



Harvest Call

February 3, 2019

OPC Ecumenicity

Prayer - the mark of faith

Prayer is our most necessary preoccupation. Luke says, “*And he told them a parable to the effect that **they ought always to pray and not lose heart.***” (Luke 18:1) and Paul reiterates this message: “*First of all, then, I **urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,** ...*” (1 Timothy 2:1).

How shall a person receive pardon for their sins if they will not ask for it? It is so easy to pray: “*Lord, forgive me.*” To live without prayer is to be without God, because the distinguishing mark of the Christian is communion with Christ, and there cannot be communion where this is no communication.

The elect of God “*have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*” (Romans 8:15). This is a distinguishing mark of the adopted children of Jesus. They cannot do otherwise, they must pray. In Acts 9 the Lord called Ananias to visit Saul in the home of Judas. The Lord instructed him that the distinguishing mark of the change of Saul’s heart lies in this: “*... for behold, **he is praying,** ...*” (Acts 9:11).

No duty of the saints is so much neglected as prayer, and for the absence of it too many excuses are made. Many complain they have no time; some lack eloquence; others lack words. There is no alibi for the lack of prayer. The Holy Spirit is given us to help us in our weaknesses in prayer, he helps us in our communication with the Lord. The Lord’s Spirit dwells within God’s people (John 14:17) as the Spirit of grace and supplication. We do not plead with God in our own strength, but the Spirit pleads in the elect of the Father.

Luke relays Jesus teaching: “*everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened*” (Luke 11:10). James says: “*Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among*

you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” (James 5:13-19).

Pray for peace of understanding that lips may be opened with prayer, and let us “*call upon the Lord while he is near*” (Isaiah 55:6) and plead for the house of Israel, that the Lord may bless his saints, may prosper their work in drawing his own out of darkness into the light. May the Lord bless your prayers, supplications, and petitions for the work of service for the Church.

Sister Church

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)

Established in 1782, the ARPC has approximately 29,000 members across 268 congregations and mission works, and made up of nine presbyteries. The Lord has raised 472 ministers to serve His people in the ARPC. Her confessional standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith and its Catechisms. The major assembly of the ARPC is its annual General Assembly, and she has a significant commitment to missions. In North America alone there are 48 mission works, and over 15 foreign mission fields.

PRAYERS:

- For continued faithfulness in witness and walk.

- For the many missionaries that server in often remote and distant places: protection, effective witness, that her works may grow and take root.
- For growth, peace and harmony in North American ARPC churches.
- For her ecclesiastical relationships to be peaceful and harmonious to facilitate the spread of the gospel.

Sister Congregation

Evangelical Reformed Church Westminster Confession (ERKWB), Rankweil, Austria - Rev. Reinhard Mayer

About 20 years ago Pastor Mayer and his family relocated to Rankweil in the western part of Austria, bordering Switzerland. There he labored to plant the ERKWB church of Rankweil with one other family.



Bernadette and Pastor Reinhard Mayer

The first 4 years were tough with almost no growth. But the Lord's promise spurred them on to "... seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33). The work in Rankweil moved forward to seek God's kingdom and never suffered from want. Pastor Mayer and his wife Bernadette have missionary hearts. The Lord blessed the kingdom work and changed hearts as he brought converts to the church. The congregation grew.

In 2004, Pastor Widter left the congregation in Neuhofen and the ERKWB. Consequently Rev. Mayer became the pastor of two small congregations that were over 300 miles apart. In Rankweil there were two families from Switzerland. They wanted their own church, so in 2005 a pastor was installed for this work.

In 2007, a police officer from Vienna (capital of Austria) came to the faith and joined the church in Rankweil. A friendly pastor (PCA) from Florida wanted to build community in Vienna. He had met his wife there. The police officer plus a Pastor led to planting in Vienna in 2009. That same year, the Liberal Evangelical Church sued the church at Rankweil. They demanded they give up the church name and its confession, and they lost. Rarely did the pastor experience the presence of the Lord as in this trial.

