

**ABSTRACT  
of the  
MINUTES  
for the  
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS**



17<sup>th</sup> Annual

Session

March 13-14, 2002

St. Paul's Ev. Reformed Church  
Hamburg, Minnesota

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## INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

### OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

President	Rev. Jim Sawtelle
Vice President	Rev. Harvey Opp
Stated Clerk	Rev. Hank Bowen
Treasurer	Elder Don Larson

### CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

*(per communicant member)*

General Fund	8.00
Missions Fund	39.00
Student Aid	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47.00</b>

### CLASSIS TREASURER

LARSON, Donald ..... (515) 379-1037  
 2673 120th St., Livermore, IA 50558  
 delarson@trvnet.net

### PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

<b>Executive:</b>	Sawtelle, Bowen, Schulz
<b>Candidates and Credentials:</b>	Sawtelle, Potter, DeBoer, Kroese
<b>Interchurch Relations:</b>	Potter, Sawtelle, Mall, Altman
<b>Missions:</b>	Opp, Bowen, DeBoer, Bruckschen
<b>Deaf Reformed Ministries:</b>	Saavalainen, Hoxie, Hamilton, Pennington
<b>Publications:</b>	No Committee formed

*(First name serves as Chairman of the Committee.)*

**2002 DIRECTORY  
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS**

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

BOWEN, Rev. Henry . . . . . (952) 467-3872, Church: (952) 467-3878  
15470 Co. Rd. 31, Hamburg, MN 55339  
[rcushank@juno.com](mailto:rcushank@juno.com)

DEBOER, Mr. Jeff . . . . . (641) 923-3060, Church: (Same)  
1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438  
[JFFDBR@netconx.net](mailto:JFFDBR@netconx.net) Fax (641) 923-3060

HAMILTON, Rev. Kevin . . . . . (859) 936-1879  
917 Rosemont Ave., Danville, KY 40422  
[deafdiscgolf@yahoo.com](mailto:deafdiscgolf@yahoo.com)

MALL, Rev. George . . . . . (570) 282-2840  
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OPP, Rev. Harvey . . . . . (419) 599-2266, Church: (419) 599-3106  
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[opp@wcnet.org](mailto:opp@wcnet.org)

PLOEGER, Rev. Chester . . . . . (641) 923-6026  
750 W. Lyon St., Garner, IA 50438-1960

POTTER, Rev. Ronald . . . . . (570) 785-4012, Church: (570) 282-6400  
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**SECUNDUS ELDERS**

ARMBRUSTER, Ken ..... (419) 592-1130  
 14027 Co. Rd. L, Napoleon, OH 43545

BORGWARDT, Bill ..... (920) 758-2240  
 12626 Newton Road, Valders, WI 54245  
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[walter\\_van\\_heest@cargill.com](mailto:walter_van_heest@cargill.com)

**CHURCHES**

*Garner, IOWA*

Peace RCUS, 50438  
 1905 200<sup>th</sup> St. (3 miles south of Garner) ..... (641) 923-3060  
 Pastor: Mr. Jeff DeBoer (Wife: Karen)  
 Worship: 10:30am SS: 9:30am

*Danville, KENTUCKY*

Deaf RCUS, 40422  
 Office: 917 Rosemont Ave., Danville, KY ..... (859) 936-7375  
 Pastor: Rev. Kevin Hamilton  
 Contact Pastor for location of church meetings  
 Worship:

*Columbia, MARYLAND*

Deaf RCUS, 20715  
 Office: 14803 London Lane, Bowie, MD ..... (301) 805-9564  
 Pastor: Rev. Jari Saavalainen (Wife: Ramona)  
 Contact Pastor for location of church meetings  
 Worship: 1:30pm; Bible Study: 3:00pm  
 Pager: [JariFinn@wyndtell.com](mailto:JariFinn@wyndtell.com) Fax (301) 805-0747

*Hamburg, MINNESOTA*

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339  
 15470 Co Road 31 ..... (952) 467-3878  
 Pastor: Rev. Hank Bowen (Wife: Patty)  
 Worship: May - October 9:30am; SS: 8:25am  
 November - April 10:00am; SS: 8:55am

*Minneapolis, MINNESOTA*

Redeemer RCUS, 55427  
 Office: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN ..... (763) 417-9835  
 Pastor: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)  
 Church: 1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley  
 Worship: 10:15am and 5:00pm; SS: 9:00am  
[www.redeemerrcus.org](http://www.redeemerrcus.org)

*Napoleon, OHIO*

Peace RCUS, 43545  
638 Huddle Rd. .... (419) 599-3106  
Pastor: Rev. Harvey Opp (Wife: Carol)  
Worship: \*10:00am; SS: 9:00am  
\*(one half hour earlier June - August)

*Carbondale, PENNSYLVANIA*

Covenant RCUS, 18407  
47 South Church St. .... (570) 282-6400  
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)  
Worship: 10:00am; Bible Classes 9:00am

*Manitowoc, WISCONSIN*

Salem Ebenezer RCUS 54220  
6524 County Trunk C .... (920) 726-4940  
Pastor:  
Worship: 10:00am; SS 8:45am  
[blutze@lakefield.net](mailto:blutze@lakefield.net) [www.salemebenezer.org](http://www.salemebenezer.org)

**ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES  
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS  
Reformed Church in the United States**

**17<sup>TH</sup> Annual Spring Meeting  
March 13-14, 2002  
St. Paul's Ev. RCUS, Hamburg, Minnesota**

**SERVICES**

The Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting at St. Paul's Ev. Reformed Church, Hamburg, Minnesota on Wednesday, March 13, 2002 at 1:07 pm.. It began with a devotion from Psalm 121 led by Rev. Hank Bowen, pastor of St. Paul's Ev. Reformed Church of Hamburg.

The Wednesday evening worship service was held at 7:30 pm with Rev. Ron Potter, pastor of Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA, conducting. Rev. Harvey Opp, pastor of Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, OH, preached a sermon from I Thessalonians 1:6-10 entitled, "Examples to All." Following the service the housing assignments were made and refreshments were served.

On Thursday morning devotions were led by Rev. Jeff DeBoer, pastor of Peace Reformed Church of Garner, IA, from II Timothy 1:7, "A Call to Pastoral Boldness."

Closing devotions were led by Elder David Schulz, of St. Paul's Ev. Reformed Church. He read from Psalm 103 and closed in prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer for God to grant the body wisdom in their deliberations. Following the reading of each Parochial Report, prayer was offered for the pastor and his charge.

**ORGANIZATION**

Rev. Hank Bowen, President of the Classis Executive Committee, called the meeting to order following opening devotions on March 13, 2002. The opening roll call showed seven ministers and eight elders present. A quorum was declared and the meeting opened for business. The bar of the house was set at the first five rows of the church on either side of the aisle. The Stated Clerk read the Standing Rules of Classis as required by Standing Rule 5. Rev. Jeff DeBoer and Rev. George Mall were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

The following delegates were elected to serve in Classical office for this coming year: Rev. Jim Sawtelle, President; Rev. Harvey Opp, Vice-President; Rev. Hank Bowen, Stated Clerk; and Elder Don Larson, Treasurer.

The President appointed Elder Kenton Hoxie as reporter to the *Reformed*

*Herald.*

The Agenda, Order of the Day, and Services were adopted. A Special Order of the Day was set for Thursday morning as the first order of business to examine Rev. Kevin Hamilton of the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, Kentucky.

### FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

There were no Fraternal Delegates present, but visiting from the deaf community were visitors Robert Cagle and Billy Widener from the Chicago area. Hearing interpreters Chuck Snyder and Mike Brabo were also introduced to the body and allowed to sit in the bar of the house to interpret for the deaf brothers.

First time elders to Classis who were welcomed included: Mike Altman, Walt Van Heest, David Schulz, Chris Pennington and Jim Bruckschen. During the meetings several of the elders from Hamburg were welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor.

Rev. Robert Grossmann was welcomed on Thursday morning. He was present as the Liaison to the Deaf Reformed Churches. He was seated within the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor.

### RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND NEW CHURCHES

The President welcomed newly ordained minister, Rev. Jeff DeBoer, serving in Garner, Iowa and the Classis extended the right hand of fellowship.

The Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, Kentucky was received as a new congregation of the Classis and Rev. Jari Saavalainen offered prayer for both our new minister and this new congregation.

### STANDING COMMITTEES

The President appointed the following Standing Committees. Chairmen were listed first:

<i>Examination and Licensure:</i>	Sawtelle, Potter, Hoxie, Sharp
<i>Excuses:</i>	DeBoer, Pennington, Van Heest
<i>Finances:</i>	Larson, Sharp, Saavalainen, Mall
<i>Judicial:</i>	Opp, Bowen, Sawtelle, Bruckschen, Larson
<i>Minutes of Synod:</i>	Opp, Schulz, Altman
<i>Missions:</i>	Potter, DeBoer, Schulz, Altman
<i>Nominations:</i>	Saavalainen, Opp, Pennington, Van Heest
<i>Overtures:</i>	Mall, Bowen, Hoxie, Bruckschen
<i>Services:</i>	DeBoer, Bowen, Van Heest

### PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

All pertinent overtures and materials were given to the Standing Overtures Committee for referral to the appropriate Standing Committees. A Complaint from Mr. John Arendt against the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee. Some items from the Permanent Committee Reports, and Reports of officers were referred to Standing Committees. The results of the Classis' actions to the various recommendations are printed in the Abstract.

### PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. *Executive Committee Report*

Dear Brethren,

In the previous Classical year, the following information was brought to the Classis, and the actions were approved by these Executive Circulars:

#### Volume 16, Number 1 (April 3, 2001)

1. That a special meeting of Classis be held at Zion RCUS, Menno, SD on May 14, 2001 to conduct an ordination exam of Licentiate Jeff De Boer.
2. That a Special Reconciliation Committee be erected to assist in matters at Covenant RCUS, Carbondale, PA. Committee members would be Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Harvey Opp, and Mr. Mark Honeck.

#### Volume 16, Number 2 (April 24, 2001)

Additional business for the Special Meeting May 14, 2001:

1. That Classis consider the report of our Missions Committee regarding recognition of northwest Arkansas as a mission work of Classis.
2. That Classis consider a request from Northland RCUS, Kansas City, MO to labor within our bounds as the oversight consistory for the work in Arkansas.
3. That Classis consider overturing Synod to include the whole of Missouri within the bounds of Covenant East Classis.
4. That Classis consider funding to reimburse Dr. Joseph Gatis and Rev. Russ Kent for travel to Synod.
5. That Rev's. Hank Bowen, Harvey Opp, and Donald Vance serve as a Special Committee of Classis to defend the actions of Classis against the Complaint by Mr. John Arendt to be heard at Synod.

#### Volume 16, Number 3 (Sept. 5, 2001)

(The two recommendations of this circular were rescinded by the next circular, due to the insufficient time for approval of the motions. These were in regard to the organization of the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY.)

Volume 16, Number 4 (Sept. 14, 2001)

1. That the action of Executive Circular Volume 16, Number 3 be rescinded due to the said constitutional problems.
2. That Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY be organized as a congregation within Classis in accord with RCUS Constitution Article 8.
3. That a committee consisting of Rev. Jari Saavalainen and Elder Kenton Hoxie superintend the election of elders and deacons and induct these men into office in the Danville congregation.

Volume 16, Number 5 (Oct. 1, 2001)

(Following the death of clerk Rev. Donald Vance):

1. That Rev. Harvey Opp be appointed to serve as the interim clerk for the remainder of the Classical year.

Volume 16, Number 6 (Oct. 19, 2001)

1. That Classis request that Synod grant \$1,000 per month in Ministerial Aid to Mrs. Joan Vance, and that this aid be provided retroactively beginning October 1, 2001.

Volume 16, Number 7 (Jan. 29, 2002)

Information regarding: the Spring Meeting of Classis at St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, Hamburg, MN, the required reports, the examination of Rev. Kevin Hamilton, and deaf interpretation for the meeting.

The Executive Circulars will be included as an attachment to this Report placed in the documents of the Minutes for this Classis Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Hank Bowen, Chm., Rev. Harvey Opp, Clerk Pro Tem, Elder John Honeck*

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**Classis Action:** Report was referred to Overtures.

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***B. Candidates and Credentials***

Dear Brothers:

Since our 2001 Spring Classis meeting, your committee has conducted the business of an Ordination exam for Mr. Jeff De Boer, and continued correspondence with Mr. Kevin Hamilton to the end that he might complete his exam process for reception as a minister of the Classis.

Mr. Jeff De Boer was examined at the Special Classis meeting held in Menno, SD, on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2001. Mr. De Boer was unable to attend the meeting in person due to the immanent arrival of his first child. We examined Jeff by way of a speaker phone. The Classis voted that the exam be declared satisfactory, and that Mr. De Boer be ordained by a committee of Classis. We are truly grateful to God for adding Jeff to the ministerial roles of the Classis and look forward to working with

him in the future.

Mr. Kevin Hamilton was assigned some readings in preparation for the next phase of his exam process, which readings cover areas specifically recommended for further study by the Classis. Your committee has maintained periodic contact with Kevin in the interim, and he expressed his desire to take the exam at the Spring Classis of 2002. Kevin has been given a Church History exam based on the book, *The Church in History*, by B.K. Kuiper. The committee will report on the outcome of that exam at the upcoming Classis meeting. We are happy with the way the exam process has worked out with Kevin, and hope we, our interpreters, and our deaf brothers can continue to refine the exam process together in a way that not only satisfies the Constitutional requirements, but also overcomes any language issues. It has been a tremendous learning experience for us all, I believe, and we trust that we can continue to learn together how to communicate some of the more difficult theological terms into American Sign Language. This would be a benefit to the exam process in future cases, not only as this relates to exams for deaf candidates, but also as deaf elders and ministers need to be able to fully participate in the exams of the hearing candidates.

The proposed exam for Kevin Hamilton is as follows:

(The first section deals with areas in which we need to re-examine)

**Doctrine of God (15 minutes)**

God's decrees

God's will regarding the entrance of sin into the world

**Doctrine of Man (15 minutes)**

Covenant of works and Cov. of Grace

Why baptize children of believers

**Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (15 minutes)**

Eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father

Order of Salvation

**Eschatology (15 minutes)**

Rev. 20 and how it is to be interpreted

Matt. 24 and how it is to be interpreted

The following are areas Kevin yet needs to be examined on:

**The Confessions (15 minutes)**

Heidelberg, Belgic, Canons of Dort

**RCUS Constitution (15 minutes)**

**Church History (Taken off the floor)**

We would like the flexibility to propose time limits as we get closer to the exam, but anticipate an exam period of around one and a half hours in total.

