

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

Indiana Wesleyan University
Marion, Indiana
June 26-29, 2018

Church Headquarters

Mr. James K. McFarland, Treasurer
7408 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15208
412-731-1177



Rev. J. Bruce Martin
Moderator

Tuesday; June 26, 2018; 8:30 a.m.

On June 26, 2018, at 8:30 a.m., the 187th 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). The Moderator, Rev. Jerrold “Jerry” Milroy (of Colorado Springs, CO), called the Synod to order, then led in the opening devotions. Devotional sermons for these meetings were all on the theme: “The Steadfast Love of God.” The Moderator called the assembly to pray in silence, then read Psalm 117:1-2 as the call to worship. Elder David Weir precented during the singing of Psalm 103B from *The Book of Psalms for Worship*. The Moderator prayed, then delivered the week’s keynote address on that blessed encouragement: the steadfast and loyal love of God (emphasized in Ex. 33-34). The Moderator prayed to constitute this Court of the Synod.

The attendance roll was made up and is as follows for each session of this Synod meeting:

	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Alleghenies				
Martin, Titus (TE; College Hill; Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X E E	E E
Smith, Dean (TE; College Hill; Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X E E	E E
McCracken, Herb (RE; College Hill; Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
York, Barry (RE; College Hill; Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Somerville, Ryan (TE; Covenant; Aurora, OH)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Gunn, Gary (TE; Covenant; Meadville, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X	X X
Smith, Peter (TE; Covenant Fellowship)	X X X	X X X	X X E	E E
Butler, Joel (RE; Covenant Fellowship)		X X X		
Gordon, Drew (RE; Covenant Fellowship)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Ramsey, Micah (TE; Eastvale; Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Robb, Jim (RE; Eastvale; Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Hanna, Lucas (TE; First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Filbert, Matt (TE; First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McBurney, Kenneth (RE; First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Schaefer, David (RE; First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA)	X X X	X X X	X	
Stivason, Jeff (TE; Grace; Gibsonia, PA)	X X X	X E E	X X X	X X
McHenry, Dean (RE; Grace; State College, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Bever, Ryan (TE; Grace & Truth; Harrisonburg, VA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Scavo, Vince (TE; Manchester, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Panichelle, Brian (RE; Manchester, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Klingensmith, Marlin (ALT. RE; Manchester, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Metzger, Harry (TE; North Hills; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Blocki, Martin (TE; North Hills; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Ma, Matthew (TE; North Hills; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Sampson, Mark (RE; North Hills; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Weir, Bill (RE; North Hills; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Bradley, Steve (TE; Providence; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Williams, CJ (TE; Providence; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McFarland, James (RE; Providence; Pittsburgh, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Monger, John (TE; Rimersburg, PA)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Brown, Charles (TE; Rose Point, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Curran, Guy (RE; Rose Point, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wood, Joel (TE; Trinity, MD)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Handermann, David (RE; Trinity, MD)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Merkel, David (RE; Trinity, MD)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Watt, Jonathan (TE; Tusca Area, PA)	E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Backensto, Bruce (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Blackwood, Ed (TE)	E E E	X X X	X X X	E E
Etheridge, Rutledge (TE)	E E E	X X X	X X X	E E
Gamble, Rick (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Martin, Paul (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
O'Neill, Jerry (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Reid, Tom (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Sanchez, Marcelo (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

Atlantic

Tabaka, J. Alex (TE; Broomall, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Werts, William, III (RE; Broomall, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Bailey, Noah (TE; Cambridge, MA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Montgomery, Tim (RE; Cambridge, MA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Fisher, Thomas (ALT. RE; Cambridge, MA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Shafer, Phillip (RE; Coldenham-Newburgh, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Edgar, John D. (TE; Elkins Park, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Brace, Paul (TE; Hazleton Area, PA)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Nelson, Jeremy (RE; Hazleton Area, PA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Howe, Daniel M. (TE; Christ Church; Providence, RI)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wingfield, Gabriel (RE; Christ Church; Providence, RI)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Robson, David (RE; Christ Church; Providence, RI)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Martin, J. Bruce (TE; Ridgefield Park, NJ)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Weir, David (RE; Ridgefield Park, NJ)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McCarthy, Steven (TE; Walton, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McCready, Jack (RE; Walton, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Coon, David (TE; White Lake, NY)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E

Great Lakes/Gulf

Pockras, Philip (TE; Belle Center, OH)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Holdeman, Richard (TE; Bloomington, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Davis, CJ (RE; Bloomington, IN)	X X X	X X		
LeFebvre, Michael (TE; Christ Church, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Koons, Dale (RE; Christ Church, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McCracken, Andy (TE; Columbus, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McNamee, Gary (RE; Columbus, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Butterfield, Kent (TE; First; Durham, NC)	X X X	X X X	X X X	E E
Mann, Wade (TE; Elkhart, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
DeRosa, Andy (RE; Elkhart, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Scott, Craig (TE; Grand Rapids, MI)	X X X	X X X	X X E	X X
Morton, Raymond (TE; Hetherton, MI)	X X X	X X X	X X X	E E
Olivetti, Jared (TE; Immanuel; W. Lafayette, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Carr, David (RE; Immanuel; W. Lafayette, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	E E
Niess, Adam (TE; Lafayette, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Bibby, Bob (RE; Lafayette, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Camery, Jason (TE; Marion, IN)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
McCracken, HP (TE; Orlando, FL)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wise, Ian (TE; Pageland, SC)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Faris, James (TE; Second Indianapolis, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Hart, Joel (TE; Second Indianapolis, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Blankenship, Richard (RE; Second Indianapolis, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Pulliam, Russ (RE; Second Indianapolis, IN)	X E X	X X	X	
Cassell, Donald (ALT. RE; Second Indianapolis, IN)			X	X
Kuehner, Adam (TE; Southfield, MI)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Kim, John (RE; Southfield, MI)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Hanson, David (TE; Southside; Indianapolis, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McKenzie, Stanley (TE; Southside; Indianapolis, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	E E
Burchfield, Bob (RE; Southside; Indianapolis, IN)	X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Porter, Jerry (RE; Southside; Indianapolis, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Work, Steven (TE; Southwest Ohio)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Vincze, Timothy (RE; Southwest Ohio)	X X X	X X X	X E E	E E
Odom, James (RE; Sparta, IL)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Anderson, Shawn (TE; Sycamore; Kokomo, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McKissick, Robert (RE; Sycamore; Kokomo, IN)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Rhoda, Steve (TE; Westminster, IL)	X X	X X X	X X X	X

	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Evans, Keith (TE)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Gregory, George (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Magill, Keith (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Smith, Frank (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Whitla, David (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

Japan

Sakai, Sumito (TE; Higashisuma, Kobe)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Takiura, Shigeru (TE; Keiyaku, Okamoto)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Takiura, Kihei (TE; Keiyaku, Okamoto)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Leach, Charles (TE; Kasumigaoka, Kobe)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Kanamori, Hiroyuki (TE; Mukonosou, Amagasaki)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X

Midwest

McFarland, John (TE; Christ Covenant; Lawrence, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Stegall, Micah (RE; Christ Covenant; Lawrence, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	E E
Baumgardner, Jack (TE; Clarinda, IA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Adams, Ren (RE; Clarinda, IA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Koller, Mark (TE; Dallas, TX)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Silva, Andrew (RE; Dallas, TX)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Hindman, J. Edward (TE; Denison, KS)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Hemken, Daniel (TE; Hebron, Clay Center, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McMahan, Steve (RE; Hebron; Clay Center, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Moore, Derek (TE; Laramie, WY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Rockhill, Steve (TE; Living Way; Bryan, TX)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Haney, Jonathan (TE; Manhattan, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wallace, Joel (RE; Manhattan, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Bartel, Dan (TE; Minneola, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Sexton, Matthew (TE; Quinter, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Copeland, Stan (RE; Quinter, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Bechtold, Jeff (RE; Salt and Light; Longmont, CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Smith, John W. (RE; Sharon; Morning Sun, IA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wing, Dennis (RE; Shawnee, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Reese, David (TE; Springs Reformed; CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Ryce, Jason (TE; Springs Reformed; CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Klajnbart, Jorge (RE; Springs Reformed; CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Logan, John (RE; Springs Reformed; CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wright, Brian (TE; Sterling, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Kilgore, Bill (RE; Sterling, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Parnell, R. Bruce (TE; Stillwater, OK)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Carroll, Dave (RE; Stillwater, OK)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Johnston, Brad (TE; Topeka, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Duguid, Philip (RE; Topeka, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Friedly, Joseph (TE; Tri-Lakes; Monument, CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Milroy, Craig (RE; Tri-Lakes; Monument, CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Allyn, Joe (TE; Trinity; Wichita, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Drost, Dan (TE; Washington, IA)	X X X	X X	X X X	X X
Jarrard, Rob (RE; Washington, IA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Sapp, Shane (TE; Westminster; CO)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Borg, Kyle (TE; Winchester, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Tweed, James (RE; Winchester, KS)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Graham, Ron (TE)	E X X	X X X	X X E	E E
Hemphill, Bob (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Leach, Jonathan (TE)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Massey, Elish (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McCracken, Sam (TE)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
McFarland, Robert (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Milroy, Jerry (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Moore, Kelly (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	
Stegall, Ron (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X	X
Stiner, Greg (TE)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Yelton, Jeffrey (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X	
Pacific				
Sawtelle, John (TE; All Saints; Brea, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Spitzer, John (RE; All Saints; Brea, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Ketcham, Sam (TE; Fresno, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Hemphill, Paul (RE; Fresno, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

Tang, Hsing (TE; Irvine, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Huizing, Howard (RE; Irvine, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Eshelman, Nathan (TE; Los Angeles, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Yang, Namsik (TE; Los Angeles, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Ashleigh, David (RE; Los Angeles, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Maginn, Jon (TE; Phoenix, AZ)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
England, Mark (TE; San Diego, CA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Hemphill, Ryan (TE; Seattle, WA)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Olson, Dennis (RE; Seattle, WA)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McCracken, Tim (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
McNeely, Patrick (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Piper, Donald (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X	X X

St. Lawrence

Goerner, Aaron (TE; Christ Church; NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Goerner, George (RE; Christ Church; NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Chamberlain, Doug (TE; Christian Heritage; NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
MacLeod, D. Allan (TE; Evangelical; Toronto)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Finlayson, Rod (RE; Evangelical; Toronto)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Iamaio, Nick (TE; Fulton, NY)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Ward, Vince (TE; Hudson/St. Lazare; Quebec)		X	X X X	X
Smith, Donald (RE; Lisbon, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X
Coombs, Brian (TE; Messiah’s Church, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Wilkinson, J. Scott (TE; New Creation; Kitchener)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Swartz, Walter “Kit” (TE; Oswego, NY)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
McGrath, John (RE; Oswego, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	E
Moberg, Greg (RE; Rochester, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Kingswood, Matthew (TE; Russell, Ontario)	E E E	E E E	E E E	E E
Hackett, Bob (TE; Shelter; Edmonton)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Dohms, Jordan (RE; Shelter; Edmonton)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Pinkerton, Robert (RE; Syracuse, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
Charlton, Eric (RE; Syracuse, NY)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X E
Pihl, William (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X

Central Presbytery GPS (TE)	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X
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It was moved, seconded, and carried to make other elders present who were not voting delegates consultative members of the Court. The following were introduced to the Court as first-time Synod delegates: Micah Stegall (RE; Lawrence, KS), David Robson (RE; Providence, RI), Gabriel Wingfield (TE; Providence, RI), Patrick McNeely (TE; Squamish, B.C.), Andy DeRosa (RE; Elkhart, Ind.), Brian Wright (TE; Sterling, KS), Gary Gunn (TE; Meadville, PA), Ryan Bever (TE; Harrisonburg, VA), Jeremy Nelson (RE; Hazleton, PA), C. J. Davis (RE; Bloomington, IN), Hsing Tang (TE; Irvine, CA), Joel Hart (TE; Indianapolis, IN), Joel Wallace (RE; Manhattan, KS), Paul Hemphill (RE; Fresno, CA), Sam Ketcham (TE; Fresno, CA), and Eric Charlton (RE; Syracuse, NY). The Court applauded its welcome to all. Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS) President Jerry O'Neill introduced the pages who serve this Court: Andrew Battiato, Tim Bloedow, Jay Dharan, and Zach Smith. Personal privilege was granted to Pastor Dan Drost, who introduced the pastor-elect for the Sharon RPC (Morning Sun, IA) congregation, Bryan Schneider. Bruce Parnell introduced fraternal delegates: Iain Wright (OPC); Andrew Barnes (PCA); Tony Mastris (Greek Evangelical Church, Cyprus); and Kyle Sims and Scott Cook (Associate RPC).

Synod Officer Elections: The Moderator asked for nominations for the new moderator. The name of Andy McCracken was put forward. A motion to close nominations failed. The name of J. Bruce Martin was put forward. The motion to close nominations carried. Moderator Milroy called for a standing vote. It was determined that Mr. Bruce Martin received more than half of the votes. The Court rose in applause, at which time new Mod. Martin shook the hand of our former Moderator Milroy and assumed the chair of leadership. Nominations and votes for the clerk and assistant clerk positions resulted in the elections of Clerk John McFarland and Assistant Clerk Charles Brown; the Court rose in applause. The Moderator asked Mr. Milroy to pray for the officers, and he did so.

The following servants of the church who have recently passed away were remembered for their faithful service to the courts, congregations, and believers:

<u>Teaching Elders:</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Congregations served</u>
Marion L. McFarland	March 28, 2018	Connellsville (PA), Clarinda (IA), Lawrence (KS); Ogemaw (MI)
<u>Ruling Elders:</u>		
Seigo Kitani	Dec. 23, 2017	Kasumigaoka (Kobe, Japan)
Michael Tabon	June 20, 2018	White Lake (NY)

Pastors' Wives:

Mrs. Robert (Elaine "Bell") Tweed December 31, 2017

The Court sang Psalm 116B. Rev. Stan Copeland led the Court in the memorial prayer.

Personal privilege was granted to Andy McCracken, who moved that the presentation of the body of all reports to be given during these meetings be limited to five minutes. The motion carried.

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 the Moderator will appoint a committee-of-the-day to canvass the 2017 overture). The Clerk's Report as a whole was approved (constituting final approval of the *2017 Minutes of Synod*) and follows:

2018 Report of the Clerk of Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers: To my knowledge, I have carried out duties assigned to me. *The 2017 Minutes of Synod and Yearbook* was edited by Heidi Filbert and proofread by myself and Assistant Clerk Charles Brown. The Managing Editors of Crown & Covenant Publications secured the printer and handled the sale and distribution of the books, with typical excellence.

The approval of this Clerk's Report—by rule—constitutes the final approval of the minutes of the previous Synod (2017); your clerk has no minutes corrections to report.

The Clerk posted the reports for the 2018 Synod at <http://synod.rpcna.net> (in the 2018 Folder). A file similar to previous publications of the Docket & Digest is being posted there along with those individual reports. No paper

Docket & Digest will be distributed to the Synod delegates; print your own (if necessary), but we hope the e-version is more useful (with searchability, etc.).

As the meeting time for 2019 Synod (June 11-14) has already been adopted, notice is here given that 2019 reports should be sent to the Clerk for inclusion in Synod's e-file and Digest by May 2, 2019 (no later than May 9, 2019). Notice this is earlier than usual, with an earlier Synod.

A page has been assigned in the 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 the List-A approach to 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 that 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/after meal times).

Some simple counsel here for "next time" on the overture process: I am glad to make wise use of e-communication tools. Our revised *Constitution* allows me to distribute overture documents to your sessions electronically, but it does not (yet) allow the sessions to bounce back their votes to me in the same efficient manner. Maybe that can change in the future! Until then, it will work best for all of us if sessions conduct their overture votes from January to March, deliver them to me before May, and include on their mail-in envelopes SESSION NAME and "OVERTURE."

Some simple counsel here for "next time" on the Synod certification process: I am glad to make wise use of e-communication tools. It will work best for all of us if sessions appoint their delegates before April and inform me before May. Full certification involves my ability to see signatures on a session delegate certificate. The clever among us, for years, have managed to do this through PDFs and/or cell phone photographs; this cuts out paper, envelopes, and the US Postal Service! We are glad to accept signed certificates through the US mail and by-hand delivery to the clerk prior to Synod's first session. No matter,

I need to know planned attendance for all sessions several weeks before Synod meets; an email works well for this. Registration for Synod through our excellent Manager is a *different* matter altogether. If this is unclear, let me know.

There are two groups of Synod servants who deserve much thanks from the Court for efficiencies we enjoy while together and in the months leading up to our annual gatherings. It is right and best and presbyterian (I believe) that I communicate with local elders *through* the clerks of their respective presbyteries. These men are well known to you and prove themselves worthy of your trust for regional matters; they are a great help to me with many necessary communications and for the gathering of essential data. The members of your Business of Synod Committee are a similar help to me in planning for effective sessions together through setting a reasonable agenda. Synod's manager (Herb McCracken) and current moderator (Jerry Milroy) serve fully on that Committee. Brothers, we are often quick to complain about imperfections of process and performance; let us be even more eager to thank these brothers and to praise King Jesus for the gifts which they are.

At the end of this Report, the retiring moderator and I provide an important record of several communications occurring from June 2017 to April 2018. Recall that the 2017 Synod repented to the three parties concerned with our failure to address the Hemphill Appeal versus the Presbytery of the Alleghenies. As you know, repenting begins a transaction which we always hopes ends with a clear statement of forgiveness. We rejoice to provide a written record that this was granted to us, times three.

And I continue to benefit from your patience with me. I am happy to report that my confidence and competence increased by 1% over the past year, so in a century we should be in great shape.

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 vacancies on Synod's boards and permanent committees be referred to the Nominating Committee.
3. That the moderator appoint a committee-of-the-day to canvass the overture.

Respectfully submitted,
John M. McFarland (Clerk)

Forgiveness

During the Thursday morning session of Synod (06/29/2017):

Moved and seconded: that Synod confess our failure to the parties involved (Mr. Bruce Hemphill, POA, Judicial Committee), to follow the proper procedure that we have agreed to in our *Book of Discipline* for hearing an appeal, and we publicly express our repentance and seek their forgiveness. Carried. The moderator expressed our repentance. Rev. Kyle Sims (visiting from Associate RPC) asked to pray for this Court; we were glad for him to do so.

During the Thursday afternoon session of Synod (06/29/2017):

Personal privilege was granted to [Committee] Chairman Dennis Olson to formally grant forgiveness to the Court on behalf of the Judicial Committee on Communication 16-4.

On 7/5/2017, Jerry Milroy wrote:

Dear Bruce Hemphill: I am writing to correct an oversight that I made regarding you and your appeal. Not very long after the Synod decided they must process the appeal as directed in the *Book of Discipline* (and therefore dismiss Judicial Committee for Communication 16-4), an additional action was taken relative to you and your appeal and the other parties. I was unaware that you were not present to witness this action. I can only imagine something of your disappointment and desire to depart. The Synod moved "that Synod confess our failure to the parties involved (Mr. Bruce Hemphill, Presbytery of the Alleghenies, Judicial Committee), to follow the proper procedure that we have agreed to in our *Book of Discipline* for hearing an appeal, and we publicly express our repentance and ask their forgiveness." This motion passed, and I publicly expressed our repentance. I apologize for not checking to make certain you and all the other parties were present. Please forgive me for that oversight. I was very thankful that our brother, Kyle Sims, fraternal delegate from the Associate RP Church, asked if he could pray for us at that time, which he did. The other fraternal delegates also prayed earnestly and specifically for our denomination during the noon closing prayer time. In any case, I am

writing to you now so that you will have my official notification that I am saying to you, as I did to the others: We as a Synod confess to you that we failed to process your appeal in the manner directed by our *Book of Discipline*, and we repent regarding that failure and ask your forgiveness. Bruce, please be assured that I will continue to pray for you and the Synod (including myself) as we move forward in dealing with your appeal.

Sincerely in Christ,
Jerold S. Milroy,
Moderator, 2017 Synod

On July 8, 2017, Bruce Hemphill wrote:

Dear Mr. Moderator: Thank you for this welcome letter of repentance in behalf of the Synod. And thank you for your personal understanding and empathy. Margie and I have been seriously distressed by the confusion and melodrama in Synod which led to another year's delay in the hearing of my Appeal. I do forgive the Synod for this breach of trust, and I promise not to remember it as an offense (1 Corinthians 13:5d). With the help of Jesus and the comfort of His Spirit we will find some ways to wait patiently and to return next year in the hope of a just outcome. We have found some comfort in Psalm 56.

In Christian love,
Bruce

From Martin Blocki to John McFarland on April 24, 2018:

Copied below are the minutes from our recent Presbytery [of the Alleghenies] meeting pertaining to Synod's request for the POA's forgiveness: The Presbytery took up the request for forgiveness from the 2017 Synod. [Synod requests forgiveness from the POA for offenses related to the handling of the Bruce Hemphill matter during the 2017 Synod meetings.] It was moved, seconded, and carried that the Presbytery of the Alleghenies grant forgiveness to Synod for their failure to follow the proper procedure agreed to in our *Book of Discipline* for hearing an appeal, and that the clerk communicate such to John Mc-

Farland, Clerk of Synod. This email is to “inform” you of our action! Let me know if you need anything else.

In Christ’s love and service,
Martin B.

Pastor Joel Wood, chairman, presented the Report of the Business of Synod Committee (BOSC) on Communications. Rev. Don Piper requested personal privilege, asking that John P. Edgar (counsel for Bruce Hemphill) be able to participate in discussion of these communications; this motion carried (by majority vote). Then the first two BOSC recommendations carried by greater than 2/3, resulting in two additions to the *Directory of Church Government* (to the Introduction and 8.13).

The Court enjoyed a break for refreshment from 10:20-10:40 a.m. Upon resuming, the Court sang Psalm 118A, with one of the tunes written by Mike Tabon (tune: White Lake).

BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-1 carried (by greater than 2/3), so this proposed addition to ordination queries goes down in overture to sessions and elders. BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-2 was introduced. There was a motion to lay the BOSC recommendation on the table, to entertain a substitute—Mr. Phil Pockras asking this Synod to vote now on the matter in Communication 18-2. The motion to lay on the table carried, so Synod considered the substitute (to take up the matter of Communication 18-2 during this Synod). The motion itself carried, and the substance of Communication 18-2 will be taken up at a later time.

BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-3 carried, so the mission in/for Birmingham (Alabama) will be led by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, with the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery’s support.

BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-4 was taken up. This motion was then offered as a substitute procedure for handling the Stegall Complaint vs. the Midwest Presbytery: “I MOVE that Synod: (a) hear this complaint as an order-of-the-day on Thursday morning following devotions; (b) grant to the complainant and defendant opening statements of up to ten minutes each; (c) the court debates the complaint; (d) grant to complainant and defendant closing statements of up to five minutes each;

and (e) render judgment on the complaint pursuant to *BOD* 4.5 (E-16).” This substitute had this sentence as original part (d): “... (d) direct members of the Midwest Presbytery who are members of the higher court that they do not have a voice in the judgment of the Complaint.”

The Moderator declared [original] (d) in the substitute motion to be out of order based on this language (from *BOD* II.4.4): “... 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.” That ruling of the moderator was challenged. The Court voted to sustain the ruling of the moderator (77-59).

It was moved and seconded to have a roll-call vote; 25% of the delegates must vote in favor of having a roll-call vote in order to do so; that number was not reached. So [original] (d) is no longer part of the substitute motion for handling Communication 18-4. There was discussion still about who is to be present and when during various parts of the Complaint.

BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-5 carried, resulting in the transfer of the Edmonton-Shelter congregation from St. Lawrence Presbytery to Pacific Coast Presbytery. BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-6 carried (by greater than 2/3; in fact, without dissent), clarifying *DCG* passages and Form 6 (about use of absentee ballots).

BOSC’s recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-7 was debated. Motion to lay this on the table, to refer this Communication to a study committee to consider the matter of recusal, reporting in 2019; motion to lay on the table carried; so the substitute motion is before us; it carried. Committee to be appointed by election via the Nominating Committee.

Personal privilege was granted to Elder David Merkel, to plead God’s help with respect to a difficult childbirth now (pertaining to a family from the Trinity, Maryland, congregation).

Synod returned to the substitute motion on Communication 18-4, with the revised language; it carried, so Synod will address this Complaint Thursday morning, making use of these procedures. There was a motion from the floor, asking Synod to recognize that Mr. Stegall’s Complaint is hereby substantiated as a claim of injustice and wrong. This was debated.

At 11:55 a.m., Elder Bill Weir and Chaplain Kelly Moore led the Court in prayer for grace. [Pastors Wade Mann, Craig Scott, and Shigeru Takiura of the Great Lakes / Gulf and Japan presbyteries coordinated prayer times during this Synod]. The delegates sang Psalm 68B. Herb McCracken (Synod's manager) made announcements and Synod applauded his work. Synod was led in a prayer of recess by Mr. Brad Johnston. The Court recessed at 12:15 p.m. After lunch break Synod delegates gathered for their presbytery meetings (1:15-2:25 p.m.).

Tuesday; June 26, 2018; 2:40 p.m.

Synod reconvened at 2:40 p.m. with the singing of Psalm 113C; the Court was led in prayer by Elder Craig Milroy. Minutes of the Tuesday morning session were read, corrected, and approved as corrected (moved, seconded, and carried). The attendance roll was passed. The Pacific Coast Presbytery asked and received the Synod's permission to meet this evening. As an update, that Presbytery licensed Jerry Foltz to preach. Mr. Merkel updated the Court to share God is helping that Trinity family; Mr. Merkel prayed for God's continued blessing.

The Moderator announced the following committees-of-the-day:

Nominating Committee. Carry over: Ed Blackwood and Bruce Martin (replaced with David Weir). Serving one year: John McGrath and Ren Adams. Two years: Jerry Milroy (convener) and Steve Rockhill.

State of the Church Committee: Pete Smith (chairman), Kent Butterfield, and Shigeru Takiura.

Resolution of Thanks: Keith Magill (chairman), Craig Milroy, and John Spitzer.

Committee to Canvass 2017 Overture: Paul Hemphill (chairman), David Ashleigh, and Dennis Wing.

The Court returned to consider Business of Synod Committee's Report on Communications. Repeating: There was a motion from the floor, asking Synod to recognize that Mr. Stegall's Complaint is hereby substantiated as a claim of injustice and wrong; motion passed (90-34). It was moved that the Midwest Presbytery (MWP) not have a vote in judgment of the matter of Communication 18-4; this motion was ruled unnecessary, so MWP delegates

will be recused from that judgment.

BOSC's recommendation pertaining to Communication 18-8 was taken up. After debate, there was a motion to lay this on the table, to entertain a substitute motion. The motion to lay on the table carried. A substitute motion was made: 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 [friendly motion reflected there]. This substitute motion passed.

BOSC's recommendations pertaining to Communication 18-9 carried (by 2/3+), so these statements from Japan Presbytery, though coming to our attention less than 30 days prior to the start of Synod, are properly before us. The communication from the Japan Presbytery itself will be taken up before consideration of the Joint Statement of the Global Missions Board and Home Mission Board.

The Business of Synod Committee's Report on Communications is printed here:

Business of Synod Committee Report on Communications to 2018 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 2018, EIGHT communications were received by the clerk and this Committee before May 27 (satisfying the thirty-day requirement).

NOT from a communication, the Business of Synod Committee deems it important to take up this Constitutional matter before looking at counsel on

communications. There is a deficiency in the *Constitution* of any means to amend *The Book of Discipline* or *The Directory of Public Worship*. In that we are clear on the need for these subordinate standards (technically, the law and order of the church) to be improved from time to time, there ought to be a clear change process identified. Useful language is available to us from the second paragraph of the Introduction for *The Directory of Church Government*:

“These definitions and procedures as set down in this *Directory* are to be received as official statements declaring the law and order of the church. The *Directory* may be amended by any given Synod by a two-thirds majority vote. If, however, Synod considers that the item before it should have the consideration and discussion of the sessions, it can by a simple majority vote decide to use the procedure of sending proposed amendments down in overture; however, any such amendments must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Synod before they can be sent down in overture to the sessions.”

The simplest way to mandate the same change procedure for the *BOD* and *DPW* is to add this sentence at the end of that same *DCG* Intro paragraph: “The same amendment process shall be followed for *The Book of Discipline* and *The Directory of Public Worship*.”

Furthermore, we recommend an addition to *DCG* 8.13. This paragraph currently reads:

“Upon request of one-third of the sessions, or one-third of the presbyteries, Synod shall give consideration to an overture. Any proposal of change in the fundamental law of the church, if adopted by Synod by a two-thirds vote, shall be submitted to the sessions of the congregations. Proposed major changes in the fundamental law (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, *Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, *Reformed Presbyterian Testimony*, *Covenant of Church Membership*, *Queries for Ordination and Licensure*, *Covenant of Baptism*) require that formal notice be given to the Synod one regular meeting in advance. No change shall be made in the fundamental law of the church until the proposed change has been sent down in overture and has been approved by two-thirds of all the sessions of the church (not including provisional sessions) that cast votes and a majority of the elders voting.”

The change we recommend simply involves *adding* these sentences to that paragraph, essentially the amendment process highlighted in the DCG's Introduction. It will help us to have all Constitutional amendment counsel in one place:

"The law and order documents (*The Directory of Church Government, The Book of Discipline, and The Directory of Public Worship*) may be amended by any given Synod by a two-thirds majority vote. If, however, Synod considers that the item before it should have the consideration and discussion of the sessions, it can by a simple majority vote decide to use the procedure of sending proposed amendments down in overture; however, any such amendments must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Synod before they can be sent down in overture to the sessions."

These two additions we so recommend; in that they themselves change the law and order of the church, a two-thirds majority vote of this Synod is required. That said, we do not believe these changes are controversial, so they do not require the consideration and discussion of the sessions and thus do not require the overture process.

Communication 18-1 (Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery, on Ordination Query Addition): This pertains to adding a tenth query onto the end of the Ordination and Installation vows, the same one closing our current Baptism vows, echoing our Covenant of Church Membership vows: "Do you make these promises in the presence of God, in humble reliance upon His grace, as you desire to give your account with joy at the Last Great Day?" The Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG) is persuasive that this addition reflects consistency. We do not believe that a study committee is needed. *DCG* 7.13 reads:

"... Any proposal of change in the fundamental law of the church—if adopted by Synod by a two-thirds vote—shall be submitted to the sessions ... Proposed MAJOR changes in the fundamental law (*Westminster Confession of Faith, Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, Covenant of Church Membership, Queries for Ordination/Licensure, Cov. of Baptism*) require that formal notice be given to the Synod one regular meeting in advance. No change shall be made in the fundamental law of the church until

the proposed change has been sent down in overture and has been approved by two-thirds of all the sessions of the church ... that cast votes and a majority of the elders voting. ...”

As much work as the overture process entails, our DCG is clear on the need to send such a change “down in overture” in the coming year if THIS (2018) Synod approves of the addition. That said, this addition does not seem to be a “proposed major change,” so there should be no need to delay our voting by one year.

Recommendation: That this Synod vote in favor of the recommendation in this Communication; 2/3+ required, then overture.

Communication 18-2 (Great-Lakes/Gulf Presbytery, on Park City—Wichita, KS): This pertains to repentance “owed” to officers involved with the Park City congregation for “offenses” from over four decades ago.

Recommendation: That our moderator appoint a one-year judicial committee to investigate this matter and work with involved parties during the year, reporting back to the 2019 Synod with their recommendations.

Communication 18-3 (Great-Lakes/Gulf and Alleghenies Presbyteries, on Birmingham): This pertains to the Birmingham (Alabama) ‘mission church’ (or hopes/plans for such). This communication represents the united appeal of two full presbyteries along with their church extension committees with regard to a region where neither presbytery is numerically strong. This proposal should garner more support than one presbytery by itself could deliver. Further, the Presbytery of the Alleghenies would be in the lead seat at the beginning; it is important that lines of responsibility are clear ... and this is clear.

Recommendation: That Synod vote YES on this agreement.

Communication 18-4 (Rev. Ron Stegall, Complaint Against Midwest Presbytery (MWP)): Notice that this FULL consideration comes in two documents: Ron’s Complaint (18-4a) and MWP’s Documentation (18-4b). Rev. Stegall’s portion is 37 pages; it is a Complaint and not an “Appeal” (for there has been no trial). The Presbytery informed Rev. Stegall that they would proceed to a disciplinary trial of him if he did not choose from several options within thirty days. Before that deadline, Rev. Stegall announced his intention to complain against his Presbytery’s action, and he is doing so through this Communication.

Recommendation: That Synod address this Complaint as an order-of-the-day following Thursday morning devotions and follow the procedure which is outlined below:

1. The clerk shall read the Midwest Presbytery action vs. which Mr. Stegall is complaining. Note: Though Mr. Stegall's Complaint is 37 pages in length, his two specific complaints (or Claims of Error) are found on pages 27-31, and are (in brief): (1)The MWP erred by stating that I deny the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture. (2) The MWP erred by abusing both parliamentary process and the disciplinary process.
2. The reading of the full Complaint (aloud) shall be waived, since this has been available in writing for delegates for sufficient time. Mr. Stegall shall have opportunity in his opening speech/statement to bring forward the content which he deems to be most relevant.
3. The reading of the Midwest Presbytery's records pertaining to this matter shall be waived since these have been available in writing for delegates for sufficient time.
4. The parties shall be heard—the complainant having the opening and closing speeches. The complainant shall not be permitted to introduce any new arguments in his closing speech but confine himself to a summary of his Complaint and a rebuttal of the argument presented by the other side. Each party shall have up to twenty minutes each to present their opening speeches (complainant first, then presbytery), then the complainant up to seven minutes for his closing speech, including any rebuttal comments.
5. Opportunity shall be given for discussion of the case by the members of the Court.

Suggested prior to general discussion of the case:

- a. That members of the Court be permitted to respectfully ask (by addressing the moderator of Synod) clarifying questions of both parties.
- b. That if either party objects, no member of the Court who has not been present during the hearing of the whole Complaint shall be allowed to vote in the final decision.
- c. That the moderator remind the Court who is not permitted to par-

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- participate in deciding the Complaint.
- d. That the moderator ask those who are not participating in deciding the Complaint to withdraw from the room, while the Court deliberates.
 - e. That the Court begin its deliberation with prayer for Divine guidance in weighing the evidence and in reaching a just decision.
 - f. That the moderator remind the members of the Court (*DCG*, 8.14-16) that:
 - (1) Those who wish to speak must rise and address the moderator, and may not proceed until the moderator announces his name.
 - (2) Members of the Court may speak not more than twice except by the Court's permission.
 - (3) Every member when speaking shall address himself first to the moderator and then speak to the house in general, but he shall not address any member individually except through the moderator.
 - (4) Speakers shall treat all members with decorum and respect, and shall attend closely in his speech to the business in hand under consideration.
 - (5) Members of the Court shall attend closely to the business in hand and shall not engage in private conversation or in anything that may cause confusion or disorder.
 - (6) If a speaker acts in a disorderly manner, indulges in personal reflection, uses improper language, or deviates from the subject in hand, it is the privilege of any member and the duty of the moderator to call him to order.
 - (7) When opinion is sharply divided, the moderator shall see that time is shared as equitably as possible between representatives of both sides of the question.
 - (8) Our tongues are potentially destructive tools, but ought to be used in meekness and wisdom to bless others, as James 3 instructs.
 6. When the deliberation is finished, a vote shall be taken on sustaining or not sustaining the Complaint, each of the two specifications of error being voted on separately.

Suggested:

- a. That the moderator remind the Court that its decision must be based solely on the records of the lower court.
- b. That the moderator remind the Court of the grounds for complaint.
- c. That the clerk of Synod read each specification of error and ask: “Shall this specification of error be sustained?” A standing vote should be taken on each specification of error separately and with no further discussion. The clerks shall count the votes and the moderator announce the decision. A record of the ayes and nays should be recorded. A simple majority vote is required to sustain a specification of error.
 - (1) If neither of the specifications of the Complaint is sustained, then the Complaint is not sustained and the Court has upheld the decision of the lower court.
 - (2) If at least one specification of the Complaint is sustained, the moderator will call for a 15-minute recess to give time for motions to be carefully formulated and written down.
 - (3) After the 15-minute recess, the moderator will entertain a motion on whether:
 - i.) the lower court has not followed the prescribed order in the conduct of the case. The Court may, at its discretion, return the whole case to the lower for a new trial.
 - ii.) the decision of the lower court appears unjust and unwarranted. The higher Court may determine to try the case itself.
 - (4) If the case is not retried, the moderator shall entertain a motion that will either:
 - i.) not sustain the Complaint.
 - ii.) reverse—in whole or in part—the decision of the lower court.
- d. That when the Court has reached its decision, the parties should be recalled and the result announced.
- e. That the clerk of Synod notify the parties, in writing, of its decision.
- f. That Synod conclude the hearing of the Complaint with prayer.

Communication 18-5 [St. Lawrence (STL) and Pacific Coast Presbyteries (PCP), on Edmonton-Shelter]: This request to transfer the Edmonton-Shelter

congregation between two presbyteries (from STL to PCP) is clear and unanimous, with clearly considered and compelling reasons.

Recommendation: That Synod vote YES on this request, effecting the transfer.

Communication 18-6 (Midwest Presbytery, on Absentee Voting for Church Officers): This is from the DCG's introductory paragraphs: "The Directory may be amended by any given Synod by a 2/3 majority vote. If, however, Synod considers that the item before it should have the consideration and discussion of the sessions, it can by a simple majority vote decide to use the procedure of sending proposed amendments down in overture; however, any such amendments must be adopted by a 2/3 vote of the Synod before they can be sent down in overture to sessions." Communication 18-6 involves reasonable clarification of several DCG statements, making clear that (1) absentee ballots for church officer elections are valid only on a first electing ballot, and (2) they will not be used on nominating ballots. For ones charged with effecting edits (should this proposal pass) the passages of interest are: DCG 3.I.D.4.i and DCG 3.I.D.4.j (for ruling elders); DCG 3.II.D.4.h and DCG 3.II.D.4.i (for teaching elders); DCG 3.III.D.4.i and DCG 3.III.D.4.j (for deacons); plus Form 6.

Recommendation: That Synod vote YES on these DCG clarifications (by 2/3+ vote), not requiring the overture process (as these changes are NOT to our fundamental law).

Communication 18-7 (Atlantic Presbytery, on Recusals During Votes on Discipline): This Communication, approved by Cambridge Session and unanimously endorsed by the Atlantic Presbytery, recommends changes in our *Book of Discipline* (4.4 and 4.12) to prohibit members of a lower court from voting (etc.) when an action involving them is appealed to their higher court. Presently, "parties to the case or counsel for the same" are not to participate in such appeals, and any members of a lower court may choose to recuse themselves in an appeal (but it is not mandatory). The author (RE Tom Fisher) makes persuasive arguments from the practices of sister denominations and from the secular courts, along with the Golden Rule. Our Business of Synod Committee favors these changes, but we are among those willing to state the obvious: This Court (the Synod of 2018) will have before it two "cases" (one formal appeal and a complaint) against full presbyteries. While some may believe that Synod delegates from those two presbyteries should not participate in these consid-

erations involving them THIS year, this very Communication highlights that the CURRENT law and order of the church allows for it (apart from those presbytery members who were “parties to the case or counsel for the same”); again, any other elder in those presbyteries may self-recuse. Some may argue that we (this Synod) can make this change now (on Synod’s first day), and since the Book of Discipline is NOT part of our “fundamental law” (merely our “law and order”), we do NOT have to send down these changes in overture. True—but we MAY send them down that way, and it seems especially prudent to do so where the wise recognize controversy. If, on the other hand, this change is “rushed through” and put into effect immediately, it will seem to taint the critical decisions this Court is called to make at these meetings.

Recommendation: That Synod vote in favor of these *BOD* changes, by 2/3+ majority, AND if it passes, these changes be sent down to the sessions and elders in overture.

Communication 18-8 (Pacific Coast Presbytery, on Inmate Church Membership): The Pacific Coast Presbytery is asking THIS Synod (of 2018) to approve their specific policy “for their particular circumstance as being within the bounds of the *DCG* and other RPCNA subordinate standards.” While the same result is enjoyed if/when a Synod does not take up action AGAINST a practice of a presbytery, we sense the good spirit in our brothers as they desire to ask first instead of apologizing later! Synod has opportunity here to bless our brothers in creatively serving Christ in their region, without adding to or modifying our *Constitution*.

Recommendation: That Synod vote YES, heartily.

Communication 18-9 [Japan Presbytery, on the Joint Statement of Global Missions Board (GMB) and Home Mission Board (HMB)]: This communication came to our attention on June 18, 2018, just eight days before the start of this Synod meeting, well short of the thirty-day requirement. It requires a 2/3 vote of Synod to properly come before us. In favor of receiving it formally, this is a response to recommendations which will be before the Court at the close of the Global Missions Report, and it is helpful for delegates to have some notice about one presbytery’s position on those motions.

Recommendation: That Synod vote YES (must be 2/3).

Respectfully submitted:
Jack Rhoda (2018),

Lucas Hanna (2018),
Herb McCracken (2019),
Dennis Olson (2019),
Chairman Joel Wood (2020),
Brian Coombs (2020),
John McFarland (Clerk) and
Jerry Milroy (Moderator), *ex-officio*

Motion from the floor (with friendly amendment): That the Business of Synod Committee provide means of electronic voting, aiming for Synod 2019, certainly by 2020 and beyond. It carried (87 to 34).

Synod turned to consider the Report of the Study Committee on Divorce and Desertion (committee chaired by Pastor Brad Johnston). After summary remarks about the Report, there was a motion to recommit the Paper to this Committee for further study. It was adopted. Their paper will be printed in Appendix. Later during Synod, this language was approved as rationale for continuing the Committee: “That the paper be recommitted to the Committee to complete the appointed study. In order to provide the church with guidance regarding the proper interpretation of the grounds of desertion for divorce (*WCF* 24.6; *RPT* 24.26)—a matter which has been extensively studied and debated within the Reformed churches through history and on which there is extensive Biblical exegesis that is relevant—more comprehensive study is needed to support or to revise the recommendations proposed by the Committee.”

Synod turned to consider the Report of the Study Committee on Tithes and Offerings, that Committee chaired by Pastor John D. Edgar. After summary remarks about the Report as a whole: Recommendations 1 and 2 carried (thus affirming that the precise manner of presenting tithes and offerings is not prescribed by the *Directory of Worship* and therefore is at session discretion, and dismissing this Study Committee with Synod’s thanks). The Report as a whole was approved and so is printed here:

Report of Study Committee on Communication 17-1a (Tithes and Offerings)

At the 2017 Synod, your Committee was tasked with examining a paper from the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, asking for a change in the wording of the *Directory of Public Worship*. Our *Directory* currently reads:

25. The presentation of tithes and offerings is warranted as part of worship. We are commanded to set aside our offerings on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). God calls His people to return a portion of their substance to Him cheerfully, systematically, and as He has prospered them. The receiving of the offering may be preceded or followed by a brief prayer that joyfully gives thanks for God's provision and commits the gifts to the work of Christ's kingdom and the blessing of the Lord. [DPW 2.25, see page F-80]

Paper 17-1a agreed that "giving to the Lord's work is a Christian duty," but questioned the Biblical necessity of "passing the plate" or collecting the tithes and offerings *during* the worship service. They therefore proposed changing Paragraph 25 to the following:

25. The giving of tithes and offerings is a Christian duty that should be performed on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). God calls His people to return a portion of their substance to Him cheerfully, systematically, and as He has prospered them. The receiving of tithes and offerings should be arranged in a convenient and orderly manner by the session.

Your Committee recommends against changing the *Directory* for the following two reasons:

- 1) All five members of the committee that drafted the *Directory of Public Worship* believe the current wording already permits variation in the manner of collecting the offering. While the current wording reflects the common practice of passing the plate ("the receiving of the offering may be preceded or followed by a brief prayer") they do not believe this paragraph to require passing the plate. Several congregations are already using a box in the back, while making it clear that presenting offerings is part of the worship service by including a prayer consecrat-

ing the tithes and offerings. We therefore recommend that the Synod affirm that the precise manner of presenting tithes and offerings is not prescribed by the *Directory* and therefore is at session discretion.

- 2) The first sentence of the current *DPW* Paragraph 25 quotes *Testimony* 21:8 exactly. As the *Testimony* is part of the more fundamental theological portion of the *Constitution*, we believe it is wise for the *Directory* to echo the *Testimony*, lest our various constitutional documents begin to point in different directions.

Recommendations:

1. That the Synod affirm that the precise manner of presenting tithes and offerings is not prescribed by the *Directory* and therefore is at session discretion.

2. That the Committee be dismissed.

Respectfully submitted,
 Bob Hackett;
 Marlin Klingensmith;
 Michael LeFebvre;
 Frank Smith;
 John Edgar (chairman)

RPCNA Synod of 2017: Communication # 17-1a POA re. Tithes

Paper ordered transferred to the RPCNA Synod by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (Nov. 11-12, 2016)

Excerpted from the Minutes of the Meeting

The report of the Committee to Study Tithes and Offerings in Worship was presented by C. J. Williams. Recommendation 1 was approved; David Schaefer and Jerry O'Neill registered their dissent from this action. Recommendation 2 was approved. The report was received and is as follows:

**Report of the Committee to Study
 Tithes and Offerings in Worship**

Fathers and Brothers: This committee was formed to study the place of tithe and offering collection as an element of worship, and whether our current *Directory for Worship* adequately captures our current practice and convictions on this matter. The Committee has explored various aspects of this question from biblical and historical perspectives, but has decided to focus on the most

practical aspect of the question: Is the current, common practice of passing an offering plate in the worship service a necessary method by which the tithes and offerings must be collected? May the tithes and offerings be collected by other means, or is there specific, biblical reason to “pass the plate” in the middle of the worship service?

Our *Directory for Worship* currently reads: “The presentation of tithes and offerings is warranted as part of worship. We are commanded to set aside our offerings on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). God calls His people to return a portion of their substance to Him cheerfully, systematically, and as He has prospered them. The receiving of the offering may be preceded or followed by a brief prayer that joyfully gives thanks for God’s provision and commits the gifts to the work of Christ’s kingdom and the blessing of the Lord.”

While it is clear that giving to the Lord’s work is a Christian duty, we find it difficult to biblically substantiate that it must be seen as a formal element of worship, or that it must take place in the midst of a worship service by means of passing an offering plate. The giving of a tithe was certainly commanded in the Old Testament, but the method of collection is a more complex picture. In some texts, no method of collection is mentioned (e.g. Num. 18:21-32). In other texts, God commands the tithe to be brought to the place of worship (Deut. 12:5-12), but with no further instructions than to take it there. Beyond taking the tithe to the place of worship, every third year’s tithe was to be stored “within your gates,” and shared there with the Levites, orphans, and widows (Deut. 14:22-29).

Perhaps the most descriptive text is Deuteronomy 26:1-15. In this text, “some” of the produce of the ground is given to the priest, who then lays it before the altar, while the worshipper makes a confession of faith and thanksgiving. While this may be perceived as an act of worship, it is hardly a ritual that we would attempt to replicate without priests and altars in a New Covenant context. When the tithe is explicitly mentioned in this passage (vv. 12-15), it is again spoken of as being “laid aside” and given to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, “so that they may eat within your gates.”

In historical narratives, the tithe is simply collected from the people in one convenient place (2 Chron. 31:5-11), or brought and given to the Levites (Neh. 10:32-39; 12:44-47). The purpose of the tithe, and the duty to give it, are both very explicit. However, it is not always or explicitly collected within

the narrow context of worship, nor is it collected in a specific, consistent way. The well-known command of the Psalter to “bring an offering” (e.g. Ps. 96:8) is in reference to animal, grain, and drink offerings. The term *minha* is used consistently as a sacrificial reference, and is never a parallel term for the tithe. Even if a *minha* or “offering” can be equated with the tithe, the Psalter would simply be answering to the command to bring the tithe to the place of worship (Deut. 12:5-12).

The single New Testament text cited by the *Directory for Worship*, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, obviously echoes the general instructions of the Old Testament to “lay something aside.” No specific means of collection is stated. The only difference is that now, instead of bringing the tithe to a specific place (the temple), it is to be brought on a specific day (the first day of the week). These texts seem to make it clear that the method of collecting tithes and offerings is not something explicitly prescribed, nor must it necessarily be done within the context of the formal elements of worship. While “passing the plate” is one traditional method of collecting the tithe, we do not see that it is a necessary method. Our conclusion is that sessions ought to determine a practical way for tithes and offerings to be collected on the Lord’s Day, but that it does not necessary need to take place by passing a plate during the worship service.

Therefore, we bring the following **recommendations**:

1. That the Presbytery forward this paper to Synod with the following suggested revision to chapter 2, paragraph 25 of the *Directory of Public Worship*: “The giving of tithes and offerings is a Christian duty that should be performed on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). God calls His people to return a portion of their substance to Him cheerfully, systematically, and as He has prospered them. The receiving of tithes and offerings should be arranged in a convenient and orderly manner by the session.”

2. That this Committee be dismissed.

Respectfully,
Jeff Stivason,
John Bower,
C. J. Williams (chairman)

Synod turned to consider the Report of the Special Committee on Standardization of Student Papers, chaired by Professor C. J. Williams. In

this printed Report there were no specific recommendations; the chairman offered spoken recommendations: (1) That Synod recommend the following student paper standards as a general guideline to be used by RPCNA presbyteries and RPTS professors; this carried. (2) That this Committee be dismissed; this carried. The Report as a whole was approved with Synod's appreciation, and so it is printed here:

Special Committee on Standardization of Student Papers Report to the 2018 Synod of the RPCNA

Last June, Synod approved a request submitted by the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary Board to appoint a committee to consider various challenges that have arisen in relation to student licensure examinations due to a lack of standardized paper requirements in Biblical Exegesis and Church History. The motion submitted by the Board and subsequently approved by Synod reads as follows:

That Synod establish a committee, consisting of a representative of the Candidates Committee (or its equivalent) of each North American presbytery and a member of the faculty of RPTS, to discuss the challenges resulting from differing standards for papers presented in connection with presbytery examinations and to make recommendations to address this situation.

The committee was thereafter formed and began consultations in the fall of 2017, with a view to standardizing paper requirements across both seminary and presbytery lines. The overarching purpose of this standardization would be to facilitate the student's examination process by enabling him to submit (with little to no modification) previously evaluated seminary papers for licensure examinations at the presbytery level.

In the process of consultations, the committee gathered and collated current student licensure examination guidelines for the various North American presbyteries, along with current seminary paper requirements in both Biblical Exegesis and Church History. Each presbytery's student licensure guidelines were carefully examined and considered by the committee in order to ensure the balance requisite in a new denominational standard.

What follows are the recommendations for standardized paper require-

ments in Biblical Exegesis and Church History. The Committee is confident that these recommendations achieve the goal of standardizing student licensure requirements for Biblical Exegesis and Church History papers, while still encouraging students to demonstrate their own unique gifts, strengths, and creative processes along the way. The Committee believes that students, presbyters, and seminary faculty will all be served through the implementation of these standards.

Finally, it should be noted that these are suggested standards that, if agreed upon, can be adopted in most ordinary circumstances. Presbyteries still have the freedom to modify student assignments in unique circumstances. *The Directory for Church Government* states, regarding both Church History and Biblical Exegesis Papers: “Presbytery is responsible to make these assignments which may correspond to assignments fulfilled in seminary” (D-15, 16). The following guidelines do not limit any presbytery’s ability to modify expectations to match unique circumstances; they are, instead, a benchmark that we think will be helpful to students, seminary professors, and presbyteries in most ordinary circumstances.

Respectfully submitted:

Kyle Borg (Midwest);

Ryan Hemphill (Pacific);

Tom Fisher (Atlantic);

Rich Holdeman (Great Lakes/Gulf);

Ryan Somerville (Alleghenies);

Dan Dupuis (St. Lawrence);

C. J. Williams (RPTS)

Church History Paper Standards

The fifth examination for licensure—eligibility to preach—requires that a pastoral candidate present a paper on church history to his presbytery. This paper is intended to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to comprehend and interpret a relevant aspect of post-apostolic church history in a scholarly manner and articulate his understanding in written prose that reflects excellence in academic research as well as communication skills. While this assignment affords the candidate an opportunity to expand his understanding of ecclesiastical history or historical theology as it relates to the Reformed Presbyterian

Church, students are no less encouraged to consider the church in its broader trajectory, spanning both time and denominational lines. The presbyteries of the RPCNA and the denominational seminary will evaluate church history papers based on the criteria below. A candidate may submit a paper to his presbytery that has already been written for a seminary class if it meets these criteria and has received a passing grade from the seminary.

Format

1. The body of the paper will be no less than 25 pages, excluding title page, bibliography, and appendices.
2. The paper must be in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced, with 1" margins.
3. Citation of sources must be in footnote/bibliography format and follow the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian.
4. Prior to submission, the paper is to be proofread and edited to ensure that it is free of grammatical errors and formatting inconsistencies.

Content

1. The paper should begin with an introduction that articulates a clear thesis statement that will be established and defended in the paper, and briefly explains why the chosen topic is important to the church at present. Note that the purpose of the church history paper is not necessarily to present a breakthrough "discovery" or "revisionist" perspective, but rather to demonstrate the candidate's ability to interact with primary and secondary sources and arrive at his own conclusions.
2. The paper should demonstrate the candidate's competent grasp of both the general historical context of the period being analyzed, as well as the more specific ecclesiastical context under consideration. The paper should also demonstrate the candidate's ability to connect both contexts, considering how world history has shaped ecclesiastical history, and vice versa.
3. The paper should demonstrate the candidate's own understanding of the general flow of church history, and how the topic being analyzed fits into that flow. This is primarily achieved by consideration of ideas and events that preceded and impacted the topic under consideration, as well as the results and effects seen in subsequent church

history.

4. Drawing on no less than ten resources, and with a mixture of primary and secondary sources, the paper should demonstrate the candidate's ability to critically interact with scholarly work already done on his subject and give compelling evidence that his thesis and its various supporting arguments are significant and valid.
5. The paper should demonstrate the candidate's ability to understand and articulate the relationship between history and theology and to make appropriate application to the church in our day.

Exegesis Paper Standards

The final step for licensure—eligibility to receive a call—requires that a pastoral candidate submit an exegesis paper to his presbytery. This paper is meant to demonstrate the candidate's ability to “rightly divide the word of truth” in a written presentation that glorifies God, edifies the reader, and shows all due respect for the authority of Scripture. The paper should provide a scholarly analysis of a Biblical text as well as a pastoral application of its most salient truths. The presbyteries of the RPCNA and the denominational seminary will evaluate exegesis papers based on the criteria below. A candidate may submit a paper to his presbytery that has already been written for a seminary class if it meets these criteria and received a passing grade from the seminary.

Format

1. The body of the paper will be no less than 25 pages, excluding title page, bibliography, and appendices.
2. The paper must be in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced, with 1” margins.
3. Greek and Hebrew text must be in BibleWorks fonts, available at <https://www.bibleworks.com/fonts.html>
4. Citation of sources must be in footnote/bibliography format and follow the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian.
5. The paper must be proofread and edited so it is free of grammatical errors before submission.

Content

1. The paper must begin with an introduction that explains the candi-

date's choice of text, why it is unique and important, and what value his exegetical study might have to the faith and life of the church at present.

2. The paper must provide a historical overview of the text, dealing with issues of authorship, date of composition, historical and geographical references, etc. The paper must then analyze how the historical setting impacts our understanding of the text.
3. The paper must examine the covenantal context of the passage and where it sits in the promise-fulfillment scheme of redemptive history. The paper must then analyze the contribution of the text to the historical development and fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace.
4. The paper must examine and illustrate the overall literary structure as well as the special literary devices of the text and analyze how these literary qualities serve to shape the overall meaning or specific emphasis of the text.
5. The paper will provide a verse by verse analysis of the text that includes:
 - a. The student's own translation of each verse.
 - b. Word studies and analysis of key terms or phrases in the text.
 - c. Identification, discussion, and resolution of significant textual variants from the critical apparatus.
 - d. Syntactical analysis of key verses, and a discussion of how such analysis helps to understand the text.
 - e. Interaction with alternative interpretations from at least three critical commentaries.
 - f. Supportive citations from at least three significant Reformed commentaries or theological works.
6. The paper must draw together the preceding steps with a theological analysis of the passage. The paper must identify and clearly articulate the unique doctrinal contributions of the text and how that doctrine relates to and harmonizes with other Scripture.
7. The paper must conclude with a short homily that applies the text to the faith and life of the church at present, and clearly articulates how the believer is to respond to it.

Synod took up the Report of the Special Committee on Christ's Mediatorial Kingship, chaired by Rev. Bruce Backensto. This Report entailed an update to Synod on their progress. Recommendation 1 was taken up, and during discussion, a friendly amendment was offered, directing the Nominating Committee to add two new members to this Committee. The recommendation carried; this Committee is continued to pursue its work. The update Report as a whole was received, and so it is printed here:

Report of the Special Committee on Christ's Mediatorial Kingship

This Report is to update the Synod of our progress. Your Committee was appointed by the 2014 Synod at the request of the Understanding the Times Committee to (1) consider the Biblical basis of the doctrine of the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ, and (2) present principles for application in today's RPCNA context.

Since last Synod, we met in October 2017 and multiple times via video conferencing. We have researched the development of the doctrine of Christ's Kingship over the last 460 years from multiple sources (i.e. Synod minutes, theological works, conf. lectures) producing an 80-page draft for internal purposes. Our next focus is to outline areas of application for this doctrine in light of our 21st century Western context. It may seem that we have moved too slowly, but we have not asked yet for the ten years that it took for the Committee on Worship to thoughtfully and carefully produce something for the church.

For the benefit of those delegates who were not present at last year's Synod, here is our collation of our Standard's statements on the Biblical duties and qualifications of the Civil Magistrate.

Regarding Scriptural Duties of the Civil Government

Our standards teach that "God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world [has] ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good."¹ For this reason, He has "armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers."² In addition, He "has given the exercise of all authority to the Lord Jesus Christ" as the God-man mediator.³

1 WCF 23.1

2 WCF 23.1

3 RPT 23.2

Every civil government “should restrain and punish its subjects for those sinful actions which fall under its jurisdiction,”⁴ “in accordance with the will of God”⁵ and “the authority and law of Christ,”⁶ which is declared in “the moral law”⁷ and “summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.”⁸

In accordance with the Ten Commandments, civil magistrates are to “maintain piety, justice, and peace;”⁹ “to wage war in defense of life, liberty, and religion,”¹⁰ to “guarantee to all [their] subjects every human right given by God to men,”¹¹ and to ensure that “individual liberty is regulated by the principles found in Scripture.”¹²

Civil governments “should enter into covenant with Christ and serve to advance His Kingdom on earth”¹³ and are “responsible for maintaining conditions favorable to the spread of the gospel.”¹⁴ This includes opposing all false worship, “according to each one’s place and calling, removing it and all monuments of idolatry,”¹⁵ such that Christ’s true visible church is “countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrates.”¹⁶

Moreover, “the governments of church and state differ in sphere of authority” and neither “has the right to invade or assume the authority of the other.”¹⁷ Civil government, notwithstanding its duty to enforce God’s moral law, “should never attempt to convert men to Christ by the use of force or by persecution.”¹⁸ Our *Testimony* seeks to protect against these and other abuses of civil authority by rejecting certain portions of the original *Westminster Confession of Faith* (23.3, 31.2). Nevertheless, both church and state “should cooperate to the honor and glory of God, while maintaining their separate jurisdictions.”¹⁹

4 RPT 23.20

5 RPT 23.24

6 RPT 23.6

7 WLC 93

8 WLC 98

9 WCF 23.2

10 RPT 23.12

11 RPT 23.20

12 RPT 20.5; Cf. WCF 20.4

13 RPT 23.2

14 RPT 23.20

15 WLC 108

16 WLC 191

17 RPT 23.19; Cf. 20.6; 23.20; WCF 23.3

18 RPT 23.20; Cf. WCF 23.3

19 RPT 23.19; Cf. 23.22; 31.6; WCF 31.5

Regarding Scriptural Qualifications for Voteworthy Civil Officers

Our standards teach that “all officers and employees of a civil government are to be servants of God for good”²⁰ who look to Jesus Christ as “the Divine Lawgiver, Governor, and Judge.”²¹

Every nation that rejects “the Divine institution of civil government, the sovereignty of God exercised by Jesus Christ,” its duty to obey “the will of God,” and its responsibility to “enter into covenant with Christ and serve to advance His Kingdom on earth” is in great danger. Such sinful “negligence ... makes the nation liable to the wrath of God, and threatens the continued existence of the government and nation.”²² Hence, every civil officer who will not openly “kiss the Son” in worshipful submission to King Jesus is a threat to national security.

While it is true that “the Holy Spirit enables even unregenerate rulers to fulfill their proper functions,” yet “a true recognition of the authority and law of Christ in national life can only be the fruit of the Spirit’s regenerating power in the lives of individuals.”²³

Therefore, “when participating in political elections, the Christian should support and vote only for such men as are publicly committed to scriptural principles of civil government”²⁴ and who give credible evidence that they genuinely “fear God, love truth and justice, [and] hate evil” as defined by God’s Word.²⁵ A Christian pursuing civil office “must openly inform those whose support he seeks of his adherence to Christian principles of civil government.”²⁶

The Christian may only vote “when such action involves no disloyalty to Christ”²⁷ and “must relinquish every right or privilege of citizenship which involves him in silence about, or denial of the supreme authority of Jesus Christ.”²⁸ He must never “take an oath which compromises his supreme allegiance to Jesus Christ”²⁹ by implying his “acceptance of unchristian principles stated or implied in the constitution of government” or his “support of anti-

20 RPT 23.11

21 RPT 23.2

22 RPT 23.4

23 RPT 23.2

24 RPT 23.29

25 RPT 23.15

26 RPT 23.29

27 RPT 23.15

28 RPT 23.17

29 RPT 23.16

Christian, atheistic, or secular principles.”³⁰ Nor may he “vote for officials who are required to take an oath which [he] himself could not take in good conscience,” since “voting involves the voter in responsibility for any act required of the official as a condition of holding his office.”³¹

Your Committee met this past year without Revs Gamble and Edgar due to their individual resignations. Our sole recommendation is that the Committee be continued.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee be continued.

Respectfully submitted,
Shawn Anderson,
Bruce Backensto (Chairman),
Adam Kuehner,
Scott Wilkinson

Pastor Nathan Eshelman presented the Home Mission Board (HMB) Report. After general and summary remarks, Rev. Dean Smith stood to ask the Court to recognize past members of the Home Mission Board (especially men serving from 1985-1994), as visions cast then are bearing great and unexpected fruit to this day; the Court applauded. Other men thanked the current version of the HMB for their support and encouragement. Under a discussion about Enid, Oklahoma, the Court applauded in appreciation for church-planting pastor Noah Bailey’s efforts there. The Court took up the HMB’s single recommendation, that the GMB-HMB Joint Statement, along with its recommendations, be taken up following the Global Missions Report; it carried. The HMB Report as a whole was approved and is as follows:

Home Mission Board Report to Synod 2018

Fathers and Brothers: Your Home Mission Board is currently comprised of the following members: Nathan Eshelman, president; Brian Panichelle, vice-president; Andy McCracken, secretary; along with Romesh Prakashpalan, Doug Chamberlain, and Steven McCarthy.* As the Board interprets the providence of God towards our church plants, we have much for which to give thanks since the previous Synod, but at the same time there have been several disturbing

30 RPT 23.26

31 RPT 23.16

trends/events that must be noted and prayed about.

Works Receiving Aid

Your Home Mission Board has the following congregations that are receiving some form of reducing aid. Please also see their presbytery report for a fuller picture:

Bryan, Texas: Six years of reducing aid remain. The Home Mission Board approved a request to fund the Bryan, Texas, work. The church plant, at the time of request, was not very strong so the Board has requested that the three-year evaluation be completed after two years. The work must also see four new households join with the work in order to continue on aid. We are thankful for Rev. Rockhill and his service to the church.

Casper, Wyoming: Three years of reducing aid remain. Sam McCracken continues to serve and it is reported that the work has seen an increase in numbers and seeing the “first fruits” of the ministry. The work is in great need of local ordained leadership. There are several budget shortfalls they are working through.

Dallas, Texas: Four years of reducing aid remain. The Dallas congregation is strong and fully organized. Rev. Koller works part-time (outside of the church). Ruling elder Romesh Prakashpalan serves on the HMB and he is also a student at RPTS. There have been some difficulties in this year, but the Lord is faithful.

Harrisonburg, Virginia: Six years of reducing aid are remaining. Rev. Ryan Bever is serving as pastor and Rev. Paul Martin is serving as (part-time) associate pastor. The HMB commends the idea of planting a congregation from the position of strength and men being sent out in twos. Hospitality and multiple Bible studies are part of the vision for church planting in Harrisonburg.

The following locations received exploratory funds so that their presbyteries could determine the viability of planting a congregation:

Birmingham, Alabama: \$5,000 was given to cover expenses related to the exploratory work in Birmingham, Ala. The Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery had stopped their work in Birmingham, and it is being requested for the Alleghenies to begin working with them through Paul Martin.

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Hazleton Church is working in Harrisburg with two separate groups—one of which is Spanish-speaking. Edgar Ibarra has been preaching there some. Attendance is in the forties. \$7,000 was granted for this work.

Reno, Nevada: \$5,000 was given for exploratory work. The Pacific Coast Presbytery is currently investigating the viability of planting in Reno (which has only one other NAPARC church). There are five households that are requesting to be organized.

San Antonio, Texas: \$5,000 was given to begin exploration towards the planting of a congregation in San Antonio. Jonathan Leach is preaching at this preaching station and there are a few families who are hoping to be established as a congregation.

Several other works and ministries are also being financially supported:

Central Valley Prison Outreach: \$24,000 has been invested into the work of Rev. Tim McCracken and Metanoia Ministries. The Home Mission Board requested that the Pacific Coast Presbytery formulate a plan ahead for how this work can move from legitimate evangelism to legitimate church-planting. The fruit of that discussion has appeared as a communication to this Synod.

North Hills, Pennsylvania, Mandarin Church: Rev. Matthew Ma has resolved his visa issues and will be installed as associate pastor of the North Hills congregation. He is leading a group of forty Mandarin-speaking believers that meet concurrently with the English congregation.

Christ RPC (Providence, RI) Resident-in-Training: Mr. Gabriel Wingfield has been called to serve as an associate pastor with the hope of exploring church-planting in New England. Mr. Wingfield is the first resident-in-training in several years, and we are hopeful that Rev. Daniel Howe's work in Providence can be replicated in another area of New England. The HMB is supporting Mr. Wingfield at \$24,000 annually for the first two years; Christ RPC is matching \$28,450 per year during that period.

Terre Haute, Indiana, summer internship with Joel Hart. HMB used \$6,000 for this work.

Paul Martin as RHM: Paul Martin has been supported in his role as Regional Home Missionary of Presbytery of the Alleghenies. Rev. Martin is also serving as associate pastor of the Harrisonburg congregation. Rev. Martin is hoping to "cross borders" into the South to work with a core group in Birmingham; the HMB is supportive of the idea.

Other church-plants, mission works, and areas of outreach can be seen in the presbytery reports. There are many other areas of church planting going on in the RPCNA, some of which are not in need of HMB funds or support.

Training and Equipping Our Church Planters/Pastors

Street Preaching: Revs. Adam Kuehner and Craig Scott were sent to a street preaching conference which has led to other pastors and students being more interested in street evangelism. Our hope is that equipping these two men will result in others in the church utilizing this means of outreach in their communities.

Church Planters' Conference: The quadrennial church planter's conference was held at the Embassy Suites in Los Angeles in early April. Over forty were in attendance (church-planters, wives, Board members) to hear Dr. William VanDoodewaard speak on the Marrow Controversy and its relationship to current church-planting. The feedback on the lectures and the venue were very positive as many were refreshed as well further equipped to do the work of church planting. The lectures are all available at the L.A. RPC's SermonAudio page. Besides Dr. VanDoodewaard speaking on the free offer of the gospel in the Marrow Controversy, we also were privileged to hear from Rev. Adam Kuehner on street preaching as a way to grow a congregation; Rev. Paul Martin on Christ in the Psalms in the church-plant; and Dr. Joel Wood on counseling in a church-planting context.

Areas of Concern

Dayton, Tennessee: The Dayton RP Mission Church underwent a terrible setback this winter as four of its active families decided to leave the work. Since then a fifth core family has left, leaving only two core families remaining and worshiping in one of their homes. The Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery reduced Dayton to a preaching station and it will be evaluated again in six months. Pray for this work.

Enid, Oklahoma: The Board took time to reflect on the closure of the Enid Church. Enid seemed to be healthy until Rev. Bailey left for Cambridge; we are not faulting him for the closure, of course. Following his departure things quickly declined. The Presbytery and HMB, upon reflection, provide the following lessons from the closing of Enid:

1. Enid did much good with the local military community. Congregations can learn from their zeal towards this community.
2. Enid was generous beyond themselves, financially as well as concerning manpower.
3. Their care for the poor and disadvantaged in the community was to be

commended.

4. Transition from church-planter to second minister is a fragile time requiring much prayer and watchfulness by our presbyteries.
5. The church-plant was in a rush to elect officers (elders and deacons), and when things did not go well, people were in a rush to leave the work. Presbyteries ought to counsel groups to work through issues and to remain.
6. The church seems to have identified more with Rev. Bailey than with the RPCNA. Again, this is not Rev. Bailey's fault, but we must carefully point church-plants away from the church-planter and towards Christ and the doctrines of the church.
7. Ad Interim Commissions ought to do all they can to retain congregations through judicial committees rather than closing works upon request.
8. Presbyteries ought to consider the Home Mission Board investment into a congregation and seek counsel from the HMB when issues arise. The HMB invested over \$100,000 into Enid, and it closed without even notifying us.

Southern Church Planting: The Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery reports that they have adopted a new approach to planting in the South which will require strengthening existing congregations in the hopes that strengthened congregations would be ready to daughter new congregations. Planting in the South has been difficult in the RPCNA and we need to be exploring the best way to proceed at establishing an RPCNA presence south of the Mason-Dixon Line. The HMB is open to hearing from pastors and elders who have a heart for planting in the South and seeing the RPCNA expand into the Southern states. We need to hear your ideas and thoughts.

Co-laboring with GMB. The joint statement with the Global Missions Board was submitted in a separate document and the recommendations will be dealt with in that statement. The statement is as follows, but without the recommendations:

RPGM and the HMB met jointly on October 6, 2017, at Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church for the consideration of several areas of overlap which are affecting our two boards. As the world gets smaller and as people groups find themselves moving into the United States and Canada, we anticipate further

questions concerning the planting of churches that are ethnic or non-English speaking. We also anticipate that expatriate churches or groups may request English-speaking RP churches in lands where English is not the mother tongue. These are good problems to have as peoples move about the globe in ways not seen before in human history.

Initial Questions. Some of the questions that led to our joint meeting included:

- What determines the boundaries of RPGM and HMB's oversight? Language spoken? Geographic location? Racial profile?
- What principles should guide financial requests falling into this space of board-overlap?
- What will be the future relationship with presbyteries that are not geographically within the boundaries of the RPCNA, yet belong to the RPCNA?

Synod Mandate: The RPGM's mandate is to plant indigenous churches which are outside of the boundaries of the RPCNA (which is the jurisdiction of the HMB). One aberration from this is that historically, Japan has fallen under the work of RPGM, yet their presbytery is a member of the Synod. Currently the presbyteries of East Asia are also members of this Synod and have specific timeframes for when they would be independent, national churches.

The mandate of RPGM as well as HMB does not include fraternal relationships with other presbyteries or synods. This work falls within the bounds of either the Interchurch Committee or one of our newly (in recent years) appointed committees or commissions which are called to build relationships with certain jurisdictions. Examples of this would include the Central and South America (CASA) Committee.

The mandate of the HMB is as defined by our denominational name: North America. Historically, we have only had congregations and presbyteries within the bounds of Canada and the US. Without further qualification, the North America in our name would also include the following: Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Greenland, etc.

Although the above-mentioned nations are officially part of North America, RPGM and HMB believe the original intent of our denominational name meant the US and Canada.

A Way Forward: As RPGM and the HMB consider the current cultural cli-

mate of the world, both boards are committed to both working together as well as respecting the other's original Synod mandate. In addition, we have agreed jointly to the following principles as we each concern ourselves with the planting of churches and seeing the Kingdom of Jesus Christ expand both home and abroad. We present the following principles and assumptions from which we will work:

1. Any future requests that come to either board believed to best fit the mandate of the opposite board will be forwarded. HMB will deal with US and Canadian projects. RPGM will deal with projects outside of these two countries.
2. Legal matters concerning geographical boundaries must be considered when planting churches. The HMB is not set up to deal with international issues in the same way as RPGM.
3. If a cross-cultural opportunity arises, each board will consider how it may help facilitate the work, respecting the jurisdiction of the other board. A joint board meeting would be appropriate in this instance.
4. Cross-cultural training of missionaries for home or abroad may be jointly considered.

New Website: HMB's website, www.RPHomeMissions.org, is in process of a much needed overhaul. We look forward to a launch date, hopefully by the end of summer.

Conclusion: We are thankful for the work in church planting that the Lord Jesus has given to the RPCNA and we look forward to seeing how God will continue to bless the church with warm, loving, Christ-centered, and confessionally reformed churches. What a blessing it is to see God working in our midst.

Finances: The HMB requests \$85,000 for 2019 from Synod's Finance Committee; this automatically goes to the Finance Committee.

Recommendation:

1. The HMB requests that the GMB-HMB Joint Statement, along with its recommendations, be taken up following the Global Missions Report.

Respectfully submitted:

Nathan Eshelman, president (class of 2019)

Brian Panichelle, vice-president (class of 2020)

Andy McCracken, secretary (class of 2018)

Steven McCarthy (class of 2019)

Doug Chamberlain (class of 2020)

Romesh Prakashpalan (class of 2020)

* **Addendum:** Steven McCarthy's term will be finished out by John Edgar due to Rev. McCarthy taking up the role as Clerk of the Atlantic Presbytery.

Pastor David Hanson presented the Report of the RP Global Missions Board (RPGM), giving summary comments about the individual ministry fields and other RPGM initiatives. The written report made special note of the Board's appreciation for the *career-long* ministry of Professor Jonathan Watt. Within this Report, the Court took up the work of the commissions serving on behalf of Pakistan and South Asia. For reasons of security and safety, full commission minutes and written reports will not be provided to all Synod delegates. Pastor James Faris of our South Asia Commission summarized that Commission's work. Pastor Brad Johnston and Dr. E-M highlighted the work of the Pakistan Commission. The RPGM Report with the two commission reports were approved. The RPGM Report is printed here. The Court sang Psalm 95D, with joy to the Lord.

Reformed Presbyterian Global Missions Board Report

Revelation 5:9-10—They sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals. For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God. And we shall reign on the earth." Jesus Christ is continuing to extend the reaches of His Kingdom through the proclamation of His gospel. We bear witness to the redemption His blood is accomplishing throughout the tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations of the world.

Individual Field Updates

Japan. God is continuing to sustain His church in Japan. Though the soil is hard the fruit is sweet. As we continue on our path of decreasing aid we seek to adapt and adjust our relationship from supporting body/mission field to one of closely-related brothers in Christ. Earlier this year Jonathan Watt visited with the Japan Presbytery shortly after rotating off his role on the RPGM

Board. This trip was a continuation of his long-time labors and friendship with them. Heather Huizing also visited in May in an effort to continue deepening the board's relationship with Japan Presbytery. This coming fall will see the retirement of Rev. Charles Leach as he and Susan return to the United States.

Prayer points:

- Pray for the Japan Presbytery as they begin to seek to fill the pulpit in the Kasumigaoka congregation when Rev. Leach returns to the United States.
- Pray for the Japan Presbytery and the RP Global Missions Board as they continue to navigate their changing relationship.
- Pray for each of the congregations in Kobe, Japan, that they would see much fruit and growth as they seek to faithfully serve and glorify God in the Land of the Rising Sun.

South Sudan. The work in South Sudan continues to grow and thrive; for that, all the glory goes to God! But the work is not without challenges; here are some of the highlights:

- In the absence of a full-time missionary pastor, Rev. Lucas Hanna has stepped up and has been going on periodic trips to continue to aid in the training and discipleship of pastors and elders. These one-month visits, though not our ideal, have been used by God to strengthen the ongoing work of the church in South Sudan. But more work is needed.
- Cush Christian School continues to grow under the leadership of Scott Brinkerhoff. They are in the process of expanding their classroom space and the RPGM Board and Scott are in discussions together about near future decisions related to the work of the school pertaining to its growth and long-term viability.
- The radio station (Weer Bei Radio)—being run in partnership with Every Village—is now able to cover its operating costs through funding coming in from local advertisers and radio listeners. For this we are thankful! Joseph Njuguna (Every Village missionary from Kenya) who has been serving as the onsite radio director has stepped away from that role to continue to encourage the work to become increasingly indigenous. Pastor Karlo is now serving as radio manager and they are praying for someone who will be able to fill in as radio director in the not-too-distant future.

- There is a group of women (deacons and otherwise) who have been trained by Jan Buchanan in the area of “community health.” This group at their own initiative have been holding quarterly workshops for women in the other South Sudan Community Churches. They use the radio station to invite the other women to come. They spend time together sharing testimonies about what God has been doing in their churches and communities, fellowshiping together, learning new ways to help their families and communities to thrive in this harsh land they call home. They also incorporate some Bible literacy into these workshops, bringing together the spiritual and the physical aspects of life.

How to pray for the work:

- Pray that God would equip and raise up a missionary pastor who could go and serve for a time until the presbytery in South Sudan is able to more effectively navigate leading this branch of our Lord’s church.
- Pray that the elders and those being equipped to lead would grow in their knowledge of the word and wisdom from the Spirit, and that they would be kept from temptations (e.g. the cultural pressures and expectations around the taking of more than one wife).
- Pray for Scott and the RPGM Board as they look at decisions related to the work of Cush Christian School.
- Pray that God would be raising up boys and girls from this school who will serve faithfully in Christ’s church and more broadly in His Kingdom as pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, missionaries, parents, and business people in the future.
- Pray that Weer Bei Radio would find a local, Spirit-filled radio director who can lead the staff and the work of this life-giving ministry for years to come. Pray that funding for this ministry will continue to come in.
- 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: RPGM adopted Pakistan as a mission field in April 2015. The goal of the ministry is church planting. At present, the ministry focus is the CRP Mission Church. Dr. EM meets weekly with the CRP session via the Internet and conducts a program of theological education for the pastoral student

IB. Last year we reported IB was midway through his program of study, with the financial support of his session. We can report that IB has completed his program of study and has furthermore completed six pastoral examinations under the Pakistan Commission (with participation of the CRP session) with three exams remaining. IB now preaches three Lord's Days per month at CRP Mission Church and is assuming an increased role in leading the session. We anticipate the ordination of IB as a teaching elder within the next few months.

Besides the mentoring of CRP Mission Church, Dr. EM supports the goal of church planting more broadly through a vigorous ministry of writing and teaching in Pakistan.

Dr. EM continues to translate and author books in Urdu for the Urdu Center for Reformed Theology.

Several students outside of the CRP Mission Church have joined IB in distance courses like Biblical Counseling.

Dr. EM traveled extensively in Pakistan during his spring visit, teaching seminars on discipleship in Wazirabad and Islamabad, preaching in multiple pulpits and visiting bookstores and publishers in Lahore. These activities represent his ongoing effort to build a "Reformed network" throughout Pakistan.

We also note, with gratitude, the work of Dr. EM's wife and daughter, who accompanied him to Pakistan this spring, to train the women of the congregation in ministry to children in the church. In reviewing all of the activity (and there is a lot!), the two most encouraging developments are (1) the completion of IB's program of study and his anticipated ordination, and (2) the initiative by the CRP's session to send IB to other villages to begin Bible studies with a view to planting churches. This is key to the health of the CRP Mission Church and is clearly the right time to begin.

India. In April, the Anugraha RP Church (Bangalore, India) celebrated the first anniversary of public worship. Here are a few highlights from this first year of ministry:

- The mission church has doubled in regular attendance from about 12 to about 24.
- We are grateful for the local elder leadership of Venkatesh G. (Venky) and Ram R.
- Venky has preached through the book of Mark, and two baptisms have been performed.

- Saints have been gathered, and evangelistic efforts are ongoing.
- Venky and Shammi have adopted an eight-year-old son, Abhi, this year, and we are grateful for the Lord's grace in giving this son.
- Ram and Asha R. were sent to help, as were Nirmala and Anjali R. All have been participating in the life of this new mission church along with the others the Lord is gathering.
- We are thankful that the congregation is increasingly able to support its pastor; he is also a tentmaker which provides roughly the second half of their needed income.

James Faris, David Hanson, and Heather Huizing visited on behalf of RPGM in November 2017, and were very encouraged to see the good work going on there. The Lord has opened many doors of opportunity, and there are many opponents. The congregation is structured as a mission church under the South Asia Commission.

The first student of theology was taken under care by South Asia Commission this year. Jayamohan D. served as an intern at Anugraha RP for a season. He is now a student at RPTS and will be a page at the 2018 Synod, D.V. Members of the Commission continue to explore future opportunities for involvement in Reformed theological education in South India where there is minimal Reformed influence. We anticipate, in due season, the formation of a new Reformed Presbyterian denomination that will be uniquely equipped to serve in that part of the world. Pray that the church will grow, and that new pastors and elders will be raised up. And pray that new congregations will be formed. More details can be found in the South Asia Commission report.

Other Ministry Updates

RP Missions (Short-Term Missions). This year marked the 21st year of RP Missions and we give thanks to God for His continuing to raise up laborers for these various fields. This year we had more than 100 men and women involved among the various mission locations and are thankful for the growing number of folks that are expressing interest in longer mission opportunities (spanning from a couple months to a few years). We are also very thankful for the host pastors, sessions, and congregations that see these as opportunities to help shape and mentor these willing servants. The time spent by pastors, elders, and other church workers is truly impacting the lives of these participants and

has been used of the Lord to see participants grow in their appreciation and understanding of Reformed theology and in their appreciation for the institution of the church and better understand their part in it. Thank you all for your continued prayers and for taking time out of your busy schedules to recommend your young people and to encourage them in their service to Christ and His Church.

Liberia: RP Global Missions in collaboration with Second RPC (Indianapolis, IN) have an exploratory team in Liberia. Representing the RPGM are Jonathan Watt and Rich Johnston. Second RPC has sent Donald Cassell, Ben Parry, and Ethan Hoffman (the latter two being adherents at Second RPC who have strong interests in global missions efforts). In addition to doing some work at Liberia Inland Christian College in Ganta, this team will be building relationships and trying to get a sense of potential ministry opportunities for the RPCNA. Pray for safe travel, good relationships, visionary eyes, discernment, and progress in the work of the gospel.

CASA Partnership?: The CASA Committee of Synod and RP Global Missions Board have begun discussions about how we can be working together in efforts in Latin America. Pray for these two bodies, that we will be able to encourage and to assist one another in our closely-aligned endeavors.

Development of Missionaries: As we look to the future, we can see so many opportunities for the RPCNA to be part of magnifying the glory of God among the nations. Jesus told us that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, and that we should therefore pray for laborers. We have been pleased to have opportunities to begin working with a number of young adults who sense God's call on their lives to serve Him abroad and are looking to be overseas in the next 2-4 years. In addition to this group, SM has also had the opportunity to teach a missions course at RPTS in the last couple of years. This course is providing men and women the opportunity to be increasingly equipped to take up the challenge of cross-cultural ministry around the world.

New Executive Director: As we announced to the denomination in the fall of 2017, RPGM hired Heather Huizing to be our Executive Director, effective September 2017. This Executive Director position is new and combines the work done by our past part-time Executive Secretary (Jonathan Watt), our past part-time Communications Director (Matt Filbert), as well as additional tasks facilitating the communication, missionary care, and coordination aspects

of RPGM. We are very thankful for Heather's background and experience in missions, bringing a wise voice of counsel to the Board. Her communication skills have already been demonstrated through the weekly prayer updates and increased web presence. Her heart for service is already freeing up Board members to focus more on the shepherding of missionaries and strategic engagement with our fields.

We selected the title Executive Director because it is widely used in the not-for-profit world for this type of role. We also wanted to differentiate between what Heather is doing and the role we had anticipated for Dave Long as a half-time Executive Secretary. We had anticipated that Dave would be responsible for much of the shepherding of missionaries, setting of strategic direction for our fields, and promotion of missions by preaching around the denomination. Obviously, the role that Heather is filling is different. We believe that in Heather we have found someone who can accomplish the necessary tasks for RPGM to function effectively, without removing a teaching elder from the pastorate.

Nominations. When Heather Huizing became Executive Director, her seat on the board was vacated. Therefore, we are nominating Liz Noell of the Stillwater (OK) congregation to fill the final year of Heather's term (concluding mid-2019). Liz has a long history of interest and involvement in missions, and participation as a board member of another Christian ministry. Those who have served as missionaries testify to her faithful communication and concern for them in informal ways. Liz also has worked in publicizing missions prayer requests. John McFarland has served on RPGM as a teaching elder representative since 2008 and his second term is concluding with this meeting of Synod. We are very thankful for his diligent efforts on the Board, and we will miss him. We are nominating Vince Ward for that opening. Vince's interest in and passion for missions is well known, but we are specifically nominating Vince because of his skill in recruiting, developing, and encouraging missionaries as well as his knowledge and understanding of missiology.

Recommendations:

1. That Liz Noell be nominated to complete Heather Huizing's first term (to mid-2019).
2. That teaching elder Vince Ward be nominated to a first term (2018-2024).

Jonathan Watt. In 1984, Synod elected Jonathan Watt to the Foreign Mis-

sion Board to fill the seat previously held by Wilbur J. McElroy, M.D. Jonathan has not served as an M.D. on the board, but he is truly the *Doctor* of our RPGM in every other way imaginable. Jonathan has faithfully traveled the globe on our behalf, been a repository of RP Missions history, and has willingly served the Board in various roles over the past 34 years. Although his official role as Executive Secretary ended with the hiring of our Executive Director, we will continue to consult with Jonathan to glean wisdom and historical perspective and to utilize him for future trips and other projects. RPGM has made tremendous gains over the past 34 years, and we honor and thank Jonathan for the significant contribution which he has had in leading RPGM during this time.

Respectfully submitted,

David Hanson (President, Class of 2020, 3rd Term);

James Faris (Class of 2022, 1st Term);

John Kim (Class of 2021, 2nd Term);

A. McCullough (Class of 2022, 1st Term);

S. McCullough (Class of 2023, 1st Term);

John McFarland (Class of 2018, 2nd Term);

Dennis Olson (Class of 2019, 1st Term);

Heather Huizing (Executive Director);

James McFarland (*ex officio*)

Joint Statement of RP Global Missions and the Home Mission Board

Reformed Presbyterian Global Missions (RPGM) and the Home Missions Board (HMB) met jointly on October 6, 2017, at Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church for the consideration of several areas of overlap that are affecting our two boards. As the world gets smaller and as people groups find themselves moving into the United States and Canada we anticipate further questions concerning the planting of churches which are ethnic or non-English speaking. We also anticipate that expatriate churches or groups may request the formation of English-speaking Reformed Presbyterian congregations in lands where English is not the mother tongue. These are good problems to have as peoples move around the globe in ways not seen before in human history.

Initial Questions: Some of the questions that led to our joint meeting included: What determines the boundaries of RPGM and HMB's oversight?

Language spoken? Geographic location? Racial profile? What principles should guide financial requests that could apply to either board? What will be the future relationship with presbyteries that are not geographically within the boundaries of the RPCNA, yet are part of the RPCNA?

Synod Mandate: RPGM's mandate is to plant indigenous churches which are outside of the geographical boundaries of the RPCNA (which is the jurisdiction of the HMB). One aberration from this is that historically, Japan has fallen under the work of RPGM, yet when the Japan Presbytery was formed, it was made a presbytery of the RPCNA. Currently the presbyteries of East Asia are also members of this Synod and have specific timeframes for when they will become independent, national, or regional churches.

The mandate of RPGM as well as HMB does not include fraternal relationships with non-RPCNA presbyteries or synods; that work falls within the bounds of either the Interchurch Committee or one of our newly (in the past several years) appointed committees or commissions called to build relations with certain jurisdictions. Examples of this would include the Central and South America (CASA) Committee and the East Asia Commission.

The mandate of the HMB is defined by our denominational name: North America. Historically, we have only had congregations and presbyteries within the bounds of Canada and the United States. Without further qualification, the North America in our name would also include the following: Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Greenland, etc. Although these nations are officially part of North America, RPGM and the HMB believe the original intent of our denominational name meant the United States and Canada.

