



## 🇨🇦 Regina, SK

Pastor Brian & Julie Cochran

### Greetings to our brothers and sisters in Christ from Regina, Saskatchewan!

We are thankful to God for all your prayers and financial support over the years. As you may recall our church began back in 1975 when a small group of believers started meeting in homes in hopes of establishing a reformed church in Regina. We spent many years as Grace Presbyterian Church, a mission work of the Presbyterian Church in America, and then 7 years as an independent church, before joining the URCNA in 2010. The first few years of being in the URCNA was a mixture of excitement and growing pains.

By 2013 we had shrunk in number and had no local elders or deacons. We then asked to go under the care of Providence URC in Winnipeg. Providence URC has faithfully overseen our church for 8 years and has been a great blessing to us. During those 8 years God has grown and matured our church to the point that at our most recent Classis Western Canada meeting we received concurring advice to re-organize Redeemer Reformation Church into a particular congregation in the URCNA.

By God’s grace Redeemer has gotten to a place where we feel we are ready to stand on our own two feet. We have a minister of the Word who has been serving the church faithfully for 11 years and two elders who have been serving faithfully for almost 4 years. We also have two faithful deacons. One has served since 2016 and the other since 2019 and has experience in a previous church. Our minister, elders and deacons all work well together



and have been blessed with unity and mutual respect for each other, even during these difficult times. We also recently brought some men in the congregation through officer training and it seems that God is raising up more men to bear office in the near future.

The congregation has also grown to about 80 members and 18 families. The growth has come from both covenant children being born (we are currently experiencing a baby boom!) as well as new people coming to the church. We recently rejoiced to witness

a young adult take membership vows and join our church and we look forward to one of our youth publicly professing her faith in November. Currently there are 10 people in the membership class and some other newcomers interested in taking the class in the future.

The congregation has also been self-sustaining this year and doesn’t plan to request money from the classis needy church fund this year. We are so thankful to the churches of our classis who generously give to that fund so that needy churches (like we had been for 11 years) can continue to proclaim the Gospel and be a light for Christ where God has placed them.

Lord willing, when COVID cases in our province go down and some of the health measures are gone, we plan to have a special worship service to mark this joyous occasion and to give thanks to God. When the time comes we will send out an announcement so that others who would like to celebrate with us can join us for worship and fellowship.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers. There have been some struggles over the past year as well. Please pray that God would continue to help us to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which [we] have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). And may God “do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).



 **Ontario, CA**

Pastor Taylor & Ariana Kern

***The congregation of Ontario United Reformed Church in California has undergone a significant transition this past year.***

The minister for the past 20 years, Rev. Adam Kaloostian, prayerfully accepted the call by God from Pasadena URC to be a church planter in the city of Ventura, California. We are thankful to the Lord for Rev. Kaloostian's faithful and heartfelt service to us, and we are hopeful that the Spirit will continue to use his servant to bless countless others in the name of Jesus.



bible study in the Spanish language to ensure that those first-generation immigrant members are well nourished and spiritually supplemented in their faith.

This recent modification of the Spanish Language ministry deserves explanation. The following three reasons reveal our rationale behind this decision:

After the departure of Rev. Kaloostian, the consistory of Ontario URC looked to me, Rev. Taylor Kern, to fill the pulpit in English and to serve the pastoral needs of the whole congregation. Prior to this interim period, I had presented to the consistory the strategic plan of merging the Spanish language ministry with the English congregation in pursuit of an integrated church model. After months of deliberation and consultation with wise counselors, the consistory eventually decided to adopt this vision for both the Spanish language ministry and Ontario URC as a whole. This means that instead of a separate Spanish language worship service on Sunday, we now encourage the Spanish ministry households to join the whole congregation of Ontario in the English worship services. Due to the language barrier, we provide a print out of the full service with all the movements of the order of worship and the Scripture passages all in Spanish. During the Sunday school hour, after the morning service, I lead the Spanish language ministry in a time of singing hymns, review and application of the sermon, and prayer. In this way I am able to check for general comprehension and directly apply the truth to their hearts. In addition, I still lead a weekly

