a serious moral issue among them. There was a man who was sexually involved with a wife of his father—a gross perversion that even the unbelieving world would not tolerate. Under the old covenant, such a case would have required stoning.<sup>64</sup> But under the new covenant, Paul insisted that the Corinthians carry out proper church discipline, through which the offender would be delivered "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of salvation."<sup>65</sup> The Corinthians applied this discipline, and the man repented and was restored.<sup>66</sup> Paul then reminded them that there were among them those who had been cleansed by Christ from all kinds of sinful living.<sup>67</sup> They too had deserved the treatment that would have been given to the man who had sinned so grossly: under the old covenant, stoning. But, under the new covenant, they are subject to church discipline. Having repented of their sins, they should use their bodies no longer for sexual immorality but for the Lord.<sup>68</sup> Church discipline then is a much neglected but Jesus-directed instrument for healing broken marriages and lives.

After this, Paul replied, in chapter 7, to the first in a series of "now concerning" matters which the Corinthian church had addressed to him. Many of these "now concerning" issues pertained to the new way of life in Christ. We are not told the specific questions they asked Paul, but we can get a good idea of their concerns from the way Paul responded to them. The first question was clearly about marriage. His response took them back to the creation ordinance which he had just mentioned in 6:16, while making no reference to Deuteronomy 24 or Exodus 21. Following Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19, Paul considered Moses' concession abrogated and the original creation ordinance renewed. Paul built his argument on Jesus' teaching.

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63 See 1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14

64 Leviticus 20:10.

65 1 Corinthians 5:5.

66 2 Corinthians 1:6-8

67 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

68 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

Paul first addressed some responsibilities of husbands and wives and gave counsel to the unmarried, including widows. Then in verses 10-16, he gave instruction to believers married to unbelievers who were experiencing consequent marriage difficulties, situations which did not involve adultery on the part of either spouse. His instructions, given as Christ's apostle, interpreted what is recorded for us in the Gospel accounts. Thus, when Paul wrote, "I, not the Lord, say," he was noting that he was not quoting Jesus, but authoritatively applying the words of Christ our prophet, priest and king.<sup>69</sup> Paul built his instructions on Jesus' instructions.

In verses 10-11, Paul addressed the situation in which both spouses were members of the covenant community, situations similar to those Jesus was addressing when queried by the Pharisees. By noting that Christ had spoken on the issue, Paul reinforced and reapplied the teaching of Christ. It is significant that in these verses Paul made no mention of sexual immorality which was already condemned, but merely referred to the Lord's clear instructions forbidding believers to desert a marriage. Concerning the members of the new covenant community, Paul said a separation should not take place between believers; neither spouse has legitimate grounds to divorce the other. If one does leave, that person must remain unmarried or be reconciled to his or her spouse. Desertion is not an option for a believer in Jesus' teaching or Paul's.<sup>70</sup>

In the Corinthian church, there were also believers married to unbelievers. Perhaps, after coming to faith in Christ, some had sinfully married unbelievers; but it is much more likely that a person had married in his or her unbelief, then believed the Gospel while his or her partner remained in unbelief. In such a situation, there could be serious stress in the marriage, and the believer might wonder what to do. The believing spouse could see that under the old covenant divorce was at least tolerated if not directed by the Lord. Specifically, he or she could read of the returning exiles in Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13 who had married women of other nations and were required to divorce their non-

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69 Rich Ganz is very helpful here. In *20 Controversies That Almost Killed a Church*, p. 117, he wrote, "Paul's seeming hesitation is a mark not of his limitation but of his office as an apostle. He demonstrated that in four places in this chapter: 'Not I, but the Lord' (v. 10), 'I say, not the Lord' v. 12, 'I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment' (v. 25), 'In my judgment, . . . and I think too that I have the Spirit of God' (v. 40). What he was saying in these four places was not 'I am about to give you uninspired opinion.' Not at all! What he was saying in verse 10, for example is that the directive is not his but the Lord's. For example, the Lord himself gave this instruction in Mark, 'What God has joined together let not man separate (Mark 10:9), and in verse 12 Paul was elucidating on what the Lord had said. The specifics of what the Spirit of God was giving Paul were not found in any of the Gospels, because they were a further application of old principles."

70 In some cases, the presence of violence in the home requires a physical departure to keep the sixth commandment.

Israelite wives.<sup>71</sup> So, the Corinthians might wonder about the severe limitation the Lord placed on divorce: only for sexual immorality. Remembering what was done by the returning exiles, they understandably might have asked, "If a believer is not to marry an unbeliever and the returned exiles were required to divorce their non-Israelite wives, should a believer divorce the unbeliever to whom he or she is already married, since they are not united to each other in God's covenant? Does the divorce among the returning exiles have a general equity application among them?" Paul answers this question directly.

Paul insists that believers ought not to divorce the unbeliever, as "the general equity of the law" might suggest or even require. Why is this? It is because the situation for the Corinthians in the new covenant is different from that of the returning exiles under the old covenant. The Mosaic concession to hardened hearts has been removed. Instead, if the unbelieving spouse is willing to remain in the marriage, there should be no divorce. Jesus might provide a new heart.<sup>72</sup> But if the unbelieving partner departs, the believing partner is not to hold on to the marriage at all costs, but is to let the spouse go. Notice that in these instructions the believing partner is never given the right to initiate the breakup of a marriage, only to accede to the unbelieving spouse's actions in the matter.<sup>73</sup> According to Christ, instigating a divorce and marrying another forces an adulterous situation on the partners.

Paul's teaching on divorce neither contradicts nor adds to Jesus'. Both acknowledge only one ground for divorce: sexual immorality. But Paul, by virtue of his apostolic authority ("I not the Lord"), extends Jesus' principles to the unequally yoked marriage. As Jesus originally asserted, unbelief and hard hearts are no longer grounds for divorce. But, if an unbeliever refuses to remain with a believer, that believer is not "enslaved," but "called to peace."<sup>74</sup> The believer should let the unbeliever separate.

### **Conclusion: the Blessing of Covenantal Sanctification**

Paul was not satisfied merely to tell the Corinthians how the Lord would have them address the subject of divorce when there has not been adultery. He further added an encouragement to them: there is a blessing or benefit from remaining in a marriage with an unbeliever. People who are dear to these believers would have the benefit of a righteous life in their midst which would have a sanctifying effect on them, perhaps even to their salvation.

Consider the soliloquy of our Lord as He prepared to address Abraham in Genesis 18:19: "I have known him, in order that he may command his children

<sup>71</sup> See Ezra 10:3 and Nehemiah 13:3.

<sup>72</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:16.

<sup>73</sup> Initiating legal proceedings may be a justifiable response to a willful, irremediable desertion.

<sup>74</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:15.

and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice.” In the previous chapter, Abraham, at the Lord’s command, had given to all the men of his household the sign of the covenant; and from an earlier chapter we know he had at least 318 men in his household at one time.<sup>75</sup> By his walk with the Lord, Abraham had a sanctifying influence on his whole household.

A believer in a household brings Christ into that household by living in a godly manner. Peter wrote that a godly wife by her conduct may be used by God to bring an unbelieving husband to trust in Christ.<sup>76</sup> It is her duty to live in this way whether her family comes to faith in Christ or not. On the day of Pentecost, Peter had said to God’s covenant people that God’s promise is for them and their children.<sup>77</sup> Believing spouses will keep the Word of God in the home and that Word transforms lives.<sup>78</sup> If Christians abandon marriages merely because their spouses are unbelievers, those Christians would surely be sinning grievously against their spouses and against the children of their marriages.

Paul is in lock-step with Jesus on the biblical grounds for divorce; there is only one ground, and it is sexual immorality. The only other divorce that God will tolerate among his people is one in which an unbelieving spouse willfully and irremediably deserts a believer. In this case the civil act of divorce is a recognition of a *fait accompli*, a division of the marriage that the believing spouse did not seek and cannot help. We who have believed in Christ have received much from him and we ought to anticipate that he will do much for our families when we remain faithful to him, even when it is difficult because of the sorrows that might be brought on by an unbelieving spouse. At the same time, the church must be ready to act using its shepherding duties to care for an abused spouse and to deal with a spouse who claims to trust in Christ but whose actions indicate otherwise. We must not add to the grounds for divorce given by Christ, the Lord of the church, whether by making new ones or expanding what he has given beyond his intended limits. We must instead take seriously the difficulties of marriage and address them biblically. To that end, we now consider some pastoral concerns.

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## **Appendix A: Applications and Pastoral Concerns**

### **Introduction: The Importance of Pastoral Care**

Having argued that Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19 will not permit any other interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7 regarding desertion beyond willful, ir-

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75 Genesis 14:14.

76 1 Peter 3:1-2 or consider Acts 16:14-15, 31-34.

77 Acts 2:39.

78 1 Peter 1:23.

remediable physical departure, and having rejected an appeal to the general equity of the law on that question, it is now imperative to consider how to proceed. Without divorce as a “solution” for so many difficult situations, other approaches must be taken. First, proactive pastoral efforts must be made to ensure that marriage is “held in honor among all.”<sup>79</sup> Second, pastoral responses must employ the powerful instruments of grace, particularly church discipline and personal discipleship, to overcome those evils which tempt members toward unbiblical divorce, which can seem like a safe way out.

Exegetical, historical, and theological reflection on divorce must inform, direct and motivate pastoral application. One excellent summary of the work of pastoral care is provided to us in Ezekiel 34. In this chapter, the Lord expresses his deep disapproval of the “shepherds of Israel,” and in verse 16 he personally promises to become the shepherd that his people need: “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment.”<sup>80</sup> This summarizes the role of the shepherd in addressing the many crises in which sheep find themselves. Some have strayed and need to be sought. Some have been scattered by attack (or fear), and need to be gathered. Others are damaged and need the acute care of emergency help (the broken) or the long-term restoration of preaching and discipleship (the sick). Yet others are not victims at all but perpetrators and need to be “fed with judgment.” There are more positive tasks, of course: feeding the sheep with the Word and sacrament. But when we speak of “pastoral care,” we often mean the reactive or responsive care described in Ezekiel. That is often the case when we talk about pastoral care in the context of marriage troubles and possible divorce.

Addressing a problem does not always mean “fixing it.” In no case does it mean that we can turn back the clock or truly help a congregant make a complete “fresh start.” Every believer will carry scars, physical and/or emotional, to the grave. The new beginning that we seek will happen only at the general resurrection that we preach week by week. That reality helps us realize the limits of our pastoral care, counsel, and discipleship. We cannot erase or reverse trauma. At times we are called simply to weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15) and to pray.

Nevertheless the comfort of the gospel and counsel that we provide can lead our sheep through their confusion and distress toward obedience and bring substantial healing. Of course, it is the Lord who truly heals, who wipes away tears.

Divorce can seem like a “clean break” (though it seldom is). Sometimes amputation is the right way of treating an infection, but very rarely. Divorce is an

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79 Hebrews 13:4.

80 Ezekiel 34:16, NASB.

extreme solution that causes a host of new problems. No one in the Reformed Christian world is happy to see divorce proliferate, and loosening the standard for divorce will inevitably have that result, in a society with few traditional barriers to divorce (cultural or economic). Far better for the church to use the ordinance of discipline and the great labor of discipleship to address situations that the world would hastily answer with divorce, and seek to prevent their happening in the first place. In many troubled marriages, divorce may seem like a good option, but where Scripture gives us no warrant to divorce, discipline and discipleship must be applied generously and robustly.

### **Mistaken Compassion and its Roots**

Evangelical Christians often assume that in order to have a healthy Christian life, you must be happily married. Marriage is not just celebrated in Evangelical churches; it almost seems to be required. We find very few unmarried men in the pastorate, a contrast to the post-apostolic early church, in which most leaders and teachers of the faith were unmarried or widowed. Some of this emphasis on marriage is a reaction to the Roman Catholic requirement of clerical celibacy. But, somewhat unexpectedly, it may also be tied indirectly to the Sexual Revolution of the 20th century. While we disagree with Sigmund Freud that sexuality is the soul of human beings, we seem to agree with him that a fulfilling sexual relationship is indispensable if adult humans are to flourish.<sup>81</sup> For that reason, telling people that they must stay in a dysfunctional marriage, or that they may not remarry after divorce, appears to be dooming them to a life of misery.

An additional factor is the American love of “starting over.” The *Little House* books and TV series follow a pioneer family, led by restless Pa Ingalls, who perennially pick up stakes and move to new and (mostly) unoccupied territory. “Blended” families star in the 1960s sitcom *The Brady Bunch* and the 1990s follow-up *Step by Step*. Starting over, whether by moving or by remarrying, seems to be not only an ever-present option, but a right.

But what if God calls people in a difficult life situation to stay right where they are? The apostle famously prayed three times that the Lord would remove an unnamed affliction, but was told, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”<sup>82</sup> The important thing is not how difficult our circumstances are; it is how we respond to our circumstances. That is the drama that angels watch and our predecessors witness from the stands of heaven.<sup>83</sup>

In a troubled marriage, both spouses usually bear some blame, and both are called to repentance. This process can be slow and difficult. It may involve

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81 For more on our over-sexualized, Freudian culture, see Carl Trueman’s *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*.

82 2 Corinthians 12:9.

83 Hebrews 12:1.

separation, counseling, legal intervention, or other means. Often, one spouse or the other will want to quit (i.e., get a divorce) rather than persevere. But that rarely accords with the will of the Lord. The result is a damaged testimony to the Lord's power to restore, first to the divorced couple themselves, then to the church and their families, then to the world as a whole. We do not help those in damaged marriages when we endeavor to get them out of their hard situations. We help them best when we give them the tools to live and serve God faithfully in the context of their difficult circumstances.

We do this in cooperation with the civil magistrate, who is also regarded as a "shepherd" by Scripture. Yes, in some situations it is lawful to exit a marriage, and even to start over. But this is itself a loss and a tragedy. We do not exercise pastoral love when we create shortcuts to that loss and tragedy.<sup>84</sup>

### **Unintended Consequences**

Often, those who would widen the historically narrow standard for lawful divorce are particularly concerned for the plight of mistreated women. Women sometimes discover that the man they married is nothing like the one they thought they were marrying, or that he changes over time. He may be unkind, even vicious, in his words. He may beat his wife physically. He may be a slave to pornography and degrade her sexually. He may be a terrible provider. These are all appropriate concerns. As far as the laws and customs of the modern world go, there is little to prevent a woman from leaving such a lout, and even taking their children with her. She is free to get work to support herself and their children. She will not be forced into prostitution, as a divorced woman could be in a traditional culture. She will not even have a bad name in the eyes of many. It seems that only the laws of the church get in the way.

But does a generous interpretation of grounds for divorce actually help such women? Consider that what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. We live in a particular cultural moment, when the safety and happiness of women are on the minds of many, in and out of the church. What happens after the cultural moment ends, when a man contends that his wife is not meeting his sexual needs (or is demanding too much)? Or when a man won't seek work, and wants his wife to support him in this? Or when a man claims that his wife's nagging or unkindness constitutes emotional abuse? Can he not use a broadened definition of "abandonment" as grounds for divorce? Both Jesus and Paul teach that the husband and wife owe each other much, and that the causes

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84 William H. Chellis, an RPCNA minister and attorney-at-law in New York State, wisely comments: "As a churchman and a lawyer who has spent time in family courts, it is clear that exceptions must be exceptional. Exceptions must be narrowly tailored and must be handled with grace and administered with love. Our hearts' hardness always tempts the lawyer, the theologian, and the counselor to make the exceptions swallow the rules." (Private communication. February 22, 2021)



and consequences of divorce are the same for both (Mark 10:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-5). Not all cultures accept the modern categorization of men as demanding bullies and women as innocent victims; the ancient Hebrews didn't, Chaucer's England didn't, and modern Africans don't.

Churches are viewed by many in the modern Western world as bastions of patriarchy, full of abusive men and victimized women. But what happens if a culture shifts significantly toward patriarchy—and what of cultures that are already patriarchal? The same broad grounds for divorce that (at their best) help women escape oppression can be turned into tools for oppressing women. That was precisely the situation in Jesus' day.

The teaching of Christ on marriage is very demanding: strict monogamy, with little justification for divorce. We do not appreciate the depth and importance of this law as we should. Marriage holds the key to peace: between men and women, in society and in the world as a whole. In marriage, people who are fundamentally and irreducibly different (a man and a woman) reach out and take one another by the hand in trust. Marriage is the most vulnerable and intimate relationship human beings can have. The marriage relationship requires a cutting off of every other opportunity for sexual intimacy, and a commitment to the shared labor of raising children (when the Lord grants children). In each marriage, the shared project that Adam and Eve undertook is renewed. Allowing husbands and wives the option of exiting in any situation but outright sexual immorality undermines peace between men and women, and indeed the peace and wellbeing of the world. Allowing easy divorce undermines the importance of the family as a foundation of human society, something that we must testify to because few remember it today.

### **Clear Teaching on What Spouses Owe One Another**

Contrary to the beliefs of many in our society, the husband and wife are not the only ones with a vital interest in a marriage. Parents, extended families, the church, and society as a whole are stakeholders. The church needs to enhance our cultural understanding of marriage and human nature, both by reminding these stakeholders of truths common to human experience, and by preaching divine virtue and grace. The primary tool of pastoral care in any church is the faithful teaching of the Word of God. Nowhere is this more important than in equipping the flock to be married and support one another in their marriages.

Pastors must preach regularly and frankly about what spouses owe one another, especially about those aspects of marriage that have generally been common to every culture and religion. Spouses owe one another fidelity, sexual intimacy, and children (if physically possible). They also include aspects that are historically well-known but widely denied in our culture. Husbands have a particular responsibility to provide for the support of the family. Wives have

a particular responsibility to see to the care of young children and the distribution of goods. Husbands and wives are to have their money and goods in common, not hoarding or hiding them from one another. Public instruction on marriage is key for healthy marriages.

Furthermore, Christian couples must be encouraged to practice their faith within their marriages, which means forgiving one another and repenting of sin to one another. It means practicing Christ-like patience. It also means acting wisely and kindly, and genuinely caring about the spiritual good of one another and the family as a whole. It means honesty with one another and a wholehearted commitment to keeping marriage vows. "He who does these things shall never be moved."<sup>85</sup> The first best defense against unbiblical divorce is promulgating, in word and deed, the biblical teaching on marriage.

### **Support for the Struggling and the Separated**

If churches are to maintain Jesus' high standards concerning divorce and remarriage, they must provide support and encouragement for couples who are having problems. A culture of easy divorce (outside of the church) incentivizes dealing with conflict privately, and bringing it into public only when it has become catastrophic. Despite a widespread culture of oversharing, people are very reluctant to tell their fellow Christians about the arguments, sexual problems, addictions, or financial mistakes that are tearing their homes apart. Twelve-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous provide safe and supportive places to acknowledge sin, but churches are usually places where people hide their sin. They are often communities where the strong please themselves, and the weak get no help.<sup>86</sup> This should not be. Far better for struggling Christians in general, and struggling couples in particular, to build a culture of openness about their problems. At least two ways of doing this present themselves.

First, pastors must be honest in their preaching, especially about marriage. Presenting a picture of marriage as an earthly paradise, and of their own marriages as nonstop happiness, is unhelpful at best and at worst sets stumbling blocks in front of others. Better to be up front about how difficult marriage can be—how difficult it usually is, especially compared to worldly singleness! This does not have to be public confession time for the pastor himself. The Word of God has plenty to say about the difficulty of marriage between two sinners. And at the same time, marriage and family must be presented as what they are, by God's grace: a key to peace between men and women. The Lord was so direct about the high calling within marriage that his disciples cried out, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry!"<sup>87</sup> Yet this same

85 Psalm 15:5.

86 Romans 15:1.

87 Matthew 19:10.

Lord put man and woman together and made them one, “with a portion of the Spirit in their union.”<sup>88</sup>

Second, sessions can cultivate, by their example and teaching, a culture of considered public confession of sin. Elders use the keys of the church on behalf of the church, but they are still the church’s keys.<sup>89</sup> In our effort to guard privacy we sometimes forget that people must be welcomed by the church, treated as an outsider by the church,<sup>90</sup> and forgiven by the church.<sup>91</sup> Not all sin needs to be confessed publicly, but some should be, public sins in particular.

For example, in one church, a married couple from a traditional culture were separated when, after years of the husband’s drinking heavily, squandering the family money, and sometimes beating her, the wife took their children and moved out. She did not file for divorce and had no notion of doing so. The husband was distraught, quit drinking entirely, and after some months of living apart asked the elders of the church if he could publicly confess sin before the church. Using a translated statement he had prepared with the pastor’s help, he confessed his wrongdoing before God and the church, and asked his wife’s, the congregation’s, and the Lord’s pardon. This he received, not only from his wife and the pastor, but from the whole congregation, who processed forward to offer him the right hand of fellowship. Similar public confession and restoration by the whole church was traditional in 16th-18th century Reformed churches, both in Scotland and the American colonies.<sup>92</sup> Such public repentance can and should be a feature of church life, just as are our membership vows.

In addition to building a culture of openness and honest confession, churches should create structures of support for those who are separated due to marital strife, abuse, or incarceration.<sup>93</sup> This could include financial help and childcare as well as marriage counseling. Deacons should prayerfully and wisely construct ministries of mercy for those experiencing difficulties in their marriage. Elders should shepherd saints into fulfilling their marital responsibilities. Members should support and encourage one another, even holding each other accountable, in keeping their marriage vows. Churches should cultivate a culture of honesty in which struggling marriages can be quickly spotted, responding quickly to shore up those marriages with oversight, service, and friendship.

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88 Malachi 2:15.

89 *Testimony* 25:6, 7.

90 Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.

91 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1.

92 cf. *Margo Todd: The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2013).

93 This list should also include separation because of abandonment or infidelity—these sins can be repented of and overcome as can less extreme ones.

### Church Involvement in Engagements

It may or may not take a village to raise a child; it certainly takes a community to support a healthy marriage. In the case of men and women from strong, healthy Christian families, parents and other kin often provide all or nearly all the necessary support. We may take this support for granted when we think of people getting engaged and marrying, but we should not. If the church is to be successful in welcoming and integrating refugees from the Sexual Revolution—people from broken homes, the children of divorce, those bearing the scars of sexual immorality or abuse—we must provide the framework needed for starting and strengthening new homes. Churches must develop life-long discipleship for healthy marriages.

Family expectations and input are communicated and enforced before marriage—with and without words. Christian children learn from their parents' example and instruction where to find a spouse, as well as what to look for in a spouse. But not every believer has good instruction or examples in his or her family, and churches owe it to their members to provide help in the process of preparing for marriage and (often) in finding a spouse. Young Christians seeking spouses may need discipleship in identifying a godly partner and initiating a relationship.

For centuries the Roman Catholic Church went so far as to require permission from both parties' families before a couple could marry,<sup>94</sup> an understandable, if extreme, standard to maintain. If both families were not happy with the marriage, friction between the families could follow the marriage. Further, if trouble arose within the new household, the couple would need support and encouragement from their families to persevere instead of running away. This Roman Catholic requirement cannot be mandated from Scripture, but parental involvement and consent (particularly for a young couple) is important. If one or both families has an objection to the match, that objection should be taken seriously by the church before a wedding takes place. Far better to make marriage difficult to enter, as well as to leave, than to make it easy both to enter and to leave.

The church should be more involved in the processes of betrothal than it usually is today. Wise older women, as well as elders, should be consulted, and their blessing sought. In strong Christian families there may be less need for such involvement, but the church should be concerned for the weak and the young, as well as for the strong. One way or another, we must also develop a culture in our churches such that godly matchmaking is recognized as helpful. The mediation of social relationships through the internet has substantially reduced the kind of informal, in-person acquaintance that can lead to marriage. Today, many marriag-

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94 See John Witte, Jr. *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*, second edition. KY: Westminster John Knox Press. 2012.

es take place either between people from the same tight-knit community (the RPCNA is a good example of this!) or between people who met through a dating website or app (which also happens in the RPCNA). This places us in a fragile situation, far too much at the mercy of algorithms and corporations that are interested in financial profit rather than the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

### **Addressing Marriages in Crisis**

While people who were raised in believing households may have seen healthy marriage modeled for them, not all have, and we certainly should not assume that men and women coming from outside the household of faith know how to handle conflict or even carry out many of the basic tasks of family life. Paul writes that young women need to be taught "to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands."<sup>95</sup> These things do not come naturally to young wives, just as Christ-like, sacrificial love does not come naturally to young husbands. Before and after marriage, the importance of wise and patient older sisters teaching younger sisters to live peaceably with their husbands cannot be overstated. Given the framing of the book of Proverbs ("my son, listen"), the same must be said for men. Healthy marriages depend on good discipleship.

Churches dedicated to preventing marriage crises, and equipped to do so by their pastors and teachers, can make great strides in this direction. But people will still sin, and marriages will still hit rocks. Discipleship can do a lot for building a culture of healthy marriage, but inevitably church discipline will be needed. Below are some common scenarios and brief notes on how to address them in such a way that the dominical teaching on marriage and divorce is respected.

**Scenario 1:** The husband and wife are both members of the church. He decides that he no longer wants to be in the marriage and leaves their home. The elders must intervene in this. If the husband is recalcitrant, church discipline is appropriate. The spouse that has abandoned the other is on a road either to repentance and reconciliation or to excommunication. If he won't return, he should be excommunicated and considered to be an unbeliever who has deserted his wife. She is free to sue for divorce, although she should not initiate until it is certain that he has no intention of returning.

**Scenario 2:** An unbelieving wife deprives her husband of conjugal rights but does not leave their domicile. Certainly, she is sinning against her husband and damaging their relationship, but this does not mean that divorce is permitted. This is an opportunity for the believing husband to provide a sanctifying influence on his wife and any children they may have—while pursuing marriage counseling and anything else that can be done to mend their relationship.

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95 Titus 2:4-5.

**Scenario 3:** An unbelieving husband is feckless and a substance abuser. He does not provide for the needs of his family, though he consents to live with his wife. As she belongs to the community of the church and is under its care and authority, it is appropriate for her elders to approach the unbelieving husband concerning his lifestyle and duties. If he refuses to provide her with the basic needs of life, the church can help see to these. She does not have grounds for divorce.

**Scenario 4:** An unbelieving spouse leaves the domicile while the believer remains, but the unbeliever does not file for divorce. When it becomes clear that the unbeliever intends this to be a permanent “solution,” the believing spouse is free to file for divorce. But this comes at the end of careful investigation and efforts by the elders of the church and (if possible) the civil magistrate to restore and strengthen the marriage.

**Scenario 5:** A husband and wife are both church members. Shortly after their marriage the husband’s violence begins to surface, and he viciously beats her, leading to police intervention, criminal charges, and a no-contact order. As in the case of direct abandonment, there is need for church discipline as well as civil intervention. Unlike the direct abandonment, there is room for discretion as to whether, after excommunication, the violent husband should be regarded as an unbelieving spouse who is not content to dwell with his wife. This is a decision that the wife must make with the help and blessing of the church.

**Scenario 6:** A husband and wife are both church members. The wife moves out, citing the husband’s emotional and verbal abuse, and frequent pornography use. In this situation, a separation may last a long time, but could not be considered abandonment. There is hope for this marriage, especially, while both spouses profess faith and look to the Spirit for his transforming work and to the church for accountability and help.

**Scenario 7:** A husband and wife are both church members. The husband is serving a very long prison sentence. The wife is understandably grieved and no longer wants to be married to him. Though he has physically left their home, that was not his intent. The wife has a hard road ahead of her, and will need all the support of family and church that she can get, but she is not free to divorce him.

### **Modern Solutions or Ancient Paths**

The world that we now know is a polarized one. Left- and right-wing factions in politics and in Christian denominations caricature one another and, too often, become more extreme versions of themselves, out of fear and defensiveness. One result in the Christian community is a damaging version of biblical headship in marriage. In response to feminism and its incursion in the church, some affirm Paul’s assertion that “the husband is the head of the wife,

even as Christ is the head of the church,<sup>96</sup> but twist it. They look on this, not as a call to sacrificial love, but as an excuse for husbands to control, demean, and even abuse their wives. Sometimes churches and elders are too cowardly to intervene in such marriages. Some even downplay the role of civil government in protecting the abused, and try to deal with every problem (even domestic violence) “in-house.” These are failures of pastoral care, to say the least.

Other believers, in turn, react to this oppression and abuse by teaching an open or thinly veiled egalitarianism in marriage. In the name of mercy and justice, divorce is often approved (especially when initiated by a mistreated wife) in situations in which churches traditionally would not have countenanced it. This is in defiance of the Lord’s strict teaching. This can have the appearance of justice, but in so doing, churches and elders often aid what the prophet Malachi calls “covering garments with violence.”<sup>97</sup> We must neither give a “biblical” cover for abuse and oppression, nor engage in a virtue-signaling that has more to do with cultural notions of patriarchy and female victimhood than with truth and just judgment. Both approaches foster war between the sexes, whereas the gospel should promote peace. We are called to labor faithfully under the authority of the Lord Jesus and his healing Word.

The biblical vision of marriage is one of trust given and trust returned. It is one in which, far from asserting their own rights, husbands and wives render to each other their due.<sup>98</sup> Marriages are the foundation-stones of churches and nations. Those stones may wear, spall, or even crack, but they must not break. The temptation to quit is strong because marriage is hard. Wise churches help callow men and obstreperous women to persevere in marriage, so that they may grow into the image of Christ and His church, which every married couple is called to be.

The prophet Jeremiah is often quoted, but nowhere is his call to embrace old ways more appropriate than when talking about marriage and divorce:

Stand by the roads, and look,  
and ask for the ancient paths,  
where the good way is; and walk in it,  
and find rest for your souls. (Jer. 6:16)

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96 Ephesians 5:23.

97 Malachi 2:16.

98 1 Corinthians 7:3

**Appendix B: Concluding Notes on Dr. G. Scipione's  
"Exegetical work on desertion as grounds for divorce as  
listed in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*"**

"The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed." – Augustine of Hippo

In section II of the main body of the paper, "General Equity and the Interpretive Authority of the Messiah," a paper by Dr. George Scipione was footnoted as a notable example of the use of Exodus 21:7-11 as a determinative text for understanding desertion in a sense that broadens its meaning far beyond that of spatial proximity. Section II of this paper considered some of the features of this argument more globally; that is, without direct refutation of the particular arguments of a specific work. This brief appendix will consider several of the particular arguments of Dr. Scipione's paper to see illustrated the hermeneutic we oppose in our paper. Scipione's paper considers an extensive range of Old and New Testament texts and draws a number of conclusions. This appendix will focus mainly on Exodus 21:7-11 and desertion.

We praise God for the good name of our brother Skip and for the fruit that God brought forth from his ministry in the RPCNA and in the broader church. Throughout this critique our desire is to honor him as best as we are able.

(1) In moving from the protection of the female slave concubine in Exodus 21 to the protection of the wife, Dr. Scipione writes:

"Arguing from the lesser to the greater, lighter to the heavier principle of interpretation which Jesus himself employs in the Sermon on the Mount in the context of birds, flowers, and his children, the free Israelite woman would get the same protection."

The "lighter to heavier principle of interpretation" is invalid in the case of Exodus 21:7-11. There are two serious problems with this manner of argumentation. First, it implies that the free woman is worthier of protection than the slave woman. This is an unbiblical implication completely alien to the purpose of Exodus 21, and untenable on the basis of the dignity of the image-bearing slave woman. Is the free woman more to be cared for than the slave woman in the same way that the human being, made in God's image, is more to be valued than the birds of the air (Matt. 6:26)? Second and equally distressing in its implications, this argument assumes the parity between the institution of slavery and the institution of marriage. Such a parity is, likewise, completely alien to the purposes of Exodus 21.

Scipione accurately notes that in Exodus 21, falling below the minimal requirements of food, clothing, and conjugal rights gives the female slave "the le-



gal right to her freedom." From that regulation he concludes that, "to fall below this bare minimal requirement can cause a man to lose his contractual bond with the woman whether slave or free." The implication of his lesser to greater argument is that "freedom" from slavery and "freedom" from the covenantal bond of marriage are equivalent freedoms granted for the same husbandly failings. From this reasoning and the implied contractual parity between slavery and marriage, one might adopt the perspective of certain radical feminists that "marriage is slavery." We do not believe this was Scipione's intent, but his reasoning dangerously threatens such an implication.

As part of his discussion of Exodus 21:7-11, Scipione concludes, "This then could possibly function as a concrete definition of desertion which then is defined covenantally / contractually and not merely spatial." Desertion as a cause for divorce, however, is the Bible's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7 in the context of the unbelieving spouse departing, not the mistreated wife. There is no exegetical or hermeneutical reason to see the Mosaic legislation of Exodus 21 concerning an abusive master in the context of slavery to be the fuller exposition of the Apostle's argumentation concerning a departing spouse in the context of marriage. Scipione's hermeneutic turns Augustine's maxim backwards on this point: He uses the Old to exegete the New in ways that no one reading 1 Corinthians would have imagined.

Scipione argues that to reject his conclusion would be to deprive wives of their protection: "To argue against this, one would have to argue that the free woman gets no such protection [as the slave concubine gets]." But slavery and marriage are not parallel institutions. Scipione's conclusion here is predicated on an illegitimate parity assumed between these two institutions. The female concubine had her own protection within the Old Covenant's temporary tolerance of slavery and polygamy. The wife has her own protection within the enduring creational ordinance of marriage, beginning with the Bible's clear and forceful teaching that the husband should love his wife even as Christ loves his church and gave himself for it (Ephesians 6:25-33).

(2) In the section of Dr. Scipione's paper where he draws out his conclusions based on his exegesis of the Old Testament data, he writes:

"4. This protection of wives [such as Exodus 21 exemplifies] against the most egregious forms of divorce or abuse does not seem to be tied to typological situations and therefore fulfilled in Christ and thus abrogated in the New Covenant. Nor does it seem to be tied to Israel as a unique redemptive-historical nation/entity and the laws that govern that nation as a unique entity and thus abrogated in the New Covenant. These provisions come under the category of 'general equity.'"

However, against Scipione's own assertion that Exodus 21 does not seem "to be tied to Israel as a unique redemptive-historical nation/entity and the laws that govern that nation as a unique entity," he writes in his explanation of the context of Exodus 21 that the "rules" of Exodus 21:1-23:19 "govern relations among Israelites." And that "the immediate context is about Hebrews as indentured servants or slaves."

In other words, everything about Exodus 21:7-11 suggests that the protections afforded the female slave concubine are precisely tied to Israel as a unique nation and entity. These protections regulate the toleration of polygamy and slavery in the Old Covenant, two institutions bonded to Israel in its unique ancient Near-Eastern milieu. It is exactly for these reasons that the provisions of Exodus 21 do not come under the category of general equity.

(3) Lastly, in the same section enumerating various conclusions that Dr. Scipione draws from his exegesis of the Old Testament, he writes:

"6. The above truths [conclusions one through five in Scipione's paper] would be Jesus' assumptions undergirding His view of divorce.

7. Any New Covenant view must comply with Jesus and not cancel His view."

Conclusion number six in Scipione's paper is the most determinative of all as regards the practice of the New Covenant church, and yet he offers no substantiation that such a declaration is warranted. He simply asserts that his particular interpretation and synthesis of the numerous and often thorny Old Testament passages referenced in his paper simply must constitute Jesus' own undergirding assumptions about marriage.

This is exactly the point we are disputing. And it is the point concerning which Scipione offers no substantiation in his paper. We heartily agree that "any New Covenant view must comply with Jesus and not cancel His view." We fear, however, that in illegitimately applying the general equity of Exodus 21 to the concept of marital desertion, it is Scipione's position that risks canceling the view of Jesus. We do not form our own conclusions about the Mosaic legislation and then—by force of assertion—simply assume that Jesus holds all the same undergirding presuppositions. Instead, as argued in the body of our paper, we first receive our interpretation of the Mosaic legislation from Jesus Himself. He is the Author of that legislation. He gives us our undergirding presuppositions, not the other way around.

We return again to Augustine's famous and trenchant remark: "In the Old Testament the New is concealed, in the New the Old is revealed (*Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet*)."

The hermeneutic in Scipione's paper threatens to reverse this dynamic and make the Old the

revealer of the New. We do not give undergirding presuppositions concerning the Mosaic legislation to Jesus, He gives them to us. And it is only by thus humbly receiving—not presumptuously giving—that we can accurately interpret the general equity of the judicial law.

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### **Appendix C: History of *Testimony* and Synod on Divorce**

This appendix covers the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church's dealing with divorce, as that history is shown in its past and present *Testimony* and in the *Minutes of Synod*, 1809-2019. This study will not describe every reference to divorce found in the *Minutes*, but will describe decisions of particular interest and then give a sense of the whole. The purpose of this review is to give a sense of what the church has taught through the centuries, to show that certain current teachings are not in line with that history, and to show one precise way that clarity about divorce has been lost and may be regained. To expedite his study of the *Minutes of Synod*, this author consulted with Nathaniel Pockras and was granted the use of his excellent Decisions of Synod Data Chart. Mr. Pockras pointed out 66 decisions that he has catalogued with the key word "divorce." This author has read the minutes pertaining to each of these decisions, and another found by Bill Edgar in the appendix of 1890. Bruce Martin provided further help in tracing events mentioned in the *Minutes of 1950 and 1990*. The author thanks each of them for their help. Any errors in this study are his own.

**The *Testimony*, Part 1.** The Reformed Presbyterian Church has its own *Testimony (RPT)*, which existed as an independent document until 1980. In that earlier form, chapter 27 dealt with oaths and covenants, and chapter 28 with marriage. Chapter 28, paragraph 7 reads:

Though the marriage covenant is not dissolved by every argument which the corruption of man, excited by passion and disappointment, may produce to separate those whom God hath joined; yet either adultery, or such wilful desertion as admits of no civil remedy, is a sufficient cause for its dissolution: and after the divorce has been regularly obtained, from the ecclesiastical or civil authority, it is lawful for the innocent party to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. Matt. 19:3, 6, 9; 1 Cor. 7:15.

After this the *RPT* goes on to enumerate and condemn six errors regarding marriage and divorce. This paragraph clearly echoes *WCF* 24.6, while extending explicit permission to the innocent party to marry another. Like the *WCF*, it speaks of "causes" for the dissolution of a marriage, not "grounds." The accompanying condemned error #6 speaks of "cases," and not "grounds."

**The Minutes of Synod.** Divorce was not mentioned in the *Minutes* until 1864, when a man married his dead wife's sister. They were suspended from membership as long as they continued in the marriage. The next mention of divorce was not until 1881, when a wife living in Winchester (Kansas) refused to reunite with her husband in Bloomington (Indiana). She charged him with leaving her (and the Winchester area) because he was thought to be a thief, was certainly a drunk, would not come to her aid when she was ill, would not earn money, and also (somewhat belatedly) that she believed him to have broken the 7th commandment. A commission of Synod investigated her charges, found that he had been a liar and a drunk while living in Winchester, but did not prove that he was a thief or an adulterer. His behavior in Bloomington had been acceptable, but after having tried to reconcile unsuccessfully he had gotten a divorce without asking counsel. He was sentenced to a year's suspension from the Lord's Supper for the unwarranted divorce, to be restored upon his confession and rebuke. The wife was also judged unjustified in her course, suspended for one year, and upon confession, was to be received back to the church.

In 1888, Elder Angier in Vermont was suspended from his office and from church membership for having too quickly asserted that his wife had deserted him, refusing to take her back, and trying to bribe her to go along.

In 1889 the Synod addressed general questions about divorce for the first time. The very strong conclusion of the committee that reported back in 1890 is here provided in full:

The committee to whom the subject of divorces for desertion was referred at the last meeting of Synod respectfully reports that after careful examination we are unable to find scripture warrant for the granting of absolute divorce on account of desertion.

The only passage in the Word of God on which the rightfulness of such divorces is based is found in 1 Cor. VII.15: "If the unbelieving depart let him depart. A brother or sister is not in bondage in such cases." This passage, however, does not, in the judgment of your committee, sustain the conclusion that absolute divorce with liberty of re-marriage may be granted on this ground. For

1. This conclusion is contrary to the uniform teaching of scripture as to the sacredness, permanence and inviolability of the marriage relation.
2. Our Lord, answering a question as to the grounds on which divorce may be granted, expressly says there is but one.
3. Because that one cause, unchastity, is a ground for which in the nature of the case there can be no equivalent.
4. Because, according to this interpretation, the apostle adds

to, and essentially changes, the law explicitly laid down by Jesus Christ.

5. Because there is nothing in the language of the apostle, which requires us to suppose that he is speaking of absolute divorce, and not merely of limited divorce or separation.

6. Because the admission of desertion as a sufficient ground for divorce opens the door to the gravest moral abuses.

7. Because absolute divorce, followed by re-marriage, precludes repentance and reformation, contrary to the end contemplated by the apostle in the verse immediately following: "What knowest thou, O, wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband, and what knowest thou, O, husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife."<sup>99</sup>

The foregoing judgment has not been sustained by Synod in subsequent years, but is included to indicate the judgment of the church in 1890, its hermeneutic ("the only passage ... is ... 1 Cor. 7:15"), and as an example of how one may relate Matthew 19/Mark 10 with 1 Corinthians 7. The language of "absolute divorce" appears to refer to the freedom to marry another and "limited divorce" to refer to separation without such freedom.

From 1890-1929, nearly all of the mentions of divorce come in the reports of the National Reform Association, Committee on Testimony Bearing, or the like. Divorce was among the rampant national sins condemned by the Synod, and ministers and members were often encouraged to write to their state representatives and ask for Scriptural standards for divorce to be established and maintained. Anti-polygamy amendments were to be promoted. Unscriptural divorce laws were among the reasons adduced for Christians to seek to be released from jury duty. (1910)

In 1912 a push to add further clarity to the church's stance on divorce was declined, in part on the grounds of some diversity of opinion, and in part on the grounds that any change would bring the *Testimony* into conflict with the *Confession*, which the church had not yet done.

In 1920 the "innocent party" was defined as one who had given no Scriptural cause for divorce or separation and was willing to maintain the marriage relation.

In 1929 the Committee on Discipline noted that in Cyprus divorces were granted not by the government but by the heads of religious bodies. The Synod ruled that in such jurisdictions, ministers, being able to effect such a union, were also allowed to dissolve them as well, so long as the grounds were "adultery and such willful desertion as admits of no remedy."

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<sup>99</sup> "Report of Committee on Divorces for Desertion" in *Minutes of Synod, 1890*, p. 317, printed in the Appendix. Members of the Committee were T.P. Stevenson, David McAllister, James Kennedy, John Hunter, and James Watson.

In 1948 the Synod took up the question of marriage to a deceased wife's sister. It passed a recommendation to delete errors 4 and 5, listed in chapter 28 of the *RP Testimony*, allowing such marriages in the future. No mention was made of the equivalent statement in the *Confession of Faith* at chapter 24 paragraph 4. Too few sessions answered for the overture to be approved in 1949, but in 1950 the overture passed despite some dissent on both substance and procedure. J.G. Vos and George Coleman then prodded the Synod to provide some signal in its printed documents that the church was no longer in agreement with the final sentence of *WCF* 24.4.

In 1951 the Synod responded to a request for detailed case law from Kansas Presbytery. The committee declined to provide a comprehensive guide to all permutations, but did answer the specific cases asked about, largely to the effect that when a second marriage had been contracted in ignorance of God's law concerning divorce, was viewed with contrition, and was currently in effect, it was not to be abandoned. The covenant with the Gibeonites was held to be more salient than Ezra 10. Nonetheless, should a member marry a non-biblically divorced non-member, such a member was to be held guilty of adultery, and more guilty than the non-member, due to the greater duty of knowing God's law. A follow-up resolution affirmed that while ignorance is an extenuating circumstance, we remain responsible to God for our ignorance. Ministers, elders, parents, and fellow-members were urged to prevent such ignorance. Marriage and divorce should be taught with care.

The following year the Foreign Mission Board urged that the above reasoning should apply to a believing Alouite with two wives who had been refused baptism. The Synod agreed to allow missionaries to baptize in such cases, so long as such members were understood to be ineligible for church office.

From 1952 we leap to 1979, when it was proposed that the NAPARC denominations should study divorce. The Synod agreed that a joint study committee should be appointed, but your author did not find further action on this point.

A 1981 Committee on Denominational Progress, Priorities, and Financial Policies included in its lengthy report an exhortation to teach on marriage and family relationships more frequently.

In 1987 the Judicial Committee was asked if the innocent party to a divorce could be an elder or a deacon. The committee answered yes, and also defined innocent as either the one who had not committed the sin leading to the divorce OR one who presented evidence of true repentance.

In 1989 the Evangelical Presbyterian Church asked to join NAPARC. NAPARC indicated the EPC needed to consider three matters further before being received: a) the continuance of extraordinary spiritual gifts, such as prophecy

and tongues; b) the ordination of women to ruling and teaching offices; and c) changes to the *WCF* that “give more latitude to divorce than the reformed confessions had traditionally acknowledged.”

In 1990 the committee to review presbytery minutes noted a “questionable divorce ruling” in the St. Lawrence Presbytery. The presbytery was directed to explain, correct, or defend this and two other rulings noted by the committee. *The Minutes of 1991* record that the session involved agreed with the *WCF* and that the minutes involved dealt with “imprisonment that may have indicated willful desertion.”

After 1990, the only mentions of divorce flagged by the indefatigable Mr. Pockras occur in reference to the two papers on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and the current issue surrounding recent teaching regarding divorce and desertion at RPTS.

**The Testimony, Part 2.** In 1980 a new *Testimony of the RPCNA* was published, now in parallel columns with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The prior complete statement about divorce (quoted earlier) no longer seemed necessary since the new *Testimony* is chiefly an expansion of and commentary on the *Confession*. The most relevant paragraphs now are as follows:

(26) Desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever [1 Corinthians 7:15; Matthew 18:17].

(27) If the unrepentant guilty party in a divorce marries another, he commits adultery [Matthew 19:9].

(28). Where the guilty party shows evidence of repentance for the sin of breaking a marriage the Church may receive or restore him or her to membership [Galatians 6:1].

Paragraph 26 helps to answer a question that arises from a careful reading of the *Minutes* through the years. In prior years, the church never simply said “adultery and desertion are the two grounds for divorce.” That was first because the *Confession* and earlier *Testimony* don’t use the word “ground.” Second, desertion was always carefully qualified as “wilful, irremediable desertion” or “such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied.” This is because Jesus, of course, granted only one exception. Desertion does not function in the same way that adultery does. But unlike the *Confession* and the prior *Testimony* (which spoke guardedly of “causes”), the new *Testimony* calls desertion a “ground,” while noting that it is only the unbeliever who may depart.

Summary: This review has shown that the church’s concern for divorce has spiked in certain eras, that questions regarding divorce arise from time to time, and that the church has never endorsed an expansive definition of desertion. There are several additional points to be made:

1. The church long spoke very carefully about divorce and desertion. Divorce had “causes,” not “grounds,” and those “causes” were never simply termed “adultery or desertion” but rather “adultery or willful irremediable desertion” or even the full “such willful desertion as can in no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate” (see *WCF* 24.6). Our recent shorthand is a break from past practice and does not sit well with Jesus’ language in Matthew 19 and Mark 10. For the sake of clarity and fidelity, we should return, laborious as it may seem, to the prior ponderous way of speaking of desertion: to be a cause of divorce, desertion must be willful and irremediable, and carried out by an unbelieving spouse.
2. The church long lamented national divorce rates that were far lower than what we see today. As we no longer entertain reports on the state of the nation, we no longer go on record decrying divorce in the same way. Whether we return to such reports or not, we should not become inured to the sins that surround us.
3. In both 1950 and 1980 we find exhortations to teach marriage and divorce with more care. This report functions in the same way.
4. The author does not recall seeing the word “abuse” in this investigation.
5. Individual cases are messy and a variety of decisions can be seen in the various difficult cases. Nonetheless, there has been unity in regards to the causes of divorce, and no examples of “financial desertion” or “sexual desertion” as grounds for divorce are to be found.
6. Exodus 21, Deuteronomy 24, and similar passages were not adduced in the *Minutes* read. Malachi 2, however, was.
7. As recently as 1989, laxity in regards to divorce was a reason not to admit a denomination to NAPARC, a reason apparently considered comparable in weightiness to female pastors or speaking in tongues.

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**Communication #21-15: GLG—Smith and Atlanta TGB on Creation.** Mr. Frank Smith stood to present this communication; he read and summarized its contents in support of the two statements this paper asks Synod to adopt. Discussion ensued. The Court took up this communication’s Recommendation 1: This court hereby declares that belief in the literal parentage of Adam and Eve as our first parents is an essential point of the Christian system of doctrine. The Court entered discussion.

At 4:40 p.m., having arrived at an order of the day, Mr. Andrew Barnes stood to read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 and to lead our afternoon prayer session, focusing on the needs of the presbyteries and our judicial concerns. Members of the court prayed. The Court then sang Psalm 32C. Then Mr. Herb McCracken (the manager of Synod) and others offered announcements. Mr.



Vincent Skwarek prayed to recess the Court for its evening dinner break, which the Court began to enjoy at 4:58 p.m.



***Tuesday; June 15, 2021; 6:15 p.m.***

At 6:15 p.m., the Synod Court resumed meeting, with the singing of Psalm 18A and a prayer of reconvening by Mr. John Ryce. The attendance roll was passed.

Special privilege was granted to the president of the Trustees of Synod to express his appreciation and general agreement with investment counsel shared from the floor. Special privilege was granted to Mr. Richard Knodel to commend literature available to the Court. The moderator then assigned a new Review Committee for the Chile Commission Minutes: Timothy Buck, Adam Niess, and Derek Moore.

*Order of the Day:* Judicial Committee 3, assigned to address the matter of the PCP and Edmonton, updated the Court on its progress, making its report available. Mr. Pete Smith, committee chairman, summarized their work and introduced their five recommendations. Recommendation 1 was discussed; carried; so Synod declines to adjudicate this case. Recommendation 2 was discussed. It was moved and seconded, to amend this so that all but the final sentence be struck, leaving this: "That Synod instruct PCP that they should inform the Hanover Presbytery that Mr. Hackett is not in regular standing because of his actions in departing from the RPCNA without regular dismissal (DCG Ch. 3, II, Sec. E, 5-j)." The amendment passed, and the amended recommendation carried. Recommendation 3 was discussed; carried; Synod will appoint this study committee. Recommendation 4 was discussed; carried. A motion from the floor was made and then seconded, that due to COVID-19, border issues, and forced quarantines, Synod authorize the Pacific Coast Presbytery to conduct this trial of Mr. Hackett via video conference technology due to these unique circumstances. Discussion ensued. It was moved to call the previous question (to cut off debate and to vote); passed 120 to 9. The motion itself carried (by standing vote, 76 to 54); Pete Smith and Frank Smith registered their dissent from this decision. Recommendation 5 carried, so this judicial committee is dismissed. The clerk is encouraged to remove the documents from Synod's online subfolder. The Report of Judicial Committee 3 is received and printed here, along with the Pacific Coast Presbytery communication (#21-12) which prompted it.

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## **Judicial Committee to Address Communication #21-12 from the Pacific Coast Presbytery [re. Edmonton]**

This Committee worked through the various communications from the PCP dated as recently as June 9, 2021, and identified as Communication #21-12, regarding the Edmonton, Alberta, congregation, in which the PCP indicates their desire to “hear the wisdom and voice of the Synod for adjudication ...” While we recognize the challenges enumerated by PCP in their communication with Synod and are sympathetic with their burdens, we nevertheless encourage PCP to continue their good work of Biblical oversight. Therefore, we

### **recommend:**

1. That Synod decline to adjudicate this case (per *BOD* IV:1) because PCP has not established sufficient grounds for referring it to Synod and are continuing to take action in this case even as recently as this week (*BOD* IV:9). We note that Pastor Bob Hackett has already received, at his own request, credentialed status from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Hanover Presbytery (per PCP Communication, 6/9/21).
2. That Synod advise PCP that they have various options, noting their ongoing efforts to date. They may choose to suspend the process indefinitely (*DCG* Ch.3, II, Sec. E, Par. 6-h: “If a teaching elder undergoing judicial process leaves the denomination, ordinarily charges against him should be tried”); or continue proceedings at a time when they can convene their presbytery in person with all parties to the case present; or, they could proceed with a trial of Pastor Hackett in absentia (*BOD* II:2, Par.5: “If the accused does not reply, the court shall proceed to try the case in his absence”; see also *DCG* Ch.3, II, Sec.6-h) given his recent actions of absenting himself from the current presbytery proceedings (*BOD* II:2, Par.9). Whatever direction they pursue, they should inform the Hanover Presbytery that Mr. Hackett is not in regular standing because of his actions in departing from the RPCNA without regular dismissal (*DCG* Ch.3, II, Sec.E, 5-j).
3. That Synod appoint a five-member study committee to present to the 2022 Synod a recommendation for a judgment respecting whether judicial ecclesiastical meetings held via online video-conferencing platforms (such as Teams, Zoom, etc.) meet the requirements of *BOD* II:2 – 7, to “preserve the rights of each individual to meet accusers face to face.” The reason for this recommendation is that there has been lack of agreement on this question within the PCP.
4. That Synod encourage the shepherds of the Pacific Coast Presbytery in their pastoral care of those who have been adversely affected by what their presbytery has experienced in this situation.
5. That Synod dismiss this Committee.

*Respectfully submitted: Peter Smith (chairman), Joe Rizzo,  
Mark Koller, Fikre Menbere, Jonathan M. Watt*

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### **Communication # 21-12: PCP re. Edmonton**

From: Colin colinsamul23@gmail.com

To: jmmlawrence@aol.com

May 8, 2021

Ref. from PCP

John: The Pacific Coast Presbytery made the difficult decision today, to reference Synod for adjudication of a matter we have been dealing with. Listed below is the motion made, as reflected in the Trial minutes. I've included all relevant documents, which includes the minutes from the meeting where we originated the charges, the complaint filed by Rev. Hackett, the Google drive from the 4/17/2021 meeting to address the complaint, the trial docket, and the signed Trial Minutes. Please let me know if you need anything further. (I've cc'd the defense and prosecution of the case, along with the PCP Clerk). I've also included my ruling on Communication #21-2, mentioned in the Spring minutes. My ruling was pertaining to over a dozen complaints from the Shelter RPC that were ruled out of order, but the contents of them motivated my request for more info from the Shelter Session, which resulted in the charges being received. So I have two questions:

1) Should I transmit PCP Communication #21-2 to you for context, even though they were ruled out of order? They were seen by the Presbytery, but were not spread on the minutes.

2) The Prosecution's drive, along with the defense, includes sensitive info, that we have assumed was for presbyters only. Right now the prosecution's drive is locked; I cannot download the files. Should we simply get permissions to transmit files ... or leave it in the locked drive and add all members of Synod to the drive? For security I'll leave it locked within the PCP Trial drive.

The motion to reference Synod: Whereas the case presently before this court addresses weighty matters impacting many parties and requires great care to handle it in an equitable manner; whereas this court has rightly directed Rev. Bob Hackett to refrain from the exercise of the office of teaching elder until final action in the trial has been taken; whereas the objections raised thus far by the defense do not constitute gross irregularities to dismiss the case; whereas the Presbytery lacks capacity to adequately adjudicate this case, given fewness of its members, geographical spread of the Presbytery involving an international border, the on-going restrictions due to the global pandemic, and the number of presbyters in the roles of parties to the case; that this Presbytery refer the whole case to Synod for adjudication (*BOD*, II, Chapter 4, Paragraph 7-8).

4/17 mtg. docket: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Rk4mEWygcIW L6PeDAwd3BXexF\\_gq18i-?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Rk4mEWygcIW L6PeDAwd3BXexF_gq18i-?usp=sharing)

PCP Docket: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1phptV5t6dz-arJus8QtGclBhAuTBZcO?usp=sharing>

Colin Samul: Great Basin RPC ... (775) 636-2703 ... [www.greatbasinpresbyterian.com](http://www.greatbasinpresbyterian.com) ... [greatbasinrpc@gmail.com](mailto:greatbasinrpc@gmail.com)

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From: [jmmlawrence@aol.com](mailto:jmmlawrence@aol.com)

To: [colinsamul23@gmail.com](mailto:colinsamul23@gmail.com)

May 18, 2021

Subject: Re: Ref. from PCP re. Edmonton matter.

Dear Colin: Acknowledging receipt. Soon you will see a version of this communication “up” in Synod’s online doc. folder (2021, in Communications), once I’ve assigned it a Synod communication #. I will have to decide, with BOSC counsel, how many of your support documents everyone must see right now, OR (in other words) which parts may be reserved for a Synod judicial committee (of-the-day) to examine first, before they might advise the full Court what to do next. ... About your Q. (1), please work w/ PCP Clerk Hemphill, explaining what you provided to me, asking if he (as an official representative of PCP) will send PCP Communication #21-2 to me for Synod to have appropriate context/background. I wouldn’t want to add offense to offense here. Re. your Q. (2), let us wait on best solution; I’m glad to have links, but I am also glad that both drives are “locked” to me/us until the appropriate parties agree more eyes can/should see their contents.—JMM; (785) 766-7796

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From: [colinsamul23@gmail.com](mailto:colinsamul23@gmail.com)

To: [jmmlawrence@aol.com](mailto:jmmlawrence@aol.com)

Cc: Chris Myers [cwmyers007@gmail.com](mailto:cwmyers007@gmail.com); B. Hackett [ContraMundum@live.com](mailto:ContraMundum@live.com); P. McNeely [pdmcneel@gmail.com](mailto:pdmcneel@gmail.com); pastorjonmaginn@msn.com; jordan@dohms.net; R. Hemphill [pastormchemp@gmail.com](mailto:pastormchemp@gmail.com); noah.d.shepherd@gmail.com

Sent: May 8, 2021

Subj: Ref. from PCP

John: I’m replying to my previous email since I forgot to add the prosecution and defense. They are now included.

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**The Court returned to Communication #21-15: GLG—Smith and Atlanta TGB on Creation. Mr. Smith read again their Recommendation 1: This court hereby declares that belief in the literal parentage of Adam and Eve as our first parents is an essential point of the Christian system of doctrine. The**

Court continued discussion. Before the comments of Mr. Ophoff, a member of the Court challenged his opportunity to speak (because he is missing his judicial committee assignment). The moderator ruled that Mr. Ophoff can speak to this, and that ruling was challenged. A point of order was made stating that a challenge is out of order; the parliamentarians ruled that the challenge of the ruling of the moderator is allowed; discussion ensued. The ruling of the moderator was upheld by a standing vote, 80 to 42. Discussion of Recommendation 1 continued. The previous question (to stop the debate) was moved, seconded and carried; by vote, 92 to 33. Mr. Rut Etheridge registered his dissent. Then the vote on Recommendation 1 carried.

The Court took up Recommendation 2: This court hereby declares that belief in biological evolution (that is, the change from one “kind” of animal to another), and particularly belief in the evolution of the body of Adam from lower creatures, is incompatible with the Christian system of doctrine, and furthermore that denial of said evolutionary views is an essential point of the Christian system of doctrine. Discussion ensued. It was moved and seconded, to amend this recommendation thus (putting “macro” in place of “biological,” removing quotes around KIND, and adding “or plant” after “animal”). While this was being discussed, it was moved and seconded to postpone this report to give the authors opportunity to consider improving the recommendation; failed. The motion to amend was debated; it failed (by standing vote, 59 to 67). So we return to the original language of Recommendation 2. A motion to lay on the table, to entertain a substitute, was made and seconded (that motion being “the Court declares that RPT 4.3 and 4.4 are essential to the Christian system of doctrine”). The motion to lay on the table carried (84 to 55).

At 9 p.m., minutes of the Tuesday afternoon and evening sessions were read, corrected, and approved as corrected. Synod’s manager (etc.) gave announcements. The Court sang Psalm 141A. At 9:14 p.m., Synod was led in a prayer of evening adjournment by Mr. Rich Holdeman.



***Wednesday; June 16, 2021; 8:15 a.m.***

At 8:18 a.m., the moderator called the Court to order, introducing Pastor John Edgar who led in morning worship. Mr. Edgar preached on the spiritual fruit of peace (Rom. 14:17-19), then closed our service in prayer. The assembly sang Psalm 34C (Mr. Edgar presenting).

Mr. Harley (Jake) Schwarz constituted the Court in prayer. The attendance roll was passed. Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Bill Weir to present opportunities at the RP Home. Mr. Robert McFarland announced literature availability. Pacific Coast Presbytery's clerk Ryan Hemphill gave news about young PCP ministers. Other prayer needs were shared.

*Order of the Day* was to hear from either of the two remaining judicial committees, but neither is prepared to report; we expect to hear from one around mid-day and the other this evening (Lord willing). So the Court returned to List-A. Those responsible to help us work through Communication #21-15 asked for some time before presenting; so bypassing, we went ahead on the agenda.

*Geneva Corporators (presented by board president Steve McMahan).* After general discussion, Recommendation 1 (to hear from Geneva's President Calvin Troup), carried; so the Court heard from President Troup, then responded with its applause. Recommendation 2 carried, so the congregations are encouraged to promote the need to contribute to the Geneva Bible Faculty Fund through the end of the 2022 academic year. In addition to the recent loss of former president John Jack White, the faithful service of Phil Duguid was remembered. The report as a whole was received.

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**2021 Report of the Geneva College Board of Corporators**

The Geneva College Board of Corporators gives thanks to the Lord for His continued provision for and protection of Geneva College over the two years since Synod last met. The College remains faithful to the Lord and His word, and through concerted efforts on the part of the administration, faculty, and staff, Geneva was able to hold classes in person for the 2020-2021 school year and also an in-person graduation ceremony. We commend Dr. Troup for his leadership, and we are thankful for the excellent teamwork and spirit of unity that is evident.

The Corporators note the passing of Dr. John H. "Jack" White on March 11, 2021. A memorial service was held on April 24, 2021, at Metheny Fieldhouse. Dr. White faithfully served Geneva in various capacities and was involved in drafting and approving "The Foundational Concepts of Christian Education" in

1967 which continue to guide the College today. He served as President of Geneva from 1992 until 2004.

The Corporators also wish to honor Philip C. Duguid who passed away Sept. 19, 2020. Phil had served faithfully for many years on both the Geneva Boards of Corporators and Trustees, and was a gentle but resolute representative of the denomination on these Boards. Steven McMahan has been elected by the Corporators to fill the unexpired term of Phil on the Board of Trustees. Synod will elect Phil's replacement for the Board of Corporators as listed in our recommendations.

The Corporators express deep appreciation to Joye Huston who stepped down from the Geneva Board of Trustees this past year due to family responsibilities. Joye served as Chair of the Board in recent years and guided the College with clear wisdom through the challenges of presidential transitions. Joel Silverman has been elected by the Board of Trustees as chair.

Since the last meeting of Synod in 2019 five new members have been elected to the Board of Trustees by the Corporators: Dr. Gregory Beechaum, Rev. Herbert (H.P.) McCracken, Luke O'Neill, Mark Sampson, and A. Dale Weaver. The Trustees work well together and are generous with their time, talents, and financial resources. They are all strongly committed to the Word of God and the mission of Geneva College.

Two years ago the Administration announced the need to raise \$255,000 over a three year period for the Geneva Bible Faculty Fund. As of March 31, 2021, \$215,172 had been pledged or donated. Please continue to support this fund through your individual donations or congregational budgets. Rev. Rut Etheridge is making progress on his doctoral program at Westminster Theological Seminary, but this will not be completed for a few years due to the significant amount of work required. The Geneva Bible Faculty Fund is providing for Rut through the end of the 2021-22 academic year, and then Geneva will take full responsibility for his needs as he takes on an increasing amount of responsibility in the Bible Department.

Geneva College has been blessed with a number of gifts and additional government aid due to COVID-19 this past school year which allowed the College to experience a solid operating surplus. Through much sacrificial work over several years, all long-term debt will be retired later this year. This puts Geneva in a good position in these challenging and uncertain times, and will allow some much needed maintenance to be done on campus during the next budget year.

Geneva relies heavily on traditional undergraduate tuition to fund operations. Student retention has remained steady, but new student enrollment was lower than desired for the fall of 2020, and student commitments are later than

usual this year for the fall of 2021. Please continue to pray that the Lord would bring more students to Geneva, and please use every opportunity that you can to make young people aware of Geneva. Many scholarship opportunities are available to help make an education at Geneva more affordable.

Another matter for prayer is that 40% of the Geneva faculty is within five years of retirement age. Please pray that a number of Reformed Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians would be raised up to prepare to take positions at Geneva.

A *Vision and Strategy Task Force* consisting of a variety of Geneva stakeholders has been meeting in recent months. Among the primary outcomes are: "an inspiring 2030 Vision Statement; a current, relevant strategic plan for 2021-2024; and unity around God's vision for the future of Geneva College." It is clear that Geneva excels in the integration of faith and learning, and an element of the *Vision* is that Geneva would be recognized nationally for her integration of faith and learning. Four Geneva Faculty were granted tenure by the Trustees at their April meeting; all four presented materials including their integration papers which powerfully demonstrated this concept of integration of faith and their disciplines.

Pray that the Lord will continue to pour out His blessings on the administration, faculty, staff, and boards of Geneva, and grant wisdom as we seek to maintain Biblical standards in the face of increasing opposition from those in authority in our nation.

The 2020 and 2021 Reports of the Geneva Trustees to the Corporators follow, which contain additional important information. The 2021 Report will be completed as soon as May 30 numbers are available.

#### **For the Nominating Committee:**

Since Synod had no elections in 2020, both the Class of 2024 and Class of 2025 need to be elected this year. All of the nominees have been nominated either by their presbyteries or are incumbent or have been nominated by the Corporators; they have been interviewed and are willing and able to serve. Nominees noted with an asterisk (\*) are currently serving in the dual-role of both Corporator and Geneva Trustee.

We ask Synod to elect these nominees to the Geneva Board of Corporators Class of 2024: Matt Filbert, at-large representative; David Schaefer\*, representative of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies; Dr. Bonnie Weir\*, representative of the Atlantic Presbytery.

We ask Synod to elect the following nominees to the Geneva Board of Corporators Class of 2025: Chris Huggins, representative of the St. Lawrence Presbytery; Shana Milroy\*, representative of the Midwest Presbytery; Scott Reynolds\*, at-large representative.



We ask Synod to elect James Tweed to the Geneva Board of Corporators Class of 2022 as an at-large representative to complete the unexpired term of Philip Duguid. See the required questionnaire for James Tweed in Appendix 1 at the end of this full report.

**Recommendations:**

1. That Dr. Calvin Troup, Geneva President, be given up to 15 minutes to address Synod.
2. That congregations promote the need to contribute to the Geneva Bible Faculty Fund through the end of the 2022 academic year.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Steven C. McMahan, chm. of the Geneva Board of Corporators*

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### **Report of the Geneva College Board of Trustees to the Board of Corporators, July 14, 2020**

The Trustees are particularly thankful for President Troup's leadership at this time. His work over the last four years, gathering a leadership team who work well together, developing a cooperative spirit on campus, and clarifying the mission of the College, have provided critical strength for Geneva College in these difficult days. We are also thankful for his wife Amy's tireless support for his work, for her gracious hospitality, for her faithful prayers for the College, and for her unwavering commitment to bring glory to God through the work of Geneva College.

Dr. Troup's strategic wisdom has been recognized by other organizations. He currently serves as Chair of the Presidents' Athletic Conference, as a founding member of the Board of the International Alliance for Christian Education (IACE), and as a member of the Board of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP). The IACE Chair said about him: "You could not have a person who articulates Geneva's mission better than Calvin does."

Geneva has had a CERT (Campus Emergency Response Team) for many years. They began meeting in February to discuss plans related to COVID-19, and have quickly adapted to follow CDC guidance and orders from the governor of Pennsylvania, keeping the needs of students in various circumstances in mind. We have received comments from a number of people commending Geneva for the timely communication and caring responses to student needs through the spring months. When praised for this excellence, Provost Melinda Stephens credited the faithful prayers of many in upholding the College at this time.

Dr. Troup has also called the College to a season of fasting and prayer each Wednesday throughout the summer to cry out to the Lord against racial injustice. He states: "Our work will continue to be Biblical and confessional, local and

educational, seeking through vibrant hospitality to make Geneva a good home for our African-American students, faculty, and staff. We also seek to contribute to racial reconciliation in Beaver Falls and the County.”

Until March, chapel continued in the Field House with regular preaching by Dr. Troup, Pastor Titus Martin, and Pastor Will Baker. When the campus was shut down, Dr. Troup invited the College community to hear edifying livestreams on Monday (Dr. Troup), Wednesday (Pastor Martin or Pastor Baker), and Friday (Testimonies by Faculty and Staff). These messages have been a blessing especially in these uncertain times.

Lord willing, students will be on campus a week earlier than usual in August. In order to minimize travel to and from campus, the fall semester will end at Thanksgiving. Professors will wear face shields, and classes will take place in rooms which allow students to sit at appropriate distances from one another. The faculty are redesigning their courses to flex with on-campus, remote, and hybrid learning to be able to quickly adapt if conditions change through the 2020-2021 school year.

Please pray for the faculty and staff being asked to do extra work at this time with less compensation. Due to budget challenges, the College has suspended retirement matching contributions for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Consider donating to the COVID-19 Project Fund established to respond to needs at the College brought on by this pandemic.

The annual Bible Department Compliance Report is appended to this report.

We thank you for the work you have done to raise funds for the Bible Faculty Fund. As of the end of May, \$187,000 has been received or pledged toward the total goal of \$255,000. These contributions from RPCNA members and congregations have been a tangible way to support the Bylaw requirements for Bible Faculty.

We also thank you for the election of Trustees who are committed to biblical truth and who have given generously to the College. There is strong unity among the Trustees in support of Geneva’s biblical stance on issues which are unpopular in our culture today. We receive regular briefings from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) regarding Supreme Court rulings and government actions on interpretation and how to respond according to our mission. Although Trustee giving is modest compared to other similar institutions, it has increased steadily in the last three years.

Engagement with alumni is also on the rise. 863 attended Homecoming 2019 and 39 students referred through the Gold & White Alumni Grant have made deposits to study at Geneva in August of 2020. Please continue to refer students through this program.

Officers of the Board of Trustees for the coming year are: Chairman, Joel Silverman; Vice Chairman, Ken de Jong; and Secretary, Bonnie Weir.

The Budget for 2020-21 is set at \$32,125,357. The Geneva Fund total for 2019-20 was \$1,202,461, and total giving was \$10,809,208.

Geneva awarded 255 undergraduate degrees, 45 adult bachelor's degrees, and 57 master's degrees, along with four associate's degree from the Center for Urban Biblical Ministry in Pittsburgh. A number of faculty have announced that they will retire or begin a phased retirement process. In the Lord's providence, Geneva has been able to hire excellent younger faculty for positions which need to be filled. Thank you for your faithful support in prayer for Geneva College.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Bonnie E. Weir, Ph.D. (Secretary, Board of Trustees)*

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### **Report of the Geneva College Board of Trustees to the Board of Corporators, May 2021**

The Lord has blessed the College in so many ways, allowing in-person education in both the Fall and Spring semesters. This required radical changes in all areas of the College—residence life, dining, and classroom assignments. The warm weather in the Fall allowed students to eat and interact outside for much of the semester and made it easier to follow the state-mandated protocols.

As a Board of Trustees, we cannot thank God enough for providing President Troup, such a godly man with prodigious energy, to lead the College for God's glory. He has advanced the mission of the College in a special way this year as a founding board member of the International Association of Christian Education (IACE). He and Provost Melinda Stephens have led with IACE in a higher education faculty development program after the Colson Fellows model in cooperation with the Colson Center for Christian Worldview.

The Trustees will have a special meeting in July to consider the work of the Vision and Strategy Task Force, which is developing a ten-year vision, specifically focused on Geneva's leadership among Christian colleges as a center for integration of faith and learning under Christ and His word. They are also identifying three-year strategic themes for 2021-24 which include enrollment, a campus master-plan, excellence of character, academics and vocation, and greater engagement with alumni.

In keeping with social distancing requirements, the College community has attended livestreamed chapel on Wednesday morning in various locations around the campus including College Hill Church with regular preaching by Pastor Titus Martin, Pastor Will Baker, and President Calvin Troup. The messages this year have been about the character and attributes of God. The Spring se-

mester began with God's love and continued with a powerful sermon about how God is a consuming fire.

The athletic department has been unbelievable, fitting in most fall (even football!), winter, and spring sports into the second semester, holding to our commitment to keep the Lord's Day holy. Softball won the President's Athletic Conference (PAC) tournament and Women's Golf finished second in just its second season. Men's Track & Field won their seventh consecutive PAC title. In addition, Men's Soccer, Men's and Women's Volleyball, Men's and Women's Basketball, and Men's and Women's Tennis had winning records and qualified for the PAC tournaments.

Although we had contingency plans for a very tight budget this fiscal year (including a suspension of retirement matching contributions), federal assistance through the Cares Act has allowed the College to restore the retirement match and provide a cost-of-living raise to the faculty and staff. We thank the personnel at Geneva College for their commitment to the work of education.

Geneva College has received accreditation for the RN-BSN program by the Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation. This accreditation is effective through February of 2027. Since beginning to offer admissions to Nursing majors in the fall of 2018, the program has been full each year.

We were able to hold in-person commencement over the weekend of May 8-10, 2021. Dr. William Glaze, Chairman of the Center for Urban Biblical Ministries, spoke at the Adult and Graduate Commencement on May 8. Dr. Lane Tipton, pastor of Trinity Church in Easton, Pennsylvania, preached for the Baccalaureate on May 9. We were blessed with good weather as Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, III, Chancellor of the Reformed Theological Seminary, addressed graduates on May 10, encouraging them to be the people God had created them to be. Dr. Charles R. Hartzell III, along with Dr. Robert and Mrs. Louise Copeland received the Life-G award for their many years of service to the College.

The College and the College Hill Church have collaborated in a new way this year. Due to space requirements, some classes have met in the church building. For the last several years, the Baccalaureate service and a Reformation Day worship service in October on campus has been conducted under oversight of the College Hill session.

We thank you for the work you have done to raise funds for the Bible Faculty Fund. As of the end of March, \$157,000 has been received and verbal commitments and pledges of approximately \$58,000 have been made toward the total goal of \$255,000. Professor Etheridge has been focusing on his studies but has been able to teach one or two classes each semester. He is enrolled in a demanding Ph.D. program at Westminster Seminary which requires a Th.M. in addition to his Master of Divinity degree. He anticipates finishing the Th.M. in

the next year and will continue with the additional requirements for the Ph.D. after that. The annual Bible Department Compliance Report is appended to this report.

We also thank your Nominating Committee and Dr. Troup for your work in identifying trustees who can advance the work of the College. We are thankful for your election of a mix of trustees with different areas of expertise who can serve Geneva's mission.

At the February Board meeting Greg Baylor, an attorney with Alliance Defending Freedom, briefed the Trustees about the current political situation. He talked about the "Equality Act," which, if passed, will add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" as protected statuses in federal non-discrimination law. Geneva could be prosecuted simply for existing as an institution, whether or not she accepts federal student grants and loans. We rely on God's care for Geneva, and realize that we may need to participate in litigation as we seek to operate the College in a way that honors Christ.

Alumni continue to refer students through the Gold and White Alumni Grant, and 72 students have made deposits to study at Geneva in August of 2021. Please do continue to refer students through this program.

Officers of the Board of Trustees for the coming year are: Chairman Joel Silverman, Vice-Chairman Ken de Jong, and Secretary Bonnie Weir.

The Budget for 2021-22 is set at \$34,540,000 with a Capital Budget of \$1,860,000.

The Geneva Fund total for 2020-21 was \$1,114,086, and total giving was \$3,870,941.

Geneva awarded 213 undergraduate degrees, 23 adult bachelor's degrees, 49 master's degrees, and two associate's degree from the Center for Urban Biblical Ministry in Pittsburgh.

On April 24, we remembered President Emeritus Dr. John H. White's fruitful life of ministry in the church and the College. Dr. Peter Lillback, President of Westminster Theological Seminary, preached. We heard testimonies from Dr. Brad Frey, Dr. Bill Glaze, and Dr. Richard Morris. It was a beautiful service, with Dr. Jonathan Watt presiding and music from New Song.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Bonnie E. Weir, Ph.D. (Secretary, Board of Trustees)*

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***Business of Synod Committee: No recommendations. The report was received.***

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## The Business of Synod Committee Report to the 2021 Synod

The purpose of the Business of Synod Committee (BOSC) is to facilitate the Synod so that its administration and business may be conducted in a biblical and an effective manner. The Committee met via phone conferences and email over two years since our mid-2019 Synod meeting to discuss our meeting operations—so we incurred no meeting expenses. 2020 Synod did not happen! With our increasing appreciation for history, we give you (in Appendix 1) the brief version of our plan and process for canceling (with/for Synod). Perhaps it can be a model for what NOT to do next time, praying against any next time!

### Plans for the 2021 Synod

**Opening Session.** Your Committee, with the encouragement of our two most recent moderators, set the starting time at 6:00 p.m., on Monday, June 14, on the Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, Indiana) campus. To be clear in the extreme, this is a *special* meeting of Synod, with only one agenda item: seeking to change the start-time for the 2021 Synod from early Tuesday morning (June 15) to 6:15 on Monday evening (June 14). All registration, check-in, scheduling, and facilities information can be found in Synod's online document repository (<http://synod.rpcna.net> ... in the 2021 folder).

**Synod's Moderator(s).** The 2019 Synod wisely voted in Pastor Andy McCracken as moderator; he served well during those busy days, in a relatively unfamiliar venue, with a very full schedule associated with extra meetings with ARP brothers. Most of you know that Andy is now pastoring within the RPC of Australia, a close sister denomination. Travel restrictions "on both ends" of a very long journey would have made Andy's participation here prohibitive. We are pleased that Andy has recorded a sermon/message for our opening session, AND we are glad for the stamina and willingness of Rev. J. Bruce Martin to step in one more time (!) to help us start this meeting; Bruce was Synod moderator in 2016 and 2018 after serving as Synod clerk for 26 years. Both Andy and Bruce were very helpful to our Committee in working through pre-meeting challenges.

**Our Chairman.** BOSC is grateful for the in-committee leadership of Joel Wood as he helped us think through the unique circumstances of calling off one Synod and planning this unusual one. Pastor Joel is choosing (wisely) to bless a daughter during her wedding this week; we pray that God will prosper Joel's growing family. Pastor Brian Coombs (of BOSC) has kindly agreed to stand in as the BOSC chairman pro tem during Synod's days together in mid-June 2021.

**Batching.** What's batching?! Yet another measure we will resist as a standard but must consider during this strange Synod (strange because of—in a

way—two years of business in one year AND one day less than normal to accomplish the work). Pre-apologies, but the clerk took note of all presbytery, committee, and officer reports which did NOT include recommendations on which the full Synod is being asked to vote. Delegates have had or will have opportunity to read reports ... and even reports WITH recommendations are NOT to be summarized aloud from the floor. So batching involves the one-minute plan to approve many reports in one fell swoop, without comment or debate (please!), trusting there may be some time Thursday morning for comments.

**Seating.** We acquired a large-enough venue that there can be some physical distancing between unrelated delegates; exercise wisdom and grace. In light of our new standard, we ask non-voting guests to find seats toward the back and sides of the room (so voting delegates “front-and-center”!)!

**Speaking from the floor.** This Synod (2021) may be the first in our long history with critical virtual aspects where voting delegates are sitting thousands of miles from the meeting room. What can those of us IN the room do to ensure our distant participants (who truly wanted to be with us in-person but were prevented from doing so) are given every realistic opportunity to engage and understand the business and deliberation at hand? While we have enjoyed in the past ice-breaking humorous asides, these will not be understood by our virtual delegates and they could be interpreted as a lack of concern for their full participation. It should be our plan to voice all comments from the microphones provided. If we have tech assistants “manning the cameras,” let us be careful to enhance our words with the visual component.

**Devotional Theme:** Living Out the Fruit of the Spirit. The preachers are ...

- Monday (opening session): Pastor Andy McCracken (RPC of Australia); retiring moderator. Love.
- Tuesday (a.m.): Pastor Noah Bailey (First RPC of Cambridge; Massachusetts). Joy.
- Wednesday (a.m.): Pastor John Edgar (Elkins Park RPC; Pennsylvania). Peace.
- Thursday (a.m.): Pastor Daniel Howe (Christ Church; East Providence, RI). Patience.

**Prayer Coordinators.** The Committee is grateful to pastors Andrew Barnes and Joe Allyn (of Midwest Presbytery) for coordinating our two prayer times during this Synod meeting.

**Conference Manager.** Herb McCracken is serving as conference manager even as he is a certified delegate and voting member of our Committee. BOS C thinks HErb is The Man!

**Assistant Clerk.** More and more of you are learning how much we ask our assistant clerk to do for us, as he is tasked with overseeing the minutes-

reviewing process for the records of all our presbyteries, boards, and commissions. Pastor Charles Brown has also been a son/brother of encouragement (a true Barnabas) to clerk and moderators up front during busy days. Charles has asked NOT to be elected as assistant clerk again. BOSC urges this 2021 Synod to comply with this stated desire, even as we thank Charles for his diligent labors since 2016.

**Travel.** Synod's Travel Policy for reimbursements is clear; all details will be handled directly through the Treasurer's Office. In those few circumstances where the amounts are in question, the BOSC chairman will serve as the Travel Agent. See the simple instructions in the document, Synod Travel Policy, at <http://synod.rpcna.net>; basically, reimbursement requests are now to be filed via online form. To interact with the Treasurer's Office directly: 7408 Penn Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15208; or email James McFarland at [RPTrustees@aol.com](mailto:RPTrustees@aol.com). Our total travel expense can be found on the Synod Meeting Travel line in Treasurer's Report, Synod Ops. Fund page.

