

OPC Ecumenicity

Sister Church

Christian Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (CGKN)

The Christian Reformed Churches seeks to be a faithful Christian church in tradition of the Reformed family of churches. The first part of the name (Christian) indicates that they are one with the catholic (universal) church of all ages. The second part of the name (Reformed) expresses the fact that their origin goes back to the 16th and 17th century Reformation. Events in this time shaped the identity of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands following in the footsteps of John Calvin, the great reformer of Geneva.

This was especially expressed at the general synod of 1618-1619 (Dordrecht) when the reformed confessional standards, the Belgic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort (the Three Forms of Unity) were adopted.



In addition to the three ecumenical creeds, these so called Three Forms of Unity are the confessional basis of CGKN churches. CGKN office bearers sign a document stating that they promise not to teach anything that contradicts these standards. With respect to church government, the CGKN abide by the Church Order of Dordrecht adopted by the 1618-1619 Synod, which is adapted according to changing circumstances.

The confessional standards of the CGKN function as a guide to be a reformed church in a secularized society. The confessional standards of the church remind us of our call to be the salt of the earth. The heartbeat of the local church is visible in its work. On Sunday, the congregation meets, with guests and visitors for public worship. Central to public worship are the faithful preaching of the Word of God from the scriptures, the faithful observance of the sacraments (Christian Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and biblical

practices of nurture and disciple-making. Members receive weekly teaching (catechism) from the Bible and from the confessional standards of the church. Confessing members have active rights and responsibilities. Members of the local church body have the right and responsibility to elect office bearers (elders and deacons). Local church members also have duties. Financially, they are responsible to ensure that the church can do its work of outreach, missions, support for church staff, agreed projects, caring for the needy, and so on. The local church is known in English as a congregation, and in the Dutch language is referred to as a gemeente (English: community, church municipality).



A meeting of the Synod of the CGKN

The Session (church board) is chosen and elected by the professing members of the congregation to govern them according to the scriptures, and in conformity with the Church Order of Dordrecht (Dort). The Session (Consistory) may appoint committees to help them to fulfill the responsibilities of office. The Session is responsible to oversee the spiritual health and wellbeing of the congregation and to provide care and assistance as needed and as the Lord may provide.

The responsibility of membership applies not only to communicant members on the roll of the local CGKN congregation, but apply also to the federation of churches of the CGKN federation and the commonly agreed work that is undertaken through decisions that are made when representatives of the churches gather at Synodical meetings.

Source: Edited from the web pages of the CGKN.

PRAYERS:

- For the faithful walk and witness of the CGKN and her members .
- For the outreach and mission works of the CGKN.

- That the Lord may bless the CGKN with growth, and stability regardless of hostility and opposition.

Sister Church Ministries

Streetlight Ministries, Canadian and American Reformed Churches - Rev. Paul Aasman

Streetlight is both a Christian ministry and a church, bringing glory to God through the gospel in downtown Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Streetlight exists to share God's word with adults and youth in the Beasley neighbourhood, to connect them with other Christians and the worshipping community, to help them grow in their faith, and to encourage them to serve others in order that God is praised.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded his followers to take the gospel and spread it to all nations of the earth. Sharing the gospel is not just a responsibility, but also a Christian privilege. Streetlight looks for different opportunities to present the gospel through personal evangelism and outreach programs and events.



Pastor Paul Aasman

Pastor Paul attended McMaster University for his Bachelor of Arts and the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary for his Master of Divinity, both in Hamilton Ontario. He served for 18 years as a pastor in the Canadian Reformed Church of Grand Valley Ontario before coming to Streetlight Ministries as a missionary in 2006. Working at Streetlight is fulfilling a long-held dream, as well as God's plan. There are many things that he loves about Streetlight, but his favourite activities are to preach the gospel on Sundays, teach reformed doctrine to youth and new members, and meet people to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Downtown Hamilton, and especially the Beasley neighbourhood, is a great place to do these things. In his spare time, Paul and his

wife Evelyn enjoy camping and canoeing in the summer, and snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter. He considers himself very blessed to have five children and a growing assembly of grandchildren.

