

the messenger

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: “DEFINITE ATONEMENT OR PARTICULAR REDEMPTION”



“For it was the entirely free plan and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of His Son’s costly death should work itself out in all His chosen ones, in order that He might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead them without fail to salvation. In other words, it was God’s will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to Him by the Father; that He should grant them faith (which, like the Holy Spirit’s other saving gifts, He acquired for them by His death); that He should cleanse them by His blood from all their sins, both original and actual . . .”
(Canons of Dort, 2/8)

Undoubtedly, the most controversial of the five points of doctrine affirmed by the Synod of Dort was the second. In this point, the Canons teach that Christ’s work of atonement was graciously designed by God the Father to provide for the salvation of those whom He has chosen to save. According to the “gracious will and intention of God the Father,” Christ’s atoning death was specifically and particularly accomplished to procure and ensure the salvation of all those for whom He laid down his life. In the words of John 10, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. These sheep are not a nameless crowd. They are the sheep whom Jesus knows and who likewise know Him (John 10:15).

Two objections are often raised to the teaching of definite atonement. Among those who raise these objections, some call themselves “four-point Calvinists” to express their agreement with the other points affirmed in the Canons while demurring from this one.

The first objection is that the teaching of definite atonement “limits” or diminishes the embrace of Christ’s atoning death. If Christ died only for the elect, the scope and reach of God’s grace are unduly constricted. The doctrine of “limited atonement” is incompatible with the well-known affirmation of John 3:16: “For God so loved *the world* that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

In reply to this first objection, it should be noted that the Canons expressly affirm the infinite value and worth of Christ’s satisfaction. Christ’s atoning sacrifice “is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins,” and “is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.” For this reason, the church must proclaim the gospel of salvation through Christ to “all nations and peoples, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel.” The church is called to proclaim “indiscriminately” that all who believe in Christ crucified and turn from their sins shall not perish but have eternal life. It should also be noted that the Canons affirm the unlimited efficacy of Christ’s atonement. Through the blood of Christ, God wills to “effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to Him by the Father.” Far from limiting Christ’s work of atonement, the Canons insist that Christ’s atonement *ensures* the salvation of a great number of fallen sinners. By contrast, the Arminian position limits the efficacy of Christ’s atonement by teaching that its intended benefit can always be frustrated by any lost sinner who freely chooses not to believe to the end. According to the Arminian view of indefinite atonement, Christ’s death does not ensure the actual salvation of a single person. Christ only makes it possible for some to be saved, provided they respond appropriately to the gospel’s call to faith.

The second objection that is often raised to definite atonement is that it undermines the gospel’s call to faith with the promise that those who do so will be saved. To this objection, I cannot offer a better response than that of John Murray: “He [Christ] could not be offered as Savior and as the one who embodies in Himself salvation full and free if He had simply made the salvation of men possible or merely had made provision for the salvation of all. It is the very doctrine that Christ procured and secured redemption that invests the free offer of the gospel with richness and power. It is that doctrine alone that allows for a presentation of Christ that will be worthy of the glory of His accomplishment and of His person. It is because He procured and secured redemption that He is an all-sufficient and suitable Savior” (*Redemption Accomplished and Applied*).

Like all of the points affirmed by the Canons, the second point underscores the simple truth that “God saves sinners.” God does not make it possible for some to be saved, depending upon their independent decision to persevere in faith. No, God actually saves those whom He graciously wills to save and whom His Son effectively redeems.

Dr. Cornelis P. Venema,
President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello friends!

If you’ve been reading The Messenger for a while, you’ll notice this one is a bit different. I’m sure you’ve noticed it is longer than others we’ve done. If you’re *really* paying close attention, you will also notice it is printed on a little heavier paper. We think it came out pretty nice. In addition to our news reporting, we were able to include an expanded alumni portion, and add a general-interest feature piece. As this is a trial issue, we would appreciate your feedback. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, you can reach me at mdeckinga@midamerica.edu.

Thanks for reading. Turn the page, and enjoy!

