

Greetings!

After a short frozen break, RPTS students have returned, preparing for mid-term exams. For graduating seniors, the end of their formal seminary training is coming and real ministry is just ahead.

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SUPPORT DINNER - FEBRUARY 9

Edward "Ted" Donnelly will be the *Faithful Servant* recipient at this year's Annual RPTS Support Dinner held on February 9, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Station Square in Pittsburgh. Earlier than usual, this year's dinner will be an extra special evening as retiring RPTS president, Jerry O'Neill, leads his last support dinner after twenty three years as president. Dr. O'Neill and Rev. Donnelly have formed a wonderful bond of friendship these past few decades. Accompanying a Seminary update will be testimonies from three students, always one of the highlights of the evening.

We would love to have you attend. To register, contact Kim Backensto at (412) 731-6000 or kbackens@rpts.edu.



SAVE THE GABLES

At the two-thirds mark in the campaign, a little over two-thirds of the goal has been reached in pledges and donations as we pass the \$2 million mark! We are praising the Lord for His faithfulness. Your participation is still needed to help us provide for this wonderful home. The campaign runs through July of 2018. Your prayers and gifts are appreciated.

More [details are available here](#) including short videos on the various projects.



PSALMS CLASS OFFERED

On April 18 and 19, 2018, Dr. Michael LeFebvre, Adjunct Professor of Old Testament Studies, will teach a two day intensive course on the Psalms. This course will provide an orientation to the formation, structure, literary forms, content, theology, Christology, and current scholarly issues regarding the Book of Psalms. The class will be held at RPTS on these two days from 1 pm to 5:40 pm.

The course will be recorded and will be available for distance students. Auditors are welcome as space permits. For more information on enrolling for this course for credit or audit, contact [Ed Blackwood](#) via email or at 412-731-6000.

TWO FOR ONE

Time is always a valuable commodity. Make the most of your time by attending the Psalms class mentioned above AND Dr. O'Neill's Retirement Celebration noted below. Double the blessing, double the fun!

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

For several decades, the Lord has seen fit to use the gifts of Dr. Jerry O'Neill at RPTS. As his retirement draws near, you will want to join in a wonderful evening of reflection upon the

goodness of the LORD and His provision through the work of Jerry O'Neill. [Click here](#) for more information or to register.



WESTMINSTER CONFERENCE

This year's conference is different and unique on many fronts. Combined with Dr. Barry York's inauguration as President of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary on September 7, 2018, there will be a conference, *Soundly Preaching the Word of God*, on the 8th. Keynote speakers are as follows:

- "Plain Preaching: Demonstrating the Spirit and His Power" | Joel Beeke
- "Faithful Preaching: Making Known the Whole Counsel of God" | Ligon Duncan
- "Wise Preaching: Applying Oneself to the Abilities of the Congregation" | Ted Donnelly
- "Zealous Preaching: Exercising Fervent Love for God and His People" | Barry York

Registration information will be posted soon so stayed tuned and save the date for this excellent conference. The conference will take place at Memorial Park Presbyterian Church in Allison Park, PA.



SUPPORTING THE MISSION

There are many ways to support the mission of the Seminary.

- * Prayer - We covet your prayers!
- * Referrals - We value your trust when you refer students for study!
- * Finances - There are multiple ways to give to the work of the Seminary:
 - o Checks
 - o Employer Gift Matching
 - o Stock
 - o Bequests and Estates
 - o Credit Cards

[More information is available here](#) or you can contact [Mark Sampson](#) at (412) 731-6000.

THE ADMISSIONAL

(News from the Admissions' Office)

Visitors. We love them. Any visitors. But especially prospective student visitors. We encourage any prospective students to visit each seminary that they are considering. It is one of the best ways to get a taste of the culture of the seminary. We had three prospective students visit in the last two weeks before our Christmas break - two of them with their wives. Please pray for clarity for them in deciding where to do their studies. Three others had hoped to visit, but had to postpone for a later date.

Visits can be scheduled at the prospective student's convenience. Obviously, we encourage visits during the school terms. A typical visit, if possible, goes from about 9 am to 1 pm. For students coming from a distance, we offer overnight accommodation. (And, if they enroll at RPTS, we pay their first credit hour.) Usually we include the following in a visit: tour the campus, talk with President O'Neill and/or President-elect York, sit in on classes (typically 1 hour for 2 classes), join us for chapel and also for lunch to interact further with faculty and students.

If you would like to visit RPTS, or know someone else who you think would benefit from a visit, contact Ed Blackwood at the contact information below.