Worship is what we were created for. Each Sunday there is an opportunity to praise God together in morning and evening worship services. Worship services include praying, singing songs of praise to God, and hearing a sermon in which we learn more about God and salvation through Christ.

Streetlight is supported and overseen by the [Ancaster Canadian Reformed Church](#).

PRAYERS:

- For the work of Pastor Paul Aasman and the saints who are being called to join the household of faith.
- For the witness of the gospel in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

OPC Congregation

Sandy Springs OPC, Maryville, TN - Rev. James Ganzevoort

Sandy Springs OPC began in 1991 as Covenant OPC, a mission work meeting under the direction of RHM Jim Heemstra. The first participants had been part of a local bible study that helped many families develop Reformed convictions. Some in the bible study took these new ideas in a Baptist direction, but for others (including the Robson family) the covenantal implications were clear, and the OPC was willing to help this latter group get organized.



Within a few months the church was invited to use the building of a former Bible Presbyterian congregation in the Sandy Springs neighborhood of Maryville, Tennessee where she still meets. She has been led by evangelist Robert Berry (1992-1997), pastor Mark Marquis (1998-2002), and pastor James Ganzevoort (2005-present), with a generous interim ministry provided by William Dennison of Covenant College in 2002-2005. Pastor Ganzevoort was raised in the Dutch Reformed churches of Grand Rapids, Michigan; studied at

Harvest Call

RTS in Jackson, Mississippi; and interned under Tom Champness in Atlanta, Georgia. Sandy Springs is his first pastoral charge. His wife Clare and four children are a great encouragement to him and to the church.

During her lifetime Sandy Springs has experienced many ups and downs, and has been used of the Lord to plant mission works in London, Kentucky and Dayton, Tennessee (the latter of which joined the RPCNA). Currently she has about fifty members. In recent years the congregation has experienced a sweet time of unity, spiritual renewal, and missions-mindedness; and has invested heavily in ministries to younger children and inmates at the local jail.

THANKSGIVING:

- For the Lord's grace to sustain Sandy Springs and revive her repeatedly after times of uncertainty and decline.
- For evident spiritual growth and maturity, especially among the ladies of the church.

PRAYERS:

- For the local jail ministry, that the inmates who receive gospel preaching and counseling would receive Christ and grow in him.
- For the impact that Reformed doctrine is having on other volunteers, in the work of jail ministry, not just inmates!
- For two members, Matthew and Rose, who are engaged to be married this year.
- For the spiritual needs and families of members whose work keeps them away for months at a time: Tim, Ash, and Ben.

OPC Mission Work

Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura - Rev. Bradney López

Many people in the OPC may not even be aware of our churches in Puerto Rico. The churches of Puerto Rico are primarily Spanish speaking and belong to the Presbytery of New Jersey. These churches are a rare gem in our denomination and represent some of the only reformed witness on the island.

Bradney López is a church planter and the pastor of the Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura (Sola Scriptura Presbyterian Church, OPC), one of three OPC churches in

Puerto Rico. I recently sat down with Rev. López to hear about the good work that they are doing in the cause of the gospel in Puerto Rico.

The Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura is in Arroyo, Puerto Rico, situated in front on the City Hall, right by the sea. In a place dominated by Roman Catholicism and Neo Pentecostalism, the OPC presence in Puerto Rico presents a significant witness to the historic Christian, Protestant faith. Bradney told me that over the last couple years they have seen the church continue to grow. This church has 22 members on their rolls and 40 in regular attendance on Sunday mornings. They also have two ordained elders.