**Orientation Meeting.** NOT THIS YEAR! Manager Herb will find and announce other ways to welcome and inform first-time delegates and others in need of a refresher. In that spirit, we will forego the formal welcoming of new delegates (+) during the Monday night session.

**Memorials.** The 2015 Synod asked us (and future Synods) to streamline this aspect of showing honor to our "fathers" who died in the previous year, limiting our on-the-floor remarks to five minutes (maximum). Under the particularly limiting parameters for this Synod of 2021, we ask that no oral reports be given. The traditional prayer may be given (per Moderator's desire). Make known memorial corrections and additions to the clerks.

### **Future Synods**

**2022 Synod.** See our recommendation, below, about June 21-24, 2022, here at IWU, Tuesday morning through Friday noon (delegates encouraged to arrive Monday night, June 20). It is our goal to hold future Synod meetings on this weekly pattern as it allows our Pacific Coast delegates (etc.) sufficient time to arrive on campus and be ready for the start of business. We veered from that plan in 2021, necessarily, but with regret.

**2023 Synod.** Synod of 2023 will meet from June 20-23 (from Tuesday morning through Friday noon), with delegates encouraged to arrive on Monday evening, June 19.

### **Business of Synod Committee Membership**

You see (below) that the terms of Joel Wood and Brian Coombs expired one full year ago. Neither pastor so much as mentioned their extra year of hard labor (maybe they forgot?!), but both are willing to serve you again. For this, BOSC is grateful. So we are advancing to the Nominating Committee the



names of Joel Wood and Brian Coombs for our two 2023 vacancies. Such a Committee makeup keeps us balanced, with three Teaching Elders and three Ruling Elders serving well.

**Recommendation(s)** (both submitted late, in Synod’s last hour, so included here for info):

1. That the 2022 Synod be held at IWU (Marion, Indiana) during the week of June 21-24; this is a Tuesday morning through Friday afternoon schedule (Monday arrival assumed).

2. That the 2023 Synod be held at IWU during the week of June 20-23.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Chairman Joel Wood (2020)*

*Brian Coombs (2020)*

*Lucas Hanna (2021)*

*Don Reed (2021)*

*Herb McCracken (2022)*

*Dennis Olson (2022)*

**Serving ex-officio:** *John McFarland (Clerk), Andy McCracken (Mod.), and J. B. Martin (Mod.)*

**Appendix 1 for the BOSC Report:  
About the 2020 Synod Cancellation**

April 23, 2020

Dear presby. clerks: Thank you for helping to facilitate last week’s straw poll. Please forward the following note, with the results and proposals from BOSC for moving forward. ~ JMM

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Dear RPCNA sessions, ruling elders, and ministers: Thank you for participating in your BOSC’s Continue/Cancel straw poll re. Synod 2020. 311 votes were cast. 82% of those votes were to Cancel. Beyond federal and local regulations and the counsel we gave ourselves by adopting the recommendation of the Committee to Review Communication #08-03 there were numerous stated reasons for the overwhelming response to our question: travel restrictions, our oldest members’ health, international barriers, economic challenges, a patchwork of government directives, a need to focus on local shepherding, and our inability to achieve a quorum. BOSC adds IWU’s increasing uncertainty of hosting us by that time.

BOSC does not think that a mere straw poll can cancel a Synod; and, while precedent saw a moderator single-handedly cancel a national conference and move the time and place of Synod due to gas shortages in the 1970s, we do not believe that approach to be the best one for our Synod at this time. The only constitutional means for Synod to not constitute for business is a quorum failure. With the clear indication from the “Cancel 2020 Synod” respondents that a quorum mostly likely will not be reached, we ask you to help us move toward

canceling Synod 2020 by confirming that there won't be a quorum present. For this Synod, as you consider certifying delegates, do so bearing in mind your recent straw poll vote, the uncertain circumstances of the present time and our place of meeting, and the need to effect (by the constitutional procedure of the Constitutional forms) a real and valid cancellation of Synod, if that, in the end, is your will. Simply put:

- If you still wish to cancel Synod 2020, then do not certify any delegates.
- If you wish for Synod 2020 to proceed, then certify delegates and submit the relevant form before the new deadline: April 28. Find Forms 3 and 4 in Synod's online file (<http://synod.rpcna.net/>), within the 2020 folder.

On April 29, the certificates will be counted and the possibility of a quorum determined. This accelerated deadline is due to good stewardship of time and resources and our Synod manager Herb McCracken's need to communicate in a clear and timely manner with IWU. Some may suggest that discovering at Synod's opening session that we do not have a quorum should suffice. However, such poor stewardship on your part and ours leading to that is unwarranted in the extraordinary time in which the Lord has placed us. This last-minute action could also have the potential of harming our relationship with IWU staff—who have shown us great grace and care during this process. Herb strives to work well with these men, and we do not wish to see his or our reputation sullied.

The cancellation of Synod 2020 does NOT call the STATUS of Synod 2021 into question, as Synod 2021 was already called for by Synod 2019. Synod 2021 will meet—Lord willing—at Indiana Wesleyan University from June 15-18 (Tues. morning through Fri. afternoon). Considering the tasks that would be before us in a meeting of Synod, we recommend that:

1. The 2020 Budget, set by the Synod of 2019, remain in effect until a new budget can be approved by the Synod of 2021. This recommendation is made in concert with the Finance Committee, which encourages all entities to operate conservatively.
2. The membership of the classes of the standing and the special committees and boards of Synod remain in their roles of active service, as they are able, until regular elections can be held in 2021. Any urgent vacancies should be made known to the Moderator.
3. Synod's clerk and assistant clerk remain in their respective roles until the 2021 Synod.
4. That the requirement of reports from boards, committees, officers, and presbyteries be suspended. Any of those entities wishing to provide a report to the clerk for publishing to the Synod's online file (2020 folder) are welcome to do so, as many use those reports to pray and lead their congregations in prayer. Reports that are submitted should include **no**

**recommendations.** If you desire to communicate the progress of your committee, board, or presbytery to the congregations and sessions (for updates, prayer, etc.), then submit your **optional** reports by **June 26**. Those entities NOT submitting reports at this time should plan to report for two years (2019-2020) at the Synod of 2021. As in past years without a Synod, the printed 2021 *Minutes & Directory* will contain two years of reports.

5. That the presbytery, board, and committee *minutes review process* administered by our assistant clerk be postponed, giving the readers who were assigned this task in 2019 two years of minutes to review in the spring of 2021.

By God's grace, a Synod ad interim commission will not be needed. Should an emergency arise, DCG 8.3 provides the means to call an emergency synod. Let us work and pray against such a need. May there be peace in Zion!

Finally, dear brothers, the BOSC has received MANY independent ideas for how we might handle the business of our church at this moment in history. However, the 82% vote in favor of canceling should not be ignored, and neither should the compelling reasons given for that preference. Due to this experience, the BOSC or others may—in the future—propose constitutional amendments. For now, your Business of Synod Committee gives these recommendations, trusting our Lord to grant great humility, unity, and love among us.

Please direct any questions to BOSC chairman Joel Wood [joelenochwood@gmail.com] or the clerk of Synod, John McFarland [jmmmlawrence@aol.com], or both. Many of you have assured us that you are praying for us regularly ... and for that kindness, we thank you!

*Respectfully submitted, the Business of Synod Committee*

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**RP Global Alliance Advisory Committee, with Financials and Theological Education Model.** Mr. Andrew Quigley presented virtually from Ottawa, summarizing their full report. Recommendation 1 (that RP Global Alliance member churches appoint the Lord's Day of October 3, 2021, as an RP International Day of Prayer for the RPC in E. Asia) carried. Recommendation 2 was withdrawn. The report as a whole was received.

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### **RP Global Alliance Report to the 2021 RPCNA Synod**

**The Advisory Committee:** Chairman, Rev. Dr. S. Andrew Quigley (RPCNA). Secretary, Rev. Stephen Steele (RPCS). Rev. Matt Kingswood (RPCNA). Rev. Andrew Stewart (RPCA). Rev. Professor Robert McCollum (RPCI). Rev. Kyle Borg (RPCNA). Rev. Philip Dunwoody (RPCI). While not a Committee member, Rev. Joel Loughridge (RPCI) has served the Committee as honorary treasurer. The

Advisory Committee met once in person in January 2020 in Northern Ireland and five times online in 2020.

**Financial Accountability.** Our 2019 report indicated that we had not provided the member churches with the financial information we wanted to. To address that, the final sentence of this section in the 2019 report read: “Towards this end, we have appointed as a financial advisor to the Committee Rev. Joel Loughridge—an RPCI minister.”

We wish to thank and commend Rev. Loughridge for the excellent work he has done to address the shortcomings we were all too aware of. In 2019 we submitted accounts for the years 2016-2018 to the member church courts. We are resubmitting these accounts; please see the relevant attachment. The accounts are the same in the substance, i.e., any changes to transactions or balances are not material, but they are more clearly presented. The accounts for 2019 and 2020 are also appended to this report.

*Explanatory notes on those accounts:*

- **2019** represented an unusual year since no contributions were received from member churches except for a small amount from the RPCNA. This was in part the result of a lapse in the treasurer function before the appointment of Rev. Loughridge in late 2019.
- **2020.** These accounts include the costs of the 2019 meeting, as well as other expenses and contributions relating to 2019. Thus, the accounts for 2019 and 2020 do not represent a typical view of the Advisory Committee’s work and financial needs.
- **2021.** *Member Church contributions.* Providing all outstanding contributions from member churches are received, we request that the annual contributions for 2022 as calculated by the agreed formula be reduced by 40%. This reduction is possible because there will be no in-person meeting in 2021, and we will have sufficient funds for 2021. The specifics are cited in the recommendation.
- **2022.** The budget for 2022 has been shared with the relevant committee or treasurer of each member church.

**Communications:** Throughout the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the world, communication has been an integral part of the relationships between the different parts of the Body. Out of a prayerful interest in and concern for sister denominations, opportunities for sharing news and events have been taken through both personal correspondence and formal letters between synods. We are living in an age when the possibilities for developing such interactions are increasing, and we want to make the most of them for the encouragement of both this and future generations. We are indebted to the part-time workers of the RPGA administrative team; Miss Beth Bogue, Mrs. Carla Steele,

Miss Katrina van der Meer, Mrs. Maria Pockras. These ladies share the responsibility of collating and presenting info gathered from the RP Church around the world. We are blessed to have such godly, servant-hearted, ecclesiastically wise women working for the RPGA. Each week they have a 45-minute Zoom meeting chaired by the Advisory Committee chairman at which progress is assessed, ideas for improvements are shared, and forthcoming work is reviewed. The fruit of their labours is clear to be seen, and a few comparisons will suffice to demonstrate it. (The following information relates to data obtained in March 2021.)

*Website*—[www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org). The website is averaging 2,500 visits per month, and the average time that people are spending on the site is increasing month by month, with almost 50% of visits to the site via mobile phone. The top ten country “visits” for March 2021 were: USA 1,115, UK 591, Canada 171, Australia 71, Ireland 66, China 60, India 24, unknown country 14, Philippines 11, and Japan 10. The website has undergone some understated—but we trust helpful—modifications, including a redesign of the “Congregations” tab to facilitate more search options. God willing, the “static” content will be translated into French and Spanish before the end of 2021, and we are investigating the possibility of it being translated into Chinese also. We encourage you to visit the website and make use of the information it provides, such as the weekly prayer updates from the member churches under the “Message—Prayer Points” tab.

*Facebook*—<https://www.facebook.com/rpglobalalliance/>. The RPGA Facebook page is currently reaching 2,000 people/month in 47 countries. The city with the highest viewing figure, interestingly, is Singapore. Without identifying them, here’s a 1-mo. comparison of page ‘likes’ to ‘actual engagements’ for the top five Facebook pages in the RP church. This shows the comparatively high level of actual usage of the RPGA Facebook page. (Some ministries have full-time employees; i.e., we are seeking to compare equitably.)

- RP ministry FB page; 4,000 total page likes; engagements per week = 297 or 7.4%.
- RP ministry FB page; 2,700 total page likes; engagements per week = 40 or 1.4%.
- RP ministry FB page; 1,500 total page likes; engagements per week = 214 of 14.2%.
- **RPGA FB page; 1,100 total page likes; engagements/week = 755 or 75.5%.**
- RP ministry FB page; 800 total page likes; engagements/week = 12 or 1.75%.

So, the work being done by the RPGA administrative team is not simply sitting out there in cyberspace; it is being accessed, read, and (we trust) used

for the growth of the Kingdom through prayerful interest. It is noteworthy that the increase in “engagements” has “correlated” to the increase “likes.” If you are a Facebook user, we encourage you, if you have not done so already, to begin following the communications being posted on it and encourage others to do so. We are aware of issues surrounding Facebook and are keeping abreast of the development of other platforms. Until those platforms become better known and are evaluated for potential use, we will continue to use the Facebook page.

*MailChimp Newsletter*—<https://rpglobalalliance.org/newsletter/>. The monthly RPGA MailChimp Newsletter was launched in March 2021 and, as of the date of this report, 180 individuals who have requested to receive it, 50% of whom are ministers and elders. If you do get the newsletter, will you please encourage those in the congregation you serve under Christ to also sign up? If you have not signed up for it yet, will you please consider doing so? It is easy to do. Simply type the address above into your web browser. It will take you to the appropriate page on the website, where you will see a simple form asking you for your first name, last name, and email address. Click the sign-up button, you will then be asked to click to subscribe, and that’s it.

### **Working Groups**

**Theological Education**—Rev. Andrew Stewart leads this working group consisting of the seminary presidents/principals, which has developed—in conjunction with the Reformed Presbyterian seminaries and colleges—a “Model for Theological Education” within RP Churches. (This is appended for your review and approval by RPCI, RPCNA, and RPCS; it has been agreed with suggestions by RPCA.)

**Former Mission Fields**—Rev. Professor Robert McCollum, with input from others in the global RP church, is continuing his work of compiling information about past RP Mission works. This material, which shows the extent of the vision and mission work of the RP Church in previous generations, will then be posted on the RPGA website.

**Missions**—Due to changes in personnel, no working group activity took place in 2019 and 2020. However, steps are being taken to engage with those around the world who desire to participate, and we will look forward next year to reporting on progress made.

**RP International Day of Prayer.** We are thankful for the encouragement received about the International Day for Prayer on October 4, 2020, which focused on new RP Church works around the world. The date for the next **RP International Day of Prayer will, God willing, be the Lord’s Day of October 3, 2021**, with the focus on RP Church in “East Asia.” Rev. Professor Robert McCollum is working with the RPCNA’s East Asia Commission to draft up-to-date and

sensitively-produced information for circulation to congregations to facilitate and encourage their participation.

**Mutual Eligibility.** The Committee did write to the Interchurch Committees (or the equivalent) of our member churches, to gather information on the practice of mutual eligibility in order to facilitate a better understanding of the rationale and operation of mutual eligibility in existing and emerging RP churches. However, we report that with the issues surrounding COVID-19, this matter has yet to be addressed.

**For Finance Committee consideration:** As per information provided in this report, the RPCNA's Representatives to the RPGA pass along this request—that the member churches/denominations contribute **60%** of the 2016 agreed formula, which stated that:

- member churches with 1-9 congregations will contribute \$1,000.00US
  - member churches with more than nine congregations will contribute \$1,000US, plus \$100US for each additional congregation.
- 60% for 2022 equates to: **RPCNA: 60% of \$10,500US = \$6,300US.**
- RPCA: 60% of \$1,000US = \$600US
  - RPCS: 60% of \$1,000US = \$600US
  - RPCI: 60% of \$4,200US = \$2,520US

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the RPGA member churches appoint the Lord's Day of **October 3, 2021** as an *RP International Day of Prayer* for the RP Church in East Asia.
2. That member churches review and approve the "*Model for Theological Education*."

*Yours in Christ, Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley, RPGA Advisory Committee Chairman*

**RP Global Alliance Accounts 2016-2018  
US Financial Statements 2016-2018**

| US Financial Statements 2016   |                   |                                   |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Income                         |                   | Expenses                          |                   |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2016     | \$0.00            | Travel: US to Scotland            | £1,249            |
| Loughbrickland RPC donation    | \$1,209.59        | Travel: Canada to Scotland        | £713.58           |
| RPCNA Contribution             | \$5,917.65        | Travel: Australia to US           | £2,070.00         |
| RPCA Contribution (AUD \$1308) | \$1,000.00        | Travel: Canada to US              | £283.65           |
|                                |                   | Travel: NI to US                  | \$1,331.29        |
|                                |                   | Website development & consulting  | \$2,414.61        |
|                                |                   | International Money Transfer Fees | \$65.00           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>            | <b>\$8,717.24</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>             | <b>\$8,127.24</b> |
|                                |                   | Balance as of 31/12/2016          | \$0.00            |

| <b>US Financial Statements 2017</b> |                   |                                   |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Income                              |                   | Expenses                          |                   |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2017          | \$0.00            | Travel: Canada to NI              | \$753.60          |
| RPCNA Contribution                  | \$7,749.65        | Travel: Australia to NI           | \$1,000.00        |
| RPCA Contribution (AUD \$1278.55)   | \$1,000.00        | Publicity Materials & Postage     | \$436.39          |
|                                     |                   | Website development               | \$6,473.00        |
|                                     |                   | International Money Transfer Fees | \$86.88           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                 | <b>\$8,749.65</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>             | <b>\$8,749.65</b> |
|                                     |                   | Balance as of 31/12/2017          | \$0.00            |

| <b>US Financial Statements 2018</b> |                    |                                   |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Income                              |                    | Expenses                          |                    |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2018          | \$0.00             | Travel: Australia to US           | \$1,454.75         |
| RPCA Contribution (AUD \$1308)      | \$1,000.00         | Website development               | \$450.00           |
| RPCNA Contribution                  | \$9,999.75         | RPCNA transfer to RPGA UK a/c     | \$9,055.00         |
|                                     |                    | International Money Transfer Fees | \$40.00            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                 | <b>\$10,999.75</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>             | <b>\$10,999.75</b> |
|                                     |                    | Balance as of 31/12/2018          | \$0.00             |

### **UK Financial Statements 2016-2018**

| <b>UK Financial Statement 2016</b> |                 |                                |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Income                             |                 | Expenses                       |                 |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2016         | £ 0.00          | Website domain & template      | £173.67         |
| RPCS contribution                  | £ 790.00        | Wages: Website content manager | £ 240.00        |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                | <b>£ 790.00</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>          | <b>£ 413.67</b> |
|                                    |                 | Balance as of 31/12/2016       | £ 376.33        |



| <b>UK Financial Statement 2017</b> |                   |                                |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Income                             |                   | Expenses                       |                   |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2017         | £ 376.33          | RPGA Website                   |                   |
| RPCS contribution                  | £ 750.00          | <i>Website domain</i>          | £ 100.08          |
|                                    |                   | <i>Stock photography</i>       | £ 88.77           |
|                                    |                   | <i>Capital Items</i>           | £ 588.00          |
|                                    |                   | <i>Email account (G-Suite)</i> | £ 94.40           |
|                                    |                   | <i>Website backup</i>          | £ 0.52            |
|                                    |                   |                                | £ 871.77          |
|                                    |                   | Let's Worship God Website      |                   |
|                                    |                   | <i>Website Hosting</i>         | £ 67.93           |
|                                    |                   | <i>Website design</i>          | £ 460.00          |
|                                    |                   |                                | £ 527.93          |
|                                    |                   | Travel: Scotland to NI         | £ 183.46          |
|                                    |                   | Meetings Hospitality           | £ 96.88           |
|                                    |                   | Publicity Materials            |                   |
|                                    |                   | & Postage                      | £ 200.76          |
|                                    |                   | Overpayment of expenses        | £ 1.95            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                | <b>£ 1,126.33</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>          | <b>£ 1,882.75</b> |
|                                    |                   | Balance as of 31/12/2017       | -£ 756.42         |

| <b>UK Financial Statement 2018</b> |                    |                                 |                   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Income                             |                    | Expenses                        |                   |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2018         | -£ 756.42          | RPGA Website                    |                   |
| RPCS contribution                  | £ 716.00           | <i>Website domain</i>           | £ 100.08          |
| Transfer from RPCNA                | £ 6,726.98         | <i>Website backup</i>           | £ 1.79            |
| RPCI contribution                  | £ 2,805.00         | <i>Email account (G-Suite)</i>  | £ 100.27          |
| RPCI contribution (2017)           | £ 2,805.00         | <i>Website template support</i> | £ 100.79          |
|                                    |                    |                                 | £ 302.93          |
|                                    |                    | Travel:                         |                   |
|                                    |                    | <i>NI to Canada</i>             | £ 487.30          |
|                                    |                    | <i>Scotland to Canada</i>       | £ 615.16          |
|                                    |                    |                                 | £ 1,102.36        |
|                                    |                    | Wages (including back pay)      |                   |
|                                    |                    | <i>Website news manager</i>     | £ 4,920.00        |
|                                    |                    | <i>Web. content manager</i>     | £ 2,760.00        |
|                                    |                    |                                 | £ 7,680.00        |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                | <b>£ 13,052.98</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>           | <b>£ 9,085.29</b> |
|                                    |                    | Balance as of 31/12/2018        | £ 3,211.27        |

Prepared by Rev. Bill Matthes

Reviewed and found correct by Rev. Joel Loughridge

### RP Global Alliance Accounts 2019

| US Financial Accounts 2019 |          |                                    |          |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Income                     |          | Expenses                           |          |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2019 | \$0.00   | RPGA Website                       |          |
| RPCNA contribution         | \$509.50 | Website template support           | \$261.00 |
|                            |          | Development--multilingual features | \$208.50 |
|                            |          |                                    | \$469.50 |
|                            |          | International Money Transfer Fees  | \$40.00  |
| TOTAL INCOME               | \$509.50 | TOTAL EXPENSES                     | \$509.50 |
|                            |          | Balance as of 31/12/2019           | \$0.00   |

| UK Financial Statement 2019 |            |                            |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Income                      |            | Expenses                   |            |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2019  | £ 3,211.27 | RPGA Website               |            |
|                             |            | Website domain & hosting   | £ 0.00     |
|                             |            | Website backup             | £ 4.06     |
|                             |            | Email account (G-Suite)    | £ 82.57    |
|                             |            | Website template support   | £100.79    |
|                             |            |                            | £ 86.63    |
|                             |            | Travel                     | £ 0.00     |
|                             |            | Wages (including back pay) |            |
|                             |            | Website news manager       | £1,370.00  |
|                             |            | Web. content manager       | £1,564.00  |
|                             |            |                            | £2,934.00  |
| TOTAL INCOME                | £0.00      | TOTAL EXPENSES             | £ 3,020.63 |
|                             |            | Balance as of 31/12/2019   | £ 190.64   |

### RP Global Alliance Accounts 2020

| US Financial Accounts 2020 |             |                                   |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Income                     |             | Expenses                          |             |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2020 | \$0.00      | RPGA Website                      |             |
| RPCNA contribution         | \$11,331.47 | Maintenance                       | \$494.40    |
|                            |             | International Money Transfer Fees | \$40.00     |
|                            |             | Transfers to RPGA UK              | \$5,000     |
|                            |             | Travel                            | \$3,612.02  |
|                            |             | Wages                             | \$2,185.05  |
| TOTAL INCOME               | \$11,331.47 | TOTAL EXPENSES                    | \$11,331.47 |
|                            |             | Balance as of 31/12/2020          | \$0.00      |

| UK Financial Statement 2019                          |                  |                                         |                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Income                                               |                  | Expenses                                |                   |
| Opening Balance 01/01/2020                           | £ 190.64         | RPGA Website                            |                   |
| RPCNA contribution (2019)<br>(USD \$750; AUD \$1083) | £ 553.45         | Website domain & hosting                | £362.28           |
| Transfer from RPCNA                                  | £3,764.78        | Website backup                          | £ 4.61            |
| Duplicate payment correction                         | £137.50          | Email account (G-Suite)                 | £ 163.22          |
| RPCS Contribution<br>(2019) (USD \$1,000)            | £779.90          | Travel                                  | £ 28.00           |
| RPCS Contribution<br>(2020) (USD \$1,000)            | £764.70          | Wages (including back pay)              |                   |
| RPCI Contribution (2019)                             | £2,800.00        | Website news manager                    | £1,935.00         |
|                                                      |                  | Web. content manager                    | £1,568.00         |
|                                                      |                  | Duplicate payment error                 | £137.50           |
|                                                      |                  | Day of Prayer publicity                 | £365.41           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                                  | <b>£8,800.33</b> | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                   | <b>£ 4,564.02</b> |
|                                                      |                  | Balance as of 31/12/2020                | £4,426.95         |
| <b>Total Income + Opening balance</b>                | <b>£8,900.97</b> | <b>Total Expenses + Closing balance</b> | <b>£8,990.97</b>  |

Note: Remainder of RPCA 2019 contribution is held in RPCA account (USD \$250) along with 2020 contribution (USD \$1,000).

*Prepared by Rev. Joel Loughridge*

*Reviewed and found correct by Elizabeth McDonnell (Trinity RPCI)*

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## A Reformed Presbyterian Model for Theological Education

By: Vince Ward

For: Reformed Presbyterian Theological Colleges Working Group, an initiative of the Reformed Presbyterian Global Alliance (RPGA)

October 9, 2018

Our world is changing at a pace none can keep up with. What is new and innovative today will soon be obsolete. What do we have in this world which will never change or expire and will speak to every culture and person in history? It is God’s inerrant and infallible Word. In whatever form it is communicated— orally, on a page, or a screen—the Word of the Lord will stand forever.

Ministers of the gospel are entrusted with the great responsibility of preaching the whole counsel of God and contending for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). Anyone who aspires to the office of a teaching elder must be a faithful steward. How can men who are called to be ministers of the gospel be thoroughly equipped for faithful and fruitful service?

This paper seeks to set forth “a vision and model for theological education in established centres and possible new fields.”<sup>1</sup> This model must hold fast to the biblical principles and practices of theological education which are presently found in the Reformed Presbyterian institutions of learning. But how can we refine the paradigm to be more effective and efficient in training men for gospel ministry in order to meet present and future needs?

We must look to the past, to our Master himself, who in his sovereign authority, commissions us to disciple nations teaching them to obey his every command (Matthew 28:18-20). We must earnestly guard the good deposit entrusted to us (2 Timothy 1:14), preaching Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), and his crown rights as mediatorial King over Church and State (Psalm 2).

We will stand on the shoulders of our Covenanter brethren who spilled their blood proclaiming Christ, Zion’s only King and Head. As a confessional and covenanting Church, we seek to extend the blessing of Christ’s Kingdom to all nations by working as one Reformed Presbyterian Global Alliance with a vision and framework to train and send out a host of laborers into the Lord’s harvest.

### **Reformed Presbyterian Models for Theological Education**

The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS) has not strayed from teaching God’s truth for over two centuries. The purpose of the Master of Divinity program is to prepare men for the gospel ministry. While living in a community with accountability, students are trained and mentored by shepherds and teachers. Upon successful completion, a student will be able to: interpret the Scriptures in the original languages and understand the Reformed faith while stressing Christ’s Kingship over every area of life; understand the principles of the mission of the Church; understand and implement the spiritual disciplines necessary for the gospel ministry and perform the duties of an ordained minister according to the Scriptures and our subordinate standards.<sup>2</sup> As with other RP theological institutions, a Board elected by the Synod provides close oversight to guard and guide the seminary to remain doctrinally sound.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, the **Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (SRPTS)** seeks to not only train men for the ministry but also in ministry. They seek to achieve this by providing students daily scheduled time in reading of God’s Word and prayer. They also receive personal mentoring so that they might learn how they are to pastor the flock of Christ toward personal growth in grace and active participation in the body life of the Church. For the faculty,

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1 From the minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Colleges Working Group which met on September 21, 2017.

2 Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary: Academic Catalog 2016-2017. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

3 *To God Alone be Glory*. RPTS Press, Pittsburgh, 2008.

the training of men is “much more than the communication of doctrine. It must have at its heart the Biblical practices of discipling and mentoring.”<sup>4</sup>

The **Reformed Theological College (RTC) in Belfast, Northern Ireland** likewise “focuses not only on encouraging a high level of scholarship but on personal godliness and the development of spiritual gifts and ministry skills.”<sup>5</sup> As the College is also under the oversight of the Irish Synod, a special Synodical committee was formed in 2012 which considered “how the selection of candidates for the ministry could and might be improved.” The committee stressed that the primary responsibility of selection resides with the Session of the local congregation to evaluate the personal graces, gifts, and godliness of the candidate. A list of questions was drawn up for the Session to use in the selection process of prospective candidates for the College.<sup>6</sup>

**Ottawa Theological Hall (OTH) in Canada** is a small church-based seminary which seeks to prepare men for the ministry in the context of the Canadian church. The courses are taught by local and visiting professors during non-office hours so that students can continue with their daytime employment. OTH also seeks to integrate theological education into the practical life of the church so that gifts can be evaluated and refined for ministry.<sup>7</sup>

The **Kobe Theological Hall (KTH) in Japan** endeavors to equip church officers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Japan by training men with sound biblical and Reformed Presbyterian theology. Considering the Japanese historical and cultural context, KTH particularly wishes to emphasize the “freedom of faith under the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ in view of the Kingdom of God in Japan.”<sup>8</sup>

Each of these institutions, and others in Asia and Africa, has tailored their paradigm to the context in which they are training men for the ministry. While adaptability is vital to each setting, can a unified model emerge from a study of Scripture and the lessons learned from the present institutions?

### **Toward a Reformed Presbyterian Model**

The need for theological education is reaching crisis levels as Christianity’s center has moved from the North to the South with the Church growing ex-

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4 Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Seminary Prospectus. Retrieved from <http://www.scottishreformedpresbyterianseminary.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/10/SRPTS-prospectus-2013.pdf>

5 Prospectus for intake beginning 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.rpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/RTC-prospectus.pdf>

6 Report of Special Synod Committee re: Student Oversight. Request from Robert McCollum: [robertmccollum@btopenworld.com](mailto:robertmccollum@btopenworld.com)

7 For more information on Ottawa Theological Hall: [rpcottawa.org/connect/oth](http://rpcottawa.org/connect/oth)

8 Kobe Theological Hall: Objectives. Retrieved from <http://www.rpjapan.org/English/KTH/>

ponentially in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.<sup>9</sup> As new opportunities open for Reformed Presbyterian church planting around the globe, our model for theological education should continue to be refined and be made available and adaptable to any context.

The letters to the first churches (especially Ephesians) and the officers of the churches (Timothy and Titus) all provide biblical principles in theological training. At its core, the strategy was rooted in the life and ministry of local churches in which “gifted men” (Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 2:2) entrusted the gospel ministry to other faithful men to establish yet more churches. This reproductive process is exemplified as Paul trained his disciples in the Hall of Tyrannus so that within two years all of Asia Minor heard the Word of the Lord (Acts 19:7-10). The seven churches established in Asia Minor (Revelation 2:1-3:22) are evidence of the church planting strategy launched from Ephesus.

The context in which ministers of the gospel were prepared was the planting and establishing of local churches. The multiplication of churches was built on the multiplication of disciples and leaders.<sup>10</sup> Those who are proven faithful and gifted in the ministry of the church will best be equipped for leadership while continuing to serve the church. The more the training is grounded in real life ministry the greater the potential for growth in convictions, character, and competence. The ultimate goal in the equipping process is to thoroughly furnish men for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and set them on a path of lifelong learning of wisdom.

Timothy is an example of a man who was thoroughly trained in the gospel throughout his life. From childhood, Timothy was acquainted with the Holy Scriptures through the instruction of his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). The brothers in the church of Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him encouraging Paul to take him along in the church planting ministry (Acts 16:1-3). Later, Paul wrote a personal letter to Timothy, his “true child in the faith,” to not neglect the gift he received when the elders had laid their hands on him (1 Timothy 4:14). In Paul’s farewell letter, Timothy was charged to entrust the gospel ministry to a third generation of ministers (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

We could make a case, in observing the example of Timothy, that there were three levels of discipleship. The first level was foundational discipleship in his youth, the second level was through practical ministry of church planting, and the third level was participation in the preparation of men for the ordained ministry, leading into faithful and fruitful gospel ministries.





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9 Status of Global Christianity, 2017, in the context of 1900 - 2050. Retrieved from <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/research/documents/StatusofGlobalChristianity2017.pdf>

10 Ott, C. & Wilson, G. (2011). *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*. (pp.352-3). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

The following Table provides a framework and objectives for each Level (Tracks) in a church-based discipleship and theological education model.<sup>11</sup>

Table 1

| Phases                                             | Evangelize (E1)                                                                                                | Establish (E2)                                                                                                                | Equip (E3)                                                                                                                      | Extend (E4)                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Picture                                            | <br>Seed                      | <br>Roots                                    | <br>Fruit                                      | <br>More Seeds                                                          |
| <b>LEVEL 1</b><br>Discipleship Track               | Sowing the seed of the gospel (evangelizing) and prepare people for baptism/membership (Acts 16:31; Mark 1:15) | Establishing every new believer in the gospel through a life of loving obedience to Jesus Christ (1 John 5:3; Colossians 2:7) | Equipping every disciple for works of service so that the Church of Jesus Christ may grow in unity and love (Ephesians 4:11-16) | Multiplying the seed of the gospel through a healthy exercising of gifts given to each part in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7) |
| Spiritual Maturity                                 | Infant                                                                                                         | Youth                                                                                                                         | Adult                                                                                                                           | Parent                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>LEVEL 2</b><br>Church Planting or Renewal Track | Evangelizing within the church, locally and through social networks                                            | Establishing new believers through the Discipleship Track                                                                     | Equipping the leaders in ministry teams (fruitful laborers) and officers in the church. (Elders & Deacons)                      | Extending the gospel ministry to new fields near and far repeating the process (Level 1 & 2)                                                             |
| Church Planting Phases                             | Fellowship Church                                                                                              | Mission Church                                                                                                                | Organized Church                                                                                                                | Reproducing Church                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>LEVEL 3</b><br>Minister Training Track          | Thorough training to apply the gospel to self and others (life & doctrine)                                     | Grounding through theological studies, character formation and practical application                                          | Comprehensive equipping for the ordained ministry of the Word and Prayer                                                        | Multiplying faithful and fruitful laborers for Kingdom service                                                                                           |
| Presbytery Licensure                               | Session commending men Presbytery approving                                                                    | License to Preach                                                                                                             | License to Receive a Call & Ordination                                                                                          | Examining Students Reproducing Ministers                                                                                                                 |

### Principles toward a unified Reformed Presbyterian Model

As a summary, the following are principles to guide us toward a unified model for theological education in Reformed Presbyterian churches around the globe.

**Context:**

- The best context for preparing men for gospel ministry is training in a setting similar to future ministry (Examples: rural vs. urban, type of mission field, etc.).
- Making full use of available technologies and flexibility with the hours

<sup>11</sup> The Discipleship track is the foundational level of discipleship from the spiritual maturity of an infant in Christ to a reproducing disciple-maker (<http://theonetwork.org/the-core.html> provides a basic curriculum for this level of discipleship). The second track is for those who would be part of a church planting effort. The objectives would be the same for those seeking to bring renewal in an existing church. The third track is for men called to the gospel ministry beginning with the screening from the session, coming under care of Presbytery, completing the theological studies and licensure examinations toward ordination. The goal for those called to the office of elders is to reproduce more disciples and officers for the building up of the church to the glory of God.

and venues for instruction can allow for more time to practically apply learning objectives.

**Curriculum:**

- There must be a balance in the core curriculum and electives toward the development of biblical convictions (head), godly character (heart), and ministry competencies (hands).
- Assessments are valuable to measure growth regularly in each of these areas through various forms of examination and mentor evaluation in personal godliness and competencies. Self-evaluation and personal reflection (journaling) is also vital for growth in grace.
- Training should be customized as much as possible to the individual in preparing them for their unique calling. This can be achieved through specialized learning-by-doing and learning-by-teaching practicums followed up by reflection and evaluation.

**Structure:**

- The theological institutions assume a supportive role to the denomination by providing expertise and resources in teaching, mentoring and coaching.
- Denominational seminaries (eg. RPTS) can serve as the central hub for a network of smaller centers in order that cohorts of students may gather for instruction, accountability and mentoring. The goal is to have every student to be surrounded by an abundance of counselors (Proverbs 11:14).


**Oversight:**

- The local church Session assesses and commends the students for theological education, and continues to maintain oversight of the spiritual welfare of the student and his family.
- The Presbytery shepherds and oversees students-under-care during their theological studies toward ordination.
- The denominational Board provides accountability for the theological institution to remain faithful to the Word of God.
- As well as serving in a local congregation a minister must be able to work constructively within the courts of the Church for the good of the wider Church. This is another reason why training received by a central institution plays an important role in Theological Education.

The table on the following page outlines the content to a core curriculum for the training of ministers in biblical convictions (head), godly character (heart), and ministry competencies (hands). (Note: This is an expansion of Table 1: Level 3: E2-E3)



**Table 2**

| <b>Convictions</b>                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Head</b><br>    | <b>Theological Education (Academic Training in wisdom and lifelong learning)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biblical Theology</li> <li>2. Systematic Theology I</li> <li>3. Covenant Theology</li> <li>4. Shorter and Larger Catechism</li> <li>5. History I</li> <li>6. Greek I &amp; Hebrew I</li> <li>7. Hermeneutics</li> <li>8. Homiletics I</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Old &amp; New Testament Biblical Studies</li> <li>2. Systematic Theology II</li> <li>3. WCF and Constitution</li> <li>4. History II</li> <li>5. Greek II &amp; Hebrew II</li> <li>6. Homiletics II</li> <li>7. Counseling I</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greek &amp; Hebrew III</li> <li>2. Homiletics III</li> <li>3. Counseling II</li> <li>4. RP History</li> <li>5. WCF &amp; Constitution Review</li> <li>6. Electives related to ministry: Misisions, Church Planting, Chaplains, etc..)</li> </ol> |
| <b>Presbytery Exams</b>                                                                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Godliness</li> <li>2. English Bible</li> <li>3. Expository Sermon</li> <li>4. Systematic Theology</li> <li>5. Church History Paper</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of pastoral &amp; evangelistic gifts</li> <li>2. Systematic Theology Expository Sermon</li> <li>3. Church History</li> <li>4. Exegesis Paper</li> </ol>                                                                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Godliness</li> <li>2. Expository Sermon</li> <li>3. Soundness in the faith</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Licensure</b>                                                                                    | Toward Eligibility to preach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Toward Eligibility for a call                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Toward Ordination and Installation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Character</b>                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Heart</b><br>   | <b>Personal Godliness (Training by self-examination &amp; disciplines with mentoring/coaching)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mentors assess student/semester:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Godliness Assessment</li> <li>• Gift Assessment.</li> <li>• Ministry Assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. The Gospel and Sanctification</li> <li>3. Spiritual Disciplines</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Competencies</b>                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Hands</b><br> | <b>Pastoral Ministry (Training by doing with mentoring/coaching):</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preaching: Sermon preparation and preaching with evaluations</li> <li>2. Counseling: Observing counseling, assisting in counseling and leading in counseling with evaluation</li> <li>3. Evangelism/Apologetics: Training in various venues and people (with study and evaluation)</li> <li>4. Discipleship: Small group and one-on-one discipleship (training and leading with evaluation)</li> <li>5. Marriage &amp; Parenting: Study and mentoring with evaluations</li> <li>6. Diaconal ministry: Study and service with deacons,</li> <li>7. Missions: Study with Cross-cultural mission trip with reflection/evaluation</li> <li>8. Administration: Church administration (writing, speaking, budgets, etc...)</li> <li>9. Church polity: Attending session meetings, Presbytery/Synod (with reference to Constitution)</li> </ol> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

There will always be some tension in striving to maintain the balance between local and central training. We need both. Central training provides an opportunity to develop collegiality and a sense of common denominational identity, as well as allowing instruction from and interaction with specialists. Local training does not uproot students and their families from the field, keeps them focused on disciple-making in the church and provides the context for the development of convictions, character, and competencies. Both local church-based training centres and central theological institutions must learn to share their strengths while working together toward the common goal to make disciple-makers, plant reproducing churches, and multiply ministers.

These principles will help guide theological institutions as they seek to offer accessible training to gospel laborers near and far. There isn't a mould that fits in all places, but we can strive for a model which can be adapted to all contexts. Let us seek to refine our paradigm in order to prepare ministers of the gospel and to establish Reformed Presbyterian churches in strategic centers so that all may hear the Word of the Lord.

*"The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." 1 Peter 1:25*

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**Church History Committee Report (presented by Mr. Joe Rizzo); after comments on the full report, Recommendation 1 was taken up; moved, seconded, to change the term *ex officio* to advisory; withdrawn. The original version of Recommendation 1 carried and so the RPTS Librarian is now to be an *ex officio* member of the Church History Committee). Recommendation 2 carried. Report as a whole was received. The Court was reminded of the substantial labors of Mr. Nathaniel Pockras in the area of church history, and we were urged to make practical our gratitude for his useful work.**

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### **Report of the Church History Committee to the 2021 Synod**

Dear Fathers and Brothers: Due to the pandemic, the Church History committee did not have formal meetings during 2020, but had many email interactions. We were able to meet again in early 2021, with one of our primary concerns being the maintenance and improvement of the Archives, located at RPTS. To this end, we are pursuing an arrangement with RPTS that would allow us to take advantage of the services of one of their new employees, Josh Meneely, as a part-time archivist.

As the new circulation librarian, Josh will report to the seminary librarian, Jordan Feagley, and dedicate five hours each week to support the archives room. Josh is a lifelong member of the RP Church and currently serves as a deacon at Covenant Fellowship RPC. As a graduate of Geneva College (B.A. in His-

tory), his experience includes employment with the Beaver Area Heritage Museum, Carnegie Art Museum, and the Carnegie Library System. He will shortly begin a Masters in Library Science with a focus on archive work, which we trust will greatly enhance the operations of our archive. The committee would provide \$5,000 per year in exchange for these services.

We recognize that the preservation of and access to so many valuable records of our church's history has largely been the result of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer work over many years. The committee especially thanks John Mitchell and Ralph Joseph for their ongoing service to the committee, and by adding Josh to the team, we hope to ensure that the efforts of these tireless volunteers are firmly established for years to come. We further believe that his work will facilitate the addition of future volunteers to assist the archives, even without the benefit of specialized training. Adding an individual with archives training, even for just 5 hours per week, will simplify donation processing and should allow us to improve the collection's cataloguing. This enhanced discoverability will increase the collection's frequency of use, both by RPTS affiliates and by outside researchers.

We are excited about the potential of an increasingly accessible archive to generate fresh studies into our denominational history. Dr. Whitla continues to open the archive to seminary students who are utilizing its resources to write research papers for a number of courses. The CHC is grateful for a partnership with the seminary, which will enable the next generation of RP pastors both to learn about RP history and to do the work of historians, "bringing out of the storehouse things old and new." For example, this past year the location of the archive in Rutherford Hall has enabled students from the Midwest to easily access minutes of the Cache Creek (Indian Mission) session while exploring cross-cultural missions, and a student from East Asia to access a rare Chinese translation of J.G. Vos's history of the RPC, his original letters from the Manchurian mission in the 1930s, and a trove of photographic material to illustrate his study. These are just the first examples of the archive being used functionally, but with the addition of a part-time archivist, we are hopeful that there will be many more such examples, benefiting the RP family around the world. We especially commend to you Faith Martin and Charles McBurney's important new work, *The White Chief of Cache Creek* (C&C, 2021), not only as a major historical study and contribution to our denominational story but particularly as a first-fruits and example of how our archive could be (and should be) used in years to come if properly catalogued, organized, and made accessible to scholars both inside and outside the church. Denominational and congregational histories, histories of missions, family genealogical studies, local histories, trans-Atlantic Ulster-Scots studies, theological studies of RP distinctives—all these and more

are awaiting further exploration. It is CHC's long-term vision for the archive to become increasingly accessible for such projects.

The Church History Committee would also like to highlight that 2021 marks the 150th anniversary of the Covenant of 1871. It is our hope to mark this milestone at least in a small way this year by a number of articles in the *RP Witness*. We encourage members and congregations to read and reflect on this part of our history and how we can continue to live out this Covenant.

Crown & Covenant has now published an electronic edition of the directory of Synod actions compiled by committee member Nathaniel Pockras; it is accessible through [http://rparchives.org/data/Complete%20Digest%20&%20Index/Complete\\_Digest\\_and\\_Index.pdf](http://rparchives.org/data/Complete%20Digest%20&%20Index/Complete_Digest_and_Index.pdf). Additionally, he is working to create a fifth volume of minister sketches, following those written by W. M. Glasgow (1888), O. F. Thompson (1930), A. W. Smith (1963), and C. R. McBurney (1993). Please help him in this work as he contacts you to gather information.

The Committee is interested in and expecting to engage in future collaborative work with the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland and Church History Committee of the RPC of Ireland to digitize the Irish *Covenanter* magazine (edited by Thomas Houston of Knockbracken, 1803-82), which contains extensive theological and historical material valuable to researchers, students, and the church as a whole. We have compiled a complete set of this scarce publication between our three respective archives and look forward to making it available within a year, Lord-willing. Additionally, we have recently been contacted by the Ulster Heritage Foundation and RPCI Church History Committee to collaborate on another significant milestone—the 250th anniversary of the arrival of William Martin and 450 families of Irish Covenanters in South Carolina in 1772. Joint publications, a conference, and commemoration events have been proposed, but the CHC's time and resources are extremely limited. Now and in the years ahead the committee will need increased Synod funding and personnel in order to support the physical archives, digital archives, and our ability to collaborate on special projects and events like these.

All this must begin with finding the staff. For years, John Mitchell and Ralph Joseph have appealed for help in their archive work, and we are pleased that the Lord has provided Josh Meneely. The new partnership with the seminary library has led us to propose the addition of the seminary librarian as a permanent *ex officio* member of our Committee. In addition, we will continue to depend on the labors of a dedicated team of regular volunteer staff (John, Ralph, and others). As previously intimated, as we build on this foundation the scope to engage in exciting research projects will increase, and to that end we anticipate requesting Synod to nominate additional members to our Committee in the years ahead. Please talk to a Committee member if this is something that sounds interesting to you!

**Finance:** The Church History Committee asks for up to \$10,000 for our work in 2022.

**Nominations:** Joseph Rizzo is willing to be elected for another six-year term (2027).

**Recommendations:**

1. That the RPTS Librarian be made an *ex officio* member of the Church History Committee.
2. That Synod commend the current project to publish an updated history of the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and urge ministers to furnish material for this project upon request.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Nathaniel Pockras

*Joseph Rizzo (Chairman)*  
David Whitla

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**CASA Report (Central & South Americas Committee), presented by Chm. Steve Bradley. After summarizing the report, Recommendation 1 was taken up; motion to refer this back to Committee (seconded and carried). Recommendations 2 and 3 for Nominating; report received.**

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### **Central & South America (CASA) Committee & Chile Commission — Report to Synod, 2021**

Your Committee and Commission offer the following updates on the work we have accomplished over the past couple of years.

Despite the issues we have all had to face with the onset of COVID-19, we are pleased to inform the court of some of the ways the Lord has been pleased to bless our labors.

First, your Commission is very happy to report that we were able to establish the work in Chile as a Mission Church. It is with great joy and thanksgiving we inform you of the establishment of Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Lo Prado in Santiago, Chile. Pastor Sanchez faithfully serves the flock there as the church-planter.

Given that Pastor Sanchez is a teaching elder in the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA) and that the formal duties and responsibility of establishing new churches belong to the presbytery, your commission decided it would be wise to petition the POA to take the work under its care and to establish a TGB to oversee it. The petition was met with favor and is now a work of the POA. In light of your commission having accomplished its task of establishing the mission church there, and POA having agreed to receive Lo Prado as a congregation of that presbytery, this commission respectfully requests its dissolution by Synod. To be clear, its members will continue to serve on the CASA Committee.

As for the work of the Committee, we have continued to have communica-

tion with various people throughout Central and South America. We have met and continue to interact with a pastor in Brazil who is involved with a small group of other like-minded Reformed/Confessional pastors who are looking to become part of a solid denomination. Please pray for reform among the churches in Brazil.

We continue to encourage and support our brethren in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bolivia. During spring 2020, Pastor Sanchez was invited by Pastor Cristian Vila to give lectures on Christ's Mediatorial Kingship and its application to the state, church, and family. In September of the same year, Edgar Ibarra was also invited to give a lecture on the Second Coming of Christ via Zoom from Matthew 25:1-13.

Your committee is grateful for the support of our labors. Last year, an article was written about our work in the *RP Witness*, and we are very thankful for the labors of Mary Brown to this end. We are also very thankful to all who graciously answered the financial request to help us provide the funds to reunite a family member from Venezuela with her daughter in Chile.

Back in June of last year, we regretfully received Pastor David Reese's resignation from our committee and commission. We wish to express our deep thanks to him for his work and counsel in the time he has served the Lord and His Kingdom with us. Pastor Bradley has also indicated his intention for this meeting of Synod to signify the completion of his term of service on the Committee for which he has been very happy to serve over the years.

In conclusion, there remains much work to be done in our interactions with folks in Central and South America. Please continue to pray for our labors and to also prayerfully consider serving on this Committee.

**Recommendations:**

1. The dissolution of the Chile Commission.
2. Given the resignation of Pastor Reese from our committee, that Edgar Ibarra's position be changed from being a consultative member to being a full and regular member of the committee upon his ordination and installation as pastor of Las Vegas RPC (July 9, 2021).
3. That Pastor Bradley's position be filled at this meeting of Synod via the Nominating Committee.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Steve Bradley (chairman)*

*Marcelo Sanchez*

*Mark England*

*Edgar Ibarra (consultative)*

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***Vital Churches Committee***; the Court received a brief oral report by Steve Rockhill, committee member; his report was received.

***Communications #20-02 and #21-11: Japan Presbytery—Missions Philosophy, presented by JP Clerk Kihei Takiura virtually. Mr. Takiura withdrew #20-02***

to focus our attention on Communication #21-11 (Japan Presbytery re. GMB Missions Manual). This brief paper asks the Synod to add a paragraph and to change another one in the RPGM Missions Manual. General discussion ensued. Recommendation 1 (Add a new paragraph to the second section, The Great Commission, as follows: "2.3 We understand the Commission [i.e., the Great Commission] to be directing us toward forming churches by baptism and the steady teaching of the whole counsel of God.") was taken up; discussion ensued. It was moved and seconded to refer this recommendation to RPGM. It was moved and seconded, to amend this motion, to include reference also to JP, to discuss with RPGM (thus, to refer this recommendation to RPGM and JP for discussion). This motion to amend carried and then the amended motion carried.

Recommendation 2 (Change the first paragraph of the seventh section, Development and Organization of Indigenous Churches, as follows: "7.1. It is the goal of this Board, as with the RPCNA Synod, to see the development of indigenous churches, which are substantially self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. This goal should be realized when significant enough development of congregations and elders committed to the doctrines and practices of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches can lead to the creation of a Reformed Presbyterian daughter denomination. To that end, the constitution of such a denomination occurs upon the recommendation of the GMB and the agreement of both the Synod of the RPCNA and the indigenous church."). It was moved and seconded to refer this recommendation to RPGM, with the understanding that they will interact with the JP. It was moved and seconded, to amend this motion, to include reference also to JP, to discuss with RPGM (so, to refer this recommendation to RPGM and JP for discussion). A challenge to the ruling of the parliamentarians was upheld by the moderator, so Mr. Takiura may speak again about this amendment. This motion to refer as amended carried and then the amended motion carried. The Report (both communications) was received.

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## Communication # 20-2: JP Mission Principles

*Japan Presbytery Communication re. clarification of RP mission principle  
to 2020 Synod*

03/26/2020

1. **History:** The Global Missions Board (GMB) and the Home Mission Board (HMB) submitted their Joint Statement at 2018 Synod and its recommendations are below:
  - i. That Synod commit to planting national or regional presbyteries in other nations rather than presbyteries of the RPCNA.

- ii. That the Japan Presbytery be organized as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Japan at some agreeable time between now and 2025 when their RPGM reducing aid is scheduled to terminate.
- iii. That the RPCNA's boundaries be defined as including only Canada and the U.S. once the organization of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Japan occurs.
- iv. That the jurisdiction of each board be defined as follows: HMB to include works in Canada and the U.S. only; GMB to have jurisdiction in all other areas of the globe.

It seems that the aim of this proposal is to make the borders of RPCNA clear, to not make presbyteries which are not in the U.S. or Canada under RPCNA, and to lighten the increasing burdens of GMB and help it focus on mission fields which need more attention.

As response, Japan Presbytery submitted *Special Resolution* to the 2018 Synod and part of the recommendation is below:

- i. The Synod acknowledges that it lacks constitutional authority to unilaterally remove any presbytery from ecclesiastical fellowship except in the exercise of formal discipline.

In 2018, Synod decided that Joint Statement of GMB and HMB be laid on the table, and in 2019, Synod voted down the proposal to take it up. 2019 Synod returned JP's communication about clarification of RP mission principle to JP, directing it to prepare concrete recommendations, get review from GMB and HMB, and re-submit to 2020 Synod.

2. *Japan Presbytery's understanding of RP mission policy:*

- (1) RPCNA is to adhere to *presbyterianism* being subject to Christ's Kingship with regard to its mission policy, and is to honor the principle of international church as may be found in the Form of Presbyterianial Church Government of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.
  - i. What is meant by "international church" does not mean two opposite extremes: one is found in the joint recommendation from GMB/HMB to the 2018 Synod where RPCNA's boundary is limited within the USA and Canada, and the other is to expand RPCNA to all five continents.
  - ii. The current GMB Manual does allow the existence of international presbyteries as a process of development, and this flexible principle should be maintained.
- (2) RPCNA should not make its mission church independent at its immature stage. This is that which even John Nevius (known for his "Nevius Method") acknowledged in his writing. Mission policy should always be considered in light of our church constitution, by



which the time for independence ought to be decided. The criteria for independence is to include the following points at least:

- i. The translation and revision, if necessary, of RPCNA's **Constitution** into the language of the mission church and also the adoption of its own *Testimony*, which are to be based upon the Westminster Standards.
  - ii. Formation of certain numbers of congregations and the establishment of sound Presbyterian church polity.
  - iii. Formation of a synod or a presbytery.
- (3) RPCNA needs to re-examine the "Nevius Method" and also the mission policy based upon numerical growth in light of point numbers (1) and (2) above.
- (4) RPCNA needs to endeavor to maintain ties of international presbyterian unity with former mission churches even after their independence so as not to make them isolated, while sharing the Confessions and presbyterian church government.

**Recommendation:** That the Synod direct Japan Presbytery (JP), which understands RPCNA's mission policy as set forth above, to submit to the 2021 Synod the proposal of revision to Manual of the GMB of RPCNA, to clarify RPCNA's mission policy, while JP continues to discuss with GMB.

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### **Communication #21-11: JP re. GMB Missions Manual**

**Note:** *The Clerk of Synod received this document from the JP Clerk on May 10, 2021, with this explanation: "This communication about mission principles was finalized today at a meeting of the JP, and we are hereby submitting it to the 2021 Synod through you. ..."*

The Manual of the Global Mission Board (GMB) of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) guides the Board in its ministry under the direction of the Synod of the RPCNA. The Manual was last substantially modified (and shortened) in 2002, and the then Foreign Mission Board (FMB) asked the Synod of the RPCNA to approve this revision.

The Manual has since been modified slightly by the GMB from time to time. The Japan Presbytery would like to propose some additions to the Manual of the GMB to make certain matters clearer than they may have been hitherto.

One of the vexed questions in missiology for many years has been the question of when an indigenous church should be seen as mature and become organizationally independent from the sending church. The RPCNA, through its FMB and then GMB, has had to grapple with this question on several occasions.

As Presbyterians, we recognize that the authority of the church lies in its courts, while the boards and committees helpfully function to implement the witness of the church, whether in global missions or in other ministries. In light of this commitment, the Japan Presbytery requests the GMB to change its Manual, with the approbation of Synod, in the following two ways:

**Request 1:** Add a new paragraph to the 2nd section, The Great Commission, as follows:

2.3 We understand the Commission [i.e., the Great Commission] to be directing us toward forming churches by baptism and the steady teaching of the whole counsel of God.

**Request 2:** Change the first paragraph of the seventh section, Development and Organization of Indigenous Churches, as follows:

7.1. It is the goal of this Board, as with the RPCNA Synod, to see the development of indigenous churches, which are substantially self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. This goal should be realized when significant enough development of congregations and elders committed to the doctrines and practices of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches can lead to the creation of a Reformed Presbyterian daughter denomination. To that end, the constitution of such a denomination occurs upon the recommendation of the GMB and the agreement of both the Synod of the RPCNA and the indigenous church.

*Respectfully submitted, the Japan Presbytery*

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The Court enjoyed a refreshment break (10:00-10:17 a.m.). The Court resumed with the singing of Psalm 59B (with Mr. Will Mann presenting), and Mr. Drew Poplin prayed.

The Court returned to Communication #21-15: GLG—Smith and Atlanta TGB on Creation. Reminder: While discussing Recommendation 2, the Court voted to lay this recommendation on the table, to entertain this substitute: The Court declares that RPT 4.3 and 4.4 are essential to the Christian system of doctrine. A motion to amend was made and seconded, adding "... and that Synod declare that *Testimony* 4.3's definition of the theory of evolution includes theistic evolution." Moved and seconded, to lay this motion on the table, postponing the deliberation indefinitely; this requires a 2/3 vote. This motion failed. One of the judicial committees (out of the room) sent word asking the Court to pray for them in their challenging work, so the moderator led us in prayer (with the Court standing) for both of our remaining judicial committees. The motion to amend by adding a closing phrase carried.

So the substitute motion as amended came before the Court: "The Court declares that *RPT* 4.3 and 4.4 are essential to the Christian system of doctrine, and that Synod declare that *Testimony* 4.3's definition of the theory of evolution includes theistic evolution." Request for division; withdrawn. The amended motion carried. Motion, to receive the communication (thus printing it in our minutes); after voice vote and call for division by standing vote, failed (63 to 67).

The EA Commission Report was given orally by a commissioner. After comments and a request for the Court to pray for the church in EA, this oral report was received.

At 11:55 a.m., the moderator called for announcements. The Nominating Committee received permission to be absent from the early afternoon session, if needed. As the Court went to its lunch recess, they sang Psalm 29B, and Mr. Ross Cerbus prayed for us, EA, etc.



### ***Wednesday; June 16, 2021; 1:15 p.m.***

At 1:15 p.m., the Court resumed meeting with the singing of Psalm 104C and a prayer of reconvening by Mr. Timothy Buck. The attendance roll was passed. Synod's manager, a member of the Business of Synod Committee, sought counsel on the timing of future meetings of the RPCNA Synod. The Court sang "Happy Birthday" to Mr. Ed Blackwood!

Minutes of the Wednesday morning session were read and approved. Mr. Gary Gunn asked the Court to pray for a shared matter and Mr. Wade Mann asked us to pray for the hard working judicial committees. The moderator asked these two men to pray aloud for these matters and they did so, with the Court standing in agreement. It was then moved to recess the Court until 3:00 p.m.; seconded, and carried. The Court began its recess at 1:43 p.m.

The Court resumed meeting at 3:00 p.m., with the singing of Psalm 121C and a prayer of reconvening by Mr. Richard Blum. The Report of Judicial Committee #1 (pertaining to GLG and Mr. LeFebvre) presented their report via Chairman Daniel Howe. Mr. Howe read aloud the entire report as its text was projected for the delegates to read. After reading the report of 14 pages, the chairman asked Synod's moderator to lead the Court in prayer, which he did as the delegates stood with him. It was moved and seconded that the Court go into executive session; discussion; withdrawn. Discussion of the report as a whole ensued. Questions of judicial process were deliberated. During discussion a ruling of the moderator was challenged (that the review work of this judicial committee satisfies the mandate of the *BOD* that these

complaints must be heard by the full Synod or a commission empowered by it); the vote to sustain the moderator carried (98 to 42). Mr. Jon Hughes registered his dissent. The recommendations were taken up.

Recommendation 1: That the Synod substantiate Communications #20-03, #20-04, #20-05, and #20-09 as addressing matters of injustice and wrong on the part of the lower court (*BOD II.4.4, E-16*). [This means that members of GLG may not vote on Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.]. A motion from the floor was made and seconded, to lay this recommendation on the table, to entertain a substitute (to hear from the two parties in the conflict for fifteen minutes). A point of order was raised, that this substitute motion is a request for reconsideration, and this point of order was upheld by the moderator. A move to divide was made, so a separate vote will be held with regard to each communication. So Recommendation 1 with regard to Communication #20-03, carried (so the GLG delegates may not vote on Rec. 2). Recommendation 1 with regard to Communication #20-04, carried (so GLG delegates may not vote on Recommendations 3 and 4). Recommendation 1 with regard to Communication #20-05, carried (so GLG delegates may not vote on Recommendation 5 and 6). Recommendation 1 with regard to Communication #20-09, carried (so GLG delegates may not vote on Recommendation 8).

At 4:55 p.m., announcements were given, Mr. David Mauser prayed, the Court's annual photograph was taken, and they began to enjoy their dinner break.



### ***Wednesday; June 16, 2021; 6:15 p.m.***

The Synod Court resumed its deliberation at 6:15 p.m. with the singing of Psalm 147A. Mr. Dean McHenry reconvened the Court with prayer. The attendance roll was passed. The moderator informed the Court about agenda matters to be pursued this evening. Parliamentarians asked delegates to help them focus exclusively on actions of the Court. It was moved and seconded, that the Court extend the time for the evening session to conclude the Report of Judicial Committee #1; motion failed (standing vote, 53 to 57).

The Report of Judicial Committee #1 (pertaining to GLG and Mr. LeFebvre) continued with their report's remaining recommendations.

Recommendation 2 (that Synod not sustain the complaint of Communication #20-03). Discussion ensued. This recommendation carried.

Recommendation 3 (that Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-04). Discussion ensued. A motion to lay on the table (to entertain

a substitute motion) was moved and seconded (that the Synod NOT sustain the complaint of Communication #20-04); discussion ensued. The parliamentarians ruled the GLG delegates may not vote on this matter. The motion to substitute carried (by standing vote, 46 to 38). So the motion before Synod is: that the Synod NOT sustain the complaint of Communication #20-04. This recommendation carried (by standing vote, 51 to 46).

Recommendation 4 was ruled moot, per our vote on modified Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 5 (that Synod instruct GLG to appoint a two-man committee to communicate with Mr. LeFebvre and, if possible, shepherd him into membership in a true branch of the Visible Church). Discussion ensued. A motion was made and seconded to entertain a substitute, that we instruct the GLG to recall Mr. LeFebvre's credentials. The moderator judged that this substitute motion is out of order, because Recommendation 5 has to do with Mr. LeFebvre's church membership and not his credentials. The judgment of the moderator was challenged from the floor. This challenge of the moderator was upheld, so the motion to entertain a substitute is back before us. A point of order was raised to argue this substitute motion is out of order; in consultation with the parliamentarians, this point of order was upheld (the GLG action of giving Mr. LeFebvre his credentials may have been improper, but it is too late for us to recall his credentials). It was moved and seconded, to temporarily lay on the table this motion to substitute in order to take up Recommendation 6; this carried.

Recommendation 6 (that Synod not sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05). Discussion ensued. The Court reached several orders-of-the-day, so the deliberation of this recommendation is delayed, with Mr. Stivason having the floor.

At 8:23 p.m., the Nominating Committee (with Mr. J. Bruce Martin as chairman) provided to the Court a preliminary ballot, preparing us for elections Thursday morning.

At 8:36 p.m., Judicial Committee #2 (pertaining to GLG and Immanuel) Chairman John Edgar read their report. D.V., the Court will deliberate this on Thursday morning.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend our time thirty minutes, so to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. Mr. Ryan Hemphill asked personal privilege as Pacific Coast Presbytery clerk to update the Court on recent PCP matters pertaining to Mr. Bob Hackett.

At 8:58 p.m., Mr. Joe Allyn stood to read Isaiah 48:9-11 and 49:5-7 and to lead our prayer session focusing on the very challenging matters before us, along with the various missions and ministries of the church. Members of

the Court prayed. The Court sang Psalm 67C.

At 9:15 p.m., the Court returned to the report of Judicial Committee #1, looking at Recommendation 6 (that Synod not sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05). Mr. Jeff Stivason moved (and another seconded) to entertain a substitute, that Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05. The motion to entertain a substitute carried by majority vote, and so Mr. Stivason's motion is before us (that Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05). Discussion ensued. It was moved and seconded, that Synod entertain an amended motion (that the Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05, and formally admonish the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery for granting Mr. LeFebvre his credentials to himself, rather than transferring them to a particular denomination). The motion to amend was deliberated, and then it failed. Returning to Mr. Stivason's motion (that Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05), it was deliberated. Division was requested, but that was withdrawn. Tabled for time.

The order of the day was reached for evening adjournment; our manager gave announcements. Mr. Steven Work prayed to adjourn the Court for the night at 9:50 p.m.



***Thursday; June 17, 2021; 8:15 a.m.***

At 8:15 a.m., the moderator called Synod to order, shared an agenda plan for the morning, and introduced Pastor Daniel Howe who led in morning worship. Mr. Howe preached on the spiritual fruit of patience from Galatians 5, then closed our service in prayer. The Court sang Psalm 26A (with Mr. Trace Turner presenting). The moderator constituted the Court in prayer. The attendance roll was passed. In the absence of two of our parliamentarians, the moderator appointed for the day Mr. J. Bruce Martin and Mr. Matthew Sexton.

Minutes of the Wednesday afternoon and evening sessions were read, improved, and approved.

*Nominating Committee:* Delegates were informed that the online ballot is ready for their careful action. The chairman offered a Committee motion: that the Nominating Committee be made a six-man standing committee to be appointed by the moderator, with classes and three-year terms, so starting staggered; it is our desire that we begin this new practice at this Synod today. Carried. As delegates stood, Chairman Martin led in prayer about our voting to fill the vacancies on Synod's boards and committees. Delegates marked their electronic ballot-surveys. The Committee was excused to publish the results for us.

At 9:05 a.m., the Court returned to the Report of Judicial Committee #2 (pertaining to GLG and Immanuel). After preliminary remarks by the chairman, the Court took up Recommendation 1. We recommend [that the members of Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery have no "voice in the judgment" of the following recommendations of this case in accordance with BOD II.4.4 (E-16) because the complainants have substantiated injustice on the part of the lower court by (a) alleging injustice on the part of the lower court, and (b) supporting these allegations, not merely stating them baldly.]. Carried.

It was moved and seconded, that the Court go into executive session; deliberated; withdrawn.

Recommendation 2. We recommend [that Synod grant the complainants' request to remove the prosecutors, and instruct GLG to replace them with others not drawn from the IJC.]. Note: The IJC is the Immanuel Judicial Commission. A substitute motion was made, seconded, and discussed [(1) that Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, and Josh Reshey be removed as prosecutors in the IRPC case, but no other restriction be placed on their involvement in the case; (2) that Synod declare any member in good standing of the RPCNA not in the GLG be allowed to serve as prosecutors; (3) that Synod

recognize Kyle Borg and Joseph Friedly to be prosecutors.]. The motion to substitute carried by a standing vote, 55 to 34; so the substitute motion is before us. A challenge was upheld to argue that the Synod must assume original jurisdiction over a case before it appoints prosecutors.

It was moved and seconded, to lay on the table the substitution motion for Recommendation 2 in order to move to Recommendation 3; this motion carried.

Recommendation 3. We recommend [(3A) The presbytery proceed to trial with new prosecutors in place, OR (3B) the moderator of Synod appoint a seven-man judicial commission to sit in judgment on the cases. (N.B. 1) The prosecutor(s) appointed by the GLG shall not be chosen from the men who served on the IJC. (2) Defense shall be chosen by each defendant. (3) We believe that the members of your judicial committee should not be appointed to such a Synod judicial commission because we have heard testimony that may be inadmissible in a trial.]. Moved to amend, and then seconded, modifying "(3A) the presbytery proceed to pre-trial ..." Withdrawn.

Another friendly amendment was offered and seconded: "the presbytery proceed with the judicial process, with new prosecutors in place." Amendment carried. So the recommendation before us is now: We recommend [(3A) The presbytery proceed with the judicial process, with new prosecutors in place, OR (3B) the moderator of Synod appoint a seven-man judicial commission to sit in judgment on the cases. (N.B. 1) The prosecutor(s) appointed by the GLG shall not be chosen from the men who served on the IJC. (2) The defense shall be chosen by each defendant. (3) We believe that the members of your judicial committee should not be appointed to such a Synod judicial commission because we have heard testimony that may be inadmissible in a trial.)] Deliberation continued. The Judicial Committee asked for a standing straw poll to discern the preference of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery delegates between the two directions highlighted in this recommendation.

The Court enjoyed a 10-minute break for refreshment (10:20-10:30 a.m.).

The Judicial Committee moved this: Remove (3B); replace with: We recommend that Synod assume original jurisdiction in the matter of GLG and Immanuel, and the moderator appoint a seven-man judicial commission to address this matter. Discussion ensued. Carried. Notice that this implies (3A) is moot, an amended version of (3B) being favored instead.

Recommendation 4. [Given the gravity of the accusations against the IRPC elders, we recommend that Synod require them to refrain from the exercise of office until their case has been decided.] Discussion ensued. The



moderator ruled Recommendation 4 is premature and out of order, though possibly useful to the new judicial commission.

Recommendation 5 was withdrawn by the Committee.

Recommendation 6, that the judicial committee be dismissed, with our thanks; carried.

For background, the full six-page Report of Judicial Committee #2 is included here, along with Communications #21-16 (redacted) and #21-17; Communication #21-18 is available from the clerk.

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### **Report of the 2021 RPCNA Synod Special Judicial Committee to Address Communications #21-16, #21-17, #21-18**

Your committee labored continuously over the past two days processing and grieving along the way. We have read documents, spent 11.5 hours interviewing involved parties (a total of fifteen individuals, five of whom represented the complainants), and then come to agreement. We begin with three points we wish to impress upon Synod: (1) This is an incredibly complex case, with many parties, many relationships, many layers, events occurring at one time and coming to light later, at different times for different parties. It is our strong opinion that the full adjudication of this matter should not be done on the floor of Synod at any time. (2) This is a very grievous case, in which multiple victims from multiple families suffered sexual abuse among minors; we grieve for those who have been impacted and for their families. (3) Many people from the local session and from the GLG Presbytery have labored long and hard on this matter already. We commend them for their efforts and prayers.

Before we proceed to the communications listed above, we offer the following information and considerations. Sexual abuse was first reported to the Department of Child Services (DCS) on April 2020. The IRPC Session initiated an investigation soon thereafter in accordance with the IRPC child protection policy. The resulting investigative report was presented to the IRPC session in early August 2020. Later in August, the IRPC session, acting in their capacity as AIC (plus one outside elder) appointed an Advisory Committee. This committee made several recommendations to the IRPC session which were not followed by the session. This committee was effectively replaced when a new AIC appointed a Judicial Commission to Immanuel RP Church (hereafter IJC) on December 29, 2020. The IJC consisted of Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Bob Burchfield, Josh Reshey, and Ian Wise. There was uncertainty in the Presbytery as to the exact scope and nature of the problems, and so the remit of the IJC begins "to investigate ..." We note that Jason Camery is an experienced former law enforcement officer and Josh Reshey is currently a lawyer for DCS in a different county in Indiana.

The IJC poured itself into its work, spending long hours in investigation in a short period of time (two months). Their reports to presbytery and the congregation provide valuable insight, and we commend them for their hard work.

The Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery met on March 4-6, 2021. In their letter to the IRPC congregation shortly after the meeting of GLG, the IJC stated: "Our investigation did not lead us to believe that there was a cover-up. However, information was concealed at times when it was necessary to share whether with the congregation or Presbytery." In their report to GLG the IJC concluded that the entire session of IRPC should repent, and as part of that repentance, resign from their charges. The IJC report included resignation as one of the steps of repentance for the IRPC session. Two elders did in fact resign, but the others did not. As they did not resign, the presbytery appointed two members of the IJC as special prosecutors to bring charges against the remaining IRPC elders. The complaints before us deal with the circumstances of this meeting, these charges, and the conduct of the IJC.

Having carefully interviewed many parties and considered the complaints, we come to consider several items that the complaints have in common. First, it is our opinion that the IJC did NOT enter this investigation with preconceived notions, or proceed in a way that warped their investigation. We think that they proceeded with the right motives and in a competent manner.

However, several items have come together to produce a strong sense of distrust within and among members of the IRPC congregation. First, the IRPC members, including the victim families, were clearly told NOT to attend the Presbytery meeting. But when one victim family asked if they could attend, in some way they received permission. Another sympathetic family (not a victim family) was sitting with them. As the meeting proceeded, the victim family was allowed to remain through a period of executive session and, at some point, given privileges to address the presbytery. When the Presbytery rose from executive session and turned on the Zoom feed, the Immanuel members watching over Zoom, including the other victim families, immediately saw these families in plain view at the meeting. In addition, the IJC's recommendations dovetailed with the desires of the two families present, and not with those of the other victim families (as far as those desires are known). Finally, the IJC was very clear about following a "victim-centered approach."

We venture two opposing comments about "victim-centered approaches." On the one hand we certainly must protect victims, hear their stories, take care they are not neglected, and consider carefully how to ensure their continued safe involvement in church life. We must never allow a closer relationship with an offending party to lead us away from caring for those sinned against. On the other hand, when it comes to judicial consequences, the desires of those

sinned against must ultimately be held to be irrelevant. Courts must deal with crimes and sins as they deserve before God, in accord with impartial justice. Otherwise we run the risk of devolving to a vengeance-based justice, and may pit victim against victim (Leviticus 19:15; Romans 12:19; 13:4; 1 Timothy 5:21).

In sum, the IJC first did excellent investigative work (in line with its remit), and then came to the Presbytery with strongly worded recommendations (also in line with its remit), urging one very strong conclusion, which fit the desires of the one victim family that was permitted to attend and speak, and not the other victim families that were not permitted to attend. This, together with the language of a “victim-centered approach” certainly gave the appearance of bias and gravely offended the remaining members of IRPC, as two of the complaints illustrate.

We come now to the complaints themselves. We are persuaded that the gravity of the underlying issues, which are substantiated by a largely agreed upon series of events, led to the Presbytery voting by large margins to proceed to trial. While we do not condone the events that led to the appearance of bias, we believe the judicial process should proceed.

However, we do agree with the complainants that no members of the IJC should serve as prosecutors in the case. We recommend that they be replaced for the following reasons:

- a) As a general rule, we are convinced that it is wise for those who have investigated not to become prosecutors, even though they have detailed knowledge of the case. Such a change of role, as exemplified in this case, may often be perceived as betrayal by those who may have spoken freely to investigators.
- b) In this particular case, the IJC unwisely allowed two families to attend the presbytery meeting, including executive session, when they had clearly told others not to come. As a result, many in the IRPC congregation feel a strong sense of betrayal and bias on the part of the IJC.
- c) As for the argument that the IJC knows the situation best, while this is true, it is also true that a fresh set of eyes gives a welcome new perspective. If charges are indeed warranted, a new prosecutor will see to it.

Our *Book of Discipline* states, “Members of the lower court who may also be members of the higher, except those acting as counsel, shall have a voice in the judgment of the case unless the complaint has been substantiated as one of injustice and wrong on the part of the lower court” (*BOD* II.4.4, E-16). We believe that these complaints have been substantiated as complaints of injustice and wrong. Specifically, the complainants have (a) alleged injustice and wrong against the lower court in their complaints, and (b) the complainants have presented a *prima facie* case of injustice and wrong and have not

baldly asserted these allegations. Please note, we are not saying that GLG did commit injustice and wrong (which would be a prejudicial determination), but only that the complainants have presented a *prima facie* argument of injustice and wrong against GLG.

Another matter requires some consideration. Multiple members of the GLG expressed to us that their presbytery is deeply divided at the present time. Synod should carefully and prayerfully consider how to assist our beloved brothers.

Throughout our investigation we uncovered serious and conflicting allegations which merit continuing the judicial process.

For the sake of the integrity of the judicial process, we **recommend** the following:

- 1) That the members of Great Lakes Gulf Presbytery have no “voice in the judgment” of the following recommendations of this case in accordance with *BOD* II.4.4 (E-16) because the complainants have substantiated injustice on the part of the lower court by
  - (a) alleging injustice on the part of the lower court, and
  - (b) supporting these allegations, not merely stating them baldly.
- 2) That Synod grant the complainants’ request to remove the prosecutors, and instruct GLG to replace them with others not drawn from the IJC.

We considered long and hard whether the Presbytery should proceed with trials or whether the Synod should assist these brothers by appointing a seven-man judicial commission to hear the case on behalf of Synod. This second option would be undertaken to relieve a divided Presbytery from further strain. We favor the latter option. We provide both alternatives so that Synod can see the two ways forward.

3A) The Presbytery proceed to trial with new prosecutors in place,  
OR

3B) The moderator of Synod appoint a seven-man judicial commission to sit in judgment on the cases. (N.B. (1) The prosecutor(s) appointed by the GLG shall not be chosen from the men who served on the IJC. (2) Defense shall be chosen by each defendant. (3) We believe the members of your judicial committee should not be appointed to such a Synod judicial commission because we have heard testimony that may be inadmissible in a trial.)

In addition to dealing with the complaints against the IJC and the GLG, we also considered the status of the accused and the teaching and ruling elders of the Immanuel RPC.

As for the current service of the elders accused, we read in *BOD* II.2.9: “The court may require the accused to refrain from the exercise of communicant

privileges, or from the exercise of office, or from both, until final action in the case has been taken, provided there is no unnecessary delay in its prosecution.”

We want it to be clear that such a requirement is in no way prejudging the case. We gladly note there are already provisional elders in place, and that GLG is scheduled to meet when Synod adjourns, and thus can address the needs of the congregation immediately. Therefore,

- 4) Given the gravity of the accusations against the IRPC elders we recommend that Synod require them to refrain from the exercise of office until their case has been decided.
- 5) That Synod direct GLG to work with IRPC to arrange for stated supply as soon as possible.
- 6) That the judicial committee be dismissed.

*Respectfully:*

*Titus Martin*

*James Tweed*

*John Edgar (chairman)*

*Roel Ophoff*

*Gabriel Wingfield*

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### **2021 Communication #21-16: Great Lakes/Gulf re. Immanuel—Redacted Complaint vs. GLG by Faris, Hanson, Hart, and Holdeman**

We write to complain against the appointment of special prosecution by the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG) for Nate Pfeiffer, Keith Magill, David Carr, Jared Olivetti, and Ben Larson, elders of the Immanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church (IRPC) at the Spring 2021 meeting of the Presbytery. These actions were taken when the Presbytery adopted Immanuel Judicial Commission (IJC) Recommendations 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, as made on Saturday, March 6, 2021.<sup>1</sup> The vote came on Saturday after several hours of meetings in executive session over Friday and Saturday. We ask that the RPCNA Synod overturn the call for special prosecution and these appointments of prosecutors. Even if the prosecution is no longer in place by the time Synod meets, we ask the Synod to consider the complaint and rule the appointment out of order.<sup>2</sup>

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1 As shown later in this complaint, the motions did not actually come from the IJC, but only from two members who labeled their motions as coming from the IJC.

2 Much of the Presbytery debate on this matter was held in executive session. The report of the IJC was also asked to be kept confidential, but it was posted on the Presbytery’s website for all elders to see, not merely delegates. Further, the IJC released an 11-page report to the IRPC congregation. Our complaint will reveal material expressed in executive session, but we will redact those portions in the public version by blackout. We regard the 11-page report and material revealed outside of executive session as public, as well as the minutes of Presbytery that were read publicly at the spring meeting. For the sake of discretion, we will append only the 11-page report and the original IJC report to the unredacted version of this complaint.

We write this complaint with great sorrow at the tragedy of the abuse that took place at IRPC. The pain of those who have suffered directly is great, and we affirm their suffering. We acknowledge that people are suffering in different ways. We pray that the Lord will build them up in the Lord Jesus Christ and care for them in their need. Our *complaint* comes as it relates to the response of the IJC and the Presbytery in addressing the abuse, and we hope for greater care for victims to come as a result.

The GLG voted for the special prosecution after being misled by the report from the IJC. Fundamentally, the IJC was originally tasked to investigate the situation involving child-abuse at IRPC and to give recommendations.<sup>3</sup> The IJC noted that it did not find evidence of a cover-up, but it did find other areas of concern that led them to recommend the resignation of all of the IRPC elders. However, while giving the impression of providing a balanced report to the whole Presbytery, they became an essentially-prosecutorial body without notifying the Court of their new direction.

The IJC report to Presbytery, which we believe is more accurately described as a prosecutorial brief, was presented as merely the fruits of an investigation. Only when questions were asked on the floor of the Presbytery did a fuller picture begin to emerge. Though more light was shed on the “*victim-centered*” report that actually only represented the interests of a few victims, the informally-accused IRPC elders were still at a great disadvantage. Critical information the IJC failed to share did not come to light for members of the Court until a week after presbytery. Members of the Court were being pressured to make decisions without all information that could reasonably have been available if the IJC had presented it. By omitting data that would represent the interests of other victims in the case and that would support the case of the IRPC elders, the IJC exercised undue influence leading the Court through an unjust process. This misled the Presbytery, which made an unjust decision that is greatly damaging to many people, including victims, IRPC elders, the congregation, and the wider church. Only by carefully listening, reading, and putting pieces

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3 The remit of the IJC from the Presbytery Ad Interim Commission, on December 29, 2020 was as follows: “It was moved, seconded and passed to establish a five-man Judicial Commission to investigate the degree of problems of child abuse at Immanuel RP Church, determine what counseling and any help that any perpetrators and victims, along with their families, and the Session and congregation may need, and whether parties involved are cooperating with civil authorities (since the Department of Child Services and the Tippecanoe County Sheriff have been involved). They are also to give recommendations to Presbytery in the following areas: (1) legal, (2) ecclesiastical, and (3) pastoral. In addition, we call upon the churches and members of the Presbytery who are becoming aware of this situation to practice grace, mercy, and patience. We would give assurance that much ministry has already taken place and the establishing of a Judicial Commission is for the purpose of ensuring good and just ministry in the future.”

together would members of the Court begin to fully understand the biased nature of the report, a bias that seems to have flowed from the IJC's approach.