Mike Deckinga,
Vice President of Advancement

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Our Mission

Mid-America Reformed Seminary seeks to serve Christ and His church by assisting in the formation and preparation of servants for the Kingdom of God. Our primary purpose is to train men for the gospel ministry of Jesus Christ. Guided by this focus, we are also committed to providing solid theological training for others among God’s people whose life calling may be enhanced by theological education.

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DEVELOPMENT REPORT: HOLIDAY PIES (AND GRAPHS)

Banana cream pie is my favorite. My mom makes it almost every time we get together during the holiday season. Top it off with a cup of coffee and a hearty scoop of whip cream, and you're all set. The thing is, I'm not the only one who likes it. I have to share. So I watch that beautiful dessert get carved up into smaller, and smaller pieces. That's okay. As you read in my last article, running isn't my thing, so it's best I don't overindulge anyway. The pie I have showing below is only cut up into three pieces though – and ours is the largest slice!

I'd like to spend a few moments updating you on our financial situation as we approach the end of the calendar year. In our August 2018 issue, I provided a fiscal year-end snapshot, and wrote about our budget shortfall of \$90,000. As you may recall, I mentioned how the majority of that deficit was created within the first several months of the fiscal year. We never quite caught up. That is why it is crucial we get off to a good start, and why it is even more pertinent we realize a significant bump in revenue by December 31st.

Have you ever pondered Mid-America's sources of revenue? This pie chart breaks it down into three major categories. The first is student tuition revenue. Did you know that Mid-America's tuition is only \$280 per credit hour? That translates to a full year of seminary costing under \$10,000. This is intentional. Imagine a new pastor entering the ministry saddled with educational debt from his time at seminary. The pressures that loan repayments can cause would undoubtedly hinder his service to the church. While our low tuition is a distinctive of MARS we are proud of, we also see how that fits into the scope of revenue sources. Student tuition only accounts for 10% of our annual revenue. This leaves 90% to be donated by church and individual partnerships across the United States and Canada.

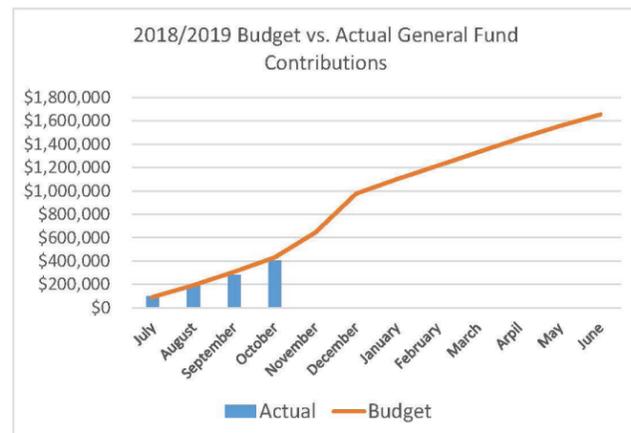
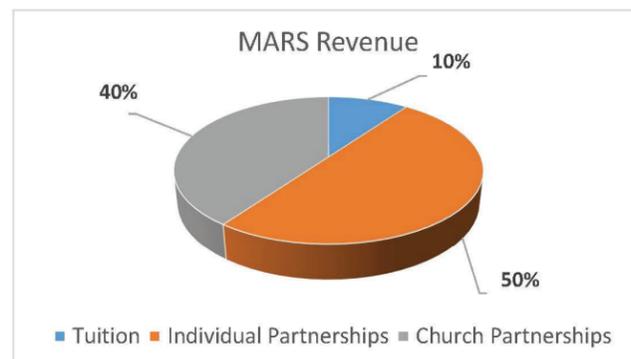
Our budget this year is \$1,900,000. 90% of that number is \$1,710,000. I think we just need to let that sink in a moment. That is not a small number. And how are we doing year-to-date on contributions? Well, things are off to a similar start as they were last year. We're not quite at budget. We are trailing some \$25,000 so far. As the year progresses, the gap could increase, thus becoming quite burdensome to the effective training of our students for gospel ministry.

