

# **The Northern Plains Classis**

## **2020 Abstract of the Minutes**



Spring Meeting  
March 8th & 9th, A.D. 2020  
Salem Reformed Church  
Ashley, North Dakota

**Guideline for Giving**

Classical Dues:	\$5.00
Missions:	\$30.00
Mission Seed Fund:	\$10.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>

**Officers of Classis**

<i>President:</i>	<i>Rev. Paul Henderson</i>
<i>Vice President:</i>	<i>Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg</i>
<i>Stated Clerk:</i>	<i>Rev. James Grossmann</i>
<i>Treasurer:</i>	<i>Elder Matthew Fickbohm</i>

**Permanent Committees of Classis**

(Underline indicates Conveener)

**Auditing**

Haddock, Voytek, Aune

**Camp**

Fickbohm, Lassley, Bowen, Haak

**Candidates and Credentials**

Poe, Snyder, Schwichtenberg

**Christian Education and Publications**

Irwin, Haddock, Poe, Beck

**Diaconal**

Voytek, Beck, Dockter, E. Mehlhaff

**Executive**

Henderson, Grossmann, Fickbohm

**Home Missions**

Lassley, Schwichtenberg, C. Mehlhaff, DeJong

**Interchurch Relations**

Bowen, Irwin, Henderson, Haak, Brice

**Assistant to the Clerk**

Haak

# Table of Contents

Ministers of the Word.....	1
Primarius Elders.....	2
Secundus Elders.....	2
Churches in North Dakota.....	3
Churches in South Dakota.....	3
Radio Programs of the Northern Plains Classis.....	4
Northern Plains Classis Sermon Audio Site:.....	4
35th Annual Spring Meeting – March 9-10, AD 2020.....	5
I. Services.....	5
II. Organization.....	5
III. Adoption of the Agenda, Orders of the Day, Special Orders.....	5
IV. Welcome & Seating of Fraternal Delegates; Welcome and Seating of Visitors.....	5
V. Reception of New Churches.....	5
VI. Reception of New Ministers.....	6
VII. Announcement of Standing Committees.....	6
VIII. Presentation of Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports & Communications.....	6
CAMP COMMITTEE.....	6
CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.....	8
Christian Education & Publications Committee.....	8
DIACONAL COMMITTEE.....	9
INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE.....	9
MISSIONS COMMITTEE.....	10
IX. Reports of Officers.....	12
A. President's Report on the State of the Church.....	12
B. Stated Clerk's Report (Including Necrology).....	16
C. Report of the Executive Committee's Report of Synod.....	17
D. Executive Committee's Report on the Minutes.....	17
E. Treasurer's Report and Auditing Committee Report.....	18
X. Parochial Reports of Ministers.....	18
Parochial Report of Rev. Hank Bowen.....	18
Parochial Report of Rev. James Grossmann.....	20
Parochial Report of Rev. Paul Henderson.....	21
Parochial Report of Rev. Dave Irwin.....	23
Parochial Report of Rev. Michael Lassley.....	24
Parochial Report of Rev. Phil Poe.....	26
Parochial Report of Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg.....	27

Parochial Report of Rev. Michael Voytek.....	28
XI. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ELDERS.....	29
XII. REPORT OF NUMERICAL & FINANCIAL STATISTICS.	30
XIII. READING OF THE STANDING RULES.....	30
XIV. REPORTS FROM CLASSIS FRATERNAL DELEGATES.	30
XV. ADDRESS AND/OR REPORTS OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES & VISITORS.....	31
XVI. SPECIAL ORDER.....	31
XVII. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.....	31
A. Education, Publications, Student Aid, Services & Interchurch .....	31
B. Examinations & Licensure.....	31
C. Excuses.....	32
D. Finances, Benevolences, & Ministerial Aid.....	32
E. Judicial.....	33
F. Missions.....	34
H. Nominations.....	34
XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS .....	34
A. Expression of Appreciation to the hosting congregation....	34
B. Adoption of the Stated Clerk's Report and Executive Committee's Minutes.....	34
XIX. Reading of the Minutes.....	35
XX. Adjournment.....	35
A. Roll Call.....	35
B. Devotions.....	35
C. The Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction and Doxology.....	35
APPENDIX.....	36
Treasurer's Report.....	37
2019 Membership & Financial Statistics.....	41
Standing Rules.....	43

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### **Churches in North Dakota**

**Ashley, ND 58413.....(701) 288-3265**

**Salem RCUS**, 209 1st Ave SW (Mail: PO Box 345)

Worship: 9 AM; SS: 10:15 AM.....Pastor: Dave Irwin

Website: [www.facebook.com/SalemReformed](http://www.facebook.com/SalemReformed)

**Dickinson, ND 58601.....(701) 590-5935**

**Grace RCUS**, 257 1st Street East, Dickinson, ND 58601

Worship:10am; Sunday School: 9am; Sunday Night: 6pm

Pastor: Michael Voytek (wife, Rebecca)

Website: [www.frcdickinson.com](http://www.frcdickinson.com)

**Minot, ND 58701.....(701) 340-7666**

**Harvest RCUS**, 234 14th Ave SD (Faith Lutheran Church)

(Mail: 1624 Foothills Rd, SW, Minot, ND 58701)

Worship: 11:00am

Pastor: Phil Poe (wife, Karen)

Website: [www.harvestreformedchurch.org](http://www.harvestreformedchurch.org)

### **Churches in South Dakota**

**Aberdeen, SD 57401.....(605) 225-6120**

**First RCUS**, 818 9th Ave. S.E.

Worship: 9:00 am Sunday School:10:15am

Pastor: Hank Bowen (wife, Patty)

Website: [www.aberdeenreformed.com](http://www.aberdeenreformed.com)

**Eureka, SD 57437.....(605) 284-2392**

**Eureka RCUS**, 310 F Ave. (Mail: PO Box 456)

Worship: 9:00 am; Sunday School: 10:15 am

Pastor: James Grossmann (wife, Michelle)

Website: [www.facebook.com/EurekaRCUS](http://www.facebook.com/EurekaRCUS)

**Herreid, SD 57632.....(605) 437-2209**

**First RCUS**, 601 N. Main St. (Mail: PO Box 212)

Worship: 10:00 am; Sunday School 11:00 am

Pastor: Cody Schwichtenberg (wife, Angela)

**Pierre, SD 57501.....(605) 224-8626**

**Hope RCUS**, 317 S. Garfield

Worship: 10:00 AM; Sunday School: 11:00AM

Pastor: Paul Henderson (wife, Tina)

Website: [www.hopercus.com](http://www.hopercus.com)

**Watertown, SD 57201.....(605) 881-4997**

**Covenant RCUS**, 15 12th Ave NE (Mail: 434 30<sup>th</sup> St. NW)

Worship 10AM SS 11:30am

Pastor: Michael Lassley (wife, Amy)

Website: [www.watertownrcus.org](http://www.watertownrcus.org)

### **Radio Programs of the Northern Plains Classis**

<b>Church</b>	<b>Radio Station</b>	<b>Time</b>
Aberdeen – Pause for Thought	KGIM – 1420 AM KDBX–107.1 FM	Sundays, 8:30 AM
Salem – Start the Week	KSJB – 600 AM	Sundays, 7:45 AM
Eureka – Worship Service	KOLY – 99.5 FM	Sundays, 9:00 AM

### **Northern Plains Classis Sermon Audio Site:**

*www.SermonAudio.com/npcrcus*



## **35<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting – March 9-10, AD 2020**

Salem Reformed Church - Ashley, North Dakota

### **I. Services**

For the opening devotion, Rev. Hank Bowen opened in prayer, giving a devotion from I Peter 1:3-6 entitled “Joy Overwhelming,” singing Hymn 604, “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart.”

On Monday evening at 7:30pm, the Classis met for a worship service with the congregation of Salem Reformed Church of Ashley, North Dakota. Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg conducted the worship service and Rev. Michael Voytek preached a sermon entitled “*Our Words Do Have Consequences*” using Psalm 5 as his text.

The Northern Plains Classis opened its session on Tuesday, March 10th, A.D. 2020 with a hymn 541, “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder” and devotion led by Rev. Phil Poe from Psalm 19:12-13, entitled “The Lamp of God’s Law”.

### **II. Organization**

The 35th Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis convened at 1:38pm on Tuesday, March 9th, A.D. 2020, at Salem Reformed Church of Ashley, North Dakota.

President Paul Henderson called the assembly to order at 1:38pm. The roll was called following the devotion. There were eight ministers and six elders present, for a total of fourteen, a quorum.

President Henderson defined the bar of the house as the first six rows of the church; Rev. Michael Lassley and Elder James Snyder as tellers; and Rev. Hank Bowen as the *Reformed Herald* reporter.

Election of Officers: Election by ballot was held for men to serve in the following capacities: President: Rev. Paul Henderson; Vice-President: Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg; Stated Clerk: Rev. James Grossmann; and Treasurer: Elder Matthew Fickbohm.

### **III. Adoption of the Agenda, Orders of the Day, Special Orders**

The Agenda, Services, and Orders of the Day were adopted as presented by Classis President Henderson.

### **IV. Welcome & Seating of Fraternal Delegates; Welcome and Seating of Visitors**

The Assembly also welcomed Brother Ron Vanderzwaag and Brother Peter Veenendaal from the Manitoba Classis of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches

First Time Elder Brian Ardry of the Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, South Dakota, and Elder Matthew Beck of the First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota were welcomed. Elders Charles Dockter, Ron Midinger of the Salem Reformed Church, Ashley, North Dakota, and Elders John Bender and Bruce Kappes of the First Reformed Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota were seated in the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor.

Student for the Ministry, David Voytek of the Grace Reformed Church, Dickinson, North Dakota was welcomed.

### **V. Reception of New Churches**

Grace Reformed Church has particularized in Dickinson, North Dakota, and was welcomed as a new church of our Classis. Rev. Bowen offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the Grace Reformed Church.

## VI. Reception of New Ministers

There were no new ministers to receive

## VII. Announcement of Standing Committees

The chairman of the committee is underlined.

**Education, Publications, Student Aid, Services & Interchurch:** P. Poe, B. Ardry, L. Kauk, D. Haak

**Examinations and Licensure:** C. Schwichtenberg, Rev. Bowen, J. Snyder, B. Ardry

**Excuses:** D. Irwin, B. Ardry, L. Kauk

**Finances, Benevolences, and Ministerial Aid:** M. Fickbohm, J. Grossmann, M. Beck

**Judicial:** H. Bowen, M. Lassley, J. Grossmann, V. Moos

**Missions:** M. Lassley, C. Schwichtenberg, J. Snyder, D. Haak

**Nominations:** M. Voytek, P. Henderson, M. Beck, M. Fickbohm

## VIII. Presentation of Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports & Communications

The Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports, and Communications were distributed to the Standing Committees.

### CAMP COMMITTEE

Dear brothers,

Your joint committees met on Tuesday October 22nd, 2019 (failed to meet quorum) and Thursday January 23rd, 2020 (quorum achieved).

The committee recommends the theme The Armor of God, with the following lesson and services:  
LESSON 1: Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

LESSON 2: Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth.

SERMON 1: For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers

of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole

armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

LESSON 3: having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

LESSON 4: and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; and the sword of the Spirit, which is

the word of God.

SERMON 2: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all

perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

LESSON 5: taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

LESSON 6: And take the helmet of salvation.

Your committee recommends the designation of the offerings collected during HYC 2020 toward Save the Storks, a prolife organization that provides buses equipped with medical equipment (including ultrasound) to pregnancy resources centers. The centers then staff the buses and park them outside of abortion clinics with the hope of intercepting women seeking out an abortion. HYC has supported STS once before and had record giving. More information is available at <https://savethestorks.com/>.

The committee warmly thanks Warren and Laura Nuss for their leadership in the kitchen for HYC 2019 and return in 2020!

The committee notes the following dates for future camps: July 20-24, 2020; July 26-30, 2021, July

18-22, 2022, July 24-28, 2023, & July 22-26, 2023.

Your committee brings the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: That the budget and registration fees (attached) be adopted.

Recommendation 2: That the theme the Armor of God be adopted as the theme of HYC 2020.

Recommendation 3: That the offerings collected during HYC 2020 be designated to Save the Storks.

Recommendation 4: That congregations take note of the registration deadlines for early registration (by May 31st) and final registration (no later than June 30th) and that congregation be encouraged to submit registrations as early as possible.

