



# Harvest Call

November 11, 2018

## OPC Ecumenicity

### The Church is One Body

In the New Testament the teaching of the unity of God's people is sustained (see Ephesians 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 to 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

#### Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC)

The Bible Presbyterian Church adopted the Westminster Standards in its organizing synod, held September 6-8, 1938. Year after year this reformed church body has reaffirmed its belief in the basic doctrines of historic Christianity.

The Westminster Confession of Faith is perhaps the most notable expression in creedal form of the truths of the Bible. It was the work of that assembly of divines which was called together by Parliament and met in London, at Westminster Abbey, during the years 1643-1648. It was this assembly which also produced the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

The Confession and the Catechisms are used by many churches as their doctrinal standards, subordinate to the Word of God.

BPC believes reformed doctrine is historic Christianity, in its emphasis upon the sovereignty of God and the trustworthiness of the Bible. BPC are a confessional church. It was the compromise of these truths in the early decades of this century that led to the formation of the Bible Presbyterian Church. As theological liberalism had moved into Presbyterian seminaries and out into the church, it became fashionable to question the fundamental tenets of Christianity.

The inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth and deity of Christ, His supernatural works and the atonement on the cross and even His resurrection from the dead were called into question. The Presbyterian Church ordained ministers and sent out missionaries who either called these doctrines into question or rejected them outright. BPC believe God has raised up this church body to take a faithful stand for the historic Christian faith, and, further, to be a standard bearer to these truths in darkening days of compromise and apostasy. The Bible Presbyterian Church continues to this day *"for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,"* Revelation 1:9.

Today, BPC are a small but vigorous group of people who seek to maintain a strong connection to their separated, Reformed roots. They also desire to faithfully minister to the Body of Christ and win souls both at home and abroad. Love of missions, evangelism, and sound Bible instruction stir the hearts of our people. The denomination approves two mission boards, two schools, and a publishing arm a independent agencies of the Church.

#### PRAYERS:

- For continued faithful walk and witness.
- For continued warmth in fellowship between the BPC and the OPC.
- That the her saints shall be protected from harm in all her reaches world-wide.

## OPC Sister Congregation - Redeemer Church (URC), Cambridge, Maryland - Pastor Steve Arrick

In 2016 Redeemer took over a former PCA church plant which was begun in 1998. Cambridge is a city of about 12,000 residents on the Chesapeake Bay and Choptank River on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Harriet Tubman lived and ran her Underground Railroad there. Also, in 1963 violent riots broke out as part of the Civil Rights Movement.

Although Redeemer was never a large church, it declined significantly due to several factors after the retirement of its founding pastor. Redeemer are presently in the process of re-planting the church.

### PRAYERS:

- That the Lord will raise up and draw many to Christ as he is proclaimed at Redeemer URC.
- For faithfulness to walk and live as a community of Christ's bearing witness to him in truth and integrity.

## OPC Congregation of the Week

### Faith OPC—Lincoln, Nebraska

A group of people, dissatisfied with the liberalism of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., met in a private home in Lincoln, Nebraska, in January 1938 and Faith OPC was formally organized that July. A second group formed Pioneer Chapel southwest of the city limits in 1943 and organized as Pioneer Chapel, operating under the oversight of Faith Church; it was particularized in 1963.

In 1968, Faith Church purchased property in a new housing area and in 1969 the two congregations merged, continuing to meet in the Pioneer OPC building until the present building was built in 1989.

Pastor Roy Miller was called to Faith OPC in 1993 after serving for six years at the Caney (Kansas) OPC (now

closed). A native of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, he came to the Reformed faith in the early 1980s from a Conservative Baptist background and graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, in 1987. He and his wife, Janet, have four adult children and nine grandchildren—including two sets of twins!



**Pastor Roy Miller**

Faith currently has 30-40 in attendance for morning worship. The last Sunday of December 2006, members began taking turns supplying hot lunches during the winter, followed by an afternoon service, so that members would not have to come out again on snowy evenings.

In July 2008, the congregation switched to the “winter schedule” year-round. This schedule has been beneficial to the development of relationships among the members, some of whom drive over 250 miles roundtrip each Lord's Day.