Take a look at this graph. It shows us our actual revenue versus budgeted revenue. The orange line is about to take off, and the blue bars have to keep up if we are to remain financially viable in the coming year. I humbly request that you consider a generous gift by year's end to help us catch up to our budget. I ask that you partner with us – both prayerfully and financially.

Our graduates are serving churches, planting churches, entering the mission field or the chaplaincy, all over the world! They are administering the common means of grace and making disciples. This is why your stewardship should include Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Is there any more urgent need in the world than for the lost to hear about Jesus?

To make or plan for a gift today, contact Mike Deckinga, Vice-President of Advancement at mdeckinga@midamerica.edu

Mike Deckinga



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Mid-America would like to express a warm welcome to our new board members!

Bryan Holstrom lives in St. Charles, IL, with his wife, Meredith, who homeschools their four children: Lauren, Brooke, Ethan, and Thomas. He works as an Investment Advisor/Financial Planner at his own firm, Covenant Financial. He has been involved with Mid-America since 2012 when he first participated in the annual golf outing and has since been a sponsor. He looks forward to “working with the rest of the board to fulfill the Seminary’s mission of preparing men for service to Christ and his church.” He is currently Ruling Elder at Grace OPC in Elburn, IL.

Camden Bucey hails from Round Lake Beach, IL, and is pastor of Hope OPC in Grayslake, IL. He has been married to his wife, Erica, for 14 years, and they have three sons: Derek, Miles, and David. He has taught the Doctrine of Man as an adjunct faculty member at Mid-America. He is excited to bring a variety of skills and experiences to the Board that would be useful in advancing the Seminary’s mission to train men for gospel ministry.

Harry Zekveld is a minister of the Word, serving Providence URC in Strathroy, Ontario, and has been married to his wife, Evelyn, for 29 years. They have 7 children, and 6 grandchildren. As an alumnus of Mid-America (1993), he looks forward to “being used by the Lord to help develop its program and to promote the Seminary among the churches.”

Edwin Kreykes lives in Sanborn, IA, with his wife Sandra of 44 years. They have 3 daughters and 8 grandchildren. He is a Dairy Veterinarian/Consultant/Nutritionist at GPS Dairy Consulting, LLC. He has been a supporter of Mid-America since the early days in Orange City, IA, and looks forward to helping “guide the future of MARS and seeing what exciting things God has planned for the Seminary!” He and his wife currently worship at Cornerstone URC in Sanborn.

Jared Luttjeboer



New Board members: Dr. Edwin Kreykes, Rev. Harry Zekveld, Mr. Bryan Holstrom; not pictured: Dr. Camden Bucey

BOARD REPORT

The Mid-America Board of Trustees met on campus on October 4-5. The Board convened on Thursday afternoon by welcoming newly elected members Dr. Camden Bucey (Round Lake Beach, IL), Mr. Bryan Holstrom (St. Charles, IL), Dr. Edwin Kreykes (Sanborn, IA), and Rev. Harry Zekveld (Strathroy, ON) who all signed the form of subscription. The Board also elected officers for the coming year with Rev. James Sawtelle (Crystal, MN) being elected Board President, Rev. Paul Murphy (Brooklyn, NY) as Vice-President, Rev. Don Johnson (West Chicago, IL) as Secretary, Mr. Scott De Jong (Tillsonburg, ON) as Treasurer, and Rev. Harry Zekveld as Vice-All.

The Board considered an array of business including matters from the Seminary President, Vice-President of Advancement, Director of the MTS program, Director of Enrollment Management, the Registrar and Theological Librarian, the Director of the Ministerial Apprenticeship Program, the Dean of Students, and the Director of Institutional Assessment. The Board also considered reports from the Building Committee, the Promotion Committee, the Faculty Development Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Long-Range Planning Committee.

The Long-Range Planning Committee recommended a change to Mid-America's By-Laws that would increase Board services from two terms to three, and also a change where incumbent Board members would be re-appointed to their second or third term by election of the Board if their service was edifying. This recommended By-Law change has been sent to the Association for approval.

Representatives of an accounting firm hired by the Board to conduct a financial audit of the Seminary reported the results of its findings. The Board minutes note that the Seminary received “a clean report: the highest recommendation possible.”

