



Harvest Call

January 27, 2019

OPC Ecumenicity

The Love of Christ's Church

Do you know the love of the Church of Christ? The love of the Church is evident in our walk - one cannot hide the depth of gratitude owed her.

All who have recited the Apostles Creed have confessed with their mouths: *"I believe in the Holy Spirit, **the holy catholic Church**, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."* The saints of the Lord do more than believe the holy catholic Church, by the very nature of having been purchased in the blood of the Lamb, they love being part of her. Christians are followers of Jesus the anointed redeemer, and cannot help being passionate about the Church.

In Ephesians 5:25-27, Paul says: "... **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, **that she might be holy and without blemish.****" The redeemed in Christ have been presented to the Father as the elect, holy and without blemish. Peter goes a step further (1 Peter 2:9-10) when he says: *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you **have received mercy.**"*

By definition you are in love with the body of Christ, His Church. As certainly as God is our Father, the Church is our Mother. How can we not love our mother? She is the one who nurtures us. Calvin says:

"... let us learn, from her single title of mother, how useful, nay, how necessary the knowledge of her is, since there is no other means of entering into life unless she conceives us in the womb and give us birth, unless she nourishes us at her breasts, and in short, keep us under her charge and government, until, divested of mortal flesh, we become like the angels (Matthew 22:30). For our weakness does not permit us to leave the school until we have spent our whole lives as scholars. Moreover, beyond the pale of the Church no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, can be hoped for, as Isaiah and Joel testify (Isaiah 37:32; Joel 2:32). Source: Calvin's Institutes Book 4.1.4.

The Church is the storehouse of love and kindness. Within her we receive Word and sacrament to build us up and to strengthen us for the battles of life. Within her is true fellowship, communal prayer, joyous song, and a pleasing cadence of ritual and repetition. Within her the saints are closer than any outside her walls. The warmth of Christ radiates within her, he is her light reaching even the most remote parts of the world.

The Lord God provides men who are able to teach; shepherds to lead the lambs to peaceful waters, able to lead them to nutritious food. God's voice resounds from them while yet they walk according to the light of His Word. As children of light, let us never forget to share the love of Christ and the love of Church, calling the stranger to join her ramparts that they too may know redeeming grace and mercy.

PRAYERS:

- For the love of God we receive may our hearts ache to tell joyously of the of the mercy of the Living God.
- For open ears to hear, and feet ready to follow the us to the house of God's love.
- For the peace of Zion to rest upon fellowship within the Church.
- For faithful walk and witness.

Sister Congregation

Regina URC, Saskatchewan - Rev. Brian Cochran

The Regina church joined the URC nine years ago. They recently ordained two elders, Shane W. and Tim V. Their work in helping to shepherd the congregation is much appreciated. These men are preparing for a year of home visitation to pray with and for the saints. With several people attending the new members class Regina URC have hopes for growth.



Regina URC leads a bi-monthly worship service in a local prison. In October Rev. Cochran preached on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It was a joy to see how the prisoners responded to the good news that Christ *“was delivered up for our transgressions and raised for our justification”* (Romans 4:25).

PRAYERS:

- That the Lord may provide more elders and deacons to serve at Regina URC.
- For the Rev. Cochran and his family.
- For the newly married that they may grow in grace and may be blessed with Covenant growth.

- That the prison ministry may be blessed with many turning to Christ to find peace and comfort.

Source: *The Trumpet*, newsletter of the URC.

OPC Congregation

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Abilene, TX - Rev. Todd Dole

Pastor Todd Dole was installed to serve the Abilene congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, October 5, 2018. Pastor Dole is preaching through the book of Acts. The Sunday School is studying the Belgic Confession of Faith and there are plans to expand the children's and youth Sunday School.

The Wednesday night Bible study is centered on Hebrews, and the session is about to commence an officer training class for three potential candidates.

The session reports that four new members were recently received and that attendance at worship is strong.

PRAYERS:

- For continued peace and unity of the saints.
- For Shiloh who will have back surgery on January 28, 2018.
- For Brad B. who has been deployed with USAF for 1 year.
- For Rev. Lotzer and his family.
- That the church may be a light that draws strangers into the house of the Living God.