We look forward to seeing you all in Hamburg.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jim Sawtelle, Ron Potter, Kevin Hoxie, Jay Kroese*

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**Classis Action:** The report was referred to the Standing Licensure and Examination Committee.

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### **C. Interchurch Relations**

Dear Brethren,

Your committee did not meet during the past year, but received some invitations to send observers or fraternal delegates. Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches in North America sent agendas and then minutes of their May meeting in Wisconsin, their August meeting in Iowa, and their December meeting in Missouri. With the distance involved, the chairman did not attend any of these. I had asked Rev. Vance if he could attend last May in Wisconsin, but he was unable to do so. I did not think to ask any of our men who are closer if they could attend the later meetings. Classis Central U.S. seems to have at least two meetings each year.

There was a recent invitation to send a delegate to the Presbytery of the Midwest, OPC, meeting at Sheboygan, WI. However, they are meeting March 15-16. Falling on the heels of our own meeting and not having a minister at Manitowoc, I expressed our regrets that we would probably not have a delegate to send. I invited them to send a delegate to our meeting at Hamburg, which seemed rather 'far out' to the contact person. That is, Minnesota is on the edge of their presbytery, with no OPC churches in the state.

Your chairman also sent invitations to our meeting to the URCNA, to the Canadian and American Reformed Churches, and to the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America. As you may recall, the RPCNA does not regularly interact at the presbytery level in fraternal relations. The Canadian and American Reformed Churches contact indicated they hope to have a representative at the meeting. No other communication has been sent or received.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Harvey Opp (Chm.), Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Elder Leslie Goeke, Elder David Sharp*

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**Classis Action:** Take note. *No Standing Ecumenicity Committee formed.*

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### **D. Missions Committee**

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

Your Committee begs the indulgence of Classis for the lateness of this report.

Information germane to the preparation of this report was not available to the Chairman until late afternoon on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. At that time a draft of the report was sent to Committee members, input received over the weekend and the final report prepared. Your Chairman, herein tenders this as an excuse pursuant to Standing Rule #14.

Your Committee met by telephone and or by e-mail to conduct its business this past year. Three members of the Committee did meet together in early May of 2001 in conjunction with a visit to the mission work at Northwest Arkansas. The following constitutes our report to Classis.

### **Minneapolis, MN.**

The Rev. Hank Bowen and Elder Bob Kroells visited Redeemer Reformed Church on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002. They met with the Consistory and then attended the evening worship service which had about 60 people in attendance. In their report to your Committee Rev. Bowen and Elder Kroells reported that Redeemer has surpassed all their budget concerns, membership continues to increase and that there are no internal struggles in the church. The principal need of Redeemer is for a permanent meeting facility. Since their visit to Redeemer a church facility has been located and a letter has been sent to the churches of the RCUS by the Consistory soliciting gifts and private loans to help in its purchase. It is expected that Redeemer will take possession of the property March 29, 2002. No request for Missions funds has been received from Redeemer by your Committee.

### **Deaf Reformed Church.**

The Deaf Church of Fredrick, MD, the recipient of Missions funds in 2001 (June-August) continues to play an influential role in the deaf community. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, Rev. Jari Saavalainen and Elder Kenton Hoxie performed the ordination and installation of two elders and two deacons for Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY. The Danville Church will be received at this Classis Meeting and its Pastor, the Rev. Kevin Hamilton, is expected to complete Licensure requirements and be added to the roll of Ministers of the RCUS. No request for Missions funds has been received from deaf Reformed Church of Fredrick, MD by your Committee.

### **Northwest Arkansas.**

By action of the Special Meeting of Classis May 14th, 2001, funds in the amount of \$1,200 per month for the remainder of 2001, were allocated to "pursue developing the mission work in the Springdale, AR area in cooperation (sic) with the Northland Reformed Church of Kansas City, MO" who was given permission to labor within the bounds of Classis. (See Abstract, Spring Meeting of Classis, 2001, p.37: Missions, recommendations #1,2,5). In pursuit of that objective, two people from the Northwest AR group were received into membership in Northland in the Fall of 2001 and Sunday Worship Services and a Sunday evening Bible



Study were begun, first in the Springdale area and then later in Bentonville, AR. Though this move brings us into the proximity of an OPC mission work in the area and thus in potential violation of the NAPARC Comity Agreement, the Home Missions Chairman of the OPC has assured your Committee that they have no problem with our work there.

Currently there are seven committed adults involved with the work there (four families) with a high attendance of 10 in Worship. Rev. Lloyd Gross preaches in NW Arkansas each month with one other minister from the RCUS preaching at another time during the month. Thus far, Rev.'s Bowen, Opp, Brice and Loucks have assisted the saints there. On other Sundays video tapes of sermons by Rev. Bowen are used. Rev. Brice has also begun to travel to NW AR to conduct a mid-week Bible study once a month. Travel for the visiting preachers is covered by the missions fund of Classis with the local group bearing the cost of the meeting place, lodging, meals and honorarium. Rev. Brice conducts the Lord's Supper when he preaches there on a quarterly basis.

There are reports of visitors attending the Worship services and an indication of ongoing interest in the work from others. But because the work has only a partial pulpit supply at present these people are unwilling to commit themselves until they see more permanence. Sunday evening Bible study sees about the same attendance as the Worship services. Some visitors and those standing back have been "burned" by other start-up works and are reluctant to commit to another work that may fail or become muddled. In effect there has been no growth since the beginning of this work though the potential is very much still there.

There is a Reformation Conference planned by the group March 8-9, 2002. This has been well advertised and is hoped will generate some interest in the work. Preliminary feed-back indicates some interest is being stirred. The speakers at this conference, organised by Paul Moore and Warren Gabbard, who are the NW AR members at Northland, will include Rev. Bud Powell, Rev. Robert Grossmann and Rev. Wes Brice. Travel expenses for the speakers will be borne by the Mission Fund and all other expenses by the local group.

A letter received by your Committee from the seven committed members in this group (dated Feb. 13, 2002) indicate a love for the RCUS, an appreciation for the work of the ministers visiting the area twice a month and a commitment to the work there and to the positions of the RCUS. But they also express the need for a person to fill the pulpit each Sunday and believe they are losing some visitors because the pulpit is only partially supplied. Their request to the Committee is that we give some thought to helping them get a more regular pulpit supply.

Input to your Committee by Rev. Gross, Rev. Brice and Mr. Paul Moore all indicate the potential for the work there but the need also for a more settled ministry to further this potential. Your Committee concurs.

Anticipated giving by the congregation was projected at \$900 per month in the Committee report to Classis given in May of 2001. Actual giving has been below this. August through February giving was \$4,887.00 or about \$700.00 per month.