***The IJC's Victim-Centered Approach.*** The IJC asserted from the outset of their report that it took a "victim-centered approach." We are glad for an approach that at least asserted a desire to care for victims of abuse. Our *complaint* will show that we do not believe victim-care was faithfully or consistently applied in the case. But we do affirm the value and Biblical warrant of the heart of victim-centered principles articulated by the IJC.<sup>4</sup>

However, the IJC's remit extended far beyond the features of a victim-centered approach. Most centrally, their task focused not simply on victim/abuser matters, but on the issue of the shepherding relationship between IRPC elders and their congregation. The shepherding matters were indeed the center of the IJC's time and effort. Victim-centered approaches to justice apply well in caring for abuse survivors.<sup>5</sup> But when addressing the shepherding matters, key distinctions are critical. In the relationship between the abuser and victims, the horrific sin was already known and acknowledged. In the relationship between session and congregation, offense was present, but the existence of grievous sin on the session's part was not established. Even where shepherding sins can be established, they are by nature of a different category than areas of sexual abuse, for which victim-centered approaches are designed.

And so as the IJC employed a victim-centered model to handle the core conflict, they moved away from a Biblical, Christ-centered model of justice with which they were tasked by the AIC. Leviticus 19:15 reads: "You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor." The repeated call for cities of refuge in the Old Testament shows the need for justice centered on properly evaluated situations from all perspectives, and the non-assumption of guilt, even when one appears guilty. Such a model is reflected in the *RPCNA Book of Discipline*, and it appears not to have been followed in the IJC's victim-centered approach.

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4 These included—per their public report to the IRPC: (1) the immediate protection of potential victims; (2) counsel for the victims; (3) admission of guilt or confession of the abuser; (4) fruit-bearing repentance of the abuser; (5) reconciliation.

5 Note that in categories of legal and judicial proceedings, the victim-centered approach model appears in categories of sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other such horrors. As one example, see the Department of Justice discussion of the model here: [www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/1-understanding-human-trafficking/13-victim-centered-approach/#:~:text=Key%20Term%3A%20The%20Victim%2DCentered,services%20in%20a%20nonjudgmental%20manner](http://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/1-understanding-human-trafficking/13-victim-centered-approach/#:~:text=Key%20Term%3A%20The%20Victim%2DCentered,services%20in%20a%20nonjudgmental%20manner). In dealing with the actual offense of sexual abuse in this case, such a legal model might be valuable. But the victim-centered approach model here appears to have been applied by the IJC in reference to the ensuing conflict between the IRPC session and some under its care, which is a different topic than sexual abuse itself.

*The IJC's Application of Victim-Centered Approach.* Consider how the IJC's model created a major and pivotal distortion: they implicitly redefined the term *victim*. In the IJC report *victim* originally meant those who were victims of sexual abuse in the congregation. But as the report unfolds, the IJC focused their concern on those most aggrieved by the session's actions in handling the situation. Being *victim-centered* meant taking up the offenses of those most aggrieved against the session. The pivot or conflation of abuser-victim and session-congregation appears in page 2 of the public report to IRPC. They write:

The harm that we have discovered is first understood in the heinous nature of the abuse itself. Harm has also come to the families of both victims and the offender who all grieve over the pillaging of sin. There has been time loss, expenses, harm to reputation, loss of privacy, [and] a great deal of emotional harm. However, an unexpected source of harm has come through various mishandlings of the Session. This report seeks to draw attention to this theme.<sup>6</sup>

Here, the source of harm for victims includes offender and the session. While the session is not identified as the abuser, immediately from there the commission proceeds to the header: "The Commission's operating philosophy of a victim-centered approach." The victims being discussed there become those who have experienced both sexual abuse and those aggrieved with the session. The large portion of the commission's work focuses on the discovery of the elders' sins, which implicitly reframes the victims as those grieved with the session. In so doing the IJC failed their remit and failed the other victims, the elders, and the congregation.

**Failing the victims:** In numerous ways, the IJC's application of a victim-centered approach failed victims. The victim-centered approach appears to have led them to exclude from their narrative victim families not aggrieved as greatly with the session. Indeed, it seems the IJC only truly gave attention to the responses of victims whose stories fit the narrative they wanted to present to the Presbytery. Other victims somehow fell out of their victim-centered approach, because such victims did not claim themselves to be victims of the session's shepherding. Subtly, it seems that the IJC redefined the term *victim* in this process. Only during and after GLG's spring meeting did it become evident that the IJC had represented the interests of only a small number of victims, not the majority of them. These realities were exposed in small part during the Presbytery meeting and then in personal discussions later, and most evidently in a congregational meeting of IRPC a week later in which the IJC gave the

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6 Page 2 of the IRPC report.



congregation a follow-up report.<sup>7</sup> The IJC's partiality to some victims not only misled the Presbytery but also left other victims abandoned by the IJC as well as being open to greater harm and shame, an issue which will be addressed later in the *complaint*.

The IJC's dramatic step of calling for the resignation of all the IRPC elders as the appropriate censure also seems to have flowed—at least in large part—from the fact that resignation was the desired censure of the two most aggrieved victim families of the six total victim families.<sup>8</sup> It is not a guiding principle of Scripture that the most aggrieved party chooses the limits of censure according to their desire as the standard of justice. Here, the victim-centered approach proved insufficient at best, because it dealt only with the desires of a few victims.

Further, in presenting their report, the IJC asked only certain aggrieved parties to be present in the executive session of Presbytery. The bias of the IJC has become even more clear in that they listened only to the victim families whose concerns fit their narrative. Only some were invited to address the Presbytery. Other victim families, who wished they could have spoken on behalf of the IRPC elders, were not invited to do so. Thus, the Presbytery was given a very incomplete picture of the realities at IRPC. Not only that, the IJC's failure to accurately represent the perspectives of all victim families forced some of these families to reveal their own identities publicly in order to support the elders at a meeting of the congregation a week after Presbytery. These families never would have been forced to self-identify in public if the IJC had accurately and appropriately acknowledged their position and perspective. The IJC seems to have been more interested in prosecuting the elders than serving all the victim families. The irony here is that the IJC claimed to promote a victim-centered approach, and yet now has brought great harm on these victim families by failing to care for them well and by forcing them to be exposed to greater indignity as they seek justice.<sup>9</sup> Another irony is that the IJC offered critique of the IRPC

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7 A Zoom link was provided to IRPC members to see the proceedings of the Presbytery after the executive session ended. A significant amount of information continued to be relayed outside of the executive session making a number of matters at least implicitly clear to observers. Those who watched were able to see what victim families had been present for the executive session. Thus, the previously unrepresented victims were able to see how they had been overlooked and dismissed by the IJC once they stated that they had no interest in pursuing action against the elders because matters were resolved, from their perspective. They were offended that they were not enabled or invited to speak up for the session and to testify on its behalf.

8 See page 3 of the 11-page follow-up report of the IJC given to IRPC on March 13, 2021.

9 Per pg. 2 of the IJC report to the congregation, the first principle of the *victim-centered approach* for the IJC was the "*immediate protection of potential victims.*" Perhaps

session for the sin of partiality. Yet here, we discover an overwhelming display of favoritism on the IJC's part.

Further, the IJC showed little regard for the reality that one of the IRPC elders assigned special prosecution is also a victim.<sup>10</sup> In their disciplinary process, no consideration seemed to be given to the complexities faced by a member of a victim family seeking to shepherd himself and others through the process as an elder. This family was not invited by the IJC to speak to the court in the status of victims. Only the elder's decision to self-identify during his public repentance allowed their story to be somewhat told (self-identification was also made to the congregation at the congregational meeting the week after Presbytery).

\_\_\_\_\_ This individual—speaking through his own grief—gave public statements of repentance at Presbytery of his failures in the case, failures that occurred while he himself was in the highly complicating and tragic position of being of a victim family. Little to no acknowledgment came from the IJC of any of this reality. Again, given the IJC's self-identified guiding statement that they operated in a victim-centered way, this action seems incongruous. Indeed, it seems that the IJC was victim-centered in only a highly selective way.

**Failing the elders:** The victim-centered approach tipped the scales against the IRPC elders from the beginning. Through a victim-centered approach, the IJC became the voice of those professing to be victims, or aggrieved, against the elders. The IJC focused its record of offenses on those pertaining to work of the elders. They focused on the weighty matters of elder-member offense, reconciliation, and so on. These are massively important matters, but ones where the victim-abuser model ceases to provide the proper framework. Because the IJC took the side of victims aggrieved by the session, the elders began to be framed in the category of the abusers in the victim-centered model.

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**Failing other parts of their remit:** The IJC noted the need for spiritual care for the one who abused others. However, the IJC provided almost no care or shepherding for that person or family. Their victim-centered approach proved too narrow to do that.

*Ambiguous and Unanswered Points in the IJC Work.* Further, there were two exceedingly important points left ambiguous or unanswered in the written report:

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this phrase immediately references protection from abuse; it is now apparent the IJC failed to protect these victim families from further harm and potential shame caused by self-identification and inability to be protected and cared for by the IJC itself.

<sup>10</sup> The family represented by this discussion agreed to this information being shared in this forum.

1. The IJC failed to make clear that their case was built on evaluating decisions of the elders that flowed from a highly complex question: if and how to make known the fact and/or identity of a person who had committed abuse in a congregation when that abuser is a young minor. The IJC—in the letter to the IRPC congregation—indicated as part of accusation #1 that the IRPC session “*showed deference to the interests of the offender.*” One example of such apparent deference appears to be the IRPC September decision to not publicly reveal the identity of the offender.<sup>11</sup> Another example of this apparent deference would be the decision to allow the offender to attend *youth group*. Forbidding the offender to attend *youth group* would lead to functional identification. Note that two of the aggrieved families in the report highlighted their concern over *youth group* attendance as a primary concern. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.<sup>12</sup> Some families may not have agreed with the IRPC elders’ decisions, or even felt these decisions warranted the elders’ resignation. They may have felt hurt and been upset by the decisions, but no authoritative body has yet said that the IRPC session was fundamentally wrong on their decisions related to this question. Even the RPTS counseling professor, Keith Evans, helped to craft the IRPC session’s initial strategy. It seems that many of the accusations directed against the IRPC elders flow from actions downstream of their decision not to identify the abuser by name. The complexity of this foundational question was not adequately acknowledged by the IJC which itself could not answer the question. The wider church clearly needs to seek and publish more wisdom in how to handle such questions. The IRPC elders wrestled with a complex situation and sought to follow the *Book of Discipline’s* instruction: “Discipline should be exercised with prudence, discretion, humility, and in full dependence upon the guidance of the Spirit of God, with love for both the Lawgiver and the lawbreaker” (*BOD* I.1.5). Further, and importantly, the abuser’s formal censure was a rebuke, a level of punishment which the IJC commended as “*thoughtful and comprehensive.*”<sup>13</sup> The *Book of Discipline* I.4.1.b-c makes explicit that a rebuke is not required to be published to the congregation, whereas a suspension is. Thus, no RPCNA disciplinary standards were broken by choosing not to reveal the abuser’s identity publicly. Perhaps the IRPC session’s answers were or were not wise, but

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11 As an example of this critique, the public report to the IRPC cites a letter from two members of the Immanuel Advisory Committee which points to the non-identification as an issue of concern.

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13 Page 2 of the public report to the IRPC.

it is unjust to impose censure for past actions that, even still, have not been ruled inappropriate simply because the most aggrieved disagree with the decisions. Additionally, we would note, rhetorically, that if an error in judgment on this matter of disclosure is worthy of resignation, then not only the IRPC elders should resign, but Prof. Keith Evans should resign as well because he was involved in crafting the approach. Again, we are not suggesting anyone should resign on this basis, but it is curious that the IJC did not make consistent recommendations. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The IJC failed to clearly acknowledge several key facts \_\_\_\_\_: abuses within the congregation ceased to exist after the elders became aware of the problems and took action to stop them, the appropriate civil authorities had been contacted by the elders according to local legal requirements, and the elders had been repenting of missteps along the way in the process of shepherding the flock to the best of their ability in a complex situation. Not every person may have thought the steps were adequate, but the fact is that abuses were stopped by the elders' actions or at least did not continue after the session became aware and acted.

*The IJC's Approach to Releasing the Report and to the Presbytery Meeting.* The IJC released a draft of their report to the IRPC elders two days (Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021) before it was released to the Presbytery, at which time the IRPC elders also received the final report (Mon., March 1, 2021). Until that time, the IJC asked IRPC elders investigative questions as a group and as individuals. No indication was given that they would be disciplined, let alone called to the drastic step of submitting their resignations. Many of the accusations of the IJC's written report against the IRPC elders alleged sins that previously had not been addressed with the IRPC elders. \_\_\_\_\_

Obviously, the timing of the IJC's report and foreboding counsel for the elders to resign left little time for thought or preparation on the part of IRPC elders before presbytery. Further harming the reputation of the IRPC elders, the IJC sent its biased report to all of the men on the Presbytery email list in advance of the meeting; large numbers of those men were not delegates at the spring meeting and were not present. \_\_\_\_\_

In anticipation of the proceedings, the IRPC elders originally were told they would have seven minutes each before the Court to respond to the report.

After the report was sent to Presbytery (but before Presbytery met), the IJC informed them that they would have only three minutes (due to a lack of time to hear all their statements). After having arrived with prepared three-minute speeches, \_\_\_\_\_. While the men indeed were given more time to share, it was now apparent that the IJC was not anticipating any kind of material or detailed response to the IJC's work. Such would be impossible to do in 3 minutes. Instead, the IJC wanted the IRPC elders to agree and resign.

The next day, two of the five members of the IJC presented motions for special prosecution. The motions were labeled in writing as motions of the judicial commission. In reality, motions for special prosecution actually did not come from the IJC, but only from Shawn Anderson and Jason Camery. No minutes exist of the IJC meeting between Presbytery sessions because the IJC did not meet. Since Presbytery, personal testimony of the two elders confirms that only these two IJC members met together. Intentionally or unintentionally, these men exerted undue influence on the Court. This reveals a pattern in the IJC, as their minutes also reveal that their entire report to Presbytery was not approved by the IJC. Obfuscated by this reality is that the IJC was not unanimous in the motions for special prosecution.<sup>14</sup> Members of the Court voted believing that the motions for special prosecution came from the IJC when in fact, they did not. This error alone on the part of members of the IJC may well warrant the rescinding of the motions made for special prosecution.

These repeated procedural errors reveal that members of the IJC have seriously breached the standards of the *Book of Discipline* for judicial process. The *Book of Discipline* states: "The entire disciplinary process should be carried out with reverence, prayer, gentleness, carefulness, love, fairness, humility, and perseverance by those who will someday give an account to God for their work" (*BOD* I.6.7). As has been shown, carefulness and fairness were sorely lacking in many ways. \_\_\_\_\_

*Ethical Concerns with the IJC Work.* We now add five more ethical concerns over the IJC's behavior that further reveal their breach of *BOD* 1.6.7 and the deep offense their work has caused:

1. The IRPC elders issued statements of confession and repentance for their sins which were not recognized by the IJC and forgiveness was not granted. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The IJC called for resignation but failed to show adequately why the alleged sins (many of which were confessed and for which forgiveness

was sought) required resignation from their charge as elders. They simply argued that an observable pattern of sins rendered the elders unable to be called *blameless* (1 Tim. 3:2). The desires of the most aggrieved victim families seemed to drive the IJC to press for resignation as evident in that the IJC so carefully noted the desired censures of the different families in the 11-page report to the congregation. The argument was made that these were unintentional sins or sins of ignorance that necessitated removal from office, but it was never demonstrated this severe (and potentially harmful for the congregation) punishment actually fit the offense. Because the IJC did not demonstrate the need for immediate removal, it is clear that BOD II.1.1 was not fulfilled: "... Formal process shall not be instituted unless evidence is presented that the means of reconciliation referred to above (Section I, Chap. 2) have been tried. Before such process is instituted it is proper for the Court to seek a solution of the case without formal trial."

3. \_\_\_\_\_ . No provision is found in the *RP Constitution* for such an approach; it seems untenable to require resignation (which is necessarily voluntary) to remain qualified, while resignation would in some way indicate an acknowledgement of being unqualified. It seems that a new form of discipline was invented which is not in our *Book of Discipline*. Similarly, it seems strange to establish voluntary resignation as the only acceptable indicator of repentance; again, this notion is an innovation as far as we can tell.
4. Of no small significance, two of the investigators, who later were appointed as special prosecutors, have a conflict of interest with Jared Olivetti. They already name Jared Olivetti and insinuate his sin in their complaint against the Presbytery in the Michael LeFebvre case.<sup>15</sup> That case is now pending. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Camery cannot be unbiased when they have already made claims against Mr. Olivetti. Again—with no small irony—men who allege the IRPC elders failed to properly recuse themselves appropriately in certain instances have failed to recuse themselves.
5. The IJC facilitated the resignation from Presbytery youth oversight of the two IRPC elders who served thus. The Presbytery then left the youth leadership vacant. There was no plan presented to fill the position, other than to trust the leaders who were forced to resign for reasons of apparent lack of trust to find people to run the still-scheduled GLG youth events. If the protection of youth were truly the priority of the IJC, they

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<sup>15</sup> See 2020 Synod Complaint #20-05 *Anderson vs. GLG*.

would have spent time and energy to ensure that adequate leadership would be provided or would at least have recommended that Presbytery youth events be ceased until adequate leadership could be found. A week after presbytery the issue was rectified by the *ad interim commission*, but only after the concern was raised by someone else.

A brief summary of the unethical ways in which the IJC acted include exercising influence of an undue, excessive, and improper nature, which involved conflicts of interest, and which showed favoritism to the interests of some victims, while disadvantaging other victims. Ironically, these are almost identical to the very sins the IJC alleges the IRPC elders to have committed and which they believe are worthy of at least resignation. The IJC alleges the IRPC elders did not follow through well on the work they were assigned, and yet the IJC did not follow through on its remit to give a report of their investigation to the Presbytery that would be reasonably be presumed to be balance but instead gave a one-sided report that led to the hurt of many, including even the victims.

It is natural to ask “*why?*” Why would the IJC present such a totally one-sided report in place of its remit? Why would a balanced report have been insufficient? We do not know why. IJC’s inherent belief that such bias was necessary is quite concerning, whatever the reason.

In addition to the behavior of the IJC that led to the unjust action of the GLG, there is one additional reason we *complain*. The special prosecutors were appointed without any charges being filed, even in general terms, as required in *BOD* II.1.4.<sup>16</sup> The action was illegal. Since no charges were stated, they could not “*conform in all other respects to the rule for specific accusations ...*”<sup>17</sup> The failure to state the charges for each man, even in general terms, has led to great uncertainty as well as unnecessary and damaging rumors. The only thing publicly known prior to presbytery was that the IJC was tasked to “*investigate the degree of problems of child abuse at Immanuel RP Church.*” The only other thing

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16 “A court may begin process on the ground of public report (*fama clamosa*) by appointing a special prosecutor. This public report is different from an idle rumor in that it is widespread, persistent, commonly known, and has the appearance of credibility. The charge will be stated in more general terms, but will conform in all other respects to the rule for a specific accusation (see below in chapter 2, paragraph 1). To avoid any process on the grounds of gossip a committee may be first appointed to investigate the rumors. A person who considers himself slandered may request an investigation. The court may exercise its discretion in granting or refusing the request.” *BOD* II.1.4.

17 “In order to institute a formal judicial process, the accuser or the special prosecutor shall sign and submit a charge in writing. It shall name the specific offense, the time, place, and circumstances of its commission. It shall also provide a list of the witnesses and of all papers to be offered in evidence.” *BOD* II.2.1.

known to the public after the spring meeting is that the Presbytery appointed special prosecution.<sup>18</sup>

The next week, on March 11, the AIC issued the following statement that brought some clarity. Questions were told to be directed to the AIC.

“Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery is the regional court of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) that has jurisdiction over ministers and churches from Michigan to Florida. At its meeting on March 4-6, 2021, the Presbytery heard a report from a judicial commission. This commission had been appointed to investigate Immanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church, West Lafayette, IN, regarding concerns related to the leadership’s exercise of congregational oversight. The Presbytery has appointed special prosecutors to institute judicial process.”

Still, no charges were given, even in general terms. Calling for the dramatic step of wholesale resignation of a session and prosecution if resignations are not issued without stating the charges is a formula for rampant rumors and the damaging of many reputations. Further, the lack of general charges leaves the prosecutors a blank slate to charge the men for any issues they could uncover about the men. This is unjust, illegal, and further reveals the lack of “*reverence, prayer, gentleness, carefulness, love, and fairness*” present in the work.

*Moving Forward.* If the work of the IJC is allowed to stand or to become the norm, our presbytery and denomination will suffer greatly. The opportunities for undue influence on the part of commissioners is far too great. If the decisions of Presbytery are allowed to stand, we will have opened the door for vague investigations that will facilitate charges being filed selectively. Almost any error found, in the judgment of commissioners willing to seek out the desires of the most aggrieved parties at the expense of considering other relevant data, will be used to convince presbyters such drastic action as resignation is needful. We

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18 The IJC did issue an 11-pg. summary of its fuller report to the Immanuel congregation on Sat., March 13, 2021. The IJC encouraged members not to spread that report, but it was not given in executive session. There, more fully than anywhere, a public statement of accusations against the IRPC elders was made, though they were not framed as charges. The four accusations in that report are: (1) Exercising/allowing regular influence of an undue, excessive, and improper nature, involving a series of conflicts of interest, which showed deference to the interests of the offender, while disadvantaging the victims in this case. (2) Failing to notify the congregation of the abuse case adequately and promptly. (3) Neglecting to maintain a promised child supervision plan for the members of the congregation, providing some with a false sense of security, while offending others by not keeping their word. (4) An overall lack of urgency and care promoted disunity within the church body, fostered distrust of the elders, denied the victims equal access to the deliberative process, and caused them actual injury.



find ourselves on a trajectory, as a Presbytery, of seeking purity by tearing down anything that seems impure as a first reaction rather than first seeking to build up and strengthen on the foundation of repentance and humility.

We believe that the one good way to lead sufferers and, indeed, the whole church, forward is by helping elders to grow where they have erred. Yes, where there have been serious sins such as cover-up, or the promotion of sin, more serious actions may be taken. But, why, we wonder, were not lesser punishments proposed, at least at first in this case? The elders were not the abusers. There was no cover-up. Why not rebuke, instruct, and put other provisional elders in place to monitor, nourish, and hold accountable those who are serving well in many other ways? Jesus calls us to pray that he would raise up laborers for the harvest. If he has called us to pray that they be raised up, then let us not make our initial instincts be to tear down the ones he has raised up.

The nature of the IJC's recommended approach also called for the whole session to resign, which, in light of the nature of the alleged errors, we would find to be a dereliction of duty on the Presbytery due to the immense needs of the local congregation. Again, there may be cases where every elder of a session should resign. But it should not require a highly biased report to convince the Presbytery to move toward that goal if it is indeed the need. At the very least, a more patient approach is warranted here. Rather, we would be better served to build up to purity. The Immanuel elders, by their own confession, sinned in various ways. Since the spring meeting of Presbytery, the AIC has wisely appointed a three-man shepherding committee to help the elders through their steps of repentance.<sup>19</sup> The Judicial Commission had stated to the congregation their desire to see the 2 Corinthians 7:5-13 steps of repentance take place.<sup>20</sup> The congregation has now affirmed by vote of confidence their desire to work with the elders through their process of repentance. Between the public repentance of the elders and the appointment of this committee, this 2 Cor. 7 process appears well underway. Let us focus our Presbytery efforts now on deep prayer for these elders and encouragement of those in the Presbytery now tasked to support them and guide them through their ongoing repentance.

A different approach could have brought much more fruit here. Our Presbytery has spent great energy by the commission putting together a one-sided report that then necessitates so many hours to respond to and unpack. Those same hours could have been invested in shepherding elders through repentance or into developing materials or communicating lessons that could have helped the whole church.

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<sup>19</sup> Footnote March 11 minutes.

<sup>20</sup> Page 11 of report to congregation.

So, in summary:

1. We request the AIC of the GLG to put a stay on the work of the special prosecution and perhaps even consider the merits of reconvening the Presbytery to change its action in light of the additional information revealed since the Spring meeting of Presbytery.
2. We *complain* to Synod against the actions of the Presbytery to appoint special prosecution based on the arguments presented here for the previously unapparent, unjust process leading to these motions. We ask that the appointment of special prosecution be overturned and that any prosecution between the time of this *complaint* and the meeting of Synod be ruled out of order.
3. With heaviness of heart, we ask the Synod to recognize the real failures in procedure and in approach caused by the IJC, and in particular, the two men who brought the motions on Saturday morning. These brothers in Christ who brought the judicial motions, though perhaps well-intentioned, have failed in many ways to follow *BOD* 1.6.7: "The entire disciplinary process should be carried out with reverence, prayer, gentleness, carefulness, love, fairness, humility, and perseverance by those who will someday give an account to God for their work." At this point, their extensive failures render them too compromised to lead us forward in the judicial process. For their sake and the sake of the denomination, we believe it best that their removal as special prosecutors be made permanent and that they not be permitted to begin again as prosecutors, counsel to prosecutors, or jurors in any cases connected to these matters with the IRPC case. We do this in love for these men, in hope that these men recognize their failures and the weighty impact of them. But we also ask this, so that in view of *BOD* 1.6.7, that our denomination may trust that any ongoing processes related to IRPC are being handled in accord with our standards.
4. We ask the Synod to affirm the good work of the AIC on March 11, 2021, in appointing a committee to counsel the elders through steps of repentance. We trust God to work through that process unless it becomes obvious that further disciplinary action is warranted.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*James Faris*

*Joel Hart*

*David Hanson*

*Richard Holdeman*

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**Appendices (not included in our redacted complaint):**

1. Minutes of the 2021 Great Lakes-Gulf (GLG) Spring Meeting of Presbytery, pp. 9-13.

2. Report of GLG Judicial Commission to Immanuel RP Church, March 13, 2021.
3. Report of the Immanuel Judicial Report (not accessible for print and inclusion due to security limitations; the clerk of the GLG Presbytery will need to supply this report).

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### **2021 Communication #21-17: Great Lakes/Gulf re. Immanuel—Complaint vs. GLG by Immanuel Members**

To whom it may concern: As members of Immanuel RP Church in West Lafayette, Indiana, we have been grieved in recent months by events that have taken place within our congregation as well as subsequent actions taken by our Presbytery. A judicial commission was requested to investigate a situation of child abuse (minor to minor) and how it was handled by the elders of IRPC. We were thankful for the outside help, time, and commitment these men gave and looked expectantly toward their report and the work of Presbytery. Together we prayed for repentance, restoration, and a path forward for us as a church body.

We want to have the right attitudes and are willing to submit in the Lord to the authority of the Presbytery. There have been sins committed within our midst and by our elders. We have no desire to add sin to sin or to be hurtful. We desire to see repentance, forgiveness, and restoration. We long to learn from the experiences we have had.

Because most of what the commission was investigating is sensitive and much of Presbytery's deliberations and work was in executive session, we do not have knowledge to determine whether all the actions and the spirit and manner of the actions of Presbytery and the commission were completed in a manner worthy of the gospel and a court of the church.

However, we want to register our complaints where we have seen discrepancies and areas of concern. We believe that the actions of the Presbytery have complicated the issues in certain ways, which are laid out below:

- Conflict of interest: Three members of the Judicial Commission swiftly volunteered themselves as the prosecutors against the IRPC elders and were appointed. They stated that this was to save others working as prosecutors from needing to repeat all of the investigative work. However, they could have volunteered themselves for the shepherding committee which needed the same background information.

Members of the congregation are aware that the commission reported that the IRPC elders were involved in conflicts of interest, yet some of their own members have now created their own conflict of interest, which is inconsistent and troubling.

- Undue harshness: The punitive actions meted out to the elders of IRPC does not seem to correspond to the “*crime*.” No one among us debates the fact that our elders sinned and should face consequences. However, the commission’s report stated that there was no malicious intent or cover up; consequently, having all elders removed from office appears rather excessive. Although the church in Corinth had tremendous sins in their midst, the Apostle Paul overflowed in his expressions of love and declarations of the members’ concrete, confident status before the Lord despite all of their failings (1 Corinthians 7). We have not seen that same type of balance of love and rebuke from some members of Presbytery to all of the members of our congregation. The harshness of recommending resignations from all elders lacks a restorative component, which we find concerning.

Related to this, all the elders appear to have been dealt with in essentially the same manner and severity. It is hard to imagine that all six elders have acted in the same sinful ways and to the same extent. As with any situation involving wrong behavior, it seems that there must have been some variation in responses and behavior by six different individuals. While it could be possible that all should be removed from office, it would seem that there certainly ought to be some discrepancy in discipline for what certainly must have been a variation in handling these matters.

- Focus on punishment, rather than instruction and forward path: The situation involves grave sins. A shepherding committee is working with the elders and we are grateful for their involvement and are hopeful about the success of their labors. We are seeing steps of repentance such as public acknowledgement of sin and seeking forgiveness. We acknowledge that this work will take time. Yet the commission’s report to Presbytery focuses a great deal more on the punitive actions than the ways in which we as a congregation and our elders can learn and grow to become more able to deal with such matters in a godly manner. The likelihood of this type of situation occurring in other congregations at some point is high. We are hoping to see great opportunities for training and instruction. Presbytery could help establish goals for what the fruit of repentance includes and ways that we and the elders could receive training from those outside, courses to take, etc. But the commission’s work focuses almost entirely on making clear the elders were wrong and seemed adjudicative in nature which led to reputations being slandered and tainted. No loving discipline stops there, but the goal should always be restoration and growth. Yet we have observed disci-

- pline with much less pastoral shepherding to train and instruct those who have failed.
- Partiality and lack of care for the entirety of the congregation:
    - ▷ The presbytery has shown partiality to some members over others. Leviticus 19:15 states “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.” When we were invited to join the Presbytery meeting on Saturday via Zoom, those of us who joined saw a victim family in the meeting, and yet other victim families were having to watch on Zoom and were not invited to attend.
    - ▷ The report given to our congregation by the commission declared that they were taking a victim-centered approach. This seems to be a biased position from which to complete an investigation. Also, upon hearing testimony at our congregational meeting a week after Presbytery, we have concern that the report is not impartial but rather is biased.
    - ▷ The congregation was harmed by the report to Presbytery and Presbytery’s subsequent actions because it “forced” victim families, who had concerns with the report, to disclose their identity publicly. Victim families either had to sit in silence with concerns about the report or to disclose their identities to speak to it.
    - ▷ Harm was caused by the manner in which we, the congregation, were informed and cared for in light of the commission’s recommendations. The general congregation that had no particular involvement in the case was not privy to the commission’s report given to our Presbytery, but we were allowed to listen in on Zoom to the Presbytery meeting. This is where we learned the commission was recommending every single elder resign. We had no forewarning, no explanation, and no access to ask questions. We are concerned over the seeming lack of compassion and communication. No email was sent from the commission making themselves available to our congregation for immediate questions.

Due to these concerns, we, as an interested party of congregants of Immanuel RP Church, respectfully submit our complaint to Synod about the actions taken by Presbytery at the March 2021 meeting. We humbly ask that Synod review the actions taken on the judicial commission’s recommendations. We recognize that we do not have knowledge of many workings of these events and are unable to verify and determine whether all of the actions and the spirit and manner of the actions of Presbytery and the commission were completed

in a manner worthy of the gospel and a court of the church. We can compare what we have seen with the Great Shepherd and assess actions based on King Jesus and his Word. These areas mentioned above contain discrepancies and concerns which we believe do not line up with Christ and ask that you look into these *complaints* as a higher court. We request of Synod:

1. The overturning of [Great Lakes/Gulf] Presbytery's actions in the judicial commission's recommendations 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9.
2. The removal of the prosecutors.
3. The consideration of another investigation by the higher court into all these matters—from the initial issues in the congregation and session, through the investigation and report, to the subsequent recommendations and actions by the Presbytery.

Synod ought to assist the Presbytery in finding a wiser, more godly response to these past events. We continue to pray and ask the Lord to give wisdom to his church and look to King Jesus.

*Respectfully submitted: Maureen Aladejebi, Oluyemi Aladejebi, Anna Allgaier, David Allgaier (Deacon), David Boudia, Sonnie Boudia, Avery Brame, Ben Brame, Emily Bretscher, Robyn Carr, Mari Doerr, Cos Gardner (Deacon), Rachel Gardner, Anna Giesler, Heather Glenn, Anjelica Groves, Jon Held (Deacon), Kimberly J. Held, Jon Calvin Rudolph Held, Myra Faith Held, J. David Held, Meghan Held, David Inouye, Harriett Inouye, Ashley Karshen, Josh Karshen, Jessica McCullough, Corban Murphy, Alexandria Murphy, Anna Larson, E. Lillian Larson, Cassie Lindenberger, Charlie Olivetti, Isabel Olivetti, Grace Pfeiffer, Isaac Pfeiffer, Luke Pfeiffer, Paul Rider, Christina Riepe, Amanda Saunders, Bart Saunders, Emma Saunders, Melisa Saunders, Adam Soldati, Kimiko Soldati, Cariann Spirydovich, Nadia Spirydovich, Maja Spirydovich, Sergej Spirydovich, Matt Wilburn, Shauni Wilburn*

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**At 10:48 a.m., the Synod Court returned to the Report of Judicial Committee #1. The moderator reminded the Court of these special rules for our remaining deliberation:**

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**Special rules for the remainder of Judicial Committee #1**

- In all cases, any discussion will be limited to one minute, and one speech per delegate allowed.
- In all cases, voting will happen at the end of discussion without amendments.

**There are five remaining recommendations.**

Recommendation 6. That the Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05. Action: Immediately vote without further debate.

- If voted up, this item is completed.
- If voted down, return to the original Committee Recommendation 6 and immediately vote without further debate.

*Time estimate – 5 minutes.*

Recommendation 5. That Synod instruct GLG to appoint a two-man committee to communicate with Mr. LeFebvre and, if possible, shepherd him into membership in a true branch of the Visible Church. Action: Immediately vote without further debate.

*Time estimate – 5 minutes.*

Recommendation 7. That the Synod strike pages 3-23 of Communication #20-05 and they not be printed in the Minutes of Synod. Action: 5 minutes of discussion with vote following.

*Time estimate - 6 minutes.*

Recommendation 8. That the Synod not sustain the complaints of Communication 20-09, nor hear the petition contained therein. Action: 10 minutes of discussion with voting in the following fashion:

- All in favor of not sustaining the complaints stand to be counted.
- All in favor of sustaining the complaints stand to be counted.
- All in favor of not hearing the petition stand to be counted.
- All in favor of hearing the petition stand to be counted.

*Time estimate - 12 minutes*

Recommendation 9. "That the Synod rule Communication #21-14 out of order, strike it, and not print it." Action: Moderator accepts the judgment of the Committee to rule Communication 21-14 out of order. If challenged, vote immediately on the challenge.

*Time estimate – 5 min.*

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Judicial Committee #1 (GLG and LeFebvre), revised Recommendation 6, modified thus: that Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-05. The deliberation ensued. Call for division; denied by moderator; challenged; withdrawn. The motion carried.

Return to Recommendation 5 (that Synod instruct GLG to appoint a two-man committee to communicate with Mr. LeFebvre and, if possible, shepherd him into membership in a true branch of the Visible Church). Carried.

Recommendation 7 (that Synod strike pages 3-23 of Communication 20-05 and they not be printed in the *Minutes of Synod*). Discussion ensued. Carried.

Recommendation 8 (that Synod not sustain the complaints of Communication #20-09, nor hear the petition contained therein). Discussion

ensued. Moved and seconded that Mr. Ben Manring be given privileges of the floor (3 minutes) to speak to this; carried. Recommendation 8 (as divided): All in favor of not sustaining the complaints stood to be counted; 51 to 42. Registering their dissent [in alpha order; note, delegates from the GLG, though unable to vote, were able to dissent]: Andrew Barnes, Robert Bibby, Martin Blocki, Steve Bradley, Kent Butterfield, Gregory Damerow, Kevin Dennis, Dan Drost, Dan Dupuis, Gary Gunn, Ed Hayes, Ryan Hemphill, Jason Housewright, Jon Hughes, Kevin Jia, Mark Koller, Matt Kingswood, Richard Knodel Jr., Adam Kuehner, D. A. MacLeod, Jon Maginn, Robert McKissick, Patrick McNeely, David J. Merkel, Christopher Myers, Drew Poplin, Romesh Prakashpalan, Don Prichard, Andrew Quigley, Micah Ramsey, Robert Rice, Steven Rockhill, Sumito Sakai, Marcelo Sanchez, Vincent Scavo, Bryan Schneider, Nick Schoeneberger, Harley Schwartz, Craig Scott, Charles Shipman, Frank J. Smith, Shigeru Takiura, Trace Turner, Vince Ward, Scott Wilkinson, Steven Work. All in favor of not hearing the petition stood to be counted; 54 to 30.

Recommendation 9 “that the Synod *rule* Communication #21-14 out of order, *strike it*, and not print it.” The moderator ruled that this communication is out of order. The judicial committee was thanked for its work.

For background, the full 14-page Report of Judicial Committee #1 is included here, along with Communications #20-03, #20-04, #20-05 (abbreviated), and #20-09.

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## Findings and Recommendations of Judicial Committee 1: LeFebvre

*RPCNA Synod 2021, Marion, Indiana*

**The Remit of this Committee:** This committee was appointed to counsel the Synod in the disposition of five communications: **#20-03**, **#20-04**, **#20-05**, **#20-06**, and **#21-14**. All of these communications contain complaints to Synod of actions pertaining to the case of Michael LeFebvre, adjudicated by the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery and its Ad Interim Commission in late 2020. The *BOD* defines a *complaint* as follows:

A complaint is a written statement made to a higher court by one or more persons aggrieved by an action of a lower court. It may be made by the parties concerned, by members of the court, or by any interested persons. The complainant shall give notice to the lower court within thirty days. He shall file his complaint, together with the reasons thereof, with the moderator and clerk of the lower court. He shall then file the same with the higher court at its next regular meeting



or at a time fixed by that court. If the complainant does not appear in person or by counsel to prosecute his case, the action of the lower court shall stand, unless such absence is shown to be unavoidable. (BOD II.4.3; E 15-16)

The questions before this committee and the Synod are—for the most part—procedural in nature. The remit of this committee is *not* to handle the doctrinal questions raised during the adjudication of the LeFebvre case. As procedural questions, it is our understanding that these complaints must be settled according to the law and order of the church.

**The Actions of Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery and the Law and Order of the Church:** The actions and communications of Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG), its ad interim commission (AIC), and the parties in the Michael LeFebvre case are well-documented, a testament to all parties' care for good order. Further, we find that all communications we address have been transmitted in good order. While minutes of the GLG have not all been signed, they appear to be in good order. For these we are thankful.

We will not rehearse all of the events of the LeFebvre case. The facts of the case are not substantially disputed among the complainants. Portions of the *Constitution of the RPCNA* relevant to the complaints received include the following:

**DCG 3.II.E.5.i-j** (D-21)

- i. A teaching elder desiring affiliation with another denomination may upon application be given credentials by his presbytery and a letter of standing by his session. If there are charges pending, they shall be included.
- j. A teaching elder who leaves the denomination without a regular dismissal is not considered to be in regular standing. It is the responsibility of the presbytery to notify the receiving body of this fact and to seek to clear any possible conflict between the two bodies.

**BOD II.2.1, 3, 4** (E-10-11) ... *Instituting Judicial Process*

1. In order to institute a formal judicial process, the accuser or the special prosecutor shall sign and submit a charge in writing. It shall name the specific offense, the time, place and circumstances of its commission. It shall also provide a list of the witnesses and of all papers to be offered in evidence ...
3. At the meeting in which the accusation is issued no further steps shall be taken, except to fix the time and place of the trial and to summon all who are concerned to appear. There shall be no unnecessary delay in hearing a case, but both parties shall have sufficient time for preparation. At least ten days shall pass between the issuing of the accusation and the date of the trial, except by consent of all concerned. If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense.

4. An official copy of the accusation shall be placed in the hands of the accused, left at his residence, or delivered by certified mail, accompanied by a summons, signed by the moderator and clerk, to appear and answer to the accusation. If the first summons is not obeyed, the court shall issue another, allowing such extension of time as it deems proper, and serving notice that if the individual does not appear it will proceed in his absence. Even though the accused declares that he or she will not obey the first summons, the court shall issue a second summons. (See Suggested Form 20.)

**Communication 20-03 Faris complaint re. LeFebvre:** In this complaint, complainant James Faris alleges misconduct on the part of the AIC, in allowing the introduction of additional witnesses at a date past the initial filing of charges. Mr. Faris says that “the *BOD* ... only allows for newly discovered evidence/witnesses to be discovered.” He goes on to elaborate that “the action was also contrary to the *BOD* because none of the witnesses were ‘discovered’ after the accusation against Mr. LeFebvre was issued. In other words, permitting additional witnesses after the reading of the accusation is permitted only for newly discovered witnesses that were not known or could not have been discovered with reasonable diligence. Although the *BOD* does not say ‘newly discovered’ that is the clear and necessary implication of the text.”

The complainant appears to misunderstand the meaning of “discovered” in *BOD* II.2.3 and therefore the intent of its rule on witnesses and evidence. Discovery in this context is a legal term meaning “pretrial procedures providing for the exchange of information between the parties involved in the proceedings” (Britannica). To discover something in this context is not to become aware of it for the first time, but to make it known to the court and to the other party. It was not out of order for the AIC to allow the addition of witnesses or evidence after the date on which charges were filed, as long as the accused and his counsel were “informed and further time given [them] to prepare a defense.” While ideally all evidence would be ready for discovery before charges were ever filed, in reality this is an unreasonable standard for any accuser or prosecutor, and in any case not the intent of the *BOD*.

For this reason **we recommend that the complaint of Communication #20-03 not be sustained.**

**Communication #20-04 Faris and Olivetti complaint re. LeFebvre:** In this complaint James Faris and Jared Olivetti allege misconduct on the part of the AIC in refusing a reasonable postponement of the trial when the defense requested it, but allowing a postponement when the prosecution requested it. The complainants note that on Oct. 2, the AIC denied a request for a postponement in order to accommodate the availability of Mr. LeFebvre’s counsel, Mr. Chellis. The AIC responded to this request by stating that they cannot lawfully

postpone a trial for any reason other than “the introduction of new evidence or witnesses,” citing *BOD* II.2.3. The relevant AIC minute is as follows:

Letters were received from Rev. Bill Chellis stating that he is to serve as counsel for the defense to Mr. LeFebvre and also requesting a possible delay in the trial date to accommodate his schedule (which was not stated). It was noted that the *Book of Discipline* (II.2.3) only allows for a delay based on the introduction of new evidence or witnesses.

When, however, the prosecution requested a postponement, it was granted. The complaint asserts that “the only discernible difference between the AIC’s action on October 2 denying a request for delay and their action on October 10 approving a request for delay, is the fact that the former was requested by the defense (and denied) while the latter was requested by the prosecution (and approved).”

In the AIC minutes of October 12 the grant of a continuance is connected with the introduction of additional prosecution witnesses and evidence:

Having received a request from the prosecutors (in a letter addressed to the Ad Interim Commission on 10/10/2020 and subsequently in Communication #20-10 addressed to the Presbytery on 10/12/2020) for a continuance to delay the LeFebvre trial and due to previous granting of the introduction of additional prosecution witnesses and also in concurrence with *BOD* II.2.3 (E-11) which says, “If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense,” it was moved/seconded/passed to grant the continuance and re-schedule the trial of Mr. Michael LeFebvre ...

However, this introduction of witnesses and materials had already been noted in the Oct. 2 minutes, and the AIC had not granted a postponement. The “Request from the Prosecutors for a Continuance” dated October 10 and appended to the October 12 AIC minutes offers a different explanation for the delay, one that fits with the complainants’ allegation:

We, the prosecution, hereby request that AIC approve a continuance, postponing the defendant’s upcoming trial until Friday, November 13 and Saturday, November 14, 2020.

Rationale: The defense’s counsel had approached the prosecution on Tuesday, Oct. 6, offering to drop opposition to prosecution’s witness list in exchange for a “more workable trial date.” An agreement was quickly and amicably reached, and prosecution intended to sign a

joint petition with defense on Thursday, Oct. 8, in time for the AIC's meeting on Friday, Oct. 9. We never received the joint petition; therefore, we would still petition the AIC for a postponement of the trial, believing that this would be in the best interest of the defense.

*It appears from this that the complainants' concerns are justified.* Advocating for themselves, the defense could not get a postponement, the reason given being that the AIC's hands were tied by an ironclad rule in BOD II.2.3. But through some "horse-trading" the defense was able to win the prosecution's advocacy and procure a postponement from the AIC, though there was no clear connection to the introduction of new witnesses or evidence.

We find two of the AIC's decisions to be erroneous. *First*, we believe it is clear that the AIC misread BOD II.2.3 when they ruled that delay of a trial is only permissible when new materials or witnesses have been discovered. In civil law, trials and hearings are postponed routinely, for myriad reasons: work obligations, weather, global pandemics, pressing needs of defendants or plaintiffs, or simply the convenience of lawyers and judges. There is no reason to think that church courts should proceed differently. The time frames given in BOD II.2.3 are safeguards and minimum standards, not strict rules to be imposed on all situations. "*There shall be no unnecessary delay in hearing a case,*"—proceedings must not be dragged out to the detriment of justice—"but both parties shall have sufficient time for preparation"—proceedings must not be rushed, either. As a bare minimum, "*At least ten days shall pass between the issuing of the accusation and the date of the trial, except by consent of all concerned.*" And note that a specific protection is put in place *for the accused*: "If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense." Again, these should not have been read as *the only* circumstances in which a trial date can deviate from the original plan, but as the bare minimum to satisfy justice.

So far, the AIC can be viewed as mistakenly narrow in its reading of our law and order. But the *second* erroneous decision is more blameworthy. The complainants' allegation that a postponement was unfairly denied the defense, but granted the prosecution, has merit. While we do not judge the hearts of our brothers on the AIC, we do find that their actions were prejudicial, and contributed materially to Mr. LeFebvre's perception that the deck was stacked against him. "An overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach," (Titus.1:6). For these reasons, **(1) we recommend that the Synod sustain the complaint of Communication #20-04.** The Ad Interim Commission acts on behalf of the presbytery, and its actions are either approved or overturned by the presbytery. For this reason **(2) we recommend that the Synod admonish the Great**

**Lakes/Gulf Presbytery for accepting and approving the actions of the Ad Interim Commission, which inconsistently applied rules of postponement, which appear to be biased against Mr. LeFebvre.**

**Communication #20-05 Anderson et al. complaint re. LeFebvre.** In this complaint sixteen members of GLG, to various degrees, take issue with two closely related actions of the presbytery at its October 23, 2020 special meeting. *First*, a vote “to uphold the moderator’s ruling that the proposed motion granting Dr. LeFebvre’s credentials to himself rather than to a receiving body is in order,” and *second*, a vote “that Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination, thereby removing him from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA.”

The statement of complaint is followed by nine “*demonstrations*.” Some of these explain what the complainants perceive to be wrong with these actions of GLG, while others elaborate on the damage they believe is done to the health of the church and the process of church discipline. We will not endeavor to treat all of these demonstrations, and will concentrate on those which explain the complainants’ objections to GLG actions.

In demonstration (1), the complainants state that in allowing Mr. LeFebvre to leave without standing trial, the presbytery afforded him a luxury denied ordinary church members, a violation of the principle of equality under the law (citing Exodus 12:49). They quote *BOD* I.4.2a (E-6): “If it appears to the session that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, the request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has properly concluded.”

But our *Constitution* clearly provides for a contingency in which a teaching elder may depart for another denomination with charges pending (i.e. filed but not yet adjudicated): “A teaching elder desiring affiliation with another denomination may upon application be given credentials by his presbytery and a letter of standing by his session. *If there are charges pending, they shall be included*,” (*DCG* 3.II.E.5.i, D-21, emphasis added). Further, while the complainants are right to compare the situations of an accused officer and an accused member, they should also note the nuances of *BOD* I.4.2a: “If it appears *to the session*”—it is up to the adjudicating body to make this determination—“that a member has requested removal *merely* to avoid church discipline”—it is conceivable that a member, or an officer, may leave during a disciplinary procedure for reasons more complicated than simply wanting to “get away with it.” The reason Mr. LeFebvre stated for wishing to leave, and which a majority of GLG evidently accepted, was that he believed he could not get a fair trial from the presbytery. This is not a *mere* avoidance of church discipline.

Declaration (2) states that adjudicating a charge against an elder is an “un-

*qualified scriptural command.*" Our *Constitution*, cited above, provides for transfer or dismissal with charges pending.

Declaration (3) gets to the heart of the complaint, stating that the GLG's action "violated the RPCNA[s] government by granting Dr. LeFebvre's credentials to himself ... without specifying any receiving ecclesiastical body to which he is now accountable."

As stated earlier, the *DCG* provides for the exit of a teaching elder who has unresolved (pending) charges against him. The details of the process are important: a teaching elder "may ... be given credentials by his presbytery." There is no requirement that the receiving body be known or stated before this action is taken, and the teaching elder is himself the recipient of his credentials—not the receiving body. The October 23, 2020, motion states that Mr. LeFebvre should "be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) *in order to transfer to another denomination*" (emphasis added).

As of June 16, 2021, it is not known if Mr. LeFebvre has joined with another denomination. But according to the wording of the motion, that was the intent and expectation of the presbytery, and this action was procedurally in keeping with the law and order of the church.

Demonstrations (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), and (9) borrow language from the *Book of Discipline* (I.1.3), and state different ways in which the presbytery's actions deprived Mr. LeFebvre, the church, and others of the benefits of the church discipline process, and dishonored the Lord. Mr. LeFebvre asked for an exception to the RPCNA's standards when the presbytery clarified that his positions were at odds with those standards at certain points. His exception was judged by GLG to be contrary to our system of doctrine. Mr. LeFebvre then resigned his pastorate, with this as his stated reason. *This sequence of events demonstrates the GLG's commitment to the purposes which church discipline serves.* In his October 9 letter to the presbytery, Mr. LeFebvre stated that he did not believe he would be tried fairly, sought to leave, and was on October 23 granted his credentials. It is within the presbytery's discretion to allow such a departure. Will we incur the wrath of God because we allowed a man to discern that he could not in good conscience serve in our fellowship, then allowed him to leave? In 1981 the Synod adopted the following from the Committee on the Nature of the Ordination Vow: "If the church as a whole and an individual disagree on what the Scripture teaches, both have a decision to make. The church must decide whether the view of the individual, which it believes to be in error, can be tolerated in the church without injury to the harmony and effective testimony of the church. The individual must decide whether his understanding of the Bible will allow him to remain a part of a communion which holds a different view from his" (*Minutes of Synod*, 127-128).

The complainants raise an important concern: the *intent* of giving a teaching elder his credentials is that he join with another denomination, not that he hold them himself indefinitely. While GLG hewed to the letter and spirit of the law in granting him his credentials, to our knowledge there has not been any effective follow-up with Mr. LeFebvre to encourage him to join another body (outside of the jurisdiction of the RPCNA, he cannot be forced to do so, only encouraged). Accordingly, **we recommend that Synod instruct the GLG to appoint a two-man committee to communicate with Mr. LeFebvre and, if possible, shepherd him into membership in a true branch of the Visible Church.**

We believe that the presbytery acted within the boundaries of the *Constitution* in granting Mr. LeFebvre his credentials with pending charges attached, per *DCG* 3.II.E.5.i. For this reason **we recommend that the complaint of Communication #20-05 not be sustained.**

Attached to the complaint is a 21-page narrative of the LeFebvre case and his ministry, stretching back years. All records of the case have been made available to the Synod and to this committee. We concur with one of the principal authors of this complaint that this narrative is unnecessary. **We recommend that pages 3-23 of Communication #20-05 be stricken and not printed in the Minutes of Synod.**

**Communication #20-09 Manring complaint re. LeFebvre.** In this communication Ben Manring, a member of the Southside Indianapolis RPC, presents two complaints and a petition. Mr. Manring's first complaint states that the presbytery "failed in its duty to guard the doctrinal integrity and witness of the church by declining to prosecute serious and provable charges against ... Rev. Michael LeFebvre." He then states that GLG aggravated this failure by rising to express its gratitude for Mr. LeFebvre's past labors and pray for his future blessing.

We are thankful that the complainant takes his responsibility as a church member seriously in exercising his privilege of complaint. He rightly recognizes that safeguarding the gospel and scriptural truth is the responsibility of every believer, not just office bearers. He also wrestles, in the body of his communication, with many of the theological implications of Mr. LeFebvre's writings, and we commend him for this.

With regard to the first complaint, we find that GLG did *not* decline to prosecute charges against Mr. LeFebvre. GLG *did* rule his exception to *RP Testimony* 4.4 as being out of accord with our system of doctrine; and their recognition of his contributions to the well-being of Christ's church<sup>1</sup> does not negate or

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1 The motion passed by the GLG in their October 23, 2020 meeting was as follows: "Whereas God has used Pastor Michael LeFebvre in many and wonderful ways to bless our Presbytery and denomination and to make the RPCNA a blessing to the bride of Jesus throughout the world; whereas God has blessed Pastor LeFebvre's church planting

reverse this. The presbytery is obligated to clarify the boundaries of teaching that is true and acceptable within their jurisdiction. The presbytery is not obligated to abide by the complainant's private opinion and treat Mr. LeFebvre as a heretic and false teacher.

The second complaint alleges that the GLG Presbytery did not go far enough in the charges it formulated against Mr. LeFebvre, and enumerates additional ways in which Mr. LeFebvre's views violate sound doctrine. This is a complaint of non-action, or not enough action, on the part of the presbytery.

However, it cannot be reasonably said that the presbytery failed to vigorously pursue charges against Mr. LeFebvre. Further, there was nothing to prevent the complainant filing charges himself: "Any member in good standing in the church may press charges against any other member before the court to whose jurisdiction he himself belongs" (BOD II.1.2, E-9).

Along with his complaints, the communication includes a petition, asking that the Synod investigate why the evaluation paper produced by faculty of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary for its board "was not published or widely circulated," and whether the board may have tried to prevent this because of a "conflict of interest or prejudicial relationship with Dr. LeFebvre." Finally, he asks the Synod to encourage the officers of the church and seminary faculty "to publicly address published writings ... that tend to adversely affect the spiritual health of the church." There is no indication that the complainant has attempted to contact the faculty or board members of RPTS in order to satisfy his concerns. We offer this as a possible path forward.

**We recommend that the Synod not sustain the complaints of Communication #20-09, nor hear the petition contained therein.**

**Communication #21-14 Hanson et al. responding to Anderson et al. re. LeFebvre ("Parties Interacting").** Communication #21-14 does not clearly fit the mould of a complaint. It is a response to the Anderson et al. complaint (Communication #20-05). There is no matter here for Synod to adjudicate, particularly if (as we recommend) pages 3-23 of Communication #20-05 are stricken. Together, those pages and this communication are specimens demonstrating the intensity of feeling, bordering on rancor, within GLG.

**We recommend that Communication #21-14 be ruled out of order, stricken and not printed in the *Minutes of Synod*.**

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and pastoring of Christ Church Reformed Presbyterian; whereas God has uniquely gifted our brother's academic and writing abilities to our great benefit, including the areas of Psalmody, ministering to those struggling with gender issues and same-sex attraction, and our understanding of God's law in the Old Testament; it is moved that Presbytery rise to express our profound gratitude to Pastor LeFebvre for his ministry and labors among us, our love for him as our friend and co-laborer, our sorrow at his departure, and that Presbytery pray for God's blessing on his future endeavors to serve Jesus."



### Observations of Synod Judicial Committee 1 on the GLG Presbytery

Michael LeFebvre's writings began to raise concern among his brothers and colleagues in the RPCNA in late 2019. In response to a communication received from the St. Lawrence Presbytery, a Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery committee was convened at its spring meeting to study Michael LeFebvre's writings. At a time when civil and criminal court proceedings slowed, stopped, or were canceled altogether, the proceedings against Mr. LeFebvre accelerated. In a single day (September 11, 2020) the committee gave their report, and a minister in good standing, who had authored valuable denominational position papers, was informed that his beliefs were outside the pale of RPCNA doctrine, and charged with violating his ordination vows. Within a few more days, he had resigned from his pastorate of fourteen years. His trial was scheduled for only a few weeks in the future. By mid-November he was gone: out of the pastorate, out of the presbytery, out of the RPCNA. GLG was left bitterly divided, and the Synod of the RPCNA has been asked to pick up the pieces. Is it possible to put them back together?

One theme that arises from reading the complaints, as well as various meeting minutes, is that the men of GLG participated in a race to the bottom in applying the standards of the church. Mr. LeFebvre's proponents read the *BOD* as prohibiting the addition of witnesses or evidence past Day 1 (this was probably wrong), and allowing the postponement of a trial at the defense's request (this was probably right). Meanwhile the AIC read the *BOD* as prohibiting postponement of trial—yet was inconsistent in applying this standard. Both sides gathered information; one side wrote a judgment-laden account of the case to date, and the other side wrote a judgment-laden response.

Together the signers of these two documents number 22 men, a significant portion of the presbytery roll. These things should not be.

Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery is so divided that the work of Christ's church is hindered, and hundreds of man-hours *this week* have been devoted to working through this presbytery's conflicts. Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! We are God's fellow workers for your good, and your true companions. We have been laboring to help you, and now we entreat you: agree in the Lord.

The tongue, and its emissaries, the pen and the email server, are too often a fire, a world of unrighteousness, set on fire by hell. I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. How much more should we watch what we say: write fewer words; be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger? If anyone thinks he's religious and doesn't bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*" (John 13:35).

**List of recommendations:**

1. That Synod substantiate Communications #20-03, #20-04, #20-05, and #20-06 as addressing matters of injustice and wrong on the part of the lower court (*BOD* II.4.4, E-16). (This means that members of GLG may not vote on recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.)
2. That Synod *not sustain* the complaint of Communication #20-03.
3. That Synod *sustain* the complaint of Communication #20-04.
4. That Synod *formally admonish* the GLG for accepting and approving, on March 4, 2021, the following actions of its Ad Interim Commission:
  - a. October 2, 2020 agenda item #7
  - b. October 12, 2020 agenda item #4
 which inconsistently applied rules of postponement, which appear to be biased against Mr. LeFebvre.<sup>2</sup>
5. That Synod instruct GLG to appoint a two-man committee to communicate with Mr. LeFebvre and, if possible, shepherd him into membership in a true branch of the Visible Church.
6. That Synod *not sustain* the complaint of Communication #20-05.
7. That Synod *strike* pages 3-23 of Communication #20-05 and they not be printed in the *Minutes of Synod*.
8. That Synod *not sustain* the complaints of Communication #20-09, *nor hear the petition* contained therein.
9. That Synod *rule* Communication #21-14 out of order, *strike it*, and not print it in the *Minutes of Synod*.

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<sup>2</sup> 2021 GLG Spring Minutes & Documents, Page 3 of 151:

The GLG AIC October 2, 2020 meeting agenda item #7 reads as follows: "Letters were received from Rev. Bill Chellis stating that he is to serve as counsel for the defense to Mr. LeFebvre and also requesting a possible delay in the trial date to accommodate his schedule (which was not stated). It was noted that the *Book of Discipline* (II.2.3) only allows for a delay based on the introduction of new evidence or witnesses." (2021 GLG Spring Minutes & Documents, Page 81 of 151).

The GLG AIC Oct. 12, 2020 meeting agenda item #4 reads: "Having received a request from the prosecutors (in a letter addressed to the AIC on 10/10/2020 and subsequently in communication 20-10 addressed to the Presbytery on 10/12/2020) for a continuance to delay the LeFebvre trial and due to previous granting of the introduction of additional prosecution witnesses and also in concurrence with *BOD* II.2.3 (E-11) which says, "If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense," it was moved/seconded/passed to grant the continuance and re-schedule the trial of Mr. Michael LeFebvre at Southside RPC on Friday, November 13, 2020, and Saturday the 14th starting at 2:00 p.m. EST on the 13th and again at 8:30 a.m. EST on the 14th." (2021 GLG Spring Minutes & Documents, Page 91 of 151).

Respectfully submitted: Bruce R. Backensto, Kyle M. Borg,  
Paul W. Hemphill, Daniel M. Howe (chairman), David A. Weir

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## **2020 Communication #20-03 ABBREV.: GLG re. LeFebvre, Faris Complaint vs. GLG**

*Complaint to Synod of Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery Ad Interim Commission Action  
James Faris—November 5, 2020*

On October 10, 2020, upon first reading the minutes of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery AIC from its October 2, 2020, meeting, I registered my complaint with its decision to admit additional witnesses and evidence at the then-planned trial of Mr. Michael LeFebvre (see Appendix 1). These were the actions regarding item 6 (requests #1 and #2) in the AIC minutes of October 2 (see Appendix 2).

On September 11, 2020, charges were filed against Mr. LeFebvre by Mr. Shawn Anderson and Mr. Adam Kuehner. The presbytery approved the charges (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 4) including the list of witnesses provided by Mr. Kuehner and Mr. Anderson as required by the *Book of Discipline* (Section II, Chapter 2, Paragraph 1 and 2).

Along with the charges, the prosecution also set forth seven parts of its body of evidence. On September 11, it is well remembered by many presbyters that the moderator directly asked the prosecution if this was their complete list, noting that it could not be added to. The prosecution responded in the affirmative. The evidence was approved and immediately after that step, the prosecution noted that it had omitted the Bible as another evidence and asked the moderator's permission to use the Bible as evidence in the trial. The moderator granted that a Bible should always be allowed as evidence in a church trial. The point is this: the prosecution knew that the *Book of Discipline* requires all evidence and witnesses to be put forth when charges are filed.

Then, prior to the October 2, 2020, meeting of the AIC, the prosecution made the following request of the AIC (see Appendix 2):

To the *Ad Interim Commission* of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA): In preparation for Dr. LeFebvre's upcoming trial, we, as the prosecutors, would like to make three requests of the court, by way of your commission.

According to *Book of Discipline* II.2.3 (E-11), at least ten days shall pass between the issuing of the accusation and the date of the trial, except by consent of all concerned. If additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered, the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense.

REQUEST #1. Having discovered additional witnesses that will prove vital to our case, we hereby request that the following individuals, all members in good standing within the RPCNA, be summoned

(per Form 24, H-21) to appear before the court as witnesses at Dr. LeFebvre's trial.

1. Joel Hart
2. Richard Holdeman
3. Jon Hughes
4. Michael LeFebvre
5. Jared Olivetti
6. Jeffrey Stivason
7. C.J. Williams

REQUEST #2. Having discovered additional evidence that will prove vital to our case, we hereby request that the following items be added to our existing list of evidence as detailed in the written accusation.

1. *The Minutes of the RPCNA Synod*
2. The Minutes of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery
3. The Minutes of the GLG Ad Interim Commission
4. The Letter from GLG to MWP concerning Rev. Brian Schwertley (03/02/2018)
5. The GLG Student Handbook
6. GLG Communications 18-06, 18-08, and 19-04.
7. The Report of the Judicial Committee to Review 19-04.

According to our reading of *BOD* II.2.3 (E-11), the granting of our first two requests would require the court to grant the defendant "further time ... to prepare a defense" ONLY IF he failed to receive notice of the action "at least ten days" prior to the trial. We trust that, if our requests are granted, you'll notify the defendant as soon as possible, exercising proper discretion in determining the most equitable way forward.

The prosecution states that they discovered additional witnesses/evidence that would be vital to their case. But none of the additional witnesses were new nor were they undiscovered previously. For the sake of order, justice, and the protection of the accused, the burden is always placed upon the prosecution to have witnesses and evidence identified when the charges are presented.

On October 9 of 2020, on the same day the AIC Minutes of October 2 were released, Mr. LeFebvre sent a letter to the Presbytery with the same grievance I am making here (see Appendix 5). In that letter, Mr. LeFebvre wrote:

In particular, I ask the court to reverse the AIC's actions approving the prosecution's amended witness and evidence list (see item #6 of the AIC's Oct. 2 minutes, approving Requests 1 and 2 from Communication 20-08). Not only was this step taken without any prior notice given to the defense, it was also taken in direct opposition to the Book of Discipline and the express instructions of presbytery during the Sept. 11 meeting.

The BOD (II.2.1-2) requires that the prosecution submit “a list of the witnesses and of all papers to be offered in evidence” at the time charges are filed. Further, the BOD requires presbytery to certify that “the proposed evidence [is] sufficient” upon receiving the charges. Finally, the BOD only allows the prosecution to add new witnesses and new evidence to their filing “if additional witnesses or new evidence are discovered” (that is, witnesses and evidence not known beforehand).

This limitation was openly and pointedly discussed on the floor of Presbytery during the Sept. 11 meeting. The prosecution and the court were fully aware, and vocally agreed during floor discussion on September 11, that the evidence list filed at that time was the only evidence permitted to the prosecution. The matter was so clearly understood that later in the meeting on September 11, one of the prosecutors asked the court for assurance that they were permitted to draw upon the Holy Scriptures as evidence even though the Bible was not specified on the already filed evidence list! The prosecution was fully aware that their evidence list was limited to what the full court received at the time of filing.

It is prejudicial for the AIC to neglect this guidance of the BOD and to reverse the understanding agreed by the full court on September 11. To add seven new witnesses and seven new lines of evidence this close to the trial—especially after the delays already introduced into my effort to arrange counsel—is unmanageable. The BOD envisions “at least ten days” (BOD II.2.3) notice between the filing of witnesses and evidence and a trial, thereby indicating that ten days is a minimum and more is expected when more extensive lists of material are filed. Even if these additions were legitimately “new discoveries” and thus warranted (which I contend they are not), the addition of fourteen new lines of prosecutorial evidence admitted this late in the case should, at a minimum, have led the AIC to postpone the trial (“the accused shall be informed and further time given him or her to prepare a defense,” BOD II.2.3). But the AIC did not allow a delay while they did approve this irregular request for new prosecution witnesses and evidence.

Furthermore, under what provision does the prosecution believe (and the AIC approve) that the prosecution can subpoena the defendant to be a witness for the prosecution’s case? (Notice that the prosecution has listed, and the AIC has approved, a subpoena for me as the prosecution’s fourth witness!) The BOD states that “the accused may be permitted to testify on his own behalf” (BOD II.3.10) but that no witness “may be compelled to answer if in doing so he would incriminate

*himself* (BOD II.3.8). Neither civil law nor the Book of Discipline allows prosecutors to compel a defendant to bear witness against himself. Item 6 of the AIC's Oct. 2 minutes is out of order for numerous reasons and creates an unfair burden upon the defense. I appeal to the court to reverse that action, in particular.

Though the trial has now been canceled, I still object to the injustice of the Ad Interim Commission's allowing additional witnesses and evidence on October 2, 2020, and ask that the Synod correct this error for the following reasons:

1. The action is prejudicial to the defense and contrary to the *BOD* which only allows for newly discovered evidence/witnesses to be admitted. We must not allow this precedence to stand, lest basic principles of justice be eroded in the courts of the RPCNA.
  - a. The action was prejudicial to Mr. LeFebvre. The accused cannot prepare a defense without knowing the evidence that will be introduced against him. If the prosecution is able to literally triple the evidence just ten days before the trial, then it eliminates the ability of the accused to prepare for trial. Preparing a defense is a vital element of due process. "*Trial by ambush*" is not permitted under any fair reading of our *BOD*.
    1. Preparation for witness testimony: Our *BOD* permits the accused to question the "*character or the competency of any witness.*" As to character, the accused may inquire into the "*mental deficiency, immaturity, infamy of character, and malice*" of the accused. As to competency, the accused may question the credibility of the witness on the matter in question, their first-hand knowledge of the matter, or the weight their testimony should carry.
 

Adding new witnesses on the eve of trial also taints the legitimacy of any guilty verdict because it raises the specter that the accused was not convicted on the merits but because he lacked access to evidence that would discredit the character or competency of the witnesses against him.
  - b. The action was also contrary to the *BOD* because none of these witnesses were "*discovered*" after the accusation against Mr. LeFebvre was issued. In other words, permitting additional witnesses after the reading of the accusation is permitted only for newly discovered witnesses that were not known or could not have been discovered with reasonable diligence. Although the *Book of Discipline* does not say "*newly discovered*" that is the clear and necessary implication of the text.

Enforcing the rule that only ‘discovered’ witnesses (i.e., newly discovered witnesses) are permitted after the reading of the accusation is also necessary to ensure the legitimacy of accusations in our denomination. Accusations must be valid charges, that is, not the product of gossip, malice, or idle rumor. (see *BOD* Sec II, Ch. 1, Para. 4). Proceeding to a trial in which the prosecution has failed to identify all known witnesses at the time of accusation (or witnesses who should have been known in the exercise of reasonable diligence) raises the suspicion that the accusation was made for an invalid purpose. It also raises the suspicion that the charge was made in haste and without due regard for the unity and peace of the church.

If the prosecution’s case was hastily assembled and lacked all of the witnesses necessary, then the correct procedure would have been to drop the original charges and file new charges with all the supporting evidence and witnesses necessary. Sloppy prosecutorial work can be no reason to set aside biblical principles of justice, equity, and love.

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery Ad Interim Commission erred in allowing the new witnesses and evidence it allowed into the LeFebvre trial by its October 2, 2020, decision. I urge Synod to rule the AIC’s decision to be out of order.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*James Faris*

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## **List of Appendices**

*(not included in this publication)*

Appendix 1: Letter of Complaint from James Faris to AIC Moderator Butterfield and Clerk Hughes

Appendix 2: AIC Minutes of October 2, 2020

Appendix 3: September 11, 2020 Charges Against Mr. LeFebvre

Appendix 4: Pages 5-7 of Minutes of the Sept. 11, 2020, of the GLG.

Appendix 5: Michael LeFebvre’s October 9, 2020 letter to presbytery

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## **Communication #20-04 Abbreviated**

### **Complaint to Synod of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery AIC**

*Jared Olivetti with James Faris—November 11, 2020*

This complaint is intended to address a potential injustice and violation of our *Book of Discipline* in the Ad Interim Commission’s actions on October 2 and 12 of 2020.

On October 2, 2020, the AIC minutes (item #6) reflect their decision to allow the addition of witnesses and evidence to the charges against Dr. LeFebvre

already approved by presbytery. In the next item, #7, the minutes note that the AIC “received [letters from the defense] requesting a possible delay in the trial” and clearly indicated their decision that they were unable to postpone the trial “[except] for a delay based on the introduction of new evidence or witnesses.” The defense had requested a delay of the trial date in order to accommodate the availability of the defense’s counsel. The AIC denied this reason for delay, stating that the only reason to delay the trial would be if new evidence or witnesses (based on AIC’s reading of *BOD* II.2.3). Furthermore, since the AIC had just admitted new evidence and witnesses in the preceding action, it is clear the AIC did not deem that admission of new witnesses to warrant a delay.

On October 12, item #4 of the AIC’s minutes reflect their decision (“having received a request from the prosecutors”) to postpone the trial “due to the previous granting of the introduction of additional prosecution witnesses” based on *BOD* II.2.3, and referring back to the October 2 action introducing new witnesses.

That is a clear reversal of the AIC’s mind and policy in the space of two weeks. Why? When the prosecution submitted their request for new witnesses, at that time the prosecution stated, “the court [is required] to grant the defendant ‘further time ... to prepare a defense’ ONLY IF he failed to receive notice of the action [to introduce new witnesses] ‘at least ten days’ prior to the trial.” Since their request was submitted more than ten days before the trial, at that time, the prosecution did not feel the new evidence and witnesses warranted a delay. The AIC concurred, and denied the defense’s request for a delay.

Later, in their October 10 communication to the AIC, the prosecution specifically asked for a delay of the trial. In that request, the prosecution never mentioned the introduction of new witnesses as the basis for such a delay. They rather indicated that they had been negotiating with Dr. LeFebvre’s lawyer, asking that the defense would drop their contest on the matter of lately added witnesses, in exchange for which the prosecution would agree to request a delay. Evidently, the prosecution believed that it was in their power to sway the AIC to provide the delay requested by the defendant and previously denied by AIC. Even though Dr. LeFebvre did not agree to the terms they wanted to negotiate for their support for a delay, the prosecution went ahead to request a delay. Again, the prosecution never cited the addition of new witnesses as the reason for such a delay. Rather, they knew that Dr. LeFebvre had already stated he would not show up for the trial since he could not be there with counsel. Therefore, they requested a delay to accommodate his counsel’s schedule in hopes that the defense would show up for the delayed trial date.

Having already denied the request for a delay from the defense, the AIC then granted the same request when it came from the prosecution. Having



previously bound themselves to a reading of the BOD that restricted them from postponing the trial for any reason other than the introduction of new evidence and witnesses, the AIC finally did decide to authorize the postponed dates based on their admission of new witnesses back on Oct. 2. However, they had already ruled in their October 2 meeting that the introduction of witnesses at that time did not warrant grounds for a delay. The only discernible difference between the AIC's action on October 2 denying a request for delay and their action on October 10 approving a request for delay, is the fact that the former was requested by the defense (and denied) while the latter was requested by the prosecution (and approved).

This is manifestly inconsistent and therefore an unjust action against the defendant. Furthermore, Dr. LeFebvre has informed me privately that the AIC never contacted the defense to ask whether the defense felt a delay was needed to prepare in light of the new witnesses. The AIC failed to show concern for the actual needs of the defense. Rather, it appears the AIC used that provision of the *BOD* (regarding a delay when new witnesses are admitted) as a justification they invoke to justify a delay, whatever may be the actual reason for a delay. The reason might be something totally unrelated to the matter of witnesses. But "new witnesses" became the lever to pull to activate the delay.

In the AIC's report to the October 23 meeting of presbytery, the AIC asserts, "At no time did we as the AIC receive a request from the defense for a delay of the trial. While we heard from the defense that it MIGHT request a delay, no request from the defense was ever actually received by the AIC." This however contradicts the AIC's minute from October 2, which states: "Letters were received from Rev. Bill Chellis stating that he is to serve as counsel for the defense to Mr. LeFebvre and also requesting a possible delay in the trial date to accommodate his schedule (which was not stated). It was noted that the *Book of Discipline* (II.2.3) only allows for a delay based on the introduction of new evidence or witnesses."

Thus, the AIC's minutes expressly indicate that they received what they understood to be a request for a delay. Perhaps the lack of a specified date for delay might be construed as making that request "informal" rather than "formal." Nevertheless, AIC preemptively denied any delay to accommodate counsel's schedule by stating that the only basis for a delay is new witnesses. It is hard to understand how AIC can characterize themselves as never receiving a request for delay from the defense.

It should further be noted that the defense submitted a complaint to the moderator of presbytery regarding the AIC's biased actions on October 3. In that complaint, the defense included a request for presbytery yet to provide a postponed trial date despite the AIC's refusal to grant that delay. In his memo-

random responding to the defense's complaint, the moderator responded indicating his denial to provide a delay himself, since "the moderator lacks the authority to grant this request." That is, of course, correct. The moderator does not have that authority. However, the defense was not asking the moderator to grant the delay himself. Nor was the defense submitting this (second) request for a delay to the AIC (having already been denied by AIC).

Rather, Mr. Chellis' October 3 letter to the moderator stated (on page 3): "We further request that the Presbytery recognize that AIC has prejudiced the Defense ... and therefore request a month adjournment [i.e., from the full Presbytery], rescheduling the trial until November 13 and 14."

The defense had no expectation that the moderator would unilaterally reschedule the trial. And they did not expect AIC to do so. Their letter to the moderator was asking him to call a special meeting of Presbytery to deal with the defense's complaints of bias from AIC. And in that full meeting of Presbytery, the defense hoped for Presbytery to consider granting the delay that AIC had, to that point, denied. It was possible at that point that a special meeting could have been called before October 23 to deal with these issues before the trial. That was unlikely, but still a possibility.

In Dr. LeFebvre's own testimony to me: "... we (Bill and I) never expected the moderator to unilaterally change the date. Nor did we expect him to forward that request to AIC (which had already denied that request). We wanted the moderator to include that request for a delay of the trial in his stated agenda for calling a special meeting for the full Presbytery to decide, whenever Presbytery met. We never expected the moderator to unilaterally postpone the trial, so it is odd if he used the language of 'denying' that request, since he had no such authority."

Nevertheless, the moderator's mindset and actions are irrelevant to the point of this complaint. The real issue remains clear: the inconsistency of AIC that manifests a stark appearance of bias which needs to be investigated and answered for. On the question of delay, AIC consistently complied with the desires of the prosecution, and consistently in opposition to the desires of the defense. Furthermore, they never reached out to ask the defense whether the introduction of new evidence seemed a burden upon the defense requiring more time. They seem to have used that "*lever*" to allow or disallow delays as they saw fit, in seeming collaboration with the prosecution.

This example of prejudice is a bad testimony of our Presbytery's commitment to justice, it failed to preference the defendant as ought to always be the case throughout disciplinary processes, and it apparently left Dr. LeFebvre without hope of justice in our midst. For the sake of our faithfulness to Jesus and to prevent this injustice from serving as a precedent, my request is that

Synod rule the October 12 item #4 action of AIC (and in its light, the Oct. 2 item #7 action of AIC) to be unjust and therefore out of order.

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**RPCNA Synod of 2021: 2020 Communication #20-05 ABBREV.  
GLG re. LeFebvre, Anderson et al Complaint vs. GLG**

A formal complaint<sup>1</sup> to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, submitted by the undersigned delegates on Saturday, November 21, 2020, concerning certain unscriptural actions taken by a special meeting of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery, assembled on Friday, October 23, 2020, at the Southside Indianapolis Reformed Presbyterian Church, on “matters affecting the purity and welfare of the church;”<sup>2</sup> wherein the court

- (1) Voted 21-17 to uphold the Moderator’s ruling that the proposed motion<sup>3</sup> granting Dr. LeFebvre’s credentials to himself rather than to a receiving ecclesiastical body is in order, and
- (2) Voted 20-18 “that Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination, thereby removing him from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA”;

Which actions demonstrably

1. **Violated the scriptural principles of equal protection, impartiality, and heightened ministerial accountability in matters of ecclesiastical jurisprudence** (Exodus 12:49; 1 Timothy 5:19-22; James 3:1) by “removing [a minister] from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA” before the conclusion of the disciplinary process for the stated purpose of “avoiding the need for a trial” (20-11)—a trial which the defendant expressed his unwillingness to attend—whereas this same privilege is denied to ordinary church members, per *BOD* I.4.2a (E-6), which states, “If it appears to the session that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, the request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has properly concluded.”
2. **Violated the unqualified scriptural command to adjudicate an “ac-**

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1 *WCF* 31.3 (A-102): “It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience, to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of His Church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word. Acts 15:15,19, 24, 27-31; Acts 16:4; Matthew 18:17-20.” Cf. *BOD* II.4.3 (E-15).

2 *DCG* 8:12 (D-41).

3 Motion: “That Mr. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with the pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination.”

- cusation<sup>4</sup> against an elder” attested by “two or three witnesses” (that is, credible evidence) such that “every word shall be established” and the church enabled to “rebuke those who are sinning” (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19-22; cf. *BOD* I.3.1-5, E-4; I.4.1, E-5; II.2.2, E-10).
3. **Violated the *RPCNA Constitution’s* scriptural form of church government by granting Dr. LeFebvre’s credentials to himself, removing him from the jurisdiction of the rpcna without specifying any receiving ecclesiastical body to which he is now accountable** (*DCG* 3.II.E.5.i, D-21; *DCG* 6:2, D-31; *DCG* 6:13, D-33), thereby creating an unbiblical and self-contradictory outcome in which he now remains a “presbyterian minister” (per his online bio) while lacking any particular membership within the visible church of Jesus Christ; in contrast to Scripture, which describes ministers as “messengers of the churches” (2 Corinthians 8:23).
  4. **Deprived Dr. LeFebvre of a dynamic, God-ordained means of individual sanctifying grace—namely, the scriptural process of church discipline which is designed “primarily, to reclaim a sinning member”** (*BOD* I.1.3, E-3; cf. Lev. 19:17; Prov. 13:24; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Revelation 3:19), yet which is all too frequently regarded as unloving, impractical, and unwise by many Christians, who remain cynical as to its effectiveness, insisting it will do more harm than good.
  5. **Deprived Christ’s visible church inside the RPCNA of the scriptural process of church discipline as a corporate means of grace designed by God to “deter others from similar offenses” and “maintain the purity and peace of his church”** (*BOD* I.1.3, E-3; *WCF* 30.3; cf. Ecclesiastes 8:11; 1 Cor. 5:6,12) by
    - A. Failing to “adjudicate all matters coming before it by” the St. Lawrence Presbytery’s unanimous “petition” (19-5)<sup>5</sup> urging the GLG to

4 That is, an approved written accusation meeting the criteria outlined in *BOD* II.2.2 (E-10). In the *BOD*, following presbytery’s approval of a written accusation, the ensuing outline of the trial process employs the words “shall” and “must” more than 50 times (E-11 to E-15). These judicial processes are not optional. Unless the court dismisses the charges based upon “well-grounded objections” (II.2.4) or the defendant pleads guilty (II.2.5), it is “necessary to proceed with the trial.”

