



*Eastern Home
Missions*

Newsletter

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From Our Family

We would like to extend to all of you our holiday greetings. Last week we held our Thanksgiving Day service. We are reminded in this time of year again of God's constant care for us as a family and for our Fellowship here. God has again given us health and strength to carry on our labors this past year. We also remember God's faithfulness to our churches in general. He has given us the glorious gospel of grace. May we never take that for granted!

We give thanks to God too for His care and blessing on the Pittsburgh mission. God has shown us positive fruit upon these labors. Our family would like to thank you for your support and prayers. We appreciate the letters, cards, emails sent us, and words of encouragement expressed. We are also thankful for the visits some of you have made to see the work here in Pittsburgh.

We were forced by our old telephone company to open up a new telephone account. This, in turn, forced us to change our phone number. For those of you who may wish to call us in the future, take note of this change of phone number: 412-727-6811. The new number is listed in the 2009 Acts of Synod and on the prca website.

Recent Developments

For the past two or three months some new regular visitors have been in attendance. I mentioned one of them in the last newsletter: a young man from the Wilkinsburg area about 15 minutes away from the church. We have also had in attendance during our morning worship services a middle aged man who has come from a Pentecostal background, but has recently discovered the Reformed truths of Scripture. Then there is a young couple who have been dating for about eight months now. She is from the Church of the Brethren. He is from a Roman Catholic background, but left that church at about the age of 13. He has since visited mainly Methodist churches and also a Lutheran church.

Recently I asked these visitors if they would be interested in a class on Reformed doctrine. All of them were genuinely excited to do so. We are meeting on Saturday mornings for class. The class is scheduled for an hour, but so far each class has gone for about two hours. It is good to see their enthusiasm for the truth of God's Word. We pray the Lord's blessing on this labor.

Marriage Workshop and Reformation Day Lecture

Since our last newsletter we have also kept busy with the outreach of our church. On Friday evening, October 2, we held our second workshop on marriage. This workshop focused on the wedding ceremony. We emphasized that during the ceremony God unites two into one flesh. We also spent some time discussing the seriousness of the wedding vows. For those of us who attended, there was another wonderful evening with God's Word.

But the workshop failed to bring in the visitors we desired. There were eleven visitors that attended our first workshop, but there was only one that came to this second one. One thing we have learned as a Fellowship in our mission work: do not set your expectations too high. That God sent us one visitor is a reason to rejoice. Yet, there was some disappointment since we expected the same people who attended the first workshop to come to this one too.

In our labors we keep in mind that all we are called to do is follow what Christ commands

His church. We are called to sow the seed; bring the word in season and out of season. God requires nothing more of us. He will give the increase. There was not one person missing that night that God had not determined to be missing. Likewise, every person was there that God meant to be there. In all of our work we rest in Him. God will bless faithful labors in His own good time. In fact, He *is* blessing those labors as is evident from our regular visitors.

When God sends disappointments He also sends encouragements. The attendance at the Reformation Day lecture was larger than we have ever seen before. We had a total of 22 visitors from around the Pittsburgh area. When we add to that my parents and my brother Keith and his wife Wanda from our Peace PRC, we had 26 visitors in all. That outnumbered our own members who were present! It is true, that few of these visitors returned, but again, that is not of the essence. The seed was sown. Many heard. We do not know what God will do with that seed in the future.

I spoke on the subject: *John Calvin and God's Sovereignty*. Afterwards, we shared in fellowship over cookies and bars in the basement of the church. Most of the visitors stayed for that and were genuinely excited about the doctrine of God's sovereignty. It is striking, however, that though there may be agreement on God's sovereignty in salvation there are divergent views in other areas. Some of the visitors were adamant premillennialists. Some were Baptist in their thinking. These kind of disagreements, I believe, stand in the way of such people showing any more of an interest in us. But they have heard us and know where we are. Perhaps they will visit another lecture. Perhaps, if the Lord chooses, they will desire more of what we teach and preach and return again at some later date. The evening was of great encouragement to the members of the Fellowship.

Now plans are being made by our Neighborhood Outreach Committee for two more conferences next year. One conference will be held in the summer here in Pittsburgh. It will be a young adults conference. Sorry, it will not be open to the young adults of our churches! Maybe we can do that on a future date. But we intend to do something on a smaller scale. The retreat will include the young adults of our Fellowship. We are also inviting the young

people/adults of the various families with whom we have contact in and around Pittsburgh and in the east. We are hoping to draw enough of them to have a small group of young adults for discussion and fellowship. In this way we can nurture our contacts in the east.

The other conference will be held just over the Pennsylvania border in the state of Ohio, either late summer or early fall. This will be a family conference that will include the families we have contact with in Ohio. We hope to draw other contacts in the east too, if possible.

These projects are in their early stages of planning.

I just finished taking another course at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological School in Pittsburgh. The name of the course was "Patristic and Early Medieval Church History." The content of the course was excellent. I also had opportunity to interact with some of the twenty-five students that attended this class with me. One student and his wife attended church by us a number of times.

The labors among the saints of the Fellowship itself continue, of course. We are into our season of catechism and societies. A highlight in the life of the Fellowship was the public confessions of faith of Samuel Colon and Jahmai Suber on October 25. Sam, if you recall, moved to Pittsburgh from Tennessee with the purpose of joining our group here. Jahmai is the third oldest child of Brian and Carla Suber. These two confessions of faith give concrete evidence of how God gathers His people from generation to generation. Some He calls from outside the church institute and grafts them in, while others are children born into the generations of believers. Both are tokens to us of God's faithfulness in preserving and gathering His church here in Pittsburgh.

Please continue to remember us in your prayers.