A Way Forward. As the RPGM Board and the HMB consider the current cultural climate of the world, both boards are committed to working together as well as respecting the other's Synod mandate. In addition, we have agreed jointly to the following principles as we each concern ourselves with the planting of churches and seeing the Kingdom of Jesus Christ expand both home and abroad. We present the following principles and assumptions from which we will work:

1. Any future requests that come to either board believed to best fit the mandate of the opposite board will be forwarded. HMB will deal with the US and Canadian projects. RPGM will deal with projects outside of these two countries.

2. Legal matters concerning geographical boundaries must be considered when planting churches. HMB is not set up to deal with international issues in the same way as RPGM.
3. If a cross-cultural opportunity arises, each board will consider how it may help facilitate the work, respecting the jurisdiction of the other board. A joint board meeting would be appropriate in this instance.
4. Cross-cultural training of missionaries for home or abroad may also be jointly considered.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod commit to planting national or regional presbyteries in other nations rather than presbyteries of the RPCNA.
2. 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.
3. That the RPCNA's boundaries be defined as including only Canada and the United States once the organization of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Japan occurs.
4. That the jurisdiction of each board be defined as follows: HMB to include works in Canada and the United States only. RPGM to have jurisdiction in all other areas of the globe.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of RPGM
and the HMB,
Rev. Nathan Eshelman, HMB President;
Rev. David Hanson, RPGM President

Representatives of the Home Mission Board, Global Missions, and Japan Presbytery have asked to delay consideration of the HMB/GMB Joint Statement. Permission was granted.

Pastor Joel Wood, chairman, presented the Report of the Vital Churches Committee. It was tabled.

At 4:40 p.m., as an order-of-the-day: Rev. William Pihl presented the Report of our Representatives to the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC). After his summary remarks, Mr. Pihl welcomed the PRCC's Del Farris to speak to this Court, which expressed its appreciation with applause. Recommendation 1 carried; elders and con-

gregations are urged to uphold our chaplains and their ministries in prayer. Recommendation 2 carried; our congregations are urged to sponsor our chaplains and to financially support the work of the PRCC where possible. Relevant details were provided to the Finance and the Nominating Committees of Synod. The Report as a whole was approved and is printed here:

2018 Report to Synod from the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCCMP)

I. Reports from Endorsed Chaplains:

A. Report from Chaplain (Colonel) Kelly Moore, US Army. I am still working to develop a stronger ministry in our building (NORAD and USNORTH-COM). This is a challenge in a Command that is very compartmentalized in its mission, has most offices behind locked doors, and a work force that is half civilian. One area I am pleased with is an increase in counseling, which shows people feel comfortable and confident in our support. It has been a busy and unique time for our Command. We provide the Title 10 military response to disasters that occur within the US and we saw an unprecedented three major hurricanes strike within a month. Not only does this mean numerous Unit Ministry Teams have been out serving citizens, but there has been good ministry to those who provide it. Many human interest stories come from disaster, but it is interesting to see how God works in tremendous ways through them.

Prayer requests: Pray for avenues of ministry and ministry of presence in a place where many work behind locked doors. Pray also for weekly Bible Studies within the Command. Join us in thanking God for His faithfulness. Pray for the development of more Bible studies in the Command. Pray for the development of a more effective religious library. Pray for us as we continue to push our availability as a counseling resource. Pray that we will make the most of opportunities to interact with persons in the Command.

B. Report from Chaplain (Capt.) Patrick Stefan, US Army Reserve. My work with the 401st Civil Affairs BN has been fruitful and enjoyable. I have had the opportunity to provide marital and personal counseling to Reserve Soldiers on and off duty. I also had the privilege of officiating a young Soldier's wedding this year. The Gospel continues to go forth and my opportunities for Christ-centered ministry are numerous.

Prayer requests: Pray for my family as they support and bear with me bal-

ancing full-time pastoral duties along with my reserve Chaplain work.

C. Report from Chaplain (Captain) Derek Moore, WY, Army National Guard. This year has seen two significant changes for my work. First, two of my companies, one infantry and one aviation, are now preparing to deploy in early 2019. Second, my commander has given me greater freedom to schedule my drill time both to accommodate my serving at church on Sunday and to focus my efforts better on spending time with the deploying Soldiers.

Prayer requests: I would appreciate prayer for myself that I would take full advantage of my opportunities, and for the Soldiers that they would choose to forsake idols and turn to God for their strength, especially those who are preparing to deploy.

Actions of the PRCC at the February 2018 meeting:

- The Commission re-elected Associate Directors David Tubley, Mack Griffith, and Del Farris to one-year terms. The Commission also approved an amendment to the bylaws to change the title “Associate Director” to “Associate Endorser.”
- The PRCC re-elected the following officers for 2018: Chairman, Bentley Rayburn (PCA); Vice-chairman, Michael Yarman (ARPC); Secretary, Erich Baum (RPCNA).
- The Commission welcomed Pastor James Carter (PCA) as the new Executive Director of the PRCC. He began his work in the fall of 2017, and is doing an excellent job of leading the PRCC.
- The PRCC adopted a working budget of \$502,068 for 2018 and a proposed budget of \$505,255 for 2019.
- The Commission received a report from the committee studying the role of women in the military services, and continued discussion of the effect of opening assignment to combat units to women, the potential of women being required to register for selective service, and the potential drafting of women for service in combat units.
- The Commission received an interim report from the committee to review a proposed policy change to Section VII, Religious Ministry and Homosexuality, in the Policy and Guidance Handbook. This committee is to bring a refined report back to the Commission with recommendations at the next called meeting of the PRCC.
- The Commission approved the following change to the Policy and

Guidance Handbook—“Activated and deployed Reserve Component Chaplains pay dues at the AD rate for the months they are activated or deployed.”

Other areas of Interest:

The Executive Director of the PRCC, Jim Carter, reported that as of December 31, 2017, PRCC had 205 military chaplains, 12 military chaplain candidates in seminaries, and 76 endorsed civilian chaplains—(8 chaplains are both military and civilian), so the total number of PRCC endorsed chaplains is 285 as of 12/31/2017. Dividing the budget by the number of chaplains endorsed gives an annual cost per chaplain of \$1,762 for 2018 and \$1,773 for 2019 (assuming same number of chaplains). The PCA has been graciously subsidizing much of this cost for other denominations represented by PRCC. We believe it is appropriate for each of the denominations represented to cover the cost of this ministry to them and their chaplains, so we are recommending that the RPCNA add an additional voluntary contribution to the denominational dues and the dues paid by each chaplain that will bring what we provide up to the annual cost of \$7,092 for our 4 endorsed chaplains for 2019 (billing is based on the number of endorsed chaplains at the end of 2017—three military and one civilian for the RPCNA).

For 2019, the budget for 4 endorsed chaplains is $\$1,773 \times 4 = \$7,092$:

\$3,000 required denominational dues for 3 military chaplains (\$1,000/
chaplain)

+ \$100 required denominational dues for 1 volunteer civilian chaplain
= \$3,100

+ \$1,416 dues paid by our 4 dues paying chaplains
= \$4,516 paid by RPCNA + RPCNA Chaplains

+ \$2,576 additional voluntary Synod contribution

= \$7,092 PRCC budgeted amount for four chaplains for 2019.

The term of Robert Copeland expires in 2018; he wishes to be replaced on the PRCC. We recommend _____ and _____ to the Nominating Committee as candidates to fill this position (Class of 2024).

The Executive Director and Associate Directors spend much time visiting and ministering to chaplains, and in assisting those who seek to become chaplains. There are many opportunities for chaplain ministry, both in the 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.
2. One of the PRCC Associate Endorsers—Del Farris—specifically focuses his work on building up the civilian chaplaincy. He can be reached at dfarris@pcanet.org if you have questions regarding civilian chaplaincy opportunities.
3. 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.
4. The Commission continues to seek congregations to sponsor our chaplains through regular prayer for the chaplain, his ministry, and his family. Please contact Gary Hitzfeld at ChaplainMinistries@pcanet.org for further information.
5. 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, please contact Gary Hitzfeld at ChaplainMinistries@pcanet.org for further information.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod uphold our chaplains and their ministries in prayer.
2. That the Synod encourage the congregations to sponsor our chaplains, and to financially support the work of the PRCC where possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Synod's Committee to the PRCCMP:
Erich Baum,
Robert Copeland,
William Pihl

Order-of-the-day: Pastor Steve Bradley presented the Report of the Central and South Americas Committee. Personal privilege was given to Mr. Bradley, to introduce the two ministers from the RPC of Bolivia—Miguel Condoretti and Cristian Vila; that denomination desires to enter into fraternal relations with us. Recommendation 1 carried (with the addition of “temporary” before commission, and “and to take students under care” at the end); and so this Committee will have Commission status for its work in Chile; only the ordained elders will participate as the Commission. Recommendations 2 and 3 carried, and so this Commission will work with Crown & Covenant Publications to provide the Westminster Standards on our denominational website and to make that site more useful for our many friends who speak and read Spanish. Recommendation 4 carried. Recommendation 5 goes automatically to the Finance Committee. The Report as a whole was approved and is printed here. Our Bolivian brothers came forward and the Moderator gave these ministers gifts from our denomination; the Court applauded.

Central and South America (CASA) Committee Report to Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers: The Lord continues to open doors and bless our labors toward building relations with Christians in Central and South America, with the aim of promoting the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ in that area of His creation. As things currently stand we have contacts in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

Last year, we had the privilege of introducing our first Reformed Presbyterian minister of South America to our Synod: Pastor Marcelo Sanchez of Chile. We are happy to report this year that he is now involved in ministry in two locations (morning worship in his hometown of Batuco and evening worship in the city of Santiago). Pastor Mark England was able to visit the work there to see what the Lord is doing firsthand, and he is looking forward to the opportunity to visit the saints there again.

It is worth noting that your Committee has been fully funding a salary for Pastor Sanchez from our annual budget. We are grateful for his service to the Lord there in Chile and also very thankful for his professional-level skill in the translation work. Pastor Sanchez has been hard at work in church-planting, pastoring, caring for his family, as well as faithfully serving on your Committee.

We look forward to the day when we will have established and self-supported congregations in Chile, but until that day our plan is to continue to support Pastor Sanchez.

As just noted, we are hoping things will continue to progress in Chile to the point that the works there will be ready for organization in the not too distant future. Should the Lord continue to bless the labors there, we will find ourselves in need of a body to visit the fellowships with the lawful authority to ordain officers and to organize the works there. Given our relationships with our brethren in Chile, we think that the best direction forward to this end would be to authorize the CASA Committee with at least a temporary commission status for accomplishing this work. If this is not the will of Synod, we would recommend that Synod establish a five-man commission in order to take up this work when the need arises.

In addition to using our allotted funds to support the works in Chile, we also provided funding for two pastors from the newly established Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bolivia to come and visit us at this meeting of Synod. We hope that they can be formally introduced to the Court, with the goal of this being the first step toward establishing a fraternal relationship with them. Last year, we were able to send three members of the CASA Committee (Mark, Edgar, and Marcelo) to Bolivia to conduct a conference on various subjects related to the celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. These brothers and their teaching were well-received by the saints there. Lord willing and funds permitting, we are planning to visit Bolivia again next year to teach at another conference and continue to build our relationship with them.

Outside of Bolivia and Chile, we are also in contact with a pastor in Peru who is interested in getting to know the RPCNA and we may plan a trip to visit him within the next year or so. Additionally, we have made a new contact with a pastor in Cuba that we believe has great potential for the establishment of a mission church there.

Also worth mentioning is the fact that Edgar Ibarra (licentiate) had been preaching regularly for two months for some saints in El Salvador and other Spanish-speaking groups via an internet feed, and his labor was well-received and greatly appreciated.

With regard to our translation work, we have made tremendous progress. Prior work by another group had already been done in translating the *WCF*,

WLC, and WSC into Spanish and Pastor Sanchez has recently completed translating our *Testimony*. We are currently in contact with Crown & Covenant to see about publishing what we have completed thus far. Currently, the work is available in electronic form and we are working on getting it published in hard copy. We would also like to work towards having the RPCNA.org website fully translated into Spanish and the Spanish version of our *Constitution* made available on the website as a free download.

Recommendations:

1. That the CASA Committee be granted commission status for the purpose of ordaining officers and organizing churches in Chile.
2. That the electronic version of the Spanish translation of our Standards be placed on the website of our denomination.
3. That the RPCNA website be translated into Spanish and an option to read in Spanish be made available on the site.
4. That Elder Jorge Klajnbart (ruling elder from Springs RPC) be permitted to fill Dave Reese's position on the CASA Committee during his upcoming sabbatical.
5. That \$30,000 be granted to the CASA Committee to continue its work.

Respectfully submitted,
The CASA Committee:
Steve Bradley (chairman);
Mark England;
Edgar Ibarra (clerk);
David Reese;
Marcelo Sanchez

At 5:08 p.m., Pastor Wade Mann read Acts 15:3-4. The delegates prayed with one another in small groups about the business of the afternoon. The Court then sang Psalm 111A. Synod's manager gave announcements. Personal privilege was granted to Mr. David Weir to present a congratulatory bouquet from Ridgefield Park RPC to its pastor, our Moderator. Synod was led in recess prayer by Mr. John Kim. The Court recessed for dinner at 5:24 p.m.

Tuesday; June 26, 2018; 7:00 p.m.

Synod reconvened at 7:00 p.m., singing Psalm 1071, being led in prayer by Pastor Joe Allyn. Minutes of Tuesday's afternoon session were read, corrected, and approved as corrected. The attendance roll was passed. Pastor George Gregory thanked the Court for its many prayers for/about his son over the past year. It was then moved that for the upcoming Report presentation Mr. Bruce Hemphill and Mr. John P. Edgar be given privileges of the floor.

Order-of-the-day: Pastor H. P. McCracken, chairman of the Special Administrative Committee to Prepare Synod for the Appeal by Bruce Hemphill Against His Discipline by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (hereafter, "Admin. Committee") stood to present that Committee's report. Counsel Edgar asked that the Court strike from the documentary record these pages from the 227-page PDF provided by the Admin. Committee: pp. 77-90. This request was essentially formed as a motion, which was seconded and then discussed. There was a motion to lay on the table to entertain a substitute motion: the motion failed. Original motion, then, to remove pp. 77-90; the motion passed, so those pages are stricken. The Court is instructed to ignore those pages of the record for our judgment on the Appeal.

Counsel Edgar objected to Admin. Comm. Report pg. 7003 lines 14-18 (about the waiving of the reading of the Appeal, pages 206-225). Moved and seconded, to remove the text on Synod PDF, page 7003, lines 14-18, and its directions to waive the reading of the Appeal and the reasons assigned by the appellant. During discussion, a point of order was claimed, that we should not be modifying a committee report; the Moderator sustained the point.

Recommendation 1 was taken up (Synod page 7006, lines 2-4). Counsel Edgar objected to the necessary implication in the Recommendation that the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA) and its delegates present here will be permitted to participate in deciding this Appeal before Synod. It was moved as an amendment from the floor to include members of the POA in the group of those who are not permitted to participate in deciding the Appeal; this was claimed to be unconstitutional by the parliamentarians. The Moderator accepted this; the amendment is ruled out of order.

Arriving at an order-of-the-day (8:50 p.m. for prayer and conclusion of

Tuesday's business), it was moved, seconded, and carried to extend our time tonight by one hour or to the completion of this Report.

Discussion continued concerning precisely who are to be regarded as parties of this case (those not permitted to participate in deciding the Appeal), the point of Recommendation 1. The Moderator reiterated that the *Constitution* is clear about the few who must be recused. The Moderator's ruling was challenged; the Court voted in the Moderator's favor (115 to 36). Recommendation 1 is before us. It was moved to lay on the table to entertain a substitute. This was changed to an amendment: "That the appellant, his counsel, and POA's prosecutor not be permitted to participate in deciding the Appeal." This amendment passed 82-32 and so the amended Recommendation 1 is before us. This was adopted by voice vote.

Recommendation 2 is before us (pertaining to the proposed writing "Committee of Five"). This recommendation is adopted, and the Moderator will so appoint.

Recommendation 3 is before us (pertaining to following the outlined appeal procedure). It was moved from the floor that Synod PDF page 7003, line 14-18, be stricken. It was also moved to strike line 25 from that same page, but the Moderator ruled that the POA's answer to the reasons of the Appeal shall be read. It was moved to extend the time for 5 minutes; which was seconded and carried. Counsel Edgar asked that Page 7004, 6.b and 6.d, be reconsidered.

The Report of the Administrative Committee was tabled, to be taken up in the morning.

Personal privilege: Mr. Merkel gave a happy update about the Trinity (Maryland) family.

At 9:57 p.m., Mr. Wade Mann read from Psalm 90 ("Lord, establish the work of our hands"). The delegates prayed with one another and then sang Psalm 90B. Synod's manager gave announcements and then Synod was led in a prayer of adjournment for the evening by Elder Rod Finlayson at 10:10 p.m.

Wednesday; June 27, 2018; 8:30 a.m.

At 8:30 a.m., the Moderator called the Court to order, asking delegates to sing Psalm 13B. Elder Dennis Wing prayed to constitute the Court, remembering that Rev. Bill Edgar is officiating Mike Tabon's funeral today. Synod enjoyed morning devotions under leadership of Pastor Jared Olivetti (Immanuel RPC; West Lafayette, IN). Pastor Brian Wright presented for Wednesday's sessions. Mr. Olivetti preached from Psalm 18:49-50 on the theme: Resting and Rejoicing in the Steadfast God Himself. Mr. Olivetti then closed in prayer. The Court sang Psalm 18G. The Moderator thanked the preacher for his ministry to us. The attendance roll was passed. The minutes of Tuesday night's session were read. Explanatory language was offered to make specific the already carried motion to continue the Study Committee on Divorce and Desertion for another year [see handling of that Report]. The Tuesday evening minutes, with this specification, were improved and approved (carried).

Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Bruce Parnell in order to introduce more of the fraternal delegates who have joined us here: Mark Jagt and Jeff Temple (Canadian Reformed Churches). Mr. Merkel updated the Court once more on the very happy word of the safe delivery of a child to the McKelvy family (of Trinity (MD)) last night; Mr. Merkel prayed in thanks to God.

The Moderator welcomed Mary Beth Schafer, a professional court reporter, who will be with the Court throughout the Appeal hearing today.

Pastor Micah Ramsey asked, moving: "that the Moderator appoint a three-man committee to write an explanation as to why the Synod did not recuse the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA) from voting on Mr. Hemphill's Appeal, to report back to this Synod, so as to be recorded in the Minutes of this Synod." This motion above reflects a successful amendment, allowing the Moderator to select the men for this assignment. After debate, the amended motion failed.

Resumption of the Report of the Administration Committee (about the Hemphill Appeal): The Moderator announced the writing committee members: Nathan Eshelman (convener), Steven McCarthy, Adam Kuehner, Joe Allyn, and Aaron Goerner [reflects later substitute].

Returning to Admin. Committee Report, Recommendation 3. The motion is before us to disregard page 7003, lines 14-18. An amended ver-

sion had been proposed to close Recommendation 3 with "... excepting lines 14-18 on page 7003." The addition of that amendment carried by voice vote, and Recommendation 3 carried. By common consent, "The Bathroom Policy"—Procedure Rule 6-b—will be regulated with reason and leniency; pages will keep track of delegates who leave and enter. Counsel Edgar asks to remain in the room during Court deliberation; the Moderator ruled that Counsel Edgar may remain in the room. There being recommendations in the Admin. Committee Report to be taken up after the conclusion of the Appeal, the Report was tabled to proceed with the Appeal itself. (10:05 a.m.)

Appeal by Bruce Hemphill versus His Discipline by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (hereafter, "The Hemphill Appeal"). In keeping with Synod's mandate that a full record of these Appeal proceedings be kept, we have enlisted a professional court reporter for the day and we have arranged for video recording. The Moderator then asked everyone in the room to turn off non-essential electronic devices. Pastor Jon Maginn was asked to lead the Court in prayer; he did so. Parliamentarians Martin Blocki and Tom Reid, being members of the POA, were removed from that role by the Moderator, then replaced with Brian Coombs and Frank Smith. Counsel Edgar objected to the replacements, asking that parliamentarians who participated in the 2017 Appeal not serve in that function this time; the Moderator's ruling was sustained (by a standing vote). The Moderator reminded the Court that duly appointed Synod delegates are permitted to participate in the deciding of this Appeal with the exception of the defense for the POA. The Moderator restricted the discussion of the Appeal case to the written record. He then confirmed, in consultation with Synod's clerk, that the Appeal is in accordance with the *Book of Discipline* on the six specified points. Then the Moderator gave solemn charges to the members of the Synod Court.

The Clerk of Synod read the sentence appealed from (Appeal PDF, page 203, "Moderator"). The Clerk read from the Hemphill Appeal, point 1. The Clerk read from the Response of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, point 1. The Court enjoyed a break from 10:30-10:50 a.m.

Resuming, Elder Steve McMahan led the Court in prayer.

The clerks (John McFarland and Charles Brown) read points 2-15 for each party, alternating [so Appeal Specification of Error #2, then Response of the POA #2; and etc.], along with the concluding remarks from each docu-

ment. Note: Response point #16 from the POA was not taken up because the Hemphill Appeal had withdrawn its one-time point #16.

Then the parties were heard—beginning and ending with the Appellant. The Appellant's opening statement was given in seventeen minutes, by Counsel Edgar and Mr. Hemphill (starting at 11:36 a.m.; ending at 11:53). It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time to complete the POA's opening statement and the rebuttal by the appellant. The POA's response was given in seventeen minutes by the defense for the POA—Prof. Rick Gamble and Elder David Schaefer (starting at 11:56 a.m.; ending at 12:13 p.m.). The appellant gave rebuttal (12:13-12:19 p.m.). The delegates were instructed not to discuss the matter of this Appeal during lunch break. At 12:20 p.m., Mr. Pockras led the Court in prayer and the delegates enjoyed a break.

Wednesday; June 27, 2018; 1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., the Synod was called to order and the Court resumed deliberation, with the singing of Psalm 68B. Personal privilege was granted to the manager of Synod to make necessary announcements. Attendance roll for Wednesday afternoon's session was passed. Mr. Joseph Friedly led the Court in prayer. Synod resumed deliberation of the Hemphill Appeal.

Opportunity was given for discussion of the case by members of the Court, beginning with questions of clarification. Procedural instructions were given from the Docket of Synod, page 7004, point 6. Questions of clarification were asked from the floor, with responses by the appellant and the defense. This question-and-answer portion of the Appeal hearing (for clarification) began at 1:35 p.m. From 3:10-3:30 p.m., the Synod enjoyed a break.

Resuming deliberation of the Hemphill Appeal, Elder Dean McHenry led the Court in prayer. A ruling of the Moderator was challenged, pertaining to what is the record of the case which the voting delegates may consider. [The Moderator had ruled that the relevant material is restricted to POA's trial record]. By standing vote, challenge was upheld vs. the Moderator; so the full printed record provided by the Admin. Committee (minus the restricted pages) is properly before us. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend Q/A time for 5 more minutes. Ending at 3:41 p.m.

At 3:42 p.m. the Moderator asked if the parties wished to restrict any of the delegates from voting due to extended absences from the deliberation; no delegates were so restricted. The Moderator ruled that official Synod delegates, with exception of POA's defense, are to rule on this Appeal (thus restricted—David Schaefer and Richard Gamble). For clarification: This ruling's intent is that these men will leave the room; this was challenged. The challenge was upheld, so David Schaefer and Richard Gamble may remain in the room. All others who will not participate in deciding the Appeal were asked to leave the room; they did so. Exceptions were made for our fraternal delegates and observers, consultative members, and four pages.

Following Procedure 6.e, Mr. Bill Weir was asked to pray to God for illumination; he did so. The Moderator ascertained from the Admin. Committee that the Court is now to go into a time of general deliberation, then vote on each of the fifteen points of the Appeal in series, without additional deliberation between each. The general deliberation began at 3:52 p.m. During this deliberation, the Moderator's understanding (allowing voting-restricted men in the room to speak during deliberation) was challenged. This challenge to the Moderator's ruling and understanding failed (by Synod's voice vote).

A question arose, again, about who and how various men in the room may participate now. The Moderator, seeking to clarify, ruled that Mr. Gamble and Mr. Schaefer may speak during this discussion, but on the same basis as Counsel Edgar may speak, only to make sure that the Court stays within the record of the case. It was moved, seconded, and carried to recess while the court reporter ascertains the precise wording of our past action on this matter (4:22-4:37 p.m.).

Resuming deliberation, the Moderator announced that the transcript record shows that these three men may remain in the room, to guard the record but not to deliberate the case: Mr. Schaefer, Mr. Gamble, Counsel Edgar (again, Mr. John P. Edgar, Mr. Hemphill's counsel). The Court continued in general deliberation. The Court voted (by voice) that remarks from the floor during this deliberation should be limited to three minutes. The Court reached an order-of-the-day at 5:30 p.m., for dinner and rest. The delegates were instructed not to discuss the matter of this Appeal during dinner break. Pastor Derek Moore prayed to recess the Court.

Wednesday; June 27, 2018; 7:00 p.m.

Synod resumed deliberation at 7:00 p.m., singing Psalm 99A. Synod's manager provided essential announcements. The Court was reconvened in prayer by Elder Jeremy Nelson. Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Bruce Parnell, requesting an order-of-the-day following Thursday morning devotions, to hear from two fraternal delegates. Mr. Parnell introduced more fraternal delegates who are with us: Don Overbeek, Maynard Koerner, and Bill Boekestein. The attendance roll was passed. Synod resumed general deliberation of the Hemphill Appeal at 7:09 p.m. Note: Clerks are keeping track of speakers (two speech limit), and 3 minutes for each speech. It was moved and seconded that general deliberation continue for 12 more minutes; the motion lost. It was moved and seconded that general deliberation continue for thirty more minutes (to 7:43 p.m.); which carried.

At 7:44 p.m.—general deliberation having concluded—the Court moved to a vote on each of the specifications of error. Pastor Kyle Sims (ARPC fraternal delegate) offered to pray for us; the Moderator invited him to do so. The Court stood to pray; Mr. Sims sought God's help. The Moderator read passages from the *Book of Discipline* for our instruction. The parties agreed that Specification of Error #1 is not to be voted on; the Moderator agreed with them. It was challenged from the floor; by voice vote, the Court sustained the Moderator's ruling.

Each specification of error was read in turn by the clerks, and the Court voted on each one.

Appeal Specification 2 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [46 for; 110 against].

Specification 3 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [29 for; 126 against].

Specification 4 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [59 for; 94 against]; Tim McCracken, Drew Gordon, Daniel Howe, Dennis Olson, Don Piper, Joel Butler, Micah Stegall, Dean Smith, Ren Adams, Andy McCracken, Rut Etheridge, James Odom, Jonathan Haney, Ron Stegall, Brian Wright, Gabriel Wingfield, David Carr, Phillip Shafer, Rich Holdeman, David Weir, Michael LeFebvre, Kelly Moore, Greg Moberg, David Robson, Daniel Drost, Ron Graham, Dale Koons, Jeff Bechtold, and Steven McCarthy registered dissent from this particular vote. Those who dissented were reminded that written reasons for dissent may be recorded in the minutes if given to the clerks by the next day's sessions.

Specification 5 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [54 for; 94 against]; James Odom, Gabriel Wingfield, Don Piper, Daniel Drost, Dennis Olson, Micah Stegall, Steven McCarthy, Ren Adams, Daniel Howe, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 6 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [37 for; 115 against]; Dennis Olson, Joel Butler, Ron Graham, David Weir, Tim McCracken, Bill Weir, James Odom, Bob Hemphill, Ren Adams, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 7 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [47 for; 102 against]; Dale Koons, Ron Graham, Jeff Bechtold, David Weir, Brian Wright, David Carr, Don Piper, Phillip Shafer, Tim McCracken, James Odom, Jared Olivetti, Bob Hemphill, Jonathan Haney, Dennis Olson, Micah Stegall, Rut Etheridge, Dean Smith, Andy McCracken, Ren Adams, Greg Moberg, Daniel Howe, David Robson, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 8 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [32 for; 118 against]; Joel Butler, Ron Graham, Don Piper, James Odom, Bob Hemphill, Dennis Olson, Bill Weir, Ren Adams, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 9 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [49 for; 99 against]; Kelly Moore, Drew Gordon, Michael LeFebvre, Ron Graham, Joel Butler, Bob Hemphill, Gabriel Wingfield, Bill Weir, David Carr, Don Piper, Phillip Shafer, James Odom, Dennis Olson, Tim McCracken, Micah Stegall, Dean Smith, Andy McCracken, Ren Adams, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 10 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [35 for; 118 against]; Ron Graham, Don Piper, James Odom, Dennis Olson, Tim McCracken, Bill Weir, Micah Stegall, Dean Smith, Ren Adams, Daniel Howe, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 11 WAS sustained in a standing vote [85 for; 57 against]; Tom Reid, Daniel Drost, Martin Blocki, David Schaefer, Richard Gamble, Edwin Blackwood, Micah Ramsey, James Robb, Vince Scavo, Bob Hackett, and Gary Gunn registered their dissent from this particular vote. The Moderator ruled that the counsel for the defense are allowed to dissent from the votes and actions of the Court. This ruling of the Moderator was challenged;

the ruling of the Moderator was sustained by voice vote.

Specification 12 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [62 for; 88 against]; Michael LeFebvre, John D. Edgar, Dale Koons, Kelly Moore, Ron Graham, Doug Chamberlain, David Weir, Tim Montgomery, Brian Wright, Joel Butler, Gabriel Wingfield, Dennis Olson, David Carr, James Odom, Tim McCracken, Micah Stegall, Rut Etheridge, Andy McCracken, Ren Adams, Don Piper, Pete Smith, Greg Moberg, Daniel Howe, David Robson, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 13 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [62 for; 87 against]; Michael LeFebvre, Gabriel Wingfield, John D. Edgar, James Odom, Joel Butler, Kelly Moore, Drew Gordon, Ron Graham, Don Piper, David Carr, Rich Holdeman, Bob Hemphill, Dennis Olson, Tim McCracken, Micah Stegall, Rut Etheridge, Dean Smith, Ren Adams, Pete Smith, Greg Moberg, Daniel Howe, David Robson, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time 30 minutes.

Specification 14 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [60 for; 95 against]; Bill Weir, Michael LeFebvre, Dale Koons, Kelly Moore, Joel Butler, Ron Graham, Doug Chamberlain, David Weir, Craig Milroy, Jeff Bechtold, Gabriel Wingfield, Bob McKissick, Rich Holdeman, Don Piper, David Carr, Phil Shafer, Jared Olivetti, James Odom, Bob Hemphill, Dennis Olson, Jonathan Haney, Tim McCracken, Micah Stegall, Rut Etheridge, Dean Smith, Ren Adams, Andy McCracken, Pete Smith, Greg Moberg, Daniel Howe, John McGrath, David Robson, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Specification 15 was NOT sustained in a standing vote [29 for; 119 against]; Dale Koons, Ron Graham, David Weir, Don Piper, Dennis Olson, Micah Stegall, Dean Smith, Ren Adams, and Ron Stegall registered their dissent from this particular vote.

One of the fifteen specifications of the Appeal having been sustained, the Moderator noted that our need for a twenty minute break to caucus toward solutions would take us beyond our new ending time tonight. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time up to 10:30 p.m., in the interest of completing this work. The Moderator directed the Court to recess for twenty minutes in order to give delegates time to formulate motions. This period began at 9:55 p.m. and ended at 10:15 p.m. As the Court was

called to order, the Moderator directed those prepared to offer motions to present them. It was moved, seconded, and carried that the Court hear all motions before any deliberation. Three motion-sets were offered; the second and third quickly combined into one, and so these two motion-sets were considered by the Court. First, the prevailing motion:

(1) We confirm Charge #1. (2) We reverse Charge #2. (3) We confirm the censure of suspension. (4) We appoint a three-man committee to discuss Mr. Hemphill's paper with him, consisting of one member of POA and one member from each of two other presbyteries to be appointed by the moderator, and report back to the Synod of 2019.

Note: This is the second motion-set, not selected by the Court: "No specification of appeal was upheld with regard to charge #1, therefore I move that the judicial action of the POA be upheld with respect to charge #1. As to charge #2, Mr. Hemphill not being in contempt in the sense of personal disposition to the POA (#11), but being in contempt in the sense of refusing needed correction in doctrine under the authority and discipline of the church (Spec. #12-13), BOD e-3, 1.6, that Synod declare that the Appeal is denied and the judgment sustained."

The Court voted (79-63) in favor of considering motion set 1. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time ten minutes. The Court requested prayer; Jeff Temple (fraternal observer from the Canadian Reformed Churches) did so. The four parts of the first paragraph were taken up: Part 1 was confirmed; Don Piper, Ron Graham, Derek Moore, Michael LeFebvre, Bob Hemphill, Joel Butler, Phil Shafer, Tim McCracken, Micah Stegall, Dean Smith, Ren Adams, and Pete Smith registered their dissent. Part 2 was confirmed. Part 3 was confirmed; Doug Chamberlain, David Carr, Craig Milroy, Derek Moore, Bill Weir, David Weir, Jeff Bechtold, Ron Graham, Kelly Moore, Dennis Olson, Michael LeFebvre, Joel Butler, James Odom, Tim McCracken, Phil Shafer, Paul Martin, Micah Stegall, Rut Etheridge, Ren Adams, Dean Smith, Don Piper, Pete Smith, Rich Holdeman, Jared Olivetti, and John McGrath registered their dissent.

Part 4 was considered. A motion was offered to amend, striking "counsel Mr. Hemphill concerning his views on office, and ...," which was seconded. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time ten minutes. The amendment was discussed; amendment passed. So the amended motion

was discussed. There was a motion to lay on the table to entertain a substitute, which carried. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time ten minutes. Deliberation ensued; the substitute lost. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time to complete Proc. Step 7-d (Synod Docket, page 7005). Deliberation. Part 4 as amended was confirmed. The Court rose to thank with applause Mary B. Schafer and Miss Tatum Rice (with IWU) for their excellent service to the Court during this very long day of work.

The Court was instructed to stand while waiting for Mr. Hemphill to arrive, along with others who had left the room. Mr. Hemphill arrived, with others. The results of the hearing of the Appeal were summarized by the Moderator using Synod's agreed upon paragraph. Mr. Hemphill, his wife Margie, Counsel Edgar, and Pastor Pete Smith stood, along with the Court, as Pastor Smith prayed for our God's help. Then the Court sang Psalm 67C. Mr. Ed Blackwood led the Court in a prayer of adjournment. The Report of the Admin. Committee was tabled, to be completed after conclusion of Thursday's Stegall Complaint.

The recorded reasons for dissent from the various Appeal specifications are recorded here:

David Schaefer and Micah Ramsey and James Robb dissented on Specification 11:

"The Presbytery of the Alleghenies responded to the Appeal, stating that the proposed understanding of Charge #2 was not a correct understanding of the charge. It is unjust to allow a false accusation to be sustained."

Tim McCracken dissented on the outcome of the vote on Specification 4, on these grounds:

"There is legitimate process in a man's experience of coming to conviction. What Mr. Hemphill has described about suspending final private judgment until hearing from the church is quite exactly what we seek in godly submission; the POA ought to have believed his sworn testimony and allowed for this."

Tim McCracken's explanation on his sustaining of Specification 14:

"I do so on the grounds of agreement with the first sentence. The latter wording is not helpful. Yes, a lesser censure would have been

adequate, but there was no need to add the other words concerning the Presbytery's 'apparent purpose.'"

Bob Hemphill's dissent, general:

"My main reason for registering my dissent at several points along the way in the actions connected with Mr. Bruce Hemphill's Appeal is that I believe Synod and presbyteries must allow men to bring forward questions they have or Biblical arguments for changes in the church without fear of censure as they wrestle through their beliefs. I do not believe this happened in Mr. Hemphill's case."
[06/28/2018 ... 12:30 p.m.]

James Odom's dissent, general:

"Because it was incorrect to conclude a violation of Query 4 and that Query 9 is the correct standard for determining disposition of exceptions for already ordained elders, and that no proper foundation of violation of the moral law or of contempt under BOD 3.2."

Ren Adams' dissent, general:

"When a man repeatedly denies charges of believing and accepting contents of a study paper, one encouraged by this same synod body in 1994 for submission to the courts of the church without threat of judicial action, his testimony is to be given the benefit of the doubt. No one here can get into his head; I do not believe the POA has proved the charges and therefore I strongly dissent from the unjust suspension of Bruce Hemphill."

Derek Moore and Kelly Moore's dissent:

"We dissent from confirming charge #1 for two reasons. First, charge #1 assumes that the present tense statement in Query Four, 'believe in and accept,' has an ongoing future tense meaning to the effect of, 'will continue to believe in and accept.' This violates the plain meaning of language. Further, in this context it implies that a man responding in the affirmative to this Query might bind himself to future versions of the *Testimony* if the *Testimony* is revised, as it

has been since the time that Mr. Hemphill took his ordination vows. This is an abuse of Query Four. Second, by framing the offense in terms of a broken vow the charge makes this case a reflection on Mr. Hemphill's integrity and not just on his position regarding women as elders, thereby defaming his good name beyond measure."

Dale Koons' dissent:

"I registered dissent for five of the 'not sustained' Specifications of Error at the vote on the 14 items of the Specifications of Error at the Hemphill appeal. The Specifications of Error are indicated below. The reasons for dissent are indicated below, and are the same for all points. *Specifications dissented:* No. 4; No. 7; No. 12, No. 14; No. 15. *Reasons for dissent:* (1) I agree that women are restricted by Scripture from holding the office of either ruling or teaching elder. (2) Paragraph 20.5 of our *Testimony* states that liberty of conscience is the freedom to interpret and apply God's Word to one's own life. The historic position of our church seems to be to accept exceptions to interpretations of scripture so long to the extent it does no harm to the church. There is no evidence that Mr. Hemphill has ever taught contrary to this. I am concerned that a Presbytery could become thought police and that expression of liberty of conscience will become restricted. In the secular judicial system, jurists swear to uphold the Constitution of the land, even if his personal belief may be at odds with the accepted law cited. Shouldn't we be able to accept the testimony of one who has heard the queries and taken vows?"

Pete Smith's dissent on Item #14:

"I dissent from this vote because Mr. Hemphill has publicly stated, '... [U]ntil I find the help I've requested, I continue to live pleasantly (if not happily) within the bounds of my original ordination commitment to uphold the law and order of the RPCNA.' Mr. Hemphill's censure is unduly severe. He has acted continually according to his ordination commitments, demonstrating subjection in the Lord to the courts, following no divisive courses, and has shown himself

submissive to brotherly counsel, even though he has not yet come to agreement with that counsel.”

Martin Blocki and Tom Reid’s dissent on Item #11.

“We register our dissent to the vote of Synod to sustain specification #11. The reasons for our dissent are as follows: (1) Specification #11 is invalid because the Presbytery of the Alleghenies never charged Mr. Hemphill with contempt for the reasons indicated in the specification. (2) The Presbytery of the Alleghenies specified this in our committee’s response to Mr. Hemphill’s specifications. (3) By Synod’s vote, Synod erred in substantiating a specification without a factual ground.”

Dennis Olson’s dissent (general):

“... on the outcome of each ‘not sustained’ Specification on multiple grounds, all primarily based on his belief that Appellant did prove his case that the written record reflected material irregularities in the proceedings and did manifest material prejudice and unfairness to Appellant.”

Michael LeFebvre’s dissent from action on Bruce Hemphill Appeal:

“Mr. Hemphill asserted and maintained that he provided his paper for critical deliberation and not as a statement of exception to the church’s standards. Nevertheless, this Synod upheld discipline as though he was asserting an exception to the church’s standards. This was done without receiving any charge or substantiation of perjury to justify this rejection of his repeated and clear testimony about his position. This seems to create a situation where a church court presumes to interpret a man’s heart. Furthermore, by charging a minister upon his submission of a good faith study paper, this action sends a discouraging message to other ministers throughout the denomination and to potential ministerial candidates inside and outside the denomination. This action sends a message of unwillingness to welcome or to tolerate ministers who engage with controversial questions of doctrine or interpretation, even when

done for good faith engagement without divisive courses of action. I dissent from this action of Synod with a heavy heart.”

Daniel Howe’s dissent on Specification #4:

“The judicial appeal of Bruce Hemphill concerning the Presbytery of the Alleghenies’ suspension has offered RPCNA a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to justice. However, the POA and ultimately Synod chose to disbelieve his sworn testimony concerning what he ‘believes and accepts.’ This was an injustice on the part of both courts. Specification #4 is key to his appeal and key to understanding what is wrong with the Presbytery of the Alleghenies’ conduct. Under oath, Mr. Hemphill testified that he did not ‘believe and accept’ the position argued in his paper on women in the office of elder. This amounts to an oath of expurgation. The sworn testimony of a good man about his beliefs ought to be decisive, given that he has never taught or preached contrary to our standards in this area.”

Daniel Howe’s dissent on Specification #7:

“The presbytery has equated not embracing fully our denomination’s view of women in the office of elder with believing and accepting a position contrary to our denomination’s in its condemnation of Mr. Hemphill. This standard goes beyond even the original queries of ordination that he took, and does introduce an element of ‘implicit faith’ (contra our *Confession* 20:2). In their response, POA admit that they have not proven that Mr. Hemphill believes and accepts a position contrary to our denomination’s! This specification touches on the matter of how an individual’s conscience intersects with that of the church. An ordained elder of the RPCNA has the right to harbor private misgivings about our standards (but not teach contrary to them). He even has the right to propose change, and argue for it in forceful language (though not invective), which is what Mr. Hemphill did. He does not have the right to avow his rejection of a significant item of doctrine, yet expect to maintain his ordination unchallenged. But Mr. Hemphill did not

cross that line: he did not declare an exception or ask for permission to do so. Presbyteries must preserve space for discussion and disagreement. POA judged Mr. Hemphill as having raised a question from an unwritten list of unacceptable taboos. This was not fair, just, or righteous; nor was it right for the Synod of the RPCNA to uphold this judgment and reject Mr. Hemphill's appeal."

Thursday; June 28, 2018; 8:30 a.m.

At 8:30 a.m., Synod enjoyed morning devotions under the leadership of Rev. Scott Cook (Erskine College dean of enrollment and adjunct professor of Bible; minister with the ARPC). Elder Bill Weir precented during singing of Psalm 98B. Pastor Hiroyuki Kanamori prayed to constitute the Court. Mr. Cook preached from Psalm 89:19-52 on God and the Sufferer—Promise, Providence, Praise, Prayer, and the Steadfast Love of the Lord in Jesus Christ. The preacher opened and closed in prayer. The Court sang Psalm 89A. The attendance roll was passed. Minutes of all three Wednesday sessions were read, corrected, and approved as corrected (carried). Personal privilege was granted to Mr. Jonathan Haney to introduce visitors with us from Columbia, Missouri (Free Church Continuing), Noah and Reuben Manning.

Order-of-the-day, requested by the Interchurch Committee (Mr. Bruce Parnell). Two of our fraternal delegates brought greetings and encouragement to the Court: Pastor Kyle Sims of the Associate RP Church and Pastor Iain Wright of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Mr. Parnell welcomed newly arrived fraternal delegate, Pastor Bill Boekestein of the URC.

Order-of-the-day: At 9:53 a.m., the Court took up the matter of Communication 18-4 (Rev. Ron Stegall's Complaint against the Midwest Presbytery; hereafter, Stegall Complaint). As a reminder, Synod agreed to this procedure (during Business of Synod Committee's Report on Communications): "I MOVE that Synod: (a) hear this Complaint as an order-of-the-day on Thursday morning following devotions; (b) grant to the complainant and to the defendant opening statements of up to ten minutes each; (c) the Court debates the Complaint; (d) grant to complainant and defendant closing statements of up to five minutes each; and (e) render judgment on the Complaint, pursuant to BOD 4.5 (E-16)."

The Moderator asked Pastor Tim McCracken to lead the Court in prayer, and he did so. Complainant Mr. Stegall gave his opening statement. Defendant (Midwest Presbytery—represented at this time by Mr. Jonathan Haney) gave opening statement. Coming close to an order-of-the-day (morning break), the Moderator directed that the Court would go to this break (10:21-10:42). The Court was encouraged not to discuss the Complaint during this break or others until conclusion of the matter. The Moderator replaced Pete

Smith with Wade Mann on the State of the Church Committee. Mr. Martin Blocki prayed.

Resuming, Rev. Ken McBurney led the Court in prayer. Debate of the Stegall Complaint began at 10:43 a.m. The Court was reminded that the Synod delegates who are from the Midwest Presbytery will not be voting on this Complaint, but will participate in the deliberation of the Complaint. Moved and seconded from the floor—that Stegall Complaint Claim #1 be declared out of order; discussion ensued; this motion lost. The Court debated.

During debate, it was clarified that during the voting on this Complaint, the Court will vote on the two points of the Complaint, without debate at that time. At 11:55 a.m., it was moved to suspend the order-of-the-day (prayer time) to continue this debate. The motion lost.

At 11:55 a.m., Pastor Craig Scott provided for our reading Psalm 2:6-8, and the Court was led in prayer by Pastor Mark Koller and Pastor Gabriel Wingfield. Synod sang Psalm 2A. The manager of Synod gave essential announcements. Synod was led in a prayer of recess by Pastor Sam Ketcham and the delegates enjoyed lunch at 12:23 p.m. Delegates were urged not to discuss the Complaint during this lunch break.

Thursday; June 28, 2018; 1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m. the Synod was called to order. The Court resumed deliberation with the singing of Psalm 125, and Elder John W. Smith prayed to constitute the Court. Personal privilege was given to Pastor Ed Blackwood to introduce his son, Allen. Minutes of Thursday morning's session were read, corrected, and approved as corrected. The attendance roll was passed. More written dissents (about the Hemphill Appeal) have been made available to the clerks. Personal privilege was granted to GPS to introduce an EA elder who is attending RPTS.

Order-of-the-day: At 1:41 p.m., in preparation for elections, Mr. Jerry Milroy (chairman of the Nominating Committee) presented a preliminary ballot for elections to fill vacancies on Synod's boards and committees (paper copies of which were distributed). Corrections and improvements were offered. A motion was made from the floor (seconded) that all indications of a board or committee nomination/recommendation be removed from future printed ballots; by standing vote, the motion lost. Personal privilege was given to

Pastor Phil Pockras to introduce his son, Nathaniel, to the Court. It was moved and seconded, to task the Business of Synod Committee (BOSC) to study the matter of Synod electing its moderator in the year prior to his service; the motion failed. It was moved and seconded that this Synod vote on our 2019 moderator at the time of the 2018 nominating election; the motion was ruled out of Constitutional order. It was moved and seconded to reconsider the failed motion (to task the BOSC to study the matter of Synod electing its moderator in the year prior to his service); the motion to reconsider carried. So the motion (to task the BOSC) is before us; after deliberation, it passed. Synod's ballot vote is scheduled for Friday morning.

Personal privilege was granted to Pastor Steven Bradley, who informed us that a relative of our dear friend Marcelo Sanchez was killed today in a car accident; Mr. Bradley led in prayer.

The scheduled order-of-the-day to hear the RPTS Trustees Report will be delayed in order for the Court to complete the Stegall Complaint, BUT to start no later than 4:30 p.m. today.

At 2:17 p.m. the Court returned to the deliberation of the Stegall Complaint. It was moved and seconded to divide into two the second point of the Stegall Complaint ("The MWP erred by abusing parliamentary process" and "The MWP erred by abusing the disciplinary process").

Debate continued. It was moved, seconded, and carried to allow Don Piper a third opportunity to speak in the debate. It was moved, seconded, and carried (from the floor) to cease debate, at 2:48 p.m. The complainant and the defendant, in turn, offered their closing statements (Mr. Stegall and MWP representative Mr. Bruce Parnell). The Synod came to the vote; all duly appointed and certified delegates may vote on the points of this Complaint, except for delegates from the Midwest Presbytery. Pastor Aaron Goerner led the Court in prayer for God's help and wisdom. Pastor Lucas Hanna will replace Clerk McFarland as a counter during the standing votes. No one was asked to leave.

Stegall Complaint, Claim of Error #1: "The Midwest Presbytery erred by stating that I deny the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture." The Complaint on this point was NOT sustained in a standing vote [12 for; 92 against]; Micah Stegall, Tim McCracken, Bob Hemphill, Ren Adams, Dennis Olson, Don Piper, David Carr, Ron Graham, and Dale Koons registered

dissent from this particular vote. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time to conclude voting.

Stegall Complaint, Claim of Error #2: "The Midwest Presbytery erred by abusing parliamentary process." The Complaint on this point was NOT sustained in a standing vote [42 for; 55 against]; Ren Adams, Micah Stegall, Bob Hemphill, Dennis Olson, Don Piper, Frank Smith, David Weir, and Ron Graham registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Stegall Complaint, Claim of Error #3: "The Midwest Presbytery erred by abusing the disciplinary process." The Complaint on this point was NOT sustained in a standing vote [13 for; 89 against]; Ren Adams, Micah Stegall, Tim McCracken, James Odom, Dennis Olson, Phil Shafer, Don Piper, David Weir, Jack McCready, Ron Graham, and Dale Koons registered their dissent from this particular vote.

Mr. Ron Stegall stood to ask that his written Complaint be printed in the Appendix of these *2018 Minutes of Synod*; the Moderator agreed, and the Midwest Presbytery Record will appear there too. The Court related its judgment to Mr. Stegall. Mr. Stegall replied with grace. Andy McCracken spoke words of appreciation about Mr. Bruce Hemphill and Mr. Ron Stegall. John McFarland prayed.

James Odom's dissent on Complaint Point 3:

"That no proper foundation of violation of the moral law or of contempt under *BOD* 3.2 has been laid or is present on which to base discipline."

Ron Graham's dissent, general:

"One reason for registering my dissent from the 2018 RPCNA Synod's denial of Mr. Stegall's complaint: Abuse of parliamentary procedures and disciplinary measures, as with any tool, sometimes occur through malicious intent, though not necessarily. One might abuse a hammer, a saw, or other tools through ignorance, carelessness, or impatience. As a boy learning to use a hand saw I recall my ignorance and impatience on one particularly hot afternoon. I attempted, unskillfully and unsuccessfully, to force a crosscut saw under my father's oversight. He, a remarkably gifted carpenter and furniture craftsman, said to me, 'Be patient and let the saw do its

work. Don't force it.' It is my considered opinion that Midwest Presbytery was hasty and abusive in its actions toward Mr. Stegall and for this reason registered my dissent. But I mean this only in the less culpable sense of the illustration from my boyhood experience. I am thankful for the progress we are making and fervently pray that we will continue to increase in Christ-like skill and patience when exercising the parliamentary and disciplinary tools that we've been given by the One who is 'building' His Church. This we seek to do in the use of every appointed means of grace at our disposal, eschewing any degree of abuse in the process."

Tim McCracken's dissent:

"With regard to my support for Complaint #1, it was bad logic for the Midwest Presbytery to reference a Synod decision about the Christian Reformed Church, declare an error in that denomination's thinking, and imply that Mr. Stegall is guilty of a like error. With regard to my support for Complaint #3, the misuse of discipline rests in the severity of the censure."

Dale Koons' dissent:

"I registered dissent for the three 'not sustained' Specifications of Error in the vote on the Stegall appeal. The reasons for dissent are indicated below and are the same for all points. (1) I agree that women are restricted by Scripture from holding the office of either ruling or teaching elder. (2) Paragraph 20.5 of our *Testimony* states that liberty of conscience is the freedom to interpret and apply God's Word to one's own life. The historic position of our church seems to be to accept exceptions to interpretations of Scripture to the extent it does no harm to the church. There is no evidence that Mr. Stegall has ever taught contrary to this. (3) Mr. Stegall's references to actions in 1939 that five men were able to present an alternate interpretation of Scripture without fear of censure is remarkable in light of the actions today. I am concerned that a presbytery could become thought police and that expression of liberty of conscience will become restricted. In the secular judicial system, jurists

swear to uphold the constitution of the land, even if his personal belief may be at odds with the accepted law being cited. Shouldn't we be able to accept the testimony of one who has heard the queries and taken vows?"

Dennis Olson dissents:

"to Synod's actions re. the issues set forth in Stegall's Complaint on the various grounds set forth in that Complaint, but primarily because I believe each Synod action failed to properly acknowledge and balance in a biblically-just manner (1) the role of liberty of conscience; (2) the historical fact that for over 100 years of Synod action addressing various papers changing or proposing to change church standards, Synod explicitly or implicitly did not charge such authors or motion makers with violations of the moral law, queries, or vows; (3) the role of biblical love and grace that should be properly extended towards such authors and motion makers, (4) the effectiveness of explicit and implicit fences of conduct that Synod could impose to properly guard the church standards (i.e., no teaching of contrary doctrines, etc.); (5) the historical precedent of such actions acting as a 'safe harbor' for how ordained men may safely and fairly raise doctrinal issues through appropriate exegetical analysis and to do so without fear of an unbiblical 'chilling' effect on efforts to be ever reforming; and (6) the need to fairly and pastorally address questions and concerns by non-ordained church members who sincerely seek answers on how best to share their faith and a Christian viewpoint on this very current issue in our culture ... Synod does not want to groom an unintended chilling consequence that only a 'don't ask and don't tell' behavior is safe."

Ren Adams' dissent:

"I dissent from Synod's decision to not uphold Mr. Stegall's Complaint. Mr. Stegall is correct when he says it is not he who has changed; rather, the church has moved the lines of acceptable belief inward. Evidence for this is that several respected ministers from an earlier generation openly held the same viewpoint yet

were not disciplined, and that Mr. Stegall registered his dissent to a 1994 Synod decision limiting the eldership to men. I also believe that he is correct, that the associated dangers of authoritarianism (contrary to Matthew 20:25-26) and loss of freedom of conscience are impacting the RPCNA."

Bob Hemphill's dissent:

"For the following reasons, I register my dissent from two actions taken in regard to Mr. Stegall. In the case of number one, Midwest Presbytery did imply by its motion that Mr. Stegall denied the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture, and even made such the basis of argument for its action, while in fact, Ron Stegall does not deny any of these truths. In the case of number two, the Midwest Presbytery erred by abusing the parliamentary process in that the process used against Mr. Stegall was rushed, confusing, and not fully documented; nor was there a record of the votes counted."

David Carr's dissent:

"A fundamental issue in this case is the freedom of conscience. A proximate issue is undue severity in disciplining a man who holds a doctrinal position that differs from the standards of the church. An ordained man should be permitted to come to his own conclusion based on study of Scripture. If his conclusions are at variance with the standards of the church and he submits to the church by not promoting those views, he should not be subject to severe sanctions for making those views known. Ron Stegall has been a blameless pastor, preacher, and teacher for his whole career. The disciplinary path he is on will likely deprive him of his ministerial credentials. This will harm the church by sullyng the reputation of a man of God. It will also deprive the people of God of a faithful servant of the Lord and His Church."

Frank J. Smith's dissent:

"I respectfully dissent from the failure of the Synod to sustain spec-

ification of error #2 in the Complaint of Stegall v. Midwest. Even though the term 'abuse' may have seemed harsh or unwarranted, it nevertheless was accurate: the basic meaning of the word means 'to use wrongly or improperly; misuse' with the example being 'to abuse one's authority'; with a secondary meaning being that of 'treat[ing] in a harmful, injurious, or offensive way.' Though the failure of Midwest Presbytery to entertain a motion to require a roll call vote was unintentional, it was still a violation of the rights of a member of the court. I do not believe that this error would have warranted that the Synod annul or reverse the actions of the MWP. Nonetheless, the acknowledgement of this error would have, I believe, been helpful in promoting peace and reconciliation."

Micah Stegall's dissent:

"During the debate surrounding Mr. Stegall's Complaint I argued the following: 'Most of you may have guessed by now that it is my privilege to call Mr. Ron Stegall my father. What you may not know about me is that I do not agree with Mr. Stegall's conclusions on the role of women in the church. That being said, what is being done to Mr. Stegall is both unwise and unfair.

We live in a changing world where slippery slopes exist around every corner and I join with you in guarding the church against these slopes. I believe this is a good branch of Christ's church and I address you to both preserve and protect this branch. I come to fight for this branch. I do not besmirch any one of you. You are all my brothers and I love you all. To give you some background on this case I want to review something. One motive for removing Mr. Stegall's ordination shared to me is the idea that Mr. Stegall's position on the role of women in the church, in and of itself, injures the church and thus must not be tolerated. The church must decide if the view of this individual, Mr. Stegall, a view the church believes to be in error, can be tolerated in an elder of the church without injury to the harmony and effective testimony of the church. But before you destroy the legacy of Mr. Stegall, hear this witness testify before you that all Mr. Stegall has ever done is faithfully and

fearlessly followed God's calling to travel the world as a missionary, pastor a church, serve his community and found a Christian school that remains a successful beacon of light in a dark community, all while raising his children in a godly manner along the way. This is a great man.

Twenty-four years ago, in 1994, Mr. Stegall publicly made his views on this issue known on the floor of Synod when he dissented from language which explicitly limited the eldership to men. Beyond this appropriate dissent, Mr. Stegall has never publicly divulged his view. Mr. Stegall has never violated his vows and has fiercely guarded his view on the issue, never teaching or preaching against the standards of the church. This issue would not have grown into the rift it is today were it not for the actions of the Midwest Presbytery that led to this decision being before this body. So I ask you, how has Mr. Stegall's guarded view injured the church? Where is the evidence?

Ron grew up in a church where his view was not as alarming as it is today. It is no secret that churches move left and right over the course of history, but by and large this branch has rightly held fast. Holding fast has always been the more difficult and less convenient path, but it has been the right path. So as our church seems to now be tempted to shift, I ask you, how do men and women of principle navigate this shift? When a church shifts, it does not shift away from the obligation to guard and protect its members and officers. This duty remains. It must not destroy them. And to those of you who perhaps did not grow up in this denomination, maybe you have only been in this denomination for 10 years, I say you not only get the heritage and the standards to protect, which is your duty, you get the long-standing servants of the Lord to protect, which is your duty. Fair or not, all the other long-standing members who are watching, and they are watching, and they will either view your actions here as a protection or a destruction of a godly man. A rule against Mr. Stegall is not only a rule against centuries of our church's distinguished and wise history, but a rule against Mr. Stegall is the destruction of a skilled and faithful servant that

God has used and is using in the role of elder to spread His gospel.

Fathers and brothers, I beg you, search your hearts; this cannot be the way. Removing the ordination of a man due to a position he has held publicly from the floor of Synod for twenty four years cannot be the way forward. In all things, may God's will be done and may God defend the right.'

In light of the Court's decision, I have some thoughts I wish to share. I share them not to speak down to anyone but because they are on my heart. I want this body (Synod) to know that you may not acknowledge these as truths; I expect you will not, but you must acknowledge these as things that countless RPCNA members believe to be true. To continue to disregard these beliefs is the continued self-destruction of a large portion of the church. I have heard the argument that this action was based on truth and that we must stand on truth above all else. Of course, this does not account for the times when principled men of the church disagree on what truth is. That is why the very wise authors of our vows wrote the vows the way they did—to not teach or preach against the standards of the church. These are action words, teach and preach. The vow does not say we may not think, or come to a different conclusion on a non-heretical issue. There is a massive difference between thought and action. The authors of the vows were wise not to include the thoughts of men in the vows. Well-studied men, who pour over the word constantly, will inevitably come to different conclusions. Including the word thoughts in the vows would have created a culture of finger-pointing, constant accusations and general discord. As we, as a church, stray from centuries of church history and defrock an elder because of his closely guarded thought, it is indeed tearing a very real hole in our beloved church.

When you take away the idea that an elder may hold a guarded view on a non-heretical issue, you take away liberty of conscience; strip away this liberty and no grace remains. And without grace, you destroy every member of Christ's church. This is a self-destructive behavior for the church to adopt. And so when I see people piously weeping at the result that they voted for, and then patting

themselves on the back at how they did it in a loving way when they destroyed a man of God, an instrument of Jesus, I am disgusted. To make it clear, I am not speaking about the moderator Bruce Martin; he had no voice and no vote. And when men come to me and say they are sorry and that it was not personal I can only laugh. Is not Ron Stegall a person? Are we all not people? A friend and fellow delegate to Synod commented to me on this very issue, stating that the hypocrisy was more than he could bear. As the church stands alone on their view of the truth regarding a non-heretical issue, and does so with no grace, it crushes the members that their sworn duty demands they protect. I'm reminded of Revelation 3:2: 'Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds to be complete.'

I am proud of my father for never wavering, head up, always looking this body square in the eye, with humility, honesty, love, and steadfastness, in order that all may see what is truly happening here—that a church which purports to execute one of its own in this manner is in fact committing a kind of self-execution. I am also reminded by a work of John Donne: 'Perchance he for whom this bell tolls may be so ill, as that he knows not it tolls for him; and perchance I may think myself so much better than I am, as that they who are about me, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that ... No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' I dissent."

The Court went to its afternoon break (3:25-3:45 p.m.). The Court sang Psalm 40B and Elder Mark Sampson led the Court in prayer.

Order-of-the-day: Pastor Michael LeFebvre presented the Report of the Trustees of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary. After summarizing features from the Report itself and responding to a question, the

Court took up the two recommendations. Recommendation 1 carried; the Court heard from Pastor David Whitla, the RPTS Board's nominee for the Professor of Church History, in a public interview under the direction of Board President LeFebvre. Questions from the floor were spoken. The interview was 18 minutes. [Mr. Whitla will also offer a sample seminary / history lecture during an upcoming break.] Recommendation 2 carried, by evidence of the standing ovation, so the Court heard from President Jerry O'Neill for five minutes. Mr. O'Neill began his address giving all glory to Christ for fruitful ministry at RPTS. At the close of his remarks, Synod applauded his 23 years of faithful, fruitful service. The RPTS Trustees Report was approved and is printed here:

Report of the Board of Trustees of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary

This year marks the 208th anniversary of RPTS. The Seminary continues to be blessed by God in our mission to train pastors and other servants of Christ for the work of his Kingdom. We are thankful to the Lord for the exceptional professors, faithful staff, diligent students and generous supporters he continues to raise up. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. The most significant recommendation of the Board for this meeting of Synod is our nomination of David Whitla to serve as Professor of Church History. Please also use this report as a guide and reminder to pray for the work of the Seminary.

Student Body

There were 25 diplomas conferred in the 2017–2018 academic year:

	RP Students	Non-RP Students	Total
D.Min.	1	1	2
M.Div.	7	6	13
MTS	4	6	10
Certificates	0	0	0
Totals	12	13	25

While fall 2017 FTE (full time equivalent) enrollment was 72.67 (the high was 74.2 in 2009), there was a sizable drop off in winter registration, resulting in

an FTE 65.08 (a drop of 3 to 4 is typical). Things continued downward in spring to an FTE of 58.6. Spring did see eight new credit students and nine new audit students, and numbers are typically lower in the spring. The drop between fall to winter was unexpected but not unprecedented. Though disappointing and though it raises concerns with regard to meeting forecast budget, there were no out of the ordinary circumstances which precipitated it. The total number of for-credit students held steady at 95. In the fall, 21 were on-line only students. We anticipate eight Reformed Presbyterian M.Div. students will graduate in 2019 and ten in 2020.

	RP Students	Non-RP Students	Total
D.Min.*	5	27	32
M.Div.	33	34	67
MTS	6	14	20
Certificates	1	5	6
Special**	1	0	1
Totals	46	80	126

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

** Special is non-degree but for credit.

Faculty: Current

Jerry O'Neill (President, Professor of Pastoral Theology, since 1995) completes his 23 year tenure on June 30, 2018. He was blessed by a wonderful retirement dinner in April. Among the honors, the Board established The Jerry F. O'Neill President's Scholarship which is a full-tuition scholarship for one or two seniors who evidence pastoral gifts and graces like Jerry's. The Lord blessed Jerry and his work for the Seminary with spiritual, intellectual, physical plant, financial and community integrity, excellence, and growth. His development of enthusiastic participation and support from the wider Pittsburgh community is particularly notable as is his development of opportunities throughout

NAPARC and even to the ends of the earth. Jerry will continue to serve the Seminary by teaching a few courses in Pastoral Theology over the next two years; Jerry will continue to work on institutional advancement and academic administration from an office in the Willson Center.

Barry York (Professor of Pastoral Theology, since 2013), is in the second year of his first seven-year term. He is scheduled to add service as Seminary President on July 1, 2018. Barry and the Board earnestly desire that he continue his excellent work in the classroom; to enable this, significant administrative support is in place and Barry is integrating some of his elective courses into his required courses.

Rick Gamble (Professor of Systematic Theology, since 2005) is in the third year of his second 7-year term and will begin service as Dean of Faculty. Publication of Vol. 2 of his three volume work *The Whole Counsel of God* is much anticipated.

C. J. Williams (Professor of Old Testament Studies, since 2005) is also in the third year of his second 7-year term. C. J. also leads our D.Min. program.

Tom Reid (Librarian, since 1996) is a member of our faculty as librarian and a member of our staff as registrar. Tom also serves as an adjunct professor, teaching courses on research and writing as well as on church history. Tom is nearing retirement so we ask for your prayers for him and for the Board as we look for our next librarian.

Jack Kinneer (Adjunct Professor of NT Studies) teaches Koine Greek Grammar, New Testament Exegesis, General Epistles and the Revelation of John. Jack is very innovative in teaching, having developed an online, multimedia textbook for learning Koine Greek. Jack is also nearing retirement, so we ask for your prayers for him and for the Board as we look for a Professor of New Testament Studies.

Jonathan Watt (Adjunct Professor of New Testament Studies) teaches Gospels, Acts and the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, and Biblical Geography and Archaeology.

George Scipione (Adjunct Professor of Biblical Counseling) will serve half-time in the 2018-2019 school year, teaching all the lecture courses and retiring at the end of that academic year. We are so thankful for Dr. Scipione's leadership and teaching in the Biblical Counseling Center as well as for his enthusiastic commendation of the Seminary to all, especially prospective students.

Keith Evans (Professor-Elect of Biblical Counseling) was elected by Synod 2017 to begin serving this fall. Keith has started a Ph.D. program at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Southern) and his duties at our seminary are limited so that he can complete this degree in four years.

Faculty: Planning

Our Board's standing Committee for Faculty Elections (CFE) continues to serve well, enabling the Board as a whole better to anticipate and prepare for future faculty needs. We are working to provide for various needs as indicated above.

Professor of Church History—It has been quite a while since our Seminary had a Church History Professor on the faculty, but it seems that we as a denomination are in a season in which a review and fresh articulation of our denominational history is both needed and opportune. Anticipating the need for a professor who could cover some of the pastoral theology courses currently being taught by Barry, and recognizing that filling out that position with church history courses would provide an opportunity to add a new professor to the faculty, the Board encouraged Pastor David Whitla to pursue a Ph.D. in church history to equip himself to be a candidate for this post. David was a faithful pastor and is a gifted student of history, so he is well suited for this position. The Lord opened a door for him to begin grad study at Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland where he is also able to be near his parents for a season. David is making outstanding progress in his Ph.D. studies including writing, publishing, and lecturing. He is on track with great momentum to complete his degree by the spring of 2019 and to begin at the seminary that summer if Synod is pleased to elect him. At this Synod, we are nominating David for Professor of Church History. In support of our nomination and in recognition of Synod's sole authority to elect our professors, we ask Synod to set aside time this year for an interview with David and for an election. We invite members of Synod to submit questions for that interview with David ahead of time. These should be sent to Dr. Alan Noell, Committee for Faculty Elections chairman (email avnoell@gmail.com). There will be opportunity to ask questions from the floor but the process can be most efficient and effective if questions are submitted ahead of time. To facilitate this process, we are providing relevant documents in an appendix to this report to further acquaint you with Pastor David Whitla. There will also be an opportunity for Synod members to attend a sample, 50-minute

class that David will teach during one of the afternoon breaks during Synod. Finally, David and June publish a wonderful newsletter. We recommend it to you to inform your prayers for them and to encourage your souls.

Other Faculty Successions—Other faculty transitions are not far away. We invite you to submit names to us of potential candidates for the following areas of service:

- o Professor of New Testament Studies (more urgent in time)
- o Professor of Systematic Theology (much less urgent in time)
- o Librarian

Staff. Many staff support the work of the seminary in important ways.

Mark Sampson is a tremendous help to the President in covering a wide variety of administrative duties. Mark's role has expanded to include service as Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Institutional Advancement in preparation for Barry's presidency. Mark's attention to administration and fund-raising will be critical to enable Barry to spend as much time in the classroom as possible. Along with Mark's wife Sharon, Kim Backensto and Vicki Smith provide valuable office support that will become even more important in the future.

Ed Blackwood begins his third year of service as Director of Admissions and Student Services. His work is extensive and extremely valuable to the life, morale, and progress of the seminary community. Student recruitment and retention is critical to the purpose and health of the seminary. This is another large area of responsibility undertaken by a key staff member that will enable Barry to sustain a significant teaching load as Seminary President.

Jordan Feagley is serving well as Assistant Librarian, a half-time position. He is scheduled to complete his Master of Library Science degree in the summer of 2019 which will enhance his work for the Seminary.

Other Developments.

Your Seminary Board would like to keep you informed of other important elements in the ministry of your Seminary.

Constitution and Bylaws—Over the past several years, the board has been reviewing the seminary's organization and governance as part of our preparations for a change in the presidency. Also, our recent reaccreditation with ATS led to a number of instructions from ATS for our review. Consequently, the board is recommending a series of adjustments to the seminary's

Constitution and Bylaws to better reflect the current needs and operations of the seminary. We are reporting these recommended changes at this present meeting of Synod for review in anticipation of a vote to approve those Constitutional changes at the Synod of 2019.

Accreditation—Sharon Sampson led the nearly three year self-study in preparation for last spring’s visit by a team from the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). With thanksgiving to God, we are delighted to report that the Commission granted us a 10-year accreditation, a length of time that is increasingly rare for seminaries.

Distance Learning—Distance Learning has become a significant part of the Seminary’s ministry both in terms of service to students and in terms of tuition revenue. Many seminaries with distance learning programs offer their full M.Div. course online. We believe that we could attract a greater number of distance learning students if we offered this option. However, we remain persuaded that training pastors for church ministry requires that some courses be provided in person and the seminary continues to require that, ordinarily, all M.Div. track students should complete at least two years of courses on campus. All courses for the MTS degree (a theological degree without pastoral courses) can be completed online except for the Biblical Counseling concentration which requires on-campus practicums.

REmaker Work Conference—The third REMaker work conference last spring was limited in scope and none is scheduled this spring due to a very busy schedule. We plan to resume next year. It seems that the roof may be good for one more decade, enabling us to address other pressing needs before replacing the roof.

Other Conferences—RPTS continues to sponsor and host the Theological Foundations for Youth event each year as well as the annual Westminster Conference.

Web Site and RPTS Journal—The web site is fully functional with significant improvements in online library access. The Journal continues to be published online in the fall and spring, focusing on subjects of pastoral theology. One of the issues each year is comprised of papers presented at the seminary’s Westminster Conference. You will find this journal at www.rpts.edu by clicking the “Resources” tab and scrolling down.

Save the Gables Campaign—A previous REMaker Work Conference

revealed that the many gables of Rutherford Hall, our main building, needed to be replaced as soon as possible. Renovations are urgently needed in the kitchen and other basement areas, corrective and preventative maintenance needs to be addressed, and normal operations must be sustained. Consequently, the Seminary launched a three million dollar capital campaign last year to fund some of these significant repair needs (\$1.7 million), to set up an endowment to provide an annual income stream to be dedicated to ongoing facilities upkeep (\$300,000), and funds for the normal operating costs of the Seminary during the campaign (\$1 million). This campaign is called “Save the Gables,” from the historic name of our main building (“The Gables”) and the fact that the aging gables are one of the major expenses to be covered by the campaign. At present, over \$2 million of the needed \$3 million has been raised or pledged, but we are almost at the June 30 (2018) end date. The Board has therefore taken action to extend the campaign another year to June 30, 2019, if needed. This necessarily requires raising the campaign amount to \$3.7 million, since Seminary operating expenses for the year are included in the campaign.

Items for Prayer—Consider praying through this report. Also, inform your prayers by using The President’s Memorandum (mailed hard copy) for quarterly updates and RPTIMEs (emails) for weekly updates. And consider visiting the Seminary’s website frequently (www.rpts.edu) for items for prayer.

Nominations

1. That Synod elect David Whitla to a three-year term as Professor of Church History, to begin serving in 2019. Please see related recommendation below.
2. That Wade Mann be elected to the Seminary Board of Trustees for a second term, joining the class of 2024.
3. That David Reese be elected to the Seminary Board of Trustees for a first term, joining the class of 2024.

Finances

We praise and thank God for His sustained provision for the work of the Seminary including through Synod. The Seminary is requesting \$90,000 from Synod in support of our 2019 budget of \$1,894,884.

Recommendations

1. That Synod set aside time at this meeting to interview Pastor David Whitla as the Board’s nominee for the Seminary’s Professor of Church History.

(We remind Synod that, in the body of our report, we invite questions in writing to Elder Alan Noell for inclusion in this interview. We also remind Synod that we are appending relevant documents to this Report in order that you may equip yourselves thoroughly for this significant decision. Furthermore, the Board has arranged for David to teach a sample class during one of the Synod break periods for interested members of Synod to attend and better assess David's teaching gifts.)

2. That President O'Neill be given five minutes to address Synod on behalf of RPTS.

Respectfully submitted,
Board of Trustees,
Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary
David Ashleigh (Class of 2019)
Wade Mann (Class of 2018)
Rut Etheridge (Class of 2022)
Alan Noell (Class of 2019)
Aaron Goerner (Class of 2020)
Jonathan Schaefer (Class of 2020)
Bob Hemphill (Class of 2021)
Kit Swartz, Secretary (Class of 2018)
Richard Holdeman, VP (Class of 2022)
Chris Villi (Class of 2023)
Michael LeFebvre, President (Class of 2021)
David Weir (Class of 2017)

The Court resumed consideration of the Report of the Administrative Committee on the Hemphill Appeal. Chairman McCracken directed the Court's attention to their PDF, pg. 7006. The Committee withdraws their Recommendation 4. Recommendation 5 carried. Recommendation 6 carried, with the Court's sincere thanks. The Admin. Committee Report as a whole was approved. Mr. Ron Stegall registered his dissent to approval of this report.

Report of the Committee to Prepare Synod for the Hemphill Appeal

Your Committee was tasked by the 2017 Synod “to clearly outline the procedural steps—in consultation with the parties—for the 2018 Synod to follow in hearing the Appeal [of Bruce Hemphill], and gather and distribute the records and papers in the case with sufficient time for Synod to review.”

First, in fulfillment of the latter of these two assignments, the records in the case were distributed by Synod’s clerk to presbytery clerks on January 3, 2018, for forwarding to all RPCNA elders. We want to urge 2018 Synod delegates to diligently read all the provided documents from this case in order to be appropriately prepared to adjudicate this appeal.

Second, we have endeavored in what follows “to clearly outline the procedural steps” for the Synod to follow in hearing and deciding this Appeal. Included are:

- Several reminders of directions given by the *Book of Discipline* that are to govern an appeal.
- The explicit procedural steps laid out in the *BOD* for hearing an appeal.
- Recommendations not addressed by the *BOD* but that we believe to be wise and/or necessary for a clear, efficient, and just process.

We shared drafts of these steps and recommendations with Bruce Hemphill and his counsel (John P. Edgar), with a committee appointed by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies to handle such matters related to the Appeal, and with the men who served the 2017 Synod as parliamentarians during discussion of the Appeal. Though we could not obtain unanimous support from the parties on every recommendation that follows, we believe the parties each support the great majority of what we recommend. Our goal is to provide Synod and its moderator with a helpful process that will result in justice for the parties and glory to God.

Reminders for the Court (see *Book of Discipline*, II.4)

- An appeal may be made (and thus sustained) on the following grounds: “irregularity in the proceedings; injustice or undue severity in the censure imposed; manifest prejudice or unfairness to the party on trial; admission of improper testimony or refusal to hear testimony that is important; or undue haste in reaching a decision before all the testimony has been heard” (4.10).

- “An appeal shall be prosecuted by the appellant in person, unless, for reasons satisfactory to the court, he cannot be present. In this case, he may request a member of the court to act as his counsel, or request the court to appoint one of its members. If an appellant fails to prosecute his appeal at the next meeting of the higher court, or at such time as the court may designate, the decision of the lower court shall stand. He may, however, appear at a later meeting, due notice having been given to the court from which he appealed, and present proof that his failure to appear was due to unavoidable circumstances. If the court is satisfied, it may proceed at once to hear the appeal, or appoint a later date for the hearing.” (4.13)
- “The decision of the higher court must be based solely on the records of the lower court” (4.15).
- Synod may decide the appeal in the following ways (see 4.15): “The higher court may confirm, or reverse—in whole or in part—the decision of the lower court. If the appeal is sustained, the judgment of the lower court is reversed. If an appeal is not sustained, the judgment of the lower court is affirmed. If the lower court has not followed the prescribed order in the conduct of the case, the higher court may, at its discretion, return the whole case to the lower for a new trial. If the decision of the lower court appears unjust and unwarranted, the higher court may itself try the case.”

Preliminary Steps

Suggested:

1. That the clerk of Synod ensure that a full record is kept of all the proceedings (*Book of Discipline*, II.4.15).
2. That the moderator request everyone in the room to turn off non-essential electronic devices so that there are no unnecessary interruptions and that members of the Court may give their full attention to the hearing of the Appeal.
3. That the moderator lead or appoint at least one member of the Court to lead in prayer for the proceedings.
4. That parliamentarians who are with the Presbytery of the Alleghenies recuse themselves from serving as parliamentarians during Synod’s

- hearing of Mr. Hemphill's Appeal and that Synod's moderator appoint in their place parliamentarians *pro tem*.
5. That the moderator remind the Court who is not permitted to participate in the deciding of the Appeal.
 6. That the moderator restrict the discussion of the case to the written record (*Book of Discipline*, II.4.15).
 7. That the moderator, in consultation with the clerk of Synod, confirm that the Appeal is in accord with the *Book of Discipline*, II.4.10,11,14:
 - a. That verbal notice of intent to appeal was given to presbytery by appellant and his counsel at the time of trial;
 - b. That the appellant filed with presbytery's clerk a written appeal and a summary statement of the reasons for the appeal within thirty days after the conclusion of the trial;
 - c. That the appellant had at least sixty days for preparing the appeal (along with a full statement of the reasons for the appeal and providing all relevant documents) and transmitting the same to Synod's clerk;
 - d. That Synod has had more than thirty days to read and process the appeal;
 - e. That the material records and papers pertaining to the case are present for considering the appeal;
 - f. That the reasons assigned by the appellant in the appeal are the same as those presented to the lower court.
 8. That the moderator remind the members of the Court of the solemn duty in which they are about to engage, and of their responsibilities as judges in the Lord's house, and enjoin them to dismiss from their minds all prejudice or personal considerations, and to concern themselves with the spiritual welfare of the church (cf. *Book of Discipline* I.3.2).

Procedural Steps (*Book of Discipline*, II.4.14a-g, 15)

1. The clerk shall read the sentence appealed from.
2. The clerk shall read the Appeal and reasons assigned by the appellant, which must be the same as those presented to the lower court.

Suggested:

That the reading be waived. Rationale: The Appeal and reasons were

transmitted through the clerk of Synod and read by the members of the Court. Waiving the reading was one of the reasons our Committee was formed by the 2017 Synod to “gather and distribute the records and papers in the case with sufficient time for Synod to review.”

3. The records and papers in the case shall be read.

Suggested:

That the reading be waived. Rationale: The records were transmitted and read by members of the Court. Waiving the reading was one of the reasons our Committee was formed by the 2017 Synod to “gather and distribute the records and papers in the case with sufficient time for Synod to review.”

4. The answer of the lower court to the reasons of appeal shall be read.
5. The parties shall be heard, the appellant having the opening and closing speeches. He shall not be permitted to introduce any new arguments in his closing speech but confine himself to a summary of his appeal and a rebuttal of the argument presented by the other side.

Suggested:

That Synod grant the parties up to twenty minutes each to present their opening speeches (appellant first, then presbytery), then the appellant up to seven minutes for his closing speech including any rebuttal comments.

6. Opportunity shall be given for discussion of the case by the members of the Court.

Suggested prior to general discussion of the case:

- a. That members of the Court be permitted to respectfully ask, by addressing the moderator, clarifying questions of both parties.
- b. That if either party objects, no member of the Court who has not been present during the whole Appeal shall be allowed to vote in the final decision.
- c. That the moderator remind the Court who is not permitted to participate in deciding the Appeal.
- d. That the moderator ask those who are not participating in deciding the Appeal to withdraw from the room, while the court deliberates.

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- e. That the Court begin its deliberation with prayer for Divine guidance in weighing the evidence and in reaching a just decision.
 - f. That the moderator remind the members of the Court (see *Directory of Church Government*, 8.14-16) that:
 - (1) Those who wish to speak must rise and address the moderator, and may not proceed until the moderator announces his name.
 - (2) Members of the Court may speak not more than twice except by permission of the Court.
 - (3) Every member when speaking shall address himself first to the moderator and then speak to the house in general, but he shall not address any member individually except through the moderator.
 - (4) Speakers shall treat all members with decorum and respect, and shall attend closely in his speech to the business in hand under consideration.
 - (5) Members of the Court shall attend closely to the business in hand and shall not engage in private conversation or in anything that may cause confusion or disorder.
 - (6) If a speaker acts in a disorderly manner, indulges in personal reflection, uses improper language, or deviates from the subject in hand, it is the privilege of any member and the duty of the moderator to call him to order.
 - (7) When opinion is sharply divided, the moderator shall see that time is shared as equitably as possible between representatives of both sides of the question.
 - (8) Our tongues are potentially destructive tools, but ought to be used in meekness and wisdom to bless others, as James chapter 3 instructs.
 7. When the deliberation is finished, a vote shall be taken on sustaining or not sustaining the Appeal, each specification of error being voted on separately.

Suggested:

 - a. That the moderator remind the Court that its decision must be based solely on the records of the lower court.
 - b. That the moderator remind the Court of the grounds for appeal.

- c. That the clerk of Synod read each specification of error and ask: “Shall this specification of error be sustained?” A standing vote should be taken on each specification of error separately and with no further discussion. The clerks shall count the votes and the moderator announce the decision. A record of the aye’s and nay’s should be recorded. A simple majority vote is required to sustain a specification of error.
- (1) If none of the specifications of the Appeal is sustained, then the Appeal is not sustained, and the Court has upheld the decision of the lower court.
 - (2) If at least one of the specifications of the appeal is sustained, the moderator will call for a 20-minute recess to give time for motions to be carefully formulated and written down.
 - (3) After the 20-minute recess, the moderator will entertain a motion on whether:
 - i) the lower court has not followed the prescribed order in the conduct of the case. The Court may, at its discretion, return the whole case to the lower for a new trial.
 - ii) the decision of the lower court appears unjust and unwarranted. The higher Court may determine to try the case itself.
 - (4) If the case is not retried, the moderator shall entertain a motion that will either:
 - i) not sustain the Appeal.
 - ii) reverse—in whole or in part—the decision of the lower court.
- d. That when the Court has reached its decision, the parties should be recalled and the result announced.
- e. That the clerk of Synod notify the parties, in writing, of its decision.
- f. That Synod conclude the hearing of the Appeal with prayer.

Recommendations before the Appeal is Heard

Recommendation 1: That the appellant, his counsel, and the Presbytery of the Alleghenies’ prosecutor be recognized as the parties in the case and not be permitted to participate in deciding the Appeal (*Book of Discipline*, II.1.7; II.4.12).

Recommendation 2: That a committee of five men—appointed by the moderator—be formed to write the reasons of the Court for its decision. The committee will give its report before the end of Synod.

Rationale: *The Book of Discipline*, II.4.15 says: “A full record shall be kept of all the proceedings with the reasons for each decision.” Recording the reasons for each decision from the floor of Synod is not practical.

Recommendation 3: That the above appeal procedure be approved for hearing the Appeal.

Recommendations after the Appeal is Heard

Recommendation 4: That the moderator appoint at least one elder to be available for pastoral care for innocent family members and other parties in the case (cf. *BOD*, I.4.3.d).

Recommendation 5: That the full record of all the proceedings—including the Presbytery of the Alleghenies’ records, papers, and trial audio in the case—be archived by the Church History Committee of the Synod.

Recommendation 6: That Synod dismiss our Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
 Noah Bailey;
 Aaron Goerner;
 Tim Montgomery;
 John Sawtelle;
 H.P. McCracken (chairman)

The Court continued the Report of the Vital Churches Committee. Committee member Jerry Porter presented three motions: Motion #1: that each presbytery take the responsibility for the health and growth of its congregations and be accountable to Synod for its actions. Motion #2: that the Synod’s Congregational Supplement Program (Church Revitalization Grant Program) be administered by the Home Mission Board. Motion #3: that the Vital Churches Committee be dismissed. Seconded, allowing for consideration. These motions (together) are regarded as a motion to lay on the table the one recommendation of the committee (to continue), to entertain these (together) as a substitute. The motion to lay on the table carried. Mr. Porter’s three motions (as one) are now before us. Discussion ensued. It was moved to divide the question (back to three parts); automatic. Motion 1

is lost (as this is already the responsibility of presbyteries). Motion 2 is lost. Motion 3 was discussed. Synod arrived at an order-of-the-day, for prayer. At 5 p.m., delegates heard the reading of Isaiah 64:1-2, then prayed with one another in small groups. The Court sang Psalm 85A. Synod's manager gave announcements and Synod was led in a prayer of recess by Jack Baumgardner. The Court recessed for dinner at 5:15 p.m.

Thursday; June 28, 2018; 7:00 p.m.

Synod resumed deliberation at 7:00 p.m., singing Psalm 87A and being reconvened in prayer by James Odom. The minutes of the Thursday afternoon session were read, improved, and approved (carried). Personal privilege: After sharing details, Dale Koons led the Court in prayer concerning grave challenges among the families of his cousins.

Order-of-the-day: Pastor R. Bruce Parnell, chairman, presented the Report of the Interchurch Committee. Mr. Parnell introduced fraternal delegates who addressed us: PCA (Andrew Barnes), RCUS (Dr. Maynard Koerner), URCNA (Bill Boekestein), Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus (Tony Mastris), and Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Iain Wright). These observers also addressed the Court: Canadian Reformed Churches (Mark Jagt), Heritage Reformed Congregations (Don Overbeek), and the RPC of Bolivia (Cristian Vila). Synod's delegates applauded following the remarks of each of these guest speakers. Interchurch Committee recommendations were taken up: Recommendation 1 carried to put Synod on record as endorsing RPTS, OTH, and KTH as seminaries, so that ICRC denominations may know this and recommend those worthy schools to their members. Recommendation 2 (modified) carried, so the Reformation Translation Fellowships are officially endorsed by us as mission agencies. Recommendation 3 carried, so the RPCNA extends an invitation to the Heritage Reformed Congregations to enter into fraternal relations with us. The Interchurch Committee Report was approved, and it is as follows:

2018 Report of the Interchurch Committee to RPCNA Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers: The Interchurch Committee (IC) met twice since last Synod. Our regular meeting took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Nov. 13, 2017, in conjunction with the meeting of NAPARC. We also met on March 15, 2018, via conference call.

Concurrent Synod with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

(ARP): As we announced last summer, the ARP has accepted our invitation to hold concurrent Synod meetings in 2019 at Geneva College. Our respective Interchurch Committees have been working together to present further opportunities to deepen our knowledge of each other and for mutual encouragement. Here are several highlights.

Worship—Rising from our experience in 2015 and from the evaluations received, one of the most important things we did was to worship together. Being in western Pennsylvania also presents the opportunity to join together not only Synod delegates but hundreds of other RPs and ARPs from churches in the area. With this in mind we envision extending invitations to the area congregations.

Workshops—The survey results from 2015 show that the joint workshops were very well received. This included learning what ARPs are doing in missions, etc., and how that relates to what we are doing, as well as developing relationships with the people in the ARP who do similar work. This part of the schedule could be sweetened by offering Oram's doughnuts at the different venues.

Geneva College and RPTS—The location of Geneva College provides us the chance to share with the ARP our common commitment to a Christian view of higher education. We heard from them that many have a strong interest to visit Geneva. The IC was further encouraged by the desire of Geneva College to host. This might also be coupled with planning an open house at RPTS after their Synod adjourns so that delegates could visit the Seminary.