The Board is scheduled to meet again on May 9-10, 2019, in conjunction with Mid-America's graduation exercises.

Keith LeMahieu

CHRIST: THE LIGHT TO OUR CITIES

REV. TONY ZEKVELD

“The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin, the Light of the world is Jesus! Like sunshine at noonday, His glory shone in; the Light of the world is Jesus!” Imagine hearing this sung by children from ethnically and religiously diverse backgrounds. They are learning to sing the truth! So it is in our local mission school, Hope Academy, an elementary Reformed Christian school. Though small, this school is a specimen, a flavor of the world’s nations in our North American cities, especially the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

And then to hear these young ones, with their vibrant voices, singing the Psalms of David sends shivers up your spine as you envision the entire city of nations breaking out in celebratory praise to the true and living God!

To win the city to Christ is to win the world!

In his somewhat dated book *Apostles to the City*, Roger Greenway’s relevant plea applies, “Throughout history God has called his servants to address the gospel to the cities, and at no time has this been more urgent than in today’s urbanizing world” (p.11). The world is in our cities. At the same time our cities are God’s gateway to the world!

The World in Our Cities

I am a missionary in Toronto. Call me a foreign or cross-cultural missionary. Toronto is a city of foreign foods, foreign dress, foreign customs, foreign languages and foreign gods. Government services are listed in multiple languages.

According to the 2016 census, three Canadian cities, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, are now home to more than one-third of all Canadians with a combined population of 12.5

million. Almost one-half [6 million] are living in the Greater Toronto Area. Toronto is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world. It is home to more than 180 nations. More than half of Toronto’s residents (51.5%) identify themselves as visible minorities. Among the visible minorities in the GTA, South Asians are the largest, constituting one third (32.3%) and Chinese next at 21%. South Asians constitute almost 17% of the entire population of the GTA.

I have been serving as a missionary and church planter among the South Asians for over twenty years, mainly among Sikhs, but also Hindus of India. The gospel is most effectively brought in the cups of hospitality, visiting households, and developing relationships and home Bible studies. I am often amazed at the openness of many to hearing the gospel, yet there is fear of rejection from families and the community if they do believe. There are both joys and challenges.

We submit articles for a monthly South Asian magazine, *Desi News*. The editor, a Hindu, says, “You, as pastor, write for this magazine. I don’t want any of our priests writing for us.” We advertise free Bibles in the language of their choice. A Muslim journalist from Pakistan asked for a Bible. This was followed by visits, more visits, and yet more visits. Soon he had me writing a series of articles for his newspaper: *What is the Message of the Bible?* In his words, “Muslims need to be educated about the Bible.” Two fruits have come out of this: the Christian-Muslim forum held twice a year and now a missionary to the Muslims in the GTA, Rev. Brian Zegers, a graduate from Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

Another example is a lawyer from Peru, who has begged us for someone to offer Christian counseling to her clients.

Our cities need long term missionaries with patience and perseverance bringing the gospel to the unconverted, particularly among the many ‘ethne’.

The gospel to the Sikhs and Hindus has its own story as well. That’s our field. It began with an influential Sikh leader who invited us to sing for them in a community centre. He had two requests: “Give us 15 Bibles in our language” and “We want to get to know you.” This was followed by visits and more visits. Through this Sikh leader, the Lord opened many doors for us, including doors into households; events such as births, weddings, funerals and festivals. This is key to knowing the culture and winning their trust. Conversing in their language, even a little, is a big plus!

To make a long story short, the work is challenging, but by the grace of God a small fellowship of believers meet for Sunday worship. A number have received baptism, including one household. Baptism is a “Jordan” only God can bring them through. Our experience has been that things often become messy with families. Baptism often brings division in house-

holds. Yet what a joy when one gathers all his Hindu gods into a black garbage bag for the trash!

While church buildings of mainline denominations are closing, or being converted into temples and mosques, ethnic churches are sprawling all throughout the city; in industrial units, office spaces and even in homes. Pentecostalism is strong; so is charismatic theology and numerous heresies, such as oneness Pentecostal movements. Charismatic Pentecostalism is strong among South Asians. One congregation, in particular, is a menace to us. But the joy comes when some of their people now come to our church saying, “I get teaching from Bible here. I want that!”