5 *DCG* 6:12 (D-33): “**The presbytery ... shall adjudicate all matters coming before it by appeal, complaint, reference or petition** from the sessions, or from members of the congregations, if properly transmitted by the sessions ...” It stands to reason that if the *DCG* requires a presbytery to “adjudicate all matters coming before it by ... petition” sent by a local church member, how much greater would be its responsibility to adjudicate matters brought to its attention by a unanimous petition from a fellow RPCNA presbytery!

“appraise” Dr. LeFebvre’s writings, “ascertain whether or not [they] are consistent with the subordinate standards of the RPCNA”, and “forward their conclusions to this Presbytery”; whereas no such appraisal or conclusions were ever formally adopted by the GLG presbytery.

- B. Failing to adequately enforce Ordination Vows 8 and 9,<sup>6</sup> which function as vital safeguards to the RPCNA’s peace and unity in the truth of Scripture; and
- C. Allowing the written statements of certain RPCNA elders (e.g. Drs. Holdeman, McCullough, and Ophoff<sup>7</sup>) in praise of Dr. LeFebvre’s writings to go unopposed and unqualified by any clear public statement by the presbytery condemning the specific list of contra-confessional teachings contained within these writings, such that, through this neglect of duty, local RPCNA church officers and members remain vulnerable to the influence of this literature.

**6. Deprived Christ’s visible church outside the RPCNA of the scriptural process of church discipline as a corporate means of grace designed by God to “deter others from similar offenses” and “maintain the purity of the church”** (*BOD* I.1.3, E-3; cf. Galatians 5:9; 2 Timothy 2:17) by granting Dr. LeFebvre’s credentials in good standing, thereby facilitating his ongoing promotion of dangerous, divisive, and unbiblical teachings among the leaders and members of our Lord’s beloved and blood-bought church.

**7. Neglected to adequately “maintain the honor of Christ”** (*BOD* I.1.3, E-3), by failing to adjudicate a credible accusation against Dr. LeFebvre for the censurable sin of violating vows made in connection with his ordination, which was solemnly administered “in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church” (*DCG* 3.II.E.5.j, D-20), who “will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7).

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<sup>6</sup> Ordination Query 8: “That you may perform faithfully all the duties of the office to which you have been called, do you engage to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Do you promise, in His strength, to live a holy and exemplary life, to study and promote the purity, peace, unity, and progress of the church—” Query 9: “Do you promise subjection in the Lord to the courts of this church, and engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted; and do you promise to submit to all the brotherly counsel which your brethren may tender you in the Lord?”

<sup>7</sup> On 10/7/20, Dr. Roel Ophoff, a Los Angeles RPC ruling elder, sent a letter to the GLG (Communication #20-6B) in strong support of Dr. LeFebvre’s writings on creation and Adam, over against the charges which had been received against the defendant.

- 8. Neglected to adequately “maintain the truth of the gospel”** (*BOD* I.1.3, E-3), in failing to adjudicate a credible accusation against Dr. LeFebvre for publishing contra-confessional teachings concerning human origins, the historical Adam, and Biblical chronology which have been shown to undermine the truth and trustworthiness of inspired gospel doctrine (1 Corinthians 10:11; 15:21-22,45-49) as set forth in our confessional standards (20-2, 20-4, 20-5).
- 9. Neglected to employ the “orderly manner for dealing with sin in [the] church ... set forth in Matthew 18:15-17” to win our brother through “loving personal confrontation, using witnesses, and calling upon church leaders for counsel and judgement”** (*BOD* I.1.2, E-3), thereby inviting “the wrath of God ... upon the church” such that the RPCNA may “lose His blessing, deteriorating more and more in doctrine and in life” (Matthew 5:13).

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### **2020 Communication #20-09: GLG re. LeFebvre, Manring Complaint vs. GLG**

*COVER LETTER, on RPC of Southside Indianapolis letterhead*

*To: Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery*

*From: Session of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southside Indianapolis*

*Subj.: Transmittal of Complaints & Petitions from Ben Manring*

On December 7, 2020, Mr. Ben Manring, communicant member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southside Indianapolis, having requested and received Presbytery Minutes of the October 23, 2020 meeting, informed Session of his intention to submit complaint documents within 30 days.

On January 6, 2021, Session received Mr. Manring’s complaints and petition. On January 8, 2021, Session received from Mr. Manring the attached document with minor annotated corrections and a clarification.

On January 12, 2021, in our regular monthly meeting, Session approved the following motion:

*that session transmit Ben Manring’s complaints against the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery and petition to Synod to the Ad Interim Commission of the Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery without endorsement.*

*[Signed]: Steven R. Sturm (Clerk of Session); David W. Hanson (Moderator of Session)*

To Steve Sturm, Clerk of Session, Southside RPCNA, Indianapolis, Indiana. Now comes Ben Manring, member of the Southside RPCNA, Indianapolis, Indiana, this 6th day of January, 2021, and presents Complaints in accordance with the *RPCNA Book of Discipline*, Section 4.3, and the *Directory for Church Government*, Section 8.11, against the delinquency of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery

of the RPCNA in the following specifications related to the charges against the Rev. Michael LeFebvre considered at its fall meetings of 2020, and the Presbytery's failure to prosecute those charges:

**Complaint 1:** Presbytery failed in its duty to guard the doctrinal integrity and witness of the church by declining to prosecute serious and provable charges against a minister under its jurisdiction, the Rev. Michael LeFebvre. Indeed, instead of condemning his errors, GLG rose at the end of its meeting to express its "*profound gratitude*" to Rev. LeFebvre for his ministry and labors, and prayed for a blessing on "*his future endeavors to serve Jesus*," which, without his repentance and recantation, evidently includes the further spread of his false and harmful teaching.

**Complaint 2:** The charges themselves, formulated and brought by members of Presbytery, while accurately framed, only addressed some of Rev. LeFebvre's errors. These were insufficient to address perhaps the most dangerous aspect of LeFebvre's public teaching, namely his non-Evangelical hermeneutic of myth, which was employed to deny the historicity of the creation account, aspects of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings, the last days of Jesus' life, and the day of his resurrection as reported in the gospels. In failing to address Dr. LeFebvre's defective hermeneutics, Presbytery failed in its duty to uphold and magnify the authority and perspicuity of Scripture.

**Reasons:** Reasons in support of the complaints are attached ...

**Remedies Sought:** Remedies sought are attached ...

Further, this document contains a separate but related petition to the Synod of the RPCNA, according to the *Directory for Church Government*, Section 8.11, and because of its close relation to these Complaints, it is included here as follows:

**Petition:** That Synod investigate the reasons that some form of the paper produced by members of the faculty of Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, written apparently at the turn of the year in 2020 to address Michael LeFebvre's writings, was not published or widely circulated; and if it finds that members of the Seminary board discouraged its publication or circulation, that further investigation be conducted to ensure that no conflict of interest or prejudicial relationship to Dr. LeFebvre influenced the decision; and, lastly, that the officers of the church and faculty of the Seminary be encouraged, under the ordinary oversight of the church courts, to publicly address published writings and public teaching that tend to adversely affect the spiritual health of the church.

**Explanatory Comments on the Petition:** Brief explanatory comments on the above Petition are attached ...

To facilitate the submission of these complaints and this petition, they are

all contained in a single document, but the complaints should be considered properly as separate complaints, and the petition as properly independent from the complaints, thus requiring separate deliberative consideration of each, at least regarding voting. Additionally, the remedies sought are not integral to the complaints, constituting petitions in themselves, conditional on substantiation of the complaints; so that whether or not a particular remedy is deemed wise and good by the Synod should not influence the decision as to whether the complaint itself ought to be sustained.

These are complaints against Presbytery as a body, not the individuals who made up the body. Men will sometimes act in a deliberative body in ways in which they would not act as individuals; often they will not have much time to consider the best course of action, and they might not have all of the information that would enable someone with leisure after the fact to come to a better conclusion. I personally understand the difficulty in acting objectively given the natural desire to be agreeable among one's peers. Certainly, many of the presbyters dissented against what was done at the meetings where these events were planned and occurred, and some acting otherwise may have thought better of their decisions afterwards. All of this I keep in mind as I bring these complaints and petitions, and I recognize that as serious as these charges are, for most of the men involved, even if they approved these things at the time, their individual culpability is less than that of the body as a whole.

Having received a copy of the Presbytery minutes concerning this matter on Dec. 7 of 2020, I notified my session the same day, in accord with provisions of the *Book of Discipline*, Sect. 4.3, of my intention to file a Complaint respecting its proceedings. Now, according to the same provisions, I file these Complaints within 30 days, and request that the Clerk of Session forward my Complaints to the Presbytery, and that the Clerk of Presbytery forward them to the Synod.

*Respectfully submitted: Ben Manning [Complainant Signature];*  
1/6/2021

### **Reasons in Support of Complaint 1**

**I. Evidence.** The case that M. LeFebvre is guilty of the errors charged against him is found in Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG) Communications 20-02 and 20-05. The evidence in support of the factual case of Complaint 1 is contained within the minutes of the meeting of the GLG of October 23, 2020. On page 6 of these minutes are found the following entries:

- Communication 20-11 was taken up.
- Item 1: The Moderator ruled #1 was constitutional. [Item #1, that M. LeFebvre be given his credentials (with pending charges attached) in order to transfer to another denomination.]



- Following debate the Moderator was sustained on a 21 to 17 vote.
- These filed a complaint: Adam Kuehner, Shawn Anderson, Steven Work, Kent Butterfield, Dick Knodel, Robert McKissick.
- Amendment: Motion: moved, seconded, that Michael LeFebvre be removed from the jurisdiction of the RPCNA.
- Motion: moved, seconded, and passed to call the question.
- Original motion "*that M. LeFebvre be removed from RPCNA jurisdiction*" passed 20-18.
- These registered their dissent: Phil Pockras, Kent Butterfield, Greg Fisher, Jon Hughes, Jason Camery, Keith Evans, Shawn Anderson, Adam Kuehner, David Whitla, Dick Knodel, Steven Work, Bob Bibby, Jake Schwartz.
- These filed a complaint: Shawn Anderson, Adam Kuehner, Jake Schwartz, Kent Butterfield, Dick Knoedel, Robert McKissick (filed November 21, 2020).

On page 10 of the minutes are found the following entries:

- Motion: moved, seconded, and passed that Presbytery rise to express our profound gratitude to Pastor LeFebvre for his ministry and labors among us, our love for him as our friend and co-laborer, our sorrow at his departure, and that Presbytery pray for God's blessing on his future endeavors to serve Jesus.
- Pastor Philip McCollum led the Court in prayer.
- Report of the Ad Interim Commission; the report, at this time, was unnecessary.
- Minutes: The Clerk read the Minutes of this meeting; the Minutes were adopted.
- Motion: moved, seconded, and passed that Presbytery adjourn.

## II. Argument

**Presbytery's action violates the *RPCNA Constitution*.** The action taken by Presbytery was ostensibly done according to *RPCNA Directory for Church Government* (hereinafter, *DCG*), Section 3.II.E.5.i. Item 1 of Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG) Communication 20-11 (Niess/Hart), which formed the basis for the motion that was passed, allowing Dr. LeFebvre to leave the Presbytery without standing trial, states, "*While Mr. LeFebvre has not yet asked for his credentials to be transferred to another denomination, we believe it is in order to give him his credentials for such a transfer in the future. According to the DCG, 'A teaching elder desiring affiliation with another denomination may upon application be given credentials by his presbytery ...' (2.E.5.i) [sic].*"

In Mr. LeFebvre's case, this provision does not apply for the simple reason that Mr. LeFebvre identified no denomination to which his credentials would be transferred. This discrepancy is not trivial. The next section in the *DCG* dis-

cusses the case where the teaching elder in question leaves without a regular dismissal, which is manifestly the case with respect to Mr. LeFebvre. It requires *“the presbytery to notify the receiving body of this fact and to seek to clear any possible conflict between the two bodies;”* (DCG 3.II.E.5.j). Item 1 in the Neiss/Hart communication is clearly quoting the DCG out of context. In order to deal properly with a minister reaffiliating without a regular dismissal, the two church bodies must communicate to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the irregularity. The DCG has in mind the Presbytery’s responsibility to protect the doctrinal purity of the church universal by clearly communicating with a sister denomination the reasons for an irregular dismissal of a teaching elder. If Mr. LeFebvre had stated a desire to affiliate with another church, then it would have been the duty of the Presbytery to initiate communication with that body.

Apart from its explicit violation of the cited DCG provisions, this action undermines the idea of what credentials represent. Neither a church officer nor a church member hold their own credentials. The credentials are held by the credentialing body, which in the RPCNA is either a presbytery or a session. From time to time, for one purpose or another, people might be given a copy of their credentials, but the authority and attestation belong to the church that issued the copy. A lawyer might be a member of the Bar Association of the State of New York, but the certificate he received in 2012 is no longer valid if he is disbarred in 2017. The paper only represents a snapshot of the state of his credentials on the date issued. Obtaining such a snapshot should not allow a minister under irregular dismissal to escape the provisions of DCG 3.II.E.5.j, nor does it allow a presbytery to disregard its duty to communicate with the church to which the minister wishes to transfer his credentials.

The *RPCNA Constitution* recognizes the principle of church-held credentials in DCG 3.II.D.6.b and the *Book of Discipline* 4.3.b, where, speaking of teaching elders, these sections of the *Constitution* speak of *“the presbytery or court holding his credentials.”* These words witness that a teaching elder does not hold his own credentials. Credentials may continue to be held by the church, they may be transferred to another church body, or they may be revoked by the implementation of discipline. Presbyterians don’t believe in *‘Lone Ranger Christianity’* for members, and we should not promote the existence of autonomous ministers accountable only to themselves, particularly when they leave our church under a cloud of controversy or because of behavior that would normally subject them to discipline.

**Presbytery’s action demonstrates lack of love for Dr. LeFebvre.** Presbytery’s action demonstrates a lack of love for Dr. LeFebvre; or, alternatively, a lack of faith in God’s remedy for recovering an erring brother from his sin:

- *"Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it"* (Psalm 141:5).
- *"Don't correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he'll love you"* (Prov. 9:8).
- *"Blows that hurt cleanse away evil as do stripes the inner depths of the heart"* (Pr. 20:30).
- *"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins"* (James 5:20).

**Presbytery's action demonstrates a lack of love for the church outside the RPCNA.** This action demonstrates a lack of regard and concern for the church outside of the RPCNA. "... *Those [elders] who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear*" (1 Tim 5:20). This lack of concern demonstrates a parochialism unworthy of a church that professes to believe in a *"visible Church which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel"* (Westminster Confession of Faith, 25.2). By dismissing Dr. LeFebvre to his own authority and pronouncing a blessing on his *"future endeavors to serve Jesus,"* the Presbytery has given their tacit endorsement for him to teach his soul-endangering errors elsewhere. It is one thing for him to rebel against admonition and continue teaching his errors; it is quite another for his erstwhile church to send him quietly into the pulpit of another denomination.

**The Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery—by refusing to discipline Dr. LeFebvre—bears part of the responsibility for his teaching.** So we may infer from Ezekiel. 33:2-6, where, if it is not clear, I am saying by way of application that Presbytery has been appointed as a watchman against the danger of men advancing false teaching: *"Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.'"*

**Presbytery's action dishonors God.** Michael LeFebvre's denial of basic biblical truth, and his undermining of our confidence in the historical reliability of Scripture, are, in the first place, an offense against God. It is God's creation, in

Dr. LeFebvre's writings, that is largely reduced to a myth to explain the agrarian culture of ancient Israel. It is God's glory in creation that is made to appear all of a piece with naturalistic presuppositions in the tenets of theistic evolution embraced and taught by Michael LeFebvre.<sup>1</sup> It is the veracity and perspicuity of God's word that is impugned by Michael LeFebvre's modernistic hermeneutics.

Instead of being rebuked for leading the church astray, Dr. LeFebvre was "profoundly" thanked, and he was honored by the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery with a blessing on his "future endeavors for Jesus." While all would agree that Dr. LeFebvre deserves thanks for many of the things he has done in the past as a minister of the church, this blessing was out of place, and ill considered, given the purpose of the meeting. God's honor was diminished in the main act of this GLG meeting, but every effort was made to find some matter of praise for Michael LeFebvre.

### Reasons in Support of Complaint 2

At the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Charles Hodge's professorship at Princeton Seminary, he addressed his well-wishers in these now famous words, "Drs. Alexander and Miller were not speculative men. They were not given to new methods or new theories. They were content with the faith once delivered to the saints. I am not afraid to say that a new idea never originated in this seminary." Hodge went on to illustrate the rule of biblical interpretation that limited Princeton's ideas by saying, "There recently resided in this village a venerable lady, as distinguished for her strength of character as for her piety. A skeptical friend once said to her, 'My dear madam, it is impossible that a woman of your sense can believe that story in the Bible, about the whale swallowing Jonah.' She replied with emphasis, 'Judge, if the Bible said that Jonah swallowed the whale, I would believe it.'"<sup>2</sup>

It is well-known that Hodge did not think it necessary to consider the creation days as ordinary 24-hour periods,<sup>3</sup> but this allowance on Hodge's part did not permit the adoption of myth as a legitimate hermeneutic for interpreting the biblical text. He wrote: "The words of Scripture are to be taken in their plain, historical sense. That is, they must be taken in the sense attached to them in the age

1 The undetectability of God's hand in so-called natural processes in the time since an incomprehensible initial act of creation is a staple of theistic evolution. See Wayne Grudem, "The Incompatibility of Theistic Evolution with the Biblical Account of Creation and with Important Christian Doctrines," in J. P. Moreland, Stephen Meyer, *et al.*, *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, & Theological Critique* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 61-77. See also Stephen Meyer and Paul Nelson, "Should Theistic Evolution Depend on Methodological Naturalism" in the same volume.

2 A. A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010), 555.

3 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, volume 1 (New York: Charles Scribner, 1872), 171, 570-74. Note, however, that he does say of the word "day" in Genesis 1, "Taking this account by itself, it would be most natural to understand the word in its ordinary sense."

and by the people to whom they were addressed. This only assumes that the sacred writers were honest, and meant to be understood.”<sup>4</sup>

There are a number of serious problems with the hermeneutics employed by Mr. LeFebvre in the writings at the center of this controversy. Some of them are documented in GLG Communication 20-04, a paper produced by members of the faculty at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary. We will, in fact, rely on the faculty paper to make much of the case respecting Michael LeFebvre’s faulty hermeneutics, and I hereby refer the reader to that document for that purpose. However, Communication 20-04 does not take into account—at least not in so many words—the most serious of LeFebvre’s errors: the use of myth as an interpretive framework. The proper identification and label for LeFebvre’s hermeneutic in this respect is important and ought not to be overlooked.

Moreover, LeFebvre’s particular form of the hermeneutic of myth is a “*new idea*” in the negative sense of the expression. He wishes us to believe that after 3,500 years or more of the church’s possession of the scriptures in writing, we have only now, with the advent of LeFebvre’s book, *The Liturgy of Creation*, learned that the point of the creation account in Genesis 1 is not the creation of the universe, the world, and all that is in it, but rather it is mainly about farming, punctuated every seventh day by “*guidance for stewardship of the land*,” otherwise called worship.<sup>5</sup>

If this sounds like an exaggeration of LeFebvre’s position, in fact, it is not. LeFebvre, over and over again, says that Genesis 1 is less about creation than about stewardship, order in society, function. For example: “*The text is not a lofty description about galaxy formation and other phenomena of little use to the average Israelite scraping out a living from the land. It is a practical calendar that encourages the people to understand their labors as ‘cooperation’ with the Lord*,” or again: “*The creation week narrative is not a scientific report detailing processes of natural origins. It is more like a ‘farmer’s almanac,’ a guide for the Hebrew farmer to work and worship each week as God’s steward*.”<sup>6</sup> His definition of worship as “*guidance for stewardship of the land*,” is particularly regrettable.

All this time, the church has missed the *trees* for the *forest*, or more aptly, we have missed the *corn* for the *cosmos*. The proof of this lamentable state of ignorance on the part of the church is accomplished by the employment of hermeneutics that fall outside the pale, not only of Reformed orthodoxy, but outside of Evangelicalism generally, and Michael LeFebvre ought to have been disciplined for misleading the people of God in the pursuit of his novelty.

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4 Ibid., 187.

5 M. LeFebvre, *The Liturgy of Creation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 77.

6 Ibid., 144, 147.

### Definition of Myth Motif Hermeneutics

What do we mean when we speak of the hermeneutics of myth? The term “myth” has held a number of connotations in the history of Bible interpretation and is susceptible of misunderstanding if not carefully defined. Let us first say what we do not mean by the term. We are not accusing Mr. LeFebvre of styling the creation account a fairy tale or a fable. It does not mean that he believes the Genesis creation account is the same sort of fanciful legend as, say, the ancient Near East creation myth the *Enumah Elish*.<sup>7</sup> I am not suggesting that LeFebvre holds the idea of myth in the sense of early German liberals like Wilhelm De Wette, Jakob Fries, or Wilhelm Gesenius, who considered the creation account to be entirely divorced from historical reality.<sup>8</sup> We do not suspect him of believing in an Old Testament version of the radical New Testament mythologies of David F. Strauss, Rudolph Bultmann, or Paul Tillich.<sup>9</sup> This is not to say there are not similarities between the ideas of Dr. LeFebvre and some of the less radical German higher critics such as Gabler, Eichhorn, and Ewald, or the more moderate of the neo-orthodox theologians, like Reinhold Neibuhr.<sup>10</sup>

Myth as a hermeneutical framework—while it sometimes has a meaning associated with one of the usages mentioned above—has a less esoteric meaning that is recognized generally by Evangelical scholars. The simple Merriam-Webster dictionary definition actually serves quite well. According to Merriam-Webster, myth is “a usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon.” For something even simpler, we can take Hengstenberg’s definition: “The idea rapidly gained ground [in Germany] that the history of

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7 “There is real history behind the Gen. 1:1-2:3 creation week,” M. LeFebvre, *The Liturgy of Creation*, 183. To be honest, however, while LeFebvre does state here that there is real history somewhere in this account, one is hard pressed to understand what he finds historical about it. This statement regarding the historicity of Genesis 1 stands completely on its own in the book and is supported with no evidence or argument while the events and described substance of creation are everywhere denied any scientific significance or detailed reality. The “firmament”—for example—is ridiculed as an ancient Near Eastern construct (pp. 153-57, 208-09). The *Enumah Elish*, which is, after all, an etiology of its own, might be a better analogue of LeFebvre’s view than he would like to believe.

8 J. W. Rogerson, “Wilhelm De Wette and His Contemporaries,” in Alan J. Hauser & Duane F. Watson, eds., *The Enlightenment through the 19th Century*, vol. 3 of *A History of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 239, 244-45; Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 276.

9 Henning Graf Reventlow, *From the Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century*, vol. 4 of *History of Biblical Interpretation*, trans. Leo G. Perdue (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 251-56; Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 3rd edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 86-88, 101, 160.

10 Bray, 298; Ramm, 74-75.

*the Hebrews, like that of other ancient nations, has a mythical character, viz., that it is composed of mingled truth and fiction.*"<sup>11</sup>

In modern discussion among Evangelicals—however—we do well to listen to someone like J. I. Packer, or the statements of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI), which spent much time on this question in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Packer writes: "By 'myth' is meant a quasi-factual narrative which, despite its form, is intended only to tell us some truth about our own lives in the present without giving us any information about external events, past or future. 'Myths' tell us nothing of happenings in the physical world, but leave us free to speculate about them as we will. . . . Few go as far as Bultmann, but most theologians today use the category of 'myth' to erode the factual reference of biblical statements at some point or other."<sup>12</sup> J. I. Packer wrote these words long before Mr. LeFebvre's book was published, but his references to "quasi-factual narrative" and "truth about our own lives in the present" (on the Hebrew farm, perhaps), make one wonder if he hadn't received an advanced copy.

The ICBI treated the question of myth in both of the major volumes it produced as a result of its summits in 1978 and 1982 respectively.<sup>13</sup> In the first volume, the emphasis was on inerrancy and infallibility, with not much attention given to hermeneutics, but the delegates recognized the interrelated nature of the two, hence the second summit on hermeneutics. An inerrant Bible, interpreted without limit or rule, cannot produce authoritative teaching. The volume on inerrancy touched on the question of myth in its treatment of genre as related to higher criticism, and myth was treated more generally in the second volume on hermeneutics.

J. Barton Payne writing in *Inerrancy* says: "Some interpreters consider themselves advocates of inerrancy, but are willing, nevertheless, to grant the existence of erroneous statements about the circumstances of the origin of a given passage. The errors are due to the literary genre or form (namely, Gospels) in which the statements occur. Since the Bible contains such literary figures as hyperbole and parable, both of which are fictional, could it not be, they argue, that the Gospels form a particular type of Christian literary genre, in which a redactor, in the interests of his theological message, reshapes the historical tradition he has received?"<sup>14</sup>

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11 Ernst Wilhelm (E. W.) Hengstenberg, *History of the Kingdom of God Under the Old Testament*, volume 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1871), 23.

12 J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Leicester: Intervarsity Fellowship, 1958), 159.

13 Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academie, 1980); Earl D. Radmacher & Robert D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academie, 1984).

14 J. Barton Payne, "Higher Criticism and Biblical Inerrancy," in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 98.

Payne, in suggesting that someone might propose the *ad hoc* genre of “gospel” in order to introduce special rules for interpretation, likely had in mind the case of Robert Gundry, forced to resign from the Evangelical Theological Society in 1984 because of the sprinkling of myths he had alleged to exist in the gospel of Matthew—“*Mattheanisms*” he called them. These *Mattheanisms* were purposely inserted in or substituted for real history, as Gundry claimed, in order to enhance the deity of Christ in the eyes of the readers of Matthew’s Gospel, so that, for example, the worshiping Magi were brought in to replace the non-worshiping shepherds described in the more historically accurate gospel of Luke.<sup>15</sup> It was done by an appeal to genre and literary device, all the while purporting to uphold an inerrant Bible.

Article XIII in the *ICBI Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics* says, “WE AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study. WE DENY that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.”<sup>16</sup>

Norman Geisler, in his commentary on this article writes,

“The Denial is directed at an illegitimate use of genre criticism by some who deny the truth of passages which are presented as factual. Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in Scripture he is presented as a real person. Others take Jonah to be an allegory when he is presented as a historical person and so referred to by Christ (Matt. 12:40-42). This Denial is an appropriate and timely warning not to use genre criticism as a cloak for rejecting the truth of Scripture.”<sup>17</sup>

Article XIV,

“WE AFFIRM that the biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact. WE DENY that any such event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.”<sup>18</sup>

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15 R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: Commentary on His Literary & Theological Art* (G. Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 31.

16 Rademacher, 884.

17 *Ibid.*, 897.

18 *Ibid.*, 884.



And Geisler's commentary is as follows:<sup>19</sup>

This article combines the emphases of Articles VI and XIII. While acknowledging the legitimacy of literary forms, this article insists that any record of events presented in Scripture must correspond to historical fact. That is, no reported event, discourse, or saying should be considered imaginary.

The Denial is even clearer than the *Affirmation*. It stresses that any discourse, saying, or event reported in Scripture must actually have occurred. This means that any hermeneutic or form of biblical criticism which claims that something was invented by the author must be rejected. This does not mean that a parable must be understood to represent historical facts, since a parable does not (by its very genre) purport to report an event or saying but simply to illustrate a point.

To quote all that *the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics* has to say relevant to the present case would become tedious, but I do want to highlight Article XXII, which says, "*WE AFFIRM that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book. WE DENY that the teachings of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.*"<sup>20</sup>

Geisler notes,

*"The article left open the question of the age of the earth on which there is no unanimity among evangelicals and which was beyond the purview of this conference. There was, however, complete agreement on denying that Genesis is mythological or unhistorical. Likewise, the use of the term 'creation' was meant to exclude the belief in macro-evolution, whether of the atheistic or theistic varieties."*<sup>21</sup>

It is clear that the ICBI summits meant clearly to deny the use of myth as a legitimate interpretive framework for the Bible—the invention of novel genres notwithstanding. The biblical account of creation is to be considered historical and factual, even though there may be disagreement on the period of time that is represented by the individual days, or whether there are possible time gaps in Genesis 1. These summits, it should be remembered, exhibited the consensus of Evangelicalism as a whole, not only of Reformed orthodoxy.

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19 Ibid., 897-98.

20 Ibid., 886.

21 Ibid., 903.

### Michael LeFebvre's Mythology

To escape the implications of a natural reading of Genesis 1, LeFebvre has invented a genre that he calls "*calendar narrative*." According to LeFebvre, calendar narrative is a "*special kind of historical narrative in which historical events are given the dates of a festival observance (sabbath observance in the case of the creation week), without regard for the timing of the original occurrence*" (emphasis mine).<sup>22</sup> The specialness of this kind of "*historical*" narrative consists in its not being historical in nature, either in the dating of events, the places where the Bible says events occurred, and often even the substance or existence of the events themselves.<sup>23</sup> For example, the Bible tells us that it took two months for the children of Israel to travel from Egypt to Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1), but Dr. LeFebvre contends that the time (the real history) was actually three days,<sup>24</sup> leaving unexplained the disappearance of events that are recorded in Scripture as having happened during this period of time.

The biblical account of this two-month period is found in Exodus 15-18, and is summarized again in Numbers 33:3-15. In both accounts, there is much detail, both as to time, place, and occurrence, including Israel's wandering on the outskirts of Egypt, the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, the people's running out of water a couple of times, the beginning of God's supplying manna for the people to eat, a battle with the Amalekites, and the coming of Jethro. The account in Numbers mentions ten places where Israel camped on the way to Sinai. These locations match and are in the same order as the four intermediate campsites described in Exodus. Further, in both Exodus and Numbers, the children of Israel are always said to have "*departed from*" campsite X and to have arrived, or "*encamped at*," campsite Y, indicating the sequential nature of these typically undated events.

It is important to understand that LeFebvre's "*calendar narrative*" rubric does not account for undated events that inconveniently show up in the record, but which need to be set aside to maintain the "*narrative*"—these he simply ignores. It is a plain denial of the historicity of these accounts to claim that the stopovers and the events described did not happen, or perhaps were inserted from later events that occurred at different locations and different times. It is not simply the dates that LeFebvre tampers with, but also the locations and content, and even the existence (e.g., the firmament or expanse in Gen. 1:7),<sup>25</sup> of biblically described events and objects.

LeFebvre's mythologizing is not confined to the wilderness wandering narrative, or to the Bible's account of creation. He feels no compunction about

22 LeFebvre, *The Liturgy of Creation*, 6.

23 This is especially true with respect to LeFebvre's treatment of Genesis 1.

24 LeFebvre, *The Liturgy of Creation*, 85.

25 *Ibid.*, 153-57, 208-09.

applying it to the Gospels and does so with respect to the reporting of the last days and hours of Jesus in the Gospel of John.<sup>26</sup> He even goes so far as to suggest that the Gospel history has been manipulated to place the day of Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week, "to align Christ's resurrection with the inauguration of weekly first-day worship in the new covenant church."<sup>27</sup> Notice that it is not the church's day of worship that is aligned with Christ's resurrection, but Christ's resurrection that is "aligned," i.e., assigned a mythical date, with a pre-existing practice of the church. Why the first day of the week was originally chosen by the church is apparently unknown. LeFebvre writes, "These 'first day' references further illustrate the usefulness of dates in biblical narratives to align divine events with the calendar days on which his people remembered and participated in those events through worship."<sup>28</sup>

LeFebvre does precisely the same thing with respect to the institution of the seventh-day Sabbath in the Old Testament, claiming that the creation account is not historically accurate—it did not intend to be—and that the seven-day period described in Genesis 1 is chosen to explain the fact that Israel was already practicing a seven-day week at the time the account was written. As quoted above, "Historical events are given the dates of a festival observance (sabbath observance in the case of the creation week), without regard for the timing of the original occurrence." Or, as LeFebvre writes in an article he has made available on the theistic evolution website, Biologos, "The text does not preserve the actual chronology of God's creation works. Instead, as narrative law, the text remaps the creation story around the cadence we are taught for laboring and worshipping in the world as God's stewards."<sup>29</sup>

While LeFebvre gives no reason for the choice of the first day of the week by the New Testament church, in the case of the Old Testament weekly Sabbath, he attempts to justify the choice by an appeal to, of all things, the lunar calendar. "Furthermore, some suggest that the Hebrew word sabbath (šabbāt, 'to cease or rest') may be related to the Akkadian šabattu ('sit'), which was used for the four points during the month when the moon 'sat,' or the Ugaritic šuptu ('a station of the moon'). These etymological connections are speculative, but the widespread importance of the moon's four phases in ancient calendars is surprisingly absent in Israel if the week is not attached to them."<sup>30</sup> This astronomically and mathematically untenable correlation, then, is LeFebvre's preferred explanation for the weekly Sabbath—not that God rested, but that the moon rested.

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26 Ibid., 4-8.

27 Ibid., 7-8.

28 Ibid., 8.

29 Michael LeFebvre, "Cracking the Code of Cadence," Biologos, September 26, 2019, <https://biologos.org/articles/cracking-the-code-of-cadence-the-genre-of-genesis>.

30 LeFebvre, *The Liturgy of Creation*, 27.

God's resting is just read backwards into the creation account. This is mythology in pure form.

I would say in passing, that however dubious, far-fetched and unorthodox Robert Gundry's "*Mattheanisms*" were, at least Gundry had something higher in mind when he invented them than attempting to reconcile a fluid biblical record with Jewish and early Christian agricultural practices and self-selected days of worship.

When it comes to the details of the account of creation in Genesis 1, Michael LeFebvre's view is clearly at variance with any plausible theory of historical correlation between what is written, and what actually occurred. He frequently denounces what he styles as attempts to turn Genesis 1 into a scientific treatise. "*The creation week should not, therefore, be strained for answers to modern scientific questions.*"<sup>31</sup> His preoccupation with this theme largely amounts to an interaction with a strawman. Few Christians are trying to glean a "*description of the scientific processes*" of God's manner of creating, nor are they attempting to "*research cures for ailments like cancer or heart disease from the Bible.*"<sup>32</sup>

Christians view the creation account as miraculous, and while the Genesis description places limits on what we may speculate backward based on our contemporary scientific observations, few of us expect to find a great deal of scientific information in it. What we do claim is that the account is historically accurate. Many of Dr. LeFebvre's objections to our supposed quest for scientific precision in the record should actually be understood as objections to our insistence on historical fidelity.

LeFebvre speaks often of his lack of concern to preserve chronology, but in LeFebvre's construction of the creation account, it is much more than chronology that is at stake. It is also a matter of sequence and substance, both of which contribute to the matter of historicity. LeFebvre argues, for example, that the sun did not appear on day four, but was present from the beginning, denying even the sequence presented in Genesis 1.<sup>33</sup>

LeFebvre's appeal to scientific detail here—there is no light without the sun—directly contradicts the reasoning behind his contention that biblical creationists are like those who believe in a geocentric universe.<sup>34</sup> The biblical writers, he says, "*wrote within the worldview of their times, their historically situated descriptions of nature matched those of the primitive societies in which they wrote*" (p. 212).

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31 *Ibid.*, 126, and similarly (pp. 127-35, 147-48, 183, and liberally throughout chapters 9-12).

32 *Ibid.*, 178, 208.

33 *Ibid.*, 168-169.

34 *Ibid.*, 212-214.

Which biblical writers, we wonder, were ever situated in a society that was naturally lit without the sun or the moon? He is here shifting the ground of the debate to bring in phenomenalism (*i.e.*, that Scripture often describes its objects in the frame of reference of the writer, which no one in this debate disputes).

But it is not a phenomenal view of Genesis 1 that we are debating. LeFebvre is not proposing that the days of Genesis 1 only appeared to the ancients in the way they are reported. He dismisses any appearance of days at all. They are entirely figurative to him, otherwise he could not discount them on the basis of science as he does (the sun has to exist for light to appear, there is no such thing as a firmament, plants don't grow that quickly—scientific claims all). It's not as if the creation days appeared a certain way to "*primitive*" men—the primitive men do not claim to have been there to see them! The problem is that LeFebvre doesn't even admit the phenomena. This, again, is mythology in pure form.

As a final demonstration that LeFebvre is teaching mythology, let us consider what he says about the semantics of Genesis 1. LeFebvre says that Genesis 1 is a straightforward narrative, best understood in the telling as referring to ordinary, 24-hour days: "*The creation week in Genesis 1:1-2:3 is a normal 168-hour week.*"<sup>35</sup> This conclusion is based on the meaning of the word *yôm* (day), the repeated mention that the days are separated by "*evening and morning*" markers, and that the days are counted. He does not advance theories of long creation days or gaps in the record. These conclusions about the semantics of the language of the creation account coincide with the views of young earth creationists on the text. But, as a theistic evolutionist,<sup>36</sup> LeFebvre can grant these admissions because he does not intend to be constrained by the verbal semantics. He is able to disregard them historically because they are encased in an overarching myth, just as the stories of Jesus' parables have logical, coherent meanings within the parable framework, but are not meant to be understood as having taken place in history.

### **Myth Upon Myth**

We will not have time to go into this in any detail, but LeFebvre's methodology makes myth of much more than the creation account. We have already seen how that is so with regard to the wilderness wanderings narrative, and more consequentially, to the Gospel accounts and resurrection day of Christ. I

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35 *Ibid.*, 116.

36 LeFebvre's commitment to the theory of theistic evolution is demonstrated most clearly in his paper "*Adam Reigns in Eden*," *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 5, no. 2 (2018), 43-46, 52-56, where he posits the existence of pre-Adamite human beings, and based on recent conclusions developed in the field of population genetics, challenges the notion that humanity could've come from a single human couple (pp. 25, 56).

only point out two other items of biblical history that will require transformation into myth in order to fit Michael LeFebvre's view of Scripture:

- The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If Adam and Eve were not the progenitors of the human race, how did the rest of humanity (all of which were created "*very good*" according to Gen. 1:31), become sinful? It can't be through a political relationship. Jesus is king in a political sense over all of unregenerate humanity, but that relationship does not impute his righteousness to them. In the same way, Adam's supposed kingship<sup>37</sup> could not have imputed his sin to his political subjects. Neither could all of the many thousands or millions of *very good* men who subsequently became sinful have eaten from the same tree. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would seem necessarily to be a myth.
- The Flood. LeFebvre claims that modern genetics demonstrate the impossibility of humanity as proceeding from a single human pair.<sup>38</sup> That rules out Adam and Eve as progenitors of the human race, but it also means that Noah and his wife could not have been the single genetic pair from which humanity rose after the flood, which further implies that the flood did not accomplish God's stated end: "*And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die*" (Genesis 6:17). The global flood of Genesis 7 is therefore another myth.

### **Remedies Sought**

#### **Remedies Sought for Complaint 1:**

1. That Synod instruct the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery to rescind its action at the meeting of October 23, 2020 to remove Michael LeFebvre from its jurisdiction, giving appropriate reasons as it sees fit.
2. That Synod instruct the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery to reinstate the planned trial of Michael LeFebvre on the original charges, adding the charge, according to the Reasons for Complaint 2 of this document, that his teaching is in conflict with essential elements of Evangelical hermeneutics.
3. That Synod recommend to the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery that, should Dr. LeFebvre be found guilty of the charges, and he does not repent, that he not only be defrocked, but that the church consider excommunication as a sanction. We admit people to membership in the RPCNA who do not agree with us on all points of doctrine, but we follow the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 25, 55.

rule of the Apostle Paul, "*Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things*" (Romans 14:1). LeFebvre's writings on this subject do not even reach the low-water mark of "*doubtful things*."

### **Remedies Sought for Complaint 2:**

1. The remedies sought for Complaint 2 are identical with those sought under Complaint 1.

### **Explanatory Comments on the Petition**

Dr. LeFebvre, in his book, calls himself "*an Old Testament scholar who is also a full-time pastor*" (p. 196). It is unfortunate, I believe, that he should view himself first as an academic and only secondarily as a pastor of God's flock, but taking him on his own terms, it is expected of academics that their written work is subject, not only to pre-publication peer review, but is liable to review and public censure in the literature of the field in which they publish. Somehow, Michael LeFebvre's work escaped the second of these conventional checks, despite the fact that qualified and competent fellow-academics at RPTS were not only interested in his work, but had gone to the trouble of writing a paper to address concerns about it.

Could this reticence to speak publicly about published controversial writings have anything to do with the position on the RPTS board of Dr. LeFebvre or Dr. Holdeman, whose laudatory comments appear on the cover of LeFebvre's book? This is not an accusation, but it is a reasonable question, and both Dr. LeFebvre and Dr. Holdeman should be glad to have it aired and cleared if they did nothing to impede the public scrutiny of LeFebvre's writings.

A cover letter conveying the faculty paper to the Presbytery, attempting an explanation of the paper's low profile, says that the author of the letter did not wish to "*impose our review on the church*." This is not particularly satisfactory, given that the Seminary has no authority over the Presbytery. If there was undue pressure on the authors not to publish or widely circulate the paper from any quarter, a clean breast should be made and better plans laid for the next time something like this happens.

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**The clerk and treasurer of Synod passed along this petition from Mr. Quigley and other Canadian pastors and delegates; the moderator ruled in favor, by our common consent.**

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From: Samuel Quigley revdrsqa@aol.com

To: John & James McFarland

Sent: 6/16/2021

Subject: IMPORTANT RPC Canada Motion Request.

Dear Synod Clerk: We apologise for having to raise this matter. It comes

with appreciation to Mr. Jim McFarland, Synod treasurer, for drawing our attention to and seeking clarification on this matter. The six ministers in the signatory sessions to the RPCC wish to request an amendment to Recommendation 3.B of *2021 Communication #21-10 STL re. Canada RPC Formation Special Resolution*. We request that this item be amended to read as follows:

**B. Release the participating RPCNA Congregations from their Synod Assessment and RPM&M obligations in 2021-2022.** That the RPCNA Synod release the participating RPCNA Congregations from their Synod Assessments and RPM&M obligations in 2021-2022, so that they can make their contributions to the St. Lawrence RPCNA Canadian Congregations Presbytery account.

*Yours in Christ, Andrew Quigley*

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**Finance Committee: Chairman Jason O'Neill led the Court in consideration of this careful report which reminded us of Mr. Raymond Morton's long and faithful service. Understanding what the Court just approved concerning the RPCNA's Canadian congregations, all votes on Recommendations 1-10 (in sequence) carried. The report as a whole was received, and then committee Chairman O'Neill led the Court in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for His bountiful provision.**

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### **2021 Report of the Committee on Finance**

The purpose of Synod's Committee on Finance ("*Finance Committee*") is threefold:

- The Finance Committee seeks to balance the needs of the RPCNA, considering the individual fundraising of boards & agencies that far outstrips the fundraising of RPM&M. To accomplish this task, the Committee recommends the allocation of Synod's available funds (from assessments, RPM&M contributions, and other sources) to the various boards, agencies, institutions, and missions of the RPCNA.
- The Finance Committee seeks to promote increased giving to RPM&M, complementing the efforts of the Stewardship Committee of Synod's Trustees in this regard. God is using the RPCNA to carry out many great ministries in His Kingdom. Congregations gain from participation in these works, whether by praying, volunteering time, or giving. An effective means of expanding our overall ministry as a denomination is for each person at Synod to take the message home and promote it personally in their congregations.
- The Finance Committee seeks to provide helpful guidelines (*Targets of Honor*) to congregations within the RPCNA regarding the percentage of a congregation's ordinary offerings that should be contributed to



RPM&M and the various boards, agencies, institutions, and missions of the RPCNA.

In addition to these three key areas, the Finance Committee also addresses any other financial requests before Synod and provides recommendations for Synod action. As the Finance Committee makes recommendations regarding the stewardship of Synod's available resources, it seeks to discern the "will of Synod" to the best of its ability. To help in this regard, the Finance Committee is comprised of (1) members by position (ex-officio), (2) members elected by Synod, and (3) members appointed by each presbytery.

**Report Outline.** The remainder of this report is divided into five sections: (1) summary of the financial results of the calendar year ended December 31, 2020; (2) discussion of various considerations affecting 2021 and future years; (3) reminders regarding Synod's financial policies; (4) nominations; and (5) listing of the Finance Committee's recommendations for Synod action. The focus of this report is to review the financial results of calendar year 2020 and present recommendations for resource allocation during calendar year 2022. A full discussion of calendar 2019 financial results can be found in the 2020 Finance Committee Report. The Finance Committee is thankful for our denomination's support—in prayer and financial resources—for the ministries of the RPCNA. When congregational leadership shares the vision of the denomination's ministry, this engages members and motivates them to partner in this ministry. We ask that church leaders continue to be proactive in this regard, praying that God will continue to use the RPCNA to build the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Lord.

**2020 Summary.** We have many reasons to be thankful to our Lord. Amid a very challenging year the Lord provided abundantly for His Church. The 2020 receipts for RPM&M totaled \$559,000, which exceeded the annual target by \$84,000. Over the past three years, RPM&M contributions have been substantially greater than historical levels. Much of this increase is due to individual giving, for which we are very grateful. Calendar year 2019 contributions that exceeded Synod's allocations remained unbudgeted because the 2020 Synod was canceled. Due to the level of giving in calendar years 2019 and 2020, a balance of \$162,800 in previously unallocated RPM&M funds is available to be allocated in 2021. The Finance Committee has provided recommendations regarding the use of these resources.

Synod should note that 31 congregations did not contribute to RPM&M in 2020, and no presbytery had contributions from each of its congregations in 2020. Please take the time to review the "*Synod Operations Fund*" financial report, which is included in the Treasurer's report. The line items in the Synod Operations Fund fall into four sub-headings: 1) the "*Judicial*" aspect of the Syn-

od's work; 2) the "*Fraternal/Interchurch Relations*" section; 3) the "*Administrative*" costs needed to support Synod's programs; 4) a "*Ministries*" section. The first three sections detailed in the financial report are funded by Synod's assessments. The committees designated as "*Ministry*" committees receive their funding from a combination of Synod's assessment and RPM&M allocations. Calendar year 2020 Synod Operations Fund expenditures were less than historical expenditure levels. This lower level of spending was largely due to the cancellation of the 2020 Synod (avoided travel costs) and a reduced level of committee/agency activity and travel throughout the year. The reduced expenditures in 2020 resulted in a larger than usual fund balance entering 2021.

**Current and Future Considerations.** The Finance Committee sincerely thanks the congregations and donors to RPM&M, and the denomination's boards and agencies. We appreciate your generosity, your vision for, and your commitment to the church. Over the past several years, giving to RPM&M has been strong, and total giving to boards and agencies has increased. Some boards and agencies separately raise a portion of their funds. It is important to understand that whether funding comes from directly from RPM&M or is raised individually from congregations & members, it is the church funding these works. RPM&M exists to support all of the ministries of the RPCNA, but is an essential tool to sufficiently fund the ministries that are less visible in their work.

Several of our boards and agencies have exciting work ahead of them, and these initiatives will require the investment of financial resources. The Finance Committee asks that the boards and agencies of the church that receive money from RPM&M include estimates of direct contributions from Reformed Presbyterian congregations and members in their annual funding requests to the Finance Committee. The Committee highlights the cooperative nature of funding via RPM&M against the possible competition between mission objectives that may result from individual fundraising. We realize that many congregations donate directly to boards and agencies of the Church. However, our position is that—as Presbyterians—congregational support should primarily be directed through the Synod-appointed channel, which is Reformed Presbyterian Missions & Ministries, handled through the denominational treasurer's office. To that end, we continue to urge congregations to fund RPM&M directly, allowing Synod to allocate denominational resources.

The 2011 and 2012 Synods adopted the voluntary Targets of Honor formula as a recommended guideline for congregational RPM&M contributions. The formula is designed to produce roughly a tithe on non-designated receipts of the congregations of the RPCNA. We again recommend that congregations give 5% of the first \$75,000 of non-designated receipts, 10% of the next \$125,000 of non-designated receipts, and 14% of non-designated receipts over \$200,000 to missions and ministries inside the RPCNA (the denominational as-

assessment is included for purposes of the Target of Honor formula). The Targets of Honor guidelines encourage congregations to prioritize funding of the missions and ministries of the RPCNA. Furthermore, we want to thank the congregations that give more than the levels suggested by the Targets of Honor guideline. For these congregations, we ask that you please do not reduce your generosity. The Targets of Honor guidelines are designed to aid congregational budgeting but are not intended to restrain generosity.

**Synod Operations Fund.** Synod assessments for 2022 will be 2.2% of prior year non-designated receipts for congregations within the United States. Of the total assessment rate 1.6% is allocated to Synod Operations and 0.6% is allocated to the Pension Fund. The assessment rate for our Canadian congregations, which are exempted from the Pension fund assessment, will be 1.6% of prior year non-designated receipts.

Please see the "Synod Operations Fund Report" for proposed financial allocations of operating funds for the 2022 calendar year. It should be noted that the budgets for some committees and boards revert to zero at the end of each year, while other committees and boards are allowed to carry forward a fund balance from year to year. Due to COVID-19 related operational disruptions, many boards and committees expended fewer dollars in 2020 than budgeted (primarily due to less travel), and reserved balances increased significantly as a result. In order to control reserved balanced, the Finance Committee is recommending reduced 2022 budget allocations for some committees. These reductions are short-term in nature and do not indicate a recommendation for a reduced level of ongoing financial commitment from the denomination for these activities.

The Board of Pension Trustees is recommending that the denomination move to a self-insured life insurance plan for denominational workers. At the request of the Pension Board the Finance Committee is recommending a one-time allocation of \$50,000 from unreserved Synod Operational funds to provide the initial funding for this program. In the Lord's providence, the larger fund balance heading into 2021 can support this allocation without impinging on any denominational ministries.

According to Synod-approved policy, one-half of unrestricted, undesignated gifts to the denomination, to the extent they occur, will be added to the funds functioning as the endowment for the E&P Board, with the remaining half added to the unrestricted, undesignated fund balance.

**MacLaughlin Trust.** We are very thankful for the income from the Cecil J.S. MacLaughlin Trust. The Committee recommends the allocation of \$171,000 in trust proceeds for calendar year 2022. We continue to follow the recommendation of Synod's Trustees in 2008, recommending that Geneva College receives

50% of the MacLaughlin Trust income, thus \$85,500 scheduled for 2022. The Finance Committee is also recommending the allocation of \$36,546 in previously unallocated MacLaughlin Trust proceeds in 2022 (50% to Geneva College).

**RPM&M.** Because of high RPM&M contributions in the past three years, the Finance Committee recommends an increase in the 2022 RPM&M contribution goal to \$522,500 — a 10% increase over the 2020 level. If contributions exceed the goal, a “step-up” plan is in place, as defined below, to allocate contributions up to \$575,000. Any contributions in excess of \$572,500 will be allocated by the 2022 Synod. We continue to stress the importance of each congregation contributing to RPM&M to ensure our denominational ministry opportunities are adequately funded. We are thankful to the Lord, and to our members and congregations, that RPM&M goals have been exceeded in most recent years. Even amid uncertain economic times please challenge your congregations to give generously to RPM&M.

**Policy Reminders:**

1. Committees that spend over \$10,000 per year must submit a budget to the Finance Committee by April 15 of each year for incorporation into Synod’s Operations budget. Committees must pay careful attention to the level of funds approved for their use by Synod. Prompt submission of expenses and communication and coordination with the Treasurer’s office is essential. Deficit spending is not permitted.
2. Each person seeking reimbursement from Synod for travel must make every effort to minimize travel costs. The largest category of Synod expenses after salaries is travel.
3. For Synod travel, use the allowable IRS mileage rate in effect at the date of travel. When in doubt, check with the Trustees Office or online at [www.IRS.gov](http://www.IRS.gov).
4. To better formulate recommendations for Synod in 2022, please submit all requests for Unrestricted Undesignated Funds to the Trustees of Synod’s office by April 15, 2022.
5. Newly established congregations can request a two-year waiver from the annual Synod assessment (for example, a congregation formed during 2021 could request a waiver for the 2022 assessment based on 2021 receipts & the 2023 assessment based on 2022 receipts). This waiver request should be submitted to the Stated Clerk/Denominational Treasurer.

**Nominations.** We are grateful for Ray Morton’s two terms of service on this committee as a “*Member Elected by Synod*.” Members elected by Synod are permitted to serve two consecutive terms, so a replacement should be seated by this Synod. The Finance Committee recommends that Garrett Mann be nominated to this Committee for the class of 2024.

**Recommendations:**

1. That Synod’s assessment for 2022 be set at 2.2%, based on non-designated receipts in 2021, as reported to the Stated Clerk, with 1.6% for Synod’s Operations Fund and 0.6% for the Pension Fund Current Account (for Canadian congregations, assessment is 1.6%).
2. That for the year ending December 31, 2020, the Treasurer’s Report, as prepared by the Denominational Treasurer, be received as distributed and that the forthcoming Auditor’s Report, prepared by Holsinger, be printed in the Minutes of Synod.
3. That the “*Synod Operations Fund*” report for 2020 be received, and the 2022 proposed budget be approved.
4. That \$50,000 in unreserved Synod Operations fund balances be allocated to the self-insured life insurance program in calendar year 2021.
5. That \$162,772 in unallocated RPM&M proceeds, and \$36,546 in unallocated MacLaughlin Trust proceeds be allocated for calendar year 2021 according to the table below:

| Recommended Distribution of Previously Unallocated Funds |                   |                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Agency                                                   | 2021 Distribution |                 |
|                                                          | RPM&M             | MacLaughlin     |
| Education & Publications                                 | \$20,000          | \$18,273        |
| Home Mission Board                                       | 14,000            |                 |
| RP Global Missions                                       | 14,000            |                 |
| RPTS                                                     | 14,772            |                 |
| Geneva College                                           |                   | 18,273          |
| RPWA                                                     | 100,000           |                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                             | <b>\$162,772</b>  | <b>\$36,546</b> |

6. That 50% of all Unrestricted Undesignated bequests received in 2021 be deposited in the Synod/E&P Quasi Endowment Fund.
7. That Synod set the minimum contribution for the employer of each participant in the Pension Plan at \$4,500 for 2022.
8. That the RPM&M funding goal for 2021 be set at \$522,500, and that allocations be made according to the table below from the following sources:
  - A. Funds from 2022 RPM&M contributions in the amount \$522,500.
  - B. Funds from 2022 receipts of the C.J.S. MacLaughlin Trust in the amount of \$171,000.
  - C. “*Step-Up*” allocation of up to \$50,000 should RPM&M contributions exceed \$522,500.

| Recommended 2022 RPM&M, MacLaughlin, & Grant Allocations |                  |                  |                        |                  |                  |                  | RPM&M           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agency                                                   | 2022 RPM&M       |                  | 2022 MacLaughlin Trust |                  | 2022             | 2022 Total       | Step Up (\$50K) |
|                                                          | Request          | Grant            | Request                | Grant            | Assess. Estimate | Allocation       |                 |
| Synod Operations                                         |                  |                  |                        |                  | \$215,040        | \$215,040        |                 |
| Pension Board                                            |                  |                  |                        |                  | 63,600           | 63,600           |                 |
| E&P Board                                                | \$117,800        | \$70,800         |                        | \$85,500         |                  | 156,300          | 5%              |
| EA Commission                                            | 34,500           | 17,250           |                        |                  |                  | 17,250           | 5%              |
| CASA                                                     | 10,000           | 10,000           |                        |                  |                  | 10,000           | 5%              |
| Home Mission Bd.                                         | 70,000           | 70,000           |                        |                  |                  | 70,000           | 25%             |
| RP Global Missions                                       | 80,000           | 80,000           |                        |                  |                  | 80,000           | 25%             |
| Vital Church Grant                                       | 25,000           | 12,500           |                        |                  |                  | 12,500           | 5%              |
| RPTS                                                     | 85,000           | 85,000           |                        |                  |                  | 85,000           | 10%             |
| Geneva College*                                          | 50,000           | 50,000           | 85,500                 | 85,500           |                  | 135,500          | 10%             |
| RPWA                                                     | 90,000           | 126,950          |                        |                  |                  | 126,950          | 10%             |
| <b>Total Budget</b>                                      | <b>\$562,300</b> | <b>\$522,500</b> | <b>\$85,500</b>        | <b>\$171,000</b> | <b>\$278,640</b> | <b>\$972,140</b> | <b>100%</b>     |

\* In 2008, the Synod Trustees recommended that 50% of the MacLaughlin Trust proceeds be distributed to Geneva College.

9. That every session promote RPCNA missions and ministries work in their congregation, explaining the needs and promoting support of the RPCNA by their congregation & individuals. Every session should also instruct congregation budget preparers to include RPM&M as a line item in their budget, & show them this report, including the *Targets of Honor* formula. Every session should provide a minimum of at least one opportunity per year to contribute to a special RPM&M collection so that there are no longer any congregations that give nothing to RPM&M.

10. That after adoption of this report, Synod rise for prayer to thank God for His provision during the past years and to pray for continued financial blessings on this branch of His Church.

*Respectfully submitted, Synod's Committee on Finance*

**Members Appointed by Presbyteries**

*Alleghenies: Guy Curran*

*Atlantic: Robert Allmond*

*Great Lakes/Gulf: Jason O'Neill (Chairman)*

*Midwest: Mike McDaniel*

*Pacific Coast: Scott Robertson*

*St. Lawrence: Jamie Hood*

**Members by Position (ex-officio voting)**

*Chairman, Business of Synod Committee: Joel Wood*

*President, Trustees of Synod: Marlin Klingensmith*

*Denominational Treasurer: Jim McFarland*

*Consultative member as Controller: Vida Brown*

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**Members Elected by Synod**

*Barry VanHorn (2nd term—2023)*

*David Tweed (2nd term—2022)*

*Ray Morton (2nd term—2021)*

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Assistant Clerk Brian Wright presented the report prepared by this Court's previous assistant clerk Charles Brown, Report on the Records of the Presbyteries. It was moved and seconded and carried to receive this report. It is printed here.

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**Review of Presbytery Records**

In response to a decision at the 2019 meeting, the Synod's review of minutes expanded this year to include permanent boards, as well as presbyteries and commissions. Minutes were submitted electronically and forwarded to committees appointed by Synod's moderator in 2019. In several cases appointed reviewers were unable to serve and, with consent of the former moderator, the assistant clerk found replacements for them. Except for the Chile Commission, all of Synod's presbyteries, commissions, and boards submitted their minutes for review prior to the start of the 2021 Synod [Note: During 2021 Synod, the Chile Commission did make their minutes available]. Suggestions from reviewers for minor corrections or clarifications were given informally to presbytery and commission clerks or board secretaries. These items were noted by reviewers as violations (or at least potential violations) of the law and order of the church:

Regarding the St. Lawrence Presbytery:

- The minutes for June 11-12 and July 9, 2019 and November 17, 2020 were not approved at the end of the meeting, contra DCG 6-9.
- No report from or approval of the actions of the Hudson-St. Lazare Commission (November 17, 2020).

Regarding the EA Commission:

- Page 151 (which seems to contain notes from a meeting held 12/20/19) states that women are exhorting in public "*quite a lot.*" This was touched on in the 2019 Synod as something that the Commission asked Synod to be patient with as they try to reform this practice, but obviously the continuance of this practice would not be consistent with our understanding of who may preach.
- The problem of an EA elder teaching a trichotomist view of man is referred to in these minutes going back to 10/10/19; while this is being addressed patiently by the commission, there is no indication as of 4/07/21 that his views have changed. There is also no indication as

to whether the EAC's 12/29/19 request for this man to stop teaching a view that is contrary to the confession has been obeyed.  
Otherwise, nothing was found contrary to the law and order of the church.  
*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Charles A. Brown, Assistant Clerk of Synod (outgoing)*

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**State of the Church Committee: Chairman Paul Brace presented the report; it was received and is printed here.**

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### **2021 Synod State of the Church Committee Report**

*Psalm 32:6-7: For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found. Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. You are my hiding place. You shall preserve me from trouble. You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah*

The past 16 months have been fraught with difficulties for Christ's church. The global COVID-19 pandemic not only brought life to a standstill, but revealed cracks in the churches and forced us all to pivot and adapt to what seemed like a constantly changing situation.

Sadly, various divisions within the church began to appear, with different opinions regarding the priority of worship, and adjustments to circumstances. Our adversary was hard at work mounting a series of attacks internally, leaving whole presbyteries battered and bruised. Yet through it all, Christ has remained faithful to his bride. Challenges came with ministry opportunities. As some departed, others arrived. Congregations were closed. New plants were opened. King Jesus has blessed us with an abundance of His grace and wisdom, purifying His church.

Statistics are somewhat difficult this year. Synod did not meet in 2020, and disruptions in worship interfere with certain numbers. Nevertheless, the picture emerges of slight growth. This past year we saw a 0.04% increase in membership (3 communicant members). While modest, it is still positive which is an encouragement after a difficult year in which other churches are unsure if their members will ever return. Attendance is 83.6% of total membership, a good number in a normal year (up from 83% in 2018), highly encouraging in our present circumstances. 37 men are under the care of their presbyteries, which is six less compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, quite a few men have left the ministry, either into retirement, or for other reasons, so we must continue to pray that God raises up more laborers for the harvest.

This tiny virus brought a halt to many things, most notably travel. The Lord graciously cared for and used His laborers around the world to continue His mission efforts. We give thanks to God for the loving protection afforded to



those laboring in South Sudan and for His continuing to raise up men for training in ministry. Through this pandemic, God has provided opportunities for His people to demonstrate the loving care of Christ to the saints and neighbors and we are thankful for the mercy ministry efforts of our brothers and sisters in South Asia. The Lord has opened new avenues of combatting isolation via technology and we are so thankful that the saints in Japan have been able to leverage this technology to see the work of their churches and KTH to continue and that we have been able to observe and participate from afar via this technology. God, through this technology, was pleased to give us these instruments to lessen the sense of isolation, allowing God's Word to be proclaimed and His Psalms sung and for His people to come together to gather from around the world to approach His throne in prayer. Yet for all the technology, we've also come to increasingly treasure real, in-person fellowship with the saints.

Old debates have resurfaced. Questions of the origins of life caused Synod to reaffirm and more clearly explain the church's stance on creation. Meanwhile new discussions of the nature of church membership and incarcerated persons stretch our thinking.

Looking forward, we rejoice recognizing the maturity of the Canadian congregations, now moving closer to forming their own national church, and taking their place at the table of the RP Global Alliance. We see a similar blessed division of church courts in other realms of the RP world, too, more cause for rejoicing. As life returns to "normal" in 2021, we pray for wisdom, as the world emerges from its dread fear of death. May we seize new opportunities to glorify our Savior, and declare His grace around us.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Filbert*

*Paul Brace (chairman)  
Philip McCollum*

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**Mr. Ryan Hemphill presented the Report of the Nominating Committee, election results. 140 ballots were cast. The Synod received this oral summary and adopted the slate as summarized (carried). Their report (the Elections Results) is printed here:**

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## **2021 Synod Nominating Committee Report Ballot/Elections Results**

### **Boards**

#### **Benefits Board (formerly Pension Trustees) (3-year term)**

Class of 2022: Seth Wing

Class of 2023: Christopher Huggins, Jacob Long

Class of 2024: Jonathan Morton, Peter Smith

**Education & Publication Board** (4-year term)

Class of 2024: Erin Bartel

Class of 2025: Linda Parker.

**Geneva College Corporators** (4-year term)

Class of 2022: James Tweed

Class of 2024: Matt Filbert, David Schaefer, Bonnie Weir

Class of 2025: Chris Huggins, Shana Milroy, Scott Reynolds

**Global Missions Board** (6-year term)

Class of 2022: Marianne Baczkur

Class of 2023: Dean Filson

Class of 2024: Kelly Moore

Class of 2026: Titus Martin

Class of 2027: Joseph Rizzo

**Seminary (RPTS) Board** (6-year term)

Class of 2024: Brad Stewart

Class of 2026: Robert Bibby, Aaron Goerner

Class of 2027: Joseph Friedly, Brian Wright

Professor of Biblical Counseling (7-year term to begin 7/2021): Keith Evans

**Synod Trustees** (3-year term)

Class of 2023: David McCune, Cheryl Hemphill, James McFarland

Class of 2024: \_\_\_\_\_ (Alleghenies), Gayle Copeland (Pacific Coast),  
Bob Sabolich (GLG).

**Commissions**

**EA Commission** (6-year term)

Class of 2027: B8

**Committees**

**Business of Synod** (3-year term)

Class of 2023: Joel Wood, David Schaefer.

**Central & South America (CASA):** Edgar Ibarra, Chris Myers.

**Church History** (6-year term)

Class of 2027: Joseph Rizzo

**Finance** (3-year term)

Class of 2024: Garrett Mann

**Graduate Study** (3-year term)

Class of 2024: Dave Carroll

**Interchurch** (6-year term)

Class of 2027: Craig Scott

**Parliamentarians** (6-year term)

Class of 2026: David Merkel

**P & R Chaplains** (6-year term)

Class of 2026: Kelly Moore

**Vital Churches** (6-year term):

Class of 2026: Steve Rockhill

Class of 2027: Joel Wood

**Study Committees****Study Committee on Communication 21-12 (Zoom Trials):** Sam Spear (convener), Tom Fisher, James Odom, Dennis Olson, Joel Wallace**Study Committee on Communications 20-01, 20-07, 20-08, 21-19 (Constitution Revisions):** Mark Koller (convener), Joe Allyn, Dan Drost, Craig Milroy, Chris Villi

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Two weeks after the close of Synod, the moderator announced the Committees to Review Presbytery Records and to read board and commission minutes, due by mid-2022. These servants will work with the assistant clerk in the Spring of 2022. Reading/review “committees” (assigned in 2021, due mid-2022):

|                                 |                                                     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Alleghenies:                    | Ren Adams, Daniel Drost, Robert Morrow              |
| Atlantic:                       | Caleb Allen, John DeGraaf, Sam McCracken            |
| Great Lakes/Gulf:               | Doug Chamberlain, Bill Boyle, Ron Graham            |
| Japan:                          | Dan Berkenpas, Doug Comin, David Maine              |
| Midwest:                        | Glen Chin, Jeff Jones, David McCune                 |
| Pacific Coast:                  | Brian Bond, John Bower, Donald Cassell              |
| St. Lawrence:                   | Clyde Brown, Larry Copeland, John Kim               |
| CASA Commission<br>(if needed): | Nick Iamaio, George Jackson, Dean Filson            |
| EA Commission:                  | Fikre Menbere, Oscar Fernandez, Ed Hayes            |
| Pakistan Comm.:                 | Sean Bird, David Coon, Courtney Miller              |
| South Asia Comm.:               | Glenn Aley, Bob Concoby, Steve Falk                 |
| Benefits Board:                 | Bob Lyon, Bus Archer, Andrew Barnes                 |
| E&P Board:                      | Bruce Henderson, Tom Dinkledine,<br>Danny Gathright |
| Geneva Corp.:                   | Robert Bibby, Jeff Bechtold, Mark Brown             |
| Global Missions Bd.:            | Gregory Damerow, George Evans, Jonathan Leach       |
| Home Mission Bd.:               | John Logan, Jonathan Adams, Gary Gunn               |
| Synod Trustees:                 | Joel Martin, Greg Alexander, Jason Camery           |
| Seminary (RPTS)<br>Trustees:    | Eric Cosens, Terry Gorden, Charles Leach            |

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The moderator assigned a committee to help the RPCC formation (a.k.a. Canada Committee): Matt Filbert (chairman), David Schaefer, Garrett Mann,

Jim McFarland, and Gabe Wingfield. Other moderator appointments will be announced soon.

Mr. Andrew B. presented the Report of the Resolution of Thanks Committee, reading it in full. The Report as a whole was adopted and is as follows:

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### **2021 Synod—Report of the Resolution of Thanks Committee**

We give thanks to Jehovah, the great God of the Bible, for lifting His wrath and curse of the COVID-19 pandemic to the degree that the RPCNA might hold Synod, and we thank Him for His grace and presence as He continues to build His Church even in difficult times. We also give thanks for: the teaching elders and ruling elders who sacrificed much time and energy to attend and serve the church, including our brothers participating online from Canada and Japan, noting our Japanese brothers have been joining us from 7:30 p.m. through their morning hours; the representatives of the various Reformed Presbyterian missions and ministries who bless the church with their gifts and took time this week to share their work; to our moderator (Bruce Parnell), manager (Herb McCracken), clerks (John McFarland and Brian Wright), parliamentarians (David Merkel, Brian Coombs, and Martin Blocki), pages (Allen Blackwood, Robert Kelbe, and Jonathan Kruis), and others who guided the work of Synod this year with their tireless efforts; to Indiana Wesleyan University and their staff who made such accommodations possible (particularly the housing and food staff and the IWU Salt, Light, and Sound Department); to Crown & Covenant Publications and their workers (Drew and Lynne Gordon; Carla Butler) who provided their pop-up bookstore. We give glory to our resurrected King Jesus who forgives us our sins and has helped us to walk in humility and love for one another, and we go forward with confidence that He will continue to glorify His name through His Church.

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Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Bruce Martin, to remind us that our brothers in the Associate RPC have been praying for us this week. Other reminders were given and prayer appeals were highlighted. The Court gave its particular thanks, through our rising applause, to our moderator for helping us through details of a most challenging Synod. The Court similarly thanked the clerk.

The clerk (a participant on the Business of Synod Committee) updated the Court on the time-and-place matter for the next two meetings of this Synod: It was announced that the Synod of 2022 will meet from June 21-24 (Tuesday morning through Friday noon), with delegates encouraged to arrive on Monday evening, June 20. It was announced that the Synod of 2023

will meet from June 20-23 (Tuesday morning through Friday noon), with delegates encouraged to arrive on Monday evening, June 19.

At 11:52 a.m., the clerk read the Thursday morning minutes; these were improved and approved. Synod's manager Herb McCracken was thanked with applause; he offered final announcements.

The Court is reminded that the 2022 Synod is to meet from June 21-24 (Tuesday to Friday), on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, Indiana). The Court sang together Psalm 133A. Mr. Gary McNamee prayed to adjourn this Court. The moderator prayed for missions matters and the 2021 Synod was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. (Thursday, June 17).

Respectfully submitted,

John M. McFarland (clerk) and Brian Wright (assistant clerk)

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**Relevant e-announcement distributed one week after  
adjournment of the 2021 Synod:**

From: Bruce Parnell pastor@stillwaterrpc.org.

To: John McFarland JMMLawrence@aol.com.

Sent: June 25, 2021.

Subject: Announcement of the moderator appointed Judicial Commission for the matter of GLG and Immanuel RPC.

Dear John: Please forward this announcement of my appointment of the Judicial Commission to the Presbytery clerks for dissemination to the Synod/elders.

*In Christ, Bruce*

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Dear Fathers and Brothers: I thank the Lord for giving gifts to the church to shepherd and rule the flock that Christ has purchased with His blood. I pray that He would continue to shepherd us all. Last week, the Synod assumed jurisdiction of the case pertaining to the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery and Immanuel RPC, giving me the weighty task of appointing a seven-man judicial commission to address this matter (see minutes below).

The Judicial Committee moved this: Remove (3B); replace with: Synod assume original jurisdiction in the matter of GLG and Immanuel, and the moderator appoint a seven-man judicial commission to address this matter. Discussion ensued. Carried. (Minutes of Synod)

I have been praying and considering this matter, asking God to bring together men who have demonstrated wisdom and discernment in order to deal with matters of deep significance. I therefore have appointed the following Judicial Commission: Bruce Backensto, John Bower, Brian Coombs, Tom Fisher, Kelly Moore, Tom Pinson, Keith Wing (chairman)

I have tried to choose men without family relationships or previous extensive interaction with the case so that the work may be conducted beyond even the appearance of favoritism. Having said that, my understanding of the *BOD* is that the defense may challenge the right of any member to sit in judgment of the case. [See *BOD*, Section II, Chapter 3, Paragraph 4: “The accused may challenge the right of any member of the court to sit in judgment of the case. If the challenge is sustained and there is no longer a quorum, the case shall be referred to a higher court.”] In that light, I have chosen several alternates who may be called on to serve.

I beseech you all [to pray] for God’s grace in this matter. Pray for the congregation, its members and Session, for the Presbytery, and for the servants of the church in the Judicial Commission. Pray that God would be glorified in our midst.

*In Christ, Bruce Parnell, Moderator of Synod*

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**Committee assignment announcement, July 20, 2021:** Dear Fathers & Brothers: As moderator of Synod I had one other committee to fill after Synod, that of a five-man *Study Committee on Vows and Queries*. I am glad to let you know of the appointment of the following committee, and to encourage you to be praying for them and for all the various appointed commissions and committees laboring on behalf of Synod.

**Study Committee on Vows and Queries:** Drew Gordon, Gary Gunn, Phil Pockras (convener), Nick Schoenberger, Jeff Stivason.

*In Christ, Bruce Parnell, Moderator of Synod*

# APPENDIX





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## Synod Memorials

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### **Memorial: Rev. John H. Tweed (1929-2020)**

*Pastored in many congregations across the denomination*

*[modified from: [www.mercerfuneralhomes.com/obituary/john-tweed/](http://www.mercerfuneralhomes.com/obituary/john-tweed/)]*

Rev. John H. Tweed, 90, of Winchester, Kansas, passed away May 25, 2020, at his home with family by his side. He was born December 28, 1929, at Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, to Dr. James Boyd and Elizabeth Dodds Tweed. He graduated from Beaver Falls High School (1947), Geneva College (1951), and RPTS (1954). Rev. Tweed was ordained to the gospel ministry of the RPCNA, July 8, 1954, then served pastorates at Youngstown (Ohio), Fresno (California), Kansas City (Missouri), Shawnee (Kansas), Pittsburgh (PA), and at two Beaver Falls churches (Geneva RPC & First Beaver Falls RPC). He retired to Winchester in 1996, then served 18 years as interim pastor at 16 congregations in the U.S. and internationally in Japan and Ireland. John was a member of many RPCNA boards and committees, also serving as trustee and/or incorporator for Geneva & RPTS and on the board of the Reformed Presbyterian Home, Pittsburgh.

In 2015 John was honored by RPTS for a lifetime of service to the denomination. He served for years as a chaplain for Jefferson County Hospice and preached often for Northeast Kansas RPC congregations. He was a member of Winchester (KS) RP Church. Rev. Tweed married Alta Marie Blackwood on August 5, 1954, at Beaver Falls; she was his faithful supporter in every aspect of their ministry. Survivors include his wife, Alta; two sons: Stuart (Laura) Tweed, Springfield, Va.; Alan (Lisa) Tweed, Madison, Conn.; three daughters: Carol (Bill) Boyle, Shawnee, Kan.; Cynthia (Jay) O'Neill, Winchester, Kan.; Alison (Chad) Agnew, Darlington, Pa.; 15 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren. John was preceded in death by two grandchildren (Nathan O'Neill and an infant grandson); a brother, Dr. Robert; and sister Alison Blair. Rev. Tweed was a beloved pastor and mentor to countless people across the denomination and in the communities where he lived. He faithfully preached from the Scriptures the full gospel message of his Savior. He was known for his regular phone calls to express his encouragement and prayer support to friends and family.

#### **John H. Tweed: An Ordinary Pastor**

#### **[Pastor Kyle Borg, Winchester RPCNA]**

*[gentlereformation.com/2020/05/25/john-h-tweed-an-ordinary-pastor/](http://gentlereformation.com/2020/05/25/john-h-tweed-an-ordinary-pastor/)*

One of the greatest privileges of being a pastor is shepherding people to the threshold of death, to read to them, to pray for them, and sing to them as they come toe-to-toe with the last enemy. Of course, that privilege is beset by heartache, and as a pastor you acutely feel in those moments your inability. You can shepherd to the doorstep but you can only go so far. Inevitably, the time

comes when in faith you must give them up for it is the singular honor of the Great Shepherd who alone can pass through that gate with his sheep. Today Jesus has tended another one of his sheep through the pasture of this life and into eternity. This morning I mourn the death of my good friend Pastor John Tweed. I know many who might read this would be unfamiliar with his name. That is because John did not pastor on a worldwide platform or in the spotlight of notoriety. He didn't write any books, speak at sold-out conferences, or stand behind the lectern in theological schools. John's field of ministry was better than all of that. He pastored in the best of all fields—the local church. His ministry was carried out from the pulpit, in hospital & living rooms, with a birthday or anniversary call, at the bedside of those in hospice care, and with constant petitions to the Throne of Grace.

It was there, in the everyday routines of people's lives, that John wept with those who wept and rejoiced with those who rejoiced. I recall hearing one liken the ministry to the nighttime sky. Occasionally, a bright comet passes through our field of vision leaving a tail that appears for a moment and then vanishes. And in that moment, all the eyes of earth are turned to see. But the dark canopy is also spotted with countless stars, each differing in their luminary glory, that constantly shine against the darkness. They may not catch the eye of those below but night after night with unending faithfulness there they are. Of course, the point was that we don't need comet-like pastors, we need men who will faithfully stand against the darkness in the normal humdrum of everyday ministry. That was John. He was an ordinary pastor. Earlier today as I sat with Alta I was shown a letter his father had written him in 1940 when he was eleven. It read: "My dear little son, my prayer for you is that you may grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and someday you may become a faithful minister of Christ." Fourteen years later that prayer was realized. John began his ministry in 1954 shortly after being married to his wife and life-long support Alta.

Throughout the years John pastored churches in Ohio, California, Kansas, and Pennsylvania. He retired from the pastorate in 1996 and moved to Winchester, but his retirement wasn't wasted. Over a span of 17 years John ministered on 31 separate assignments in 18 different RP congregations. During this time he encouraged the discouraged and strengthened the weak, and did so much to bring healing and help to those who needed it. John's last interim pastorate ended when I was called to be the pastor in Winchester in 2013. John's ordinary ministry had a tremendous effect. Five years ago John was recognized by RPTS for his decades of service in the church. Compiled at that time was a book with 81 letters written by family, friends and churches from around the world. Reading over some of those personal letters (being John's pastor has its benefits!) they testify to his life-long commitment of shepherding well. As

one letter stated: "Few portions of the RPCNA have not known his tender care or kind touch." Another said: "[You were] one of the brightest spots in my life." And still another wrote: "[You were] a patient listener and a wise counselor." And to capture it all in a few words: "[Your] whole being is a reflection of [your] love for God and His people." Personally John has meant a lot to me. Though I was officially his pastor for the last seven years of his life, the truth is he was my pastor ... making me the last person John got to pastor! His prayers, counsel, encouragement, and last whispered "I love you," have held me up. His words of appreciation for every sermon (even the botched up ones!) have kept me going. His concern for the unsaved and his love for the simple gospel have been contagious. And his example of what a pastor is and does has taught me more than any book or class ever could. I guess this is a small way to pen my own letter of deep appreciation for this man whom Jesus has seen safely home. But far more than letters written on paper are those written on the tablets of human hearts. As Paul wrote: "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all" (2 Cor. 3:2). When at last we no longer see through this glass dimly and we perceive more of the ways of God than we're now fitted to see, then we will gaze at the eternal impact of one ordinary pastor, with an ordinary ministry.

The church of Jesus Christ is in need of those kinds of pastors. Men who forego the desire for power, the grabbing of influence, and building of platforms—men who do not need the applause and approbation of this world. The church needs men of a different conviction. Men who understand God works most through ordinary means, ordinary ministries, and ordinary pastors. As the Great Shepherd welcomes one of these men into the presence of His glory with great joy, may He be pleased to give His church pastors after His own heart. "O then what raptured greetings, on Canaan's happy shore; what knitting severed friendships up, where partings are no more! Then eyes with joy shall sparkle, that brimmed with tears of late; orphans no longer fatherless, nor widows desolate."

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### **Memorial: Rev. James D. Carson (1929-2020)**

*Pastored in Portland (OR), Pittsburgh (PA), Los Angeles (CA)*

James Donald Carson was born on July 4, 1929, in Sparta, Illinois, and died on August 1, 2020, in Beaver Falls, Pa. He was married to Dorothy Jane Mersereau for over 56 years; she preceded him in death on January 7, 2009. To this couple were born four children, all of whom survive Pastor Carson: Doug (Jerryn), Ken (Jean), Tom (Karen), and Becky (Don) Phillips. Rev. Carson is also survived by 12 grandchildren: Kirsten Bestor, Chris (Caryn), Kate (Cody) Hill, Nick, Peter (Emily), Molly (Zach) King, Beth, Scott, Erich (Ali), James, Sarah (Tim) Krappweis, and Christiana Phillips. Eight great-grandchildren survive: Elliot and Sam Bestor, Kit

and Atticus Carson, Hudson and Holden Hill, Tyler Krappweis, and Everett King. Mr. Carson was a 1950 Geneva College grad and a 1953 graduate of RPTS. He served three RPCNA congregations: Portland, Oregon; Pittsburgh, PA (Central Pittsburgh/North Hills); and Los Angeles, California. He was on the admin. staff of Westminster Seminary (West) of California upon his retirement from the pastorate. At an early age, Mr. Carson committed his life to Jesus Christ. He trusted in the promises of the Bible, knew that his sins were forgiven, and had sure hope that, at death, he had been “perfect in holiness.” Mr. Carson’s desire is that in his death all glory will be given to his Savior—the Lord Jesus—together with an invitation that all who read or hear this obituary, if not already believers in Jesus Christ, would come to know him in a personal relationship. There will be a private family graveside service at the Reformed Presbyterian Cemetery, New Galilee, Pa. In lieu of a memorial service, due to the critical medical situation in our country, please visit [www.forevermissed.com/james-d-carson/](http://www.forevermissed.com/james-d-carson/) for a virtual eulogy by Rev. Anthony Selvaggio. Please consider posting a tribute on the website. The family would like to thank the staff at the Reformed Presbyterian Home for the wonderful care he received and Heritage Hospice, especially Robert and Melissa, for their loving care of Dad in his final days. Memorial contributions—if desired—may be made to: Geneva College, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Westminster Seminary CA, Beaver County Christian School, or other charities of your choice. To God Alone Be the Glory!!