Pre-Synod Seminar on Psalmody—Lord willing, this will provide a healthy and edifying dialogue about a key conviction where we have differences. As we both hold to the regulative principle of worship, this seminar will allow each denomination to express how we apply that principle in the area of worship music.

Other possibilities—Small group prayer times, softball game, etc. As we are committed to promoting the unity of the church we ask you to pray for the concurrent Synod meetings next year.

Reformed Presbyterian Church Worldwide: The IC continues to deepen our relationship with the global RPC family. One way to achieve this goal has been to make regular and intentional visits to their synod or presbytery

meetings. To this end, Bruce Parnell served as fraternal delegate to the Synod meeting of RPC of Ireland, and the Presbytery meeting of the RPC of Scotland. Also of note in this area, Bill Sterrett served as fraternal delegate to the Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus (GEC), the church descending from the former RP mission to Cyprus.

Here is our planned schedule of delegates with the RPC worldwide through 2019:

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

NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council): The annual meeting of NAPARC was hosted by the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on November 14-16, 2017. The next meeting will be hosted by the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), November 13-15, 2018, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Here are three items of note from the 2017 meeting.

First, Psalter-Hymnal—The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) announced the publishing of a joint Psalter-Hymnal. This publication is notable for two reasons; first, it includes all 150 Psalms, and second, it was jointly developed and approved.

Second, Organic Union—NAPARC took up the discussion about the Bylaws statement: "... to hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice." There had been some questions in 2016 about the "need" for organic union. The discussion this year served to affirm our commitment to this vision. At the same time some delegates voiced frustration at the slow progress made toward achieving the goal. This gave rise to a pointed discussion about how to build cooperation.

Third, Cooperation—There were two developments in this area: (1) Joint Consultations. The delegates committed to a revival of having consultations among member churches between heads of prominent missions and minis-

tries. For many years there has been an annual consultation on World Missions. Over the coming year we anticipate additional consultations in the areas of Diaconal Work, Theological Training, and Youth Ministries. (2) Biblical Counseling. The HRC suggested that one way to cooperate is to establish joint counseling centers. NAPARC churches in a certain geographical area could band together to support and maintain a Biblical Counseling Center.

International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC): The ICRC, of which the RPCNA is a member denomination, met in September 2017 in Jordan, Ontario. Bruce Martin and Scott Wilkinson served as delegates for the RPCNA. The next meeting will be in 2021 in India, Lord willing. There were three notable actions. First, the ICRC serves as a point of reference for those seeking theological training. Member churches officially endorse certain seminaries and thereby certify them to the broader reformed church. In that light, the IC recommends that Synod endorse the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS), Ottawa Theological Hall (OTH), and Kobe Theological Hall (KTH) so that ICRC denominations may know this and recommend them to their members.

Second, in a similar fashion, the IC recommends that Synod endorse Reformation Translation Fellowship as a mission agency; this endorsement doesn't imply any change in status or financial commitment, but serves to let the broader reformed church know about this faithful mission.

Third, the ICRC suspended the Reformed Church of the Netherlands (Liberated) (RCN) based on their action to permit the ordination of women to the offices of minister and ruling elders, such action making the RCN out of agreement with the ICRC Constitution.

Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC): We have been in "observer" status with the HRC for several years now. The Committee has had time to evaluate the denominational standards and find them to be a body of like-minded saints holding to the historical Reformed Confessions. Furthermore, many at Synod have also come to know the HRC through a variety of means. For instance, the HRC has faithfully sent delegates to our Synod meetings; we have been blessed by graduates from their seminary now serving in our denomination; and many members sat under the teaching of Dr. Joel Beeke when he spoke at our International Conference. The Interchurch Committee therefore recommends extending an invitation to the HRC to enter fraternal relations.

Fraternal Delegates: The IC made the following assignments for fraternal delegates:

- RPCI and RPCS: Bruce Parnell
- ARP: Drew Gordon and Kent Butterfield
- GEC: Bill Sterrett
- OPC and URCNA: Bruce Backensto
- PCA: Jerry O'Neill
- RCUS: Jerry Milroy
- HRC: Stan McKenzie

Note: We typically visit each fraternal congregation every other year when their highest court meets annually. When their court only meets every other year or every third year, we plan to send a fraternal delegate. We will include reports from those attending other Synod meetings in our appendix as they are available. The Committee has extended invitations to our Synod to all the churches with which we share full intercommunion or fraternal relations, and has invited the CanRC, HRC, and Free Church of Scotland Continuing as observers.

Nominations: Drew Gordon was elected last year to fill Matt Filbert's unexpired term and we gladly nominate him for reelection.

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

Recommendations:

1. That Synod endorse the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS), Ottawa Theological Hall (OTH), and Kobe Theological Hall (KTH) as theological seminaries so that ICRC denominations may know this and recommend them to their members.

2. That Synod endorse Reformation Translation Fellowship (RTF) as a mission agency.

3. That Synod extend an invitation to the HRC to enter fraternal relations.

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Gordon (Class of 2018, unexpired term);

Bruce Backensto (Class of 2019, 1st term);

Matt Kingswood (Class of 2020, 2nd term);

Bruce Parnell (chairman; Class of 2021, 2nd term);

Dean McHenry (Class of 2022, 1st term);

Jerry Milroy (Class of 2023, 2nd term);

Bruce Martin (executive secretary; Class of 2019, 2nd term)

Order-of-the-day: There was no Report of the Judicial Committee (of the day).

The Report of the Vital Churches Committee was taken up again, considering Motion 3 offered by Mr. Porter (that the Vital Churches Committee be dismissed). It is lost. So the Vital Churches Committee's single Recommendation was taken up and carried. So the Vital Churches Committee is to carry on in their mission. The Report was approved and is as follows:

RP Vital Churches Committee Report to 2018 Synod

Summary: Over the past two years, Vital Churches has found renewed purpose in our work on behalf of Synod. While there is more honing to be done, we believe that now, a time of increased growth in our denomination, is as good a time as ever for us to be serving the presbyteries of the RPCNA by standing ready to help consult, counsel, and confront in times of conflict, stagnation, or uncertainty, helping to make peace, encourage creative ideas for outreach, or turn a corner on vision or direction. We are finding avenues of communication opening more regularly with our traveling Pastoral Refresher, and we work regularly to help any presbyteries or congregations that reach out for our help.

The Committee believes that its work can be summarized in this statement: RP Vital Churches is a committee of the RPCNA appointed by its Synod to be a catalyst to presbyteries and congregations to promote effective leadership and spiritually healthy churches. The Committee's focus is to be able to help presbyteries and congregations recognize, acknowledge, respond to, and eliminate symptoms of decline before they actually occur; also, to help address the difficult issues of decline and revitalization where they may already exist. Within this context, the two primary areas of Committee focus are the spiritual vitality of the church and the effective ordained leadership required for the spiritually vital church.

The first area—"Spiritually Healthy Churches"—is represented by three long-range goals: (1) congregations that exhibit the stated mission of the church (as it appears in the *Constitution of the RPCNA*); (2) availability of diagnostic tools for the self-assessment of church health; and (3) motivational

resources for developing productive congregational ministries.

The second area—"Effective Ordained Leadership"—is represented by four long-range goals: (1) ordained officers who understand the source of spiritual vitality in the church; (2) ordained officers who practice effective teamwork; (3) resources available for pastoral refreshment and development; and (4) ordained officers who understand the importance of long-range planning.

In the years since Vital Churches was formed, under the auspices of the Committee for Church Revitalization, questions have been raised as to whether or not the Committee is effective, helpful, or even stayed with its original mission. One of our members would recommend the Committee be disbanded and that the role it has served be handed back to the presbyteries. At the heart of it, the presbyteries are responsible for the congregations they oversee. However, it seems that various conditions (zealous loyalties, being too close to a situation to see it clearly, fear of admitting failure, etc.) hinder congregations and presbyteries from reaching out for help before it is too late.

The recent Pastoral Refreshers have begun to address this problem of communication. In the time away, pastors and wives not only have time to reflect and refresh, but also to open up in a safe place about struggles and issues within their congregation. This has given Vital Churches a good platform to begin dialoguing with pastors about how Vital Churches might help. The seminars and workshops provided at RPIC have also expanded this platform to ruling elders and laymen who get to help interact on issues of concern within our churches. Consequently, apart from one member of Vital Churches, the rest of the Committee believes our work is important enough to continue, focusing on some key matters of development:

1. *Continued Cohesive Vision:* We have tried to stick to the mission given us by Synod. While we do believe this work is primarily that of presbyteries, we do not see each presbytery developing its own team of men to help discern and correct the multiplicity of matters facing a hurting congregation as practical or reasonable. For this reason we continue to serve as one group, accessible to each presbytery and congregation, with input from each presbytery, ready to help in any way we can those churches that need encouragement.
2. *Biblical Peacemaking:* Most often, hurting churches are the fruit of hurting people. Each of us has witnessed ongoing conflict between

two persons overflow to bring harm to a larger community. Receiving proper training and consultation in Biblical Peacemaking will help Vital Churches be all the more ready to address needs within our churches.

3. *Pastoral Refresher Retreats, Church Revitalization Grants, and Pastoral Revitalization Grants* will continue to help open paths of communication and address the needs of struggling church seeking to grow in health.

Prayer Requests. Give thanks that we have been able to provide financial and strategic support for some of our smaller, struggling congregations; that the Lord continues to provide funding and manpower to meet the needs of those pastors, elders, and churches who need it; that the vision of RPVC continues to grow to stay on our given mission and to meet the needs of the present generation of pastors and churches. Pray for our labors to connect with presbyteries in their particular work of helping churches under their oversight; pray for all of our congregations that the peace, unity, and purity of Christ's church would be present there.

Nominations: Jerry Porter has come to the end of his term. Vital Churches needs the election of a nominee to take his place as a ruling elder on the Committee.

Finances:

(1) *Atlantic / St. Lawrence Pastoral Refresher: \$15,000.* Last year's proposal put the Atlantic / St. Lawrence Pastoral Refresher in 2018 and the Pacific Coast Presbytery Pastoral Refresher in 2019. However, an opportunity presented itself to work jointly with the HMB in 2018 and provide a Pastoral Refresher for ministers within the bounds of the Pacific Coast Presbytery. This saved us money on speakers, etc. With limited registration, the Pastoral Refresher typically provides an "all expenses paid" getaway for around ten pastors and their wives where relevant topics are taught, small-group discussion is developed, and relaxation is encouraged. The Pastoral Refreshers have afforded us the opportunity to fulfill Goal III of our Mission/Vision and to get into the hearts of pastors and wives to see how we might better complete our other labors of ministry to pastors, elders, congregations, and presbyteries. This joint venture with HMB was a valuable experience and an event we may repeat in the future, with certain tweaking. Future Pastoral Refreshers will rotate among presbyteries. Our vision for the next four years: Atlantic / St. Lawrence (2019), Great

Lakes/Gulf (2020), Alleghenies (2021), then Midwest (2022).

(2) *Church Revitalization Grant: \$25,000.* After following up with second year renewals on the Church Revitalization Grant, we have depleted those funds. We are already processing requests and have some coming down the pipeline. One congregation has discussed a reboot to help overcome some intra-congregational cultural issues. These types of matters that hinder growth fall well within our scope. And, as we have been more active as a Synod Committee, more are seeking to use our services and help.

(3) *Pastoral Revitalization Grant: \$6,000.* Part of our mission is to revitalize the Pastors and other officers of the church. Having received requests for sabbatical assistance, we believe aiding congregations and pastors in this way fits well within the scope of the work Synod has asked us to do.

RP Vital Churches TOTAL: \$46,000

Recommendation:

1. That RP Vital Churches carry on in their mission.

Respectfully submitted:

Joel Wood (2021, 1st term), Chairman

Jerry Porter (2018, 1st term)

Tim McCracken (2019, 1st term)

Steve Rockhill (2020, 1st term), Secretary

Dan Bartel (2022, 1st term)

Greg Stiner (2023, 1st term)

Personal privilege: The Court is asked to remember Pastor Steve Miller in our prayers.

Pastor Daniel Howe, president, presented the Report of Education and Publication Board. After summary observations, Recommendation 1 was taken up and carried, so the Court heard from publications director, Elder Drew Gordon, for ten minutes. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time for Mr. Gordon to finish his remarks before our prayer time. It was moved, seconded, and carried to extend the time three minutes to finish the E&P Report. Recommendation 2 came to us in four parts which were regarded as a whole, so were voted on as one; carried. This basically establishes an indexed digest of Synod actions past, with policies for keeping this index updated into future years. The Report as a whole was approved and

is as follows. In keeping with Synod requests in recent years, the Education and Publication Board provided a table showing sales totals for the past year; this page (Appendix 2) will also be printed with the Report.

Report of the Education and Publication Board

The Lord continues to have His good hand on our denomination's publishing ministries. We are blessed with a faithful Board, which met in Pittsburgh in October 2017 and in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in April 2018. With the exception of one member who was sick in October, the entire Board was able to attend both meetings.

Board Matters. Last year's report mentioned that Matt Filbert was resigning. We are grateful that this turned out to be a false alarm, and we continue to benefit from his creative and wise input. We are, however, sorry to see the terms of John Pershe, Linda Au, and Nathan Eshelman come to an end with this Synod; they will be sorely missed. We are nominating Joseph Friedly (TE, Monument, Colorado), Betty Burger (member, Floyd, New York), and a third person (not yet confirmed) to fill their chairs. Each proposed member brings appropriate experience and gifts: Joe as an educator, and Betty as a writer, editor, and homeschooling mother.

Pilgrimage to Grand Rapids. This semiannual board meeting, the first outside Pittsburgh in over thirty years, was suggested and arranged by Board member Kyle Borg. We met on the campus of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, toured Reformation Heritage Books, and met with staff, including Dr. Joel Beeke. In addition to seeing how a somewhat larger Reformed publishing house operates, the explanations and suggestions of the RHB staff were invaluable, and we will certainly benefit from them in the years to come. Among other takeaways, we were encouraged to publish aggressively and to find a balance between selecting books that will likely pay for themselves in sales and books that will not.

Publishing. This is an exciting time for Crown & Covenant Publications. Gordon Keddie's *Prayers of the Bible*, including a gift edition, was released late in 2017 and has been very well received. Vince Ward's memoir *Pursuit of Glory: A Disciple's Journey with Jesus* has just been released. *The Battle for the Biblical Family* by George Scipione (a new edition of his *The Sword and the Shovel*) will be released soon.

Also in process: Rut Etheridge's volume on the doctrine of Scripture, *God Breathed*, intended for an audience in their twenties and thirties; republication of two children's Bible books—*The Tent of God* and *God With Us* by Marianne Radius (late sister of J. G. Vos and daughter of Geerhardus and Catherine Vos); and a pocket-sized edition of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. We are hoping to have Barry York's book on the marks of the church, *Hitting the Marks*, available by September. The manuscript for the first volume of Bill Edgar's history of the RPCNA (1871-1920) was recently received; Bill is researching the second volume (1920-1980) now.

In fulfillment of Synod's recommendation, *The Gospel and Gender Identity* was published within a few months of Synod 2017 and has already sold about 1,000 copies.

Ascent, a recording of the Genevans choir using the Psalms of Ascent, is the 14th album from *The Book of Psalms for Worship*.

Rosaria Butterfield's first two books—*Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* and *Openness Unhindered*—continue to have strong sales. The release of her third book—*The Gospel Comes with a House Key* by Crossway—has only helped.

A sales report of a number of our titles is appended to this Report.

New Imprint. A 2017 strategic conversation led the Board to begin work on a new imprint of Crown & Covenant aimed at publishing works (mainly short books) that will bridge a gap between people from an unchurched background with faith and life as understood and practiced in the Reformed Presbyterian tradition. We are giving much thought, prayer, and attention to this new effort, and are hopeful that it will fill a real need in our denomination and beyond. Along with content, we are very concerned about presentation: "packaging" these resources to make them pleasing and acceptable to folks who may not be habitual readers. Two committees are working on these things. Please pray for us.

Online Presence. Together with webmaster Scott Doherty, Crown & Covenant is creating author web pages (GordonKeddie.com is already live). After careful review of legal requirements, many of our psalm arrangements are now available as streaming audio through Spotify, Pandora, and Apple Music. Starting in March, RPWitness.org has received a significant redesign, making it visually more pleasing, better functioning, and most important, mobile friendly. The Board continues to maintain a web presence through many domains:

- www.CrownAndCovenant.com—central location for our publishing.
- www.RPWitness.org—site for the digital magazine of the denomination; newly redesigned.
- www.ReformedPresbyterian.org—official denominational site of the RPCNA.
- www.ReformedVoice.org—official media site for the RPCNA operating as a mini-site within www.SermonAudio.com
- www.Psalter.org—support site for psalters that C&C publishes. Recently, a four-part audio player was added to assist psalm singers.
- www.BlueBanner.org—dedicated to the life and work of J.G. Vos.

Reformed Presbyterian Witness. The *Witness* continues to publish six high-quality issues per year, in print and online. Editor Drew Gordon remains dedicated to producing a publication that serves the church rather than attempting to steer it. Please encourage your congregations and members to subscribe: this is a valuable link to the life of our denomination, and helps strengthen the culture of our local congregations. Subscriptions to the print edition include full access to the magazine web site content, including Archives.

Personnel. Drew and Lynne Gordon continue to oversee the staff and work at Crown & Covenant. Business and Circulation Manager Danielle Pockras, Editorial Assistant Shelby Winkel, Shipping Clerk Matt Mierski, and several part-time employees fill out the office staff. After years of creative and diligent service, Shelley Davis has stepped away from work at Crown & Covenant to better care for her family.

Finances. The Lord continues to provide generously for our needs, through sales, RPM&M, endowment funds, and direct contributions. We are seeking to be faithful stewards with the resources the Lord has given us.

Documenting Synod Actions: Recently Nathaniel Pockras (Grace and Truth RPC, Harrisonburg, Virginia) approached the Board with a desire to publish a digest of all past Synod actions. An explanation of this project is appended to this report, and previously an article about it appeared in the March/April issue of the *RP Witness*:

<https://rpwitness.org/trunk/page/article/setting-the-record-straight>

Previous Synod committees have longed for this type of document, and some current Synod committees have used the fruit of Mr. Pockras' labor to

make their own work more efficient. The value of such a publication seems clear. In cooperation with Mr. Pockras, we are submitting some recommendations to the 2018 Synod that would make this project a reality (see Recommendations 2a-2d).

Nominations: The Education and Publication Board put forward the names of Joseph Friedly, Betty Burger, and a third nominee (confirmed, DV, by the start of Synod) be appointed to this Board to fill posts vacated by Nathan Eshelman, John Pershe, and Linda Au, who have completed their second terms.

Recommendation 1: That publications director Drew Gordon be heard for up to 10 min.

Recommendation 2: Regarding publishing a digest of Synod actions:

- 2a.** That Synod approve the general plan outlined in the attached paper and grant the request of this paper's appendix regarding official texts of reference.
- 2b.** That Synod adopt the proposed index as its official digest, conditional upon approval of a review committee to be appointed by the Board of Education and Publication.
- 2c.** That conditional upon adoption, the Board be directed to publish this digest as an electronic book and permitted to publish it in print.
- 2d.** That conditional upon adoption, the Clerk shall include in each Synod's published minutes a simple list of decisions appearing in that edition, ascertained in accordance with this digest's standards.

Submitted with gratitude to our King,
Daniel Howe (President),
Kyle Borg (VP),
Linda Au Parker (Secretary),
Eileen Bechtold,
Nathan Eshelman,
Matt Filbert,
Stan McKenzie,
John Pershe

E&P Appendix 1: Proposal for Synod Digest

Reverend Fathers and Brothers: The Synod of 1821 appointed a committee to codify past decisions and publish them as a digest, but the committee

failed to produce results. Between 1866 and 1939, multiple committees were appointed to create a digest; one even believed that the task was nearly complete, but internal confusion prevented completion, and the project failed completely after its chairman died. For years afterward, committeeman J. B. Willson distributed copies of his portion of the project upon request. Summaries of recent policy decisions appeared in the published *Minutes of Synod* for 1974 and 1990, and J. Bruce Martin possesses an unpublished guide to more recent decisions. However, these documents do not list decisions unrelated to policy, and no guide covers all 220 years of our history. This situation contrasts with that of the PC(USA), the CRCNA, the former UPCNA, the OPC, and the PCA, for which guides have been produced.

Lacking a comprehensive guide, researchers must examine multiple years of minutes when researching past decisions. This might be simple for a topic that spans just a few years (such as a prolonged judicial case), but developing a complete list of all Synod decisions on broad topics requires the researcher to consult approximately 20,000 pages of decisions from 186 Synod meetings. Although all minutes are available from rparchives.org the process is still laborious, especially for years that lack a good index; the study committee on Atlantic Presbytery's 2017 divorce and desertion paper has contacted historians and Synod clerks for assistance in finding past decisions, and since early 2018, I have spent many hours conducting research for the administrative committee preparing for this year's judicial appeals.

In order to address this problem, I am finishing a digest of the acts of our church's highest court from 1798 to 2017. Unlike other denominations' digests, which sort decisions topically, this digest lists them chronologically, so that they can be found easily in the published minutes and so that sequences of decisions may be easily observed. Each decision is given a unique number, its location in the published minutes is noted, its effects are summarized, related decisions are listed, its topics are noted, and involved ministers and congregations are provided. After the end of the list of decisions, a topical index lists all appearances of each topic, thus compensating for the lack of a topical arrangement, and a chart lists all ministers of the church.

The topics are assigned carefully, using specific, predetermined phrases (a controlled vocabulary) to ensure that the same topic always be given the same name. For example, all seminary-related decisions will be listed under

“RPTS,” and notes will be provided under alternate terms, such as “Seminary” or “Theological seminary.” Moreover, researchers studying a topic may not be aware that a similar topic exists, so notes will guide researchers to broader, narrower, and related terms—for example, “foreign missions” and “South China Presbytery” are respectively broader and narrower than “China mission,” while “Manchuria mission” is related. This chain of broader and narrower terms will form a comprehensive subject tree.

In order to serve both pastoral and academic researchers, almost all types of decisions are noted. Many procedural matters are excluded, so entries will not appear for the appointment of a committee, the election of board members and RPTS professors, or scheduling matters such as extending the time for a debate. Routine statements without practical effect are also generally excluded, including letters to the British synods, typical resolutions of thanks, and Signs of the Times Committee reports. However, this project’s scope is broader than listing policy actions: It logs financial decisions and procedural decisions affecting Synods beyond the ones that enacted them, as a researcher may be studying how the church promoted temperance events, handled bequests, supported struggling congregations’ budgets, and responded to written dissents.

An outstanding problem is the lack of an official text for pre-1833 minutes. This issue is discussed in an appendix, which recommends the adoption of official texts of reference.

This digest is envisioned as being employed in the church courts. Consequently, approval by the committee and consequent adoption will result in permission for its use in official documents; in particular, documentation in the courts will be permitted to use this digest’s numbering when referring to past decisions. Finally, this digest will eventually need to be updated. Future editions of the *Minutes of Synod* should facilitate updates; the Clerk should not be expected to apply controlled vocabulary or to analyze decisions’ placement in the subject tree, but creating a list of decisions with page numbers will simplify discoverability and require minimal effort.

Delegates may be aware that an article similar to this paper—with a sample page—appeared in the *Reformed Presbyterian Witness* for March/April 2018.

Texts of Reference. When the Reformed Presbyterian Church divided into Old and New Light sides in 1833, the autographs of Synod’s minutes followed

clerk John Black to the New Light side. In all likelihood, this volume has been destroyed; most New Light records were lost in the fire that destroyed their historical archive in Duaneburg, NY, in 1951. For this reason, and because minutes were not published in their entirety before 1833, we are forced to rely on a range of witnesses to the original text:

- Church historian W. Melancthon Glasgow produced a manuscript transcription of Presbytery minutes, 1798-1809, and Synod minutes, 1809-1833. This document was created by order of the Synod of 1898 (page 21), and it was completed in time for the Synod of 1899 (page 8), which directed Glasgow to publish it if possible and to report progress in 1900, but that year's Stated Clerk's report notes his departure. This document was apparently never published nor reported on to Synod, aside from a record of its purchase in the 1902 Stated Clerk's report. RPTS holds this manuscript, and electronic copies of its Synod minutes section appear at <http://rparchives.org/synod.html>. The Presbytery minutes are not yet online as of 21 May 2018, but transcription is nearly complete and these may be online by Synod time.
- Geneva College holds a microfilmed copy of a complete minutes manuscript produced c. 1853 by direction of John McLeod, who succeeded Black as Clerk of General Synod (New Light) in 1837. The scribe likely worked from the autographs. Further information appears at <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/191867498>.
- Extracts from the minutes of the pre-1830 meetings were printed between 1816 and 1828 by order of Synod), and Alexander McLeod's American Christian expositor published extracts from the minutes of 1831 and 1833. Electronic reproductions of these extracts appear at <http://rparchives.org/synod.html>.
- In 1888, a committee of the New Light church arranged for the publication of a synopsis that is hosted at [http://rparchives.org/data/Minutes of Synod/1798-1809 Minutes.pdf](http://rparchives.org/data/Minutes%20of%20Synod/1798-1809%20Minutes.pdf). This work was expressly prepared in consultation with the autographs, but it omits all minutes from the synods of 1809 through 1829, and its reports of Presbytery meetings are both incomplete (being only summaries) and fragmentary.

Some variations occur between the various versions of pre-1833 minutes, but Synod's instruction to publish the Glasgow manuscript gives it highest

authority. As the matter of greatest importance is the establishment of an official text, rather than determining the original text as in biblical textual criticism, a declaration by Synod will suffice. No such analysis is required for the minutes of later years: The practice of publishing minutes as monographs by order of Synod was followed from 1833 until 1836 and from 1896 to the present, and the minutes of intervening years appeared in the *Reformed Presbyterian* and its successor, the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*.

It is therefore **recommended** that Synod adopt as its official texts of reference the minutes appearing in the following sources:

- For all meetings of the Reformed Presbytery, 1798-1809, and of the Synod and General Synod, 1809-1831: W.M. Glasgow's manuscript.
- General Synod did not meet in 1832, so nothing is recommended for this year.
- For all meetings of the Old Light General Synod, 1833-1836: monographs published by order of the Old Light General Synod.
- For all meetings of the Old Light General Synod and Synod postdating 1836: minutes published in the *Reformed Presbyterian*, in the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, and as monographs.

—Nathaniel Pockras

Appendix 2: Sales for the past 12 months

WITNESS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Every household in congregation subscribes	40 (Congregations)
Most/some in congregation subscribe	48 (Congregations)
Congregation does not subscribe	8 (Congregations)

PSALTERS (copies)

Book of Psalms for Worship	2,537
Book of Psalms for Singing	513
ARP Psalter	523
Trinity Psalter	774
Chinese Psalter	12

MUSIC (copies or tracks)

CDs/Digital Downloads	1,566
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BOOKS (copies)

<i>150 Questions about the Psalter</i>	331
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<i>Constitution</i>	182
<i>From the Lips of Little Ones</i>	139
<i>Gospel and Sexual Orientation</i>	245
<i>Gospel and Gender Identity</i>	923
<i>Jeanette Li</i>	33
<i>Messiah the Prince</i>	45
<i>Messiah the Prince Revisited</i>	19
<i>Missions: The Biblical Motive and Aim</i>	28
<i>Nadzieja</i>	26
<i>Openness Unhindered</i>	7,030
<i>Political Danger</i>	16
<i>Prayers of the Bible</i>	1,250
Presbyterian and Reformed Life Series	151
<i>Romans</i>	22
<i>Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert</i>	5,307
<i>Secret Thoughts, Expanded Edition</i>	7,143
<i>The Two Empires of Japan</i>	5
<i>Understanding Biblical Doctrine</i>	237

Personal privilege granted, for Pastor Shane Sapp to request prayer for Elder John Duke's granddaughter and her family, in a severe car accident (Michaelah Duke and her children). Keith Magill thanked 2017 delegates for effective prayers for his health. Jack Baumgardner asked delegates to pray concerning a county hearing about the Clarinda church building, tomorrow. At 8:59 p.m. Shigeru Takiura read Ephesians 4:4-7,16. Andy McCracken and Frank Smith prayed aloud. The Court sang Psalm 100A. After announcements by Synod's manager, Mark Sampson gave opportunity for the Court to thank Mrs. Ann O'Neill for her co-ministry with Jerry. Delegates were led in adjournment prayer by Ray Morton at 9:22 p.m.

Friday; June 29, 2018; 8:30 a.m.

At 8:33 a.m., the Moderator called the Synod Court to order, directing us to sing together Psalm 84D; Pastor Joe Allyn presented. Elder Eric Charlton prayed to constitute the Court. Synod enjoyed morning devotions under leadership of Pastor Joseph Friedly (of Tri-Lakes RPC in Monument, Colorado). Mr. Friedly preached from Romans 8:28-39 on the theme: God's Perfect, Personal, Perpetual Love. Mr. Friedly opened and closed in prayer. The Court sang Psalm 116C. The attendance roll was passed. The minutes of the Thursday evening session were read, improved, and approved (carried). Written dissents received were identified. The clerk offered a revised agenda for finishing our Friday work on time; approved.

Special privilege was asked by and granted to Pastor Brad Johnston, chairman of the Study Committee on Divorce and Desertion. He asked that Gabriel Wingfield and Craig Scott be added to that Study Committee. Motion (seconded), then carried; they are added.

Nominating Committee: Ballots were distributed for the election. Mr. David Weir of the Nominating Committee led in prayer for the voting to fill the vacancies on Synod's boards and committees. Delegates marked ballots. The pages collected the completed ballots for Nominating Committee tabulation. The Nominating Committee was excused to tabulate votes.

Pastor Scott Wilkinson asked personal privilege to pray aloud for a troubled adherent who is involved with the Kitchener congregation; he did so.

The Writing Committee had distributed paper copies of their report: "Reasons for the Hemphill Court Decision Committee Report." After discussion and a number of improvements, this Report was adopted as our (Synod) statement of ruling rationale. Mr. Drew Gordon stood to express his appreciation for this Report.

2018 Synod: Reasons for the Hemphill Court Decision Committee Report

Fathers and Brothers: The Committee before you has been tasked with writing the reasons for the way in which the court voted on the Hemphill Appeal, as required in *The Book of Discipline*:

"The decision of the higher court must be based solely on the records of the lower court. The higher court may confirm, or reverse,

in whole or in part, the decision of the lower court. If the appeal is sustained, the judgment of the lower court is reversed. If an appeal is not sustained, the judgment of the lower court is affirmed. If the lower court has not followed the prescribed order in the conduct of the case, the higher court may, at its discretion, return the whole case to the lower for a new trial. If the decision of the lower court appears unjust and unwarranted, the higher court may itself try the case. A full record shall be kept of all the proceedings with the reasons for each decision.”¹

Understanding that the Committee before you has not the ability to judge the hearts of each presbyter or to assume that each presbyter voted for the same or similar reasons, this Committee therefore provides the following analysis of the Hemphill decision:

History of the Proceedings. Mr. Hemphill appealed conviction of two charges and a censure of suspension in 2016. Synod was unable to successfully adjudicate this Appeal in 2017 (a delay of justice for which the Synod has repented, requested forgiveness, and received it from both parties). This year, Synod has shown love to all parties involved by following our procedures for appeal according to *The Book of Discipline*.

Spirit of the Proceedings. The Court proceedings were entered into with sobriety and prayerfulness. The respect and love for Mr. Hemphill was apparent and noted in the Court with comments such as, “We respect Dr. Hemphill’s decades of service to the RPCNA.” All affirmed the difficulty and devastating nature of this case, and at the same time the Court affirmed that Mr. Hemphill is a believer and remains a communicant member of the RPCNA. Connected to that were both comments on the Hemphill Appeal not being “about women elders” but instead about the Appeal; as well as the fact that discipline is a mark of the church.

Grounds for Appeal. The *Book of Discipline* sets out the grounds by which an appeal can be made²:

1. Irregularities in the proceedings;
2. injustice or undue severity in the censure;
3. manifest prejudice or unfairness;

¹ *Book of Discipline*, 2.4.15

² *Book of Discipline*, 2.4.10

4. admission of improper testimony or refusal to hear testimony;
5. undue haste in reaching a decision before all testimony is heard.

Counsel for the Hemphill Appeal confirmed the Hemphill Appeal was sought on the grounds of the first three and did not argue on the basis of 4 and 5.

Fifteen Specifications to the Appeal. Mr. Hemphill had 15 specifications of his Appeal. The first specification was a brief history of the case, and it was not voted on for that reason. The remaining fourteen specifications dealt with matters such as the nature of exceptions, the moral law, the RPCNA's System of Doctrine, Query 4 of the Vows of Ordination, changes to historic doctrines of the RPCNA, the tone of his paper, the question of contempt of court, and severity in discipline.

Sense of Justice and Specifications. The Court voted on each of the fourteen specifications and the varying ways in which the Court voted on each specification are demonstrative of the care with which justice was sought in this case.³ There is no way to discern which arguments on the floor persuaded or dissuaded presbyters to vote the way in which they did.

Concerning Specifications 2-10 and 12-15, Mr. Hemphill and his counsel failed to persuade the majority of the Court that there were "irregularities in the proceedings," "injustice or undue severity in the censure," or "manifest prejudice or unfairness" in the trial. Therefore these specifications of error were not sustained in the Appeal.

The majority of the Court were persuaded of number 11 which argued against the charge of contempt because Mr. Hemphill "willingly participated in the regular presbytery meetings since the judicial process began ..." and "was respectful and kind in all his actions."

Justice Upheld and Judgment Reversed. The Court upheld the first charge of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies because Mr. Hemphill and his counsel were unable to prove their case: "Mr. Hemphill is charged with believing and accepting a stance on women in the eldership, which is contrary to Query Four of his official vows of ordination and a violation of the moral law as understood in the *RPCNA Book of Discipline*."

The Court voted to reverse the second charge, due to the Presbytery of

³ Specifications (sustained - not sustained): 2: 46-110; 3: 29-126; 4: 59-94; 5: 54-94; 6: 37-115; 7: 47-102; 8: 32-118; 9: 49-99; 10: 35-118; 11: 85-57; 12: 62-88; 13: 62-87; 14: 60-95; 15: 29-119.

the Alleghenies being unable to prove their case: “Not having abandoned his belief and acceptance that women ought to be able to hold the office of elder, Mr. Hemphill is charged with having contempt for this court in refusing to respect the authority and discipline of the church.”

Conclusion. As the hearts of presbyters are unable to be fully discerned; and acknowledging that there are various reasons for which presbyters may or may not vote, this Court determines that a portion of the appeal was upheld because Mr. Hemphill and his counsel proved their case and another aspect was denied because the reasons for which an appeal can be made were not proven.

Respectfully and humbly submitted,
Nathan Eshelman (chairman);
Joe Allyn;
Aaron Goerner;
Adam Kuehner;
Steven McCarthy

Chairman Steven McMahan presented the Report of the Geneva College Board of Corporators. Recommendation 1 carried, resulting in Synod’s acceptance of the Report of the Geneva Trustees. Recommendation 2, modified, carried; the Court heard from Geneva president, Dr. Calvin Troup, for up to 10 minutes. The Court applauded. The Corporators Report was approved and is as follows with the Report of the Geneva College Trustees to the Corporators.

2018 Report of the Geneva College Board of Corporators to the Synod of the RPCNA

The Geneva Board of Corporators continues to rejoice in the work of Dr. Calvin Troup as President of Geneva College. Dr. Troup is doing an excellent job of leading the College through the multitude of challenges faced by explicitly Christian private colleges.

The Board of Corporators met twice since last Synod, and has received extensive updates on a variety of matters at Geneva from President Troup and Trustees Chairman Joye Huston. Some of the non-Trustee Corporators were

able to participate in several joint meetings and activities with the Trustees at the February Trustees meeting, which proved quite beneficial. Plans are being made to continue some joint meetings and activities in February 2019.

A large portion of the Corporator Board time is spent interviewing new and incumbent Trustees for Geneva College, and also interviewing the Corporator nominees. The Board then elects the Trustees of the College after prayerful and careful consideration and submits the Corporator nominees to Synod for election. As we get to know the non-Reformed Presbyterian Trustees better, we are amazed at the diversity of talents as well as the evident commitment to Geneva that these people bring in their service as Trustees.

The Board of Corporators is made up of 12 members—six of whom also serve as Geneva Trustees elected by the Corporators as Trustees. The terms of three Corporators expire this year; all are willing to continue serving in this capacity. These are Bruce Backensto, Phil Duguid, and Steven McMahan; all are at-large candidates and are nominated by the Board of Corporators. Questionnaires completed by each of the nominees are included with our Report. Here are the classes of each of the Corporators which were elected by previous Synods:

Class of 2018—terms expiring; the Class of 2022 to be elected by this Synod.

Class of 2019—Ken DeJong (at-large, Trustee), Don Piper (Pacific Coast Presbytery, Trustee), Phil Pockras (Great Lakes /Gulf).

Class of 2020—Bonnie Weir (Atlantic, Trustee), David Schaefer (Alleghenies, Trustee), Matt Filbert (at-large).

Class of 2021—Chris Huggins (Saint Lawrence), Shana Milroy (Midwest, Trustee), Scott Reynolds (at-large).

Nominations: The Corporators submit these names to Synod's Nominating Committee for election to Geneva Corporators to serve 2018-2022 (Class of 2022): Bruce Backensto, Phil Duguid, and Steven McMahan (all at-large). Note: Phil Duguid also serves as a Trustee.

Recommendations:

1. That the 2017-2018 Report of the Geneva College Board of Trustees be accepted.
2. That Geneva's president, Dr. Calvin Troup, be heard by Synod for up to fifteen minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven McMahan (chairman);
Matthew Filbert (vice chairman);
Philip Pockras (secretary)

Report of the Geneva College Board of Trustees to the Board of Corporators

May 31, 2018. A highlight of this past year was the 50th anniversary of the adoption of a document called The Foundational Concepts of Christian Education. I quote from Geneva's press release in October 2017:

Dr. Calvin L. Troup, Geneva College president says: "Foundational Concepts was pivotal in renewing the Christian identity of the College, rejuvenating the mission and vision for Christian higher education at Geneva. In retrospect, just at the moment in which many schools were losing their moorings and being tossed about by modern cultural conflicts during the late 1960s, Geneva's boards and leadership set a course for faithfulness—revitalizing the College's commitments to the compelling intellectual relevance of Biblical truth to all of life. Grounded in the College's reformed confession and heritage, and resonant with the great truths of the historic Christian faith held in common by Christians in every age and place, Foundational Concepts continues to guide Geneva College today."

The Strategic Plan, adopted by the Trustees in November 2017, includes the following core values:

With Christ as King and under Scripture, we:

1. serve with grace,
2. pursue Godly wisdom,
3. foster academic strength,
4. engage culture faithfully,
5. inspire vibrant hospitality,
6. honor one another.

President Troup presented "lessons in hospitality" on the six occasions when he addressed the students in chapel during the 2017-2018 academic year. The five-year strategic plan lays out detailed action plans, revenue, and

expenses associated with initiatives to advance the mission of the College, and improve institutional financial stability.

The Middle States Accreditation Committee has visited the College and found that Geneva appears to meet all seven accreditation standards. Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Melinda Stephens, continues to provide excellent leadership for the academic program. A nursing program in cooperation with the Community College of Beaver County will launch in August 2018. The number of students who have made deposits indicates that we will meet enrollment goals set for the program. The annual Bible Department compliance report is appended to this report.

Dr. Ryan McIlhenny of the Los Angeles Reformed Presbyterian Church accepted a position (paid for by the Chinese corporation, New Channel) to teach freshmen in Zizhu, China, to prepare them to start their sophomore years at Geneva. He and his family have developed a reputation for wonderful hospitality among the Chinese students. The initial projection of forty students beginning their sophomore years in the Fall of 2018 will not be realized. Please pray that this program will grow numerically and be fruitful.

Geneva has hired a discipleship coordinator, Caleb Musselman. As an alumnus and experienced assistant soccer coach, he knows the college well and has a good rapport with students. His work has allowed the type of discipleship group already in place through College Hill Reformed Presbyterian Church's Discipleship, Accountability, and Service on the Hill (DASH) program, to expand, using the fund established in honor of Dr. Roy Blackwood. A key component of this program is to encourage students to be involved in local churches.

To bring closure to our joint lawsuit, argued before the Supreme Court, attorneys from Alliance Defending Freedom have asked the US Third Circuit Court in Pittsburgh for an injunction in our case against the US Federal Department of Health and Human Services. The lawsuit challenged the regulation which required that we provide abortifacient drugs through our institutional health care benefits. Attorney Greg Baylor states: "The permanent injunction and declaratory relief would protect Geneva from any effort by the federal government to force you (Geneva) to comply with religiously objectionable manifestations of the women's preventive services mandate. It would protect the College from efforts by future administrations to enforce the statutory

requirements either directly, through the Obama Administration's 'accommodation,' or some new and different mechanism that no one has yet thought of." We anticipate a favorable outcome, since the Justice Department has indicated that it will not oppose the motion.

Dr. Dan Doriani, Vice President, Strategic Academic Projects, Professor of Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary, was the preacher at the Baccalaureate worship service which was held in the First Presbyterian Church of Beaver Falls. Dr. R. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was the Commencement speaker, and received an honorary doctorate from the College. Nancy Alderson McDonnell, President and CEO of Value of the Person, was the speaker at the Graduate and Adult Education Commencement Ceremony.

Thank you for electing Mr. Ethan Wingfield as a Trustee in February. Information about incumbent Trustees currently considered for the class of 2022 has been shared by the Executive Committee. Officers of the Board of Trustees for the coming year are: Chair, Joye Huston; Vice Chair, Don Piper; Secretary, Bonnie Weir. The Budget for 2018-19 is set at \$34,334,278. Geneva Fund total for 2017-18 was \$1,192,306. Total giving was \$4,218,131. Geneva awarded 225 undergraduate degrees, 68 adult bachelor's degrees, and 45 master's degrees, and 1 associate's degree from the Center for Urban Biblical Ministry in Pittsburgh.

President Troup and Trustee Chair Joye Huston have sent out bulletin inserts to each of the congregations in the RPCNA. Please encourage your congregation and individual members to support the vision of Geneva College, to "inspire students to integrate faith in Christ into all aspects of life in the real world, and to serve faithfully within their callings."

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie E. Weir, Ph.D.

Secretary, Board of Trustees

The clerk, in absence of all members, presented the Church History Committee Report. Recommendation 1 carried. This Report, having been authored by one member, had to be seconded before consideration, and it was. Additional nomination information was provided to that Committee. Then this Church History Committee Report was approved and is printed below.

Report of the Church History Committee to the 2018 Synod

The Church History Committee of the Synod is the collector and custodian of a variety of historical resources from various individuals, courts, and agencies of the RP Church. John Mitchell and Ralph Joseph continue to be primarily responsible for the work activities at the Archives located in the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS) building. As has been the custom in recent years, the Committee has not met formally, but kept in touch via email when necessary.

Many of the technical issues referred to in our report last year have been remedied and there are now several additions to our website. We are now up to date with the *Minutes of Synod*. In agreement with Crown & Covenant Publications, we are always one year behind the printed editions of the *Minutes*. In addition to the *Minutes*, we have added to the website Abstracts of Obituaries in “The Covenanter” 1845-1862, a “Record of the RP Church: Ministers, Pastors, and Elders 1721-1900” by Glasgow and Tibby as transcribed by Kate Madill, and a listing of pamphlets, booklets, and tracts published over the years by various ministries of the church (totaling some 235 listings).

We continue to have some concerns about access issues of the *RP Witness* (formerly the *Covenanter Witness*) since 1990 in that a person needs to have a regular subscription in order to be granted access to the RPW Archives. This requirement, we believe, severely limits access to those documents. Accordingly we expect to have a conversation soon with the management of Crown & Covenant about making those documents accessible, perhaps by way of a link, to those who use the RParchives.org site.

In mid-2017 we reported on the number of items at the Archives but not on the website. The number then was more than 1,725 and has increased throughout the course of the year. These are available for researchers willing to come to the Archives.

As the members of Synod may be aware, with this amount of material collected—and more coming almost every week—space is becoming limited. While the two volunteer archivists are still going strong, we will not last forever, so there is a need of staffing in the not too distant future. Recent additions to the Archives are four books by Charles McCalla outlining the burials in the Clarinda RPC Cemetery, a history of the Hopkinton (Iowa) RPC, a history of the Rehoboth (Wyman, Iowa) congregation, and a history of the West Hebron (New

York) congregation as gleaned from various periodicals.

A history of the RP Indian Mission in Oklahoma since 1871 has been completed by Mrs. Faith Martin who is presently searching for a publisher. Bill Edgar is working on a history of the denomination since 1888, the year Glasgow's history was published.

We continue to be grateful for contributions of many across the church to the Archives over the past year and provision of space to do our work by the Seminary administration.

Finances: We have asked (through Synod's Finance Committee) that up to \$7,000 for the work of the Committee be approved for 2018.

Nominations: There are three vacancies on this three-member Committee as of this 2018 meeting of Synod, so we are asking Synod's Nominating Committee to put forward three qualified candidates. Ralph Joseph (chairman) has completed two terms, so is not normally eligible for reelection; that said, the chairman believes Synod will be best served by making an exception to the rule for the sake of continuity and elect Ralph to a 3rd term (Class of 2024). Gordon Keddie has asked to be replaced in the Class of 2022 (FYI, the terms for this Committee are six years); we recommend Tony Gazo (an elder) as Joe Rizzo has resigned in the Class of 2020. For the third opening, we recommend Nathaniel Pockras (who is not an elder). Another person who has an interest in church history besides Nathaniel and Tony is David Whitla (an elder) who can help us.

Recommendation:

That sessions and presbyteries submit minute books and any other significant documents to be scanned as soon as practical after they finish using a particular record book. [Such material may be sent to the Committee c/o the Seminary at 7418 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15208, delivered personally, or given to either of the archivists and can be returned after the scanning is completed if that is desired.]

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Joseph (Chairman)

Pastor Joel Wood, chairman, presented the Report of the Business of Synod Committee. Recommendation 1 carried, so the 2020 Synod is now scheduled to meet at Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, Indiana) during the week of June 23-26 (Tuesday morning through Friday afternoon). The

Report as a whole was approved and is printed here. Synod's manager, Herb McCracken, was thanked for his work through rising applause.

The Business of Synod Committee Report to 2018 Synod

The purpose of the Business of Synod Committee 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 during the year since our mid-2017 Synod meeting to discuss 2018 meeting operations (so incurred no meeting expenses). Also, the Committee anticipates meeting the night before the 2018 Synod commences.

Plans for the 2018 Synod

Opening Session. Your Committee has set the starting time at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 26, on the Indiana Wesleyan University campus. All registration, check-in, scheduling, and facilities information can be found in Synod's document repository (<http://synod.rpcna.net>; 2018 folder).

Seating. Unlike past Synod meetings, we strongly urge that only voting delegates sit at tables (with guests, visitors, ministerial students, etc. sitting at the back and on the sides). This is critical if we are to keep careful count of our standing votes and for focusing our clearest communication.

Devotional Theme: The Steadfast Love of God. The preachers are:

Tuesday: Rev. Jerry Milroy (Colorado Springs, CO); retiring moderator's address.

Wednesday: Pastor Jared Olivetti (Immanuel RPCNA; West Lafayette, Indiana).

Thursday: Pastor _____ (a minister of the Associate RP Church).

Friday: Pastor Joseph Friedly (Tri-Lakes/Monument RPCNA; Colorado).

Conference Manager. Herb McCracken is serving as conference manager. We will enjoy the service of an assistant manager, Cory Veldhuizen. This Committee is grateful to both men.

Travel. Synod's Travel Policy for reimbursements is clear, and all reimbursement details will be handled directly through the Treasurer's Office. In those few circumstances where the amounts are in question, the chairman of this Committee will serve as the Travel Agent. See the simple instructions in the document Synod Travel Reimbursement, found at <http://synod.rpcna.net>; basically, reimbursement requests are now filed via an online form. If you need to

interact with the Treasurer's Office more traditionally: 7408 Penn Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15208 or email James McFarland at RPTrustees@aol.com. Synod's total travel expense can be found on the line labeled: Synod Meeting Travel in the Treasurer's Report, Synod Operations Fund page.

Prayer Coordinator. The Committee is grateful to Pastors Wade Mann and Craig Scott (of the Great-Lakes/Gulf Presbytery) and Shigeru Takiura (of the Japan Presbytery) for working together to coordinate our several prayer times during the four days of our Synod meeting.

Orientation Meeting. All new members of the Court who are delegates for the first time, pages [Andrew Battiato, Tim Bloedow, Jay Dharan, Zach Smith], students, and other delegates who want a refresher course are invited to an orientation meeting at the Tuesday breakfast. Those introducing new delegates during Synod's opening session are also urged to attend this breakfast along with officers of the Court and members of the Business of Synod Committee. Location T.B.A. We are grateful to former member/chairman Dave Carroll for leading this talk.

Memorials. As a reminder, the 2015 Synod approved the following recommendation:

"That our practice be modified to include memorials among the reports for Synod in the Docket & Digest, and later in the Appendix to the *Minutes*; that the Clerk continue to assign the writing of memorials for teaching elders; that if sessions would like to include memorials for ruling elders that they supply these memorials, forwarding them to the Clerk for inclusion in Synod's Docket & Digest and in the Appendix to the *Minutes*; but that memorials read on the floor of Synod be limited to five minutes each."

In that light, please limit speaking time for any memorial to no more than five minutes.

Future Synods

2019 Synod. In 2016, the Synod voted to invite the ARPC General Synod to meet jointly with our Synod. Many of their men are eager to see Geneva College and our Seminary. We are advancing with plans for our two synods to meet from June 11-14, from Tuesday through Friday, at Geneva College. Details for combined sessions with ARPC brothers will be announced in the upcoming

ing year, as planned by the interchurch committees, etc. It is our Committee's understanding that this decision/vote was already made by Synod.

2020 Synod. Though specific details must be worked out, this Committee will proceed with new standard plans to arrange for Synod to meet at IWU during late June (23-26), Tuesday through Friday. Note that is an RPIC year (RP International Conference), with meetings on the same campus one month later (July 29 to August 3, Wed.-Mon.).

Our thanks: With his legal background, Committee member Dennis Olson was most helpful in securing for this Synod meeting a qualified court reporter/stenographer to be with us for our long Wednesday sessions. We are grateful for Dennis' extra efforts.

Business of Synod Committee Membership

You will see (below) that the terms of Jack Rhoda and Lucas Hanna are expiring mid-year. Lucas is willing to serve again; Jack is asking to be relieved. So we are advancing to the Nominating Committee the names of Lucas Hanna and Don Reed for our two 2021 vacancies. Such a Committee makeup would keep us with three ruling elders serving well.

Recommendation:

1. That the 2020 Synod be held at IWU (Marion, Indiana) during the week of June 23-26; this is a Tuesday morning through Friday afternoon schedule (with Monday arrival assumed).

Respectfully submitted:

Jack Rhoda (2018),

Lucas Hanna (2018),

Herb McCracken (2019),

Dennis Olson (2019),

Chairman Joel Wood (2020),

Brian Coombs (2020),

John McFarland (Clerk) and

Jerry Milroy (Moderator), *ex-officio*

Elder Tom Fisher presented the Report of Synod's Trustees (which includes the Reports of the Treasurer and the Auditors). Mr. Fisher noted that Treasurer James McFarland has served our denomination for 20 years; the Court rose in applause. The lone recommendation carried, empowering

the Trustees to “forgive” congregational assessments (under certain presbytery provisions). The Report as a whole was approved and printed here, with audit.

Report of the Trustees of Synod, 2018

We give thanks to God for providing for denominational work through strong giving to the Reformed Presbyterian Missions & Ministries (RPM&M) Fund in 2017. Once again some one-time gifts, including a bequest, enabled us to exceed the 2017 RPM&M goal. More information can be found below in the report of our Stewardship Committee.

We are also thankful for the successful transition of our new denominational Controller, Vida Brown, whose selection last year took place too late to be included in our last report. We introduced Vida to the Court at the meeting of last year’s Synod, and after a brief period of overlap with previous Controller Trevor York, she has come up to speed in her new job very quickly. Our auditors were especially complimentary of her work in their recently-completed audit of our books.

Regarding Continuing Duties of the Board

The Trustees of Synod have held three regular board meetings (one by conference call) and several committee meetings and other conference calls since last year’s Synod. The Unallocated Denominational Office financial report for 2017 is included in the Treasurer’s Report.

The Stated Clerk’s Report and the Statistical Report are also included in the Docket & Digest. After several years of making needed changes to the process of gathering congregational statistics, we are hopeful that we have a system that will work well for multiple hardware and software combinations. If you have feedback on the new data-gathering system, please communicate with the Treasurer’s office or with one of us.

The Treasurer’s Office has established a new online form for submitting travel expense vouchers. There are two separate links, one for Synod Travel expenses and one for board and committee travel expenses. In recent years, most travel vouchers have been submitted electronically via email, so this system should fit the needs of most of those who submit expenses for reimbursement. Those who do not have computer access or who cannot scan receipts should contact the Trustee’s Office for a paper travel voucher.

The work of the denominational office is overseen by our Board. The office's employees have been doing some of their work remotely for the last few years. While Jim McFarland and Vida Brown are located in the Pittsburgh area, they are normally present in the Penn Avenue office two and three days a week, respectively: both are in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, and Vida is there on Fridays. Anna Dinkledine, who supports the office in the processing of bills and payroll, among other things, currently lives in Connecticut and works entirely remotely on a part-time basis. The employees are able to work remotely since the Accounting system is in the "cloud," and other cloud-based systems are being used to access shared files. Many of the office processes have been moved from paper to electronic systems this year and the office continues to look for other opportunities to make this kind of change. We continue to assess the effectiveness of this approach, and would appreciate your input as you make use of the office's services.

The members of the Board are:

Class of 2018: Nathan Anseth, Marlin Klingensmith, David Schaefer

2019: Joseph Comanda, Thomas Fisher (Pres.), Stanley McKenzie

2020: David McCune, James McFarland (Treasurer), Shawn Stickel (V.P.)

We are sorry to report that Shawn Stickel, who has served productively and vigorously on our Board, has found that his responsibilities to Tri-Lakes RPC and the Midwest Presbytery, as well as his own work and personal life, have grown to a point that he does not feel able to continue serving as a trustee. The Board has accepted his resignation, which takes effect as of the end of this meeting of Synod. The Board is nominating Cheryl Hemphill (Laramie RPC) to fill Shawn's unexpired term in the class of 2020. Cheryl rotated off the Board last year after serving two terms and is now eligible to serve again. She served ably in the recent past, including as chair of our Stewardship Committee, and we would welcome her return. We are also nominating Mr. Joel Silverman (Southside Indianapolis RPC), who presently serves as Advisor to the President of Geneva.

Nathan Anseth, Marlin Klingensmith, and David Schaefer are all completing their first terms this year. Mr. Schaefer has volunteered to step off of the Board so that in 2021 we will not lose three members simultaneously. The Board agrees that the future continuity of our work would be better served by this move; Mr. Schaefer could return at a future date. We are nominating

Nathan Anseth and Marlin Klingensmith to the Class of 2021. We have found it helpful over the years to have members from all parts of the denomination on this Board. Mr. Stickel is our only member from Midwest Presbytery, and next year, both members from Atlantic will have to rotate off. So this year we are also nominating John Duke (Westminster, CO, RPC), who has served on this board several times in the past, and Larry Gladfelter (Broomall RPC), who for many years was the Atlantic Presbytery representative on Synod's Finance Committee.

Stewardship Committee

We thank God for providing, as He always does, for the needs of the RPCNA in 2017; a portion of this provision is the RPM&M Fund.

2017 RPM&M goal: \$400,000

2017 RPM&M received: \$416,000

Last year the Trustees phoned representatives of most congregations to speak with them about the support that RPM&M gives to the church's ministries and to promote giving to RPM&M. There are still some copies available of the video prepared in 2016 that describes the needs of church's missions and ministries and the role RPM&M plays in funding them. There is an RPCNA YouTube channel that contains the entire video at (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrDP1P-PZmjPeTFezWyRQzw-57pUbD_a4), and the video is also available at rpcna.org. We continue to hear congregations are using these videos as tools for educating the church about RPCNA ministries; that is encouraging. If your congregation needs a DVD copy, please speak with Vida Brown or Jim McFarland. There should be some copies available for distribution at this meeting of Synod.

We note, as the Finance Committee has also stated in its report, that in 2017 the number of congregations that did not contribute to RPM&M increased from 20 to 32. This means that almost one-third of our churches did not send an RPM&M contribution. While our Board will seek to do all that it can to promote RPM&M giving, the members of Synod 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 therefore urge each member of Synod to personally promote RPM&M giving in your respective congregations.

This year, our Stewardship Committee had RPM&M response envelopes included in selected issues of the RP Witness magazine, and some direct contributions were received as a result. We are continuing to review the effectiveness of this approach.

In addition to gifts to RPM&M, the Trustees occasionally receive bequests not designated to individual boards or agencies of the denomination. These gifts left to the church in estates are distributed by Synod and are a great blessing to all ministries, often providing for new initiatives and special needs. In 2017, the estate of Dr. Richard Weir provided a gift of \$25,000 to RPM&M that enabled us to exceed our goal. Information on the appropriate "form of bequest" for gifts to the RPCNA is printed in recent copies of Synod's minutes. Please remember this important source of funding for the work of the denomination.

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 engaged in the businesses of gambling, abortion, pornography, alcohol, or tobacco. As of 12/31/17 the portfolio of stocks and bonds managed by Wilmington Trust had a market value of \$17,831,524.37. Additionally, securities with a value of \$252,558.63, held by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, have been pledged as collateral toward bank loans made to the RP Woman's Association. The lender has reduced the collateral requirement as the loan is paid down and the need for collateral is expected to end sometime in 2019.

The endowment funds of the church—along with other funds held by the Trustees—are invested in a combined pool of stocks, bonds, and general mortgages. The endowment funds of the church are legally restricted (by the

donors) to the use of the income only, and usually for specific boards, agencies, or congregations of the RPCNA. In a few cases, some boards also have unrestricted funds available for their use.

The Trustees used a 4.5% total return spending policy in 2017 to pay out income to the boards, institutions, and congregations whose funds are invested with the Trustees. The payout was based on the average market value of the previous twelve quarters as of the end of 2016. Long-term studies and the practice of other institutions have convinced us to reduce the payout in the past due to concerns that the spending rate was too aggressive and that the inflation-adjusted value of the endowments was declining over time. The payout was most recently reduced in 2014 from 4.75% to 4.5%. As noted previously, the Special Trustees of the MacLaughlin Trust have studied this issue for some time and recently decided to reduce their spending policy from 4.5% to 4%. Synod's Trustees have been discussing a similar reduction in our policy, but we recognize that it would have a sudden and dramatic impact on the funding of several ministries if we moved immediately to 4%. We have therefore decided to set the 2019 spending policy at 4.4% (down 0.1% from 2018). We have not made a final decision as to future spending reductions, but our expectation is that we will continue to lower the rate by 0.1% in coming years until we reach 4%.

The pooled investments have generally increased in value over the years while also paying out a dividend. Market performance in 2017 provided strong gains, in keeping with the moderate-risk diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, and mortgages. Our Pooled Investments experienced a gain of 10.13% in market value plus the dividend payout of 4.59% of the beginning-of-year market value, for a total return of approximately 14.72%.

Cecil J. S. MacLaughlin Trust

Since its inception, the Cecil J. S. MacLaughlin Charitable Trust has remitted over \$4.8 million in income for use by the RPCNA. The market value of the Charitable Trust has risen from \$1,688,383 on 9/30/1981 to \$ 4,269,900 on 9/30/2017. The terms of the trust provide that a person designated by this Board should serve as Special Trustee of the Trust. Our Special Trustee represents the Synod at biannual meetings which include the two other Special Trustees (one representing Geneva College and another from the firm of Mrs. MacLaughlin's original lawyer) and the Corporate Trustee, who manages Trust investments.

As we noted last year, Mr. John Mitchell informed the Board of his desire to retire as Special Trustee of the Trust, representing the RPCNA, after serving in this role since 1981. The Board has appointed Mr. David Schaefer to serve as the RPCNA Synod's Special Trustee to the Trust. As we reported last year, the Special Trustees have been studying the question of whether the Trust's payout percentage—now at 4.5%—should be reduced. Under the California Probate Code, they are allowed to make a payout anywhere in the range of 3 to 5 percent. The MacLaughlin Trustees have decided to lower the Trust's distribution policy to pay out 4.0% ... effective with the fourth quarter payment of 2018. This will result in an initial drop in the income paid out by the Trust.

Audit Committee

RC Holsinger Associates, now known as Holsinger, has audited the financial records of the Trustees of Synod for the year ending 12/31/2017. The final version of the audit report has been uploaded to Synod's 2018 Docket & Digest web page.

Our Audit Committee has developed a closer working relationship with the auditors and this has been very helpful. The 2017 audit went very smoothly, and again it resulted in a clean report. In response to the auditor's earlier suggestions regarding our system for tracking mortgages, we added some mortgage software. Implementation of the software has been challenging and will require some assistance from a consultant before the office can transition to the new system. Temporarily, this requires maintaining the two systems in parallel, but we are hopeful that the new one will be working soon.

Building Loan and General Mortgages Committee

The Building Loan and Grant Fund ended 2017 with a balance of \$1,093,600 in loans outstanding or receivable. The maximum amount that can be borrowed from the Building Loan and Grant Fund is currently \$150,000 for churches. An additional loan of up to \$200,000 is available to congregations from the General Mortgage Loans. As of Dec. 31, 2017, there were General Mortgage Loans outstanding or receivable in the amount of \$764,700. In 2017, loans from the Building Loan Fund were made to Lafayette and Marion (Indiana), and no new loans were made from General Mortgage funds.

"Blue Banner" Trademark

From 2000 to 2005, the Board did considerable exploratory work on the possibility of establishing the "Blue Banner" as a legal trademark owned by the

RPCNA. The effort began out of concern that non-RP groups occasionally make use of the Banner as a symbol, and depending on the group involved this could potentially reflect negatively on the RPCNA. After expending a good deal of effort, we abandoned our pursuit of registering the Banner as a trademark for several reasons: (1) there were indications that other entities might actually be able to demonstrate higher-priority claims to usage of the symbol, (2) there were concerns about the costs and complexities of enforcing a trademark in multiple jurisdictions (different states and federal districts have different rules), (3) the question of whether the RPCNA could even obtain a trademark was unclear, and (4) as we looked further into what would be needed to get a trademark, estimated costs associated with registration continued to climb. Recently, we were contacted by a representative of Crown & Covenant who forwarded a new inquiry about this question from an RP minister who had discovered YouTube videos of a group using the banner. The Board discussed whether we should renew our efforts to obtain a trademark. After considering the matter, we decided not to pursue trademark registration, partly for the reasons that caused us to abandon our efforts a decade ago and also because even if we were able to register successfully, in order to keep a trademark in force we could be obliged to sue anyone who infringed on it in order to retain the trademark.

Guidelines for Congregational Treasurers

In recent years we have become aware that congregational treasurers around the denomination face increasing difficulty knowing what is required to do their work. Our Stewardship Committee began working a while ago on developing a set of guidelines and suggested best practices that could be helpful to those serving as treasurers in our churches. We hope to have these suggestions ready for distribution later in 2018.

Implied Trusts and Congregational Properties

Last year 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 many no longer be regarded in some states as holding their properties in trust for the denomination as a whole.

As stated in our *Directory for Church Government* (Chapter 2, Paragraph 16), congregations of the RPCNA hold their property in trust for the Synod; this is

sometimes referred to as an “implied trust.” Normally, the ownership of the property of a congregation that is disorganized or that leaves the denomination reverts to the Synod. But a 2012 ruling of the Indiana Supreme Court determined that Indiana is a “neutral principles of law” state with regard to church property disputes. Therefore, even in churches with presbyterian polity, a statement in a denominational constitution is not sufficient in itself to establish that local church properties are held under an implied trust in the event of a dispute. In such a case other factors, such as the property deed itself and local church articles of incorporation, would be weighed and would likely take precedence over denominational constitutional documents. We believe that it is our responsibility as a Board to offer counsel to the Synod on this matter, as we have learned that similar concerns could apply to churches in states other than Indiana. We have not yet had time to investigate fully, but we would appreciate any counsel that Synod might have for us.

Assessments

For many years, expenses associated with Synod Operations have been paid through a denomination-wide assessment set annually by the Finance Committee. The expenses paid for through assessments benefit the whole church, with Synod’s Travel Fund and the expenses of Synod-level committees being the largest costs covered by the Synod Operations Fund. At one time, the assessment was calculated based on the number of communicant members in a congregation; in 2013 the Finance Committee moved to a calculation based on a percentage of a church’s non-designated receipts. The change was an attempt to recognize that a congregation’s ability to give is probably better represented by income than by the number of members. Most congregations have not had difficulty paying the annual assessment, but a few that have struggled financially have not paid their assessment from time to time. The Finance Committee sets the assessment figure, but the Trustees of Synod are responsible for collecting assessments. In 2015, the Synod forwarded a request to the Trustees asking us to forgive past assessments of a congregation that had been unable for a period of some years to pay its assessment. We found ourselves struggling with the question of whether this was even within our power, as the assessment is not determined by this Board. However, after consulting with the Finance Committee, we are ready to propose a policy to address such situations. Our thinking is that when a congregation is struggling financially, it

falls to the congregation's presbytery to give assistance and oversight. Several of us have seen this happen in our respective presbyteries. So it makes sense to us that when denominational assessments cannot be paid, the presbytery should be the first line of defense. We therefore ask the Synod to adopt the following recommendation as a policy for this Board:

That at their discretion, the Trustees of Synod can forgive any or all outstanding assessments of a congregation, provided that the congregation's presbytery:

- (1) certifies that the congregation is facing a real need, and
- (2) contributes significantly towards relief of the congregation's outstanding assessments.

Finance:

We ask that the following items be referred to the Committee on Finance:

- a. That the Treasurer's Report for the year ended December 31, 2017 be received.
- b. That the Unallocated Denominational Office financial report for 2017 be received and that the 2019 proposed budget be approved.
- c. That boards, agencies, and committees of Synod be notified that the Synod mileage reimbursement rate is the IRS rate as of the date of travel. Also, individuals traveling for boards and committees should make every effort to use the least expensive methods possible for traveling to and from meetings.

Nominations:

We are nominating Marlin Klingensmith, Nathan Anseth, John Duke, and Larry Gladfelter for election to the class of 2021; and Cheryl Hemphill and Joel Silverman to fill Shawn Stickel's unexpired term in the class of 2020.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod approve the following policy statement for this Board: "At their discretion, the Trustees of Synod can forgive any or all outstanding assessments of a congregation, provided that the congregation's presbytery: certifies that the congregation is facing a real need; and contributes significantly towards relief of the congregation's outstanding assessments."

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan Anseth (2018, 1st Term)
James McFarland (2020)
Joseph Comanda (2019, 2nd Term)
Stanley McKenzie (2019, 1st Term)
Thomas Fisher (2019, 2nd Term)
David Schaefer (2018, 1st Term)
Marlin Klingensmith (2018, 1st Term)
Shawn Stickel (2020, 2nd Term)
David McCune (2020, 1st Term)

Financial Statements
TRUSTEES OF THE SYNOD OF THE
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF NORTH AMERICA
DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

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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, 2017 and 2016, and the related statements of activities 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, implementation, 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, 2017 and 2016, 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 PC

Wexford, Pennsylvania

May 17, 2018

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

	Dec. 31, 2017	Dec. 31, 2016
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Current Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 933,629	\$ 944,403
Investments, at fair value	18,084,083	15,766,932
Receivables	41,716	44,437
Building loans receivable, current portion	153,224	87,569
General mortgages receivable, current portion	25,537	56,905
Accrued investment income receivable	42,295	41,917
Inventories	228,307	228,670
Prepaid expenses	4,351	14,859
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Current Assets	19,513,142	17,185,692
Property and Equipment, net	1,336,657	1,415,987
Other Assets:		
Building loans receivable, net of current portion	940,368	1,016,403
General mortgages receivable, net of current portion	739,124	815,387
Deferred student aid receivable	1,430	1,430
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Other Assets	1,680,922	1,833,220
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 22,530,721</u>	<u>\$ 20,434,899</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities:		
Payables and accrued expenses	\$ 399,062	\$ 396,906
Charitable remainder trust and gift annuities payable	129,341	125,000
Custodial funds	3,416,687	2,974,580
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Liabilities	3,945,090	3,496,486
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted	198,929	120,364
Temporarily restricted	7,075,920	6,579,880
Permanently restricted	11,310,782	10,238,169
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Net Assets	18,585,631	16,938,413
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 22,530,721</u>	<u>\$ 20,434,899</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenues:				
Net gain on investments	\$ 229,802	\$ 243,508	\$ 1,507,738	\$ 1,981,048
RP Missions & Ministries	132,881	282,960	-	415,841
Other contributions	93,932	1,756,348	9,350	1,859,630
Bequests	-	76,800	-	76,800
Building loans interest	-	39,137	-	39,137
Sales of publications	-	314,831	-	314,831
Tuition, fees and assessments	182,116	923,379	-	1,105,495
Rental income	-	74,500	-	74,500
Other income	6,000	101,528	-	107,528
Net assets released from restrictions	3,761,426	(3,316,951)	(444,475)	-
Total Revenue and Support	4,406,157	496,040	1,072,613	5,974,810
Expenses:				
Education & Publication Board	458,317	-	-	458,317
Geneva College	241,992	-	-	241,992
Home Mission Board	134,913	-	-	134,913
Pension Board	72,536	-	-	72,536
RP Global Missions	759,174	-	-	759,174
RP Theological Seminary	2,036,454	-	-	2,036,454
RP Woman's Association	104,033	-	-	104,033
Synod operations	282,953	-	-	282,953
Trustees office	237,220	-	-	237,220
Total Expenses	4,327,592	-	-	4,327,592
Change in Net Assets	78,565	496,040	1,072,613	1,647,218
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	120,364	6,579,880	10,238,169	16,938,413
Net Assets - End of Year	<u>\$ 198,929</u>	<u>\$7,075,920</u>	<u>\$11,310,782</u>	<u>\$ 18,585,631</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenues:				
Net gain on investments	\$ 223,938	\$ 81,534	\$ 536,218	\$ 841,690
RP Missions and Ministries	163,100	316,000	-	479,100
Other contributions	97,998	1,263,967	31,640	1,393,605
Bequests	-	22,819	-	22,819
Building loans interest	-	41,608	-	41,608
Sales of publications	-	360,744	-	360,744
Tuition, fees and assessments	166,195	921,331	-	1,087,526
Rental income	8,700	79,344	-	88,044
Other income	-	114,557	-	114,557
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>3,402,152</u>	<u>(2,934,133)</u>	<u>(468,019)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Revenue and Support	4,062,083	267,771	99,839	4,429,693
Expenses:				
Education and Publication Board	551,008	-	-	551,008
Geneva College	235,999	-	-	235,999
Home Mission Board	105,402	-	-	105,402
Pension Board	84,059	-	-	84,059
RP Global Missions	640,619	-	-	640,619
RP Theological Seminary	1,941,914	-	-	1,941,914
RP Woman's Association	104,545	-	-	104,545
Synod operations	227,277	-	-	227,277
Trustees office	234,473	-	-	234,473
Total Expenses	<u>4,125,296</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,125,296</u>
Change in Net Assets	(63,213)	267,771	99,839	304,397
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	<u>183,577</u>	<u>6,312,109</u>	<u>10,138,330</u>	<u>16,634,016</u>
Net Assets - End of Year	<u><u>\$ 120,364</u></u>	<u><u>\$6,579,880</u></u>	<u><u>\$10,238,169</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 16,938,413</u></u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	Dec. 31 2017	Dec. 31 2016
Cash Flows from Operating Activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 1,647,218	\$ 304,397
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating act.:		
Depreciation	85,190	86,765
Contributions rest. for long-term purposes	(9,350)	(31,640)
Net gain on investments	(1,981,048)	(841,690)
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Receivables	2,721	(39,906)
Accrued investment income receivable	(378)	(2,441)
Inventories	363	(19,208)
Prepaid expenses	10,508	(14,859)
Payables and accrued expenses	2,156	38,653
Annuities	4,341	(26,757)
Custodial funds	442,107	30,183
	(1,443,390)	(820,900)
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Act.	203,828	(516,503)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities:		
Purchases of property and equipment	(5,860)	(26,433)
Proceeds from sales of investments	8,106,974	6,192,342
Purchases of investments	(8,443,077)	(5,998,964)
Principal receipts on building loans receivable	210,380	125,341
Building loans receivable issued	(200,000)	-
Principal receipts on general mortgages rec.	107,631	74,819
General mortgages receivable issued	-	(219,500)
	(223,952)	147,605
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Investing Act.	(223,952)	147,605
Cash Flows from Financing Activities:		
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	9,350	31,640
	9,350	31,640
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Financing Activities	9,350	31,640
Net Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(10,774)	(337,258)
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Beginning of Year	944,403	1,281,661
Cash and Cash Equivalents - End of Year	\$ 933,629	\$ 944,403

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Organization Background—The Synod is the highest court in the denomination known as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. The Board of Trustees (“the Trustees”) is the governing body within the Synod. The Trustees hold title to property and are responsible to the Synod for managing and reporting on the financial condition of the denomination. The financial activities include various boards and committees of the Synod. Congregations and domestic and foreign missions are sanctioned by the 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 the Synod’s various boards and committees.

Although sanctioned by the Synod, congregations and mission churches (domestic and foreign) 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 foreign mission fields are charged to expense in the accompanying financial statements.

Basis of Accounting—The financial statements for the Trustees have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

Basis of Presentation—The Trustees are required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets.

Net assets are classified as follows:

- *Unrestricted net assets* are neither permanently nor temporarily restricted by donor- or grantor-imposed restrictions.
- *Temporarily restricted net assets* are inflows of assets whose use by the Trustees is limited by donor- or grantor-imposed stipulations that either expire by passage of time or can be fulfilled and removed by ac-

tions of the Trustees pursuant to the stipulations.

- *Permanently restricted net assets* are inflows of assets subject to donor- or grantor-imposed stipulations that they 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 three 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—The amounts for all funds of the Trustees are pooled and are allocated for financial reporting purposes based on assets (other than cash and investments), liabilities and net assets. Investments are presented in the financial statements at fair value based on quoted prices in active markets. Net realized gain or loss on the disposition of investments is the difference between the proceeds received and the average cost of investments sold. Substantially all investments are pooled and 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, 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, 2017 and 2016 approximate fair values because of the relatively short time between the origination of the instrument and its

expected realization / liquidation.

Receivables—Receivables consist of the contributions received after year-end that were postmarked before year end. As such, 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) or net realizable value.

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 7- 40 years for buildings and improvements, and 5-10 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 \$5,000 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 groups, congregations, and individuals within the denomination. Typically, general mortgages are granted to congregations, pastors and employees of the Synod for the purchase or building of churches, houses, camps 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, less an allowance for loan losses and net deferred loan fees and unearned discounts. The loans are collateralized by a first mortgage on the property and a title policy is required showing the Trustees as the valid first lien on the property. Certain insurance coverage is required and the policies must name the Trustees as additional insured. 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.

Loans are placed on nonaccrual status when management believes, after considering economic conditions and collection efforts that the loans are impaired or collection of interest is doubtful. Uncollected interest previously accrued is charged off or an allowance is established by a charge to interest income. Interest income on nonaccrual loans is recognized only to the extent

cash payments are received. No loan loss allowance is deemed necessary as of December 31, 2017 and 2016.

Deferred Student Aid Receivable—Deferred student aid receivable is recorded as a deferred charge and is amortized to expense, usually over a period of five years from the date that the graduate seminarian begins service for the Synod. Repayment of advances must be made only if the student or graduate does not provide service to the Synod.

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 unrestricted net assets 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 beneficiaries 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. 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 reinvest the dividend. The dividend is

calculated according to the spending policy set by the Trustees, which is currently 4.5% of the 12-quarter average market value, ending with the prior year.

Contributions—All donor-restricted support is reported as an increase in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets depending on the nature of the restriction. When a restriction expires (that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished), temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets 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 unrestricted support.

Contributed Services—During the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, 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 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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.

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 measurement. 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, 2017:

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Total
ASSETS:				
Money market	\$ 405,372	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 405,372
US Government Agency securities	40,162	-	-	40,162
US Treasury notes	3,338,792	-	-	3,338,792
Common stocks	12,331,595	-	-	12,331,595
Corporate bonds	-	1,968,162	-	1,968,162
Total	\$ 16,115,921	\$ 1,968,162	\$ -	\$ 18,084,083
LIABILITIES:				
Annuities Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 129,341	\$ 129,341

As of December 31, 2016:

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Total
ASSETS:				
Money market	\$ 431,058	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 431,058
US Government Agency securities	57,581	-	-	57,581
US Treasury notes	2,771,874	-	-	2,771,874
Common stocks	10,959,354	-	-	10,959,354
Corporate bonds	-	1,547,065	-	1,547,065
Total	\$ 14,219,867	\$ 1,547,065	\$ -	\$ 15,766,932
LIABILITIES:				
Annuities Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000

The Trustees' determined the general mortgages and building loans receivables were level II assets. As detailed in Note 8, certain of the above investments have been pledged as collateral for various purposes.

NOTE 3 - GENERAL MORTGAGES AND BUILDING LOANS RECEIVABLE

General mortgages receivable are due over periods from 1 to 20 years through July 2036 and bear annual interest primarily from 3.35% to 7.5%

The general mortgages receivable were due from the following groups:

	<u>Dec. 31, 2017</u>	<u>Dec. 31, 2016</u>
Congregations of the denomination	\$ 414,539	\$ 451,729
Ministers and members of the denomination	350,122	404,559
Boards and agencies	<u>-</u>	<u>16,004</u>
Total	<u>\$ 764,661</u>	<u>\$ 872,292</u>

The aggregate annual maturities of general mortgages receivable as of December 31, 2017 are as follows:

<u>Years Ending December 31,</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2018	\$ 25,537
2019	26,406
2020	26,884
2021	22,737
2022	23,191
Thereafter	<u>639,906</u>
Total	<u>\$ 764,661</u>

Substantially all of the building loans receivable as of December 31, 2017 have been granted by the Building Loan Committee at interest rates of 0% to 4% through September 2037 for the purchase or construction of residences or church buildings. The receivable balances for congregations as of December 31, 2017 and 2016 were \$1,093,592 and \$1,103,972, respectively.

The aggregate annual maturities of building loans receivable as of December 31, 2017 are as follows:

<u>Years Ending December 31,</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2018	\$ 153,224
2019	131,112
2020	122,009
2021	107,742
2022	87,771
Thereafter	<u>491,734</u>
Total	<u>\$ 1,093,592</u>

The following tables present informative data by class of financing receivable regarding their age and interest accrual status as of December 31, 2017 and 2016.

	Number of Loans	Current	Past Due			Total Financing Receivables	Total Financing Receivables on Nonaccrual Status	Status of Interest Accruals
			30-59 Days	60-89 Days	=/>90 Days			
December 31, 2017								
General Mortgages	17	\$ 764,661	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 764,661	\$ -	\$ -
Building Loans	23	1,093,592	-	-	-	1,093,592	-	-
Total	40	\$ 1,858,253	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,858,253	\$ -	\$ -

	Number of Loans	Current	Past Due			Total Financing Receivables	Total Financing Receivables on Nonaccrual Status	Status of Interest Accruals
			30-59 Days	60-89 Days	=/>90 Days			
December 31, 2016								
General Mortgages	17	\$ 866,979	\$ 759	\$ 759	\$ 3,795	\$ 872,292	\$ -	\$ -
Building Loans	21	1,097,761	757	757	4,697	1,103,972	-	-
Total	38	\$ 1,964,740	\$1,516	\$1,516	\$8,492	\$1,976,264	\$ -	\$ -

NOTE 4—PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

The components of property and equipment are as follows:

	Dec. 31, 2017	Dec. 31, 2016
Land, building and improvements	\$ 2,619,245	\$ 2,619,245
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	255,732	249,872
Total	2,874,977	2,869,117
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(1,538,320)	(1,453,130)
Property and Equipment, net	<u>\$ 1,336,657</u>	<u>\$ 1,415,987</u>

Depreciation expense for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 was \$85,190 and \$86,765 respectively.

NOTE 5—BENEFIT PLANS

The Organization sponsors a defined contribution plan called "Plan B" that covers substantially all ministers, missionaries, and employees of the Synod. Plan B does not allow for participant contributions. For each plan year, employing congregations and boards of Synod are recommended to contribute an amount approved by the Synod annually. The recommended minimum contribution was \$4,200 per employee for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016. Full-time employees become eligible on the first day of work and are automatically vested. Total pension expense for Plan B contributions for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 were \$0 and \$74,069, respectively. During 2016, the Trustees decided to phase-out contributions to Plan B. All contributions to the plan ceased as of October 31, 2016.

A defined contribution 403(b) plan was established with a third party sponsor (Clergy Advantage) on November 1, 2016. The plan provides all ministers, missionaries and employees of the Synod the option of salary deferral and direct rollover of funds from Plan B to the 403(b) plan and the option of opening individual retirement arrangements. All 403(b) employer contributions are immediately vested upon contribution. The Synod recommends each congregation contribute a minimum of \$4,200 per employee. Total employer contributions to the 403(b) plan was \$106,376 and \$33,590 for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively, and is recorded within the statement of activities.

NOTE 6—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, 2017:

	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	Permanently Restricted Net Assets	Total Endowment Net Assets
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ -	\$ 8,460,957	\$ 8,460,957
Board-designated endowment funds	334,400	-	334,400
Total funds	<u>\$ 334,400</u>	<u>\$ 8,460,957</u>	<u>\$ 8,795,357</u>

Endowment net asset composition by type of fund as of December 31, 2016:

	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	Permanently Restricted Net Assets	Total Endowment Net Assets
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ -	\$ 7,650,534	\$ 7,650,534
Board-designated endowment funds	303,628	-	303,628
Total funds	<u>\$ 303,628</u>	<u>\$ 7,650,534</u>	<u>\$ 7,954,162</u>

Changes in endowment net assets as of December 31, 2017 are as follows:

	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	Permanently Restricted Net Assets	Total Endowment Net Assets
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Endowment net assets, beginning of year	\$ 303,628	\$ 7,650,534	\$ 7,954,162
Contributions	-	9,350	9,350
Investment income	20,862	525,672	546,534
Net appreciation (depreciation)	23,854	601,042	624,896
Transfers	-	25,000	25,000
Amounts appropriated for expenditure	<u>(13,944)</u>	<u>(350,641)</u>	<u>(364,585)</u>
Endowment net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 334,400</u>	<u>\$ 8,460,957</u>	<u>\$ 8,795,357</u>

Changes in endowment net assets as of December 31, 2016 are as follows:

	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	Permanently Restricted Net Assets	Total Endowment Net Assets
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Endowment net assets, beginning of year	\$301,619	\$ 7,567,173	\$ 7,868,792
Contributions	-	31,640	31,640
Investment income	7,024	176,238	183,262
Net appreciation (depreciation)	8,929	224,030	232,959
Transfers	-	641	641
Amounts appropriated for expenditure	<u>(13,944)</u>	<u>(349,188)</u>	<u>(363,132)</u>
Endowment net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 303,628</u>	<u>\$ 7,650,534</u>	<u>\$ 7,954,162</u>

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 aftercost 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 have a policy of appropriating for distribution each year 4.5% of its endowment fund's average fair value of the 12 quarters for the previous year through the calendar year end of the prior fiscal year for which the distribution is made. In establishing this policy, the Trustees considered the long-term expected return on its investment assets, the nature and duration of the individual endowment 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 endowment 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 endowment assets as well as to provide additional real growth through investment return.

NOTE 7 - NET GAIN ON INVESTMENTS

The Trustees reported the following investment activity related to the pooled investments:

	Dec. 31, 2017	Dec. 31, 2016
Dividend income	\$ 408,959	\$ 269,630
Money market interest income	1,912	621
General mortgage interest income	37,005	33,016
Federal Home Loan Bank income	7,688	9,625
PNC interest income, net	695	912
M&T Bank fees	(72,415)	(69,712)
Net realized gain	664,069	252,070
Net unrealized gain (loss)	933,135	345,528
Net gain on investments	1,981,048	841,690
Less: Denomination Office Expenses allocated	(229,802)	(223,938)
Amount subjected to pooled investment dividend payout	<u>\$ 1,751,246</u>	<u>\$ 617,752</u>

NOTE 8—ASSETS PLEDGED AS COLLATERAL

The Trustees have pledged specific investments with a market value of \$252,559 as of December 31, 2017 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"). The underlying debt had a balance of \$922,191 and \$1,136,819 as of December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively, and matures on April 1, 2026. The Trustees are recipients of RPWA's annual audited financial statements and no payment on the guarantee is expected by the Trustees.

NOTE 9—CONCENTRATIONS and 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 to \$1.50 per printed book, and either 10% or 17% per eBook sold.

NOTE 10—SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Management has evaluated subsequent events through May 17, 2018, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, and determined that no material subsequent events have occurred.

Elder Paul Hemphill (chairman) presented the Report of the Committee on Finance. As the Committee came to its recommendations, Synod reached an order-of-the-day (break). Synod enjoyed a break for twenty minutes (10:30-10:50 a.m.). The Court resumed with the singing of Psalm 50B. Personal privilege was given to Mr. Baumgardner to express thanks to God that county authorities, today, approved the variance for the Clarinda RP Church facility; Mr. Baumgardner praised God in prayer. Resumption of Finance Committee Report:

Recommendation 1, was discussed. Motion to lay on the table, to entertain a substitute; the motion to lay on the table carried. This substitute motion was offered: That Synod's assessment for 2019 be set at 2.2%, based on non-designated receipts in 2018, 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%). Discussion ensued; substitute carried. Recommendations 2-6 together: approved. Recommendations 7-8 together: approved (standing vote). Recommendation 9: approved (standing vote). Recommendation 10: approved. Recommendation 11: approved. In keeping with Recommendation 11, Guy Curran prayed, thanking God for bountiful provisions to/through the RPCNA. The Report as a whole was adopted and is as follows:

2018 Report of the Committee on Finance

Summary. The purpose of Synod's Committee on Finance ("Finance Committee") can be summarized in three categories:

- 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. This is done by proposing 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 efforts in His Kingdom. Congregations gain from participation in these works, whether by praying, volunteering time, or giving. An important

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 voluntarily given 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 prepares proposed allocations 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 made up of (1) members by position (*ex-officio*, voting), (2) members elected by Synod, and (3) members appointed by each presbytery.

The remainder of this Report has been divided into five sections: (1) summary of the financial results of the calendar year ended December 31, 2017; (2) discussion of various considerations effecting 2018 and subsequent years; (3) reminder regarding various policies carrying forward from prior years; (4) nominations; and (5) listing of the Finance Committee's proposed recommendations for Synod's vote.

The Finance Committee is thankful for each of you and your congregation's prayer and support for the missions and ministries of the RPCNA. When congregational leadership shares the vision of what the denomination is doing, congregation members are reached and motivated to join in 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.

2017 Summary

As we have reviewed the work that the Lord is doing through the RPCNA, we continue to be thankful for His provision. The 2017 receipts for RPM&M totaled \$416,000—a decrease of \$63k from 2016, but \$15k over the 2017 goal of \$400k. As mentioned in last year's report, Synod should note that about \$70k of the 2016 RPM&M receipts and \$63k of 2017 RPM&M receipts represented

special one-time gifts that may not occur again in subsequent years (\$402k and \$353k were received from congregations in 2016 and 2017, respectively). Synod should also note that 32 congregations did not contribute to RPM&M this year (up from twenty in 2016). Only one presbytery (the Pacific Coast Presbytery) had contributions to RPM&M from all of its congregations in 2017. This was the tenth year of the "Step-Up" plan, with \$30,000 (including \$14,000 rolling over from 2016) allocated using the Step-Up percentages.

Please take 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/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, which we view as "necessary" or "required responsibilities" of the Synod, have been recently funded by assessments. The committees designated as "Ministry" committees have received their funding from a combination of Synod's assessment and RPM&M allocation.

Current and Future Considerations

The Finance Committee deeply thanks the congregations and donors to the boards and agencies of the RPCNA and also those who give to RPM&M. 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 improved dramatically. 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 fund all causes of the RPCNA but is especially important to those that are less "high profile" to Reformed Presbyterian members.

