



Celebrating Organized Churches!

A Milestone for Our Mission Churches

Rev. Morrie Lawing, Executive Director

It is with a profound sense of gratitude and excitement that we present this quarter's newsletter, focusing on a significant milestone in the life of any mission: **organization**. The transition from a mission work to an organized church is more than just a change in administrative status; it is a visible testament to God's faithfulness and the tireless labor of a group of saints dedicated to the gospel. In this issue, we are privileged to feature reflections from three ministers who have recently guided their congregations through this transformative process.

The path to organization is rarely a straight line. It involves years of prayerful planting, the formation of local leadership, and the cultivation of a distinct congregational identity. Seeing these three churches stand on their own—electing their own officers and taking full responsibility for their ministry—is a moment of great joy for all of us at **Outreach North America**. It reminds us that the *"home missionary life"* is not just about the initial departure, but about the steady, patient work of building something that lasts.

However, organization is not a finish line; it is a new starting point. To these newly organized churches (and for all churches who also at one point were newly organized): the challenge is to maintain that "pioneer spirit" even as you establish your roots. Do not lose the outward-facing zeal that defined your early days.

To all: thank you for the resources and prayers that made these milestones possible. Your investment has yielded fruit that will impact generations. As you read these stories of renewal and growth, may you be encouraged by the reality that the Kingdom is expanding, one organized body at a time. Let us celebrate these three new sisters in our presbyteries and continue to pray for the missions still in the soil. 🌱



River City Reformed Church



River City Reformed Organization

River City Reformed

Rev. James Ritchey

In God's kindness, River City Reformed Church in Little Rock, Arkansas was organized on March 15, 2026. I have had the privilege of serving this congregation since 2021. When I was first called here, I was called to be the Associate Pastor serving alongside Rev. Howard Wheeler, who was the initial planter of River City. We served together until the beginning of 2023.



Wheeler

Rev. Wheeler began exploratory work in Little Rock in 2016, and soon after River City began meeting as a Bible study. They began to hold worship services on Sunday evening in 2018. All the while the group was gathered and the congregation began to grow, Rev. Wheeler was still serving as pastor at Pottsville ARP Church. In 2023, I became a solo planter, and the congregation began morning services at another facility, and have since added back evening worship.

The work at River City has been slow, steady and ordinary. We have been with a congregation that loves the Word of God and wants it preached faithfully. The church has grown as God has blessed the ordinary means He has appointed. Morning and evening worship are the pinnacle of our life and fellowship together as a congregation. During the evening we also have the added blessing of believers from other churches visiting with us as there is not another consistent evening worship service in the city of Little Rock. Our men's and women's Bible studies and midweek prayer meetings have also offered opportunities during the week to study the Word together. There have been plenty of

outreach opportunities as well, through local events, and through community relationships. We cannot take any of the credit for the growth, numerical or spiritual—it has all been the result of what God has done.

The Lord has been faithful in providing men to serve in office. He has given us two elders and two deacons. In 2025, we held an 18 week officer training seminar in which we spent six weeks discussing matters related to character, calling and competency (three C's that I borrowed from David Strain), and twelve weeks on doctrine. The Lord used this and further conversations to lead us to qualified men. We are grateful for his faithfulness in using this process.

We praise God for a new chapter in the life of our congregation. We would appreciate continued prayers for faithfulness and that we would seek the Lord in all that we do. Please pray in accordance with Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9-1, "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." 🌿



Ritchey & Lawing Families



Redbud Church Organization

Redbud Church

Rev. Scott Mitchell



Redbud Church in Claremore, Oklahoma reached an important milestone on May 17 as the congregation officially organized as a church and installed Rev. Scott Mitchell as pastor. What began as a small prayerful vision has grown into a thriving mission work marked by God’s provision, strong community relationships, and a heart for future church planting. Before coming to Oklahoma, Rev. Scott Mitchell spent nine years serving with Reformed University Fellowship in Pennsylvania before later becoming an associate pastor at a PCA church in Oklahoma. While serving there, Scott noticed that several families were regularly traveling from Claremore to attend worship. Scott and these members recognized the need for a gospel-centered church in Claremore committed to the ordinary means of grace. That eventually became the core group that planted Redbud Church. After months of discernment and prayer, the group received encouragement, guidance, and ongoing support from the Florida Presbytery of the ARPC, and Redbud was officially received as a mission work in January 2022.