**From ‘UPDATE Magazine Fall 2020’ by Westminster Seminary California**

*IN MEMORY OF JAMES D. CARSON (July 4, 1929 to Aug. 1, 2020). Trustee Emeritus, Dean of Students, Westminster Seminary California.* Westminster Seminary California (WSC) has lost one of the founding members of its first independent Board of Trustees. Rev. Dr. James D. Carson went to be with his Lord and Savior on August 1, 2020, at age 91. He was married to Dorothy (Mersereau) for 56 years; she preceded him in death on Jan. 7, 2009. Jim is survived by 4 children, 12 grandchildren, and 8 great grandchildren. James D. Carson was born in Sparta, Illinois, on July 4, 1929. His life’s journey would lead him from the Midwest to the West Coast, and lastly to Beaver Falls, Pa. His journey would be focused on leading people to Christ as he was led to serve in many ways to people and institutions. A graduate of Geneva College and Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, he served three congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church: Portland, Ore.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Los Angeles, Calif. It was during his time as a pastor in California that Jim was called to be Westminster Seminary California’s (WSC) first commencement speaker (1982) and then to serve as a Trustee on the first WSC board that was independent from Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. He was involved for 18 of the first thirty years of WSC as a member of the Board of Trustees for 12 years, including six years as

chairman of the board, and—after his retirement from the pastorate—as the dean of students and director of field education for nearly six years. Dr. Carson's impact and influence in those formative years of the seminary were immeasurable, but he would humbly defer any focus on himself and point people to Jesus. Dr. Dennis E. Johnson, Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology, writes this about the influence of the Dr. Carson in his life:

“We first met in 1976 when I was called to pastor Beverly OPC in East L.A. Jim welcomed me and took me under his wing in so many ways. And then we were able to work together in the launch of Westminster Seminary California. His leadership as chairman of WSC's board was crucial to our institutional foundations ... then I had the extra joy of working with him as he took the lead in developing our field education program—and ‘pastoring’ so many students who needed a wise, truth-telling, and patient shepherd.”

There are many who testify to the wisdom, kindness, and “beautiful feet” of God's messenger, James Carson. Rev. Anthony Selvaggio at Rochester CRC eulogized Jim Carson in the memorial service, “Beautiful Feet.” Rev. Selvaggio said Romans 10:15 was Dr. Carson's “... spiritual résumé.” He was a messenger of the good news of Jesus Christ wherever his journey led him, “and he proclaimed Christ with his entire being.” At an early age, Mr. Carson committed his life to Jesus Christ. In Jim's death he desired that all glory be given to his Savior, the Lord Jesus. He trusted in the promises of the Bible, knew his sins were forgiven, and had sure hope that, at death, he had been “perfect in holiness.” He wrote in his will, “It has been the goal of my life to bring honor to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How are they to believe in him of whom they've never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they're sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news! [Romans 10:14-15, ESV]. ... [https://issuu.com/wscal/docs/update\\_fl2020/s/11377914](https://issuu.com/wscal/docs/update_fl2020/s/11377914)

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### **Memorial: Gene W. Spear (1927-2021)**

*Pastored 46 years in Japan*

Dr. Gene W. Spear died quietly with his wife Ruth by his side. We rejoice that he has gone to be with his Savior whom he served so faithfully, founding and pastoring churches for 46 years in Kobe and Osaka, Japan.

*His children: Carol, Bruce, Mary Jane, Joyce, and Bonnie*

Gene W. Spear, age 93, passed from this life on Feb. 26, 2021, at Forest Creek Memory Care in Overland Park, Kan. He was born Aug. 14, 1927, on a

dairy farm in Berryton, Kan. Daily family worship and weekly church attendance nourished his soul. He attended a two-room school house and Berryton High School before enlisting in the United States Navy in 1945. He was trained in aviation electronics and deployed to Panama; while there he made a commitment to serve Jesus Christ for the rest of his life. He earned a B.A. degree with an emphasis in Greek at Sterling College, where he met Ruth Adams, who became his lifelong sweetheart. They were married on August 16, 1951, and moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he attended the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS). He then earned a M.Th. degree at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. In 1955, Gene was called by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) to serve in Kobe, Japan, and sailed there with Ruth and two children; three more children were born in Japan. He learned to converse and even preach and counsel in Japanese, and served there tirelessly and compassionately for 46 years, planting two churches which continue today with Japanese pastors. He and Ruth worked as an amazing team, loving each other and their children and involving them in their work as well. He was very handy; it seemed that he could fix just about anything.

He liked to fish and hunt and had a collapsible fishing pole in his luggage wherever he traveled. Gene and Ruth retired from Japan in 2001 to Topeka, Kan., to care for his mother until her death. They moved to Olathe, Kan., in 2005, where he continued teaching, preaching occasionally, and writing. In his retirement Gene was deeply concerned for his country, advocating for protection of the unborn and biblical morality. Gene was elected Moderator of the RPCNA Synod in 1980. He became "Dr. Spear" in 1985, when Geneva College awarded him a Doctor of Divinity degree. From his alma maters he has received a Distinguished Servant Award (Sterling College, 2005) and a Faithful Servant Award (RPTS, 2012). He served on the board of the Reformation Translation Fellowship for years; his book, *What Am I?*, has been published in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and English. Gene was preceded in death by an infant sister Iris and infant brother Floyd, parents Maurice B. and Edna C. Spear, his brother Francis Spear, sister Doris Parsons, three grandchildren, Andrea Ward, Jonathan Weir, and Peter Spear. He is survived by his wife Ruth, brothers A. Irvin Spear and W. Howard Spear, his five children, Carol J. Wright (Chris), Bruce A. Spear (Susan), Mary Jane Ward (Harry), Joyce A. Schofield (Charles), Bonnie E. Weir (David), fifteen grandchildren, and 29 great grandchildren. A funeral service will be held at Shawnee RPC on Friday, March 5, to be followed by a Zoom meeting for sharing of memories. For info, select this link: <[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctXHzebZ7ejUBx6zRHB3Oafv6H33u2EfhUGnnnYadM4UxIw/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctXHzebZ7ejUBx6zRHB3Oafv6H33u2EfhUGnnnYadM4UxIw/viewform?usp=pp_url)>. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests making

donations in memory of Gene to the RPCNA's Japan Presbytery (check payable to Shawnee RP Church or [www.shawneerpc.org/give/](http://www.shawneerpc.org/give/), Gen. Fund: memo "Gene Spear Memorial") or to the Alliance Defending Freedom (<https://www.adflegal.org/donate>).

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### **Memorial: Dr. John H. (Jack) White (1936 - 2021)**

*Pastored at College Hill RPC (PA) and served as president of Geneva College  
[www.geneva.edu/news/2021/03/nr-jack-white-passing](http://www.geneva.edu/news/2021/03/nr-jack-white-passing)*

(BEAVER FALLS, Pennsylvania)—Geneva College announces the death of President emeritus John H. "Jack" White, D.Min., on Thursday, March 11, 2021. Dr. White faithfully served the college as its 18th President from 1992-2004 and as Dean of Religious Services and a professor of Biblical Studies beginning in 1970. Dr. White served on the Geneva College Board of Corporators, 1964-1970, and Board of Trustees, 1967-1970. He played a key role in drafting and approving the college's Foundational Concepts of Christian Education, a treatise adopted in 1967 that still guides Geneva's ministry of education today. In 1978 the college named Dr. White as Director of Church Relations and in 1985 as Associate Vice President for Religious Services, a post he held until his appointment as college President. Geneva President Calvin L. Troup, Ph.D., says, "Jack went to his eternal reward yesterday, a great loss to us. Yet, for Jack, who so faithfully testified and taught the Kingdom Gospel of Jesus Christ as pastor, professor and president, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We will miss him."

Dr. White was born in Newburgh, New York, in June 1936 to John and Ethel Perry White. He graduated from Geneva College in 1958 with a degree in history and from RPTS in 1961. He completed his M.A. in History at the University of Pittsburgh in 1962. He served as pastor of the College Hill RPC (Beaver Falls), 1962-1970, and earned a doctoral degree in Ministry from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1977. Dr. White was known for his involvement in numerous evangelical Christian organizations, including the National Association of Evangelicals (which he served as President, 1988-90), & the boards of World Relief Corporation and Westminster Theological Seminary (where he was vice chm.). John helped develop the North American Presbyterian & Reformed Council (NAPARC), Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO), National Coalition Against Pornography (NCAP), the Center for Urban Biblical Ministries (CUBM), now associated with Geneva College Pittsburgh Campus, and Beaver County Christian School. He was named publisher of the *Christian Scholars' Review* in 1991 and published his writing in *Christianity Today*, *Decision*, *Eternity*, and *Table Talk*. Among his published books are *The Book of Books* (Crown & Covenant) and *Slavery to Servanthood* (Great Commission Publications).

[www.legacy.com/obituaries/timesonline/obituary.aspx?n=john-h-white-jack&pid=198034187&fhid=27999](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/timesonline/obituary.aspx?n=john-h-white-jack&pid=198034187&fhid=27999)

Chippewa Township—John H. (Jack) White went to be with his Savior and Lord on March 11, 2021, and now awaits the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the bodies of those who trust Jesus as their Savior. Dr. White was born on June 14, 1936, in Newburgh, N.Y., the son of John and Ethel Perry White. He was preceded in death by his wife of fifty years, Norma Woods White. He is survived by his wife of eight years Mary E. Veith Tait White, his daughters Natalie (Ray) Austin and Stephanie White, and also by his grandchildren Asa, Aiden, Matthew, and Max Austin; Steven (Simona), Jennifer, and Janelle White. Also included are his “bonus” children, Neil Tait (Beth), Ross Tait, Holly Rayar and grandchildren, Jeffery, Samuel, and Natalie. Dr. White was a 1958 graduate of Geneva College, RPTS, and the University of Pittsburgh (Ph.D). He received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1977. Dr. White was the pastor of College Hill RPC from 1962-1970.

In 1970 he was called to serve at Geneva College in what would become various offices: Dean of Religious Services, Vice President for Religious Services and Church Relations, and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies. He was one of the framers of the “Foundational Concepts of Christian Education” that he helped to write in 1967 that has defined Geneva’s Christ-centered educational philosophy. In 1991 he was elected as the 18th President of Geneva College and served until 2004. After his retirement in 2004 he continued to serve Geneva by teaching and assisting his successors, Presidents Ken Smith and Calvin Troup. Dr. White was one of the founders of the Beaver County Christian School in 1967 and Tiger Pause Youth Ministry in 1982. He was also active in the community serving on such Boards as Ellwood City Hospital and Housing Opportunities of Beaver County. He was also privileged to be a leader in the Evangelical Christian community both in Western Pennsylvania and nationally. Dr. White was a constituting Board member of the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO), on the Committee for the Billy Graham Crusade of 1993 in Pittsburgh, a member of The Pittsburgh Offensive that sought strategic ways to reach the city for Christ, an organizer of the Center for Urban Biblical Ministry (CUBM) in Pittsburgh, an organizer of the Center for Urban Theological Studies (CUTS) in Philadelphia, a member of the Urban Impact Foundation Board in Pittsburgh, and a member of the board of City Rescue Mission. Nationally he served as Vice President and later the President of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1990-1991 and the chairman of the Board of the World Relief Commission of the NAE from 1987-1994. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Westminster Theological Seminary from 1986-2016 and Chairman of that Board from 1989-2015. From 1983-2014, he was a member of the Board of God’s World which



publishes *World Magazine* and other online news venues. He was the author of several chapters in books published by various evangelical publishers and the author of two chapters in, and editor of, *The Book of Books*, a book in honor of Dr. J.G. Vos, recently published by Crown & Covenant Publishers and the author of a book published by Great Commission Publishers entitled *From Slavery to Servanthood*. In 1988-1991 he was the publisher of *Christian Scholar's Review*. In addition to writing, advising, and organizing, Jack was a frequent preacher throughout Western Pennsylvania and in the Reformed and Evangelical Community nationwide. These are but examples of Jack's ministry and influence, but Jack would want everyone to say, "To God alone be the Glory!"

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### **Memorial: Dr. Norman M. Carson (1925-2021)**

*Pastored at First RPC (Chicago), in Ireland and Cyprus, and served at Geneva College*  
[www.legacy.com/obituaries/timesonline/obituary.aspx?n=norman-m-carson&pid=198307799&fhid=27999](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/timesonline/obituary.aspx?n=norman-m-carson&pid=198307799&fhid=27999)

Geneva College announces the death of beloved Professor Emeritus of English Norman M. Carson, Ph.D., age 95, on April 6, 2021. Carson taught in the English Department at Geneva from 1957-1991 and served as department chair from 1969 to 1981. Dr. Carson graduated from Geneva in 1947 and in 1949 received a Master of Arts in English from the University of Iowa. He earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh in 1952 and his doctorate in English Literature from Boston University in 1961. The college community extends condolences to Dr. Carson's wife of 68 years, Beverly (Hanson) Carson, whom he married on June 12, 1953. Dr. Norman M. Carson, age 95, died Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at his apartment at the Reformed Presbyterian Home of complications from congestive heart failure. Norman met his wife, Beverly Hanson, in Boston, Mass., at a friend's wedding. They were married on June 12, 1953. Beverly has been by his side for 68 years. Dr. Carson was born April 20, 1925, in Denver, Colo., and adopted shortly thereafter by Rev. Charles T. and May (Finley) Carson. His early schooling took place in Sterling, Kan., and he graduated from Beaver Falls High School in 1943. In 1944-45, he served in the medical corps of the U.S. Army and in India as a cryptographer with the Office of Strategic Services. He graduated from Geneva College in 1947 and in 1949 received a Master of Arts in English from the University of Iowa. He graduated from the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary in Pittsburgh in 1952, serving as pastor of the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Chicago, Ill., from 1952 to 1955. He taught in the Department of English at Geneva College from 1957-1991, earning his Ph.D. in English Literature from Boston University in 1961. He was granted a leave of absence in 1968 and pastored the Dublin Road Reformed Presbyterian Church in Belfast, Northern

Ireland. He was Chairman of the Department of English from 1969 to 1981. He was a member of the national Conference on Christianity and Literature, and was its national president in 1972. For many years, he was an elder in the College Hill Reformed Presbyterian Church. He was involved in community service, serving in the Meals on Wheels program. Upon retirement he taught English Literature at Christ's College, Taipei, Taiwan, in 1991-1992. For several months in 1997 and 2007, he pastored the Trinity Christian Community Fellowship in Larnaca, Cyprus. He is the author of two books: *Received in Grace* and *Precious Son*. In 1987, he discovered his birth parents, the late Samuel and Elizabeth Wells of Las Vegas, N.M., and their surviving family, Parker Wells and wife, Floraida, of Ohkay Owingeh, N.M.; Samuel Wells and wife, Dixie, of Miami, Okla.; and Jeanne (Wells) Keating, with whom he established a rewarding relationship over many years. Dr. Carson was preceded in death by a son, Mark, and by a sister, Jeanne (Wells) Keating and brother Samuel Wells. He is survived by a daughter, Rebecca Carson of Boulder, Colorado; a daughter, Bonnie Irvin and husband, Richard, of Wapwallopen; a son, David Carson and wife, Andriani, of Durham, N.C.; and by eight grandchildren: Blake, Lauren, Erik, Brendyn, Cameron, Caleb, and Elise Irvin and Christopher George Carson.

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### **Memorial: Rev. H. Leverne Rosenberger (1925-2021)**

*Pastored in Pennsylvania, served as a missionary in the Philippines, and helped found Christian schools*

[www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/20790677/H-Leverne-Rosenberger/Whitinsville/](http://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/20790677/H-Leverne-Rosenberger/Whitinsville/)

On April 14, 2021, Herman Leverne Rosenberger passed into glorious eternal life. Leverne was born February 14, 1926, in Souderton, Pa. At age ten Leverne committed his life in faith to Jesus Christ through the daily reading of the Bible. He began to preach during high school and also led a choir in weekly radio broadcasts. Following military service as a medic and chaplain's assistant in the Far East in WW2, he married Gertrude Althea Baghurst on July 13, 1946. After graduating from Bob Jones University, they served as missionaries in the Philippines (1952-56), courageously taking the gospel to the headhunter tribes of the Mountain Province. Returning to the US, Leverne graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary and received an M.Ed. at Temple University. With a desire to establish Christian schools, he began work with the Christian School Foundation, co-founding the Pennsylvania Association of Christian Schools and serving on the board of NUCS (now Christian Schools International) as President of District 1. In 1978, he became the organizing pastor of Covenant Chapel, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., (now Covenant OPC, Madisonville, Pa.) and helped found the Northeastern Christian School in Scranton, Pa. He also co-founded

the Wyoming Valley Christian School in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., in 1980 and Covenant Christian School in Franklin Square, N.Y. in 1984. He then served as Director of Devp. for Plumstead Christian School for several years before moving to Middletown, NY to evangelize in Orange County. In retirement, Lerverne moved in 2000 to Uxbridge, MA where his wife Gertrude died from cancer complications in 2003. Verne married Shirley Chilton (08/21/2004) and moved to Beaver Falls, Pa. He developed cancer in his liver in 2020. He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Shirley (nee Dillon) Chilton, PA; his daughter Judith (Don) Godeke, MA; his son Andrew (Debbie) Rosenberger, TX; his stepchildren Karen Stadnick, PA; Kendall (and Bing) Chilton, MA; Kim (Wayne) Tatko, FL; Keith (Brenda) Chilton, OH; brother Carroll Rosenberger, PA; 13 grandchildren and step-grandchildren; and 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceasing him were his parents, Jacob Herman & Mary Ann (nee Landis) Rosenberger and sisters Esther Bergey and Naomi Clemmer, all of Souderton, Pa. Lerverne loved people and was a gracious listener and sharer. He loved to sing Psalms and play piano. He will be greatly missed until we meet again in that heavenly reunion with all those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. A graveside service for the family was held at Pine Grove Cemetery in Whitinsville, Mass.

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### **Memorial: John “Jack” Ramsey (1932-2019)**

*Elder at Fulton RPC (NY)*

John “Jack” Ramsey, 86, of Baldwinsville, New York, passed away at Mercy House in Endicott, New York, on June 5, 2019. Jack was a graduate of Dryden High School and also attended Geneva College (Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania); he later graduated from Spring Garden Institute for auto repair and was an independent garage owner in Port Providence, Pa. He served in the Merchant Marines and was in the Army Presidential Honor Guard during the Korean War (1953-1955). Jack married Viola “Vi” Watterson in 1956. She preceded Jack in death; they were married 58 years. Jack moved to the Syracuse area in 1973 and sold ambulances for many years. Jack was a member of Fulton Reformed Presbyterian Church. Jack is survived by one sister, Lois Gross; two children, Kimberly “K.J.” (Douglas) Chamberlain and Bill (Jessi) Ramsey; two nephews, Scott (Theresa) and Todd Gross; one niece, Shannon (Dave) Schaffsma; three grandchildren, Quinn (Susan) Anders, Rachel Coulton, and Liam Ramsey; two foster grandchildren, Madison and Carter Tonchen; two step grandchildren, Jackson and Molly Wright. Among other ministries the family remembered White Lake Covenanter Camp for memorial gifts.

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## Memorial: Dr. Jorge Klajnbart (1960-2020)

*Elder at Springs Reformed Church (CO)*

<https://allveterans.com/tribute/details/176581/Jorge-Klajnbart/obituary.html>

The RPTS community notes the passing of Dr. Jorge Klajnbart, who went to be with the Lord on February 15, 2020, in Colorado Springs (CO) after a three-year battle with cancer. An elder in the Springs Reformed Church (RPCNA), Jorge was a wonderful friend to RPTS. Despite being physically frail at the time due to his cancer, Jorge, with his wife Tammy Jo, came to Pittsburgh in August last year to teach Medical Issues in Biblical Counseling with biblical fidelity and the compassion of Christ to our D.Min. students. Jorge, a retired surgeon and Colonel in the Army, was, as noted in his funeral program, “officially relieved of duty by his Commander in Chief and honorably promoted into Glory.” Jorge Oscar Klajnbart was called home to dwell with his Lord and Savior on Feb. 15, 2020, at the age of 59 with his wife and daughter singing psalms as he requested in Colorado Springs. Jorge lived for more than three years with a diagnosis of cancer originating in his appendix. Jorge leaves behind his wife of 37 years, Tammi J. Altizer; his daughter, Sarah (Scot) Eskestrand and their sons Evan and Drew; his son, Jared (Madeline) Klajnbart and their twin sons Mason and Nolan; his parents Humberto Klajnbart and Hilda Gurwich, and best-loved brother, Marcelo Klajnbart. Jorge was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 30, 1960. Jorge graduated from Syossett High School, N.Y., in 1978 and Plattsburgh State University College (NY) in 1987 with degrees in Biology and Chemistry. Jorge enlisted as an E2 in the Air Force before finishing college and left the Air Force to pursue a career in medicine at the University of New England in 1988. He commissioned into the US Army as a Captain upon graduation from medical school in 1992. He began his residency in Orthopaedics at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Aurora, Colo., and graduated as a Major from Madigan Army Medical Center, Tacoma, Washington, in 1999 as an Orthopaedic Surgeon. Along with assignments to Fort Rucker (Alabama), Fort Irwin (California), Fort Eustis (Virginia), and Fort Carson (Colorado), Jorge was deployed to Jordan, Afghanistan, and Kuwait with shorter tours to Colombia, Chile, and Guatemala. In addition to being an Orthopaedic Surgeon, Jorge served as Chief of Orthopaedics, Chief of Surgery, 3rd Army ARCENT Surgeon Forward, Lead Surgeon for the WCAP (World Class Athlete Program), and team physician for the All Army Men’s and Women’s Soccer teams and Women’s Volleyball for a number of years while on active duty at Fort Carson, Colorado. Jorge loved long-distance runs in the woods, hiking with his children and grandchildren, regular trips to the gym, traveling the world (thanks to “Uncle Sam”), tasting exotic food, and drinking good beer or savoring great red wine. He could be found at his desk reading his Bible or researching Biblical Medical Ethics in preparation for talks on the

topic or adding chapters to the book he hoped to write. He took his role as an elder at Springs Reformed Church (RPC) very seriously, and encouraged others to be their best physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Jorge served the Lord well, whether it was coaching soccer, teaching Sunday School, mentoring others in the Ortho Clinic, or repairing patients in the Operating Room. He retired from the Army as a Colonel in August 2014, but continued to enjoy his craft until the very end. Jorge was a faithful father, physician, and friend, but most importantly, he was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. A funeral with military honors was conducted at Village Seven Presbyterian Church, Colorado Springs, on Saturday, February 22, 2020. Jorge is buried at Pikes Peak National Cemetery in Colorado.

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### **Memorial: Bruce Adams, D.O. (1926-2020)**

*Elder at Southfield RPC (MI)*

Dr. Bruce E. Adams, D.O., age 93, passed away March 30, 2020 (born on April 29, 1926 in Stafford, Kansas). U.S. Navy veteran, WW2. Beloved husband of Charlotte; dear father of Denice (James) Jackson, Daryl (Rose) Adams, David (Stacy) Adams, & late Dwight (Rachel) Adams; loving grandpa of 13, great grandpa of 8, great-great grandpa of one + one on the way. Brother of Ruth (Gene) Spear, the late Roy Adams, the late Lois Graham, the late Mary Marion McMillian. Burial at Southfield RPC where a memorial service was held on July 2.

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### **Memorial: Robert "Bob" James Mann (1931-2020)**

*Elder at Springs Reformed Church (CO)*

The Lord called Robert "Bob" James Mann home on the morning of June 11, 2020, after a brief illness at the age of 88 years. He was preceded in death by his grandson, Michael G. Linders; and also by his beloved wife of sixty-two years, Ruth Evelyn (McBurney) Mann. He is survived by his four children and their spouses: Roger and Malinda Mann, Sheryl and Mark Linders, Keith and Jill Mann, and Greg and Catherine Mann; also 15 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. Bob was born Nov. 10, 1931, in Quinter, Kan., to Joseph Lynn and Ruth Hedwig (Feiler) Mann, the fifth of their five children and was raised on the family farm south of Quinter, Kan. His parents and siblings all preceded him in death. He graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in animal husbandry. He later earned his master's in guidance counseling from Colorado College. Bob met his future wife, Ruth McBurney in Quinter, KS. Some time after they were married they moved to Colorado and settled in Colorado Springs, where they raised their four children. Bob worked for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Bear Trap Ranch for many years before working as a teacher and eventually a High School guidance counselor at Palmer High

School, Colorado Springs, School District 11. Even after he retired from District 11, Bob continued working as a guidance counselor at Evangelical Christian Academy, as well as volunteer work at Pikes Peak Academy. Bob was a founding elder, and elder *emeritus* of Springs Reformed Church, Colorado Springs, Colo. He was also an active member of Gideons International. He and Ruth had many years of involvement in youth and college ministry, including mentoring and leading summer backpacking trips in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. In their later years, Bob faithfully and lovingly cared for his wife Ruth as her Parkinson's Disease symptoms worsened, until her death in November of 2016. The family held a small family memorial service at the Keith Mann home on Monday, June 15, 2020. Pastor Jason Ryce shared a brief devotional.

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### **Memorial: Charles Francis Lorraine (1950-2020)**

*Elder at Christ Church (Floyd, NY)*

[www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/15073583/Charles-Chip-F-Lorraine](http://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/15073583/Charles-Chip-F-Lorraine)

Charles Francis Lorraine, "Chip," of Utica, age 69, was called home by the Lord on Monday, June 15, 2020, at the Siegenthaler Center in New Hartford. He was the son of Charles and Nathalee (Marriott) Lorraine. Chip was born in North Utica, Oct. 10, 1950, and was a graduate of Utica Free Academy class of 1968. He grew up a member of Christ Community Church, then to its Central College, Iowa. Chip earned a B.A. in Philosophy, which he found practical in his life. He tended roses at Bakers Greenhouse for five years. Chip continued family tradition and worked on the Conrail and Adirondack railroads and then with Mohawk Valley Oil. Enjoying trucks and heavy equipment since childhood, he worked most of his life for Fred Burrows Trucking, a well-suited field of employment. Chip was proud of the quality of work the crews did on roads and the businesses he could see develop from the first digging. A self-controlled person in habits and finances, by God's grace he was able to save and provide for his family but also give generously to his love for foreign missions and the Rescue Mission. His greatest contentment was seeing Christ Church (RPC) able to provide a congregation locally with thorough biblical doctrine, life, and worship. Chip's enjoyments were visiting local historical sites, daily Bible reading and trips with brother Brian Brockway, and railroad shows. His quiet, reserved personality could misleadingly disguise his concerned interest and deep affection for young relatives and friends. But one could easily see his ease with older people, such as in the Kemble St. nursing home ministry and at church. Surviving are his loving wife Susan Chesnick; son, Jacob (Sarah) Lorraine; sisters-in-law and families, Karen (Andy) Frosch and Christine (Joe Renninger) Chesnick; sisters, Nadeen (Steve) Nunn, Marcia (Ted) Swenszkowski and brother, Brian (Marcia) Lorraine. He leaves with grateful thanks for friendship to the Burrows

friends, Ingersolls, Rev. Aaron Goerner, and the RPC. A 5-year survivor of glioblastoma, the family is indebted to Upstate's good care and the great work of hospice. Ready and anchored in Christ Jesus the Lord, Chip now enjoys Him face to face. Burial: Grandview Cemetery, Whitesboro—awaiting the resurrection of the body itself at the return of the Lord.

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### **Memorial: Aubrey Eugene Ayer (1937-2020)**

*Elder at Ottawa (ON) RPC*

[www.fco-cfo.coop/fr/avis-de-deces/aubrey-eugene-ayer-187174/](http://www.fco-cfo.coop/fr/avis-de-deces/aubrey-eugene-ayer-187174/)

Aubrey Ayer, 83, passed away peacefully on the morning of August 13, 2020. Aubrey was born August 31, 1937 to John and Laurine (Bannister) Ayer in Elgin, New Brunswick. He graduated from Elgin Rural High School in 1955 and attended Teacher's College in Fredericton, N.B. His first teaching position was in Tabusintac, N.B., 1956-58, where Edith Joy Beattie was one of his Grade 12 students. They were married July 3, 1959, settling in Boom Road, N.B. Aubrey taught English and history at North & South Esk Regional HS (1959-73), serving as principal also. He took summer classes at the University of New Brunswick, earning a B.A. In 1973, Aubrey and Joy moved to Wakefield, Quebec, where they became the administrators of Brookdale Farm, a Christian children's home. Always a country man at heart, Aubrey enjoyed running the dairy farm as well as caring for the children. When Brookdale closed in 1975, Aubrey became a Special Ed teacher of the Ottawa-Carleton Separate School Board, working at Frank Ryan Intermediate School and then St. Paul High School. Special Ed was a new field at the time, but Aubrey's previous teaching experience and patience stood him in good stead. Through summer and night classes at the University of Ottawa, he completed his Bachelor and Master of Education and Special Education Certification. Aubrey retired from teaching in 1993. Aubrey was a founding member of the Ottawa RPC, serving as an elder for decades until his health declined due to Parkinson's. He was a Board member for Ottawa Theological Hall and enjoyed working in their library. Aubrey and Joy recently celebrated their 61st anniversary. He will be deeply missed by Joy; children Shelley (Brian Bond), David (Jacqueline), and Steven (Joanna Lynn); grandchildren Laura, Julianna, Andrew, Matthew, Peter, Nathaniel, Zachary, Anneke, Jared, Seth, Simon, Emily Jayne, Hannah, Noah, Molly, Levi, Bronwyn, and Ellianna. He delighted in his great-grandchildren Jude, Grant, Simon, Fiona, Keegan, Emma, Elliott, Reilly, Eleanor, Phoebe, Juliet, Ralph, Brielle, Liam, Tannis, Venice, Tiberius, Owen, James, Everley, Silas, James, Mark, and Hope and was excited to hear of four more unborn great-grandkids. Predeceased by a granddaughter, Hope M. Ayer. Aubrey is also mourned by his brother Barton (Barb) Ayer; his sisters, Laura (late Vernon) Lewis and Arlene (late Bill) Mercer; and many nieces and

nephews. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the graveside service and burial were limited to the family, but a memorial service was held at Ottawa RPC on August 29 and was livestreamed.

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### **Memorial: Gene Huggins (1944-2020)**

*Elder at Syracuse (NY) RPC*

*[obits.syracuse.com/obituaries/syracuse/obituary.aspx?n=gene-huggins&pid=196796541&fhid=22218](https://obits.syracuse.com/obituaries/syracuse/obituary.aspx?n=gene-huggins&pid=196796541&fhid=22218)*

Gene Russell Huggins, 75, of Tully, passed away on September 13, 2020. He was a good and godly man who desired to please the Lord in all he did. He was born in 1944 to the late Russell and Merle (Roberts) Huggins, growing up on Sheepskin Hollow Farm, Waterville, NY. After graduating from Waterville High School, Gene went into the U.S. Navy and served during the Vietnam War. He received his Bachelor's from Geneva College, and two Master's from Syracuse University. Gene retired in 2008 after twenty years as a Special Ed Teacher in the Cicero-North Syracuse School District. He was an ruling elder in the Syracuse RPC. Gene was an avid birdwatcher and president of the Onondaga Audubon Society, 1983-1985. Gene is survived by: his wife of 50 years (whom he met in kindergarten), Gail V. (Eckerson) Huggins; son, Christopher (Shari); daughters, Rebekah and Jocelyn (Evan); grandchildren: Sarah, Ryan, Emma, Eliana, Hazel, Caleb; brother, Lynn (Coleen). A funeral service was held on September 22, with the burial at Stockwell Cemetery. Memorial donations blessed Syracuse RPC and White Lake Camp

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### **Memorial: Philip C. Duguid (1954-2020)**

*Elder at the Topeka (KS) RPC and Geneva College board member*

*[www.penwellgabeltopeka.com/Obituary/189439/Philip-Duguid/Topeka-KS](https://www.penwellgabeltopeka.com/Obituary/189439/Philip-Duguid/Topeka-KS)*

Philip (Phil) Charles Duguid, 66, of Meriden Kansas, first saw his Savior face-to-face on September 19, 2020. He was born to the late Charles and Edith Duguid in Leavenworth, Kansas, on May 24, 1954, and was raised on the Duguid farm just outside of Boyle, Kan., along with his four sisters who all survive him: Sharon (Mathews), Eileen (Filbert), Joan (Wallace), and Brenda (Kuntz). He graduated from Jefferson County North High School in nearby Winchester in 1972 and received his bachelor's degrees from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pa., in 1976. Those who knew Phil are aware of the impact Geneva had on his life; his degrees in business and accounting were valuable to his professional life as a self-employed general contractor. Phil also highly valued the biblical instruction he received at Geneva and the relationships he formed. Music provided an outlet to Phil's studies, as he joined the college's traveling choir, the Genevans. While in the Genevans, Phil met his future wife, Eleanor Den-



nison. They were married on June 20, 1975, and remained in Beaver Falls until Phil finished his education in 1976. Given Geneva's impact on his life, Phil was proud to serve as a member of its two governing bodies, initially as a member of the Board of Corporators and then as a member of the Board of Trustees until his death. The church also played a significant role in Phil's life. He was baptized at Winchester RPC and then made a profession of faith at age 12. When he and Eleanor moved back to Kansas following his graduation from Geneva, the two became members of Topeka RPC. Phil put his musical talents to use in the church as he frequently led the singing. He also served as a deacon for 9 years and then as an elder from 1989 until his death. Phil grew up helping his father with the livestock, something he continued to do following his return to Kansas. He also joined his father's construction company, Duguid Construction, taking over the company following his father's retirement in 1990. Over the years, Duguid Construction—employing Phil's son, grandsons, nephews, and numerous friends—built and maintained churches, farms, homes, and civic buildings located across Northeast Kansas. Phil also enjoyed the outdoors, including bird hunting and fishing. Then in 2014, Phil started a business raising white-tailed deer. Along with his sisters, Phil is survived by his loving wife, Eleanor; two children, Rebecca Adams and Timothy; and three grandchildren, Derek, Makara, and Camden Adams. The visitation was at Topeka RPC with the funeral at Winchester RPC on Sept. 29 (livestreamed), with burial next to the church. Memorial donations blessed Topeka RPC and the Geneva College Bible Department.

### **Geneva Announces Death of Corporator, Trustee Phil Duguid '76**

*[www.geneva.edu/news/2020/09/nr-geneva-philip-duguid-passing](http://www.geneva.edu/news/2020/09/nr-geneva-philip-duguid-passing)*

Geneva College announces the passing of Board of Trustee and Board of Corporators member Mr. Philip C. Duguid of Meriden, Kansas, on Saturday, September 19. Duguid was a 1976 graduate of the college, earning an accounting business degree. Duguid had served on the Board of Corporators since 1998 and on the Geneva College Board of Trustees since 2011. Geneva president Calvin L. Troup, Ph.D., says, "We grieve the loss of Phil Duguid, with his family, with his church, and with the entire Geneva Community. Phil provided more than two decades of faithful and fruitful board service, leading efforts to strengthen the mission of the College and its relationship with the RPCNA. Most recently, he worked with board colleagues on a task force that led to the establishment of the Geneva College Foundation, a charitable organization with the sole purpose of enhancing Geneva's mission via long-term financial strength and independence. We'll miss Phil greatly and are grateful to God for his life and faithful service to the Lord Jesus with us at Geneva." Duguid was a member and elder of the Topeka RPC and principal owner of Duguid Construction (a

single-family housing construction business in Meriden, KS). He leaves his wife, Eleanor (Dennison '74) and daughter, Rebecca (Adams), and son, Timothy '02, both of whom attended Geneva.

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### **Memorial: Russell James (1922-2020)**

*Elder at Hebron RPC (Clay Center, KS)*

[www.nsrffh.com/obituary/russell-james](http://www.nsrffh.com/obituary/russell-james)

Russell James, age 98, was born Jan. 15, 1922 in Blaine Township, Clay County, Kansas, the eldest of twelve children born to Dean and Eva (Chestnut) James. Russell learned the value of hard work when his father suffered a ruptured appendix and was laid up for a year. Russell completed the 8th grade but did not go on to high school as he was needed at home to work on the family farm. While he did not have much formal education, he had vast mechanical knowledge which served him well throughout his life. If he was not doing field work or farm chores, he would be found in the shop doing maintenance on his equipment. Russell professed faith in Christ while in his teens and joined Hebron RPC. Over the course of his lifetime, he faithfully served the church as both a deacon and elder. His faith in Christ was a very important part of his life; he read his Bible faithfully, and always strived to live a life honoring to Christ. Russell enlisted in the U.S. Army in October 1942 during WW2 and served in the 132nd Infantry Regiment, achieving the rank of Tech-5. He was originally slated to work in vehicle maintenance, but an interesting encounter in training changed his path. Russell was training at Monterey, California, when a whale was badly injured by a boat. Rather than let the whale go to waste, local fishermen wanted it brought ashore. A bulldozer was available, but the operator was not. Armed with his knowledge of farm machinery, Russell manned the bulldozer and dragged the whale carcass onto the beach. The Army took note of his skills and made him a combat engineer machine operator instead. Russell arrived in the Pacific Theater in January 1944 to participate in several important campaigns and battles, including the amphibious invasion of Cebu Island during the Luzon Campaign. After 23 months of overseas combat duty, the war ended, and he returned to civilian life in Kansas and on December 26, 1945, married Betty Dunn of Five Creeks Township and began farming. Russell farmed and raised cattle until retiring in 1980. In addition to farming Russell also was a Blaine Township trustee and could always be depended on to maintain or plow open the roads when needed. He also served on the Hebron school board for a number of years.

Before retiring from farming, Betty had convinced Russell to take a course in sewing machine cleaning and repair; thus began another chapter in his life. In 1986 Russell and Betty moved from their home on the farm to Clay Center.

Russell continued serving the community with his mechanical skills by opening a sewing machine and sweeper repair shop in their home's basement. After Betty's death in 2004, Russell sold his sewing machine and vacuum repair business and moved into Park Plaza, where he continued to tinker with everything possible and be a servant to many. Russell moved into Presbyterian Manor in 2011.

His presence was much appreciated as he used his talents to do minor repairs around the facility and helped meet residents' needs. Late in life, he could be spotted riding his souped-up scooter downtown. The Presbyterian Manor was known to receive calls from well-intentioned folks who thought he was an escapee, but Russell's sharp mind allowed him the freedom to enjoy his scooter well past his 95th birthday. John Russell James passed into the presence of our Lord on Dec. 29, 2020 at the Presbyterian Manor in Clay Center, Kansas.

Russell was 98 years, 349 days old. Those who knew him admired him for his quiet manner, his physical stamina, and his deep faith in Christ. Russell is preceded in death by his wife of 59 years; his parents; brothers Ralph, Milo and infant brother, Paul James; and sisters Genevieve and Bertha. Though Russell's earthly body was laid to rest in Greenwood Cemetery, Russell himself currently enjoys his eternal life in heaven with his wife and feasting with the Lamb of God where he doubtless eats as much or little as he wants with no one telling him: "You're too thin!" Survivors include: son Ed and Janice James of Olathe, Kan.; daughter Marilyn and Stan Copeland of Quinter, Kan.; daughter Linda and Dick Heitman of Canon City, Colo.; brothers Leo, Wayne and Arlo; sisters Vesta, Velda, and Alta; nine grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and one great-great grandson; many nephews and nieces. Private family services were held at the Greenwood Cemetery (Clay Center, KS) on Jan. 4, 2021. Memorial gifts proved to be a blessing to Hebron RPC and the Clay Center (Kansas) Presbyterian Manor.

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### **Memorial: Jessie Shell (1924-2019)**

*Wife of Ruling Elder Ralph Shell (dec.), Southfield (MI) RPC*

*[www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/obituaries/Jessie-Shell/#!/Obituary](http://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/obituaries/Jessie-Shell/#!/Obituary)*

Jessie L. Shell (nee Bowes) died on July 15, 2019. Beloved wife of the late C. Ralph Shell; loving mother of Ruth (Jerry) Lee, John (Donna) Shell, Gary (Laura) Shell, and the late David Shell. Proud grandmother of 12 grandchildren, predeceased by one granddaughter. Dear great-grandmother of seven great-grandchildren. Sister of Dick (the late Alice) Bowes and the late Grace (Tom) Jameson. Funeral service on July 19 at Southfield (Michigan) RPC with interment following at the adjacent Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Cemetery.

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### **Memorial: Marion Adams McMillan (1923-2019)**

*Wife of Rev. John McMillan (dec.)*

[www.legacy.com/obituaries/postgazette/obituary.aspx?n=marion-adams-mcmillan&pid=193654534&fhid=9906](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/postgazette/obituary.aspx?n=marion-adams-mcmillan&pid=193654534&fhid=9906)

Marion McMillan went to be with the Lord Aug. 14, 2019, at Juniper Village of Forest Hills, two days shy of her 96th birthday. Born Aug. 16, 1923, on Cheung Chao Island, Hong Kong, to missionary parents Richard and Belle (Edgar) Adams, she grew up at the Indian Mission, Apache, Oklahoma, graduated from Sterling College, Kansas, and taught home economics. She married Rev. John McMillan on July 23, 1948, whom she met at the RP National Conference. They served RP congregations in Sparta, Ill.; Coldenham, N.Y.; Marion, Iowa; and Endwell, N.Y. When her children were in college, she returned to school to get a Masters in English Education and taught English. In retirement they continued serving in Japan, Ireland, Canada, and Scotland. Marion enjoyed gardening, canning, and hosting guests. She is survived by her children, Richard (Linda) McMillan, Jane (Gordon) Keddie, Donald (Jean) McMillan; seven grandkids, Morgan (Brian) Clinton, Matthew (Adrienne) McMillan, Donald Keddie, Iain (Erin) Keddie, David (Christina) Keddie, Philip (Miriam) McMillan, Kyle McMillan; eight great-grandchildren; siblings, Bruce Adams and Ruth Spear. She was preceded in death by her husband, John; siblings, Roy Adams and Lois Graham. Marion could handle anything that came along in a calm manner and was faithful in all her tasks, willing to do what was needed. She is much loved and will be dearly missed. The family received friends at Covenant Fellowship RPC (Wilkesburg, Pa.) on August 24, 2019, prior to the funeral. Interment followed in the Reformed Presbyterian Cemetery of New Galilee, Pa.

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### **Memorial: Lois Schaefer (1933-2019)**

*Wife of Ruling Elder John Schaefer (dec.), Eastvale (PA) RPC*

[campbellfuneralhomes.com/tribute/details/238/Lois-Schaefer/obituary.html](http://campbellfuneralhomes.com/tribute/details/238/Lois-Schaefer/obituary.html)

Lois H. Schaefer, 86, of Chippewa Township went to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to join her husband, John, on November 26, surrounded by her children and grandchildren. Born in Denver, Colorado, in August of 1933, Lois graduated from Geneva College in 1960 before meeting John in Pittsburgh, Pa. They married in 1962, and John soon joined the Physics Department at Geneva, where he taught for nearly fifty years. John preceded Lois in death in 2017. They were long-time members of Eastvale RPC where Lois used her creativity and gifts in art and music in helping to lead the Good News Club and Treasure Diggers for many years, as well as being the church secretary. Lois was a warm, kind, and patient lady with a smile for everybody. She was truly a good listener because she loved people, and she was ever ready to make a

new friend. Her generosity and kindness extended to many people beyond her family. Always curious and ready to try something new, she dabbled in visual arts and quickly mastered many new skills and crafts, each time making something beautiful before turning her hand to the next challenge. She was a great cook, and she loved to find ways to make her meals special for the many guests at her table over many years; she was an accomplished piano player who accompanied musicals for Blackhawk High School more than once. Lois led Bible studies, decorated cakes, arranged flowers, and helped to run a food co-op. A loving mom and grandma, she had a quirky sense of humor with a bit of mischief, and she loved special treats and surprises. Lois enjoyed perfect pitch and a beautiful singing voice, singing in Genevans and Handel's Messiah, among other things, and almost anything could bring a song to her lips—even in her last days. Lois is survived by her children Jonathan (Dianne), Deborah, Paul (Brenda), David (Joy), and Mark (Rachel), and eighteen beloved grandchildren and spouses, as well as brother-in-law Jim (Kit) and family. A private graveside service was held at the RP Cemetery in New Galilee (Pa.) on Nov. 28. A memorial service was held at a future date. Memorial gifts blessed Eastvale RPC.

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### **Memorial: Gretchen Robson (1940-2020)**

*Wife of Rev. Prof. Ed Robson*

*[obituaries.post-gazette.com/obituary/gretchen-j-robson-1079327267](https://obituaries.post-gazette.com/obituary/gretchen-j-robson-1079327267)*

Dear Families and Friends: At 4:06 p.m. today, eighty years & nearly to the hour of her birth, Gretchen Johannah (nee Baierl) Robson was summoned from this life to his presence with great joy as the Gospel of Jesus Christ promises. I was playing a recording of Psalm 4 which we sang for years at the conclusions of campfires at White Lake, at the conclusion of her life: "I will both lay me down in peace and quiet sleep will take, because Thou only me to dwell in safety Lord, dost make." Gretchen loved Psalm 121 and constantly turned to it through her many surgeries. She was comforted because of the Lord's vigilance over her. "I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber; behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day nor the moon by night. The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever." My family and I are going to have a memorial service for Gretchen when the threats posed by the COVID-19 virus are diminished. This service is planned for later this summer and we will try to choose a time convenient for all. We plan to hold the service at our home church in Gibsonia, Pa., and have

asked Pastor Jeff Stivason to officiate, which he graciously consented to do. In lieu of flowers, please send any gifts in honor of Gretchen to any one of the following works: Grace RPC Mercy Fund; RP Global Missions, RPTS, Rochester RPC, White Lake Camp. In our family worship this evening, we read again one of the great promises of the Resurrection. We were thinking of many more. For your comfort as well as our own, I conclude this brief announcement with them. "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

—*with love from Edward, David, Peter, Stephen Robson, & families*

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### **Memorial: Alice Joseph (1933-2021)**

*Wife of Rev. Ray Joseph (dec.), Southfield (MI) RPC*

Memorial Service for Alice Joseph (from Alice's children): Friends, family, and loved ones: While we mourn the loss of our mother, Alice Joseph, we overwhelmingly rejoice for the answered prayers for her heaven homecoming. After father's retirement from his pastorate in Southfield, Mich., and his death in 2006, mother moved to Pittsburgh, Pa. Because of having two home cities—Pittsburgh and Southfield—we're planning two identical services to give praise to our God and remember the life of our mother. She will be buried in Southfield next to our father. Pastor Harry Metzger of North Hills RPC where mom has been a member while in Pittsburgh graciously agreed to conduct both services. We welcome you to join us in praising our Lord for who He is and for the work He did in and through the life of our mother. January 15, 2021, at North Hills RPC or Jan. 18 at Southfield (MI) RPC. After the service interment will take place immediately outside the building in the cemetery. There will be a "livestreamed" connection both services, for any who are unable to come.

*With love in Christ, Alice's children*

*(Brenda, Brian, Phil, Barb, and Becky)*

Recollections from son Phil Joseph [phil@philjoseph.org]: Mom was the youngest of six children born to her mother, Sarah Wallace Smith. Her oldest brother was actually a half-brother, Robert Self, born to her mother's first husband who died in the Spanish Flu epidemic. Sarah remarried to Alvin Smith and

had five more children: Annette, Kenneth, Barbara, and twins Alvin and Alice. Alice went to Geneva College for two years, then returned home to help out financially. Soon, a young Iowa “G-I” caught her eye. Alice and Raymond Joseph were married in 1955. Less than a year later (but long enough, thank you!) she gave birth to twins Brenda and Brian. A year and a half later they were joined by Philip and a year and a half after that by Barbara. Four kids in three years slowed her down a bit, so number five—Becky—did not come along until the other four were in high school. Meanwhile the Lord used Pastor Ray to found a new congregation in West Lafayette, Indiana. He and Alice were an effective team for ministry and taught both the congregation and their own children the joys and trials of serving the Lord. Both church and family flourished. After fifteen more years in Southfield (Michigan), Ray and Alice retired to Atlanta to live with their son. When Ray passed away in 2006 Alice was single again—the first time in fifty years; it didn’t take. To minimize loneliness she convinced her son to let her move to the RP Home (Pittsburgh, PA). She enjoyed her Upper Room apartment until dementia made that impractical. In 2019 she moved into the Home proper, where her health gradually declined until her death in January 2021.

Phil’s funeral remarks: “Everyone here knew my mother, so you all know she was a godly woman. Most of what I know about godly women comes from my mother; here’s a sample: Godly women can encourage you even when they just did and will have to again. Godly women can befriend people that others ignore. Godly women can produce salad from a garden. Godly women can be happy with enough when it is not enough. Godly women can sing silly songs. Godly women can listen with interest to teenagers. Godly women can invest in people of all ages. Godly women can be positive when everyone else is negative. Godly women can like to watch baseball while they iron. Godly women can show how gentleness is strength. Godly women can accept responsibility for people who take them for granted. Godly women can melt telephone cords, timers, and all manner of plastic things on hot stove burners. Godly women can think of the Bible as common sense. Godly women can drive at night while everyone else in the car is asleep. Godly women can make wherever they are a comfortable place. Godly women can make shirts that even an 8-year-old is embarrassed to wear. Godly women can be ready to help just about anyone. Godly women can imagine fun things at holiday time. Godly women can be underrated by people who don’t know better, but they don’t care. Godly women can inspire you with their sense of adventure. It is possible for godly women to master everything in the kitchen except tearing off Saran wrap. Godly women can keep doing boring, repetitive work until it is done. Godly women can say nice things about people who don’t deserve it. Godly women can stay out of the Spirit’s way. Godly women can enjoy helping other people be successful.

Godly women can stand by their man no matter what, and no matter who, even their children. My mother showed me Jesus: Because of her, more than any other single person, I know how to recognize Jesus in a woman; because of her I saw Jesus in a twenty-two-year-old, God's gift to me, a woman who shows me the love of Jesus every day. It says in Proverbs that her children rise up and call her blessed. I wish I had a megaphone at the top of the world to tell everyone everywhere—but God has not given me one of those. So I will tell anyone within the sound of my voice that Alice Joseph was blessed indeed ... and I am blessed and blessed and blessed every day to have called her my mom."

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### **Memorial: Leslie Schutz (1950-2021)**

*Wife of Ruling Frank Schutz*

[www.newcomercolumbus.com/Obituary/198622/Leslie-Schutz/Columbus-OH](http://www.newcomercolumbus.com/Obituary/198622/Leslie-Schutz/Columbus-OH)

Leslie Schutz (née Hannah) died on April 23, 2021, at home with her family after a long illness. She was 71. Leslie was the beloved wife to Frank Schutz, devoted mother of Andrew Schutz, Ellen Schutz Strickland (Jeremy) and Laura Guinto (Brian), and enormously proud grandma to Amos and Maisie Guinto. She is also survived by her sisters, Laura DeMasie (Mark) and Betsy Hannah, her brother, Jeff Hannah (Lyn), and many treasured nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her parents, Charles & Frances Hannah, and brother, John Hannah. Leslie was born on March 21, 1950, in Indianapolis, Ind. After graduating Eastern High School in Sardinia, Ohio, she attended Ohio Wesleyan University, where she graduated in 1972 with a Journalism degree. She married Frank Schutz on May 6, 1978. Before retiring, Frank served as a pastor in the Pittsburgh area for many years and worked in IT after the family moved to Columbus, Ohio. Leslie supported Frank in his ministry and worked over the years as a journalist, administrative assistant, editor, and high school English teacher. Frank and Leslie built a beautiful life for their three children full of laughter, imagination, and many, many books. Leslie could often be found curled up on the couch with a good book and a cup of hot coffee. She loved to read and shared that love with everyone she knew. Leslie enjoyed reading, but she also loved talking about what she read. She shared many conversations with her children and siblings, breaking down plots and analyzing characters. In the last few years, Leslie was so excited to be a part of a book club, where she often led discussions. She demonstrated and instilled in her kids a love for learning and critical thinking. She was always open to learning new things, argued passionately, and loved good conversation and laughter. We remember Leslie fondly for her intellect, but also for her wonderful sense of humor. She loved to laugh and put up with more than 43 years of bad jokes and puns from Frank. Leslie's tendency to take everything literally made her an easy target for some



gentle teasing from her family, but she always took it with a smile. She loved to share funny family stories and many nights were spent sitting around the table laughing. Leslie was active in the life of her church, Grace Orthodox Presbyterian. She drew strength from fellowship and her openness and willingness to share her own struggles was an encouragement and an example to so many. She loved the Lord with her whole heart and demonstrated daily a deep faith in God. Her family is confident she is now resting peacefully with her Savior. Visitation will be Wednesday, April 28, 2021 from 11 a.m. until the time of service at 1 p.m. at Newcomer NE Chapel (3047 East Dublin Granville Road, Columbus). Private burial at Blendon Central Cemetery.

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### **Memorial: Cordelia Harrington (1936-2021)**

*Wife of Rev. Milton Harrington (dec.), Hetherton (MI) RPC*

Cordelia Louise Harrington, 84, Kokomo, went to be with the Lord Friday, April 23, 2021, at 7:20 p.m., at St. Vincent Hospital, Kokomo. She was born in Orlando, FL, on July 4, 1936, to Robert and Edna (Claypool) Price. She graduated from Boone High School in 1955. On August 30, 1957, she married Milton Leonard Harrington in Orlando. They began their married life in Hebron (Clay Center, KS) where Milton pastored, then moved to Rose City, Mich. Together Cordelia and Milton raised four children: Diane (Jim) Thurlkill, Denise (Sam) Morrow, Derald (Stephanie) Harrington, and Deric (Barbara) Harrington. Cordelia is survived by her children and grandchildren: Amber, Sierra, and Emily Thurlkill, Brenna, Devin, Steven, and Vanessa Morrow, Karah and Gabriel Harrington, and Ilse, Serina, Ameena Iyonia, and Malikai Harrington. Cordelia is also survived by sisters Edith, Catherine, Lucy, Ada, and Ann as well as many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, Milton, her sisters Betty, Pearl, Ella, Gertie, and Jennie and her brother Robert. Cordelia volunteered in classrooms at Rose City Elementary School. Cordelia was a member of Hetherton RPC in Johannesburg, Michigan, and attended Sycamore RPC in Kokomo, Indiana. She was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. In her last years, she was loved and cared for by staff at Northwoods Commons and St. Vincent Hospice. Funeral services were held on Saturday, May 1, 2021, at Hetherton RP Church, 1200 Meridian Line Road, Johannesburg, MI 49751, with Pastor Ray Morton officiating. Donations blessed Hetherton RPC.

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## Memorial: George Scipione (1946-2020)

*RPTS counseling professor*

*RPTS Announcement re. Dr. Scipione, from President Barry York*

With hearts heavy from our loss yet rejoicing in gospel hope, the RPTS community notes the passing into glory of beloved professor Dr. George "Skip" Scipione this morning as he was surrounded by his loved ones. Skip was hired in 2008 by former President Jerry O'Neill to develop and direct a new Biblical Counseling Institute (BCI) for RPTS. In God's amazing providence, Skip helped sanctify a former bar in Pittsburgh, once known for its drunkenness, carousing, and even murders, into a place where the life-giving waters of Christ now flow as people are regularly brought under the gospel counsel of Christ. He faithfully served at BCI from 2008 to 2018. Skip and his wife Eileen have been instrumental in developing a generation of Biblical counselors, with their ministry impacting thousands of lives with the promise of God's word. During his time at RPTS and into his retirement, he also taught abroad in such places as Brazil, the Czech Republic, Uganda, and Romania, where he also represented RPTS and recruited students for us. Skip was a minister in the OPC for 45 years, and had many experiences in ministry and counseling before coming to RPTS that prepared him for his service here so well. He was ordained and installed as pastor of Calvary Community Church (OPC) in 1974, where he pastored until 1982. Moving to California, Skip was one of the founders of what is now the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD) from 1982 to 2006. He then was a church planter at Covenant Community OPC in Taylors, S.C., from 2006 to 2008. Skip had a profound impact here at RPTS. The students admired and loved him for his Biblical precision, mentoring, and loving demeanor, all delivered in his Philly streetwise style. Skip's influence on our new professor of Biblical Counseling, Keith Evans, and others who serve at RPTS, like Mark and Sharon Sampson, was profound. Though a long-time *Orthodox Presbyterian* minister, Skip always demonstrated respect for the RPCNA.

One of my favorite memories of George, besides the joy and joking you could always count on, was of our times of prayer on Tuesdays for RPTS. Skip was a bedrock of that time together, always there and always earnest in his prayers for the Seminary. Even in retirement he made it a point to join us around the throne of the Lord. The RPTS community will continue to beseech that throne of grace on behalf of his dear wife, Eileen, their five children, and two grandchildren as they mourn the loss of their beloved husband and father. During his last chapel messages at RPTS, Skip expounded the Pastoral Epistles. Often his voice would crack and eyes tear up over the thought of God's grace for His people and how we will one day appear before the Lord who loves us so. Skip knew that the words of the Apostle Paul had become his through the

Lord's grace: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8). On behalf of the RPTS community, I give public thanks for the life, ministry, and gift of Dr. George Scipione.

*Dr. Barry York, President, RPTS*

*[rpglobalalliance.org/2020/01/23/rpts-professor-finishes-his-race/]*

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### **Memorial: Timothy Russell (1957-2020)**

*Geneva College Chaplain and pastor of Geneva and Covenant Fellowship RPC (PA)*

Timothy Lowell Russell was born September 3, 1957, and passed away on March 30, 2020. A memorial service was held Sept. 2, 2020, at 2nd Presbyterian (Memphis, Tennessee).

#### **Geneva Mourns Loss of Former Chaplain Rev. Tim Russell**

*www.geneva.edu/news/2020/04/nr-geneva-mourns-former-chaplain-tim-russell*

(BEAVER FALLS, Pennsylvania)—Geneva College announces with great sadness the death of alumnus, longtime administrator and dear friend of the college, the Rev. Tim Russell. Tim passed away on Monday, March 30 after a week-long battle with COVID-19. Tim was Assistant Pastor at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tenn., at the time of his death. Senior Pastor at Second Presbyterian, George Robertson shares remarks about Tim here: [www.2pc.org/media/remarks-about-our-friend-tim-russell/](http://www.2pc.org/media/remarks-about-our-friend-tim-russell/). Tim was a 1979 Geneva graduate and served in several roles at the college (1991-2004), including Director of Financial Aid, Director of Church Relations, and College Chaplain. He served on the Board of Corporators (1984-1991) and as a Degree Completion Program Adjunct Faculty (1998-2004). His other roles of service included President of the Memphis Center for Urban Theological Studies and Head of Schools for Westminster Academy and Lexington Christian Academy.

#### **Pastor at Second Presbyterian dies from COVID-19 complications**

*K. Burgess; M. Watts; D. Connolly (MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL)—March 31, 2020*

A pastor of one of the largest congregations in East Memphis has died due to complications from COVID-19. The Rev. Timothy Russell—62—was Second Presbyterian Church's pastor to middle adults, according to the church website. The church (with a membership of 3,000) is also known as 2PC. Both an email from 2nd Presbyterian obtained by *The Commercial Appeal* and a social media post from Dean Weaver, a Pittsburgh-based evangelical Presbyterian pastor, confirmed Russell died of complications from COVID-19. Weaver and Russell served together on the Revelation 7:9 Task Force, a group of evangelical Presbyterian pastors. In an email sent late Monday, Rev. George Robertson, Second Presbyterian's senior pastor, said Russell "took a sudden turn for the worse this

evening." Robertson wrote that Russell had loved singing the Psalms and that Russell's last words (spoken to him) were from Psalm 126: "Those who sow with tears and weeping will return with joyful song."

**Pastor describes final conversation with his friend.** In a video shared online Tuesday afternoon, Robertson expanded on that last conversation. "When I had my last conversation with him, he quoted to me Psalm 126 and then he asked me to read to him Psalm 98. And I want to try to imitate that conversation because you will appreciate how Tim would have interacted with me reading that Psalm—he had it memorized. He did not really need me to read it. He echoed, he highlighted key words. He festooned his own praises onto the psalm as I read it. I read, 'Sing to the Lord a joyful song, for He has done great things.'" Then Robertson recalled Russell's words: "'Great things! Great things He has done! Bless Him! Bless His name! Can't you hear him saying that?'" Robertson continued his reenactment of the last conversation. "For God the Lord is coming soon to judge the world He made. 'Come Lord Jesus! He'll judge the world with equity and righteousness displayed.'" Then he recalled Russell's response: "Equity! Equity! He'll judge with equity." Then he recounted a few more words from Russell: "'Oh dear Lord,' he said, 'Oh dear Father, have mercy on me and judge me with equity. And deliver me from my enemy.'"

With the reenactment of the conversation over, Robertson continued: "The Lord did deliver Timothy from that enemy and judged with equity. It's not the kind of deliverance we wanted. But it's what the Good Shepherd knew to be best." He told congregants to honor Russell's memory once normal services resume by saying "Amen!" and "That's the Jesus I know!" He also asked them to sing more of the Psalms: "And we will discover as we commit more songs to heart—through the Psalms—that we will find ourselves to be more courageous, as Tim was. He wasn't naturally courageous. He was made courageous by God's word, hidden deeply in his heart. . . . My brothers and sisters, I am very, very sorry. I am lost today without my chaplain. And I know you feel the same way. And I am praying for you, as I pray for me, that you'll know God as the God of all comfort and the Father of mercies." Pastor Robertson closed by telling congregants to pray for Russell's widow [Kathe] . . .

**Legacy remembered.** On Tuesday, a Facebook post from the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary said Russell's ministry "played a major role in the lives of many in Reformed Presbyterian circles and in the greater Kingdom of Christ." Russell was previously the president of the Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies, head of school at Lexington Christian Academy, and chaplain and director of financial aid at Geneva College.

## Reformation Translation Fellowship Report to 2021 RPCNA Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers in the RPCNA: With grateful hearts we recall the solid roots many men in the RPCNA have provided for the Reformation Translation Fellowship (RTF). Those faithful roots have provided strong support for the work that continues among Chinese-speaking people. It has been noted by many that the current persecution of Christians and others in China is more severe now than in any time since *the Cultural Revolution*. Among other things:

- The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) now requires all religious leaders to pledge to obey CCP ideology in pulpits before being allowed to practice.
- Worship services are to begin with the choir singing anthems of praise to the CCP.
- Children are forced to renounce their faith by signing CCP prepared documents.
- Teachers and medical staff are pressured to sign documents stating they have no religious faith.
- The Roman Catholic churches that retain the crucifix in their building are to have it flanked by pictures of Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping—an interesting irony in light of Luke 23:32-33.
- A social credit score, enforced in part by 20,000,000 facial recognition cameras, is increased by “good” deeds and decreased by bad deeds; those with low scores are blacklisted so they cannot use planes and trains, stay at hotels, receive loans, or be employed.
- A new translation of the Bible is being prepared; John 8 has been released concerning the woman caught in adultery. After the crowd is dispersed Jesus says to the woman: “*I too am a sinner. But if the law could only be executed by men without blemish, the law would be dead.*” He then proceeds to stone her!

Last summer we lost contact with the printer we used. As a result, we are not currently able to print books on the mainland. Books that we translate are available, however on our website, [rtf-usa.com](http://rtf-usa.com). In light of this turn of events, we are focusing on Chinese students that come to American universities by providing copies of RTF books (printed in Grand Rapids) for student ministries. Shipment #1 of 3,000 books has been sent to about 300 ministries and churches.

Young people in China now have a different outlook on life and education than did their forefathers. The older generations sought to excel in their studies in order to earn grades that would allow them to attend college and have better jobs. The current young people are seeking to get into higher education

in order to have questions answered about their world and life views because they are not being answered in their early years. Thus, the books RTF provides for campus ministries fill a critical need.

We continue to give thanks for your support and ask your prayer that an acceptable and secure printer will be found to reestablish RTF publishing in China.

## Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association

### Report of the Leadership Team to the 2021 RPCNA Synod

**Mission.** "The Reformed Presbyterian Home, guided by the Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association, is a charitable, nonprofit organization that provides quality care and a supportive living environment to older adults in a manner consistent with the affection honor and care that the Bible teaches us to give our parents."

Serving the residents of the Nursing unit, McKee Place Personal Care, Vista (independent apartments) and Upper Rooms (HUD Section 202 apartments for low income frail elderly) with dignity and providing quality care are key components of our mission. In keeping with our philosophy of care, our goal is to "provide an environment that will help each person we serve achieve his or her maximum level of physical, spiritual, mental and social well-being." In Nursing, we serve people who need short term rehabilitation while recovering from an injury, illness, or surgery as well as those who need long-term care. In McKee Place, Vista, and Upper Rooms we provide retirement living with additional care services as needed. We desire to see our mission carried forth in a manner that is pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ and in accordance with federal and state regulations.

The RP Home was able to serve nineteen members of the broader RP Church during 2020.

**Leadership.** The Management Services Agreement with Baptist Senior Services continues to benefit the Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association (RPWA) in many ways. That relationship includes the services of the Executive Director Cara Todhunter who has led us through so much particularly with the pandemic. Remarkably through all the struggles the RP Home has had very few residents and staff diagnosed with COVID-19 thanks to the efforts of Ms. Todhunter and her staff. The staff of the RP Home continually strive to improve our quality of care in all areas.

We are delighted that after years of effort we have a new RP Home website that includes opportunities to donate to both the RPWA and the Disabilities Ministry, contact information, an opportunity to receive newsletters, and importantly, a way to send greetings to residents. We have partnered with various outside vendors to provide psychiatry, counseling, and dental services on-site.

Capital improvements include, among other things, expansion of the HVAC system and replacement of the aged domestic water boiler. The dining experience for McKee Place residents has been greatly enhanced by the complete renovation of the personal care dining room as well as by a change to a more restaurant-like menu plan. We have installed new windows in the main building, paved the back parking lot, and replaced a retaining wall.

The next major undertaking is the much-needed renovation of the Chapel which is also used for most gatherings other than worship.

**COVID-19.** COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on the RP Home. Increased expenses included such things as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hazard pay, and testing supplies. Some grant money may be available, however the amount is unknown and timing is an issue. Decreased census had a major impact on the budget. Rooms that are ordinarily semi-private had to be converted to “private” for quarantine purposes. Positivity rates in nursing homes nationwide resulted in less hospital and doctor referrals, and it was certainly true for the RP Home. We are pleased to report a high vaccination rate of 98% among residents. The rate for staff is a disappointing 48% but continuing efforts are being taken to increase that number.

The Executive Director and Director of Finance, with assistance from Baptist personnel, have spent considerable time completing requests for and maintaining record-keeping relating to the federal CARES and Paycheck Protection Program. These funds certainly were a blessing, but the rate of forgiveness is uncertain.

A job description for a Director of Spiritual Care and Church Relations was recently approved by the Board of Directors. The need to fill this position is great but there are no funds currently available, so we are also exploring ways to fund the position.

Because of the need to quarantine or restrict group gatherings during the pandemic, we are thankful to be able to broadcast the North Hills RP Church's morning worship service on the RP Home's in-house television channel on Lord's Day mornings with a one-week delay.

**Board of Directors.** As of our recent 2021 Annual Association Meeting and April Board meeting, current Board of Directors are: Marilyn Roll, president; Louise Copeland, vice president; Patricia Boyle, recording secretary; Jennifer Willson, corresponding secretary; Bill Weir, treasurer; Sarah McChesney, assistant treasurer; Dr. Betsy Johns; Rev. Ralph Joseph; Barb Miller; Debby O'Neill; Karen Olsen; and Virginia Wheeler.

**Conclusion.** We remain deeply appreciative of the financial support that we receive from RPM&M, various congregations, and individuals, enabling us to carry out the mission originally assigned by the Synod of 1897 to provide a home for the elderly.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Cara D. Todhunter (Executive Director)*

*Marilyn J. Roll (President)*

*William J. Weir (Treasurer)*

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## Annual RPWA Disabilities Ministry Report

The committee has continued to meet via remote access since April 2020 due to COVID-19 and restrictions on gatherings. In an effort to increase donations and awareness of the Disabilities Ministry Committee, an advertisement has been placed in each bi-monthly edition of the *RP Witness* magazine throughout 2020 and will continue through 2021.

The committee planned to present three seminars at the 2021 RP International Conference (RPIC). We were also prepared to financially assist with conference registration for those with disabilities and to assist with the cost of the rental of scooters for those with mobility impairments. Due to cancellation of the 2021 RPIC, we will make new plans for the 2024 conference. Bill Weir and Martin Blocki made a presentation to nine seminary students at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS) on January 19, 2021, about ministry to individuals with disabilities; they will also be presenting to participants in the Theological Foundations for Youth (TFY) program during the summer of 2021.

The committee is working with Pastor Matt Filbert to update and expand the Disabilities Ministry page on the RP Home website. Using a new platform designed by Zoho One we will be able to easily share resources and contacts with individuals and congregations dealing with disability issues. Testimony articles are being submitted for publication in the *RP Witness* (magazine) written by individuals with personal experience living with a disability, such as parents, siblings, or caregivers. We continue to engage and cultivate representatives from each congregation to assist us in meeting the needs of those with disabilities in all congregations of the RPCNA.

Rich Johnston continues to lead a Friendship Bible Study group for special needs adults in Indianapolis, Indiana. We are encouraged to learn that the Reformed Presbyterian congregation church in Columbus, Indiana, is interested in starting a similar group.

A committee member has offered to sponsor a teen or young adult to attend Camp Joy. Camp Joy is managed by the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and provides a summer camp experience for teens and young adults with disabilities. We hope to learn more about organizing camps and activities for the disabled.

This statement from the RPCNA church testimony (1994 revision) provides an excellent summary of our mission: "All people, regardless of their mental or physical condition, are made in the image of God. Each person's life is a gift from God. We are not to evaluate individuals in terms of their mental and physical ability or appearance. The church should be careful to accept and cherish its handicapped, incorporating them into the life of the church. In evangelistic

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outreach the church should not overlook handicapped persons, but seek them out, minister to them, and pray for their conversion."

*Respectfully submitted, Debby O'Neill, Secretary*

## 2020 Report of the Pension Trustees to 2020 RPCNA Synod

**Executive Summary:** The Board spent much of the year considering self-funding the life insurance benefit and presenting to Synod an insured long-term disability plan. We have an agreement in principle with the Trustees to Synod to bring a proposal to the 2021 Synod. We are also planning on bringing an insured long-term disability plan to the 2021 Synod. The retirement plan is now with Clergy Advantage and AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company. The Board has been concerned with developing a mechanism for monitoring what are now individual retirement accounts. Most of the retirement accounts are with Clergy Advantage and AXA, but some participants have chosen to invest their funds elsewhere.

**Meetings of the Pension Trustees:** The Board of Pension Trustees has held two regular meetings since our last report to Synod. These meetings were held on September 13, 2019, and March 9, 2020. The September meeting was held at RPTS (Pittsburgh, PA) and the March meeting was held by teleconference.

**Officers:** The officers of the Board, elected at the fall meeting are as follows: David Merkel, Chairman, Peter Smith, Vice-Chm.; Matthew Van Vlack, Secretary; and James McFarland, Treasurer. In addition to the regular officers of the Board, the Board elected A. Wayne Duffield as Executive Secretary.

**How to contact us:** All correspondence should be mailed to the Executive Secretary of the Board, A. Wayne Duffield, P. O. Box 373, New Alexandria, PA 15670. Wayne may also be contacted by calling (724) 668-7506, by email at awd70@windstream.net or by fax at (724) 668-7252.

**Reporting:** The Board would again remind the clerks of presbyteries and/or clerks of ad interim commissions of the importance of informing the Secretary of the Pension Trustees of actions taken by presbyteries relative to licenses, ordinations, installations, and any other changes from active to inactive service. This information is needed for insurance and/or pension purposes.

**Contributions:** The Pension Trustees are recommending that employee contributions to our new preferred provider, Clergy Advantage, Inc., be set at \$4,500 for 2021 by having employers contribute a minimum contribution of \$1,125.00 per quarter, by check from the church checking account. Quarterly contributions should be made on March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31. It is noted that in 2019, many employers contributed more than the minimum contribution. More than the minimum was contributed to the accounts of most of the participants. All employers, including boards of the church, are encouraged to contribute over the minimum. Congregations and boards are reminded that it takes, on average, at least 10% of a pastor's direct compensation to provide for an adequate retirement. Participants are urged to

consider working out an arrangement with their employer whereby additional funds may be contributed to their retirement account.

**Assessments:** The 2019 assessment for the Pension Fund Current Account was set at 0.6% of non-designated receipts by the 2019 Synod and it is recommended that the percentage be 0.9% for 2021. It will be credited to the Current Account of the Board and used to fund the expenses as shown in the Treasurer's report.

**Administrative Changes:** Inasmuch as the work of the Board has significantly changed with the change to Clergy Advantage, the Board has decided to change its name to the Benefits Board. This change more accurately describes our work. We are no longer trustees of anything. A proposal to change our name to the Benefits Board and to change the Constitution of the Board accordingly will be presented to the 2021 Synod.

The Board is attempting to keep the cost of "*Professional Services*" to a minimum. All technical questions regarding the Retirement Plan with Clergy Advantage & AXA should be addressed to the Executive Secretary and should go through him for a response.

The Pension Trustees still want to be able to monitor our retirement program so as to be sure that teaching elders and certain other denominational employees retire with a pension. Since the transition to the new Clergy Advantage 403(b) Retirement Plan by Church and Clergy Alliance involves individual accounts, the Board no longer receives information regarding who is a participant and who is not. In order for the Board to monitor our retirement program, Pension Board will contribute \$250 a year to each active participant's account on condition that the participant agrees to share their year-end retirement statement with the Board. This will enable the Board to offer helpful advice to participants, should it be needed, and to advocate for them if their congregation is not contributing the required amount for their retirement account.

**New Developments:** The Board has been considering self-funding our life insurance program in an effort to reduce expenses. Nearly every year the cost of life insurance increases, but we think self-funding life insurance could reduce the cost. We have been discussing this with Synod's Board of Trustees and have an agreement in principle with the Trustees to bring it to Synod 2021 as a proposal. The Board has also been considering providing long-term disability insurance for pastors in conjunction with the Board of Trustees. Some pastors may already have their own coverage. We have set up a joint committee to work out the details. The proposal agreed to by the Trustees has them paying claims directly from the Endowment. In exchange, we would hand over the excess assets in the Pension Board's current account to the Endowment. We are planning on bringing an insured long-term disability proposal to the 2021 Synod.

**Benefits:** The 2007 Synod approved the recommendation of the Pension Trustees to establish a Pension Plan “B” Supplement Program. Step One of this program was completed in 2008 in which 38 participants (in some cases their spouses if the retiree has died) who have already retired under Plan “B” received a one-time supplement. Step Two is to supplement 39 pastors and denominational employees under Plan “B” who were age 50 or above in 2007. These supplementary payments began in 2008 and will continue until the participant retires from active service or has reached age 70. These supplements, ranging from \$400 to \$700, will total approximately \$4,300 for this year. The number of active pastors under this program decreases each year. There are only 8 pastors still receiving funds under this program. These supplements are added to the participant’s retirement funds.

The Board recently reviewed our policies with regard to benefits and adopted some new policies. Consult the *2018 Minutes of Synod*, pp. 193f, for a list of these policies. Also be aware that the form in which you receive income may affect your ability to take distributions as “housing allowance.” (See discussion of Section 107 of the I.R.C.).

The issue of ministerial housing allowance has recently been in the courts. In 2017 a federal judge in Wisconsin ruled that the tax exemption for ministerial housing is an unconstitutional establishment of religion. The ruling came in response to a challenge by the Freedom from Religion Foundation. This ruling was appealed to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. On March 15, 2019, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the clergy housing allowance is constitutional and does not violate the Establishment Clause. The Appeals Court, as reported by Clergy Advantage, ruled against all the arguments of the anti-religious group. Congress first enacted the Clergy Allowance tax legislation in 1923. It is therefore one of the oldest and most supported tax provisions in all of the Tax Code. All three branches of government have in recent years expressed strong support for the clergy housing allowance, but it could still be appealed.

**Canadian Pension Program:** In 2001, the Pension Plan Document was amended, effective as of October 1, 2001, to exclude non-resident aliens with no U.S. source income from an employer. This means that a Canadian citizen who is a pastor of a congregation in Canada is not eligible to be a participant in the pension plan with Clergy Advantage. At the same time, the Board committed itself to the task of working with the congregations in Canada to replace the benefits provided by our former Plan “B” with similar or comparable tax favored retirement benefits in Canada and similar or comparable life insurance. One of the problems that we have encountered is that there are certain financial requirements in Canada that you have to meet to set up a pension program. At

this point we do not have enough congregations and adequate pension funds in Canada to establish our own pension program for our pastors. It would seem that the best solution, at least for now, is for pastors and/or congregations to set up and contribute to a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP). Canadian churches with no pastor in Plan B are exempt from paying the pension portion of the annual assessment of Synod.

**Health Insurance:** Health Insurance is also part of the work that Synod has assigned to the Board of Pension Trustees. Due to a number of factors beyond the control of the Board, there is no longer a denominational-wide health insurance program. Congregations and presbyteries are encouraged to investigate local health care options. While denominational employees previously had a group plan, they also now have to acquire their own health insurance. The respective boards are providing additional compensation to help employees pay for their health insurance. The Affordable Care Act has made major changes in what health care coverage is now available. The Trump Administration has altered the Affordable Care Act and more changes may be forth coming. The Board continues to be concerned about health insurance and continues to look at the various options that are available.

Another option is Health Savings Accounts or HSAs. HSAs have two parts. The first part is a high deductible health insurance policy that provides significant benefits, including coverage of large hospital bills, but has statutorily required high deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles, co-payments, and other amounts but not premiums). A HSA is a tax-exempt medical savings account you can contribute to and draw money from tax free. HSAs pair with high deductible plans (HDHP) only. The Affordable Care Act usually works well with HSAs. A Health Savings Account is recommended if your plan has an annual deductible of more than \$1,350 for individual coverage or \$2,700 for family coverage. A high deductible plan paired with an HSA can provide the best overall value of any health insurance option. You can get a Health Savings Account from most banks. For 2020 annual out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles, copayments, and other amounts, but not premiums) cannot exceed \$8,150 for individual coverage and \$16,300 for family coverage. The out-of-pocket expenses for 2020 cannot exceed \$8,150 for individual coverage and \$16,300 for family coverage. Once you reach your plans out-of-pocket maximum your insurer covers 100% of your costs. Each year you can contribute dollars tax free to your HSA up to a certain limit. The annual contribution limit for 2020 for your HSA is \$3,550 for an individual and \$7,100 for a family. HSA holders 55 and older can contribute an extra \$1,000 tax deductible dollars to their HSA, \$4,550 for an individual and \$8,100 for a family. HSA contributions that exceed the applicable limit (or "excess contributions")

are not deductible and are subject to a 6% excise tax. This 6% excise tax can be avoided if the excess contribution is returned to you by not later than April 15 of the year immediately following the year in which an excess contribution is made. If the excess contribution is not returned to you on or before the applicable April 15 deadline, the 6% excise tax is cumulative and continues into future years until corrected. An excess contribution carried over to a future year will be reduced by the difference between the limit for the future year and the amount actually contributed for the future year. If you have a health insurance policy with a high deductible, it may already be HSA qualified. You can open an account with an insurance company or bank that offers health savings accounts or with an HSA administrator. Further information is available on the web. Congregations, boards, presbyteries, and pastors are encouraged to investigate this option.

**Social Security:** It has come to the attention of the Pension Trustees that a number of teaching elders have opted out of Social Security. The IRS only allows ministers with moral objections to civil government collective security plans to withdraw from Social Security and Medicare. If ministers are doing this only for their personal convenience and enrichment, they are breaking the law. We cannot monitor this, so we encourage all ministers to do what they think is right before God. It should be clearly understood that the pension plan was not designed to provide an adequate retirement income without the help of Social Security. Furthermore, Social Security also provides certain survivor benefits for a young family. Those who have opted out of Social Security will need to purchase adequate insurance coverage to provide benefits for their family that they will not receive from Social Security, such as Medicare. It should be understood that there are important advantages to being eligible for Medicare with respect to qualifying for other programs. While the Pension Board recognizes that it is a family matter for individual pastors to decide for themselves, we think that opting out of Social Security is an unwise financial course of action.

**Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code:** Section 107 of the I.R.C., regarding "parsonage allowance," permits "ministers of the gospel" to exclude (1) the rental value of a home furnished as part of compensation or (2) the rental allowances paid as part of the minister's compensation, to the extent used by the minister to rent or provide a home, and to the extent such allowance does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus cost of utilities. Treasury Regs. §1.107-1(c) provide that a rental allowance must be included in the minister's gross income in the taxable year it is received, to the extent such allowance is not used by him during such taxable year for rent or to otherwise provide a home. So the

amount of a parsonage allowance that is excludable from gross income is the least of:

1. the amount actually used to provide a home;
2. the amount officially designated as a housing allowance; or
3. the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and a garage, plus cost of utilities.