But with twice monthly honorariums of \$100.00 each, hotel expenses for the ministers ranging from \$115.00 to \$160.00 per visit (depending on the number of days they stay), \$50.00 a week for a hotel conference room and incidental expenses related to advertising and the upcoming Conference, not much is left over. There is every indication that if a regular pulpit ministry is instituted then giving will step up accordingly. In fact in correspondence received February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002, from these brothers and sisters, which was addressed to the Northland Church as well as Classis they write : "*We would ask you that you look at the amount given by our work and that you tell us what you are able to do in regards to supporting this effort (here they have a summer intern in view). We know that certain funds have been set aside for this work. We would ask that you set forth what you are able to do and then let us know what is expected of us (given our weekly giving). . .*"

After considering the Northwest Arkansas situation, your Committee proposes that Classis continue to fund this work so as to provide twice monthly pulpit supply as we are doing and then provide a senior seminarian summer student for a 10 week period to see if things can be jump-started. If it looks like there is increased growth then an evaluation can be done in late summer to see if the calling of a pastor is warranted. The cost of a Mid-America summer student would be as follows:

\$280.00	Single student
\$350.00	Married student
\$375.00	Married student – 1 child
\$410.00	Married student – 2 children
\$450.00	Married student – 3 children
\$490.00	Married student – 4 children

It is most desirable that housing for the student (and his family) be arranged prior to the student's arrival. Such housing shall be at the church's expense. In addition, travel costs incurred to and from the field, as well as during the summer work, should be reimbursed at the rate of \$.31 per mile.

At present your Committee is utilising the help of Rev. Jim Sawtelle who is in contact with Mid-America seeking to provisionally secure a summer intern. As of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002 there was \$9,500.00 in the Classis Missions fund. The Treasurer has been paying the travel expenses for the ministers supplying the Arkansas work out of this fund.

In light of the foregoing your Committee brings you the following recommendations re: the mission work in Northwest Arkansas.

**Recommendations:**

1. That Classis continue to set aside \$1,200.00 per month for the mission work in Northwest Arkansas for the Classical year 2002.
2. That Classis continue to fund the travel expenses for bi-monthly ministers to preach at the mission work in Northwest Arkansas and for such ministers as may be recruited to supply the pulpit on vacant Lord's Days.
3. That Classis seek for a summer intern to supply the pulpit and do pastoral work at the mission work in Northwest Arkansas and contribute \$1,200.00 per month to

his salary plus cover mileage to and from the field at the rate of \$.31 cents per mile with the mission work in Northwest AR covering the balance of the salary.

4. That Classis recommend that the mission work in Northwest Arkansas provide the necessary housing for a summer intern (approximately 10 weeks).

5. That the Consistory of the Northland reformed Church in Kansas City, MO oversee the work of the summer intern and provide monthly reports to the Missions Committee on the progress of the work.

6. That the Missions Committee re-evaluate the work in Northwest Arkansas in the late summer and make recommendations to Classis relative to continuing the work.

7. That Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS to budget \$14,000 for the coming Synodical year to be used if needed, for the mission work in Northwest Arkansas.

8. That Classis, through its Stated Clerk, commend the brothers and sisters in Northwest Arkansas for their personal commitment and giving toward the establishment of an RCUS church in that region and assure them of our continued prayers and support.

Respectfully Submitted: *Rev. Ron Potter (Chm.); Rev. Hank Bowen; Elder Bob Kroells; Elder Bill Borgwardt.*

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**Classis Action:** The report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee.

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#### ***E. Publications Committee***

No Permanent Publications Committee was formed for the 2001 Classical year.

### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

#### ***A. President's Report on The State of The Church***

Beloved Brothers,

The Apostle Paul writes in Titus 3:8, *This is a faithful saying and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*

Over this past year there seems to have been a renewed interest in the debate over the proper view of good works in the believer's life. Lately we have seen it in the discussions concerning the Law-Gospel distinctions. We see it also in the life of the church. As shepherds we look out over the congregation and we see various levels of commitment to living godly before the world.

The Apostles' exhortation weighs heavy on the minds of the ministers in our Classis. It is evident in your parochial reports as you express in varying ways your

emphasis on biblical preaching with the goal of moving your members to greater levels of experiencing Christ in their daily lives. This is commendable to you brothers. It is the work the Lord has called us to. We are to be shepherds first, concerned for the flock of the Great Shepherd under whom we labor. That is not to say that our theological astuteness is not important. On the contrary, daily we see the need for even greater care to be taken to *speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)*. All of the ministers reports reflect a conscious effort being made to live up to the three marks of the church and share similar difficulties in accomplishing visitation in our fast paced society.

It has not been a year without our struggles as a Classis either. Our beloved brother, Rev. Donald Vance, was called into glory unexpectedly this year. Unexpectedly from our perspective, but by God's purpose and will to the furtherance of His kingdom. Our sympathies are extended to his wife Joan who was a faithful and positive influence in his pastoral labors. Our prayers are continually before the Lord that another shepherd will soon come to take his place. That is the way of things in this world. God raises up a man and gives him a number of years to labor in the field. The day comes when his labors come to an end. But the Lord always seems to raise up another to take his place. As such, Christ continues to build His church. I would like to express my personal gratitude as well as the gratitude of the Classis to the Rev. Harvey Opp for stepping in and assuming the Clerk's duties in the interim period.

A cause for great rejoicing this year is the addition of the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, Kentucky to our list of churches. We anticipate the completion of Rev. Kevin Hamilton's license exam and his being added to the roll of active ministers. As fellow ministers we often stand in awe of the work that Rev. Jari Saavalainen and Elder Kenton Hoxie are doing within the deaf community with limited resources but an abundance of energy and love for the reformed faith.

We rejoice also in adding Rev. Jeff DeBoer to our roll of ministers and he will now attend Classis for the first time as a minister of the Covenant East Classis. We are thankful for the enthusiasm that he brings for outreach and work with the youth of our denomination. He is also to be commended for unhesitatingly taking up the task of organizing the Covenant East Youth Camp for this coming year.

Last Spring Classis we heard an appeal brought against one of the Spiritual Councils in our Classis. The appeal was upheld but we then found ourselves in the awkward position of having to defend our procedures even though our resolution was determined to be correct. The same individual has returned with yet another complaint against his Spiritual Council. This will be the third year that we will hear of discord between this individual and the Spiritual Council. Let us pray that God will give us wisdom and humility in our efforts to deal with the difficulty. May God grant a resolution that will bring about a truly biblical reconciliation between the parties.

In the work of missions the Classis continues to gain momentum. After years of relative inactivity in starting new works within our boundaries, the Lord has

blessed in the planting of the Redeemer congregation in Minneapolis. We thank our God and Savior for the reports of the good work being done by Rev. Jim Sawtelle, his fellow officers and the members as a whole in laboring tirelessly and giving sacrificially to establish the church. It is with great joy we look forward to hearing about the prospect of the purchase of a new building. If the Lord wills, soon we can celebrate with the congregation as they host Classis for the first time.

The Lord has also expanded our field of efforts with initial ministry efforts in Northwest Arkansas. While this effort appears to have great potential, there are some very difficult hurdles that confront us in how to pursue taking this missions effort to the next level. The key difficulty is knowing when to commit a man full time to the field, and should that time arise, finding who that man will be, given our current strain on men available to move into a missions field.

The Rev. George Mall has completed translation of two reformed works into the Urdu language and is asking that the Classis consider undertaking their printing in this coming year. Not only have members in our Classis been involved in mission work within our bounds, but many of our congregations also are involved in the work of taking the gospel to other lands. In Hamburg several of the catechism class students started a Kid's Missionary Club following visits by a number of our African ministers this past summer. To date they have raised almost \$900 to help with the building of the hospital and school in Kenya.