Rev. Bradney López receiving a new family

Hurricane Maria took a significant toll on our churches in Puerto Rico. This was one of the most devastating storms that this island has ever faced. Bradney told me that after the Hurricane, they were meeting in his father's house. It was very difficult on the church, because they didn't have electricity, cell phone service or other forms of normal communication. They were also cut off from the other OPC churches, as they couldn't communicate with one another. It took some time to account for all of their members and for the other churches. The storm produced a scarcity of food and gasoline and communication was word-of-mouth and door-to-door.

One week after the Hurricane, David Nakhla traveled to Puerto Rico to assess the damage and meet with our churches there. The OPC sent teams to help with disaster recovery and to bring needed diaconal assistance to members of our churches on the island.

This church is using different strategies in Puerto Rico to reach their community. One way in which they have tried to reach out is through Facebook Live; another way is through a daily radio program called "*Five Minutes of Reformed Reflection*". This year, however, apart from these two

Harvest Call

resources, Bradney's church is making a purposeful and concerted effort to get out into the community, evangelize in public places, hand out flyers and tacts and bring the gospel of Jesus out to the community.



Volunteer Team to Puerto Rico after Maria

Please pray for this church and for all of our churches in Puerto Rico (of the PNJ). The Lord is doing a great work in this US territory and we ought to be holding them regularly before the Father's throne and keeping them before the members of our churches.

Written by: Rev. Nicholas Lammé

PRAYER:

- Pray that the church will be moved to a greater zeal for the lost and evangelism.
- Pray that the members of the church will love the church more and more and invite their friends and families to come worship.

Listening In and Sounding Out

SouthWest Presbytery News

**South Austin Presbyterian Church (OPC),
Austin, TX - Rev. James J. Cassidy**

The Lord continues to bless South Austin Presbyterian Church. He is adding to our numbers daily those who are being saved. We have been running new member classes repeatedly throughout the year. Our deacons have been busy keeping up with the financial matters of the church and the care of the pastor and his family.

The church meets for morning and evening public worship each Lord's Day. Morning attendance averages around

55-60, evening attendance around 30. We are exceedingly thankful to God for the faithfulness of the congregation and for their active participation in the life of the body.

Currently we have two candidates in officer training class, along with a young man who is planning to begin seminary in September. We have a three part program of training; church history, theology (Westminster Confession of Faith) and practice (the Book of Church Order).

The elders are blessed to carry out regular visitation. We have the congregation divided into three groups, one group per elder. The elder organizes and leads the group meetings (called "Shepherding Groups") and the annual home visits.

South Austin Presbyterian Church recently came to the end of its financial support from the OPC Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. We express our deepest gratitude for the support of our denomination over the past four years, and in particular we thank the members of our churches for their faithful support, their encouragement, and particularly for the prayers of the saints. Your encouragement is important and your prayers are being answered in the growth of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The session of SAPC also oversees the work in New Braunfels (New Braunfels OPC). We have started a pastoral search committee. We hope to identify the man of God's provision and have him on the field by July of this year.

We are also looking at a church building which may come up for sale. It is a good facility and perfect to meet our needs. Facility costs whether we rent or purchase are significant hurdles. Our officers are planning and brainstorming for ways to find an affordable solution. Meanwhile, we are confident that the Lord will provide the way and the means so that His house may be filled, and so that His praises may ring loudly bringing light to the world.

PRAYERS:

- For wisdom and grace to be given to the officers of SAPC to discern with regard to a potential purchase of our own facility.
- For the continued training of men for office.
- For wisdom to oversee the work in New Braunfels and that the man of God's call would be identified to be the organizing pastor.
- For continual growth and the ability to keep up with all the shepherding needs.
- For good health for all, and for provision for those who are seeking employment.

Evangelism Work

Houston Harvey Mission - Rev. Nick Lamme

Dear Saints, I want to thank you for your weekly prayers for the ministry we are doing in Houston. Since this last week was spent at a special meeting of the Presbytery of the Southwest, I don't have as much to report as normal. But, this last week did see the Lord open up a couple of welcome opportunities. I would like to briefly report them and ask you for your continued prayers as the Lord continues to guide me in bringing the gospel to the lost in Houston.

