

The President's Memorandum



October 2021

Dear Friend of RPTS,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ! One of the chief Scriptures that undergirds the ministry of RPTS is Ezekiel 34:15-16. “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down,” declares the Lord God. “I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.” As students “*Study Under Pastors*” here, we want them to remember two key truths reflected in these verses. First, the church belongs to the true Shepherd who redeemed it by His blood. Second, pastors must always care for Christ’s people as His under-shepherds by feeding and treating them according to His Word.

What follows are some recent ways in which the Lord is doing this work here at RPTS.

Student News

As the 2021-2022 academic year began in September, we were excited to welcome over twenty new students on campus and online! After several years of student population decline, we are encouraged that the Lord was pleased to use renewed recruiting efforts to give us an uptick this year.

We are thankful not only for the quantity, but the quality and diversity of the new students. Even as we sent several graduates back home to East Asia, three young men from that part of the world arrived to start their studies on campus. Two sons of longtime Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to Japan, Woody Lauer, began their MDiv program with us. A local Baptist pastor transferred from an online seminary to study on campus, expressing his appreciation for the community and practical teaching at RPTS. Longtime Christian Missionary Alliance pastor Andrew “Jack” Jackson, our former maintenance supervisor, has returned to campus as a student and we are happy to have him back.

Though we did not have many graduates this past spring ready to fill the empty RPCNA pulpits of our sponsoring denomination, the future looks brighter as we hope to see about a dozen men graduate over the next two years. In addition, we are busy interacting with young men who are being stirred to pursue a pastoral calling. One Reformed Presbyterian congregation has four men in various stages of preparing for a call! Yet there remains a tremendous need for more preachers. Please pray to that end.

Last year, we unveiled our Support Our Students (S.O.S) Tuition Relief Program. Those who want to encourage a student can simply send in a payment for their tuition bill and it will be credited to them. Many of you responded to this need – thank you! If you have a student you would like to support or have further questions, please contact Mark Sampson at msampson@rpts.edu.

New Staff

At an RPTS board retreat two years ago, one message they had for me as the new president was clear. They were encouraged by the expansion of the ministries and pursuit of new ideas, but too much work was falling on just a few key individuals. They concluded that additional staff was needed. Since that time, the Lord has graciously provided new support personnel that are truly lifting our hands.

With a desire to increase our library services, this summer we hired Josh Meneely as our new Circulation Librarian; Josh works behind a beautiful new circulation desk serving our students and others. Just last month, the increasing digital nature of our work led us to hire Noah Williams as our new Information Technology Director. June Whitla, wife of Professor David Whitla, has increased her hours in development as she takes over more responsibilities from our longtime assistant Kim Backensto. Tori Mann, an MTS student, is using her creativity to find new ways to reach potential students as she works half time in admissions assisting Ed Blackwood.

Faculty Updates

We are happy to have Dr. C.J. Williams return from his sabbatical this school year! As part of the fruit of this time, Crown & Covenant Publishers will publish his next volume, *The Shadow of Christ in the Book of Lamentations*. Dr. Richard Gamble will have the third and final volume of his life's work, *The Whole Counsel of God*, released this fall, Lord willing. Dr. Jeffrey Stivason is now teaching all the Greek courses in addition to New Testament Studies. Professor Keith Evans continues to make progress on his dissertation presenting a Reformed understanding of demonology, and Dr. David Whitla's doctoral work on Archibald Johnston of Wariston is now in the hands of a publisher. In addition to these exciting projects, all of our professors are also now contributing articles for the *Reformed Presbyterian Witness* in a column called "From Rutherford Hall." Our faculty was joined by Dr. John Tweeddale of Reformation Bible College for this year's Westminster Conference addressing the theme "The Spirit Bearing Witness by and with the Word in Our Hearts." Later this fall, you too can be blessed by the Westminster Conference by going to the Resources tab on our website where these talks will be available in audio form, and then also published in the *Reformed Presbyterian Theological Journal*.

Strike the Match

It's time for our largest fundraising campaign of the year, **Strike the Match!** From **October 11-16**, any donation to the Seminary (up to \$15,000) will receive a 50% match (up to a total of \$80,000) made possible by gracious friends of RPTS. This matching donation means every \$100 given to us becomes \$150! Our financial goal this year is \$240,000 and our participant goal is 400 people. So please consider sending a gift by check, calling us at (412) 731-6000 to use a credit card, or using our website at rpts.edu/give.

We need more shepherd-hearted laborers for the kingdom! Thank you for taking time to stay updated on RPTS, praying for us as we train men for the pastorate and others for kingdom service, and giving generously to help us do so!

In Christ's Service,



Barry J. York