



# Harvest Call

July 29, 2018

## OPC Ecumenicity

In the New Testament the teaching of the unity of God's people is sustained (see Eph. 2:11-22 and 4:1-16). Yet the situation is different. The people of God are no longer circumscribed by ethnic, political, or geographical boundaries. All nations are to be disciples. This unity includes the people of God in past ages and also looks to the future and includes all people who have yet believe on his name (John 17:20-21).

The gospel proclaimed by the apostles as the foundation of the church resulted in establishing churches as covenant communities in various locations, churches which were ruled by elders.

These churches and their elders were not independent, but were one body united by Christ their head, by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and by the covenant promise of God. The elders at Antioch and Jerusalem resolve a problem, under God, and their decision is binding on the churches (see Acts 15, 16:4).

## OPC Sister Church of the Week

### The Christian Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (CGKN)

The Christian Reformed Churches (Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland - CGK) of the Netherlands are the continuing work of the Protestant Reformation from the 1550s and onward. The GKN is a federation of churches of the low-lying lands (the Netherlands). The key confessional documents of the Reformed Churches were the [Belgic Confession](#), first published in 1561, and the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), first published in 1563, and of the [Canons of Dort](#) (1618). These 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 and around the globe.

In the 17th and 18th century a reforming emphasis was placed on the personal experience of faith and led to further Reformation. The GKN came into being in 1892 and today has approximately 75,000 members, from 180 local churches within her federation. The GKN's ministry is principally directed towards the local community church.

The heartbeat of the GKN is the centrality of teaching (catechizing) lead by the local session that culminates in the weekly preaching of the Word. Pray that the fruits of her work can be seen in the daily confession and walk of the local church and her people.

Please pray that the CGK federation of churches may be grow in grace and number, and that her witness may be faithfully preserved. Pray that the Holy Spirit shall continue to be the light and power of the walk of the CGK. See: <http://cgk.nl/>

## OPC Congregation of the Week

**Pilgrim Church (OPC), Maine**, was formed in 1952 by Christians who desired a church reformed in doctrine and worship in Bangor, Maine – a stronghold of liberal congregationalism. Reformed in doctrine means that we look to the great affirmations of the Protestant Reformation: Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, and in Christ alone.

These great statements declare: how we know God, how God befriends us, how we can please God, and how He saves us from sin and its eternal consequences. Reformed in worship means that our worship is according to the principles of Scripture.

Pilgrim Church has 147 communicant members and is governed by the session, which is made up of the Pastor and six elders. Pilgrim OPC have four deacons, who lead the congregation in ministries of mercy. As a particular congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, all of their officers believe the Bible to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Additionally, the officers subscribe to the American Presbyterian Church 1789 version of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms,

acknowledging that these subordinate standards accurately summarize what the Bible teaches.

Pilgrim Church is a praying church with a mid-week prayer and study meeting, a long-established small group ministry involving the majority of our congregation and a prayer group that meets monthly to pray for the persecuted church world-wide.

Pilgrim have articulated their mission to equip the saints to build “*Deeper Roots, Wider Branches and Abiding Roots.*” The commitment to this vision has been actualized over the years by the active engagement of our members in the community.

In 1980 members of Pilgrim Church founded parent-sponsored Penobscot Christian School and a few years later First Step Pregnancy Resource Center both of which have grown over the years into major community ministries involving brothers and sisters from nearly 30 area churches. Pilgrim also have an active nursing home ministry. This fall marks the opening of the newest Pilgrim ministry: The Tan House for Men provides a residential house where young men coming to the Bangor area to further their education or start careers can live in a stable, affordable environment structured to provide Christian discipleship and encourage regular interaction with older male mentors.

Mr. Russell J. Hamilton was called to be the pastor of Pilgrim OPC in December 2007. Prior to coming to Bangor, he served as a church planter, for 3 years in Bucksport, Maine, and for 6 years in New Orleans, Louisiana. His pastoral education is from Knox Theological Seminary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (M.Div.). He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He is married and has 4 children.

Pilgrim request prayers for:

- Pastor Hamilton and his family as they are on vacation - rest and renewal.
- Tan House ministry - God's guidance and wisdom in preparing to open; need for a resident house parent or couple.

## OPC Mission Work of the Week

### Rev. John Hilbelink Honored at GA

At the 85th General Assembly held this June, General Secretary John Shaw expressed the thanks of the Home Missions Committee for the 33 years of service by Mr. Hilbelink.



The Assembly gave Mr. Hilbelink a standing ovation. Here is an excerpt of what Mr. Shaw shared:

*It is right to take a minute to thank God for the labors of John Hilbelink. He is a gift from Christ to his church, and he has been a gift to the CHMCE and to the home missions labors of the OPC.*

*A few details are worth noting about his time of service on the Committee: John was first elected to the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (CHMCE) at the 52nd GA in 1985 and has served without interruption since. The Committee so appreciated his service that he was elected VP in 1986, and served in that capacity until 1991. At that point, he was elected President of the Committee in 1991, and has served in that capacity until the present day. During that time, he*

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*has provided a steady hand and a gentle, humble, but commanding presence to guide the Committee through our work.*

*John will be deeply missed by the Committee, but we praise God for 33 years of service OPC on the CHMCE.*

*Please pray for the Lord's continued blessings on John and his dear wife Lois, his church in Rockford, and his continued service to Christ and his church.*

## SouthWest Presbytery News

**Rio Rancho OPC, NM**, began as a mission work of the Presbytery of the Southwest in late 2007. The church is located in the City of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, adjacent to northwest Albuquerque. Mr. Todd Bordow was called as the founding pastor. In 2017 Pastor Borodow stood down from his ministry for medical reasons. The congregation called Pastor Thomas A. Tkach who was ordained and installed on June 24, 2018. The congregation has approx. 60 members, 3 ruling elders, and 2 deacons.

Please be in prayer for:

- The congregation, for Pastor Tkach and the Session as they re-establish the regular ministry of the church.
- Thanks for Pastor Tkach and his family's safe move from North Dakota, settlement into their new home, and for his being well received.
- Gratitude that he demonstrates great qualities of leading the congregation in the ministry of the Word and in bringing harmony and peace to God's people.
- For help in meeting financial challenges.
- That the congregation will take hold of more opportunities for outreach and growth.

## Listening In and Sounding Out

The OPC Presbytery of the Southwest has pulpit vacancies in the following churches:

- Abilene, TX, are searching for a new pastor.
- Cornerstone (NW Houston), TX, are processing a call to a pastor from within the Presbytery of the Southwest - stay tuned for updated information.

Both churches are searching for and/or calling pastors. Please pray for these churches that their pulpits may be filled with godly and capable servants of God's people.

On a sad note, **Norman OPC, OK**, will be closing August 31, 2018. Please pray for the members who are impacted. Pray for Pastor Todd Dole for strength and peace through this difficult time. Pray also that he may find a new call soon, and for his family.

Good Shepherd OPC, SW Houston, are seeking a meeting facility with several good options. Please pray that the Lord may provide suitable accommodation so that this mission work may continue to grow.

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

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