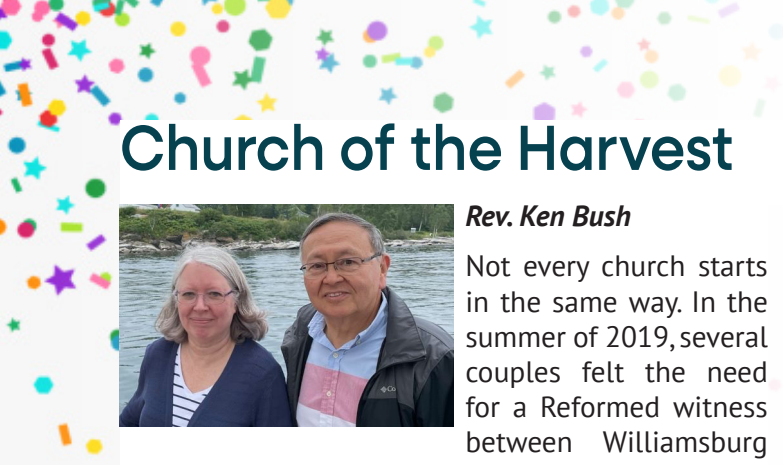
Like many church plants, Redbud’s early years required flexibility and faith. The congregation first met in homes before moving into an old church building in May 2022. Attendance steadily grew, especially among young families, and by May 2024 the church had outgrown the facility. Shortly afterward, a tornado damaged the building and forced the church to relocate. In God’s providence, another local congregation that was closing its doors offered Redbud a new meeting space.

Today, Redbud averages around 80 in worship, including approximately 40 children under age 16. The ministry philosophy remains intentionally simple: a focus on the Word, sacraments, prayer, and hospitality rather than marketing strategies. In fact, most visitors come through personal invitations from friends and neighbors.



Looking ahead, Redbud hopes to continue growing toward a long-term vision of planting additional churches throughout the region. Leadership hopes to eventually reach 140–150 members before sending groups out to establish new parish churches.

Please pray for Redbud Church: for continued faithfulness to the gospel, wisdom for Rev. Mitchell and church leadership, provision for future building and staffing needs, unity within the congregation, and that the Lord would use Redbud Church to raise up healthy new congregations for generations to come.



Church of the Harvest



Rev. Ken Bush

Not every church starts in the same way. In the summer of 2019, several couples felt the need for a Reformed witness between Williamsburg and Richmond, Virginia. One of those couples was Ken and Kathy Bush. Kathy heard that the ARP was interested in planting churches, so she contacted the ONA Committee of Virginia Presbytery who met with the core group in the fall. A partnership was formed and Ken, who was a retired Army chaplain and PCA Teaching Elder, was able to lead the group in worship and study in homes even through the COVID pandemic.

Towards the end of the pandemic, we called a mission developer who at the last minute decided the time was not right. We providentially noticed that the hotel where we housed him had a conference room, so we moved our worship there. We continued to meet there until the Lord provided space for the

growing group at the Toano Woman’s Club. After a second unsuccessful attempt to call a mission developer the congregation and borrowed session from Redeemer Blacksburg felt that Ken should consider the call. He agreed to serve as a tentmaking pastor and transferred into the ARP and was installed as the mission developer in May 2023. We have been blessed to have men who previously served as elders in Reformed churches. The congregation elected two elders and one deacon and after petitioning the presbytery were organized on November 16, 2025.

We are an organized congregation with a mission church flavor and remain committed to the vision of church planting through disciple making, authentic community, and winsomely Reformed worship. We are now in the process of searching for our first fulltime minister and covet your prayers as we trust the Lord for the way ahead.



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