See the IRS Minister Audit Technique Guide at: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Minister-Audit-Technique-Guide>. The fair rental value of a home that has been paid for in previous years may not be included in a parsonage allowance. See *Swaggart v. Commissioner*, T.C. Memo 1984-409.

Distributions from the Pension Plan may be excluded from the income of a retired minister under Section 107 of the I.R.C. if the distribution is designated as a housing allowance by the employing church, or in the case of denominational plan, the national governing body of the church, but only to the extent the Pension Plan distribution is used by a retired minister to rent or provide a home (Rev. Rul. 75-22). In our case the retiree housing allowance resolution is adopted each year by the Synod at its annual meeting. However, if the retired minister elects a lump sum payment, the amount of the lump sum payment that will be eligible for exclusion as a housing allowance will be limited to the amount used to rent or provide a home, not to exceed the fair rental value of the home for only the year in which the lump sum payment is received. Therefore it may be to the advantage of a retired minister to select an annuity option instead of a lump sum payment.

The Pension Trustees recommended and the 2005 Synod adopted two resolutions prepared by Mr. Thomas Graves, our legal counsel at that time, relative to the parsonage allowance exclusion. The resolutions are as follows:

Resolution 1: "Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Synod designates 100% of the pension received by ordained elders under the Plan as eligible for exclusion from income under I.R.C. 107 as a maximum rental allowance paid as compensation for past services, to the extent such allowance is actually used to rent or provide a home and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities"(2005 Minutes of Synod, p. 56).

Resolution 2: " That the Synod recommends to congregations, presbyteries, and boards of the church that, for teaching elders who are required to file income taxes to the Internal Revenue Service of the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury & who are participants in the Plan, up to 60%



of their compensation be designated as eligible for the maximum exclusion from income under I.R.C. 107 as a rental allowance paid as compensation for services, to the extent such allowance is actually used to rent or provide a home and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities”(2005 Minutes of Synod, p. 56).

It should be understood by all interested parties that the terms “ministers of the gospel”, “ordained elders” and “teaching elders” are all equivalent terms referring to individuals who are (or were, prior to retirement) recognized as ministers or religious leaders of their congregations and who perform (or performed, prior to retirement) the types of services set forth in Treasury Regulation section 1.1402(c)-5(b)(2), which, in this regulation, are described in part as “the ministration of sacerdotal functions and the conduct of religious worship and the control, conduct and maintenance of religious organizations (including religious boards, societies and other integral agencies of such organizations), under the authority of a religious body constituting a church or church denomination.”

**Severance Pay Program:** Presbyteries and ad interim commissions are reminded that it is the policy of the Pension Board to pay an allowance toward a three- (3) month severance compensation for teaching elders who are participants in the Pension Plan of Synod. Certain eligibility requirements must be met for teaching elders to qualify for this program. Provided that one does qualify, as determined by the Pension Trustees, funding for this program should be by congregation, presbytery, and the Pension Trustees in that order. The Pension Trustees will only be responsible for a maximum of one-third of the total of the three month severance pay package. Please see the *1991 Minutes of Synod*, pp. 23-25, for the details of this program.

**Moving Allowance Program:** The Pension Trustees have been authorized to pay an allowance toward the Once-In-A-Lifetime moving allowance, as specified in the statement of this program. The amount that will be paid will be an allowance equal to 50% of the moving expenses, up to a maximum pay out of \$2,000. Please see the *1991 Minutes of Synod*, pp. 25-27 and the *1993 Minutes of Synod*, p. 58, for the details of this program.

**Investments:** For questions regarding investments with Clergy Advantage and AXA you may contact our treasurer James McFarland at (412) 731-1177 or William Brandt, AXA Advisors, LLC. at (970) 776-1371. The Customer Service Representatives of AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company may be contacted at (800) 628-6673. There are 403(b) contribution limits. Find IRS guidance at: <https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/plan-participant-employee/retirement-topics-403b-contribution-limits>.

**Pension Plan Information:** There is considerable info regarding the Church & Clergy Alliance Retirement Program online at [www.Churchandclergyalliance.org](http://www.Churchandclergyalliance.org).

**Prayer Requests:** Thank God for those have been called to serve as teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons. Thank God for this branch of His church. Pray for those who minister the Word of God every week in a post-Christian and hostile culture. Pray for spiritual revival and the growth of the church. Pray that we all may be faithful to the Lord.

**Nominations:** The terms of Christopher Huggins and Matthew Van Vlack were to expire at our fall meeting. Given the fact that there is no 2020 meeting of Synod, nominations are postponed until the Synod of 2021. The Board will be presenting a new list of nominees to the 2021 Synod. In the meantime, Christopher Huggins and Matthew Van Vlack will continue to serve on the Board for another year.

**Finances:**

1. That Synod set the minimum contribution rate of \$4,500 for 2021 by each employer for a participant in the Retirement Plan, but this is now postponed until the 2021 meeting of Synod and would apply to 2022.

2. That Synod set the 2020 assessment for current pension plan funding at 0.9% of non-designated receipts as of December, 31, 2020 as reported to the stated clerk. This too will be considered at the 2021 Synod and would not apply until 2022.

**Recommendations:** Our recommendations will be coming before the 2021 Synod.

*Respectfully:*

*David Merkel (Chairman)*

*Christopher Huggins*

*Matthew Van Vlack*

*James McFarland (Treasurer)*

*Joel Hart*

*Peter Smith*

*A. Wayne Duffield (Exec. Sect.)*

## 2020 Report of Synod's Special Committee on Christ's Mediatorial Kingship

Dear Fathers and Brethren:

In addition to mandating the publication of our voter's guide, last year's Synod provided us with some very helpful feedback. As you may recall, many felt that it would be wisest for us to refocus our energies upon the task of defining and clarifying the Scriptural doctrine of Christ's mediatorial kingship as opposed to its various practical applications. Not a few even suggested (on the floor as well as privately) that we labor to present a substantial exegetical and theological treatment of this doctrine to the 2020 Synod. Others raised the familiar question as to when our mysterious "80-page historical-theology paper" would finally be released. All in all, we were extremely thankful for the wealth of practical insight which so many of these comments provided for our Committee.

After several months of prayerfully weighing Synod's feedback and brainstorming our options, we decided that the best path forward would be to complete our historical-theology paper, *Christ's Mediatorial Kingship: A Developing Doctrine*, and submit it to the 2020 Synod for feedback. It is our hope that this paper will not only help to define and clarify our Scriptural position as Reformed Presbyterians, but that it will also serve to encapsulate our findings (research and analysis) as a Committee since our appointment in 2014. It features a selective historical-theological survey of the confessional doctrine of Christ's mediatorial kingship from the *Scots Confession of Faith* (1560) to the current *RPCNA Testimony* (1980), followed by three appendices. Appendix Two provides "A Historical Outline and Summary of the RPCNA Synod's Gradual Abandonment of Principled Political Dissent" (1958-1970). Granted, this is not primarily an exegetical paper. However, we believe that it does outline the clear Biblical basis for our position in a manner that should satisfy the court.

Our rationale for submitting this report so early in the year is that we desire to provide you with as much time as possible to consider our paper. To be clear, we are **not** asking the Synod to adopt or approve this paper. All we ask is that you read it, think about it, and tell us what you think about it. Your feedback is welcome before, during, and after the 2020 Synod, but we will especially look forward to hearing from you at the meeting itself.

Ultimately, our Committee's objective is very simple: We would like to compose a small booklet summarizing the doctrine of Christ's mediatorial kingship (as taught in our standards and laid out in our paper) to be approved by the 2021 Synod for use in local congregational ministry. By presenting this paper so far in advance of the 2020 Synod, we hope that we will put the Synod in an optimal position either to affirm our vision (perhaps with constructive criti-

cisms and suggestions) or simply to dissolve our Committee.

The Committee recommends that you, the reader, take note our paper (***Christ's Mediatorial Kingship, a Developing Doctrine***) may be accessed on-line via [www.reformed.com/cmkn](http://www.reformed.com/cmkn).

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Shawn Anderson*

*Brad Johnston*

*Adam Kuehner*

*Bruce Backensto (chairman)*

*Mark Koller*

*Scott Wilkinson*

## 2020 Report of the Committee on Finance

### Summary

The purpose of Synod's Committee on Finance ("Finance Committee") is threefold:

- The Finance Committee seeks to balance the needs of the RPCNA, considering the individual fundraising of boards and agencies that far outstrips the fundraising of RPM&M. To accomplish this task, the Committee proposes an allocation of Synod's available funds (from assessments, RPM&M contributions, and other sources) to the various boards, agencies, institutions, and missions of the RPCNA.
- The Finance Committee seeks to promote increased giving to RPM&M, complementing the efforts of the Stewardship Committee of Synod's Trustees in this regard. God is using the RPCNA to carry out many great ministries in His Kingdom. Congregations gain from participation in these works, whether by praying, volunteering time, or giving. An effective means of expanding our overall ministry as a denomination is for each person at Synod to take the message home and promote it personally in their congregations.
- The Finance Committee seeks to provide helpful guidelines (Targets of Honor) to congregations within the RPCNA as to what percentage of a congregation's ordinary offerings should be contributed to both RPM&M and the various boards, agencies, institutions, and missions of the RPCNA.

In addition to these three key areas, the Finance Committee also addresses any other financial related requests that come before Synod, providing suggested courses of action as Synod determines how best to respond.

As the Finance Committee makes recommendations regarding the stewardship of Synod's available funds, it seeks to discern the "will of Synod" to the best of its ability. To help in this regard, the Finance Committee is comprised of (1) members by position (*ex-officio*), (2) members elected by Synod, and (3) members appointed by each Presbytery.

### Finance Committee's 2020 Remit

In canceling the 2020 meeting of Synod, the Business of Synod Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee, put forth the following guidance "that the 2020 Budget, set by Synod 2019, remain in effect until a new budget can be approved by Synod 2021. In light of this directive, Synod Assessments, budgeted Synod operational expenditures, and RPM&M allocations will remain in place for 2021 at the levels approved by Synod 2019.

This report is intended to provide an informational update on calendar year 2019 financial activities, reminders of finance policies. The Finance Committee

traditionally concludes its report with a list of recommendations for Synod to consider for adoption. This year, due to the cancellation of Synod 2020, we instead reiterate the financial allocations and policies adopted by Synod 2019, that will be in effect for 2021.

### **Report Outline**

The remainder of this report is divided into four sections: (1) summary of the financial results of the calendar year ended December 31, 2019; (2) discussion of various considerations affecting 2020 and subsequent years; (3) reminders regarding Synod's financial policies; and (4) reiteration of 2021 funding allocations based on Synod 2019 action.

The Finance Committee is thankful for each of you and your congregation's prayer and support for the missions and ministries of the RPCNA. Congregational leadership sharing the vision of the denomination's ministry engages members and motivates them to partner with prayer and support. We ask that you continue to lead your congregations in this regard, praying that God will continue to use the RPCNA to build the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Lord.

### **2019 Summary**

As we have reviewed the work that the Lord is doing through the RPCNA, we continue to be thankful for His provision. The 2018 receipts for RPM&M totaled \$629K, an increase of \$78K from 2017, and \$184k over the 2019 goal of \$445k. This is a record level of RPM&M giving, and we are very thankful for the faithful support of the denomination. Synod should note that individuals contributed \$159,000 to RPM&M; the majority comprised of one-time gifts. Synod should also note that 25 congregations did not contribute to RPM&M this year (unchanged from 2018). No presbytery had contributions to RPM&M from all of its congregations in 2019. This year was the twelfth year of the "Step-Up" plan, with \$55k allocated using the step-up percentages. The remaining surplus of \$129,248 will be allocated by Synod 2021, with guidance from the Finance Committee.

Please take the time to review the "Synod Operations Fund" financial report. The line items in the Synod Operations Fund fall into four sub-headings: (1) the "Judicial" aspect of the Synod's work; (2) the "Fraternal/Inter-Church Relations" section; (3) the "Administrative" costs needed to support Synod's programs; (4) a "Ministries" section. The first three sections detailed in the financial report, are funded by Synod's assessments. The committees designated as "Ministry" Committees receive their funding from a combination of Synod's assessment and RPM&M allocation.

### **Current and Future Considerations**

The Finance Committee sincerely thanks the congregations and donors to RPM&M, and the denomination's boards and agencies. We appreciate your

generosity and your vision for and commitment to the church. Over the past several years, giving to RPM&M has improved (e.g., 2006 RPM&M giving was \$276k). And total giving to boards and agencies has increased as well. Some boards and agencies separately raise a portion of their funds directly; direct giving to the boards and agencies of the church is over two times what RPM&M receives. Whether it comes from RPM&M directly, or through congregations and Reformed Presbyterians individually, it is the church funding these works. RPM&M exists to support all causes of the RPCNA but is especially important to those that are less visible in the ministry of the denomination.

Several of our boards and agencies have exciting new prospects, which in turn, require the investment of financial resources. We understand that maintaining funding at established levels will require Boards and Committees to be judicious in their use of available resources. We are thankful for the cooperative spirit exhibited in this unusual year.

This one-year delay in funding allocations puts an increased emphasis on next year's budgetary considerations. We ask that boards and agencies of the church who receive money from RPM&M include estimated totals of direct giving from Reformed Presbyterian congregations and members in their annual requests for funding to the Finance Committee. Allocations from RPM&M tend to be proportionately greater to boards and agencies that do not have alternative funding sources. The Finance Committee emphasizes the cooperative nature of funding via RPM&M against the inherent competition that results from separate fundraising. We realize that many congregations also donate directly to Boards and Agencies. However, our position is that, as Presbyterians, congregational support should primarily be directed through the Synod-appointed channel, which is Reformed Presbyterian Missions & Ministries, handled through the denominational treasurer's office. To that end, we continue to urge congregations to fund RPM&M directly, allowing Synod to allocate denominational resources.

The 2011 and 2012 Synods adopted the voluntary Targets of Honor formula as a recommended guideline for congregational RPM&M contributions. The formula is designed to produce roughly a tithe on non-designated receipts of the congregations of the RPCNA. We again recommend that congregations give 5% of the first \$75,000 of non-designated receipts, 10% of the next \$125,000 of non-designated receipts, and 14% of non-designated receipts over \$200,000 to missions and ministries inside the RPCNA (the denominational assessment is included for purposes of the Target of Honor formula).

The Targets of Honor guidelines encourage congregations to prioritize funding of the missions and ministries of the RPCNA. Furthermore, we want to thank the congregations that give more than the levels suggested by the Targets of Honor guideline. For these congregations, we ask that you please

don't reduce your generosity. The Targets of Honor guidelines are designed as an aid to congregational budgeting but are not meant to restrain generosity.

Synod assessments for 2021 will be 2.2% of prior year non-designated receipts for congregations within the United States. Of the total assessment rate, 1.6% is allocated to Synod Operations, and 0.6% is allocated to the Pension Fund. The assessment rate for our Canadian congregations, which are exempted from the Pension fund assessment, will be 1.6% of prior year non-designated receipts.

For 2021, allocations from the Synod Operations fund will remain unchanged from 2020 levels as follows:

| 2021 Allocation from Synod Operations<br>(Based on 2020 Approved levels) |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Board/Committee                                                          | 2021 Allocation |
| Church History Committee                                                 | \$7,000         |
| Graduate Study Committee                                                 | \$40,000        |
| Vital Churches Committee                                                 | \$22,500        |
| Youth Ministries Committee                                               | \$12,000        |
| RP Global Alliance                                                       | \$10,000        |

According to Synod-approved policy, one-half of unrestricted, undesignated gifts to the denomination, to the extent they occur, will be added to the funds functioning as the endowment for the E&P Board, with the remaining half added to the unrestricted, undesignated fund balance.

We are very thankful for the income from the Cecil J.S. MacLaughlin Trust. Allocations from trust proceeds are allocated at \$171,000 for 2020 and 2021. Any available proceeds exceeding this amount will be allocated by Synod 2021. We continue to follow the recommendation of Synod's Trustees in 2008, designating that Geneva College receives approximately 50% of the MacLaughlin Trust income, thus \$85,500 scheduled in 2020 and 2021.

The "base" RPM&M funding goal for 2021 is \$475,000 (maintained at the 2020 level). Due to the generosity of the denomination, giving in 2019 exceeded this level. Even with the present economic and financial uncertainties, we are cautiously optimistic that the 2021 goal is attainable. If contributions exceed the \$475,00 goal, a "step-up" plan is in place, as defined below, to allocate contributions up to \$525,000. Any contributions in excess of \$525,000 will be allocated by Synod 2021.

We continue to stress the importance of each congregation contributing to RPM&M to ensure our denominational ministry opportunities are adequately funded. We are thankful to God and to our members and congregations that



RPM&M goals have been exceeded in most recent years. Even amid uncertain economic times, please challenge your congregations to give generously to RPM&M.

### **Policy Reminders**

1. Committees that spend over \$10,000 per year must submit a budget to the Finance Committee by April 15 of each year for incorporation into Synod's Operations budget. Committees must pay careful attention to the level of funds approved for their use by Synod. Prompt submission of expenses and communication and coordination with the Treasurer's office is essential; deficit spending is not permitted.
2. Each person asking reimbursement from Synod for travel must make every effort to minimize travel costs. The largest category of Synod expenses after salaries is travel.
3. For Synod travel, use the allowable IRS mileage rate in effect at the date of travel. When in doubt, check with the Trustees Office or online at [www.IRS.gov](http://www.IRS.gov).
4. To better formulate recommendations for Synod in 2021, please submit all requests for Unrestricted Undesignated Funds to the Trustees of Synod's office by April 15, 2021.
5. Newly established congregations can request a two-year waiver from the annual Synod assessment (e.g., a congregation formed during 2020 could request a waiver for the 2021 assessment based on 2020 receipts and the 2022 assessment based on 2021 receipts). This waiver request should be submitted to the Stated Clerk/Denominational Treasurer.

### **Financial Provisions in Place for 2021**

1. Synod's assessment for 2020 will be set at 2.2%, based on non-designated receipts in 2019, as reported to the Stated Clerk, with 1.6% for Synod's Operations Fund and 0.6% for the Pension Fund Current Account (for Canadian congregations, assessment is 1.6%).
2. The RPM&M funding goal for 2021 is set at \$475,000.
3. Financial allocations for 2021 are illustrated by the table below. These allocations include \$171,000 from the 2021 income of the Cecil J.S. MacLaughlin Trust (Unrestricted Undesignated Funds), \$0 from the remaining Unrestricted Undesignated Funds, and up to \$475,000 in contributions to RPM&M in 2021.

| 2021 RPM&M, MacLaughlin, & Assessments Requests & Associated Grants |                |                |                        |                |                     |                |                | RPM&M             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Agency                                                              | 2021 RPM&M     |                | 2021 MacLaughlin Trust |                | Assessment Estimate | 2021 Total     |                | Step Up To \$525K |
|                                                                     | Request        | Grant          | Request                | Grant          |                     | Request        | Grant          |                   |
| Synod Ops.                                                          |                |                |                        |                | 211,000             | 203,200        | 203,200        |                   |
| Pension                                                             |                |                |                        |                | 73,000              | 63,600         | 63,600         |                   |
| E&P                                                                 | 102,800        | 17,300         |                        | 85,500         |                     | 102,800        | 102,800        | 5.0%              |
| EAC                                                                 | 40,000         | 33,000         |                        |                |                     | 40,000         | 33,000         | 5.0%              |
| CASA                                                                | 30,000         | 30,000         |                        |                |                     | 30,000         | 30,000         | 5.0%              |
| HMB                                                                 | 70,000         | 70,000         |                        |                |                     | 70,000         | 70,000         | 25.0%             |
| RPGM                                                                | 78,000         | 77,700         |                        |                |                     | 78,000         | 77,700         | 25.0%             |
| V.C. Grants                                                         | 23,500         | 22,000         |                        |                |                     | 23,500         | 22,000         | 5.0%              |
| RPTS                                                                | 100,000        | 82,000         |                        |                |                     | 100,000        | 82,000         | 10.0%             |
| Geneva                                                              | 50,000         | 48,000         | 85,500                 | 85,500         |                     | 135,500        | 133,500        | 10.0%             |
| RPWA                                                                | 95,000         | 95,000         |                        |                |                     | 95,000         | 95,000         | 10.0%             |
| <b>Total Budget</b>                                                 | <b>589,300</b> | <b>475,000</b> | <b>85,500</b>          | <b>171,000</b> | <b>284,000</b>      | <b>941,600</b> | <b>912,800</b> | <b>100.00%</b>    |

*Note: Prior year requests are used in instances where updated requests were not received due to the cancellation of Synod 2020*

4. RPM&M contributions over \$475,000, up to \$525,000, will be distributed according to step-up percentages and amounts shown in the right-hand column of the table above. Any RPM&M contributions that exceed \$525,000 will be held for strategic allocation by Synod.
5. That 50% of all Unrestricted Undesignated bequests received in 2021 will be deposited in the E&P endowment fund.
6. The minimum contribution for the employer of each participant in the Pension Plan is \$4,400 for 2021. Congregations should remember that this is a minimum; you are free and encouraged to contribute more.
7. Following the guidance provided by the Business of Synod Committee, no new members will be nominated or elected in 2020. Instead, the term date of each of the three members elected by Synod will be extended by one year.

*Respectfully submitted, Synod's Committee on Finance*

**Members Appointed by Presbyteries**

*Alleghenies: Guy Curran*

*Atlantic: Robert Allmond*

*Great Lakes/Gulf: Jason O'Neill (Chairman)*

*Midwest: Mike McDaniel*

*Pacific Coast: Paul Hemphill*

*St. Lawrence: Matthew Sloots*

**Members by Position (ex-officio voting)**

*Chairman, Business of Synod Committee: Joel Wood*

*President, Trustees of Synod: Marlin Klingensmith*

*Denominational Treasurer: Jim McFarland*

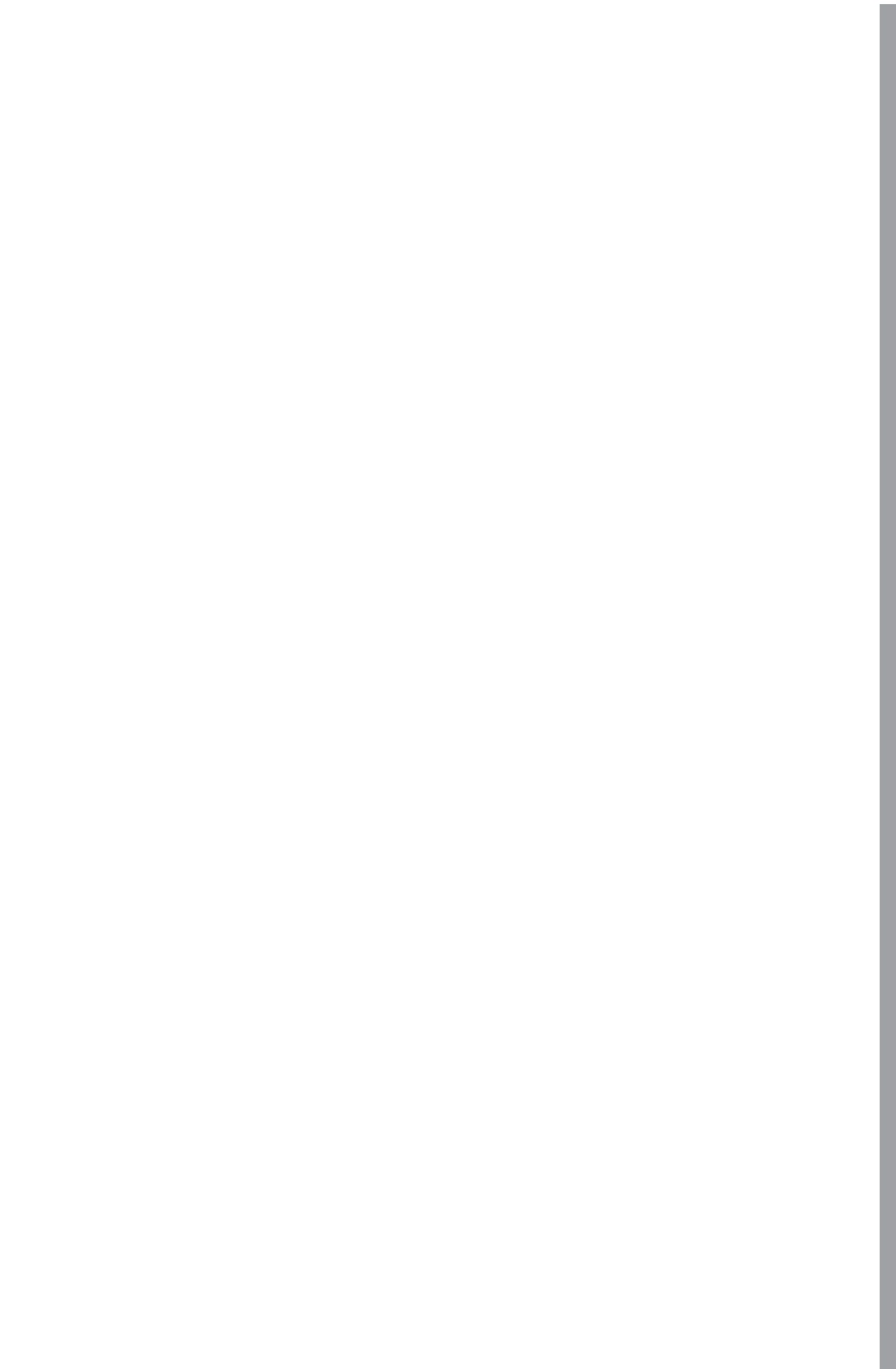
*Consultative member as Controller: Vida Brown*

***Members Elected by Synod***

*Barry VanHorn (2nd term—2023)*

*David Tweed (2nd term—2022)*

*Ray Morton (2nd term—2021)*



# DIRECTORY



**DIRECTORY OF THE  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

**INSTITUTIONS**

**Geneva College**

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President: Calvin Troup, Ph.D.      Phone: 800-847-8255  
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Email: [rptrustees@aol.com](mailto:rptrustees@aol.com)  
Denominational Controller: Vida Brown, (address and phones as above)  
Email: [rpcnacontroller@gmail.com](mailto:rpcnacontroller@gmail.com)

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Executive Director: Arthur Thompson

3775 Rooks Road

Atchison, KS 66002-4111

Email: RTFDirector@gmail.com

## **Woman's Association**

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(See Reformed Presbyterian Home, above.)

### **Disabilities Ministry**

Contact: Debby O'Neill

7732 SW Huntoon St.

Topeka, KS 66615

Phone: 785-608-7072

Email: oneill.debby@gmail.com

### **Upper Rooms, Inc. / Upper Rooms Vista:**

2334 Perrysville Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Phone: 412-321-4139

Email: ctodhunter@rphome.org

## **OFFICERS OF SYNOD**

**Moderator:** Pastor R. Bruce Parnell

1011 South Duncan

Stillwater, OK 74074

Phone: 405-714-1033

Email: pastor@stillwaterrpc.org

**Clerk:** Pastor John M. McFarland

2312 Harvard Road

Lawrence, KS 66049

c/o Christ Covenant Church

Cell: 785-766-7796

Email: JMMLawrence@aol.com

**Assistant Clerk:** Pastor Brian Wright

510 Broadway Ave.

Sterling, KS 67579

Phone: 785-409-5839

E: pastorbrian@sterlingchurch.org

**Treasurer:** James K. McFarland

7408 Penn Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Phone: 412-731-1177

Email: rptrustees@aol.com

## **BOARDS OF SYNOD**

### **Benefits Board (formerly Pension Trustees) (3-year terms)**

Members

Term Expires

Joel Hart<sup>t</sup>, Seth Wing

2022

Chris Huggins<sup>t</sup>, Jacob Long

2023

Jonathan Morton, Peter Smith<sup>t</sup>

2024

James McFarland<sup>t</sup>, *treasurer*

**Secretary:** A. Wayne Duffield

PO Box 373

New Alexandria, PA 15670

Phone: 724-668-7506

Cell: 724-875-1494



**EA Commission (6-year terms)**

For commissioner names and classes, contact the Clerk of Synod.

**Board of Education and Publication (4-year terms)**

| Members                                                                            | Term Expires |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Robert Bibby <sup>t</sup> , Betty Burger, Joseph Friedly <sup>t</sup> (vice-pres.) |              |
| Eileen Bechtold, Kyle Borg <sup>t</sup> (president), Matt Filbert <sup>t</sup>     | 2023         |
| Erin Bartel                                                                        | 2024         |
| Linda Parker                                                                       | 2025         |

**Board of Corporators of Geneva College (4-year terms)**

| Members                                                                                                                          | Term Expires |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Bruce Backensto <sup>t</sup> (at large); Steve McMahan <sup>r</sup><br>(at large); James Tweed <sup>r</sup> (at large)           | 2022         |
| Ken de Jong <sup>r</sup> (at large), Paul Hemphill <sup>r</sup> (Pacific Coast),<br>Phil Pockras <sup>t</sup> (Great Lakes/Gulf) | 2023         |
| Matt Filbert <sup>t</sup> (at large), David Schaefer <sup>r</sup> (Alleghenies)<br>Bonnie Weir (Atlantic)                        | 2024         |
| Chris Huggins <sup>r</sup> (St. Lawrence), Shana Milroy (Midwest)<br>Scott Reynolds (at large)                                   | 2025         |

**Chairman:** Steve McMahan, [Sheryl]

1807 Pogue Road

Clay Center, KS, 67432

Phone: 785-632-274

Email: smcmahan@kansas.net

**Board of Trustees of Geneva College (4-year terms)**

Trustees Emeriti: Wendell F. McBurney, Ph.D.; Kenneth G. Smith, D.D.

| <i>Members of the RP Church</i>                                                | Term Expires |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Steve McMahan <sup>r</sup> ; David Schaefer <sup>r</sup> , Bonnie Weir         | 2022         |
| Scott Reynolds, Mark Sampson <sup>r</sup> , Joel Silverman                     | 2023         |
| HP McCracken <sup>t</sup> , Shana Milroy                                       | 2024         |
| Ken de Jong <sup>r</sup> , John Edgar <sup>t</sup> , Luke O'Neill <sup>r</sup> | 2025         |
| <b>Members at large</b>                                                        |              |
| Kathy Gardner, Ethan Wingfield                                                 | 2022         |
| David Shedd                                                                    | 2023         |
| Bill Kriner, Ray Lipps, Dale Weaver                                            | 2024         |
| Greg Beechaum, Don Kirkwood                                                    | 2025         |

**Chairman:** Joel Silverman

t denotes teaching elder

r denotes ruling elder

### **Board of RP Global Missions (6-year terms)**

| Members                                                | Term Expires |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| James Faris <sup>t</sup> (president), Marianne Baczkur | 2022         |
| Dean Filson <sup>r</sup>                               | 2023         |
| Kelly Moore <sup>t</sup>                               | 2024         |
| Greg Moberg <sup>r</sup> , Elizabeth Noell             | 2025         |
| Titus Martin <sup>t</sup>                              | 2026         |
| Joseph Rizzo <sup>r</sup>                              | 2027         |
| James McFarland <sup>r</sup> ( <i>ex officio</i> )     |              |

**Executive Director:** Heather Huizing

Email: HeatherHuizing@hotmail.com

### **Board of Home Missions (3-year terms)**

| Members                                                                                                                                    | Term Expires |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| John Edgar <sup>t</sup> (Atlantic); Rom Prakashpalan <sup>t</sup> (MWP);<br>Vicki Smith (at large)                                         | 2022         |
| Doug Chamberlain <sup>t</sup> (St. Lawrence); Patrick McNeely <sup>t</sup><br>(Pacific Coast); Brian Panichelle <sup>r</sup> (Alleghenies) | 2023         |
| Jason Camery <sup>t</sup> (Great Lakes/Gulf )                                                                                              | 2024         |
| James McFarland <sup>r</sup> ( <i>ex officio</i> )                                                                                         |              |

**President:** Romesh Prakashpalan

E: romeshprakash@hotmail.com Phone: 805-404-3547

### **Board of Trustees of Synod (3-year terms)**

| Members                                                                            | Term Expires |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Larry Gladfelter, Bill Roberts <sup>t</sup> (president), David Robson <sup>r</sup> | 2022         |
| Cheryl Hemphill, David McCune <sup>r</sup> , James McFarland <sup>r</sup>          | 2023         |
| Douglas Comin <sup>t</sup> , Gayle Copeland, Bob Sabolich                          | 2024         |

**Secretary-Treasurer:** James K. McFarland

7408 Penn Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Email: rptrustees@aol.com

**Board of Trustees of the Theological Seminary (6-year terms)**

| Members                                                         | Term Expires |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Rutledge Etheridge <sup>t</sup> , Richard Holdeman <sup>t</sup> | 2022         |
| Chris Villi <sup>r</sup> , David Weir <sup>r</sup>              | 2023         |
| Wade Mann <sup>t</sup> , Brad Stewart <sup>t</sup>              | 2024         |
| David Ashleigh <sup>r</sup> , Alan Noell <sup>r</sup>           | 2025         |
| Robert Bibby <sup>r</sup> , Aaron Goerner <sup>t</sup>          | 2026         |
| Joseph Friedly <sup>t</sup> , Brian Wright <sup>t</sup>         | 2027         |

**Chairman:** Alan Noell

Phone: 405-377-0634

Email: avnoell@gmail.com

**PERMANENT COMMITTEES OF SYNOD**

**Business of Synod Committee (3-year terms)**

| Members                                                  | Term Expires |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Herb McCracken <sup>r</sup> , Dennis Olson <sup>r</sup>  | 2022         |
| David Schaefer <sup>r</sup>                              | 2023         |
| Lucas Hanna <sup>t</sup> , Don Reed <sup>r</sup>         | 2024         |
| Bruce Parnell <sup>t</sup> , John McFarland <sup>t</sup> | Ex officio   |

**Chairman:**

**Central and South Americas Committee**

- Members
- Steve Bradley<sup>t</sup> (chairman)
  - Mark England<sup>t</sup>
  - Edgar Ibarra<sup>t</sup>
  - Chris Myers<sup>t</sup>
  - Marcelo Sanchez

**Church History Committee (6-year terms)**

| Members                                     | Term Expires |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Nathaniel Pockras                           | 2023         |
| David Whitla <sup>t</sup>                   | 2025         |
| Joe Rizzo <sup>r</sup> (chairman)           | 2027         |
| Jordan Feagly <sup>r</sup> (RPTS librarian) | Ex officio   |

t denotes teaching elder

r denotes ruling elder

## Finance Committee

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|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Members | Term Expires |
|---------|--------------|

### At Large (3-year terms):

|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| David Tweed <sup>r</sup>   | 2022 |
| Barry VanHorn <sup>r</sup> | 2023 |
| Garrett Mann <sup>t</sup>  | 2024 |

**Presbytery Reps:** Guy Curran<sup>r</sup> (Alleghenies); Robert Allmond (Atlantic); Jason O'Neill<sup>r</sup> (Great Lakes/Gulf); Mike McDaniel<sup>r</sup> (Midwest); Scott Robertson (Pacific Coast); Jamie Hood (St. Lawrence)

**Ex officio, voting:** Business of Synod Committee Chairman; Bill Roberts<sup>t</sup> (Synod Trustees); James McFarland<sup>r</sup> (Denominational Treasurer)

**Ex officio, non-voting:** Vida Brown (Denominational Controller)

**Chairman:** Jason O'Neill

Phone: 317-306-5022

Email: jason.k.oneill@gmail.com

## Graduate Study Committee (3-year terms)

---

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Members | Term Expires |
|---------|--------------|

|                                                            |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Barry York <sup>t</sup> , President of the Seminary (RPTS) |      |
| Calvin Troup <sup>r</sup> , President of Geneva College    |      |
| John Stahl <sup>r</sup>                                    | 2022 |
| Dave Carroll                                               | 2024 |

## Interchurch Committee (6-year terms)

---

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Members | Term Expires |
|---------|--------------|

|                                                       |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Bruce Martin <sup>t</sup> , Dean McHenry <sup>r</sup> | 2022 |
| Jerry Milroy <sup>t</sup>                             | 2023 |
| Drew Gordon <sup>r</sup>                              | 2024 |
| Bruce Backensto <sup>t</sup>                          | 2025 |
| Craig Scott <sup>t</sup>                              | 2027 |

**Executive Secretary:** J. Bruce Martin

7822 Whitewood Rd.

Elkins Park, PA 19027

Phone: 201-403-6527

Email: exrpclerk@gmail.com

## International Conference Advisory Committee for 2024 Conference (4-year terms)

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|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Members | Term Expires |
|---------|--------------|

|                                        |      |
|----------------------------------------|------|
| John McFarland <sup>t</sup> (chairman) | 2023 |
| Garrett Mann <sup>r</sup>              | 2024 |
| Adam Niess <sup>t</sup>                | 2025 |

**Representatives to the RP Global Alliance**

Kyle Borg<sup>t</sup>, Matt Kingswood<sup>t</sup>, Andrew Quigley<sup>t</sup>

**Nominating Committee (3-year terms)**

| Members                                               | Term Expires |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Daniel Hemken <sup>t</sup> , Craig Scott <sup>t</sup> | 2022         |
| John McFarland <sup>t</sup> , Will Werts <sup>r</sup> | 2023         |
| Andrew Barnes <sup>t</sup> , Tim Vincze <sup>r</sup>  | 2024         |

**Parliamentarians (6-year terms)**

| Members                   | Term Expires |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Martin Block <sup>t</sup> | 2022         |
| Brian Coombs <sup>t</sup> | 2024         |
| David Merkel <sup>r</sup> | 2026         |

**Representatives to the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (6-yr. terms)**

| Members                   | Term Expires |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Gary McNamee <sup>t</sup> | 2022         |
| Bill Wagner <sup>r</sup>  | 2024         |
| Kelly Moore <sup>t</sup>  | 2026         |

**Vital Churches Committee (6-year terms)**

| Members                                 | Term Expires |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|
| To be filled                            | 2022-2023    |
| David Robson <sup>r</sup>               | 2024         |
| David Robb <sup>r</sup>                 | 2025         |
| Steve Rockhill <sup>t</sup> (secretary) | 2026         |

**Youth Ministries Committee**

- Alleghenies: Will & Sarah McChesney
- Atlantic: Kyle & Violet Finley
- Great Lakes/Gulf: Ken<sup>r</sup> & Christy Nelson
- Midwest: Craig<sup>r</sup> & Shana Milroy
- Pacific Coast: Paul<sup>r</sup> & Megan Hemphill
- St. Lawrence: Chris<sup>r</sup> & Megan Goerner
- RP Missions representative: Keith Mann<sup>r</sup>

**Synod Liaison:** David Whitla<sup>t</sup>

t denotes teaching elder  
 r denotes ruling elder

## **JUDICIAL COMMISSIONS OF SYNOD**

**Judicial Commission on GLG & Immanuel Session:** Bruce Backensto<sup>t</sup>, John Bower<sup>r</sup>, Brian Coombs<sup>t</sup>, Tom Fisher<sup>r</sup>, Kelly Moore<sup>t</sup>, Tom Pinson<sup>r</sup>, Keith Wing<sup>r</sup> (chairman)

## **SPECIAL/STUDY COMMITTEES OF SYNOD**

**Study Committee on Christ's Mediatorial Kingship:** Shawn Anderson<sup>t</sup>, Bruce Backensto<sup>t</sup> (chairman), Brad Johnston<sup>t</sup>, Mark Koller<sup>t</sup>, Adam Kuehner<sup>t</sup>, Scott Wilkinson<sup>t</sup>

**Study Committee on Communication 18-7 (Recusals in Discipline Cases):** Tom Fisher<sup>r</sup>, Allan MacLeod<sup>t</sup>, Phil Pockras<sup>t</sup> (chairman), Craig Scott<sup>t</sup>, Scott Wilkinson<sup>t</sup>

**Study Committee on Communication 18-8 (Inmate Church Membership):** Bob Bibby<sup>r</sup>, Kent Butterfield<sup>t</sup>, Jason Camery<sup>t</sup>, Tim McCracken<sup>t</sup> (chairman)

**Study Committee on Communication 19-1 (Synod Action Authority):** Brian Coombs<sup>t</sup> (chairman), Jared Olivetti<sup>t</sup>, David Schaefer<sup>r</sup>

**Study Committee on Communications 20-01, 20-07, 20-08, & 21-19 (Constitution Revisions):** Joe Allyn<sup>t</sup>, Dan Drost<sup>t</sup>, Mark Koller<sup>t</sup> (convener), Craig Milroy<sup>r</sup>, Chris Villi<sup>r</sup>

**Study Committee on Communication 21-12 (ZOOM Trials):** Tom Fisher<sup>r</sup>, James Odom<sup>r</sup>, Dennis Olson<sup>r</sup>, Sam Spear<sup>r</sup> (convener), Joel Wallace<sup>r</sup>

**Special Committee for RPCC (Canada) Formation:** Matt Filbert<sup>t</sup> (chairman), Garrett Mann<sup>t</sup>, James McFarland<sup>r</sup>, David Schaefer<sup>r</sup>, Gabe Wingfield<sup>t</sup>

**Study Committee on Vows and Queries:** Drew Gordon<sup>t</sup>, Gary Gunn<sup>t</sup>, Phil Pockras<sup>t</sup> (convener), Nick Schoenberger<sup>r</sup>, Jeff Stivason<sup>t</sup>.

t denotes teaching elder

r denotes ruling elder

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## **CHURCHES IN ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP**

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### **REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES**

#### **Reformed Presbytery of Australia**

Rev. Andrew Stewart      Email: andrewstewart7@bigpond.com  
12 Fenwick Street  
Geelong  
Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3220

#### **Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland†**

Rev. Samuel McCollum      Email: rpciclerkofsynod@aol.com

#### **Reformed Presbytery of Scotland**

Peter Loughridge (clerk)      Email: peterloughridge@hotmail.com  
48 North Bridge St.  
Airdrie, ML6 6NE  
SCOTLAND

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### **OTHER CHURCHES IN FRATERNAL RELATIONS**

#### **Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church \*†**

Rev. Kyle Sims, Principal Clerk  
3132 Grace Hill Road      Phone: 803-285-1578  
Columbia, SC 29204      Email: pastorkyle@comporium.net

#### **Aweil Community Church in South Sudan**

Contact the RP Global Missions Board

#### **Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus**

Mr. Adam Mastris      Email: personal@mastris.com  
16 Chlois St., CY 6301  
Larnaca, CYPRUS

#### **Korean American Presbyterian Church \***

Rev. Hyouk Chun Kwon, Stated Clerk  
Email: hyonk@msn.com

#### **L'Église reformee du Quebec (ERQ) \***

Rev. Bernard Westerveld      Email: b\_westerveld@hotmail.com  
844, rue de Contrecoeur  
Ste-Foy (Quebec) G1X 2X8, CANADA

**Orthodox Presbyterian Church \*†**

Rev. Hank L. Belfield, Stated Clerk  
 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Box P  
 Willow Grove, PA 19090  
 Email: statedclerk@opc.org

**Presbyterian Church in America \***

Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk      Email: rtaylor@pcanet.org  
 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105  
 Lawrenceville, GA 30043

**Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia†**

Rev. George D. Ball  
 9 Craiglea Close      Phone: +612-6552-1317  
 Taree, NSW  
 2430 Australia

**Reformed Church in the United States \*†**

Rev. Ruben Zartman, Stated Clerk      Email: rzrcus@gmail.com

**United Reformed Churches in North America \*†**

Rev. Ralph A. Pontier      Email: statedclerk@urcna.org

**OBSERVER CHURCHES****Canadian Reformed Churches\*†**

Mr. Cornell Feenstra      Email: dunnvilleclerk@gmail.com

**Heritage Reformed Congregations\*†**

Rev. Don Overbeek, Stated Clerk      Email: overbeek610@gmail.com

\* Member of NAPARC—North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council: [www.naparc.org](http://www.naparc.org)

† Member of ICRC



**FORM OF BEQUEST**

The following sample form of bequest can be used in your will. If you wish, you may further specify where you desire the bequest to go. In making out a will, it is advisable to get legal advice.

*I hereby give and bequeath (Insert either a Dollar amount or a percentage of the residue of your estate) \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars or percent of the rest and residue of my estate to the Trustees of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, a religious non-profit corporation, located at 7408 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15208, to be used for general purposes. The Tax ID Number for the Trustees is 25-0987250 and the contact information for the Trustees is (412)731-1177 or RPTrustees@aol.com. Additional information can be found at RPCNA.org.*

**Key to Accessibility Services**

The accessibility of church buildings is noted following each congregation's name and address using the following key.

- BF—Barrier Free (includes restrooms)
- PA—Partially accessible (call the church)
- SS—Services accompanied by signing
- HA—Special Hearing Aids available
- PM—Programs available for people with mental impairments



**ROSTER OF PRESBYTERY OF THE ALLEGHENIES**

Moderator ..... Matt Filbert  
 Clerk ..... Martin Blocki  
 Assistant Clerk ..... Titus Martin  
 Treasurer ..... Bill Weir  
 Ad Interim Commission ..... Matt Filbert, Presbytery Moderator, Trace Turner,  
 ..... Brian Barsottini, Joel Butler, John Ryce, Ad Interim Clerk

**Aurora, Ohio—Covenant**

Meeting at: Burns-Lindow Building Website: [Covenantrpcohio.org](http://Covenantrpcohio.org)  
 8465 Bainbridge Rd.  
 Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44023  
*(Address all regular mail to the clerk or send email to [clerk@covenantrpcohio.org](mailto:clerk@covenantrpcohio.org)).*

**Pastor:** Vacant  
**Clerk:** Bob Concoby  
 3732 Fishcreek Rd. #277 Cell phone: 330-554-4260  
 Stow, OH 44224 Email: [bob@nouthetics.com](mailto:bob@nouthetics.com)  
**Elders:** John Bower Email: [jbowerr@gmail.com](mailto:jbowerr@gmail.com)  
 Ron Grissett Email: [grissettclan6@yahoo.com](mailto:grissettclan6@yahoo.com)  
**Deacon Chairman and Treasurer:**  
 Jerry Bridge [Paulette] Email: [bridge8149@roadrunner.com](mailto:bridge8149@roadrunner.com)

**Beaver, Pennsylvania—Tusca Area RPC**

Corner of Darlington and Chapel Roads Mail to: P. O. Box 526  
 Phone: 724-495-6811 Beaver, Pennsylvania 15009

**Pastor:** Jonathan M. Watt, Ph.D. [June]. Installed 2012.  
 213 Brooks Dr. Phone: 724-630-4995  
 Beaver Falls, PA 15010 Email: [jwatt@geneva.edu](mailto:jwatt@geneva.edu)

**Clerk:** Jeffrey Dobbs  
378 Lisbon Rd. Phone: 724-495-2717  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010 Email: jkdobbs82@yahoo.com

**Elders:** Brian Barsottini [Rachel] Email: bbarsottini@gmail.com  
A. Dale Carothers  
James R. Dobbs, *emeritus*  
Ben Rice [Diana] Email: bunji14@yahoo.com

**Treasurer:** Glen Detwiler  
870 Canal St. Phone: 724-774-3280  
Beaver, PA 15009

**Deacon Chairman:** Craig Claerbaut  
Phone: 724-495-1601  
Email: craigcl@comcast.net

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**Beaver Falls, Pa.—College Hill Reformed Church (PA)**

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3217 College Avenue Office: 3233 4th Ave.  
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010 Phone: 724-384-1028  
Website: www.collegehillreformed.com

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**Pastors:** Titus Martin [Alyssa]. Installed 2006.  
2823 4th Ave. Phone: 412-251-4290  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010 Email: titusknox@gmail.com

**Associate Pastor:** Hao Lu [Amy]. Installed 2021.  
412 30th st. Phone: 412-417-1191  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010 Email: hlu@rpts.edu

**Clerk:** Keith Wing [Claudia] Phone: 330-310-2822  
Email: wing@thekeysource.com

**Elders:** Dave Carleton [Candy], *inactive* Email: dwcarlton1956@gmail.com  
Herb McCracken [Patty] Email: mccrackenh@svsd.net  
Barry York [Miriam] Email: byork@rpts.edu

**Elder Emeriti:** Karl Cunningham

**Deacon Chairman:** Jake McCracken [Brianna]  
561 4th St. Phone: 330-770-9758  
Beaver, PA 15009 Email: jakegmccracken@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Kyle Beckhusen  
Phone: 315-480-7404  
Email: kylebeck2@yahoo.com

**Secretary:** Lauren Kozak  
Email: lauren@collegehillreformed.com

**Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania—Eastvale RPC (PA)**

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504 Second Avenue

Phone: 724-847-2080

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

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**Pastor:** Micah A. Ramsey [Leslie]. Installed 2007.

904 Washington Ave. PO Box 231 Cell: 724-312-9969

New Galilee, PA 16141

Email: pastor.micah.ramsey@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Keith Willson [Jennifer]

3416 8th Ave.

Phone: 724-846-3130

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Email: krwillson@comcast.net

**Elder:** James Robb [Sheila]

Email: smc006robb@aol.com

**Deacon Chairman and Treasurer:** James Dymond [Jennifer]

415 March St.

Phone: 724-752-1207

Ellwood City, PA 16117

Email: dymond5@Zoominternet.net

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**Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania—First RPC of Beaver Falls (PA)**

---

209 Darlington Road

Phone: 724-846-6877

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Website: [www.firstRPCchurch.org](http://www.firstRPCchurch.org)

---

**Pastor:** Matt Filbert [Heidi]. Installed 2013.

3307 5th Ave.

Cell: 412-901-3553

Beaver Falls, PA 15010-3509

Email: pastormatt@firstrpcchurch.org

**Associate Pastor:** Tim McClain [Bonnie]. Installed 2013.

299 Route 68

Phone: 724-728-8275

Rochester, PA 15074

Cell: 412-219-7326

Email: timmcclain299@comcast.net

**Clerk:** Tim McClain (see above)**Elders:** Glenn Aley

Email: ga\_123@yahoo.com

David Schaefer [Joy]

Email: davidjschaefer@eaton.com

David Tweed [Melissa]

Email: dtweeder@gmail.com

**Deacon Chairman and Treasurer:** Matt Thompson [Emily]

1106 Highland Ave.

Phone: 724-494-8820

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Email: Thompson.a.matthew@gmail.com

**Director of Christian Education:** Tim McClain (see above)

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**Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania—Hope Community RPC (PA)**

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3400 5th Ave.

Phone: 724-843-4840

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Website: [hopecommunityrpc.com](http://hopecommunityrpc.com)

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**Pastor:** George Gregory [Danielle]. Installed 2020.

3237 5th Ave.

Phone: 724-359-2482

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

[pastorgregory@hopecommunityrpc.com](mailto:pastorgregory@hopecommunityrpc.com)**Clerk:** Richard (Rick) Mason [Pat]

475 Maxine Dr.

Phone: 724-847-0909

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Email: [richarddmason@gmail.com](mailto:richarddmason@gmail.com)**Elders:** Robert M. Copeland [Louise]Email: [rmcopeland45@msn.com](mailto:rmcopeland45@msn.com)

Richard Morris [Victoria]

Email: [rm\\_morris2@yahoo.com](mailto:rm_morris2@yahoo.com)

Dean Smith [Nancy]

Email: [smithdean1943@gmail.com](mailto:smithdean1943@gmail.com)

John Stahl [Jacque]

Email: [jwstahl7@gmail.com](mailto:jwstahl7@gmail.com)

Joel Ward [Tabi]

Email: [joel@thewards.house](mailto:joel@thewards.house)

Adrian Wright [Cassandra]

Email: [adriantwright@gmail.com](mailto:adriantwright@gmail.com)**Elders Emeritus:** Cliff Glovier, Donnie Hicks, Don McBurney**Deacon Chair:** Pat Mason

Phone: 724-462-6448

Email: [pmasonrn@gmail.com](mailto:pmasonrn@gmail.com)**Treasurer:** Lorrie Meneely

Phone: 412-915-8579

128 Earlwood Rd.

Email: [meneelyl@gmail.com](mailto:meneelyl@gmail.com)

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

or [lorrie@meneelys.com](mailto:lorrie@meneelys.com)

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**Birmingham, Ala.—Mission Station**

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Contact TGB: Paul Martin (Moderator), Bruce Backensto, Mark Sampson

**Burtonsville, Maryland—Trinity RPC**

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4515 Sandy Spring Road

Website: [www.trinityrpc.org](http://www.trinityrpc.org)

Burtonsville, Maryland 20866

Phone: 240-360-1285

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**Pastor:** Vacant**Clerk:** David Merkel [Ruth]

3505 North Chatham Rd.

Phone: 410-750-7894

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Email: [david.merkel@gmail.com](mailto:david.merkel@gmail.com)**Elders:** Vincent SkwarekEmail: [uscgrower@earthlink.net](mailto:uscgrower@earthlink.net)

Brad Stewart [Betsy]

Email: [rmbconstruction@yahoo.com](mailto:rmbconstruction@yahoo.com)**Deacon Chairman:** Jonathan Baumann [Kaitlyn] Phone: 240-360-1285Email: [deacons@trinityrpc.org](mailto:deacons@trinityrpc.org)**Treasurer:** Andrew Ashleigh [Rachel]

732 Lake Path

Cell phone: 443-691-4231

Crownsville, MD 21032

Email: [ashleighaj1@gmail.com](mailto:ashleighaj1@gmail.com)

**Gibsonia, Pennsylvania—Grace RPC**

3916 Bakerstown Road

Phone: 724-473-3449

Gibsonia, Pennsylvania 15044

Website: GraceInGibsonia.org

**Pastor:** Dr. Jeff Stivason [Tabatha]. Installed 2009.

3914 Bakerstown Rd.

Phone: 412-523-7862

Gibsonia, PA 15044

Email: graceingibsonia@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Chris Villi [Jennifer]

1137 Woodland Rd.

Phone: 724-935-4223

Wexford, PA 15090

Email: villi.chris@gmail.com

**Elders:** Group Elder Email:

session\_grace\_rp@googlegroups.com

Calvin Troup [Amy]

Email: cltroup@geneva.edu

John DeGraaf [Cheryl]

Email: John.Degraaf@netapp.com

Wayne Spear [Mary]

Email: waynespear337@comcast.net

Roy Grau [Sandy]

Email: rhgrau3@gmail.com

John Ryce [Fran]

Email: ryce10@gmail.com

Mark Sampson [Sharon]

Email: msampson@rpts.edu

**Treasurer:** Glenn Graner [Linda]

109 Windwood Heights Dr.

Phone: 412-302-6867

Cranberry Township, PA 16066

Email: glenn.graner@klgates.com

**Harrisonburg, Virginia—Grace and Truth Mission Church**

Meeting at: 342 Neff Avenue

Website: <https://graceandtruthrpc.org>

Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

**Pastor:** Ryan Bever [Betsy]. Installed 2017.

8615 Sweetwater Rd.

Cell: 434-509-8698

Dayton, VA 22821

Email: rbever3@gmail.com

**Associate Stated Supply:** Paul Martin [Janet]

PO Box 2476

Cell: 412-370-9960

Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Email: pappaul@gmail.com

**TGB:** Paul Martin, Moderator; Dave Merkel (clerk); Tom Reid (tg Reidjr@gmail.com)**Clerk:** David Merkel

3305 N. Chatham Rd.

Phone: 410-750-7879

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Email: david.merkel@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Nathaniel Pockras [Maria]

Phone: 434-485-9885

Email: njpockras@liberty.edu

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**Meadville, Pennsylvania—Covenant RPC**

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30 Park Avenue

Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

Email: meadvillerc@gmail.com

Website: www.covenantrpc.org

---

**Pastor:** Gary Gunn [Jill]. Installed 2018.

787 Gasteiger Rd.

Meadville, PA 16335

Cell: 814-573-2787

Email: ggunn@rpts.edu

**Clerk (provisional):** Mark Brown

Cell: 412-720-6529

Email: MarkBrown18@hotmail.com

**Elder (provisional):** Doug Comin

---

**New Castle, Pennsylvania—Rose Point RPC (PA)**

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1166 Church Alley

New Castle, Pennsylvania 16101

*(Send all mail to pastor's address.)*

Website: www.rosepointrpc.org

Phone: 724-924-9519

---

**Pastor:** Charles Brown [Miriam]. Installed 2008.

468 Rose Point Rd.

New Castle, PA 16101

Phone: 724-924-0012

Email: modernreformation@yahoo.com

**Clerk:** John M. Mitchell

1072 Golf Course Rd.

Volant, PA 16156

Phone: 724-530-2305

Email: jmmitchell@centurylink.net

**Elders:** Steven Wilson [Patricia]

Email: spxwilson@gmail.com

Guy Curran [Joann]

Email: ebrp1960@gmail.com

**Deacon Chairman:** John Hanninen [Judy]

106 Simpson Lane

Utica, PA 16802

Phone: 814-425-2784

Email: jhmohair@windstream.net

**Treasurer:** John M. Mitchell (see above)

---

**New Kensington, Pennsylvania—Manchester RPC**

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204 Manchester Hill Road

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068

Website: www.manchesterrpcchurch.org

Phone: 724-339-1551

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**Pastor:** Vince Scavo [Elizabeth]. Installed 2001.

200 Manchester Hill Rd.

New Kensington, PA 15068

Phone: 724-681-4979

Email: revscavo@yahoo.com

**Clerk:** Marlin Klingensmith [Karen]

Email: knilram@gmail.com

**Elders:** Doug Comin [Amy]

Email: dcomin311@comcast.net

**Deacon Chairman:** Ed Panichelle

209 Beverly Dr.

Lower Burrell, PA 15068

Phone: 724-889-6603

Email: edpaniche@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Karen Klingensmith [Marlin]

2605 Leechburg Rd.

Phone: 724-994-8915

Lower Burrell, PA 15068

Email: Karen@knilram.org

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—Covenant Fellowship RPC**

1300 Swissvale Avenue

Phone: 412-371-6118

Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania 15221-1836

Email: covenantfellowshiprpcna@gmail.com

**Pastor:** Peter Smith [Vicki]. Installed 2011.

1427 Penn Ave.

Cell: 412-944-3881

Wilkinsburg, PA 15221

Email: perwsmith@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Drew Gordon [Lynne]

7408 Penn Ave.

Phone: 412-731-2854

Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Email: drew@gordon.cc

**Elders:** Timothy Buck [Fiona]

Email: timothyscottbuck@gmail.com

Joel Butler [Autumn]

Email: joelsbutler42@yahoo.com

Jordan Feagley [Elise]

Email: jordfeagley@gmail.com

**Deacon Chairman:** Lois Claerbaut

137 Betty Jane Ct.

Phone: 412-770-7632

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Email: loisclaerbaut@comcast.net

**Treasurer:** Scott Stewart [Anneke]

Phone: 412-690-0490

Email: stewart.scottie@gmail.com

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—North Hills RPC (BF, PM)**

606 Thompson Run Road

Website: www.rpcnh.net

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237

Phone: 412-486-1167

**Pastor:** Harry Metzger [Catherine]. Installed 2000.

1049 Balmoral

Phone: 412-366-1231

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Cell: 412-901-2150

Email: RevHMetz@aol.com

**Associate Pastor:** Martin Blocki [Kathryn]. Installed 2003.

5368 Hardt Rd.

Cell: 412-901-3008

Gibsonia, PA 15044

Email: mblocki1@consolidated.net

Matthew (ShaoHui) Ma [(YanHong Zhang) Dorcas]

3681 Allendale Circle

Phone: 412-886-8866

Pittsburgh, PA 15204

Email: yurenma01@gmail.com

**Clerk:** William J. (Bill) Weir [Rose]

101 Maruth Dr.

Phone: 412-872-7123

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Email: weirbnr@gmail.com



|                                                                                         |                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Elders:</b> Jerry F. O'Neill [Ann]<br>Luke O'Neill [Jen]<br>Samuel Spear [Meg]       | Email: joneill@rpts.edu<br>Email: lukeO1175@yahoo.com<br>Email: s.spear@gaiconsultants.com |
| <b>Deacon Chairman:</b> Jeff Hall [Ruth]<br>111 Richmond Circle<br>Pittsburgh, PA 15237 | Phone: 412-358-8532<br>Email: corridor111@verizon.net                                      |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> Rose Weir [Bill]                                                      | Phone: 412-526-1247<br>Email: treasurer@rpcnh.org                                          |

---

### Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—Providence RPC

|                                                       |                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2001 Pioneer Avenue<br>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15226 | Website: www.providencerpchurch.com<br>Phone: 412-401-2424 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|

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|                                                                                                       |                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pastor:</b> Steven Bradley [Julie]. Installed 2014.<br>1210 Barnstaple Dr.<br>South Park, PA 15129 | Phone: 412-650-3120<br>Email: bygracealone@verizon.net                                       |
| <b>Clerk:</b> James McFarland [Carnel]<br>11867 Quarter Horse Dr.<br>North Huntingdon, PA 15642       | Phone: 412-378-6428<br>Email: rptrustees@aol.com                                             |
| <b>Elders:</b> Dan Berkenpas [Julia]<br>Randy Johovich<br>Matt McKnight                               | Email: berkenpasdb1@gmail.com<br>Email: rjohomurphy@gmail.com<br>Email: mcknight0315@msn.com |
| <b>Deacon Chair:</b> Dale Hulley                                                                      | Phone: 412-735-8943<br>Email: theovendale@gmail.com                                          |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> Matt McKnight                                                                       | Phone: 724-996-4100<br>Email: mcknight0315@msn.com                                           |

---

### Rimersburg, Pennsylvania, RPC

|                                                                                                     |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| North Main Street<br>Rimersburg, Pennsylvania 16248<br><i>(Send all mail to the pastor's home.)</i> | Website: www.rpcrimersburgpa.com<br>Phone: 814-229-9670 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|

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|                                                                                             |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pastor:</b> John Monger [Donna]. Installed 2012.<br>959 Corbett St.<br>Clarion, PA 16214 | Cell: 814-229-9670<br>Email: johnwmonger@gmail.com  |
| <b>Clerk:</b> Bill Douthett [Sara]<br>PO Box 225<br>Rimersburg, PA 16248                    | Phone: 814-473-3760                                 |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> Mrs. Carrie Engro<br>PO Box 762<br>Rimersburg, PA 16248                   | Phone: 814-473-6499<br>Email: cengro@windstream.net |

## **Santiago/Batuco, Chile—Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Lo Prado (Mission Church)**

---

**Pastor:** Marcelo Sanchez

Email: marcelosanchez81@live.com

**TGB:** Steve Bradley [Julie]

Phone: 412-650-3120

Email: bygracealone@verizon.net

Mark England

## **State College, Pennsylvania—Grace Presbyterian Church**

---

370 Airport Road

Phone: 814-237-2637

State College, Pennsylvania 16801

Website: gracerc.org

**Pastor:** Trace Turner [Meg]. Installed 2020.

270 Science Park Ct.

Phone: 602-370-6978

State College, PA 16801

Email: pastortraceatgrace@gmail.com

**Clerk:** John C. Pershe [Barb]

Phone: 814-429-3257

102 Ridgewood Circle

Phone: 814-482-0996

State College, PA 16803

Email: jcpershe@yahoo.com

**Elders:** Jonathan D. Adams [Kathy]

Email: jadams2@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Dean McHenry [Ellen]

Email: demchenry@comcast.net

**Deacon Chair:** Ed Fenton

Phone: 814-470-2310

Email: efenton4@comcast.net

**Treasurer:** Tom Fenby

Phone: 814-599-1559

Email: tfenby17@gmail.com

## **Ministers serving at Geneva College**

---

Jonathan M. Watt, Ph.D. [June]

213 Brooks Dr.

Phone: 724-630-4995

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Email: jwatt@geneva.edu

Rutledge Etheridge [Evelyn]

Cell: 412-759-7105

107 Book Ave.

Email: rutetheridge3@gmail.com

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

or reetheri@geneva.edu

## **Ministers serving at the RP Seminary**

---

Richard C. Gamble, Ph.D. [Janice]

5307 Richland Rd.

Cell: 724-831-7564

Gibsonia, PA 15044

Email: rgamble@rpts.edu

C. J. Williams [Sherri]

748 Lafayette Dr.

Phone: 412-233-0603

Clairton, PA 15025

Email: providencerpc@juno.com

Barry York [Miriam]

1600 Tuscarawas Rd.

Beaver, PA 15009

Phone: 765-437-3349

Email: byork@rpts.edu

Ed Blackwood [Nancy]

109 Sumner Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Phone: 412-407-3317

Work: 412-731-6000

Email: eblackwood@rpts.edu

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## Ministers serving on the Mission Field

---

Lucas Hanna, Sr. [Melissa]

2810 5th Ave.

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 913-484-4598

Email: pastorlucashanna@gmail.com

---

## Ministers retired

---

Bruce Backensto [Kim]

3303 Seventh Ave.

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 724-494-0888

Email: bruce.backensto@gmail.com

Wayne Duffield [Nancy]

PO Box 373, 311 Church St.

New Alexandria, PA 15670

Cell: 724-875-1494

Phone: 724-668-7506

Email: awd70@windstream.net

Ralph E. Joseph [Joday]

225 North Main St.

Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Phone 724-794-1429

Cell: 724-968-8800

Email:Slipperyrockprep@Zoominternet.net

G. Duncan Lowe [Carol]

2513 Holly Dr.

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Phone: 412-731-5768

Email: gd88lowe@yahoo.com

Paul M. Martin [Janet]

PO Box 2476

Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Cell: 412-370-9960

Email: pappaul@gmail.com

Kenneth A. McBurney [Virginia]

2334 Perrysville Ave., Apt. 405

Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Phone: 412-224-6803

Email: kenmcb100@gmail.com

Courtney Miller [Barbara]

144 Ridgeview Dr.

Beaver, PA 15009

Phone: 724-728-2352

Cell: 724-312-2607

Email: cjmillier80@hotmail.com

Jerry F. O'Neill, D.D. [Ann]

505 Fox Dr.

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone 412-477-9200

Email: joneill@rpts.edu

Kenneth G. Smith

2344 Perrysville Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Phone: 724-581-3559

Cell: 724-544-0103

Email: revkgs@gmail.com

Wayne R. Spear, Ph.D. [Mary]  
337 Saddlebrook Rd.  
Gibsonia, PA 15044

Phone: 724-939-7940  
Email: wrspear@Zoominternet.net

William Sterrett [Kalli]  
1126 4th St.  
Beaver, PA 15009

Email: bksterrett@gmail.com

### **Ministers without pastorates**

---

Doug Comin [Amy]  
311 Walnut St.  
Latrobe, PA 15650

Phone: 724-537-3050  
Email: dcomin311@comcast.net

Mark England  
815 Woodrow Drive  
Williamsburg PA 16693

Phone: 619-402-8233  
Email: dmec3117@gmail.com

Terry Gorden [Heather]  
PO Box 472  
New Windsor, MD 21776

Phone: 410-635-8346  
Email: gordenmail@yahoo.com

Marcelo Sanchez, Santiago, Chile  
Acevedo 388  
Batuco Lampa Region  
Metropolitana Chile

Phone: +56949447299  
Email: marcelosanchez81@live.com

Dan Woodring [Julie]  
PO Box 185  
Ramey, PA 16671

Phone: 814-378-7927  
Email: dwcanon@hotmail.com



**ROSTER OF ATLANTIC PRESBYTERY**

Moderator ..... Bill Chellis  
Clerk ..... J. Bruce Martin  
Treasurer ..... Joseph Comanda  
Ad Interim Commission ..... Walton Session  
Youth Ministries Committee Representatives..... Kyle and Violet Finley

**Boston, Massachusetts—First RPC of Cambridge**

53 Antrim Street Website: reformedprescambridge.com  
Cambridge, MA 02139 Phone: 617-864-3185  
*Send all mail to pastor.*

**Pastor:** Noah Bailey [Lydia]. Installed 2017.  
106 Antrim St. Phone: 857-331-5650  
Cambridge, MA 02139 Email: nmbirish@gmail.com  
**Clerk:** Thomas Fisher  
425 Putnam Ave. Phone: 617-491-7132  
Cambridge, MA 02139 Email: tafisher@post.harvard.edu  
**Elders** Tim Montgomery [Arianna] Email: TMMontgomery@gmail.com  
**Elder Emeritus:** Christopher Wright, Ph.D. [Carol] Email: wri.chr@gmail.com  
**Treasurer:** Elaine Klingensmith Phone: 717-870-6718  
Email: Elaine.Klingensmith@gmail.com

**S.S. Supt.:** Tim Montgomery (see above)

**Coldenham-Newburgh, New York, RPC (BF)**

469 Coldenham Road Phone: 845-564-3924  
Walden, NY 12586

**Pastor:** Vacant  
**Stated Supply:** Zachary Dotson [Wilma] (student under care)  
Manse: 467 Coldenham Rd. Phone: 276-219-1738  
Walden, NY 12586 Email: zachary11dotson@gmail.com  
**Clerk:** Phillip Shafer [Lesesne]  
394 Lake Osiris Road Phone: 845-778-5088  
Walden, NY 12586 Email: pashafer@gmail.com  
**Elder & Treasurer:** Ernie Johnson [Becky]  
116 Chrystal Dr. Phone: 845-926-0804  
Maybrook, NY 12543 Email: etj718@aol.com

### **Hazleton Area, Pennsylvania, RPC**

680 Roosevelt Street  
Hazleton, PA 18201

Website: [www.nepachurches.org](http://www.nepachurches.org)

**Pastor:** Paul Brace [Jennifer]. Installed 2009.

376 Pond Hill Mt. Rd.  
Wapwallopen, PA 18660

Phone: 570-479-1306

Email: [ps110\\_1@hotmail.com](mailto:ps110_1@hotmail.com)

**Clerk:** Jeremy Nelson [Deborah]

127 9th St.  
Wyoming, PA 18644

Phone: 570-693-1072

Email: [nelsonj17@comcast.net](mailto:nelsonj17@comcast.net)

**Elder:** Philip Urie [Fran]

Email: [philurie@epix.net](mailto:philurie@epix.net)

**Deacons:** Seth Olivieri, Joe Davidovich

**Treasurer:** Joe Davidovich

1278 Mountain St., PO Box 21  
Rock Glen, PA 18246

Phone: 570-384-0884

### **New York City—Ridgefield Park, New Jersey, RPC (BF)**

310 Main St.  
Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660

Phone: 201-440-5993

Website: [www.rpc-nj.org](http://www.rpc-nj.org)

**Pastor-elect:** Andrew Kerr F.R.C.S.I.

**Clerk:** David A. Weir, Ph.D. [Bonnie]

18 Midland Avenue  
Bronxville, New York 10708

Phone: 914-337-2833

Email: [daw@pipeline.com](mailto:daw@pipeline.com)

**Elder:** Glen A. Chin [Jewel]

210 Oakdene St.  
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Phone: 201-657-8826

Email: [gacjer31@gmail.com](mailto:gacjer31@gmail.com)

**Deacons:** Miss Francis Chao, Eugene Forsythe. **Deacon Emeritus:** Midge Whitehead

**Treasurer:** Miss Francis Chao

102 Oak St.  
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Phone: 201-530-9644

**S.S. Supt.:** Glen Chin (see above)

### **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—Broomall RPC**

25 Lawrence Road  
Broomall, PA 19008

Phone: 610-353-1371

**Pastor:** Alex Tabaka [Melissa]. Installed 2016.

27 Lawrence Rd.  
Broomall, PA 19008

Cell: 719-428-9630

Email: [j.alex.tabaka@gmail.com](mailto:j.alex.tabaka@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** William J. Werts, III [Mandy]  
6210 Whitehill Dr.  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050  
Phone: 610-416-5041  
Email: wjwerts@yahoo.com

**Elders:** Alexander Edgar [Susan]  
Joseph Rizzo [Laura]  
Email: edgar.physics@gmail.com  
Email: josephv.rizzo@gmail.com

**Elder Emeritus:** George Jackson  
Email: gwjack3@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Joseph Comanda [Jan]  
629 Tennis Ave.  
Ardsley, PA 19038  
Phone: 215-884-7685  
Email: jdc.comanda@gmail.com

**S.S. Supt.:** Lisa Edgar [Adam]  
Email: lmbaldwin88@gmail.com

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### **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—Elkins Park RPC**

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901 Cypress Avenue  
Elkins Park, PA 19027  
Phone: 215-460-2391  
Website: elkinsparkchurch.com

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**Pastor:** John D. Edgar [Evniki]. Installed 2002.  
401 Shoemaker Rd.  
Elkins Park, PA 19027  
Phone: 215-782-9849  
Email: johnevnik@comcast.net

**Clerk:** Michael Jessop [Anna Li]  
2629 Susquehanna Rd.  
Roslyn, PA 19001  
Phone: 215-576-0348  
Email: jmjessop@hotmail.com

**Elder:** Duran Perkins [Betsy]  
Email: duran.perkins@gmail.com

**Deacons:** Bob Allmond, Emil Nahm

**Treasurer:** Bob Allmond  
551 Harvey Rd.  
Glenside, PA 19038  
Phone: 215-852-9980  
Email: agizmos2@aol.com

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### **Providence, Rhode Island—Christ Church**

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Meeting at: 81 Warren Avenue  
East Providence, RI 02914  
Send mail to: PO Box 14168  
East Providence, RI 02914

---

**Pastor:** Daniel M. Howe [Esther]. Installed 2010.  
19 Serpentine Rd.  
Warren, RI 02885  
Phone: 401-316-3583  
Email: pastor@chrstrpc.com

**Clerk:** David Robson [Deryl]  
336 Sea View Ave.  
Riverside, RI 02915  
Phone: 401-413-8783  
Email: dcrobson10@gmail.com

**Elders:** Matthew Topper, Jonathan Trexler

**Deacons:** Matthew VanVlack, Darte Bolton, Shawn Hare

### Walton, N.Y., RPC

East and Bruce Streets  
Walton, NY 13856 (no mail)

Phone: 607-865-6481  
Website: [www.waltonrpc.org](http://www.waltonrpc.org)

**Pastor:** Bill Chellis [Katrina]. Installed 2020.

27 Maple Ave.  
Jeffersonville, NY 12748

Phone: 845-482-3405  
Email: [whchellis@gmail.com](mailto:whchellis@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Jack McCready [Bev]

495 Munn Rd.  
Walton, NY 13856

Phone: 607-865-5966  
Email: [mccreadyjb@hotmail.com](mailto:mccreadyjb@hotmail.com)

**Elders:** John Cripps

Bruce Henderson  
Hartley Russell

Email: [Crippsj1955@gmail.com](mailto:Crippsj1955@gmail.com)  
Email: [brucehenderson@gmail.com](mailto:brucehenderson@gmail.com)  
Email: [mhrussell@frontiernet.net](mailto:mhrussell@frontiernet.net)

**Treasurer:** Renwick Russell

4919 County Highway 21  
Walton, NY 13856

Email: [renrussell@frontiernet.net](mailto:renrussell@frontiernet.net)

### White Lake, N.Y., RPC

6 Mattison Rd. (PO Box 208)  
White Lake, NY 12786

Website: [whitelakechurch.com](http://whitelakechurch.com)

**Pastor:** David C. Coon [Cathy]. Installed 1980.

PO Box 418  
Mongaup Valley, NY 12762

Phone: 845-583-7082  
Cell: 914-799-5425  
Email: [dcoon2@hvc.rr.com](mailto:dcoon2@hvc.rr.com)

**Clerk:** Scott Sanford [Debbie]

10 Feldberg Dr.  
Monticello, NY 12701

Cell: 845-798-9363  
Phone: 845-791-6256  
Email: [ssanford@hvc.rr.com](mailto:ssanford@hvc.rr.com)

**Elders:** Mike DeSocio, Mike Klussman

**Treasurer:** Judy Klussman

1416 County Rt. 56  
Mountaindale, NY 12763-5118

Email: [judithklussman@yahoo.com](mailto:judithklussman@yahoo.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** Marc Mendelsohn

91 Perry Road  
Cochecton, NY 12726

Phone: 845-583-7040  
Email: [MARCJOYM@gmail.com](mailto:MARCJOYM@gmail.com)

### Ministers Without Pastorates

William J. Edgar, Ph.D. [Gretchen]

332 Riverview Ave.  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Phone: 610-623-0117  
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Charles Leach [Susan]

25 Browns Rd.

Walden, NY 12586

Phone: 845-713-4335

Email: cwleachjr@gmail.com

J. Bruce Martin [JoAnne]

7822 Whitewood Rd.

Elkins Park, PA 19027

Phone: 201-403-6527

Email: exrpcclerk@gmail.com

Mauro Silva-Krug [Brandy]

2445 Lyttonsville Rd., Apt. # 401

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: 856-330-4303

Cell: 814-931-5366

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### **ROSTER OF GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY**

Moderator ..... Frank Smith

Clerk ..... Adam Kuehner

Assistant Clerk ..... Dale Koons

Treasurer ..... James Bishop

..... 1541 Connemara Road, Indianapolis, IN 46217

..... Phone: 317-884-0116. Email: jbbishop797@gmail.com

AIC Moderator ..... Frank Smith

CovFAMIKOI Conference Director ..... Ken Nelson

..... Email: knelson0204@gmail.com

Youth Coordinator ..... Ben Larson

### **Atlanta, Georgia—Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship**

Meeting at: 574 Western Ave. NW

Website: atlanta-rpc.org

Atlanta, Georgia 30314

**Pastor:** Dr. Frank J. Smith [Penny]. Installed 2019.

5830 Millstone Dr.

Cumming, GA 30028

Phone: 770-241-3946

Email: franksmith76@gmail.com

**Moderator:** Steven Work

Phone: 785-299-0248

Email: stevenwork48@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Amy Work

1104 Treehouse Pkwy.

Norcross, GA 30093

Phone: 785-250-0856

Email: brerrabbit\_03@yahoo.com

### **Belle Center, Ohio, RPC (PA)**

102 East Main Street

PO Box 365

Belle Center, Ohio 43310

Website: [www.bcrpchurch.org](http://www.bcrpchurch.org)

[www.sermonaudio.com/bc-rpcna](http://www.sermonaudio.com/bc-rpcna)

**Pastor:** Philip Pockras [Judy]. Installed 1985.

403 North Elizabeth St.

PO Box 365

Belle Center, OH 43310

Phone: 937-464-6851

Email: [covvie@columbus.rr.com](mailto:covvie@columbus.rr.com)

**Clerk:** Scott Hunt

1627 Parkview Dr.

Marion, IN 46952

Phone: 765-660-1223

**Provisional Elder:** Scott Hunt

**Treasurer:** Greg Probst

3463 OH 103

Bluffton, OH 45817

Phone: 419-358-7514

Email: [gprobst8@embarqmail.com](mailto:gprobst8@embarqmail.com)

**S. S. Superintendent:** Philip Pockras (see above)

### **Bloomington, Indiana, RPC (SS)**

302 East First Street

Bloomington, IN 47401

Website: [bloomingtonrpcchurch.org](http://bloomingtonrpcchurch.org)

Phone: 812-339-1922

**Pastor:** Rich Holdeman [Amy]. Installed 2005.

3202 East Kensington Park Dr.

Bloomington, IN 47401

Cell: 812-327-5367

Email: [rholdema@indiana.edu](mailto:rholdema@indiana.edu)

**Pastor:** Philip McCollum [Heather]. Installed 2018.

523 N. Plymouth Rd.

Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-650-2481

Email: [psmccollum@gmail.com](mailto:psmccollum@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Kenneth De Jong [Carolyn]

3613 Brownridge Rd.

Bloomington, IN 47401

Phone: 812-334-0069

Email: [kdejong@indiana.edu](mailto:kdejong@indiana.edu)

**Elders:** Wes Archer [Angie]

Eric Cosens [Rachel]

Wendell McBurney [Jean] (Inactive)

C. J. Davis [Melinda]

Stephen Shipp [Sarah]

Email: [jwesarcher@hotmail.com](mailto:jwesarcher@hotmail.com)

Email: [ecosens@iu.edu](mailto:ecosens@iu.edu)

Email: [daviscolbyjames@gmail.com](mailto:daviscolbyjames@gmail.com)

Email: [stephen.shipp@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.shipp@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Carolyn De Jong

Mail to church address.

Phone: 812-334-0069

**Christian Education Chairman:** Richard Holdeman (see above)

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**Brownsburg, Indiana—Christ Church RP**

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Meeting at: 5075 North Raceway Rd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46234  
Phone: 317-456-2551

All mail to: PO BOX 725  
Brownsburg, IN 46112  
Website: [www.ccrp.church](http://www.ccrp.church)

---

**Pastor:** Vacant as of Oct. 5, 2020

**Clerk:** Jason O'Neill [Michelle]  
2825 N. Delaware St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Phone: 317-306-5022  
Email: [jason.k.oneill@gmail.com](mailto:jason.k.oneill@gmail.com)

**Elders:** Dale Koons [Laura]  
Sean Bird [Monica]  
Andrew Falk [Alaina]  
Duane Judd [Anne]

Email: [dlkoons49@aol.com](mailto:dlkoons49@aol.com)  
Email: [covenantbird@gmail.com](mailto:covenantbird@gmail.com)  
Email: [andrew.falk.esq@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.falk.esq@gmail.com)  
Email: [d.joseph.judd@gmail.com](mailto:d.joseph.judd@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Dale Koons  
6001 Godello Circle  
Zionsville, IN 46077

Phone: 317-523-1599  
Email: [dlkoons49@aol.com](mailto:dlkoons49@aol.com)

**Deacons:** Todd Brown [Cindy], Chairman  
Anna Roberts

Email: [tcbrown8915@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tcbrown8915@sbcglobal.net)  
Email: [anna.rachel.roberts@gmail.com](mailto:anna.rachel.roberts@gmail.com)

---

**Columbus, Indiana, RPC (PA)**

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550 North National Road  
Columbus, Indiana 47201

Website: [columbusrpc.org](http://columbusrpc.org)  
Phone: 812-378-3003.