Having seen the risk a church takes by not raising up new leaders to serve as deacons or elders, Pastor Miller began offering a leadership training class several years ago. Young men in the class study doctrines with Pastor Miller twice a month during Sunday lunch and are given opportunities to teach the adult Sunday school class.

Missions are very important to the Faith congregation. Rev. Mark Harrington serves as a missionary called by Faith OPC to minister to international students on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus under the auspices of Horizons International. Another church member serves as a medical missionary in Russia and

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three others served as missionaries in Cambodia until a few months ago. There is a “Missions Moment” during opening exercises each Sunday, highlighting the work of the OPC’s home and foreign missions.



Music is also important. Though the building has no choir loft, half to two-thirds of the congregation meet after lunch on Sunday for choir practice and sing special arrangements during morning worship several time each year. The whole congregation is thoroughly enjoying the new Trinity Psalter Hymnal.

Wednesday evening Bible studies are led by one of the four ruling elders and a time of prayer follows.

Just a few miles south of Interstate 80, Faith OPC has frequent visits from members of sister Reformed churches who plan their travel so that they can worship on the Lord’s Day.

Pastors over the years have been:

1. Thomas Cooper (1938-41)
2. James Brown (1941-44)
3. Delbert Schowalter (1945-46)
4. Herbert Bird (1948-52)
5. V. Robert Nilson (1953-56)
6. Russell Piper (1957-74)
7. Richard Miller (1975-78)
8. Huibert Vandenbroek (1979-83)
9. Stephen Doe (1984-92)
10. LeRoy E. Miller (1993-present)

## PRAYERS:

- Several senior saints are dealing with health issues and are not able to attend services on a regular basis. Please pray for their health, peace, and comfort.
- Pray for Mark Harrington’s work with international students.
- Pastor Miller plans to start traveling to Kearney, Nebraska, twice a month to hold an evening service with the members who travel from there. Pray for safety in travel.
- That Lord willing a church plant may be established.

## Southwest Presbytery News

The Presbytery of the Southwest continues with continued care and encouragement from the Home Missions Committee and the regional home missionary of the PSW, Mr. Mark Sumpter continues to provide care and oversight of its mission works. At this time of the year with winter upon our doorsteps, with the time of Thanksgiving and the Christmas and New Year seasonal activities let us be mindful of the needs of those near and far. In particular may God grant that the many church planting works of the OPC and its sister churches may be sustained in all their needs.

During the month of November the OPC holds its Thanksgiving call to give generously for its many works and activities. The funds received support the work of the various committees of the OPC, among which the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (CHMCE) is most visible across our country. San Antonio Reformed (San Antonio, TX), Trinity (Waco, TX), South Austin Presbyterian (Austin, TX), and Good Shepherd (Sugar Land, TX), are beneficiaries of CHMCE works. Rev. Nick Lammé, recently called as an evangelist to the Houston Harvey area, is now settling into his work.

New church planting works are being established in New Braunfels (TX), the Clear Lakes area of Southeast Houston (TX), El Paso (TX), and Wichita Falls (TX).

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Requests from new church planting groups and churches continue to flow in and flood available resources (financial as well as evangelists and missionaries).

The 8 key pillars of church planting work include; leadership training, public worship, diaconal ministry, communication, edification, prayer, evangelism / church planting, and facilities and finances.

Some congregations encourage member families to another location to begin a church just like theirs. At other times a session takes on the challenge of being the actual overseeing body of a mission work, or a presbytery coordinates the mustering of resources and elders to help to plant a church in a location where none of them reside. Starting churches on purpose involves risks and challenges.

Dear brothers and sisters, the needs of seedling works are greater than their financial dependencies - they need the prayers of God's people. The harvest is ready, but the laborers are few. Although all that the Lord gives sufficient for the day, yet let us make our petitions for those yet to be brought into the fold of Christ - that the work may grow to the glory of the Risen One.

## PRAYERS:

- For the prayer ministries of each church plant.
- For the cultivation and training of leaders.
- For faithful welcome and hospitality for visitors.
- For regular meeting places that are suitable for worship.

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