Representing the SCC: Rev. Kevin Carroll, Rev. David Fagrey, Rev. Jimmy Hall, Rev. J.P. Mosley, Elder Dave Kimble, & Elder Warren Nuss

Representing the NPC: Rev. James Grossmann, Rev. Hank Bowen, Rev. Michael Lassely, & Elder Matthew Fickbohm

**Heidelberg Youth Camp Financial Report and Proposed Budget**

		2019 Budget	2019 Actual	Difference (under)/ Over	2020 Proposed Budget
Opening Fund Balance			\$2,902.71		
<b>Revenue</b>					
	Camp Fees (105 campers)	\$17,400	\$18,775	\$41,375	\$19,725
	Donations	2,000	2,246	246	2,000
	Worship Offering	1,000	1,083.26	83	1,000
	Camp Store Sales	600	498.00	(102)	500
	Interest		0.15		
<b>Total Revenue</b>		21,000	22,602.41		23,225
<b>Expenses</b>					
	Camp Bob Marshal Rental	\$11,457	\$11,322.00	(135)	\$12,259
	Camp Bob Sewage Surcharge	1,700	1,500	(200)	1,700
	Food	4,000	4,268.53	269	4,400
	T-Shirts & Counselor Gifts	2,500	3,007.02	507	3,000
	Arts & Crafts	100	--	(100)	100
	Supplies and Equipment	400	980.75	581	200
	Administration	100	23.30	(77)	100
	Camp Store Supplies	500	519.58	20	500
	Designated offering				1,000

	recipient				
<b>Total Expenses</b>		20,757	21,621.18		23,259
	<b>Operating Gain (loss)</b>		(981.23)		(34.10)
<b>Ending Fund Balance (10/31/18)</b>			3,883.94		

\*Rental cost: \$600 (kitchen use) +[\$19(daily rate/person) X 4 (days) X 135 (people)] + 5.5% tax

Proposed Camper  
2020 Fees

\$185 per camper if registration and fee received by June 1. (\$5 increase)

\$215 per camper if received June 1 or after (\$5 increase)

No fee for adult volunteers

Proposed budget is based upon 105 campers and 40 adults

### CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Esteemed Brothers,  
Your Committee had no business to engage in 2019.  
Respectfully Submitted,  
Phil Poe, James Snyder, Cody Schwichtenberg

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Report of the Christian Education & Publications Committee of the Northern Plains Classis, RCUS  
February 19, 2020

The Committee conducted its business via e-mail between February 15 and 19, 2020. Rev. William Haddock expressed a willingness to continue serving as the editor of the Northern Plains Chronicles for the year. Rev. Haddock submitted the following table of proposed due dates for reports to the Chronicles for the upcoming year.

Proposed due dates for reports to the Northern Plains Chronicles are as follows:

<u>ISSUE:</u>	<u>NEWS DUE DATE:</u>
March/April 2020	May 7, 2020
May/June 2020	July 9, 2020
July/August 2020	September 10, 2020
September/October 2020	November 5, 2020

November/December 2020

January 7, 2021

January/February 2021

March 4, 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We, the Christian Education and Publications Committee of the Northern Plains Classis of the RCUS, propose the following recommendations to the Classis:

1. We recommend and nominate Rev. William Haddock to continue as the editor of the Northern Plains Chronicles for another one year term (March 2020-March 2021).
2. We recommend that the Classis pay the editor of the Northern Plains Chronicles at least a \$200.00 stipend for the 2020 term.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. David Irwin, Rev. Phillip Poe, Rev. William Haddock, Elder Bruce Kappes

## DIACONAL COMMITTEE

Diaconal Committee of the Northern Plains Classis – R.C.U.S.  
Report for the year 2020

Esteemed Brothers and Fellow Servants in Jesus Christ,

Your committee received no requests for diaconal assistance; therefore there was no need to meet.

We stand ready to serve when the need arises.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elder Matthew Beck; Elder Charles Dockter; Elder Earl Mehlhaff; Rev. Michael Voytek

## INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Interchurch Relations Committee Report

Northern Plains Classis

March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Esteemed Brothers,

The Interchurch Relations Committee was aware of three invitations this past year to attend Churches with which we have fraternal relations because they were listed in our Abstract. Otherwise, I had no contact from any of the fraternal churches except Classis Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

The Central Classis of the United Reformed Churches in North America met September 10-11, 2018 in Lansing, IL which is in the geography of the Covenant East Classis. Given that the meeting was within another Classis of the RCUS geography I deferred to them to send a representative.

This was also the case with the Midwest Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America which met November 6-8 in Clarinda, IA.

An invitation was received from the Canadian Reformed Church at Carmen East to attend the meeting of the Classis Manitoba on September 27, 2019. Unfortunately, no one from our Classis was available to travel there and so a letter of greeting was sent. Included within that letter was an invitation to our Spring Meeting of Classis in Ashley, ND.

Letters of invitation were sent to our fraternal churches in January by our Clerk of the Classis, but as of this report I have not received any responses of fraternal delegates who plan to

attend our meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Hank Bowen; Rev. Dave Irwin; Rev. Paul Henderson; Elder Doug Haak

## MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Northern Plains Classis (RCUS)

### Missions Committee Report

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg and Elder Craig Mehlhaff visited the congregation of Grace Reformed Church in Dickinson, ND to oversee the current health of the mission work. Rev. Schwichtenberg and Elder Mehlhaff were able to attend Sunday school, worship, and meet with the consistory of GRC.

During adult Sunday school, Rev. Michael Voytek taught a lesson on the covenant of creation using the book *Covenant Theology* by Frank Walker. There has been a desire by the congregation to have their understanding of covenant theology strengthened. After Sunday school, Rev. Voytek conducted the worship service with Rev. Schwichtenberg preaching the sermon. Before the missions committee met with the consistory, they enjoyed a delicious fellowship meal with the congregation.

The consistory has expressed gratitude to God for providing GRC with a full consistory (A pastor, two elders, and a deacon). They hope to add another deacon to the consistory in the future. Some work that the consistory has been active includes establishing GRC, teaching membership classes, purchasing a new garage for the parsonage, and searching for a potential new building. The year lease agreement with their current building owner is up in October. The plan is to find a new building rather than renew their current lease agreement.

The congregation is a mix of people from a variety of different church backgrounds which include Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal. Even with this great variety, the people are receptive to the Reformed faith. From visitors in the community, there seems to be a positive response to the preaching. The consistory also voiced a desire to have a stronger outreach to Dickinson transplants (those who moved to Dickinson from other geographical locations). The consistory expressed these prayer requests to the committee.

1. Pray for the health of Wes and Ginger Brice.
2. Pray for a greater awareness of how to interact and teach new members and visitors who come from a variety of different backgrounds.
3. Pray for the search of a new building and more visibility in the Dickinson community.
4. Pray for spiritual protection from the attacks of the evil one.
5. Pray for growth and maturity in Christ
6. Pray for a year of stability to be able to focus on outreach.

Last year, there were unusual financial burdens with the transition of the Voytek's to Dickinson and with the support of Wes and Ginger Brice during their hardships in health. Despite this, the current financial state of GRC is stable although the consistory acknowledged that growth this coming year is needed. The consistory is asking that the support from Classis and Synod to remain the same as last year. This will help them as they seek to reach the budgeted offering of \$86,356 for the next classical year.

### Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That Classis provide missions support in the amount of \$9,100.00 for Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson for the 2021 classical year (This is the same amount received as last year; no reduction)

Recommendation 2: That Classis overture the 274<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RCUS for home missions support for Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson in the amount of \$9,100.00 for the 2020-2021 synodical fiscal year (This is the same amount received as last year; no reduction)

Recommendation 3: That Classis continue to fund 75% of the costs for Ashley's radio broadcast, "Start the Week."

Recommendation 4: That churches in the Northern Plains Classis consider updating or developing a website to help with outreach and visibility in their local communities. Take note

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg; Rev. Michael Lassley; Elder Rod DeJong; Elder Craig Mehlhaff

## **IX. Reports of Officers**

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

2020 President's Report on the State of the Church  
Northern Plains Classis  
Reformed Church in the United States  
March 9 -10, 2020 Ashley, ND

To my Fellow Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and all Elders, Deacons and Members who serve alongside them in this precious faith, this report will be presented in two (2) parts:

I. The State of the Northern Plains Classis – A brief synopsis of the labors reported.

II. The State of the Northern Plains Classis within the Reformed Church in the United States – a brief report as to where the Northern Plains will be found in the coming years within the Reformed Church in the United State.

Beloved brothers, and all members of His much loved Church:

I have heard it said somewhere: "*Make America Great Again*" and "*Keep America Great!*" Folks, I truly like these mottos very much! I pray our God would hear our pleas in this regard. But praying for *Thy kingdom to come*, is so, so much better! This I love the best! This I desire to see the most! For without this, those other two, are only hollow and weak. Therefore as I read through your Parochial Reports, I heard and witnessed our Father's kingdom coming. For truly He is preserving and increasing our churches, as well as destroying of the works of the devil even as we are continually being assailed.

So indeed, what a blessing then to read your reports and hear of this continual coming of God's kingdom throughout the Northern Plains Classis!

So now, from the heart of South Dakota, and Eureka Reformed Church, Rev. Grossmann expresses that his labors are filled with the blessed knowledge that as we bring our petitions before God, He will answer according to His perfect will, which in turn, brings a certain and sure confidence that He will do the absolute best for us, for His church, which then, results in restful thoughts! That is sweet 'medicine' we all need to hear! We praise God for Rev. Grossmann's continuing pursuit of higher learning, as he seeks to gain his Doctorate, even as he serves as Classis clerk, full time daddy, as well as ministering to God's folk! Moreover, after all these years of churches conducting Vacation Bible Schools, it is a tremendous blessing to see that Pastor Grossmann and the church there in Eureka continue to minister to many, many within the community! May our God use this ministry to save many unto the uttermost. One item to report in regards to improvements on the church property is that they repaired the ceiling, and floor in the main auditorium /sanctuary, which is always a big deal, as well as a big blessing! So as Pastor Grossmann continues to encourage them in the reading of their Bibles, as well as praying earnestly for one another, we also pray: *Our Father, Thy Kingdom come in Eureka - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!*

From Pierre, and Hope Reformed, Rev. Henderson reports that the Lord continues to keep Hope's doors open for business, in spite of the coming and going of her members, which seems to be the reoccurring scenario for this struggling church body. Yet, they are thankful for their heavenly Father's adding to His church even as He takes away! He also expresses a sincere desire to be a fully functioning, as well as contributing church body within the RCUS, while at the same time,

expressing the need for prayer and the increase of sinners being saved, and then added to the ranks. Hope also saw improvements to their church properties, which were not planned for, but desperately needed. Pastor Henderson reported that he was glad for the faithful attendance of the members, and for their desire to fight the good fight of faith while going about their day-today callings! So also, as reported, though there are areas of the ministry which need shoring up and strengthened, Elder Fickbohm and Pastor Henderson continue to seek the Lord's mercies as they deal with these trends and challenges. Indeed then, *Thy Kingdom come in Pierre - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!* From Watertown, and Covenant Reformed, Rev. Lassley wove through his report, the vision statement of Covenant Reformed Church: "To know God through Christ and glorify Him in all that we do." This he reports is a theme and truth that he is even more convinced of as he continues serving in Christ's body! So throughout all of the activities and work of the church, the saints continue to be fed the Word of God, and thus, brought to a closer walk with their Lord and Savior. This year also brought an increase in membership as well as a host of other activities. There was an increased numbers of youths going to Heidelberg Youth Camp, a graduation of High schoolers, the confirmation and addition of new communicant members, the baptism of a covenant child, and yes, even a difficult discipline case which resulted in Excommunication of a member, which they hope will lead to true repentance and real amendment! Thus, in all of this activity, labor and 'kingdom work', they strove to carry it out with an eye single for His glory! So indeed, let all of us be mindful of Covenant's vision statement, that we might keep this blessed vision before our eyes as the year unfolds! So dear Father, *Thy Kingdom come in Watertown - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!* From Herreid and First Reformed, Rev. Schwichtenberg reports a spiritually happier, healthier, and thus, an increased excitement for the gospel ministry in this small town! Folks, you cannot get much better than that! For not only has there been members added to their fellowship, but also there has been noticeable growth in regards to the officers as well as the congregation in the use of their gifts on behalf of the saints, which therefore resulted in better interaction between the members! Furthermore, the mantra of '*being reformed and always reforming*' has affected some changes in their order of worship, such as more Scripture reading, as well as a focus in truly dealing with a serious effort at confessing their sins before God, and their faults, one to another. This will surely result in growth and a grand blessing! So who says that 'small towns and burgs' are on the way out! 'No way Jose'! Okay, no way O Christ, who continues to build His Church when, and where, and how He sees fit! We beg of Thee, Father, *Thy Kingdom come in Herreid - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!*

From our host church in Ashley, North Dakota, and Salem Reformed, Rev. Irwin reports that in the midst of a very tough year for him personally, that he felt, and was again refreshed with the comforting truth, that truly, nothing or no one could really be against him, if the Lord was on his side, which we know our gracious Lord was, and always is, now and forever more! Indeed, throughout the work and labors of Pastor Irwin, in spite of many personal hardships and trials, God has been pleased to bless and use them to strengthen the folks of Salem Reformed, as well as, or in addition to the entire community of Ashley! Wherefore it is a reliable statement, that though the results of all of our labors may not be always visible, we know that God is still causing His Word to accomplish much, as it brings forth fruit, and never, never returns unto Him void! Again, what true joy and gladness God causes to spring forth from hearts that sometimes are broken, hurt and yet sustained by His all sufficient loving kindness! Amen brother Irwin, amen! By the way, I would suggest that you run for mayor, at least the "Mayor of Mercy", for you would win, hands down! *Our Father Thy Kingdom come in Ashley - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!*

From our mission work in Dickinson, North Dakota, Grace Reformed, Rev. Michael Voytek began with his heartfelt desire and prayer, which followed the apostle Paul's prayer for the saints in Ephesians 3:14-21; a prayer and heartfelt desire we should all strive to have tightly wrapped around our hearts! Wherefore Pastor Voytek expressed throughout his report great rejoicing for what God has done this past year, along with a host of challenges, as well as some sorrow over a substantial bunch of visitors who decided to move on for a variety of reasons. He expressed then, great rejoicing over the church becoming a self-governing church, which meant the transfer of members from First R.C. to Grace R.C., and then also, the addition of officers with which to govern! This is evidence of God's Kingdom coming!