In reading over the reports it is apparent that the Lord is keeping us very occupied in the work of the building of His church. May He continue to sustain and grant unto us perseverance in the year that lies ahead. Our Lord speaks with great vigor at the end of Luke 10 where these words are recorded for us, *let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.* And again he says a few verses later, *no one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* Brothers, the work you have been called to is of the most serious nature. Let us never take lightly how much of what we do is used by our Lord in the advancement of His Kingdom and the building up of the people of God.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Rev. Hank Bowen, President

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**Classis Action:** The report was received and is to be printed in the Abstract of the Minutes and submitted to the *Reformed Herald*.

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**B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes**

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Since I have been Clerk Pro Tem only since October 15, 2001, this report deals mainly with the activities of the former Clerk, our dear departed brother, Rev. Donald Vance. The Clerk's records show that the following is a summary of activities in the last year.

1. Following the 2001 Spring Classis Meeting:
  - a. Preparation, printing and binding of the *Minutes* of the 2001 Spring Classis Meeting, and of the Special Classis Meeting of May 14, 2001. (The latter were mailed to delegates.)
  - b. Preparation and mailing of all requisite forms, overtures, and correspondence to the Stated Clerk of Synod.
2. Preparation of a camera ready copy of the *2001 Abstract of Minutes* for the copier service and subsequent distribution of the *Abstract* to the Churches of Classis and Synod.
3. Preparation and mailing of Executive Circulars Volume 16, Numbers 1-7. (Number 5 was sent by Classis President, Rev. Bowen. Numbers 6 and 7 were sent by Rev. Opp, as well as an overture to Synod for Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Vance).
4. Preparation of the Statistical Report, Executive Committee report, and miscellaneous forms for the 2002 Spring meeting of Classis (prepared by Rev. Opp).
5. Necrologies of two Elders of Peace RCUS, Napoleon, OH accompany this report, that of Harold Schroeder and of Eldon Koppenhofer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Rev. Harvey Opp, Clerk Pro Tem

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**Classis Action:** Take note. *The Necrology for the Rev. Don Vance that was printed in the Reformed Herald is to be included in this Abstract.*

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**C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod**

There was no report received from the Stated Clerk of Synod.

**D. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Elder Don Larson, presented the following report:

Balance 2/1/01 .....	17,112.66
General Fund Balance .....	5,485.13
Receipts* .....	6,042.00
Expenses .....	6,091.93
Balance 1/31/02 .....	5,435.20
Mission Fund Balance .....	9,284.53
Receipts .....	22,801.68
Expenses .....	21,393.58
Balance 1/31/02 .....	10,692.63
Student Aid Fund Balance .....	2,343.00

Receipts .....	.00
Expenses .....	.00
Balance 1/31/02 .....	2,343.00
Ending Balance 1/31/01 .....	18,470.83
Short Term CD (90 Days) .....	\$5,000.00
Short Term CD .....	\$7,000.00
Checking .....	\$6,470.83

\*The \$400.00 Deaconal money is included with the General Fund Total.

**Treasurer's Report - (Detailed Income - Expense)**

INCOME:	Members	Budget	General	Missions	Deaconal	Total
Bowie, MD	14	490.00	392.00	98.00	100.00	590.00
Carbondale, PA	38	1,330.00	280.00	1,120.00	200.00	1,600.00
Garner, IA	130	4,550.00	910.00	3,640.00		4,550.00
Hamburg, MN	257	8,995.00	1,799.00	7,196.00	100.00	9,095.00
Manitowoc, WI	267	9,345.00	1,869.00	7,476.00		9,345.00
Minneapolis, MN	30	1,050.00	210.00	840.00		1,050.00
Napoleon, OH	68	2,380.00	476.00	1,904.00		2,380.00
Interest				233.68		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>28,140.00</b>	<b>5,642.00</b>	<b>22,801.68</b>	<b>400.00*</b>	<b>28,843.68</b>

**EXPENSES:**

Spring Classis:		
Travel	3,433.26	
Hearing Interpreters	600.00	
Hotel	453.00	
		4,486.26
Travel to Synod:		
Deaconal		639.45
Stated Clerk:		
Abstract	766.22	
Gratuity	200.00	
		966.22
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</b>		<b>6,091.93</b>

**Missions:**

Redeemer-Minneapolis	14,156.67
Deaf RCUS - Maryland	4,500.00
NW Arkansas	2,513.91

Deaf RCUS - Kentucky	223.00	
<b>TOTAL MISSIONS</b>		<b>21,393.58</b>
<b>TOTAL CLASSIS EXPENSE</b>		<b>27,485.51</b>
<b>INCOME FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>1,358.17</b>
<b>CASH ON HAND 02-01-01</b>		<b>17,112.66</b>
<b>CASH ON HAND 01-31-02</b>		<b>18,470.83</b>

*Donald Larson, Treasurer*

**Classis Action:** The report was referred to the Standing Finances Committee.

**PAROCHIAL REPORTS OF MINISTERS**

Each Minister attending the meeting read his parochial report and prayer was offered for each of the congregations after the pastoral reports were read. Elder Jim Bruckschen from Manitowoc reported on the progress of filling their vacant pulpit. Rev. Kevin Hamilton gave a parochial report on his activities in the Danville, Kentucky congregation.

**Classis Action:** 'Take Note' on each pastoral report except for Rev. Mall whose report was referred to Standing Finances.

**CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ELDERS**

The President addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the RCUS Constitution to the Elder delegates of each congregation. The Elders answered as follows:

- 1. Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God? All answered "Yes".*
- 2. Is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and the Christian nurture of the members? All answered "Yes".*
- 3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:*
  - a. Is visitation faithfully performed? All answered "Yes".*
  - b. Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution? All answered "Yes".*
- 4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution? All answered "Yes".*
- 5. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:*
  - a. Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? All answered "Yes".*

b. Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer? All answered "Yes".

c. Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? All answered "Yes".

d. Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer? All answered "Yes".

6. Are the Church records properly kept? All answered "Yes" except for the Deaf RCUS of Columbia, MD and Danville, KY who answered "Needs Improvement."

7. a. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge? All answered "Yes".

7. b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs? All answered "Yes".

### MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Stated Clerk, pro tem, provided a table on statistics as they were sent to him. These appear in the Appendix of this Abstract.

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**Classis Action:** The 2001 Statistical Report was adopted.

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### REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

There were no reports to be given by Fraternal delegates to other bodies.

### ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

A letter from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church - Presbytery of the Midwest by Dr. Alan Strange was read to the body.

Elder Kenton Hoxie addressed the body on behalf of the Deaf Reformed Ministries to explain their work. They are governed by an independent board at this time as they work within the deaf community to proclaim the Reformed Faith.

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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### EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE

Rev. Kevin Hamilton was examined in the areas of Doctrine of God, Doctrine of Man, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Eschatology, RCUS Standards, and RCUS Constitution. After each oral area was completed, questions were allowed from the floor. The result of the examination is presented in this Abstract in the report of the Examination and Licensure Committee.

## REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### A. Special Reconciliation Committee

Dear Brothers,

Your committee was not able to complete its assignment to meet with the members of the Carbondale congregation as one of the key figures involved refused to meet with the committee. After consultation as a committee and with members of the executive committee it was determined that your committee wait until such a time as we could meet with all the parties involved in the problems.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Harvey Opp, Elder Mark Honeck

### B. Committee for the Installation of Jeff DeBoer

Esteemed Brothers,

On Friday evening of June 15, 2001, Mr. Jeff De Boer was ordained to the ministry of the Word and sacraments by the Covenant East Classis. Jeff was then installed as the pastor of Peace RCUS in Garner, IA.