Several of our boards and agencies have exciting new prospects; these new opportunities of course require financial resources to be applied. The Finance Committee tries to balance the needs of the RPCNA, considering the individual fundraising of boards and agencies that far outstrips the fundraising of RPM&M. Our recommended allocations for 2019 reflect this in part. We continue to ask that Synod would direct boards and agencies of the church which

receive money from RPM&M to include estimated totals of direct giving from Reformed Presbyterian congregations and members in their annual requests for funding to the Finance Committee of Synod. RPM&M gives proportionately more to those boards and agencies that do not separately raise funds.

The Finance Committee emphasizes the cooperative nature of funding through RPM&M against the inherent competition that results from separate fundraising. To that end we are contacting congregations, asking that they give a greater amount directly to RPM&M for allocation ultimately by Synod.

The Finance Committee met at the Reformed Presbyterian Home on May 11, 2018, and a portion of this meeting included representatives from most of the boards and agencies of Synod. We will meet as needed during Synod.

We are looking to raise \$445,000 for RPM&M in 2019 (2018's goal was \$440k). In order to meet most board and agency requests, \$530,500 would need to be raised. Notice that we are recommending that the minimum pension contribution be increased to \$4,300 in 2019 (the 2018 minimum was \$4,200).

The Finance Committee has often considered how to better fund the missions and ministries of the RPCNA. The 2011 and 2012 Synods adopted the voluntary Targets of Honor formula. The formula is designed to produce roughly a tithe on non-designated receipts of the congregations of the RPCNA. We again recommend that congregations should aim to 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 charged to each congregation should be included for purposes of the Target of Honor formula).

Targets of Honor encourages fairer funding of the missions and ministries of the RPCNA. But beyond fairness, we want to thank the congregations that give more than their fair share as measured by the Targets of Honor guideline; for these congregations, we ask that you please do not reduce your generosity. The Targets of Honor is an aid to show what congregations ought to do but is not meant to restrain generosity.

We realize that many congregations donate directly to boards and agencies. But our position has always been 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.

Our Committee has noticed that several presbyteries have continued to appoint the same representatives year in and year out. While these representatives' experience is invaluable and greatly appreciated, we do want to remind Synod that one of the original purposes of including the representatives from each presbytery was to provide opportunities for less experienced members to learn about the denomination's finances and activities, allowing them to more actively promote the missions and ministries of the denomination in their individual congregations and presbyteries. While each presbytery is free to choose whom they prefer to be their representative to this committee, we considered it worthwhile to include this reminder in our report.

The 2018 report from the Trustees of Synod includes a recommendation to establish a policy granting the Trustees the power to forgive outstanding assessments of a congregation, at the Trustees discretion. Our Committee is in favor of the Trustees' proposal in this regard.

Our Committee realizes that assessments are more difficult to cover at lower levels of income. As a result, we have proposed that the assessment base be a percentage of the prior year's non-designated receipts; ability to give is more related to that number than to number of communicant members. As the current reserve held in the Synod Operating Fund (built up over the past several years) is expected to be depleted in the next two or three years (due to projected expenses exceeding projected assessments), the total assessment we are proposing for 2019 is 2.5% (2018 is 2.0%), based on 2018 non-designated receipts (please note that the assessment for 2018 and proposed for 2019 for our Canadian congregations is 1.25% and 1.75% respectively, as those congregations are exempted from the 0.75% pension fund assessment). The proposed split for the 2019 assessment is as follows: 1.75% to Synod Operations and 0.75% to the Pension Fund. For 2019, we have proposed allocations from Synod Operations of \$7,000 for Church History Committee, \$40,000 for the Graduate Study Committee, \$15,000 for Vital Churches Committee, \$12,000 for the Youth Ministries Committee, and \$10,000 for the RP Global Alliance.

We expect no estate gifts in 2018. In keeping with Synod-approved policy, one-half of unrestricted undesignated gifts to the denomination will be added to the funds functioning as 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, which is estimated to be \$182,000 in 2018 and \$168,000 in 2019. We continue to follow the recommendation of Synod's Trustees in 2008, designating that Geneva College receive approximately 50% of the MacLaughlin Trust income, thus \$91,000 in 2018 and \$84,000 in 2019.

Each board and agency has a compelling story to tell and many opportunities to address. God is using our small denomination, with limited resources, to accomplish many things for His glory. We have carefully considered all requests, and have sought to provide the essential levels of funding each ministry needs (through the RPM&M, Step-Up giving, and Unrestricted Undesignated Fund grants). We have set a 2019 "base" goal of \$445,000 (the 2018 "base" goal is set at \$440,000) for RPM&M. Since the church has met and exceeded the RPM&M budget nine of the past ten years, we are cautiously optimistic that the 2018 \$440,000 goal will be met and that the 2019 goal is also attainable. It is essential that each member of Synod take home to his congregation the message of the importance of contributing to RPM&M on some level as the Lord leads. We are proposing a 2019 Step-Up plan as well, to \$500,000.

We note that the total amount the Finance Committee is being asked to grant from RPM&M to the Central and South America Committee (CASA) and the East Asia Commission (EAC) together is comparable to the amount being directed to RP Global Missions. In effect, our Committee is now making decisions about funding priorities among different potential global mission fields. It seems more appropriate to us that such determinations be made by the Global Missions board. Our Committee respectfully suggests that the Synod develop a plan to integrate or combine these ministries under the auspices of the Global Missions board, so that the prioritization of resources for global missions can be united in one place. We have included a recommendation below regarding this matter.

We are thankful to God and to our members and congregations that RPM&M goals have mostly been exceeded in recent years. Please challenge your congregations to significantly increase giving to RPM&M, in 2018 and in 2019. As the RPM&M goal is exceeded, the Step-Up goals will enable boards and agencies to address the additional projects and opportunities they are promoting, both to us and to the Synod.

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.
4. In order to better formulate recommendations for Synod in 2019 (related to the 2020 budgets), please submit all requests for Unrestricted Undesignated Funds to the Trustees of Synod's office by April 15, 2019.

Nominations

David Tweed has served faithfully on this Committee for his first term as a "Member Elected by Synod," and we recommend that David be nominated for his second term for the class of 2021 (members elected by Synod are allowed to serve only two consecutive terms on this Committee).

Recommendations

1. That Synod's assessment for 2019 be set at 2.5%, based on non-designated receipts in 2018, as reported to the Stated Clerk, with 1.75% for Synod's Operations Fund and 0.75% for the Pension Fund Current Account (for Canadian congregations, assessment is 1.75%).
2. That, for the year ending December 31, 2017, the Treasurer's Report, as prepared by the Denominational Treasurer, and the Independent Auditor's Report of the Trustees of Synod, as prepared by Holsinger, be received as distributed and that the Audit Report be printed in the *Minutes of Synod*.
3. That the Unallocated Denominational Office financial report for 2017 be received and that the 2019 proposed budget be approved.
4. That boards, agencies, and committees of Synod be notified that the Synod mileage reimbursement rate is the IRS rate as of the date of travel. Also,

individuals traveling for boards and committees should make every effort to use the least expensive methods possible for traveling to and from meetings.

5. That 50% of all Unrestricted Undesignated bequests received in 2019 be deposited in the E&P endowment fund.

6. That Synod set the minimum contribution for the employer of each participant in the Pension Plan at \$4,300 for 2019. Congregations should remember that this is a minimum; you are free and encouraged to contribute more.

7. That \$168,000 from the 2019 income of the Cecil J.S. MacLaughlin Trust (Unrestricted Undesignated Funds), \$0 from the remaining Unrestricted Undesignated Funds, and contributions to RPM&M in 2019 up to \$445,000 be distributed as reflected in the table below:

Agency	2019 RPM&M, MacLaughlin, and Assessments Requests and Associated Grants										RPM&M
	2019 RPM&M		2019 MacLaughlin Trust		Assessment	2019 Total		RPM&M		Step Up To \$500K	
	Request	Grant	Request	Grant	Estimate	Request	Grant	Request	Grant		
Synod Ops.					203,000	203,000	203,000	203,000	203,000		
Pension					79,500	79,500	79,500	79,500	79,500		
E&P	16,000	10,000	84,000	84,000		100,000	94,000	94,000	94,000	5.0%	5.0%
EAC	44,500	35,000				44,500	35,000	35,000	35,000	10.0%	10.0%
CASA	30,000	25,000				30,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	5.0%	5.0%
HMB	85,000	70,000				85,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	25.0%	25.0%
RPGM	90,000	70,000				90,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	25.0%	25.0%
V.C. Grants	25,000	20,000				25,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	5.0%	5.0%
RPTS	95,000	85,000				95,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	10.0%	10.0%
Geneva	50,000	40,000	84,000	84,000		134,000	124,000	124,000	124,000	10.0%	10.0%
RPWA	95,000	90,000				95,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	5.0%	5.0%
Total Budget	530,500	445,000	168,000	168,000	282,500	981,000	895,500	895,500	895,500	100.00%	100.00%

That Synod approve the distribution of 2019 contributions to RPM&M from \$445,000 to \$500,000 in accord with the Step-Up percentage and amount shown in the right-hand column of the chart above. Any RPM&M contributions in 2019 that exceed \$500,000 will be held for strategic allocation by Synod in 2020.

8. That every session promote RPCNA missions and ministries work in their congregation, explaining the needs and promoting support of the RPCNA by their congregation and by individuals. Every session should also instruct

congregation budget preparers to include RPM&M as a line item in their budget, and 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.

9. That Synod request the RP Global Missions Board to (a) consider whether the activities currently overseen by the East Asia Commission (EAC) and Central and South America Committee (CASA) should in some way be integrated or combined under the oversight of the RP Global Missions Board, (b) develop a plan to transition the oversight (working with EAC and CASA to develop such a plan) to the RP Global Missions Board (or provide rationale as to why such an integration is not prudent), and (c) report back to Synod in 2019 regarding its findings and progress.

10. That following the adoption of this report, Synod rise for prayer to give thanks to 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

Midwest — Mike McDaniel

Pacific Coast — Paul Hemphill (Chairman)

St. Lawrence — Matthew Sloots

Members by position (ex-officio voting)

Chairman, Busn. of Synod Comm. — Joel Wood

President, Trustees of Synod — Tom Fisher

Denominational Treasurer — Jim McFarland

Consult. member, Controller, non voting — Vida Brown

Members elected by Synod

Barry VanHorn (1st term — 2019)

David Tweed (1st term — 2018)

Ray Morton (2nd term — 2020)

Charles Brown (asst. clerk) presented his Report on the Records of the Presbyteries. The Assistant Clerk's Report on the Records of Presbyteries was approved and printed here.

2018 Report of the Assistant Clerk on Records of Presbyteries

Minutes from seven presbyteries and three commissions were submitted for review. Three readers were assigned to each set of minutes by the 2017 Synod moderator, the readers as follows:

Alleghenies: Brian E. Coombs, William McFarland, Jack Rhoda

Atlantic: Vince Ward, Phil Beard, Richard Knodel

Great Lakes / Gulf: Ralph Joseph, Tom Fisher, Glen A. Chin

Japan: Martin Blocki, Butch Shoop, David Robson

Midwest: Katsunori Endo, John Mitchell, Joe Worsham

Pacific Coast: Greg Stiner, Mike Tabon, Greg Moberg

St. Lawrence: Nathan Eshelman, Steven Work, Phillip Shafer

EA Commission: J. Bruce Martin, Jack Baumgardner, Jim Ritchhart

South Asia Commission: Adam Kuehner, Robert Pinkerton, Robert McKissick

Pakistan Commission: Renwick Adams, Mark England, Micah Ramsey

Electronic copies of these minutes were reviewed by the readers in the weeks leading up to this meeting. Hard copies of these minutes were presented to the assistant clerk at this meeting of the Synod. The minutes of the seven presbyteries and the three commissions were reviewed, and nothing was found contrary to the law and order of the church.

Respectfully submitted,

TE Charles A. Brown

Assistant Clerk of Synod

The Moderator announced Committees to Review Presbytery Records (due by mid-2019). These will be working with the assistant clerk in the Spring of 2019:

Alleghenies: Dennis Olson (Seattle), Joe Rizzo (Broomall), Micah Stegall (Lawrence)

Atlantic: Phil Duguid (Topeka), Matt Filbert (Beaver Falls), Kihei Takiura (Okamoto-Keiyaku)

Great-Lakes/Gulf: Mike DeSocio (White Lake), Nate Anseth (Phoe-

nix), Jonathan Haney (Manhattan)

Japan: Peter Robson (Rochester), Dave Carroll (Stillwater), Duran Perkins (Elkins Park)

Midwest: Mike Jessop (Elkins Park), Joel Butler (Pittsburgh), George Goerner (Rome/NY)

Pacific Coast: Sumito Sakai (Higashisuma), David Fitch (Walton), Mark Koller (Dallas)

St. Lawrence: Jonathan Trexler (RI), GPS (CP), Robert McKissick (Kokomo), Ryan Hemphill (Seattle)

EA Commission: Joe Allyn (Wichita), James Odom (Sparta), Scott Wilkinson (Kitchener)

Pakistan: Timothy Vincze (S.W. OH), Steve Rockhill (Bryan/TX), Tim Montgomery (Cambridge)

South Asia Commission: Ray Morton (Hetherton), Jeremy Nelson (Hazleton), Stan Copeland (MWP)

Return to Communication 18-2 (GLG re. Park City / Wichita): Mr. Phil Pockras stood to present a summary of this communication and its five recommendations (the steps). The Court amended Step 3, to remove its second part, which was moved, seconded, and carried. After more discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to refer this matter/communication to a judicial commission (of three members, to be appointed by our Moderator), to take action.

Paul Hemphill (chm.) presented the Report of Committee to Canvass 2017 Overture (re. Congregational Officers). The report consisted of relating these statistical counts: 75 session votes were cast, plus 6 provisional (which were not counted). 66 sessions voted in favor of the changes, while 9 sessions voted against changes. 301 elders voted (including 8 on provisional ballots); 278 voted in favor of the changes, while 23 elders voted against the changes. Note: *DCG* 7.13 reads, "No change shall be made in the fundamental law of the church until the proposed change has been sent down in overture and has been approved by two-thirds of all the sessions of the church (not including provisional sessions) that cast votes and a majority of the elders voting." The sessional vote being greater than 2/3 in favor and the elder vote being greater than half, the proposed changes to the *DCG* carry, so the clerk will work with Crown & Covenant Publications to update the

RPCNA Constitution. This Report as a whole was approved. The Moderator declared this now to be the law and order of the church.

James McFarland presented his Report as Stated Clerk. Sessions and presbyteries are urged to submit their statistical data in a timely, accurate manner. Corrections to this tabulation are to be made in the next two weeks through the supplied form. No recommendations. The Report as a whole was adopted and is printed here (timely corrections included).

Report of the RPCNA Stated Clerk as of December 31, 2017

MEMBERSHIP

	<u>12/31/2016</u>	<u>12/31/2017</u>
Communicant Members	5,074	5,122
Baptized Members	2,002	2,068
Total Members	7,076	7,190
Increases:		
By Baptism	159	169
By Profession of Faith	131	119
From Other RP Congregations	121	192
From Other Denominations	222	168
Other	100	33
Total Increase	733	681
Decreases:		
Deaths	62	39
To Other RP Congregations	159	165
To Other Denominations	215	208
Final Removal	180	117
Other	76	38
Total Decrease	692	567
Baptized Member becoming Communicant Member	81	74

CONGREGATIONS

Congregations	89	90
Mission Churches	9	9
Teaching Elders	170	175
Men Under Care of Presbyteries	53	45

Certified Eligible to Preach	10	10
Certified Eligible to Receive a Call	10	8
Ruling Elders	304	298
Deacons	251	248
Missionaries	8	8
Sabbath Worship Average Attendance	5,946	5,966

CONGREGATIONAL FINANCES

	12/31/2016	12/31/2017
Beginning Balances	5,955,473	5,356,359
Receipts	13,429,038	14,370,010
Disbursements		
Pastors Salaries and Comp.	5,888,930	5,919,809
RP Mission and Ministry	394,326	378,754
Other RP Works	832,038	824,593
External Ministries	316,029	375,686
Other	6,596,829	5,321,930
Total Disbursements	14,028,152	12,820,772
Transfers		(1,052,898)
Ending Balances	5,356,359	5,852,697
Other Assets	5,956,567	7,241,545

Congregations/Missions Organized or Received from other Denominations

Irvine RPC, CA	Pacific Coast	12/2017
Las Vegas M.C., NV	Pacific Coast	2017

Congregations/Missions Disorganized

Enid RPC, OK	Midwest	11/19/2017
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Names of Preaching Stations

Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship, Atlanta, GA		Great Lakes / Gulf
Harrisburg, PA	Atlantic	
San Antonio, TX	Midwest	11/9/2017

Vacant Congregations

Grace, State College, PA	Alleghenies
Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA	Alleghenies
Coldenham-Newburgh, NY	Atlantic
Dayton RP M.C., Dayton, TN	Great Lakes / Gulf
Pageland M.C., SC	Great Lakes / Gulf
Selma RPC, Alabama	Great Lakes / Gulf
Sparta RPC, IL	Great Lakes / Gulf
Sharon RPC, Morning Sun, IA	Midwest
Shawnee RPC, Shawnee, KS	Midwest
Las Vegas M.C., NV	Pacific Coast
Hudson-St. Lazare	St. Lawrence
Lisbon RPC, NY	St. Lawrence
Syracuse RPC, NY	St. Lawrence

Presbytery	Ministers					Congregations		
	2016 Total	2017 Total	Pastors	Other Church Works	Retired	Other	Congos.	Mission Churches
Alleghenies	45	47	18	8	16	5	15	1
Atlantic	12	12	8	0	1	3	9	0
Great Lakes/Gulf	44	42	22	3	17	0	19	4
Japan	6	6	6	0	0	0	4	1
Midwest	33	38	22	5	9	2	21	2
Pacific Coast	8	9	7	1	1	0	8	0
St. Lawrence	22	21	12	0	4	5	14	1
Totals	170	175	95	17	48	15	90	9

Ministers Ordained and Installed

Doug Chamberlain	Christian Heritage, Endicott, NY	Installed	04/01/2017
Marcelo Sanchez	CASA Comm. / Santiago, Chile	Rec'd/Ord.	04/2017
Steven Rockhill	Living Way M.C., Bryan, TX	Installed	06/21/2017
Lucas Hanna	First RPC Beaver Falls, PA	Installed	07/07/2017
Joseph Friedly	Tri-Lakes Reformed, CO	Ord./Inst.	07/14/2017
Brian Wright	Sterling RPC, KS	Ord./Inst.	08/09/2017

Ryan Bever	Grace & Truth, Harrisonburg, VA	Ord./Inst.	08/12/2017
Noah Bailey	Cambridge RPC, MA	Installed	09/09/2017
Daniel Hemken	Hebron RPC, KS	Installed	09/12/2017
Gary Gunn	Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA	Ordained	11/10/2017
Hsing Tang	Irvine, CA	Ord./Inst.	12/2017

Ministers Released from Pastoral Charges

Timothy McCracken	Fresno RPC, CA		02/24/2017
Lucas Hanna	Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA		03/29/2017
Greg Stiner	Sharon RPC, Morning Sun, IA		05/31/2017
Richard Johnston	Second RPC, Indianapolis, IN		07/02/2017
Noah Bailey	Enid RC, OK		07/09/2017
Daniel Hemken	Sparta RPC, IL		07/31/2017
Andrew Schep	Syracuse RPC, NY		09/28/2017
Adam Niess	Bloomington RPC, IN		12/18/2017

Stated Supplies

Jonathan Leach	San Antonio RP Preaching Station, TX
Greg Stiner	Shawnee RPC, KS
Frank Smith	Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship, GA (Preaching Station)
Ryan Bever	Grace and Truth, Harrisonburg, VA

Ministers Transferred to Other Denominations

Stephen Michaud	to OPC, Presbytery of NY and New England	10/28/2017
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Deaths of Ruling Elders

Joseph Copeland	Hays, Kansas	04/25/2017
John Schaefer	Eastvale RPC, Pennsylvania	05/06/2017
Richard Weir	Ridgefield Park RPC, New Jersey	05/12/2017
Seigo Kitani	Kasumigaoka RPC, Japan	12/23/2017

Theological Students

Caleb Allen	Alleghenies	
Matthew Bates	Alleghenies	11/2017

Timothy Bloedow	Alleghenies	
Mark Brown	Alleghenies	
Keith Dewell	Alleghenies	
Frank Du	Alleghenies	06/2017
Joe Dunlap	Alleghenies	
Jordan Feagley	Alleghenies	10/2017
Josh Giesler	Alleghenies	
Edgar Ibarra	Alleghenies	
Kevin Jia	Alleghenies	
Hao Lu	Alleghenies	
Chris Myers	Alleghenies	
Bryan Schneider	Alleghenies	
Jason Thoman	Alleghenies	
Jeremiah Wilson	Alleghenies	
Zachary Dotson	Atlantic	03/30/2017
Hunter Jackson	Atlantic	04/01/2017
Gabriel Wingfield	Atlantic	
Andrew Battiato	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Joel Hart	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Gary McNamee	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/02/2017
Zachary Smith	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Yusuke Hirata	Japan	
Hayato Ohara	Japan	
Dempei Takiura	Japan	
Keita Yasunaga	Japan	
Rob Haynes	Midwest	
Garrett Mann	Midwest	
Patrick McNeely	Midwest	
Romesh Prakashpalan	Midwest	
Tianzhixi (Tim) Yin	Midwest	
Jerry Foltz	Pacific Coast	
Sean Holm	Pacific Coast	
George Wallace	Pacific Coast	
Derek Baars	St. Lawrence	
Scott Doherty	St. Lawrence	

Dan DuPuis	St. Lawrence	
Jonathan Finlayson	St. Lawrence	
Chris Goerner	St. Lawrence	
Mark Goerner	St. Lawrence	
Reuben Lindeman	St. Lawrence	
Stephen Mulder	St. Lawrence	04/18/2017
Jeff Wallace	St. Lawrence	
Micah Wright	St. Lawrence	

Certified Eligible to Preach

Caleb Allen	Alleghenies	
Kevin Jia	Alleghenies	04/2017
Hao Lu	Alleghenies	11/2017
Bryan Schneider	Alleghenies	04/2017
Gabriel Wingfield	Atlantic	
Yusuke Hirata	Japan	
Hayato Ohara	Japan	07/10/2017
Keita Yasunaga	Japan	
Patrick McNeely	Midwest	
Romesh Prakashpalan	Midwest	11/09/2017

Certified Eligible to Receive a Call

Kevin Jia	Alleghenies	11/2017
Chris Myers	Alleghenies	11/2017
Gabriel Wingfield	Atlantic	10/28/2017
Donald Cassell	Great Lakes / Gulf	
Patrick McNeely	Midwest	
Derek Baars	St. Lawrence	10/10/2017
Scott Doherty	St. Lawrence	
Mark Goerner	St. Lawrence	

ADDENDA

Congregations/Missions Organized or Received from Other Denominations

Squamish Mission Church, B.C.

Pacific Coast 04/2018

Congregations/Missions Disorganized

Dayton RPMC, TN (to Preaching St.)	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/02/2018
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Ministers Ordained and/or Installed

Adam Niess	Lafayette RPC, IN	Inst.	02/02/2018
Sam Ketcham	Fresno RPC, CA	O/I	02/2018
Matthew Ma	North Hills RPC, PA	O/I	04/06/2018
Patrick McNeely	Squamish, B.C.	O/I	04/11/2018

Stated Supplies

Ian Wise	Pageland Mission Church, SC	Great Lakes / Gulf
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Ministers Released from Pastoral Charges

Ian Wise	Pageland Mission Church, SC	03/03/2018
Keith Evans	Lafayette RPC, IN	05/31/2018

Ministers Transferred

Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan	to South Asia Commission of Synod	03/03/2018
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Deaths of Teaching Elders

Marion McFarland	03/28/2018
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Theological Students Taken Under Care

Allen Blackwood	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/01/2018
Peter Zhang	Alleghenies	04/2018

Theological Students Certified Eligible to Preach

Timothy Bloedow	Alleghenies	04/2018
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Theological Students Certified Eligible to Receive a Call

Joel Hart	Great Lakes / Gulf	03/02/2018
Bryan Schneider	Alleghenies	04/2018

Respectfully submitted,

James K. McFarland, Stated Clerk

At noon, Pastor Takiura read Titus 1:5-9, and Pastor Jerry O'Neill led the Court in prayer. Synod sang Psalm 110C. Synod's manager gave announcements; Pastor Barry York asked personal privilege to remind us of the spiritual needs of our covenant children. Synod was led in a prayer of mid-day recess by Greg Moberg, then enjoyed lunch from 12:20-1:30 p.m.

Friday; June 29, 2018; 1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., Synod resumed deliberation with the singing of Psalm 149B; Elder Tim Montgomery prayed to constitute the Court. The attendance roll was passed. The minutes of the Friday morning session were read, improved, and approved (carried).

Mr. Jerry Milroy presented the Report of the Nominating Committee (elections results). 149 ballots were cast. Synod received the oral report and adopted this slate (carried). The Moderator announced membership of 18-2 Judicial Commission: Phil Pockras (Chm.); Mark England; Dale Koons. Mr. David Whitla was recognized, by rising applause, in his election to be the Professor of Church History at the RPTS, beginning 2019.

2018 Report of the Nominating Committee

The Report of the Nominating Committee of the 187th Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America is as follows. Those elected at this (2018) meeting of Synod are listed in bold and appear with their other respective board or committee members.

Boards:

Board of Corporators of Geneva College:

2019: Don Piper, TE (Pacific Coast, Trustee); Phil Pockras, TE (Great Lakes / Gulf)

2020: Bonnie Weir (Atlantic); David Schaefer, RE (Alleghenies); Matt Filbert, TE (at-large, Trustee)

2021: Chris Huggins (St. Lawrence); Shana Milroy (Midwest); Scott Reynolds (at-large Trustee)

2022: Bruce Backensto, TE (Alleghenies); Steve McMahan, RE (Midwest); Phil Duguid, RE (Midwest)

Board of Education and Publication:

C&C Publications co-directors: Drew (RE) and Lynne Gordon (2019)

2019: Eileen Bechtold; Kyle Borg, TE; Matt Filbert, TE

2020: Daniel Howe, TE; Stan McKenzie, TE

2021: Joseph Friedly, TE; Robert Bibby, RE; Betty Burger

RP Global Missions Board:

Heather Huizing, *executive director*; James McFarland, *ex officio*.

2019: Liz Noell; Dennis Olson, RE

2020: David Hanson, TE and *president*

2021: John Kim, RE

2022: James Faris, TE; A. McCullough

2023: S. McCullough, RE

2024: Vince Ward, TE

EA Commission: For commissioner names and classes, contact the clerk of Synod.

Board of Pension Trustees: A. Wayne Duffield, *executive secretary*; James McFarland, *treasurer*.

2019: Joe Allyn, TE; John Hanson, RE

2020: Chris Huggins; Matt Van Vlack

2021: David Merkel, RE; Peter Smith, TE

Board of Trustees of Synod:

2019: Tom Fisher, RE and *vice-president*; Joe Comanda, *deacon*; Stan McKenzie, TE

2020: David McCune, RE; James McFarland, RE

2020: Cheryl Hemphill

2021: Nathan Anseth, RE; John Duke, RE; Marlin Klingensmith, RE

Board of Trustees of the Theological Seminary:

2019: David Ashleigh, RE; Alan Noell, RE

2020: Aaron Goerner, TE; Jonathan Schaefer, RE

2021: Michael LeFebvre, TE and *president*; Bob Hemphill, TE

2022: Richard Holdeman, TE; Rutledge Etheridge, TE

2023: Chris Villi, RE; David Weir, RE

2024: Wade Mann, TE; David Reese, TE

RPTS Professor of Church History: Professor David Whitla, TE (2019-2022)

Parliamentarians: Tom Reid, TE (2020); Martin Blocki, TE (2022); **Brian Coombs, TE (2024)**

Committees:***Business of Synod Committee:***

2019: Herb McCracken, RE; Dennis Olson, RE

2020: Joel Wood TE; Brian Coombs, TE

2021: Lucas Hanna, TE; Don Reed, RE

Ex Officio: Bruce Martin, TE and *moderator*; John McFarland, TE and *clerk*

Church History Committee:

2020: Joe Rizzo, RE

2022: Nathaniel Pockras

2024: David Whitla, TE

Central and South Americas (CASA) Committee: Steve Bradley, TE and *chairman*; Mark England, TE; Edgar Ibarra, *consultative member*; **Jorge Klajnbart, RE (temporary replacement of David Reese)**

Committee on Finance:

At large: Barry VanHorn (2019); Ray Morton, TE (2020); **David Tweed, RE (2021)**

Presbytery appointments: Guy Curran, RE (Alleghenies); Larry Gladfelter (Atlantic); Jason O'Neill (Great Lakes / Gulf); Mike McDaniel, RE (Midwest); Paul Hemphill, RE (Pacific Coast and chairman); Matthew Smoots (St. Lawrence).

Ex officio voting: Joel Wood, TE, Business of Synod Committee chairman; Tom Fisher RE, President of Board of Synod Trustees; James McFarland, RE, denominational treasurer.

Ex officio non-voting: Vida Brown, Denominational Controller.

Graduate Study Committee: Barry York, TE and President of the Seminary; Calvin Troup, RE and President of Geneva College; Kit Swartz, TE (2019); **Tom Fisher, RE (2021)**

Interchurch Committee:

2019: Bruce Backensto, TE

2020: Matt Kingswood, TE

2021: Bruce Parnell, TE and *chairman*

2022: Bruce Martin, TE and *executive secretary*; Dean McHenry, RE

2023: Jerry Milroy, TE

2024: Drew Gordon, RE

International Conference Advisory Committee for the 2020 Conference:

John McFarland, TE and *chairman*; Andy McCracken, TE; Sam Spear, RE; Garrett Mann, RE; Adam Niess, TE

Mediatorial Kingship of Jesus Christ Study Committee: Bruce Backensto, TE and *chairman*; Shawn Anderson, TE; Katsunori Endo, TE; Zack Kail, TE; Scott Wilkinson, TE; Adam Kuehner, TE; **Brad Johnston, TE; Mark Koller, TE (elected to replace Bill Edgar and Rich Gamble)**

Representatives to the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel:

2020: William Pihl, TE

2022: Erich Baum, RE

2024: Bill Wagner, RE

Vital Churches Committee:

2019: Tim McCracken, TE

2020: Steve Rockhill, TE

2021: Joel Wood, TE and *chairman*

2022: Dan Bartel, TE

2023: Greg Stiner, TE

2024: David Robson, RE

Youth Ministries Committee:

Atlantic: Kyle and Violet Finley

St. Lawrence: Chris and Megan Goerner

Pacific Coast: Paul and Megan Hemphill

Midwest: Craig (RE) and Shana Milroy

Great Lakes / Gulf: Ben (RE) and Anna Larson

Alleghenies: Will and Sarah McChesney

Synod Liaison *pro tem* (2016-2019): Matt Filbert, TE

RP Missions: Heidi Filbert

Study Committees**Committee on Communication 18-7—Recusals in Discipline Cases:**

Phil Pockras, TE (Convener); Tom Fisher, RE; Scott Wilkinson, TE; Craig Scott, TE; Allan MacLeod, TE

Committee on Communication 18-8—Inmate Church Membership:

Tim McCracken, TE (Convener); Robert Bibby, RE; Bob Hackett, TE; Jason Camery, TE; Kent Butterfield, TE

Respectfully submitted:
Jerry Milroy, TE and Chairman (2019);
Ed Blackwood, TE (Carry over);
David Weir, RE (Carry over);
Steve Rockhill, TE (2019);
John McGrath, RE (One year);
Ren Adams, RE (One year)

Due to previously approved recommendations pertaining to the timing of the presentation of the Joint Statement (of GMB/HMB), the Court turned to consider the last communication which came to us (Communication 18-9). Pastor Takiura of the Japan Presbytery stood to present the substance of it, basically modified recommendations from the Joint Statement. After Mr. Takiura summarized the Japan Presbytery's concerns, Mr. David Hanson gave RPGM Board and HMB perspectives on Communication 18-9. As the Court came to the recommendations in Communication 18-9, it was moved, seconded, and carried to table this matter [Communication 18-9 and the Joint Statement] until 2019.

Mr. David Merkel presented the Report of the Pension Trustees; after a report overview, the lone recommendation carried; presbyteries are so instructed. The Report as a whole was approved and is printed here. The Report highlighted the Trustees' deep thanks to Elder Luke O'Neill for nine years of fruitful service to/through them. The Pension Trustees provided a helpful paper on investment returns (etc.) prepared at the Trustees' direction; this will be printed in the *Minutes* after the Pension Trustees Report.

2018 Report of the Pension Trustees

Executive Summary: Pension Plans "A" and "B" have been terminated. While in certain situations some of the Pension Plan "B" terminology is still being used, we no longer have a Pension Plan "B." The denominational plan is now with Clergy Advantage and AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company. The Board has been mainly concerned with developing a mechanism for monitoring what are now individual retirement accounts. Most of these 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 15, 2017 and March 19, 2018. The September meeting was held at the RP Seminary (Pittsburgh, PA) and the March meeting were held by teleconference.

Officers: The officers of the Board, elected at the fall meeting are as follows: Luke O'Neill, Chairman; John Hanson, Vice-Chairman; David Merkel, 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, or 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 licensures, ordinations, installations, and any other changes from active to inactive service. This information is needed for insurance and/or pension purposes. See Recommendation 1.

Contributions: The Pension Trustees are recommending that employee contributions to our new preferred provider, Clergy Advantage, Inc., be set at \$4,300 for 2019 by having employers contribute a minimum contribution of \$1,075.00 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 2017 many employers contributed more than the minimum contribution. More than the minimum was contributed to the accounts of most 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 2011 Synod adopted a new means for funding the mission and ministries of the RPCNA, including the current account of the Pension Trustees. The 2018 assessment for the Pension Fund Current Account was set

at 0.75% of non-designated receipts by the 2017 Synod and it is recommended that the percentage remain the same for 2019. It will be credited to the Current Account of the Pension Trustees and used to fund the expenses as shown in the Treasurer's report.

Administrative Changes: The Board is attempting to keep the cost of "Professional Services" at a minimum. All technical questions regarding the Pension/retirement Plan with Clergy Advantage and 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 pension/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. The Board has therefore taken two actions to help us monitor the program. The first is that the Pension Board in 2017 contributed \$250 to each active participant's account on condition that the participant agreed to share their year-end retirement statement with the Board. The second action is that the Pension Board will contribute \$250 a year to each active participant's account on condition that their employer contribute the full Synod voted amount and the participant agrees to share their year-end retirement statement with the Board.

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 \$1,000, will total approximately \$9,000 for this year. These supplements are added to the participant's retirement funds. The Board recently reviewed our policies with regard to benefits and adopted the following:

1. Benefits pertain to full-time employees of the denomination and full-time teaching elders, including part-time relationships where the

denomination and congregations provide a full benefits package. For the moving benefit this includes retired full-time employees of the denomination and full-time teaching elders.

2. Benefits begin on the first day that eligible employees begin accruing pay and end on the last day for which they accrue pay.
3. The only exception to that is when someone is receiving disability payments. They are then deemed to be eligible for all the other benefits, including remaining in the life insurance plan.
4. The above benefits pertain to the severance benefit, the moving benefit, the life insurance benefit, and the \$250/year payment for the pension benefit.
5. To receive the \$250/year payment into the pastor's pension arrangement for 2018 and later years, they must contribute at least the minimum payment for the prior year, and give us a copy of their year-end financial statement(s) from all of their pension arrangement(s). For those serving a partial year those contributing at the minimum rate receive the benefit.

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.)

The issue of ministerial housing allowance is now in the courts. Last October 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. For now, the ruling has not taken effect and is being appealed to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. The Alliance Defending Freedom is urging ministers to sign on to a "friend of the court brief" in support of the housing allowance exemption and its importance for churches and ministers. You can do this by going to MinisterHousing.com.

Canadian Pension Program: In 2001, the Pension Plan Document was amended effective as of October 1, 2001, to exclude non-resident aliens with no US 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 Board’s 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 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 forthcoming. 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 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. You can get a Health Savings Account from most banks. For 2018 annual out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles, copayments, and other amounts,

but not premiums) cannot exceed \$6,650 for individual coverage and \$13,100 for family coverage. The out-of-pocket expenses for 2018 cannot exceed \$6,650 for individual coverage and \$13,300 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 2018 for your HSA is \$3,450 for an individual and \$6,850 for a family. HSA holders 55 and older can contribute an extra \$1,000 tax deductible dollars to their HSA, \$4,450 for an individual and \$7,850 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 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 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 this 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 Internal Revenue Code, 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 the cost of utilities.

See the IRS Minister Audit Technique Guide at: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-and-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. There-

fore 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, 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 US 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*, 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. See the *1991 Minutes of Synod*, pp. 23-25, for 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. See the *1991 Minutes of Synod*, pp. 25-27 and *1993 Minutes of Synod*, p. 58, for details of this program.

Investments: If you have questions regarding investments with Clergy Advantage and AXA, contact the denominational treasurer James McFarland at (412) 731-1177 or William Brandt, AXA Advisors, LLC., at (970) 776-1371. Customer Service Reps of AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company may be contacted at (800) 628-6673.

A paper on *Investment Returns, Risk, and Retirement Spending* has been prepared by Matthew Van Vlack at the direction of the Board and has been approved by the Board. This may be found following the report of the Pension Trustees. Anyone thinking about retirement should read this paper.

Pension Plan Information: There is considerable info regarding the Church and Clergy Alliance Retirement Program online at www.Churchand-clergyalliance.org.

Thanks: The Pension Trustees would like to thank Luke O’Neill for his 9 years of service on the Board and particularly for his work with respect to the transition to the Clergy Advantage 403(b) Retirement Plan by Church and Clergy Alliance.

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 David Merkel and Luke O'Neill expire at the fall meeting of the Pension Trustees. Both have served two terms on the Board and therefore are not eligible for re-election according to the two-term rule of Synod. However, the Board is asking Synod to grant an exception from the two-term rule so that the Board can recommend the re-election of David Merkel, due to a major insurance initiative recently begun that would benefit from David's expertise in this area. The Board would like to place in nomination the names of David Merkel and Peter Smith for a three year term on the Pension Trustees in the Class of 2021.

Finances

1. That Synod set the minimum contribution rate of \$4,300 for 2019 by each employer for a participant in the Pension Plan.

2. That Synod set the 2019 assessment for current pension plan funding at 0.75% of non-designated receipts as of December, 31, 2018, as reported to the stated clerk.

Recommendation

1. That Synod instruct the presbyteries to include in the minutes of each installation service the date that the teaching elder actually started working in the congregation, and to notify the denominational office. This is needed because participants should be enrolled in the pension plan on the first day of the month following the date they actually started working, and are also enrolled in the group term life insurance coverage through the Pension Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke O'Neill (Chairman);

Joe Allyn;

John Hanson;

Christopher Huggins;

David Merkel;

Matthew Van Vlack;

A. Wayne Duffield (Executive Secretary);

James McFarland (Treasurer)

Pension Trustees Investment Information

Executive Summary

Examination of US returns (1928-2017) finds:

- Among stocks, bonds, and cash, annualized returns are highest for stocks and lowest for cash.
- Stocks have the highest short-term risk, but cash the highest long-term risk.
- As many live to a very old age, prudent retirement planning requires long-term investing.

Investment Returns

Traditional pension plans used to be fairly common in the US, but in recent years many firms have moved to defined contribution (DC), or 401(k) / 403(b)-style, plans. The current plan which makes 403(b) accounts available to RPCNA ministers and denominational employees is a DC plan. These plans require participants to choose their own investments, typically from a list of funds. A primary characteristic of these funds is the underlying security type, or asset class, in which the fund invests. Common asset classes are stocks, bonds, and cash.¹

We will first examine the returns associated with different asset classes. There is a natural human tendency to focus on the returns of the past month or past week; popular media encourages this type of thinking. Here the focus will be on longer horizons, especially those of interest to retirement investors. Table 1 shows annualized returns to stocks, bonds and cash from 1928 to 2017² in the United States.³

1 Throughout this document cash means short-term debt of the US government (or mutual funds invested in that debt), not bags of \$100 bills kept in the freezer.

2 Source: Professor Aswath Damodaran, <http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/pc/datasets/histretSP.xls>. Stock series is SandP 500 (including dividends); bond series is 10-year Treasury Bonds; cash is 3-month Treasury Bills. Damodaran provides details of the construction of each asset class index.

3 While there are substantial benefits to international diversification, that topic is beyond the scope of this document. The choice of the US over other countries is simply that the US has a lengthy return history easily available.

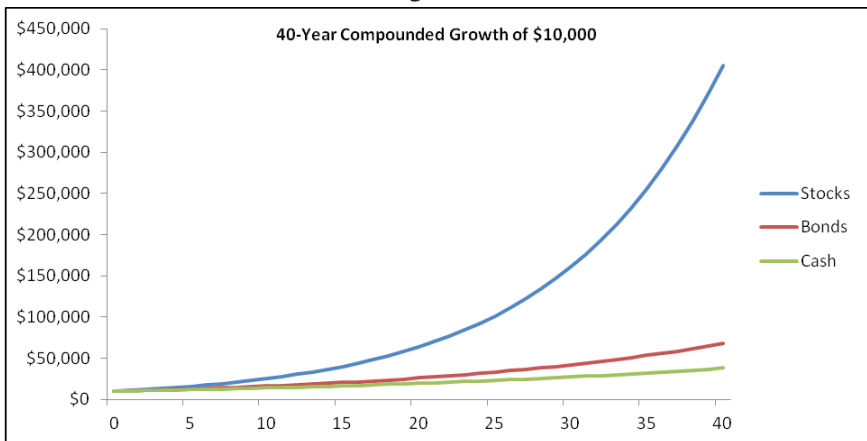
Table 1

Asset	Annualized Return
Stocks	9.7%
Bonds	4.9%
Cash	3.4%

Stocks have higher average returns than bonds, and cash provides the smallest return. Over longer horizons these returns are compounded and differences are magnified. Fig. 1 shows the cumulative growth of \$10,000 using these annualized returns for forty years, the length of a typical career. Apparently minor annualized differences compound to a substantial cumulative differences. The \$10,000 invested in cash compounds to \$38,091, in bonds to \$67,767, and in stocks to \$405,756!

In *Stocks for the Long Run*, Jeremy Siegel pieces together various datasets to examine US asset class returns between 1802 and 2012. Despite a different analysis period, Siegel shows a largely similar pattern across asset classes. Siegel calculates annualized returns of 8.1% for stocks, 5.1% for bonds, 4.2% for cash, and 2.1% for gold. This book is recommended for a deeper, yet still accessible, treatment of the topics discussed here.

Figure 1



Risk

Risk can be measured in a variety of different ways. The most traditional measure of investment risk has been the volatility of the investment. However, for investors planning for retirement, and especially for those who do not earn large sums of money, an even more critical measure of risk is the likelihood of not saving enough or earning enough return on their investments to be able to fund their retirement needs. For this section, we define risk as “worst historical loss.” In other words, if an investment has historically had a greater likelihood of achieving worse returns over a given time period, that investment is riskier than the alternative.

Table 2 shows the worst returns for each asset class over 1-, 10-, 20-, and 30-year investment horizons. For example, the worst year for bonds was 2009 when the asset class lost 11.1%. The worst decade for bonds was 1950-1959 with an annualized return of 0.8%. A few general patterns emerge from the data. One, many of the largest losses occurred during the Great Depression. These were difficult years with both high unemployment and low investment returns.

Second, the riskiest asset as measured by worst historical loss depends on the investment horizon. The worst year for cash (1940) was 0.0%—no loss at all. Contrast that against stocks which lost 43.8% in 1931. Clearly, over a short time period of one year, stocks are far riskier than cash. But over a 30-year window, cash returned just 1.1% annualized from 1932 to 1961. The worst 30-year window for stocks was 1929-1958 with a return of 8.0% annualized. Even at its worst, over 30 years an investment of \$1.00 in stocks compounded to become \$9.98! With a longer window of time, cash actually is counterintuitively far riskier than stocks! Risk varies with horizon; across all three asset classes, short-term risk is highest in stocks, but long-term risk is highest in cash. The last group of rows is a 60% stock / 40% bond allocation. 60 / 40 is by no means the only reasonable allocation but is shown here because it’s one often advocated by investment advisors.

Finally, while the stock allocation has been lowest risk over any full 30-year period, the annualized returns shown here can hide substantial short-term volatility over shorter sub-horizons. A high percentage of stocks often gives high long-term average return, but with significant volatility and potential for large short-term losses along the way. The 30-year worst return in the table

for both stocks and the 60 / 40 allocation begins in 1929, and combines very strong returns in the 1950s with negative returns during the Depression. Investors must be willing to “ride out” the negative returns that inevitably happen. Similarly, if investors have a shorter-term horizon and cannot financially afford to incur a potentially significant loss in account value, having a high percentage in stocks makes less sense.

Table 2

Asset	Horizon	Worst Return (Annualized)	Starting Year of Worst Return
Cash	1	0.0%	1940
Cash	10	0.2%	1934
Cash	20	0.5%	1932
Cash	30	1.1%	1932
Bonds	1	-11.1%	2009
Bonds	10	0.8%	1950
Bonds	20	1.6%	1950
Bonds	30	1.9%	1940
Stocks	1	-43.8%	1931
Stocks	10	-1.7%	1929
Stocks	20	2.4%	1929
Stocks	30	8.0%	1929
60 / 40	1	-27.3%	1931
60 / 40	10	1.8%	1929
60 / 40	20	3.5%	1929
60 / 40	30	6.6%	1929

Retirement Spending

What about spending from savings in retirement? Especially for a married couple, retirement can last decades. For a man and woman, both 65 years old, there is a 50% chance that at least one of them will be alive 25 years later at age 90. There is even a 5% chance that one of them will be living at age 100!

⁴ Retirement income requires long-horizon planning. Consider a 65-year-old couple who would like plan for a 35 year retirement. They would like to set their initial spending so that they are able to increase their spending with infla-

⁴ Source: Vanguard, <http://www.vanguard.com/us/insights/retirement/plan-for-a-long-retirement-tool>. Also note that RPCNA pastors have an unusually long life expectancy.

tion⁵ each year and have a 95% probability of never running out of money.⁶ Given this scenario, Table 3 shows their maximum initial annual withdrawal rate based on different portfolio assets. Cash has the lowest rate, 1.9%. This means that a couple invested in cash can initially spend \$1,900 annually (\$158 monthly) for every \$100,000 of retirement savings, increasing that amount each year with inflation. Bonds are higher than cash at 2.3% (initially \$192 monthly per \$100,000). Stocks and the 60 / 40 portfolio are tied for the highest initial rate at 3.8% (\$317 monthly). Even in retirement the risk associated with slow growth or traditionally conservative investments (bonds or cash) is greater than the risk of short-term loss.

Table 3

Asset	Maximum Initial Withdrawal Rate
Cash	1.9%
Bonds	2.3%
Stocks	3.8%
60 / 40	3.8%

It is important to note that all the analysis here assumes a static asset allocation. Consider a hypothetical long-term investor in January 1929. He fully invests in stock, and after 4 bad market years loses 64.8%. At that point he panics and switches to all cash, missing the recovery that follows. After 30 years he has only recovered a portion of his losses and is still down 55.7%, for an annualized return of -2.7%. He would have done far better starting with a less aggressive investment such as the 60 / 40 allocation and sticking with it. A good asset allocation that you can maintain is better than the best asset allocation that you can't maintain.

Conclusion

Stocks have higher annualized returns than bonds, and cash provides the smallest return. Asset class return differences may seem small on an annualized basis, but compound to large cumulative differences. Short-term risk is highest

⁵ Source: Federal Reserve, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CPIAUCNS>.

⁶ This is an example scenario and is not advice to either retire at age 65 or follow a preset spending pattern. Both working beyond 65 (at least part-time) and adjusting expenses following low market returns can make retirement savings last longer.

in stocks and lowest in cash, but long-term risk is highest in cash and lowest in stocks. Modern life expectancies, especially for married couples, imply many will have a long retirement. Prudent retirement planning requires long-term investing. Investors with a large allocation to cash are likely to receive disappointing long-term returns, possibly less than the inflation rate.

The Reports of the Presbyteries were taken up together, with specific remarks made by their clerks or others: Alleghenies, Atlantic, Great Lakes/Gulf, Japan, Midwest, Pacific Coast, Saint Lawrence, and East Asia (presbyteries: CP and EP). B-6 presented the Report of the EA Commission. The Synod Court stood to pray for these presbyteries under the leadership of Bob Hemphill, Phil Pockras, and Joe Allyn. All seven of the presbytery reports and the EAC Report were received (moved, seconded, and carried); all except the EAC Report are printed below. The lone recommendation in the Pacific Coast Report was spoken and approved earlier.

Report of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies

The Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA) gives thanks for the blessings of God and His providential care for us. The Lord Jesus has promised to build His church, and we find Him doing so in our midst. Paul Martin continues to serve as Regional Home Missionary. As a Presbytery, we seek to be aware of opportunities to church-plant. Opportunities for ministry to internationals have grown in our midst. One of our congregations has established a Mandarin-speaking worship service; another is seeking the Lord's will related to the establishment of ministry to East Asian students. At our spring meeting in April, Presbytery accepted the resignation of Cy Beisel as our treasurer; Cy served the POA faithfully for many years in this capacity. Bill Weir was selected to replace him. We give thanks to God for Cy's labor to advance the Kingdom.

Due to our proximity to the Seminary, we are finding that our time is dominated by the need to conduct student examinations. At each of our last two meetings, over eight hours per meeting of floor-time was devoted to examinations. While this is a wonderful thing and an indication that Christ is building His church, it is difficult to conduct our other business in the time we have currently allotted for our spring and fall meetings. The Candidates Committee has been charged with developing alternative methods for conducting

and scheduling exams. We will debate these proposals in the fall of 2018. Our proximity to the Seminary also means that we are faced with examining an increasing number of international students. The Candidates Committee is working on solutions to bridge language barriers while maintaining the integrity of the exam process. The Candidates Committee has developed a manual for students-under-care. It has been expanded to give guidelines/counsel to sessions that have men under care. At the April 2018 meeting a set of final revisions to the manual were adopted. Currently the POA has fourteen men under care: Caleb Allen, Matthew Bates, Timothy Bloedow, Mark Brown, Keith Dewell, Frank Du, Joe Dunlap, Jordan Feagley, Joshua Giesler, Edgar Ibarra, Hao Lu, Jason Thoman, Jeremiah Wilson, Peter Zhang. Matthew Bates was transferred in from Midwest Presbytery and Jordan Feagley was transferred in from the Pacific Coast Presbytery. Subsequent to our fall meeting, Brendan Byham requested to be removed from being under care.

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: sixteen that are retired (one of whom is under suspension), seven that are without charges (one of whom serves as Director of Admissions and Student Services at RPTS), one who serves as Stated Supply at the Grace and Truth Mission Church, two who serve at Geneva College, and five who serve as professors at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS).

Since Synod of 2017 (where we held a short meeting), the Presbytery of the Alleghenies has met for two regular meeting (November 2017 and April 2018) and numerous times for installations and ordination exams. These meetings were as follows:

Date:	Purpose:	Mtgs. led by:
07.17.17	Installation of Lucas Hanna (First B.F.)	Full Presbytery
08.12.17	Installation of Ryan Bever (Grace and Truth)	Commission
10.14.17	Gary Gunn Ordination Exams	Commission
04.06.18	Installation of Matthew Ma (North Hills)	Commission
05.12.18	Kevin Jia Ordination Exams	Full Presbytery
06.16.18	Kevin Jia Ordination Exam	Full Presbytery
06.23.18	Installation of Gary Gunn (Meadville)	Commission

As a Presbytery, we are considering how the congregations under our care should appropriately respond to Act 153 passed by the Pennsylvania State government and its mandates pertaining to church workers needing to obtain background checks (Criminal and Child Abuse) in order to work with children in our congregations. Many of our congregations have developed policies already. We desire to carefully think through issues surrounding this legislation. A committee has been appointed. The Presbytery has sought to shepherd the congregations under our care by sending committees to congregations who have sought outside help and counsel. We are thankful for God's clear blessing in one situation and anticipate His mercies in two more.

The POA has fifteen organized congregations, all of which have settled pastors except Grace State College. The Presbytery has one mission church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The Grace and Truth Mission Church TGB consists of Ryan Bever (mod./"stated supply"), Paul Martin, David Merkel, and Tom Reid. We have been saddened by the passing of ruling elder John Schaefer and Floy Smith (wife of retired teaching elder Ken Smith). Lucas Hanna is our moderator and Martin Blocki is our clerk, with Titus Martin serving as assistant clerk. The Covenant Aurora Session functions as Ad Interim Commission. There were two Presbytery youth retreats this past year. Will and Sarah McChesney continue to serve as youth coordinators; we're thankful for their years of faithful service. Laurelville Family camp will take place July 9-13, 2018. The topic under consideration will be: Tomorrow's Worries, Today—My God, Bigger Than My Worry. Jeff Stivason will be our speaker. Joel and Tabitha Ward continue to serve as camp directors. Individual congregational summaries follow:

College Hill: The congregation continues to meet at two locations for worship each Lord's Day morning. We worship together in evenings with a variety of men preaching at these services. Titus Martin has been the primary pastor preaching in the morning at the Old Stone Building (3217 College Avenue); this is our original location. Dean Smith has been the primary pastor overseeing the work and preaching at the 5th Ave. building (3400 Fifth Avenue). We acquired this building a little over three years ago. During this past year Pastor Smith has decreased his hours to half time and is now preaching an average of once a month; we thank him for his service to us over the last several years as the search process has been underway for a pastor to assume the work at 5th Avenue. In April 2018, the congregation placed a call to George Gregory. Pas-

tor Gregory has expressed his intention to accept the call and the congregation is looking forward with excitement to the Gregory family joining us at College Hill in early August.

Covenant (Meadville) continues to worship and witness in northern PA, for the glory of Christ. We desire to see growth in the congregation, spiritually and numerically. We have recently called a new pastor, and pray for the Lord's presence in the ministry and life of the congregation. We have seen some increases with prospective members joining our fellowship, and with births in our families. The focus of the congregation is the pulpit ministry, which we hope will continue to transform souls. There is also the need for growth in the teaching of Reformed doctrine and application in our lives. We also want to see the congregation grow in fellowship with God and each other. We recently had an elder reinstated to our Session, and have had the assistance of provisional elders during the Spring. We trust in God, the Maker and Builder of Zion!

Covenant (Aurora): The work continues along in northeast Ohio. We had blessings and challenges in 2017, but God was always faithful. His people here grow in their faith through the sound exposition of the Scriptures and the weekly encouragement to live lives that are pleasing to God. Pastor Ryan's full schedule shows he takes his calling very seriously—marriage counseling, member visitation, Bible studies for distant members, and other ways he makes himself a part of peoples' lives. You can pray for CRPC in these ways: for a better meeting location with facilities for new moms and the covenant babies, growth for the church that we might minister to more people, and that all the members live a life of powerful faith in the midst of our covenant community.

Covenant Fellowship: By late June, a new ground-floor entrance should be completed by Covenant Fellowship, along with an elevator/lift that will make their large old building much more accessible to the elderly and disabled in the membership and community. The mayor of Wilkinsburg recently joined Pastor Pete Smith in dedicating a pollinator garden and fruit orchard on formerly dilapidated property adjacent to the church building that the congregation has helped to reclaim for the sake of the community. Tim and Lynette Bloedow were leaders in that project, and Tim and other seminary students have been a blessing to the congregation in various ministries—including evangelism and visitation. The congregation continues to pray for the development of young leaders.

Eastvale: In 2017 we saw two of our oldest saints move away as Elder John Schaefer unexpectedly passed into glory and Mrs. Madge Adams moved to the RP Home. We also said goodbye (temporarily, we hope) to Nick and Theresa Bloom and their children as they moved from Beaver Falls to Germany to work as missionaries among the Middle Eastern immigrants there. Our pastoral intern, Bryan Schneider, has recently graduated from RPTS and has accepted a call to the Sharon RP Church outside Morning Sun, Iowa. We give thanks for his service and the blessing of having him, his wife Olivia, and their children among us for the past several years. We also are giving thanks for several new families that have recently moved into the area and have been worshiping with us, and we ask for prayer that God would use us well to provide for their spiritual and temporal needs.

First RP Beaver Falls: In early July, after returning from a mission trip to South Sudan, Lucas Hanna was installed as our senior pastor; later in the year, Matt Filbert was taken on as half-time associate pastor, expanding his responsibilities. In addition to regular morning and evening worship, Sabbath School, Kids Quest, Teen Quest, and VBS, we continued outside ministry opportunities with weekly services at the Franciscan Manor (led by Pastor Filbert) and bi-weekly preaching by Pastor Tim McClain at the RP Home. Pastor Hanna returned for a five-week mission trip to South Sudan later in the year. At year's end, First RP had 121 members (82 communicant and 39 baptized).

Grace & Truth Mission Church (Harrisonburg, VA): Ryan Bever was ordained and made full-time stated supply in August of 2017. Paul Martin continues to labor alongside Ryan and remains a vital asset to this small church body. The elders are encouraged that God appears to be blessing our labors in the Lord. The congregation seems to be growing together as a family. We have been having visitors pretty consistently. There have been some good relationships established with other ministers in the area. Ryan's preaching appears to be well received. We have a total of about 38 people who attend, including both members and adherents. Please pray that God will continue to give wisdom unto the TGB as they continue to make efforts to see this church established.

Grace (Gibsonia, PA) is enjoying God's blessing. We have a family spirit that is palpable, the congregation respects and loves the elders, and there is deep appreciation for the preaching and teaching ministry. Pastor Jeff started a

four-year preaching plan in September and is now preaching through Romans in the morning and Revelation in the evening. During the Church School hour, Pastor Jeff has taught series on "How We Got Our Bible," "How to Study Our Bible," and a series on original sin. Grace continues to grow numerically and we have secured an architect to draw up plans for a worship and fellowship facility. However, in the midst of blessing there is always difficulty. At the beginning of the year we dealt with two discipline situations and one (after almost two years) led to an excommunication. However, despite those heavy-hearted situations, the Lord has blessed us with the light of His countenance and we are thankful to Him.

Grace (State College, PA) did experience significant difficulties in the summer of 2017. Some families have left the church. At that time, we did request a committee of Presbytery to help us, the State College Committee. We have appreciated the meetings that Bruce Backensto held with the Committee. We have appreciated their prayers and advice; they have since been dismissed with thanks. They have prayed for us. They have advised us. We have taken that advice to increase our emphasis on prayer and discipleship and shepherding. The Lord is allowing us to bear and see fruit.

Manchester RPC continues to operate with four ruling elders and three deacons. The congregation has been stable and experienced some numeric growth in the last year. We are blessed with peace in the congregation and continue to see the congregation grow in grace under the faithful preaching of our pastor and teaching of the elders. We have several midweek Bible studies and regular opportunities for fellowship, including a fellowship meal each Lord's Day. Worship and fellowship events are well attended. We are blessed to see our young people coming to faith and growing in grace, and are encouraged that they maintain their memberships in the RPCNA after college and starting their own families, some at Manchester others around the RPCNA where work takes them. We are currently seeking to raise funds to pave the parking lot. The deacons strive to do an improvement to the building each year in order to maintain and/or upgrade the facilities. We are grateful for the Lord's continued provision for our ministry and covet your prayers for His continued blessings.

The **North Hills** congregation is thankful for God's providence in our international ministry venues in both the oversight of the Mandarin worship service and sponsorship of the English Conversation Classes. Harry Metzger,

Martin Blocki, and Matthew M faithfully preach and teach the each Lord's Day and are involved in several teaching, counseling, and evangelism opportunities throughout the course of the week. The Session and congregation were delighted to have Matthew recently elected as an additional teaching elder and join the Session. The elders have divided the members and adherents up into shepherding groups for purposeful encouragement and mentoring of families or individuals. The Session continues to pray that God will protect each and every marriage in the congregation. Of noteworthy challenge for the next four months, the North Hills congregation has approved the recommendation by deacons and elders to move ahead with the much needed reconstruction of the church parking lot by the close of October 2018, trusting that God will provide the necessary funds to accomplish this need.

Providence gives thanks to the Lord for another year of His blessing and provision in all areas of the life and ministry of the flock. We have recently concluded a preaching series in Hebrews and have begun a new series in Genesis along with the ongoing series through Psalm 119. We continue to observe the Lord's Supper twice a month in an afternoon service and have had many opportunities to baptize covenant children within the congregation. Our congregational life is full as there are many opportunities to be in the means of grace and in fellowship with others. We have a weekly meal after morning worship, biweekly prayer meetings and Sabbath school classes for the youth, and a midweek Bible Study in which we are presenting an overview of each Bible book. In addition to the weekly events, we have the following monthly gatherings: Psalm sing, dinner and doctrine, Biblical manhood for boys/young men, and a bimonthly women's book study group. Every Lord's Day afternoon and evening there are opportunities for fellowship, whether at one of the monthly scheduled gatherings or at the home of one of our pastors when there is not something scheduled. The past year has not been without difficulties; there are counseling matters that have been and still are quite challenging. That said, we are grateful to the Lord for the overall peace and harmony within the body life. Finally, we pray the Lord will bless our upcoming outreach efforts to add still more and more to the flock so that we might be able to one day plant a daughter church.

Rimersburg: The Rimersburg congregation continues to enjoy times of worship and fellowship each Lord's Day. The congregation cares very deeply

for one another and seeks to meet community needs as they are able. Please pray with this small congregation of twenty for the Lord to add to His church in Clarion County.

Rose Point: The Session increased the frequency of observing the Lord's Supper from semi-annual to quarterly. In May 2017, the congregation mourned the death of longtime deacon Harold Wilson, who served on the deacon board for sixty years. In September 2017, a new steel roof was installed on the church building, replacing the 150-year-old slate roof.

Trinity: The Lord remains faithful to Trinity RPC with the addition of many new covenant children, new communicant members joining, and some members leaving the area, including two of our deacons. Pastor Joel Wood completed his morning sermon series on Titus and afternoon series on Job, both of which were well-received by hearers. The church recently held its second annual congregational retreat at Camp Wabanna, providing a great opportunity for fellowship and encouragement as the congregation enjoyed both physical activities and spiritual teaching. With assistance and counsel from a committee of Presbytery, the Session of Trinity RPC has been working through difficulties with some success. The building is a blessing, but neglect from the prior owner has led us to spend more than expected to catch up on maintenance. Sharpening that view was two notable fires that could have done a lot of damage, but thanks to the Lord had only minor consequences. We thank the Lord for His providential hand on our church and we ask for prayer as we continue seeking to serve Him.

Tusca is enjoying warm fellowship and solid attendance these days, even as it continues to adjust in the wake of the tragedy the summer before last. Sermon series this year have been based on "The Names of Jesus" along with selections from Deuteronomy, while adult classes studied R. C. Sproul's *What is Reformed Theology?* and C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*; classes for children and youth, and weekly prayer meetings are generally well attended. We have just elected two new elders, and are encouraging many kinds of friendship evangelism on the parts of our members and adherents, as we tend to be long-time Beaver Valley residents with a strong network of relatives and acquaintances.

Respectfully submitted,
Martin Blocki (Clerk)

Report of the Atlantic Presbytery to the 2018 Synod

The Atlantic Presbytery continues to give thanks to the Lord for His many mercies.

Coldenham-Newburgh is our only church without an installed teaching elder. It is being served at the Session's request by Zachary Dotson, a theological student at Greenville Presbyterian Seminary. They are also served by two provisional ruling elders and Interim Moderator, David Coon. Other pastors join them four times annually to administer the Lord's Supper.

The Hazleton Area Church, with the support of Presbytery, has begun work in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Currently they are holding services on a twice-a-month basis averaging in the low forties in attendance. A Spanish-language church in that area has shown interest in this work (and the Presbytery has appointed the Candidates and Credentials Committee to shepherd their pastor, James Machuca, into the RPCNA).

Mauro Silva-Krug 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. William Chellis is a member of the White Lake Church and preaches for a rural church while practicing law in New York State. Stephen Michaud's credentials have been transferred to the Presbytery of New York and New England of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Bill Edgar is retired but his wisdom and service to the church continue and are appreciated; Bill and his son, John, have started a periodical for the Presbytery entitled *A Little Strength*.

Gabe Wingfield has been doing an internship with Christ RPC in East Providence, Rhode Island, and expects to graduate from RPTS in May of this year. He has been called to be an associate pastor for Christ RPC. Hunter Jackson is a student at RPTS and has just begun to take exams toward eligibility to preach. Zachary Dotson was received as a communicant member of the Coldenham-Newburgh from the Restored Reformed Church and was received as a student-of-theology by the Presbytery on March 30, 2018.

The **Broomall RPC** noted the Lord's long faithfulness to our congregation as we looked back 220 years to the origins of our church in the First RPC of Philadelphia in 1798. We have been blessed by the Lord Jesus with growth in our church and in our families. We have rejoiced in the last several years as the Lord has given us many children. We are served by the pastoral leadership

of Alex Tabaka and are thankful to God for his ministry among us. Our sincere prayer is that we continue to serve and worship the Lord, to grow in faith, to minister in our community, and to see our children profess faith in Jesus Christ and a love for Him.

The **Cambridge** congregation is thankful for financial stability, numerical growth, and particularly for the installation of our pastor, Noah Bailey, last year. We're thankful for the provision of means to address the lack of handicapped access to our facility. We are hopeful that the Lord will give us more deacons, and we plan to have a deacon election in the fall. Some of our young families are seeking to buy houses in proximity to others in the congregation—a challenging task in an “overheated” real estate market. Ask the Lord to grant healing to several among us who suffer chronic health concerns and to grant greater Gospel receptiveness among our neighbors.

Christ (East Providence, Rhode Island) RPC continues to experience God's blessing in many ways. The congregation continues to serve a variety of nationalities. The elders are piloting a new membership process, hoping to do a better job of habituating new believers to the Christian life. Pastor Howe was blessed to take a three-month sabbatical during the Summer of 2017. Gabriel Wingfield has been serving as full-time intern since June 2017, and it is anticipated that he will soon be ordained and installed as Associate Pastor here.

The **Coldenham-Newburgh** congregation is thankful for God's provision through nearly 220 years of continuing existence as an organized congregation. They are thankful for the preschool that meets in the church basement and greatly helps with regular finances. After two years, it was determined that Steven Welch's status as stated supply be terminated. God provided Zach Dotson, a distance-learning Greenville Presbyterian seminarian, to work closely with the Session to provide regular preaching while practicing pastoral work. Zach has recently transferred his membership to the RPCNA and been taken under care of the Atlantic Presbytery. Most sermons are now on SermonAudio. Concerns being addressed are an aging congregation with limited access to the second level for worship and how to disciple the recent visitors we have had.

The **Elkins Park** (PA) congregation thanks God for a year full of growth. Attendance averaged sixty for the first time in many years. People from many nations now worship with us regularly. Pray that the congregation would be

emboldened to share the gospel freely, would continue to welcome newcomers, and that members new and old would work fruitfully together in God's Kingdom.

The **Hazleton** congregation rejoices in the Lord for opening doors in the Harrisburg, Pa., region. Evening services began in July; at that first meeting, we also met a Spanish-speaking pastor who is seeking to join a Reformed denomination with his congregation. We inch ever closer to their joining Atlantic Presbytery. Meanwhile, Hazleton enjoys another large class of baptized members in process of becoming communicants.

The **Ridgefield Park Church** anticipates the retirement of its pastor, Bruce Martin, next year at the end of March. In the meantime its members have prayed for, and God has brought it, new members. Please pray for the development of these new members as faithful servants of Christ. Pray also that in His time the Lord would raise up future leadership for this congregation; pray that this congregation of His people would be able to make inroads for the Gospel in the large metropolitan area where it serves the Lord.

The **Walton**, New York, congregation endured hardship this Fall: Marilyn Russell was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, several members moved away, and the "Released Time" elementary school outreach program (running since the 1940s) was closed. They also received encouragements: another child in Pastor McCarthy's household and two new communicant members that visited the same weekend the baby came home. Pastor McCarthy is leading a Bible study with them and several other people in nearby Oneonta and is reaching out to the campuses of SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College. If you know people headed to one of these schools, please tell them.

The **White Lake** congregation continues—by the grace of God—to care for local families by ministering the Gospel from the pulpit and the pew. This happens through the ordinances of worship and small group Bible studies. Through various outreach programs we minister to seniors and youth. The food pantry (The Shepherd's Pantry) helps provide monthly for some 180 families. We are thankful that God has answered our prayer for families with children. God has especially blessed us by allowing one of the sons of the congregation to be elected a deacon. We covet your prayers inasmuch as some of our members are dealing with chronic and acute health concerns.

A retreat for Pastors and their families is scheduled for July 10-12, 2018, at the White Lake Covenant Camp.

A commission consisting of two elders each from the St. Lawrence and Atlantic presbyteries oversees the spiritual direction of White Lake Covenant Camp. This summer, the Teen and Kids camps will again convene concurrently, July 27 to August 3, and will be immediately followed by the Family Camp, from August 3-10, with Pastor Titus Martin as the main speaker.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Steven McCarthy, Clerk

Report of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery to 2018 Synod

Overview. The 20 organized congregations, two mission churches, and two preaching stations of the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery (GLG) are grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for continuing His faithful ministry among us during the past year. Notable developments, joys, and concerns:

- The seminary-level classes in Indianapolis (Indiana) organized by our Candidates and Credentials Committee continue to provide local theological training for men seeking to pursue pastoral ministry.
- Our mission churches in Pageland (South Carolina) and Terre Haute (Indiana) continue to labor for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, while the mission church in Dayton (Tennessee) was reduced to a preaching station at our Spring 2018 meeting.
- The pulpits in Sparta (IL) and Selma (AL) remain vacant, and the Pageland (SC) mission church is now seeking a church planter to assist stated supply preacher, Rev. Ian Wise.
- The preaching station in Atlanta (Georgia) continues to bring the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a challenging part of that city.
- The Lafayette (Indiana) congregation welcomed its new pastor, Rev. Adam Niess, former copastor in the Bloomington (Indiana) congregation.
- Rev. Philip McCollum of the RPC of Ireland accepted a pastoral call from the Bloomington (Indiana) congregation, and RPTS graduate Joel Hart accepted a pastoral call from Second RPC of Indianapolis (Indiana).

Officers. In 2017, Pastors Stan McKenzie and Andy McCracken ably and faithfully served as Moderator of Presbytery and Ad Interim Commission Moderator, respectively. At our spring 2018 meeting, Pastors Shawn Anderson (moderator of the GLG Presbytery) and Andy McCracken (AIC moderator) were elected to fill these roles. Other officers and chairmen include Pastor Adam Kuehner (GLG clerk), Pastor Ray Morton (assistant clerk pro tem), Elder Dale Koons (assistant clerk) and Pastor Jared Olivetti (chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee).

Activities. The Covenanter Young Peoples' Union has continued its nearly century-long ministry of helping churches and parents to disciple young Christians. This year's activities included a Fall Ministry Project, Winter Conference (speaker: Micah Ramsey), College Winter Conference (speaker: Ed Blackwood), Theological Foundations Weekend (speakers: Rut Etheridge and Keith Evans), SONrise Party, and ECHO summer mission trip. Our 2017 COVFAMIKOI family conference met at Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Kentucky, on June 17-22 with featured speaker, Dr. Dennis J. Prutow. Our speaker for 2018 is Rev. Kyle Borg (June 9-14), Lord willing.

Congregational Updates

Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship, Ga. (Preaching Station). Pastor Frank Smith. Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship (APF) is the RPCNA's urban ministry in the heart of the key city in the Southeast. In 2017 average worship attendance was 27, with at least 76 first-time visitors. Total income was \$70,289.60; building fund had \$10,070. Starting in February 2018, APF added a morning worship service. As of mid-April, the average number of weekly worshippers was 32. The ongoing Sunday School classes have been augmented by increased discipleship activities, particularly for youth and men. More mature families are needed as is a permanent meeting place in our rapidly gentrifying neighborhood.

Belle Center RPC, Ohio. Pastor Phil Pockras. The Belle Center congregation continues remodeling its building in the center of the village. Building finances seem to be in place and the general financial picture has eased a good deal with giving much improved. We have been blessed with visitors, a couple of families moving toward becoming adherents, and a young lady joining. We continue to pray that Jesus will raise up or bring in men to be local church officers. Our young people have gotten active in the CYPUs and we have one girl attending TFY this summer. Peace and active love continue to characterize the

Belle Center congregation.

Bloomington RPC, Indiana. Pastor Rich Holdeman. The Bloomington congregation gives thanks for another year of growth. This year has witnessed some changes in the session, with Adam Niess moving to take up the work in Lafayette RPC, and with the Lord's provision of two new ruling elders, both changes coming to fruition in the first part of 2018. The Lord has further provided in the prospect of Phillip McCollum joining as a second pastor later this coming year. The congregation has seen some growth in number of members, and has particularly been blessed with a renewed outreach to international students.

Christ Church RP, Brownsburg, IN. Pastor Michael LeFebvre. In 2017, Christ Church gave thanks to God as seven covenant children publicly professed their faith and became members of church; and mourned the death of one member who had battled health ailments for many years. Sunday school classes continue to meet weekly during the school term, and four community small groups meet regularly in member' homes. Pastor LeFebvre traveled to Malaysia over the summer where he was the conference speaker at the Pilgrim Church Family Conference.

Columbus RPC, IN. Pastor Andy McCracken. The Columbus congregation adopted a new mission statement in 2018 that reads: "We seek to be a church offering help, hope, and a home by proclaiming the word of God, living out the gospel by investing in relationships, and making disciples of Jesus Christ." Three teams have then proposed to Session ways to implement this in ministry; many of these are underway. They include a new church planting effort in Louisville, KY, a companionship ministry to a retirement home, and a new kid's club that takes the gospel into the public school. We rejoice in a good spirit of unified ministry.

Dayton RP Mission Church, Tennessee (DRPF). Vacant. DRPF continues to meet for worship and fellowship in Dayton. Near the end of 2017, fissures in the mission church began to appear. By the end of the year, all but three families had scattered elsewhere; one of those three left at the end of February. At the spring stated Presbytery meeting, the mission church and its TGB were dissolved; it is now a preaching station with former TGB elders in an oversight committee of Presbytery. The fellowship is now meeting in the home of Dr. Kevin Clauson. They receive regular preaching from a PCA minister

who is interested in the RPCNA and a theology student in the PCA, who is also interested. Finances are surprisingly and sacrificially strong and new plans for outreach have been made and are being implemented.

Elkhart RPC, Indiana. Pastor Wade Mann. We give thanks for God's covenant love this past year. Sermon series were completed in 2 Thessalonians and the Decalogue. The men were blessed by a monthly A-B-C study in 1 Timothy; women enjoyed personal accountability meetings for prayer and study. Two small groups met considering Proverbs and parenting, in addition to monthly prayer meetings. The Lord's Supper has been observed bi-monthly. Missions presentations, testimony evenings, picnics, dinners, and summer recreation nights have encouraged. God graciously added an elder and two deacons, as well as financial resources for various projects and to repay our building mortgage three years early. We ask God's help in the process of disciplining a straying member. We seek Him for continuing peace and unity, care of new members and visitors, sanctification by the word and Spirit, and salvation of the lost.

First RPC of Durham, North Carolina. Pastor Kent Butterfield. The Lord builds His church and this is evident here. Even with a decline in membership for part of 2016 the Lord has raised up our baptized youth to make professions of faith and new people moving to our area and joining the membership. One incarcerated man who attends our Lord's Day worship is seeking to join once he is released. Families from South America are currently going through a membership class with several others. We hope to build up new ministry with the new members. Also, our prayers are answered with the Lord sending some unconverted people to our evangelistic Bible study. This summer we have our second intern in two years. We keep praying for the Lord to raise up a ruling elder(s) from within the congregation.

First RPC of Grand Rapids, MI. Pastor Craig Scott. The year 2017 was one in which the Lord's goodness was manifest to us. Despite many pastoral challenges, the Lord continued to show His face and provision throughout the year. The Yang family experienced much sorrow with the heart defect in their third child, Minsol. Our God's kindness would show no end as Minsol surpassed doctor's expectations and recently celebrated his first birthday. Our street evangelism bears fruit as we regularly have unchurched people attending worship services; from this, midweek Bible studies are ongoing. Of course,

our great prayer is for conversions. Despite the outreach, the Lord has yet to bring sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. We sincerely desire the power of the Holy Spirit to work in all who are in need of the Savior. In 2017 we received six into membership (four communicant and two baptized).

Hetherton RPC, Michigan. Pastor Raymond Morton. The Hetherton congregation enjoins the words of the Psalmist. Psalm 107:1-2a (NKJV): "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." The congregation has been blessed in several ways. We have seen many visitors this year, some from Reformed Presbyterian churches and others who have been visiting in the area. Our attendance each Lord's Day averages fifteen. We have been blessed with the addition of two new members. A family who has been attending has decided to remain in the area and has committed to be part of the church. After several months of prayer, Jason Lapointe has acquired a job with the DNR and we all praise God for this. The Lapointes have three children. A Sabbath School has started, and it is being led by Barton Briley (elder) and Stacy Schiller. The Session and the congregation have greatly enjoyed Paul Mathews as a provisional elder. Paul and his wife Janet have attended frequently, and Paul has committed himself to another year in office. Thus, we have experienced the Lord's blessings. "We are glad" (Psalm 126:3)!

Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette, Indiana. Pastor Jared Olivetti. Immanuel RPC continues to see God's blessing and grace. Our ministries continue as in past years with active small groups, bi-monthly Psalm-singing at the Veteran's Home, joining the Lafayette RPC for youth group, college, and men's ministries. We are glad for the arrival of Peter Z. and his family as they work at Purdue University with China Outreach Ministries. God's blessing on us has led us to pray for ways to maximize and expand our current facilities, even possibly move. By the time this is published, we hope to have ordained new elders to the Session.

Lafayette RPC, Indiana. Pastor Adam Niess. The Lafayette congregation gives thanks for another year of God's mercy and goodness to us in Jesus Christ. Pastor Keith Evans has served us faithfully for many years, and he will now be moving on to serve at the Seminary in June of 2018. As Keith's replacement, the Lord has kindly provided a new pastor for us in Adam Niess, for which we are very glad. In the county jail, God continues to bless our efforts. On the university campus, we are still being used to care for students through our

Purdue CORPS ministry. God is blessing us and we are glad to serve Him in our community.

Marion RPC, Indiana. Pastor Jason Camery. Since our last report, the congregation has been blessed with a new building. In September of 2017 on our anniversary for organization (09/11/15) we were able to be in a new permanent place in Marion. The local PCUSA congregation closed its doors and graciously sold us their building. The beginning of 2018 has us getting use to this new place of worship. We have seen many visitors, and we expect to reach out to our community even more in the upcoming years, now that we have a place which our community can recognize as an RP church. Thank you for all the prayers and gifts that have been given to us as we minister for Christ's Crown and Covenant in Marion, Indiana.

Orlando RPC, Florida. Pastor H.P. McCracken. We are grateful for God's continued faithfulness to us. Pastor McCracken continues to preach through Luke and selected Psalms. Regular activities continue: Bible studies, fellowship meals, social events, elders' weekly prayer times, etc. Three communicant members and a baptized member have been added, and we have witnessed an increase in visits from those looking for a reformed place of worship. Community outreach includes the Walk for Life and our Fall event. The Lord has raised up two additional deacons. Please pray the Lord would raise up additional leader and elders.

Pageland RP Mission Church, South Carolina. Pulpit Supply, Ian Wise. We thank God for His faithfulness to us this past year. He continues to show how good He is to His people. Pastor Wise is preaching through Matthew's gospel on Lord's day mornings and teaching through the Psalms at prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings. We are a good mix of ages and stages of life. We especially pray that our many young people would personally own the promises of the gospel. We also pray for usefulness in our community. There are several in our congregation who suffer ongoing health concerns, and we ask prayer for them. One note of news is that GLG Presbytery, at the request of Ian Wise and the Pageland TGB, has changed Ian's position from pastor to pulpit supply.

Second RPC, Indianapolis, Indiana. Pastor James Faris. We are thankful that the Lord added David Mauser and Denny Prutow to the Session in 2017, and now associate pastor-elect Joel Hart. The timing has come as Ram and

Asha Rao headed to South Asia and Rich Johnston was retiring as a pastor. We honored Rich's service as an elder and deacon, as an exemplary servant-leader. The Lord is fulfilling Matthew 28:18-20 as the world comes to Indianapolis, for higher education. An ESL ministry offers a fruitful welcome mat to those coming from other nations. We thank our deacons for live-streaming our worship services for shut-ins and friends around the world.

Selma RPC, Alabama. Vacant. The congregation is going on seven years without a pastor. We have had a minister who is no longer in the pastorate move to Selma to fill the pulpit for us, but the pastoral plans for the future are still uncertain. We covet your prayers for us as we seek a man to be our shepherd. We are still hopeful of getting a lift put in the building so that we could use our main auditorium again. Currently, we use our basement since it is more accessible for those of us have mobility problems.

Southfield RPC, Michigan. Pastor Adam Kuehner. The Lord has once again blessed us with a variety of outreach opportunities, including biweekly chapel services at a drug rehab center in Detroit, street-preaching at a bus stop in Pontiac, regular "fifth Sabbath" evangelistic services, a pancake dinner followed by an evangelistic sermon, occasional outreach events for teens in Pontiac, and three regional midweek Bible studies. Five of our young adults served with RP Missions over the summer. We publicly renewed our Covenant of Communicant Membership in January. Membership and attendance are growing as we continue to receive abundant grace and provision from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Southside RPC, Indianapolis, Indiana. Pastors David Hanson and Stan McKenzie. Membership at the end of 2017 stood at 220 (159 communicant, 61 baptized). There were seven baptisms and one wedding. Elder George Shopp passed into glory. Outreach activities included welcoming new neighbors, helping the Heart Change urban ministry to mothers in crisis, evangelism in downtown Indianapolis, ministering to Plainfield Correctional Facility inmates, and teaching of ESL classes. In this first year of our ESL program there were students from eight different nations attending classes. We hosted our ninth annual Reformation Indy conference in April 2018 with Dr. Joel Beeke addressing the subject, "Sanctification—Living Intentionally Holy Lives."

Southwest Ohio RP Church, Mason, Ohio. Pastor Dick Knodel. As our second full year of existence, A.D. 2017 was a grand success. We had a 55%

increase, going from 20 to 31 members, with another 13 already looking to join this year—for an additional 42% increase! It looks like we have more than doubled our size in a little over a year. Our Session meetings appear to have become “routine,” giving us a greater sense of “normalcy.” And best of all, our church appears happy-in-the-Lord despite some tremendous trials of sickness!

Sparta, Illinois. Vacant. The past year has been one of transition. Pastor Daniel Hemken resigned after 3.5 years of effective service, to accept a call from Hebron RPC (in Kansas). The Presbytery appointed Pastor Keith Magill as interim moderator. Rev. Jim McMahon completed many years of service and has moved to Indianapolis. The congregation hired Rev. Joshua Hall, a PCA teaching elder who is considering coming into our Presbytery, to be our part-time interim pastor effective June 1, 2018. We are asking the Lord for a renewed urgency to bring the gospel to our region and to disciple converts with the result that Christ will build His church through us in Southern Illinois.

Sycamore RPC, Kokomo, Indiana. Pastor Shawn Anderson. Sycamore has known seasons of pruning, of maintaining, and of growing. And the essence of a growing church is a people abiding in Christ. We are thankful for new members and an intern, Adam Novinger, former minister of an independent Pentecostal church. We serve through the local pregnancy resource center, along with the Kokomo Rescue Mission by leading a weekly Bible study helping men deal with addictions. Most importantly, Kokomo is called every Sabbath into the gracious presence of Jesus Christ to hear His gospel. We give thanks to our Triune God for His manifold blessings and gracious benefits in Christ Jesus.

Terre Haute RP Mission Church, Indiana. Pastor Bill Roberts. Terre Haute reports that it is making progress toward becoming a fully organized congregation. In May, the TGB is planning on an election for pastor and ruling elder. One man has already been elected and approved to be a ruling elder. Assuming the election and agreement of these two men, it is anticipated that sometime in the fall the congregation would be organized. The Mission Church continues to grow in strength, numbers, financially, and, most importantly, spiritually. The radio ministry and ministry to two death row inmates as the Federal Penitentiary continue. A second bathroom and

storage shed were added to the church property. Our pastor is set to retire June 3, 2018.

Westminster RPC, Prairie View, Illinois. Pastor Stephen Rhoda. Westminster RPC is seeking to bring the gospel and the Reformed faith to the north suburbs of Chicago. We are in an upper-middle class area, making ministry a challenge as our neighbors are comfortable and busy, but we continue to reach out in any way we can to make contact with people and invite them to come hear the gospel and enjoy fellowship with God's people. We were blessed with a profession of faith and the baptism of a covenant child this past year. Please pray with us that God will add to our number and build up His people in Christ at Westminster. Currently our numbers remain approximately the same: Weekly attendance = 12-30; Communicant Members = 26; Baptized Members = 6.

Japan Presbytery Report to the 2018 Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers: In one of *the most unchurched* lands, Japan Presbytery (JP) consists of four congregations and one mission church in the cities of Kobe and Amagasaki in western Japan with now six incumbent pastors. We praise the Lord's name for His giving abundant blessings upon this very small presbytery in a pagan land of Japan, where the percentage of evangelical Christians is only 0.5% of the whole population. (See *Operation World* website.) Since the 2017 Synod, we experienced the loss of late Mr. Seigo Kitani of Kasumigaoka RPC, who also served as a board member and the bookstore manager of Covenant Bookstore (now being renamed as Covenant Book Room). The DVD entitled "A Testimony of God's Grace in Japan" that introduces our ministries is now available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZzxYFJHv1Y&feature=youtu.be>. (You can read there through our unofficial Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/JapanPresbyteryRPCNA/>)

Another noteworthy development is our Agreement with the Global Missions Board of the Synod which is in the process of ratification by both parties.

Kobe Theological Hall (KTH)

There are currently ten active students during 2018 spring semester, including five course students, two auditors, two credit taking students and one e-distant student: three from RP, and seven from other evangelical denominations. This year the Lord has sent three new students. Among KTH's graduates

there are two RP pastors (Rev. K. Endo and Rev. Kihei Takiura, who had finished with M.Div. degree at RPTS), three theological students under care including two who hold the preaching license (Dr. Yusuke Hirata, Mr. Keita Yasunaga). Our senior student, Mr. Hayato Ohara of Mukonosu RPC, is also under care of the Presbytery and licensed to preach.

Six pastors of Japan Presbytery (viz. Takiura, Sakai, Kanamori, Endo, Leach, and Kihei Takiura) have continued to participate in the teaching responsibilities at KTH this past year. Visiting lecturers this past year include: Dr. David Weir (elder of Ridgefield Park RPC), Professor Tom Reid (of RPTS, who with his wife worked hard for KTH library's improvement), Rev. Alastair McEwen and Rev. Lynsey Blakston (both from RPC Australia), Dr. David Toshio Tsumura (chm. of the editing committee of New Japanese Bible 2017—an author of one of the N.I.C.O.T.), Rev. Yukihiro Tsuji (a specialist in the study of first Japanese translation of the Bible by Rev. Hepburn), Dr. Jonathan Watt (of Geneva College), Rev. Hiroshi Sumita (Japan Evangelical Assoc.), and Dr. Reiji Oyama (Tokyo Theological Seminary). We will invite Rev. Prof. Warren Peel of RTS-Belfast this June. We have Dr. Woody Lauer (OPC missionary, on New Testament Introduction and Old Testament survey) and Dr. Tsuyoshi Kodama (PCJ pastor who studied under Dr. Robert Letham, on exegetical study of ST) every semester from within Japan.

KTH also participated in the West Japan Division of the Japan Evangelical Theological Society, and also took part in the work of newly published (in 2017) Japanese translation of the Bible. KTH is a small seminary, but its importance among Japanese Reformed and evangelicals in terms of maintaining the faith and practice in the inspiration/inerrancy of the Scripture, and of witnessing the RP's biblical teachings of the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ etc. are crucially increasing, facing the recently unstable theological climate of the Japanese evangelical scene. (Ex.: So-called New Perspectives on Paul finally landed in Japan and John Walton's new view on Genesis 1 began to influence Japanese evangelicals). KTH participates in RP Global Alliance's Fellowship of RP colleges.

We appreciate the financial help through GMB's Japan budget for a part of KTH budget as well as transportation of a guest faculty from mainly RPTS once a year. Four women, mainly the students of KTH, are serving to assist the work of the Representative of KTH in the area of treasury, library, and Excel-related work.

Covenanter Book Room (CBR)

Under the Trustee of the Synod and directed by the Board appointed by JP: Rev. Shigeru Takiura (Chm.), Deacon Toyoki Hamada, and Deacon Masahiro Harada; advisory member Shigeru Yamaguchi helps the Board.