Love and prayers for their Pastor Emeritus and wife, Wes and Ginger Brice, were requested - That



## *Abstract of the Minutes – 2020 Annual Meeting* 13

God would deliver him from his cancer and therefore sustain him, even as he labors in the pulpit when, and where he can, as often as the Lord supplies him the ‘juice’ to do so. **God bless you both for your continued service unto Jesus & His folk!** So it is then, that we also hear in his report, that ‘*being reformed means always reforming,*’ and that, according to God’s Word! It is a real joy then to read how that the labors of Rev. Voytek continue to lead Grace in that blessed direction, even as he now pursues a Doctorate in the Ministry. May God guide him and bless him in these endeavors. Though there was some sadness at the departure of long-time visitors, still, God has seen fit to bring others in to replace them! Moreover, covenant young people are being confirmed in the faith, and a new bunch of students in Catechism class are being instructed! Lastly, from Psalm 67, Rev. Voytek issues the challenge to be responsible and generous with the blessings we have all received from our God and Savior; such that, as we taste and know the goodness of His grace in Christ that we too then will see God’s blessings spread abroad to many others! Yes, and that we will not be hoarders of the blessings which have been graciously bestowed! O Lord, *Thy Kingdom come in Dickinson - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!*

From Aberdeen and First Reformed, Rev. Hank Bowen reports the absolute joy and love present as he witnesses the blessed unity of the congregation! This unity though, as will be heard in his report did not just spring forth out of thin air! For the labors of Pastor Bowen, the officers and many of the members is propelling this attitude and atmosphere of communion and fellowship! This work and these labors, activities, visions and goals, are all carried out with an eye to being very visible, accessible, and relevant within the community of Aberdeen! We rejoice with the saints as they ably provided oversight of our mission work in Dickinson, and then on to seeing the folks up there organized and self-governing.

Moreover, the host of activities and various ministries have as their goal to “...to experience progress in providing good care and introducing new ways to focus on the joy of salvation.” O that we would all incorporate this goal into all that we do! For what better way for outsiders to gain a true portrait of the church, as they see Christians loving one another and rejoicing in the salvation Christ has obtained for them! He reports then on their Heidelberg camp experience, their engaging Catechism program; their desire to see TASC to become a viable ministry; Adult Sunday school-“Coffee Chat” class which continues to excel, along with a number of other aspects of church work, including Pastor Bowen’s Hockey labors, both on and off the ice. Thus he notes, the church body their remains very stable! It is from this stability that he prays for still yet, a greater sense of unity, as well as a greater sense of being a very relevant and important part of the Aberdeen community! Indeed our Father, *Thy Kingdom come in Aberdeen - into the hearts and lives of Thy people!*

Finally, from Minot, North Dakota, and Harvest Reformed, Rev. Poe’s report came in, the labors and condition or state of the church was set forth; AND THEN, we received the news: **“Rejoice with us that Harvest Reformed Church has a new building starting March 1<sup>st</sup>!”** O how we rejoice with our brothers and sisters up north, who have labored so faithfully, in prayer continually, holding out the hope that our God would provide them a “church home” in which to worship Him! God indeed has heard your prayers and we are overjoyed with this good news! Now, in between and through all of their waiting, the saints of Harvest, led by their faithful and steady Pastor, along with their faithful Deacon and Elder who love the faith and the church, continued to carry on their labors with all patience and due diligence, even as the trials of discipline cases, loss of members, along with those simple, yet vital labors of self-sacrifice and service also continued. Wherefore Rev. Poe rejoiced in all of the labors of the saints, and for the work of the ministry, though statistically, they did not grow. Wherefore then dear brethren of Harvest Reformed, may our Lord give you all that you stand in need of as you enjoy and use your new facilities for the furtherance of the Gospel, that is, to the Reformed faith in all its beauty, and unto our glorious God and Savior, in the beauty of His holiness! Our heavenly Father, *Thy Kingdom come in Minot, and into the hearts and lives of Thy people!*

II. The State of the Northern Plains Classis within the Reformed Church in the United States  
Brethren and delegates of the Northern Plains Classis: as a Classis, as individual ministers and elders of the gospel of Jesus Christ - of the faith, which was once for all delivered unto the saints - where will we be within the Reformed Church in the United States? (RCUS). That is, as the debates over various issues and truths or doctrines, and long-standing biblical positions are debated, questioned, and perhaps even over-turned, or at least shelved and tabled each year, where will we stand? Yes,

and will we stand? Will we hold firm? Will we remain steadfast? Indeed, how will we respond when many of these “old fashioned”, “politically incorrect” biblical positions or biblical beliefs, and truths are questioned and or challenged? Again, will we respond?

Well, how we respond may just depend upon how you and I ‘feel’, as a Classis, as a local church, as well as individual ministers or elders about these things and thus, about these battles which are sure to come, and most likely, increase? So indeed brethren, do we feel any responsibility or duty toward, or for our brethren in the other Classes? For the next generation? I ask these questions because dear ones, the challenges we face today are nothing new! The spiritual warfare that we are called to be engaged is nothing new! For many of our forefathers in the faith, faced challenge after challenge, before we were born, yes, and while we were still in diapers, whereby they suffered through many long, sleepless nights, and troubled or strained relationships with their fellow soldiers! Yet dear bothers, they did not shrink from a good fight! From a good spiritual fight! And why?

Because they were not fighting necessarily for their own personal comfort and peace, but rather for the glory of their God and for the sake of God’s elect! Indeed, they actually, and truly believed and therefore sought to obey what the apostle Paul exhorted young Timothy with: *“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. . Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the \*elect that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory II Timothy 2: 1, 3, 8-10.”*

\*The ‘elect’ dear brothers, not just in our day, but the elect whom God will save through the ministry of the gospel until He returns on the clouds of glory. Yes I am referring to the future generations of sinners whom God will save!

So again fellow ministers, elders, deacons and precious members in the Lord’s army, involved in all of the local and Classical labors and callings, where will we be as these spiritual challenges arise?

Will we engage in them? Will we run? Will we remain on the sidelines and let others do the hand to hand combat? Or worse, will we fold our hands and hope for the best? Or shall we *come after Jesus Christ, deny ourselves and take up our crosses and follow Him – desiring rather to lose our lives for His sake and the gospel’s?* (Mark 8: 34) Yes, I know, for I myself do not wish to engage my fellow ministers or elders, or to get engaged in these spiritual battles; no, I would rather remain busy with my particular local labors and battles! But I know also brethren, that my God will not stand for cowardice, so that whether we like it or not – whether we want it or not, He has not given us a choice. Rather, we have been commanded by God the Holy Spirit in Acts 20: 28: *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with His own blood.”* (See also the verses above from II Timothy)

So in light of these remarks, concerns as well as your reports, let us all consider then, the tasks and callings at hand. And please, keep praying: *“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.”*

In Christ’s love and mine, respectfully,  
Henderson

Rev. Paul H.

## B. Stated Clerk's Report (Including Necrology)

March 4th, A.D. 2020

Esteemed Brethren,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as your Stated Clerk over the course of the past year. I will be reporting on my labors since our 34th Annual Spring Meeting of Classis.

Duties Performed:

1. Completed the Minutes from the 34th Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis and presented them to the 273rd Synod of the Reformed Church of the United States. (There were no

exceptions of any substance. Thank You to those who read over the minutes in preparation for Synod!)

2. Prepared the Abstract of the 34th Annual Spring Meeting of Classis and delivered copies of them to the churches of the RCUS at the Synod meeting held in Kansas City, MO.
3. Prepared the Statistical Report, Stated Clerk's Report, as well as any items needed for this meeting.

Correspondence Sent and Received:

1. Communication with the Heritage Reformed Church, Minot, North Dakota requesting their answers to the Article 81 Constitutional Questions.
2. A letter from the Stated Clerk of Synod regarding the documents to be submitted to the churches prior to the next session of Synod.
3. Five items to the Stated Clerk of Synod:
  1. Statistical & Membership Report for the NPC
  2. Writ of Certification for Classis Delegates to the 273rd Synod of the RCUS
  3. Addresses of the Churches and Delegates of the NPC
  4. Report of Changes
  5. Six overtures from the NPC to the Synod of the RCUS
4. Three Executive Circulars to the Delegates of Classis sent via email and the US Postal Service.
5. Emails and correspondence to denominations with which we have fraternal relations, inviting them to our stated meetings.
6. Forms for Membership and Financial Statistics, as well as the Form for the Credentials of Elders to Classis to the churches of the NPC to be completed prior to our 35th Annual Meeting.

I have only one comment on the reports supplied for this meeting. If we have a committee which has had no work for the year, please note that you still have to produce a report to that end (note how the Diaconal Committee did it).

Respectfully Submitted,  
James Grossmann

## C. Report of the Executive Committee's Report of Synod

Office of the Stated Clerk  
Rev. David Fagrey  
5626 Haines Ave Rapid City, SD 57701  
dfagrey@gmail.com  
January 14, 2020  
ATT: Classes Clerks  
RE: Minutes of Synod Report  
Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 273rd Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

1. Regarding the Minutes of Classis Committee, I sent our hard copies of the errors needing correcting to the Classis clerks; and did not publish these in the 2019 Synod Abstract.
2. In regards to the presentation of the Permanent Web-Site Committee Report, a motion from the floor, which was seconded and carried, (lines 191-192 of Synod Minutes) was inadvertently left out of the 2019 Abstract. It should have been Recommendation #3 of the Report: "That 5Q be looked into to manage the RCUS website and possibly each church's web-site if they so choose." I corrected the error in the electronic version of the 2019 Abstract. Please accept my sincere apologies for this error.
3. Regarding article 84 of the RCUS Constitution, Classis clerks need to remember that "Classis shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers from other denominations, and also provide a

resume regarding the new minister. The confirmation of a new minister from another denomination may be accomplished by executive circular at the request of Classis, provided that the resume and the actions of Classis be included in the circular.” When a man from the RCUS is ordained between Classis and Synod, the Classis clerk needs to notify the Synod Clerk, and then the Synod Clerk automatically includes him on the Roll of Synod.

4. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.

5. Standing rules #2 and #3 which respectively read: “The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1”; “The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1.”

6. That the Stated Clerk of each Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring Classis meeting.

7. Standing Ministerial Aid recommendation 8 (2013 Abstract page 76), that pursuant to Article 28 of the RCUS Constitution, Classes shall not consider a pastoral call letter as “adequate support” to the temporal needs of the called pastor, unless retirement is addressed and funded in the terms of the call.

8. That treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with Synod standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.

9. Please remember to send necrologies to me in time for Synod.

10. The Classes are reminded that the 274th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 11-14, 2020, at Trinity Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD.

Respectfully submitted,

David Fagrey

Stated Clerk, RCUS

## D. Executive Committee's Report on the Minutes

March 4, 2020

Esteemed Brethren,

Three (3) circulars were sent out this past year and the following is a summary of that business. Because no objections were received to the circulars, all the recommendations brought by the Executive Committee became actions of the Classis.

### **Volume 34, Number 1**

The Northern Plains Classis adopted a replacement camp report, including budget, theme, and lectures.

### **Volume 34, Number 2**

Constitution Article 81 answers were noted from Harvest Reformed Church, Minot, North Dakota. Recommendations were adopted in place of the Missions recommendations 1-3 adopted at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Classis:

1. That Classis provide missions support in the amount of \$9,100 for the First Reformed Chapel of Dickinson for the 2020 fiscal year.