Believers from countless nations in our cities do impact the church and her worship. The image of Christ fills out and becomes more beautiful!

Those joys are mixed with other challenges, such as ministering cross-culturally in our congregation. I often hear, “They have so much to learn from us.” But how about, “We have so much to learn from them?” We need to distinguish cultural practices from biblical norms in worship styles, social customs including marriage, dress, as well as application of the church order. The struggle is a healthy one: learning to distinguish our own traditions from what the Bible says. No one eats peppermints, but they clap when they sing; no pipe organ, but tabla (Indian drum), the tambourine and the piano. We sing both English and Punjabi/Hindi Psalms and hymns. One of our leaders provides a written and oral translation of my sermon in summary form each service. Services are back to back, with a 5-10 minute break in between. The second service is an abbreviated interactive catechism teaching followed by lunch or refreshments.

Believers from countless nations in our cities do impact the church and her worship. The image of Christ fills out and becomes more beautiful!

In the city we want to sing the song of the Lamb in Revelation 5: you have “redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (v. 9). A young Filipina lady from a neighbouring jewelry store is married to a man from Guyana. They start coming to church, not yet baptized, as a result of a Bible study from Genesis. The manager of a Greek restaurant, an Iranian Muslim, calls one day, “My sister-in-law came from Iran six days ago. She is a secret believer, not baptized, and wants to become a Chris-

tian. She speaks only Farsi. May we meet at my restaurant?" On a Sunday at church, the manager's daughter, a Muslim, translates my sermon on John 4 for her in Farsi. Bible study continues in our home two hours each Wednesday morning.

Despite the big emphasis on developing indigenous leadership, there are distinct advantages of being a non-indigenous missionary among 'ethne' in a North American city.

Our Cities: the Gateway to the World

Our cities are also the gateway of Christ as Light to the world. Many 'ethne' who live in our North American cities come from countries where they have not heard the gospel and/or are closed to the gospel. Check out the Global Gates website: <http://globalgates.ca/gateway-cities> for mega cities listed in Canada and the USA and the many 'ethne' unreached with the gospel.

God has brought the ends of the earth to our cities (Acts 17:26). In so doing, God provides a gateway to the ends of the earth. Should we be sending missionaries as we always have been? How might we use the city as a strategic base for reaching the world? Might a missionary institute in North America under, say, NAPARC, serve in training and strategizing?

With the speed of travel, the back and forth flow of relationships, these questions may be worth pondering. Islam understands this well. Muslims see Toronto as the gateway to North America for the spread of Islam.

In our congregation, we have members closely tied with families and villages in the Punjab. An evangelical pastor from the Punjab translated the Heidelberg Catechism into Punjabi. When I asked him for the bill he said, "Don't pay me anything. But may I have 400 copies to distribute to my neighborhood?" More examples come to mind.

Opportunities abound. But we, by ourselves, do not have the resources or the personnel to build on this gateway. We as churches need to recapture a vision for the kingdom, Christ's global kingdom. Antioch was such a city – a gateway city for Christ to the Roman Empire (Acts 13:1ff)!

Christ as Light to our cities is a light to our world. We should no longer be thinking of missions in terms of foreign and home. Home is foreign!

Concluding Observations

First, the old fashioned definition of a missionary is a good one: "The church's task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted" (Church Order of the United Reformed Churches in North America, Article 47). Missionaries need

to be on the streets, in homes, at functions, connecting with influential leaders of various "ethne" in our cities. Social media, church websites, and Facebook are so limited in their effect. We need more missionaries on the ground. May I add, the role of wife and children is so important.

Second, a vision for the kingdom of Christ will result in churches sending more missionaries to our cities, and a willingness to sacrifice comforts. Truly the harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few. The doors are open for the hearing of the gospel in our cities!

Third, sometimes people ask me, "Why did you focus on Sikhs and Hindus?" The reason is intentional. These, like many other "ethne" in the city, are not being reached with the gospel. Who will do the hard work among them? They are hidden. Who will go to the trenches with the light of Christ? At the same time, we see God broadening our base among other "ethne."