---

**Pastor:** Joel Hart [Orlena]. Installed 2021.  
4486 Princeton Park D  
Columbus, IN 47201

Phone: 317-657-3540  
Email: [joel@columbusrpc.org](mailto:joel@columbusrpc.org)

**Clerk:** Jeffrey Jones [Kathy]  
1401 Parkside Dr.  
Columbus, IN 47203

Phone: 812-447-2005  
Email: [jeffreydj69@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreydj69@gmail.com)

**Elders:** David Schisler [Jenelle]  
Edmund Schisler [Lynn]

Email: [d.schisler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d.schisler@sbcglobal.net)  
Email: [schisler.edmund@sbcglobal.net](mailto:schisler.edmund@sbcglobal.net)

**Treasurer:** Michael Mellinger  
3838 Sycamore Bend Ct.  
Columbus, IN 47203

Phone: 812-343-7004  
Email: [mellinger1121@yahoo.com](mailto:mellinger1121@yahoo.com)

**Christian Education Chairman:** Jeffrey Jones (see above)

### **Durham, North Carolina—First RPC (BF, HA)**

1316 Watts Street  
Durham, North Carolina 27701

Website: [firstrpcdurham.org](http://firstrpcdurham.org)  
Phone: 919-908-8327

**Pastor:** Kent Butterfield [Rosaria]. Installed 2012.

727 Clarion Dr.  
Durham, NC 27705

Cell: 571-439-2033  
Email: [kentbutterfield@yahoo.com](mailto:kentbutterfield@yahoo.com)

**Clerk:** Drew Poplin [Anna]

4307 Emerald Forest Dr., Apt. G  
Durham, NC 27713

Cell: 757-768-4078  
Email: [dpop95@gmail.com](mailto:dpop95@gmail.com)

**Elder:** Eric Hallfors [Denise]

Email: [ehalfors@nc.rr.com](mailto:ehalfors@nc.rr.com)

### **Elkhart, Indiana, RPC**

2323 17th Street  
Elkhart, Indiana 46517-1431

Website: [www.elkhartrpc.org](http://www.elkhartrpc.org)  
Phone: 574-293-1772

**Pastor:** Wade Mann [Barb]. Installed 2016.

58538 Sun Bow Dr.  
Goshen, IN 46528

Cell: 574-903-4999  
Email: [WadeMann@ElkhartRPC.org](mailto:WadeMann@ElkhartRPC.org)

**Clerk:** Fikre Menbere [Ritva]

57100 Bluff Crest Dr.  
Elkhart, IN 46516

Phone: 574-849-3396  
Email: [fikre@Menbere.net](mailto:fikre@Menbere.net)

**Elder:** Jonathan Ummel [Jennifer]

Andy DeRosa

Email: [jonummel@hotmail.com](mailto:jonummel@hotmail.com)  
Email: [adererpc@protonmail.com](mailto:adererpc@protonmail.com)

**Deacons:** Robert Daniels, Christopher Dean, Eric Dean, Keith Lorenz, Isaac Moore

**Treasurer:** Yuhui Lu

51439 Stapleford Ct.  
Granger, IN 46530

Phone: 574-252-1092  
Email: [YuhuiLu3@gmail.com](mailto:YuhuiLu3@gmail.com)

### **Grand Rapids, Michigan—First RPC**

Meeting at: Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary  
2965 Leonard Street NE  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525

**Pastor:** Craig Scott [Rebekah]. Installed 2016.

134 Kirtland St. SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Phone: 616-644-3160  
Email: [craig.scott1560@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:craig.scott1560@hotmail.co.uk)

**Clerk:** Harley (Jake) Schwartz [Lydia]

8142 20th Ave.  
Jenison, MI 49428

Email: [RPEphesian@gmail.com](mailto:RPEphesian@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Jeffrey Wykstra [Tara]

4209 Michael Ave. SW

Wyoming, MI 49509

Phone: 616-534-7706

Email: jeff.wykstra@gmail.com

**Hetherton, Michigan, RPC**

---

Meeting at: 1200 Meridian Line Road

Johannesburg, MI 49751

(Mail to Rev. Raymond Morton)

**Pastor:** Raymond Morton [Susan]. Installed 2015.

11825 Meridian Line Rd.

PO Box 249

Johannesburg, MI 49751

Phone: 989-786-3188

Cell: 618-317-6157

Email: revmorton@frontier.com

**Clerk:** Barton Briley

1371 Old State Rd.

Johannesburg, MI 49751

Phone: 989-390-6036

Email: bartonbriley@yahoo.com

**Treasurer:** David Hagadorn

1940 Roby Rd.

Johannesburg, MI 49751

Phone: 989-390-4115

Email: hagadorndavid@yahoo.com

**S.S. Superintendent:** Sonja F. Hoy

PO Box 555

Johannesburg, MI 49751

Phone: 989-732-5651

**Indianapolis, Indiana—Second RPC (BF, HA)**

---

4800 North Michigan Road

Indianapolis, Indiana 46228

Website: 2RP.church

Phone: 317-255-7557

**Pastor:** James Faris [Elizabeth]. Installed 2011.

4134 Sunmeadow Ln.

Indianapolis, IN 46228

Phone: 317-361-8508

Email: james@2rp.church

**Clerk:** Russ Pulliam [Ruth]

c/o Indianapolis Star

1025 West 52nd St.

Indianapolis, IN 46228

Phone: 317-213-9830

Email: russell.pulliam@indystar.com

**Elders:** Richard Blankenship [Linda]

Rich Blum [Barbara]

Donald Cassell, Jr. [Choi-Ha]

Dean Filson [Pam]

Terry Magnuson [Debbie]

David Mauser [Julie]

Jeff Platt [Catherine]

Email: richardblankenship3@gmail.com

Email: rkblum430@gmail.com

Email: donald@sagamoreinstitute.org

Email: dean@2rp.church

Email: magnuson.terry@gmail.com

Email: djmauser@comcast.net

Email: jplatt281@gmail.com

|                                              |                                |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| David Pulliam [Grace]                        | Email: david.pulliam@gmail.com |
| <b>Inactive Elders:</b> Dennis Prutow [Erma] | Email: dprutow@currently.com   |
| Karl Stoicheff [Joan]                        | Email: kstoich@gmail.com       |
| Walt Zebrun                                  | Email: walter_zebrun@yahoo.com |
| <b>Pastor Emeritus:</b> Rich Johnston        |                                |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> Ethan Bell                 |                                |
| 4010 Westover Dr.                            | Phone: 317-492-0486            |
| Indianapolis, IN 46268                       | Email: ethanjbell@gmail.com    |
| <b>Deacon:</b> Eric Filson                   | Email: filsonian@mac.com       |

### **Indianapolis, Indiana—Southside RPC**

|                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6969 South Meridian Street  | Website: ssrpc.org             |
| Indianapolis, Indiana 46217 | Office Email: office@ssrpc.org |
| Phone: 317-787-1211         |                                |

|                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Pastor:</b> David Hanson [Ruth]. Installed 2016.                                                                                                                                    |                                     |
| 1595 Beck Ridge Circle                                                                                                                                                                 | Phone: 317-801-1222                 |
| Greenwood, IN 46143                                                                                                                                                                    | Email: davidrpts@hotmail.com        |
| <b>Associate Pastor:</b> Ian Wise [Deanna]. Installed 2019.                                                                                                                            |                                     |
| 126 National Ave.                                                                                                                                                                      | Phone: 843-517-2088                 |
| Indianapolis, IN 46227                                                                                                                                                                 | Email: iwiserpc@gmail.com           |
| <b>Clerk:</b> Steve Sturm [Nancy]                                                                                                                                                      |                                     |
| 719 Boulder Rd.                                                                                                                                                                        | Phone: 317-644-2248                 |
| Indianapolis, IN 46217                                                                                                                                                                 | Email: stevesturm@pobox.com         |
| <b>Elders:</b> John Cavanaugh [Margarita]                                                                                                                                              |                                     |
| Ross Cerbus [Kaitlyn]                                                                                                                                                                  | Email: jrcavanau@gmail.com          |
| John Hanson [Pam]                                                                                                                                                                      | Email: ross@thecerbuses.com         |
| Mark Hart [Susanne]                                                                                                                                                                    | Email: johnhhanson@att.net          |
| David Kleyn [Cathy]                                                                                                                                                                    | Email: mhart200@gmail.com           |
| Jerry Porter [Sharon]                                                                                                                                                                  | Email: kleyn.david@sbcglobal.net    |
| Don Prichard [Stephanie]                                                                                                                                                               | Email: jerry.l.porter@sbcglobal.net |
|                                                                                                                                                                                        | Email: pdon@sbcglobal.net           |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> Cathy Kleyn                                                                                                                                                          | Email: kleyn.david@sbcglobal.net    |
| <b>Deacon Chairman:</b> Nick Ritenour                                                                                                                                                  | Phone: 317-403-5762                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                        | Email: nick.ritenour@gmail.com      |
| <b>Deacons:</b> Gary Buriss [Nancy], Brad Erney [Diane], Patrick Hart [Anne], Tim Kleyn [Caroline], John Mauser [Pat], Kevin Mauser [Bethany], Rafa Perez [Sarah], Daniel Sturm [Anna] |                                     |

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**Kokomo, Indiana—Sycamore RPC**

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300 East Mulberry Street  
Kokomo, Indiana 46901

Website: [sycamorerpc.org](http://sycamorerpc.org)  
Phone: 765-854-0850

---

**Pastor:** Shawn Anderson [Tammy]. Installed 2013.

305 East Taylor St.  
Kokomo, IN 46901

Phone: 765-319-8728  
Email: [shawn.anderson@yahoo.com](mailto:shawn.anderson@yahoo.com)

**Clerk:** Robert McKissick [Sharon]

303 E. Walnut St.  
Kokomo, IN 46901

Phone: 574-329-0037  
Email: [rammd51@gmail.com](mailto:rammd51@gmail.com)

**Elder:** Tom Dinkledine [Susan]

Email: [tomdink@gmail.com](mailto:tomdink@gmail.com)

**Treasurers:** Brentt and Bethany VanSickle

1045 South Indiana Ave.  
Kokomo, IN 46902

Phone: Brentt 765-431-7238  
Bethany 765-438-8759  
Email: [bethany.vansickle@gmail.com](mailto:bethany.vansickle@gmail.com)

**Deacons:** Brian Anderson, Patrick Blue [Mia], Sam [Denise] Morrow, Brentt VanSickle

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**Lafayette, Indiana, RPC (PA, HA)**

---

1723 South 9th Street  
Lafayette, Indiana 47905

Phone: 765-474-3307

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**Pastor:** Adam Niess [Anne]. Installed 2018.

1606 Stonevalley Ct.  
Lafayette, IN 47909

Cell: 765-250-0492  
Email: [adamniess@reformedlafayette.com](mailto:adamniess@reformedlafayette.com)

**Clerk:** Ken Nelson [Christy]

1228 Meadowbrook Dr.  
Lafayette, IN 47905

Cell: 765-418-8118  
Email: [knelson0204@gmail.com](mailto:knelson0204@gmail.com)

**Elders:** Robert Bibby [Marlene]

Jeff Kessler [Karla]

Chris Stockwell [Linda]

Email: [rwbibby@mintel.net](mailto:rwbibby@mintel.net)  
Email: [kesslerjeff@me.com](mailto:kesslerjeff@me.com)  
Email: [cmstocks@gmail.com](mailto:cmstocks@gmail.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** Aaron Hartzler [Jen]

1023 North 675 East  
Lafayette, IN 47905

Phone: 765-589-3269  
Email: [alhartzler@juno.com](mailto:alhartzler@juno.com)

**Financial Secretary:** Bob Sabolich [Linda]

8809 Fenwick Ct.  
Lafayette, IN 47905

Phone: 765-426-9972  
Email: [rsabolich@gmail.com](mailto:rsabolich@gmail.com)

### Marion, Indiana—Marion RPC

1100 West Jeffras Ave.  
Marion, IN 46952

Mail to pastor.  
Phone: 765-419-2700

**Pastor:** Jason Camery [Jenny]. Installed 2015.

1604 West Chapel Pike  
Marion, IN 46952

Phone: 765-419-2700  
Email: jacamery@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Scott Hunt [Allison]

1627 Parkview Dr.  
Marion, IN 46952

Phone: 765-660-1223  
Email: shunt@grantcounty.net

**Elder:** Greg Fisher [Pam]

**Treasurer:** David Morgan, Jr.  
4638 South 800 West  
Swayzee, IN 46986

Phone: 765-517-3095  
Email: morgandavidlewis@gmail.com

### Mason, Ohio—Southwest Ohio RPC

Meeting at: Mars Hill Academy  
4230 Aero Drive  
Mason, OH 45040

Websites: reformedohio.com  
sermonaudio.com/sworp  
www.KnodelLifeStyle.com

**Pastor:** Dr. R. E. "Dick" Knodel Jr. [Susan]. Installed 2015.

7515 Dover Dr.  
West Chester, OH 45069

Cell: 937-750-9459  
Email: knodeljr@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Timothy Vincze

9545 Cobblestone Walk  
West Chester, OH 45069

Cell: 513-417-7064  
Email: tvincze@juno.com

**Elders:** Gregory Scott Damerow

Steven Work [Jeannie]

Email: gdamerow@gmail.com  
Email: stevenwork48@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Timothy Vincze (see above)

**Deacon:** Christopher Knodel [Lisa]

124 Cariese Dr.  
Springboro, OH 45066

Cell: 937-313-4556  
Email: chris.knodel@gmail.com

### Orlando, Florida, RPC

324 East Livingston Street  
Orlando, Florida 32801

Website: orlandorpc.org  
Phone: 407-843-4361

**Pastor:** Dr. Nathan Eshelman [Lydia]. Installed 2021.

5262 Hoperita St.  
Orlando, FL 32812

Phone: 323-356-5717  
Email: n.p.eshelman@gmail.com



**Clerk:** Jonathan Schaefer [Dianne]

4529 Fontana St.

Orlando, FL 32807

Phone: 407-435-8700

Email: jonathan.f.schaefer@outlook.com

**Elders:** James Pennington [Ruth]

Joe Worsham [Donna]

Email: jcpenn73@gmail.com

Email: wor8727@msn.com

**Treasurer:** Robert Terry [Peggy]

2047 Howell Branch Rd.

Maitland, FL 32751

Phone: 407-648-0877

**Deacon Chairman:** Scott Bailey

3824 Alverado St.

Orlando, FL 32812

Cell: 407-924-8962

Email: BSB898@gmail.com

---

### **Prairie View, Illinois—Westminster RPC**

16670 West Easton Avenue

Prairie View, Illinois 60069

Website: westminsterrpc.org

Phone: 847-634-3333

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**Pastor:** Brett Mahlen, Interim, Sept. 24, 2020

**Clerk:** Robert Koch [Pam]

103 Hamilton Place

Vernon Hills, IL 60061

Phone: 847-367-9188

Email: rlkochsales@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Matt Stiegert

Send all mail to church address.

Email: mlstiegert@aol.com

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### **Selma, Alabama, RPC**

627 J. L. Chestnut Jr. Boulevard

Selma, Alabama 36701-5576

Phone: 334-875-7692

(All mail to church address)

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**Pastor:** Vacant (since 2011)

**Interim moderator:** Jerry O'Neill [Ann]

505 Fox Dr.

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Work: 412-477-9200

Email: joneill@rpts.edu

**Provisional Elder:** Adam Niess

Email: adamniess@reformedlafayette.com

**Clerk:** George P. Evans [Jeannie]

328 Kingsley Dr.

Selma, AL 36701

Phone: 334-875-1583

Email: evans\_g44@earthlink.net

**Elder:** Averette Woodson

Greg Woodson [Aretha]

Email: averette.woodson614@gmail.com

Email: gregory.woodson@att.net

**Treasurer:** Contact Greg Woodson (see above)

**Assistant Treasurer:** Juanita Jones

2504 Parkway Drive

Selma, AL 36701

Email: J2504J@aol.com

**Deacons:** Bertran Woodson [Regina], Charles Moorier [Velma], Jeannie Evans [George],  
Lynne Brown, Regina Woodson [Bert]

**S.S. Superintendent:** Lynne Brown

2007 Third Avenue Circle  
Selma, AL 36701

Phone: 334-872-0643

### **Southfield, Michigan, RPC (PA)**

26550 Evergreen Road

Website: reformed.com

Southfield, Michigan 48076

srpc.sermonaudio.com

Phone: 248-356-3932

**Pastor:** Adam Kuehner [Maegan]. Installed 2012.

26580 Evergreen Rd.  
Southfield, MI 48076

Cell: 248-497-9187

Email: ak@streetsermon.org

**Clerk:** Jon Hughes [Wendy]

4495 Harold Drive  
Troy, MI 48085

Phone: 248-680-1959

Email: jonhughes27@gmail.com

**Elder:** John Kim [Laura]

Email: kimjohn248@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Wendy Hughes [Jon]

Phone: 248-680-1959

Email: wendyhughes@reformed.com

### **Sparta, Illinois, RPC (BF)**

605 North Market Street

Website: spartarpc.org

Sparta, IL 62286

Phone: 618-443-4435

**Pastor:** Ross Fearing [Emily]. Installed 2021.

939 Country Club Rd.  
Sparta, IL 62286

Phone: 936-618-6336

Email: orfearing@gmail.com

**Clerk:** James Odom [Margaret]

300 East Main St.  
Sparta, IL 62286

Phone: 618-443-5867

Email: james.odom@covenanthome.com

**Elder:** Robert Morrow

Email: rwmorrow62286@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Eric Morrow

414 North Vine St.  
Sparta, IL 62286

Phone: 618-317-8557

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**Terre Haute, Indiana, RPC**

---

1407 North 25th Street

Website: terrehafterpc.org

Terre Haute, Indiana 47803

Phone: 812-612-1646

(Send all mail to church address.)

---

**Pastor:** Steve Rhoda [Mary]. Installed 2019

2300 N. 12th St.

Phone: 765-412-7786

Terre Haute, IN 47804

Email: smrhoda@mac.com

**Clerk:** Dr. Russell Lodge [Charlene]

2966 Brittany Ct.

Phone: 631-946-9618

Terre Haute, IN 47805

Email: russlodge@gmail.com

**Elder:** Josh Reshey

Email: jreshey@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Mrs. Donna SmithEmail: Treasurer@TerreHauteRPC.org

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**West Lafayette, Indiana—Immanuel RPC**

---

2212 Yeager Rd.

Website: immanuelrpc.com

West Lafayette, IN 47906-3823

Phone: 765-320-0077

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**Pastor:** Jared P. Olivetti [Lisa]. Installed 2007.

2103 Old Oak Dr.

Phone: 765-463-7913

West Lafayette, IN 47906

Cell: 765-418-5471

Email: jared@immanuelrpc.com

**Clerk:** David Carr [Karen]

103 Elvernan Dr.

Phone: 765-583-4494

West Lafayette, IN 47906

Cell: 765-337-2374

Email: david@davidkarencarr.net

**Elders:** Benjamin Larson [Anna]

Email: ben.anna.larson@gmail.com

Keith Magill [Becky]

Email: keith@magill.com

**Deacon Chairman:** Benjamin Brame [Avery]

840 Barlow St.

Phone: 765-418-0756

West Lafayette, IN 47906

Email: bbrame@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Sergei Spirydovich

6335 Gallegos Dr.

Email: spirydovich@hotmail.com

West Lafayette, IN 47906

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**Ministers without Pastorates—Retired**

---

Godfrey Franklin, Ph.D. [Barbara]

5625 Saint Adamnan St.

Phone: 850-485-1777

Pensacola, FL 32503

Email: dr.kbfranklinphd@gmail.com

Richard Johnston [Beckie]

1701 W. 51st St.

Phone: 317-460-0405

Indianapolis, IN 46228

Email: johnston2rpc@gmail.com

- Gordon J. Keddie [Jane]  
 330 Webber Way  
 Greenwood, IN 46142-1895  
 Phone: 317-887-0632  
 Email: gordon.j.keddie@gmail.com
- Ray B. Lanning [Linda J.]  
 547 Kingsbury St. NW  
 Grand Rapids, MI 49544  
 Phone: 616-459-9530  
 Email: raylann51@gmail.com
- Keith Magill [Becky]  
 4870 Little Pine Dr.  
 West Lafayette, IN 47906  
 Phone: 574-875-4688  
 Email: Keith@Magill.com
- R. Paul Mathews [Janet]  
 1372 Maple Leaf Dr.  
 Gaylord, MI 49735  
 Phone: 989-732-1051  
 Email: pjmath1@att.net
- Robert B. McCracken [Lynn]  
 Phone: 812-342-6375  
 Email: bobmccrcc@gmail.com
- Glenn McFarland [Jean]  
 212 Oak Hammock Dr.  
 Davenport, FL 33837  
 Summer (with James McFarland):  
 11867 Quarter Horse Dr.  
 North Huntingdon, PA 15642  
 Email: GandJMcFarland@yahoo.com
- Jim McMahan  
 110 E. Meridian School Rd. Apt. 304  
 Indianapolis, IN 46227  
 Phone: 267-625-8520
- Robert W. Morrow  
 32 Eagle Dr.  
 Sparta, IL 62286  
 Phone: 618-708-0169  
 Email: rwmorrow62286@gmail.com
- Jim/James Pennington [Ruth]  
 123 Casa Mirella Way. Apt. #2109  
 Windermere, FL 34786  
 Cell: 407-235-5393  
 Email: jcpenn73@gmail.com
- Dennis Prutow, *Prof. Emeritus* RPTS [Erma]  
 1043 Carters Grove  
 Indianapolis, IN 46260  
 Cell: 412-901-2608  
 Email: dprutow@currently.com
- Thomas Reid [Genevieve]  
 3206 NW 103rd Dr.  
 Gainesville, FL 32606-5099  
 Phone: 412-576-7865  
 Email: tgreidjr@gmail.com
- Bill Roberts [Rachel]  
 Phone: 812-327-5296  
 Email: Bill4RTF@gmail.com
- Frank C. Schutz  
 5650 North Meadow's Boulevard  
 Columbus, OH 43229  
 Phone: 614-848-8414  
 Email: frankc@schutzonline.net
- Steven Work [Jeannie]  
 401 Eastdale Dr.  
 Dayton, OH 45415  
 Cell: 785-299-0248  
 Email: stevenwork48@gmail.com

James M. Wright, *Pastor Emeritus*

Cell: 407-721-6385

Email: jimbojhawk@gmail.com

**Ministers without Pastorates—Active**

Mark Brown

Email: mbrown@rpts.edu

Keith Evans [Melissa]

Phone: 412-731-3000

100 Laurelwood Dr.

Cell: 765-414-9373

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Email: kevan@rpts.edu

Zachary Smith [Beth]

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David G. Whitla [June]

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**Students Under Care**

Allen Blackwood

Email: e.allen.blackwood@gmail.com

Tre Crawford

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Harley (Jake) Schwartz

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Joe Smith

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Jon Sturm



**JAPAN PRESBYTERY**

Moderator .....Sumito Sakai

Clerk ..... Kihei Takiura

Treasurer ..... Katsunori Endo

Auditor .....Hiroyuki Kanamori, Hayato Ohara

Young People's Secretary..... Kihei Takiura

Secretary for the presbytery's website: .....(http://www.rpjapan.org)

..... Manabu Torii (Email: manabu.torii@gmail.com)

**Amagasaki—Mukonosu RPC**

3-26-5, Mokonoso Honmachi

Phone and Fax: 06-6432-5343

Amagasaki 661-0031, Japan

[From USA and Can.: 011-81-6-6432-5343]

**Pastor:** Hiroyuki Kanamori [Junko]. Installed 2001.

5-26-12 Daiwanishi, Kawanishi

Email: hkgenapomuko512@yahoo. co.jp

Hyogo 666-0112, Japan

**Clerk (Elder):** Hayato Ohara [Misuzu]

6-24-3, Mukonosu

Amagasaki 661-0035, Japan

**Elder:** Jaewoon Jung [Minjung Shin]

**Treasurer:** Atsuko Fukuya and Misuzu Ohara—c/o Mukonoso RPC  
3-26-5 Mukonoso Honmachi  
Amagasaki, 661-0031 Japan

### **Kobe—Higashisuma RPC (SS, HA)**

4-2-26 Oote-cho, Suma-Ku, Phone and Fax: 078-731-5702  
Kobe 654-0013, Japan [From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-731-5702]  
Email: rpkp99124@maia.eonet.ne.jp

**Pastor:** Sumito Sakai [Reiko]. Installed 1995.

2-7-3, Takakuradai, Suma-ku Phone: 078-732-0405  
Kobe, 654-0081, Japan [from USA & Can.: 011-81-78-732-0405]  
Email: sumitorpc@docomo.co.jp

**Provisional Elder:** Katsunori Endo (see Kita-Suzurandai Mission Church)

**Retired Elders:** Akira Funahashi, Kazuo Ishii

**Treasurer:** Yoko Funahashi

6-1-33 Nishi Maiko, Tarumi-Ku Phone and Fax: 078-783-3989  
Kobe 655-0048, Japan [From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-783-3989]

**S.S. Superintendent:** Kazuo Ishii

1-26-4, Takakura-dai, Suma-ku Phone: 078-733-8941  
Kobe, 654-1181 [From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-733-3989]

**Youth Leader:** Takashi Sato

#302, 1-1-22, Tobimatsu-cho, Suma-Ku Phone: 078-734-7474  
Kobe 654-0012, Japan [From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-734-7474]

### **Kobe—Kasumigaoka RPC (BF, SS, HA)**

6-8-10, Kasumigaoka, Tarumi-Ku Phone/Fax: 078-707-2155  
Kobe 655-0039, Japan [From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-707-2155]

**Pastor:** Yusuke Hirata [Honami]. Installed 2020.

304 Carnmoney Rd. Email: yhirata0416@gmail.com  
Newtownabbey  
BT36 6NW, UK

**Clerk (Elder):** Kozo Kato [Yoshiko].

1-4-15, Midorigaoka Higashi Phone and Fax: 079-485-0592  
Miki 673-0533 Japan [From USA & Can.: 011-81-79-485-0592]  
Email: kozo.kato0317@gmail.com

**Provisional Elders:** Shigeru Takiura (Interim Session Moderator), Sumito Sakai

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**Kobe—Okamoto-Keiyaku RPC (SS, HA, PM)**

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6-17-31, Motoyama Kita-Machi,  
Higashinada-Ku  
Kobe 658-0003, Japan

Phone and Fax: 078-452-5310  
[From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-452-5310]

---

**Pastors:** Shigeru Takiura, D.D. Installed 1977.

8-5-503, Sumiyoshidai  
Higashinada- Ku  
Kobe 658-0003, Japan

Cell Phone: 090-3940-8251  
[From USA & Can.: 011-81-90-3940-8251]  
Email: stakiura@nifty.com

Kihei Takiura (Amelia). Installed 2013.

6-17-31, Motoyama Kita-Machi  
Higashinada-Ku  
Kobe 658-0003, Japan

Phone: 078-452-5310  
{From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-452-5310}  
Email: prayandpeace@@hotmail.com

**Clerk** (Elder): Hirokazu Enomoto [Chie]

#202, 13-25, 1-chome  
Mikage, Higashinada-ku  
Kobe 658-0047, Japan

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[From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-862-5136]

**Treasurer:** Hajime Nakamura [Hiroko]

1-9-2 Daiwa-Higashi  
Kawanishi, 666-0111, Japan

Phone and Fax: 0727-95-0182  
[From USA & Can.: 011-81-727-95-0182]  
Email: hajime.nk@jupiter.ocn.ne.jp

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**Kobe—Kita-Suzurandai (Mission Church)**

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1-4-10, Izumi-dai, Kita-Ku  
Kobe 651- 1141, Japan

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**Pastor:** Katsunori Endo [Yuko]. Installed 2005.

#102, Royal Heights Amagi  
1-3-7 Amagidoru  
Nada-Ku, Kobe 657-0823 Japan

Phone: 078-855-2454  
[From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-855-2454]  
Email: katsunori.e.endo@gmail.com

**Provisional Session (Kita-Suzurandai Commission) Moderator:**

Katsunori Endo (domestic missionary)

**Provisional Clerk:** Hiroyuki Kanamori (pastor, Mukonosu RPC)

**Provisional Elder:** Sumito Sakai (pastor, Higashisuma RPC)

**Treasurer:** Katsunori Endo

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### **Kobe Theological Hall (KTH)**

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Covenanter Center Building

1-25-2, Nakayamate-dori, Chuo-ku

Kobe 650-0004, Japan

\* Main facility and Guest room:

(Contact Rev. S. Takiura)

Website: [www.rpjapan.org/English/KTH/](http://www.rpjapan.org/English/KTH/)

Phone : 078-230-1199

[From USA & Can.: 011-81-78- 230- 1199]

Phone and Fax: 090-3940-8251

[From USA & Can.: 011- 81-90-3940-8251 ]

---

**Chairman of the Faculty:** Shigeru Takiura, D.D.

**Representative:** Shigeru Takiura, D.D.

**Other Faculty Members:** Katsunori Endo, Hiroyuki Kanamori, Sumito Sakai, Kihei Takiura

**Lecturer:** Yusuke Hirata

**Assistant Librarian:** Junko Enmi

**Treasurers:** Chizuru Morikage, Setsuko Iwama

### **Covenanter Book Room (CBR)**

---

[Its legal status being under the Trustees of the Synod]

Covenanter Center Building

1-25-2, Nakayamate-dori, Chuo-ku

Kobe 650-0004, JAPAN

Phone and Fax: 078-242-7003

[From USA & Can.: 011-81-78-242-7003]

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**Chairman of the Board:** Masahiro Harada

**Members of the Board:** Masahiro Harada, Shigeru Takiura, Shigeru Yamaguchi

**Literature Department Director:** Shigeru Yamaguchi

**Mission Department Director:** Kihei Takiura





### **MIDWEST PRESBYTERY**

Moderator ..... Contact Clerk of Presbytery  
 Clerk ..... Andrew Barnes (mwpclerk@gmail.com)  
 Assistant Clerk ..... Joe Allyn (joellyn@gmail.com)  
 Treasurer ..... Shawn Stickel (shawn.stickel@outlook.com)  
 Ad Interim Commission Moderator ..... Jason Ryce (pastor.ryce@gmail.com)  
 Iowa, Kansas, and Western Conference Secretaries ..... John W. Smith  
 ..... Jonathan Haney, Brad Johnston  
 Youth Leaders ..... Craig and Shana Milroy

### **Bryan, Texas—Living Way RP Church**

3141 Briarcrest Drive, Suite 513  
 Bryan, Texas 77802-3057

Website: [www.livingwayrpc.org](http://www.livingwayrpc.org)  
 Email: [livingwayrpc@gmail.com](mailto:livingwayrpc@gmail.com)  
 Phone: 979-464-9728

**Pastor:** Steve Rockhill [Maria]. Installed 2017.

2315 Kent St.  
 Bryan, TX 77802

Home: 979-704-1588  
 Cell: 979-721-0717  
 Email: [revrock402@gmail.com](mailto:revrock402@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Sean McDeavitt [Angela]

14 Ravens Nest  
 Bryan, TX 77808

Cell: 979-595-8142  
 Email: [promisebelievers@gmail.com](mailto:promisebelievers@gmail.com)

**Elders:** Nathanael Cook [Bethany]

Kevin Dennis [Candice]

Email: [ncook@cookandsonskbath.com](mailto:ncook@cookandsonskbath.com)  
 Email: [kevin.l.dennis@gmail.com](mailto:kevin.l.dennis@gmail.com)

**Deacon:** Jaco VanderMerwe [Sandra]

Email: [jacovandermerwe65@gmail.com](mailto:jacovandermerwe65@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Nathanael Cook.

### **Clarinda, Iowa, RPC**

223 E. Washington St.  
 Clarinda, Iowa 51632  
 Phone: 712-303-1220

Mailing address: PO Box 66  
 Clarinda, IA 51632

**Pastor:** Jonathan Haney [Adrienne]. Installed 2021.

302 West Nishna St.  
 Clarinda, IA 51632

Phone: 712-303-9660  
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**Clerk:** Steve Falk [Ruth]

2045 Willow Ave.  
 Clarinda, IA 51632

Phone: 712-542-2486  
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**Elder:** Renwick Adams [Norma]

Phone: 712-542-5841

Email: renwickadams@mediacombb.net

**Treasurer:** Norma Adams [Renwick]

723 South 22<sup>nd</sup> St.

Phone: 712-542-5841

Clarinda, IA 51632

### **Clay Center, Kansas—Hebron RPC (PA)**

1328 Goodin Drive

Website: [www.claycenterreformed.org](http://www.claycenterreformed.org)

Clay Center, Kansas 67432

Phone: 785-630-8403

**Pastor:** Daniel Hemken [Kim]. Installed 2017.

825 Court St.

Phone: 319-931-2042

Clay Center, KS 67432

Email: revhemken@hotmail.com

**Clerk:** Steven McMahan [Sheryl]

1807 Pogue Rd.

Phone: 785-632-3043

Clay Center, KS 67432

Email: smcmahan@kansas.net

**Elder:** Harold Milligan [Margaret]

Email: hlmill67.hm@gmail.com

**Deacon Chairman:** Norman Milligan [Gwen]

1301 Sherman St.

Phone: 785-632-3613

Clay Center, KS 67432

**Treasurer:** Bessie Van Kirk

1038 Huntress St.

Phone: 785-632-3794

Clay Center, KS 67432

**C. E. Chairman:** Steven McMahan [Sheryl]

### **Colorado Springs, Colorado—Springs Reformed Church (PA)**

229 South Weber Street

Website: [www.springsreformed.org](http://www.springsreformed.org)

Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Phone: 719-577-4157

Email: [office@springsreformed.org](mailto:office@springsreformed.org)

**Pastor:** Jason Ryce [Janine]. Installed 2014.

2019 Sussex Ln.

Phone: 412-849-7675

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Email: [pastor.ryce@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.ryce@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** John Logan [Suzanne]

2227 Wood Ave.

Email: [office@springsreformed.org](mailto:office@springsreformed.org)

Colorado Springs, CO 80907

**Elders:** Greg Mann

Email: [gregmann63@gmail.com](mailto:gregmann63@gmail.com)

Keith Mann

Email: [kmann8@gmail.com](mailto:kmann8@gmail.com)

**Elder Emeritus:** Dean Chaney [Shirley]

**Deacon Chairman:** Josh Mann

**Treasurer:** John Logan (see above)

---

**Colorado Springs, Colorado—Tri-Lakes Reformed Church**

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5550 Shoup Rd.

Website: [www.trilakesreformed.org](http://www.trilakesreformed.org)

Colorado Springs, CO 80908

Phone: 719-487-9299

Email: [office@trilakesreformed.org](mailto:office@trilakesreformed.org)

---

**Pastor:** Joseph Friedly [Morgan]. Installed 2017.

17472 Crestview Ct.

Phone: 970-302-2865

Monument, CO 80132

Email: [joseph.friedly@trilakesreformed.org](mailto:joseph.friedly@trilakesreformed.org)**Associate Pastor:** Sam McCracken [Julia].

6180 Plowshare Ct.

Phone: 307-315-7864

Colorado Springs, CO 80922

Email: [pastorsammcc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorsammcc@gmail.com)**Clerk:** Craig Milroy [Shana]

2306 Afton Way

Cell: 719-338-0748

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Email: [eldercraigmilroy@gmail.com](mailto:eldercraigmilroy@gmail.com)**Elder:** Joe Debenedittis [Rebecca]Email: [joedebe68@gmail.com](mailto:joedebe68@gmail.com)**Treasurer:** Shawn Stickel [Cindy]

1420 Catamaran Ln.

Phone: 719-510-0973

Monument, CO 80132

Email: [shawn.stickel@outlook.com](mailto:shawn.stickel@outlook.com)**Deacon Chairman:** Jeremiah Hamer [Emily]

1235 S. Calhan Hwy.

Cell: 720-724-7228

Yoder, CO 80864

Email: [hamer.jeremiah@gmail.com](mailto:hamer.jeremiah@gmail.com)

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**Columbia, Missouri, RPC—Grace Reformed Mission Church**

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Meeting at: 3669 Legion Lane

Website: <https://www.gracerpcna.org>Columbia, MO 65201

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**Pastor:** Gary McNamee [Cynthia]. Installed 2021.

Phone: 912-374-7852

Email: [gmcnamee@rpts.edu](mailto:gmcnamee@rpts.edu)**Commission/TGB:** Gary McNamee (moderator), Bryan Schneider, Joe Allyn (clerk), Daniel Hemken

---

**Dallas (McKinney), Texas, RPC**

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Meeting at: 1008 W. Erwin Ave.

Website: [www.dallasrpc.org](http://www.dallasrpc.org)

McKinney, TX 75067

Phone: 214-538-2297

Mail to: PO Box 484

Howe, TX 75459

---

**Pastor:** Romesh Prakashpalan [Maegan]

3207 Franklin Ave.

Phone: 805-404-3547

Melissa, TX 75454

Email: [romeshprakash@hotmail.com](mailto:romeshprakash@hotmail.com)

**Clerk:** Andrew Silva [Jenny] Phone: 325-864-9593  
 Email: andrewsilva80@gmail.com

**Elder:** Nick Schoeneberger [Laura] Phone: 972-569-7143  
 Email: repeater75@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Nick Schoeneberger (see above)

### **Denison, Kansas, RPC**

106 7<sup>th</sup> Street; PO Box 76 Phone: 785-935-2348  
 Denison, Kansas 66419-0076

**Pastor:** Caleb Allen [Hannah]. Installed 2021  
 208 Central Ave. Phone: 540-421-5963  
 Denison, KS 66419 Email: csallen488@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Steve VanHorn [Mitzie]  
 19166 W Rd. Phone: 785-935-2372  
 Denison, KS 66419-9626 Email: mitzie.vanhorn@gmail.com

**Elder:** James Scoby [Laura] Email: jim.scoby@gmail.com

**Deacon Chm.:** Dale Harman [Barb]  
 17940 198<sup>th</sup> Rd. Email: dale.harman@gmail.com  
 Holton, KS 66436-8479

**Treasurer:** Barbara Harman Email: barbharman@gmail.com

**S. S. Supt.:** Eric Scoby [Sarah]  
 244 K246 Hwy. Phone: 785-285-1995  
 Sabetha, KS 66534 Email: escoby@gmail.com

### **Grandview, Missouri—Christ Presbyterian Church**

Meeting at: 12708 US 71 Hwy. Mail to: PO Box 480161  
 Grandview, MO 64030 Kansas City, MO 64148  
 Website: www.cpc-kc.com Phone: 913-206-3681

**Pastor:** Andrew J. Barnes [Dena]. Installed 2011.  
 11908 W. 68th St. Phone: 913-206-3681  
 Shawnee, KS 66216-2812 Email: barnesaj@gmail.com

**Clerk:** David Maine [Patty]  
 5510 Noland Rd. Phone: 913-631-4180  
 Shawnee, KS 66216-4616 Email: dbmdba@gmail.com

**Deacon Chm. and Treasurer:** Larry Maxwell [Patricia]  
 10929 Virginia Ave. Phone: 816-941-8299  
 Kansas City, MO 64131-3550 Email: lqm300@gmail.com

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**Laramie, Wyoming, RPC**

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Meeting at: Albany County Library

Website: [www.laramierpc.org](http://www.laramierpc.org)

Send mail to: 2020 Grand Ave., Ste. 415

Phone: 307-761-3701

Laramie, Wyoming 82070

---

**Pastor:** Vacant since 2021**Provisional Clerk:** Jerrold S. Milroy [Saundy]

2028 Downing Dr.

Phone: 719-694-9081

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Cell: 913-488-0005

Email: [jsmilroy@gmail.com](mailto:jsmilroy@gmail.com)**Elder:** Clyde Brown [Mary]Email: [cbrown@kodiaktechnology.com](mailto:cbrown@kodiaktechnology.com)**Treasurer:** Jeremy Riggs

Phone: 307-399-0550

Mail to church mailing address.

Email [jjidder13@yahoo.com](mailto:jjidder13@yahoo.com)

---

**Lawrence, Kansas—Christ Covenant Church**

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2312 Harvard Road

Website: [christcovenantchurchrpc.org](http://christcovenantchurchrpc.org)Lawrence, Kansas 66049

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**Pastor:** John M. McFarland [Lisa]. Installed 2003.

23252 Guthrie Rd.

Cell: 785-766-7796

Linwood, KS 66052

Email: [JMMLawrence@aol.com](mailto:JMMLawrence@aol.com)**Clerk:** Carl Mathews [Sharon]

818 Missouri St.

Phone: 785-218-3085

Lawrence, KS 66044

Email: [csmathews72@hotmail.com](mailto:csmathews72@hotmail.com)**Elders:** Phil Beard [Eileen]Email: [epbeard@gmail.com](mailto:epbeard@gmail.com)

Bill Graham [Mary]

Email: [wdgraham1@gmail.com](mailto:wdgraham1@gmail.com)

Jim Jarrow [Tamara]

Email: [jimjarrow@earthlink.net](mailto:jimjarrow@earthlink.net)**Deacon Chairman:** Peter McDonald [Rachel]

Phone: 785-840-8607

Email: [petemcd@gmail.com](mailto:petemcd@gmail.com)**Treasurer:** Jeremiah Johnson [Michaelah]

Phone: 785-331-8194

Email: [jjohnson@alcovproperty.com](mailto:jjohnson@alcovproperty.com)**Christian Education Chairman:** Phil Beard

Phone: 785-764-0168

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## **Longmont, Colorado—Salt and Light RPC**

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Longmont, Colorado 80503

Website: [www.saltandlightrpchurch.org](http://www.saltandlightrpchurch.org)  
Phone: 720-606-3438

**Pastor:** H.P. McCracken [Carly]. Installed 2020.

1119 Button Rock Ct.  
Longmont, CO 80504

Phone: 443-668-3681  
Email: [McCracken.HP@gmail.com](mailto:McCracken.HP@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Mike McDaniel

1273 Brookfield Dr.  
Longmont, CO 80501

Phone: 303-775-2059  
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**Elder:** Jeff Bechtold [Eileen]

Email: [jeffbechtold123@gmail.com](mailto:jeffbechtold123@gmail.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** John Hindman [Angi]

221 Grant St.  
Longmont, CO 80501

Phone: 303-682-9829  
Email: [jongicon@juno.com](mailto:jongicon@juno.com)

**Treasurer:** Jarrod Bechtold [Hannah]

1815 Duchess Dr.  
Longmont, CO 80501

Phone: 303-815-9829  
Email: [JarrodBechtold@gmail.com](mailto:JarrodBechtold@gmail.com)

## **Manhattan, Kansas, RPC**

Meeting at: First Free Methodist  
1231 Poyntz Ave.  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

Website: [www.manhattanreformed.org](http://www.manhattanreformed.org)

**Pastor:** Vacant since 2021

**Interim Moderator:** Mark Koller [Amy]

Phone: 214-538-2297

Email: [mkoller1517@yahoo.com](mailto:mkoller1517@yahoo.com)  
or [mkoller1517@gmail.com](mailto:mkoller1517@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Joel Wallace [Laura]

3309 Anderson Ave.  
Manhattan, KS 66503

Phone: 785-817-2625  
Email: [jwallaceks@gmail.com](mailto:jwallaceks@gmail.com)

**Elders:** William T. Mann [Lindsay]

Mike Stewart [Jean]

Email: [mann.williamt@gmail.com](mailto:mann.williamt@gmail.com)  
Email: [MLS04@sbcglobal.net](mailto:MLS04@sbcglobal.net)

**Deacon Chairman:** Contact Session Clerk

**Treasurer:** Erin Backensto [Keith]

814 Wildcat Ridge, A  
Manhattan, KS 66502

Phone: 785-217-8638  
Email: [treasurer@manhattanreformed.org](mailto:treasurer@manhattanreformed.org)

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**Morning Sun, Iowa—Sharon RPC (BF)**

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PO Box 486

Phone: 319-394-3382

Morning Sun, Iowa 52640

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**Pastor:** Bryan Schneider [Olivia]. Installed 2018.

26029 160th Ave.

Phone: 319-217-2388

Morning Sun, IA 52640

Email: bryan@sharonrpc.org

**Clerk:** John W. Smith [Roselea]

11573 Northview Dr.

Phone: 319-754-8720

Burlington, IA 52601-8611

Email: johnroseleas@q.com

**Elder:** James Pilling [Sharon]

Email: iowafarmer@gmail.com

**Deacon Chairman:** Bob McElhinney

PO Box 131, 109 SE Third St.

Phone: 319-868-7865

Morning Sun, IA 52640

Email: mssun@live.com

**Treasurer:** Kim Robb [Christy]

26518 Morning Sun Rd.

Phone: 319-868-7852

Morning Sun, IA 52640

Email: kcrobb@louisacomm.net

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**Oklahoma City, OK—Mission Station**

---

**Contact:** Stillwater (OK) RPC Session or

Stephen Mulder [Grace]. Installed 2021.

2025 Sheffield Rd.

Phone: 412-721-1970

The Village, OK 73120

Email: smulder@rpts.edu

---

**Quinter, Kansas, RPC**

---

719 Gove Street, PO Box 280

Website: quinterrpc.org

Quinter, Kansas 67752

---

**Pastor:** Matthew Sexton [Marcie]. Installed 2016.

605 Main St., PO Box 41

Phone: 719-839-0305

Quinter, KS 67752

Email: m.thomassexton@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Max Mann [Fran]

2551 Castle Rock Rd.

Phone: 785-754-3925

Quinter, KS 67752

Email: memplain@ruraltel.net

**Deacon Chairman:** Sam Chestnut [Norma]

PO Box 313

Phone: 785-754-2315

Quinter, KS 67752

**Treasurer:** Marilyn Copeland [Stan]

531 Lincoln St.

Cell: 785-447-0298

Quinter, KS 67752

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## San Antonio, Texas, Mission

Meeting at: 6755 N. Loop 1604 W.  
San Antonio, TX 78249

Website: <http://rpcsa.org>  
Email: [sanantoniopc@gmail.com](mailto:sanantoniopc@gmail.com)

**Pastor:** Jonathan B. Leach [Mary Lou]

17110 Low Rd.  
Helotes, TX 78023

Phone: 210-347-5116  
Email: [lonestarleach@gmail.com](mailto:lonestarleach@gmail.com)

**Commission:** Jonathan Leach, chairman; Kevin Dennis; Mark Koller; Andrew Silva; Steve Rockhill

## Shawnee, Kansas, RPC (BF)

6835 Pflumm Road  
Shawnee, Kansas 66203

Website: [www.shawneerpc.org](http://www.shawneerpc.org)  
Phone: 913-631-1991

**Pastors:** Joe Allyn [Maggie]. Installed 2021.

10227 Long St.  
Lenexa, KS 66215

Phone: 913-707-2121  
Email: [joeallyn@gmail.com](mailto:joeallyn@gmail.com)

Derek Moore [Clara]. Installed 2021.

13424 West 70th Terrace  
Shawnee, KS 66216

Phone: 913-213-9899  
Email: [covenanterderek@gmail.com](mailto:covenanterderek@gmail.com)

**Moderator:** Derek Moore

**Clerk:** Dennis Wing [Debbie]

6104 Hallet St.  
Shawnee, KS 66216

Phone: 913-268-9612  
Email: [dwingkc@hotmail.com](mailto:dwingkc@hotmail.com)

**Elders:** Bill Boyle [Carol]

Ron Patterson [Mary Lou]

Barry VanHorn [Jenia]

Harry Ward [Mary Jane]

Email: [bcboyle76@gmail.com](mailto:bcboyle76@gmail.com)  
Email: [d.ronald.patterson@gmail.com](mailto:d.ronald.patterson@gmail.com)  
Email: [vanhornba@gmail.com](mailto:vanhornba@gmail.com)  
Email: [harryward33@gmail.com](mailto:harryward33@gmail.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** Matt Boyle [Anne]

7431 Monrovia St.  
Shawnee, KS 66216

Phone: 913-593-4176  
Email: [mjboyle08@gmail.com](mailto:mjboyle08@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Anthony Nicholl [Gretchen]

10827 West 50<sup>th</sup> St.  
Shawnee, KS 66203

Phone: 913-951-6825  
Email: [aknicholl@hotmail.com](mailto:aknicholl@hotmail.com)

**C. E. Chairman:** Barry Viss



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**Sterling, Kansas, RPC (BF)**

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421 North 8<sup>th</sup> Street, PO Box 153  
Sterling, KS 67579

Website: [www.SterlingChurch.org](http://www.SterlingChurch.org)  
Phone: 620-278-3507

---

**Pastor:** Brian Wright [Lisa]. Installed 2017.

510 Broadway Ave.  
Sterling, KS 67579

Phone: 785-409-5839  
Email: [pastorbrian@sterlingchurch.org](mailto:pastorbrian@sterlingchurch.org)

**Clerk:** Don Reed [Linda]

425 North 7<sup>th</sup> St.  
Sterling, KS 67579

Cell: 620-204-0699  
Email: [dreed1946@gmail.com](mailto:dreed1946@gmail.com)

**Elders:** Ed Hayes [Terri]

Bill Kilgore [Andrea]

Email: [ehayes@rpts.edu](mailto:ehayes@rpts.edu)  
Email: [w.kilgore@cox.net](mailto:w.kilgore@cox.net)

**Treasurer:** Bill Kilgore [Andrea]

207 East Main  
Sterling, KS 67579

Phone: 620-204-6007  
Email: [w.kilgore@cox.net](mailto:w.kilgore@cox.net)

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**Stillwater, Oklahoma, RPC**

---

PO Box 531  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74076-0531  
Phone: 405-385-9127  
Website: [www.stillwaterrpc.org](http://www.stillwaterrpc.org)

Meeting at:  
1624 W. Lakeview  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74075

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**Pastor:** R. Bruce Parnell [Vicky]. Installed 1991.

1011 South Duncan  
Stillwater, OK 74074

Phone: 405-714-1033  
Email: [pastor@stillwaterrpc.org](mailto:pastor@stillwaterrpc.org)

**Clerk:** Alan Noell [Liz]

2723 North Monroe St.  
Stillwater, OK 74075

Phone: 405-377-0634  
Email: [avnoell@gmail.com](mailto:avnoell@gmail.com)

**Elders:** David Carroll [Margaret]

Jeff Spitler [Melody]  
Bill Wagner [Jeanne]

Email: [dave@poiemainc.com](mailto:dave@poiemainc.com)  
Email: [jeffrey.spitler@gmail.com](mailto:jeffrey.spitler@gmail.com)  
Email: [williamnwagner79@gmail.com](mailto:williamnwagner79@gmail.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** Dan Yost [Stephanie]

1101 South Chester St.  
Stillwater, OK 74074

Phone: 405-372-2494  
Email: [dan@tri8.com](mailto:dan@tri8.com)

**Treasurer:** Logan West [Johannah]

4607 SW 29<sup>th</sup> St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73179

Email: [srpcbudget@gmail.com](mailto:srpcbudget@gmail.com)

**Topeka, Kansas, RPC (BF)**

8345 Southwest 33<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 (33<sup>rd</sup> and Auburn Road)  
 Topeka, Kansas 66614

Website: [www.topekareformedpres.org](http://www.topekareformedpres.org)  
 Phone: 785-272-1940

**Pastor:** Brad Johnston [Sue]. Installed 2010.

2538 Southwest Windslow Ct.  
 Topeka, KS 66614

Cell: 785-207-7007  
 Email: [brjusa@gmail.com](mailto:brjusa@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** William "Bill" McFarland

2709 Boswell Ave.  
 Topeka, KS

Cell: 785-233-2985  
 Email: [mr.macc16@gmail.com](mailto:mr.macc16@gmail.com)

**Elders:** Larry Copeland [Karen], Jonathan Parnell [Lisa], Kyle Reed [Elizabeth]

**Emeritus:** Darrell Parnell [Esther].

**Deacon Chairman:** Betsy Johns

2411 SW 34th St.  
 Topeka, KS 66402

Phone: 785-266-1580

**Treasurer:** Jonathan Parnell [Lisa]

2712 West 27<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
 Lawrence, KS 66047

Phone: 785-218-3361  
 Email: [treasurertrpc@gmail.com](mailto:treasurertrpc@gmail.com)

**Washington, Iowa, RPC**

500 South Avenue D  
 Washington, Iowa 52353

Phone: 319-653-3101

**Pastor:** Dan Drost [Abigail]. Installed 2012.

510 W. Jefferson St.  
 Washington, IA 52353

Phone: 319-471-2441  
 Email: [Daniel.Drost@gordon.edu](mailto:Daniel.Drost@gordon.edu)

**Clerk:** Rob Jarrard [Dorcas]

1928 Orange Ave.  
 Washington, IA 52353

Phone: 319-591-1481  
 Email: [andre9945@gmail.com](mailto:andre9945@gmail.com)

**Elder:** Michael Todd, D.V.M. [Lana]

Email: [mdtodd50@gmail.com](mailto:mdtodd50@gmail.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** Greg Skubal [Nancy]

3189 223<sup>rd</sup> St.  
 Ainsworth, IA 52201

Phone: 319-657-2315

**Treasurer:** Phil Falk [Joy]

Phone: 724-714-5930  
 Email: [philsf31@yahoo.com](mailto:philsf31@yahoo.com)

**S. S. Superintendent:** Donald Wilson [Judy] Phone: 319-728-2081

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**Westminster, Colorado, RPC (BF, PA)**

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4455 West 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Westminster, Colorado 80031

Website: [www.westminsterrpchurch.org](http://www.westminsterrpchurch.org)  
Phone: 303-469-0761

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**Pastor:** Vacant (since 2020). **Provisional Moderator:** Joseph Friedly (see Tri-Lakes)

**Clerk:** Paul Welander [Tara]  
PO Box 350453  
Westminster, CO 80035

Phone: 303-439-9694  
Email: [parshandera@outlook.com](mailto:parshandera@outlook.com)

**Elders:** John Duke [Kathy]

Email: [jtduke44@gmail.com](mailto:jtduke44@gmail.com)

**Deacon:** John Greene

Email: [john.greene@westminsterrpc.org](mailto:john.greene@westminsterrpc.org)

**Treasurer:** Jennifer Crow

1771 Evelyn Ct.  
Denver, CO 80229

Email: [treasurer@westminsterrpc.org](mailto:treasurer@westminsterrpc.org)

**C.E. Chairman:** Tara Welander [Paul]

Email: [taramd86@yahoo.com](mailto:taramd86@yahoo.com)

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**Winchester, Kansas, RPC (PA)**

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306 Delaware Street  
Winchester, Kansas 66097

Send all mail to  
PO Box H

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**Pastor:** Kyle Borg [Rachel]. Installed 2013.

PO Box 181  
Winchester, KS 66097

Phone: 913-297-4053  
Email: [borgkyle@gmail.com](mailto:borgkyle@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Jay O'Neill [Cindy]

16657 150<sup>th</sup> St.  
Winchester, KS 66097

Phone: 913-774-8791  
Email: [jk76oneill@gmail.com](mailto:jk76oneill@gmail.com)

**Elders:** David Huston [Joye]

Email: [husteigh@gmail.com](mailto:husteigh@gmail.com)

Bob Lyon [Rita]

Email: [blyon@ku.edu](mailto:blyon@ku.edu)

James Tweed [Jill]

Email: [jbtweed2@gmail.com](mailto:jbtweed2@gmail.com)

**Deacon Chairman:** Justin Finley [Molly]

Phone: 785-817-7211

Email: [jf4646@yahoo.com](mailto:jf4646@yahoo.com)

**Treasurer:** Bryan Noll

Email: [bwnoll@gmail.com](mailto:bwnoll@gmail.com)

**Christian Education Chairman:** James Tweed (see above)

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**Retired Ministers and/or Ordained Men Without Pastorates**

---

Dan Bartel [Teri Ann]

For address, contact MWP clerk.

Email: [djbartel965@gmail.com](mailto:djbartel965@gmail.com)

Stan Copeland [Marilyn]

531 Lincoln St.

Phone: 520-255-6948

Quinter, KS 67752

Email: [Stanley.Copeland@gmail.com](mailto:Stanley.Copeland@gmail.com)

|                                                                                             |                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paul W. Finley [Elizabeth]<br>811 Frazier St.<br>Valley Falls, KS 66088                     | Phone: 785-945-3895<br>Email: pefinley78@gmail.com                                   |
| Ron Graham [Gay]<br>7155 Mathews Rd.<br>Colorado Springs, CO 80908-4318                     | Phone: 719-313-9223<br>Cell: 785-672-5098<br>Email: rgraham1953@gmail.com            |
| Robert L. Hemphill [Cheryl]<br>1867 North 15th St.<br>Laramie, WY 82072                     | Cell: 307-399-8710<br>Email: bobhemphill2@gmail.com                                  |
| J. Edward Hindman [Cindy]<br>1186 SW Randolph Ave.<br>Topeka, KS 66604                      | Phone: 785-640-4906<br>Email: j.ed.hindman.42@gmail.com                              |
| Mark Koller [Amy]<br>2115 Tamarron Terrace<br>Manhattan, KS 66502                           | Phone: 214-538-2297<br>Email: mkoller1517@yahoo.com<br>or mkoller1517@gmail.com      |
| Jonathan B. Leach [Mary Lou]<br>17110 Low Rd.<br>Helotes, TX 78023                          | Phone: 210-347-5116<br>Email: lonestarleach@gmail.com<br>Email: hispeace4u@yahoo.com |
| Dr. EM<br>Robert H. McFarland [Georgia]<br>5460 SW 53 <sup>rd</sup> St.<br>Topeka, KS 66610 | Phone: 785-862-1835<br>Email: BGMcf58@aol.com                                        |
| Jerrold S. Milroy [Saundy]<br>2028 Downing Dr.<br>Colorado Springs, CO 80909                | Phone: 719-694-9081<br>Cell: 913-488-0005<br>Email: jsmilroy@gmail.com               |
| Kelly Moore [Judy]<br>3020 Vandenberg Ave.<br>Monument, CO 80132                            | Phone: 719-646-8608<br>Email: covenanter.kelly@gmail.com                             |
| Joe Paul [Marla]<br>5789 SW 116th Place Rd.<br>Ocala, FL 34476                              | Phone: 941-301-1421<br>Email: jcpaul88@yahoo.com                                     |
| David Reese [Elke].<br>For address contact MWP clerk.                                       | Email: pastor.reese@gmail.com                                                        |
| Shane Sapp [Kelly]<br>2684 Bryant Dr.<br>Broomfield, CO 80020                               | Cell: 720-215-1474<br>Email: pastor.shane.sapp@gmail.com                             |
| David R. Smith [Joann]<br>8850 W. 80th Dr.<br>Arvada, CO 80005                              | Cell: 303-557-8259<br>Email: David@drsmithproperties.com                             |

Greg Stiner [Janis]

11038 SW 5th St., Apt. 6837  
Yukon, OK 73099

Phone: 913-265-2464  
Email: gdstiner@gmail.com

Robert Ulrich

122 W. 13th Ave.  
Hutchinson, KS 67501

Phone: 620-664-7721  
Email: rbtulrich@yahoo.com

Jeffrey Yelton [Susan]

1741 Main St.  
Osawatomie, KS 66064

Phone: 913-755-7050  
Email: reformthechurch@yahoo.com

**Ministerial Students Under Care**

---

Nicki Imperato

Email: nimperato92@gmail.com

Kevin Dennis

Email: kevin.l.dennis@gmail.com

Colin Doyle

Email: cdoyle@rpts.edu

Josh Day

Email: jjoshday@outlook.com

**Ruling Elder Certified for Regular Occasional Preaching**

---

Joel Wallace

3309 Anderson Ave.  
Manhattan, KS 66503

Phone: 785-817-7625  
Email: jwallaceks@gmail.com



**PACIFIC COAST PRESBYTERY**

Moderator .....Colin Samul  
Clerk ..... Ryan Hemphill  
Assistant Clerk ..... Vacant  
Treasurer ..... Aaron Piper; Email: AaronPiper71@gmail.com  
Young People’s Co-coordinators..... Paul and Megan Hemphill  
Ad Interim Commission .....Colin Samul (moderator), Ryan Hemphill (clerk),  
..... Eduardo Fricovsky

**Boise, Idaho—Treasure Valley RP Mission Church**

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Meeting at: 237 E. State Ave.  
Meridian, ID 83642

Website: boisereformedpresbyterian.com  
(Mail to pastor)

**Pastor:** Ryan Hemphill [Alicia]

13586 Bascom St.  
Caldwell, ID 83607

Phone: 206-715-0988  
Email: pastormchemp@gmail.com

**Provisional elders:** John Maginn, Paul Perkins

**Treasurer:** Aaron Piper

### **Brea, California—All Saints**

Meeting at Laurel Elementary School  
200 South Flower Avenue  
Brea, California 92821

Mailing address: All Saints RP Church  
613 Moonbeam Street  
Placentia, California 92870

**Pastor:** John Sawtelle [Denise]. Installed 2012.

613 Moonbeam St.  
Placentia, CA 92870

Phone: 714-404-9908

Email: sawtelleboyz@yahoo.com

**Clerk:** John Spitzer [Jessica]

3010 A La Paz Ln.  
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Phone: 909-576-5785

Email: jmspitzer@gmail.com

**Elder:** Oscar Fernandez [Gurli]

Email: oacnmt@gmail.com

**Treasurer and Deacon:** Victor Triana [Adriana]

13970 Ramhurst Dr. Apt. 6  
La Mirada, CA 90638

Phone: 562-464-8238

Email: vhtriana@gmail.com

### **Edmonton, Alberta, Canada—The Shelter RPC**

Meeting at Mt. Zion Lutheran Church  
11533 - 135 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5M 1K9

Website: <https://shelterrpcchurch.com>  
*All mail to Clerk.*

**Pastor:** Vacant.

**Associate Pastor:** Derek Baars [Frances]. Installed 2018.

13544 - 124 Ave. NW  
Edmonton, AB T5L 1K5, Canada

Phone: 825-993-2095

Email: derekbaars@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Jordan Dohms [Doralynne]

11936 - 128 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5L 1C1, Canada

Phone: 780-455-8198

Email: jordan@dohms.net

**Provisional Elders:** Patrick McNeely, Jon Maginn

**Treasurer:** Eric Mulder

144 Greenwood Village  
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 0Z8, Can.

Phone: 780-920-4979

Email: ericmulder7@gmail.com

**Fresno, California, RPC**

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380 North Maple Avenue  
Fresno, California, 93702

Website: [www.fresnorpcchurch.org](http://www.fresnorpcchurch.org)

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**Pastor:** Vacant

**Clerk:** Paul Hemphill [Megan]  
166 N. Fairbanks Ave.  
Sanger, CA 93657

Phone: 559-392-2139  
Email: [hemphill.paul@gmail.com](mailto:hemphill.paul@gmail.com)

**Ruling Elder:** Bus Archer [Cheryl]

Email: [thebuzzard00@aol.com](mailto:thebuzzard00@aol.com)

**Elders Emeritus:** Bill Copeland [Willa], Dan Gathright [Kathy]

**Treasurer:** Dan Gathright [Kathy]

1073 North Filbert Ave.  
Clovis, CA 93611

Phone: 559-779-8549  
Email: [dgathright@gmail.com](mailto:dgathright@gmail.com)

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**Irvine, California—All Saints RP Church**

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Meeting at Northwood Community Center  
4531 Bryan Ave.  
Irvine, California 92620  
Website: [www.asrpci.org](http://www.asrpci.org)

Mailing address: All Saints RP Church  
14 Brentwood  
Irvine, CA 92620

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**Pastor:** Hsing Tang [Nancy]. Installed 2017.  
14 Brentwood  
Irvine, CA 92620

Phone: 949-751-7816  
Email: [irvinerpc@gmail.com](mailto:irvinerpc@gmail.com)  
Email: [sawtellboyz@yahoo.com](mailto:sawtellboyz@yahoo.com)

**Provisional Elder:** John Sawtelle

**Treasurer:** Alex Tu

24341 Blueridge Rd.  
Lake Forest, CA 92630

Phone: 949-294-5681  
Email: [alex@aitmission.org](mailto:alex@aitmission.org)

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**Las Vegas, Nevada, RP Mission Church**

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Meeting at:  
2800 W. Sahara Ave. #8A  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89102  
Website: [www.lasvegasreformedpresbyterianchurch.com](http://www.lasvegasreformedpresbyterianchurch.com)

Mail to: c/o Sean Holm  
7824 North Spartanburg St.  
Las Vegas, NV 89149

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**Pastor:** Edgar Ibarra [Juana]. Installed 2021.

7505 Turtle Dove Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89129

Phone: 410-733-9214  
Email: [puritanpresbyterian@gmail.com](mailto:puritanpresbyterian@gmail.com)

**Provisional Elders:** Chris Myers, Charles Shipman

**Treasurer:** Nathan Bell [Hannah]

3953 E. Packard Ave.  
Kingman, AZ 86409

## **Los Angeles, California, RPC**

3557 Fletcher Drive

Los Angeles, California 90065

Website: [www.rpcla.org](http://www.rpcla.org)

Phone: 323-255-8757

**Pastors:** Vacant

**Associate Pastor:** Namsik Yang [Eun]. Installed 2015. (Currently on study leave.)

2925 Leonard St. NE, Apt. 5

Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Phone: 412-737-7095

Email: [yang40517@hotmail.com](mailto:yang40517@hotmail.com)

**Clerk:** David Ashleigh [Sarah]

1130 Magnolia St.

South Pasadena, CA 91030

Phone: 626-703-7187

Email: [ashfam6@hotmail.com](mailto:ashfam6@hotmail.com)

**Ruling Elder:** Roel Ophoff [Marjan]

Email: [ophoff@gmail.com](mailto:ophoff@gmail.com)

**Elder Emeritus:** Hector Pino [Dottiann]

Email: [hcpino@aol.com](mailto:hcpino@aol.com)

**Treasurer:** Mirthe Spear

1720 Grevelia St. Apt. G

South Pasadena, CA 91030

Email: [mirthe97@gmail.com](mailto:mirthe97@gmail.com)

## **Phoenix, Arizona—First RPC**

1117 East Devonshire Avenue

Phoenix, Arizona 85014

Website: [PhoenixRPC.com](http://PhoenixRPC.com)

Phone: 602-277-3497

**Pastor:** Chris Myers [Misty]. Installed 2019.

6011 W. Purdue Ave.

Glendale, AZ 85302

Cell: 856-297-5837

Email: [reformationpastor@gmail.com](mailto:reformationpastor@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Charles Shipman [Kunthy]

Phone: 602-309-8670

Email: [charleshshipman@gmail.com](mailto:charleshshipman@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Christopher Myers with assistant Kunthy (Thy) Shipman

15147 W. Cortez St.

Surprise, AZ 85379

Email: [deacon.phxrpc@gmail.com](mailto:deacon.phxrpc@gmail.com)

## **Reno, Nevada—Great Basin Reformed Presbyterian Church**

Meeting at (5 p.m. Lord's Day worship)

Evangelical Free Church

9725 S Virginia St.

Reno, NV 89511

Email: [GreatBasinRPC@gmail.com](mailto:GreatBasinRPC@gmail.com)

*All mail to Colin Samul.*

**Pastor:** Colin Samul [Shanna]. Installed 2019.

6909 Brahms Dr.

Sun Valley, NV 89433

Phone: 616-719-9922

Email: [colinsamul23@gmail.com](mailto:colinsamul23@gmail.com)

**Provisional elders:** Bus Archer, Paul Hemphill



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**San Diego, California, RPC**

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3495 College Avenue  
San Diego, California 92115

Website: [www.sandiegorpc.org](http://www.sandiegorpc.org)  
Phone: 619-582-0940

---

**Pastor:** Vacant

**Ruling Elder:** Eduardo Fricovsky [Maria]

3209 Via Marin  
La Jolla, CA 92037

Phone: 858-345-7528  
Email: [esfricovsky@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:esfricovsky@health.ucsd.edu)

**Provisional Elders:** Ryan Hemphill, Colin Samul

**Treasurer:** Eduardo Fricovsky

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**Seattle, Washington, RPC**

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6554 20th Avenue NE  
Seattle, Washington 98115

Website: [www.seattlerpchurch.org](http://www.seattlerpchurch.org)  
Phone: 206-522-3187

---

**Pastor:** Vacant

**Clerk:** Paul Perkins [Patricia]

5745 Kirkwood Pl. N.  
Seattle, WA 98103

Phone: 206-267-8823  
Email: [perkins48@q.com](mailto:perkins48@q.com)

**Ruling Elders:** Joel Martin [Jennifer]

Dennis Olson [Karen]

Email: [joel.martin3@comcast.net](mailto:joel.martin3@comcast.net)  
Email: [olson1de@aol.com](mailto:olson1de@aol.com)

**Treasurer:** Aaron Piper

19209 1st Ave. W.  
Bothell, WA 98012

Phone: 206-251-5947  
Email: [aaronpiper71@gmail.com](mailto:aaronpiper71@gmail.com)

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**Squamish, British Columbia—Coram Deo RP Church**

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Meeting location:

*All mail to pastor.*

Sea to Sky Community Services-Centerpoint

38024 Fourth Ave.

Squamish, BC V8B 0A7, CANADA

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**Pastor:** Patrick McNeely [Jaclyn]. Installed 2018.

66-39920 Government Rd.  
Squamish, BC V8B 0G5, Canada

Phone: 720-982-3464  
Email: [pdmcneel@gmail.com](mailto:pdmcneel@gmail.com)

**Provisional Elders (TGB):** Ryan Hemphill, Joel Martin, Patrick McNeely

**Treasurer:** David Robertson

1212 Main St., #416  
Squamish, BC V8B 0S1, Canada

Phone: 604-815-0950  
Email: [davidcarrob@hotmail.com](mailto:davidcarrob@hotmail.com)

### **Surry, B.C.—Nissi RP Mission**

Meeting location:

10629 - 138 St.

Surry, B.C., Canada

**Pastor:** Kevin Jia [Yvonne]

10269 - 138 St.

Surry, B.C.

Phone: 412-626-7419

Email: jiasb@yahoo.com

**Provisional Elders:** Patrick McNeely, Ryan Hemphill

### **West Vancouver, B.C.—North Shore Chinese Bible Truth Church**

Meeting location:

Meeting time: 2 p.m.

2893 Marine Dr.

West Vancouver, BC V7V 1M1, Canada

**Provisional Elders:** Patrick McNeely, Hsing Tang, John Spitzer

### **Retired Ministers and Missionaries**

Jon Maginn [Bonnie].

3827 North 73rd Dr.

Phoenix, AZ 85033

Phone: 602-751-7035

Email: PastorJonMaginn@msn.com

Tim McCracken [Lori], Regional Director (San Joaquin Valley, CA), Metanoia Prison Ministries of Mission to North America (<http://pcamna.org/metanoia-ministries>)

4614 E. Grant Ave.

Fresno, CA 93702

Phone: 559-455-3356

Email: fresnomcc@sbcglobal.net

### **Students Under Care**

Seni Adeyemi

Email: seni.adeyemi@icloud.com

Jerry Foltz

Phone: 562-862-9140

Email: jfoltz@rpts.edu

Johnathan Kruis

Phone: 520-488-9481

Email: johnathank@providencecc.edu

George Wallace

Phone: 412-327-6519

Email: george.John.Wallace@gmail.com

“James” Zhou Zheng

Phone: 604-271-6257

Email: zzhou@rpts.edu



**ST. LAWRENCE PRESBYTERY**

Moderator ..... D. Allan MacLeod  
 Clerk ..... Brian E. Coombs  
 Ad Interim Commission ..... contact Clerk, if needed  
 Treasurers, United States  
 ..... Ev Wood, Phone: 315-677-3711. Email: evwood1@aol.com  
 ..... Andrew E. Curran, Phone: 315-216-4460. Cell: 315-402-4417.  
 ..... Email: andycurranjr@gmail.com  
 Treasurer, Canada  
 ..... Jamie Hood, Phone: 613-224-2081  
 ..... Email: hosenco@bell.net  
 Presbytery Youth.....Chris Goerner [Megan], Phone: 315-507-7446.  
 ..... Email: cggoerner@hotmail.com

**Almonte, Ontario—Hillside RPC**

273 Almonte St. Phone: 613-256-2816  
 Almonte, Ontario, Canada K0A 1A0

**Pastor:** Matthew H. Dyck [Jennifer]. Installed 1998.  
 95 King St., Box 1725 Cell: 613-791-4811  
 Almonte, Ontario, K0A 1A0 Email: mhdyck@rogers.com  
**Clerk:** Gerry deHaan Email: dehaangn@gmail.com  
**Elders:** Bill Lowry Email: wlowry@hotmail.ca  
 Peter Chan Email: write2petechan@yahoo.ca  
**Treasurer:** Tony Welk Phone: 613-256-0842  
 Email: tntwelk@xplornet.com

**Clay, New York—Messiah’s Church**

8181 Stearns Rd. Phone: 315-706-5900  
 Clay, NY 13041 Website: www.messiahchurch.org

**Pastor:** Brian E. Coombs [Dorian]. Installed 1996.  
 6068 Rose Arbor Ln. Phone: 315-451-4032  
 Cicero, NY, 13039 Cell: 315-706-5900  
 Email: briancoombs@me.com  
**Clerk:** David McCune Phone: 315-652-1787  
 3956 Pawnee Dr. Cell: 315-372-4884  
 Liverpool, NY 13090 Email: dmccune1@icloud.com

**Treasurer:** Rick Tidd

6122 Owlwood Dr.  
Cicero, NY 13039

Phone: 315-409-9156  
Email: ricktidd@me.com

**Endicott, New York—Christian Heritage**


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Meeting at:

(Send mail to pastor, below.)

1000 Day Hollow Rd.  
Endicott, NY 13760

**Pastor:** Doug Chamberlain [Kimberly “K.J.”]. Installed 2017.

306 Lillian Ave.  
Endicott, NY 13760

Phone: 607-205-0280  
Email: doug@rockhollow.org

**Clerk:** Cory Valentine

26054 State Route 29  
Hallstead, PA 18822

Cell: 570-396-1018  
Email: drcjvalentine@gmail.com

**Elder:** Arthur Fawthrop [Ellen]

419 West Franklin Street  
Endicott, NY 13760

Phone: 607-748-0924  
Email: aefawthrop@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Michelle Fawthrop

Email: michellefawthropatlivingfree@gmail.com

Phone: 607-624-2607

**Floyd, NY—Christ Church**


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8470 New Floyd Road  
Floyd, NY 13340

Website: [www.christchurchreformed.com](http://www.christchurchreformed.com)

**Pastor:** Aaron M. Goerner [Heidi]. Installed 1997.

3 Proctor Blvd.  
Utica, NY 13501  
Email: agoerner@adelphia.net

Study: 315-734-0568  
Home: 315-733-0530

**Clerk:** Chris Goerner [Megan]

9269 Mallory Rd.  
New Hartford, NY 13413

Phone: 315-507-7446  
Email: cggoerner@hotmail.com

**Elder:** Greg Wold

Email: gregory.s.wold@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Mike Kelly

8459 New Floyd Rd.  
Rome, NY 13440

Phone: 315-204-4094  
Email: kellyilion@aol.com

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**Fulton, New York, RPC**

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207 South First St.  
Fulton, NY 13069

Phone: 315-402-8727  
Website: [www.fultonrpc.org](http://www.fultonrpc.org)

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**Pastor:** Nick Iamaio [Kathleen]. Installed 1994.

162 County Route 24  
Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-343-1976  
Email: [nicholasiamaio@gmail.com](mailto:nicholasiamaio@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Kevin Plummer

Phone: 315-312-0381  
Email: [plummerkrp@juno.com](mailto:plummerkrp@juno.com)

**Treasurer:** Rachel Tumbry

118 Batavia Ave  
Fulton NY 13069

Phone: 315-593-6691  
Email: [hit3forme@yahoo.com](mailto:hit3forme@yahoo.com)

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**Kitchener, Ontario—New Creation RPC**

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Christ the King United Church  
167 Thaler Ave., Kitchener, ON

(Send mail to Pastor, below)  
Website: [www.newcreationrpc.org](http://www.newcreationrpc.org)

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**Pastor:** J. Scott Wilkinson [Elineke]. Installed 2010.

1075 Saint Charles West  
Breslau, ON, Canada N0B 1K0

Phone: 519-807-4134  
Email: [pastorscottwilkinson@gmail.com](mailto:pastorscottwilkinson@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Rob Somers

104-320 Kingswood Dr.  
Kitchener, Ontario, N2E 2K2

Phone: 519-622-5713  
Email: [uberkermit@gmail.com](mailto:uberkermit@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Sam Sutherland

129 Farnham Road, RR2  
Guelph, Ontario N1H 6H8

Phone: 519-824-9983  
Email: [sutherlandhq@gmail.com](mailto:sutherlandhq@gmail.com)

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**Lisbon, New York, RPC**

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Cemetery and Tuck Roads, PO Box 88  
Lisbon, NY 13658

Website: <http://lisbonrpc.org>

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**Pastor:** Garrett W. Mann [Charity]. Installed 2020.

6904 County Route 10  
Lisbon, NY 13658

Phone: 315-393-9041  
Email: [garrett.w.mann@gmail.com](mailto:garrett.w.mann@gmail.com)

**Clerk:** Don Smith

420 Dezell Road  
Lisbon, NY 13658

Phone: 315-393-2179  
Email: [smith.extra.don@gmail.com](mailto:smith.extra.don@gmail.com)

**Elder:** Brian Bond

Email: [bondrabbits@gmail.com](mailto:bondrabbits@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Kelly Proulx

8283 Long Pond Rd.  
Croghan, NY 13327

Phone: 315-346-1535

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## Montreal, Quebec, Canada—Hudson – St. Lazare RPC

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Meeting at: Église Baptiste Évangélique de Vaudreuil

90 Cité des Jeunes Blvd.

Vaudreuil-Dorion, QC J7V 8B9

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**Pastor:** Dan Dupuis [Miriam]. Installed 2019

850 rue de Coccinelles

Saint-Lazare, QC J7T 0P8

Phone: 514-894-4318

Email: dan\_dupuis1@hotmail.com

**Clerk:** Victor Tochijara

624 rue de L'Esterel

Saint-Lazare, QC J7T 3J1

Phone: 514-292-2966

Email: victor.tochijara@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Ashley Miller

973 rue Frontenac

Saint-Lazare, QC J7T 2A4

Cell: 514-434-1553

Email: ashleymiller91@gmail.com

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## Oswego, New York, RPC

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154 City Line Rd.

Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-343-7112

Website: www.oswegorpc.org

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**Pastor:** Gabriel Wingfield [Megan]. Installed 2020.

560 East Ave.

Oswego, NY 13126

Cell: 214-478-8747

Email: gwingfield@fastmail.fm

**Clerk:** John W. McGrath

216 Duer St.

Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-342-1682

Cell: 315-746-0441

Email: jmcgrath@twcny.rr.com

**Elders:** Kevin Plummer

John O'Brien

Email: plummerkrp@juno.com

Email: JOBRIENOSW@aol.com

**Treasurer:** Debora Standish

81 E. Oneida

Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-532-8943

Email: deborastandish@gmail.com

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## Ottawa, Ontario, RPC

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Box 23139

Ottawa, Ontario K2A 4E2

Phone: 613-596-5566

Website: www.rpcottawa.org

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**Pastor:** Andrew Quigley, D.Min [Heather]. Installed 2018.