OPC Mission Work

Grace Fellowship OPC, Zeeland, Michigan - Rev. Schout

On January 8, 2019, Grace Fellowship had their first [Core Values Study and Discussion](#) at the Howard Miller

Public Library, a highly visible location for which they praise God.



Michael and Naomi Schout

The group is meeting every Tuesday evening for ten weeks to discuss such topics as: Gospel Centrality; Prayer Dependency; Culture of Evangelism & Hospitality; and A Place for Weakness, to name a few. They are praying that it will be helpful as they delve deeper into what it means to be a faithful church plant and look closely at these Christian values at the foundation of Grace Fellowship.

Michael shares that the group hopes to begin evening services on March 10 and, Lord willing, launch a morning and evening service on Easter Sunday. He requests prayer for a workable, inviting, and visible building to use for worship services, an office space for him, and God's blessing on these Tuesday night studies as he knits the core group together.

PRAYERS:

- Please make your petitions known before the Throne of Grace that the Lord may bless this mission work with growth and influx of many newcomers.
- That Rev. Schout may bear a durable testimony to the work and reign of King Jesus!

SouthWest Presbytery News

Meeting of the PSW in Garland, TX

The PSW met this January 18th and 19th for its stated winter meeting. This was the first meeting which included the ministers who came into the PSW from the now-defunct PCUS. The Presbytery extended a warm welcome to the men and their congregations.

Evangelism Work

Houston Harvey Mission - Rev. Nick Lamme

While the work in Houston has only recently begun, we want to praise God that he has already begun to open doors for ministry among those who are still grappling with the effects of Hurricane Harvey. Here is brief outline of opportunities and prayer requests.

We have had extended opportunities with one family who is in dire straits. Their names are Daniel and Crystal. They have two young boys, Leon (4 years) and Samuel (10 months). Their house was completely destroyed in the hurricane and they have been living out of an RV for the last 11 months. We have been able to help them with food and other assistance, and are actively working with their home church to see how we can best serve their needs and show Christ's love to them in what has been the most difficult time of their lives.

I have also been regularly visiting a widow in Spring, TX named Lynne. Lynne is 82 years old and apart from the damage that the storm did to her house, this last year, she also lost her daughter to cancer. Not only have I had opportunity to pray with her and minister the Word, but we are also working to help her install cabinets and make other small repairs to her house.



Daniel, Samuel and Rev. Mark Sumpter

PRAYERS:

- Pray for Daniel and Crystal and their two boys. Pray that God would lead us in wisdom to provide the right help to them in their situation.
- Pray for Lynne that God would strengthen her faith in Christ and grant her his mercies and comfort in the loss of her daughter.
- I have begun working on a series of devotionals that we are printing up for distribution in neighborhoods where I am currently seeking to make new contacts. Please pray that the Lord would use these 5 Minute devotions to minister to those who receive them.
- Pray that the Lord would permit us to establish
1) a Bible study group, 2) Prayer meetings and
3) a support group for people still struggling with the effects of hurricane.

I am grateful to the Lord, not only for some of the aforementioned opportunities, but also for bringing together our Houston churches in collaborating on Harvey outreach. The willingness of our churches to work together to meet the needs of this ministry is a powerful witness to the watching world of how God is

loving and calling people to himself through his Church. Continue to pray!

- Rev. Nick Lamme

New Braunfels OPC - declared a funded mission work

With great delight the Presbytery of the Southwest determine to designate funds for the purpose of supporting New Braunfels OPC for up to three (3) years.

Listening In and Sounding Out

Christ's Gift to His People

Have you considered how Christ has given Christians a very special gift? Christ has not only given us His Spirit and Word, and the sacraments as means of grace in order to become more like him, but he has given us a real visible institution, family, or school, in order for us to grow up together into maturity, and into the likeness of our Lord! This institution, family, or school is the visible Church of Christ. Treasure her, hold her true, and don't forget to invite the stranger in. Remember, once we were strangers too.

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