



Harvest Call

July 22, 2018

OPC Ecumenicity

The church finds its unifying principle in the covenant promise "my dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Ezekiel 37:27, Leviticus 26:12). This finds fulfillment in Jesus as Emmanuel ("God with us," Matthew 1:23, John 1:14), who came as the mediator of the covenant of grace to redeem and purchase this people for his dwelling by his blood. The ultimate consummation of the promise is the new Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:3).

The church must recognize, appreciate, and confess this fundamental unity of the covenant people of God, the body of Christ; which is a God-given creation and not a human achievement.

The church, the visible organization, is described in the Bible as one church. God has given only one covenant of love (Deuteronomy 7:6–12) and has only one people of the covenant.

OPC Sister Church of the Week

The Canadian and American Reformed Churches

The Canadian Reformed Churches are rooted in the branch of the Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands from the 1550s and onward. The cause of the Reformation led to a vigorous Reformed church life. The key confessional documents of the Reformed Churches were the [Belgic Confession](#), first published in 1561, and the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), first published in 1563.

Soon these churches faced threats from within that touched the very heart of the Reformation - salvation by grace alone. Arminianism undermined the sovereignty of God in saving sinners. It ascribed to

fallen man the power to accept or reject God's grace. At the synod of Dort (Dordrecht), beginning in the fall of 1618 and attended also by delegates from England, Scotland, Germany and Switzerland, Arminianism was refuted and the sovereignty of God's grace was maintained. The decisions of this Synod became the third confessional document of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. These decisions are called the [Canons of Dort](#). These Canons of Dort, together with the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, became known as the **Three Forms of Unity** in that these documents in that they expressed the common faith of the Reformed believers in the Netherlands.

Following World War II immigrants from the Netherlands settled in North America and Canada. The first Canadian Reformed Church congregation was instituted on April 16, 1950, in Lethbridge, Alberta. That same year also saw churches instituted in Edmonton and Neerlandia, AB, Orangeville, ON, and New Westminster, BC. Over the years, this has grown to a federation of 54 churches. Twenty seven are located in Southern Ontario, four in Manitoba, eight in Alberta, eleven in British Columbia, along with four American Reformed Congregations with one each in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Colorado, and Washington.

OPC Congregation of the Week

Faith Presbyterian Church, ND, started in Warren, Minnesota, in 1995, when the church was particularized as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. In 2007 the church relocated to the Grand Cities Mall in Grand Forks, North Dakota. The congregation was received into the Presbytery of the Dakotas in June 2016 as a mission work of Bethel OPC in Mandan, ND.

On January 15, 2017, Bethel OPC called Rev. Christopher Drew as pastor of Faith OPC. He was received by transfer from the Presbytery of Minnesota

Harvest Call

Valleys of the PCUSA. His service to the church began on June 25. Pastor Drew has been married to his wife Sara for 11 years. They have four children: Daniel (8), Lydia (6), Rebekah (4), Anna (2). They are expecting a fifth child, Lord willing, in February of 2019. In addition to his pastoral call, Rev. Drew works full time at the University of North Dakota as a technical support specialist.

Faith is a small congregation consisting primarily of five families, regular attenders and guests. Three families travel an hour or more each week to worship with their brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the only Reformed church within several hundred miles, and so frequently hosts guests from the local Air Force base, as well as students attending the University of North Dakota.

In addition to weekly worship, Faith OPC hosts a regular Wednesday night Bible study, a biweekly women's Bible study, and Sunday school for adults and little ones. On the first Sunday of the month, members gather for a prayer meeting and every Sunday members and guests participate in a shared meal and an extended time of fellowship.

Faith OPC is deeply grateful to God for sustaining the congregation - they ask for prayers that they continue to grow in grace, that the covenant children shall hear the gospel and believe it, and grow to make their own professions of faith. Please pray that the congregation would soon be able to call Rev. Drew as its full time minister, for his strength and wisdom to manage his family, the congregation.

OPC Mission Work of the Week

Please pray for Mark Sumpter as he works alongside Mr James Roberts (a deacon from Westminster OPC of Corvallis, OR) from July 17-August 1 in outreach and evangelism throughout the Houston, TX area. Over this

time frame, outreach will focus on door-to-door ministry, tract distribution, and public witness in various city venues. A special emphasis is aimed at visitation to around 35 families, those who have received ministry from the OPC's Hurricane Harvey Disaster Response. Pray for wisdom and courage in this visitation. Give thanks that Mr. Miller Ansell completed his church planting internship in Houston, TX at the end of June. Ask God to direct his steps to a call in the weeks ahead.

SouthWest Presbytery News

Four mission works in the Presbytery of the Southwest continue to receive care and encouragement from the Home Missions Committee and Pastor Mark Sumpter. These church plants—Trinity (Waco, TX), South Austin Presbyterian (S. Austin, TX), and Good Shepherd (Sugar Land, TX)—need to grow: 1) their prayer ministries, 2) cultivate and train leaders (both church officers and general leadership), and 3) their faithful welcome and hospitality regarding new people. South Austin and Good Shepherd ask for the Lord to provide permanent locations as meeting places conducive for worship.

Listening In and Sounding Out

Please pray for progress and fruit for church planting in New Braunfels, TX and Wichita Falls, TX. These locations are already seeing developing strength, with some 20-25 folks gathering for worship or study, and for prayer and outreach.

Harvest Call is published by South Austin Presbyterian Church (OPC), Austin, TX

Email: clerk@southastinpres.org

Phone: (512) 900-1654