The ordination committee consisted of the Reverends Hank Bowen and Jim Sawtelle, and the elders of Peace Reformed Church. Rev. Bowen conducted the service; Rev. David Fagrey, De Boer's brother-in-law, gave the charge to the congregation preaching from Romans 15:30-33. His sermon was entitled, "Pray For Your Pastor." Rev. Sawtelle gave the charge to the pastor from Acts 18:9,10 entitled, "Christ Commissions A Fearful Minister."

Jeff and his wife, Karen, moved to Garner in August of 2000, and has served the congregation as Stated Supply. De Boer is a graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and has been a member of Trinity RCUS of Sioux Falls, SD for many years. He sustained licensure and ordination exams in Covenant East Classis. On May 17 the De Boers were blessed with the birth of their first child, Josiah. The timing of his ordination was such that, on the following Lord's Day Jeff was privileged to administer the sacrament of baptism to his newborn son.

Jeff is the fifteenth pastor to serve Peace Reformed Church in its 123 year history. We are grateful that our Lord continues to call gifted men to the gospel ministry among our churches, and pray God's richest blessing on Jeff and his family as he serves the Lord and His people.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Hank Bowen

### C. *Liaison Representative to the Deaf Reformed Churches*

Honorable Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States  
Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The undersigned was appointed as a liaison representative to the Deaf Reformed Churches by the 2000 Synod of the RCUS with a view to helping work with them and the Covenant East Classis to establish a Deaf Reformed Classis within the RCUS. This work has gone more slowly than we or the Deaf Churches had anticipated but they (and we) are still solidly committed to the goal. It will be remembered that Rev. Hank Bowen, President of the Covenant East Executive Committee and the undersigned attended a meeting with the deaf brothers in Maryland in June 2000, at which time the Deaf Reformed leaders committed themselves to the formation of a Deaf Classis of the RCUS.

Progress made so far has been two-fold. First, a new Deaf Reformed Congregation in Danville, KY, has been organized, and has been enrolled as a member congregation of Covenant East Classis. This is a solid second congregation of the three needed to found a separate Classis. Second, the Rev. Kevin Hamilton, who pastors Deaf RCUS of Danville has sustained a major portion of his theological exams before Classis and should soon be received and enrolled as a pastor in the RCUS. Rev. Hamilton is a solidly reformed and very capable pastor, as well as an excellent preacher (he preached at the 2001 Spring meeting of Covenant East Classis held in Carbondale, PA). The Danville Deaf Church also has two sound elders, Chris Pennington and Shane Hodge.

At this time the third congregation needed for a Deaf Classis is not yet on the horizon. It was thought that a Deaf Reformed Congregation at York, PA, might be such a congregation. However, this congregation was split into three parts by a divisive leader and has ceased to exist. There are other scattered groups of Deaf Reformed believers that may or may not coalesce into one or more congregations but that is simply not in sight at this time.

One great need and issue is outreach into the Deaf community by Reformed Christians. At the present time Deaf Reformed Ministries (DRM) led by our Columbia, MD elder Kenton Hoxie, with the help of his pastor, Rev. Jari Saavalainen, is just such an outreach. The work of DRM is however limited for lack of funds. It is definitely time for the Covenant East Classis, and perhaps the RCUS Synod, to consider funding this particular mission to the deaf community.

The other great need for deaf Christian ministry is the education of deaf pastors. DRM established its own committee of Chuck Snyder, Samuel Marsh, Mike Brabo (a hearing interpreter from Chicago who has a deaf wife) and Kenton Hoxie to work on this problem. It is hoped that some arrangement to translate solid Reformed seminary lectures for use in training deaf pastors might be developed. Mr. Brabo has good experience in making videotapes, etc., for deaf folks.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. That Covenant East Classis consider financing Deaf Reformed Ministries with \$3,000.00 per year, and that the RCUS Synod consider financing DRM with \$500.00 per year.
2. That the Synod of the RCUS consider funding development of training for deaf Reformed ministers at \$2,000.00 for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted, *Rev. Robert Grossmann*

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**Classis Action:** Report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee.

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### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

*The following motions and their dispositions appear in their final form, including all amendments which may have been made to the committee's recommendations, and any additional motions made from the floor relative to the committee's report. Unless otherwise noted, the motions were adopted by Classis.*

#### **A. Ecumenicity**

No Ecumenicity Committee was formed for this Classis meeting. The Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee report was heard by Classis.

#### **B. Examination and Licensure**

1. That the examination of Rev. Kevin Hamilton be declared satisfactory and his name be added to the roll of Covenant East Classis upon his signing the Licensure form.

#### **C. Excuses**

This committee received no documents and took no actions.

#### **D. Finances**

1. That the Treasurer's Report be pronounced audited and be adopted.
2. That travel expenses be paid in the following amounts:

Kevin Hamilton	556.00
Charles Snyder	579.00
Michael Brabo	235.00
Harvey Opp	480.95
David Sharp	311.50
Jari Saavalainen	445.48
Kenton Hoxie	21.00

Don Larson	72.50
Jeff DeBoer	29.00
Jim Bruckschen	180.00
Ron Potter	677.00
George Mall	<u>32.00</u>
TOTAL	3,419.43

- That Chuck Snyder be paid \$400.00 and Michael Brabo \$300.00 as an honorarium for their deaf interpretation work for the Classis Meeting.
- That Classis overture Synod for \$1,000.00 per month of Ministerial Aid for Rev. Chester Ploeger.
- That the Guideline for giving per communicant member for 2002-2003 be:

General Fund	8.00
Missions Fund	39.00
Student Aid	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	47.00
- That the overture from Rev. Mall concerning support for printing materials into the Urdu language be referred to Missions.

#### ***E. Judicial***

The Judicial Committee made the statement with regards to the complaint by John Arendt against the Carbondale Spiritual Council “that we find the complaint to be regular, but not ready for hearing.” *Note: The body was encouraged to look at the RCUS constitution Article 168.*

- That Classis erect a Special Committee to investigate alleged offenders and offenses cited within the complaint against the Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA Spiritual Council, after which time the complaint will be taken up again.

Grounds:

- 1) We believe it is necessary, based on what has been presented to us, that an investigation be conducted to seek a just, correct and intelligent conclusion (Article 151).
- 2) Such an investigation is required constitutionally based on Articles 121, 125, and 150.
- That the Special Reconciliation Committee to Carbondale, PA be dissolved.
- That Standing Rule 19 be changed to read on the first Tuesday of March, in place of the second Wednesday of March. *Note: The body was reminded that this takes a two-thirds vote.*
- That the Special Investigation Committee consist of Jim Sawtelle, Harvey Opp, Mark Honeck and Jay Kroese.

#### ***F. Minutes of Synod***

This committee received no business, and had nothing to report.