The Literature Division:

1. CBR has been able to operate thankfully on a reduced budget. The reevaluation of its management is now at the stage of finalization between the Board and the Japan Presbytery. It is our conviction that CBR has been the important witness of Reformed Presbyterian convictions among Japanese Reformed/evangelical churches and seminaries, as well as the help for them.
2. CBR continues the effort to publish and to re-publish Reformed books (which are so few in the Japanese language!) in paper and/or e-book format. Generous funds were donated to the Presbytery for the purpose of such publication.
3. Sales through internet homepage need to be encouraged more. CBR is still one of the precious few Japanese Christian literature ministries.

The Mission Division:

1. CBR 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.
2. Okamoto-Keiyaku Session has been serving as the Sannomiya Commission under the Japan Presbytery. The Presbytery is now considering establishing a more permanent Sannomiya Commission in view of the positive mission efforts at CCB.
3. CBR holds also bi-weekly outreach at CCB in downtown Kobe: Monday lunch time English Bible class, where Rev. and Mrs. Charles Leach serve faithfully for evangelism.

The Caretaking Committee for the Covenanter Center Building (CCB).

Four persons are appointed for the daily care for CCB: two for the management (who are Rev. S. Takiura, chairman; and Deacon Harada of Higashisuma; and the other two take care of its guest room: Mrs. Nakamura from Kita-Suzurandai RPMC; Deaconess Mrs. Iwayama from Kasumigaoka). This Committee is efficiently working and continues achieving extensive facility improvements, including air conditioning.

The Psalter Committee

1. Completed translation of at least one part of all 150 Psalms into a metrical Japanese version with the Psalter's Addendum (28 new tunes) to the current Japanese Psalter. Now we have 100 completed Psalms and 50 partial Psalms in 250 tunes. The Committee proceeded to prepare a revised publication of the Japanese Psalter including 28 additions in a book. Efforts to correct mistakes in all 250 tunes are almost completed. The Committee faces a difficult task of making various indexes. This time we plan to publish this new revised Psalter through Word of Life Press, a major evangelical publishing house in Japan, hoping that it all will be distributed among all Japanese Christian bookstores. After this effort, the Committee will go back to the normal work of translating the rest of the parts of the fifty Psalm into the Japanese metrical form.
2. It has eight members consisting of those who read Biblical Hebrew, Japanese, English, Mandarin Chinese, and Korean as well as those in charge of the music. Mrs. Amelia Takiura serves for selection of tunes mainly from American Psalters. All are rejoicing to serve for creating singing of His inspired Psalms into Japanese.

Theological students under care of JP: Dempei Takiura, Dr. Yusuke Hirata, Keita Yasunaga, Hayato Ohara, Colin Doyle.

Kasumigaoka RPC (Rev. Charles Leach, pastor)

1. Give thanks for two women preparing to join the congregation. Pray that their spiritual gifts will be used to build up Christ's church, and that they will continue to grow steadily in their faith.
2. Thank God for many new people now coming to Bible studies and worship service. Pray for effective ministry to the spiritual needs of each one, and that the Lord will equip His people to make disciples.
3. Thank God for providing another faithful deaconess for our church this year. Pray for the Kitani family and congregation losing a beloved family head and elder (Seigo Kitani) who was called to heaven at the end of 2017. Ask the Lord to prepare a new generation of leaders and teachers to serve the congregation.
4. Pray for the congregation and one ruling elder as they prepare to call and welcome a new pastor; pray that a warm bond of spiritual affec-

tion and trust will be quickly established between a new pastor and members.

5. Pray for the Lord's blessing on Pastor Charlie and his wife Sue Leach as they return to the USA after serving for five years in Kobe, Japan. Pray that the Lord will guide them into new opportunities for service in retirement.

Mukonosu RPC (Rev. Hiroyuki Kanamori, pastor)

1. We are grateful that Mr. Katsuaki Matsushita has joined us from the Reformed Church of Japan (RCJ).
2. Our worship has been "broadcasted" through Facebook.
3. Pray for our Sabbath School.
4. Pray that our covenant youth will be led to confession.
5. Pray for our evangelism.
6. Pray for the cure of Mr. Norihide Komuro (aged 94) for his broken bone.
7. Pray that we may better serve the aged and the handicapped.
8. Pray that we may elect a new ruling elder.
9. Pray that we may worship in truth and spirit and that we may mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who rejoice.

Higashisuma RPC (Rev. Sumito Sakai, pastor)

1. We are grateful that Mr. Takeshi Nakagawa confessed Him and got baptized in April. Pray for his growth.
2. Pray for the recovery of Mrs. Sachiko Natsuzono who had a serious surgery in May.
3. Pray for both spirituality and health of Pastor Sakai, who has multiple responsibilities with the church, denomination, several seminaries, theological association, as well as inter-denominational activities.
4. Pray for the faith and wellbeing of the aged members.
5. Pray that the Sabbath School, the English Class (bi-weekly), and the Bible Class are used to reach out to the unchurched in the community.
6. Pray that the servants in the Lord will be added towards the next generation.
7. Pray that Christian home will increase and that more unchurched people will be saved.

Okamoto-Keiyaku RPC (Rev. Shigeru Takiura and Rev. Kihei Takiura, pastors)

Please pray for:

1. Continued growth in faith and love of church members.
2. Two seekers who are currently attending worship services.
3. Spiritual life and witness of our church members who live at a distance.
4. New leadership to be added.
5. Youth who are preparing for profession of faith.
6. Mr. Colin Doyle who was taken under care of Japan Presbytery. Pray for him and his family for their future.

Kita-Suzurandai RPMC (Rev. Katsunori Endo, domestic missionary [pastor])

Please remember Kita-Suzurandai in your prayer, when the church's declining finance has necessitated some significant adjustments in the ministry, which include Pastor Endo's having become bi-vocational from this spring while the preaching on the Lord's Days are now being maintained by three teaching elders who had been assigned as the Commission members of this Mission Church by the Presbytery: viz. Pastor Sakai, Pastor Kanamori, and Pastor Endo himself. We are reminded of our Lord's precept as set forth in Proverbs as follows:

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.—Proverbs 16:1-3

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Katsunori Endo
(clerk, Japan Presbytery)

Midwest Presbytery (MWP) Report to Synod — May of 2018

Fathers and Brothers: Our Midwest Presbytery has four (4) theological students under care; Garrett Mann; Rob Haynes; Tim (T.Y.); and Romesh Prakashpalan. Some men under our care have in the last year been ordained, or have moved to other presbyteries, or are no longer under care. We pray for the Lord to raise up new laborers for His harvest.

With gratitude to Jesus Christ we note this past year has seen licentiate

Brian Wright ordained and installed at the Sterling RP Church (Sterling, KS) and licentiate Joseph Friedly ordained and installed in the Tri-Lakes Reformed Church (Monument, Colorado). Rev. Daniel Hemken from the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery was called by our Hebron congregation and installed by the Presbytery last September. Patrick McNeely, a MWP licentiate eligible to receive a call, has recently accepted the call of the Squamish RP Mission Church (Squamish, British Columbia, Canada) and was subsequently ordained to that ministry by the Pacific Coast Presbytery to the great joy of our brothers and the families of the Squamish Mission Church. Mr. Bryan Schneider has accepted the call of the thankful Sharon RP congregation in Morning Sun, Iowa, and pending the outcome of his ordination exams the MWP expects to ordain and install him later this summer. Once again, Jesus Christ who ascended on high and has given gifts unto men has supplied our needs; only Shawnee (Kansas) RPC's pulpit remains to fill.

This past year we rejoiced to see Pastor Jonathan Leach receive approval to commence the Reformed Presbyterian Church in San Antonio (www.rpcs.org) as a preaching station. Pastor Leach is a retired military chaplain who was diligently involved in assisting the Living Way RP Mission Church in Bryan, Texas, prior to Rev. Steve Rockhill's arrival there last year, and has now commenced this work in San Antonio, Texas.

Bowing our hearts and minds to the inscrutable providence and wisdom of God, it is with sadness that the Presbytery has recorded the dissolution of the Enid Reformed Church (Oklahoma) this past year. The members have moved to sister congregations or in some cases military families have moved on due to changes in duty stations. Still, with a thankful heart, Enid elder William Wagner noted that because of the ministry at Enid RC some have carried the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the far reaches of the earth. Thus, despite apparent reversals, we do praise God for the lives and labors of all these faithful servants and saints, "knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Our MWP mission works in Casper, Wyoming (Sam McCracken) and Bryan, Texas (Steve Rockhill) continue laboring steadfastly for Christ. As a reminder, we note here with a deep sense of gratitude to our Lord that the RPGM Board had previously adopted PK as a mission field and has also taken on the oversight of Dr. EM as missionary pastor; Dr. EM is still very much a part of the MWP and so is upon our hearts and in our prayers.

Midwest Presbytery summer conferences include Colorado's Horn Creek (June 10-16) with Pastor Steve Rockhill as the featured speaker and the Iowa RP Family Camp (from July 30 to August 4) with Pastor Kyle Borg as the featured speaker. Our Kansas Conference plans for Camp Curry this year include the annual joint worship service and Psalm Sing on Sabbath morning, July 1. The Midwest Presbytery CY summer retreat meeting for youth is at Quinter, Kansas, on July 20-22; we give our Lord thanks for providing Christian fellowship and encouragement for over sixty of our MWP CY each quarter at retreats held throughout our Presbytery during the year.

Brethren, by God's kindness the Presbytery has 21 congregations, two missions churches, and one preaching station being led by 96 elders (ruling and teaching). Four congregations were visited by Presbytery elders this year. Jonathan Haney is both our MWP moderator and AIC chairman, Greg Stiner is clerk, and Shawn Stickel is our Treasurer. Mike McDaniel is our representative to Synod's Finance Committee and Romesh Prakashpalan is our HMB rep. The MWP has made plans to gather in or near Clarinda, Iowa, from November 6-8 (Tuesday through Thursday). Together we give thanks and praise to our victorious King and gracious God for His work in our Presbytery!

MWP Clerk,
Greg Stiner

Bryan, Texas—Living Way RPMC. We rejoice and give thanks for the Lord's blessing upon us this past year. Pastor Rockhill and his family have settled nicely into the life of the congregation and the Bryan/College Station community. Despite the challenges of having a few families move away because of employment opportunities, we were thankful to receive one new family into membership earlier this year. A planning meeting in January generated a lot of energy and excitement among the members as we set some outreach and ministry goals for the year. The Lord has given us several opportunities for mercy ministry and we have been able to utilize our small food pantry—one of the results of our January meeting—to serve individuals and families in need. We have also recently finished our first rotation as a congregation of serving in a community organization that provides food, shelter, and recreational activities for homeless families working to get back on their feet. Under the leadership of the Bryan Commission, we are looking forward to holding an election for

elders this summer (Lord willing), with a view toward organization as a particular congregation in the fall of 2018. Please continue to pray for us as we seek to faithfully proclaim Jesus Christ in the Bryan/College Station community.

Casper (Wyoming) RPMC. The Lord is blessing the Casper RP Mission Church. Average attendance has risen to about 40 with lots of young children. A young man was recently received as a new member. A member family leads weekly Bible studies in their home with Casper College students. The congregation carries on a ministry of worship, fellowship, outreach, and care for one another. Uphold in prayer Pastor Sam McCracken and the provisional session and ask God to raise up local leaders to shepherd the flock.

Clarinda, Iowa, RPC is involved in several ministries within the community. We held a Vacation bible school July 10-14 and had 25 children enrolled. The ladies come together on a regular basis to do charity sewing besides their monthly fellowship and study meetings. This year we have hosted monthly game nights, which have been well-received. Members of the congregation are involved in several community ministries including the AWANA program, nursing home ministry, neighborhood Bible study, and radio ministry. Our congregation also participates in the community "Faith, Food, and Fellowship Meal" (from which we've made several contacts within the community). We have been worshiping in our new location within the city of Clarinda for two years now. We praise God for answered prayer as a family of seven is making plans to move to Clarinda and to join our fellowship. We also have had a young family of five worship with us occasionally. The husband of this family of five would like to see a Reformed Presbyterian Church begin forty miles away in their hometown. Please pray that we would be faithful with the fruit that God is giving us and that we would be able to sell the church building in the country.

Clay Center, Kansas—Hebron RPC began 2017 without an installed pastor (Rev. Ron Graham having retired in November of 2016). We are grateful to ruling elders Harold Milligan and Steve McMahan for their leadership and to the many men who provided us with preaching during this time. On May 14, 2017, Rev. Daniel Hemken was elected pastor and soon after accepted the call. He and his wife, Kim, moved to Clay Center in early August. Several repairs and improvements were made to the parsonage prior to their arrival (and more such projects are forthcoming). We rejoice once again to have a pastor who endeavors to feed us with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:15). We also

rejoice in the Lord's gracious provision as He sent us a new family who began worshipping with us shortly after Rev. Hemken's Sept. 12 installation; after many months of faithful attendance and preparation they were received as communicant members on April 22, 2018. Pray that the Lord will continue to bless our outreach efforts and that we may effectively employ the gifts He has given us.

Colorado Springs, Colorado—Springs Reformed Church. The SRC session continues to be thankful for the blessings the Lord has been pleased to pour out upon us. We continue to see steady growth in numbers, with membership around 200. Most importantly, we rejoice at the growth in grace and knowledge of Christ that the Spirit has been accomplishing among us. Pastor Reese is currently preaching through the book of Acts and is preparing for a six-month sabbatical beginning in July. Pastor Ryce is preaching through the book of Ruth along with a series on how Christ is proclaimed in the Old Testament. Our Sabbath School classes consist of a short study through the Apostle's Creed followed by a sermon discussion. Our other activities include a men's sanctification study, a study of David Murray's book *Jesus on Every Page*, a women's study, a newly-formed Young Adult Group, and regional prayer groups. Pastor Ryce will participate in the annual Theological Foundations Backpacking program (TFB) this summer. We hope to have an officer election in the early fall to add to our deacon board. While the Lord continues to add to our numbers with both communicant members and covenant children, He also continues to bring hard trials to us. Pray that the Lord would uphold the SRC saints, make the SRC elders faithful under-shepherds, and that, in all things, have our eyes fixed upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Dallas, Texas, RPC is thankful for the Lord's blessings and protection upon us over the past year. Our numbers have declined (21 Communicant, 20 Baptized, one birth), though our core families remain committed to our goal of preaching the gospel of King Jesus in North Texas. Within the past year we have labored to trim down our budget, by moving to a more suitable location in McKinney and transitioning Pastor Mark Koller to part-time status. These changes have helped us achieve a more stable financial position for the next few years. The Session has been pleased to begin deacon training with Nick Schoeneberger with the hopes of having an election later this year. Sermons included John, The First Commandment, and a monthly series on The Psalms (currently on Psalm 54). Romesh Prakashpalan, R.E. and seminary student at

RPTS, was licensed to preach by the Presbytery and has been a tremendous help in preaching each month through a series on Malachi. Our small church has been able to help with other church-planting efforts—with members of our Session serving on Synod's HMB and our Presbytery's San Antonio Church Planting Committee. Through several significant challenges in the past year, we continue to trust in Christ's oversight of His church as we pray for more laborers in the work ahead.

Denison, Kansas—Denison RPC

Laramie, Wyoming, RPC. We are encouraged by the growth that God has given our church in the past year. We have seen additional members come by profession of faith, by transfer of membership, and by birth in covenant families. We have also seen growth in leadership in the election of our first deacons at the end of 2017. The transience of our university town presents various challenges and opportunities; this year we will see several students leave us as they graduate and move on to other places. Please pray that God might send more in their place, and that we might be further established with local families. We are currently seeking a new location to hold worship services; pray that God will provide a suitable location and use us in it for His glory!

Lawrence, Kansas—Christ Covenant RPC is pleased to represent King Jesus in this “progressive” university town between Kansas City and the state capital. We are more convicted about Jesus Christ's reign after an adult class by Elder Phil Beard on that subject. We continue to open our facility to other ministries and groups doing good for our community; for example, we hosted the Fall Festival for the local pregnancy care center, heard high school seniors present their capstone speeches, and hosted 80+ youth from our Presbytery for a wonderful Spring Sabbath. Though we are blessed with a large session, God is prompting us to notice some gifted men who are younger so that elders may “pass the baton” well in the next few years; it is likely that more deacons will be needed as well. A Presbytery visitation team encouraged us in late 2017 concerning our strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Hosting a “Science AND Faith” fall seminar seems like a worthy follow-through to some of that counsel. It is hard to believe we are now 48 years old; the Home-going of our first pastor (Rev. Marion McFarland) prompts gratitude for a faithful past.

Longmont, Colorado—Salt and Light RPC

Manhattan, Kansas, RPC. Our congregation (34 communicant members and 19 baptized members) praises God for answered prayers in providing two additional elders this year. We continue to see new faces come into our fellowship through Fort Riley Army base and Kansas State University—many of whom then go out to other places from here. Our outward ministry is focused on four primary areas: students at K-State, inmates at the county jail, individuals in need (engaged via diaconal work), and the community surrounding our rented meeting location, the county Senior Center. As we meet twice for worship each Lord's Day, our pastor has led the congregation through several preaching series including the book of Matthew and topical series on Love and Christ in the Old Testament.

Minneola, Kansas, RPC. After eight years of patient watering and sowing, the Lord has opened the door for visitors to come worship with us. One family with four teen daughters and an infant son is coming from a town 50 miles to the West; they have been attending Sabbath School regularly. Last week another father representing a family with several teens from a town 50 miles to the south visited; two weeks from now, we are hoping to meet his family. Pray for us as we seek to be faithful in reaping the harvest and tending the growing flock.

Monument, Colorado—Tri-Lakes Reformed Church. The session of Tri-Lakes Reformed Church is thankful for the many blessings God has bestowed on our congregation in the past year. Pastor Joseph Friedly has demonstrated his gifts in preaching and ministering the Word of God to the congregation since being installed as our pastor last June, currently preaching through the book of Romans in our morning services, and the Psalms of Ascent in our evening services. The Lord continues to add to our numbers, both organically through births of babies in our congregation, and with the addition of several new families. Our weekly attendance has been running around 100 souls, so we are continuing to feel the need for a larger facility in which to meet. We have formed a Building Committee to look into the options for other meeting places, but thus far the Lord has not opened any other opportunities for us. Our deacons are keeping up with the mercy ministry in our congregation and have been looking into the various ways in which we can reach out more to the greater Tri-Lakes Community. The Lord has graciously added two new ruling elders to the Session; Jason Castro and Joe DeBenedittis having been

ordained and installed on Lord's Day, May 6. Please pray for our pastor—Joseph Friedly—that God will continue to uphold him in his ministry amongst us, and please pray that the Lord will provide a larger meeting place for us soon so that we can better serve our growing congregation.

Morning Sun (Iowa) Sharon RPC. We have been without a regular pastor from June 2017 until the present. By God's grace, Bryan Schneider has accepted our call and plans to be in the parsonage by July 2018. We've had various RPCNA pastors filling the pulpit. Pastor George Gregory held communion when he filled the pulpit. Dr. John Weirs, OPC, who lives in Iowa City, filled the pulpit many times. The Session met several times and by electronic means otherwise, approving actions in constituted court. God has been gracious.

Quinter, Kansas—Quinter RPC

San Antonio, Texas—RPC of San Antonio is a preaching station, meeting weekly since January 7, 2018 for morning worship, fellowship lunch, and afternoon study in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Reformed Presbyterian Testimony*. We are blessed with affordable meeting space rental at a Quality Inn on the Alamo city's northwest side, near the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and Fiesta Texas amusement park. Four faithful families currently comprise the group, under oversight of MWP's San Antonio Committee. With God's help we anticipate petitioning for graduation to mission church status in late 2018.

Shawnee, Kansas, RPC. Our pastor-search is ongoing; we remain encouraged by the preaching of the Word to faithfully stay the course. Pray with us in this process and for a continued unity among the body. We are thankful for our elders and are actively asking God to raise up new ones as well. We have a provisional moderator and stated-supply since January which has given additional help for the flock at this time. We are also grateful for our many students, outreach opportunities, recent additions by baptisms and conversion over the past year. Join us in praying about EM's recent work in PK where the church continues to grow and to be established. Ask with us for God's covenant love and protection to bring glory to His name!

Sterling, Kansas, RPC. The Sterling congregation was blessed with our new pastor, Rev. Brian Wright, and his family—wife, Lisa, son Emmett, and their recent addition, daughter Jenna—in June 2017. Pastor Wright has been preaching through Ephesians and concluded this study series in May. He is now

preaching a brief series on Habakkuk and then will look at the life and ministry of Elijah. We are thankful to God that during our 25 months without a pastor, we lost no one to transfer because we were without a pastor. We believe this is a testimony to the members of our congregation believing and resting upon the word of God and not the pastor or personality of the messenger. Our worship attendance averages about 90 in the morning worship service and around 40 in the afternoon service. We continue to have a congregational fellowship meal together each Lord's Day as a "regional" church, drawing about two-thirds of our members from around Central Kansas. This is due in part because there are very few churches of Reformed faith in our area. Following our mealtime we return to the sanctuary for our afternoon service before concluding our day together. Remember our congregation in praying that God will continue to unite us in the importance of corporate worship and fellowship as we seek His will for our ministry.

Stillwater, Oklahoma, RPC. The congregation moved into a new rental building last September. For the first time in our history, the facility we use for worship is available to us through the week; this has been a blessing in promoting a sense of community and has opened opportunities for fellowship, nurture, and outreach. The congregation has adopted a theme of "Growing in Christ" this year, with an emphasis on discipleship in the areas of personal and/or family devotions. We covet your prayers that we would be rooted and grounded in Christ, growing in godliness, and bearing gospel fruit in our relationships.

Topeka (Kansas) RPC is grateful for God's continued blessings upon our congregation. We are thankful for professions of faith by our covenant youth, and for the regular visitors, new families, and adherents God brings to us. Give thanks for the growth in our congregation and pray that some adherents will be led to unite formally with us. Our congregation is blessed with many gifted individuals, so pray for God's blessing as we seek to add to our ordained leadership. We rejoice in the willingness of many to exercise their gifts for God's glory and the equipping of the local saints. We are blessed by the continued faithful ministry of Pastor Brad Johnston, as we focus on lessons from Exodus this year. We have instituted a partnered Scripture memorization program open to all in the congregation. We were again pleased to host the LifeFocus youth conference in March. We rejoice in the

spiritual growth of the young people in the Presbytery. Pray for our many and busy covenant youth and for their adult sponsors. Remember those among us whose strength is diminished by age; in particular we have four ladies facing life-threatening health problems. Vince Rocereto, the oldest member of our congregation at 96, received his heavenly reward (02/2018). Rejoice with us in the recent birth of a covenant child in April; we await the birth of three others in coming months.

Washington, Iowa—Washington RPC

Westminster (CO) RPC. Westminster RP Church gives thanks to God for the growth which He has given us over the past year. We have enjoyed close fellowship with sixteen new members (five by baptism) in 2017. We are also seeing spiritual growth among the members. In addition, two new deacons were ordained in 2017 and have been a great benefit to the congregation. Pastor Sapp is preaching through 2 Samuel in the morning services and has begun a preaching series on the Ten Commandments in evening services. He recently finished a series on the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Please pray for WRPC as we try to reach out to our neighbors and the north Denver area with the gospel, and for the seventh year of our Theological Foundations Backpacking (TFB) ministry in July as we host thirteen CY (youth) students from congregations around our Presbytery and beyond, taking them on a backpacking trip filled with theological instruction.

Wichita, Kansas—Trinity Reformed Church gives praise to God for His gifts of leaders to the Church. We ordained our first ever deacons in September and added a second ruling elder, Sean Knaak, in February. The intergenerational class has studied *The Faith Shaped Life* by Ian Hamilton, Evangelism, and a video series on Early Church History by Robert Godfrey. Pastor Allyn preached through Isaiah in the latter half of 2017 and is in Exodus through 2018. We have begun a neighborhood Bible Study and are thankful steady interaction with visitors. Pray for the Lord's continued provision for and protection of us, and for our growth in grace.

Winchester, Kansas, RPC. The Winchester congregation has been blessed by the teaching of Pastor Kyle Borg over the last year. Pastor Kyle has recently concluded a sermon series on the book of Acts and has begun a series on the book of Job in morning worship. Session has concluded a year-long devotional on *The Shepherd Leader* (by Timothy Witmer) and is currently implementing

some of the strategies introduced. The Deacons have been active in caring for the needs of our congregation and community. By Synod time our Vacation Bible School will have been completed, Lord willing, which is a great way to get families in our community familiar with our church. Please pray for our congregation as Pastor Kyle will be speaking at two summer camps this year, and as we plan to praise God for blessing our congregation with 150 years of service in September.

Pacific Coast Presbytery Report to Synod 2018

Fathers and Brothers: The Pacific Coast Presbytery has experienced a year of stretching and a year of blessings under the good providence of God. Our resources are small and our numbers are small, but the Lord has been bringing the promise of Isaiah 54:2 to pass in our Presbytery: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: Spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes." This has been a year of making our tent larger, stretching the curtains, and lengthening the cords to make room for more officers, congregations, and worshipers. God is truly faithful to His people.

Officers: Rev. Mark England serves as moderator, Rev. Nathan Eshelman serves as clerk, Mr. Aaron Piper serves as treasurer.

Ad Interim Commission: The Phoenix congregation is currently acting as the AIC.

Below you will find summaries of the ministry and life of our congregations. Each pastor has submitted the paragraph on behalf of their congregation.

Brea, California (All Saints—John Sawtelle): Each year brings its fresh new challenges, opportunities, and providential difficulties but the Lord always supplies grace. We rejoice that the Lord has given to us and has taken away as well, but in all things the name of the Lord is to be praised. The ministry of the ordinary means of grace has continued among us as the word was proclaimed and the sacraments administered each Lord's Day. In addition, the elders have persisted in the ministry of rule through catechizing the young saints, engaging in family visitation, and administering Christian discipline. The ministry of mercy has also been upheld through humble means and cheerful giving as the needs of the distressed were met according to our limited capacity. This past year has also seen elder oversight duties reduced with the Presbytery decision

to organize Las Vegas RP as a congregation. We are grateful for the small role ASR was granted in serving the Las Vegas plant for the past five years. An additional change in oversight occurred as the Irvine Mandarin speaking church plant, consisting of members of ASR, was organized by Presbytery in December of 2017. Pray for us as a congregation that we may kindle a more fervent zeal for evangelism and that we may grow in number that the Lord may be pleased to use us to multiply church plants in Orange County.

Fresno, California (Samuel Ketcham): Pastor Ketcham arrived in July as stated pulpit supply and was ordained and installed in February. He has preached through several Psalms and half the book of Mark. He has also worked through half of the book of Exodus and started a series from the book of Proverbs. The congregation continues to enjoy his expository preaching both in the morning and evening services. Midweek prayer is hosted in various homes twice a month; these times have been great for encouragement and fellowship, but also for spiritual protection and power through prayer. The congregation has seen several prayer requests answered over the past few months, one of them being a job transfer to Fresno for Gayle Copeland (and her two boys Will and Jon). The work of shepherding is conducted on a more formal basis by the elders with a new rotation of house visits to all members of the church. This has been a useful means of strengthening the pastoral bond between the elders and the congregation. Upon Pastor Ketcham's ordination in February, the congregation has enjoyed a quarterly administration of the Lord's Supper. The congregation has also enjoyed the baptism and reception of Gredyl Cline as a non-communicant member. Furthermore, we have had one adult membership transfer from the OPC and one covenant child become a communicant member. The congregation was greatly helped by Rev. Eshelman during his time as interim moderator. The election of Pastor Ketcham as the new pastor was as fluid as possible. Since then, the congregation has enjoyed new excitement about the work of the church in Fresno. The ladies continue to meet on a monthly basis for fellowship and the men have started a monthly prayer breakfast. The congregation also enjoyed Sabbath school on the book of Matthew, the book *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, and a series on family life and marriage. The congregation hosted a NAPARC joint worship service in April with a PCA and URC congregation; the event was a total success and huge encouragement to all parties. Pastor Ketcham preached on "The Protection of

Christ" from Proverbs 2. Last but not least, Paul Hemphill was elected as ruling elder and his ministry has been received very well by the congregation.

Irvine, California (All Saints, Irvine—Hsing Tang): All Saints RP Church, Irvine, was established as a congregation of the Pacific Coast Presbytery on December 16, 2017. Pastor Hsing Tang was ordained to the gospel ministry during that same meeting of the Presbytery. The congregation elected Rev. Hsing Tang to be their pastor. Presbytery appointed elder Howard Huizing as a provisional elder for a period of one year. The church meets weekly for worship at the Northwood Community Center in Irvine. They celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper weekly. The Session meets monthly to discuss matters concerning the congregation. An application for tax exempt status has been filed with the State of California. The Session is working with individuals within the congregation toward the goal of electing ordained officers. A ministry among Mandarin speaking students at UC-Irvine has been put on hold due to a change with the hosting family.

Las Vegas, Nevada (Mission Church—vacant): Las Vegas Reformed Presbyterian Mission Church, which had been under the oversight of All Saints RP, Brea, California, became a fully organized congregation August 27, 2017, and made out a call to Pastor Jason Ryce. Pastors John Sawtelle and Tim McCracken serve as provisional elders. Pastor Ryce, who had developed a great love for the group, was, however, unable to accept the call. With heartache and tears, having agonized over the decision, Pastor Ryce wrote the church to say he had come to believe that his health would not allow him the strength and energy necessary to give them the pastoral care he would have wanted to give. Pastors Sawtelle and McCracken have sought to give support, some supply preaching, and help in the matter of inviting other candidates. By the time this report is read the congregation will have received at least two and perhaps three across a span of just six or seven weeks. This is a crucial time for them in the matter of their seeking pastoral leadership.

Los Angeles, California (Nathan Eshelman and Namsik Yang): The LA RPC experienced a year of sending as well as stretching on various fronts. The Lord is always faithful. The McIlhenny family—Ryan being a deacon—went to Shanghai to help "college-plant" the new Geneva College extension in Shanghai. They were difficult to lose, but we are thankful for God's work in their lives and the way they are blessing the greater RP community through

their services. Several new families were added to our number. Pastor Eshelman was privileged to baptize five covenant youth; he also was honored to baptize three adults who had been discipled. What a joyful day that was. We continue to meet each Lord's Day for morning and afternoon worship. We have visitors each Lord's Day, rarely without exception. We have a weekly fellowship lunch that is especially helpful in getting to know visitors. Wednesday evening prayer meetings with Psalm meditations happen each week. A study through Calvin's *Institutes* slowly happens as we are able to meet. Men meet for a prayer breakfast six times a year; the women do the same at another location. LA RPC is thankful for the paying off of our manse (a 30-year mortgage paid off in 8 years). We participated in mercy in several ways: feeding the homeless, clothing and hygiene product drives through the winter, helping to "document" those without proper documentation, and serving those in need in various ways; mercy is a very important component to our vision for ministry. We continue to seek God's will for our associate pastor—Rev. Namsik Yang—as medical needs of his infant son, Minsol, have him in Grand Rapids, Mich., for the time-being. All elders serve on various boards, committees, and agencies of the Presbytery and Synod.

Phoenix, Arizona (Jon Maginn): The congregation here is doing well considering some of the hardships that God has allowed some to go through in the past couple of years. The Session is staying on track and on top of things, although they can get difficult at times. We have seen some growth in attendance of some adherents and have recently had two of the Shipman girls come into communicant membership. We're also in process of bringing a young man into membership in the next month or so. We have been greatly pleased with this as this has been our constant prayer and hope that all the children in our congregation would someday come to a point in their lives where each one will hopefully acknowledge Jesus as their Savior and King. This year has been filled with much activity surrounding Pastor Jon's replacement. The search that started over a year ago has brought us a few men to look at and although we have not been able to come to a solid congregational vote as of yet, we are hopeful to have our new pastor in place when Pastor Jon retires in April of 2019. God has provided some good men and we are trustful that He will give us a like mind in choosing the man He has already prepared for this position. Finally, although we have had to deal with some different struggles over this past year,

we are greatly encouraged to see all the work that our Lord has been doing in both the lives of the members of our congregation, but also that greater work that He has been doing in greatly building up our Presbytery. We are thankful for the many blessings that we are able to see being lived out in the lives of most of the members and we pray for those who are going through various struggles. On a closing note, it has been a great blessing to so many who are willing to stay for an extra 30-40 minutes each week for a time of prayer following our weekly meal together. We remember always that our God is good when things are going well and when they are not going so well in our eyes.

San Diego, California (Mark England): This past year saw continued changes for the San Diego congregation. Three families (eighteen individuals) of the Anyuak community relocated to Minnesota for better opportunities (they are doing well); this drastically affected our worship attendance, but through visitors, adherents (two new Anyuak families) and new members, our overall worship numbers did not suffer greatly. Our life is much like other churches—the ongoing concerns for family (health, age, raising of children and grandchildren); employment; witness and evangelism; and the honoring of God in our individual and corporate lives. Church finances have suffered a bit in the past two years, making some necessary maintenance issues more difficult to manage. Matters for prayer include better work schedules for those required to work on the Lord's Day; general health and end-of-life issues; growing together as brothers and sisters in Christ through our language and cultural differences; better outreach and evangelism for neighbors and friends; the raising up of local leadership (elders and deacons). We are so grateful for the Lord's forgiveness and the care which Jesus provides for us. All thanksgiving and glory to God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Seattle, Washington (Ryan Hemphill): The Lord continues to bless us throughout the 2017-18 year since last Synod. We have received many visitors and added new members to our fellowship. Pastor Hemphill is currently preaching through Paul's letters to the Thessalonians in the morning and Psalms in the evening. We held officer elections this spring and elected a new ruling elder; Lord willing, by the time of Synod, we will have a new elder ordained and installed. We have several members who continue to advance in years. We give praise for God's faithful witness in this stage of life as they endure many physical hardships associated with getting older. Pray for the Lord's continued

sustaining hand on these saints. On the other end of the age spectrum, we rejoice in the growth of our young people—numerically and spiritually. Pray for the Lord to be glorified in the lives of these youths as well as in the life of the Seattle RPC. Since 2011 we have been praying for God to add churches to our geographical area. We have the hope that we will be used to establish another presbytery one day. The cities we've been praying for are Portland, Ore.; Boise, Ida.; Vancouver, BC; and the Seattle area. We are excited to see this prayer partially fulfilled in the Coram Deo Mission Church in Squamish, BC (about an hour north of Vancouver, BC)! Join us in praying for these cities.

Squamish, British Columbia (Coram Deo; Mission Church—Patrick McNeely): By God's gracious provision, the newly established Coram Deo Reformed Presbyterian Mission Church caught traction in 2017. In late February, Licentiate Patrick McNeely relocated to Squamish to carry out weekly Bible studies and start walking four families through the *Understanding Biblical Doctrine* workbook. The Lord richly blessed our times of study, prayer, psalm singing, and fellowship during these midweek gatherings. Additionally, many from this small group began driving to worship with the Vancouver Associated Presbyterian Church each Lord's Day. The timing of these services allowed the Squamish group to begin a Sunday morning Bible study working through the Gospel of John. The encouragement and edification from the Lord, His word, and His people helped solidify the desire of these families in Squamish to request the establishment of an RPCNA work by the fall meeting of Presbytery. A committee was established, then visited Squamish and Vancouver to engage with both groups. A temporary governing body was subsequently formed and the Squamish work established as a mission church. We give thanks for the Lord's gracious guidance and wisdom in directing each step that has brought us to our current state as a mission church with a recently ordained pastor, Patrick McNeely. We are currently meeting at Brennan Park Recreation Center for morning and evening worship, with a consistent attendance hovering between 15-20. We are encouraged to see people from the community walking through our doors merely by word of mouth and personal invitation. Some of the people we engage with in the small town of Squamish (approx. 20,000 people) have never been to church, and/or have never met a Christian! We are thankful to be planted in a community that has such a great need to be exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our prayer that the Canadian national motto will be

a celebrated reality in the lives of the people who reside here: “[May He have dominion] from sea to sea ...” (Psalm 72:8).

Prison Ministry (Timothy McCracken): The California State Prisons in the San Joaquin Valley continue to show themselves to be fertile fields for important work, as Pastor McCracken reports a steady attendance of seventy men across the chapels where he has an opportunity to teach. Since the teaching through the last fifteen months has been weekly, the involvement constitutes a real standing relationship. Pacific Coast Presbytery is working through how God’s call to church membership could be worked out with some of the men, and they are seeking your input at this meeting. A rich opportunity of Correspondence Bible Study relationship is available to any session-approved volunteers through the national work of Metanoia Prison Ministries. Volunteers from your congregations could be a great blessing in this work; contact Pastor McCracken for details. Locally, more teaching volunteers are being raised up from our sister NAPARC and Gospel Coalition churches, and the door still seems wide open for their work. A request for wisdom and counsel concerning prison ministry has been submitted to this Court and will be taken up as a communication.

Future Works: Currently the Pacific Coast Presbytery is investigating a church-planting opportunity in Reno, Nevada. In May, representatives from the church extension committee [of PCP] visited with several families who want to participate in an RPCNA church plant. Since there is an OP Church in the area, the committee has been in communication with the Presbytery of Northern California (OPC) as well as took opportunity to meet with the OPC minister in Reno. We hope to see this work flourish as Reno is a growing area with very little church presence in the city.

Students Under Care: Currently we have the following students under care: Jerry Foltz (Los Angeles), Sean Holm (Las Vegas), and George Wallace (Phoenix). There are a couple of other men in the queue who have requested to be taken under care, two of whom are from the Los Angeles congregation and one from the San Diego congregation.

Relationship with Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: The Presbytery approved a transfer request of the Shelter congregation (Edmonton), pending Synod approval. This also will be taken up as a communication (2018 Synod Communication # 18-5).

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

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Nathan Eshelman, clerk

Report of St. Lawrence Presbytery

Dear Brothers: The Presbytery currently has fifteen congregations spanning Canada (7) and New York State (8). It now has eleven students under care. As of this writing, and given Synod's agenda, The Shelter congregation is in process of transferring to the Pacific Coast Presbytery. Canadian students currently are Jonathan Finlayson (Evangelical Presbyterian, Toronto), Dan Dupuis (Ottawa), Reuben Lindeman (Hudson – St. Lazare), Derek Baars and Stephen Mulder (Shelter, Edmonton). US students are Mark Goerner and Chris Goerner (Christ Church, Floyd), Scott Doherty (Fulton), Micah Wright (Syracuse), and Jeff Wallace (Oswego). Mark Goerner is Eligible to Receive a Call, and teaches occasionally in the Christ Church congregation. His licensure was renewed recently for another five-year term. Scott Doherty, also Eligible to Receive a Call, is completing his PhD at Westminster Theological Seminary (East). Warren Campbell requested, and was given, dismissal as a theological student (October 10, 2017). Reuben Lindeman is taking classes through Ottawa Theological Hall. Dan DuPuis, along with Micah Wright and Jeff Wallace, are students in conjunction with RPTS. Jeff Wallace still serves in the Oswego congregation in matters of discipleship, evangelism, and counseling. He leads the chaplaincy program at St. Joseph's hospital in Syracuse. All of these men are growing in knowledge, godliness, and family/personal life. This year saw Derek Baars become Eligible to Receive a Call, while Stephen Mulder and Chris Goerner progressed in Eligibility to Preach exams, and Dan Dupuis and Reuben Lindeman progressed in Eligibility to Receive a Call exams. The Shelter congregation has called Derek Baars as its Associate Pastor, and that call is being processed.

Doug Chamberlain was installed into the Christian Heritage congregation on April 1, 2017, and Andrew Schep resigned from the Syracuse pastorate on Sept. 28, 2017. Vince Ward is now the provisional moderator of the Hudson–St. Lazare session, while Lisbon and Syracuse have its resident elders serving as interim moderators, Don Smith and Robert Rice respectively. Daniel Kok has

relocated from Edmonton (The Shelter RPC) to Smiths Falls (Free Church of Scotland, Continuing) and is currently on our roll as a credentialed minister.

The Presbytery and its youth have been well served again by Chris and Megan Goerner (and those who help with them). Presbytery youth have also participated in the Ottawa Winterlude Retreat and the Sprinter Retreat in Presbytery of the Alleghenies. The third Theological Foundations Weekend occurred at Messiah's Church. Gabriel Wingfield, Kit Swartz, Brian Coombs, and Daniel and Joanne Howe spoke on the respective themes of The Mediatorial Kingship of Christ, Who Do Men Say That I Am?, What Is the New Testament About?, The Jordan Peterson Moment, and The Art of Hospitality. The Presbytery is well served by financially gifted men: Ev Wood (Syracuse), Andy Curran (Oswego), and Matthew Sloots (Hillside, Almonte RPC).

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

Christ Church (Floyd, NY) continues its renovation of their building, and is blessed to join others in hosting Psalm Sings and various gatherings. Afternoon worship is also held at the Oneida Center, a residence for seniors and those in need of adult care. A 500th year Reformation gathering was held, and Pastor Goerner had many opportunities with counseling and evangelism. One member successfully underwent brain cancer surgery.

Christian Heritage (Endicott, NY) rejoiced to have Doug Chamberlain installed as its pastor and also for his recent marriage. Elder Cory Valentine obtained his doctorate this year. Several visitors have come to the congregation, while some have lessened their attendance due to work and other reasons.

Evangelical Presbyterian (Toronto, ON) has seen three families unite in membership, and three baptisms performed, this past year. The congregation has completed its large-scale rebuild of its building, and is currently awaiting the completion of the parking lot. Pastor MacLeod is mending from a recent fall in which he broke his arm.

Fulton RPC deacons have led the congregation in seeing its plan for two new bathrooms and two new classrooms come to fruition. The congregation was blessed to have two weddings, though saddened by one death. The congregation has been particularly blessed by Don Pastor's donation of most books in their library, and Kevin Plummer's service as supply elder.

Hillside RPC (Almonte, ON) recently ordained one deacon and one elder.

They have received a family and children into membership and are encouraged to see others ready to follow. The congregation is active in community outreach and service.

Hudson–St. Lazare RPC has ordained two deacons. Jurgen Dodenhoff has resigned as deacon due to health reasons. The congregation is blessed with student preachers (Reuben Lindeman and Dan Dupuis), as well as by the moderating of Vince Ward. It hopes to call a pastor in the near future. A delightful story is the conversion of a German man named Christian, who returned to his country from the congregation as a Christian.

Lisbon RPC recently installed Brian Bond as an elder and is hoping to call a pastor in due time. While they have received members recently by transfer, profession, and baptism, one family relocated to another part of the state and some have transferred to other Reformed churches. Elder Smith's mother went to be with the Lord after years of faithful service in the congregation.

Messiah's Church (Clay, NY) now observes the Lord's Supper twice per month, and has seen much benefit in having lunch together most weeks after morning worship with either an additional worship service or study/prayer activity. A more extensive Reformation Symposium was had this year, involving speakers from various Reformed and Congregational denominations, each to declare a Reformation sola. The ministry of its ladies immensely helps both the congregation and the community.

New Creation (Kitchener, ON) installed another deacon this year. Births, too, were a glad occasion for the congregation. An unconverted man is a particular burden of the congregation, whom they hope will be saved soon.

Oswego RPC notes that Pastor Swartz plans to retire at the end of 2020 after a long and fruitful ministry. Plans are being made for such a transition. The membership has decreased via transfers, dismissals, and removals. Recently the mayor visited the congregation, and spoke on poverty in Oswego. The congregation is fruitful in the various activities of fellowship, study, and service.

Ottawa RPC anticipates the installation of Rev. Andrew Quigley as its next pastor in October. Pastor Ganz will be on sabbatical this summer, and retire in September. Cory Vandermeer will serve as the congregation's interim moderator. Several members have relocated, and several new persons have come. The congregation again hosted its Winterlude retreat for Presbytery's youth.

Rochester RPC hosted a men's conference involving other NAPARC speakers; it was well attended. A new believer was received and baptized while her unbelieving parents witnessed the occasion. Three new deacons have been added and there is a sizable number of college students attending. Some members lost employment, and thus the targeted budget was missed.

Russell RPC celebrated its twenty years together under Matt Kingswood's ministry. The congregation anticipates purchasing land across from its current rental facility, now to build its own building. One member died of cancer, and her funeral was widely attended to God's glory. Pastor Kingswood will be on Sabbatical from May to August.

The Shelter (Edmonton, AB) has seen one of its involved leaders relocate, and another step down from the eldership. Derek Baars currently preaches in the afternoon service. New deacons have been ordained and installed, and several children have been born to the congregation recently; others are expected.

Syracuse RPC, like Lisbon and Hudson–St. Lazare, is hoping to call another pastor in due time. Its elders have been busy as the Presbytery's Ad Interim Commission, as well as shepherding the sheep. A women's study and youth Bible club are regularly had. A pastoral search team helps the congregation. A food pantry regularly serves the needs of the community for not only food but important household items as well.

In short, we are glad as a Presbytery to report all these things as testimonies to the Lord's fruit-forming grace among us: "From Me comes your fruit" (Hosea 14:8).

Respectfully submitted,
Brian E. Coombs (clerk)

These reports, without recommendations, were approved in a group and are printed below: Report of the Graduate Study Committee; Report of Youth Ministries Committee; Report of the RP Global Alliance Advisory Committee; Report of the RP International Conference Advisory Committee (of significance are these dates for our 2020 RPIC: July 29 through August 4—Wednesday evening through Tuesday morning).

Report of the Graduate Study Committee to 2018 Synod

Fathers and Brothers: The Graduate Study Fund was established by the Synod of 1961 to encourage Reformed Presbyterians to pursue graduate studies in preparation for further usefulness in the church. While the grants are often focused on supporting the studies of RPs (pastors and others) seeking training that will qualify them academically to serve in our church's Seminary and College, a considerable amount of support has been given to pastors who wish to enrich their pastoral usefulness through post-graduate study.

The Committee is composed of four members: the presidents of our College and Seminary, plus two members whom you elect. The chairman must be an elected member and serves by common consent. The Committee administers grants provided by Synod to Reformed Presbyterians seeking post-graduate degrees.

Our policy document is available at the Denomination's web site, reformed-presbyterian.org, under the "Agencies" tab; we ask that new applicants review it before submitting an application. This past fall, we began making a downloadable version of our application form, along with application instructions, available at the same location.

The deadlines for grant request submissions are April 1st and September 1st, and applicants should 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, and applicants will need to renew their application each year. The granting of an initial application does not guarantee future renewal.

As recently as five years ago, much of our grant support went to men pursuing graduate study primarily for pastoral enrichment. In recent years, as various Seminary faculty are approaching retirement, we've entered a season in which a larger proportion of the grant funds are needed to support the studies of men endorsed by RPTS. We received grant requests for 2018 totaling about \$68,000; this figure does not include the total cost of the programs represented, as most recipients bear some of the costs from their own funds, are receiving scholarship support, or have funding from their presbyteries or other donors.

We approved 2018 grants for a total of nine applicants:

Name	Degree Program	School	Anticipated Comp. Date	Purpose	2017 Grant Approved
Douglas Chamberlain	D. Min.	RPTS	2020	enrich past. service	\$700
Scott Doherty	Ph.D.	WTS (PA)	2020	pastor/professor	\$2,100
John D. Edgar	D. Min.	RPTS	2021	enrich past. service	\$1,000
Keith Evans	Ph.D.	Southern Baptist T.S.	2021	request of RPTS	\$10,000
Jordan Feagley	MLIS	University of Pgh.	2019	request of RPTS	\$5,500
Yusuke Hirata	M.Th./Ph.D.	WTS (PA)	2024	pastor/professor	\$3,000
Mark Koller	Ph.D.	Puritan RTS	2020	pastor/professor	\$1,100
Alex Tabaka	Ph.D.	WTS (PA)	2022	pastor/professor	\$600
David Whitla	Ph.D.	Queens U.	2019	request of RPTS	\$16,000

Last year we received a request to support Mr. Jordan Feagley, who currently serves as the Seminary's Assistant Librarian, in the pursuit of a Masters in Library and Information Sciences. Mr. Feagley is an M.Div. graduate of RPTS and is enrolled in the MLIS program at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information and Library Science.

An important transition on our Committee will take place this year, as our longest-serving member, Jerry O'Neill, will be leaving us when he retires as president of RPTS. The rest of us have deeply appreciated and enjoyed working with Jerry, and we will miss him. We look forward to having RPTS President-elect Barry York join us in the committee's work.

Prayer Requests: Please join us in giving thanks that the Lord has given our church a "bumper crop" of men pursuing graduate and advanced degrees! Please pray for the Lord to bless the studies of our grant recipients.

Nominations: Tom Fisher is completing his first term on the Committee this year, and we ask that he be re-elected.

Finances: As noted above, our 2018 funding of \$40,000 was significantly less than the grant requests that we received. In view of this, the Committee considered asking for a higher amount in 2019, but we recognize that Finance Committee wrestles each year with the apportioning of limited funds among many ministries, and so we are again requesting \$40,000.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Fisher, Chm. (2018, 1st term);
Jerry O'Neill, President, RPTS;
Kit Swartz (2019, 2nd term);
Calvin Troup, President, Geneva College

Youth Ministries Committee of Synod Report to 2018 Synod

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16, ESV)

The Youth Ministries Committee met in the fall of 2017 on September 22-23 at the College Hill RP Church building on 5th Avenue. As is customary, the early hours of this meeting were spent hearing updates from each of the presbytery representatives as to the ongoing work among the youth and discussing new initiatives and giving thanks to God for the growth which He is bringing about among the next generation of Christian servants. Our Committee is delighted to see the efforts being made across all the presbyteries of the RPCNA and for the hunger of the youth to participate in the retreats, TFY, TFW, TFB, and mission programs being made available.

Much of our time at the fall meeting was spent in planning for the 2018 Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) to be held on July 5-9 on the Geneva College campus. We are appreciative of the enthusiasm of the College to host this coming event and for the efforts of pastors, elders, and parents to encourage the young adults (age 18-24) from across the denomination to take part in this program. Pastor Andrew Quigley will be speaking on the topic of "Conformed to Christ: A Life of Productive Joy!" In addition, we were so pleased at the enthusiasm of all those we asked to lead workshops. Workshops are being offered by the following: Dr. Calvin and Amy Troup; Harry Metzger; Titus Martin; Dr. Jonathan Watt; Dr. Jeff Stivason; Dr. Joel Ward; Prof. Rut Etheridge; Keith Evans; Paul Hemphill; Jake McCracken; Herb and Patty McCracken; and Dr. Barry York.

The Committee continues to provide encouragement and support for many programs held across the denomination (Theological Foundations for Youth; Theological Foundations Weekends; Theological Foundations Backpacking; as well as trying to provide annual Youth Leader's seminars which move from presbytery to presbytery each year.

As a Committee we have certainly missed having David Whitla actively serving with us. We continue to uphold him in our prayers as he continues in his studies, and we look forward to his return in the future. It has been wonderful to see how the Lord has rallied the Committee in David's absence and to see each of the representatives using their many skills to help fill in the gap. Will and Sarah McChesney have done a wonderful job organizing and leading our meetings and all the representatives have worked tirelessly to plan for YLC in addition to all their other duties among the youth.

Please continue to pray for the coming YLC and that God would be pleased to continue to strengthen these young adults for service in His Church.

Finances: We have asked Synod to budget \$12,000 to YMCS for 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Filbert (YMCS Synod Liaison)

RP Global Alliance 2018 Report

Website. We are pleased that the RP Global Alliance (RPGA) website (www.rpglobalalliance.org) has been well received in the global Reformed Presbyterian Church. A number of very positive and encouraging comments have been made about the simplicity of use, clarity, and beneficial content of the site. We appreciate the work of Mrs. Carla Steele and Miss Beth Bogue in updating the website daily. We are continuing to develop its content; for example we are working with Rev. Ken Smith (RPCNA) to produce a series of articles to encourage ministers in the Church. In the coming year we aim to have an "RPGA App" developed, and be more proactive in promoting the existence of the website.

Working Groups:

Theological Education. Led by Rev. Andrew Stewart (RPCA), this working group has discussed a number of issues relating to theological education. We appreciate the investment of time and thought made by the Seminary presidents and principals in this group.

Mission Working Group. This group has meet three times under the leadership of Rev. Matt Filbert (RPCNA). It is still in its early stages of development but it has proved to be a valuable forum for the exchange of missions info between the representatives of the member churches.

RP Missions History. A working group is being established to undertake a comprehensive review of historical RP Missions throughout the world. We are

pleased that Rev. Prof. Robert McCollum (RPCI) has agreed to lead this working group and we are looking forward to the information it will produce.

Islam. Rev. Matt Kingswood (RPCNA) is currently working with Rev. Aaron Goerner (RPCNA) to establish a working group on Islam.

Social Media. Rev. Bill Mathess (RPCI) will be seeking to establish a working group on Social Media this year. We are thankful to God for the advancements made in technology which afford the opportunity for these working groups to meet via internet platforms.

Constitution. The Committee is working on amendments to our Constitution. There will be no fundamental changes but rather “streamlining” modifications. These amendments will be made available to the member churches in the autumn of this year.

Finance. We have now established two financial accounts, one in US dollars and one in Pounds sterling, and will be producing a financial report for the period 2016-2018 in 2019 and an annual financial report thereafter. We are thankful to the member churches for their financial investment in the RPGA work and ask that the following allocations be made for 2018: RPCA = AUS \$1,350. RPCNA = US \$10,000. RPCI = £2,850. RPCS = £750.

Conclusion. We very much see ourselves as merely facilitating the interaction of others, in order to multiply the work of Christ’s Kingdom and are indebted to all who have worked with us toward that goal.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,
Andrew Quigley (RPGA A.C. Chairman);
Matt Kingswood;
Matt Filbert;
David Silversides;
Bill Mathess;
Andrew Stewart

RP International Conference Advisory Committee to Synod

Dear Brothers: Catching you up on what we have known.

The RPIC 2020 Leadership Team: Bruce Backensto is Program Director and Sam Spear remains his assistant. Kyle Reed is Conference Manager / Operations. Lorrie Meneely and Kim Backensto are experienced Registrars, and Tim Meneely is the Webmaster and all-round Team genius. Dennis Wing serves

steadily as Treasurer.

After considering many other possible campuses where we might hold the 2020 RPIC, we are planning to return to IWU (Indiana Wesleyan University; Marion, IN) in 2020. IWU no longer is able to give us a July week because we are on campus this way only once every four years. The available dates are July 29 (Wednesday afternoon arrival) through August 4 (Tuesday morning departure). Our program would begin on Wednesday evening and conclude Monday evening. We will enjoy a Lord's Day together with a following Monday as our last full day.

Fresh news: The RPIC 2020 Leadership Team is thankful to be able to announce Rev. Warren Peel (pastor of Trinity RPC; Belfast, Ireland) as our conference speaker. Do pray for Warren as he prepares the Conference messages. As soon as we decide on the Conference Theme, Conference Psalm, and Conference Verse(s), we will post them on the denomination's website and spread the good word through Covie-Net.

In light of this full Synod, we will not ask to hear from Pastor Backensto at this meeting, but please seek him out during our days together.

For Synod's RPIC Advisory Committee,
Garrett Mann,
Andy McCracken,
Adam Niess,
Sam Spear,
John McFarland (chairman)

There were no recommendations on the report of the Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association (including the RPWA Disabilities Ministry, authored by that extension ministry's chairman, Rev. Rich Johnston). Moderator J. Bruce Martin presented the Report of the Reformation Translation Fellowship. All these reports were received and will be printed in the Appendix.

Pastor Wade Mann presented the Report of the Committee on the State of the Church and he read the Report aloud. This Report was adopted.

2018 State of the Church Committee Report

The psalmist affirms: "I have trusted in Your steadfast love. My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me." (Psalm 13:5-6, ESV). This is both his experience and intent, and is true of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, as well.

Our church is surrounded by the depraved climate of the modern world. There are rumors of war in many sectors, including the Korean peninsula. Islam is a wide threat to the promotion of the Gospel. There is poverty, injustice, and sinful secularism all around the globe. In this context, the hearts of God's people are agonizing and waiting for the coming of the redemptive power of Jesus Christ the Savior-King. We know that only the work of the Spirit applying the Word is able to save lost souls. The RP Church is standing among these nations, witnessing the fact of the true King who is the gracious Savior. We must trust Him more and more, confessing and proclaiming His great name, as well as His living Word, holding up the pillar of His truth in the midst of the nations.

By His grace and power, God continues to extend our reach and influence. We rejoice to see the development of both Spanish- and Chinese-speaking churches in North America and church extension work in a number of southern states. This has led to the challenge of clarifying the jurisdiction and mission focus of the Home Mission Board and the Global Missions Board. Churches are being developed in Japan and East Asia, South Asia and Pakistan, South Sudan, Chile and elsewhere in South America, with exploratory work again under way in Liberia. Reformed Presbyterian witness is present on six continents, and this is reason to rejoice.

As we see growth and development in our churches, we also see increasing numbers of communications and studies related to pastoral concerns, including divorce and prison inmate church membership, presbytery alignments, and matters related to church discipline. While some of these issues are painful, they do arise from vibrant ministry in a fallen world. We give thanks to our gracious Lord for leading us in addressing discipline issues involving long-standing teaching elders in a respectable and loving manner, though making hard and tearful decisions.

We observe an increase in total membership (1.6%) and number of churches (1.1%), yet note that average worship attendance is only 83% of our

membership. Receipts increased by almost 7%. We also observe that 12% of our churches are without pastors. And while we have 47 students under care, there are no North American Reformed Presbyterian students registered to enter the Seminary this fall. Let us fervently pray for the Lord of the harvest to raise up laborers for the harvest, even as we give thanks that more and more sons of delegates have been installed within the Synod. We praise the Lord for His grace in the succession of faith to our children and the handing over of His church's ministry to the next generation. Yet we also earnestly desire the Lord to work increasingly in the lives of our covenant children for their salvation and to give them a vision for Kingdom service toward the growth of this branch of His church.

Our major education institutions—Geneva College and Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary—are transitioning through recent changes in leadership and are standing strong in equipping men and women for Kingdom work, as well as standing firm in God's redemptive truth. The E&P Board has approved the publication of numerous works by Reformed Presbyterian Church elders and members. *The Gospel and Gender Identity* and *The Gospel and Sexual Orientation*, stating our church's views on transgenderism and homosexuality, have helped not only this branch of Christ's church, but also our sister denominations in NAPARC and beyond on these sobering issues. *Prayers of the Bible* by Gordon Keddie has sold widely, with Vince and Samuel Ward's *Pursuit of Glory* just coming out this year recounting God's marvelous work in South Sudan.

We rejoice in the fraternal bond and measure of unity shared with like-minded Reformed and Presbyterian bodies, and we look forward to deepening that fellowship as we join with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church next summer for our Synod meetings. We also recognize threats in the spiritual battle faced within these bodies.

We grieve the loss of dear saints, but we rejoice in the hope of glory in our Savior. Mike Tabon passed out of this world into his eternal rest, having served this denomination faithfully and having contributed greatly to our recently published Psalter.

In all things we have hope that our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to sustain this branch of His church as we look to Him. His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. His love endures forever. We testify with the psalmist: "For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to Your name. Great salvation

He brings to His king, and shows steadfast love to His anointed, to David and his offspring forever" (Psalm 18:49-50, ESV). "Blessed be the Lord forever! Amen and Amen" (Psalm 89:52, ESV).

Resting in His everlasting love,
Peter Smith,
Kent Butterfield,
Shigeru Takiura,
Wade Mann

The Moderator was replaced at the podium with last year's moderator, to ask the Synod to seek the forgiveness of Elder David Weir. Concerning our 1998 Bicentennial celebration, all papers were feared lost. These have been found in the Archives. In the process of this search and communications, Mr. Weir was called out wrongfully. It was moved, seconded, and carried to seek the forgiveness of Mr. Weir. Mr. Weir freely granted forgiveness, and thanked the Court.

Moderator Martin returned to the podium. Elder Craig Milroy presented the Report of the Resolution of Thanks Committee. The Report as a whole was adopted and is as follows:

2018 Resolution of Thanks Committee Report

We pause to give thanks at this 187th meeting of Synod. We declare with the psalmist: "I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations." We therefore praise God and give thanks for:

- The blessedness of the love and peace from our Lord Jesus that has prevailed throughout this entire meeting of Synod—love for our Lord and love for one another.
- The promise of God's Word that our labor in Christ is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).
- Our ability, by God's grace and mercy, to accomplish the Lord's work in the name of Jesus Christ, our King and only Head of this Church.
- The diligent and faithful efforts of our Moderator Bruce Martin, and clerks John McFarland and Charles Brown—who all served us extraordinarily well through the difficult challenges of this Synod.

-
- The faithful preaching of God's Word each morning by Jerry Milroy, Jared Olivetti, Scott Cook, and Joseph Friedly which the Holy Spirit so powerfully used to instruct our minds and stir our hearts.
 - The blessed times of prayer together and the marvelous and moving times of singing our praises to God as our Savior, Jesus Christ, lead us.
 - The kindness and respect shown by all as we worked through and reached conclusions on the two discipline cases that were before us and for our trust in the sovereignty of our Lord over all our decisions.
 - The opportunity to meet and enjoy fellowship with our brothers from so many other countries around God's world.
 - The attendance of all 175 delegates—possibly a record number—which included sixteen first-time delegates.
 - The opportunity afforded us to renew old friendships and meet new leaders in the church.
 - The tremendous work of all the Boards and Committees that labored throughout the past year.
 - The Kingdom work accomplished by our various presbyteries as we met this week.
 - Our fraternal delegates that kept us aware of the broader church and Kingdom work beyond our denomination.
 - The presence of guests, visitors, ministerial students, and supporting family members.
 - The support of our congregations and fellow officers not present at Synod.
 - The helpful advice of the parliamentarians and the efforts of our pages this week: Andrew Battiato, Tim Bloedow, Jay Dharan, and Zach Smith.
 - Herb McCracken's work with IWU and this court in various ways that are seen and unseen.
 - Our host—Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU)—who has again provided us with excellent accommodations, delicious and plentiful food, and a servant's spirit.
 - Safety in travel to this Synod and the fervent prayers for the same as we return home.
 - The blessing and outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord in the churches of this denomination as seen in His Steadfast Love and Faithfulness

to each congregation and presbytery in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

- And finally, for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which has brought us salvation and unites this Synod in one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Through this we are brought to the one true God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. To Him and Him alone be all the glory. Amen.

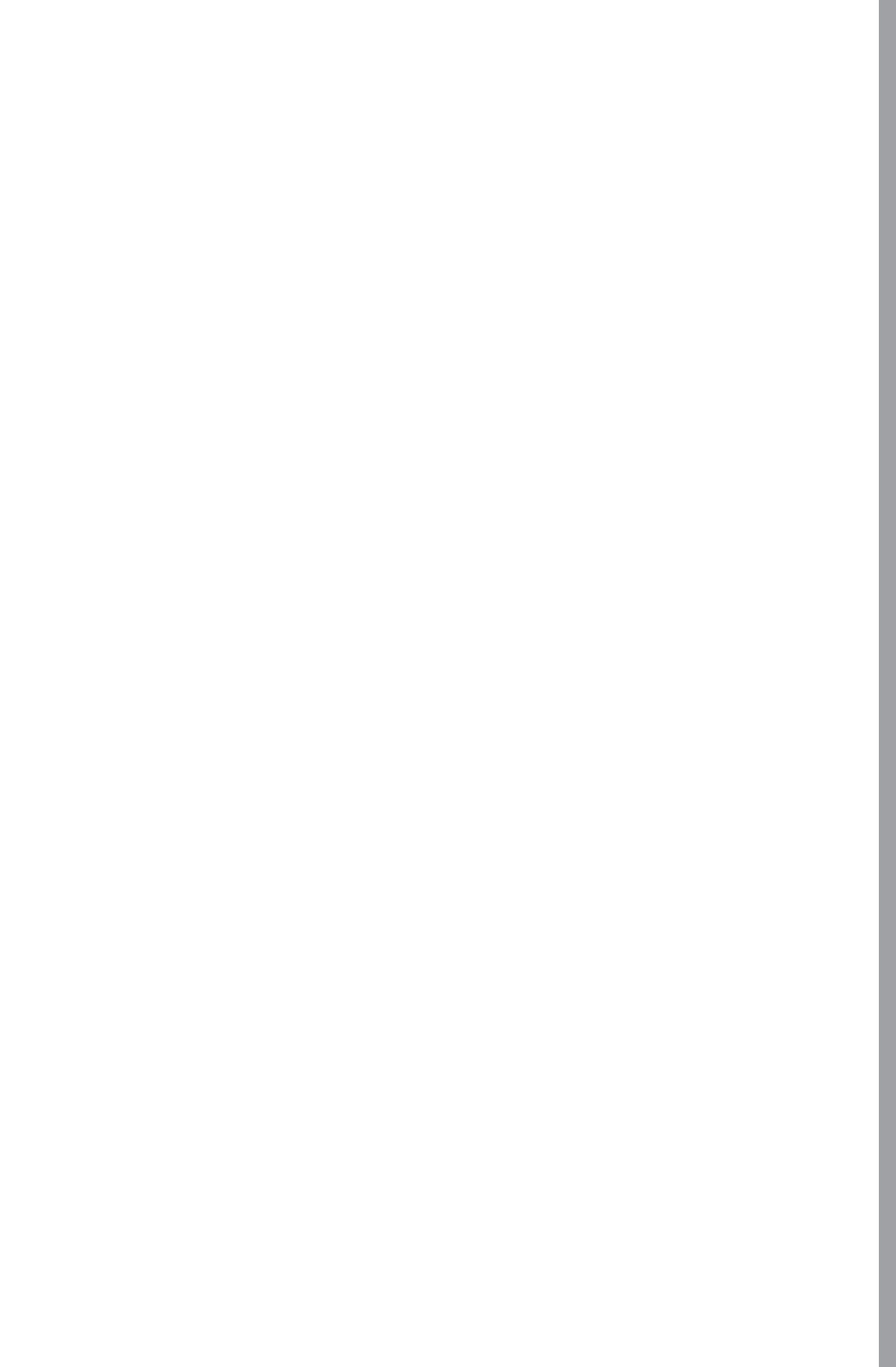
Respectfully submitted,
John Spitzer,
Craig Milroy,
Keith Magill (chairman)

The Moderator was honored and thanked from the floor, and the Court rose in applause.

The minutes of the closing Friday afternoon session were read, improved, and approved. Sessions are reminded to look for the overture instructions early in 2019. The Court is reminded that the 2019 Synod is to meet June 11-14 (Tuesday through Friday), on the campus of Geneva College (Beaver Falls, PA). The Moderator prayed to adjourn this Court of the RPCNA, so the 2018 Synod was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The Court sang Psalm 133A.

After adjournment, the Moderator sought to appoint the committee to discuss Mr. Bruce Hemphill's paper with him, but during that time, Mr. Hemphill's ministerial credentials were transferred out of the RPCNA. Therefore, the Moderator chose not to make the appointment.

Respectfully submitted,
John M. McFarland (clerk);
Charles Brown (assistant clerk)



APPENDIX

Memorial for Marion Luther McFarland (1933-2018)

Rev. Marion McFarland passed into glory on March 28, 2018, from slumber to being truly awake, fully alive, and permanently healthy. We continue to pray for his wife Shirley (of West Branch, Michigan); they would have been married sixty years this July 5. Appreciative testimonies arrived. Many in the RPCNA's Midwest Presbytery are grateful for Marion's service as the first pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Lawrence, Kansas (now in their 48th year of Kingdom service). Marion was equally appreciated in the Orlando (Florida) RP congregation (where he often worshiped in recent decades). Friends from Clarinda (Iowa) spoke appreciatively of Marion's fruitful work with young people at the junior college there.

From his formal obituary: Marion Luther McFarland, age 84, passed away at The Villa at Rose City, Michigan. He was born on December 31, 1933, in La Junta, Colorado, to Luther and Ethel (Anderson) McFarland. He had lived in West Branch since 1975, moving there from Kansas. Mel married Shirley Brown in Evansburg, Pa., on July 5, 1958. He was head counselor at AuSable Valley Mental Health in Tawas City and Mio. Mel had a D.Min. from Westminster Theological Seminary in Glenside, Pa. He also had received his Bachelor's from Geneva College and his Master's in Education from the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA). Marion was an RP minister for thirty years and a servant on assignment at Florida Baptist Youth Camp for the last two years in Groveland, Florida. Mel was a volunteer for SOWERS (Servants On Wheels Ever Ready). He was a magician, loved painting, saved many souls for Christ, and helped raise thirty three foster children. Mel is survived by his loving wife, Shirley; sons David and Kevin P. (Cheryl) McFarland; grandchildren Paige, Andrea, Chris, Jeron, and Gregory (Shawn) McFarland; great grandson Landon; and brother, James E. (Helen) McFarland.

Report of Study Committee on Paper #17-2 (Divorce and Desertion)

Your Committee was charged to “study Communication #17-2 from the Atlantic Presbytery concerning RPTS and divorce/desertion, and report to the Synod of 2018.” Specifically the Business of Synod Committee Report asked the Synod for “*Testimony* interpretation (without changing *Testimony* wording) on the matter of desertion as an allowance for divorce.”

In Communication #17-2, the Atlantic Presbytery expresses concern that students at RPTS are taught views on divorce and desertion that are not in accord with *Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* 24.6 and *RP Testimony (RPT)* 24.26. The Presbytery maintains that *WCF* 24.6 and *RPT* 24.26 define “the circumstances under which desertion should be viewed as biblically-sufficient grounds for divorce; in particular, that desertion includes ‘departing.’” Both of these subordinate standards are believed to affirm this view, but the added clarification of *RPT* 24.26, that “desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever,” is understood as distinguishing the RPCNA’s view of desertion from other NAPARC denominations.

Communication #17-2 concludes with Atlantic Presbytery petitioning the 2017 Synod to confirm its understanding of *RPT* 24.26 regarding desertion is correct and “not novel.” Specifically:

1. The Atlantic Presbytery asks the Synod to affirm that when the *Testimony* says in 24.26 “desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever,” the word “departing” explains that desertion refers to an unbelieving spouse physically leaving the believing spouse and departing to live elsewhere.
2. The Atlantic Presbytery asks the Synod to direct the Board and President of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary to ensure that the teaching of the RPCNA on divorce and desertion be taught there fully and without reservation.

As Communication #17-2 specifically seeks affirmation by Synod regarding the teaching of *RPT* 24.26, this Committee has limited its attention to this portion of the *Testimony* and set aside the question of the original intent in 24.6 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. However, it should be noted that this subject has received considerable attention by other NAPARC denominations

and we would refer Synod to the work of the PCA and the work of the OPC's Ohio Presbytery.¹

Conclusions:

1. This Committee concludes that at least four observations may be drawn from the text of *RPT 24.26*, which states: "*Desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever. 1 Corinthians 7:15; Matthew 18:17.*"
 - a) The central theme of *RPT 24.26* is that the guilty party must be an unbeliever in cases of divorce arising from desertion.
 - b) The language used in *RPT 24.26*, specifically "unbeliever" and "departing person," clearly arises from the 1 Corinthians 7:15 proof-text. In this passage, Paul instructs that "if the unbelieving depart, let him depart." The understood circumstance of this departure is that the unbelieving spouse chooses not to live with the believing spouse (cf. "and she consents to live with him" in 1 Corinthians 7:12). The use of "departing person" in *RPT 24.26*, therefore, is best understood as indicating physical or geographical departure. A review of Synod minutes from 1821 to 2017 failed to offer any decision or report, either prior to or after the approval of *RPT 24.26* in 1980, that would alter this direct interpretation.
 - c) The prooftexts of *RPT 24.26* suggest that the unbelief of a spouse can be established by self-professed unbelief, as in 1 Corinthians 7, or by excommunication as in Matthew 18:17. In the case of excommunication, *RPT 24.26* would suggest:

1 In the "Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Divorce to the Eighteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America" is attached a study by David Clyde Jones entitled "The *Westminster Confession* on Divorce and Remarriage" (pg. 143-161). The "Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Divorce to the Twentieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America" includes a chapter: "Historical Perspective on Divorce and Remarriage" that focuses on "The Original Intent of the Confession" (pg. 187-201). Also included in this report are two appendices: "Appendix I: The Westminster Divines on Divorce for Physical Abuse" by William Barker and "Appendix II: Divorce Reconsidered" by David Lachman. These are available at <http://pcahistory.org/pca/>. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has not addressed this question at the General Assembly level, but the Ohio Presbytery has issued a lengthy report on "'Willful Desertion'" in *Westminster Confession 24.6*" together with a minority report and an "alternate exegetical report." These are publicly available at <http://pohopc.org/reports/>.

- 1) Among believing couples where one spouse is later excommunicated, desertion becomes a ground for divorce only when the excommunicated unbeliever physically departs.
- 2) Excommunication of a spouse alone is not a ground for divorce.
- 3) Physical desertion by one believing spouse of another believing spouse is not a ground for divorce. The church must first exhaust every effort toward correction and reconciliation. Only when an unrepentant departing spouse has been excommunicated, being declared "*like a heathen and a tax gatherer*," can desertion be a ground for divorce.
- d) *RPT 24.26* makes no prohibition of remarriage following divorce by desertion. The 1890 Synod committee report appended to Communication #17-2 has no bearing on *RPT 24.26*.

2. This Committee affirms that *RPT 24.26* limits divorce for desertion to cases where an unbelieving spouse physically departs from a believing spouse. It should be noted that the requirement of physical departure by an unbelieving spouse does not necessarily exclude the circumstance where a believing spouse is forced to leave the home due to physical abuse. In the case of a spouse forced to physically flee the home for reason of safety, there was support in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century for attributing the guilt of physical abandonment to the threatening spouse. Illustrating this view, the Puritan writer William Perkins considered that in cases of "*certain and imminent danger*," a threatened spouse is justified in leaving the home "*for her own safety*." For as he explains, "*to depart from one, and drive one away by threat, are equipollent* [equivalent]."²

3. This Committee can offer no opinion regarding the current instruction of students at RPTS on divorce and desertion. However, in correspondence accompanying Communication #17-2 it is perhaps noteworthy that the brief letter from the RPTS Board of Trustees makes no reference to the *Testimony*

² William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie* (London: Imprinted by Felix Kyngston, 1609), p. 107. Perkins was most likely drawing upon the series of proposed reforms to ecclesiastical law in the Church of England which were completed in 1552 and called the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiaticarum*. Although the *Reformatio* was never enacted, its chapter "Concerning Adultery and Divorce" includes divorce for "deadly hostility" which escalates "to such an intensity that one attack the other." The net effect of the attacker's hostility is that "they cannot live together." (See Arthur Robert Winnett, *Divorce and Remarriage in Anglicanism* (London: MacMillan and Company, 1958), pp. 32-33.

as it applies to *WCF* 24.6, or how *RPT* 24.26 might distinguish the RPCNA from other members of NAPARC. While this brief reply of the RPTS Board was not a comprehensive treatment of the subject, the absence of reference to *RPT* 24.26 when specifically addressing the RPCNA standards on desertion suggests the need for promoting further understanding and instruction in its meaning.

Committee Recommendations:

1. That the 2018 Synod affirm the interpretation of *RPT* 24.26 presented in Paper #17-2 which states that: *"The word 'departing' explains that desertion refers to an unbelieving spouse physically leaving the believing spouse and departing to live elsewhere."*
2. That Synod affirm that physical departure in *RPT* 24.26 does not necessarily exclude the case of a spouse who is forced to flee the home when in imminent personal danger, since there is historical support for assigning the guilt of *"departing"* to the threatening spouse.
3. That Synod direct the Board and President of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary to affirm the interpretation of *RP Testimony* 24.26 in recommendation #1 in the Seminary's teaching.
4. That Paper #17-2 be included with this report in the 2018 Minutes of Synod.
5. That this Committee be dismissed.

Respectfully submitted:

John Bower,

H.P. McCracken,

Tim McClain,

Ed Schisler,

Brad Johnston (chairman)

**RPCNA 2017 Synod Communication #17-2 Atlantic re. RPTS
Atlantic Presbytery Communication #17-A**

The Atlantic Presbytery respectfully forwards to the 2017 Synod of the RPCNA the attached communication with its supporting documents. The supporting documents show the history of this communication up to the time it was brought to the presbytery for this action. This communication was brought to the Atlantic Presbytery at its March 31–April 1, 2017 meeting in East Providence, R.I., where it was modified and ordered forwarded to the Synod. Be-

cause the communication addresses some teaching by a professor at the RPTS, the Atlantic Presbytery believes that the Synod should take original jurisdiction of the matter rather than having the Presbytery study it further, especially since the Presbytery does not have jurisdiction over the Seminary.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Bruce Martin, Clerk of Atlantic Presbytery

In the section on Marriage and Divorce (Chapter 24), the *WCF* states (paragraph 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 willful 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."

The *RP Testimony* expands on this statement with regard to "desertion" (paragraph 26) stating that: "Desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever. 1 Corinthians 7:15; Matthew 18:17."

We believe that these two sections of our standards provide a clear statement of our denomination's position on the circumstances under which desertion should be viewed as biblically-sufficient grounds for divorce; in particular, that desertion includes "departing."

In the course of examining and talking with students under the care of our presbytery, we have been surprised to learn that they are being taught in our denominational seminary that divorce on the ground of desertion is justified in a variety of circumstances other than physical desertion (e.g. failure of a husband to provide for his wife financially or sexually). In our understanding, this is not what we teach as a church, based on what we find in our standards.

Two members of our presbytery have corresponded with the RPTS board to express their concerns about this matter. Their letters, and the board's response, are attached.

While we recognize that some NAPARC churches have views on this issue that differ from ours, this could be said of a host of issues. But we do not conclude from this fact that we should teach interpretations of Scripture in our seminary that are at odds with our own. Our assumption has always been that

we can assume that on topics where our standards take a position, students sent to RPTS will be taught that position.

We also recognize that it may be the case that our presbytery's understanding of our standards may be in error, but so far as we have been able to ascertain, our position is not novel.

This is an important question, and one on which we believe we should avoid confusion in our churches. We therefore respectfully petition the Synod to act as follows:

1. The Atlantic Presbytery asks the Synod to affirm that when the *Testimony* says in 24.26 "desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever," the word "departing" explains that desertion refers to an unbelieving spouse physically leaving the believing spouse and departing to live elsewhere.
2. The Atlantic Presbytery asks the Synod to direct the board and president of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary to ensure that the teaching of the RPCNA on divorce and desertion be taught there fully and without reservation.

John Edgar,
Bill Edgar,
Tom Fisher

September 22, 2016

[From:] Pastor John Edgar

[To:] Board of Trustees of Theological Seminary; c/o Michael Lefebvre

Dear Brothers: I write to ask you to curtail the teaching of Professor George Scipione on the matter of divorce at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

A strangely inventive answer from a RPTS student on a presbytery exam alerted me to a potential problem. I then listened to a lecture of Professor Scipione available online, took a look at his Marriage and Family Counseling class notes, and spent over an hour discussing the matter with him at RPTS, first semi-publicly at his instigation in the lunchroom and in more detail privately in his office. I am glad to say our discussion was brotherly, clear, and robust, but sorry to say that it only clarified the wide divide between Prof. Scipione and the standards of the RPCNA.

Prof. Scipione's position may be summarized as follows: (a) the mention of desertion in 1 Corinthians 7 demonstrates that Jesus was not comprehensive in Matthew 19, (b) therefore Old Testament passages that deal with divorce may be plumbed for their general equity,³ (c) the New Testament says that if someone does not provide for his own he is worse than an unbeliever, the husband's body belongs to the wife, etc. and that therefore (d) if the session has gone through church discipline with a man (our discussion focused on the potential failures of men) for not providing adequately for his wife, whether sexually or financially, then after his excommunication the wife, if the session agrees, may seek a divorce on the grounds of desertion. Please note that this "desertion" could be the absence of financial or sexual provision, or the presence of abuse; it does not require the husband's actual physical absence, unlike 1 Corinthians 7 and our historic understanding.

Contrary to Prof. Scipione's teaching, our standards teach: "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" (*WCF* 24.6). "Desertion can be a ground of divorce only when the departing person is an unbeliever" (*RPT* 24:26). To redefine desertion to encompass a wide array of failures is an example of precisely the tendency "to study arguments unduly to put asunder" that the *Confession* warns against.

It is most disappointing, as we attempt to stand against the sexual revolution in its more advanced errors, to find that our own denominational seminary is teaching our future pastors to begin to accommodate themselves to it in the matter of divorce. The legal sexual revolution in our country began with California's 1970 no-fault divorce law and legalized abortion, not with gay and lesbian issues. As for the heart-wrenching cases handled by biblical counselors, I observe that civil law in various states legally recognizes things like trial separations, living apart, permanent separations and legal separations, things which the Christian Church has also recognized in the past in cases where husband and wife cannot live together peaceably.

³ His class notes include a discussion of Ge 2:18-25, Ex 21:7-11, Le 21:1-15, Le 22:1-16, Nu 30:9-15, Dt 21:10-14, Dt 22:13-21, 28-29, Dt 24:1-4 'a difficult but central passage', Ez 10, Ne 13:23-31, Es 1:10-22, Is 50:1, Je 3:1-10, Ez 44:15-27, Ho 1:2-9, 2:1-23, 3:1-5, Ma 2:10-16, then Mt 5:31-32, 19:3-12, Lk 16:14-18, Ro 7:1-3, 1 Co 7:1-40, 1 Ti 5:3-16.

Prof. Scipione expressed to me that he does not desire a fight or a public scandal. I appreciate his humility. So I urge the board to deal with this matter quietly and promptly.

In Christ's service,
John D. Edgar
cc. Jerry O'Neill,
George Scipione,
Kit Swartz,
Barry York

Report of Committee on Divorces for Desertion

(Minutes of Synod, 1890, page 317, in Appendix)

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 Corinthians 7:15: "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 repen-

tance 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."

T. P. Stevenson,
David McAllister,
James Kennedy,
John Hunter,
James Watson

[FROM:] William J. Edgar

[TO:] RP Seminary Board of Trustees

To the Board and Administration: Some years ago I dealt with a quarreling husband and wife. The wife wanted a divorce; the husband did not. Both wanted to stay within the bounds of Christian teaching. The wife caught the husband looking at naked women on the Internet, found a local pastor who agreed with her that the husband was therefore guilty of adultery, so she had biblical grounds to divorce her husband. She did. The marriage ended, and the children were left with divorced parents. In Malachi 2:16, the Lord says that he hates divorce. So do I. I have read the letter that John D. Edgar has sent to you, and I hope that you will follow its request that you instruct Professor Scipione not to continue teaching his greatly expanded understanding of "desertion." There is no reason why this matter needs to go further than to the Seminary, but if you think it does not merit your intervention with Professor Scipione, I will bring the matter to the attention of the Atlantic Presbytery and through them to the Synod. Yours in the Lord's Name, William J. Edgar

October 27, 2016

[To:] Rev. John Edgar [and]

Dr. William J. Edgar;

Dear John and Bill: At our recent meeting, the seminary board discussed your request regarding Dr. Scipione's teachings on divorce. We understand from your letters that it is clear to you that the language of the *Westminster Confession* restricts the meaning of "desertion" to geographical abandonment, thus denying divorce over other forms of abandonment like abuse, financial

neglect, etc. Whether this is the proper meaning of “desertion” is, however, the question that needs to be established.

As you know, when the Westminster divines were divided on a matter, they often restricted themselves to biblical terminology without elaboration. This may have been their reason for citing Paul’s reference to “desertion” without further defining it, despite the various interpretations known even in their day.

It is our understanding that some Reformed theologians at the time of the Westminster Assembly held that an abandoned spouse may divorce, but was to remain single (this may, in fact, have been the majority view at the Assembly). There were also those who permitted remarriage after desertion, but only when geographical desertion had occurred (which may have been the strongest minority position at the Assembly, and seems to be your position). But there were also those who regarded divorce as a possible outcome following other forms of abandonment—those deemed “equivalent to, or worse than” geographical departure—like abuse. The divines were clearly opposed to the “incompatibility” arguments for divorce propounded by Martin Bucer and John Milton (who were likely those they had in mind when reproving “arguments unduly to put [marriages] asunder”). But the divines left the extent of what qualifies as “desertion” undefined, perhaps because they themselves had a variety of views on the matter.

However, “desertion” does need to be defined. You are certainly correct that, in this age of free-for-all divorce, the church needs to speak with clarity. And the interpretation you have endorsed may indeed be correct. Nevertheless, the board respects the fact that Dr. Scipione is doing more than asserting opinion on what constitutes “desertion”; he is endeavoring to develop a biblical definition following the guidance of the *Confession*, itself: “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” (*WCF* 1.9). Furthermore, we understand that Dr. Scipione’s conclusions are similar to those derived by some of our NAPARC brethren who have also undertaken exegetical and historical study of this topic (e.g., the PCA’s extensive work: www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf).

While we share your concern that the seminary guard itself against any teaching that accommodates the sexual and divorce laxity of our age, we also

need to guard against reacting to the errors of the age with strictures beyond what Scripture actually requires (as the RPCNA once did regarding alcohol). Dr. Scipione is certainly not known as a liberal theologian, and the board appreciates that he is endeavoring to “let Scripture interpret Scripture” on this Confessionally undefined term.

Of course, you are not alone in your conviction that “desertion” refers exclusively to geographical departure. As noted previously, that was one of the interpretations among the Westminster divines; and it is probably the view most widely held among early presbyterian recipients of the Confession.

The board has, therefore, instructed Dr. O’Neill to work with Dr. Scipione to adjust his teaching on this subject: we have asked him to teach that the strictly geographical interpretation of “desertion” is likely the majority view held within the presbyterian heritage, and that it is a view strongly held by some within the RPCNA today. But since neither Westminster nor the RPCNA have stated that Scripture limits “desertion” to geographical abandonment, it seems unwarranted for us to restrain Dr. Scipione from searching the Scriptures for further, biblical illumination into the mind of the Spirit behind that term, nor to restrain him from sharing the fruits of such exegetical study with his students.

I hope you will appreciate the seriousness with which we have received your request and the steps that we are taking, even if our conclusion is not in full agreement with what you have asked of us. May our Lord Jesus shepherd us, as a church, into an ever greater understanding of his Word for the nurture and care of his sheep!

In his grace,
Michael LeFebvre
(RPTS Board of Trustees, President)
cc: George Scipione,
Jerry O’Neill (Seminary President),
Barry York (Dean of Faculty),
Alan Noell
(Chairman, Academic Affairs Committee)

2018 Report of the Interchurch Committee Appendices

1. Fraternal Churches
 2. NAPARC Member Churches
 3. Fraternal delegate reports, as available: (a) Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC); (b) Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland; (c) Free Church of Scotland Continuing; (d) Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus.
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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. Free Church of Scotland (Synod of N. America)
 - d. Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus
 - e. Korean American Presbyterian Church
 - f. L'Église reformée du Québec
 - g. Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 - h. Presbyterian Church in America
 - i. Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
 - j. Reformed Church in the US
 - k. 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)

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- 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.

Appendix 3.a. Orthodox Presbyterian Church—Stephen Rhoda

August 25, 2017. Dear Fathers and Brothers: I write to report on my service as the RPCNA fraternal delegate to the 2017 OPC General Assembly, meeting at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois, May 31-June 6, 2017. I was able to be present for the opening worship service on the evening of May 31, in the Grand Lobby of the Ozinga Chapel. Rev. Iain Wright, Covenant OPC of Orland Park, Illinois, presided and administered the Table, and Rev. Jeremiah Montgomery of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pennsylvania, preached the word. The service and the evening were a blessing to me, and I trust to all. Subsequently, I was able to attend the meetings of Thursday and Friday. There were around a dozen other fraternal delegates, and we were all well-received and treated with much grace and hospitality, even being offered a special “green room” where we could retreat and relax as needed. The food was exceptional and the fellowship even better.

One of the strengths of the OPC, by God’s grace, is her agility at traversing meeting agendas with fluidity and efficiency, even making use of an electronic voting system. Given the anticipation of finishing their agenda even by end of day Saturday, when they were scheduled to meet through the following Tues-

day noon, I was called upon to give my report ahead of schedule and with far less preparation than expected. I trust that I represented our RPCNA identity well, and that I maintained and even furthered our ecclesial relationship with the OPC, by way of my address, in which I brought warm greetings in Christ on your behalf, called for their prayers for us in our then upcoming Synod meeting, identifying key topics, issues, and challenges, and promised our prayers for them. A key aspect of my address was the overwhelming majority of our confessional and doctrinal positions held in sympathy and even identity with them. Behold, I am a living example of the unity and brotherhood between the OPC and the RPCNA, having first served my current congregation as interim pastor for five years with OPC ordination, before my entrance, by your gracious examination and reception of me, into our now common ecclesial fraternity.