Remember, if you, or someone you know would like to get seminary information, provide contact information [here](#). For details on our \$99 audit of courses, [click here](#). You can also call Ed Blackwood at 412-731-6000 or [click here](#) to email.

ALUMNI IN ACTION



The Jerusalem Chamber, just celebrating its first anniversary, is a collection of three RPTS alumni, Shawn Anderson, Nathan Eshelman, and Joel Wood, along with Kyle Borg, a good friend of the Seminary. These four Reformed Presbyterian pastors note, "There are many good commentaries and works that explore the theology of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The uniqueness of The Jerusalem Chamber podcast is that it provides an audio discussion with pastoral application of every paragraph of the confession."

Listen to one of the most recent podcasts on [Total Depravity](#).

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH (TFY)

TFY is annual ministry of the Seminary and the RPCNA dedicated to equipping young people for a life of ministry to Christ in the RP church by providing intensive theological instruction, practical ministry experiences, and an increased awareness of opportunities to serve Christ within the church.

Rising Reformed Presbyterian high school juniors heading into their senior year in the fall of 2018 must have their session's recommendation for consideration into this program. [This link](#) contains more information and past participant testimonials. Information packets have been sent to all RP churches with a registration deadline of March 1, 2018. Space is extremely limited.

THE BIBLICAL COUNSELING INSTITUTE: A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK FORWARD

What do you eat on New Year's Day? Many of us observe family traditions without understanding why we continue them. For example, many of you might eat pork on New Year's Day, but never chicken. Why? It's because pigs root forward and chickens kick backward. At the New Year, we're to be forward looking and thus eat pork. So the tradition goes. Well, here at the Biblical Counseling Institute, we're eating both chicken and pork on January 1!

Looking back, 2017 was a busy year for us. We counseled over 840 hours, including folks from the community, students, and pastors. There were over fifty new counselees this past year, and many from 2016 continued to receive Biblical counsel to address their difficulties. We are thankful for the donations from those who have appreciated the care provided by our counselors and from others who want to support this work as part of their giving to RPTS. We had several of our MDiv students step into supervised counseling this fall, being mentored by Dr. Scipione as they met with new counselees and worked with them over a number of months. One former student, Eun Kim (MTS 2013), completed her certification process with the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, under Dr. Scipione's supervision.

What's ahead in 2018? Both big changes and faithful consistency. On July 1, Lord willing, we will welcome Pastor Keith Evans as the new professor of Biblical counseling at RPTS! Many of

you have prayed with us for a number of years that the Lord would raise up a counseling professor to replace Dr. Scipione when he retires. The Lord has answered this prayer! This photo from our archive shows Pastor Evans (back in 2010 when he was a student and admissions counselor) entering the Willson Center where the offices for the Biblical Counseling Institute are located. As he takes up his new responsibilities, Dr. Scipione will remain on hand, moving to a part-time role. What remains the same? Our commitment to provide faithful instruction in Biblical counseling for our students and the faithful application of Biblical counseling for our counselees, always reminding them that the Lord gives us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Please pray for Dr. Scipione and Pastor Evans during this transition, and, as always, for our students and our counselees.



MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

RPTS frequently receives notifications of ministry positions available. [Check out the latest opportunities](#) in Vermont and the Pittsburgh region.

POINTS OF PRAYER

Psalm 141:1-2 *I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you! Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!*

The RPTS Family craves your prayers. Here are a few things that you can take before the throne of God:

- * Pray that God's Spirit would raise up a greater number of preachers to call our nation to repentance.
 - * Pray for several alumni who are facing hard providences in their lives.
 - o The George Gregory family as they mourn the passing of their 2 ½ year old son from this life into the presence of Jesus.
 - o The Namsik Yang family as their son, Minsol, born with significant heart defects, continues to thrive to the great surprise of medical professionals.
 - * Pray for our many international students who are putting in extra work since English is not their primary language. These students come from Canada, India, Japan, Australia, China, and a few other places that are too security-sensitive to mention.
 - o Pray that our on-line classes would continue to be used to shape and mold students of the Gospel. Give thanks for the blessing of having students able to study some while working in their home churches.
 - * Pray for the upcoming Presidential transition at RPTS in July.
 - * Pray that our students would be transformed by the Word of the Lord, not just informed.
 - * Please pray for our graduating seniors as they seek how best to serve in Christ's kingdom.
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Do you follow RPTS on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)? These are great ways to keep track of professor quotes, conferences, and news at the Seminary.

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