#### ***G. Missions***

- That Classis continue to set aside \$1,200.00 per month for ministerial travel to Northwest Arkansas.
- That Classis seek a summer intern to supply the pulpit and do pastoral work at the mission work in Northwest Arkansas and contribute the budgeted \$1,200.00 per month to his salary plus cover mileage to and from the field at the rate of \$.31 per mile with the mission work in Northwest Arkansas covering the balance of the salary.
- That Classis recommend that the mission work in Northwest Arkansas provide the necessary housing for a summer intern (approximately 10 weeks).
- That the consistory of the Northland Reformed Church in Kansas City, MO oversee the work of the summer intern, and provide monthly reports to the Missions Committee on the progress of the work.
- That if a summer intern is not found, the Missions Committee arrange for weekly preaching and pastoral work from among the retired and active ministers of our denomination for June through September of 2002.
- That the Missions Committee re-evaluate the work in Northwest Arkansas in the late summer and make recommendations to Classis either via circular letter or the fall meeting of Classis, relative to continuing the work in Northwest Arkansas.
- That the Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS to budget \$14,000.00 for the 2002 synodical year, to be used if needed, following assessment in recommendation 6, for the Covenant East Classis mission work in Northwest Arkansas.
- That Rev. Wes Brice, in his monthly Bible Study in Arkansas, instruct the brothers and sisters in evangelism.
- That Classis, through its Stated Clerk, commend the brothers and sisters in Northwest Arkansas for their personal commitment and giving toward the establishment of an RCUS church in that region and assure them of our continued prayers.
- That Covenant East Classis overture Synod to budget \$12,225.00 for Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis, MN for the 2002 Synodical year.
- That Covenant East Classis overture Synod to budget \$12,225.00 for Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis, MN for the 2003 Synodical year.
- That Covenant East Classis provide \$1,000.00 per month for June, July and August of 2002 for Jari Saavalainen.
- That Covenant East Classis finance Deaf Reformed Ministries with \$3,000.00 for the year 2002.
- That Covenant East Classis overture Synod to provide \$2,000.00 for the training of deaf Reformed ministers in 2002.

15. That Covenant East Classis provide \$500.00 for Rev. G. Mall to publish Reformed books in Urdu and the Missions Committee provide oversight of the proofing and publishing of this material.

**H. Nominations** - (*First name serves as chairmen.*)

1. The committee's recommendations for Permanent and Special Committees are as follows:

**Executive:** Sawtelle, Bowen, Schulz  
**Candidates and Credentials:** Sawtelle, Potter, DeBoer, Kroese  
**Interchurch Relations:** Potter, Sawtelle, Mall, Altman  
**Missions:** Opp, Bowen, DeBoer, Bruckschen  
**Deaf Reformed Ministries:** Saavalainen, Hoxie, Hamilton, Pennington  
**Publications:** No Committee formed

**I. Overtures**

1. That the following overtures be referred as follows:  
Request from Rev. Chester Ploeger for Ministerial Aid. Refer to Finances.  
Request for support from Redeemer, MN. Refer to Missions.  
Request for aid from Deaf RCUS, MD. Refer to Missions.  
Request for aid from Deaf RCUS of KY and MD. Refer to Missions.
2. That the Inter-church Relations Committee Report be received and read on the floor of Classis. *Take note.*
3. That letters received from the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York be referred to the Permanent Inter-church Relations Committee.
4. A request from Salem-Ebenezer concerning call of Mr. Kyle Sorenson was ruled out of order by the President.
5. That a request to change standing rule 19 be referred to Judicial.

**J. Services**

1. That Classis 'Take Note' of the fact that all services took place in accordance with the schedule adopted with the proposed agenda of Classis.
2. That Classis move the following note of appreciation: "On behalf of Covenant East Classis, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the St. Paul's Ev. Reformed Church congregation and Rev. Bowen for your loving

hospitality and care for us during our 2002 Spring Classis Meeting. May God richly bless you in return for your loving service," and that this be published in the bulletin the following Sunday.

**MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation.**

The expression of appreciation to the host congregation was handled by the Standing Services Committee, item #2.

**B. Adoption of Stated Clerk's, Executive Committee, and Overtures Report.**

All of the above were adopted.

**C. Miscellaneous Business**

A motion was made to overture Synod for Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month for the 2002 Synodical year, and that the Manitowoc Consistory consult with her regarding this amount.

**READING OF THE MINUTES**

The Minutes were read by the Stated Clerk at the beginning of business on Thursday and at the conclusion of business on Thursday evening. Corrections were made and the final approval was given to the minutes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

**A. Roll Call**

The final roll call showed eight ministers and eight elder delegates present.

**B. Devotions**

Elder David Schulz read from Psalm 103 and closed in prayer.

**C. Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction and Doxology**

The President led the delegates in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed and



prayed the Lord's Prayer. He pronounced the Benediction and the body sang the Doxology.

Stated Clerk Covenant East Classis

**Appendix to the Minutes  
2001 Spring Meeting, Covenant East Classis**

Standing Rules of Classis

1. The fiscal year of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. shall run from February 1st to January 31st of the following year. The Classical Dues shall be due on the first of January and are to be paid not later than the thirty-first of January of the current fiscal year.
2. The parochial reports shall be forwarded to the President and the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of Classis two weeks before the Spring Session of Classis.
3. The writ of certification of delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the Spring session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an annual report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school at the Spring Meeting of Classis. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire *Heidelberg Catechism* before confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Bible survey, Bible reading, Catechism, and

also singing of "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs".

5. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after defining the bar of the house.
6. If pastors, elders, or members of congregations request information from the Executive of Classis concerning Constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned in written form and pertain only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. A pastor and his elder delegate to Classis shall be paid a maximum of forty cents per running mile; when an elder or pastor drives his own car, he shall be paid twenty-five cents per mile; when a pastor or elder rides with another person he shall be paid ten cents per mile. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Classis, they shall be granted full fare.
8. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis at twenty-five cents per running mile, or, if several ride together in one car or travel by public transportation, the actual fare. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis.
9. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
10. The Classis shall designate the following Permanent Committees when needed as follows: Executive, Missions, Candidates and Credentials, Inter-Church Relations, Publications. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees.
11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made part of the minutes at the Spring Meeting of Classis.
12. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. This copy shall be signed by all the elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.

14. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the Churches at least three weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis.

15. The services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circulated before Classis.

16. Students for the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend seminaries which are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.

17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship of eight months for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the RCUS for at least five years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the peculiarities and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.

18. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of \$200.00 annually.

19. The Spring Meeting of Classis shall begin on the first Tuesday of March, and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. [2002].

20. It shall be the practice of Covenant East Classis to examine Ministers coming to it from other Classes of the RCUS to ensure that they have not departed from Reformed teaching or have developed major objections to the peculiar practices of the RCUS. Such examinations shall be completed before these candidates shall enter into a charge in Covenant East Classis and shall be conducted in such a way that each Minister and delegate shall have opportunity to hear the examination and put questions to the candidate.

21. In order to preserve the historic Reformed and Biblical practice of voting in congregation meetings by male heads of households, the Covenant East Classis shall neither start nor receive new congregations in which voting by women is practiced.