2. That Classis overture the 273rd Synod of the RCUS for home missions support for First Reformed Chapel of Dickinson in the amount of \$7,400.00 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. [Recommendation 3 was struck]

### **Volume 34, Number 3**

Distributed a proposed agenda and services for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual spring meeting of the Northern Plains Classis with two overtures that were received according to standing rule 8.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Executive Committee

## E. Treasurer's Report and Auditing Committee Report

*See the Appendix of this Abstract for the Treasurer's Report.*

## **X. Parochial Reports of Ministers**

### **Parochial Report of Rev. Hank Bowen**

Beloved Brothers,

**Psalm 133** speaks of the blessed unity of the people of God where we read, *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! <sup>2</sup>It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. <sup>3</sup>It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing— Life forevermore.*

As I stand before you and reflect on the state of First Reformed Church in Aberdeen it is an amazing thing to see the grace of God at work and how the unity and love of God are present and flourishing within this congregation. I praise God for the display of His grace and love within His people.

The consistory of First Reformed Church, the Sunday School, the Women of Faith and Early Risers all provide for the Church as an organization a great opportunity for the members to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

The various ministries of the church continue to experience progress in providing good care and introducing new ways to focus on the joy of salvation. The Catechism Class has four students who are committed to the program. This year one catechumen is due to be confirmed. There is a focus on the Heidelberg Catechism, Bible doctrine, Church history and singing of hymns and psalms on Wednesday nights. On Sunday morning Elder Bender teaches English Bible. The overall effectiveness of the current approach is evident. Last year we introduced a new practice of quarterly mini-exams where the students recite their catechisms and Bible memory from that quarter before those who are present. The goal is to make the process in the final confirmation exam more familiar and thus develop a comfort level.

Our Catechism program is built upon the work done in our Sunday School and Bible School programs. Several have given generously to these areas of our youth ministry. The Vacation Bible School programs have covered the Old and New Testaments over the past two years, and this year our attention will turn to Ten Commandments.

We had four Heidelberg Campers again this past year who handled themselves admirably and gave a good report to the congregation following. Elder Haak was also a good addition to the camp. We do encourage all who are eligible to go to Heidelberg Camp to make that a priority. Church camp becomes a great experience in the life of those who take advantage of this opportunity.

The hope of forming a TASC group for our High School and College members has yet to become a viable ministry. We are still looking for someone in the congregation to take up a leadership role here in organizing and generating more activity in this group.

The Coffee Chat, which is our Adult Sunday School, has now gone completely through the Bible chronologically twice. This year will see a bit of a change with a deeper focus upon going through just the New Testament chronologically. There is a section on our website dedicated to this has been used effectively for those who need access to the questions for the week.

This past year the Women of Faith continued to enjoy great fellowship and devotions. There are plans to organize and sponsor a second Women of Faith Conference in Sioux Falls this next year for the ladies from throughout the RCUS in the Midwest. The men's Early Risers Club has been

enjoyed by a faithful few this year. They meet at 6:30 am on the first and third Tuesday of each month to study a book along with coffee, goodies, and fellowship.

The work that has been put into updating and making our website a more active instrument in our ministry is paying dividends. This past year both the sermons and Coffee Break questions were updated weekly and many are taking advantage of this. There were over 1,000 visits to our website this past year. Facebook has also been widely used although primarily for access to the Sunday morning sermon. The hope is to utilize the Aberdeen facebook page more this coming year to include announcements.

This past year the oversight responsibilities of our mission chapel in Dickinson, ND came to end as they are now organized as a constituted church of the RCUS. All of their membership and officers were transferred to Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson.

My duties as pastor continue to keep me very busy, and very happy. I preached 53 times this past year spending much of the year in our Lord's great Sermon on the Mount. The summer continues to be an occasion for going through the Psalms. I did manage to sneak away for a weekend in April to play in the California State Hockey Championships. I was also absent for one Sunday in July to participate in one of the true highlights of being a Papa. I baptized my Grandson Quinn at Trinity Reformed Church in Sioux Falls which I helped start back in June of 1988. This was a double delight as it was the first time since I was involved in the start of Trinity Reformed Church that I performed an official function there.

Other areas that keep me busy are doing the monthly chapel on the first Tuesday at the Prairie View Home. Elder Haak also provides a monthly time of singing hymns amongst this group.

My role as the Chaplain on the staff for the Aberdeen Wings Tier II Junior Hockey Team is also something I perceive as very fruitful. Chapels are every Tuesday morning during the season at 11:30. This year we are covering the Book of Romans in what amounts to 20-minute devotional messages. Along with my work as a Hockey Ministries International Chaplain comes the opportunity to work at an HMI camp in Fargo, ND for a week with about sixty youth.

There are simply a lot of things going on at First Church. The radio program Pause for Thought is heard every Sunday morning, and Bible studies for Sunday are being developed. Recently our radio program fell off of the FM station but it is still heard every Sunday morning on AM1420.

Members continue to have opportunities for fellowship through outside picnics, fifth Sunday hymn sings, and other activities. Those who have taken advantage of these times of getting together have expressed a great deal of appreciation for just getting together and having fun.

One of the areas that is so important to our worship and which we are so thankful for is Becky Mehlhoff and Patty Bowen who use their talents in providing a high quality of complementary instrumentation to aid us in raising our voices in praise to God.

Our membership remains very stable at 91 with 19 unconfirmed members. One was received by letter from the Hosmer Church, while one was administratively erased.

So what is our vision for the year that lies ahead? Points of emphasis will continue to include nurturing a greater sense of community within our congregation. As a congregation, we need to become more active in reaching out and inviting people to come to church. There is a particular need to increase our numbers in the area of younger families with children. Woven into all of this, I believe there is great joy amongst us like the early saints who it was said of, *and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Your pastor,

Rev. Hank Bowen

**Parochial Report of Rev. James Grossmann**

Esteemed Brothers and Fathers,

Paul says in Philippians 4:6-7 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

We live in a world that does not have peace, yet we have peace with God and therefore we have peace no matter what is going on in this world. We can take our requests to God in prayer and trust Him to do that which is best. Sometimes that is that which we have prayed for. Sometimes it is the opposite. However, we can have confidence that God will do the absolute best. What a restful thought.

It has been an honor for me to serve this past year as Minister of the Word at Eureka Reformed Church. I have been blessed to preach for 50 regular worship services. Some of those services were designed to provide worship over the radio when the weather was too problematic to invite the church members. We also celebrated the New Year, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas with worship. My Sermons have been largely in series format from the books of 2 Thessalonians; Daniel; Luke Psalms; 2 Samuel; and Mark. I also preached a series on the 5 points of Calvinism to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canons of Dort. We have held worship at the Eureka Health Care Center on the fourth Wednesday of almost every month. On most months, I have provided a devotion for our Ladies Aid. Our Sunday Evening Bible Study has been studying the basics of Bible Study. We have begun an Adult Sunday School, reading through the Bible over two years. We have been studying about forgiveness.

Over the past year, we have lost 2 members to death. The funeral of Ted Krein was held February 9<sup>th</sup>. The funeral of Bertha Bentz was held April 25<sup>th</sup>. We Hosted the Funeral of Vera Jung. Anthony and Ramona Kauk moved their membership to the Volga Christian Reformed Church of Volga, South Dakota. We received Tashana Casilas by public profession of her faith. With these changes, our membership stands at 104 communicant and 8 baptized members.

We have celebrated the Lord's Supper four times this year. On each occasion, shut-in communion was offered to our shut-ins in the Eureka Health Care Center, the Assisted Living, and to those in their own homes. A total of 80 members or 76% of our members partook of the Lord's Supper this year.

We held Vacation Bible School again this summer. We had 30 students attend! Praise the LORD. We humbly thank those who contribute their time and efforts to make this possible. Please join me in praying for the young people who have been attending and for the opportunity to impact our community through this ministry again this summer. This is an excellent ministry we can have in our community. Please make this ministry a priority and consider assisting or teaching a class.

Our Sunday School consists of 10 young men and one young woman. It has been an outreach opportunity as well as an opportunity to train our covenant young men in the things of the LORD.

We have resumed Catechism with 3 students, Drew Arbach, Aaron Ingerson, and Noah Ingerson. Please pray for these young men as they study the basics of the Christian faith.

Early this March, we completed an unexpected project, repairing the ceiling of the sanctuary and because the pews were removed, we also decided at last year's congregational meeting to replace the floor.

My duties as Stated Clerk of the Northern Plains Classis continue; they have been lower than previous years.

We have joined other churches in the classis to help a student in the Philippines pay for his seminary education with Heidelberg Theological Seminary. Dr. Koerner reports that they are finishing up their second year of classes and that they have 60-65 students taking classes with them. By all reports they are excited about the Reformed faith and have been learning quickly. Please pray for them.

I have finished the classroom work on a path for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The only thing left is for me to write my dissertation. Unfortunately, the professor under whose guidance I intended to write on Pastoral Counseling (Dr. George Scipione) recently passed away.

As always, I pray that I have accomplished an acceptable job for the glory of our Savior and for the extension of His Church. On all of these items, I request your prayers that I may be able to

balance my labors for Classis and Synod with faithfully ministering to God's Church here in Eureka.

I continue to challenge the congregation to read their Bibles. Paul in Philippians 4 continues to say, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."<sup>9</sup>The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

Where can we best consider the things which Paul teaches except in the word of God as a whole. If we focus on these things, God tells us that He will be with us!

I continue to encourage prayer for the church. We rely on prayers to bring God's word. I encourage prayer for our youth, our shutins, our outreach into our community, and our denomination. That God would use the broadcast of our worship services to spread His Gospel into the surrounding area. That God would use our VBS, our Mid-Winter Conference, and the other opportunities He supplies to bring His word to this community. That God would by His Holy Spirit use His word to change hearts and call sinners to Himself.

May God Richly Bless Eureka Reformed Church in 2020,

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. James Grossmann

## Parochial Report of Rev. Paul Henderson

Greetings brethren and fellow laborers in Christ,

This year's report will be set forth as follows: 1. Statistics 2. Temporal condition. 3. The Spiritual condition 4. Pastoral duties.

**I.** Statistically speaking, Hope lost five (5) Communicant members: Four (4) by dismissal, and one (1) by administrative erasure. Many of you know already that Lynn & Joyce Goehring retired to the friendly fields and farms of Greeley, CO, and are now members of Grace Reformed. Elder Brian Davis and his wife, Eileen, are now members of our Colorado Springs congregation, as Brian took a "dream-job" for Hewlett Packard. The other loss was from an erasure of a member who had long been away. But thankfully, we also had two communicant members added: one (1) by transfer, Ms. Amber Van Otterloo, & one (1) by confirmation, Mr. Travis Henderson, who was confirmed in September. Recently, Miss Van Otterloo became engaged to another member at Hope, Mr. Dylan Mehlhaf!

Furthermore, we have two others which we hope will join with us in the near future. Interestingly, one of them came to visit us via our newspaper ad campaign that we began last year. He has been coming regularly! His name is Lane Nelson, and we would appreciate your prayers for him as he is now undergoing chemotherapy. Tina's mother, Mrs. Donna Bender, our 'other visitor', has also relocated here to be with us, and has been a big blessing to us all. Lord willing, we will also be blessed with another covenant child, as Matt & Heather Fickbohm are expecting their third child! Therefore though, statistically it looks almost impossible, if not impractical for 20 communicant members, (5 of whom are the pastor & family), to make a viable go of the ministry, that is, to support the ministry of the gospel in all of its duties, responsibilities & ministries, still, amazingly, God is seeing to it that Hope continues to keep its doors open for "business". "*Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. Ps. 150:6*"

**II.** So how are we doing temporally? Thankfully this year, we were blessed and able to install a new Furnace & Air Conditioner in the main auditorium (sanctuary), as well as to replace the Parsonage Roof and Water Heater. Expenses of course that were certainly not planned as we made our annual budget! (\$11,000.00 or so!) I believe we even added a new Lawnmower for the church! So yes, the Lord provided once again through His people!

Moreover Hope was blessed to have three volunteers who were appointed as new Trustees to help out with the care and maintenance of the church properties! The church is looking forward to their insight, input, and energy in dealing with these temporal, yet very important stewardship issues, as they pertain to the more physical aspects of the gospel ministry! So, though I am very pleased to be able to report on these improvements and accomplishments, I share with you a burden which 'plagues' us - that is, though we are making it, we are doing so without contributing our fair share of



the financial support to both the Classis and the R.C.U.S. Synod. Now though we have sent portions of our Dues or Guidelines, which have been collected from those who designate their offerings as such, still, this lack of bearing one another's burdens, is of course, not desirable and we hope to see a change in it in the coming year or years. All in all then, except for this aspect of our temporal condition, we continue in prayer that God will not only provide for His people and their families, but also that with His gracious provision, that they too will continue to give with a willing, cheerful, and faithful spirit toward all of the labors of the gospel!

