



Harvest Call

October 21, 2018

OPC Ecumenicity

Identity of the Church

The church is the covenant people of God in all ages and among all nations—the body of people to whom God has made the promise to be their God and they to be his people and he to dwell with them. All those who believe the promise of God and their children and have had the promise sealed to them in baptism are to be recognized and treated as God's people, as members of the organized church.

The church belongs to her covenant head Jesus Christ and *"there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV.6).

The work of the church, in fellowship with and in obedience to Christ, is divine worship, mutual edification, and gospel witness (Form of Government, II.4.), under the teaching and rule of elders.

The Lord governs his church also through the application of his Word to the people by the Spirit as the Word is expounded and applied by the officers of the church (Ephesians 4:11-16).

OPC Sister Church of the week

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)

The RPCNA is part of the organized body of Christ. The word *Reformed* as part of the name of the RPCNA refers to their adherence to the biblical principles set down by the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. RPCNA spiritual fathers include Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox.

The word *Presbyterian* refers to the form of church government. Each congregation is under the oversight of men elected as elders, and who also serve higher courts known as presbyteries and Synods.

Reformed Presbyterians have been referred to as Covenanters because of their identification with public

covenanting in Scotland, beginning in the 16th century. This act was a protest for Christ's crown rights over the state and the recognition of Christ as King over the Church without interference from the government. RPCNA roots also include those referred to as the Seceders, who share in the testimony for Christ's Crown and Covenant.

In America

In 1743 the first Reformed Presbyterian congregation was organized in North America. In this continent, too, the Kingship of Christ has been maintained as a foundational principle of the RPCNA. Its congregations across North America acknowledge sister churches of Reformed Presbyterians in Ireland, Scotland, and Australia.

RPCNA churches adhere fully to the authority of the Bible as the inerrant, infallible Word of God. They believe in the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and acknowledge total inability to save ourselves and, in faith, depending on Christ alone as our Savior. The RPCNA acknowledges Him as Covenant Lord in every area of life, and her members vow together to advance His Kingdom on earth. The creed of the RPCNA is set out in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, as the continuing application of God's written word to the work of the church.

Worship

The RPCNA believe that God's Word clearly sets forth how God is to be worshiped. The reading and exposition of the Word of God are central focus to their worship. The RPCNA practice exclusive Psalmody without musical accompaniment.

PRAYERS:

- For continued faithful walk and witness.
- For an abiding testimony and preservation through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- For peace and harmony within her churches, and for the protection of her young from the wiles of the devil.

OPC Congregation of the week

Lake OPC (LOPC), Cleveland, OH - The greater Cleveland area is rich in such common-grace features as the arts, music, medical technologies and sports. The spiritual climate of northeast Ohio is a spiritually needy mission field — one plagued by such evils as an aggressive secularism, the cults, drug addiction, homelessness, false religions, spiritual indifference, poverty and despair.

It is in the midst of this spiritual climate our sovereign God has seen fit to raise up and preserve for Himself a small but persevering Reformed gospel witness — Lake Orthodox Presbyterian Church — one of the very few confessionally Reformed churches in the large region of northeast Ohio!

On October 19, 2007, Lake OPC officially became a mission work of the Presbytery of Ohio. The Session of Covenant OPC in Mansfield, Ohio oversaw the mission work as its supervising Session. Rev. Larry Oldaker, who was then serving as the Regional Home Missionary for the Presbytery, served as the organizing pastor of the Lake OPC mission.

The mission church met in various rented spaces over the years, including a hotel banquet hall. Currently the church continues to meet in rented banquet hall space at a local Holiday Inn hotel. By 2012 this mission work was ready to be self-supporting and self-propagating. On January 29, 2012 Reverend Geoffrey Willour received a call to serve LOPC. Previously he served Redeemer OPC in the Toms River / Seaside Heights, New Jersey area.

On June 22, 2012, Lake Orthodox Presbyterian Church was organized by the Presbytery as a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Rev. Willour was installed as its Pastor. Mr. John Grubb and Mr. John Collins were installed as Ruling Elders. Mr. Seth Oldaker was installed as a Deacon.