Fourth, God intends the church to be an "all the families of the earth" kind of people (Genesis 12:3). Racial prejudice and tribalism in the church are unacceptable to God.

Greenway writes, "We must learn what it means to advance the gospel among city people and plant among them living churches, lighthouses of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Apostles, p.13). May "all the families of the earth" Reformed congregations continue to multiply and proliferate in our cities!

As God's people we wait for a city "whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10), seeking the city to come (Hebrews 13:14), and the coming glory of the New Jerusalem where the "Lamb is its light and the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light..." (Revelation 21:22-27). May this glorious promise of the new city stimulate missionary fervor for our cities today!



Rev. Anthony Zekveld (class of 1993) and his wife, Arley-Ann. Rev. Zekveld is Pastor of The Hope Centre in Brampton, Ontario.

FROM INDIA TO INDIANA: INTRODUCING PRAVEEN PHINEAS

Praveen Phineas was born in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and raised in a Christian home. However, it was not until he was in the 11th grade, at a retreat conducted by his school, that he felt convicted of his sins and the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. He says, "I ran to Jesus Christ and immediately submitted myself to His Lordship. The Holy Spirit raised me from the dead." The Holy Spirit gave him a deep conviction not only of sin, but ultimately of the beauty of Christ.

The life of a Christian is not without its struggles, however, and Praveen found himself backsliding in the third year of his Bachelor of Engineering studies, being falsely led into the prosperity gospel through a television network. But God in His sovereign grace was, in Praveen's words, "merciful enough to call me back to His glorious Kingdom."

Over the next four years, the Lord helped Praveen research different theological topics. His interests lay in the controversies surrounding different Bible translations, the dangers of the prosperity gospel, Young Earth Creationism, the rise of Islam, and more. Furthermore, "God helped me to go to the biblical doctrine of Calvinism, which is deeper than TULIP, and understand the beauty of the gospel," Praveen comments. In so doing, by God's providence, at the age of 25 Praveen embraced the Reformed faith.

Ever since he began learning the teachings of the Reformation, Praveen has had a burning passion for sharing the gospel, especially on a one-on-one basis in his workplace. He desires to be "a faithful student of Scripture, rightly handling the sword of the Spirit." It is his firm conviction that "the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only solution for all the problems that exist in this fallen world, and it is primarily through the preaching of God's Word that the Triune God of the Scriptures brings dead sinners alive."

Since his arrival in August, Praveen is thankful for the brilliance of the professors, and the strong passion for the Reformed faith within the student body. Academically, spiritually, and communally, Praveen feels nurtured here. His plans after seminary? "Lord willing, once I graduate from MARS, I would like to get ordained here as a minister in the United Reformed Church and go back to India as a Reformed missionary."

Jared Luttjeboer



DECADES OF DISCIPLESHIP: REV. TODD JOLING ON 20 YEARS IN MINISTRY

Longevity in the ministry faces a host of challenges: family and health issues, discouragement and burnout, church discord, and many more. That's why it's worth our time to celebrate stories like this one: 20 years of faithful service in one congregation.

The call to preach the gospel brought Rev. Joling from the west coast of the USA to study at Mid-America. During his studies he was able to witness the early days of Faith URC (Beecher, IL). He preached from time to time, and after graduation served as its first, and so far, only pastor. The church has grown throughout those 20 years, and so has its pastor. Todd married Joy five years in, and the Lord has blessed them with five children, ranging in ages from 4-13. If you were to drop by their neighborhood, you might find them enjoying some of their favorite activities: biking, basketball, gardening, and woodworking.

When Todd speaks about life in the church he serves, he sounds very much like a shepherd caring for sheep. He sounds excited about the rather unique opportunity he has been given to watch babies he has baptized grow up to profess their faith. Undoubtedly there have been challenges along the way, but these have allowed both pastor and flock to struggle, grow, pray and press forward together. The church recently hosted a twenty year celebration. Pastor Joling shared a conversation with a member: "One of the advantages (of a long pastorate) someone recently brought up to me was the trust factor. She suggested that knowing one's pastor very well makes it much easier to go to him with needs and burdens...." The advantages also include long-term pastoral care for persistent or recurring issues, and the opportunity for a congregation to witness their pastor's own growth (1 Tim. 4:15).