## 2001 Covenant East Statistical Report

Category	Carbondale	Columbiana	Danville	Garner	Hamburg	Napoleon	Manitowoc	Minneapolis	Total
1. No. of Elders	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	20
2. No. of Deacons	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	19
3. Comm. Last Year	38	14	14	130	257	68	267	30	818
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	2	0	0	2	0	6	2	12
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	1	2	0	7	0	0	13	23
6. Rec'd by Prof.	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	12
7. Tot. Received	7	3	2	0	9	0	9	17	47
8. Tot. Old/New Mbr.	45	17	16	130	266	68	276	47	865
9. Lost by Dismissal	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	6
10. Lost by Eras./Dis.	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
11. Lost by Death	0	0	0	2	3	3	4	0	12
12. Total Lost	1	0	0	2	8	6	5	0	22
13. Comm. this Yr.	44	17	16	128	258	62	271	47	843
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	23	6	13	39	51	27	40	34	233
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	67	23	29	167	309	89	311	81	1,076
16. No. of Families	23	7	10	80	143	37	153	26	479
17. No. S.S. Child.	21	6	10	42	40	22	33	27	201
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	1	0	3	3	1	0	4	5	17
20. Total Baptisms	1	0	3	3	1	0	4	5	17
21. No. Rec. L.S.	43	17	10	116	225	60	249	47	767
22. Times L.S. Served	12	12	42	4	9	6	5	6	96
23. Regular Offerings	64,833	28,017	14,246	77,708	124,324	76,242	112,805	107,299	605,474
24. Special Offerings	3,746	3,803		5,114	4,515	6,175	4,156	4,216	31,725
25. Other Sources	920	3,900		7,444	15,868	7,384	50,792	31,045	117,353
26. Total Receipts	69,499	35,720		90,266	144,707	89,801	167,753	142,560	740,306
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidl.	6,710	2,119		32,640	34,506	11,691	43,045	5,216	135,927
28. Giv. to Cla. Guidl.	1,600	490		4,550	9,095	2,380	9,345	1,050	28,510
29. RCUS Non-budget	0	0		3,754	951	726	2,000	3,719	11,150
30. Non-RCUS Causes	6,490	1,834		2,520	0	3,224	4,156	756	18,980
31. Other Expenses	54,283	25,236	11,015	58,925	95,289	55,787	111,397	124,376	536,308
32. Total Expenses	69,083	29,679	11,015	102,389	139,841	73,808	169,943	135,117	730,875
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	50,070	0		660,000	700,000	150,000	650,000	0	2,210,070
34. Val. of Parsonage	0	0		113,000	100,000	85,000	140,000	210,000	648,000
35. Impr. on Prop'ty	0	0		20,000	0	1,253	0	2,185	23,438
36. Property Debt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
37. Debt Paid Last Yr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57,894	57,894
38. Syn. Giving /Com	177	151		251	134	172	161	174	Avg. 153
39. Class. Giving/	42	35		35	35	35	35	35	Avg. 32
40. RCUS Giving/Com	219	186		315	173	218	204	333	Avg. 206

## NECROLOGIES

### HAROLD SCHROEDER PEACE REFORMED CHURCH NAPOLEON, OH

**Schroeder, Harold A. (1933-2001)** was born on December 23, 1933 in Henry County, Ohio. On November 15, 1958 he married Joann K. Rettig. To this union two sons were born.

Harold was a Korean War veteran, serving in the U.S. Army as a Corporal. He was a carpenter for 35 years and worked at the Farmers and Merchants State Bank in Archbold, OH for 16 years in the maintenance department.

Harold was a charter member of Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, from its inception in 1968. He served as deacon, elder, and past president of the congregation. He was an advisory member on the Building Committee when the church was built. He was often a delegate to Classis and Synod. Service in Christ's Church was at the center of Harold's life.

Harold had been fighting leukemia for five months, and was doing well after receiving chemotherapy. However, he was killed instantly in a tragic auto accident, when a semi-trailer crossed into his lane. Harold is dearly missed by his family and the congregation. The Lord called His servant home on December 14, 2001, at the age of 67 years, 11 months, and 21 days.

### ELDON KOPPENHOFER PEACE REFORMED CHURCH NAPOLEON, OH

**Koppenhofer, Eldon A. (1919-2001)** was born June 18, 1919, in Henry County, Ohio. On November 21, 1945 he married Amelia Busch, who died in 1974. He married Eleonora Miller Hoops on December 11, 1976. Eldon had one daughter by his first marriage, and he was loved as a father by the children of his second wife.

Eldon was a life-long farmer retiring in 1980, a rural route mail carrier, retiring in 1985, and a former employee of the Filling Memorial Home of Mercy in Napoleon. He was a World War II Army veteran, and a member of a local school board.

Eldon was a charter member of Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, from its inception in 1968. He served as an elder of the congregation. Eldon was a delegate to Classis and Synod several times. He retired from the consistory only when his voice became impaired.

After a stroke, Eldon had surgery to open an artery. Complications resulted through which his earthly life was taken. Eldon is dearly missed by his family and the congregation. On December 21, 2001, the Lord called His servant home at the

age of 82 years, 6 months, and 3 days.

**REV. DONALD R. VANCE**  
**SALEM-EBENEZER REFORMED CHURCH**  
**MANITOWOC, WI**

*present with his Lord and King.*

**The Rev. Donald R. Vance** died unexpectedly of a heart attack on Monday, September 24, 2001 at Holy Family Memorial Medical Center. Funeral services were held at 11:00 am on Friday, September 28, 2001 at Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI. Rev. Hank Bowen officiated and Rev. Herman Van Stedum preached a sermon from Psalm 73:23-28.

Expressions of sympathy and comfort were given by Rev. Vern Pollema on behalf of the Synod, Rev. Neale Riffert on behalf of the Western Classis, Rev. Dale Clark on behalf of Northern Plains Classis, Rev. Warren Embree on behalf of South Central Classis, and Rev. Bowen for Covenant East Classis. A letter of condolence was also read from the Canadian Reformed Churches. Other RCUS ministers present included Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Jeff DeBoer, Rev. Harvey Opp, Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Bob Grossmann, Rev. Maynard Koerner, and Rev. Hans Kalkman. There were also pastors from the PCA and OPC present. Rev. Vance was buried in the church cemetery near the Rev. Norman Hoeflinger.

Rev. Vance was born on April 8, 1947, in Woodstock, Ontario, Canada, son of James E. and the late Gladys Marie Chambers Vance. He graduated from Huron Park High School, Woodstock, Ontario, Canada. After working various jobs, the Lord called him into the gospel ministry. For his training, he attended the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia, PA. After finishing his three years in the seminary, he studied at the University of Toronto and then at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, where he received his BA degree. He was then awarded a Master of Divinity degree from the Reformed Episcopal Seminary. He married Joan M. Gustafson on June 8, 1974 in Willmar, Minnesota. He had one daughter, Johanna Charys Vance who had just started her first semester at Redeemer Bible College in Toronto, Canada.

Don began his ministry in 1980 working as a representative for the World Home Bible League in Toronto, Canada. In 1986, he was called by the Odessa Charge of the RCUS, where he served the congregations of Artas and Herried, SD. He was ordained to the gospel ministry there on May 17, 1987. In 1990 he accepted a call to serve in Menno, SD in the congregation of Zion Reformed Church. Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI called him to be their pastor in 1998, where he faithfully served until the Lord called him home. He was currently the Stated Clerk for the Covenant East Classis and had served on various committees for both the Classes and the Synod of the RCUS. He had a love for singing and was active in the church choir. He had been the camp director for the Covenant East Youth Camp for the past three years.

A note in the bulletin read: *Don loved the Lord and God's people from the very depth of his soul. He was not only a pastor, but also a friend to anyone who knew him. His family and friends will dearly miss him. We rejoice that Don is now*