Over the years Lake OPC has sought to be active in its outreach and advertising. The church maintains a user-friendly, informative website (<http://lakeopc.net>), and has been blessed with many visitors. It has also advertised in the local newspaper, and ran ads on a

local Christian radio station, featuring Pastor Willour on one of its local radio talk programs. The church has participated in the New Mover Mailer program offered by outreach.com, and has hosted a table for six summers in a row at the annual Mentor CityFest, a two-day family event held in August that attracts thousands of area residents and has proven to be a wonderful way to connect with neighbors in the community. Pastor Willour conducts an evangelistic Bible Study twice per month at an area rehab hospital, combined with some volunteer hospital chaplaincy work. In these and other ways LOPC seeks to make connections for Christ and His church in the broader community.



In spite of its' numerous efforts at outreach and advertising, LOPC has struggled to grow. Over the years it has lost a number of members, often through geographical relocations, and it has struggled to replace those whom it has lost with new members. In fact, there was a period of time recently when attendance averaged in the mid-teens. During that time attendance of 20 was regarded as a good attendance! LOPC are down to one Ruling Elder (Mr. John Grubb) on their Session, and felt compelled to request the Presbytery to augment the Session with a borrowed officer (the Rev. Leo Frailey, a retired minister). LOPC started to wonder, is God simply pruning and refining them, or is He preparing to close them down?

Thankfully there is good news — God is adding to LOPC potential new members. A new family with three

covenant children have been attending, and are taking the membership class. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

A number of months ago a woman who had been attending a local Episcopal church began attending LOPC. She had listened to some sermons on the LOPC Sermon Audio page and decided to attend. She shared that she had been starving for the Word of God, but after the first service she attended she described it as a spiritual “feast” of the Word when compared to the crumbs she had been getting at her previous church. Since then she has been very faithful in her attendance, and has opened her home for the mid-week Bible Study. LOPC are hopeful that she, and possibly also her husband, might soon take steps toward membership.

Though LOPC are thankful and encouraged there is still much renewal and strengthening before LOPC can be back on its feet as a revitalized, renewed, strengthened gospel witness.

PRAYERS:

- That God would enable and empower LOPC Lake OPC to make a spiritual impact for Christ and the Reformed Faith in northeast Ohio.
- That God would remove obstacles to His Word going forth, would speed forth His Word with grace and power, crush Satan under His feet, and open many hearts to the gospel through the witness of LOPC.
- Pray that God would bless LOPC with many new, first-time visitors, and that they will become part of the church.
- Pray that God would add at least 15 new members and/or three families with covenant children to the membership of LOPC within the next 6 months.
- Pray that God would raise up additional qualified, mature, godly men who can serve the church as Ruling Elders and Deacons.
- Pray that God would enable LOPC to find a more suitable and more permanent meeting location in the area.

OPC Mission Work of the week

Corona OPC, CA - In our August 5, 2018, edition we featured the work of Pastor Matt Prather and now we bring an update:

Recently, people in the congregation have been looking for opportunities to share the Gospel. A few weeks ago, one of the men in membership class told Matt about a family in his neighborhood which just lost a son in a motorcycle accident, and how he has been visiting them and sharing the Gospel. Last weekend, a university student told Matt that he is witnessing to three people on his college campus - a Muslim, an atheist, and a transgender person. A police officer in the congregation has been keeping Matt updated on his ongoing efforts to disciple a fellow officer. Matt is delighted that these kind of stories are becoming more frequent.

PRAYERS:

- For the Lord to raise up elders and deacons.
- For the Lord's provision for families facing significant financial hardship.
- For wisdom and protection of a growing number of college-age members who are making important life decisions.
- For Elin and Matt Prather as they raise three small children (ages 4,3, and 10 months).

Southwest Presbytery News

PSW Church of the Week

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth, TX - began almost 20 years ago, when in 1999 Home Missions of the OPC PSW sought to plant a mission church in the NW Fort Worth/Lake Worth area, where there was no reformed and Presbyterian presence.