In 2010, they got in touch with Professor Tony Curto (Covenant Community, OPC, Taylor, SC). Since then, he teaches, helps and encourages them every year.



Rev. Klaas Rozema, missionary to Innsbruck

In 2015 a family in Innsbruck (capital of Tyrol, 100 miles across the mountains) and a family in Bludenz (20 miles south of Rankweil) asked Rev. Mayer to minister to them. The Session approved of it. In 2016 Klaas Rozema visited Rankweil. He studied theology and loved Austria. In 2017 he interned in Rankweil. In 2018 he was ordained as a missionary and pastor in

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Innsbruck. He is now a missionary in this beautiful Alpine city.

In 2017 Mrs. Bernadette Mayer met a philologist from Graz (capital of Styria) at an EPCEW conference in England. He longed for a church founded upon God's word. Rev. Mayer spoke with him and he mentioned contacts in Holland. Pastor Peter Drost, a long-time friend of Rev. Mayer's, heard about it and was very concerned. The ERKWB issued a call to him (as always without being able to return the favor). He was offered two calls to serve in large Dutch congregations with good compensation packages, but he accepted the call extended to him from Austria.

At the end of February he started looking for a house for his family, and their 5 children. In the summer of 2019 they hope to establish the "Ekklesia Grazia" in Graz.



The founders group from Graz

For the last 20 years the ERKWB has face great challenges - but the grace of the Lord is always greater.

PRAYERS:

- For **Rankweil:**
 - The most important thing: growth to the glory of God.
 - For the session, and Rev. Mayer and his wife.
 - For further growth of the 56 Covenant members.
 - For our asylum seekers: faith and healing. They have experienced terrible things.
- For **Innsbruck:**
 - For missionary Rev. Klaas Rozema.
 - For a new hall for worship.

- For the Lord to draw out his people in Innsbruck.
- For Alco + Lydia, who want to help in Innsbruck.
- For **Graz:**
 - Rev. Peter Drost and family - house, church, finances.
 - God's honor and His people in Graz.

OPC Congregation

Covenant OPC, Orlando Park, IL - Rev. Iain Wright

Covenant OPC in Orland Park was particularized 24 years ago. It was formed under the direction of its founding pastor, Rev. Dr. Norm De Jong by a number of families who had become increasingly concerned at the direction in which the CRC was heading.

From the beginning there was a strong emphasis on seeking to be reformed and confessional with a desire that the children of the congregation should be raised in the nurture and admission of the Lord. Having established the fellowship on a sure footing, Dr. De Jong retired from the work in early 1998 and was succeeded by Rev. Iain Wright whom the congregation called from his native Scotland in May 1999.

The congregation has long had an emphasis on missions both at home and abroad with strong links to a number of mission fields and regular visits from missionaries. The youth group have been overseas on many occasions and more recently have sent teams for the past few years to the Boardwalk Chapel. A particularly significant aspect of outreach has been for many years the ministry at the local maximum security correctional center.

The Lord has been pleased to bless the ministry and Covenant has been much encouraged to have the professions of faith of a dozen inmates. Concerned to be able to pastor our members in the correctional center more adequately Covenant called Rev. Brett Mahlen specifically for the work in November 2016. He works alongside Divine Hope Reformed Seminary

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teaching classes weekly in addition to preaching regularly and visiting inmates to share the Gospel.

Locally, the congregation is involved in a community activity called “*The Taste of Orland Park*” each year in August. Up to 10,000 people visit the local event and members seek to make contact and invite passers-by to attend the services.

PRAYERS:

- We invite others to join with us in giving thanks to our gracious God for the privilege of declaring the Gospel of His Son.
- We thank Him for those whom He has brought to Himself at Covenant and the trophies of grace also in the Correctional Center.
- We bless the Lord for raising up Pastor Mahlen to pastor, preach and teach.
- We delight in the Lord’s goodness in giving a desire to our young people to spend a week each year at the Boardwalk Chapel.
- We thrill to see the Lord adding to our number both in our services at Orland Park and at Stateville CC.