5 Benson St.

Ottawa, ON, Canada K2E 7S5

Phone: 613-224-8184

Cell: 819-712-7201

Email: revdrsaq@aol.com

**Clerk:** Cory VanderMeer

536 Kidd Rd.

Ashton, ON K0A 1B0

Phone: 613-864-3774

Email: coryvandermeer@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Jamie Hood

1093 Meadowlands Drive

Ottawa, ON K2C 0K5

Phone: 613-224-2081

Email: hosenco@bell.net

## Rochester, New York, RPC

115 East Avenue

East Rochester, NY 14445

Website: [www.rochesterrpc.com](http://www.rochesterrpc.com)

**Pastor:** Ryan Somerville [Catherine]. Installed 2019

117 East Avenue

East Rochester, NY 14445

Phone: 724-747-8345

Email: ryancsomerville@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Greg Moberg

186 Ashbourne Road

Rochester, NY 14618-1702

Phone: 585-256-1069

Email: gmoberg@frontiernet.net

**Elders:** Peter Robson

Geoff Shaw

William Pihl

Email: peter\_robson@boces.monroe.edu

Email: gshaw@pharos.com

Email: wmhpihl@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Daniel Pilling

280 East Squire Dr., #7

Rochester, NY 14623

Phone: 319-671-1705

Email: djpilling@gmail.com

## Russell, Ontario, RPC

Concession Street

Russell, Ontario, Canada K4R 1C9

Website: [www.russellrpc.org](http://www.russellrpc.org)

Mail address: P.O. Box 222

Russell, ON, Canada K4R 1C9

**Pastor:** E. Matthew Kingswood [Tara]. Installed 1997.

248 Forced Rd.

Russell, Ont., Canada K4R 1A1

Phone: 613-445-1937

Email: Mkingswood1@gmail.com

**Clerk:** Hank Vedder

7516 Lawrence St.

Osgoode, ON, Canada K0A 2W0

Phone: 613-299-0580

Email: hrvedder@gmail.com

**Elder:** Greg Alexander

Chris Farenhorst

Ernst van der Meer

Email: ghalexander99@gmail.com

Email: chrisfaren1@gmail.com

Email: ecvandermeer@gmail.com

## Syracuse, New York, RPC

2517 South Salina St.

Phone: 315-476-5618

Syracuse, NY 13205

Email (secretary): syracsuserpc@verizon.net

Website: www.syracsuserpc.org

**Pastor:** Jason Housewright [Sara]. Installed 2019.

310 Goodrich Ave.

Phone: 205-399-3127

Syracuse, NY 13210

Email: jhousewright@psalm68.com

**Clerk:** Eric Charlton

3800 Brinkerhoff Rd.

Phone: 315-256-2311

Syracuse, NY 13215

Email: echarlton9@gmail.com

**Elders:** Chris Huggins

Email: christopherhuggins@gmail.com

Sean McNaughton

Email: sean.mcnaughton@gmail.com

Bob Pinkerton

Email: pinkertonfamily6@yahoo.com

Robert Rice

Email: rgrice1947@hotmail.com

Bruce Trexler

Email: brucerpc.trexler@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Shari Huggins, c/o church addresses above

Phone: 315-696-6451

## Toronto, Ontario, Canada—Evangelical Presbyterian

10 Thomas Clark Way

Phone: 416-222-4131

Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2K 0G8

**Pastor:** D. Allan MacLeod [Alison]. Received 2015.

113 Heatherside Dr.

Phone: 416-913-2671

Toronto, ONT, Canada M1W 1T6

Email: holdfast113@hotmail.com

**Clerk:** Rod Finlayson

41 Snowshoe Crescent

Phone: 905-731-5602

Thornhill, ONT, Canada L3T 4M7

Email: rod.finlayson@rogers.com

**Elder:** Jim Hughes

Email: jrughes53@hotmail.com

## Ottawa Theological Hall

466 Woodland Ave.

Mailing address: PO Box 23139

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2A 4E2

Phone: 613-596-5566

Website: <http://www.rpcottawa.org>

## Retired Ministers

Arthur Fawthrop [Ellen]

419 W. Franklin St.

Phone: 607-748-0924

Endicott, NY 13760

Email: aefawthrop@stny.rr.com



|                                                                                                    |                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Richard L. Ganz, Ph.D. [Nancy]<br>PO Box 23139<br>Ottawa, ON K2A 4E2                               | Phone: 613-257-1650<br>Fax: 613-257-4900<br>Email: revrichganz@gmail.com  |
| Harold B. Harrington [Ena]<br>1761 Moon St.<br>New Albany, PA 18833                                | Phone: 570-363-2637<br>Email: onecaucus@yahoo.com                         |
| Edward A. Robson, Th.M., Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, RPTS<br>5370 Richland Rd.<br>Gibsonia, PA 15044 | Phone: 724-444-6705<br>Email: egrobson@consolidated.net                   |
| Walter "Kit" Swartz [Karen]<br>119 East Third St.<br>Oswego, NY 13126                              | Phone: 315-343-0581<br>Cell: 517-630-6325<br>Email: oswegorpc@hotmail.com |

### **Ministers Serving in Various Occupations**

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|                                                                                                                |                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Daniel Kok [Jennifer] (in transit to Free Church Continuing)<br>178 Brockville St.<br>Smiths Falls, ON K7A 3Z1 | Phone: 613-430-4386<br>Email: estaurotai@gmail.com      |
| William H. Pihl [Beverly]<br>123 Brentwood Lane<br>Fairport, NY 14450                                          | Phone: 585-377-0875<br>Email: wmhpihl@gmail.com         |
| Robert G. Rice [Vivian]<br>416 Crawford Ave.<br>Syracuse, NY 13224                                             | Phone: 315-446-0768<br>Email: rgrice1947@hotmail.com    |
| Vince Ward [Julie]<br>854 Melfa<br>Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2C 0P3                                             | Phone: 613-225-7557<br>Email: DengGarangThiel@gmail.com |

### **Students under Presbytery's Care**

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|                                                                     |                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Scott Doherty [Andrea]<br>421 Sylvania Ave.<br>Glenside, PA 19038   | Cell: 315-447-3099<br>Email: scott@rpts.edu                               |
| Chris Goerner [Megan]<br>9297 Mallory Rd.<br>New Hartford, NY 13413 | Phone: 315-507-7446<br>Email: cggoerner@hotmail.com                       |
| Mark Goerner [Debra]<br>1127 Rush St.<br>Celebration, FL 34747      | Phone: 315-737-0524<br>Cell: 315-404-6499<br>Email: mgoerner@twcny.rr.com |
| Reuben Lindeman<br>197 Renouf Ave.<br>Ottawa, Ont., K1K 3S9         | Phone: 514-966-1633<br>Email: reubenlindeman@hotmail.com                  |



**SOUTH ASIA COMMISSION**

Moderator: ..... Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan, Email: venkatesh83@gmail.com  
Clerk: ..... Ram Rao, Email: drramrao@gmail.com  
Members:..... James Faris (james@2rp.church), David Hanson (davidrpts@hotmail.com)

**Bangalore—Anugraha RP Mission Church**

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Meeting at: St. Thomas Centre Website: [www.anugraharpc.org](http://www.anugraharpc.org)  
Babusapalya, Bengaluru 560 043 *Send all mail to moderator's address.*

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**Moderator:** Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan [Sarmishta].  
109 The Potters Hand Phone from US and Can.: +91-988-059-9177  
78/1 Doddagubbi Main Road Email: venkatesh83@gmail.com  
Kyalasanahalli, Kothanur PO  
Bangalore 560077  
**Clerk:** Ranjit Mathew Email: rmonline@gmail.com  
**Elder:** Ram Rao [Asha] Email: drramrao@gmail.com



## Membership Statistics 2020

|                                        | Total Members<br>12/31/2019 | Total Members<br>12/31/2020 | Average* Worship<br>Attendance | Communicant<br>Members | Baptized<br>Members | Bapt. Mem.<br>Becoming Comm. | By Baptism | Upon Profession<br>of Faith |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>ALLEGHENIES</b>                     |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                              |            |                             |
| Birmingham RP MC, AL                   | 14                          | 21                          | 10                             | 12                     | 9                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| College Hill RPC, Beaver Falls, PA     | 359                         | 231                         | 233                            | 171                    | 60                  | 2                            | 7          | 8                           |
| Covenant Fellowship RPC, PA            | 140                         | 149                         | 80                             | 117                    | 32                  | 0                            | 3          | 1                           |
| Covenant RPC, Aurora, OH               | 13                          | 14                          | 18                             | 11                     | 3                   | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA            | 20                          | 22                          | 20                             | 15                     | 7                   | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Eastvale RPC, PA                       | 49                          | 49                          | 45                             | 41                     | 8                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| First RP of Beaver Falls, PA           | 118                         | 104                         | 87                             | 71                     | 33                  | 1                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Grace & Truth MC, Harrisonburg, VA     | 33                          | 33                          | 30                             | 13                     | 20                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Grace Presbyterian, State College, PA  | 37                          | 34                          | 35                             | 28                     | 6                   | 0                            | 0          | 1                           |
| Grace RPC, Gibsonia, PA                | 183                         | 188                         | 147                            | 129                    | 59                  | 0                            | 2          | 3                           |
| Hope Community RPC (BF, PA) <b>new</b> | 0                           | 139                         | 110                            | 104                    | 35                  | 0                            | 0          | 2                           |
| Manchester RPC, New Kens., PA          | 69                          | 65                          | 55                             | 53                     | 12                  | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| North Hills RPC, Pittsburgh, PA        | 177                         | 168                         | 175                            | 139                    | 29                  | 3                            | 3          | 0                           |
| Providence RPC, PA                     | 121                         | 119                         | 100                            | 80                     | 39                  | 2                            | 4          | 3                           |
| Rimersburg RPC, PA                     | 18                          | 18                          | 8                              | 15                     | 3                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Rose Point RPC, PA                     | 71                          | 65                          | 56                             | 51                     | 14                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Trinity RPC, Burtonsville, MD          | 140                         | 143                         | 118                            | 87                     | 56                  | 0                            | 3          | 5                           |
| Tusca Area RPC, Beaver, PA             | 67                          | 72                          | 45                             | 46                     | 26                  | 0                            | 2          | 0                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>1,629</b>                | <b>1,634</b>                | <b>1,372</b>                   | <b>1,183</b>           | <b>451</b>          | <b>8</b>                     | <b>28</b>  | <b>23</b>                   |
| <b>ATLANTIC</b>                        |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                              |            |                             |
| Broomall RPC, PA                       | 86                          | 86                          | 72                             | 64                     | 22                  | 0                            | 2          | 0                           |
| Christ RPC, Providence, RI             | 74                          | 71                          | 85                             | 49                     | 22                  | 1                            | 4          | 0                           |
| Coldenham-Newburgh RPC, NY             | 32                          | 30                          | 22                             | 25                     | 5                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Elkins Park RPC, PA                    | 66                          | 70                          | 60                             | 49                     | 21                  | 3                            | 2          | 0                           |
| First RPC of Cambridge, MA             | 96                          | 101                         | 80                             | 70                     | 31                  | 0                            | 4          | 6                           |
| Hazleton Area RPC, PA                  | 71                          | 70                          | 60                             | 46                     | 24                  | 1                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Ridgefield Park RPC, NJ                | 23                          | 19                          | 21                             | 16                     | 3                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Walton RPC, NY                         | 26                          | 26                          | 22                             | 25                     | 1                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| White Lake RPC, NY                     | 113                         | 115                         | 60                             | 82                     | 33                  | 0                            | 1          | 1                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>587</b>                  | <b>588</b>                  | <b>482</b>                     | <b>426</b>             | <b>162</b>          | <b>5</b>                     | <b>13</b>  | <b>7</b>                    |

| Increase in 2020 |                          |          |            | Decrease in 2020 |              |                        |               |          |            | Elders    | Deacons   |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| From RP Church   | From Other Denominations | Other    | Total      | Deaths           | To RP Church | To Other Denominations | Final Removal | Other    | Total      |           |           |
| 7                | 0                        | 10       | 7          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0          | 4         | 0         |
| 12               | 5                        | 0        | 32         | 3                | 144          | 7                      | 6             | 0        | 160        | 4         | 7         |
| 9                | 3                        | 0        | 16         | 2                | 0            | 5                      | 0             | 0        | 7          | 5         | 6         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0          | 3         | 1         |
| 1                | 0                        | 0        | 2          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0          | 0         | 1         |
| 1                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 1        | 1          | 2         | 1         |
| 1                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 3                | 7            | 2                      | 3             | 0        | 15         | 3         | 4         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 1             | 0        | 1          | 0         | 0         |
| 2                | 0                        | 0        | 3          | 0                | 0            | 6                      | 0             | 0        | 6          | 3         | 2         |
| 10               | 1                        | 0        | 16         | 2                | 2            | 4                      | 0             | 3        | 11         | 8         | 0         |
| 139              | 0                        | 0        | 141        | 0                | 2            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 2          | 6         | 4         |
| 0                | 1                        | 0        | 1          | 1                | 4            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 5          | 3         | 5         |
| 5                | 3                        | 0        | 11         | 1                | 9            | 10                     | 0             | 0        | 20         | 4         | 6         |
| 1                | 0                        | 0        | 8          | 1                | 7            | 1                      | 0             | 1        | 10         | 3         | 3         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0          | 1         | 0         |
| 4                | 1                        | 0        | 6          | 1                | 5            | 6                      | 0             | 0        | 12         | 3         | 3         |
| 4                | 3                        | 0        | 15         | 0                | 0            | 8                      | 4             | 0        | 12         | 5         | 3         |
| 6                | 0                        | 0        | 8          | 2                | 1            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 3          | 5         | 2         |
| <b>201</b>       | <b>18</b>                | <b>0</b> | <b>270</b> | <b>16</b>        | <b>181</b>   | <b>49</b>              | <b>14</b>     | <b>5</b> | <b>265</b> | <b>62</b> | <b>48</b> |
| 2                | 1                        | 0        | 5          | 0                | 0            | 1                      | 4             | 0        | 5          | 3         | 4         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 4          | 0                | 7            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 7          | 4         | 3         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 1                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 1        | 2          | 2         | 0         |
| 1                | 6                        | 0        | 9          | 0                | 4            | 1                      | 0             | 0        | 5          | 2         | 2         |
| 0                | 7                        | 0        | 17         | 0                | 5            | 7                      | 0             | 0        | 12         | 2         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 1                      | 0             | 0        | 1          | 2         | 2         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 4             | 0        | 4          | 2         | 2         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0          | 3         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 2          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0          | 3         | 5         |
| <b>3</b>         | <b>14</b>                | <b>0</b> | <b>37</b>  | <b>1</b>         | <b>16</b>    | <b>10</b>              | <b>8</b>      | <b>1</b> | <b>36</b>  | <b>23</b> | <b>20</b> |

## Membership Statistics 2020

|                                            | Total Members<br>12/31/2019 | Total Members<br>12/31/2020 | Average* Worship<br>Attendance | Communicant<br>Members | Baptized<br>Members | Bapt. Mem.<br>Becoming Comm. | By Baptism<br>Upon Profession<br>of Faith |           |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Great Lakes/Gulf</b>                    |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                              |                                           |           |
| Atlanta RP Mission Church, GA              | 10                          | 17                          | 28                             | 10                     | 7                   | 0                            | 5                                         | 5         |
| Belle Center RPC, OH                       | 66                          | 64                          | 48                             | 47                     | 17                  | 4                            | 1                                         | 0         |
| Bloomington RPC, IN                        | 186                         | 193                         | 162                            | 146                    | 47                  | 2                            | 4                                         | 4         |
| Christ Church RPC, Brownsburg, IN          | 98                          | 78                          | 78                             | 56                     | 22                  | 0                            | 1                                         | 0         |
| Columbus RPC, IN                           | 132                         | 137                         | 80                             | 104                    | 33                  | 1                            | 1                                         | 3         |
| Elkhart RPC, IN                            | 61                          | 61                          | 57                             | 40                     | 21                  | 0                            | 0                                         | 1         |
| First RPC of Durham, NC                    | 32                          | 40                          | 42                             | 33                     | 7                   | 0                            | 2                                         | 7         |
| First RPC of Grand Rapids, MI              | 34                          | 44                          | 42                             | 29                     | 15                  | 0                            | 2                                         | 3         |
| Hetherton RPC, MI                          | 20                          | 20                          | 15                             | 15                     | 5                   | 0                            | 0                                         | 0         |
| Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette, IN           | 153                         | 190                         | 127                            | 95                     | 95                  | 1                            | 24                                        | 4         |
| Lafayette RPC, IN                          | 118                         | 125                         | 95                             | 85                     | 40                  | 0                            | 2                                         | 0         |
| Marion RPC, IN                             | 47                          | 37                          | 45                             | 28                     | 9                   | 0                            | 0                                         | 0         |
| Orlando RPC, FL                            | 99                          | 101                         | 83                             | 73                     | 28                  | 2                            | 0                                         | 2         |
| Pageland MC, SC <b>Disorganized 3/2/20</b> | 34                          | 0                           | 30                             | 0                      | 0                   | 0                            | 0                                         | 0         |
| Second Reformed, Indianapolis, IN          | 229                         | 233                         | 165                            | 178                    | 55                  | 1                            | 5                                         | 2         |
| Selma RPC, AL                              | 22                          | 20                          | 7                              | 20                     | 0                   | 0                            | 0                                         | 0         |
| Southfield RPC, MI                         | 59                          | 58                          | 58                             | 42                     | 16                  | 0                            | 5                                         | 2         |
| Southside RPC, Indianapolis, IN            | 243                         | 263                         | 230                            | 192                    | 71                  | 2                            | 7                                         | 0         |
| Southwest Ohio RP MC, W. Chester, OH       | 33                          | 33                          | 21                             | 18                     | 15                  | 0                            | 1                                         | 0         |
| Sparta RPC, IL                             | 21                          | 23                          | 12                             | 14                     | 9                   | 0                            | 0                                         | 0         |
| Sycamore RPC, Kokomo, IN                   | 65                          | 65                          | 57                             | 36                     | 29                  | 0                            | 1                                         | 0         |
| Terre Haute RPC, IN                        | 28                          | 41                          | 24                             | 28                     | 13                  | 0                            | 2                                         | 3         |
| Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL          | 24                          | 20                          | 15                             | 15                     | 5                   | 0                            | 0                                         | 1         |
| Presbytery Roll                            | 21                          | 20                          | 0                              | 11                     | 9                   |                              |                                           |           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               | <b>1,835</b>                | <b>1,883</b>                | <b>1,521</b>                   | <b>1,315</b>           | <b>568</b>          | <b>13</b>                    | <b>63</b>                                 | <b>37</b> |

\* — "Average Worship Attendance" is taken from the 2019 submitted statistics, as 2020 attendance statistics were inconsistent due to COVID-19 restrictions.

| Increase in 2020 |                          |          |            | Decrease in 2020 |              |                        |               |           |            | Elders    | Deacons   |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| From RP Church   | From Other Denominations | Other    | Total      | Deaths           | To RP Church | To Other Denominations | Final Removal | Other     | Total      |           |           |
| 0                | 1                        | 0        | 11         | 1                | 3            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 4          | 1         | 0         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 0            | 1                      | 2             | 0         | 3          | 1         | 1         |
| 1                | 8                        | 0        | 17         | 0                | 5            | 2                      | 3             | 0         | 10         | 5         | 8         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 12           | 6                      | 0             | 3         | 21         | 4         | 3         |
| 0                | 12                       | 0        | 16         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 5             | 6         | 11         | 3         | 4         |
| 1                | 4                        | 0        | 6          | 0                | 2            | 4                      | 0             | 0         | 6          | 4         | 5         |
| 0                | 4                        | 1        | 14         | 0                | 3            | 2                      | 1             | 0         | 6          | 2         | 0         |
| 0                | 4                        | 1        | 10         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 1         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 1         | 0         |
| 1                | 26                       | 4        | 59         | 0                | 12           | 0                      | 4             | 6         | 22         | 5         | 5         |
| 1                | 9                        | 0        | 12         | 2                | 0            | 1                      | 2             | 0         | 5          | 4         | 5         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 2            | 3                      | 0             | 5         | 10         | 3         | 0         |
| 8                | 8                        | 0        | 18         | 3                | 7            | 5                      | 1             | 0         | 16         | 3         | 4         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 6            | 28                     | 0             | 0         | 34         | 0         | 0         |
| 5                | 0                        | 0        | 12         | 1                | 0            | 3                      | 4             | 0         | 8          | 8         | 7         |
| 1                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 1                | 0            | 2                      | 0             | 0         | 3          | 5         | 7         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 7          | 1                | 0            | 4                      | 3             | 0         | 8          | 2         | 0         |
| 15               | 14                       | 0        | 36         | 2                | 1            | 5                      | 8             | 0         | 16         | 10        | 7         |
| 0                | 7                        | 0        | 8          | 0                | 0            | 8                      | 0             | 0         | 8          | 3         | 1         |
| 7                | 0                        | 0        | 7          | 1                | 2            | 2                      | 0             | 0         | 5          | 2         | 0         |
| 1                | 1                        | 0        | 3          | 0                | 0            | 3                      | 0             | 0         | 3          | 3         | 4         |
| 4                | 4                        | 0        | 13         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 2         | 0         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 5         | 5          | 1         | 0         |
|                  |                          |          |            |                  |              |                        |               | 1         | 1          |           |           |
| <b>45</b>        | <b>102</b>               | <b>6</b> | <b>253</b> | <b>12</b>        | <b>55</b>    | <b>79</b>              | <b>33</b>     | <b>26</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>73</b> | <b>62</b> |

### Membership Statistics 2020

|                               | Total Members<br>12/31/2019 | Total Members<br>12/31/2020 | Average* Worship<br>Attendance | Communicant<br>Members | Baptized<br>Members | Bapt. Mem.<br>Becoming Comm. | By Baptism | Upon Profession<br>of Faith |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>JAPAN</b>                  |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                              |            |                             |
| Higashisuma, Kobe             | 85                          | 86                          | 43                             | 59                     | 27                  | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Kasumigaoka, Kobe             | 52                          | 57                          | 20                             | 42                     | 15                  | 0                            | 1          | 1                           |
| Kita-Suzurandai Mission, Kobe | 20                          | 17                          | 7                              | 14                     | 3                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Mukonosu, Kobe                | 29                          | 26                          | 19                             | 21                     | 5                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Okamoto-Keiyaku, Kobe         | 72                          | 75                          | 24                             | 51                     | 24                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>258</b>                  | <b>261</b>                  | <b>113</b>                     | <b>187</b>             | <b>74</b>           | <b>0</b>                     | <b>2</b>   | <b>1</b>                    |

\* — "Average Worship Attendance" is taken from the 2019 submitted statistics, as 2020 attendance statistics were inconsistent due to COVID-19 restrictions.



| Increase in 2020 |                          |          |           | Decrease in 2020 |              |                        |               |          |          | Elders    | Deacons  |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| From RP Church   | From Other Denominations | Other    | Total     | Deaths           | To RP Church | To Other Denominations | Final Removal | Other    | Total    |           |          |
| 0                | 1                        | 0        | 1         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0        | 3         | 4        |
| 3                | 0                        | 0        | 5         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 0        | 2         | 3        |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0         | 0                | 0            | 3                      | 0             | 0        | 3        | 1         | 0        |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0         | 0                | 0            | 1                      | 0             | 2        | 3        | 3         | 0        |
| 0                | 0                        | 3        | 4         | 1                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0        | 1        | 3         | 1        |
| <b>3</b>         | <b>1</b>                 | <b>3</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>1</b>         | <b>0</b>     | <b>4</b>               | <b>0</b>      | <b>2</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>8</b> |

### Membership Statistics 2020

|                                              | Total Members<br>12/31/2019 | Total Members<br>12/31/2020 | Average* Worship<br>Attendance | Communicant<br>Members | Baptized<br>Members | Bapt. Mem.<br>Becoming Commn. | By Baptism | Upon Profession<br>of Faith |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>MIDWEST</b>                               |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                               |            |                             |
| Casper RP MC, WY <b>Disorganized 6/30/20</b> | 39                          | 0                           | 32                             | 0                      | 0                   | 0                             | 1          | 1                           |
| Christ Covenant RPC, Lawrence, KS            | 64                          | 60                          | 45                             | 42                     | 18                  | 2                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Christ Presbyterian, Grandview, MO           | 31                          | 46                          | 24                             | 33                     | 13                  | 0                             | 3          | 8                           |
| Clarinda RPC, IA                             | 19                          | 18                          | 18                             | 14                     | 4                   | 0                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Dallas RPC, TX                               | 39                          | 41                          | 40                             | 23                     | 18                  | 1                             | 1          | 3                           |
| Denison RPC, KS                              | 40                          | 41                          | 30                             | 33                     | 8                   | 0                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Grace Reformed MC, Columbia, MO              | 19                          | 23                          | 20                             | 14                     | 9                   | 1                             | 1          | 0                           |
| Hebron RPC, Clay Center, KS                  | 48                          | 46                          | 30                             | 39                     | 7                   | 2                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Laramie RPC, WY                              | 33                          | 36                          | 31                             | 26                     | 10                  | 2                             | 1          | 0                           |
| Living Way RPC, Bryan, TX                    | 44                          | 48                          | 37                             | 29                     | 19                  | 0                             | 1          | 2                           |
| Manhattan RPC, KS                            | 59                          | 52                          | 45                             | 34                     | 18                  | 0                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Minneola RPC, KS <b>Disorganized 3/17/21</b> | 24                          | 24                          | 8                              | 20                     | 4                   | 0                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Quinter RPC, KS                              | 27                          | 28                          | 26                             | 22                     | 6                   | 0                             | 1          | 0                           |
| Salt & Light RPC, Longmont, CO               | 72                          | 78                          | 39                             | 49                     | 29                  | 0                             | 0          | 0                           |
| San Antonio RP Mission Church                | 3                           | 6                           | 6                              | 5                      | 1                   | 0                             | 1          | 0                           |
| Sharon RPC, Morning Sun, IA                  | 63                          | 72                          | 45                             | 58                     | 14                  | 0                             | 0          | 7                           |
| Shawnee RPC, KS                              | 153                         | 161                         | 117                            | 120                    | 41                  | 0                             | 4          | 0                           |
| Springs Reformed, CO Springs, CO             | 193                         | 180                         | 160                            | 126                    | 54                  | 1                             | 8          | 1                           |
| Sterling RPC, KS                             | 111                         | 109                         | 89                             | 70                     | 39                  | 0                             | 1          | 0                           |
| Stillwater RPC, OK                           | 86                          | 82                          | 77                             | 61                     | 21                  | 0                             | 2          | 3                           |
| Topeka RPC, KS                               | 123                         | 123                         | 95                             | 94                     | 29                  | 5                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Tri-Lakes Reformed, Co. Springs, CO          | 120                         | 144                         | 115                            | 92                     | 52                  | 1                             | 2          | 4                           |
| Trinity Reformed, Wichita <b>Dis. 1/1/21</b> | 28                          | 28                          | 25                             | 19                     | 9                   | 0                             | 0          | 1                           |
| Washington RPC, IA                           | 44                          | 47                          | 41                             | 34                     | 13                  | 2                             | 3          | 4                           |
| Westminster RPC, CO                          | 83                          | 74                          | 68                             | 48                     | 26                  | 0                             | 3          | 0                           |
| Winchester RPC, KS                           | 74                          | 70                          | 60                             | 54                     | 16                  | 0                             | 0          | 0                           |
| Presbytery Roll                              | 1                           | 1                           | 0                              | 1                      |                     |                               |            |                             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>1,640</b>                | <b>1,638</b>                | <b>1,323</b>                   | <b>1,160</b>           | <b>478</b>          | <b>17</b>                     | <b>33</b>  | <b>34</b>                   |

\* — "Average Worship Attendance" is taken from the 2019 submitted statistics, as 2020 attendance statistics were inconsistent due to COVID-19 restrictions.

| Increase in 2020 |                          |          |            | Decrease in 2020 |              |                        |               |           |            | Elders    | Deacons   |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| From RP Church   | From Other Denominations | Other    | Total      | Deaths           | To RP Church | To Other Denominations | Final Removal | Other     | Total      |           |           |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 2          | 0                | 23           | 15                     | 3             | 0         | 41         | 0         | 0         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 4            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 4          | 4         | 4         |
| 4                | 0                        | 1        | 16         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 1             | 0         | 1          | 1         | 2         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 1                      | 0             | 0         | 1          | 2         | 3         |
| 0                | 1                        | 3        | 8          | 0                | 0            | 2                      | 1             | 3         | 6          | 3         | 0         |
| 0                | 1                        | 2        | 3          | 2                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 2          | 2         | 2         |
| 2                | 0                        | 1        | 4          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 0         | 0         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 2                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 2          | 2         | 1         |
| 1                | 3                        | 0        | 5          | 0                | 0            | 1                      | 0             | 1         | 2          | 1         | 2         |
| 0                | 3                        | 0        | 6          | 0                | 0            | 2                      | 0             | 0         | 2          | 3         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 7            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 7          | 3         | 4         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 1         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 1         | 1         |
| 7                | 0                        | 0        | 7          | 0                | 1            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 1          | 4         | 3         |
| 0                | 9                        | 0        | 10         | 0                | 7            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 7          | 0         | 0         |
| 2                | 0                        | 1        | 10         | 1                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 1          | 2         | 5         |
| 1                | 7                        | 0        | 12         | 0                | 1            | 3                      | 0             | 0         | 4          | 4         | 5         |
| 3                | 6                        | 0        | 18         | 4                | 5            | 16                     | 6             | 0         | 31         | 4         | 5         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 1                | 0            | 0                      | 2             | 0         | 3          | 6         | 4         |
| 0                | 8                        | 0        | 13         | 0                | 0            | 17                     | 0             | 0         | 17         | 4         | 3         |
| 1                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 1                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 1          | 4         | 7         |
| 14               | 7                        | 0        | 27         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 3         | 3          | 2         | 5         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1          | 1                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 1          | 0         | 2         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 7          | 1                | 0            | 3                      | 0             | 0         | 4          | 3         | 2         |
| 2                | 3                        | 0        | 8          | 0                | 2            | 8                      | 2             | 5         | 17         | 2         | 3         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0          | 1                | 0            | 2                      | 0             | 1         | 4          | 4         | 6         |
| <b>37</b>        | <b>48</b>                | <b>8</b> | <b>160</b> | <b>14</b>        | <b>50</b>    | <b>70</b>              | <b>15</b>     | <b>13</b> | <b>162</b> | <b>62</b> | <b>71</b> |

### Membership Statistics 2020

|                                       | Total Members<br>12/31/2019 | Total Members<br>12/31/2020 | Average* Worship<br>Attendance | Communicant<br>Members | Baptized<br>Members | Bapt. Mem.<br>Becoming Comm. | By Baptism | Upon Profession<br>of Faith |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>PACIFIC COAST</b>                  |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                              |            |                             |
| All Saints RPC, Brea, CA              | 58                          | 62                          | 50                             | 43                     | 19                  | 2                            | 2          | 4                           |
| All Saints RPC, Irvine, CA            | 7                           | 8                           | 8                              | 8                      | 0                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Coram Deo RP MC, Squamish, BC         | 27                          | 25                          | 30                             | 14                     | 11                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| First RPC, Phoenix, AZ                | 51                          | 47                          | 46                             | 33                     | 14                  | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Fresno RPC, CA                        | 67                          | 64                          | 50                             | 46                     | 18                  | 0                            | 3          | 0                           |
| Great Basin RP MC, Reno, NV           | 23                          | 29                          | 25                             | 16                     | 13                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Las Vegas RP Mission Church, NV       | 33                          | 17                          | 35                             | 9                      | 8                   | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Los Angeles RPC, CA                   | 92                          | 84                          | 77                             | 58                     | 26                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| North Shore Bible Truth MC, Vancouver | 8                           | 8                           | 25                             | 8                      | 0                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| San Diego RPC, CA                     | 62                          | 59                          | 49                             | 35                     | 24                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Seattle RPC, WA                       | 70                          | 66                          | 55                             | 50                     | 16                  | 1                            | 1          | 0                           |
| Shelter RPC, Edmonton, Alberta        | 46                          | 48                          | 47                             | 25                     | 23                  | 0                            | 1          | 0                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>544</b>                  | <b>517</b>                  | <b>497</b>                     | <b>345</b>             | <b>172</b>          | <b>3</b>                     | <b>12</b>  | <b>4</b>                    |

\* — "Average Worship Attendance" is taken from the 2019 submitted statistics, as 2020 attendance statistics were inconsistent due to COVID-19 restrictions.

| Increase in 2020 |                          |          |           | Decrease in 2020 |              |                        |               |           |           | Elders    | Deacons   |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| From RP Church   | From Other Denominations | Other    | Total     | Deaths           | To RP Church | To Other Denominations | Final Removal | Other     | Total     |           |           |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 6         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 2             | 0         | 2         | 2         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 1        | 1         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0         | 1         | 1         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1         | 0                | 3            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 3         | 0         | 0         |
| 0                | 5                        | 0        | 5         | 0                | 4            | 5                      | 0             | 0         | 9         | 1         | 1         |
| 0                | 3                        | 0        | 6         | 1                | 7            | 0                      | 1             | 0         | 9         | 2         | 1         |
| 0                | 5                        | 0        | 6         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1         | 0                | 0            | 2                      | 0             | 15        | 17        | 0         | 0         |
| 0                | 1                        | 0        | 2         | 1                | 5            | 2                      | 2             | 0         | 10        | 2         | 4         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 0         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1         | 0                | 1            | 2                      | 1             | 0         | 4         | 2         | 2         |
| 0                | 0                        | 0        | 1         | 1                | 2            | 0                      | 1             | 1         | 5         | 4         | 4         |
| 0                | 2                        | 0        | 3         | 0                | 1            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 1         | 1         | 1         |
| <b>0</b>         | <b>16</b>                | <b>1</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>3</b>         | <b>23</b>    | <b>11</b>              | <b>7</b>      | <b>16</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>15</b> |

## Membership Statistics 2020

|                                       | Total Members<br>12/31/2019 | Total Members<br>12/31/2020 | Average* Worship<br>Attendance | Communicant<br>Members | Baptized<br>Members | Bapt. Mem.<br>Becoming Comm. | By Baptism | Upon Profession<br>of Faith |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>ST. LAWRENCE</b>                   |                             |                             |                                |                        |                     |                              |            |                             |
| Christ Church, Floyd, NY              | 50                          | 43                          | 67                             | 33                     | 10                  | 2                            | 0          | 3                           |
| Christian Heritage RPC, NY            | 26                          | 37                          | 22                             | 35                     | 2                   | 0                            | 2          | 0                           |
| Evangelical Presbyterian, Toronto, ON | 39                          | 34                          | 45                             | 32                     | 2                   | 0                            | 0          | 1                           |
| Fulton RPC, NY                        | 18                          | 21                          | 40                             | 18                     | 3                   | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Hillside RPC, Almonte, Ontario        | 77                          | 89                          | 71                             | 65                     | 24                  | 0                            | 3          | 3                           |
| Hudson-St. Lazare RPC, Quebec         | 46                          | 27                          | 41                             | 17                     | 10                  | 0                            | 0          | 0                           |
| Lisbon RPC, NY                        | 83                          | 84                          | 57                             | 53                     | 31                  | 1                            | 0          | 4                           |
| Messiah's Church, Clay, NY            | 55                          | 53                          | 60                             | 37                     | 16                  | 0                            | 1          | 1                           |
| New Creation RPC, Kitchener, ON       | 55                          | 61                          | 47                             | 43                     | 18                  | 0                            | 5          | 0                           |
| Oswego RPC, NY                        | 53                          | 70                          | 66                             | 58                     | 12                  | 1                            | 7          | 8                           |
| Ottawa RPC, Ontario                   | 114                         | 88                          | 140                            | 52                     | 36                  | 0                            | 3          | 0                           |
| Rochester RPC, NY                     | 55                          | 62                          | 49                             | 45                     | 17                  | 0                            | 1          | 4                           |
| Russell RPC, Ontario                  | 145                         | 126                         | 130                            | 80                     | 46                  | 0                            | 2          | 0                           |
| Syracuse RPC, NY                      | 122                         | 119                         | 75                             | 89                     | 30                  | 2                            | 4          | 2                           |
| Presbytery Roll                       | 2                           | 1                           | 0                              | 1                      |                     |                              |            |                             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>940</b>                  | <b>915</b>                  | <b>910</b>                     | <b>658</b>             | <b>257</b>          | <b>6</b>                     | <b>28</b>  | <b>26</b>                   |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                    | <b>7,433</b>                | <b>7,436</b>                | <b>6,218</b>                   | <b>5,274</b>           | <b>2,162</b>        | <b>52</b>                    | <b>179</b> | <b>132</b>                  |

\* — "Average Worship Attendance" is taken from the 2019 submitted statistics, as 2020 attendance statistics were inconsistent due to COVID-19 restrictions.

| Increase in 2020 |                          |           |            | Decrease in 2020 |              |                        |               |           |            | Elders     | Deacons    |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| From RP Church   | From Other Denominations | Other     | Total      | Deaths           | To RP Church | To Other Denominations | Final Removal | Other     | Total      |            |            |
| 0                | 0                        | 0         | 3          | 1                | 1            | 0                      | 0             | 8         | 10         | 4          | 2          |
| 2                | 3                        | 4         | 11         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 2          | 0          |
| 0                | 0                        | 0         | 1          | 1                | 3            | 2                      | 0             | 0         | 6          | 2          | 0          |
| 1                | 1                        | 1         | 3          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 1          | 3          |
| 7                | 0                        | 0         | 13         | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 1             | 0         | 1          | 4          | 4          |
| 0                | 0                        | 0         | 0          | 0                | 12           | 2                      | 0             | 5         | 19         | 2          | 2          |
| 8                | 1                        | 0         | 13         | 0                | 1            | 10                     | 0             | 1         | 12         | 2          | 2          |
| 0                | 0                        | 0         | 2          | 1                | 0            | 1                      | 0             | 2         | 4          | 1          | 2          |
| 1                | 7                        | 0         | 13         | 0                | 0            | 7                      | 0             | 0         | 7          | 1          | 2          |
| 6                | 0                        | 0         | 21         | 0                | 3            | 1                      | 0             | 0         | 4          | 3          | 4          |
| 0                | 0                        | 0         | 3          | 2                | 7            | 4                      | 14            | 2         | 29         | 2          | 4          |
| 2                | 0                        | 0         | 7          | 0                | 0            | 0                      | 0             | 0         | 0          | 4          | 4          |
| 0                | 5                        | 0         | 7          | 0                | 0            | 26                     | 0             | 0         | 26         | 4          | 4          |
| 0                | 0                        | 0         | 6          | 1                | 0            | 1                      | 7             | 0         | 9          | 4          | 8          |
|                  |                          |           |            |                  |              | 1                      |               |           | 1          |            |            |
| <b>27</b>        | <b>17</b>                | <b>5</b>  | <b>103</b> | <b>6</b>         | <b>27</b>    | <b>55</b>              | <b>22</b>     | <b>18</b> | <b>128</b> | <b>36</b>  | <b>41</b>  |
| <b>316</b>       | <b>216</b>               | <b>23</b> | <b>866</b> | <b>53</b>        | <b>352</b>   | <b>278</b>             | <b>99</b>     | <b>81</b> | <b>863</b> | <b>283</b> | <b>265</b> |

## Financial Statistics 2020

|                                                  | Balance<br>12/31/2019 | Receipts 2020                    |                           |                                  |                            | Total Receipts<br>2020 | Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
|                                                  |                       | Contributions<br>(Ordinary Rec.) | Other Rec.<br>(Not Rest.) | Other Rec.<br>(Restricted gifts) | Sup. Aid<br>Prsby. and HMB |                        |                                |           |
| <b>ALLEGHENIES</b>                               |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                        |                                |           |
| Birmingham RP MC, AL (NEW)                       | 18,622                | 45,526                           | 6,000                     | 0                                | 0                          | 51,526                 | 0                              | No        |
| College Hill RPC, Beaver Falls, PA               | 65,421                | 469,556                          | 2,994                     | 2,902                            | 0                          | 475,452                | 97,949                         | No        |
| Covenant Fellowship RPC, PA                      | 92,803                | 205,703                          | 11,446                    | 33,479                           | 0                          | 250,628                | 75,166                         | No        |
| Covenant RPC, Aurora, OH                         | 32,296                | 37,166                           | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 37,166                 | 0                              | No        |
| Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA                      | 101,543               | 38,065                           | 0                         | 459                              | 0                          | 38,524                 | 37,544                         | No        |
| Eastvale RPC, PA                                 | 81,789                | 75,288                           | 2,649                     | 23,740                           | 0                          | 101,677                | 68,790                         | No        |
| First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA                    | 40,210                | 159,233                          | 0                         | 12,916                           | 0                          | 172,149                | 45,705                         | No        |
| Grace and Truth MC, Harrisonburg, VA             | 36,100                | 122,331                          | 322                       | 250                              | 25,982                     | 148,885                | 57,491                         | No        |
| Grace Presbyterian, State College, PA            | 220,573               | 113,285                          | 0                         | 3,365                            | 0                          | 116,650                | 18,630                         | No        |
| Grace RPC, Gibsonia, PA                          | 250,275               | 506,077                          | 11,030                    | 100                              | 0                          | 517,207                | 130,486                        | Yes       |
| Hope Community, Beaver Falls, PA <b>New 2020</b> | 0                     | 74,572                           | 930                       | 0                                | 0                          | 75,502                 | 22,346                         | No        |
| Manchester RPC, New Kens., PA                    | 22,993                | 161,928                          | 0                         | 9,739                            | 0                          | 171,667                | 77,130                         | Yes       |
| North Hills RPC, Pittsburgh, PA                  | 39,474                | 383,322                          | 29,767                    | 29,922                           | 0                          | 443,011                | 106,958                        | No        |
| Providence RPC, Pittsburgh, PA                   | 40,568                | 173,537                          | 0                         | 3,505                            | 0                          | 177,042                | 99,912                         | No        |
| Rimersburg RPC, PA                               | 7,906                 | 35,739                           | 1                         | 0                                | 0                          | 35,740                 | 25,245                         | No        |
| Rose Point RPC, PA                               | 8,346                 | 100,552                          | 0                         | 3,508                            | 0                          | 104,060                | 57,620                         | Yes       |
| Trinity RPC, MD                                  | 107,701               | 381,515                          | 16,831                    | 0                                | 0                          | 398,346                | 138,414                        | No        |
| Tusca Area RPC, Beaver, PA                       | 48,605                | 67,600                           | 101                       | 800                              | 0                          | 68,501                 | 38,300                         | No        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>1,215,225</b>      | <b>3,150,995</b>                 | <b>82,071</b>             | <b>124,685</b>                   | <b>25,982</b>              | <b>3,383,733</b>       | <b>1,097,686</b>               | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>ATLANTIC</b>                                  |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                        |                                |           |
| Broomall RPC, PA                                 | 73,741                | 148,859                          | 1,346                     | 23,011                           | 0                          | 173,216                | 70,526                         | Yes       |
| Christ RPC, Providence, RI                       | 20,199                | 171,524                          | 0                         | 54,195                           | 0                          | 225,719                | 96,719                         | No        |
| Coldenham-Newburgh RPC, NY                       | 13,267                | 68,532                           | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 68,532                 | 29,044                         | Yes       |
| Elkins Park RPC, PA                              | 9,907                 | 131,071                          | 28                        | 31,229                           | 0                          | 162,328                | 75,395                         | Yes       |
| First RPC of Cambridge, MA                       | 174,197               | 246,222                          | 19,127                    | 2,192                            | 0                          | 267,541                | 90,290                         | Yes       |
| Hazleton Area RPC, PA                            | 12,910                | 71,589                           | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 71,589                 | 61,321                         | No        |
| Ridgefield Park RPC, NJ                          | 112,762               | 59,781                           | 24,357                    | 5,215                            | 0                          | 89,353                 | 0                              | No        |
| Walton RPC, NY                                   | 32,662                | 87,161                           | 19,517                    | 0                                | 0                          | 106,678                | 21,830                         | Yes       |
| White Lake RPC, NY                               | 39,380                | 120,945                          | 811                       | 6,902                            | 0                          | 128,658                | 61,452                         | No        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>489,024</b>        | <b>1,105,685</b>                 | <b>65,186</b>             | <b>122,744</b>                   | <b>0</b>                   | <b>1,293,614</b>       | <b>506,577</b>                 | <b>5</b>  |



| Expenses 2020                                |              |               |                |                        |                            |                        |                       |                            |                                      |                  |                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Additional<br>Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage #2 | RPM&M         | Other RP Works | External<br>Ministries | Other Internal<br>Expenses | Total<br>Distributions | Balance<br>12/31/2020 | Transfers In<br>or Out (-) | Final Checking<br>Balance 12/31/2020 | Other Assets     | Budgeted<br>Pastor's Sal. '21 |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 0                      | 27,087                     | 27,087                 | 43,061                | 0                          | 43,061                               | 0                | 0                             |
| 67,685                                       | No           | 40,000        | 37,693         | 26,950                 | 195,512                    | 465,789                | 75,084                | -25,821                    | 49,263                               | 80,001           | 102,327                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 5,742         | 14,780         | 4,000                  | 119,483                    | 219,171                | 124,260               | -28,644                    | 95,616                               | 62,129           | 76,600                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 300           | 750            | 0                      | 23,575                     | 24,625                 | 44,837                | -5,981                     | 38,856                               | 0                | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 100           | 3,337          | 0                      | 35,123                     | 76,104                 | 63,963                | 10,000                     | 73,963                               | 0                | 59,933                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 5,780         | 3,997          | 1,600                  | 17,568                     | 97,735                 | 85,732                | 0                          | 85,732                               | 36,773           | 68,790                        |
| 1,224                                        | No           | 9,200         | 24,864         | 1,000                  | 87,278                     | 169,271                | 43,088                | 0                          | 43,088                               | 71,259           | 71,656                        |
| 7,541                                        | No           | 1,000         | 3,250          | 1,100                  | 11,026                     | 81,408                 | 103,577               | 0                          | 103,577                              | 122,051          | 65,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 5,000         | 6,154          | 6,345                  | 180,155                    | 216,284                | 120,938               | -1,844                     | 119,094                              | 143,667          | 67,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,500         | 46,583         | 29,953                 | 81,969                     | 293,491                | 473,991               | -7,194                     | 466,797                              | 148,330          | 134,252                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 620                    | 34,474                     | 57,440                 | 18,062                | 22,615                     | 40,677                               | 145,013          | 91,525                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,474         | 13,182         | 1,500                  | 56,197                     | 149,483                | 45,177                | -1,000                     | 44,177                               | 35,757           | 66,971                        |
| 151,941                                      | No           | 5,600         | 39,523         | 46,649                 | 105,925                    | 456,596                | 25,889                | 53,360                     | 79,249                               | 12,808           | 263,449                       |
| 22,149                                       | No           | 500           | 13,630         | 0                      | 16,919                     | 153,110                | 64,501                | 0                          | 64,501                               | 150,748          | 131,331                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 781            | 0                      | 5,804                      | 31,830                 | 11,816                | 0                          | 11,816                               | 0                | 25,245                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 5,000         | 4,058          | 1,050                  | 25,472                     | 93,200                 | 19,206                | 0                          | 19,206                               | 20,469           | 58,600                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,247         | 12,416         | 3,687                  | 195,718                    | 354,482                | 151,565               | 0                          | 151,565                              | 45,687           | 133,150                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 3,025          | 3,266                  | 29,010                     | 73,600                 | 43,506                | 0                          | 43,506                               | 0                | 38,300                        |
| <b>250,540</b>                               | <b>0</b>     | <b>88,443</b> | <b>228,023</b> | <b>127,720</b>         | <b>1,248,294</b>           | <b>3,040,707</b>       | <b>1,558,252</b>      | <b>15,491</b>              | <b>1,573,742</b>                     | <b>1,074,691</b> | <b>1,454,129</b>              |
| 0                                            | No           | 8,110         | 19,763         | 1,874                  | 43,265                     | 143,538                | 103,419               | 0                          | 103,419                              | 6,000            | 74,030                        |
| 27,625                                       | No           | 2,000         | 5,279          | 1,045                  | 33,393                     | 166,061                | 79,857                | 30,000                     | 109,857                              | 101,175          | 100,328                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 140           | 3,086          | 456                    | 37,935                     | 70,662                 | 11,137                | 0                          | 11,137                               | 13,019           | 37,500                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,540         | 7,766          | 0                      | 69,139                     | 156,840                | 15,395                | -217                       | 15,178                               | 40,684           | 82,730                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 5,000         | 16,613         | 12,972                 | 101,679                    | 226,554                | 215,184               | -110,864                   | 104,320                              | 115,733          | 96,393                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 7,125          | 0                      | 6,804                      | 75,250                 | 9,249                 | 0                          | 9,249                                | 0                | 61,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 600           | 7,509          | 375                    | 52,917                     | 61,401                 | 140,714               | 0                          | 140,714                              | 651,050          | 70,500                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 9,778         | 6,711          | 2,000                  | 34,251                     | 74,570                 | 64,770                | -30,000                    | 34,770                               | 552,137          | 34,600                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 2,050         | 7,686          | 2,500                  | 53,136                     | 126,824                | 41,214                | 0                          | 41,214                               | 0                | 51,700                        |
| <b>27,625</b>                                | <b>0</b>     | <b>32,218</b> | <b>81,538</b>  | <b>21,222</b>          | <b>432,520</b>             | <b>1,101,700</b>       | <b>680,938</b>        | <b>-111,081</b>            | <b>569,857</b>                       | <b>1,479,797</b> | <b>608,781</b>                |

**Financial Statistics 2020**

|                                                        | Balance<br>12/31/2019 | Receipts 2020                    |                           |                                  |                            |                  | Total Receipts<br>2020 | Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
|                                                        |                       | Contributions<br>(Ordinary Rec.) | Other Rec.<br>(Not Rest.) | Other Rec.<br>(Restricted gifts) | Sup. Aid<br>Prsby. and HMB |                  |                        |                                |           |
| <b>Great Lakes/Gulf</b>                                |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                  |                        |                                |           |
| Atlanta RP Mission Church, GA                          | 9,284                 | 171,108                          | 0                         | 72,801                           | 10,000                     | 253,909          | 8,558                  | No                             |           |
| Belle Center RPC, OH                                   | 59,616                | 74,468                           | 360                       | 0                                | 2,197                      | 77,024           | 50,654                 | Yes                            |           |
| Bloomington RPC, IN                                    | 360,273               | 365,498                          | 816                       | 19,768                           | 0                          | 386,082          | 98,398                 | No                             |           |
| Christ Church RPC, Brownsburg, IN                      | 128,339               | 101,506                          | 0                         | 3,321                            | 250                        | 105,077          | 90,267                 | No                             |           |
| Columbus RPC, IN                                       | 176,928               | 245,118                          | 92                        | 29,262                           | 12,565                     | 287,037          | 19,480                 | No                             |           |
| Elkhart RPC, IN                                        | 90,088                | 142,341                          | 3                         | 8,182                            | 0                          | 150,526          | 74,850                 | No                             |           |
| First RPC of Durham, NC                                | 19,785                | 105,486                          | 0                         | 8,785                            | 0                          | 114,271          | 86,171                 | No                             |           |
| First RPC of Grand Rapids, MI                          | 46,059                | 80,332                           | 149                       | 8,550                            | 0                          | 89,032           | 54,666                 | No                             |           |
| Hetherton RPC, MI                                      | 15,992                | 31,227                           | 5                         | 5,275                            | 0                          | 36,507           | 15,146                 | Yes                            |           |
| Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette, IN                       | 90,174                | 280,034                          | 90                        | 75,742                           | 0                          | 355,866          | 94,005                 | No                             |           |
| Lafayette RPC, IN                                      | 144,193               | 204,112                          | 20,239                    | 16,133                           | 1,000                      | 241,484          | 85,500                 | No                             |           |
| Marion RPC, IN                                         | 13,913                | 80,215                           | 28,325                    | 504                              | 250                        | 109,294          | 64,820                 | No                             |           |
| Orlando RPC, FL                                        | 88,506                | 151,282                          | 1,220                     | 850                              | 0                          | 153,352          | 62,622                 | No                             |           |
| Pageland Mission Church, SC <b>Disorganized 3/2/20</b> | 10,713                | 0                                | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 0                | 0                      | No                             |           |
| Second Reformed, Indianapolis, IN                      | 519,568               | 720,361                          | 16,907                    | 182,307                          | 0                          | 919,576          | 115,703                | No                             |           |
| Selma RPC, AL                                          | -110                  | 25,030                           | 24,831                    | 202                              | 0                          | 50,062           | 0                      | Yes                            |           |
| Southfield RPC, MI                                     | 26,777                | 121,367                          | 297                       | 4,165                            | 0                          | 125,828          | 77,133                 | Yes                            |           |
| Southside RPC, Indianapolis, IN                        | 498,115               | 570,831                          | 34,147                    | 2,993                            | 0                          | 607,971          | 111,926                | No                             |           |
| Southwest Ohio RPC, W. Chester, OH                     | 36,420                | 66,818                           | 0                         | 1,165                            | 0                          | 67,983           | 40,751                 | No                             |           |
| Sparta RPC, IL                                         | 71,385                | 50,101                           | 220                       | 0                                | 0                          | 50,321           | 7,422                  | No                             |           |
| Sycamore RPC, Kokomo, IN                               | 28,177                | 101,581                          | 11                        | 2,750                            | 0                          | 104,341          | 55,332                 | No                             |           |
| Terre Haute RPC, IN                                    | 58,332                | 90,783                           | 7,500                     | 2,865                            | 0                          | 101,148          | 66,000                 | No                             |           |
| Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL                      | 46,082                | 51,830                           | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 51,830           | 0                      | Yes                            |           |
| <b>Total</b>                                           | <b>2,538,609</b>      | <b>3,831,429</b>                 | <b>135,211</b>            | <b>445,619</b>                   | <b>26,262</b>              | <b>4,438,522</b> | <b>1,279,403</b>       | <b>5</b>                       |           |

| Expenses 2020                                |              |                |                |                        |                            |                        |                       |                            |                                      |                  |                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Additional<br>Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage #2 | RPM&M          | Other RP Works | External<br>Ministries | Other Internal<br>Expenses | Total<br>Distributions | Balance<br>12/31/2020 | Transfers In<br>or Out (-) | Final Checking<br>Balance 12/31/2020 | Other Assets     | Budgeted<br>Pastor's Sal. '21 |
| 0                                            | No           | 77             | 0              | 0                      | 56,492                     | 65,126                 | 198,066               | -72,474                    | 125,592                              | 63,904           | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 640            | 2,281          | 0                      | 59,565                     | 113,140                | 23,500                | 0                          | 23,500                               | 6,156            | 56,171                        |
| 78,423                                       | No           | 4,870          | 40,571         | 6,590                  | 310,178                    | 539,030                | 207,325               | 0                          | 207,325                              | 152,151          | 179,704                       |
| 17,088                                       | No           | 6,650          | 10,374         | 6,400                  | 70,903                     | 201,682                | 31,734                | 0                          | 31,734                               | 196,669          | 0                             |
| 23,314                                       | No           | 30,100         | 11,310         | 24,783                 | 107,711                    | 216,698                | 247,267               | -80,000                    | 167,267                              | 209,000          | 81,000                        |
| 9,369                                        | No           | 6,379          | 10,572         | 1,172                  | 38,954                     | 141,296                | 99,319                | 0                          | 99,319                               | 0                | 76,600                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 600            | 2,765          | 0                      | 31,122                     | 120,659                | 13,398                | 20,000                     | 33,398                               | 322,445          | 89,769                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 1,613          | 0                      | 21,425                     | 77,703                 | 57,388                | 0                          | 57,388                               | 0                | 57,036                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 923            | 0                      | 38,245                     | 54,314                 | -1,815                | 5,188                      | 3,373                                | 7,022            | 15,147                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 7,000          | 9,029          | 15,030                 | 140,173                    | 265,237                | 180,803               | 0                          | 180,803                              | 0                | 99,200                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 6,500          | 21,395         | 3,222                  | 128,943                    | 245,560                | 140,117               | -9,532                     | 130,585                              | 912              | 88,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 44             | 3,719          | 250                    | 46,522                     | 115,354                | 7,852                 | 6,020                      | 13,872                               | 30,053           | 65,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 7,500          | 5,219          | 0                      | 48,107                     | 123,448                | 118,410               | 0                          | 118,410                              | 0                | 81,250                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 0              | 0                      | 0                          | 0                      | 10,713                | -10,713                    | 0                                    | 0                | 0                             |
| 74,539                                       | No           | 20,000         | 33,583         | 131,929                | 342,959                    | 718,714                | 720,430               | 0                          | 720,430                              | 0                | 197,921                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 300            | 1,549          | 1,175                  | 45,954                     | 48,978                 | 974                   | 0                          | 974                                  | 90,708           | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 5,511          | 12,681         | 100                    | 30,455                     | 125,880                | 26,725                | 0                          | 26,725                               | 10,000           | 79,294                        |
| 90,920                                       | No           | 49,000         | 111,764        | 7,400                  | 116,230                    | 487,240                | 618,845               | -255,000                   | 363,845                              | 555,734          | 209,800                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 1,632          | 0                      | 8,513                      | 50,895                 | 53,507                | 0                          | 53,507                               | 0                | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 1,217          | 1,076                  | 29,305                     | 39,019                 | 82,687                | 0                          | 82,687                               | 0                | 44,420                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,200          | 3,140          | 1,118                  | 38,174                     | 98,964                 | 33,554                | 0                          | 33,554                               | 4,030            | 60,332                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 500            | 1,888          | 0                      | 27,861                     | 96,249                 | 63,231                | 0                          | 63,231                               | 1,511            | 72,750                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 2,635          | 0                      | 37,620                     | 40,255                 | 57,657                | 0                          | 57,657                               | 0                | 0                             |
| <b>293,653</b>                               | <b>0</b>     | <b>146,871</b> | <b>289,861</b> | <b>200,245</b>         | <b>1,775,410</b>           | <b>3,985,443</b>       | <b>2,991,687</b>      | <b>-396,511</b>            | <b>2,595,176</b>                     | <b>1,650,294</b> | <b>1,553,393</b>              |

Financial Statistics 2020

|                               | Balance<br>12/31/2019 | Receipts 2020                    |                           |                                  |                            |                | Total Receipts<br>2020 | Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
|                               |                       | Contributions<br>(Ordinary Rec.) | Other Rec.<br>(Not Rest.) | Other Rec.<br>(Restricted gifts) | Sup. Aid<br>Prsby. and HMB |                |                        |                                |           |
| <b>JAPAN</b>                  |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                |                        |                                |           |
| Higashisuma, Kobe             | 48,579                | 66,456                           | 7,343                     | 2,663                            | 0                          | 76,462         | 40,068                 | No                             |           |
| Kasumigaoka, Kobe             | 0                     | 52,612                           | 3,244                     | 9,833                            | 0                          | 65,689         | 19,161                 | No                             |           |
| Kita-Suzurandai Mission, Kobe | 1,285                 | 3,455                            | 1,130                     | 0                                | 0                          | 4,585          | 0                      | No                             |           |
| Mukonoso, Kobe                | 8,258                 | 31,135                           | 1,991                     | 5,110                            | 0                          | 38,236         | 19,850                 | No                             |           |
| Okamoto-Keiyaku, Kobe         | 11,847                | 33,754                           | 9,291                     | 4,090                            | 0                          | 47,135         | 32,410                 | Yes                            |           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>69,969</b>         | <b>187,412</b>                   | <b>22,999</b>             | <b>21,696</b>                    | <b>0</b>                   | <b>232,107</b> | <b>111,489</b>         | <b>1</b>                       |           |

| Expenses 2020                                |              |            |                |                        |                            |                        |                       |                            |                                      |                |                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Additional<br>Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage #2 | RPM&M      | Other RP Works | External<br>Ministries | Other Internal<br>Expenses | Total<br>Distributions | Balance<br>12/31/2020 | Transfers In<br>or Out (-) | Final Checking<br>Balance 12/31/2020 | Other Assets   | Budgeted<br>Pastor's Sal. '21 |
| 12,445                                       | No           | 276        | 5,514          | 3,024                  | 15,265                     | 76,592                 | 48,449                | 0                          | 48,449                               | 114,698        | 51,409                        |
| 17,002                                       | No           | 0          | 4,080          | 2,325                  | 23,121                     | 65,689                 | 0                     | 0                          | 0                                    | 229,018        | 32,808                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0          | 37             | 0                      | 4,137                      | 4,174                  | 1,696                 | 0                          | 1,696                                | 27,274         | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 92         | 459            | 919                    | 15,687                     | 37,007                 | 9,487                 | 0                          | 9,487                                | 104,110        | 19,850                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0          | 2,886          | 469                    | 17,755                     | 53,520                 | 5,462                 | 0                          | 5,462                                | 31,406         | 33,442                        |
| <b>29,447</b>                                | <b>0</b>     | <b>368</b> | <b>12,976</b>  | <b>6,737</b>           | <b>75,965</b>              | <b>236,982</b>         | <b>65,094</b>         | <b>0</b>                   | <b>65,094</b>                        | <b>506,506</b> | <b>137,509</b>                |

**Financial Statistics 2020**

|                                                     | Balance<br>12/31/2019 | Receipts 2020                    |                           |                                  |                            |                  | Total Receipts<br>2020 | Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
|                                                     |                       | Contributions<br>(Ordinary Rec.) | Other Rec.<br>(Not Rest.) | Other Rec.<br>(Restricted gifts) | Sup. Aid<br>Prsby. and HMB |                  |                        |                                |           |
| <b>MIDWEST</b>                                      |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                  |                        |                                |           |
| Casper RP Mission Church, WY <b>Disorg. 6/30/20</b> | 67,588                | 25,160                           | 0                         | 0                                | 8,979                      | 34,139           | 14,000                 | No                             |           |
| Christ Covenant RPC, Lawrence, KS                   | 95,670                | 193,237                          | 0                         | 50,000                           | 0                          | 243,237          | 73,904                 | No                             |           |
| Christ Presbyterian, Grandview, MO                  | 1,682                 | 68,726                           | 338                       | 249                              | 0                          | 69,313           | 67,360                 | No                             |           |
| Clarinda RPC, IA                                    | 13,418                | 31,094                           | 963                       | 1,225                            | 0                          | 33,282           | 28,509                 | No                             |           |
| Dallas RPC, TX                                      | 68,642                | 98,584                           | 0                         | 2,960                            | 0                          | 101,544          | 16,500                 | No                             |           |
| Denison RPC, KS                                     | 63,855                | 93,548                           | 0                         | 133                              | 0                          | 93,681           | 0                      | Yes                            |           |
| Grace Reformed MC, Columbia, MO                     | 57,827                | 39,256                           | 0                         | 1,000                            | 5,000                      | 45,256           | 5,800                  | No                             |           |
| Hebron RPC, Clay Center, KS                         | 12,827                | 68,216                           | 5,519                     | 5,185                            | 0                          | 78,920           | 52,794                 | Yes                            |           |
| Laramie RPC, WY                                     | 10,320                | 44,789                           | 0                         | 4,315                            | 15,000                     | 64,104           | 46,100                 | No                             |           |
| Living Way RPC, Bryan, TX                           | 55,212                | 107,555                          | 0                         | 4,700                            | 33,460                     | 145,715          | 74,130                 | No                             |           |
| Manhattan RPC, KS                                   | 14,512                | 74,179                           | 0                         | 490                              | 0                          | 74,669           | 61,200                 | No                             |           |
| Minneola RPC, KS <b>Disorganized 3/17/21</b>        | 2,059                 | 37,742                           | 56,213                    | 975                              | 0                          | 94,930           | 44,700                 | Yes                            |           |
| Quinter RPC, KS                                     | 5,944                 | 57,250                           | 94,237                    | 2,960                            | 0                          | 154,447          | 60,115                 | No                             |           |
| Salt and Light RPC, Longmont, CO                    | 37,432                | 98,458                           | 409                       | 3,949                            | 0                          | 102,816          | 29,500                 | No                             |           |
| San Antonio RP Mission Church, TX                   | 19,189                | 25,537                           | 0                         | 8,709                            | 5,000                      | 39,246           | 24,637                 | No                             |           |
| Sharon RPC, Morning Sun, IA                         | 48,488                | 100,059                          | 0                         | 203                              | 0                          | 100,262          | 58,608                 | Yes                            |           |
| Shawnee RPC, KS                                     | 0                     | 241,199                          | 3                         | 7,814                            | 0                          | 249,016          | 71,514                 | No                             |           |
| Springs Reformed, Colorado Springs, CO              | 3,857                 | 521,652                          | 1,196                     | 89,417                           | 0                          | 612,265          | 110,100                | No                             |           |
| Sterling RPC, KS                                    | 129,423               | 177,084                          | 151                       | 1,246                            | 0                          | 178,481          | 77,030                 | Yes                            |           |
| Stillwater RPC, OK                                  | 252,770               | 191,232                          | 0                         | 13,277                           | 0                          | 204,509          | 103,467                | No                             |           |
| Topeka RPC, KS                                      | 69,416                | 189,363                          | 9,035                     | 9,306                            | 0                          | 207,704          | 88,413                 | No                             |           |
| Tri-Lakes Reformed, Co. Springs, CO                 | 273,737               | 276,892                          | 0                         | 4,800                            | 0                          | 281,692          | 86,400                 | No                             |           |
| Trinity Reformed, Wichita, KS <b>Disorg. 1/1/21</b> | 12,948                | 55,895                           | 0                         | 12,789                           | 8,000                      | 76,684           | 50,850                 | No                             |           |
| Washington RPC, IA                                  | 65,660                | 74,362                           | 40                        | 1,409                            | 0                          | 75,810           | 56,685                 | No                             |           |
| Westminster RPC, CO                                 | 30,749                | 135,808                          | 0                         | 8,322                            | 0                          | 144,130          | 80,272                 | No                             |           |
| Winchester RPC, KS                                  | 31,490                | 135,436                          | 0                         | 4,721                            | 0                          | 140,157          | 65,853                 | Yes                            |           |
| <b>Total</b>                                        | <b>1,444,714</b>      | <b>3,162,313</b>                 | <b>168,104</b>            | <b>240,153</b>                   | <b>75,439</b>              | <b>3,646,009</b> | <b>1,448,441</b>       | <b>6</b>                       |           |

| Expenses 2020                                |              |         |                |                        |                            |                        | Balance<br>12/31/2020 | Transfers In<br>or Out (-) | Final Checking<br>Balance 12/31/2020 | Other Assets | Budgeted<br>Pastor's Sal. '21 |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Additional<br>Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage #2 | RPM&M   | Other RP Works | External<br>Ministries | Other Internal<br>Expenses | Total<br>Distributions |                       |                            |                                      |              |                               |
| 0                                            | No           | 0       | 770            | 850                    | 6,561                      | 22,181                 | 79,546                | -79,546                    | 0                                    | 0            | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 6,000   | 9,118          | 2,500                  | 111,072                    | 202,594                | 136,313               | 1,999                      | 138,312                              | 63,600       | 83,240                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0       | 1,001          | 0                      | 0                          | 68,361                 | 2,634                 | 18,300                     | 20,934                               | 141,440      | 67,360                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 450     | 2,330          | 350                    | 4,587                      | 36,226                 | 10,474                | 0                          | 10,474                               | 26,567       | 0                             |
| 34,250                                       | No           | 2,120   | 3,066          | 0                      | 27,716                     | 83,652                 | 86,534                | 0                          | 86,534                               | 4,239        | 66,500                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 520     | 4,951          | 133                    | 39,869                     | 45,473                 | 112,063               | 0                          | 112,063                              | 103,365      | 54,860                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,000   | 1,501          | 3,250                  | 16,106                     | 27,657                 | 75,426                | 0                          | 75,426                               | 0            | 48,200                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 970     | 5,339          | 0                      | 11,831                     | 70,934                 | 20,813                | -8,865                     | 11,948                               | 21,925       | 55,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0       | 3,016          | 0                      | 10,898                     | 60,014                 | 14,410                | 0                          | 14,410                               | 1,450        | 43,704                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,000   | 3,574          | 3,254                  | 26,794                     | 108,752                | 92,175                | 0                          | 92,175                               | 0            | 78,936                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 500     | 4,325          | 0                      | 3,236                      | 69,261                 | 19,920                | 0                          | 19,920                               | 0            | 62,550                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 2,500   | 3,242          | 400                    | 26,920                     | 77,762                 | 19,227                | 0                          | 19,227                               | 85,625       | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 6,592   | 6,481          | 250                    | 21,462                     | 94,900                 | 65,491                | -48,127                    | 17,364                               | 98,847       | 62,115                        |
| 15,371                                       | No           | 2,917   | 9,124          | 8,482                  | 24,687                     | 90,081                 | 50,167                | 0                          | 50,167                               | 129,393      | 82,500                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,833   | 0              | 0                      | 6,399                      | 32,869                 | 25,566                | 0                          | 25,566                               | 0            | 37,872                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 510     | 5,526          | 0                      | 49,123                     | 113,767                | 34,983                | -203                       | 34,780                               | 78,861       | 54,300                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 24,010  | 33,264         | 1,600                  | 84,121                     | 214,509                | 34,507                | -34,507                    | 0                                    | 887,603      | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 52,000  | 52,400         | 109,500                | 198,387                    | 522,387                | 93,735                | 1,153,766                  | 1,247,501                            | 448,151      | 103,850                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 11,100  | 10,788         | 3,550                  | 57,767                     | 160,235                | 147,668               | 0                          | 147,668                              | 231,827      | 78,792                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,000   | 16,401         | 14,250                 | 42,599                     | 180,716                | 276,563               | -9,234                     | 267,329                              | 360,064      | 104,200                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,000   | 14,140         | 3,000                  | 87,147                     | 196,700                | 80,420                | -7,125                     | 73,295                               | 130,827      | 89,852                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 27,689  | 12,168         | 3,200                  | 232,236                    | 361,693                | 193,736               | 0                          | 193,736                              | 246,000      | 136,900                       |
| 0                                            | No           | 0       | 2,989          | 0                      | 6,762                      | 60,601                 | 29,032                | -1,490                     | 27,542                               | 6,071        | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 3,000   | 4,303          | 0                      | 7,931                      | 71,919                 | 69,551                | 0                          | 69,551                               | 5,208        | 58,299                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,363   | 7,600          | 0                      | 39,071                     | 128,306                | 46,573                | -7,475                     | 39,098                               | 0            | 65,196                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,192   | 10,747         | 900                    | 48,288                     | 129,980                | 41,668                | 0                          | 41,668                               | 223,973      | 72,764                        |
| 49,621                                       | 0            | 158,266 | 228,164        | 155,469                | 1,191,569                  | 3,231,530              | 1,859,195             | 977,493                    | 2,836,688                            | 3,295,036    | 1,506,990                     |

### Financial Statistics 2020

|                                           | Balance<br>12/31/2019 | Receipts 2020                    |                           |                                  |                            |                | Total Receipts<br>2020 | Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
|                                           |                       | Contributions<br>(Ordinary Rec.) | Other Rec.<br>(Not Rest.) | Other Rec.<br>(Restricted gifts) | Sup. Aid<br>Prsby. and HMB |                |                        |                                |           |
| <b>PACIFIC COAST</b>                      |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                |                        |                                |           |
| All Saints RPC, Brea, CA                  | 29,920                | 82,499                           | 0                         | 4,952                            | 0                          | 87,451         | 82,971                 | No                             |           |
| All Saints RPC, Irvine, CA                | 46,753                | 16,630                           | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 16,630         | 0                      | No                             |           |
| Coram Deo RP MC, Squamish, BC             | 47,883                | 69,776                           | 597                       | 0                                | 0                          | 70,373         | 49,287                 | No                             |           |
| First RPC, Phoenix, AZ                    | 4,521                 | 61,567                           | 909                       | 4,398                            | 0                          | 66,874         | 40,750                 | No                             |           |
| Fresno RPC, CA                            | 7,124                 | 103,664                          | 6,000                     | 3,425                            | 0                          | 113,089        | 0                      | No                             |           |
| Great Basin RP MC, Reno, NV               | 12,741                | 48,138                           | 0                         | 500                              | 38,364                     | 87,002         | 56,364                 | No                             |           |
| Las Vegas RPC, NV                         | 130,403               | 25,196                           | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 25,196         | 0                      | No                             |           |
| Los Angeles RPC, CA                       | 47,380                | 135,204                          | 156                       | 18,599                           | 0                          | 153,959        | 74,580                 | Yes                            |           |
| North Shore Bible Truth MC, Vancouver, BC | 2,332                 | 0                                | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 0              | 0                      | No                             |           |
| San Diego RPC, CA                         | 36,301                | 102,587                          | 82                        | 4,824                            | 0                          | 107,493        | 59,545                 | No                             |           |
| Seattle RPC, WA                           | 136,155               | 140,593                          | 0                         | 1                                | 0                          | 140,594        | 78,900                 | Yes                            |           |
| Shelter RPC, Edmonton, AB                 | 1,048                 | 57,108                           | 0                         | 591                              | 0                          | 57,700         | 42,697                 | No                             |           |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>502,561</b>        | <b>842,963</b>                   | <b>7,744</b>              | <b>37,290</b>                    | <b>38,364</b>              | <b>926,361</b> | <b>485,094</b>         | <b>2</b>                       |           |



| Expenses 2020                                |              |               |                |                        |                            |                        |                       |                            |                                      |                |                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Additional<br>Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage #2 | RPM&M         | Other RP Works | External<br>Ministries | Other Internal<br>Expenses | Total<br>Distributions | Balance<br>12/31/2020 | Transfers In<br>or Out (-) | Final Checking<br>Balance 12/31/2020 | Other Assets   | Budgeted<br>Pastor's Sal. '21 |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 4,740          | 0                      | 12,549                     | 100,260                | 17,111                | 0                          | 17,111                               | 15,026         | 82,721                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 0                      | 379                        | 379                    | 63,005                | 0                          | 63,005                               | 0              | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 0                      | 10,682                     | 59,969                 | 58,287                | 0                          | 58,287                               | 55,715         | 50,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 1,260          | 0                      | 10,827                     | 52,837                 | 18,559                | -79                        | 18,480                               | 0              | 48,180                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 400           | 6,253          | 0                      | 35,056                     | 41,709                 | 78,505                | 0                          | 78,505                               | 0              | 64,600                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 0                      | 10,338                     | 66,702                 | 33,041                | 0                          | 33,041                               | 0              | 64,164                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 0                      | 20,184                     | 20,184                 | 135,415               | 0                          | 135,415                              | 0              | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,150         | 10,296         | 1,100                  | 91,651                     | 181,777                | 19,562                | 24,000                     | 43,562                               | 52,186         | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 0             | 0              | 0                      | 88                         | 88                     | 2,244                 | 3,676                      | 5,920                                | 0              | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 2,000         | 4,752          | 0                      | 29,998                     | 96,295                 | 47,499                | 0                          | 47,499                               | 0              | 70,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 12,200        | 7,842          | 7,000                  | 106,606                    | 212,548                | 64,201                | 0                          | 64,201                               | 134,337        | 20,000                        |
| 2,050                                        | No           | 0             | 2,076          | 0                      | 6,447                      | 53,270                 | 5,477                 | 0                          | 5,477                                | 0              | 45,936                        |
| <b>2,050</b>                                 | <b>0</b>     | <b>18,750</b> | <b>37,219</b>  | <b>8,100</b>           | <b>334,804</b>             | <b>886,017</b>         | <b>542,905</b>        | <b>27,597</b>              | <b>570,503</b>                       | <b>257,264</b> | <b>445,601</b>                |

### Financial Statistics 2020

|                                      | Balance<br>12/31/2019 | Receipts 2020                    |                           |                                  |                            |                   | Total Receipts<br>2020 | Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
|                                      |                       | Contributions<br>(Ordinary Rec.) | Other Rec.<br>(Not Rest.) | Other Rec.<br>(Restricted gifts) | Sup. Aid<br>Prsby. and HMB |                   |                        |                                |           |
| <b>ST. LAWRENCE</b>                  |                       |                                  |                           |                                  |                            |                   |                        |                                |           |
| Christ Church, Floyd, NY             | 1,761                 | 112,917                          | 0                         | 6,098                            | 0                          | 119,015           | 77,028                 | No                             |           |
| Christian Heritage RPC, Endicott, NY | 2,231                 | 45,275                           | 0                         | 1,843                            | 8,000                      | 55,118            | 17,791                 | Yes                            |           |
| Evangelical RPC, Toronto, Ontario    | 47,697                | 129,232                          | 0                         | 19,745                           | 0                          | 148,977           | 62,840                 | Yes                            |           |
| Fulton RPC, NY                       | 37,975                | 70,489                           | 0                         | 1,530                            | 2,000                      | 74,019            | 55,162                 | No                             |           |
| Hillside RPC, Almonte, Ontario       | 37,239                | 109,316                          | 0                         | 8,991                            | 0                          | 118,307           | 55,752                 | No                             |           |
| Hudson-St. Lazare, Quebec            | 55,691                | 49,243                           | 483                       | 0                                | 0                          | 49,726            | 38,967                 | No                             |           |
| Lisbon RPC, NY                       | 76,981                | 57,080                           | 0                         | 2,394                            | 0                          | 59,474            | 22,919                 | Yes                            |           |
| Messiah's Church, Clay, NY           | 66,810                | 130,251                          | 0                         | 0                                | 1,127                      | 131,378           | 83,500                 | No                             |           |
| New Creation RPC, Kitchener, Ontario | 36,447                | 154,342                          | 1,090                     | 6,414                            | 0                          | 161,846           | 68,225                 | No                             |           |
| Oswego RPC, NY                       | 53,235                | 167,297                          | 11,482                    | 26,934                           | 5,000                      | 210,713           | 40,863                 | No                             |           |
| Ottawa RPC, Ontario                  | 81,329                | 206,555                          | 242                       | 0                                | 0                          | 206,797           | 92,989                 | No                             |           |
| Rochester RPC, NY                    | 43,112                | 100,956                          | 0                         | 7,600                            | 0                          | 108,556           | 72,058                 | Yes                            |           |
| Russell RPC, Ontario                 | 105,030               | 192,856                          | 1,325                     | 264,135                          | 0                          | 458,316           | 80,252                 | No                             |           |
| Syracuse RPC, NY                     | 46,584                | 161,043                          | 0                         | 0                                | 0                          | 161,043           | 61,554                 | Yes                            |           |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>692,123</b>        | <b>1,686,852</b>                 | <b>14,622</b>             | <b>345,684</b>                   | <b>16,127</b>              | <b>2,063,285</b>  | <b>829,900</b>         | <b>5</b>                       |           |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                   | <b>6,952,225</b>      | <b>13,967,649</b>                | <b>495,937</b>            | <b>1,337,871</b>                 | <b>182,174</b>             | <b>15,983,632</b> | <b>5,758,590</b>       | <b>27</b>                      |           |

| Expenses 2020                                |              |                |                |                        |                            |                        |                       |                            |                                      |                  |                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Additional<br>Pastor's Total<br>Compensation | Parsonage #2 | RPM&M          | Other RP Works | External<br>Ministries | Other Internal<br>Expenses | Total<br>Distributions | Balance<br>12/31/2020 | Transfers In<br>or Out (-) | Final Checking<br>Balance 12/31/2020 | Other Assets     | Budgeted<br>Pastor's Sal. '21 |
| 0                                            | No           | 1,000          | 5,118          | 0                      | 9,698                      | 92,844                 | 27,932                | -16,284                    | 11,648                               | 25,002           | 86,877                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 6,244          | 0                      | 18,646                     | 42,681                 | 14,668                | 3,742                      | 18,410                               | 0                | 18,500                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 1,534          | 0                      | 63,629                     | 128,003                | 68,671                | 9,108                      | 77,779                               | 84,626           | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 100            | 3,594          | 0                      | 15,511                     | 74,367                 | 37,627                | 0                          | 37,627                               | 0                | 0                             |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 3,830          | 11,523                 | 36,794                     | 107,899                | 47,647                | 0                          | 47,647                               | 151,459          | 55,493                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 0              | 1,924          | 0                      | 14,728                     | 55,619                 | 49,798                | -25,407                    | 24,391                               | 139,673          | 39,704                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 220            | 1,652          | 520                    | 17,144                     | 42,455                 | 94,000                | 0                          | 94,000                               | 55,222           | 40,000                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 103            | 6,032          | 1,000                  | 57,425                     | 148,060                | 50,128                | 0                          | 50,128                               | 0                | 83,500                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 3,580          | 6,679          | 0                      | 24,472                     | 102,956                | 95,337                | 77,134                     | 172,471                              | 443,312          | 70,250                        |
| 40,358                                       | No           | 1,870          | 8,940          | 35,277                 | 54,865                     | 182,173                | 81,775                | -50,593                    | 31,182                               | 141,112          | 74,180                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 4,566          | 8,545          | 725                    | 90,580                     | 197,405                | 90,721                | -15,871                    | 74,850                               | 41,099           | 92,625                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 200            | 6,188          | 0                      | -9,768                     | 68,678                 | 82,991                | 23,000                     | 105,991                              | 29,621           | 72,198                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 9,563          | 7,867          | 17,122                 | 117,512                    | 232,316                | 331,030               | -299,656                   | 31,374                               | 41,069           | 80,728                        |
| 0                                            | No           | 2,600          | 26,730         | 0                      | 108,539                    | 199,424                | 8,204                 | 0                          | 8,204                                | 8,663            | 63,099                        |
| <b>40,358</b>                                | <b>0</b>     | <b>23,802</b>  | <b>94,877</b>  | <b>66,167</b>          | <b>619,776</b>             | <b>1,674,880</b>       | <b>1,080,529</b>      | <b>-294,827</b>            | <b>785,702</b>                       | <b>1,160,858</b> | <b>777,155</b>                |
| <b>693,294</b>                               | <b>0</b>     | <b>468,718</b> | <b>972,659</b> | <b>585,660</b>         | <b>5,678,337</b>           | <b>14,157,259</b>      | <b>8,778,601</b>      | <b>218,162</b>             | <b>8,996,763</b>                     | <b>9,424,447</b> | <b>6,483,558</b>              |

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## Glossary of Common Abbreviations

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- AIC**—ad interim commission
- BCI**—Biblical Counseling Institute
- BOD**—Book of Discipline
- BOSC**—Business of Synod Committee
- CASA**—Central and South America Committee
- Cush4Christ**—South Sudan mission
- DCG**—Directory of Church Government
- GLG**—Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery
- GMB**—Global Missions Board
- HMB**—Home Missions Board
- IC**—Interchurch Committee
- ICRC**—International Council of Reformed Churches
- IJC**—Immanuel Judicial Commission
- JP**—Japan Presbytery
- KTH**—Kobe Theological Hall
- NAPARC**—North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
- NT**—New Testament
- OT**—Old Testament
- PCP**—Pacific Coast Presbytery
- POA**—Presbytery of the Alleghenies
- PRCC**—Presbyterian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains
- RE**—Ruling Elder
- RIT**—Resident-in-Training
- RP**—Reformed Presbyterian
- RPC**—Reformed Presbyterian Church
- RPCNA**—Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
- RPIC**—Reformed Presbyterian International Conference
- RPM&M**—Reformed Presbyterian Missions & Ministries
- RPT**—Reformed Presbyterian Testimony
- RPTS**—Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- RPWA**—Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association
- RTF**—Reformation Translation Fellowship
- STL**—St. Lawrence Presbytery
- TE**—Teaching Elder
- TFY**—Theological Foundations for Youth
- TGB**—Temporary Governing Body
- WCF**—Westminster Confession of Faith
- WLC**—Westminster Larger Catechism
- WSC**—Westminster Shorter Catechism
- YLC**—Youth Leadership Conference
- YMCS**—Youth Ministries Committee of Synod



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