**III.** Now onto the Spiritual condition of the congregation – Brothers, they keep on coming back every Sunday! They stay for Sunday school! They keep on working at their jobs, and serving within the church! They keep on praying for one another! They keep on giving! They also keep on struggling or battling in their day-to-day spiritual warfare & battles – so, I suppose their spiritual condition is good, and yes, is quite normal! Therefore we continue to rejoice in the mercies our God has showered upon us as well as to continue to beg our Sovereign Lord to continue to supply His grace, mercy and strength, even as we continue to beseech Him to bring an increase in our membership! Yes, I know, what else is new!! Still yet, we are seeking His help to be those living, every day, on the job, good old regular witnesses of His grace, which proves itself sufficient each and every day! May He use our personalities, our abilities, our good work ethic, and our kindnesses in these cities and surrounding areas, to promote His own excellent name and splendid glory!

**IV.** Now, as for my Pastoral duties or labors for 2019 – I began the year with a series of sermons from Psalm 45; then I moved into a prolonged series on marriage & the family. In between I preached on the seasonal passages as well as a brief series of summer sermons on the Parables of Jesus. I am currently preparing for a series in Ruth, and then Lord willing, onto Galatians and/or James. Maybe I will also try to fit in a series of sermons on Psalm 23.

In the Sunday school class I finished up a study on what it means to be reformed; Did a shorter summary of the R.C.U.S.'s Cremation Paper; and currently we are going through the "I AM" passages in John's gospel, along with other lessons which I felt needed to be addressed.

On our Wednesday evenings we have been going through the R.C.U.S. Directory of Worship and the section covering the "Nature & Scriptural Elements of Public Worship." Elder Fickbohm and his wife, Heather, have been hosting the Wednesday Eve Youth Fellowship and Bible times! They have a simple lesson, do some crafts, and have a whole lot of fellowship & fun! I finished with one catechumen this year, and he was subsequently confirmed; and now I have begun to instruct new student, in the essentials of our Christian faith.

This year also, I was privileged to be the Mission fest speaker at Salem Reformed Church in Ashley, ND while enjoying some great food and fellowship. I also had to make an 'emergency' fill in Mission fest appearance at Hope, as our scheduled speaker was not able to make it due to? - of course, 'un-drivable' weather and road conditions!

I continue to hold a Hymn Sing and Bible Lesson for a Senior Apartment facility each month which always brings a joy to my heart and I pray, some encouragement to these fine folks! Along with other counselling sessions, visits, and visiting the sick (members & non-members), our Reformation day, and Christmas program, as well as being a good neighbor, these made up a majority of my labors.

Now in respect to the work of the Consistory and Spiritual Council, I bring to your attention that elder Fickbohm and I must conduct both parts of this aspect of the gospel ministry by "Common Consent"! Though we get things done, this manner of operating and conducting God's business is neither wise, nor desirable for the long haul!

I know this plagues many of our smaller churches, but brethren, I ask you to diligently beg our Lord to answer this need that we might be a fully functioning church body. Moreover, I trust that Matt and I, should we need assistance, may count on you brothers for help, counsel, wisdom, and possible oversight, if such assistance is requested.

This then is my pastoral report for 2019. May God be pleased to bless our labors for the furtherance of His kingdom, and thus, the exaltation of His glorious name and beautiful holiness!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Paul H. Henderson

## Parochial Report of Rev. Dave Irwin

Dear Brothers in Christ,

God promises that even in the wilderness, that He is with His people. When the enemies of the Gospel rise up against us, He has proven time and time again to be for us, "*Jehovah-nissi*" (Ex. 17:15), which means, "*The LORD is my banner*", Exodus 17 reminds us that God's own presence with us is our banner and our flag under which we find our victory in our fight against the world, the flesh, the Devil; as well as our defense from the assaults made against Christ and His church by the Devil's followers. The flags and banners of the nations in Moses' day were topped with the idols that each nation followed when they went into battle — a flag was an idol on a stick. However, when Israel fought against Amalek's attacks in Exodus 17, the flag Moses held up, the staff in his hand, had no image on top. There was no idol on Moses' staff. Instead of some carved block of metal or wood, it was Jehovah's own invisible presence with His people that served as Israel's banner. Our God is an unseen God, and unlike the deaf, dumb, and blind idols of the nations, He *is in the heavens* and He does *whatsoever He hath pleased* (Psalm 115:2-4). When the forces of this world attack the Gospel and Christ's people, God Himself is our banner who brings us into victory in our wilderness journey through this life. Truly, *there is a God in Israel* (1 Samuel 17:46).

It has been my honor and privilege to serve the flock of God at Salem Reformed Church in Ashley, ND, through 2019. As minister of Word and Sacrament, I have led an estimated 41 worship services in our church this past year, including holiday services. We had at least five services canceled due to weather in 2019 (six if you count our New Year's Day service). Our sermons this past year covered the Gospel of John chapters 12 through 16 and an overview survey of the Book of Ezekiel, along with a look at the first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew during the Christmas season. We celebrated the Lord's Supper 3 times in 2019 (March 31, July 21, and October 27). We had one baptism, with Ian Entzie, the infant son of Alex and Larissa Entzie, being baptized on November 3. We held Adult Sunday School classes an estimated 18 times, with studies in Genesis and Romans. We had no confirmations or weddings in 2019. I officiated over at least 6 funerals, memorial prayer services, and graveside services in 2019. I have no estimate for the number of end-of-life visitations I performed for both our members and our community.

Outside of our church, I led an estimated 11 chapel services at the local nursing home here in Ashley, and one chapel service at the nursing home in Eureka, SD. I preached at at least one community service, and lead the Ashley Ministerial Association's mercy ministry efforts and the local Salvation Army bell-ringing campaign. I preached for the MissionFest services in both Minot, ND and Herried, SD. I also led an estimated 39 Tuesday morning Bible studies at the Ashley nursing home. We broadcast 52 "*Start the Week*" radio programs over KSJB AM-600 in 2019 — mostly studies of either Jonah or the Gospel of Mark.

God brought back to our local fellowship Alex and Larissa Entzie, who had continued to remain on our membership rolls during their time living in Hope, ND, but are attending regularly now that they have moved back to our area. Their son, Ian, was received into covenant membership through baptism in November. While still on our membership rolls, Reinhold Dockter moved from Ashley in October to live in Wishek. We lost two members through death, with Milton Baumann passing from this life on November 18, and Levern Wagemann passing on December 8. No new members joined and none were erased from our rolls in this past year.

For myself, personally, 2019 was a very distressing and trying year. With Trena divorcing me in December 2018, my mother passing away shortly after Mother's Day 2019, along with several other personal trials, there have been times I have not always been as focused on the tasks of ministry over this past year as much as I ought to have been. I am very grateful for the friendship, support, prayers, and graciousness of the members of the Ashley congregation, the elders and ministers of our Classis, and many of the folk in the local community where I serve. Only by God's lovingkindness and grace have I made it through this past year.

Grace & Peace in Christ –

Rev. David B. Irwin

## **Parochial Report of Rev. Michael Lassley**

Fathers and brothers of the Northern Plains Classis,

January of 2020 marks not only the two year anniversary of my having been called to be the pastor of Covenant Reformed Church in Watertown, SD but also a two year anniversary of my having been called to be a pastor in the Northern Plains Classis of the R.C.U.S. Being a year further into this calling, I have only become even more convinced than ever, that all glory belongs our good and gracious God, and for this I am truly thankful: for God's calling on my life, for the calling of the saints of Covenant Reformed, and for being brought into your fellowship to share with you all in this sacred work.

When we began two years ago, we began with the gospel, preaching through Matthew on Sunday mornings and teaching through the pastoral epistles 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus on Wednesday nights. The singular goal, at that time, was to begin with that which mattered most to God and to the church, for the strengthening of souls and encouragement to continuing in the faith; the two things upon which the Spirit himself established the church; the proclamation, teaching, and nurture of the gospel and the growth of biblical elders to oversee the proclamation, teaching and nurture of the gospel both within and without the church.

In this second year we began by preaching through the final few chapters of Matthew's account of the gospel and the book of Ruth before shifting our focus to the work of the Spirit in building up the church by preaching through fifteen chapters in the book of Acts and teaching through twenty-five articles of the Belgic Confession of Faith on Sunday mornings, as well as teaching through several letters written to the church, including: 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude and twelve chapters from the first letter to the Corinthians on Wednesday nights; all along seeking the grace of God to better understand the Scriptures and from the Scriptures and the church throughout history with the Spirit's leading to better understand who we are, how the Church came into existence, it's purpose, and how God has structured the church for the fulfillment of his purpose for her... so that we might better be the church our Lord and God has called us to be.

For all of this and in all of this, we give the glory to God, who has been pleased this past year to grant us to pray for and pursue all of these things and to nominate, call, and ordain a new elder, Brian Ardry, as well as a first in the history of Covenant Reformed, a second deacon, Allan Towles. We give the glory to God, who granted us this past year to pray for, support, supply, and send thirteen children to Heidelberg Youth Camp in the Black Hills for a week of worship, confessional teaching on the doctrines of grace, and Christian nurture with over one-hundred of their peers in the Reformed faith.

We give the glory to God, who granted us this past year to pray for and support the works of Heidelberg Theological Seminary in Sioux Falls and in the Philippines, the establishment of a new R.C.U.S. church in Dickinson, ND, of the teaching and nurturing ministries of our local Covenant Life Communities, the C.R.Y.F. ministry, and the diaconal care and support of several others who struggled with trials of various sorts this past year.

We give the glory to God, who granted us this past year to pray for and celebrated the expectation of a new soul coming into this world with a baby shower, the honor of hosting wedding shower and serving at wedding (in which we were emphatically reminded both in word and deed, that our God reigns... and rules the winds, lightning, and hail... as well as of the great celebration and joy which he has promised will follow.

We give the glory to God, who granted us this past year to pray for and celebrate the Reformation by hosting a party for the community of Watertown, to host Rev. Phil and his wife Karen in the R.C.U.S. tradition of Mission Fest, to host an Evening of Thanks, a Christmas program, a Christmas dinner, as well as for the many among our local body who throughout the year opened their homes for cookouts, book studies, game nights, clay shoots, and a variety of other fellowships by which the church was further nurtured, strengthened, and encouraged in our common faith.

We give the glory to God, who granted many among our body this past year to recognize the needs and burdens of their fellow members and give of themselves not only in the worshiping, teaching, nurturing, and reaching ministries of the church but in the many works behind the scenes that make all these ministries possible.

We give the glory to our God, who granted to us this past year to pray for and celebrate the

graduation of five our covenant children from high school, for whom we continue to be blessed to pray for, as they each continue to discover and refine their unique gifts to realize God's calling upon their diverse lives.

We give the glory to God, who granted to us this past year to pray for and celebrate the confirmation of yet another covenant child, to welcome three new communing members into our family, and celebrate the birth and covenant baptism of our newest member Clayton John Burggraf in December.

For all of this and much more, we give all glory to our good and gracious God... glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit for this amazing grace in which we stand; the grace through which he has made all these things possible and called us to share in them with him and with one another through our common faith and new life in Christ worked in us by the Holy Spirit and his Word by which we are more than comforted in body and soul, both in life and death, by the firm assurance that we are not our own, but most assuredly belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

With this assurance we are pleased report that the finances of Covenant Reformed Church continue to remain strong in spite of shortfall in budgeted giving this past year; which might have been expected, given this was our first year full year of ministry after adding over thirty new members. Nevertheless, our building fund grew and with a clearer baseline the church has approved a balanced budget for 2020.

Concerning church discipline, ten months of last year were spent praying and attempting to work through the process commanded by our Lord in Matt 18 and required by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States (Articles 112-119) before the Spiritual Council reached a final and unanimous judgement on December 11th, to excommunicate from the membership of Covenant Reformed Church and The Reformed Church in the United States, former member Scott Maag, for refusing to pursue reconciliation for offenses against the church and persistence in the advocacy of the Federal Vision heresy; the final admonishment of the Council being, that if he promise and show real amendment, he may again be received as a member of Christ and His Church.

In 2020, as we move further into the book of Acts and the doctrines contained in our Confessions and Creeds with the church on Sunday mornings and further into the books and letters of Scriptures on Wednesday nights, our prayer is that God would continue to grant us to understand even more, and desire to know even better, who we are, that we might more and more be the church which our Lord has called us to be; how to better strengthen and encourage one another to continue in the faith, how to be better minister the gospel to one another and to the world around us; *"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,"* (Eph 4.13 ESV)

The vision statement of Covenant Reformed Church is:

*"To know God through Christ and glorify him in all that we do."*

This was the vision of the church long before I was called to be their pastor. When I first read it two years ago, I believed it to be a sound and biblical vision and have aspired by the grace of God given to me, to lead the saints at Covenant Reformed in its direction ever since.

As we move forward into 2020, this continues to be the vision of Covenant Reformed Church, that which defines both who we are as a local redeemed, covenant community of Christ, as well as who we desire more and more to become... in our relationships to God, with one another, and with all those whom our Father will draw to himself through us, by his Spirit and Word, through faith in Jesus Christ his Son... Our prayer is that our Father in heaven would bless us in the pursuit of this vision even more this year than in the years before... for his glory and the joy of all the saints of the Northern Plains and of the Reformed Church in the United States, and of the one holy catholic Church to which we each belong.

