

Reformed Presbyterian Church

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June 1, 2017

Reverend Roger G. Collins, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley
130 Byram Parkway
Byram, MS 39272

Dear Roger,

Greetings to you and to the Fathers and Brothers of the Presbytery of the Mississippi River Valley.

I am writing to provide an annual update on my activities as a member of PMV currently laboring out of bounds, pursuant to BCO 8-7. Here is the initial report of my activities at the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Beaumont, Texas, during 2016-2017.

In April 2016 I contacted Dr. Duncan Rankin who was then serving as Associate Pastor with Christ Church in Katy, Texas, to inquire about ministry opportunities within the PCA in Southeast Texas. Dr. Rankin mentioned some possibilities he was aware of and asked me to send my MDF on to him, which he then helpfully recommended to Rev. Fred Greco, the Senior Pastor at Christ Church in Katy and Chairman of the Houston Metro Presbytery Ministerial Relations Committee.

On May 13, 2016, I received an email from Mr. Charles Poss (RE at RPC) requesting a recording of one of my sermons because I had been recommended as a possible candidate for Interim Pastor at RPC by Rev. Greco. I found this interest from a church 300 miles away to be intriguing, but actually didn't expect much to come from it. However, I dutifully provided Charles with a link to a local church website with some of my sermons and awaited the response. After receiving no word for several weeks, I assumed they didn't care for my preaching and that was the end of it.

I was pleasantly surprised when I received another email from Charles on June 15 inviting me to come to Beaumont and meet the RPC Session on Saturday June 23 and then preach on Sunday June 24 at the morning and evening services. Although I had some concerns about moving 300 miles to take a temporary job, I also believe it is crucial to respond whenever you are called to preach the gospel, and so I agreed to make the journey from my home in Clinton, Mississippi to Beaumont.

Upon meeting the members of the RPC Session, I came to believe that I might be able to fill a real need by serving as an Interim Pastor as the church continued to seek a Senior Pastor. Although my position as Interim Pastor would be temporary, I saw it as an opportunity to truly minister to the needs of this flock at RPC, and realized the Lord might be calling me to Beaumont. Any remaining doubts I may have had were dispelled after worshipping with the congregation on the following Sunday. I knew then that this was where the Lord wanted me, and soon after accepted the call to serve as their Interim Pastor for the term of one year, with the possibility of a longer term, depending on the time it took to install a new Senior Pastor.

Three weeks later I travelled to Houston and was examined by the Houston and Metro Presbytery Candidates and Credentials Committee. On August 15, I was received by the HMP and licensed to preach the gospel within the bounds of this Presbytery for three years, specifically at RPC in Beaumont. A house was leased, a U-Haul truck was packed and I arrived in Beaumont, Texas on August 23 and commenced to unload said truck in the sweltering heat of a high Texas summer. I was assisted by my sister, brother-in-law and several church members and, needless to say, my family and I were very grateful for the help provided by the RPC folks!

Following my arrival, I can honestly say I have never felt so welcomed by a congregation and believe this attitude speaks well of their Christian witness to their community (John 13:35). Over the next eight months I was truly blessed to be able to preach, pastor, teach and lead these dear people, and in the process, the Lord established some godly friendships which I trust will last me a lifetime.

In January 2017, the RPC Pulpit Search Committee announced an upcoming visit by Rev. Nick Napier and his family to meet the congregation. Nick was then Senior Pastor at Boyce Memorial ARP Church in Kings Mountain, North Carolina and had been in ministry since graduating from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2012. After meeting him and his family and hearing him preach, the RPC congregation and Session voted unanimously to call him as Senior Pastor. Following prayerful consideration Nick accepted, and was then interviewed and examined by the Houston Metro Presbytery and received as a member in March 2017. After making the move with his family from North Carolina, Nick began preaching at RPC on April 23 and will be duly installed as our Senior Pastor on June 25.

With the arrival of Rev. Napier my duties at RPC as Interim Pastor will officially end on August 31, but the Session and congregation have indicated their desire for me to continue at RPC in another pastoral role, possibly Associate or Assistant Pastor. This item is on the docket for discussion at our next Session meeting and by the time this report is published on the PMV website, I trust I will have a better idea of the Lord's leading and of my future status at RPC Beaumont (Philippians 1:6).

Roger, many thanks for all your help and wise counsel over the last year, and I pray the Lord will continue to bless you and the members of the Presbytery of Mississippi Valley. I ask that the Presbytery would permit me to continue in my labor in this call for another year, and that Christ's kingdom would be glorified among his saints here in Beaumont.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Wagner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. John D. Wagner