1. On Tuesday, I met with Keith, a gentleman on the Memorial Hills HOA who has been very supportive of our ministry outreach. He has more than once invited me to participate at their meetings and get to know the community. However, Keith does not go to church. He has confessed a difficult relationship with the church in general and is very skeptical of religious people. I have been praying for him and trying to have coffee with him on a semi-regular basis. He has been slowly opening up. This last time we had tea at Starbucks and he opened up more about his life and background. We also spent the majority of our time talking about the Bible and Jesus in the New Testament. He had a lot of questions and I was encouraged that we were able to spend time discussing God's Word.
2. Today (Saturday, as I am writing this), I am getting ready to go to the Memorial Hills neighborhood to attend an open house at one of the houses we helped to rebuild after Harvey. I am taking some of my kids and some literature. I hope to have good conversations with people about the Lord.
3. Last Sunday, I preached at Oak Lawn PCA in downtown Houston. I preached on Mark 1:40-45 where the Leper comes and asks Jesus if he is willing to make him clean. The funny thing about this church is that it is bilingual. There are many Spanish speakers and English speakers and then there are folks who know both languages. I am very used to preaching in Spanish, but I confess that I have never preached a single sermon in both languages at the same time! It was quite an experience, but the Lord was good and his Word was preached, and the saints were ministered to. I praise God for the opportunity to continue to minister to God's people in Spanish here in Houston.

So, that's the report for this week, my friends. Now, I ask that over the next week, you would pray specifically for the following petitions.

PRAYER:

- Pray for Keith from Memorial Hills, that God would continue to work in his heart by his Spirit and bring him, not only into contact with Christ, but into the fellowship of his Church.
- Pray for the fruit of Saturday's (Feb. 24) activity that the Lord would give future contacts and opportunities for ministry from it.
- Pray that the Lord would open up opportunities for Bible studies, as this week I will be actively seeking to do that.

That is all for this week. Thank you for your prayers and may the God of peace be with you this week and comfort you in his Word and in the knowledge of our Savior, Jesus.

Ordination and Installation of Mr. Robert Mossotti

In the providence of the Lord Mr. Robert Mossotti was ordained and installed as a Teacher. He will serve Mid-Cities Presbyterian Church, Bedford, TX, and will minister to the saints and labor for the upbuilding of the church in the Wichita Falls area of Texas.

The ordination took place at 7:00 p.m. on February 21, 2019, at Mid-Cities OPC. Following the service of ordination and installation there was a time of enriching fellowship. The presbyters very much appreciated the fellowship, hospitality shown by the saints. It is a delight to see the many ways the Lord is blessing Mid-Cities OPC and the saints who serve within her.



Presbyters of the Southwest present at Mossotti ordination service

Listening In and Sounding Out

Update on PSW Judicial Trial

The Presbytery of the Southwest met for Judicial Trial on February 21-22, 2019. Last week we requested the prayers of the saints for the process and matters that were pending trial. We asked for prayers for the peace and harmony of Christ's Church, the vindication of the honor of Christ, and the purity of His Church.

We were comforted by your prayers and with exceeding gratitude to Almighty God we report that more than the best outcome came into being by the work of the Holy Spirit. To God be the glory.

Prayers that Matter - Rev. John Shaw

Recently, John Shaw published an article in *Tabletalk* magazine (Ligonier Ministries). The title in the magazine is "Prayer That Matters," but as you will see if you read the article, the emphasis is on evangelistic prayer. The setting of the prayer discussed is an evangelistic setting and John was thinking about how it applies to all prayers, but particularly prayers for the lost in our families, among our friends, and in our communities.

If you read the article, think about how John's two main points would change your own prayers for the lost, and how they might change our church prayer meetings.

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