In the end, the 2017 meeting of the OPC General Assembly did continue into the following Monday, after due Sabbath rest on the first day of the week, but they still managed to complete their business well ahead of schedule. Given the significant difficulties of our 2017 Synod, perhaps we might seek a consultant from them to advise us, if only they might receive one from us to help them with their choice of worship songs. Yet, seriously, we have much that we might learn even from our “younger sister,” and even as iron sharpens iron, so may we continue to treasure and grow our relationship with the OPC.

Sincerely, in Christ,

Stephen Rhoda

(Westminster RPC; Prairie View, Illinois)

Appendix 3.b. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland—David Whitla

The Presbytery of the REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND met October 27-28 of 2017. The Friday evening meeting was held in Craigmoynton Community High School, Edinburgh, the home of the North Edinburgh Reformed Presbyterian Church, which was constituted as a new congregation with Rev. Peter Loughridge as pastor.

This was a landmark occasion for the RPCS, which after decades of decline is again seeing new works established. Rev. Andrew Quigley drew attention to this fact in his sermon, reminding the assembly that this was the most important thing that was happening in Scotland that night, Jesus Christ constituting a congregation that will declare His praises. As recently as 1988 there had been

a motion to close the RPCS while it had the dignity to do so; the Loanhead, Glasgow, and Wishaw Reformed Presbyterian churches closed in rapid succession in subsequent years. So, the organization of a new Covenanter work in the Scottish capital was indeed an important occasion in the life of the denomination. In general terms the spiritual climate in Scotland is in rapid decline, with recent surveys showing that people have simply stopped going to church, and aging congregations of churchgoers are dying: 85% of Scottish churchgoers are aged 65 and over (whereas the average age of the new Edinburgh RPC is in the late twenties).

The following morning, presbytery met in Glasgow to discuss the remainder of its business, of which the following are highlights:

- The presbytery is exploring the possibility of new men being added to the number of ministerial colleagues. A commission was appointed to interact with a minister from another denomination who has expressed an interest in joining the RPCS along with his congregation. For several months the presbytery has also been getting to know a minister in the African nation of Gambia (a nation with little to no Reformed witness), and who is interested in becoming an RPCS minister. It was agreed to take him under care of presbytery, provide modest monthly financial support, and appoint a committee to travel to Gambia to become better acquainted with him and the congregation he serves. There was also some discussion regarding building closer links with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).
- The RPCS was instrumental in launching the Reformed Presbyterian Global Alliance (RPGA) a few years ago, and this venture has proved very helpful to the RP family of churches in networking with their sister denominations, communicating news, information, and project ideas between churches. It was reported that to date there have been three meetings of the “missions” working group, and two of “principles of colleges” working group via Skype. The RPGA website and Facebook pages are running well to make people aware of the RP church family, and drawing inquiries from around the globe, such as three ministers in Bolivia who recently expressed interest in the work of the RP churches. Appreciation was expressed for the many hours of unpaid work that is being invested in preparing and maintaining these online media.

- The RPCS produces a quarterly magazine, *Good News*, edited by Rev. Stephen McCollum of the Stornoway congregation. Presbytery decided to offer the magazine freely online as a means of raising the profile of the denomination, with a suggested donation for anyone wanting a paper copy.
- Stranraer reported the encouragement of two women joining the church, plus several interested adherents taking membership classes. This congregation is one of a number which occupy very old, historic buildings, that are proving costly to maintain—a new ceiling will cost some £10,000 to 11,000 to replace.
- It was noted that a former student in the RPCS—Mr. Gary Gunn—had been recently ordained in the RPCNA following the completion of his studies at RPTS. He was commended to the Lord's blessing.
- In a nation with a failing education system, there is an enormous need for Christian education. One way the presbytery is addressing this need is by supporting Sunrise Christian School in Glasgow. Operating on a slender budget, this work is also supported by the Free Church (Continuing) and Free Presbyterian Churches, which each provide staff and students. There was some debate over whether this was a matter for presbytery or private Christians to support, and also whether to create a Board for Reformed Christian education in Scotland, for which there is potential support from Dutch Reformed churches.
- Probably the most significant project the presbytery is undertaking at present is the revision of their *Book of Church Government*. Very productive work is being done by each of the ministers to realize this goal. Individual sections have been designated to different ministers in the presbytery and their drafts on each section are then discussed in consultation meetings. At this meeting, new terms of membership were discussed and approved. Also being updated this year is the denomination's child protection policy, to keep pace with government requirements for the same.
- There was acknowledgement of a need for improvements in the sung worship of the churches, and so presbytery discussed holding a day workshop for instruction in precenting for potential future precentors.
- The denomination's future relationship with our own RP Missions (short-

term mission) organization was discussed at considerable length. Due to concerns expressed about the 2017 team, the presbytery will be requesting that in future, successful applicants serving in Scotland should be members of NAPARC churches only, with a caveat for exceptional candidates. It was clear that there is a long-standing, mutually-appreciated relationship between our denominations through the valuable work of these teams, which the presbytery is keen to maintain. The RPCS also appreciates the financial support received from the RPCNA, including generous gifts from certain of our congregations, acknowledging that a little goes a long way.

These are the main matters before the Scottish Church at this time, and they covet our prayers and support to help them continue to be faithful in a faithless culture.

Respectfully submitted,
David G. Whitla

Addendum: Although not part of the formal report of the RPCS fall presbytery meeting, your delegate notes here two important subsequent milestones in the life of the Scottish RP Church from the first half of 2018. The first is the unexpected passing of one of its retired ministers (formerly Glasgow RPC), the Rev. Marcus McCullough. The second is the acceptance of a call by Rev. Andrew Quigley to pastor the Ottawa (Canada) RP Church. Both these men have served different generations faithfully by the grace of God (Acts 13:36) and their removal from Scotland in the providence of God (albeit by very different means) should move us to thank Him for His provision through years of denominational dwindling, restructuring, and renewal. It should also move us to continue to pray for the RPCS in the years ahead as a new generation of laborers carry on the Covenanter legacy in an increasingly hostile culture.

Appendix 3.c. Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)—David Whitla

It was my privilege to once again represent the RPCNA at the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) held at Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh, from 21-24 May, 2018. The FCC was constituted as a denominational entity by the division of the historic Free Church of Scotland in the year 2000,

and maintains continuity with that historic church in its doctrine, discipline, and worship.

As reflected in several of its reports this year, it is a shrinking denomination of some one thousand members, with many rural and remote congregations scattered throughout the Scottish Highlands and Islands, plus a number of urban congregations, and seven congregations in North America. Despite its diminutive size, it maintains a healthy missions program, supporting churches in Northern Ireland, Spain (Bilbao and Barcelona), France (Pau), Canada (Smiths Falls), and Sri Lanka, all through its Home and Foreign Missions Committee. This year the FCC brought to an end its support for a mission effort in Zambia, and expressed a desire to reach South America as a new field of labor. Working with the group Reformation Scotland, they have begun to translate Reformed works into Spanish, such as Boston's *Fourfold State of Man*, are actively planting a Spanish-speaking church in Chicago, and are exhorting their young people to study the Spanish language.

The FCC's Presbytery of the United States of America draws some 200 people to worship each Lord's Day in five locations (Atlanta, GA; Greenville, SC; Mebane, NC; St Louis, MO; and Washington DC). The annual August Free Church Family Conference draws similar numbers to Lexington, Kentucky, and a pastors' colloquium for two days of fellowship, teaching, and prayer attracts ministers and elders from other denominations. The American presbytery reported the reception of Mr. Tyler Ray as a new candidate for the Gospel ministry and the reception of several new members in 2018. The congregation of Mebane, N.C., called Rev. Gavin Beers from Ayr, and such has been their growth that they are no longer dependent on fiscal support from the home church in Scotland. The presbytery produces *The Master's Trumpet* magazine, which will be available online for free, and have launched The Grange Press to reproduce important works of Scottish theology.

The FCC is a member of the International Conference of Reformed Churches, and also supports a number of interdenominational ministries, notably the work of Affinity (formerly the British Evangelical Council), Hudson Taylor Ministries (bringing the Gospel to East Asia through Reformed literature and recording video lectures on theology for dissemination), and Christian Witness to Israel. £500 was set aside by the 2016 GA for anyone wishing to undertake CWI's training program to prepare for Jewish evangelism; with no one to date

accepting this invitation, an appeal was made this year that the General Assembly remind the church of the call to Jewish evangelism, historically such a lynchpin of Scottish Presbyterian missions.

The Free Church Seminary meets at the Inverness Church and is supplied by five ministers appointed by the synod. The church currently has two ministerial students who will complete their four-year course of study in 2019. As several of the FCC's ministers are expected to retire soon, they ask us to pray with them that the Lord will raise up more men to fill their vacant pulpits. To date, there is just one American student who will begin training in the fall. The Scottish church also hosts the annual Free Church School in Theology, which attracts many ministers, elders, and Christian workers from across the United Kingdom.

Despite its small size, the FCC maintains a remarkable output of published material. It produces its own denominational magazine (*Free Church Witness*), a youth magazine (*The Explorer*), and an evangelistic magazine (*Good News*). It has a seminary theological journal which is in its fifth year.

As already mentioned, the American presbytery also maintain their own magazine and publishing imprint. The FCC are actively reprinting important historical volumes of Scottish theology, as well as the new series of "Finding Out" booklets, seeking to introduce people to subjects of shared denominational interest, like Psalmody, *a capella* worship, church discipline, church membership, leadership, funerals, weddings, and Sabbath-keeping. As a church with a keen sense of its heritage, a recent history of the Free Church in the 20th Century has just been produced along with a companion volume explaining the division of the Free Church of Scotland in 2000 (both written by John Keddie).

A long-term project currently under compilation is a multi-volume set of *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1900-2000*, a massive work for which collaboration is being sought with the "majority" Free Church—a welcome step given the deep divisions that still remain between the two bodies. There is thus a remarkably broad witness to Scotland through these publications and beyond, through its an online presence: the FCC website and various social media platforms.

The Psalmody Committee reported good sales of their psalter necessitating another print run. They also reported on a program designed to teach the psalms in meter to beginners. The program is called the Psalmody Test, and over six years, aided by accompanying CDs, participants learn 63 tunes from

the psalter in four-part harmony to improve congregational praise. As an aging denomination, the FCC is eager to invest in its youth; to that end, the church produces its own Sabbath School Syllabus, and administers an annual church-wide Sabbath School exam and a Shorter Catechism diploma scheme. In 2018 the exam drew 26 entrants, and the catechism only one, which aroused the GA's concern. It runs a junior and senior summer camp, which drew a total of 27 students, and also supports a number of small Christian schools.

Scotland is a nation that by any measure, has rejected its Christian heritage wholesale, and several reports at the General Assembly reflected the increasing pressure being brought to bear on Christians.

It is a sign of the times in Scotland that for the first time, a mosque is being built in the Reformed stronghold of the Isle of Lewis. State overreach into home and church life is increasingly evident. The UK department of education's Time for Inclusive Education program threatens to enforce the LGBT agenda in elementary schools. Legislation before the Scottish Parliament will criminalize parents for spanking their own children in the home, regardless of the circumstances (something 70% of Scots believe is unnecessary).

Further legislation is considering organ donation to be an "opt-out" program rather than an "opt-in," meaning that the government has the automatic authority to harvest its citizens' organs unless they have requested otherwise. The FCC has a Public Questions, Religion, and Morals Committee to address such matters through press releases, letters to lawmakers, politicians, and even the Queen. As a church committed to the establishment principle, this year the committee determined to call the UK government to address infringements of the first table of the law, stating, "where our governments are so frequently in error is in failing to recognize their own duty to submit to the Lordship of Christ. And where we as a Church are at fault is in failing to tell the Government of its responsibilities to govern as handmaids of Christ the King."

In addition, this year's General Assembly agreed to pursue a new emphasis of equipping the person in the pew to ask the right questions of their own elected representatives, and present a winsome case for Christian morals in their rapidly secularized and often hostile culture. To this end, materials will be produced for each member addressing key issues as they arise, and where appropriate, to partner with a successful and largely Reformed Christian advocacy group, the Christian Institute.

These are some of the highlights from this year's General Assembly. In all, it was comparatively uneventful, completing its business much earlier than expected and enjoying a good spirit of unity. Per the moderator's request, I herewith convey the Assembly's warm greetings to this year's Synod of the RPCNA.

Respectfully submitted,

David G. Whitla

Appendix 3.d. Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus—William J. Sterrett

Report of the Fraternal Delegate to the Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus

Dear Fathers and Brothers: On April 21, 2018, I had the opportunity to attend the Synod of the Greek Evangelical Church (GEC) as a fraternal delegate, but unfortunately there were not enough delegates to make up a quorum. According to the *GEC Book of Government*, there should be three delegates from each of the four congregations, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of that or nine delegates needed to make up a quorum. Due to illness and other reasons, there were only six delegates present (the pastors of Limassol, Nicosia, Larnaca, and Trinity-Larnaca and two ruling elders from Larnaca).

Since the Synod was not able to conduct regular business, they spent time discussing matters that did not need any official action. It was decided that a new date would be set soon for Synod to meet later in the summer, as it meets only once every two years.

With the six members present, the acting moderator led a time of devotions; then I was given the opportunity to bring greetings from the RPCNA. I expressed our thankfulness for the establishing of fraternal relations with the Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus and our desire for mutual encouragement and prayer for one another. I shared information on new congregations and mission stations in North America and new mission work that is taking place in various countries. The brothers in the GEC expressed a great deal of interest in this and a desire to learn more.

Please be in prayer for the GEC. The Greek-speaking congregation in Larnaca has called Zach Kail to be their pastor when Pastor Kodros Nousios retires at the end of September. Zach has accepted that call, which means that Trinity congregation (English-speaking) will be without a pastor. Please pray for Zach as he takes up this new pastorate and pray for pastoral leadership to be provided for the Trinity congregation.

Give thanks that the English- and Greek-speaking congregations in Larnaca together have eight young families. Tony Mastris has graduated from RPTS, and plans to return to Cyprus with his family in August. Pray for the Lord to lead Tony and Bekah as they seek to serve the Lord in Cyprus. Pray for the Greek-speaking congregation in Limassol to grow and for more elders to be raised up.

Give thanks for the regular attendance of over one hundred in the Nicosia congregation. Pray for all the congregations to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Reformed faith as declared in the GEC confessional documents. Pray that the GEC will have an effective ministry among the Greek Orthodox people on the island.

Pray that potential GEC leaders will have opportunity for sound theological training.

Respectfully submitted,
William J. Sterrett

Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association Report of the Leadership Team to the 2018 RPCNA Synod

Resident Care: Serving the residents of the RP Home Nursing Unit, McKee Place Personal Care, Vista (independent apartments), and Upper Rooms (HUD Section 202 apartments for the frail elderly) with dignity and providing quality care is 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, an 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.

Leadership Change: Key leadership positions changed in 2017 and the beginning of 2018. While change is not always easy, we have seen God's hand actively working in the whole process. Over the last several years, the Board has struggled with how to meet the numerous changes in healthcare: changes in clinical requirements, changes in life safety (our physical building), changes in employment regulations, and changes and opportunities in the way we market our services. Our size and financial position do not provide the resources for us to have experts in all these areas so that we meet the regulations and provide the care that we desire to give all of our residents.

During Board discussions in late 2016 and early 2017, the Board determined that the RP Home could not continue as we were. At the same time, we began conversations with Baptist Senior Services regarding our future and our impact as a faith-based community on the Northside of Pittsburgh. Of the organizations we worked with in the Faith Based Network for more than ten years, the mission, vision, and philosophy of Baptist Senior Services is closest to ours. They have two campuses in the South Hills area of Pittsburgh. Baptist Homes is twice the size of our campus; similar in the age of the buildings, the mix of residents in nursing (including Medical Assistance) and Personal Care (providing Benevolent Care), while Providence Point is a high-end senior living community. Their board is committed to maintaining both campuses.

The Reformed Presbyterian Woman's Association signed a Management

Services Agreement effective November 1, 2017. Under this agreement Baptist Senior Services provides an administrator (subject to the Board's interview and approval) and additional services and expertise for a fee. In our first six months of this relationship, we have seen God's blessing many times. Our new administrator, Cara Todhunter, started in early November and a month later was diagnosed with a serious illness. We are hoping that she will be able to return to work in June of 2018. During that time Baptist Senior Services has provided administrator support for us in addition to so much else.

In November, we added a Director of Environmental Services position and hired Ryan Orr. He has brought a wealth of knowledge of aging buildings and is providing leadership in maintaining and improving our campus. Also in November, one of our employees took on the role of Community Liaison to improve our marketing for nursing and personal care and now she is continuing to handle that role as well as the Director of Personal Care. Joan Bova, RN, loves the RP Home and is very excited to tell our story. Last month we hired a new Director of Nursing, Susan Hannak; the Director of Nursing is a very challenging role as she coordinates the care we give, the rules and regulations that we follow, and maintains the appropriate staffing levels. One other personnel change we are very excited about is our new Medical Director, Dr. Matthew Macken. Through our relationship with Baptist Senior Services we were able to connect with a local large network of physicians who became very interested in us, the care we provide, and our close proximity to Allegheny General Hospital and their office. Dr. Macken spends two days a week here along with his nurse practitioner and has built warm relationships with our residents.

Finances: We are very thankful to God for His continued provision for our ministry. We had a loss from operations in 2017. Recently we have had an increase in the nursing census and a significant increase in the Personal Care census. Fourteen months ago we had eleven people living in McKee Place; now there are twenty three. An increased census will improve our financial operations. We received a significant bequest in 2017—another sign of God's provision—and we are using it to do several projects in the building that were greatly needed. Our faithful donors continue to enable us to provide benevolent and uncompensated care to our residents. In 2017, we provided \$268,681 in benevolent care and \$1,478,288 in uncompensated care for the individuals we serve. Our bottom line was a positive \$351,638 due to bequests and donations.

From that we made all of the scheduled principal payments on our construction loans and line of credit reducing our debt by \$286,556. These included making the final two payments on the \$250,000 loan granted by the Trustees of Synod.

Board of Directors: As of our recent Annual Association Meeting and April Board Meeting, current Board of Directors members are: Marilyn Roll (President), Debby O'Neill (VP), Betsy Johns (Recording Secretary), Jennifer Willson (Corresponding Secretary), Wendy Hughes (Treasurer), Autumn Butler (Assistant Treasurer), Louise Copeland, Ralph Joseph, Karen Olson, Kathy Stegall, Patricia Watters, and Nola Youngman.

Conclusion: We are deeply appreciative of the funds that we receive from RPM&M to support the care that we give to our Reformed Presbyterian residents. As you pray for us, please ask God to provide us with compassionate and talented staff. Along with many other healthcare organizations, we are in need of nurses: RNs, LPNs, and Nurse Aides. It is encouraging to see God providing in the midst of what seems to be constant change.

Lorrie J. Meneely, Chief Financial Officer

Report of RPWA Disabilities Ministry to 2018 RPCNA Synod

This year the RPWA Board decided to revitalize a program for the disabled. A formal motion by the RPWA Board endorsed the following members: Rev. Rich Johnston (Chairman), Rev. Martin Blocki, Bill Weir, Karen Olson, Debby O'Neill, and Nola Youngman (Board representative). After several organizational meetings the name chosen for the organization was "RPWA Disabilities Ministry." The Ministry is an extension of the RPWA.

A draft of simpler bylaws is in progress and set to replace the 1996 bylaws of the previous Board to Address Disability Concerns. A funding policy has been adopted. A questionnaire was sent to all congregations to assess their disability needs. Upon receipt of the questionnaire results, a plan will be developed to meet disability needs in the areas of mentoring, education, or finance. Plans are also in development for a program for adults with disabilities as well as discussion groups for caregivers and church leadership at the 2020 International Conference. The *RP Witness* and a link on the RPWA website will be used for further information and future educational offerings.

Rich Johnston, Chairman

Reformation Translation Fellowship Report to Synod

Dear Fathers and Brothers: For the past 69 years, the motto of the Reformation Translation Fellowship, Inc., has been “but the Word of God is not bound.” Even though conditions recently have become more restrictive, God’s Word and work have continued unabated. We are thankful for the abounding ministry God has given to us despite a relatively small budget. We are especially thankful for the financial and prayer support of numerous individuals, families, and congregations which makes this work possible.

We are thankful for the tireless efforts of Executive Director, Arthur Thompson. Book publishing, with the increased complexity in getting copyright permission, is an ever increasing challenge; Arthur has been able to successfully navigate this area. Art has also been able to attract new donors to the RTF. Please pray for Arthur’s continued strength and health in his labors. The RTF-USA has been busy translating books and pamphlets into Chinese. These are available for free-downloading on our website: www.rtf-usa.com. Please refer any Chinese readers you know to this resource. Some of the new titles on the website are:

Sermons on Sanctification, various authors

The Ark of Safety by McGraw

Timothy, Titus, and You by Scipione

How Can Justification Make Me Joyful by Hyde

The Lord’s Day by Pipa

Whitefield’s Letter to Wesley on Election by Whitefield

Public Worship by Ryle

What is a Reformed Church? by Watts

The Duties of Parents by Ryle

Luther’s 95 Theses by Luther

Our hope is to have printed about 250,000 volumes in Mainland China this year. Please pray for safety for the printers and others involved in this effort.

Donations can now be made on the RTF website, www.rtf-usa.com. Or contributions by mail can be sent to: Reformation Translation Fellowship; 3775 Rooks Road; Atchison, Kansas 66002-4111.

Respectfully submitted,

William L. Roberts (RTF Board Secretary)

Communication # 18-1 GLG re. Ord. Query Addition

[Passed up from Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery to the Synod]

Request to [Great Lakes / Gulf] Presbytery

Recommendation: The Bloomington Session requests the Presbytery to petition Synod for a change to the “Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure.” Namely, we request that Vow #6 from “The Covenant of Baptism” be added to the “Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure” as Query 10.

Grounds: Vow 6 in the Covenant of Baptism echoes Vow 7 of the Covenant of Communicant Membership, and our experience in administering these vows with our members has shown the crucial role of these final vows in our understanding and taking of the vows. It is a suitable and meaningful capstone to the vows, both in contributing to our understanding of how we take the vows, but also places them in the context of our overall vision of the end of the church and all of our interaction in it. Since two of the sets of queries end with this language, its lack in the case of the Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure is noticeable. Adding the final language to the Queries brings them in line with the other two sets, and is a fitting capstone to the Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure.

Communication # 18-2 GLG re. Park City**[Passed up from Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery to the Synod]****Request to Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery**

Dear brothers of Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery, RPCNA: I request that this paper be forwarded to Synod, and it is my hope that it will receive Presbytery's endorsement. It concerns a matter from over forty-five years ago, but it remains an injustice that Synod needs to recognize and repent of. I am, brothers, with the highest respect, yours.

In Jesus,
Phil Pockras

Dear brothers of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America:

It is with the deepest respect and with the glory of God and the blessing upon this Synod that I submit this petition. In consultation with my son, Nathaniel, and relying upon research that he is doing, it has come to our attention that a grave injustice was done against the Rev. G. I. Williamson, Ruling Elder John Leland, and the Session of the former Park City (Wichita), Kansas, RP Church in 1972. As well, the Synod of the RPCNA defied its own *Constitution* in these actions. We seek justice in this matter. First, some history:

The Synod of 1968 issued a statement of union upon which merger with the Associate Presbyterian Church of North America was undertaken, being consummated in 1969. One of its provisions (*Minutes of Synod 1968*, page 39) exempted incoming ordained officers of the Associate Presbyterian Church from the RPCNA's prohibitions on tobacco use, although individuals ordained after the merger were not to be exempted.

Paper 1972-1 to the Synod of 1972 (*Minutes of 1972*, pp. 94-97) discussed the issue of tobacco use. This paper originated in the Session of the Park City congregation, of which Mr. Williamson was the pastor, because one of the ruling elders (unnamed in the report to Synod, although named as Mr. John Leland on page 107 of the Park City Session Minutes) found himself unable to break a tobacco habit. Observing that Synod had permitted an exception to church law for former Associate Presbyterians, the paper denounced this exception as unbiblical (reference to Ex. 12:49) and as creating a double standard. After petitioning Midwest Presbytery and being informed of the impossibility

of relief, Presbytery being unable to overturn a Synodical decision, the Session appealed to Synod for relief. In conclusion, the paper requested that Synod declare either (1) that tobacco use by church officers is sinful and prohibit it entirely, even for the former Associate Presbyterian church officers, or (2) that it be declared not sinful and thus permitted to all officers and licentiates; the petitioners asserting their willingness to abide by “a consistent single standard.” The Judicial Committee holding (pp. 99-101) that this exemption was a proper recognition of human weakness that ought to be continued, and this report being accepted by Synod, Mr. Williamson presented his intention (page 101) to leave the communion of the Church: He could submit to a no-tobacco standard that he personally believed to be an improper interpretation of the Bible, but seeing the committee-informed prohibition of tobacco as a man-made law from which the church could grant dispensation, he denounced this as a departure from a position of the Bible being the only rule of faith and practice, and an invasion of Christ’s rights as the only King and Head of His Church. In response (p. 102), Synod failed to address his concerns entirely and merely asked Mr. Williamson to reconsider his departure, exempted him from a requirement of the committee’s response, and asked Midwest Presbytery to “allow him sufficient time to make necessary provision for his and his family’s needs” should he “still fee[] the same” following reconsideration.

Aside from notes on his departure, Mr. Williamson’s only further appearance in the *Minutes* occurred in 1993 (p. 62), in which the Pension Trustees were instructed to consider refunding him the money he had paid into the pension fund. Ultimately, this prohibition on tobacco remained until 1998. The Synod of 1997 (p. 120) removed abstinence from “habit-forming narcotics” (a class that the Synod of 1940, pp. 26f, had deemed to include tobacco) from the ordination queries, and the Synod of 1998 (p. 58) recognized the passage of these queries in overture.

For these reasons, we ask this Synod to take the following steps:

1. Synod recognize the correctness of the argument made by the Rev. Gerald Irvin Williamson and others of the Park City Reformed Presbyterian Church in deeming unbiblical a total prohibition of tobacco to all ordained officers.
2. Synod acknowledge that its acts of 1968 and 1972 created a double standard, imposing one law on some members of the church and an-

other on other members, in violation of Ex. 12:49, "one law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."

3. Synod acknowledge having sinned against: (1) God in maintaining a double standard, (2) Mr. John Leland for penalizing his inability to comply with this double standard, and (3) Mr. Williamson for failing to address his arguments biblically and deeming them merely a feeling, rather than an argument from the Church's only rule for faith and practice.
4. Synod seek forgiveness from God, from Mr. Williamson, and from Mr. Leland for these sins.
5. Synod direct the Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to Mr. Williamson, and to Mr. Leland or his descendants, should reasonable inquiry ascertain his address.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras

(Minister, Belle Center, Ohio, RP Church)

Communication #18-3 GLG and POA re. Birmingham

From: Rev. Adam M. Kuehner, Clerk of Great Lakes / Gulf Presbytery

March 20, 2018. To: Synod of the RPCNA; c/o Clerk, Rev. John McFarland

Dear Clerk of Synod: On March 2, 2018, the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (GLGP) took up a letter sent from the Home Missions Committee of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA). The letter requested permission to engage in church planting efforts in the city of Birmingham, Alabama. The court proceeded to pass the following motions.

That the GLGP petition Synod to allow the POA to lead church planting efforts in Birmingham with the expectation that the POA would take full responsibility to bring the congregation to maturity. At such a time, the Birmingham work would be enfolded back into the GLGP. Such maturity would mean that the congregation would be defined by the congregation there meeting the following requirements:

- The congregation is fully organized (not Mission Church status).
- There are at least two resident ruling elders and no provisional elders.
- There is a resident installed pastor.
- The congregation is fully self-supporting (no longer receiving HMB reducing aid, presbytery subsidies, etc.)

That the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery welcome the immediate efforts of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies' Home Missions Committee.

Because Synod sets presbytery boundaries, we hereby submit our petition for permission to carry out the above arrangement. Attached [below—*JMM*] is the POA-HMC's letter and a related report from our Southern Church Extension Committee.

For Christ's Crown and Covenant,
Rev. Adam M. Kuehner, Clerk of GLGP

December 15, 2017. Greetings Co-Laborers. Recently, Paul Martin, the Regional Home Missionary (RHM) of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (POA), visited Birmingham on two occasions, where he met with the families which had

gathered monthly with Sam Ketcham for Bible study. Since his departure, the group has continued to meet and made special arrangements to enjoy Paul's ministry. Paul visited with the permission of SOCHEX on each occasion. Paul was also following up particularly with two families in the group, one he knew when ministering in the Pacific Coast Presbytery years ago and another led by a former member of Grace and Truth Mission Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The POA desires to see an RPCNA presbytery develop in the southeast, with congregations from Trinity in Maryland to Orlando in Florida, drawn from both the POA and the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (GL-G). At present, four RPCNA congregations exist in this region, plus three mission churches and one preaching station. Thus, if the POA worked in Birmingham through its RHM and Home Missions Committee (HMC), we would be taking a constructive step toward the creation of a new presbytery out of parts of the two existing presbyteries.

Part of Paul's job description, approved by the POA in 2016, includes helping the presbyteries adjacent to us in church planting. As a result, the HMC of the POA, which has oversight of Paul's work, was also involved in pre-approving his ministry in Birmingham. We encouraged Paul to meet with the Birmingham people to assess where they are with respect to the RPCNA. He is impressed by the quality of the families there and believes that there is real potential there, if God would be pleased to bless the efforts of helpers like Paul. Therefore, the Home Missions Committee of the POA at our most recent meeting unanimously encouraged Paul to talk with members of the Birmingham group to see if they would welcome the following initial plan for a viable ministry there. We present the plan to SOCHEX for your consideration, and for the committee to present it to Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery's approval.

1. The HMC of the POA will oversee the work in Birmingham, in order to relieve the heavy burden presently carried by the Great Lakes/Gulf Presbytery in helping scattered groups of Reformed Presbyterians in the southeast.
2. RHM Paul Martin will be particularly responsible for the development of the work in Birmingham.
3. The HMC will work with the group in Birmingham to establish a bank account, to permit those in Birmingham who wish to contribute to the ministry expenses of a church plant in Birmingham to send their tithes to a central place.

4. Paul will go to Birmingham for nine days each month, from a Saturday through a Monday, so that he will be there for two consecutive Lord's days.
5. Paul will work during his week in Birmingham to cultivate community among the families invested in seeing an RPC established. During his first trip to Birmingham, he will contact NAPARC denominations active there in keeping with the Comity Agreement.
6. The RHM will coordinate sending teaching elders who will lead worship on the Lord's days when Paul is not on site. We will be glad for elders of the GL-G to join in this ministry. (For instance, the group has used Gordon Keddie's studies in their meetings and would welcome his ministry among them.)
7. The HMC will keep SOCHEX informed regularly about the development of the ministry in Birmingham.
8. In a year's time, a careful assessment of the ministry will be made by the HMC of the POA and plans made or adjusted accordingly.
9. If a congregation is eventually organized in Birmingham, it will be a member of the GL-G Presbytery, because it is within the usual boundaries of GL-G, unless a southern presbytery has been organized by that time.

Respectfully submitted:
Bruce Backensto (chairman),
Steven Bradley,
Thomas Reid (secretary),
Mark Sampson,
C. J. Williams

Southern Church Extension Committee 2018 Report to GLGP

Our committee has not fielded requests for or pursued any new Southern works in the past year. Church planting in this region has been historically, and continues to be, a challenge for our presbytery and denomination. The reasons for this are not all clear to us, though one factor we believe will likely be a significant contributor to successful church planting in the future is the strengthening of our existing Southern congregations. So, our committee plans to meet monthly this year to pray for the strengthening of our Southern congregations

and to ask God for wisdom and vision for his Kingdom in this part of the country. We have had communication with the Birmingham Bible study group and would like to share both our perspective on that and our recommendation regarding the Presbytery of the Alleghenies Home Missions Committee's proposal to our presbytery (which is above).

In 2016/17, we oversaw Sam Ketcham's leading of a Bible study in the Birmingham area for about seven months. Though we had some concerns about moving forward with this group, we were prepared to do so in light of the Ketchams' plans to move to Birmingham. When that did not happen last spring, we decided not to continue the Bible study by some other means. Several households began again to meet in the summer of 2017, and one contacted us concerning the possibility of moving forward in church planting with our presbytery.

Following are some reasons why we continue to believe that pursuing a work in Birmingham is unwise for our presbytery at this time. Some of these reasons also support our recommendation regarding the POA Home Missions Committee's proposal.

- Distance from existing, vibrant churches in the presbytery: We have noted both from our presbytery's recent history and the counsel of synod's Home Mission Board that "parachute" plants have seen far less success than "daughtering" plants and the support they receive, and this caution is heightened in the absence of a local church planter. It would be very difficult to provide adequate shepherding at such a distance from the rest of our presbytery.
- Strained resources in the presbytery and strength of existing Southern churches: The results of our planting efforts across the South over the last 35 years are stark; as a presbytery we have yet to plant a congregation that isn't reliant on at least one of the following: a temporary governing body, financial aid, provisional elders, and outside preaching/pastoring. We do not see Birmingham as having a significantly better set of circumstances and resources than areas where there are existing-but-not-yet-stable new works. Rather than begin a new effort, we sense that it would be wise to invest our resources in present efforts and ask the Lord to show us more blessing in bringing existing works to stability.
- The absence of a local church planter: Twelve months ago we believed that Sam's eagerness to go to Birmingham (a place he was from and

familiar with) and that the energy and giftedness he seemed to have for the work was a significantly compelling factor in moving forward despite the two bullet points above. Part of our failure in planting thriving churches in the South might be attributed in part to the fact that we have rarely had a Southern church planter.

- The group itself: There are certainly encouragements and strengths to speak of among these saints, but in terms of church planting and given the concerns above, the drawbacks are significant. These concerns relate to geography, leadership potential, and philosophy of ministry, among others.

Our committee is grateful for Paul Martin's ministry to this group on a couple of occasions and for his committee's interest in seeing a church raised up to the glory of God in Birmingham and our presbytery. However, we are not in favor of this proposal at this time, for the reasons outlined above, particularly with regard to distance, limited man-power for preaching/TGB/etc., and the many presbyters already serving provisionally in the South (without strong, established congregations).

Recommendation 1: That we thank POA for their willingness to serve but return their request and wait for clearer leading that church planting work in Birmingham should proceed.

If Recommendation 1 is not the will of the presbytery and fails, we offer this alternative:

Recommendation 2: That the GLGP petition Synod to allow the POA to lead church planting efforts in Birmingham with the expectation that the POA would take full responsibility to bring the congregation to maturity. At such a time, the Birmingham work would be enfolded back into the GLGP. Such maturity would mean that the congregation would be defined by the congregation there meeting the following requirements:

- The congregation is fully organized (not Mission Church status).
- There are at least two resident ruling elders and no provisional elders.
- There is a resident installed pastor.
- The congregation is fully self-supporting (no longer receiving HMB reducing aid, presbytery subsidies, etc.).

H.P. McCracken (chair),
Kent Butterfield,

James Faris,
George Gregory

Communication 18-4a: Stegall Complaint vs. Midwest Presbytery

COMPLAINT

Rev. Ron Stegall, Complainant, vs. Midwest Presbytery, RPCNA, Respondent

Taken pursuant to the *Book of Church Discipline*, Chapter 4, from the two Motions approved by the MWP at its Fall 2017 Meeting and printed in the *Minutes* of that meeting at pages 672-674.

The Plea and Exhortation. This dispute, which is far wider and all-encompassing than my Complaint, is currently tearing our communion in pieces—sinew from sinew, bone from bone, brother from sister. We all know this, and it's time we faced it squarely. The hour runs short to put back together all that has been sundered. Brothers, let us not squander this final opportunity to reaffirm our doctrinal commitments and our historical identity—to respect the *imago Dei* in each of us; to honor the blood of our Lord that purchased each of us back from sin and death; to recognize the sanctity of Christian conscience and the grace of God's design for his Church—that she live together, search the Scriptures together, always reforming, always being sanctified, always working out her salvation in humility and the fear of the Lord. In short, to love one another as we have been loved.

This dispute is not about whether women can biblically serve as elders. This is a matter of some confusion. But we must be clear about what is at stake—something far more important and precious than any one of our individual conscientious commitments with regard to the office of elder. What is at stake is nothing less than our ability to live together in both peace and sincere disagreement on matters that do not strike at the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Simply put, the issue is not the role of women in the church. It is whether men of good conscience can disagree on this question and remain in communion with one another.

In this Complaint, I set forth my personal history and the historical identity of our communion as Covenanters. I tie that history and identity directly to our doctrinal commitments—commitments we have all vowed to uphold. I set forth the manner in which the Motions from which I appeal misrepresent both that history and my position in order to accuse me of the moral sin of heresy, and then abusively use the threat of discipline to cut off a brother in the Lord without according him the full rights and bonds of fellowship designed to prevent such sundering at all costs.

In short, I plead with this communion, my communion, the Church that I love, to return to its true heritage as a Covenanter Church in the fullness of that revered name—her spirit, her doctrinal expressions, her laboring sweat and spilled blood in service to the fullness of life together in mutual submission to our Lord and his revealed Word. I exhort this people—my brothers—we are not simply a reformed church. We do not strive to be a Johnny-come-lately presbyterian-lite church with little but our conservatism to guide us. We are Covenanters. If we are to be worthy of our fathers in the faith, we must act like Covenanters. May our Lord have mercy on us all.

The Introduction. Specifically, this Complaint presents two simple, straightforward questions. First, am I in a state of unrepentant sin? Is an honest commitment on a matter properly reserved to liberty of conscience (that is, a matter that does not strike at the fundamental doctrines of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ accompanied by sincere expression of submission in all actions to the clear teaching of the Church) intolerable and repugnant to God? And second, if I am in such a state, what is the appropriate remedy? The Midwest Presbytery of the RPCNA gets the answer to both of these questions wrong in ways that strike at the very heart of who we are as a Church of Jesus Christ, both historically and in terms of our distinctive, doctrinal commitments. Therefore, those actions must not be permitted to stand.

The Nature of the Case. This Complaint arises from two interrelated Motions adopted at the 2017 fall meeting of the Midwest Presbytery.¹ The motions were occasioned by my request to be granted an “exception” for my conviction of conscience that the office of elder in the church is and ought to be open to women as a matter of sound Biblical interpretation.² I set forth my reasons for that request—along with the context in which it was made—more completely below.³ The First Motion purported to declare that the exception I requested is “out of accord with the system of doctrine” I have vowed to believe and accept

1 For clarity, I will refer throughout to the “First Motion” and “Second Motion.” The Motions are attached hereto as Exhibit A.

2 *Minutes of the Midwest Presbytery* (Fall 2017), 672 (“Mr. Stegall’s request for an exception on the position of women elders [was] taken up by the Presbytery.”)

3 My thorough and exhaustive exegetical rationale is set forth in the paper authored by Rev. Bruce Hemphill and signed by both me and Rev. Hemphill titled “What the Bible Teaches about Men and Women Together” and submitted to the MWP through the Lawrence Session in 2014. The exegetical case for my conviction of conscience is not directly relevant to the more weighty matters raised in this Complaint and therefore will not be discussed.

because it denies the “authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency of the Scriptures.”⁴ The Second Motion purported to declare that my statement of conscience was a “violation of the moral law” and that if I did not “repent of the position” I must either surrender my ordination, transfer my ordination, or face a disciplinary action.⁵

The errors contained in these Motions are numerous, and they will each be addressed, but I have structured my Complaint to focus on the two most egregious: (1) I emphatically do not, after a full search of my conscience, deny the authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency of Scripture, and I do continue to believe and accept the system of doctrine set forth in our constituent documents⁶ as being founded upon and agreeable to Scripture; and (2) the Midwest Presbytery has abused both constitutional process and, more seriously, the rod of discipline, in order to obtain an unjust result while avoiding the full transparency and accountability that rightly should attach to such proceedings. In all of this, my self-appointed prosecutors have twisted the truth and have abused the Church’s process and powers to haphazardly level these most serious yet scurrilous allegations against me and mislead my fellow presbyters in the process.

Moreover, they have used the threat of discipline, not as a means of love and reconciliation, but as a bully’s fist to intimidate and force me to relinquish my full constitutional rights as an ordained minister of the Gospel in this communion. The Midwest Presbytery and its individual presbyters were certainly misled, and the Presbytery was maneuvered in ways to conceal this fact and cover its acts with the veil of secrecy. These entire proceedings by right ought to be—and by justice must be—disavowed in their entirety by this Synod.

The Historical and Factual Background. On July 23, 1637, in Edinburgh, Scotland, King Charles I along with his prelates attempted—against the widespread conscientious dissent of ordinary Scottish citizens—to force the Scottish church to use the *Book of Common Prayer*.

On that Sunday, when the Dean of St. Giles’ Cathedral began to read the Collects, a poor market-woman, Jenny Geddes, flung her wooden stool at the Dean’s head in protest. That one act of conscience, taken at great personal

4 *Minutes of the Midwest Presbytery* (Fall 2017), 673.

5 *Id.* at 673-674.

6 References throughout this Complaint to either our “constituent documents” or to our “subordinate standards” explicitly include the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Catechisms*, and the *Testimony* of the RPCNA.

risk by a poor woman, sparked a tumult and riot that would spread across the whole of Scotland and culminate in the signing of the Scottish National Covenant the following year. Three hundred years later, in Greyfriars' Church in Edinburgh, the three great Covenanter communions gathered for an international convention to celebrate the tercentenary of that National Covenant. Addressing the gathered Covenanters, the Reverend D. H. Elliott recalled that single faithful act: "Jenny Geddes may have hurled the first stool at a dictator system of government three hundred years ago, but Covenanters everywhere, ever since, have been flinging their stools at all such systems wherever they have lifted their heads."⁷ It is high time to raise the stool again against our present-day Deans of St. Giles, some of whom, I regret, have appointed themselves my prosecutors. This Complaint is my wooden stool.

Yes, I fling it with the righteous anger of the Covenanters of old against authoritarians everywhere. But I fling it too with all the overflowing love of my heart for the historical faith of my fathers and for you, my brothers. I fling it with abiding hope that the justice and righteousness of this cause may still be recognized and vindicated; that even at this late hour you might heed the call to the courageous path of faith—to the way home that is still open to you. But finally, knowing that all things short of the Second Coming will disappoint our fondest desires, I fling it firmly and solely in the conviction that I rest in the loving bosom of my Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, deliverer of slaves, vindicator of the downtrodden, champion of the powerless, He who sets all the mighty wisdom of the world for naught and requires instead the faith of a child. I fling it in commemoration of Jenny Geddes and of all such Covenanter children of the faith who have come before me.

1. My History as a Christian, Covenanter, and Minister of the Gospel. I was born in Topeka, Kansas, in 1946 into the Covenanter heritage. My mother was a McElroy from Quinter, Kansas, who lived the first part of her life in sod house. My grandfather was Joe McElroy and my great grandfather was also named Joe McElroy. Both were leaders in the Church. It was said of my great-grandfather that he once walked 300 miles to attend a meeting of Synod. My

7 "The Covenanters' Contribution to the Ideal of Christian Government," address by Rev. D. H. Elliott to the Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1938, reprinted in Rev. John Macleod and Rev. A. J. McFarland, eds., *Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1638-1938, Memorial Convention of the Three Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, and America* (Blackie and Son, London, 1939), 192.

uncle, June McElroy, was a pastor in the Church and my aunt, Elizabeth McElroy, inspired me to mission work by her faithful life spreading the Gospel under the Blue Banner in Syria.

I was actively involved in the Covenant Church from my earliest memory—two worship services on the Lord’s Day; Wednesday evening prayer meetings; vacation Bible school in the summer; and church camp at Forest Park. I graduated from Geneva College in 1968 and then attended the RPCNA seminary for a year enrolled in a mission program to train missionaries to Cyprus in a special program called Christian Cyprus Corp (CCC).

In 1969, I married Kathy Elliott in Larnaca, Cyprus. She had gone to Cyprus in 1968, also with the CCC program. Kathy likewise has a long heritage in the Covenant Church. Her father and his father before that were pastors in the Church. Her mother was a Coleman, and the Colemans go all the way back to the Kellswater Covenant Church in Northern Ireland in the early 1800s. The Colemans were also leaders in the Covenant Church as pastors, elders, teachers, and professors.

Kathy and I served in Cyprus with the CCC until 1971. Then we moved back to Pittsburgh where I attended the RPCNA seminary. I graduated from the Seminary in 1975 with a Masters of Divinity degree. While in Pittsburgh, Kathy and I were founding members of Covenant Fellowship and by the time I graduated, we had three children. We moved west to my hometown of Topeka where we became actively involved in the Topeka Covenant Church. In those days, I worked as an entrepreneur to support my young family while also filling local pulpits as needed, waiting for the Lord’s call. One of those vacant pulpits was in Lawrence, Kansas.

In 1976, I was called, ordained, and installed as the pastor of the Lawrence Reformed Presbyterian Fellowship. We moved to Lawrence at that time and have lived in the area ever since. While in Lawrence, I not only served the local congregation but also the Presbytery and Denomination through various committees and boards including the Trustees of Synod. In 1983, there was a sudden need for a teacher at the American Academy in Larnaca, Cyprus. Heeding the call, I took a year-long leave of absence from the Lawrence congregation and took my family (seven strong by that point) to Cyprus for a year.

In 1986, discerning a new call, I resigned from the Lawrence pastorate, but

we decided to stay in Lawrence to continue our involvement with the local congregation. I worked for two years as the Director of the National Reform Association and editor of *The Christian Statesman*. In 1990, I took a position with the local Court Services (probation) Office as a probation officer with a special emphasis on directing the many volunteer programs administered by Court Services—some of which I had helped start while still a Covenanter pastor in Lawrence.

In 1992, Kathy and I were called back to Cyprus, and we spent the next three years helping to start Trinity Christian Community Fellowship in Larnaca, Cyprus. Having seen the Lord accomplish that gratifying work, we returned to Lawrence in 1995 where I spent the next sixteen years as the director of two probation offices in Lawrence (Court Services and Community Corrections). In 2011, I formally retired and we returned again to labor in Cyprus as part of what was known as the Bridge Ministry—created by the Global Missions Board to help TCCF which was without a pastor due to the retirement of Bill Sterrett. We were there, off and on, for the next two years until Zack Kail was called as pastor of TCCF. During all of my three decades in the Lawrence area I have continuously preached in various congregations, most in the Midwest Presbytery, that have needed to fill their pulpits. Even now, I am active with the Church locally as an elder of Christ Covenant Fellowship. I am now 71 years old and have spent my entire life in the Covenanter Church, the last 41 years as an ordained elder. This labor of love—in addition to my family—has been the great privilege, blessing, and grace of my life.

I do not recount this brief biography as worthy of any credit before the throne of God. But it is my history. Because many of you do not know me personally, I wanted to introduce myself. When Rosaria Butterfield was asked why she remains in the RPCNA she has answered that *“these are the people that God used to come get me, and I’m loyal as a bird dog.”*⁸ I agree. As my wife Kathy has said, we are grateful for the RPCNA and the Covenanter heritage as one *“tiny member of that one great body [of Christ], where [we were] born and bred, trained and taught, nurtured and molded, challenged and sharpened, supported and loved.”*⁹ The RPCNA is where I learned to study the Bible and where I was encouraged to be like the Bereans who constantly searched the Scriptures to

8 Rosaria Butterfield, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Crown & Covenant Publishing 2012).

9 Kathryn Stegall, *The Full Rights of Sons* (Dog Ear Publishing 2013), pg. v.

see if what they were being taught was true. It is this, more than anything else that has brought us to where we are today. In all this time, to the best of my knowledge, and after fully searching my conscience, I can testify that I have ever striven, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in faithful accord with the revealed Word of God in the Scriptures; with the system of doctrine found in the *Westminster Confession*, the *Catechisms*, and the *Testimony* as it is agreeable to and founded upon Scripture; with the vows of my ordination to always submit to the authority of the Church and to seek always its peace, purity, and ever-closer fidelity to Scripture; and finally, with the dictates of my conscience as informed by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

2. Our History as Covenanters, a Distinct People and Church. My entire adult life has been spent living in and laboring for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. In that span of over five decades now, I have spent a great deal of time and energy listening to and discussing a question that is near and dear to all Covenanters—what is it that makes us *distinct* as people of God and a Church of Jesus Christ? What are our *distinctives*? This Complaint tests whether one such distinctive—the Covenanter’s unique commitment, purchased in blood, to the liberties of the individual Christian conscience before God and to the loving exercise of loyal dissent in the face of power and persecution—will endure or be eradicated.

In his important history, the Rev. J. C. McPheeters wrote:

But where do we find the starting-point of Covenanter History?
 ... As a distinct denomination she rises into view in Scotland [where]
 ... the foes of truth and liberty pressed hard upon her from the moment of her entrance. ... [H]arassed and destroyed for their faith, their descendants formed a covenant bond ... [and] two years afterward, they renewed their oath, subscribing another bond, prepared in the same spirit, and embodying the same principles of faith and freedom.
 ... While the joy of the solemn oath was vibrating across the kingdom, a storm was gathering. The king made haste to overthrow the liberty of the Church; he employed his power in a desperate attempt to bring her under subjection to his dictates.¹⁰

Freedom and liberty of conscience were Covenanter watchwords from

10 Rev. J. C. McPheeters, *The Covenanters in America* (Spangler and Davis 1892), 48-50.

the beginning. The introduction to the commemorative volume recording the 1938 Tercentenary Celebration of the National Covenant of Scotland of 1638 describes the National Covenant as a “magnificent expression” of the “*sons of the Covenant*” who “*bequeathed ... their hatred of oppression and their dauntless spirit*” in “*the struggle of the Covenant ... which raised the poor out of the dust and set them with princes.*”¹¹ That is the faith of our fathers. This is what is at stake. That introduction goes on to describe the Covenanter struggle as “*on the one side a continuous series of attempts made by the Government to force an ecclesiastical system of a kind inconsistent either with civil or religious liberty on people to whom it was obnoxious; and on the other side the series of acts by which that people resisted the pressure so long, so uninterruptedly, and so heavily brought to bear upon them.*”¹²

This Covenanter *distinctive* was given pride-of-place at the Tercentenary Celebration. In one speech, the Rev. William Russell made it clear that: “[The Covenanters’] *contention may perhaps be described as a claim for unhindered opportunity to fulfil all the duties that God requires from man. Claiming that right for themselves implied the granting of that right to others.*” Those Covenanters, the heroes of our faith, were firmly committed to the idea that one of those duties required by God is for every Christian to exercise “*the spirit of Christian liberty on its inward side [to] ... not [be] moved with any worldly respect, but [be] persuaded only in our consciences, through the knowledge and love of God’s true religion, imprinted on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as we shall answer to Him.*”

To which, Rev. Russell asked: “*Can such men apply force to others? Manifestly not.*”¹³

Because of this *distinctive*, “*many of the best citizens of [Scotland] were banished to America. ... Others fled because there was no prospect of freedom in their native country to worship God, as they had been taught in the Holy Scriptures.*” Rev. McPheeters makes it clear that the “*heritage of civil and religious liberty*” we now

11 Rev. John Macleod and Rev. A. J. McFarland, eds., *Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1638-1938, Memorial Convention of the Three Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, and America* (Blackie and Son, London, 1939), 2.

12 *Id.* at 5.

13 “The Covenanters’ Conception of Liberty,” address by Rev. Professor William Russell to the Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1938, reprinted in Rev. John Macleod and Rev. A. J. McFarland, eds., *Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1638-1938, Memorial Convention of the Three Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, and America* (Blackie and Son, London, 1939), 121-129.

enjoy in this nation arrived with the Scottish Covenanters who, “[w]ith manly spirit and Christian fortitude . . . promulgated those precious principles of independence, for which their brethren had freely offered up their lives on the other side of the Atlantic.”¹⁴

With this commitment to the principle of freedom of religion, independence of thought, and Christian liberty of conscience unburdened by the dictates of all worldly powers—both those in the civil government and those in the church, from princes to prelates—our fathers in the faith maintained a robust tradition and practice of individual dissent. The Covenanters recognized that a faithful dissenter—one who proceeds with an equal measure of steadfastness and submission—is a beloved brother and a faithful son. His is a special kind of love that must be guarded and protected, not because he agrees and therefore comfortably takes a position of approbation and aplomb, but because he disagrees and remains faithful. “Dissent, when based upon just grounds, and offered with intelligence, indicates love of... the purest type.” The best of our shared heritage has wisely recognized that “the true dissenter is a hopeful worker, . . . an active . . . toiler, though . . . not a zealous partisan, . . . he never despairs.”¹⁵

These distinct commitments to the liberty of individual Christian conscience and to loyal dissent molded our church communion into a formidable institution for the advancement of the Gospel. This became true because of our recognition that the Gospel demands that, in the words of Rev. Russell, the rights we claim for ourselves imply granting those rights to others. Thus, it is our communion that can lay claim to a primary laboring oar in bringing democratic government to the peoples of the world. It is a distinctly Christian accomplishment, and a distinctly Covenanter one at that. D. H. Elliott boldly declared at the Tercentenary Celebration: “The ideal of Christian government is a free Church in a free State, with Jesus Christ over both, and both cooperating together in building the Kingdom of God on earth.” This ideal stands over and against all forms of worldly power which “crucif[y] the Christian conscience.”¹⁶

Moreover:

14 Rev. J. C. McPheeters, *The Covenanters in America* (Spangler and Davis 1892), 58-59.
15 *Id.* at 127.

16 “The Covenanters’ Contribution to the Ideal of Christian Government,” address by Rev. D. H. Elliott to the Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1938, reprinted in Rev. John Macleod and Rev. A. J. McFarland, eds., *Tercentenary of the National Covenant of Scotland, 1638-1938, Memorial Convention of the Three Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, and America* (Blackie and Son, London, 1939), 192.

Covenanters in their feeble way, from pulpit and platform and press, have been contributing to this same governmental ideal. Theodore Roosevelt—in his *Winning of the West*—says: “It is doubtful if we have realized in the leadership of our country the part played by that stern and virile people, the Scotch-Irish, whose preachers taught the creed of Knox and Calvin. They ... became the vanguard of our civilization. ... These were the men who first declared for American independence. ... They were the kinsfolk of the Covenanters; they deemed it a religious duty to interpret their own Bible. ... For generations their whole ecclesiastical and scholastic systems had been fundamentally democratic.”¹⁷

But in the midst of this celebration of Covenanter heritage, there has always been a warning against the ever present temptation in us to revert to the power-hungry ways of the prelates of old—to settle comfortably in the regal and comfortable position of the Dean of St. Giles with the self-assured and arrogant assumption that the Jenny Geddes of the church will fall in line. In his seminal work on Christian government in both the church and the state, Dr. Elliott reserved an entire chapter to discuss the dangers of “*Dictators in the Church*.” “The totalitarian system of government does not confine itself to nations but fastens its tentacles also upon the church.” After reciting some of the egregious abuses of churchmen and prelates against which the Covenanters rebelled and asserted right of individual conscience, Dr. Elliott concluded that even the reformed church must now be “*deeply concerned over the hierarchical tendencies appearing in the Protestant Church*.”¹⁸

The actions of our Church in recent years, and specifically the actions of the Midwest Presbytery against which this Complaint is lodged, have stunningly brought Dr. Elliott’s prophetic warning home to our very hearths. Who do we now identify with—the powerful? the princes? the prelates? Have we become that which we once beheld? Where will we stand on this most significant and historically important question of our distinctive identity as Covenanters?

3. Our Doctrinal Commitment to Liberty of Conscience and Loyal Dissent. The *Westminster Confession* teaches us to foster the same clear-eyed view of Church action championed by D. H. Elliott. The *Confession* states the under-

17 Id. at 195.

18 D. H. Elliott, *Doom of the Dictators* (Eerdmans 1959), 29-31.

lying problem succinctly—all synods and councils may err.¹⁹ While few people would disagree with the idea that legislatures, synods and courts make mistakes, the temptation throughout history has been for these same bodies to claim the exclusive role in correcting those errors. But there is a reason the history of the Reformation is replete with names of individuals. Protestants generally, and Covenanters specifically, have stood their ground asserting that God alone is the judge of conscience. The teachings of synods “*are not to be made the rule of faith or practice.*”²⁰

But problems persist. Most notably, how can a church in which every man and woman may draw upon his own reason in the articulation of his faith survive, let alone maintain a coherent and consistent witness? The Westminster Divines anticipated and answered this question, applying a three-fold approach.

First, the *Confession* repeatedly affirms a distinction between Scripture and church doctrine, always establishing the preeminence of Scripture. For men seeking ordination in our communion, this is the subject of the first vow they must take—is Scripture the only infallible rule of faith and life? In contrast, the *Confession* refers to itself and church testimonies by a name that is a reminder of status—they are the subordinate standards. Again, rather than the rule of faith or practice, these subordinate standards are only to be a help in faith and practice.²¹ Similarly, the *Testimony* states very clearly that “the *Confession of Faith, Catechisms* and the *Testimony*, serve a necessary and useful purpose as a summary of biblical teaching, a basis for fellowship and common service, and as a testimony to the world of the church’s belief and practice. They are never to be taken as a substitute for God’s Word or as a complete or final exposition of it.”²²

Second, the *Confession* establishes that Presbyterianism is the permanent form of church government. This is covered in the fifth vow of ordination within the Covenanter Church. Presbyterian church government is based on the understanding that the Holy Spirit operates through the body of believers. While synods may err, such errors are not an excuse to seek out substitute means or to streamline the process for sorting out church doctrine. In other words, the messiness of Presbyterian government is essential if it is to be a true manifestation of the priesthood of all believers.

19 WCF 31:4.

20 Id.

21 Id.

22 RPT 31:5.

Third, the *Confession* insists that each participant in the body of believers, and in the church courts appointed by the body, rely upon their individual reason with full liberty of conscience when understanding Scripture. Without liberty of conscience, we are left with a mere *implicit faith* in church doctrine—a faith without qualification or question—which the *Confession* condemns in strong terms. “*God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship. ... [T]he requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.*”²³

Our vows are consistent with this teaching. Not one person standing for ordination in this Church has ever been asked whether he believes or accepts the system of doctrine or manner of worship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Instead, within the very vow recognizing the authority of the Church and its subordinate standards, a safe harbor for the ongoing, indwelling work of the Spirit in the individual consciences of elders is carefully crafted and protected. A pastor vows only to believe and accept the *system* of doctrine set forth in the subordinate standards as being *agreeable to and founded upon* the Scriptures.²⁴ Those emphasized phrases are in the vow for a reason—we are not a strict subscription communion—and anyone who overlooks them will misunderstand the elder’s relationship to church doctrine.

At the beginning, the Covenanter church was a gathering of Scots. How did people known for their stubborn refusal to abandon a conviction manage to bequeath to our generation a coherent church with fleshed out doctrine? The answer lies in the final vow for ordination. The Church recognizes liberty of conscience, yet demands that dissent be loyal. Vow nine asks: “*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?*”²⁵

Engaging lawfully with a court is to be subject to it. Without the recognition of liberty of conscience, how is a pastor to articulate views that, by some degree, vary from church doctrine?

23 WCF 20:2.

24 Constitution of the RPCNA, G-2.

25 Constitution of the RPCNA, G-3.

Similarly, the Covenanter Church has developed a practice of formally recognizing exceptions to church doctrine. This allows a pastor who continues in his faithfulness to the vows to give notice to the Church that his understanding of Scripture compels him to reach a different conclusion on a point of church doctrine. In my case, the subject matter of my requested exception pertains to the service of women in the office of elder. This question, and the related question of women serving in the office of deacon, provides a noteworthy example of how discussion and dissent work together as the Church addresses an issue. Indeed, these mechanisms give space for the Holy Spirit to work—they are the fertile soil upon which He may sow. Without these, how could Synod and the Church as a whole ever meet its solemn obligation to “*the continuing reformation of the church in maintaining the subordinate standards of the church in harmony with the Scriptural truth and order?*”²⁶

4. The History of Women in the Covenanter Church. Of course it was a humble market-woman, Jenny Geddes, who heroically sparked the movement against the dictatorial prelates nearly 400 years ago now, leading to the covenanting movement that birthed our communion. During those many centuries, and up until recent decades, our Church was a leader among the churches in according dignity, respect, and equal rank to our sisters in Christ.

In 1888, long before women were granted the civil franchise, our communion resolved that the ordination of women to the office of deacon was “*in harmony with the New Testament and with the constitution of the Apostolic church.*”²⁷ The vote of the 1888 Synod was not unanimous as a number of men dissented on the grounds that such action represented a “*departure from the law and order of the church and contrary to the word of God.*”²⁸ However, the men who dissented from this decision, who as a matter of conscience believed the action was contrary to the word of God, were not disciplined. There was never any suggestion that they denied the church’s doctrine of Scripture. They simply disagreed. They submitted to the action of the church and continued to live in peace.

In 1939, a committee that had been commissioned by Synod to study the question of the ordination of women as elders reported and made recommendations to Synod. The committee consisted of five ministers of impeccable

26 Id. at D-35.

27 *Minutes of Synod (1888)*, 287.

28 Id.

reputation for integrity and scholarship, and deep roots in the Covenanter heritage. The committee reported as follows:

Your committee believes that the first and most important question to be decided is whether or not such ordination would be Scriptural. If not, we need go no farther, for we accept the Scriptures as our infallible guide in all matters of faith and practice. If it can be shown not to controvert the Scriptures, then other phases of the question may be considered. Unfortunately, there is no unanimity of opinion as to the teaching of the Scriptures on this subject. Men of equal ability, scholarship, piety, and devotion to the truth, and equally concerned for the welfare of the Church, take the most diametrically opposite views. It is evident that the committee cannot possibly bring in a report which will be satisfactory to all. We can only hope that those who disapprove the report will at least give the committee credit for doing the best it could under the circumstances, and will not feel that their contributions to the study of the subject were not appreciated. We have humbly sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit in preparing our report, and trust the Synod may be guided by the same Spirit in reaching its decision. The fact that the ablest scholars and commentators take exactly opposite views of the passages bearing on this subject, would seem to suggest that no one is warranted in speaking dogmatically with reference to it.²⁹

The committee recommended that *"the ordination of women to the office of Ruling Elder is not contrary to a reasonable interpretation of the Scriptures: hence that women are eligible to the office, and should be ordained when duly elected thereto."*³⁰ Ultimately, after a year of discussion, the committee's recommendation was not adopted.

However, the eminent ministers who authored the report were not accused of denying our doctrines of Scripture. Their view did not obtain a majority within the Church, but they were neither harassed with threats of discipline nor summarily drummed out of the Church. In response to the rejection of their view, they submitted to the action of the Church and continued to live in peace.

²⁹ *Minutes of Synod (1939)*, 133-144.

³⁰ *Id.*

For most of the 20th Century, our communion lived in this peace even without any express limitation of the office of elder to men in any of our constituent documents. In the 1980s, many members of the Church began to rigorously study the Bible's teachings on this subject and to reconsider the proper scope of the office of elder. In 1988, Faith Martin's book *Call Me Blessed* was published. Mrs. Martin, a member of our Church, made a careful and detailed study of the question by examining the Scriptures. Her work spurred numerous conversations around the Church. Some of those conversations took place under the auspices of the Cornerstone newsletters and conferences.

In response, Synod again took up the question during the five-year period from 1990 to 1994. Synod urged "*all persons*" to use "*caution and compassion*" while considering "*the variety of places, roles and responsibilities women and men have in Christ's church.*"³¹ Synod warned against the "*reactionary spirit*"³² which could arise in the context of these discussions, and encouraged all the courts of the Church to "*conduct forums under the supervision of the judicatories where all the communicant members of the church are encouraged to frankly and openly discuss*"³³ the issue.

In the midst of this time of deep, church-wide consideration and reflection, proposal was advanced by the San Diego Session to amend the *Testimony* to explicitly limit the office of elder to men. That proposal was duly studied and considered by Synod, and ultimately adopted. I alone formally recorded my dissent from this action.³⁴ While my reasons for dissent are not noted in the minutes, I can affirmatively state that my reasons were that I considered that action of Synod to be contrary to the Word of God. Simultaneously, a committee of Synod formed to study the issues raised by Cornerstones and by the San Diego Session reported to Synod that the view that women may serve as elders is "*error but not heresy*" because "*this erroneous position is not condemned in the subordinate standards of the church.*"³⁵ This report was accepted and favorably acted upon by Synod with no suggestion that its substantive conclusion in this respect was in error.

Almost certainly for this reason, no suggestion was made then that I had

31 *Minutes of Synod* (1990), 129.

32 *Id.*

33 *Minutes of Synod* (1994), 148-153.

34 *Id.* at 146.

35 *Id.* at 151.

denied the authority of Scripture by virtue of my earlier dissenting vote; that I had violated my vow to believe and accept the system of doctrine taught in our constituent documents as being agreeable to and founded upon Scripture; or that I had committed a moral sin worthy of church discipline. I simply disagreed. I held a view that the Church as a communion had rejected as error, but not as heresy or even as contrary to our subordinate standards. Therefore, I recorded my dissent and continued to live in submission to the judgment of the communion and in peace with my fellow elders and believers in the Church. I resolved then to act in all ways consistent with both my affirmation of the ninth vow, to *"follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted"* and with Synod's exhortations to present such matters within, through, and under the jurisdiction of the church courts.

Four years later, in an act that now proves pivotal for both the acts of the Midwest Presbytery below and for this Complaint, Synod formally suspended fraternal ties with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). It is vital to the issues presented here to gain a full and accurate understanding of exactly what happened during the 1998 Synod. In 1995, the CRC Synod had ruled that individual presbyteries of the CRC would be permitted to *"declare inoperative"* the rule in the book of *CRC Church Order* that the office of elder be restricted to men.³⁶ That is to say, the CRC attempted to take *"middle road"* by neither altering its confessional standards nor enforcing those standards on its lower courts. After several years of earnest correspondence and fraternal discussions, our own Synod was confronted with the question of how to respond to this unique arrangement.

In the end, Synod suspended our fraternal relations with the CRC in response to the act of the 1995 CRC Synod. Understanding our reasoning becomes critically important to resolving my Complaint. We stated that the *"decision of the CRC Synod"* was: (1) in conflict with the *"authority of Scripture"* because it sets aside *"command of Scripture"*; (2) in conflict with the *"perspicuity of Scripture"* because it was based upon *"alleged ambiguity"* in Scripture; and (3) in conflict with the *"doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency"* because it did not rely on a *"positive Scriptural warrant to change an element of church government or worship."*³⁷

³⁶ *Minutes of Synod (1998)*, 113.

³⁷ *Id.* at 114.

As will be discussed in greater detail below, this act of Synod in 1998 morphed, in the hands of some in the Midwest Presbytery, into a declaration that the conscientious view that Scripture mandates that the office of elder be open to both men and women is a denial of the authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency of Scripture. *But nothing could be further from the truth.* Indeed, it would be strange for a communion to declare that a view it only four years earlier had acknowledged was not heresy and was not even condemned by our subordinate standards to all of a sudden be the equivalent of heretically denying our doctrines of Scripture. This is manifestly *not* what was happening in 1998. Rather, our 1998 Synod was condemning the “act” of the CRC of taking *internally inconsistent positions* on this important issue. We were saying, in essence, that the CRC can no longer maintain a consistent witness to the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture if it cannot maintain one rule of faith and practice within its communion.

Setting aside the more fraught question of whether this inconsistency justified severing fraternal relations, the general point of the 1998 Synod is a reasonable one. A church communion cannot have it both ways on this question and maintain a vibrant witness to the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture. This, in point of fact, is one of the most *compelling reasons* in favor of our doctrinal commitments to liberty of conscience. We recognize that a Church must maintain a consistent witness to the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture. But we also recognize that such a witness is buttressed by toleration of loyal dissent for the sake of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the individual consciences of Christians. Our theology, beginning as it does with total depravity, builds in redundancies. In humble recognition of the truth that the Church can be wrong and must be “*always reforming*” and bringing our subordinate standards into closer agreement with Scripture, we “check” the necessary authoritative “*rule*” of the Church with the safe harbor for the loyal dissenter. The Covenanter spirit was clear in those synods at the close of the last century. Though Synod felt compelled to explicitly state that only men were eligible for the office of elder, it extended the hand of charity and brotherhood to those who disagreed and dissented from that action. Synod urged everyone to exercise compassion rather than a reactionary spirit. It urged open discussions of the issue (and every other honest pursuit of Scriptural truth) without the threat of judicial action. It even asked for a well written and researched paper on this issue.

Finally, Synod faithfully witnessed to the authority, perspicacity, and sufficiency of Scripture by firmly declaring its view that it is “*error*” to hold to the view that women may be elders—in the same way that it is clearly “*error*” according to our *Testimony* to hold the view that women may not be deacons. But Synod did not stop there. It also faithfully witnessed to the equally important principles of liberty of the individual Christian conscience and loyal dissent by embracing the brothers and sisters who as a matter of conscience held to this “*error*” and affirmed that they were neither heretics nor condemned by our subordinate standards. This is the glory of the Church! Let the eye never say to the hand, you are not needed. But the record of the Church in the current century has marked a distinct change. For nearly two decades now, we have all witnessed the trends toward what Dr. Elliott warned of—“*hierarchical tendencies*” and a “*totalitarian system*.”

Briefly, the advancing authoritarianism in the Church includes the effort to eliminate women deacons; the effort to eliminate the freedom of communicant members to pray aloud during worship services; the movement to eliminate congregational officers; and the efforts to drive out those elders who have conscientious reservations about exclusive Psalmody.

These trends, and the harsh and strident manner in which they have often been pursued, have culminated in the efforts of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies and now the Midwest Presbytery to strip the Rev. Bruce Hemphill and myself—two of the longest serving and still preaching elders of the Church—of our ordination. Brothers, let us lift our eyes off of ourselves and to the horizon in order to see where the course we have charted is taking us. We are not compelled to plunge off these cliffs of strife, recrimination, division, and discord.

Here I must recount one personal and painful anecdote that may help us apply the brakes as we careen along. In the course of my service to the Church, I have voted on scores of candidates for ordination. Only once, in all that service, have I ever voted “*nay*” based *exclusively* on the candidate’s claim of conscience. When this man was a candidate, he expressed his sincere conviction of conscience that he did not believe our *Testimony* was in accord with Scripture on the question of women in the deaconate. When I questioned him further, he expressed sincere commitment to submit to the teaching and practice of the Church and to continue to study the Scriptures and pursue the truth together within the properly constituted channels of the Church. In short, he exhibited

an honorable and articulate expression of liberty of conscience and loyal dissent. I still voted “*nay*.” *But I was wrong*. I acted in the moment, without sufficient reflection, out of fear. I was afraid that too many dissenters would lead us astray; would result in change in our *Testimony*. I gave in to that fear. Brothers, *I understand* the fear of losing something you love. But by giving in to that fear, I reduced the biblical mandate for the governance of the Church to mere power politics, shorn of the grace, supernatural favor, and guidance of our Lord. This communion cannot continue to make my mistake. We must act in faith—not fear.

5. The 2017 Fall Midwest Presbytery Meeting and Subsequent Acts.

As mentioned above, my views on the underlying question have been known, recorded, and very public for nearly a quarter of a century. Just as clearly, the position of this communion on the underlying issue has been settled now for some time. I do not dispute this fact and I accept it. Furthermore, in all ways I submit to it. But I do not, will not, and cannot relinquish my sacred duty to my individual conscience as informed by both the ministry of the Holy Spirit and by my sincere and diligent pursuit of the truth of Scripture. The whole history of our Church, its doctrines and identity, councils that this way is righteous and just. I was affirmed and confirmed in this view by Synod itself when it accepted that this view “*is not condemned in the subordinate standards of the church*.” I relied on this in all my thoughts and actions with regard to this question.

However, after the startling acts of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies and of the 2016 Synod with respect to Rev. Hemphill and questions from Presbytery concerning my involvement with Rev. Hemphill’s paper, I became convinced—as a matter of conscience and simple honesty—that I had an obligation to affirmatively seek an “*exception*” for my view from the Presbytery holding my ordination. This, I did. In the process, I made it clear that my request was borne of conscience and from a sincere desire to continue in my prior path and practice of full submission in all words and deeds to the stated and settled position of the Church—including the duty to engage in appropriately sanctioned efforts to study Scripture and bring our subordinate standards into conformity with it.

The acts I now complain from were the Presbytery’s response. Before those acts, however, a motion was made to *grant* my request. But cutting off any discussion, the maker of the Motions in question asserted a point of order and

erroneously claimed that the granting of my request would “*conflict*” with previous ruling of Synod”³⁸ citing the 1998 action of Synod vis-à-vis the CRC. Nonetheless, the point of order was sustained, and Presbytery was informed that it would now consider and vote on two separate motions.

During the discussion and debate on the Motions now at issue, there was expressed concern that these Motions made weighty claims that required a time for study and deliberation. Furthermore, some presbyters requested to know the content of the Second Motion before being required to vote on the First Motion in order that the full import of their actions might be considered and weighed in their context. But those with a head of steam ignored these concerns. Prior to the vote on the Second Motion, I moved for a roll call vote. My request was discussed and debated, with reference to the Book of Order requiring that one-quarter of the presbyters agree to such a roll call vote. No effort of any kind was made to determine whether the requisite one-quarter of the presbyters supported my motion for a roll call vote. The Second Motion was simply put to a voice vote.

When the minutes of the meeting were later circulated for review, I discovered they were devoid of any recitation of these facts. I requested that the draft minutes be amended to include the facts underlying what I believe is a significant procedural flaw. My request was denied, despite the fact that no one disputed my recitation of the facts, and several affirmed the truth of that recitation. In the wake of that denial, the maker of the Motions has now freely communicated with third parties that “*only three*” presbyters dissented from his Motions. A falsehood. It will be impossible to reconstruct the actual roll call vote *because my request to follow proper procedure was ignored in a rush to judgment*. However, I know and attest as *true* that more than three presbyters voted “*nay*” on the Motions.

Now, the quibble about how many people voted “*nay*” is of no significant import by itself. Rather, it illustrates the very significant fact that the very point of roll call vote is to ensure that such weighty matters be recorded fully and fairly in the light of day in order that no one may spread falsehoods about what happened after the fact. It is one of the most ancient violations of the integrity of any system of justice for participants to turn a blind eye to the details of human judgment *specifically* to make themselves “*free*” to believe and propagate

38 *Minutes of the Midwest Presbytery* (Fall 2017), 672.

future narratives of their own making that provide nothing but *post hoc* justifications. There is a reason Jesus was tried at night.

Finally, I requested that the operative effect of the Second Motion—giving me an ultimatum to either repent, renounce my ordination, or transfer my ordination within 30 days or face a judicial process to strip my ordination—be stayed pending the outcome of this Complaint. My stated reason was that to refuse to stay the effect of the Motion either denies me the very relief afforded in the Motion (transfer) or it denies me my constitutional rights to appeal the actions of the Presbytery to a higher Court via this Complaint. I cannot do both. If I transfer, I will lose the right to appeal. If I appeal, I will lose the right to transfer. My request was at least provisionally denied. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the Midwest Presbytery is no longer dealing with me in good faith. It is not for me to judge the hearts and motives of other men, but my nearly five decades of experience leads me to the inescapable conclusion that some prefer the cover of darkness and the strong-arm of the bully to the duty of care and love that underlie our carefully crafted procedures.

The Claims of Error

1. The Midwest Presbytery Erred by Stating that I Deny the Authority, Perspicacity, and Sufficiency of Scripture

The meat of the First Motion is found in its four “*whereas*” clauses. Each clause is significantly manipulative and misleading. The overall impact of the clauses taken together is to create a false impression that the presbyters are left with no choice but to acquiesce to the proposition the First Motion is intended to codify—that my requested exception is “*out of accord with the system of doctrine*” set forth in our subordinate standards.³⁹ The reason proffered via these deceptive “*whereas*” paragraphs is *not* that my requested exception is condemned by our subordinate standards, but that my requested exception is *equivalent to* a denial of our doctrines of Scripture—which of course would be condemned by our subordinate standards. But this equivalency is patently false. I shall address the errors and misleading character of each “*whereas*” paragraph leading the Midwest Presbytery to accept such a false equivalency in turn.

The first “*whereas*” statement attempts to give the substance of the fourth

³⁹ *Id.* at 673.

vow of ordination by both paraphrasing and incomplete quoting. It states that the “vows for ordination require believing and accepting ‘the system of doctrine and manner of worship set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.”⁴⁰ But it omits a crucial qualifying phrase. What is actually being vowed is that the vow taker believes and accepts that the system of doctrine in the subordinate standards is “agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures.”⁴¹ I have already set forth the doctrinal significance of this portion of the vow. In fact, without these clauses, the vow means something very different. Taking the Motion at face value, it becomes apparent that the alteration of the meaning of the vow was clearly intended.

The second “whereas” clause states that the “vows are to be explained by the authority administering them.”⁴² But of course the purported intent of this statement in the First Motion—that the Presbytery should now “explain” to me the vow I took forty years ago—is exactly contrary to the teaching of the *Testimony*. The *Testimony* instructs that the meaning of the oath is to be explained prior to the administration of the oath. The MWP was led to misunderstand this passage to mean that decades after I took the oath, Presbytery could alter its meaning and “explain” this to me. Again, the presbyters were misled by this false characterization of their duties.

The third “whereas” statement reads, “the Scriptures restrict the office of elder to men only (RPT 25.8).”⁴³ Thus, according to the Motion, what is in Scripture is proved up by what is in the *Testimony*, and what is in the *Testimony* must be scriptural! The entire statement is nothing but a tautology intended to create clearly condemned elevation of our subordinate standards to equality with Scripture itself. It is stunning in its faux simplicity and its raw audacity. But it is contrary to the *Testimony* itself which, as I explained more fully above, states that it is “never to be taken as a substitute for God’s Word.” What is the purpose of the third “whereas” statement if not to directly invite presbyters to substitute our *Testimony* for the Word of God?

Finally, the fourth “whereas” statement brings us to the crucial act of the 1998 Synod when suspending fraternal relations with the CRC. The First Motion

40 Id. at 672.

41 *Constitution of the RPCNA*, G-2.

42 Minutes of the Fall 2017 Midwest Presbytery Meeting, 672.

43 Id. at 673.

misled the Midwest Presbytery into believing that Synod had *already* declared that the basis of the exception I requested was in “*conflict with the authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency of the Scriptures which is part of our ‘doctrinal system.’*”⁴⁴ Recall now the crucial fact that when a point of order was raised concerning the prior motion to *grant* my request for an exception, the presbyters were told that such a motion was out of order *because* it “*conflicted with*” the 1998 act of Synod.⁴⁵

But these Motions did not merely mischaracterize the 1998 action of Synod, they get it precisely backwards. The CRC had thrown up its hands and had, in effect, said: “*Scripture isn’t providing an answer so the church will allow different practices within the denomination.*” It does not appear that the CRC had, at that time, concluded that the office of elder was open to women. Therefore, the 1998 Synod cannot be understood as condemning as heretical the reason for my requested exception. Rather, the 1998 Synod action condemned the middle road approach by the CRC because it failed to recognize (1) the authority of Scripture given that there are passages that speak to the question, (2) the clarity of Scripture, and the (3) sufficiency of Scripture. The Midwest Presbytery, however, combined and confused the Synod statement and framed it as speaking to the question of women elders. It manifestly did not.⁴⁶ Worse still, it uses this Synod action to condemn me as one who denies the authority, clarity, and sufficiency of Scripture. *I affirm these doctrines!* In fact, it is in part *because* of these doctrines that I have arrived at the conviction of conscience which compelled my request in the first place. I may be in “*error,*” as the 1994 Synod declared, but I *do not* deny our doctrines of Scripture. This is the most gut-wrenching of slanders.

Some men at the Midwest Presbytery voted against these Motions. By the self-same logic of the First Motion, they have now denied the authority, clarity, and sufficiency of Scripture. This heresy hunt could go on and on. Suggest that a disfavored view is error but not heresy and you condemn yourself as no better than the heretic. Shall all these men now be subject to disciplinary actions

44 Id.

45 Id. at 672.

46 To the extent the 1998 act of Synod can be stretched or somehow construed to be a statement that the view I hold with respect to women elders is heretical or a denial of the doctrines of Scripture, the 1998 Synod would simply have to be said to be wrong given the acts of the 1994 Synod. This is merely further evidence that the 1998 Synod was not doing what the First Motion claimed it was doing.

and the forfeit of their ordinations? After all, they have denied that I have denied our doctrines of Scripture. How can they not too, in all logic and honesty, be subject to the same charge? What about ordinary communicant members who are convicted by conscience and by their study of Scripture that the office of elder ought to be open to women? By these Motions, they too are deniers of the doctrines of Scripture.

Are they subject to heresy charges and excommunication as a result? Brothers, this way lies madness, division, strife, and ruin. We must turn back.

2. The Midwest Presbytery Erred by Abusing both Parliamentary Process and the Disciplinary Process

I will not prolong matters by repeating myself further. The errors of process are set forth above. The Presbytery ignored requests for time to study; refused to permit presbyters to consider both Motions together; refused to even take a vote on my Motion for a roll call vote; and has at least to date refused my request to stay the effects of the Second Motion pending the outcome of this Complaint. The Second Motion must fail primarily because it is entirely premised on the faulty First Motion. But beyond that, I have one final concern. I believe these authoritarian power-plays have co-opted the rod of discipline to achieve separation rather than unity and reconciliation. How else is one to understand the fact that these Motions *both* claim that I commit the heresy of denying the doctrines of Scripture and at the same time, appear to simply open the door to me to leave? If I am a heretic, it would be *wrong* to let me transfer with a friendly "*fare thee well*." If I may transfer, surely I have not denied the doctrines of Scripture. There is one explanation for this jarring contradiction. The authors of these maneuverings would prefer it if these "*troublesome*" members and elders would just leave. And the threat of discipline is a convenient tool to induce the proper motivation. I suggest this is a dereliction of the duty to use discipline "*to bring about a redemptive change, and a continuing growth toward holiness in the life of Christian.*"⁴⁷

In Conclusion, a Warning

We live in a time of winnowing. We all know this, whether explicitly or instinctively. I suggest this reality is in fact the catalyst driving the upheavals we

⁴⁷ *Constitution of the RPCNA*, E-I.

are all struggling to faithfully reckon with. But being men of limited knowledge, wisdom, and perspective, it is all too easy to err when deciding what must be, what is being, winnowed. In such times as these, religious leaders of all stripes and in all times have reverted to authoritarianism of all kinds. This is the natural posture of men who fear they are losing what they love. They squeeze and hold on—tighter and tighter—too often unaware that the thing they love is choking, gasping for breath.

But this posture of fear and grasping was not the posture of our Lord. In a time of winnowing, He presented a countenance of supernatural calm, a posture of open hands, a spirit not of fear, but of serene confidence and faith in the loving goodness of His Father in heaven. So it must be for us, lest we act out again the cosmic tragedy of Pilate—he who thought himself judge was in fact being judged; he who thought to winnow found himself winnowed; he who thought to balance the scales discovered himself on the scale, weighed and found wanting. *Mene mene, tekel, upharsin.*

I have presented my case as both a plea and an exhortation out of the overflow of my heart—compelled by an abiding and tri-fold love for our Lord, for the Covenanter Church, and for you, my brothers. But that same love dictates that in the end, pleas and exhortation give way to warning. Should this Synod affirm the actions of the Midwest Presbytery, it will act not so much to cast me out, but to cast itself out—out of the bold, courageous, faithful heritage of the Covenanters who stood firmly against authoritarianism and the crucifixion of conscience.

It is I who stand in conscience with Jenny Geddes. It is I who stand with our fathers in the faith on Bothwell Bridge against King Charles' prelates and their armed stooges and courtesans. It is I who stand in and for our rich heritage represented by the Blue Banner. I am in true *covenant* now, across the centuries, with our ordinary Scottish ancestors—those who resisted the hierarchical systems of control erected by King and Kirk to defang those terrifying doctrines, liberty of conscience and the priesthood of all believers, championed in the time of our great Reformation.

The question is—do I stand alone? The choice really is that straightforward. Will we reclaim our rightful inheritance as Covenanters? Or will we be the first generation to fail, to bend the knee to the power of man where our forefathers bravely stood solely on the strength of their faith and the power of their convic-

tions, confident only in their Lord and his promise to vindicate the powerless? I plead with you, brothers, do not sell such a rich birthright for that most unsatisfying bowl of thin gruel—position, power, and man’s empty praise.

I have little doubt that if this Synod chooses to affirm the actions of the Midwest Presbytery, our congregations will continue to hoist the Blue Banner. But it will be akin to whitewashing the walls of tombs. Appearances notwithstanding, the living, beating heart of this Church—the Covenanter spirit in America—that nourished so many in the faith for centuries, will have stopped. You will take your place instead with the Dean of St. Giles’ Cathedral—a pretender to the throne of the Lord Jesus, who alone rules over the sacred and solemn consciences of men. In so doing, you will assuredly reap as you have sown.

[SIGNATURE]

Rev. Ronald H. Stegall,
Minister of the Gospel
in the Covenanter Church
of the Lord Jesus Christ

Exhibit A

Midwest Presbytery Minutes of Fall Meeting 2017 ~ 672-674

[See those minutes within Communication 18-4b, immediately following]

**Communication #18-4b:
Stegall Complaint vs. MWP**

Midwest Presbytery Actions and Reports

**Record of Actions and Reports by the MWP pertinent to the complaint
filed by Mr. Ron Stegall (prepared for RPCNA Synod in accordance with
BOD II.4.4)**

Minutes of Christ Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church (Lawrence, KS) Session: 12/10/2014. It was moved and seconded that we refer Pastor Bruce Hemphill's paper to the MWP for its future study and action. The motion carried. Pastor John McFarland and Carl Mathews requested their dissenting votes be recorded in the minutes. Language for the motion and explanation was settled upon as follows:

On December 10 of 2014, a majority of the Christ Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church (Lawrence, KS) Session voted to refer the paper, Men and Women Together (authored by Dr. Bruce Hemphill), to the Midwest Presbytery for further study and action. The majority of the Christ Covenant Session that voted to send this paper to the MWP for further study and action would like to convey to the MWP some of the reasons we voted to do so:

(1) The Session spent many hours reading and studying this paper, both individually and together, and we believe it warrants further study by the Presbytery. (2) This paper was authored by Dr. Bruce Hemphill—a lifelong Reformed Presbyterian pastor and is a scholarly work that deals extensively and thoroughly with this subject from a Biblical point of view. (3) There were several points raised in this paper that we judge need further study, including: (a) the concept of the Trinity being viewed as both plurality and parity, and its application to this issue; (b) the primary interpretive position this paper gives to Genesis 1-3; (c) the significance to this issue of the Biblical thread of Moses wishing all were filled with the Spirit, the prophecy of Joel that all would be filled with the Spirit, and the use of this prophecy by Peter to describe what happened at Pentecost, and further New Testament examples of women prophesying; (d) and the interpretation by this Paper of the traditional Biblical passages that appear to support

the subordination of women as the unclear passages to be interpreted in light of what this Paper claims to be the overall clear teaching of the Bible which asserts the inclusion of women in the leadership of the church.

Minutes of Midwest Presbytery: 11/3/2015 (p. 485). The Court took up consideration of MWP PAPER 2015-01 (passed to the MWP by CHRIST COVENANT RPC of Lawrence). Moved and seconded, that this paper be returned; carried. Moved and seconded, that MWP establish a three-man committee to meet with the Session to answer their questions, to bring them into conformity with the standards of the RPCNA; carried. This committee will be appointed by the moderator and reported in the Nominating Report.

Minutes of Midwest Presbytery: 11/1/2016 (page 582). Committee to Counsel Christ Covenant: Next, the court heard from the Committee to Counsel Christ Covenant Session and chairman Jonathan Haney presented their report. After the presentation of the report and some discussion on the recommendations the court tabled the report due to a 9:05 p.m. order-of-the-day. The matter is to be taken up at a later time by this court.