*"To know Him through Christ and glorify him in all that we do."*

On behalf of saints of Covenant Reformed Church,

The Rev. Michael E. Lassley

## **Parochial Report of Rev. Phil Poe**

Esteemed and Beloved Brethren

“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It is a tremendous privilege to serve a congregation of the Lord's blood-bought church as one of His undershepherds. Over the past nearly ten years Harvest Reformed Church has been blessed with a large amount of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3) I am not saying there was none before this; I am only reporting my personal experiences over the past decade. All glory to God for His goodness to us!

Elder Jim Snyder and Deacon Elton Dockter have both continued to serve faithfully on the HRC Consistory. Both of these brethren love the Church and the reformed faith and conscientiously fulfill the duties of their offices.

Elder Snyder regularly shares in the teaching ministry and does pulpit supply for HRC when I am away. He is also an efficient administrator. Deacon Dockter does a sterling job of overseeing the finances and funding of the congregation. Both offices require thought, time and labor and I don't believe we could ask for better officers.

This past year I have met with Sam Hoverson in the study of Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* book in preparation of becoming our second deacon. We thank the Lord for Sam's servant's heart and love of God's Word. (Sam Hoverson was installed Feb. 9, 2020)

Thank you to Cherise Dockter and Diana Dockter for serving as our church pianists.

Thank you to Jeff Milam who runs the sermon audio service each week. I am thankful for one who understands the electronic media as well as Jeff does. May God use this ministry to edify His Church around the world.

As usual, I really cannot say enough about our HRC women's ministries (Friends of Phoebe). They do a great deal “behind the scenes” and we are truly thankful for all they do for His kingdom! This past year (2019) was not a year of statistical growth. Due to moves, membership transfers or non-attendance we have erased Peter Bartlett, David Bartlett, Arne Moilan, and Sam Rau from HRC membership.

I finished the sermon series on the Book of Acts. Since then I have been preaching textual, expository, and a few topical sermons on various Christian doctrines. Several in the congregation have expressed interest in an exposition of the Book of the Revelation!

Our Sunday School meets on Sunday evenings at the parsonage. My adult class continues to go through the history of the Old Testament people of God. We are now well into the study of I Samuel. At the same time, Karen, my wife, teaches a class of small children and Elton Dockter teaches a class of middle and high school youth on Old Testament history using curriculum from Great Commission Publication.

I am glad to report HRS's continuing support of missions beyond the RCUS dues requirements. We send additional support to Westminster Biblical Missions for the work in Lahore, Pakistan and to Rev. Nap Narag and the work in the Philippines. We thank God for enabling us to give.

We continue to meet at the Grand Hotel but a more permanent worship facility may be coming open to us. We covet your prayers as we move forward.

May God bless His Church in Minot in the future as He has in the past.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phillip E. Poe, Pastor

## **Parochial Report of Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg**

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

In Matthews 16:18, Jesus says, “*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” The comfort that I receive from this verse is that Jesus is the One who builds His church, not me. I have been reminded of this over the past year. You could say that 2019 was a bounce back year. In 2018, we lost two young families, which included both of our elders. This was extremely hard upon myself and the congregation. Despite this hardship, the Lord has provided graciously. How has the Lord provided you may ask?

First, Matthew Beck has been elder for over a year now. He has shown a commitment and a desire to learn. Second, Aaron and Ashlee Kocher joined the church along with their daughter Paislee. The Lord provided them with their second child Ambree in September who was baptized. From my records, the last baptism took place in 2015. Third, the Lord has given us a variety of new visitors including Brady and Faith Vander Vorst who plan to join the church in 2020. They are taking membership classes as we speak. We are grateful to God for these blessings.

I have also seen growth in the congregation when it comes to the using of their gifts which should be acknowledged. Various members donated their time and effort in the search, purchase, and installation of our new church sign which was installed in the September. I see a church willing to serve where they are needed and called. We had no shortage of volunteers for Vacation Bible School, our Reformation Day party, and our various Christmas events.

I have been encouraged by those who have kept up with our readings in the recommended book of the week through the New Testament this past year. Numerous members have told me that they have benefited and enjoyed walking through the New Testament. My hope is that we can take the next two years to walk through the Old Testament. Another encouragement for me is the growth of participation in Bible studies and Sunday school. Although there could be an improvement in attendance, I see more interaction and deep conversation from those who do attend. A third encouragement is that the overall attendance for our regular worship services remains strong.

This last year, we have made changes to our order of worship. We have done this as it was believed that there were a few areas lacking in our service. The first thing lacking was the amount of Scripture read in our church gathering. Yes, there was the usual call to worship, sermon passage, and benediction, but we wondered if we should read more. So in order to increase Scripture in the service, we have added responsive Psalm readings, an assurance of pardon, and a monthly reading from the Law of God.

Another thing that seemed to be lacking was the confession of sin in prayer. Yes, we would confess sin, yet it was often quite general. So to improve upon this, we have distinguished the prayer of confession from the pastoral prayer. Since the Word, sacraments, and prayer are the primary means by which God sanctifies us, we thought it wise to use these means more frequently and efficiently while remaining faithful to the dialogical principle of worship (God speaks, we respond). My hope is that the congregation will come to appreciate and benefit from these changes.

In preaching, we have gone through sections in Leviticus, Psalms, Proverbs, Acts, and Philippians. We are currently working our way through the Book of Romans which has been extremely beneficial to me. In Bible study, we have been using John Stott's guide through Ephesians. This has been challenging for the members, but it has helped them learn how to read the Bible. In Sunday School, we finished a four year study through the Heidelberg Catechism. Currently, we have been watching a variety of different videos teaching on topics such as the prosperity gospel, presuppositional apologetics, and Reformed worship.

Overall, the church appears to be healthy and happy as well as growing and grateful. Praise be to God that it is Christ who builds His church, not us. We are simply servants called to care and tend to His sheep.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg

## **Parochial Report of Rev. Michael Voytek**

February 15, 2020

Fathers and Brothers,

The Apostle Paul, in the middle of his letter to the church in Ephesus stopped and prayed for them as follows: *"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in*

*your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen*" (Ephesians 3:14-21). This is my heart's desire and prayer not only for Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson, but for all the churches of the RCUS and beyond.

Looking back at the great things that the Lord has been doing here in Dickinson this past year, the most significant was the establishing of our mission work here in Dickinson as a self-governing church. In January of last year, Mr. Dan Aune was elected to the office of elder and Mr. Jeremy Cox to the office of deacon. Then in August the congregation was organized as Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson (GRC) and the members were transferred from First Reformed Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota by the elders of GRC. Furthermore, the congregation voted to call the Rev. Michael Voytek as our pastor. This year as a church family, we have experienced some gains (the profession of faith of Morgan Aune and the addition of Jon and Trish Walker) and some losses (the Pearson family did not express the desire to transfer their membership to GRC and have chosen to attend church elsewhere). Thus, our membership statistics for the end of the year show a net gain of one communicate member. The Lord blessed the congregation with a number of visitors, and some expressed interest in attending new members classes. Please pray that the Lord will continue to add to our church family for the sake of the advance of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the lost souls in our community and the world.

Throughout the year we have been blessed with the fruit of God's Word through the preaching and teaching ministry of the church. In 2018, your servant began an extended series of sermons from the book of Acts. He completed that study in December of last year and began a series from the Apostle Paul's letters to the mission church in Thessalonica in January of 2020. During the adult Sunday school, we spent time addressing a number of topics and explored the riches of the book of Proverbs. Recently due to the challenge presented by the attendance of a number of "calvinistic" Baptist visitors, we shifted the focus to the biblical teaching on the covenant using Dr. Frank Walker's book "Covenant Theology" as his main study guide. On Sunday evenings we continued our survey of the Old Testament books of the Bible until we came to the book of Isaiah. At that point we turned our attention to the wonderful revelation of who God is in His person and works (in particular His attributes) as He has revealed in His Holy Word. Another very important part of the teaching ministry of the church that should be mentioned is the confirmation preparation of the youth of the congregation. It is my joy to report that 6 youth are preparing for confirmation, diligently pursuing a deeper understanding of the truth as well as preparing to make a credible profession of faith.

We also have been blessed by God through the exercise of the gifts of the members of the church such as the weekly snacks and monthly shared lunch, the weekly maintenance of the facility and the faithful recording of the sermons. Susan Huizinga and David Voytek have blessed us with the exercise of their musical gifts to assist us in our worship of God. Furthermore, David Voytek is to be commended for his faithful teaching during the Sunday School hour. There are many others who have faithfully served Christ and His church through their prayers and service of love and mercy. Finally, the women of the church met every other Wednesday evening through the middle of summer studying the book "Identity Theft: Reclaiming The Truth Of Who We Are In Christ" and the men of the church met monthly for a time of food, fellowship, prayer and the study of the book "The Masculine Mandate". May the Lord continue to add other opportunities to glorify Him in loving and serving others.

Another aspect of the ministry that the Apostle Paul mentioned in his charge to the Ephesian elders recorded in Acts chapter 20 was that of oversight of the flock. This responsibility includes both the proper administration of the sacraments and Christian discipline. I am pleased to report that the Spiritual Council of Grace Reformed Church take this responsibility very seriously, being zealous to guard and protect the flock. The Lord's table is properly guarded, with all visitors who desire to partake interviewed prior to the service.

As we have been challenged in the past by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be His witnesses throughout the whole world (Acts 1:8), we have faithfully attempted to be lights and witnesses to the lost both far and near. We do so through our website ([frcdickinson.org](http://frcdickinson.org)), Facebook presence and the

uploading of the sermons on [www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com). We also had invitation cards and gospel tracts printed and made available so that the members of the congregation are able to invite others to the church. Please pray for the Lord's blessing in this important area of outreach.

This past year the Lord has blessed us by stretching our faith in a number of ways. One of those ways has been the disappointment of the loss of five visiting families last October. Two of those families were driving three hours round trip from Glendive, Montana. One of those families (with 2 children) had completed the new members class and were preparing to meet with the elders when they decided that it would be better to join a church in their community. The other family (with 6 children) could not continue to attend due to the change of workdays of the husband and father of the family. The other three visiting families (with a total of 10 children under the age of 10) are committed in credobaptism and left to find churches that they are in theological agreement. Another challenge is the finances as we have been forced to draw from our savings to make ends meet. Please pray that the Lord will provide the needed finances to continue to reach the lost and to edify the saints here in Dickinson and beyond.

On a personal note, last year your servant taught two students of City Seminary in Sacramento and one student of Heidelberg Theological Seminary. He is currently teaching the Old Testament Poetics course at Heidelberg (three students) and an Old Testament Poetics and Prophets course with one student at City Seminary. Furthermore, last year your servant began pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree with Heidelberg Theological Seminary. Please pray for the Lord's grace in these endeavors. I would like to conclude this brief report with an exhortation from Psalm 67. God has abundantly blessed us here at Grace this past year and it is my prayer that He will continue to do so in the coming years. With these blessings come responsibility and we need to take this to heart. God has a purpose in blessing us, and it is not necessarily for ourselves. In the first two verses of Psalm 67 we read the following; "*God be merciful unto us and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*" Here we learn that God blesses His people in order that others would come to know Him and His salvation. We are blessed in order to be a blessing to others. Will we grasp this truth and run with it to the glory of God or will we fall into the same sin that plagued Israel throughout her long sojourn here on earth? May God grant us the grace to fulfill His purposes. Amen.

Your fellow bondservant in Christ,

Rev. Michael Voytek

## XI. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ELDERS

The President asked the Elder delegates that were present the Constitutional Questions from Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. The following are the questions that were read and the answers that were given:

1. *Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the word of God?* **All Elder delegates 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 Elder delegates answered Yes.**
- 3a. *In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation, is visitation faithfully performed?* **All Elder delegates answered Yes, with the exception of the Elder from Pierre who answered No.**
- 3b. *In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation, is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?* **All Elder delegates answered Yes.**
4. *Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the constitution?* **All Elder delegates answered Yes.**
- 5a. *In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* **All Elder delegates answered Yes, with the exception of the Elders from Ashley and Pierre who answered No.**



*5b. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer? All Elder delegates answered Yes with the exception of the Elders from Ashley and Dickinson who answered No.*

*5c. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? All Elder delegates answered Yes with the exception of the Elders from Ashley, Dickinson, Herreid, and Pierre who answered No.*

*5d. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer? All Elder delegates answered Yes.*

*6. Are the church records properly kept? All Elder delegates answered Yes.*

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

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

*The president instructed the Stated Clerk to communicate with the consistory of Dickinson to provide a signed document containing their answers to the Article 81 Questions, to be circularized as soon as possible.*

## **XII. REPORT OF NUMERICAL & FINANCIAL STATISTICS**

*See the Appendix of the Abstract for this Report.*

## **XIII. READING OF THE STANDING RULES**

*The Standing Rules were read by the Stated Clerk.*

## **XIV. REPORTS FROM CLASSIS FRATERNAL DELEGATES**

There were none to report

## **XV. ADDRESS AND/OR REPORTS OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES & VISITORS**

Brother Peter Veenendaal of the Manitoba Classis of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches addressed the body, bringing their greetings.