A year later the Rev. Todd Bordow was installed as organizing pastor for the mission work, and in the spring of 2002 Covenant became a particularized congregation of the OPC. Covenant was greatly blessed during the tenure of Rev. Bordow, with a

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growing congregation being edified weekly through excellent biblical teaching. Through some remarkable providences Covenant was able to erect a church building in 2005 (a disbanding Bible church gave the congregation her church building which Covenant met in for a season and then sold, and a developer gave the congregation some undeveloped acreage in a growing new neighborhood in far west Fort Worth, of which the congregation sold a portion and built a church building on the remainder.) Covenant is very thankful for the benefits given by a permanent location and facility. Planting in a new area of Fort Worth, the congregation had hoped to have greater outreach into that developing community than has happened, with many members who drive a distance to be part of a faithful reformed congregation, but the congregation has seen more visitors and new members from the area in the last couple of years.

In early 2009 Rev. Bordow moved to Rio Rancho, NM, to work with a new OPC mission work there. Following his departure, there were some tumultuous and difficult years with multiple, long pastoral searches, and two shorter-termed pastorates. Many members and officers left, yet a small and faithful core group held on while praying for God's will and leading. Elder Bill Mock (ordained 2002) and deacon Ted Schwarz (2006) were attendees from that first church planting meeting in 1999, and Elder Charles Ramsay and Deacon Roy Wickham were ordained in 2007 and 2010 respectively. The faithfulness of these four officers and their families was integral to the survival of the church during the lean years, along with a handful of faithful long-time members including Ramona Van Slyke and Diane Riddle who came early on from that disbanded Bible church, Fred Smith and Michael Mirsky who transferred from other OPC congregations, and the Walma family who joined even as Covenant was losing a pastor.

In 2014 the small and weary congregation was delighted that the Rev. Todd Wagenmaker was willing to come and serve sacrificially, starting at minimal salary while working bi-vocationally as an immigration lawyer to support his family. Pastor Wagenmaker has a passion for helping to grow Christ's church, and experience in mission churches. Todd and Julie are

Michigan natives who have been married for nearly 3 decades and were blessed with six children. He studied at Westminster Seminary California, and served as a minister in his childhood church, the CRC, for seven years before joining the OPC in 2004, where he labored church planting in St. Louis for eight years, before coming to Fort Worth.



Julie and Pastor Todd Wagenmaker

Todd and Julie open their home to meet with church families and neighbors, and host Bible studies in their home. They share a passion for classical education, using those skills in outreach through the church. Todd enjoys teaching the Catechism to teens and sponsoring fellowship outings with them. He visits the church families on a regular basis to encourage them. He believes it is a privilege and high calling to try to show the greatness of Jesus Christ and the beauty of God's truth each Lord's Day from the pulpit.

In these last few years under his leadership, the church has been thankful to hear the gospel soundly preached every week, and in God's providence many new members have been added. Part of the church's recent outreach has been to host two conferences on specific reformed concepts, bringing in noted guest speakers. Recently two new officers were ordained: Dr. Ken Knight as an elder with a love for the reformed faith and a broad church background gained during his career in the Air Force, and deacon Taylor Mock as a literal "*son of the church*" who grew up at Covenant from his early teens as one of the original members of

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Covenant. The congregation continues to pray to be a gospel light to both the neighborhood and the greater Fort Worth area.

Covenant has a quite eclectic congregation demographically: members raised in the reformed faith, side by side with those raised in other traditions, and those raised in non-Christian homes; many different schooling methods are used; typical dress varies; the age, gender, educational and socio-economic status, and racial and geographic background of members are all widely varied. Surprising for a relatively small congregation, yet our Lord has knit us together into a loving family through mutual love for what really matters, faith in Jesus Christ as our redeemer. This is a sweet earthly foretaste of what glory will be like as people from every nation, tongue, and tribe together confess Christ. We also trust that this unity within diversity is a sign of a healthy church, one where people aren't friends because their style is the same, but rather are family because they worship the same Lord. We currently have about 65 members who are regularly present for worship, with another dozen who are living out of town for school or work, and several long-time visiting families that we hope and expect will officially join soon.