11/2/2016 (pp. 596-597). Committee to Counsel: The court at this time took up the report and recommendations of the Committee to Counsel the Christ Covenant Session which had been tabled earlier. Mr. Haney, the committee's chairman, offered to the court the committee's recommendations and an amended report. Questions and discussion from the floor lead to a motion from Mr. David Reese. David moved to substitute the report's first recommendation. The substitute motion was presented in five parts. The motion to substitute was seconded and discussion ensued. After moving to a vote on the five parts of the substitute motion, Recommendation 1 was lost. Recommendation 2 was passed. "That presbytery clarify that the Lawrence session as a whole was not out of compliance to our standards in passing on the paper to presbytery." Recommendation 3 was passed. "That presbytery recognize and apologize to the Lawrence Session for the fact that the wording of our original directives to the committee could be interpreted to imply that the Session was out of conformity with our doctrinal standards concerning the role of men and women in the leadership of the church." Recommendation 4 was withdrawn by David with the approval of the seconder. An alternate motion for recommendation 4

was seconded, discussed, but not sustained. Another motion was then offered to the court by Mr. Shane Sapp and seconded by Mr. Bob Hemphill. The exact wording of the new motion was under discussion as the appointed time for adjournment approached. Mr. Brad Johnston rose to urge the court to consider tabling the matter until morning. The moderator ruled that due to the hour of recess being near the matter would be taken up at the next day's meeting after the conclusion of the CCC exams. The ruling met with no objections from the floor. At 9:20 p.m. the court prayed and was recessed until morning with the singing of Psalm 121C.

11/3/16 (pp. 597-599). Committee to Counsel Christ Covenant (taken up): The Committee to Counsel Christ Covenant report returned to take up the previously tabled item. Mr. Shane Sapp stood to articulate and clarify the motion presented the previous evening. Mr. Sapp moved, "That since Mr. Ron Stegall signed the paper arguing for the ordination of women to office of elder, the MWP assign the existing committee to meet with Mr. Ron Stegall to determine if Mr. Stegall believes that women should be ordained to the office of elder in the RPCNA and report back to the Midwest Presbytery with his statement and any recommendations at the 2017 fall meeting." The motion having already been seconded by Bob Hemphill the previous evening was carried. At that time John McFarland, Pastor at Christ Covenant RPC, expressed to the court his concerns as he pastors the soul of Mr. Stegall and that the committee and presbytery do their work with grace. The Court continued to consider the committee's report and after discussion the report was approved as a whole with the revised recommendations and is printed below in the minutes:

Report of the MWP "Christ Covenant" Committee

Fathers and Brothers of the Midwest Presbytery: This committee was appointed during the Fall 2015 meeting of Presbytery in response to MWP Paper 2015-01, "What the Bible Teaches about Men and Women Together." This paper was authored by Dr. Bruce Hemphill of the Allegheny Presbytery, but forwarded to the MWP for discussion by the Session of Christ Covenant RPC. The paper was returned to the Session, and this committee was given a two- or three-fold task: to meet with the Session to answer their questions, to bring them into conformity with the standards of the RPCNA (Minutes of Presbytery, p. 485).

The committee feels confident in our completion of the first two aspects

of our charge, meeting with the Christ Covenant Session and answering their questions which were raised by the content of Dr. Hemphill's paper. This meeting took place at the Christ Covenant RPC building on April 26. All members of the committee were present, as were all members of the Session, except for one elder who was unable to physically attend, but joined remotely by telephone.

Prior to this meeting, the committee took time to reread the paper, and also solicited specific questions from the Christ Covenant Session members. Having received four such questions, these were divided among the committee members for more in-depth study and response. Most of our committee work was done over email, but we did meet in person on March 24 to discuss and collaborate on our initial responses to the assigned questions, before preparing the final draft of our responses.

The committee was warmly received by the Session members, and we believe there was a genuinely charitable spirit present throughout our conversation as we interacted with these questions and responses. We all are very thankful for God's blessing the meeting in that way.

The third part of our task (to bring them into conformity with the standards of the RPCNA) was rather easy, as we found nothing to suggest that the Session was ever out of conformity with our standards. At the same time, this aspect did become a matter of offense, as the implication of our committee's charge is that the Christ Covenant Session was found in summary fashion to be out of conformity. We do note that the conclusions and recommendations of Dr. Hemphill's paper are not in conformity with RPCNA standards, but the process of properly submitting papers through the courts of the Church is very much in conformity with our standards. Indeed, this is the appropriate method of working towards reformation of the Church, and as such should not be denied or discouraged by the higher courts. And so, we acknowledge that this paper is unpopular in its content, we agree that the conclusions are not Biblically warranted, but we do not believe it was inherently wrong to present this paper.

One final thought on this matter. It may seem that the issue of women elders is a settled matter in the church, and as such this paper did not need to be entertained. That may well be the case, but this committee felt that our time studying, discussing, and praying—with one another and with the Session—proved to be time well spent. And while we do not commend Dr. Hemphill's pa-

per for further study, we do encourage our brothers of the Presbytery to think seriously and pastorally about these issues which arose in our discussions:

- Communicating lovingly and patiently with brothers and sisters who have differing convictions,
- Handling pastoral authority with Christ-likeness and personal humility,
- The roles in which women can properly serve, and ensuring that their personal value and contributions are given more than empty lip-service,
- The place of singles (male or female) in the Church, ensuring they are not overlooked in a culture and community which places high priority on the family unit.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1. That Presbytery clarify that the Lawrence Session as a whole was not out of compliance to our Standards in passing on the paper to Presbytery.

Recommendation 2. That Presbytery recognize and apologize to the Lawrence Session for the fact that the wording of our original directives to the Committee could be interpreted to imply that the Session was out of conformity with our doctrinal Standards concerning the role of men and women in the leadership of the church.

Recommendation 3. That Since Mr. Ron Stegall signed the paper arguing for the ordination of women to office of elder, the Midwest Presbytery assign the existing Committee to meet with Mr. Ron Stegall to determine if Mr. Stegall believes that women should be ordained to the office of elder in the RPCNA and report back to the Midwest Presbytery with his statement and any recommendations at the 2017 fall meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

Kevin Dennis,

Darrell Parnell,

Jonathan Haney (chairman)

Minutes of the Midwest Presbytery: 11/8/2017 (pages 690-697). Committee to Counsel Christ Covenant: Next, the court heard from the Committee to Counsel Christ Covenant Session. Moderator Haney, also the chairman of this Committee, asked the previous Moderator, Sam McCracken, to take the

chair allowing him to present the report. After some brief comments on the report the Court took up the report's recommendations.

Recommendation 1. It was recognized by the Committee this recommendation was dealt with in the Candidates and Credentials Committee report recommendations, so was withdrawn.

Recommendation 2. A substitute motion was made to grant the proposed exception to Mr. Stegall, however, a point of order was made citing this motion conflicted with a previous ruling of Synod (see Minutes of Synod 1998, pages 112-119). The moderator ruled in favor of the point of order. An appeal to the moderator's ruling was made and seconded. After some discussion, the Moderator called for a vote to sustain the decision of the Moderator. The Moderator's decision was sustained by a voice vote and the original Recommendation 2 then came back to the floor [R2 ... that Mr. Stegall's request for an exception on the position of women elders be taken up by the Presbytery].

At this time a motion to entertain a substitute was M/S/C. The substitute motion being read was seconded, and was then discussed. The motion reads:

Whereas vows for ordination require believing and accepting "the system of doctrine and manner of worship set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*" (Queries for Ordination, Installation, and Licensure, G-2) and,

Whereas those vows are to be explained by the authority administering them (*WCF* 22.5 and *RPT* 22.3), and,

Whereas the Scriptures restrict the office of elder to men only (*RPT* 25.8), and,

Whereas the 1998 Synod of the RPCNA suspended fraternal relations with the Christian Reformed Church of North America because of their 1995 Synodical decision that classis [equivalent to a presbytery] may "declare inoperative" the rule that restricts the office of elder to males, because it conflicts with the authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency of the Scriptures which is a part of our "doctrinal system" (see *Minutes of Synod 1998*, pp 112-119), therefore,

I move that the position that women should have access to the eldership, be found out of accord with the system of doctrine set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*.

After much discussion, and prior to calling for a vote the moderator suspended business on account of an order-of-the-day for the afternoon break.

Afternoon Break (Day 2): After a much needed break was taken business resumed at around 3:30 p.m, with the singing of Psalm 25A and prayer for guidance.

The Court took up its business again as our Moderator called for a vote on the previous motion and the motion was passed. Mr. Ron Graham asked that the minutes record his dissent to the Court's decision. A second motion, relating to the previous action was then read and seconded. After discussion a substitute motion was offered but failed to carry, thus returning the Court to the original motion. A friendly amendment was then made by the motion's mover and was conceded by the seconder as well. The amendment to this motion was put to the floor for a vote and passed. The motion reads:

Whereas Mr. Stegall has provided a written statement saying "[I] believe women should have access to all positions within the church, including the eldership," and,

Whereas the Midwest Presbytery has found this position to be out of accord with the system of doctrine set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*, and,

Whereas the ordination vows require believing and accepting the system of doctrine set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*, and,

Whereas it is a violation of the moral law to refuse to submit in the Lord to the teaching of this church as being based upon the Scriptures and described in substance in the *Constitution of the RPCNA* (see

BOD 1.1.6., E-3) and,

Whereas Mr. Stegall as a member of the Christ Covenant session (Lawrence, Kansas), has already received counsel from a committee of the MWP to the satisfaction of the session who requested no further response, therefore, I move the MWP counsel Mr. Ron Stegall to within thirty days from Nov 8, 2017 request that his ordination be terminated pursuant to the DCG 3.2.7.b (d-23), or repent of the position that this Court has recognized is against the system of doctrine, or indicate an intent to transfer his credentials to a denomination allowing this position, but if he does not the MWP institute proceedings against Mr. Stegall by appointing a special prosecutor to pursue the case and bring charge(s) against Mr. Stegall pursuant to the *BOD* (2.1.3, E-9 and 2.2.1, E-10).

The Court debated the amended motion for a time and when the Moderator called for a vote the motion passed.

Following the vote John McFarland asked to have noted in the minutes that he had abstained from the vote. Ron Graham asked that his dissent from this vote be recorded, and Mr. Ron Stegall at this time indicated an intent to file a complaint or appeal to this action.

Recommendation 3 [to dismiss the Committee] passed, and the Committee was dismissed with the thanks of Presbytery for their two years of work.

The report of the Committee as a whole was received, and appears in the minutes below:

Report of the “Christ Covenant” Committee to the Fall 2017 meeting of MWP

Fathers and Brothers: Background: This committee was first appointed in 2015 to meet with the Session of Christ Covenant RPC to answer questions raised by Dr. Bruce Hemphill’s paper, “What the Bible Teaches about Men and Women Together.” The paper was returned by Presbytery at that same meeting, and in the following year, your Committee did interact with both the paper and the Session. The Christ Covenant Session indicated they were satisfied with the Committee’s work, and requested no further response. This Committee was

retained at the Fall 2016 meeting of the MWP by the following recommendation: That, since Mr. Ron Stegall signed the paper arguing for the ordination of women to office of elder, the MWP assign the existing Committee to meet with Mr. Ron Stegall to determine if Mr. Stegall believes that women should be ordained to the office of elder in the RPCNA and report back to the MWP with his statement and any recommendations at the 2017 fall meeting (Recommendation #3, MWP Minutes, pages 597-599).

A significant portion of this past year was spent awaiting Synod's ruling on the appeal of Dr. Hemphill against the Presbytery of the Alleghenies' judicial censure arising from the presentation of "Men and Women Together." Both the Committee and Mr. Stegall believed the outcome of this case would bear influence on our own responses to the MWP, but in God's providence, a decision has not yet been reached by Synod, and thus most of our communication has been confined to the past few months, and most of it has been via email.

Response: As Mr. Stegall makes clear in his attached response to the MWP, he has become convinced that the church office of elder should be open to women. Recognizing that this is not the position held by the RPCNA, Mr. Stegall is also requesting that the MWP grant him an exception in holding this belief. The attached response also articulates why he believes the exception would be warranted. Without commenting on the warrants of the request, your Committee believes the request for exception ought to be entertained by Presbytery.

Complications: Your Committee acknowledges that we do not know how the Presbytery would go about granting or rejecting an exception for an already ordained elder. We further acknowledge the entire matter of taking or granting exceptions is problematic for maintaining a united commitment to being a confessional church. It also seems to be a disagreed upon practice with an ill-defined procedure. In our experience and observation it seems that the Presbytery does not take a specific action to grant an exception for students under care or ministers entering the denomination, but rather takes a general vote as to whether the individual is sustained in his exams as a whole. If an individual has stated an exception(s) to our standards, and the Presbytery still votes to sustain him in his examinations as a whole, we have, in effect, granted the exception(s).

This inevitably raises more questions about the nature of exceptions. Which exceptions or what kinds of exceptions are permissible? Is it morally wrong to

take to any exceptions, or certain exceptions? Does the granting of an exception by Presbytery enable departure from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted? And in granting an exception, what are the reasonable expectations placed upon someone holding an exception?

Precedent: What does seem clear in our considerations, and in accordance with past precedent, is that exceptions are granted to an individual specifically, and not for a doctrine or practice generally. This should resonate with common sense, too. After all, if the church should make a blanket statement that this or that item in our Testimony and Confession is not necessary to believe, why would such an item be included as something we testify or confess?

In the case of the church's position on women deacons, we have seen the exception granted to students or ministers in some cases, but not in others. Typically, the Presbytery has refused to grant the exception to those men who refuse to submit themselves to the church's practice and order. The determining factor is not the particular exception being taken but rather how that exception is held by the individual. In deciding whether or not an exception is granted, Presbytery must consider and weigh out both the matter and the man, and should do so on a case by case basis.

Concerning the matter of women elders: Your Committee previously interacted with Dr. Hemphill's paper, and through a study of the Scriptures cited throughout the paper, we did not find his arguments to be Biblically convincing. We do not believe the position has Biblical warrant. We do not believe the position has momentum within the denomination. Considering the current appeal by Dr. Hemphill at the Synod level, we do not see the matter at hand as being about the position of women elders, but more so the nature of exceptions and the practical care for elders who have come to disagree on an issue. Should the Presbytery determine to grant Mr. Stegall an exception on this position, we believe that such an action would not be an affirmation of the position, but an affirmation of the man.

Concerning the man, Ron Stegall: Mr. Stegall is a father and a brother, a member in good standing of this church and of this court. He ought to be given the respect and care rightly due to one whom Christ has purchased for His flock, and one whom Christ has used for the shepherding of His flock. While exceptions are granted or denied largely on the perception of how a candidate

for ministry might conduct himself, Mr. Stegall provides for our consideration many years' example of how he has conducted himself. His request and reasoning for the exception is attached to this report.

Concerning the way forward: Brothers, we must move forward on this matter, but we must do so in an appropriate manner. We have all taken a vow "to study and promote the purity, peace, unity, and progress of the church" (Vow #8). Mr. Stegall has made a request that an exception be granted. It seems that we ought to entertain his request, which is one of our recommendations below. This request could be taken up here at this meeting of Presbytery, or it could be taken up later, contingent upon the report of our proposed "Exceptions Committee" (Recommendation #1). Should Mr. Stegall's request be entertained but subsequently denied, where does that leave us? Possibly in uncharted territory, which could be further evidence to the wisdom of appointing and waiting upon an Exceptions Committee.

On a final, and related note: While the Committee is convinced that the conclusions of Dr. Hemphill's paper, and the position of opening the office of elder to women is in error, we assume that most would agree it is an error that falls short of heresy. The reason for stating this is that heresy is one of the three grounds which our *Book of Discipline* identifies for formal disciplinary process. The question came up in our Committee discussions about whether or not formal discipline is warranted for "merely" submitting a paper for study, and if not, what would prevent someone from submitting a paper which questions the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, and then fleeing consequence by hiding behind the process of "just having submitted a paper." Where do we draw the line, in other words? The *Book of Discipline* draws a line at heresy. For this reason, your Committee is not convinced that by entertaining the original paper, nor by entertaining Mr. Stegall's request for an exception, that the Midwest Presbytery is somehow opening the doors to take up any and all ideas that come our way, simply because they are presented through the proper channels.

Recommendations:

1. That a three-man committee, including at least one member from Candidates and Credentials, be appointed to study the nature and practice of exceptions, in order to present to the Presbytery practical guidelines for evaluating stated exceptions, pertaining both to students under care and ministers

entering the denomination, as well as a clear procedure for members of the Presbytery whose personal convictions change.

2. That Mr. Stegall's request for an exception on the position of women elders be taken up by the Presbytery.

3. That this Committee be dismissed.

Respectfully submitted:

Kevin Dennis,

Darrell Parnell,

Jonathan Haney (chairman)

**(Written Response from Mr. Stegall to the MWP via the Committee;
dated August 19, 2017)**

Dr. Hemphill wrote an extensive Bible study on the role of women in the church specifically in regards to leadership in the church. I signed that study. The study was written by Dr. Hemphill and not by me. If I had attempted to write a similar study I, obviously, would not have written it exactly as he did and perhaps would have said some things differently. However, I do agree with the substance of the study and believe women should have access to all positions within the church, including the eldership. In fact, I believe the equality of women in church, home, and society is the logical, good, and necessary consequence of the central message of the Bible which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, I believe all elders, including women, should be chosen according to gifts rather than gender (as long as they meet the character guidelines described in the Scriptures.)

The statement of the exclusion of women to the eldership is in the same chapter as the inclusion of women to the diaconate in the current *Directory of Church Government*. Many men have taken exception to women deacons and have been ordained. It would seem that if an exception to women deacons is accepted, then an exception on women elders should also be accepted. I have heard it said on occasion that one's view on women deacons is not as important as one's view on women elders (it seems I have heard that mostly from men who take exception to women deacons—but perhaps that is not so). However, I would suggest that practically speaking the exact opposite may be true.

The current *Directory of Church Government* includes ten specific duties

of an elder which include “active pastoral care of the congregation,” “training of the whole congregation to mature discipleship,” and “dedication to the advancement of the whole Church of Christ” (Chapter 3 I B. 1, 5 and 8 and II B). However an elder who has taken exception to women as deacons may tend to feel as if he has permission to refuse to acknowledge, support, or nurture the spiritual gifts of the women in his congregation that fit them for the office of deacon. But, how then can he claim to be faithful to his “pastoral care” of these women or of the congregation which would benefit from the exercise of their gifts? If an elder refuses to train qualified women as deacons, isn’t he refusing “to train the whole congregation to mature discipleship”? If an elder refuses to make use of a woman’s gifts to properly and wisely administer various aspects of church work (as deacons are supposed to do), how can he be dedicated “to the advancement of the whole Church of Christ.” If the RPCNA believes that women can and often are gifted and called to the diaconate, then any elder who asks for an exception to this will certainly have a difficult time faithfully performing at least three of the ten duties of an elder to a specific group within his congregation or to the congregation as a whole, which will be deprived of the potential contributions of that specific group.

But a person who takes an exception because he believes women can be elders is still able to perform all ten duties assigned to an elder. He will (1) not systematically withhold proper and pastoral care and encouragement from a person or group; (2) he will not withhold discipleship from a specific group in the Church; and (3) he is not opposed to specific types of advancement that the Church has confirmed are proper to the Church and the Scriptures. However, an elder who opposes women as deacons will, as stated above, most likely tend to (1) withhold proper and biblical pastoral care from a specific group in a systematic way; (2) withhold discipleship (the kind of discipleship that prepares qualified people for office) from a specific group in a systematic way; and (3) oppose the work of a specific group within the Church to advance the Church of Christ and to themselves advance in Christ.

The practice of stating exceptions during a candidate’s examination has a long and honorable history in the practice of the church and has been routinely done for decades at least. When I was ordained over forty years ago it was an established practice then. For those stating exceptions, the main concern of the church was that the person to be ordained would promise not to preach,

teach, or practice contrary to the church's position on these specific matters. When I was ordained I stated an exception to exclusive Psalmody and total abstinence. I promised not to preach, teach, or practice contrary to the church's position on these specific issues. I have tried to keep this promise for the over forty years I have been ordained (except for the use of alcohol after the church changed its position on this).

I am unaware of any procedure set forth in the *Directory of Church Government* for informing one's presbytery if an ordained person should come to some position not in harmony with the *Directory of Church Government* after they have been ordained. In my forty years of ordained service in the church I have never seen that happen, as far as I can remember. However, that is what has happened with me in regards to the issue of a woman's role in church leadership. It was many years after I was ordained that I began to move toward my present position. Because there was no procedure set forth in the *Directory of Church Government* and because I had never seen it happen before, I felt no obligation to make my changing position known to the presbytery. However, because it was obviously not in harmony with the church's position I considered it as an exception in the same way I had taken an exception to exclusive Psalmody and use of alcohol. Therefore, I determined not to preach, teach, or practice in opposition to the church's position on this and, as far as I know, I have never done that.

Finally, I would like to suggest that this whole issue could also be framed in the context of freedom of conscience. The question then would be: Can an ordained person have the freedom of conscience to believe a position not in harmony with the church's position if he promises not to preach, teach, or practice in opposition to the church's position? In the past our church has said he could. I trust that is still true today.

In conclusion, I believe that a stated exception on the issue of women elders should be treated exactly the same as a stated exception on the issue of women deacons. I have been asked to answer the question as to what my belief and position is regarding women in leadership in the church. I assume I have been asked this question because I signed the Biblical study Dr. Hemphill wrote and that I presented to my Session for study and possible referral on to the Presbytery. This raises a question in my mind as to the legitimacy of this whole thing. Papers are presented to sessions, presbyteries, and Synod every

year. For the most part all of these papers are suggesting possible changes in the church and for the most part those who sign and submit those papers are themselves interested in seeing changes made. That is, they do not agree with some position of the church, and want to see it changed. But, how many times before, with the hundreds of papers that have been presented over the years, have you ever heard of a presbytery singling out one of the signers of a paper for what—potential judicial action? I have never heard of this being done before and think this is not right, proper, or just. I also believe this singling out of a person who has submitted a paper to the courts of the church could have a very chilling effect on the very method of change prescribed by our denomination and an integral part of the Presbyterian form of government.

Thank you for listening.

In Christ,
Ron Stegall

Minutes of the Midwest Presbytery Ad Interim Commission (12/13/2017). It is noted, on Dec. 7, Ron Stegall filed his complaint against actions of MWP, which was within the allotted thirty days. On Dec. 8, which was the deadline set by MWP, Mr. Stegall requested that AIC reconsider its provisional denial of his request of a stay of the subject motions until his complaint is fully resolved by Synod. MSC that AIC defer appointment of a special prosecutor until after Mr. Stegall's complaint be heard by Synod.

[Later, in the Spring of 2018, the MWP's AIC appointed Jonathan Haney and Bruce Parnell to represent the MWP during the 2018 Synod's hearing of Ron Stegall's complaint.]

**Communication # 18-5: Edmonton-Shelter to Pacific
[Passed up to Synod from both St. Lawrence and Pacific Coast presbyter-
ies]**

From: Nathan Eshelman. To: John McFarland. Sent: May 5, 2018. Subject: Item for Synod. Mr. Clerk: The St. Lawrence Presbytery has approved a request from the Edmonton Church (the Shelter) to be transferred to the Pacific Coast Presbytery, pending Synod approval. Our Presbytery has also approved this transfer request pending Synod approval. ... I am hoping that it can be done on the first day of Synod so that the Shelter can be in our Presbytery-at-Synod meeting. Please instruct and inform. — Nathan Eshelman ... RPC of Los Angeles (Pacific Coast Presbytery clerk)

05/04/2018. To: Nathan Eshelman (Clerk of Pacific Coast Presbytery, RPCNA; c/o L.A. RPC). RE: AIC — Shelter RP Church. Dear Pastor Eshelman: The Session of the First RPC of Phoenix met May 4, 2018, in its capacity as the Pacific Coast Presbytery Ad Interim Commission to consider The Shelter Reformed Presbyterian Church's (Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA) request to transfer from the St. Lawrence Presbytery to the PCP. AIC approved the request and appreciates your facilitating this through the Synod. Respectfully—Charles Shipman (AIC Clerk)

To: RPCNA Synod (c/o John McFarland, clerk). April 25, 2018. From: St. Lawrence Presbytery

Dear Brothers: The St. Lawrence Presbytery received a petition (April 1, 2018) from The Shelter Reformed Presbyterian Church (Edmonton), requesting transfer from the St. Lawrence Presbytery to the Pacific Coast Presbytery. At our April 17, 2018, meeting we approved that petition. We further recognize that "The Synod, alone, may organize a presbytery, define its approximate boundaries, determine which congregations shall be under its oversight, and approve its name" (*Directory for Church Government* (D-32, chap. 6, section 2). We therefore have written the Pacific Coast Presbytery (04/19/2018), urging them to join us in likewise petitioning the RPCNA Synod for this determination. We expect their petition to accompany this petition, and likewise to comprise Synod's agenda at its June 26-29, 2018 meeting.

Our Presbytery Minutes read as follows:

Presbytery took up a petition from The Shelter RPC, that it be transferred to the Pacific Coast Presbytery for reasons of location and proximity, as well as for mutual strengthening and identity with other western Canada works begun (e.g., in Squamish). After discussion, the Presbytery passed a motion that The Shelter petition to transfer to the Pacific Coast Presbytery be forwarded to the 2018 Synod with our Presbytery's approval. An additional motion was passed that Presbytery's Clerk communicate matters involved in this action to the Pacific Coast Presbytery according to his discretion.—*St. Lawrence Presbytery Minutes*, April 17, 2018, page 3.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of
[St. Lawrence] Presbytery,
Brian E. Coombs, clerk

[ON CHURCH LETTERHEAD]. The Shelter Reformed Presbyterian Church. A congregation of the RPCNA, located in Edmonton, Alberta. Web: shelterr-church.com. Email: theshelterrchurch@gmail.com. Phone: (780) 278-8778 (Pastor). April 1, 2018

To: Clerks of the St. Lawrence and Pacific Coast Presbyteries of the RPCNA

On January 11, 2018, the Session of The Shelter RP Church of Edmonton voted in favour of requesting the transfer of The Shelter congregation from the St. Lawrence Presbytery to the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA. On March 31, 2018, the matter was brought to a congregational meeting and the unanimous vote was also to request “congregational transfer from the St. Lawrence Presbytery to the Pacific Coast Presbytery.”

With the Session and members united in their desire, we now bring this request to both Presbyteries. We believe it is important to be not only formally under but also actively participate in the higher courts of the church and an advantageous presbyterial alignment can help that.

There are a few reasons why we believe the Pacific Coast Presbytery is a good fit for The Shelter:

- The congregations (and therefore the church meetings) are located in larger centres with easier, faster, and cheaper travel options. Travel costs and time will be reduced flying to centres such as Los Angeles,

Seattle, etc.

- Seattle is geographically closer [to us—*JMM*] than any other RP congregations. Though too far for casual visits, their semi-annual Presbytery family camp in the Pacific Northwest is accessible to our church members.
- The church planting work ongoing in British Columbia (specifically Squamish) is happening under the oversight of the Pacific Coast Presbytery. There is a group there [which] has called an RP minister to serve and the ordination service is imminent. There is also exploration of other work in the British Columbia Lower Mainland. Those works would become the closest geographically to us.
- We can assist and support the work in British Columbia.
- The Pacific Coast is a small presbytery and would be immensely blessed by having another healthy congregation join.

It is worth stating to our brothers in the St. Lawrence Presbytery that we do not make this request from any disagreements with the Presbytery or the men of it. We appreciate you all and wish you all God's richest blessing.

It is also worth remembering that these alignments are largely pragmatic in nature and need not be permanent. So if God prospers this northern land and there are further developments towards a Canadian Presbytery, we would be open to reconsidering which Presbytery we were affiliated with. We would appreciate your Presbytery's (or AIC's) attention to this request.

In His service,

Jordan Dohms (Clerk),

The Shelter RP Church, Edmonton

Synod Communication 2018-06 (from the Midwest Presbytery) *Directory for Church Government*—Clarification of Wording on Absentee Votes

To RPCNA Clerk of Synod. From MWP Clerk Greg Stiner. *May 11 of 2018.*

RE: MWP Request for Clarification of Wording of Absentee Votes

Dear Fathers & Brothers: In 2017, the MWP was forced to make a ruling regarding the use of absentee voting. This necessity was due to what some among us perceived as a lack of clarity or precision regarding the instructions for absentee voting in the *Directory for Church Government* (see attached). The need for clarity was pushed to the front of our thinking by one of our congregations while electing a teaching elder. While the outcome of this election was agreeable to all, the question of clarity for future use remains. To assist our sessions across all presbyteries in future elections, the Midwest Presbytery asks for Synod's consideration in reviewing the wording of our *Directory for Church Government* at those points mentioned and amend these as explained in our communication or as Synod thinks wisest. This is so that we may protect the unity of our congregations at a tender point in her life, that of electing a pastor. We thank you for your consideration and anticipate the Lord's blessing through your actions.

—Midwest Presbytery of the RPCNA

[MWP] Committee to Review Comm. 17-1: *Directory Clarifications on Absentee Voting*

The Committee has reviewed [MWP] Communication 17-1 and has found it to be in keeping with the law and order of the church. The Committee recommends the following:

That the wording for the use of absentee votes be the same for all ordained offices (as presented by the AIC) except for paragraph identification.

That the wording of paragraphs i, i, h remain as presented by AIC: "*Communicant members unable to attend the meeting may send their votes in writing (also known as absentee votes), enclosed in sealed envelopes which bear their names & are addressed to the session. **Absentee votes are valid only on the first electing ballot.***"

That paragraphs j, j, i be modified to read: "*The use of a nominating ballot is not encouraged; if it is used, absentee votes are valid only on the first electing bal-*

*lot. **Absentee votes will not be used on a nominating ballot.***

That an additional sentence be added to the edict paragraph on absentee ballots on **Form 6**—“*Notice of a Congregational Meeting to Elect an Ordained Officer(s).*” “*Members unable to be present may send absentee votes to the meeting enclosed in a sealed envelope, or given or mailed to the Clerk of Session. The envelope shall bear the name of the communicant member, and shall be addressed to the session. **Absentee votes are valid only on the first electing ballot.***”

That [MWP] Communication 17-1 be approved to send to Synod 2018 for consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Graham (chairman),
Alan Noell,
Jay O’Neill

[NOTE: Synod Communication 2018-06, as delivered by Midwest Presbytery, was 34 pages in length; above are the first two pages. The remaining pages gave background on the confusion and “controversy” which brought this need to light. Those extra pages are available from the clerks of Synod and of the Midwest Presbytery.—JMM]

Communication #18-7: Atlantic Recusal Proposal
Communication: Proposal for Revising our *Book of Discipline*
re. *Recusal*

The following Communication proposes a revision to our *Book of Discipline* regarding recusal from a case. It came to the Atlantic Presbytery from Tom Fisher with the approval of the Cambridge Session. It was unanimously approved by the Atlantic Presbytery with a show of hands at its Fall meeting on October 27, 2017, where it was also ordered to be forwarded to Synod by the Clerk.

Hereby signed,

Steven McCarthy

(Clerk of the Atlantic Presbytery, RPCNA)

Proposal for Revising our *Book of Discipline* re. *Recusal*
(DRAFT 4)

Fathers and Brethren of the Atlantic Presbytery:

In our *Book of Discipline (BOD)*, Ch. 4, Par. 12 (a section dealing with appeals), we find:

“The members of the lower court, if also members of the appellate court, unless parties to the case or counsel for the same, shall be entitled to participate in the decision.”

In recent years, our Synod has interpreted this to indicate that when a judicial appeal is heard, the members of the lower court involved—except for the special prosecutor and the appellant(s)— are entitled to take part in the entire appellate process. While I find this interpretation of our *Book of Discipline* tenable, I am also persuaded that this provision in our *BOD* ought to be changed, for it is in conflict with the expectation that judges hearing a case will be impartial, and can readily be perceived as such. Under the prevailing interpretation, the members of a lower court are NOT parties to an appellate case and are regarded as impartial judges of the appeal. In other words, the members of a lower court are permitted first to try a case and then to rule on the correctness of their prior judgment. There are other passages in our *Constitution* that relate to the question of whether a member of a court may or should take part in the hearing of a judicial matter:

BOD Chapter 3, Paragraph 4 (“The Trial of the Case”): “The accused may

challenge the right of any member of the court to sit in judgment of the case ...”

BOD Chapter 4, Paragraph 4 (“Complaint”): “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.”

Directory of Church Government, Ch. 8, Par. 20 (“Rules of Order for a Meeting of Synod”): “A member has no vote in the trial of a case in which he is involved.”

To explain why I believe our *Book of Discipline* should be changed, I offer three evidences: (1) the judicial practices of several of our sister denominations; (2) the practice of secular courts; and (3) the instruction of our Lord commonly referred to as “The Golden Rule.”

The judicial practices of other Reformed churches

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland:

The Code: *The Book of Government and Order of the RP Church of Ireland* (1989 edition) provides regarding judicial appeals that (5.29): “The members of the court against whose judgement or decision the appeal is taken shall not vote on the appeal.” This statement is exceedingly brief, but it is quite clear: Members of a lower court are not permitted to take part in evaluating an appeal against the same court’s own judgment.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church:

The *OPC Book of Church Order* (2015 edition) provides that (p. 117): “When the judgment of a lower judicatory is before an appellate judicatory, neither the appellant, nor any member of the judicatory from whose judgment the appeal is taken shall propose or second motions, or vote in any decisions concerning the case.” The same document states, regarding complaints (page 120): “Neither the complainant nor any member of the judicatory whose alleged delinquency or error is complained of shall propose or second motions, or vote in any decisions concerning the matter.” In this instance, not only are all members of the lower court required to recuse themselves from voting on an appeal or complaint from that court’s actions, they are explicitly barred from moving or seconding any appellate court motions that pertain to the case. This makes sense, as any motions relating to the disposition of a case can have a direct bearing on the outcome of the case.

The Presbyterian Church in America:

At the General Assembly level, the PCA hears judicial appeals via a permanent Judicial Commission. Among the commission's rules are these directives (*PCA SJC Manual 2.10.d.*):

"A member shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which the member's impartiality might reasonably (see Section 2.5.b) be questioned, including but not limited to the following circumstances:

1. The member has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or a party's representative, or personal knowledge of facts that are in dispute in the proceeding, which is inconsistent with the impartial performance of the duties of his office.

2. The member, while a member or after nomination to membership, has made a public statement, other than in a court proceeding, judicial decision, or opinion, that commits or appears to commit the member to reach a particular result or rule in a particular way in the proceeding or controversy.

3. The member, the member's spouse, or a person within the third degree of relationship to either of them, or the spouse of such a person:

- i. served as a representative in the matter in controversy;
- ii. was a witness concerning the matter; or
- iii. is a member of a court which is party to the case or is a member of a congregation in the bounds of a presbytery party to a case."

[Section 2.5.b. cited above states that "... *'Reasonably' refers to the judgment of one in possession of all the relevant facts, which facts are subject to a fair-minded assessment.*"]

This is a recusal requirement similar to the OPC's, with the further more explicit provision that personal knowledge of the case inconsistent with impartiality or a public statement that even "*appears*" to commit a commissioner to an opinion on a case disqualify him from participation. More broadly, he is *required to disqualify himself in any matter where his impartiality "might reasonably be questioned."*

The Reformed Church in the United States:

The *Constitution of the Reformed Church in the US* (2017) contains two provisions defining who may not vote in matters of complaint or appeal: Article 154 indicates that “Neither the complainant, nor the persons complained of, nor the members of the judicatory complained of shall vote in the case in any of the judicatories of the Church.” Article 170 provides similarly that “Neither the appellant nor the members of the judicatory appealed from shall vote in the case in any judicatories of the Church.” These requirements tacitly recognize that in an appeal or complaint, the judicatory whose action is under review is as much a party to an appeal or complaint as an appellant or complainant, and that its members should therefore not take part in reviewing their own decision.

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church:

ARP Book of Discipline, Ch. V., Section B, Paragraph 2 (“*Trial Procedure*”):

“Judgment shall not be rendered in a case by any members of a court or commission who can benefit personally from the decision, who is closely related to either party, who had been active for or against either party in the matter embraced in the charge, who has personal enmity toward either party, or who has prejudged the case. Any member may be challenged by either party at and only at the first opportunity when the court meets for trial. The decision about the challenge shall be made by the remaining members of the court.”

Through correspondence with Dr. Kyle Sims, who has served as an ARP fraternal delegate to our Synod for several years, I have learned that in practice, at the ARP Synod level most appeals are heard by a standing Ecclesiastical Commission on Judicial Affairs, which includes members from all the presbyteries. When a presbytery has a case under review, commission members from that presbytery routinely recuse themselves from hearing the case.

While I have not undertaken an exhaustive study of the books of church order of our sister churches, in no case have I been able to find another Reformed denomination that permits a lower court to take part in an appellate review of its judgments. It seems to be the case that Reformed and Presbyterian churches tend to take the common-sense view that a lower court is a party in judicial cases where its actions are being reviewed, and so it is not permitted to judge such cases.

The practice of US secular courts:

US Code title 28, Chapter 3, Section 47 says that “*No judge shall hear or determine an appeal from the decision of a case or issue tried by him.*” US Code title 28, Chapter 3, Section 455 says that “*Any justice, judge, or magistrate judge of the United States shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned.*” Other parts of the US Code list specific reasons for recusal, but these sections are probably the ones most germane to this discussion.

Section 47 is explicit in barring judges from hearing appeals against decisions that they themselves have rendered. Notice that Section 455 is a “*catch-all*” provision: like the PCA SJC’s rule, it does not require *evidence* that *actual* bias exists, but requires only the *appearance* of a lack of impartiality. Even though an appearance of bias could exist where no actual bias is present, this requirement pertains to the *credibility of the judicial process*—if a reasonable person would question a judge’s impartiality, that provides sufficient grounds to disqualify him from hearing the case.¹

The “Golden Rule”

In Matthew 7:12, we find the passage that has come to be known as the Golden Rule: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets” (KJV). Jesus’ remark at the end—less often cited than the first part—suggests that he regarded this statement as a summary of the whole moral law. An appeal is a request to have a judicial opinion reviewed by a new, independent judicatory Body. If I were the losing party in a lawsuit, I might appeal. If, having done so, I entered the appellate court and found that the judge was the same one who had ruled against me initially, I would feel aggrieved. Who wouldn’t? Even if it were legal for him to do so, I would not feel that I was being treated fairly. So if I were personally given the opportunity to judge the appeal of a case on which I had already ruled, I hope that in keeping with the Golden Rule, I would recuse myself. Yet our *Book of Discipline* not only permits me to break the Rule, it almost urges that I do so (“... shall have a voice ...,” “... shall be entitled to participate in the decision ...”).

1 Similarly, Canada’s Supreme Court has framed the issue this way: “What would an informed person, viewing the matter realistically and practically—and having thought the matter through—conclude? Would this person think it more likely than not that the judge, whether consciously or unconsciously, would not decide fairly?” (*Wewaykum Indian Band v. Canada*, 2 S.C.R. 259, 2003 SCC 45)

Observations: As previously noted, *DCG* Chapter 8, Paragraph 20 provides that “A member has no vote in the trial of a case in which he is involved.” “Involved” might be considered vague, but it seems to be the right word: fair judges should be uninvolved in the substance of the cases before them. Were it not for paragraphs 4 and 12 in Chapter 4 of our *BOD*, involvement in a case would imply the same recusal criteria that several of our sister denominations use, as do secular courts. In an appeal or complaint against the action of a court, the lower court is the defendant; it stands accused of error. Our *Book of Discipline* requires us to let most of the lower court—the defendant—sit in judgment of such cases. Defendants are never allowed to sit in judgment on their own cases. This practice is wrong, and I believe it demeans our judicial process. Therefore I propose the following changes in our *Book of Discipline*:

Revision Recommendation # 1

Citation	Current language (to be deleted) is:	Deleted language will be replaced with:
<p><i>Book of Discipline</i> Chapter 4, Paragraph 4</p> <p>[pertains to judicial complaints]</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>No one who is a party or has served as counsel to the complainant(s), or who is a member of the lower court whose action is under review, shall propose or second motions or vote in any decisions pertaining to the case. The complainant and defendant(s) may challenge the right of any member of the higher court to sit in judgment of the complaint, subject to the judgment of the court.</p>

If the action of a lower court is challenged and the court refuses to reverse itself, the question of whether it judged incorrectly should be tried by neutral judges. Any human being would reasonably be regarded as incapable of making a truly impartial judgment if asked to rule on his own prior judicial decision.

Also, there is an insuperable problem with the “injustice and wrong” provision in the *BOD* 4.4. In practice, when invoked, a ruling that a complaint is one of “injustice and wrong” is likely to inflame and offend the members of any lower court involved in such a case. In order to determine who can vote, the provision

requires the appellate court to decide whether the lower court acted unjustly before the appellate court has finalized its judgment on the lower court's actions. The current language makes recusal of the lower court into a kind of de facto censure; the proposed change makes recusal of the lower court the norm for all cases, with no wrong-doing implied.

Revision Recommendation #2

Citation	Current language (to be deleted) is:	Deleted language will be replaced with:
<p><i>Book of Discipline</i>, Chapter 4, Paragraph 12</p> <p>[pertains to judicial appeals]</p>	<p>The members of the lower court, if also members of the appellate court, unless parties to the case or counsel for the same, shall be entitled to participate in the decision.</p>	<p>No one who is a party or has served as counsel to the appellant(s), or who is a member of the lower court whose action is being appealed, shall propose or second motions or vote in any decisions pertaining to the case. The appellant and members of the lower court may challenge the right of any member of the higher court to sit in judgment of the complaint, subject to the judgment of the court.</p>

The same issues of impartiality apply here; and again: a defendant should not be a judge in his own case.

I have not done a true survey, but I have talked to a number of presbyters and have yet to find one who believes that our current practice is *right*. There are some who believe that the way we have *interpreted* the present language of the *BOD* is incorrect, and they may be right—but procedural rules that invite a disagreement as to their meaning every time they must be used are not helpful to the judicial process.

The proposed changes would save future Synods and presbyteries from having to debate the interpretation of the present language every time a new case arises. More importantly, the changes would enable our appellate courts to use a judicial process that is unambiguously fairer than the present process, one that does not call us to do unto others that which we would not want done to ourselves.

I respectfully petition the Atlantic Presbytery to forward these proposed revisions of our *Book of Discipline* (4.4 and 4.12) to the Synod of 2018, and if the

Presbytery finds them agreeable, to endorse them.

—Thomas Fisher, Cambridge, Mass.

2018 Communication #18-8a Pacific on Inmate Membership*Pacific Coast Presbytery**Committee on Church Membership for the Incarcerated**Rev. Tim McCracken; Elder Roel Ophoff; Rev. Mark England; Deacon Jerry Foltz
(consultative)*

Fathers and brothers: In conjunction with Pacific Coast Presbytery's (PCP) February 24, 2017, call upon Pastor Tim McCracken to serve as a Missionary to the Prisons in the San Joaquin Valley of California and to serve the national work of Metanoia Prison Ministries (PCA—Mission to North America) as their Regional Director, we have been contemplating the matter of church membership as it relates to repentant inmates whose sentences involve significant further time. Average overall attendance at the six chapels where Pastor McCracken ministers is about seventy; among them there are a number who have seen the importance Scripture places on the visible church. This Committee was formed at the PCP's October 2017 meeting to further study the matter. Compelled by a sense that we ought to seek to apply God's template for the life of the Body and the administration of the ordinary means of grace, we presented the attached proposal to the March 2018 meeting of the Pacific Coast Presbytery. The PCP decided to first seek counsel and endorsement at the denominational level. With this letter and accompanying documentation, then, the Committee submits a summary of its considerations, with the hope that it will serve your reflections, thoughts, and recommendation.

Envisioned benefits to both inmates and to the communities where most of them will someday be released are very worth mentioning, but the root of consideration begins with God's design in having ordained the visible church in the first place and His call that believers associate themselves with it. To consider church membership for the repentant who are still incarcerated is not to fabricate principle or to compromise existing church standards, but to seek to put into practice the wise plan of God under unique circumstances. Engaging those of credible profession of faith in membership, we would seek to live out body life as it relates to:

1. The hearing of the Word / singing of praises / corporate prayer / mutual encouragement (1 Timothy 4:13; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 10:25)
 - a. Pastor McCracken's current preaching/teaching work can be adapt-

ed to services of worship that readily involve members and non-members.

2. The observing of the Sacraments (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 22:19)
 - a. Because of the inmates being outside a membership relationship till now, Pastor McCracken has not been able to administer these ordinary means of grace to any, across his 12 years of volunteer service. Special services for Baptism, upon occasion, and for the Lord's Supper can be arranged, with day-clearance approved for visiting elders and other willing participants from the church "*outside*."
3. Community and commitment to others (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Peter 4:10)
 - a. Taking due care not to bring risk into the picture by an uncared sharing of information, inmates can identify with, care about, and pray for our churches.
 - b. Over time, an established relationship with the church sets the scene well for seeking church involvement after release.
 - c. Internally, regardless of number of members or adherents, there can be a mutual support without an undue segregation from other believers.
4. Cooperation with shepherding care and discipline (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17)
 - a. Prison circumstance lends itself to independency, every-man-for-himself—both doctrinally and practically. A stated relationship to shepherds like Scripture describes can serve spiritual maturity and witness.
5. The cultivation of gifts (Ephesians 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:2)
 - a. Inmates' discipleship of one another is deeply important to the well-being of the Body of Christ on any given yard. Our Presbytery can be servants to training up workers in sound principles of handling Scripture and of sanctification.

Two approaches to the locus of membership could be possible—membership in one or more of our particular existing congregations, or membership in a Presbytery-overseen Mission Church. We propose the latter structure because of the following reasons:

1. Whole Presbytery awareness and involvement is valuable to the ulti-

mate cause of cultivating and refining our developing work in prison ministry.

2. Many hands and hearts make lighter work!
3. The release prospects for men is statewide and not limited to a single location.
4. In addition to the weekly worship that would be part of the picture, shepherding by more remote PCP elders by correspondence is valid and Biblical.

In all, we are on the front end of the learning curve about this. Though other NAPARC churches are practicing membership here and there, no tried-and-true model exists. We are seeking your encouragement to engage and explore this idea. We are glad to report each year, and the whole of the idea could be revisited and assessed in a chosen number of years. As we hope is clear from the Recommendation, we seek to implement as simple an approach as we can to the matter of bringing reality to membership under these unique circumstances.

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.

Respectfully submitted,
 PCP Committee on Membership for the Incarcerated
 [Chm. Rev. Tim McCracken;
 Elder Roel Ophoff;
 Pastor Mark England;
 Deacon Jerry Foltz (consultative)]

CA Penal Code, Title 15 — #3237:

Inmate Membership in Outside Organizations.

- (a) Inmates may obtain and retain membership in outside organizations and associations provided such membership does not threaten facility security or the safety of staff, inmates, or the public; and creates no financial burden on the state.
- (b) An inmate's membership in an outside organization shall not entitle any member to conduct the organization's activities within a

facility, or to represent inmate members in dept. or facility matters, except as specifically approved by the institution head or the director.

- (c) Unless such an act would jeopardize facility security or safety of persons, inmate members of outside organizations shall be permitted to possess membership cards and to wear membership buttons and lapel pins of such organizations. The official denying such items shall provide the affected inmates with written notice of the reasons for the denial.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 5058, Penal Code. Reference: Section 5054, Penal Code.

Report of the [PCP] Committee to Address the Matter of Prison Membership²

Chair: Rev. Tim McCracken, Roel Ophoff, Rev. Mark England, Jerry Foltz (consultative)

Fathers and brothers: Having contemplated Biblical principle concerning God's ordaining the fellowship of the visible church for His glory and for the benefit of all His people, and having received and reviewed input on membership policies from Pastors Ian Wright and Brett Mahlon of Covenant OPC Orland Park (IL) and Mark Casson (Executive Director of Metanoia Prison Ministries and Elder at First Presbyterian Church PCA, Chattanooga, TN), both of which sister churches receive member inmates, your Committee is recommending that our Presbytery engage men from the three institutions where Pastor McCracken regularly preaches with the possibility of membership in a Mission Church.

Realizing that the unique situation and confines of life in California State Prisons presents certain default limitations on practicing the fullness of church life, we are nevertheless compelled to believe that the mission of the church with church membership extends beyond the prison walls. Perhaps the words of OPC Pastor Wright express well the principle:

"... we have held that those believers who came to Christ while incarcerated were following Biblical desires in wanting to bring themselves under a Session and wishing to receive the regular preaching of the word and

² Motion: A presbytery committee be established to address the matter of prison membership to report back to Spring 2018 presbytery. The motion was seconded. The motion carried. The Committee will consist of Rev. McCracken, Ruling Elder Ophoff, Mark England, and Jerry Foltz (consultative member).

the sacraments. The constrictions of their circumstances have proved at times challenging and yet it has been our desire to minister to them as completely as possible.”³

For these reasons, we make the following **recommendation**:

That the Pacific Coast Presbytery appoint Pastor McCracken and two other elders as a Temporary Governing Body Commission (TGBC) for the establishment of The Reformed Presbyterian Mission Church of San Joaquin Valley.

1. Repentant men, while still incarcerated, will be offered orientation classes before their reception into membership.
2. As some enter into membership covenant relationship, they will be provided with the *“The scriptural elements of ordinary public worship ... prayer, the singing of Psalms, the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word of God, the presentation of tithes and offerings, and the celebration of the sacraments.”⁴*
3. The TGBC is responsible for receiving new members. These elders are also committed to communicate in fellowship and shepherding relationship through written correspondence through the ministry PO Box that will be established.
4. Separate services for Communion, with a service of worship and with attending TGBC elders and possibly other day-clearance supporters, will be held at least once per year. Invitation to and the fencing of the Lord’s Table is the responsibility of the TGBC elders (collectively).
5. Annual reports of the TGBC will be provided to the Presbytery for review and evaluation.

Without presuming the outcome of Presbytery’s judgment on the matter, we would ask you as elders to think about whether you would be called to serve in this kind of capacity.

Respectfully submitted,
 your Committee:
 Tim McCracken (Chairman);
 Roel Ophoff;
 Mark England;
 Jerry Foltz (consultative)

³ Letter, November 15, 2017

⁴ DOPW Chapter 2, The Practice of Public Worship, paragraph 2

Related Constitutional material:

Any person capable of forming moral judgments and of making decisions for himself may be received into communicant membership in the reformed Presbyterian Church, upon credible profession of faith, baptism, and acceptance of the Covenant of Church Membership.—DCG Chapter 1, The Communicant Membership of the Church, paragraph 1

In a regularly organized congregation it belongs to the session alone to admit to membership in the church. In extraordinary circumstances, such as the organization of a new congregation, presbytery may assume this function or delegate it to a temporary governing Body. In the early stages of work in a foreign mission field, special powers may be exercised by the missionaries in this regard ...⁵—DCG Chapter 1, The Communicant Membership of the Church, paragraph 2

Presbytery may establish a temporary roll of membership. Such a roll may be used for a mission church or may authorize the temporary governing Body to receive members on such a roll.—DCG Chapter 1, The Communicant Membership of the Church, paragraph 14

Because of its transitional nature, the mission church requires temporary organization. The right to administer the sacraments, to receive members, and to exercise discipline would be the responsibility of the temporary governing Body, which may be established by presbytery in one of the following ways:

- a. ...
- b. the presbytery may appoint a commission to serve as the temporary governing Body of the mission church.
- c. the presbytery may appoint a provisional session consisting of at least two elders who are already involved with, and on the site of the prospective mission church and/or other elders as the presbytery deems necessary. This provisional session may be appointed for a period of up to one year.—DCG Chapter 6, The Presbytery, paragraph 12

5 Note: The uniqueness of this new field of ministry would likely warrant the same exercise of “special powers” as a global field.

**Communication # 18-9: Japan Presbytery
re. RPGM/HMB Joint Statement**

[Passed up from Japan Presbytery to the Synod]

From the **Business of Synod Committee ... Report on Communications** ... adding this concluding paragraph:

Communication 18-9 (Japan Presbytery, on the *Joint Statement of GMB and HMB*): This communication came to our attention on June 18, 2018, just eight days before the start of this Synod meeting, well short of the thirty-day requirement. It requires a 2/3 vote of Synod to properly come before us. In favor of receiving it formally, this is a response to recommendations which will be before the Court at the close of the Global Missions Report, and it is helpful for delegates to have some notice about one presbytery's position on those motions. **Recommendation:** That Synod vote **YES** (must be 2/3).

From: Endo Katsunori <katsunori_usa@hotmail.com>. To: <jmmlawrence@aol.com>. Cc: <cwleachjr@gmail.com>. Sent: June 18, 2018. Subject: FW: Communication to the Synod from JP. ... FYI. June 18th, 2018. ... Japan Presbytery has met today on June 18th and resolved to send the following special resolutions to the forthcoming Synod: **Special Resolutions:**

1. The Synod acknowledges that it lacks constitutional authority to unilaterally remove any presbytery from ecclesiastical fellowship except in the exercise of formal discipline.
2. A delegate from Japan Presbytery be granted 5 minutes to address the floor of the Synod prior to taking of the recommendations from RPGM and HMB.

Best regards,
Rev. Katsunori Endo (clerk, JP)

P.S. [Below] please find the *Minutes of the Japan Presbytery* [with the relevant English portion].

[Following a list of the four recommendations from the Joint Statement of RPGM and HMB, then the two *Special Resolutions* from JP listed above] ... comes this English text:

Japan Presbytery's Visions:

1. We wholeheartedly desire to become a mature and independent ecclesiastical body.
2. In so doing, we want to move forward in a genuine covenantal and ecclesiastical unity with other Reformed Presbyterian bodies.

Japan Presbytery's Substitute to the recommendations from RPGM and HMB:

One: That Synod commit to planting national or regional REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN presbyteries in other nations, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THEIR OWN RP CONSTITUTION AND RP TESTIMONY IN LINE WITH RP'S GLOBAL COVENANTAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL UNITY rather than presbyteries BEING DIRECTLY UNDER THE CONSTITUTION of the RPCNA.

Two: That the Japan Presbytery be organized as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Japan AT A TIME TO BE ARRANGED BETWEEN JAPAN PRESBYTERY and THE SYNOD.

Three: To be deleted; please show your Biblical ground for setting such boundaries?

Four: That THE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY of each board be defined as follows: HMB to include works in Canada and the United States only. RPGM to have RESPONSIBILITY in all other areas of the globe. [It is the court of the church rather than the boards that possess such jurisdiction].

Bruce Hemphill Appeal of the POA's Verdict to Synod from July 28 of 2016

July 28, 2016. On June 11, 2016, at approximately 8:00 p.m., I, Bruce Hemphill, appealed from and complained of the wrongful trial and verdict on that date by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies to the 2016 Synod of the RPCNA.

Reference: *Book of Discipline*, II:4. (10) An appeal is the removal to a higher court of a case already decided by a lower court. None but parties can appeal. They may appeal on the following grounds: *irregularity in the proceedings; injustice or undue severity in the censure imposed; manifest prejudice or unfairness to the party on trial; admission of improper testimony or refusal to hear testimony that is important; or undue haste in reaching a decision before all the testimony has been heard.* (11) *Written notice of an appeal and a full statement of the reasons must be filed with the clerk of the court appealed from within thirty days after the accused is informed of the action, and he shall transmit the same, with the necessary records and papers, to the clerk of the higher court before its next regular meeting. Parties are entitled to such extracts from the minutes as may be necessary in preparing an appeal. The clerk of the court shall furnish such extracts, but, if they are large, the court may request the party demanding them to pay the necessary expense.* (emphasis added)

The prosecutor's closing argument referred to the *1994 Minutes of Synod* as containing the last reference to Synod's renderings on the topic of women in the eldership. Those *1994 Minutes* also contain the following statements and recommendations:

Synods and presbyteries have been remiss in not providing forums for the discussion of issues facing the church. There should be a forum in the life of the church, under the supervision of the courts of the church, where men and women who are not officers may, along with church officers, frankly and openly discuss the standards of the church. This is an essential way of carrying out the responsibility of the "continuing reformation of the church." (DCG, Chap. 7, para. 1, p. D-35). Such forums must be conducted with an uncompromising commitment to the authority of Scripture, *without any threat of judicial action* and always with love and respect for both the church and the individual. ... (3) Individual members of the church are free to publish or otherwise circulate their views in godly submission to the coun-

sel of their sessions. As Reformed Presbyterians, all must hold to the Covenant of Church Membership, vow #4. Initiative in any disciplinary matters resides with the Session. ... Recommendations:

2. That Synod counsel the editorial board of Cornerstones to **submit a well researched paper** on the subject of the ordination of women to the eldership to the church courts, or invest their editorial and writing energies in the general topic of the role of women in the church. ...

5. That sessions, presbyteries, and Synod be encouraged to conduct forums under the supervision of the judicatories where all the communicant members of the church are encouraged to frankly and openly discuss issues confronting the church.

6. More generally, we would urge all those engaging in debate on these issues to attend to their tone. Debate, writing, quoting, etc., all has to be done, and it can be sharp at times. But it should be done with grace and respect.

(1994 Minutes of Synod, pp 148-153, emphasis added)

This record of the 1994 Synod presents a dramatically different tone regarding further examination of the Scriptures on the topic of women in the eldership than the judicial, disciplinary pursuit against me in the Presbytery of the Alleghenies in its April 10, 2015, November 13, 2015, April 8, 2016, and June 11, 2016, meetings.

The following is a concise statement of the matters complained of:

1. This Appeal arises from and furthers the grievances spelled out in my Complaint to the 2016 Synod, forwarded by the Covenant Fellowship Session to the Presbytery's Ad Interim Commission on May 4, 2016, and forwarded to this Synod by the Presbytery on June 11, 2016, (see Appendix #1 below) and in my Response Letter to Presbytery of the Alleghenies of March 7, 2016 (See Appendix #2 below), which was attached to and referenced in that May 4, 2016, Complaint to the 2016 Synod.

2. The prosecution has argued that the "violation of the moral law" in

Charge #1 arises not simply from “believing and accepting a stance ... contrary to query four;” but that it comes from “believing and accepting a stance ... contrary to query four” *which Presbytery will not accept*. The prosecution argued that Presbytery has the right to grant such exceptions which stand “contrary to query four;” as it sees fit, and that many times the Presbytery has granted exception to men who stand opposed to permitting women into the office of deacon and, further, who refuse to participate in ordaining women to that office, contrary to *Testimony 25:8*. Thus, the real point of Charge #1 is that it is a “violation of the moral law” to “believe and accept a stance *on women in the eldership*,” also contrary to *Testimony 25:8*, *but an exception which Presbytery does not see fit to grant*. Therefore, the logical difference between a “violation of the moral law” (“contrary to query four” in Charge #1) and a “nonviolation of the moral law” (other exceptions “contrary to query four” granted by the Presbytery) is merely the Presbytery’s choice in what exceptions it grants. In effect, then, the prosecution argues that I have “violated the moral law” by choosing the wrong topic on which to do a Bible study and write a paper, a topic which, as it turns out, the Presbytery chooses not to allow. The difficulty here is that the Presbytery has never announced this limitation, and even now this limitation is only manifest in the Presbytery’s judicial pursuit in its April 10, 2015, November 13, 2015, April 8, 2016, and June 11, 2016, meetings. It is readily accepted by the defense that the Presbytery must decide which exceptions to approve and which to deny, but such a choice by the Presbytery cannot be allowed to become the definition of what is a “violation of the moral law” and what is not a “violation of the moral law.” Therefore, it is unjust for the Presbytery to claim that this is a chargeable “violation of the moral law;” simply because the Presbytery has made a set of decisions. It is the shape of this prosecutorial argument (Presbytery decisions create the substance of this “violation of the moral law” in Charge #1) which demonstrates that the censure imposed (suspension of ordination privileges) is unduly severe. This is especially so in respect to the suggested grounds for judicial process in the *Book of Church Government 3:6: i* (p 23): “A teaching elder forfeits his ordination by renouncing his faith, or may do so by conduct unbecoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Such actions warrant judicial process.)”

3. The two “Objections to proceeding with a trial,” which I presented on June 11, 2016, before the trial, I reassert now as still valid and should be care-

fully weighed by the Synod. They are: (a) The *gross irregularity* of this judicial pursuit against me in the POA is manifest in that many who have repeatedly voted in favor of this judicial process on April 10, 2015, November 13, 2015, April 8, 2016, and June 11, 2016, are themselves on record in the minutes of presbytery as doing the same thing as they are alleging in Charge #1 that I have done; that is, *they themselves have “believed and accepted” a stance on women in the deaconate, which is contrary to query four of their official vows of ordination and a violation of the moral law as understood in the RPCNA Book of Discipline.* This charging and convicting one person as guilty of a “violation of the moral law” and yet holding others who do the same thing as righteous, is nothing less than the practice of a double standard of judgment. *This double standard is a gross irregularity and is contrary to one of the most basic laws of God — Love your neighbor as you love yourself.* (b) Charge #1, of “believing and accepting a stance on women in the eldership, which is contrary to query four of his official vows of ordination,” *if proven is not chargeable as a sin in this Presbytery.* This is demonstrated in that many in the Presbytery who have done the same thing do not consider themselves to be guilty of a violation of the moral law. Let all who have taken exception to the sentence in our current *Testimony*, 25:8, “Women as well as men may hold the office of deacon,” or any who are on record in the minutes of Presbytery as having voted to sustain for licensure or ordination a man who has taken exception to that sentence, and especially any who have in addition asserted that they will not participate in the ordination of a woman as a deacon under the mandate of that sentence in our current *Testimony*, let them stand now and confess their own sinfulness with respect to their vow in Query #4, and then we will know if this is a chargeable offense. Further, let those who have written or helped write papers advocating against that sentence in our current RPT 25:8, stand up and confess their own guilt in this crime of “believing and accepting a stance on women ... contrary to query four.” Let them say out loud that they have committed this “violation of the moral law as understood in the RPCNA BOD,” and then we will know that this is a chargeable offense in this Presbytery. Finally, such men should at least have recused themselves from sitting in judgment as jurors, as the defense challenged at the beginning of the June 11, 2016, proceedings.

4. In the April 8, 2016, Presbytery meeting, the prosecutor explained that the language of Charge #1, “believing and accepting,” comes from Ord. Query

#4, so in my sworn testimony, under oath, in the trial on June 11, 2016, I answered Charge #1 as if it were a query, “Do I ‘believe and accept’ the proposal I make in the paper?” I testified, “NO, not yet, and maybe never.” In convicting me of Charge #1, the Presbytery has chosen to act upon assumptions about what I “believe and accept,” in defiance of and in contradiction to my own testimony. The majority in this Presbytery has acted on its own belief about what I believe, in direct opposition to my own persistent claims and testimony on April 10, 2015, November 13, 2015, April 8, 2016, and June 11, 2016—see my Response Letter to the POA, March 7, 2016, and my Complaint to Synod, May 4, 2016. In my sworn testimony in the trial on June 11, 2016, I went on to state positively (both orally and in writing) what I do “believe and accept” regarding the Proposal I presented for study. I testified:

“I do agree with the rationale, that is, the component arguments, of the Paper sufficiently to propose it with its conclusion, to the church for its consideration. I think this Proposal is a sufficiently fair, legitimate, even persuasive exploration of the teaching of Scripture as to warrant the church, again, after nearly a quarter of a century, taking the time and effort to examine it. At this stage in my personal examination of the Scriptures, I intentionally withhold further private judgment on the validity of this Proposal, awaiting the outcome of the church’s consideration. Thus, to me this Proposal is a tentative proposal, a *working hypothesis*, awaiting the church’s examination—I am a presbyterian by genetics and by conviction, this is how I work. As a *working hypothesis*, I currently think this Proposal accounts for more pieces of the biblical evidence and theology than other hypotheses I’ve seen. As a *working hypothesis*, however, it is outside my own frame of reference to “believe and accept” it. (emphasis original)

I testified this, under oath, before God.

5. If the language of Charge #1: “... believing and accepting a stance on women in the eldership, which is contrary to query four” is the primary focus of the prosecution’s case and of all the preceding steps in this judicial pursuit against me, then my testimony under oath that I do not “believe and accept,” within the meaning of that phrase in Ordination Query #4, should satisfy as answering that charge, or should serve as a recantation of that alleged “believing

and accepting.”

6. In the process of the trial the prosecution stipulated, but discounted the value of, three claims made by the defense: (a) The prosecution stipulated that I *have not taught* that women could be elders, but argued that this is immaterial to Charge #1, of “believing and accepting ... a stance contrary to query four.” The defense, on the other hand, argues that this stipulation that I “have not taught” this Proposal implies that, with the significance of the language from Ord. Query #4, I have not “believed and accepted” that which I don’t teach. (b) The prosecution stipulated that most of the men in the POA have indeed either themselves taken exception to the sentence of the current RPCNA *Testimony*, 25:8, that the office of deacons is open to women, or have voted to sustain others who have taken that exception but argues that those facts are not relevant to the charges against me. The defense argues, on the other hand, that this stance against women serving as deacons is also “contrary to query four.” The defense further argues that “believing and accepting a stance ... contrary to query four” is either “a violation of the moral law of God” or it is not—the prosecution cannot have it both ways. The prosecution’s argument suggests that it is in the Presbytery’s power to grant exemptions from the charge of “violation of the moral law.” (c) The prosecution stipulated that the RPCNA has made material changes in its then current *Testimony* through papers presented to the church courts persistently without judicial charges being processed against the paper writers, even for open teaching in that process, including political dissent, total abstinence, close communion and public covenanting. The defense argues, on the other hand, that singling out the presentation through the church courts of a study paper raising the question of the eligibility of women for the office of elder is unprecedented, arbitrary, and contrary to the current subordinate standards of the RPCNA.

7. I clearly testified in the trial that I do not “believe and accept a stance on women and the eldership, contrary to query four.” The POA’s goal, however, as stated in its April 10, 2015, assignment to the Committee to Counsel Bruce Hemphill, was “to convince him to embrace fully the RPCNA’s position on women and the eldership.” That is, not satisfied that I not “believe and accept” the hypothesis set forth in my paper, the POA also demands that I “embrace fully” the current *Testimony* sentence which my paper has called into question. This demand, coming in immediate conjunction with the POA’s rejection of my

request for an examination of the Scriptural arguments in my paper, put me into jeopardy with the *WCF* 20:2, which states that “the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.” Thus, the actions of Presbytery have set up two parameters defining what they demand of me: (1) April 10, 2015: “... to embrace fully the RPCNA’s position on women and the eldership,” and (2) April 8 and June 11, 2016: not “believing and accepting a stance ... contrary.” I have addressed the latter with my repeated testimony that I do not “believe and accept,” within the meaning of Ordination Query #4, but lacking a response from the church courts to the Scriptural arguments in my paper I will have trouble coming “to embrace fully the RPCNA’s position on women in the eldership.” This is an unreasonable exercise of human authority by the Presbytery.

8. I had 14 witnesses summoned from Covenant Fellowship Congregation, my former pastorate of 18 years, who came to the June 11, 2016, trial to bear witness that they had never heard me teach, preach, or argue that women could or should be elders. My counsel had insisted on this plan because he could not believe that a charge of “believing and accepting a stance on women and the eldership, which is contrary to query four” could arise merely from a paper presented for study by the church courts. It also could not possibly be limited to what the paper said, so that “teaching” had to be at least in the “back of the mind” of those voting to proceed with the prosecution. The language of “believing and accepting,” arising as it does from Ord. Query #4, is suggestive of what a teaching elder is committed to teach, and thus the fact, stipulated by the prosecution, that I have not taught that women could be elders demonstrates that I have not “believed and accepted” this stance.

9. The verdict in the June 11, 2016, trial is against the weight of the evidence. (a) In his closing argument Presbytery’s prosecutor took statements from my Proposal out of my stated context, turned them, and presented them as the definitive evidence of what I “believe and accept” (within the meaning of that phrase in Ord. Query #4). My stated context or purpose in bringing the paper to the courts of the church, when it originally came to the floor of Presbytery, and repeatedly since then, is that the paper comes as a proposal and should go to a study committee. This statement is on record in my Response Letter to the POA of March 7, 2016: “I remind the Presbytery of my speech in the Spring Meeting, 2015, when the Judicial Committee Report brought my paper

to the floor of the meeting for discussion. I said that despite its appearance as a proposal for change, I have brought this paper forward as a request for study of the Scriptures, not as the statement of an exception I am taking to the system of doctrine set forth in our subordinate standards. I believe it is unjust for Presbytery simply to dismiss this assertion of my purpose and to respond as if I were taking an exception to the teaching I request Presbytery to study.” (1) The prosecutor quoted from the Presentation statement on the front page of the paper: “We, the undersigned, submit this paper to the RPCNA through her courts with the goal of having the denomination adopt a position of making women eligible for every aspect of church leadership, including the eldership,” asserting that this sentence proves that I “believe and accept,” within the meaning of that phrase in Ord. Query #4, the Proposal. The defense, on the other hand, has testified that this sentence is what makes it a “proposal,” putting it before the church courts for examination. (2) The prosecutor quoted the conclusion of the paper, forecast in the Introduction and stated again in the Conclusion: “The bottom line, then, is this: The churches should no longer maintain a rule that women may not serve in its leadership positions” (*italics original*). He asserted that this is the “bottom line” of what I believe, proving that I believe it. The defense, on the other hand, testifies that this is the “bottom line” of my working hypothesis — context is important. This is not the “bottom line” of what I “believe and accept” (within the meaning of Ordination Query #4). (3) The prosecutor quoted from the last paragraph of the Introduction of the Proposal: “A certain compulsion arises in the soul when the message and mandate of the written Word of God become clear. After forty years, then, perhaps it is just high time.” He asserted that this proves that I “believe and accept” (within the meaning of that phrase in Ord. Query #4) the Proposal. On the other hand, I have testified under oath that this is merely the rhetoric of a proposal. I could apologize for the emphatic tone of the rhetoric in the paper, but I still insist that rhetoric in the proposal is the limit of its significance. (b) The prosecution elicited and repeatedly emphasized testimony from its two witnesses that in one of the conversations with the committee to counsel me I had used the word “reprehensible” with respect to the RPCNA’s current position. The testimony of these witnesses also stated that that word was brought into the conversation by one of the committee members. I have no recollection of this incident, but I will assume that I agreed to that word in that context. However, that is not a

word I would normally use on my own initiative in that context—it is an overstatement of what I “believe and accept,” within the meaning of that phrase in Ordination Query #4. This incident does not appear in the Committee’s “Notes.”

10. It is an unprecedented exercise of the unrestrained power of the majority present for a presbytery to institute a judicial process against a person for offering a proposal for Scripture study toward a change in a sentence in the current *Testimony* 25:8, a change which has to do with church government, not with the doctrines of salvation and the gospel, or with the doctrine of God.

11. Regarding Charge #2: By any reasonable definition of “contempt,” I have never been in contempt of this Presbytery or of its counsel to me. I have attended and willingly participated in the regular presbytery meetings since this judicial pursuit began, and I attended and willingly participated in all five of the meetings which the Committee to Counsel Bruce Hemphill invited me to attend. I was respectful and kind to all in all of my interactions in all of those meetings.

12. If by “contempt” Charge #2 means that I did not “embrace fully the RPCNA’s position on women and the eldership” when the Presbytery or its Committee counseled me to do so, I have testified that that counsel, along with their rejection of my request for an examination of the Scriptural arguments in my Proposal, would have put me into conflict with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 20:2, which states that “the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.”

13. If by “contempt” Charge #2 means that I did not “terminate my ordination” when they counselled me to do so on Nov. 13, 2015, this charge does not acknowledge the content of our current *Testimony*, 20:5, that, “The Christian is to render due submission in the Lord to any lawful authority, *but he has the right to disagree with any improper use of human authority*” (emph. added). In my Response Letter of March 7, 2016, I demonstrated six (6) reasons and a two paragraph history of precedents, all describing ways in which POA’s counsel to me was an “improper use of human authority.” Thus, this Presbytery has convicted me of sin in a matter which is permitted as “Christian liberty” in our current *Testimony*.

14. The censure of suspension of the privileges of ordination is unduly severe. The lesser censures of admonition or rebuke could have carried out the apparent purpose of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies to publically make it

well known that the topic of women in the eldership is not a tolerable subject for Bible study in this presbytery.

15. Neither the defendant nor his counsel was present for the “charge to the jury,” if there was one. The transcript does not include one, nor does it include any of the deliberations. The defense therefore does not know what standard of evidence each of the jurors was instructed to use. Given the severity of the sentence, stripping the defendant of the privileges of his ordination and a lifetime calling, surely the standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt” should have been applied. The defense submits that neither a vote of 21 to 7 on Charge #1, let alone a vote of 14 to 13 on Charge #2, can possibly be viewed as meeting this standard!

By these listed reasons, I hereby appeal to the RPCNA Synod against the wrongful trial and verdict on June 11, 2016, by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, and I complain of all the several wrongful actions of this Presbytery which led up to that trial.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Hemphill, Retired

WCF, 1:10. **The supreme judge** by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined; and in whose sentence we are to rest; **can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.**

WCF, 20:2. **God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship.** So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: **and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.**

RPT, 20:5: Liberty of conscience differs from Christian liberty. Liberty of conscience is the freedom to interpret and apply God’s Word to one’s own life. The Christian is to render due submission in the Lord to any lawful authority, **but he has the right to disagree with any improper use of human authority.** If that authority requires him to sin, he must obey God rather than man. Individual liberty is regulated by the principles found in Scripture and is limited by

the mutual duties believers owe to one another, and by concern for the welfare of all men.

WCF 31:3. 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.

WCF, 31:4. All synods or councils, since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. **Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice; but to be used as a help in both.**

RPT, 31:5. Subordinate standards, such as the *Confession of Faith*, *Catechisms* and the *Testimony*, serve a necessary and useful purpose as a summary of biblical teaching, a basis for fellowship and common service, and as a testimony to the world of the church's belief and practice. **They are never to be taken as a substitute for God's Word or as a complete or final exposition of it.**

Presbytery of the Alleghenies Response to Communication 16-4 (Appeal of Bruce Hemphill)

Pursuant to the *Book Of Discipline*, Section II, Chapter 4, Paragraph 14, Point d, the Presbytery of the Alleghenies has prepared the following answer to the reasons of appeal.

1. In the first point of the appeal, Mr. Hemphill refers to the matters addressed in his complaint. As Synod has ruled that the substance of the complaint is included in the appeal, we deem it wise to address those specific issues:
 - a. That Charge #1 is contrary to the Reformation of the Church in Harmony with the Scriptures.
 - i. Mr. Hemphill argues that because his disagreement with the doctrinal positions of the RPNCA came to light through a request for study, he should be exempt from discipline for that disagreement. He argues that such action is without precedent among Presbyteries. The Presbytery would respond that the

actions taken with regard to the request for study were loving efforts to shepherd a brother who presented a flawed exegetical argument which directly contradicted Scripture, the subordinate standards of the Church, and multiple previous rulings of Synod. The progression from shepherding and counsel to formal discipline occurred as a direct result of Mr. Hemphill's response to the Committee, and his clear statement that he did not agree with the denomination's position that the office of elder is restricted by Scripture to men. However that disagreement came to light, Presbytery is bound by Scripture and the subordinate standards to proceed with discipline in the hopes of bringing about redemptive change in our brother.

- b. That Charge #2 is without foundation in the Scriptures or our Subordinate Standards.
 - i. Mr. Hemphill argues several side issues in this complaint, arguing that despite his refusal to submit to the counsel of his brothers and repent of his errant position, he was respectful of the court and willing to participate in the process. The section of the Book of Discipline quoted in the charge is specific as to the definition of contempt. "... (*refusal, in the case of need of correction in doctrine or life, to respect the authority and discipline of the church*)."
2. In the second point of the appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that it is unjust for Presbytery to rule that holding an exception to our doctrine is a violation of the moral law, because they have granted exceptions on other matters. Presbytery would simply respond with the language of the *Report of the Committee to Consider Paper Ten Concerning Requirements for Licensure and Ordination (1968 Minutes of Synod, RPCNA, pp 131-133)*:
- "It is our belief, with regard to the vows of licensure and ordination, that, if the one taking those vows takes exception to any particular doctrine or practice of the church, he should state his exception as clearly as he can in writing, and should be prepared to present*

the line of Scriptural teaching on which he bases his opinion. This could then be either the basis for counsel on the part of the examining Presbyters or the basis for papers to be addressed to Synod for adjudication. The Confession of Faith (Chapter 31, Sec. 3, p. 54) states that 'it belongeth to Synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience ...' Before a church court allows a conscientious scruple, especially on the part of a minister or licentiate, it must exercise care to determine whether the person holding the scruple believes in the system of doctrine as set forth in the church's standards. It must consider such matters as the extent of his deviation from the position of the church, his attitude toward the church courts, his willingness to engage in further study of the issues involved, and his concern to avoid any divisive or scandalous actions, either in his ministry of preaching and teaching or by his personal behavior."

3. In the third point of the appeal, Mr. Hemphill again argues that having granted any exceptions invalidates Presbytery's authority to pursue discipline for any disagreement with the doctrine of the Church. As noted above, Synod has already ruled that it is within the court's purview to allow conscientious scruples. If, as Mr. Hemphill argues, this invalidates the court's ability to judicially pursue any deviation from the position of the Church, this leads to the conclusion that the Church as a whole has no authority to enact discipline.
4. In the fourth point of the appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that his statement that he has not settled on the specifics of his contrary position should have invalidated the charge. However, the words of Query #4 are specifically a positive affirmation. Testimony was presented that when Mr. Hemphill was asked by the committee if he would affirm the position of the denomination, he would not. Testimony was also presented that he stated in the affirmative that "we should no longer have the rule that the office of elder is restricted to men." Mr. Hemphill confirmed that response when questioned under oath. Whatever it may be that Mr. Hemphill does "believe and accept" with regard to this matter, it is clear that it is not the doctrinal position of the RPCNA.

5. In the fifth point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill restates the fourth point of his appeal.
6. In the sixth point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that the following stipulations of the prosecution were not considered by the Presbytery:
 - a. That Mr. Hemphill has not taught that women could be elders. Mr. Hemphill argues that this is proof that he does not “*believe and accept*” that women could be elders. Presbytery does not agree, and notes that he was not charged with teaching that position. Absence of guilt on one matter does not prove innocence on another.
 - b. That Presbyters have either taken exceptions themselves, or voted to sustain men who have taken exceptions. This is a restatement of the second and third point.
 - c. That the RPCNA has made changes to its doctrinal position in the past through the process of the submission of papers. Presbytery notes that the action of Presbytery to institute formal discipline was not in response to the submission of Mr. Hemphill’s paper. It was in direct response to Mr. Hemphill’s direct statements to the committee regarding his inability to affirm agreement with the doctrine of the Church.
7. In the seventh point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill acknowledges that he is not in agreement with the position of the denomination, but argues that since he is not committed to the contrary position, he cannot be charged with breaking his vow. Presbytery notes that in his appeal, he is acknowledging the truth of the charge against him. Mr. Hemphill’s argument is that the burden is upon Presbytery to prove what, specifically, he believes. Presbytery’s conviction is on the basis that whatever Mr. Hemphill believes, he clearly does not believe and accept the position that the office of elder is restricted by Scripture to men. As that is the case, he is in violation of his ordination vows.
8. In the 8th point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill restates the 6th point of his appeal, part a.
9. In the ninth point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that the language of his paper should not be considered as evidence. Presbytery argues that the paper itself is evidence, but is certainly not the sole evidence that Mr. Hemphill has departed from his vows. The statements made

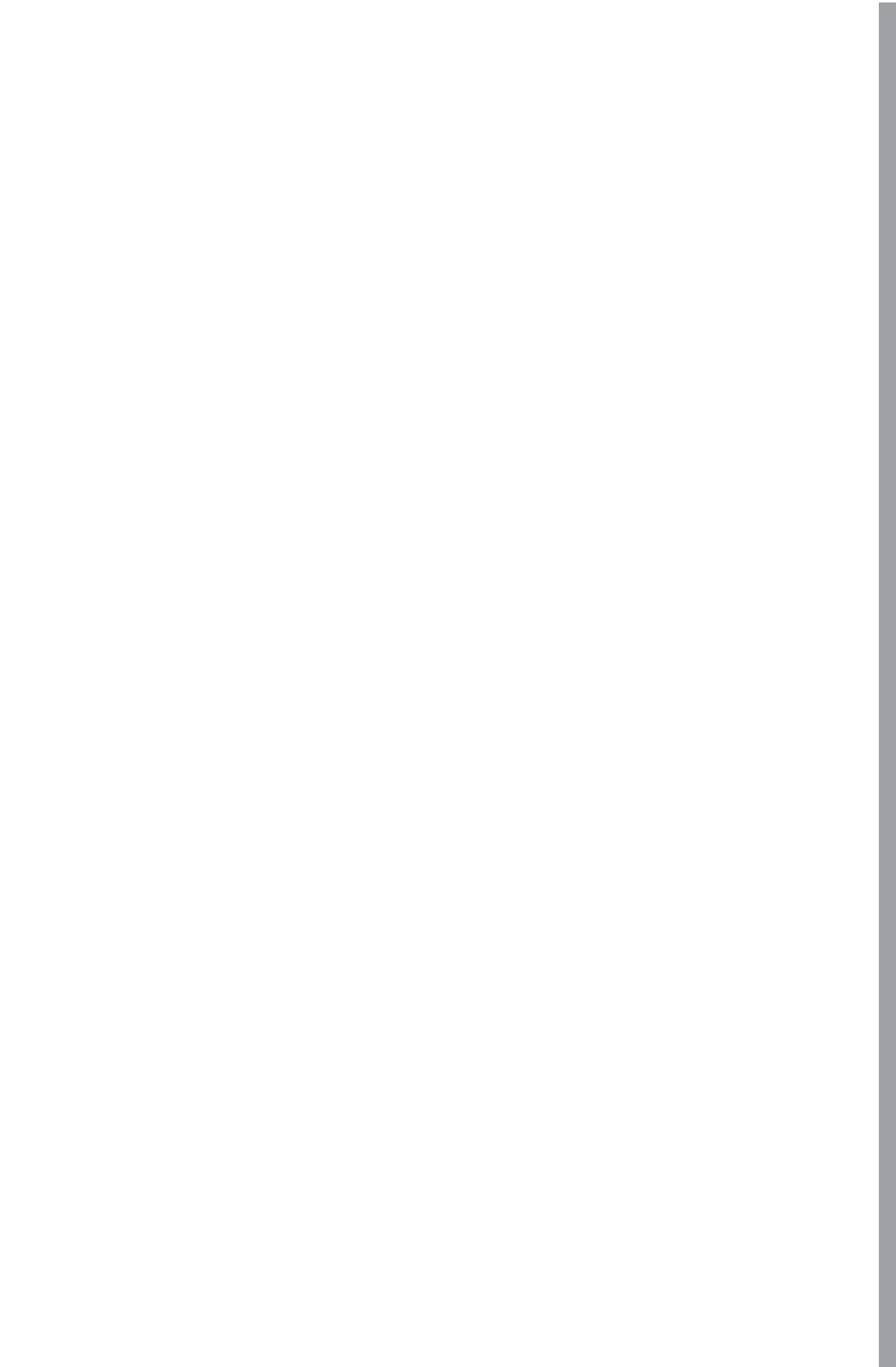
by Mr. Hemphill, his unwillingness to positively affirm his agreement with our doctrinal position and the testimony of multiple witnesses as to what he said, which he agreed were true, are the primary evidence of his guilt. The use of direct quotations from his paper in closing arguments was neither inappropriate nor prejudicial.

10. In the tenth point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill restates the first point of his appeal.
11. In the eleventh point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that he was not in contempt of the court because he attended the court meetings and was respectful and kind. Presbytery does not dispute these facts, but as these are not the basis of the charge, we consider them to be irrelevant to the appeal.
12. In the twelfth point of his appeal, Mr. Hemphill again confirms his guilt of both charges. He argues that being required by Presbytery to hold to his vows of ordination constitutes “the requiring of implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience.” Presbytery notes that Mr. Hemphill affirmed query #4 of his own volition, and as such agreed to be bound by its strictures. The position of the denomination has not changed. Mr. Hemphill is no longer able to affirm the position of the denomination, and no longer believes and accepts the position of the denomination to be agreeable to the Scriptures. The members of the committee testified that they presented him with the scriptural arguments for the denomination’s position, and that he remained convinced that his exegesis of Scripture was correct.
13. In the thirteenth point of the appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that he was not in contempt of the court because he did not terminate his ordination. Presbytery does not dispute this, but as this was not the basis of the charge, we consider it to be irrelevant to the appeal.
14. In the fourteenth point of the appeal, Mr. Hemphill argues that the suspension of the privileges of ordination is unduly severe. Presbytery argues that, first, the vows which he was convicted of violating are the vows which he is required to affirm to receive ordination, and second, that the *Book of Discipline* gives original jurisdiction to Presbytery only for charges which are serious enough to warrant suspension, deposition, or excommunication. When Mr. Hemphill was charged by Presby-

tery, Presbytery had already formally determined that the charges were sufficiently serious to warrant a suspension of his privileges.

15. In the fifteenth point, Mr. Hemphill argues that a vote of 21-7 should not be sufficient to convict. Presbytery argues that the decision was made in accord with the guidance provided in the *Book of Discipline*.
16. In the sixteenth point, Mr. Hemphill notes that he did not have a transcript of the trial available in sufficient time to prepare his appeal. Presbytery notes that every effort was made to provide the transcript quickly, but as we are not ordinarily in the business of conducting trials, we did not have the same resources available for transcription that the civil courts have.

In summary, Presbytery convicted Mr. Hemphill of a violation of the moral law because he does not believe and accept the system of doctrine set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* as being agreeable to the Scriptures. He sought the counsel of the Church on this matter through the submission of his paper. He rejected the counsel of Presbytery as inadequate to convince him of the error of his exegetical argument. When asked if he was still in agreement with what he affirmed in his ordination vows, he said, "No." We ask that Synod deny his appeal and uphold the ruling of the Presbytery, so that our brother may be convicted of the error of his ways, and be restored to us again through repentance.



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Committee on Communication 18-7: Recusals in Discipline Cases: Phil Pockras^t (convener), Tom Fisher^r, Scott Wilkinson^t, Craig Scott^t, Allan MacLeod^t.

Committee on Communication 18-8: Inmate Church Membership: Tim McCracken^t (convener), Robert Bibby^r, Bob Hackett^t, Jason Camery^t, Kent Butterfield^t.

Committee on Divorce & Desertion: John Bower^r, H.P. McCracken^t, Tim McClain^t, Ed Schisler^r, Craig Scott^t, Gabriel Wingfield^t, Brad Johnston^t (chairman)

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Park City (18-2) Judicial Commission: Phil Pockras^t (chairman), Mark England^t, and Dale Koons^r

t denotes teaching elder

r denotes ruling elder

CHURCHES IN ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP

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. E. M. McCollum
21 Croft Hill, Cairnshill Road
Belfast, BT8 6GX
NO. IRELAND

Reformed Presbytery of Scotland

Peter Loughridge (clerk) Email: peterloughridge@hotmail.com
48 North Bridge St.
Airdrie, ML6 6NE
SCOTLAND

OTHER CHURCHES IN FRATERNAL RELATIONS

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church *†

Rev. Donald Beard, Principal Clerk
3132 Grace Hill Road Email: rbeard1@sc.rr.com
Columbia, SC 29204

Aweil Community Church in South Sudan

Contact the RP Global Missions Board

Free Church of Scotland, Synod of North America†

Rev. Kent Compton, Clerk of Synod
Box 4907 Crapaud, P. E. I.
CANADA

Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus

Mr. Adam Mastris Email: personal@mastris.com
16 Chlois St., CY 6301
Larnaca, CYPRUS

Korean American Presbyterian Church *

Rev. John E. Jho, Stated Clerk
Email: drjoh@hotmail.com

L'Église reformée du Québec *

Rev. Bernard Westerveld Email: b_westerveld@hotmail.com
844, rue de Contrecoeur
Ste-Foy (Quebec) G1X 2X8
CANADA

Orthodox Presbyterian Church *†

Rev. Ross W. Graham, 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. David Fagrey, Clerk of Synod Email: dfagrey@gmail.com
5626 Haines Avenue
Rapid City, SD 57701

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. Bartel Elshout, Stated Clerk

Email: delshout@gmail.com

* Member of NAPARC

† 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 Lucas Hanna
 Clerk Martin Blocki
 Assistant Clerk Titus Martin
 Treasurer Bill Weir
 Assistant Treasurer Peter Smith
 Ad Interim Commission Covenant (Aurora) Session
 Grace and Truth TGB Paul Martin, Moderator; Dave Merkel; Tom Reid

Aurora, Ohio — Covenant

Website: Covenantrpcohio.org

Currently meeting at: Centerville Mills Park
 8558 Crackel Road
 Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44023

(Address all regular mail to the clerk or send email to clerk@covenantrpcohio.org).