Rev. Joling serves alongside Rev. Ruben Sernas, who pastors El Pacto de Gracia, a church plant of the Beecher congregation in Chicago Heights. The church assists this ministry in many ways, including attending their services and enjoying joint services when there is a profession of faith or a baptism. Signs of God's blessing of the ministry have also been seen in families coming to visit and join the church, having been disciplined and welcomed by church members in their own neighborhood.

Pastor Joling's greatest sorrow in the ministry? "Seeing some betray the Lord and His church and then the profound grief of family members who suffer so deeply from such losses."

His greatest joy? "Seeing the glory of Christ in His Word and watching Him minister to people through His Word is a huge joy."

Rev. Mark Stewart



ALUMNI UPDATES



John Barach

(1997) is the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church (CREC) in Sulphur, Louisiana, and a fellow at the Theopolis Institute in Birmingham,

Alabama, where he recently taught an intensive course on Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. He and his wife Moriah have four children.



Talman (2005) and Sarah Wagenmaker

with their five children (Jonathan, Dorothy, Callie, Silas, and Monica) have moved to Michigan from Waupun, Wisconsin.

Talman accepted the call to serve as the pastor of the Dutton United Reformed Church (Caledonia, MI). They were in Wisconsin for over 12 years at the Grace United Reformed Church.



Joel ten Brinke

(2007) is completing his Masters in Clinical Counseling at Tyndale

University and Seminary in Toronto. He will be graduating in the spring of 2019 and looks forward to beginning a new career in counseling.



Christian McShaffrey

(2003) and his wife, Kelly, and their six children live in Reedsburg,

Wisconsin, where he has been the pastor of Grace Reformed Church (OPC) since graduating from Mid-America.



Corey Dykstra

(2010) obtained his Masters of Theology degree in May 2018 from Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids, MI) with an emphasis in

Systematic Theology. He's been serving as the pastor of Walker United Reformed Church in Walker, MI, since 2013.



Wes White (2004)

serves as the Pastor of Evergreen Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Sevierville, TN (near Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge). He and his wife Melinda have 7 children:

Anna (16), David (15), Geneva (12), Hope (11), Leah (10), Rochelle (8), and Virginia (5). Wes is working on his D.Min. at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte.



Rev. Nick Alons

(2006) his wife, Allison, and their four children now reside in Lansing, Illinois. Nick is pastor of the Lynwood

United Reformed Church in Lynwood, Illinois. He has been pastoring this congregation for the last three years. Prior to coming to Lynwood, Rev. Alons pastored the United Reformed Church of Prince Edward Island in Canada for seven years.



Nathan Tomlinson

(2012), has been serving as pastor of Christ Church of Franklin County (Reformed

Independent) in Greenfield, MA, since the summer of 2015. Nathan holds his credentials in the Presbytery of New York and New England of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, where he is currently serving on the Committee of Ministerial Relations. Nathan and Holly were blessed with the addition of Mia to their family in September 2017.



Justin Beach

(2015) was called as an Assistant Pastor to Ethos Presbyterian Church in Chicago, IL. While in Chicago they were

affirmed in their sense of call towards church planting by the PCA's Mission to North America, which oversees church planting in the Presbyterian Church in America. That led them to move back to Phoenix, Arizona which is where Justin first felt the call to ministry. Lord willing, they will be worshipping with a *newly gathered* local church in North Phoenix by 2020.



Erik (2011) and Georgina Stolte,

by God's grace, are now into their 6th year at the Reformed Church of Dunedin in beautiful New

Zealand. They left Mid-America with seven children in tow, which has now grown to nine, with one on the way. They thank God for using MARS to equip them for the demanding work of pastoral ministry. "It really is the frontline of the spiritual battle and calls us to constantly lean on him for His grace and not our own. If you're ever in this part of God's beautiful creation, you definitely need to stop in and see us."



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