We have already been blessed with a number of new families who have joined, from varied backgrounds. Some have been desperately searching for a church where they will hear scripture clearly taught along with the doctrines of grace, and we've had professions of faith from many covenant youth, both from new families being disciplined in worship and through our twice a month catechism classes, and from home-grown youth coming to an age and understanding that they want to publicly profess their covenant faith as their personal faith.

Covenant's heart, along with reaching those who seek a self-consciously reformed and Presbyterian congregation, is to also reach the unchurched in our area. The session is passionate that the ordinary means of grace be presented consistently to reap an extraordinary bounty of souls, that the word of God be

preached faithfully, that Christ is shown in every section of scripture, both his active and passive obedience known, and that those who have recognized their guilt, and been caught hold of by God's merciful grace, will continue on to live out their lives in great gratitude to Him.

Covenant has other activities such as a Ladies' Fellowship night out, Psalm Night, Teen Catechism Classes, classical education classes open to the community, and periodic holiday celebrations such as a Reformation night and our annual Christmas Party and "Talent" Show.

The prayer of the officers and members during the difficult times has been answered with a resounding "yes" from God that Covenant Fort Worth continue in sharing the gospel with a fallen world, and discipling the saints, and loving each other. We are thankful to have been sustained through difficulty to reach this point of encouragement.

PRAYERS:

- That the ordinary means of grace, love of the brethren, and faithful biblical preaching continue to be used by God in his providence to grow the church.
- For the continued spiritual growth of our covenant youth.
- That our regularly visiting families will officially join with us as members.
- Outreach into the Fort Worth community to reach the unchurched with the gospel and to give a home to those who long for faithful biblical reformed teaching.
- Continued knitting together the hearts of our members.
- Continued financial growth so that we may increase our pastor's salary.
- Encouragement for the officers that they may not grown weary in their labors.
- Our pastor, that he will find time to balance the increasing needs of a growing church with his family and immigration lawyer responsibilities.

Listening In and Sounding Out

Evangelist Nick Lammé to Arrive Soon

"I saw your sign on the side of the truck, OPC Disaster Response, I wanted to stop and speak with you." Betty Ann and her husband pulled up to us and wanted to inquire about the OPC Disaster Response Ministry. Pastor Sumpter and his team were in this NE Houston neighborhood visiting with folks about their needs and circumstances.

The OPC Disaster Response Ministry in Houston has now ministered to around 50 families. Betty Ann was given a blessing bag—a cloth bag containing Christian literature, a gift card, a pocket calendar, a gospel booklet and church contact information.

Although up to this point, the focus has been diaconal in nature we will complement our diaconal service with the ministry of the Word. Expansion of ministry is coming! The Rev. Nick Lammé will join in the OPC efforts in disaster response ministry beginning November 15, 2018.



Pastor Lammé (left) welcomed by Pastor York

Nick will spearhead the ministry of the Word and prayer, and he'll be coordinating hospitality and other practical ways of outreach—and most especially, he will help the churches in getting out invitations to these neighborhood folks, so that they might worship at local OP congregations.

To have a full-time evangelist on the field ministering the gospel and offering counsel and prayer in connection with the Hurricane Harvey disaster response ministry will be a first for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. PSW churches are looking forward to this wonderful step forward for outreach and teaching. Rev. Lammé will be on this 2-year assignment, called by the Presbytery of the Southwest (OPC) to initiate outreach, evangelism, and follow-up.

PRAYERS:

- For the Lammés. Nick, Rosie and their four children arrive this fall.
- For rapid acclimation and adjustment to the peculiarities of the Houston area.
- For the Lord to direct our steps in outreach and discipleship to the families affected by Hurricane Harvey!
- For discipleship in the Word, and for conversions.
- For effective means of inviting and welcoming people in the worship of the Lord.



Pastor Lammé and his family

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