## **XVI. SPECIAL ORDER**

The Classis held a Round Table Discussion on Monday Evening following the worship service to discuss the effects and our response to the 2019 Synodical Judicial committee decision on the authority of Synodical Decisions.

## **XVII. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

*Please Note: All recommendations in the Standing Committee reports appear in their final, amended form, and were adopted unless otherwise indicated.*

## **A. Education, Publications, Student Aid, Services & Interchurch**

Your committee received the following items: – #1 the Permanent Camp Committee; #2, the Interchurch Relations Committee report; #3, the Christian Education & Publications Committee; #7 an overture from Rev. Michael Voytek for Student Aid for David Voytek

Your Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Recommendation #1: That the budget, including registration fees, for HYC 2020 be adopted.

Recommendation #2: That the theme the Armor of God be adopted as the theme of HYC 2020.

Recommendation #3: That the offerings collected during HYC 2020 be designated to Save the Storks.

Recommendation #4: Take Note, that congregations take note of the registration deadlines for early registration (by May 31st) and final registration (no later than June 30th) and that congregations be encouraged to submit registrations as early as possible.

Recommendation #6: We recommend and nominate Rev. William Haddock to continue as the editor of the Northern Plains Chronicles for another one year term (March 2020-March 2021).

Recommendation #7: We recommend that the classis pay the editor of the Northern Plains Chronicles at least a \$200.00 stipend for the 2020 term.

Recommendation #8: That the Northern Plains Classis overture Synod for Student Aid in the amount of \$8,600 for David Voytek to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary and books in the amount of \$400 for the 2020 school year.

Rev. Phillip Poe, Elder Brian Ardry, Elder Larry Kauk, Elder Doug Haak

## **B. Examinations & Licensure**

Your Committee received one item (Item #6) from the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Dickinson, ND. Your committee brings the following recommendation:

Recommendation #1: that the application of Mr. David Voytek be accepted to come under care as a student of the Northern Plains Classis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg, Rev. Hank Bowen, Elder Jim Snyder, Elder Larry Kauk

## **C. Excuses**

1) Elder Matthew Beck of Herreid Requested an excuse for his expected tardiness to the first day of Classis. He expected to be late due to work demands.

2) Rev. Voytek of Dickinson requested excuse for Elder Dan Aune (primarius) and Elder John Huizinga (Secundus) from the Spring Classis meeting. Both men were prevented from attending due to work demands. The Primarius in particular had a series of sudden work demands that he could not extricate himself from.

We the committee find these requests for excuses to be in order and make the following recommendation.

Recommendation #1: That the excuses be granted to all three elders.

David B Irwin, Brian Ardry, Larry Kauk

## **D. Finances, Benevolences, & Ministerial Aid**

Your committee received the following items:

Item #2: Overture from First RCUS on behalf of Rev. and Mrs. Wes Brice.

Item #4 : Overture from Covenant RCUS on behalf of Mrs. George Syms.

Item #5: Overture from Hope RCUS on behalf of Mrs. Norman Jones.

Report of the Permanent Diaconal Committee.

Financial Statements of Northern Plains Classis for 2019 to investigate error in the Notes.

The following reimbursement requests:

Hope (Fickbohm):	\$144.00
Grace (Voytek):	\$198.00
Eureka (Grossmann):	\$ 27.00
Harvest (Snyder):	\$203.40
Covenant (Lassley):	\$159.30
First – Herried (Cody):	\$ 45.00
First – Aberdeen – (Haak):	\$ 76.50

Your committee makes the following recommendations:

- 1) With regards to Item #2, that the NPC Stated Clerk be directed to overture Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid of \$26,760 annually on behalf of Rev. and Mrs. Wes Brice.
- 2) With regards to Item #4, that pending receipt of a completed “Ministerial Relief Fund Application Worksheet” from Covenant Reformed Church the NPC Stated Clerk be directed to overture Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid of \$23,160 annually on behalf of Mrs. George (Debbie) Syms.
- 3) With regards to Item #5, that the NPC Stated Clerk be directed to overture Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid of \$12,000 annually on behalf of Mrs. Norman (Lena) Jones.
- 4) With regards to the Permanent Diaconal Committee Report. Take note.
- 5) That the Classis budget \$600 for Sermon Audio for 2020 and that pastors be encouraged to use this resource.
- 6) That Note 5 of the Notes to the Financial Statements be corrected as follows: Under members for Aberdeen correct 106 to 91 and Dickinson from 13 to 21 and associated calculations (This was a clerical error on the part of the Classis Treasurer) and that the Treasurers Report be adopted as corrected.
- 7) With regards to the reimbursement requests for the Spring Meeting, that all be granted in the total amount of \$853.20.
- 8) That the dues for 2020 be set at Classical Dues: \$5 (\$5 decrease), Missions Guideline: \$30 (\$10 decrease), and \$10 for the Missions Seed Fund (\$5 increase).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. James Grossmann; Rev. Michael Voytek; Elder Matthew Beck; Elder Matthew Fickbohm

## **E. Judicial**

Recommendations:

With regards to the matter concerning the action of the Classis Executive Committee’s decision to allow South Central Classis to function within our boundaries in beginning a mission work in Manhattan, Montana and the Synod subsequently ruling that the area around Manhattan, Montana north of I-90 now be deemed in the bounds of South Central Classis (Synod Abstract, (4) p. 73) we recommend the following:

1. That the Executive Committee add to the Executive Committee Report a summary of the interaction with the South Central Classis what transpired with particular regards to those issues impacting the boundaries of the Northern Plains Classis.
2. Take Note that the Executive Committee be reminded that their authority to make decisions is limited to Article 91 and that any decisions that impact the Classis beyond those items does require an Executive Circular.
3. That given the shrinking borders of the Northern Plains Classis, the limited opportunities and resources to increase the number of congregations within our territory, and the fact that two congregations and now a mission work that should be in Northern Plains Classis have been designated in the SCC, we would encourage the NP Executive Committee to work on a proposal to Synod for them to consider expanding the boundaries of the NP Classis to include the whole of the Dakotas.

With regards to the concerns raised within the Northern Plains Classis concerning recommendation 1 of the Standing Judicial Committee of the 273rd Synod of the RCUS wherein the Synod approved the following: may a church take an action or make a change to its constitution that is contrary to a position of the RCUS? We answer Yes, but with the explanation: . . .

4. That the Northern Plains Classis overture the 274th Synod of the RCUS to reconsider the Yes answer in the Standing Judicial Committee Report of the 273rd Synod in recommendation 1.

Grounds: This answer is problematic in several ways in that it seems contradictory to the principle of mutual submission to the positions of the RCUS as decisions of the Synod. We believe that the discussion of this was inadequate when it came to the floor due to circumstances and that given the implications and magnitude of this issue there needs to be a more deliberative consideration.

That with regards to the need for the dissolution of the congregation in Hosmer, given that worship services were suspended five years ago, there have not been regular consistory meetings as required by the constitution, there has not been the submission of statistics reports nor any contributions to classical or synodical guidelines, and that the current membership stands at two men, we would rule that the Hosmer is de facto dissolved and that Classis needs to deal with the final shutting down of the remaining aspects that need to be dealt with. As such we recommend the following:

5. That the Hosmer congregation be de facto determined to be dissolved, and that the Eureka Reformed Church serve to receive the remaining members and help with the resolution of what to do with any property and funds that remain in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

.Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Hank Bowen; Rev. James Grossmann; Rev. Michael Lassley; Elder Vern Moos

## **F. Missions**

### Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That Classis provide missions support in the amount of \$9,100 for Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson for the 2021 classical year. (no reduction)

Recommendation 2: That Classis overture the 274<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RCUS for home missions support for Grace Reformed Church of Dickinson in the amount of \$7,400.00 for the 2020-2021 synodical fiscal year. (no reduction)

Recommendation 3: That Classis continue to fund 75% of the costs for Ashley's radio broadcast, "Start the Week."

Recommendation 4: Take Note: that churches in the Northern Plains Classis consider updating or developing a website to help with outreach and visibility in their local communities.

## **H. Nominations**

Recommendations:

1. That the following nominations be approved:

Executive:	<u>Henderson</u> , Grossmann, Fickbohm
Assistant to the Clerk:	Haak
Auditing:	<u>Haddock</u> , Voytek, Aune
Camp:	<u>Fickbohm</u> , Lassley, Bowen, Haak
Candidates & Credentials:	<u>Poe</u> , Snyder, Schwichtenberg
Christian Education & Publications:	<u>Irwin</u> , Haddock, Poe, Beck
Diaconal:	<u>Voytek</u> , Beck, Dockter, E. Mehlhaff
Home Missions:	<u>Lassley</u> , Schwichtenberg, C. Mehlhaff, DeJong
Interchurch Relations:	<u>Bowen</u> , Irwin, Henderson, Haak, Brice

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Michael Voytek; Elder Matthew Beck; Elder Matthew Fickbohm

## **XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Expression of Appreciation to the hosting congregation**

That the following expression of thanksgiving be printed in the abstract and in this Sunday's bulletin. "The Delegates of the 35<sup>th</sup> Northern Plains Classis sincerely thank the beloved saints of Salem Reformed Church of Ashley, North Dakota for their Christian generosity and hospitality in hosting us. We will remember the gracious provision which God has granted through your generosity. Thank You!"

### **B. Adoption of the Stated Clerk's Report and Executive Committee's Minutes**

The Stated Clerk's Report and Executive Committee's Minutes were all adopted by the Northern Plains Classis.

## **XIX. Reading of the Minutes**

On Tuesday morning, March 13th, the minutes on part of the previous session were read and corrected. The President declared the minutes from the previous session to be approved as read and corrected.

At the end of the business meeting, the minutes for the day were read and corrected. The President asked, "Shall the minutes be now approved?" Since there were no objections, he declared the minutes approved as corrected.

## **XX. Adjournment**

Elder Kauk moved that the Classis adjourn to the 36th Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis to begin on March 8th, A.D. 2021 at 1:00pm, at Eureka Reformed Church of Eureka, South Dakota.

The Classis adjourned at 12:12pm on March 9th, A.D. 2019.

**A. Roll Call**

The final roll call showed eight ministers and seven elders present for a total of fifteen, a quorum.

**B. Devotions**

Elder Moos closed the meeting by reading from Ephesians 4 and prayer.

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

The Assembly stood and united in reciting the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The President pronounced the Benediction and lead the Assembly in the singing of the Doxology.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. James W. Grossmann, Stated Clerk

# **APPENDIX**

***Treasurer's Report*****Statement of Financial Position – Year Ended December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019**

	<b>2019 Total</b>	<b>2018 Total</b>
Current Assets:		
Cash	\$33,408	\$29,195
Certificates of Deposit		
Classical	1,000	1,000
Mission Seed Fund	6,721	6,591
Total Assets:	41,129	36,786
Current Liabilities:	-	-
Total Net Assets	\$41,129	\$36,786

**The Notes to these financial statements are integral to the statements.**



Statement of Activities – Year Ended December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019

	2019	2018
	Total	Total
<b>Dues:</b>		
Classical Dues	\$ 3,788	\$ 6,905
Home Missions Dues	14,692	16,085
Missions Seed Fund	<u>1,895</u>	<u>1,870</u>
<b>Total Dues Revenue:</b>	<b>20,375</b>	<b>24,860</b>
 <b>Other Income:</b>		
Interest: Classis	36	19
Interest: Foundation CD	129	57
Other Remittances	<u>-</u>	<u>310</u>
<b>Total Other Income:</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$ 20,540</b>	<b>\$ 25,246</b>
 <b>Expenses:</b>		
<i>Home Missions:</i>		
First Reformed - Dickinson	\$ 10,800	\$ 14,200
Start the Week Radio	2,574	2,454
Travel - Aberdeen Mission Oversight	-	84
Travel - Classical Mission Oversight	-	279
Sermon Audio	<u>479</u>	<u>479</u>
<i>Total Home Missions:</i>	<b><u>13,853</u></b>	<b><u>17,497</u></b>
<i>Meetings:</i>		
Spring Meeting Mileage	911	1,167
Special Meeting (June 2018) Mileage	<u>-</u>	<u>697</u>
<i>Total Meetings:</i>	<b><u>911</u></b>	<b><u>1,864</u></b>
<i>General Operating:</i>		
Stipends - Standing Rule 13	900	900
Installation & Ordination Travel	-	261
Interchurch Travel	-	-
Chronicle Editor	200	200
Abstracts - Printing & Mailing	200	200
General	<u>133</u>	<u>186</u>
<i>Total General Operating:</i>	<b><u>1,433</u></b>	<b><u>1,747</u></b>
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ 16,197.76</b>	<b>\$ 21,108</b>
 <b>Transfer of Funds</b>		
Monies designated for Dickinson	<u>-</u>	<u>310</u>
<b>Total Transfers:</b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>310</u></b>
 Change in Net Assets:	\$ 4,342	\$ 3,827
Net Assets, Beginning of Year (As of December 31st)	<u>36,786</u>	<u>32,959</u>

The Notes to these financial statements are integral to the statements.

