



“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” James 1:2-3

Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary

Pastor Ken & Renee Anema

Glad to be back in prison?

Our students can't wait to get out, but I couldn't wait to get in!

“I was out of prison for 15 months. Now I am back in.” That's the story of too many criminals. They serve their time. Get out. Do well for a time. And then commit another crime. Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary hopes to break that cycle and lower the rate at which criminals return to prison.

In March of 2020, COVID drove out all volunteers from the Indiana and Illinois prisons. In the meantime, we offered one DVD correspondence course, Relational Wisdom 360 by Ken Sande in two of the Indiana prisons. Due to the upheaval caused by COVID-19 we were unable to offer any additional courses in Indiana. We fared better in Illinois. There we were able to offer three classes per semester through old fashioned correspondence. We sent in workbooks. When the chaplain collected all their finished assignments, he sent them to us to grade.

After being out for 15 months we are just beginning to return. The Indiana prisons impose greater restrictions than Illinois. For instance, the Indiana Department of Corrections (IN-DOC) limits each volunteer to only one facility and allows them to enter only once a week. Prior to COVID we served inmates in three different Indiana prisons – two for men and one for women. The women's prison in Rockville opened their doors to only five organizations



and Divine Hope was not included. The men's prison in Michigan City, known as the Indiana State Prison (ISP), is not currently opening to any volunteers due to a violent assault in February 2021. One of the inmates attacked a guard. When a second guard came to the aid of the first, the inmate stabbed the second guard as well. Sadly, the wounds of the second guard proved to be fatal. Consequently, no volunteers are being admitted to the ISP. But we hear from the chaplains that several inmates are eager to join Divine Hope when we eventually start again.

The men's prison in Westville is the only facility in Indiana open to us for now. Since volunteers are limited to only one facility for only one day per week, I will be the sole faculty member teaching at Westville.

On August 23, professors Paul Ipema, Nathan Brummel, and John Hamstra will begin teaching at our campus in Danville, IL where there are no restrictions except for wearing a mask. There we have at least 50 students. Professor Ipema teaches ministerial courses that train our students to use the Bible to cultivate personal change. Professor Brummel primarily teaches the theology courses. And Mr. John Hamstra teaches a variety of courses in Spanish to our Hispanic students. Beginning in July we resumed leading chapel services for two Sundays out of each month.

We are not back to “normal” yet, but we are glad to be back in two of the prisons after 15 months.

Pastor Ken Anema



Paul Ipema, Ken Anema, Nathan Brummel

SAVE THE DATE!

The URCNA Missions & Pastors Conference will be held on March 14th-18th 2022, D.V. We will return to the beautiful grounds of Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC to enjoy four days of fellowship, rest and learning together. More information to follow.

 **Poconos, PA**

Pastor Rich & Margaret Kuiken

Greetings in the Name of the LORD!

My wife, Margaret, and I can hardly believe that a little more than two years have already passed since I was commissioned as a Church Planter by the Council, Consistory and congregation of the Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church, and I am grateful for this opportunity to share with you just a few of our most recent ministry developments:



First of all, on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, a bright, kind and promising young man named Milan Loncar was senselessly murdered one evening near his home in Philadelphia, PA while simply walking his dog. Through a series of God's providences, I was asked to conduct Milan's Graveside Service as indoor Funeral Services were not yet permitted here in PA due to the coronavirus. While I was under the impression that this Graveside Service would be an intimate gathering of several close family members and friends, to my complete surprise I would estimate that some 150-200 persons showed up on a windy, frigid winter's day! In answer to *so much prayer* the Lord graciously blessed me with the peace, presence and power of His Holy Spirit ... and I felt incredibly free to honor Milan's memory while at the same time boldly sharing the comfort and hope to be found **solely** by God's grace through faith in the Name of Jesus! Please PRAY along with me, Margaret and our "fledgling flock" that eternal fruit from this providential ministry/evangelistic opportunity would remain.

Secondly, on Sunday, April 25, 2021, we had the distinct honor, pleasure and privilege of welcoming the family of Tim and Jennifer Learn by way of "Transfer of Membership" from the OPC while also witnessing the Public Professions of Faith of Nick and Jessica Costanzo and having their three covenant children – Lucian, Isabel and Mariana – receive the Sacrament of Baptism! With nearly 100 in attendance, I was gratefully assisted in these Professions of Faith and Baptisms by Elders Michael Kerlen and Gregg Vivolo of the Pompton Plains RBC. We PRAISE GOD that Nick, Jessica and their precious young children are representative of several young families with which our Pocono RBC has been so graciously and abundantly blessed!

Finally, on a personal note, please know that on Friday, April 9, 2021, I was admitted to the hospital to undergo an urgently needed heart catheterization. While I won't recount all of the details for you, please know that my cardiologist, a dear friend and Brother in Christ, subsequently remarked, "*It is a miracle of God's grace that Margaret is not a widow today ... and that is because God is not done using you yet!*"



Soli Deo Gloria! To God Alone Be the Glory!
(Psalm 115:1)

In His Service,

Rev. Rich Kuiken