**1) The Generational Challenge**

Over the past two years I have been in conversation with URCNA Missions Coordinator Rev. Rich Bout regarding the direction for the future of *El Mesias*, the Spanish Language ministry here in Southern California. One of the major challenges that we have confronted time and time again was the difficulty of reaching and retaining all the generations of immigrant families. The first-generation of immigrants prefer and often need to worship in their own native tongue, however the second and third generations of immigrants almost always come to prefer and need worship in the native tongue of the land they are living in. We observed that at a certain point our immigrant households with children typically decided to transition to the English ministry in order to ensure that their children could hear and grow in the gospel with full understanding. This would happen around the adolescent age. When we observed that this is a standard occurrence to be expected for immigrant families, we realized that the former model of a separate church plant in the Spanish language is not sustainable into the future. We all know that the retention and formation of our children are essential aspects of building up the church and seeing it flourish into the future. Our new integrated model, is better structured to both disciple first-generation immigrants in the Spanish language and disciple subsequent generations in English while keeping them in worship together.

**2) The Tragedy of COVID-19**

As was the case with many ministries, the tragedy of Covid-19 hit our Spanish Language ministry like a ton of bricks. Prior to the lockdowns and the contagious illness, the Lord was blessing us with spiritual momentum. We had strong attendance in our worship services, engaged activity and fellowship among both the members and regular visitors, and



we were hopeful about the future. I am still thankful to God for that season of growth. Yet shortly after, once the pandemic spread to our region, two of our beloved regular attenders fell ill with the virus and died in the Lord. The joyful lives of Isidro and Marco are deeply missed by our close-knit congregation. In discouragement due to the lockdown and to the divisive politics surrounding it, another member left us. Nearly all of the members and visitors that remained with us were very concerned about contracting the virus, so they by and large refrained from in-person gatherings. After Covid-19, much of that momentum we had slowed down and the Spanish Language of Ontario URC was limping forward. Thus, in order to strengthen the joy and faith of our Spanish speaking members and visitors, it seemed best for us to work the few into the many of our entire congregation here at Ontario, and this for their own spiritual well-being.



**3) The Collaborative Mission**

For years now the congregation of Ontario URC has housed and supported our local Spanish language ministry because they saw its growing significance due to the massive changes in the demographics of our region. What we as a consistory recently came to agreement on, however, was that our entire congregation needs to be encouraged to reach all of our neighbors for Christ. In other words, the consistory realized that Ontario URC needs to take more ownership of outreach to its local community in general, and specifically to the majority of Hispanic households of our region. We became convinced that by combing the gifts of both ministries to reach all of our neighbors for Christ is the best way forward. It is important to state that we are not asking the Spanish members or visitors to assimilate into the English ministry, but rather we are asking both ministries to embrace one another, learn from one another, and collaborate more together in mission for Christ. Thus, we are confident that this was the right decision for the ongoing vitality of Ontario URC as much as that of our Spanish language ministry.

I hope that these succinct reasons sufficiently explain why we made this significant decision. With respect to finances,

the congregation of Ontario URC is currently compensating me for all of my labors. We are reserving all of our Spanish language funds, including outside support and general giving from within. It is our prayerful desire to call a second laborer to serve alongside me as co-pastor of Ontario URC and our integrated church model. For indeed, the ministry and

outreach opportunities set before us in the city of Ontario are far beyond the ability of one minister. Once we find the right man suited to this position, Lord willing, we will reconfigure the respective duties of our two ministers in order to serve our current membership and to reach our neighbors for Christ in both English and Spanish. We have already begun the search and we are closing in on one candidate in particular. In order to call another minister to serve alongside me on this mission field here in Southern California, however, we will look to the generous partnership of our sister churches and individual partners within the federation. Our prayerful hope is that within 5 years of calling a second minister, the Lord will bless us with enough growth to thereby independently sustain the fullness of our integrated ministry model.

In preparation for these plans, please consider supporting the future of the Spanish Language ministry with prayerful and patient perseverance. Pray for the Lord’s blessing upon our Sunday gatherings in Spanish and upon our weekly Wednesday Bible study. We recently finished our study of the book of Revelation and we are currently studying “The Doctrine of God” in Spanish over zoom and our members are interested in starting an in-person bible study soon. Pray also that the Lord will guide us in finding and calling a man who will be a good fit for our church and the mission field around us. Lastly, pray for more opportunities to meet and reach our Spanish-speaking neighbors with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to bring deliverance and hope to those who live in the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

Gratefully in Him who will never cast us out (John 6:37),

Rev. Taylor Kern

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**THE URCNA MISSIONS & PASTORS CONFERENCE**

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.