



Worshiping at 330 W. Indiana, Spokane WA

www.reformedspokane.org

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To the congregations of the Protestant Reformed Churches,

I just looked, and it's been over a year since I wrote an update for the churches on the work of our congregation here in Spokane. So, I'd better do it again, especially since all of you support our work through your synodical assessments, and now through collections for our building fund. We are very grateful for this support for the work here in Spokane. We also receive generous support for our evangelism work from some of you, and your support of the Reformed Witness Hour's broadcast is another way you promote the work here. We ask, also, that you continue to remember us in your prayers. Though we are now an established congregation with our own office bearers, there are many ways in which our work is still mission work.

The last year has been quite eventful. Let me give some highlights.

Probably the highlight of the year was that a family moved out here from our Loveland congregation to join our church. This was a great blessing to our congregation. The hard part is that his job situation did not work out, and so the Lord made it clear that they should move back to Loveland. This was a sad day in our congregation. But, even their five months here was a great blessing to our church. It gave our members opportunity to get to know well a family from one of our congregations, and they were a great contribution, bringing their experience and wisdom to our congregational life. I want to use this as an opportunity to suggest that others of you consider doing this. As you do it, I urge you to consider not only your job and family situation, but also the blessing and benefit that you would be to the church here, and in that way to the spread of the gospel and the broader work of our churches in missions.

Another highlight of this year was the first out-West Young People's camp. We organized a camp in the early summer in our area and invited the Young People from our Loveland, Redlands, Lynden, Lacombe and Edmonton congregations to attend. This was not organized as an alternative to the

Young People's convention, but as something to prepare the Young People from our more isolated congregations for the convention by their getting to know some of the other Young People from the churches. We had 32 young people attend. Rev. Hanko and Rev. Marcus spoke on subjects related to the theme, "Watching for Christ's Coming." Also, 8 families were able to camp for the week at the camp location. It made for a good opportunity for our people to fellowship with some from our other congregations. Usually, on Sundays, we have about 40-45 in our services. On the first Sunday in July, right after the camp, we had more than 120. The singing was wonderful, and we took advantage of that too by having an evening singspiration. We plan to have a similar camp again next Summer.

Another important highlight of this past year was the addition to our church, as members, of Fred and Becky Johnston. Fred and Becky, (aka Frecky), had been attending for about 3 ½ years and were taking Essentials pre-confession classes. On the joyful Sunday in April when they were received as members, Fred also received the sacrament of baptism.

We continue to receive a steady flow of visitors to our services. We get quite a number of one time visitors, people who have heard about us on the radio, found us on the internet, driven past the building, talked to members here, or seen us in the Yellow Pages. For these first time visitors we have prepared a welcome pack that includes some information about our church, some introductory material to Christianity, material on the Reformed faith, information about the Protestant Reformed Churches and the 7 minute introductory DVD to the PRCA. We distribute quite a few of these to visitors.

Earlier this year my wife received a phone call on a Saturday (we get a number of inquiries by phone too) and was asked two questions by the gentleman on the other end; 1. What version of the Bible do you use? and 2. What do you sing, and does your congregation sing too? The next day this family came to church, with two teenage children. They have since been coming almost every week, and have opened their home to me meeting with them to explain the Reformed faith and teach them in other areas of doctrine. They are totally new to the Reformed faith, and have come through a variety of churches to this point. They have also begun to become involved in the congregation life in other areas too, willing to get in and help with things like church cleaning and bringing meals to others, etc. We are very thankful to God for this addition to our group, and the way that God is leading them, more and more, to a stronger commitment here. This is the kind of work we look for here. In this way God answers our prayers for the growth of our church. Certainly, this is another highlight of this past year.

Catechism classes have begun again for the Fall. We have ten children in catechism. In the Spring of this year I began teaching the Essentials of Reformed doctrine class on Sunday mornings at 8:45 AM, for an hour before our service. This way the class can include some adults, which is good for the two Young People who are in the class, and gives opportunity for all the members to continue to grow in their knowledge of the Scripture and faith in Christ.

We have had several visiting pastors and lectures over the past year. A year ago, Rev. Bruinsma and his wife visited here. While here Rev. Bruinsma and I recorded a four part introductory radio series to air on a local Christian radio station. We had a three way conversation in the radio studio with a local radio personality. Prior to the recordings, I met with him and went over a set of questions/discussion topics that I had prepared. We discussed subjects of church, worship, family, antithesis, the end times, etc. These have been aired on the radio here at two different times this past year. If you'd like to hear them, you should be able to access them from our sermonaudio web site.

Later last Fall, Prof. Cammenga came and spoke for our Reformation Day lecture on "Calvin's Reformation of Worship." This Summer, while on vacation, Rev. Stewart and his wife stopped here over a Sunday, and the ever-energetic Rev. Stewart, also offered to give a speech, so he spoke on a Friday evening on the question, "For Whom did Christ Die?" This week Rev. Key, who will be here for Church visitation, will be giving a speech on the life of John Newton, the author of the hymn, Amazing Grace. And then for Reformation Day, this year, Prof. Gritters will be coming to speak and preach.

Along with each of these visits we record some appropriate Radio advertising, and prepare a flyer that we mail out to a list of local contacts and use for distribution through email, on the internet, and person to person. We have found that the best way to get someone to attend a speech or worship service is through personal invitation from one of the members here, and are thankful that God has given us some members here who are very willing to talk to their friends and invite them to these kinds of events. Even though we haven't had any significant additions or growth from these lectures and the radio, these are things that increase a local awareness of our presence. Generally a lecture or a visiting pastor brings a number of extra visitors for the weekend, who do not return again. Over the past year we have also had four or so other families or individuals who have come along to services for a number of weeks or months, and then stopped coming because of some difference they've had with us. We pray that we may have the wisdom needed to deal with such visitors, and that we ourselves have not become the stumbling block to their returning.

Probably one of the main ways that we have been trying to raise awareness of our presence in this community is by use of the Radio. Earlier this year I spoke for five months on the Reformed Witness Hour which did bring some local response. It is good, and important, I think, that people in the community hear a local pastor on the radio. We have looked at other ways to use the radio, but the Reformed Witness Hour seems the best option right now, so long as I can continue to speak on it from time to time. We have also used the radio for other types of advertising. Following Rev. Bruinsma's pattern, we have also recorded series of advertisements on a particular subject. These are 60 second recordings on different biblical topics.

During our Summer trip to MI this year I was glad to accept the opportunity to lead a class, two different times, at Georgetown PRC on the subject, "Major Questions in Doing Domestic Missions." My experience here, as well as on the DMC, has caused me to reflect, quite a bit, on our approach as a denomination to missions, and also to read and learn from other Reformed denominations.

One question I am often asked is, "How big is your congregation?" I think I answer honestly when I say there are nine families (37 total members), but that we also have almost as many in visitors and outside interest as we have members. This was very obvious on a recent Sunday when we celebrated the Lord's Supper, and there were more adults in attendance who did not partake than those who are members and could. This can be a little difficult for us to handle, but it also gives us opportunity to talk about why we have office bearers in the church who supervise communion. Anyhow, I raise this just to show that there is considerable interest and potential for growth here.

Over this past Summer we've enjoyed a number of visitors from several of our congregations. This is always a great encouragement to the saints here, and helps the church here to become more integrated in the denomination. I think that even just a one Sunday visit will help you to appreciate a different aspect of the work of God in gathering His church.

Continue to pray for us,

Pastor Rodney Kleyn

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