

Home Missions Today

This is Al Tricarico reporting the March 31, 2021, edition of *Home Missions Today*. God is using your prayers to develop the ministries of Orthodox Presbyterian mission works across North America.

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA — Caleb and Erika Smith

We are pleased to welcome Caleb Smith, organizing pastor of Thousand Oaks Presbyterian Church, to denominational support. Caleb is married to Erika and they have two boys, Joel (4) and Oliver (almost 2), and a third baby due in September. Most recently Caleb had been pastoring at Calvary OPC in Glenside, PA, but in June of 2020 the Smiths moved to Thousand Oaks with the hopes that an exploratory work would develop into a church plant. For Erika this is a return to her hometown, and for Caleb this is an answer to many years of prayer. There is a tremendous need for a Reformed church in the Conejo Valley (the north-western part of Greater Los Angeles), and they are thankful for the opportunity to apply themselves toward the expansion of Christ's Kingdom. Caleb first began leading a Sunday afternoon Bible study at the Conejo Community Park, and now a group of believers are very thankful for the opportunity to gather for public worship each Lord's Day. Pray that this new congregation would be zealous for the gospel in their worship, discipleship, and outreach.

ZEELAND, MICHIGAN — Michael and Naomi Schout

Pastor Michael Schout of Grace Fellowship OPC writes, "The past few months have been a whirlwind in a wonderful way! In the kind providence of God, we were able to purchase a facility early January 2021 and spent the next several weeks getting it ready for move-in. Our first public worship service was March 21. With a new building has come many new faces, which brings a lot of excitement and opportunity for our church family to show hospitality. We are hoping to particularize in the coming weeks, so that is also exciting for us (and for Harvest!). We had been praying for some additional elderly people to join the mission, and the Lord did not disappoint. He brought a widow from the east side of the state, who moved to live closer to her daughter (a member of our church). This wonderful lady is 84 years old and has already brought a lot of joy and encouragement to our church family and her neighbors. She loves digging into the Word, mentoring young ladies through her gift of sewing, and praying with other women that God has brought into her life. What an encouragement! Please pray that we would humbly serve the Lord and never be wise in our own eyes. As His blessings flow, it's a real temptation to look within ourselves and to our own resources. Please pray that we would see our dependency on Christ as we continue to move His mission forward in the Zeeland community."

CORONA, CALIFORNIA — Andrew and Rebekah Canavan

Corona Presbyterian Church (CPC) is so thankful for the prayers of God's people throughout the OPC. Pastor Andrew Canavan shares, "CPC welcomed seven new members this month and two more will be received in the coming weeks (including one new member who is homebound with MS and will be received virtually). We would be grateful for prayer that visitors might continue to show up and that our members and regular attenders might be propelled outward to their neighbors as the joy of the gospel overflows in their lives. One long-time member recently rented a plot in the community garden next to our Sunday meeting location specifically to share the gospel and invite fellow gardeners to church. A new member regularly makes time to share the gospel (and to train others in evangelism) at local skate parks and low-income housing areas. Our prayer is that this fruit will continue to blossom and flourish to God's glory! In addition to our Sunday evening Bible study, our session recently approved beginning a monthly Sunday evening worship service. Please pray that many will come even though evening worship is an unfamiliar concept for many in Southern California. In addition to all of these requests, our chief prayer is that we might wisely engage in outreach and evangelism as Riverside County recently moved out of the most restrictive Covid-19 tier. The pandemic has hindered 'official' evangelism and we hope that the lifting of restrictions will give new opportunities for gospel proclamation to our neighbors."

WEST PLAINS, MISSOURI — Paul and Sarah Mourreale

With much gratitude, Pastor Paul Mourreale writes, "Your prayers are being answered! Covenant Reformed has been encouraged by steady growth and has been strengthened in every way. In the past month, our average attendance has been over 50 people. We have six families in our new members class and roughly 80% of our attendance for worship also attends Sunday School. In addition, we have multiple families who drive for over an hour to come to church. Opportunities abound for further church plants in the region—pray that these might bear fruit. The people of Covenant Reformed are excited to study the Word of God and to share it with the community around us. Pray that we might be effective stewards of God's grace in Christ and that we might be used by God to make many disciples in the Ozarks region. Pray that this congregation would continue to be a place of refreshment and joy to the gathered saints and that this joy would be infectious to those around us. Finally, please pray that we might mature in wisdom and knowledge as we seek to move towards one day becoming a particular congregation of the OPC."

Look for the next Home Missions Today on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.

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