

Dear Elder Kaptein,

I ask that you share this letter with the consistory at your next meeting. My family and I want to convey to you and all the elders of Byron Center PRC that we are thankful for your work and sacrifice on behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ. We trust in the Spirit of Christ to lead the consistory in the way of wisdom and truth. We pray the Lord's blessing upon all your work and sacrifice. We know the consistory has had much work that she has had to do over the last several weeks. It is our hope that the Spirit sustains you and gives you strength in your stand for the truth.

Before we became members of Byron we had to consider many other good Protestant Reformed churches. The deciding factor that led us to choose Byron was the fact that her minister and elders not only confessed the truth (such truth that all of our other churches confessed) but that Byron actively rejected the lie and called her people to repentance for that lie. As members of Hope who had languished under the doctrinal error of our minister and consistory we needed and desired a clear word calling us to repentance in the truth. This comforting word of the Gospel we found in the preaching of Rev. Lanning and the oversight of his consistory. We pray that the consistory continues to countenance this preaching in our midst.

Martin Luther once said, "peace if possible, the truth at all costs." It is my fear that we as churches are now saying, "the truth if possible, peace at all costs." It is my hope that the consistory agrees with and follows Luther's confession and example.

I know that the sermon on Jeremiah was a hard word to hear. It was a strong rebuke. But as God tells us, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:5-11)

Praying for the peace and unity of our congregation and denomination grounded only in the truth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Matthew Overway
(email letter dated Nov. 26, 2020)

Matthew and Family,

Thank you for passing this on to me. I will be sure to bring this to the consistory. We appreciate your words of encouragement and prayers. These are difficult and trying times - we cast our burden upon the Lord who does rule in His church for the good of His sheep and for the glory of His name. We put our trust in Him.

Psalm 34: 17 "The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles".

Regards,

Terry Kaptein
(email reply Nov. 27, 2020)