Pastor: Ryan Somerville [Catherine]. Installed 2015.
 8021 Valley View Rd. Phone: 724-747-8345
 Hudson, OH 44236 Email: ryanksomerville@gmail.com

Clerk: Bob Concoby
 3766 Fishcreek Rd. #277 Cell phone: 330-554-4260
 Stow, OH 44224 Email: bob@nouthetics.com

Elders: John Bower Email: jbowerr@gmail.com
 Ron Grissett

Deacon Chairman and Treasurer:
 Jerry Bridge [Paulette] Email: bridge8149@roadrunner.com

Beaver, Pennsylvania — Tusca Area RPC

Corner of Darlington and Chapel Roads
Phone: 724-495-6811

Mail to: P. O. Box 526
Beaver, Pennsylvania 15009

Pastor: Jonathan M. Watt, Ph. D. [June]. Installed 2012.

213 Brooks Dr.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 724-630-4995
Email: jwatt@geneva.edu

Clerk: Jeffrey Dobbs

378 Lisbon Rd.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 724-495-2717
Email: jkdobbs82@yahoo.com

Elders: Brian Barsottini [Rachel]

A. Dale Carothers

James R. Dobbs

Ben Rice [Diana]

Email: bbarsottini@gmail.com

Email: bunji14@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Glen Detwiler

870 Canal St.
Beaver, PA 15009

Phone: 724-774-3280

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania — College Hill RPC (PA)

At Old Stone: 3217 College Avenue
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Second Location: 3400 5th Ave.
Phone: 724-843-4840

Pastors: Titus Martin [Alyssa]. Installed 2006.

416 30th St.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 412-251-4290
Email: titusknox@gmail.com

George Gregory [Danielle]. Installed 9/14/2018.

3237 5th Ave.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 812-343-2741
Email: gggregory@rpts.edu

Clerk: Robert Copeland [Louise]

116 Breezewood Ct.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Email: rmcopeland45@msn.com

Elders: Dave Carleton

Rick Mason

Herb McCracken

Richard Morris

Dean Smith

John Stahl

Joel Ward

Keith Wing

Barry York

Email: dwcarlton1956@gmail.com

Email: richarddmason@gmail.com

Email: hmccracken9@hotmail.com

Email: richard.moris@servicetoservants.com

Email: drsmith@geneva.edu

Email: jwstahl@geneva.edu

Email: wardjscott@gmail.com

Email: wing@thekeysource.com

Email: pastoryork@gmail.com

Elders Emeriti: Doug Carson; Norman M. Carson; Karl Cunningham; Donnie Hicks; Don McBurney; Cliff Glovier; David Willson

Deacon Chairman: Joel Ward [Tabitha]

2528 Burgess St.

Email: wardjscott@gmail.com

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Treasurer: Lorrie Meneely [Tim]

128 Earlwood Rd.

Phone: 412-795-7985

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Email: Lorrie@Meneely.com

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania — Eastvale RPC (PA)

504 Second Avenue

Phone: 724-847-2080

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Pastor: Micah A. Ramsey [Leslie]. Installed 2007.

904 Washington Ave. PO Box 231

Cell: 724-312-9969

New Galilee, PA 16141

Email: pastor_micah@comcast.net

Clerk: Keith Willson [Jennifer]

3416 8th Ave.

Phone: 724-846-3130

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Email: krwillson@comcast.net

Elder: James Robb [Sheila]

Deacon Chairman: James Dymond

415 March St.

Phone: 724-752-1207

Ellwood City, PA 16117

Treasurer: James Dymond (see above)

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania — First RPC of Beaver Falls (PA)

209 Darlington Road

Phone: 724-846-6877

Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010

Pastor: Lucas Hanna [Melissa]. Installed 2017

207 Darlington Rd.

Cell: 913-484-4598

Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Email: pastorlucashanna@gmail.com

Associate Pastors: Matt Filbert [Heidi]. Installed 2013.

3307 5th Ave.

Home office: 724-384-8327

Beaver Falls, PA 15010-3509

Cell: 412-901-3553

Email: proclaimchrist@rmissions.org

Tim McClain [Bonnie]. Installed 2013.

299 Route 68

Phone: 724-728-8275

Rochester, PA 15074

Email: timmcclain299@comcast.net

Clerk: Tim McClain (see above)

Elders: Glenn Aley Email: ga_123@yahoo.com
 Kenneth A. McBurney [Virginia] Email: kenmcb100@gmail.com
 David Schaefer [Joy] Email: davidjschaefer@eaton.com
 David Tweed [Melissa] Email: 5tweeds@comcast.net

Deacon Chairman: Matt Thompson [Emily]
 Phone: 724-494-8820 Email: Thompson.a.matthew@gmail.com

Treasurer: Matt Thompson

Director of Christian Education: Tim McClain (see above)

Burtonsville, Maryland — Trinity RPC

4515 Sandy Spring Road Website: www.trinityrpc.org
 Burtonsville, Maryland 20866 Phone: 240-360-1285

Pastor: Joel Wood [Emily]. Installed 2015.
 604 Whittingham Dr. Phone: 620-204-0222
 Silver Springs, MD 20904 Email: joelenochwood@gmail.com
 or pastor@trinityrpc.org

Clerk: David Merkel
 3505 North Chatham Rd. Phone: 410-750-7894
 Ellicott City, MD 21042 Email: david.merkel@gmail.com

Elders: Anthony Gazo Email: greatgazooo@gmail.com
 Brad Stewart Email: rmbconstruction@yahoo.com
 David Handermann Email: dhandermann@trinityrpc.org
 Mike Morton Email: mjmortva@gmail.com
 Vincent Skwarek Email: usegrower@earthlink.net

Deacon Chairman: Jonathan Baumann Email: snarky@thesnarky.com

Treasurer: Andrew Ashleigh
 732 Lake Path Cell phone: 443-691-4231
 Crownsville, MD 21032 Email: ashleighaj1@gmail.com

Gibsonia, Pennsylvania — Grace RPC

3916 Bakerstown Road Phone: 724-449-6363
 Gibsonia, Pennsylvania 15044

Pastor: Jeff Stivason [Tabatha]. Installed 2009.
 3914 Bakerstown Rd. Phone: 724-444-4430
 Gibsonia, PA 15044 Email: graceingibsonia@gmail.com

Clerk: Chris Villi [Jennifer]
 109 Farmingdale Rd. Phone: 412-628-9464
 Wexford, PA 15090 Email: villi.chris@gmail.com

New Castle, Pennsylvania — Rose Point RPC (PA)

1166 Church Alley

Website: www.rosepointrpc.org

New Castle, Pennsylvania 16101

Phone: 724-924-9519

(Send all mail to pastor's address.)

Pastor: Charles Brown [Miriam]. Installed 2008.

468 Rose Point Rd.

Phone: 724-924-0012

New Castle, PA 16101

Email: modernreformation@yahoo.com**Clerk:** John M. Mitchell

1072 Golf Course Rd.

Phone: 724-530-2305

Volant, PA 16156

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

Phone: 814-425-2784

Utica, PA 16802

Email: jhmohair@windstream.net**Treasurer:** John M. Mitchell (see above)**Christian Education Committee Chairman:** Steven Wilson (see above)**New Kensington, Pennsylvania — Manchester RPC**

204 Manchester Hill Road

Website: www.manchesterrpcchurch.org

New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068

Phone: 724-339-1551

Pastor: Vince Scavo [Elizabeth]. Installed 2001.

200 Manchester Hill Rd.

Phone: 724-334-1775

New Kensington, PA 15068

Email: revscavo@yahoo.com**Clerk:** Brian Panichelle [Heather]

516 Spring St.

Phone: 724-537-2790

Latrobe, PA 15650.

Work: 724-238-2148

Email: brian@panichelleagency.com**Elders:** Marlin Klingensmith [Karen]Email: knilram@knilram.org

Doug Comin [Amy]

Email: dcomin311@comcast.net**Deacon Chairman:** Ed Panichelle

209 Beverly Dr.

Phone: 724-339-2949

Lower Burrell, PA 15068

Email: paniche@nationwide.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

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15221-1836

Email: covenantfellowshiprpcna@gmail.com

Pastor: Peter Smith [Vicki]. Installed 2011.

1427 Penn Ave.

Phone: 412-246-9720

Wilksburg, PA 15221

Cell: 412-944-3881

Email: perwsmith@gmail.com

Clerk: Drew Gordon [Lynne]

7408 Penn Ave.

Phone: 412-731-2854

Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Email: drew@crownandcovenant.com

Elders: Joel Butler [Autumn]**Retired:** Lou Beatty [Lorraine], Christian Hallstein [Shirley]**Deacon Chairman:** Lois Claerbaut [Dale]

137 Betty Jane Ct.

Phone: 412-241-1594

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Email: loisclaerbaut@comcast.net

Treasurer: Faith Martin [Fred]

100 Denniston St. #48

Phone: 412-362-3677

Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Email: faith_martin@yahoo.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

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: 626-863-2316

Pittsburgh, PA 15204

Email: sma@rpts.edu

Clerk: William J. (Bill) Weir [Rose]

114 Virginia Rd.

Phone: 412-872-7123

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Email: wjweir@juno.com

Elders: Jerry F. O'Neill; Mark Sampson; Luke O'Neill; Samuel Spear**Deacon Chairman:** Jeff Hall [Ruth]

111 Richmond Circle

Phone: 412-358-8532

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Email: corridor111@verizon.net

Treasurer: Rose Weir [Bill]

114 Virginia Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-635-8175
Email: wjweir@juno.com

Youth Ministries Team: Luke O'Neill and Michelle LaMay

Co-Chairmen of the Christian Education Committee:

Martin Blocki (see above)
Ann O'Neill [Jerry]
505 Fox Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-477-9201
Email: aoneill@rpts.edu

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania — Providence RPC

2001 Pioneer Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15226

Website: www.providencerpchurch.com
Phone: 412-401-2424

Pastor: Steven Bradley [Julie]. Installed 2014.

1210 Barnstaple Dr.
South Park, PA 15129

Phone: 412-650-3120
Cell: 412-401-2424
Email: bygracealone@verizon.net

Associate Pastor: C. J. Williams [Sherri]. Installed 2014.

748 Lafayette Dr.
Clairton, PA 15025

Phone: 412-233-0603
Email: providencerpcc@juno.com

Clerk: James McFarland [Carnel]

11867 Quarter Horse Dr.
North Huntingdon, PA 15642

Phone: 412-378-6428
Email: rptrustees@aol.com

Elders: Mike Williams [Renee]

Caleb Allen [Hannah]
Dan Berkenpas [Julia]

Email: mike_renee@juno.com
Email: csallen488@gmail.com
Email: berkenpasdb1@gmail.com
Email: markbrown18@hotmail.com

Mark Brown

Treasurer: Dale Hulley

Rimersburg, Pennsylvania, RPC

North Main Street
Rimersburg, Pennsylvania 16248

Website: www.rpcrimersburgpa.com
Phone: 814-473-3510

(Send all mail to the pastor's home.)

Pastor: John Monger [Donna]. Installed 2012.

959 Corbett St.
Clarion, PA 16214

Cell: 814-229-9670
Email: johnwmonger@gmail.com

Clerk: Bill Douthett [Sara]

PO Box 225
Rimersburg, PA 16248

Phone: 814-473-3760
Email: bsdouthett@windstream.net

Treasurer: Mrs. Carrie Engro

PO Box 762
Rimersburg, PA 16248

Phone: 814-473-6499
Email: cengro@windstream.net

State College, Pennsylvania — Grace Presbyterian Church

370 Airport Road
State College, Pennsylvania 16801

Phone: 814-237-2637

Pastor: Vacant since 08/2016.

Interim Moderator: Bruce Backensto [Kim]

3303 Seventh Ave.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 724-843-4696
Email: bruce.backensto@gmail.com

Clerk: John C. Pershe [Barb]

102 Ridgewood Circle
State College, PA 16803

Phone: 814-482-0996
Email: jcpershe@yahoo.com

Elders: Jonathan D. Adams [Kathy]

Dean McHenry [Ellen]
David Eiseman [Pat]

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Email: deisemann@embarqmail.com

Treasurer: Cyrus Beisel

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Ministers serving at Geneva College

Jonathan M. Watt, Ph. D. [June]

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Rutledge Etheridge [Evelyn]

107 Book Ave.
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Ministers serving at the RP Seminary

Richard C. Gamble, Ph.D. [Janice]

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Gibsonia, PA 15044

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Jerry F. O'Neill, D.D. [Ann]

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Thomas Reid [Genevieve]

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C. J. Williams [Sherri]

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Email: providencerpc@juno.com

Barry York [Miriam]

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Beaver, PA 15009

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Ed Blackwood [Nancy]

109 Sumner Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Phone: 412-407-3317
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Ministers retired

Bruce Backensto [Kim]

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James D. Carson

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Norman M. Carson, Ph.D. [Beverly]

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Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Phone: 412-224-6734
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Wayne Duffield [Nancy]

PO Box 373, 311 Church St.
New Alexandria, PA 15670

Phone: 724-668-7506
Email: awd70@windstream.net

Robert R. Fullerton

310 Cherrywood Ln.
Edgewater, Florida 32132

Phone: 386-426-2337

Ralph E. Joseph [Joday]

225 North Main St.
Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Phone 724-794-1429
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Randy Johovich [Priscilla]

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Allison Park, PA 15101

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G. Duncan Lowe [Carol]

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Phone: 412-731-5768
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Paul M. Martin [Janet]

PO Box 2476
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Cell: 412-370-9960
Email: pappaul@gmail.com

Kenneth A. McBurney [Virginia]

149 Patricia Dr.
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Phone: 724-827-8548
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
Verne Rosenberger [Shirley] 130 Coralberry Dr. Beaver Falls, PA 15010	Phone: 724-846-7054 Email: Psalmsinger@comcast.net
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
John H. White, D.Min. [Mary] 110 Klitch St. Beaver Falls, PA 15010	Phone: 724-581-4488 Email: jhwhite@geneva.edu

Ministers without pastorates

Doug Comin [Amy] 311 Walnut St. Latrobe, PA 15650	Phone: 724-537-3050 Email: dcomin311@comcast.net
Terry Gorden [Heather] PO Box 472 New Windsor, MD 21776	Phone: 410-635-8346 Email: gordenmail@yahoo.com
Marcelo Sanchez, Santiago, Chile	
Dan Woodring [Julie] PO Box 185 Ramey, PA 16671	Phone: 814-378-7927 Email: dwcanon@hotmail.com

ROSTER OF ATLANTIC PRESBYTERY

Moderator..... Daniel Howe
Clerk..... Steven McCarthy
Treasurer..... Joseph Comanda
Ad Interim Commission Broomall 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 E: pastor@reformedprescambridge.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.: Kyle and Violet Finley Phone: 617-460-7554
Email: violet.finley@gmail.com

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
Treasurer/Deacon: Ernie Johnson [Becky]
417 Coldenham Rd. Phone: 845-567-6922
Walden, NY 1256 Email: etj718@aol.com

Hazleton Area, Pennsylvania, RPC

680 Roosevelt Street
Hazleton, PA 18201

Website: www.nepachurches.org

Pastor: Paul Brace [Jennifer]. Installed 2009.

376 Pond Hill Mt. Rd.
Wapwallopen, PA 18660

Cell: 570-578-5243

Email: ps110_1@hotmail.com

Clerk: Philip Urie [Fran]

52 Maple Ave.
Tunkhannock, PA 18657

Phone: 570-836-3665

Email: 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

Pastor: J. Bruce Martin [JoAnne]. Installed 1997.

947 Alpine Drive
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Phone: 201-837-0202

Email: JBruMar@aol.com

Clerk: David A. Weir, Ph.D. [Bonnie]

18 Midland Avenue
Bronxville, New York 10708

Phone: 914-337-2833

Email: daw@pipeline.com

Elder: Glen A. Chin [Jewel].

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.: J. Bruce Martin [JoAnne] (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

Clerk: William J. Werts, III [Mandy]
802 Shadeland Ave.
Drexel Hill, PA 19026
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Elders: Michael Lydon [Linda] Email: mglydon@verizon.net
Joseph Rizzo [Laura] Email: josephv.rizzo@gmail.com
George Jackson Email: gwjack3@gmail.com

Treasurer: Joseph Comanda [Jan]
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — Elkins Park RPC

901 Cypress Avenue
Elkins Park, PA 19027
Phone: 215-460-2391
Website: elkinsparkchurch.com

Pastor: John D. Edgar [Evniki]. Installed 2002.
401 Shoemaker Rd.
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Phone: 215-782-9849
Email: johnevniki@comcast.net

Clerk: Michael Jessop [Anna Li]
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Roslyn, PA 19001
Phone: 215-576-0348
Email: jmjessop@hotmail.com

Elder: Duran Perkins [Betsy]
Phone: 215-481-0494
Email: duran.perkins@gmail.com

Deacons: Bob Allmond, Clara McClay, Emil Nahm

Treasurer: Anna Li Jessop
(see Michael Jessop, clerk)

Providence, Rhode Island — Christ Church

Meeting at: 81 Warren Avenue
E. Providence, RI 02914
Send mail to: PO Box 14168
East Providence, RI 02914

Pastor: Daniel M. Howe [Esther]. Installed 2010.
61 Ring St.
Providence RI 02909
Phone: 401-709-4678
Email: pastor@chrstrpc.com

Associate pastor: Gabriel A. Wingfield [Megan]. Installed 2018.
25 Meader St., 2nd Floor
Providence, RI 02909
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Email: gwingfield@fastmail.fm

Clerk: David Robson [Deryl]

336 Sea View Ave.

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Email: dcrobson10@Ximedica.com

Elders: Chad Highfill, Matthew Topper, Jonathan Trexler

Deacons: Matthew VanVlack

Walton, N.Y., RPC

East and Bruce Streets

Walton, NY 13856 (no mail)

Phone: 607-865-6481

Website: www.waltonrpc.org

Pastor: Steven McCarthy [Emily]

115 Townsend St.

Walton, NY 13856

Phone: 607-510-4233 (manse)

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Email: smccarthy@rpts.edu

Clerk: David Fitch

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Elders: Bruce Henderson

Jack McCready

Hartley Russell

Email: brucehenderson@gmail.com

Email: mccreadyjb@hotmail.com

Email: mhrussell@frontiernet.net

Treasurer: Renwick Russell

4919 County Highway 21

Walton, NY 13856

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White Lake, N.Y., RPC

6 Mattison Rd. (P.O. Box 208)

White Lake, NY 12786

Website: whitelakechurch.com

Pastor: David C. Coon [Cathy]. Installed 1980.

P.O. Box 418

Mongaup Valley, NY 12762

Phone: 845-583-7082

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Email: dcoon2@hvc.rr.com

Clerk, pro tem: Scott Sanford [Debbie]

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Elders: Mike DeSocio, Mike Klussman

Treasurer: Judy Klussman

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William J. Edgar, Ph.D. [Gretchen]

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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 ModeratorAdam Kuehner

CovFAMIKOI Conference Director Erich Baum, Email: erichbaum@gmail.com

Youth Coordinator Ben Larson

Belle Center, Ohio, RPC (PA)

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PO Box 365

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Website: www.bcrpchurch.org

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Pastor: Philip Pockras [Judy]. Installed 1985.

403 North Elizabeth St.

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Clerk: Scott Hunt

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S. S. Superintendent: Philip Pockras (see above)

Bloomington, Indiana, RPC (SS)

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Website: bloomingtonrpcchurch.org

Bloomington, IN 47401

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Pastor: Rich Holdeman [Amy]. Installed 2005.

3202 East Kensington Park Dr.

Cell: 812-327-5367

Bloomington, IN 47401

Email: rholdema@indiana.edu

Pastor: Philip McCollum [Heather]

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Clerk: Kenneth De Jong [Carolyn]

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Elders: Wes Archer [Angie]

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Eric Cosens [Rachel]

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Wendell McBurney [Jean]

C. J. Davis [Melinda]

Email: daviscolbyjames@gmail.com

Stephen Shipp [Sarah]

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Treasurer: Carolyn De Jong

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Mail to church address.

Christian Education Chairman: Richard Holdeman (see above)

Brownsburg, Indiana — Christ Church RP

Meeting at: Brownsburg Seventh Day Adventist building

4172 North C. R. 900E

Website: www.ccrp.church

Brownsburg, Indiana 46112

Phone: 317-456-2551

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5881 Skyward Ln.

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Clerk: Jason O'Neill [Michelle]

10111 Cornith Way

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Avon, IN 46123

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Email: dlkoons49@aol.com

Sean Bird [Monica]

Email: covenantbird@gmail.com

Duane Judd [Anne]

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Treasurer: Dale Koons (see above)**Deacons:** Todd Brown [Cindy]. Chairman

Email: tcbrown8915@sbcglobal.net

Anna Roberts

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Elliot Judd [Ashley]

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Columbus, Indiana, RPC (PA)

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Website: columbusrpc.org
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Pastor: Andy McCracken [Susan]. Installed 2004.

632 Ridgeview Ln.
Columbus, IN 47201

Phone: 812-342-3711

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Elders: Gary McNamee [Cynthia]

Edmund Schisler [Lynn]
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Christian Education Chairman: Jeffrey Jones (see above)

Durham, North Carolina — First RPC (BF, HA)

1316 Watts Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701

Website: firstrpcdurham.org

Phone: 919-908-8327

Pastor: Kent Butterfield [Rosaria]. Installed 2012.

727 Clarion Dr.
Durham, NC 27705

Cell: 571-439-2033

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Provisional Elders: Bob Burchfield (Southside Indianapolis); Bob Bibby (Lafayette)

Elkhart, Indiana, RPC

2323 17th Street
Elkhart, Indiana 46517-1431

Website: www.elkhartrpc.org

Phone: 574-293-1772

Pastor: Wade Mann [Barb]. Installed 2016.

58538 Sun Bow Dr.
Goshen, IN 46528

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Clerk: Fikre Menbere [Ritva]

57100 Bluff Crest Dr.
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Elder: Jonathan Ummel [Jennifer]

Andy DeRosa

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Johannesburg, MI 49751

Indianapolis, Indiana — Second RPC (BF, HA)

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Website: 2RP.church

Indianapolis, Indiana 46228

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Phone: 317-361-8508

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Email: james@2rp.church

Associate Pastor: Joel Hart [Orlena]. Installed June 2018.

6037 MacBeth Way

Phone: 317-657-3510

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Assistant to the Pastors: Dean Filson [Pam]. Email: dean@2rp.church**Clerk:** Russ Pulliam [Ruth]

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Walt Zebrun

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Don Prichard [Stephanie]

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Deacons: Gary Burriss [Nancy]; John Cavanaugh [Margarita]; Mark Cavill [Patty]; Brad Erney [Diane]; John Mauser [Pat]; Kevin Mauser [Bethany]

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Greg Fisher [Pam]

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Lafayette, Indiana, RPC (PA, HA)

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Jeff Kessler [Karla]

Ken Nelson [Christy]

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Chris Stockwell [Linda]

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Email: jack_rhoda@comcast.net

Email: cmstocks@gmail.com

Deacon Chairman: Aaron Hartzler [Jen]

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Marion, Indiana — Marion RPC

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Marion, Indiana

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Marion, Indiana 46952

Pastor: Jason Camery [Jenny]. Installed 2015.

1503 Ironwood Dr.
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Phone: 765-419-2700

Email: jcamery@hotmail.com

Clerk: Scott Hunt [Allison]

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Treasurer: David Morgan, Jr.

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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.

Cell: 937-750-9459

West Chester, OH 45069

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Clerk: Timothy Vincze

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Elders: Gregory Scott Damerow

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Steven Work [Jeannie]

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Treasurer: Timothy Vincze (see above)

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124 Cariese Dr.

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Orlando, Florida, RPC

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TGB: Robert Shapiro

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Prairie View, Illinois — Westminster RPC

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Pastor: Stephen Rhoda [Mary]. Installed 2015.

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Elders: Jim Ritchhart [Connie]

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Treasurer: Matt Stiegert

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Selma, Alabama, RPC

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Selma, Alabama 36701-5576

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Interim moderator: Jerry O'Neill [Ann]

505 Fox Dr.

Work: 412-477-9201

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Elder: Averette Woodson

Greg Woodson [Aretha]

Email: averette.woodson614@gmail.com

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Treasurer: Contact Greg Woodson (see above)

Assistant Treasurer: Juanita Jones

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S.S. Superintendent: Lynne Brown

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Southfield, Michigan, RPC (PA)

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Website: reformed.com
srpc.sermonaudio.com

Pastor: Adam Kuehner [Maegan]. Installed 2012.

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Clerk: Jon Hughes [Wendy]

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Elder: John Kim [Laura]

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Treasurer: Wendy Hughes [Jon]

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Pastor: Vacant

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Elders: Robert Morrow

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Terre Haute, Indiana — Mission Church

1407 North 25th Street

Website: terrehauterpchurch.org

Terre Haute, Indiana 47803

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(Send all mail to church address.)

Pastor: Vacant (since 06/2018)**Moderator:** Jerry Porter [Sharon]Email: jerry.l.porter@sbcglobal.net**Prov. Clerk:** Kenneth De Jong [Carolyn]

Phone: 812-334-0069

Treasurer: Mrs. Donna Smith5111 North State Road 59
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West Lafayette, Indiana — Immanuel RPC

1893 East 600 North

Website: immanuelrpc.com

West Lafayette, IN 47906-9608

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Pastor: Jared P. Olivetti [Lisa]. Installed 2007.2103 Old Oak Dr.
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Phone: 765-583-4494

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Atlanta, Georgia — Atlanta Presbyterian Fellowship

Meeting at: 472-B Paines Avenue NW
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Website: atlanta-rpc.org

Contact: Dr. Frank J. Smith [Penny]. Began 2010.

5830 Millstone Dr.
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Moderator: Shawn Anderson

Treasurer: Amy Work

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1702 Blueberry Hill Rd.
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sermonaudio.com/ic-tenn
Email: immanuelrpcchurch@gmail.com

Local Contact: Dr. Kevin Clauson [Marcia]

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Oversight Committee

Chairman: Gary McNamee [Cynthia]

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Member/Clerk: Philip Pockras [Judy]

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Roy Blackwood, Ph.D.

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 Assistant Clerk Kihei Takiura
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 Treasurer Hiroyuki Kanamori
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 Young People's Secretary Kihei Takiura
 Secretary for the presbytery's website: (<http://www.rpjapan.org>)
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Clerk (Elder): Youichiro Fukuya [Atsuko]

9-33-9, Mukonoso
 Amagasaki 661-0035

Provisional Elder: Katsunori Endo

Treasurer: Atsuko Fukuya and Misuzu Ohara—c/o Mukonoso RPC

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Kobe — Higashisuma RPC (SS, HA)

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Pastor: Charles Leach [Susan]. Installed 2013.

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Youth Leader: Valerie Leach

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Katsunori Endo (domestic missionary)

Provisional Clerk: Hiroyuki Kanamori (pastor, Mukonosono RPC)**Provisional Elder:** Sumito Sakai (pastor, Higashisuma RPC)**Treasurer:** Kumiko Kudo**Kobe Theological Hall (KTH)**

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Covenanter Book Room (CBR)

[Its legal status being under the Trustees of the Synod]

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Literature Department Director: Toyoki Hamada

Mission Department Director: Kihei Takiura

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Moderator Jonathan Haney

Clerk and Asst. Clerk Greg Stiner and Joe Allyn

Treasurer Shawn Stickel

Ad Interim Commission Moderator Jonathan Haney

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..... Jonathan Haney, Brad Johnston

Youth Leaders Craig and Shana Milroy

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Treasurer: Bill Kilgore [Andrea]

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Phone: 405-377-1689

Website: www.stillwaterrpc.org

Meeting at:

1624 W. Lakeview

Stillwater, Oklahoma 74075

Pastor: R. Bruce Parnell [Vicky]. Installed 1991.

1011 South Duncan

Stillwater, OK 74074

Phone: 405-372-4910

Email: pastor@stillwaterrpc.org**Clerk:** Alan Noell [Liz]

2723 North Monroe St.

Stillwater, OK 74075

Phone: 405-377-0634

Email: avnoell@gmail.com**Elders:** David Carroll [Margaret]

Jeff Spitler [Melody]

Email: dave@poiemainc.comEmail: spitler@okstate.edu**Deacon Chairman:** Dan Yost [Stephanie]

1101 South Chester St.

Stillwater, OK 74074

Phone: 405-372-2494

Email: dan@tri8.com**Treasurer:** Logan West [Johannah]4607 SW 29th St.

Oklahoma City, OK 73179

Email: srpcbudget@gmail.com**Topeka, Kansas, RPC (BF)**

8345 Southwest 33rd Street(33rd and Auburn Road)

Topeka, Kansas 66614

Website: 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**Clerk:** Dean O'Neill [Debby]

7732 SW Huntoon St.

Topeka, KS 66615

Phone: 785-478-1689

Email: doneill3@cox.net**Elders:** Larry Copeland [Karen], Philip Duguid [Eleanor], William "Bill" McFarland, Darrell Parnell [Esther], Jonathan Parnell [Lisa]**Deacon Chairman:** Betsy Johns2411 SW 34th St.

Topeka, KS 66402

Phone: 785-266-1580

Treasurer: Jonathan Parnell [Lisa]2712 West 27th Terrace

Lawrence, KS 66047

Phone: 785-218-3361

Email: treasurertrpc@gmail.com

Washington, Iowa, RPC

500 South Avenue D

Phone: 319-653-3101

Washington, Iowa 52353

Pastor: Dan Drost [Abigail]. Installed 2012.

510 W. Jefferson St.

Phone: 989-370-1631

Washington, IA 52353

Email: Daniel.Drost@gordon.edu

Clerk: Michael Todd, D.V.M. [Lana]

c/o 102 East Walnut St.

Phone: 319-728-7718

Columbus Junction, IA 52738

Email: louisavet@windstream.net

Elders: Rob Jarrard [Dorcas]

Email: andre9945@gmail.com

Donald Wilson [Judy]

Deacon Chairman: Greg Skubal [Nancy]

3189 223rd St.

Phone: 319-657-2315

Ainsworth, IA 52201

Treasurer: Phil Falk [Joy]

Phone: 724-714-5930

Email: philsf31@yahoo.com

S. S. Superintendent: Donald Wilson [Judy] Phone: 319-728-2081

Westminster, Colorado, RPC (BF, PA)

4455 West 112th Avenue

Website: www.westminsterrpchurch.org

Westminster, Colorado 80031

Phone: 303-469-0761

Pastor: Shane Sapp [Kelly]. Installed 2009.

2684 Bryant Dr.

Home: 303-404-9064

Broomfield, CO 80020

Cell: 720-215-1474

Email: shane.sapp@westminsterrpchurch.org

Clerk: Paul Welander [Tara]

PO Box 350453

Phone: 303-439-9694

Westminster, CO 80035

Email: paul.welander

@westminsterrpchurch.org

Elders: John Duke [Kathy]

Email: jtduke44@gmail.com

Bill Van Sciver [Vicki]

Email: bill@unitedbuilders.us

Deacon and Treasurer: Matt Parker

Phone: 303-803-5404

Email: Matt@westminsterrpchurch.org

Christian Education Chairman: Tara Welander [Paul]

Email: taramd86@yahoo.com

Wichita, Kansas — Trinity Reformed Church

Meeting at the SEIU Building
3340 West Douglas Avenue
Wichita, Kansas 67203

Website: trinityrpcna.org

Pastor: Joe Allyn (Maggie). Installed 2015.

233 S. McComas St.
Wichita, KS 67213

Phone: 913-707-2121; 316-285-0515

Email: teamallyn@gmail.com

Clerk: Rob Haynes [Kerry]

854 North Brook Forest Rd.
Derby, KS 67037

Cell: 316-393-6238

Email: robhaynes1165@hotmail.com

Elder: Sean Knaak [Mindy]

Email: scknaak@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Ted Means

2719 South Yellowstone St.
Wichita, KS 67215

Phone: 316-721-5908

Email: treasurer.trinityrpc@cox.net

Winchester, Kansas, RPC (PA)

306 Delaware Street
Winchester, Kansas 66097

Send all mail to
PO Box H

Pastor: Kyle Borg [Rachel]. Installed 2013.

PO Box 181
Winchester, KS 66097

Phone: 913-297-4053

Email: borgkyle@gmail.com

Clerk: Jay O'Neill [Cindy]

16657 150th St.
Winchester, KS 66097

Phone: 913-774-8791

Email: jk76oneill@gmail.com

Elders: David Huston [Joye]

Email: husteigh@gmail.com

Bob Lyon [Rita]

Email: blyon@ku.edu

James Tweed [Jill]

Email: jbtweed2@gmail.com

Deacon Chairman: Justin Finley [Molly]

12964 Rawlins Rd.
Winchester, KS 66097

Phone: 785-817-7211

Email: jf4646@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Bryan Noll

Email: bwnoll@gmail.com

Christian Education Chairman: Bob Lyon (see above)

Retired Ministers and/or Ordained Men Without Pastorates

Stan Copeland [Marilyn]

531 Lincoln St.
Quinter, KS 67752

Phone: 520-255-6948

Email: Stanley.Copeland@gmail.com

Paul W. Finley [Elizabeth]

811 Frazier St.
Valley Falls, KS 66088

Phone: 785-945-3895
Email: pefinley78@gmail.com

Ron Graham [Gay]

7155 Mathews Rd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80908-4318

Phone: 719-313-9223
Cell: 785-672-5098
Email: rgraham1953@gmail.com

Robert L. Hemphill [Cheryl]

1867 North 15th St.
Laramie, WY 82072

Phone: 307-745-8721
Cell: 307-399-8710
Email: Bobhemp@juno.com

Jonathan B. Leach [Mary Lou]

9519 Geronimo Oaks
San Antonio, TX 78254-1728

Phone: 210-347-5116
Email: lonestarleach@gmail.com
Email: hispeace4u@yahoo.com

Dr. EM

Robert H. McFarland [Georgia]

5460 SW 53rd St.
Topeka, KS 66610

Phone: 785-862-1835
Email: BGMcF58@aol.com

Jerrold S. Milroy [Saundy]

2028 Downing Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Phone: 719-694-9081
Cell: 913-488-0005
Email: jsmilroy@gmail.com

Kelly Moore [Judy]

3020 Vandenberg Ave.
Monument, CO 80132

Phone: 910-728-6612
Email: kjmchap@gmail.com

Joe Paul [Marla]

5789 SW 116th Place Rd.
Ocala, FL 34476

Phone: 941-301-1421
Email: jcpaul88@yahoo.com

David R. Smith [Joann]

8850 W. 80th Dr.
Arvada, CO 80005

Cell: 303-557-8259
Email: David@drsmithproperties.com

Gene Spear [Ruth]

714 South Church Terrace
Olathe, KS 66061

Phone: 913-390-5817
Email: tencommandmentsnow@gmail.com

John H. Tweed [Alta]

300 Poplar; PO Box 237
Winchester, KS 66097

Phone: 913-774-2529
Email: jhtweed@yahoo.com

Jeffrey Yelton [Susan]

1741 Main St.
Osawatomie, KS 66064

Phone: 913-755-7050
Email: reformthechurch@yahoo.com

Ministerial Students Under Care

Rob Haynes	Email: robhaynes1165@hotmail.com
Garrett Mann	Email: garrett.w.mann@gmail.com
Romesh Prakashpalan	Email: romeshprakash@hotmail.com
Tim Yin	Email: tianzhixi.yin@gmail.com

Pacific Coast Presbytery Roster (July 2018)

ModeratorMark England
 Clerk Nathan Eshelman
 Treasurer Aaron Piper; Email: AaronPiper@comcast.net
 Young People’s Co-coordinators..... Paul and Megan Hemphill
 Ad Interim CommissionPhoenix Session

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. Phone: 714-404-9908
 Placentia, CA 92870 Email: sawtelleboyz@yahoo.com

Clerk: John Spitzer [Jessica]
 3010 La Paz Ln. Unit A Phone: 909-576-5785
 Diamond Bar, CA 91765 Email: jmospitzer@gmail.com

Elder: Oscar Fernandez [Gurli] Email: oacnmt@gmail.com

Treasurer and Deacon: Victor Triana [Adriana]
 13970 Ramhurst Dr. Apt. 6 Phone: 562-464-8238
 La Mirada, CA 90638 Email: vhtriana@gmail.com

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada—The Shelter RPC

Meeting at: 11533-135 Street Edmonton, AB T5M 1K9 Canada	Website: https://shelterrpbchurch.com
--	--

Pastors: Bob Hackett. Installed 2004.
 11920-129 Street
 Edmonton, AB T5L 1G6, Canada

Derek Baars. Installed 2018.

12203-129a Street

Phone: 780-482-2095

Edmonton, AB T5L 1K5, Canada

Elder: Jordan Dohms

11936 128 Street NW

Edmonton, AB T5L 1C1, Canada

Treasurer: Eric Mulder

Fresno, California, RPC

380 North Maple Avenue

Website: www.fresnorpcchurch.org

Fresno, California, 93702

Pastor: Samuel Ketcham [Dorsey]. Installed 2018.

264 N. Burgan Ave.

Phone: 205-516-4360

Fresno, CA 93727

Email: samuel.Ketcham2@gmail.com

Clerk: Danny Gathright [Kathy]

1073 North Filbert Ave.

Phone: 559-779-8549

Clovis, CA 93611

Email: dgathright@gmail.com

Elders: Bus Archer [Cheryl]

Email: thebuzzard00@aol.com

Paul Hemphill [Megan]

Email: hemphill.paul@gmail.com

Elder Emeritus: Bill Copeland [Willa]

Treasurer: Paul Hemphill [Megan]

Phone: 559-392-2139

Email: hemphill.paul@gmail.com

Irvine, California — All Saints RP Church

Meeting at Northwood Community Center

Mailing address: All Saints RP Church

4531 Bryan Ave.

14 Brentwood

Irvine, California 92620

Irvine, CA 92620

Website: www.asrpci.org

Pastor: Hsing Tang [Nancy]. Installed 2017.

14 Brentwood

Phone: 949-751-7816

Irvine, CA 92620

Email: irvinerpc@gmail.com

Elder and Clerk: Howard Huizing

Treasurer: Casey Tray

Las Vegas, Nevada, RP Mission Church

Meeting at 2800 W. Sahara Ave. #8A

Las Vegas, Nevada 89102

Website: www.lasvegasreformedpresbyterianchurch.com

Contacts: Mr. Chris Farnsworth and Mr. Sean Holm

Phone: 702-907-LIFE (5433)

Provisional Elders: Timothy McCracken, clerk; John Sawtelle, moderator

Los Angeles, California, RPC

3557 Fletcher Drive

Los Angeles, California 90065

Website: www.rpcla.org

Phone: 323-255-8757

Pastors: Nathan Eshelman [Lydia]. Installed 2009.

3252 Shasta Circle North

Los Angeles, CA 90065

Phone: 323-356-5717

Email: n.p.eshelman@gmail.com

Associate Pastor: Namsik Yang [Eun]. Installed 2015. (Currently on study leave.)

1024 Burton St. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Phone: 412-737-7095

Email: yang40517@hotmail.com

Clerk: David Ashleigh [Sarah]

1130 Magnolia St.

South Pasadena, CA 91030

Phone: 626-703-7187

Email: ashfam6@hotmail.com

Elders: Howard Huizing [Irene]

Roel Ophoff [Marjan]

Hector Pino [Dottiann]

Email: hguard1939@gmail.com

Email: ophoff@gmail.com

Email: hcpino@aol.com

Treasurer: Hector Pino

4524 Stanton Dr.

Los Angeles, CA 90065

Phoenix, Arizona — First RPC

1117 East Devonshire

Phoenix, Arizona 85014

Website: www.psalms4phoenix.com

Phone: 602-277-3497

Pastor: Jon Maginn [Bonnie]. Installed 2000.

3827 North 73rd Dr.

Phoenix, AZ 85033

Phone: 602-751-7035

Email: PastorJonMaginn@msn.com

Clerk: Charles Shipman [Thy]

15147 West Cortez St.

Surprise, AZ 85379

Phone: 602-309-8670

Email: charleshshipman@gmail.com

Elder: Nathan Anseth [Jenifer]

Email: nathan.anseth@gmail.com

Treasurer: D.J. Shirey [Linda]

1017 E. Echo Ln.
Phoenix, AZ 85020

Phone: 602-515-6410
Email: dj.shirey@gmail.com

Reno, Nevada—Great Basin Reformed Presbyterian Church

Mailing address:
c/o Mr. Colin Samul
6909 Brahms Dr
Sun Valley, NV 89433

Meeting at (5pm Lord's Day worship)
Evangelical Free Church
9725 S Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89511

TGB: Sam Ketcham (moderator), Bus Archer, Danny Gathright, Paul Hemphill

Contact: Andrew Cunningham

Phone: 775-527-5273
Email: isaiah53ac@gmail.com

San Diego, California, RPC

3495 College Avenue
San Diego, California 92115

Website: www.sandiegorpc.org
Phone: 619-582-0940

Pastor: Mark England. Installed 2003.

2519 Camino de Las Palmas
Lemon Grove, CA 92115

Cell: 619-402-8233
Email: dme2810@gmail.com

Provisional Elders: Jon Maginn (see Phoenix); John Spitzer (see Brea)

Treasurer: Kelli Sullivan [Bill]

3248 Atlas St.
San Diego, CA 92111

Phone: 858-569-8458
Email: kellijo@san.rr.com

Seattle, Washington, RPC

6554 20th Avenue NE
Seattle, Washington 98115

Website: www.seattlerpcchurch.org
Phone: 206-522-3187

Pastor: Ryan Hemphill [Alicia]. Installed 2009.

1915 NE 68th St.
Seattle, WA 98115

Phone: 206-715-0988
Email: pastormchemp@gmail.com

Clerk: Don Lamont [Karen]

5636 North East 200th Pl.
Kenmore, WA 98028

Phone: 206-856-6304
Email: dm.lamont@comcast.net

Elders: Dennis Olson [Karen]

Paul Perkins [Pat]
Joel Martin [Jennifer]

Email: olson1de@aol.com
Email: perkins48@q.com
Email: joel.martin3@comcast.net

Dave Robb [Jeana]

Email: dave@daverobb.net

Elder Emeritus: Richard Buck [Leah]

Email: SeattleBucks@comcast.net

Squamish, British Columbia—Coram Deo RP Mission Church

Meeting location: *All mail to pastor.*

Brennan Park Recreation Center (Tantalus Room)

1009 Centennial Way

Squamish, BC V0N 1T0, CANADA

Church Planter: Patrick McNeely. Ordained April 2018.

41839 Hope Rd., PO Box 40

Phone: 720-982-3464

Brackendale, BC, V0N 1H0

Email: pdmcneel@gmail.com

Canada

Provisional Elders (TGB): Ryan Hemphill, moderator

Sam Ketcham; Don Lamont, clerk; Dave Reese, consultative

Retired Ministers and Missionaries

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.

Phone: 559-455-3356

Fresno, CA 93702

Email: fresnomcc@sbcglobal.net

Don Piper [Boni]

2529 Elm Drive

Phone: 425-778-1981

Brier, WA 98036

Email: dwpiper@aol.com

Students Under Care

Jerry Foltz

Phone: 562-862-9140

Email: jfoltz@rpts.edu

Sean Holm (Las Vegas)

Phone: 702-606-9286

Email: seancholm@gmail.com

Stephen Mulder

Phone: 780-918-6531

Email: stephenmulder14@gmail.com

Colin Samul

Phone: 616-719-9922

Email: colinsamul23@gmail.com

George Wallace

Phone: 412-327-6519

Email: george.John.Wallace@gmail.com

ST. LAWRENCE PRESBYTERY

ModeratorD. 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

..... Matthew Sloots, Phone: 613-836-4239.

..... Email: st.lawrence.pres.RPCNA.CDA@gmail.com

Presbytery Youth..... Chris Goerner, 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.

951 Ramsay Con. 4A

Cell: 613-791-4811

Mississippi Mills, Ontario, K7C 3P1 Email: mhdyck@rogers.com

Clerk: Gerry deHaan

Email: gndehaan@xplornet.com

Elders: Bob Van Noppen

Email: bvannoppen@hotmail.com

Bill Lowry

Email: wlowry@storm.ca

Treasurer: Tony Welk

Phone: 613-256-0842

Email: tntwelk@aol.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
3956 Pawnee Dr.
Liverpool, NY 13090
Phone: 315-652-1787
Cell: 315-372-4884
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

Meeting at: (Send mail to pastor, below.)
1000 Day Hollow Rd.
Endicott, NY 13760

Pastor: Doug Chamberlain [Kimberly]
306 Lillian Ave.
Endicott, NY 13760
Phone: 607-205-2832
Email: doug@rockhollow.org

Clerk: Cory Valentine
26054 State Route 29
Hallstead, PA 18822
Phone: 570-967-2083
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: Wendy Valentine (see Cory Valentine, above)

Floyd, NY — Christ Church

8470 New Floyd Road
Rome, NY 13340
Website: 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: George Goerner
1 Huntington Pl.
New Hartford, NY 13413
Phone: 315-738-1385
Email: GGoerner@mvcc.edu

Elder: Chip Lorraine
Email: chiplorraine@gmail.com

Treasurer: Mike Kelly
8459 New Floyd Rd.
Rome, NY 13440
Phone: 315-204-4094
Email: kellyilion@aol.com

Fulton, New York, RPC

207 South First St.
Fulton, NY 13069

Phone: 315-402-8727
Website: www.fultonrpc.org

Pastor: Nick lamaio [Kathleen]. Installed 1994.

162 County Route 24
Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-343-1976
Email: nicholasiamai@gmail.com

Clerk: Kevin Plummer (see Oswego)

Treasurer: Rachel Tumbry

118 Batavia Ave
Fulton NY 13069

Phone: 315-593-6691
Email: hit3forme@yahoo.com

Kitchener, Ontario — New Creation RPC

Scholars Hall
888 Trillium, Kitchener

(Send mail to Pastor, below)
Website: www.newcreationrpc.org

Pastor: J. Scott Wilkinson [Elineke]. Installed 2010.

154 Martinglen Crescent
Kitchener, ON, Canada N2E 2A2
Email: snewilkinson@gmail.com

Phone: 519-578-7588
Cell: 519-505-1983

Clerk: Rob Somers

104-320 Kingswood Dr.
Kitchener, Ontario, N2E 2K2

Phone: 519-622-5713
Email: uberkermit@gmail.com

Treasurer: Sam Sutherland

129 Farnham Road, RR2
Guelph, Ontario N1H 6H8

Phone: 519-824-9983
Email: sutherlandhq@gmail.com

Lisbon, New York, RPC

Cemetery and Tuck Roads, PO Box 88
Lisbon, NY 13658

Website: <http://lisbonrpc.org>

Pastor: Vacant

Clerk: Don Smith

420 Dezell Road
Lisbon, NY 13658

Phone: 315-393-2179
Email: smith.extra.don@gmail.com

Treasurer: Doreen Sweeney

1594 Old DeKalb Rd.
Canton, NY 13617

Phone: 315-386-1489

Montreal, Quebec, Canada — Hudson – St. Lazare RPC

Meeting at: Église Baptiste Évangélique de Vaudreuil

90 Cité des Jeunes Blvd.

Vaudreuil-Dorion, QC J7V 8B9

Pastor: Vacant**Clerk:** Brian Brodie

22265 Brodie Rd.

Dalkeith, Ontario K0B 1E0

Phone: 613-874-2989

Email: uplook@xplornet.ca

Elder: Victor Tochijara

Email: victor.tochijara@gmail.com

Treasurer: Gwen Brodie (see Clerk address, above)**Oswego, New York, RPC**

154 City Line Rd.

Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-343-7112

Website: www.oswegorpc.org

Pastor: Walter "Kit" Swartz [Karen]. Installed 1980.

119 East Third St.

Oswego NY 13126

Email: oswegorpc@hotmail.com

Phone: 315-343-0581

Cell: 517-630-6325

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

Ottawa, Ontario, RPC

Box 23139

Ottawa, Ontario K2A 4E2

Phone: 613-596-5566

Website: www.rpcottawa.org

Pastor: Andrew Quigley [Heather]

Email: sandrewq@aol.com

Clerk: Allan Cameron

1100 St. Germain Crescent

Orleans, ON K1C 2L8

Phone: 613-837-5290

Email: allan-cameron@gmx.com

Elders: Dan Dupuis

Cory Vandermeer

Email: dan_dupuis1@hotmail.com

Email: coryVandermeer@gmail.com

Elder Emeritus: Aubrey Ayer

Email: aubrey.e.ayer@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

Pastor: Vacant. Moderator William Pihl, below.

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: whpihl@earthlink.net

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

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: Ernst Vandermeer

Email: ecVandermeer@gmail.com

Elder: Hank Vedder

Greg Alexander

Chris Farenhorst

Email: hrvedder@gmail.com

Email: ghalexander99@gmail.com

Email: chrisfaren1@gmail.com

Syracuse, New York, RPC

2517 South Salina St.

Phone: 315-476-5618

Syracuse, NY 13205

Email (secretary): syracuserc@verizon.net

Website: www.syracuserc.org

Pastor: Vacant. Moderator Bob Rice, see below.
Clerk: Bruce Trexler

Phone: 315-677-3775

3111 US Route 11N

Cell: 315-399-7535

LaFayette, NY 13084

Email: brucerpc.trexler@gmail.com

Elders: Bob Pinkerton

Email: pinkertonfamily6@yahoo.com

Robert Rice

Email: rgrice1947@hotmail.com

Jonathan Wright

Email: wrightj@upstate.edu

Jeff Bulow

Email: jabulow@gmail.com

Eric Charlton

Email: echarlton@twcny.rr.com

Treasurer: Shari Huggins, c/o church addresses above

Phone: 315-696-6451

Toronto, Ontario, Canada — Evangelical Presbyterian

593 Sheppard Ave. E.

Phone: 416-222-4131

Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2K 1B4

Pastor: D. Allan MacLeod [Alison]. Received 2015.

113 Heatherside Dr.

Phone: 416-913-2671

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Membership Statistics 2017

	Total Members 12/31/2016	Total Members 12/31/2017	Average Worship Attendance	Communicant Members	Baptized Members	Bapt. Mem. Becoming Comm.	By Baptism	Upon Profession of Faith
ALLEGHENIES								
College Hill, Beaver Falls, PA	282	303	300	230	73	2	12	8
Covenant Fellowship RPC, PA	145	144	80	112	32	0	2	0
Covenant RPC, Aurora, OH	28	29	24	22	7	0	1	0
Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA	55	42	30	24	18	0	0	0
Eastvale RPC, PA	56	54	45	40	14	1	2	0
First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA	112	120	82	82	38	0	3	2
Grace and Truth MC, Harrisonburg, VA	38	37	23	16	21	0	1	0
Grace Presbyterian, State College, PA	73	56	42	46	10	0	0	1
Grace RPC, Gibsonia, PA	153	159	131	114	45	1	2	2
Manchester RPC, New Kens., PA	58	57	45	50	7	0	1	2
North Hills RPC, Pittsburgh, PA	164	155	175	126	29	0	2	5
Providence RPC, Pittsburgh, PA	130	120	100	76	44	3	3	2
Rimersburg RPC, PA	19	20	10	17	3	0	0	0
Rose Point RPC, PA	80	87	65	63	24	3	3	1
Trinity RPC, MD	144	160	125	98	62	2	6	1
Tusca Area RPC, Beaver, PA	59	59	0	40	19	0	1	0
TOTAL	1,596	1,602	1,277	1,156	446	12	39	24
ATLANTIC								
Broomall RPC, PA	72	77	60	59	18	0	3	0
Christ RPC, Providence, RI	80	66	75	44	22	0	2	0
Coldenham-Newburgh RPC, NY	34	32	18	27	5	0	0	0
Elkins Park RPC, PA	52	53	60	36	17	2	2	0
First RPC of Cambridge, MA	68	85	62	55	30	3	1	2
Hazleton Area RPC, PA	79	79	69	46	33	0	0	1
Ridgefield Park RPC, NJ	35	36	25	31	5	0	0	3
Walton RPC, NY	40	35	22	31	4	0	1	0
White Lake RPC, NY	98	107	65	79	28	0	6	6
TOTAL	558	570	456	408	162	5	15	12

Notes - Congregations in bold type did not submit complete statistical reports for 2017. To more accurately reflect the totals for the denomination, statistics from 2016 or earlier have been inserted instead of blanks.

Increase in 2017				Decrease in 2017						Elders	Deacons
From RP Church	From Other Denominations	Other	Total	Deaths	To RP Church	To Other Denominations	Final Removal	Other	Total		
8	3	9	40	1	5	13	0	0	19	9	11
4	2	0	8	2	7	0	0	0	9	3	7
0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1
0	0	0	0	1	4	5	0	3	13	3	1
2	0	1	5	1	2	4	0	0	7	2	1
7	0	0	12	2	2	0	0	0	4	7	5
8	0	0	9	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	0
0	3	0	4	1	9	3	0	8	21	4	2
9	9	0	22	0	15	0	1	0	16	6	0
2	0	0	5	1	5	0	0	0	6	4	3
2	2	0	11	2	8	3	7	0	20	5	6
0	3	0	8	1	9	7	1	0	18	5	4
0	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
9	1	0	14	2	4	0	1	0	7	3	5
10	5	1	23	1	0	6	0	0	7	6	6
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2
61	28	15	167	17	80	41	10	13	161	64	54
2	2	0	7	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	4
3	6	0	11	0	0	9	16	0	25	4	3
2	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	4	1	1
0	4	0	6	0	2	2	1	0	5	2	2
11	7	0	21	0	0	3	1	0	4	2	1
0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	2
0	0	2	3	0	3	0	0	5	8	4	1
0	0	0	12	0	0	0	3	0	3	4	5
18	20	2	67	2	6	15	24	8	55	24	21

Membership Statistics 2017

	Total Members 12/31/2016	Total Members 12/31/2017	Average Worship Attendance	Communicant Members	Baptized Members	Bapt. Mem. Becoming Comm.	By Baptism	Upon Profession of Faith
GREAT LAKES / GULF								
Atlanta Fellowship, Pr. St., GA	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0
Belle Center RPC, OH	44	45	35	33	12	0	0	0
Bloomington RPC, IN	160	162	164	116	46	0	3	2
Christ Church RPC, Brownsburg, IN	93	96	75	64	32	7	2	0
Columbus RPC, IN	143	144	94	103	41	1	3	3
Dayton RP Mission Church., TN	14	14	30	12	2	0	0	0
Elkhart RPC, IN	54	50	55	36	14	2	1	0
First RPC of Durham, NC	20	22	37	22	0	2	0	3
First RPC of Grand Rapids, MI	23	28	40	23	5	0	1	1
Hetherton RPC, MI	14	14	16	12	2	0	0	0
Immanuel RPC, W. Lafayette, IN	121	137	108	62	75	0	5	8
Lafayette RPC, IN	149	131	107	87	44	0	0	2
Marion RPC, IN	39	49	50	38	11	3	1	0
Orlando RPC, FL	79	83	67	62	21	0	1	1
Pageland Mission Church, SC	27	34	30	19	15	0	10	3
Second Reformed, Indianapolis, IN	238	239	175	195	44	7	9	5
Selma RPC, AL	24	22	14	22	0	0	0	0
Southfield RPC, MI	38	38	41	31	7	0	1	1
Southside RPC, Indianapolis, IN	219	220	210	159	61	1	8	5
Southwest OH RP MC, W. Chester OH	20	31	21	19	12	0	2	2
Sparta RPC, IL	25	23	17	18	5	0	0	0
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo, IN	56	60	65	38	22	0	6	0
Terre Haute RP MC, IN	27	29	32	20	9	0	1	1
Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL	30	31	20	25	6	0	1	0
Presbytery Roll	32	32	0	23	9	0	0	0
TOTAL	1,689	1,734	1,530	1,239	495	23	55	37

Notes - Congregations in bold type did not submit complete statistical reports for 2017. To more accurately reflect the totals for the denomination, statistics from 2016 or earlier have been inserted instead of blanks.

Increase in 2017				Decrease in 2017						Elders	Deacons	
From RP Church	From Other Denominations	Other	Total	Deaths	To RP Church	To Other Denominations	Final Removal	Other	Total			
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
0	8	0	13	0	0	4	7	0	11	4	6	6
3	0	1	6	1	0	1	0	1	3	4	3	3
0	2	0	8	0	2	1	1	3	7	4	5	5
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	4	0	6	0	1	3	4	2	10	3	2	2
0	1	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0
1	3	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
9	0	0	22	0	0	4	2	0	6	2	4	4
0	3	0	5	2	10	6	5	0	23	6	3	3
1	8	1	11	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	4
0	0	0	13	0	6	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
2	2	2	20	1	7	8	1	2	19	9	7	7
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	4	3	3
0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	0
4	0	0	17	1	2	8	4	1	16	9	9	9
0	7	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1
0	0	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	4	3	0	0
1	2	0	9	1	0	4	0	0	5	3	1	1
0	1	1	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	44	7	165	9	30	46	26	9	120	71	50	50

Membership Statistics 2017

	Total Members 12/31/2016	Total Members 12/31/2017	Average Worship Attendance	Communicant Members	Baptized Members	Bapt. Mem. Becoming Comm.	By Baptism	Upon Profession of Faith
JAPAN								
Higashisuma, Kobe	82	81	40	52	29	0	0	0
Kasumigaoka, Kobe	51	52	25	40	12	0	1	1
Kita-Suzurandai Mission, Kobe	22	21	11	18	3	0	0	0
Mukonosu, Kobe	24	29	23	24	5	0	0	1
Okamoto-Keiyaku, Kobe	68	71	22	48	23	0	1	2
TOTAL	247	254	121	182	72	0	2	4

Notes - Congregations in bold type did not submit complete statistical reports for 2017. To more accurately reflect the totals for the denomination, statistics from 2016 or earlier have been inserted instead of blanks.

Increase in 2017				Decrease in 2017						Elders	Deacons
From RP Church	From Other Denominations	Other	Total	Deaths	To RP Church	To Other Denominations	Final Removal	Other	Total		
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
0	5	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
0	5	0	11	4	0	0	0	0	4	10	5

Membership Statistics 2017

	Total Members 12/31/2016	Total Members 12/31/2017	Average Worship Attendance	Communicant Members	Baptized Members	Bapt. Mem. Becoming Comm.	By Baptism	Upon Profession of Faith
MIDWEST								
Casper RP Mission Church, WY	21	21	30	7	14	0	0	0
Christ Covenant RPC, Lawrence, KS	69	73	55	51	22	2	0	1
Clarinda RPC, IA	25	19	17	15	4	1	0	0
Dallas RPC, TX	38	38	35	21	17	0	0	0
Denison RPC, KS	49	48	30	39	9	0	0	0
Enid Reformed Church, OK	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hebron RPC, Clay Center, KS	46	45	30	36	9	0	0	0
Laramie RPC, WY	27	39	35	26	13	0	4	4
Living Way RP Mission, Bryan, TX	19	26	24	16	10	0	2	0
Manhattan RPC, KS	47	52	47	33	19	0	5	1
Minneola RPC, KS	24	24	12	20	4	0	0	0
Quinter RPC, KS	30	30	20	26	4	0	0	0
Salt and Light RPC, Longmont, CO	72	76	44	51	25	0	2	0
Sharon RPC, Morning Sun, IA	60	58	31	50	8	0	1	0
Shawnee RPC, KS	144	145	120	106	39	6	0	1
Springs Reformed, Colo. Springs, CO	194	192	150	135	57	4	1	4
Sterling RPC, KS	111	111	95	71	40	0	0	0
Stillwater RPC, OK	75	76	66	53	23	1	2	0
Topeka RPC, KS	107	113	114	91	22	5	0	2
Tri-Lakes Reformed, Monument, CO	59	89	75	64	25	0	3	3
Trinity Reformed, Wichita, KS	42	33	32	19	14	1	0	0
Washington RPC, IA	47	47	36	37	10	0	0	0
Westminster RPC, CO	77	83	70	57	26	2	5	3
Winchester RPC, KS	67	71	60	54	17	3	0	0
Presbytery Roll	5	5		5				
TOTAL	1,503	1,514	1,228	1,083	431	25	25	19

Notes - Congregations in bold type did not submit complete statistical reports for 2017. To more accurately reflect the totals for the denomination, statistics from 2016 or earlier have been inserted instead of blanks.

Increase in 2017				Decrease in 2017						Elders	Deacons
From RP Church	From Other Denominations	Other	Total	Deaths	To RP Church	To Other Denominations	Final Removal	Other	Total		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	7	4
0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	6	2	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	0	48	0	0
2	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	3	2
1	3	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
7	0	0	9	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
2	0	0	8	0	3	0	0	0	3	5	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
2	1	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	3
0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	3	2	5
4	0	0	5	0	4	0	0	0	4	5	5
0	3	3	11	1	11	0	1	0	13	3	4
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	7
3	1	0	6	0	5	0	0	0	5	3	2
0	4	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	7
12	12	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
0	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	0	9	3	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
0	8	0	16	1	4	2	3	0	10	4	4
8	0	0	8	0	1	2	1	0	4	4	5
45	32	3	124	5	34	66	8	0	113	73	69

Membership Statistics 2017

	Total Members 12/31/2016	Total Members 12/31/2017	Average Worship Attendance	Communicant Members	Baptized Members	Bapt. Mem. Becoming Comm.	By Baptism	Upon Profession of Faith
PACIFIC COAST								
All Saints RPC, Brea, CA	72	72	52	53	19	0	0	0
Fresno RPC, CA	83	64	35	44	20	1	3	1
Irvine RPC, CA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Los Angeles RPC, CA	74	83	83	60	23	0	4	0
Las Vegas RPC, NV	0	33	25	19	14	0	0	0
Phoenix, First RPC, AZ	29	31	28	23	8	0	0	0
San Diego RPC, CA	65	63	55	37	26	0	0	0
Seattle RPC, WA	82	79	53	63	16	1	1	0
TOTAL	405	425	331	299	126	2	8	1
ST. LAWRENCE								
Christ Church, Rome, NY	59	59	55	43	16	0	0	0
Christian Heritage RP MC, Endicott, NY	35	35	28	32	3	0	0	0
Evangelical RPC, Toronto, Ontario	32	38	50	35	3	0	0	2
Fulton RPC, NY	20	21	30	20	1	1	0	0
Hillside RPC, Almonte, Ontario	75	80	85	56	24	0	0	2
Hudson-St. Lazare, Quebec	58	59	55	33	26	0	1	0
Lisbon RPC, NY	80	79	63	46	33	2	1	7
Messiah's Church, Clay, NY	42	33	35	30	3	0	0	0
New Creation RPC, Kitchener, ONT	36	38	32	24	14	0	1	0
Oswego RPC, NY	71	53	60	47	6	0	1	4
Ottawa RPC, Ontario	109	126	137	76	50	1	9	1
Rochester RPC, NY	67	75	65	51	24	0	3	3
Russell RPC, Ontario	158	160	170	92	68	3	2	1
Shelter RPC, Edmonton, Alberta	58	65	58	38	27	0	2	2
Syracuse RPC, NY	177	169	99	131	38	0	5	0
Presbytery Roll	1	1		1				
TOTAL	1,078	1,091	1,022	755	336	7	25	22
GRAND TOTAL	7,076	7,190	5,966	5,122	2,068	74	169	119

Increase in 2017				Decrease in 2017						Elders	Deacons
From RP Church	From Other Denominations	Other	Total	Deaths	To RP Church	To Other Denominations	Final Removal	Other	Total		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
6	0	0	10	0	1	1	27	0	29	2	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	6	1	11	0	0	0	0	2	2	6	2
32	0	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
3	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2
0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0
0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	4	4	5
41	7	2	59	0	3	4	30	2	39	18	13
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
1	3	1	7	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
0	8	0	10	0	1	2	0	2	5	3	3
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
0	1	0	9	1	8	1	0	0	10	2	3
0	2	0	2	0	0	5	6	0	11	1	2
1	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
0	0	0	5	0	1	15	7	0	23	3	4
1	14	0	25	0	0	6	0	2	8	4	4
0	3	0	9	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	4
0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2
2	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
0	0	0	5	0	0	7	5	1	13	5	5
5	32	4	88	2	12	36	19	6	75	38	36
192	168	33	681	39	165	208	117	38	567	298	248

Financial Statistics 2017

	Balance 12/31/2016	Receipts 2017					Pastor's Total Compensation	Parsonage
		Contributions (Ordinary Rec.)	Other Rec. (Not Rest.)	Other Rec. (Restricted gifts)	Sup. Aid Prsby. and HMB	Total Receipts 2017		
ALLEGHENIES								
College Hill RPC, Beaver Falls, PA	48,951	473,218	9,531	34,381	0	517,130	87,030	No
Covenant Fellowship RPC, PA	110,353	184,649	15,428	60,949	0	261,026	67,400	No
Covenant RPC, Aurora, OH	71,538	62,533	0	3,250	1,000	66,783	53,244	No
Covenant RPC, Meadville, PA	80,507	80,810	0	510	0	81,320	4,952	No
Eastvale RPC, PA	49,401	80,286	8,516	26,637	0	115,439	69,510	No
First RPC of Beaver Falls, PA	88,974	170,491	0	28,111	0	198,602	18,213	Yes
Grace and Truth MC, Harrisonburg, VA	55,783	76,744	31	0	24,308	101,083	25,345	No
Grace Presbyterian, State College, PA	81,676	124,663	0	2,410	0	127,073	0	No
Grace RPC, Gibsonia, PA	56,709	368,387	0	58,438	0	426,825	107,277	Yes
Manchester RPC, New Kens., PA	9,101	117,262	0	4,041	0	121,303	70,396	Yes
North Hills RPC, Pittsburgh, PA	66,423	354,192	32,411	36,526	0	423,129	108,738	No
Providence RPC, Pittsburgh, PA	27,490	146,592	162	2,351	0	149,105	90,112	No
Rimersburg RPC, PA	327	31,540	2,020	0	0	33,560	30,345	No
Rose Point RPC, PA	19,405	103,860	0	968	0	104,828	55,367	Yes
Trinity RPC, MD	242,871	313,229	42,878	24,593	0	380,700	114,800	No
Tusca Area RPC, Beaver, PA	43,973	83,929	2,011	0	0	85,940	37,500	No
TOTAL	1,053,483	2,772,384	112,988	283,165	25,308	3,193,845	940,229	4
ATLANTIC								
Broomall RPC, PA	31,368	118,361	3,839	42,157	11,250	175,607	60,703	Yes
Christ RPC, Providence, RI	68,596	126,203	596	16,002	0	142,801	92,997	No
Coldenham-Newburgh RPC, NY	17,240	52,175	882	500	500	54,057	27,071	Yes
Elkins Park RPC, PA	22,925	80,911	10	11,949	0	92,870	58,021	Yes
First RPC of Cambridge, MA	150,684	164,561	1,000	4,389	0	169,950	36,600	Yes
Hazleton Area RPC, PA	23,445	72,813	15	7,885	0	80,713	56,015	No
Ridgefield Park RPC, NJ	91,078	103,750	31,501	0	22,498	157,749	82,720	No
Walton RPC, NY	27,387	82,273	16,117	0	0	98,390	55,952	Yes
White Lake RPC, NY	21,000	102,678	3,028	13,856	0	119,562	57,540	No
TOTAL	453,723	903,725	56,988	119,236	11,750	1,091,699	527,619	5

Expenses 2017							Balance	Transfers In	Final Checking	Other Assets	Budgeted
Pastor's #2 Total Compensation	Parsonage #2	RPM&M	Other RP Works	External Ministries	Other Internal Expenses	Total Distributions	12/31/2017	or Out (-)	Balance 12/31/2017		Pastor's Sal. '18
57,801	No	37,500	40,609	13,050	230,657	466,647	99,434	-62,120	37,314	329,389	158,538
0	No	7,622	7,340	2,000	116,169	200,531	170,848	0	170,848	0	71,000
0	No	0	0	0	24,964	78,208	60,113	0	60,113	0	52,480
0	No	1,875	3,305	0	33,695	43,827	118,000	0	118,000	0	61,141
0	No	4,484	3,009	1,793	28,737	107,533	57,307	-36,957	20,350	36,562	68,637
2,719	No	11,126	29,103	951	106,644	168,756	118,820	-84,270	34,550	86,557	65,892
21,316	No	1,000	2,179	1,000	13,657	64,496	92,370	-73,150	19,220	73,150	58,927
0	No	5,225	6,020	4,550	61,572	77,367	131,382	0	131,382	66,513	25,000
0	No	3,000	37,746	13,210	121,752	282,985	200,549	-108,479	92,070	59,178	114,800
0	No	1,390	8,810	724	35,135	116,455	13,94	-5,000	8,949	41,403	71,000
94,741	No	5,585	25,537	16,025	127,599	378,225	111,327	-50,000	61,327	140,043	254,404
19,278	No	400	3,152	0	21,355	134,297	42,297	0	42,297	148,701	113,365
0	No	0	0	0	3,731	34,076	-188	1,500	1,312	4,032	28,375
0	No	7,500	5,129	500	41,032	109,528	14,705	0	14,705	6,984	55,500
0	No	2,000	12,865	3,920	195,264	328,849	294,722	0	294,722	0	133,724
0	No	1,000	2,596	100	33,884	75,080	54,833	0	54,833	0	38,300
195,855	0	89,707	187,400	57,823	1,195,847	2,666,861	1,580,468	-418,476	1,161,992	992,512	1,371,083
0	No	6,000	38,623	2,136	54,665	162,127	44,848	0	44,848	6,000	62,900
29,167	No	8,835	4,695	600	51,246	187,540	23,857	0	23,857	201,057	145,635
11,040	Yes	0	2,640	456	23,103	64,310	6,987	0	6,987	121	26,000
0	No	1,500	2,831	200	34,537	97,089	18,706	0	18,706	0	61,768
0	No	5,171	11,943	1,456	76,900	132,071	188,563	-3,000	185,563	112,800	79,200
0	No	0	7,273	7,885	8,708	79,881	24,277	0	24,277	0	57,351
0	No	1,066	6,906	510	66,547	157,749	91,078	0	91,078	468,077	90,227
0	No	10,034	6,677	0	26,173	98,836	26,941	0	26,941	363,567	53,510
0	No	1,500	7,117	600	49,105	115,862	24,700	0	24,700	0	48,700
40,207	1	34,106	88,705	13,843	390,985	1,095,465	449,957	-3,000	446,957	1,151,622	625,291

Financial Statistics 2017

	Balance 12/31/2016	Receipts 2017					Total Receipts 2017	Pastor's Total Compensation	Parsonage
		Contributions (Ordinary Rec.)	Other Rec. (Not Rest.)	Other Rec. (Restricted gifts)	Sup. Aid Prsby. and HMB				
GREAT LAKES / GULF									
Atlanta Fellowship, Preaching St., GA	15,734	22,873	26,582	20,835	0	70,290	24,000	No	
Belle Center RPC, OH	4,919	53,981	1,274	30,500	2,177	87,932	49,164	Yes	
Bloomington RPC, IN	166,409	314,438	5,734	25,141	0	345,313	84,898	No	
Christ Church RPC, Brownsburg, IN	270,473	154,614	2,246	250	0	157,109	98,750	No	
Columbus RPC, IN	63,237	259,317	24	15,910	0	275,251	95,974	No	
Dayton RP Mission Church., TN	4,192	17,636	0	3,102	0	20,738	11,040	No	
Elkhart RPC, IN	85,864	143,298	0	0	0	143,298	60,601	No	
First RPC of Durham, NC	2,570	101,257	0	310	0	101,567	65,757	No	
First RPC of Grand Rapids, MI	89,203	43,639	335	16,945	0	60,919	37,160	No	
Hetherton RPC, MI	29,274	24,496	1,013	731	0	26,240	11,500	Yes	
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette, IN	104,093	176,529	0	9,028	0	185,557	76,265	No	
Lafayette RPC, IN	124,804	227,585	20,946	16,183	0	264,714	72,800	No	
Marion RPC, IN	30,569	66,735	4,620	15,869	2,919	90,143	43,722	No	
Orlando RPC, FL	45,235	111,561	262	12,718	0	124,541	57,877	No	
Pageland Mission Church, SC	23,019	42,780	0	2,050	2,000	46,830	37,880	No	
Second Reformed, Indianapolis, IN	484,786	483,440	9,514	150,916	0	643,869	102,600	No	
Selma RPC, AL	11,373	27,599	5,148	216	0	32,963	0	No	
Southfield RPC, MI	23,377	102,125	28	7,455	0	109,608	69,000	Yes	
Southside RPC, Indianapolis, IN	153,584	484,302	4,093	500	0	488,895	102,126	No	
Southwest Ohio RP MC, W. Chester, OH	22,975	41,858	0	4,392	0	46,249	34,147	No	
Sparta RPC, IL	15,209	39,271	79	737	0	40,087	22,120	Yes	
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo, IN	6,041	104,330	427	5,949	0	110,706	51,200	No	
Terre Haute RP MC, IN	26,209	74,548	11,940	3,550	8,950	98,988	53,350	No	
Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL	29,471	69,796	0	0	0	69,796	45,064	Yes	
Total	1,832,621	3,188,006	94,264	343,286	16,046	3,641,602	1,306,995	5	

Notes - Congregations in bold type did not submit complete statistical reports for 2017. To more accurately reflect the totals for the denomination, statistics from 2016 or earlier have been inserted instead of blanks.

Expenses 2017											
Pastor's #2 Total Compensation	Parsonage #2	RPM&M	Other RP Works	External Ministries	Other Internal Expenses	Total Distributions	Balance 12/31/2017	Transfers In or Out (-)	Final Checking Balance 12/31/2017	Other Assets	Budgeted Pastor's Sal. '18
0	No	145	0	0	34,945	59,090	26,934	-10,070	16,864	10,070	24,000
0	No	743	1,802	0	5,815	57,524	35,327	0	35,327	36,643	50,959
70,186	No	5,155	40,047	6,100	90,393	296,779	214,943	0	214,943	131,835	124,655
0	No	9,805	12,109	3,484	30,464	154,612	272,970	-253,350	19,620	253,350	103,500
0	No	24,000	9,315	35,716	62,119	227,124	111,364	4,591	115,955	0	120,176
0	No	0	0	0	13,890	24,930	0	0	0	0	0
0	No	7,354	6,035	0	83,709	157,698	71,464	0	71,464	0	80,000
0	No	500	2,448	1,000	57,167	126,872	-22,734	34,300	11,566	312,539	71,250
0	No	0	1,506	3,259	15,275	57,200	92,922	0	92,922	22,882	57,740
0	No	200	345	0	14,195	26,240	29,274	0	29,274	0	0
0	No	2,000	5,585	10,375	88,996	183,221	106,429	0	106,429	0	75,300
0	No	7,876	15,948	4,495	153,138	254,257	135,261	98,365	233,626	0	105,583
0	No	50	1,250	250	48,054	93,326	27,386	-13,050	14,336	62,050	42,450
0	No	7,500	4,395	0	42,873	112,645	57,131	0	57,131	0	58,798
0	No	550	837	0	21,619	60,886	8,962	0	8,962	0	25,500
23,328	No	20,000	29,140	69,131	426,950	671,148	457,507	0	457,507	0	147,006
0	No	0	1,210	1,425	39,997	42,632	1,704	0	1,704	103,691	0
0	No	4,870	10,013	0	26,178	110,061	22,924	0	22,924	10,000	71,990
85,519	No	0	26,502	4,200	240,554	458,901	183,578	0	183,578	55,042	193,022
0	No	0	0	0	12,012	46,158	23,066	0	23,066	0	0
0	No	0	2,306	0	13,716	38,142	17,154	0	17,154	0	0
0	No	1,200	2,848	556	32,536	88,340	28,407	-2,756	25,651	5,444	55,800
0	No	675	1,149	300	40,666	96,140	29,057	0	29,057	0	28,383
0	No	500	3,846	0	24,543	73,953	25,314	0	25,314	0	44,700
179,033	0	93,123	178,635	140,291	1,619,801	3,517,879	1,956,345	-141,970	1,814,374	1,003,546	1,480,812

Financial Statistics 2017

	Balance 12/31/2016	Receipts 2017					Total Receipts 2017	Pastor's Total Compensation Parsonage	
		Contributions (Ordinary Rec.)	Other Rec. (Not Rest.)	Other Rec. (Restricted gifts)	Sup. Aid Prsby. and HMB				
JAPAN									
Higashisuma, Kobe	27,285	65,932	23,193	3,413	0	92,538	53,325	No	
Kasumigaoka, Kobe	5,439	53,989	15,139	0	0	69,128	45,212	Yes	
Kita-Suzurandai Mission, Kobe	2,260	11,194	2,105	0	267	13,565	12,924	No	
Mukonosu, Kobe	8,202	34,076	2,040	196	0	36,312	14,062	No	
Okamoto-Keiyaku, Kobe	1,209	34,696	11,732	1,273	0	47,701	26,968	Yes	
Total	44,395	199,886	54,209	4,882	267	259,244	152,490	2	

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Expenses 2017							Balance 12/31/2017	Transfers In or Out (-)	Final Checking Balance 12/31/2017	Other Assets	Budgeted Pastor's Sal. '18
Pastor's #2 Total Compensation	Parsonage #2	RPM&M	Other RP Works	External Ministries	Other Internal Expenses	Total Distributions					
0	No	356	6,390	2,252	13,604	75,926	43,897	0	43,897	103,344	38,804
0	No	0	8,669	1,971	29,222	85,073	-10,506	10,506	0	215,264	37,558
0	No	0	1,068	0	1,712	15,704	121	0	121	30,578	10,324
0	No	178	2,236	1,513	10,684	28,673	15,841	0	15,841	80,463	10,680
0	No	71	3,649	614	13,874	45,176	3,734	0	3,734	44,347	24,564
0	0	605	22,011	6,350	69,096	250,552	53,086	10,506	63,592	473,995	121,930

Financial Statistics 2017

	Balance 12/31/2016	Receipts 2017					Total Receipts 2017	Pastor's Total Compensation	Parsonage
		Contributions (Ordinary Rec.)	Other Rec. (Not Rest.)	Other Rec. (Restricted gifts)	Sup. Aid Prsby. and HMB				
MIDWEST									
Casper RP Mission Church, WY	31,565	42,374	0	350	34,790	77,514	64,400	No	
Christ Covenant RPC, Lawrence, KS	29,466	146,227	0	0	0	146,227	69,527	No	
Clarinda RPC, IA	14,278	25,069	5,628	2,645	0	33,342	25,250	No	
Dallas RPC, TX	30,765	64,263	2,900	340	39,325	106,828	74,358	No	
Denison RPC, KS	1,069	52,565	0	21,979	0	74,543	40,756	Yes	
Enid Reformed Church, OK	73,372	72,272	0	6,490	0	78,762	42,989	No	
Hebron RPC, Clay Center, KS	8,380	59,128	5,001	1,714	0	65,843	22,063	Yes	
Laramie RPC, WY	6,465	40,439	0	486	25,000	65,924	46,747	No	
Living Way RP Mission Church, Bryan, TX	70,816	33,449	250	0	5,000	38,699	36,799	No	
Manhattan RPC, KS	13,797	71,031	0	361	0	71,392	59,800	No	
Minneola RPC, KS	2,223	38,723	36,413	0	0	75,136	38,604	Yes	
Quinter RPC, KS	1,950	49,132	12,815	5,271	10,775	77,993	53,924	No	
Salt and Light RPC, Longmont, CO	34,496	113,307	205	14,370	0	127,882	36,050	No	
Sharon RPC, Morning Sun, IA	32,522	90,487	30	0	0	90,517	24,392	Yes	
Shawnee RPC, KS	101,650	230,962	241	8,895	0	240,098	0	No	
Springs Reformed, Colorado Springs, CO	227,697	542,039	13	52,263	600	594,915	102,401	No	
Sterling RPC, KS	105,271	187,815	2,370	114,509	0	304,694	35,305	Yes	
Stillwater RPC, OK	88,253	200,296	0	21,161	2,000	223,457	95,062	No	
Topeka RPC, KS	26,333	177,868	671	13,101	0	191,640	82,450	No	
Tri-Lakes Reformed, Monument, CO	154,519	195,144	8,000	3,906	0	207,050	40,367	No	
Trinity Reformed, Wichita, KS	19,951	51,998	0	29	8,000	60,026	49,400	No	
Washington RPC, IA	33,995	77,859	8,176	569	0	86,604	53,722	No	
Westminster RPC, CO	19,077	147,037	0	16,055	0	163,092	80,393	No	
Winchester RPC, KS	144,736	119,172	0	5,488	0	124,660	58,996	Yes	
Total	1,272,645	2,828,654	82,712	289,982	125,490	3,326,838	1,233,753	6	

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Expenses 2017											
Pastor's #2 Total Compensation	Parsonage #2	RPM&M	Other RP Works	External Ministries	Other Internal Expenses	Total Distributions	Balance 12/31/2017	Transfers In or Out (-)	Final Checking Balance 12/31/2017	Other Assets	Budgeted Pastor's Sal. '18
0	No	850	420	0	11,844	77,514	31,565	0	31,565	0	66,500
0	No	1,000	7,544	850	36,368	115,289	60,404	0	60,404	61,764	71,803
0	No	530	2,425	450	11,153	39,808	7,812	0	7,812	30,040	24,200
0	No	400	3,663	0	35,791	114,212	23,381	0	23,381	0	40,100
0	No	0	4,047	0	41,289	86,092	-10,480	19,089	8,609	99,798	42,315
0	No	300	17,790	4,910	86,145	152,134	0	0	0	0	0
0	No	162	3,834	0	29,874	55,933	18,290	-5,417	12,873	5,417	51,000
0	No	0	1,883	0	19,511	68,141	4,248	0	4,248	0	43,440
0	No	0	3,104	0	36,415	76,318	33,197	0	33,197	0	59,740
0	No	500	3,601	0	8,339	72,240	12,949	100	13,049	3,732	59,860
0	No	2,500	3,144	400	17,611	62,259	15,099	-14,000	1,099	28,246	0
0	No	1,552	3,568	0	14,791	73,835	6,108	1,004	7,112	48,559	52,215
0	No	1,763	6,852	6,697	36,137	87,499	74,879	-3,000	71,879	53,000	38,000
0	No	0	5,681	0	43,412	73,485	49,554	0	49,554	78,605	20,800
0	No	23,092	18,908	900	92,895	135,795	205,953	-205,953	0	531,313	38,239
81,401	Yes	35,674	46,836	74,857	159,919	501,088	321,524	-18,000	303,524	135,383	195,800
0	No	15,467	14,196	500	131,970	197,439	212,526	0	212,526	133,301	73,524
0	No	5,030	6,690	2,433	23,095	132,310	179,400	0	179,400	115,865	97,033
0	No	1,795	9,522	0	81,665	175,431	42,541	6,737	49,278	139,984	84,294
0	No	19,515	6,087	1,500	56,245	123,714	237,855	-150,000	87,855	150,000	0
0	No	0	4,204	0	12,547	66,151	13,826	0	13,826	4,280	50,600
0	No	2,750	4,139	0	11,083	71,694	48,904	-3,491	45,413	3,492	54,809
0	No	4,845	7,127	841	65,706	158,912	23,257	0	23,257	520	0
0	No	9,000	11,700	1,300	39,654	120,650	148,746	903	149,649	80,175	62,014
81,401	1	126,726	196,966	95,638	1,103,459	2,837,943	1,761,540	-372,028	1,389,510	1,703,473	1,226,286

Financial Statistics 2017

	Balance 12/31/2016	Receipts 2017					Pastor's Total Compensation Parsonage
		Contributions (Ordinary Rec.)	Other Rec. (Not Rest.)	Other Rec. (Restricted gifts)	Sup. Aid Prsby. and HMB	Total Receipts 2017	
PACIFIC COAST							
All Saints RPC, Brea, CA	30,259	92,118	0	19,204	0	111,322	75,700 No
Fresno RPC, CA	63,029	71,414	0	12,127	0	83,541	37,298 Yes
Irvine RPC, CA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 No
Los Angeles RPC, CA	7,559	130,346	0	46,059	1,800	178,205	74,377 Yes
Las Vegas RPC, NV	0	43,935	5,354	64,695	0	113,984	0 No
Phoenix, First RPC, AZ	14,148	62,292	2,000	4,460	0	68,752	42,630 No
San Diego RPC, CA	42,820	85,547	0	14,972	0	100,519	62,996 No
Seattle RPC, WA	43,562	155,619	2,816	0	0	158,435	71,950 Yes
Total	201,378	641,271	10,170	161,517	1,800	814,758	364,951 3
ST. LAWRENCE							
Christ Church, Floyd, NY	1,022	109,576	0	14,800	5,000	129,376	77,514 No
Christian Heritage RP MC, Endicott, NY	2,231	30,369	0	3,000	4,000	37,369	14,871 Yes
Evangelical RPC, Toronto, Ontario	80,118	120,766	0	0	0	120,766	61,372 Yes
Fulton RPC, NY	24,265	12,886	63,373	10,710	3,000	89,969	54,032 No
Hillside RPC, Almonte, Ontario	45,996	112,852	0	24,403	0	137,255	54,255 No
Hudson-St. Lazare, Quebec	0	67,688	774	0	0	68,463	0 No
Lisbon RPC, NY	19,683	64,298	0	5,890	0	70,188	20,581 Yes
Messiah's Church, Clay, NY	44,108	146,490	0	7,325	0	153,815	75,758 No
New Creation RPC, Kitchener, Ontario	47,540	106,042	156	9,375	0	115,573	64,999 No
Oswego RPC, NY	4,316	158,335	8,690	29,154	0	196,179	73,847 No
Ottawa RPC, Ontario	104,212	171,883	11,359	16,572	0	199,814	95,255 No
Rochester RPC, NY	21,274	93,456	12,000	2,930	0	108,386	62,550 Yes
Russell RPC, Ontario	43,425	191,850	118	66,585	0	258,553	78,644 No
Shelter RPC, Edmonton, Alberta	14,092	96,133	10,353	160	0	106,646	60,900 No
Syracuse RPC, NY	29,479	249,671	0	0	0	249,671	95,036 Yes
Total	498,114	1,732,296	106,823	190,904	12,000	2,042,023	889,615 5
GRAND TOTAL	5,356,358	12,266,223	518,154	1,392,972	192,661	14,370,010	5,415,652 30

Expenses 2017							Balance 12/31/2017	Transfers In or Out (-)	Final Checking Balance 12/31/2017	Other Assets	Budgeted Pastor's Sal. '18
Pastor's #2 Total Compensation	Parsonage #2	RPM&M	Other RP Works	External Ministries	Other Internal Expenses	Total Distributions					
0	No	500	3,200	0	8,063	87,463	54,118	-24,120	29,998	15,004	77,971
0	No	800	5,344	0	50,268	93,710	52,860	0	52,860	0	65,400
0	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	No	3,777	4,780	608	82,612	166,154	19,610	0	19,610	44,770	77,475
0	No	0	0	0	10,362	10,362	103,622	0	103,622	0	0
0	No	1,200	2,960	0	15,097	61,887	21,013	702	21,715	4,770	39,480
0	No	2,000	4,624	0	31,707	101,327	42,012	0	42,012	0	63,300
0	No	13,580	8,902	0	61,201	155,633	46,364	0	46,364	137,145	73,620
0	0	21,857	29,810	608	259,309	676,535	339,601	-23,418	316,181	201,690	397,246
0	No	625	2,000	0	10,056	90,195	40,203	-33,000	7,203	239,800	80,378
0	No	0	700	2,597	19,201	37,369	2,231	0	2,231	0	14,000
0	No	0	302	0	67,130	128,804	72,080	10,000	82,080	133,375	62,400
0	No	460	3,235	0	29,143	86,870	27,363	2,006	29,369	0	50,082
0	No	0	3,468	9,976	43,435	111,134	72,117	-40,379	31,738	142,417	56,411
0	No	0	5,510	0	40,971	46,481	21,982	0	21,982	141,022	0
0	No	1,732	6,249	2,000	25,371	55,933	33,938	0	33,938	52,243	0
0	No	162	3,693	0	54,381	133,994	63,929	0	63,929	0	73,500
0	No	0	12,282	1,563	21,748	100,592	62,521	-31,198	31,323	258,143	66,300
0	No	0	9,038	22,494	55,332	160,711	39,784	-11,941	27,843	40,086	77,514
0	No	1,212	16,999	6,396	80,114	199,976	104,050	0	104,050	20,262	98,177
0	No	0	5,332	0	40,504	108,386	21,274	0	21,274	0	63,879
0	No	1,540	19,870	15,307	43,317	158,678	143,300	0	143,300	681,415	78,924
7,661	No	6,899	7,488	0	22,067	105,013	15,725	0	15,725	0	60,900
0	No	0	24,899	800	114,310	235,045	44,105	0	44,105	5,943	97,500
7,661	0	12,630	121,065	61,133	683,434	1,775,537	764,601	-104,512	660,090	1,714,706	879,965
504,157	2	378,754	824,593	375,686	5,321,930	12,820,772	6,905,598	-1,052,898	5,852,697	7,241,545	6,102,613

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