Statement of Fund Balance – Year Ended December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019

	FUND			2019 Total	2018 Total
	Home Missions	Mission Seed	Classis Business		
Beginning Cash	\$ 8,346	\$ 1,870	\$ 18,979	\$ 29,195	\$ 25,424
Beginning CD	-	6,591	1,000	7,591	1,000
Total Beginning	8,346	8,461	19,979	36,786	26,424
Income:					
Dues	14,692	-	3,788	18,480	22,990
Seed Fund Foundation	-	-	-	-	6,534
Seed Fund Dues	-	1,895	-	1,895	1,870
Interest	-	129	36	165	75
Total Income	14,692	2,024	3,824	20,540	24,935
Expenses:					
Dickinson	10,800	-	-	10,800	14,200
Start the Week	2,574	-	-	2,574	2,454
Travel	-	-	911	911	2,489
Stipends (SR 13)	-	-	900	900	900
Sermon Audio	479	-	-	479	479
Abstracts	-	-	200	200	200
NPC Editor	-	-	200	200	200
Supplies	-	-	133	133	186
Total Expenses	13,853	-	2,344	16,198	21,108
Ending Cash	9,185	3,765	20,459	33,408	29,195
Ending CD	-	6,720	1,000	7,720	7,591
Total Ending	\$ 9,185	\$ 10,485	\$ 21,459	\$ 41,129	\$ 36,786

The Notes to these financial statements are integral to the statements.

**Note 1:** The Classis operates on a calendar year fiscal year (January 1 - December 31).

**Note 2:** Beginning in calendar year 2012 the Classis implemented accrual basis accounting. Accrual basis accounting focuses on matching expenditures and revenues of the period to which they pertain. The financial activity of the Classis through January 20th, 2020 was evaluated to determine to which period the transaction applied.

**Note 3:** Accrual basis accounting includes the recognition of revenue not yet received and an amount determined to be uncollectible. As the Classis requires all dues to be received no later than November 30th, no recognition of dues not received is deemed necessary and has, therefore, not been performed.

**Note 4:** The Classis holds two Certificates of Deposit with BankWest of Pierre, SD. The terms of each are as follows:

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date of Issue</u>	<u>Maturity</u>	<u>Renewal</u>	<u>Annual yield</u>	<u>Payment Frequency</u>	<u>Interest Treatment</u>
General	\$ 1,000.00	March 23, 2018	March 23, 2019	Automatic	2.25%	Every 3 months	Deposited to General Fund
Foundation	\$ 6,720.82	March 23, 2018	March 23, 2019	Automatic	2.25%	Every 3 months	Deposited to General Fund

**Note 5:** The Classis collects dues from congregations for both Home Missions and Classical Funds. The following schedule reports the dues actually received from congregations for 2019:

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Type of Dues</u>	<u>Remitted</u>	<u>Full Remittance</u>	<u>(Variance)</u>	<u>Received</u>
Aberdeen	91	Classical	\$ 910	\$ 910	\$ -	- On-time
		Home Missions	3,640	3,640	-	-
		Missions Seed	455	455	-	-
Ashley	23	Classical	230	230	-	- On-time
		Home Missions	460	920	(460)	-
		Missions Seed	115	115	-	-
Dickinson	21	Classical	210	210	-	- Late
		Home Missions	840	840	-	-
		Missions Seed	105	105	-	-
Eureka	107	Classical	1,070	1,070	-	- On-time
		Home Missions	4,280	4,280	-	-
		Missions Seed	535	535	-	-
Herried	48	Classical	480	480	-	- On-time
		Home Missions	1,920	1,920	-	-
		Missions Seed	240	240	-	-
Hosmer	13	Classical	-	130	(130)	-
		Home Missions	-	520	(520)	-
		Missions Seed	-	65	(65)	-
Minot	34	Classical	370	340	30	- On-time
		Home Missions	1,480	1,360	120	-
		Missions Seed	185	170	15	-
Pierre	23	Classical	118	230	(112)	- On-time
		Home Missions	472	920	(448)	-
		Missions Seed	60	115	(55)	-
Watertown	40	Classical	400	400	-	- On-time
		Home Missions	1,600	1,600	-	-
		Missions Seed	200	200	-	-
<b>Classical Total</b>			<b>3,788</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>(212)</b>	
<b>Home Missions Total</b>			<b>14,692</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>(1,308)</b>	
<b>Missions Seed Total</b>			<b>\$ 1,895</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>	<b>\$ (105)</b>	

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew Fickbohm  
Treasurer, Northern Plains Classis

## 2019 Membership & Financial Statistics

	Aberdeen	Ashley	Dickinson	Eureka	Herried	Minot
Number of Elders	3	2	2	3	1	1
Number of Deacons	3	2	1	3	2	1
Communicants Last Year	91	23	21	107	48	37
Received – Confirmation	0	0	1	0	0	0
Received – Transfer	1	0	0	0	0	0
Received – Profession	0	0	2	1	2	1
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Old &amp; New</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>
Lost – Dismissal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lost – Erasure/Discipline	1	0	2	3	0	4
Lost – Death	0	2	0	2	1	0
<b>Total Lost</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Communicants This Year</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>
Unconfirmed Members	19	1	8	8	8	9
Total Baptized Members	110	22	30	111	57	43
Number of Families	44	17	12	64	27	19
Children in Sunday School	21	0	8	11	4	6
Adults Baptized Last Year	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infants Baptized	0	1	0	0	1	1
<b>Total Baptisms this Year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Members' Lord's Supper	91	23	22	80	43	34
Lord' Supper Observed	4	3	4	3	3	12
Receipts – Sunday Offerings	\$122,340	\$50,365	\$70,255	\$109,947	\$52,736	\$74,864
Receipts – Special Offerings	\$2,950	\$5,428	\$0	\$0	\$14,531	\$10,675
Receipts – Other Sources	\$0	\$3,303	\$25,596	\$53,411	\$22	\$5,203
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$125,290</b>	<b>\$59,096</b>	<b>\$95,851</b>	<b>\$163,358</b>	<b>\$67,289</b>	<b>\$90,742</b>
Budgeted Synodical Funds	\$23,884	\$3,768	\$3,404	\$27,856	\$10,185	\$9,490
Budgeted Classical Funds	\$5,005	\$805	\$1,155	\$5,885	\$2,640	\$2,035
Non-Guideline Causes	\$5,932	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,628
Non-RCUS Benevolences	\$0	\$350	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,676	\$4,158
Other General Expenses	\$83,692	\$53,154	\$111,115	\$87,974	\$59,283	\$66,618
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$118,513</b>	<b>\$59,077</b>	<b>\$115,674</b>	<b>\$122,715</b>	<b>\$73,784</b>	<b>\$84,929</b>
Value of Church Buildings	\$350,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$40,000	\$0
Value of Parsonage	\$0	\$45,000	\$40,000	\$100,000	\$25,000	\$300,000
Property Improvements	\$0	\$9,298	\$7,799	\$84,041	\$4,831	\$0
Present Property Debts	\$0	\$0	\$29,884	\$0	\$0	\$0
Debt Paid Last Year	\$0	\$0	\$7,838	\$0	\$0	\$0
Synod Giving per Communicant	\$262	\$164	\$162	\$260	\$212	\$256
Classis Giving per Communicant	\$55	\$35	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55
<b>Total RCUS per Communicant</b>	<b>\$383</b>	<b>\$242</b>	<b>\$217</b>	<b>\$315</b>	<b>\$267</b>	<b>\$383</b>

	Pierre	Watertown	Totals 2018	Totals 2019	Difference
Number of Elders	1	2	17	15	-2
Number of Deacons	0	2	13	14	1
Communicants Last Year	23	39	384	389	5
Received – Confirmation	1	0	3	2	-1
Received – Transfer	1	0	8	2	-6
Received – Profession	0	5	25	11	-14
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-21</b>
<b>Total Old &amp; New</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>-16</b>
Lost – Dismissal	4	0	5	4	1
Lost – Erasure/Discipline	1	5	10	16	6
Lost – Death	0	0	6	5	-1
<b>Total Lost</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Communicants This Year</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>-20</b>
Unconfirmed Members	5	20	88	78	-10
Total Baptized Members	25	59	487	457	-30
Number of Families	11	17	227	211	-16
Children in Sunday School	5	19	81	74	-7
Adults Baptized Last Year	0	0	0	0	0
Infants Baptized	0	1	16	4	-12
<b>Total Baptisms this Year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-12</b>
Members' Lord's Supper	24	39	88.22%	93.93%	5.71%
Lord' Supper Observed	6	12	43	47	4
Receipts – Sunday Offerings	\$60,128	\$83,828	\$617,176	\$624,463	\$7,287
Receipts – Special Offerings	\$2,851	\$1,774	\$38,949	\$38,209	-\$740
Receipts – Other Sources	\$1,227	\$0	\$62,047	\$88,762	\$26,715
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$64,206</b>	<b>\$85,602</b>	<b>\$718,172</b>	<b>\$751,434</b>	<b>\$33,262</b>
Budgeted Synodical Funds	\$650	\$10,360	\$74,010	\$89,597	\$15,587
Budgeted Classical Funds	\$1,306	\$2,200	\$24,860	\$21,031	-\$3,829
Non-Guideline Causes	\$0	\$2,000	\$10,278	\$11,560	\$1,282
Non-RCUS Benevolences	\$583	\$0	\$6,126	\$7,767	\$1,641
Other General Expenses	\$65,581	\$78,719	\$593,938	\$606,136	\$12,198
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$68,120</b>	<b>\$93,279</b>	<b>\$709,212</b>	<b>\$736,091</b>	<b>\$26,879</b>
Value of Church Buildings	\$112,000	\$0	\$777,000	\$777,000	\$0
Value of Parsonage	\$105,000	\$150,000	\$765,000	\$765,000	\$0
Property Improvements	\$12,033	\$1,961	\$18,112	\$119,963	\$101,851
Present Property Debts	\$0	\$0	\$29,844	\$29,884	\$40
Debt Paid Last Year	\$0	\$0	\$7,838	\$7,838	\$0
Synod Giving per Communicant	\$28	\$266	\$193	\$230	\$38
Classis Giving per Communicant	\$57	\$56	\$65	\$54	-\$11
<b>Total RCUS per Communicant</b>	<b>\$85</b>	<b>\$373</b>	<b>\$284</b>	<b>\$314</b>	<b>\$30</b>

***Standing Rules******Organization***

1. The Standing rules shall be read during the session of Classis.
2. That the Northern Plains Classis hold its annual meeting on the second Monday in March and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. (2009)
3. The worship services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circulated before Classis.
4. 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.
5. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the yearly Spring meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send the answers to the questions placed before the elder 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.

***Correspondence***

6. The statistics, Credentials of Elders to Classis and the Mailing Addresses of Delegates to Classis shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk by February 1st. (2010, 2012)
7. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed or emailed to the Consistories of all the Churches by February 15th before the Spring Meeting of Classis. Parochial reports from all Ministers and Licentiates are to be sent to the President by February 15th before the Spring Meeting of Classis. Excuses for these requirements are to be made by written request to the Executive Committee of Classis by the chairman of the committee involved, at least two weeks before the meeting of Classis. (2012, 2014)
8. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis four weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time.
9. If pastors, elders, and members of congregations request information from the Executive Committee 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 in written form and relevant only to the item in question.
10. All documents submitted to Classis be written on sheets of white paper measuring 8.5 inches wide and 11 inches long. (2005)

***Financial***

11. The Classical dues shall be due on the first of November and are to be paid not later than the 30th of November of the current year. (2013)
12. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form to "Northern Plains Classis," and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
13. The President of Classis shall receive two hundred dollars (\$200.00), the Stated Clerk shall receive five hundred dollars (\$500.00), and the Treasurer two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for the Classical year. (2008, 2013, 2014)
14. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only to those delegates whose congregations have

paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions or have been properly excused by Classis.

15. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel to and from Classis, or for Classis business, at the mileage rate established by the Synod in its standing rules. When distance and time require public travel on public transportation to and from Classis, or for Classis business, they shall be granted full fare. (2007, 2017)

**Examinations**

16. It shall be the practice of the Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry and before installing ordained ministers from other denominations, to require no less than an eight month internship for them under the supervision of a pastor of the Classis who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five years. During this internship particular emphasis shall be placed upon learning the peculiarities and practices of the RCUS. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed. (2010)