To His Name alone be the Glory.

OPC Mission Work

First Street Reformed Fellowship, Dayton, OH - Rev. Brad Peppo

A warm welcome Brad (and Cinnamon) Peppo, church planter at First Street Reformed Fellowship in Dayton, Ohio as they begin denominational support. Pastor Peppo, who was born in Dayton, is excited to be leading this group, which started meeting the first Sunday in August 2018. The group currently has about ten households represented, from young families to empty nesters.

Brad shares that the group as a whole is new to one another. The group meets Sunday evenings in a rented church building in the Dayton business district. They are thinking through the issues of location and

what ministries fit that location, specifically as they consider looking for another facility in a residential area. Studies and meetings are intentionally held in public venues in order to draw in interested observers.



Brad and Cinnamon Peppo

PRAYERS:

- For growth in unity, worship, fellowship, and service with one another.
- For First Street’s studies and meetings.
- For blessings of growth and effective outreach efforts.

SouthWest Presbytery News

Providence Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, OK - Rev. Jim Stevenson

Providence continues to enjoy God's richest blessings. We are approaching our seven year anniversary since becoming a mission work of the former Presbytery of the Central US. In those early days, they breathed a sigh of relief when attendance reached twenty for the morning worship service. Now attendance is regularly in the sixties for the morning service and thirties for the second service.

Pastor Stevenson is currently preaching through the post-exilic prophets in the morning and is nearing the

end of a series on the book of Acts in the second service, which will be followed by his preaching straight through the book of Psalms. The Wednesday evening study has just concluded a book study on *Bringing the Gospel Home* by Randy Newman, a book about evangelizing unbelieving family members. The Saturday morning men's study is continuing a study on O. Palmer Robertson's *The Flow of the Psalms*."

GRATITUDE AND THANKS:

- There are at least two families who have expressed interest in a membership class.
- The Session's unity of mind and ministry approach.
- Our in-depth study on the Doctrine of God during the adult Sunday School has been well received thus far.
- Thus far, the Lord has financially blessed our small work.

PRAYERS:

- We are seeing the need for larger facilities and the means to acquire such. We need wisdom and insight as to whether we should purchase a building or find a larger place to rent. Either way, this will affect our finances significantly.
- We see a need for greater outreach and evangelism opportunities; our region is starving for self-consciously reformed and confessional Churches.
- As we grow, we anticipate the need for more qualified officers.

Listening In and Sounding Out

Tyler OPC, TX - Rev. John Johnson

Tyler OPC gives thanks for the birth of Phoebe J. on January 26th. Please pray for expectant mothers (3), for three upcoming marriages. Please pray for Pastor John Johnson and the ministry to a congregation that has many battling with serious illnesses.

OPC Foreign Missions visit to Bogota, Colombia

Please pray for the safety of Rev. Doug Clawson and Rev. Jim Cassidy visiting Bogota, Colombia, and give thanks for the teaching opportunities extended to them. Pray that the Lord may use their labors to the end that the harvest may be bountiful and there may be great joy in the Lord's House.

Doug Clawson's Daughter

Please bear before the Throne of Grace the needs of the Clawson family as they minister to their daughter in her battle with cancer and present illnesses. May the Lord extend His kindness, and mercy and may He grant healing. May the Name of the God who keeps covenant with His people be magnified.

Reflections about Ministerial Authority

The OPC publication (available on-line) *Ordained Servant*, February 2019 edition, has an excellent article by T. David Gordon focussing on the authority and responsibilities of the office of a Minister of the Word. The article is very much worth reading and can be found at the URL: <https://bit.ly/2RzQBhA> or scan the following QR code with your smartphone:



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

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